

Health

Nine hot health trends to watch in 2021

From stress-busting chocolate to the gym in a shed, *Rosie Taylor* reveals new paths to wellness

The last thing most of us want to do in the new year is start a depressingly restrictive diet or trudge to the gym before daybreak. Instead, getting fit and healthy in 2021 will be all about simplicity, gentleness and finding our inner calm. Here are the wellness trends set to change our lives next year...

1. Fast – for 14 hours a day
In 2021, the trend for intermittent fasting – or time-restricted eating – will continue to grow, as evidence mounts to show its benefits for weight loss and all round health. You could lose half a stone in three months simply by eating all your normal meals between 8am and 6pm, according to Harley Street nutritionist Jeannette Hyde, whose new book *10 Hour Diet* is published next month. “Research shows this is the sweet spot,” she explains. “Fasting for 14 hours overnight helps improve heart health, lower blood pressure and protect against type 2 diabetes because our bodies go into repair mode. It’s a gentler way to lose weight.”

The science behind this says humans were never meant to eat at the times we do now. With people eating breakfast early and having dinner late, their systems don’t have enough time to recover overnight. The science behind this says humans were never meant to eat at the times we do now. With people eating breakfast early and having dinner late, their systems don’t have enough time to recover overnight.

2. Load up on new superfoods
Among this year’s predicted new superfoods is carob. The chocolate substitute is seeing a revival as it contains hydroxyproline, an amino acid involved in collagen production that is often deficient in vegan diets. For palm oil-free carob, try Biona’s Carobio carob and hazelnut spread, £4.69 for 350g. Starch-rich breadfruit tastes a bit like bread when cooked, but can also be dried and ground into flour, which a British Columbia University study suggested was easier to digest than wheat. “Flour produced from breadfruit is a gluten-free, low



glycaemic index, nutrient-dense and complete protein option for modern foods,” says lead researcher Ying Liu. Mankai duckweed, also known as *Wolffia globosa*, contains fibre, iron, folic acid and vitamin B12 and could help you lose weight.

A new study published in the journal *Heart* found men following a Mediterranean diet who drank a daily duckweed shake lost 800g more on average over six months compared with those following the diet alone. Common duckweed (*Lemna minor*) is licensed in the EU for use in food supplements, but *Wolffia globosa* powder is still under review to see if it can be classed as a “novel food” and added in supplements.

3. Embrace micro-changes
Joanne Mallon, author of *Change Your Life in 5 Minutes a Day* (published in January), recommends replacing a new year lifestyle overhaul with “micro-changes”: small, easy fixes that improve

your life, such as stepping outside to look at the sky or taking five minutes to extend a conversation with a neighbour beyond “hello”. “Even the smallest interactions like that can make us feel more connected and less isolated,” she says.

4. An immunity-boosting break
International travel has lately become a luxury for Britons, but when it’s back on the agenda, many holidaymakers will be swapping cocktail-soaked breakfasts for healthier options. Bookings for “immunity-boosting retreats” are up 22 per cent at specialist holiday provider Health and Fitness Travel. Founder Paul Joseph says: “Our clients want to continue or start their fitness journey and improve resilience to stress, boost immunity and therefore improve their mental and physical wellbeing following a tumultuous 2020.”

Luxury breaks to Greece, Spain and Thailand offer travellers a health MOT in the form of blood and urine tests, nutritional analysis, guidance on boosting immunity with lifestyle

changes and a host of treatments such as deep meditation, forest walks and underwater massage. There’s no firm evidence these treatments can really alter your body’s immune response, but that hasn’t deterred Britons desperate to escape the gloom – and they are certainly better for you than overdoing it the all-you-can-eat buffet.

5. Stress-reducing chocolate
With a third of adults now more anxious than they were before the pandemic, consultancy Mintel says stress-reducing foods will be big in 2021. Chocolate is already a known mood booster, with 2018 research by Loma Linda University in California showing chocolate with more than 70 per cent cacao had a positive effect on stress and inflammation levels, mood, memory and immunity.

But savvy producers are now developing “supercharged” chocolate – enhanced with other stress-relieving compounds such as reishi mushroom, used in Asian medicine to promote

sleep, and the cannabis extract CBD, which studies have suggested can help reduce anxiety. Products like The London Botanists’ CBD-infused dark chocolate bar (£6) and Four Sigmatic’s reishi-infused hot chocolate (10 sachets for £17.50) are already on sale.

6. Eat a ‘climatarian’ diet
Worried about our impact on the planet, but can’t stick to a vegan diet? Climatarians could be the way forward. The diet means sticking to foods with a low carbon footprint and the least environmental impact, such as local and seasonal produce, sustainable fish, animal products from high-welfare, free-range suppliers, while also avoiding excess packaging. Meat eaters should switch from beef and lamb to pork and chicken to save a ton of CO₂ being emitted every year, according to the Climates network. It says: “Grazing animals who chew the cud like cattle, sheep, goats and deer have a much higher climate impact.”

7. Calm your chattering mind
Nearly one in five adults was suffering with some form of depression by mid-2020, double the rate of the previous year – so books on mental wellbeing are destined to do well. Psychologist Ethan Kross’s new book *Chatter* promises to help readers harness their inner voice to prevent them going “down a rabbit hole of negative self-talk and endless rumination”. Mind coach Don Macpherson calls our negative inner voice the “Monkey Mind”, after the Buddhist idea that it is like a monkey swinging from tree to tree. His book *How to Master Your Monkey Mind* (out in January) explains how to “harness” this inner voice through breathing and heightened awareness. “We all need to learn how to tune our brains to be calmer and have a more balanced perspective in 2021,” he says.

8. Mainstream menopause
Celebrities like Gwyneth Paltrow and Meg Mathews helped make the menopause mainstream this year, according to John Lewis. It predicts a 2021 boom in products to help cope with symptoms, such as supplements, hair removal devices and cooling sprays to deal with hot flashes. Kamwell also predicts menopause technology will be the next big thing, such as the wrist-worn device Grace, which tracks and fends off hot flushes via a cooling patch.

9. Get a shedload fitter
Retailer WeMakeGyms.com saw a 30 per cent increase in home gym enquiries this year. Prices start from £2,000, decluttering out the shed is the logical next step. The shed office, or shoffice, is being replaced by the “shym”, at least for Scott Church who, with three twentiesomething sons at home during the pandemic, saw an opportunity to get creative. “We haven’t felt the need to renege gym memberships,” he explains. “But we did have to upgrade the roof structure, so we could fit a punchbag.”

MIDLIFE FITNESS FILES

PAUL JAMESON, 60

Paul Jameson is a retired businessman and founder of *Aura*, a new online platform that provides support for people in their final days, months or years. He lives with his wife Jess, a GP, their son David, 27, and their daughters Jo, 25, and Rosie, 22.



Paul Jameson raised £150,000 by playing tennis on Kilimanjaro

In June 2017, I was given a life expectancy of two years. After months of tests and investigations, I was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND), a terminal illness with no known cure. It was a huge shock. I was angry and thought: “Why me?” I’d played golf for 50 years, was a member of my local tennis club for 20 years and also loved doing mountain treks and cycling challenges. After my diagnosis, I immediately thought of my bucket list. There was one big challenge left that I had been thinking about – climbing Kilimanjaro. A few glasses of wine with my tennis friends later, we came up with the idea of playing the highest altitude game of tennis ever at the top. We did it in six days in October 2017 and raised £150,000 for MND research.

How I work out
My MND started with my mouth area and affected my speech and swallowing. It has now started to affect my lower limbs, too. It manifests as muscle weakness and wastage, stiffness, and balance and co-ordination problems. Golf has sadly gone, as I can’t swing a club now. Cycling is proving difficult, too – I kept

‘A terminal diagnosis hasn’t stopped me from staying fit’

falling off and had a couple of nasty injuries. So I bought a Peloton fixed bike, which I enjoy as my principal way of keeping fit, two or three times a week. I also do 30 minutes’ stretching and Pilates core exercises every two days and take a daily walk with our two dogs. I still enjoy a couple of sets of tennis each week.

How I eat
I don’t watch what I eat that carefully. I have to select foods that are easy to swallow – typically, porridge for breakfast

LIFESTYLE ASIDES

- Sleep Seven hours
- Coffee Three cups
- Alcohol Beer, wine – 30 units
- Guiltily pleasure Sherry trifle that my mum makes
- Motivation secret I don’t like failure
- Biggest achievement Having a wonderful, loving family
- What keeps you going? I love life, treat every day as a bonus and stay positive

Aura was born. At its simplest, it’s a place to manage all your end-of-life affairs, leave final wishes, write a life story and leave heartfelt messages to those you love. I think we need to talk about death to help us live better and not fear dying. I have already planned my funeral as an end-of-life celebration. I’m going to have a big party in my garden, with a short service full of happy music. I’m then having my ashes made into a firework and, at the end of the ceremony, I want the firework to go off over the house I’ve lived in for more than 20 years. Having the type of ending will help my family grieve in the knowledge that I was happy to be celebrating the fantastic life I’d had – not in body then in spirit.

As told to Anna Magee

Details: aura.life

Give something clever this Christmas

Treat a loved one – or yourself – to a year’s supply of incisive political commentary, unmissable books and arts reviews and the wittiest cartoons in Britain

And we’ll send you
A free gift worth up to £65. Choose from a bottle of Pol Roger Champagne or an Aspinall passport holder

All for just £99
(Saving 60% off the cover price)



UK rate £99 for continuous payments only, £109 for one-off payments. Pol Roger Champagne available for UK payers only. Special overseas rates available with free passport holder. While stocks last.

THE SPECTATOR To order: www.spectator.co.uk/frosty | 0330 333 0050 quote code A634