



Charlotte Heathcote

Body talk

New books to boost your wellbeing, chosen by Caroline Sanderson

The Stress Solution: The 4 Steps To Reset Your Body, Mind, Relationships And Purpose *****
by Dr Rangan Chatterjee
(Penguin Life, £16.99)

"The very existence of stress generates more stress. The more that piles up, the less we're able to cope. It's time to take back control." It's thought that 70 to 90 per cent of GP appointments are related to the stresses we experience in our lives, from daily micro-doses to adverse events that have a long-lasting impact on our health and wellbeing.

For TV's Dr Rangan Chatterjee, the solution to stress lies in addressing the underlying causes in body, mind, relationships and life. Blending the science of what happens in stressed brains and bodies with anecdotes from his own family and patients' experiences, he suggests a wealth of easy-to-implement solutions across these four areas. They range from making positive daily affirmations before breakfast and taking a digital holiday to pursuing a personal passion and engaging more fully with loved ones.

Some advice will feel familiar, such as eating a diverse diet rich in fibre and getting fresh air and exercise, but it's presented in such an accessible, persuasive way that you can't help but sign up.

Dr Chatterjee argues that a life devoid of meaning and purpose is more stressful than anything else and came up with his compelling LIVE – love, intention, vision, engagement – framework to counteract it. To deal with the stresses of life, he suggests, do something you love, live with intent, work towards a long-term vision and engage with the world around you. This guide deserves to become your year-round health bible.

The Alcohol Experiment: 30 Days To Take Control, Cut Down Or Give Up For Good ****
by Annie Grace
(HQ, £12.99)

Doing Dry January? Instead of just gasping



through the four weeks until you can down your next G&T, your health and wellbeing might benefit if you can establish why you drink in the first place.

Annie Grace, author of this bracing, booze-binning programme was a high-flying US businesswoman and a heavy drinker for many years because of the corporate culture in which she worked. But after downing two vodka and oranges in her London hotel bar at 6am, before flying home to Colorado after a business trip, she decided something had to change.

Her method for getting people to rethink their opinions about drinking includes 30 days of "tough love" in which you take a break from alcohol while she helps you review the psychological evidence for your perceived need for it.

Be warned, though, she pulls no punches about the harm that alcohol, both as a toxin and highly addictive drug, does to mind and body and explodes myths like red wine being good for the heart.

But she also unpicks the deep social conditioning that leads many of us to believe we need alcohol to relax, de-stress, socialise, be interesting or even to be happy. It might sound as though she is preaching but, in fact, she urges people who drink to cut themselves some slack.

"People who can't control their drinking are not weak-willed," she writes. "It's often the strongest, smartest and most successful people who drink more than they should."

This is an amazing, life-changing book which will shake up your attitudes to alcohol, even if you don't give it up entirely.

Just Eat It: How Intuitive Eating Can Help You Get Your S* Together Around Food ******
by Laura Thomas
(Bluebird, £12.99)

When was the last time you asked yourself what you'd really like to eat rather than what you can or should eat? Can't remember? Then this book, with its enticing doughnut cover, is for you.

Laura Thomas is a registered nutritionist who knows of what she writes, having had her own "strained and weird" relationship with food since comfort eating her way through a turbulent childhood. In 2016 she launched a podcast, 'Don't Salt My Game, to call out diet trends and myths and to reach out to those of us who waste hours every day worrying about what to eat.

Now with this rigorously scientific book, Laura furthers her mission to kick restrictive dieting and disordered eating into touch and to set free those of us who constantly obsess about food, whether it's worrying about whether paleo or plant-based is better or feeling guilt pangs about that bag of crisps.

Her ingenious solution is intuitive eating, a concept that helps you tune into your own innate hunger and fullness cues instead of relying on diet tools such as meal plans and calorie trackers.

There are no rules, no dos and don'ts, no banned food lists. Instead, she helps us examine why our relationship with food is so messed up and suggests practical steps towards fixing it for good, from deleting social media feeds that "make us feel like garbage" to ditching garments that don't fit properly – "if clothes don't look good on you, it's not your fault".

A powerful and essential read for the time of year when we are hardest on ourselves.

Life lessons

Give your health and fitness a New Year's overhaul with Caroline Sanderson's pick of more new guides to wellbeing

Quiet: Silencing The Brain Chatter And Believing That You're Good Enough
by Fearné Cotton
(Orion Spring, £20)

Building on the best-selling success of her books *Happy* and *Calm* and based on her experience of living in the public eye and trying to ignore negative online chatter, the TV and radio presenter and social media star asks why so many of us question whether we are, or ever will be, "good enough". Through boosting quotes, interviews with the likes of Bryony Gordon and Billie Piper, and pause-for-thought activities, she aims to help us silence our inner critic, the one "that has the power to overthrow gut instinct and talk us out of new adventures".

The 21 Day Blast Plan: Lose Inches, Gain Strength And Reboot Your Body
by Annie Deadman
(HQ, £18.99)

If you're middle-aged, most

health and fitness gurus can make you feel a bit past it. Not personal trainer and 56-year-old mother-of-two Annie Deadman, though. Her three-week healthy eating and fitness programme offers a down-to-earth, fun and wryly humorous approach which promises to kick your sweet tooth into touch, calm your gut and leave you with less fat.

The Hollywood Body Plan: 21 Minutes For 21 Days To Transform Your Body For Life
by David Higgins
(Headline, £25)

Personal trainer and physical therapist to the A-list, David Higgins presents his "Hollywood-tested" method that has turned the likes of Margot Robbie, Samuel L Jackson and Colin Firth into "action superheroes". Through 21-minute daily workouts and his 21-day eating plan, he aims to transform your everyday movements (if you don't move well, you put yourself at risk of injury), treat all

the aches and pains that build up from years of sedentary living and "forever fix your body".

Gene Eating: The Science Of Obesity And The Truth About Diets
by Dr Giles Yeo
(Seven Dials, £14.99)

Based on two decades of research into how the brain controls our food intake, this engaging and accessible book tackles the meaty question of why some people are compelled to eat more than others. Yeo, a Cambridge University geneticist, argues convincingly that such behaviour stems from genetics, which we need to understand if we are to tackle the obesity epidemic (in the UK we have the biggest waistlines in Western Europe) and improve our health. In short, where you put weight on is down to your genes. But whether you put weight on is – ultimately – down to you.



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