

How to get healthy (and be hip)

It's time to throw out the Power Plates and goji berries. **Lucy Mayhew** reveals the latest techniques to fight fat and boost your metabolism

Most of us enjoy having our finger on the pulse – being in touch with what's hot and what's not. But knowing and predicting consumer trends is also a serious business.

Trendhunter.com, the world's biggest online cool-hunting magazine, receives millions of hits a month and has an army of almost 20,000 trendspotters scattered across the globe (the biggest contingent in London), with around 25 new trends from some 190 countries reported every day. And according to Jeremy Gutsche, the site's founder, the fastest-changing subject area is new ways we can munch, glug, cook, move, stretch and exercise our way to hardcore health with minimum effort. "Little intrigues consumers more than what should be on our radar for feeling fit and fabulous."

So if Power Plates, goji berries and antioxidants are all so last year, read on for the latest things to try if you're up for novel ways to stay slim, trim and radiant.

FATS TO MAKE YOU THIN

Forget essential fatty acids, 2008 will be all about fats that can make you thin. The hip acronym is MCTs (medium-chain triglycerides). Researchers at McGill University in Canada advocate the use of this type of dietary fat to prevent and treat obesity. And a review in *The Journal of Nutrition*, which reviewed all current published studies on MCTs, found that diets rich in these fats led to increased energy levels, increased burning of

calories and an overall decrease in food consumption.

Coconut oil and palm kernels are stuffed with these fat molecules, which are much smaller than those found in the majority of dietary fats, meaning that they're digested faster and can be used as an immediate source of fuel instead of hanging around inside our fat cells. Nutritionists in the know already advise cooking with organic coconut oil, which contains fewer calories than any other fat and is, paradoxically, more satisfying than other fats, meaning that when it is added to meals you'll stay full for longer and will consume less food overall.

CALORIE OFFSETTING

Carbon offset for your eco-science and calorie offset for your body. Forget Weight Watchers, the latest home delivery meal service, Go Lower, is the only nationwide outfit that serves unprocessed wholefoods with carefully measured ratios of protein, essential fats, carbs and fibre to tip your body into a state known as metabolic advantage. Hannah Sutter – a food campaigner and former lawyer – con-



sulted metabolic medicine experts including obesity expert Iain Broom of Grampian University Hospitals NHS Trust and Richard Feinman, a New York biochemist and metabolic medicine specialist, to be certain that her ready meals would trigger the body to burn more calories while metabolising the food. The theory goes that you'll end up burning more calories as energy, meaning you'll feel revved up and have less food that's likely to get converted to fat.

www.golower.co.uk

THE GREATEST FITNESS CONTRAPTION SINCE THE DUMBBELL AND SWISS BALL

Dangling like a monkey with your feet in two industrial nylon straps doesn't sound like the ultimate way to work every muscle and sculpt the body faster than you can say functional fitness. But the newfangled fitness contraption called a TRX Suspension Training kit has an army of American devotees from soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq, to trainers who work with A-listers including

Gwen Stefani, Amber Valletta and Ben Affleck. It's recently come to Britain and is exciting everyone from Pilates aficionados to professional athletes and trainers who work with models and dancers. It doesn't look that special, but there are 300 exercises you can do either hanging the legs or leaning back while gripping the straps. The moves require you to engage your core and stay balanced and aligned, so you work up a sweat and hit muscles you could never target with standard machines.

For personal training visit www.trifitness.co.uk; to buy the TRX go to www.totallyfitness.co.uk

INCAN BERRIES

Touted as the new goji berry, Incan or Inca berries (above) are golden dried fruits slightly larger than raisins from a plant that's indigenous to parts of the Ama-

zon and which are rich in cholesterol-lowering pectin and B vitamins. The Michelin-starred chef Raymond Blanc is a fan and has ordered some for his breakfast buffet at his luxury Oxford hotel, while the nutritionist Dr John Briffa has referred to them as little nuggets of nutritional gold.

www.detoxyourworld.com

GIZMO IMPROVEMENT

This year's ultimate hi-tech fitness gizmo will come courtesy of Nintendo. The recent Nicole Kidman commercials ratcheted up excitement for the company's brain-training games – so this year its big focus is ultra-female-friendly fitness programmes. Jessica Alba's already a fan of forthcoming Wii Fit packs – they measure body mass index – and targeted exercise plans done on a balance board.

This requires building core strength and includes cardio, aerobic and yoga moves. Nintendo will also launch its facial yoga (aka "facening", below) game this year, where your console will become a compact mirror that gives you beautifying and youthifying exercises to improve your facial muscle tone.



TRAMPOLINING – THE BEST EXERCISE (AND THE HAPPIEST) KNOWN TO MAN/WOMAN!

We've got Olympic athletes training for it and there's a surge of people joining in clubs throughout Britain. You might have bounced around in the school gym, but trampolining is set to become the supercool, super-efficient fitness trend of 2008.

Nasa scientists have labelled it the most efficient, effective form of exercise yet devised by man – it gets more oxygen and blood flowing than you'll ever achieve on a run or on the treadmill, as every bounce requires that you engage your core muscles (great for a flat tum) and no matter how black your mood there's something about bouncing on a huge trampoline that gets the feelgood endorphins flowing better than most exercise activities

HIGH BIOLOGICAL VALUE PROTEIN POWDER

This is not the kind of protein powder that you'd pick up in a gym or in the body-building section of a health shop. The protein powder to add to breakfast cereal or smoothies is called high-BV protein powder – which refers to high biological value, a rating system that indicates how well and how quickly your body can use the protein you are eating.

These new protein powders are popular with slender clients of Dr Shamim Daya's Wholistic Medical Centre in Harley Street, London. Dr Daya says high-BV powder has superior protein quality to milk and eggs, but with-

out the calories. She explains, "The point about protein is that it's one of the best foods for muscles, which are one of the hungriest parts of the body. A lot of fat gets burnt in them and without good intakes of protein you'll burn fat less efficiently."

She says having a scoop with breakfast is a good way of feeding muscles what they need most as well as keeping hunger locked up until lunch (or beyond). Nutritionist Ian Marber, principal consultant at The Food Doctor Clinic in London, agrees that muscles are very efficient at burning fat we want to get rid of. "Most of us have too little protein in our diet. Adding protein powder to what you eat at breakfast is a good way of upping your protein with very few calories, plus a higher protein breakfast will keep you full for longer."

"However, powders can take the focus off whole foods that are rich in protein, but also contain other important nutrients, such as selenium and essential fats. If you want to make cells really efficient at burning fat you also need to exercise."

www.gfcshakes.com

15-MINUTE TUM-BUM-THIGH BURN: THREE-IN-ONE WONDER WORKOUTS FOR TIME-POOR FITNESS-PHOBES

Everyone from the FBI and US marines to Kim Cattrall and Penelope Cruz are crazy for Russian kettlebells (below), the fastest three-in-one wonder workout from the Soviets.

Kettlebells hit the news last summer as Geri Halliwell used them for her remarkable tone-up.

You could be forgiven for thinking that these weights are a bit manly, but fitness gurus say that once you've seen the results of using kettlebells you'll never return to the gym or use standard weights again.



The girlie status of kettlebells has been endorsed by the trend that's come over from the US – girlie pink and baby blue kettlebells are now available and, given that exercises are easy to learn and deliver cardio, strength training and deep toning all at once – it's hardly surprising that busy time-poor women are relieved to have found a fat-melting, toning exercise trend that delivers such speedy results.

Fifteen minutes of Russian kettlebell exercises will produce similar results to an hour spent switching from running machines to weights and mat-work in the gym, according to the fitness consultant and former athlete Svetlana Writtle, who teaches and has produced a DVD explaining the killer moves.

www.russiankettlebells.co.uk

THIS YEAR'S POWER PLATE?

Kiefer Sutherland, star of cult series *24* has had the Tread-Climber (right) – touted as the true all-in-one modern gym – in his Californian home since 2006. Last year, there were a few Tread-Climbers floating around private gyms in London, but now the national gym chain David Lloyd has

got hold of them, more of us will be able to burn twice the calories you would be able to on a treadmill. Twenty-two trials, including one clinical test conducted at Adelphi University in New York, show that the machine, which acts as a three-in-one stair-climber, elliptical trainer and treadmill, burns the same number of calories and works more muscle groups (including the all-important abdominal muscles) than can be achieved by running.

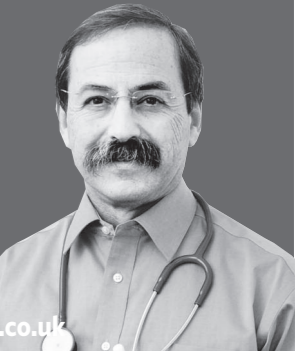
Gloriously for those of us who are anti-exertion, you would need to run on a treadmill for an hour and 20 minutes to burn the same number of calories as you would on the Trea Climber in only 30 minutes.

ALOE'S REVIVAL

Aloe vera has a big sister, *Aloe ferox* (above). It's a stronger, wilder version from South Africa with double the protein and three times as many polysaccharides found to calm bloated, blocked insides, ease irritable bowel syndrome symptoms and help you to feel less sluggish after a meal. The plant is also brimming with substances found to have potent antiviral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties.

Casebook

Dr Fred Kavalier



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What's the best way to stop my child dehydrating?

"Whenever our young children develop diarrhoea we are advised by the surgery to give them Dioralyte, to prevent them from getting dehydrated. This contains sodium chloride (salt), potassium chloride (similar to salt), glucose (sugar) and disodium hydrogen citrate. Would it not be just as good to use water with a bit of salt and sugar in it? What about plain water?"

Dioralyte is the brand name of a powder that contains, as you say, essentially sugar and salt. The non-brand name is ORS, or oral rehydration salts. When a child has diarrhoea and vomiting, the greatest risk to their health is dehydration. ORS dissolved in water is an ideal fluid to prevent dehydration. Its combination of sugar and salts is more readily absorbed in the stomach than plain water. I wouldn't recommend you make up your own version of ORS. Too much salt can be dangerous and even fatal. It would be safe, however, to add a couple of level teaspoons of ordinary sugar (sucrose) to about 250ml of water.

"Following a transient ischaemic attack (TIA) last year I had a number of scans. One showed that there had been a bleeding from the brain. The scan showed a small infarction, with 'minimal haemorrhagic conversion'. I have since been on bendroflumethiazide and ramipril to lower blood pressure. These have controlled my blood pressure, but have also interfered with my ability to get an erection. My GP was about to prescribe Cialis, but on checking found that it was not recommended where a haemorrhage has occurred. Is there any other medication that may be suitable?"

TIA symptoms disappear within 24 hours, which is why it is called "transient". A small area of your brain was infarcted, which means it was deprived of its blood supply. The "haemorrhagic conversion" means a small amount of bleeding occurred as a consequence of the brain tissue being damaged. The manufacturers of Cialis recommend that caution should be used for patients with "bleeding disorders" – people whose blood does not clot properly – but I do not think there is any reason to believe that you come into this category. All of the drugs used to treat erectile problems can have an effect on blood pressure, but I do not think there is any absolute reason why you could not take Cialis. Other options include Muse, a tiny pellet inserted into the urethra at the tip of the penis.

Please send your questions and suggestions to A Question of Health, 'The Independent', Independent House, 191 Marsh Wall, London E14 9RS; fax 020-7005 2182 or email to health@independent.co.uk. Dr Kavalier regrets he is unable to respond personally to questions.

Readers write

KW, a yoga instructor, disagrees with my advice about exercise during pregnancy:

The abdominal exercise you described is definitely contraindicated during pregnancy in all yoga texts. This is irresponsible advice, especially given to one so advanced in the pregnancy.

independent.co.uk

Need Dr Fred's advice? Go to Dr Fred's Health A-to-Z at independent.co.uk/drfred