

Your No.1 wellbeing magazine

SEPTEMBER/
OCTOBER 2014

ONLY
£1.99
€2.95

healthy

EXPERTS • SELF • NUTRITION • FITNESS • BEAUTY



SAVE!
£104

HOLLAND & BARRETT
VOUCHERS

INSIDE
(€137) Pages 4 & 5

**SURVIVING
BREAST
CANCER**

**By the
women
who have**

**GET HEALTHIER
WITH YOUR
SMARTPHONE**

*Pick the best
supplements
for you*

Live better
Look younger
Lift energy

WIN!

A Cornish
spa break
worth £1100

30

**DELICIOUS
WAYS TO
EAT WELL
NOW**

Gluten-free treats
Cosy vegan suppers
Food myths busted

**GO
SUGAR
FREE**

**STAY
SUMMER
HAPPY**
all year long

LATEST ADVICE **PREDIABETES + MENOPAUSE + ARTHRITIS + ASTHMA + ECHINACEA**

Stay summer-happy all year long

As shorter days and gloomy weather near, don't lose your sunshine mood
– the cooler, darker months can be just as joyful as the warmer ones

WORDS CLAIRE LAVELLE

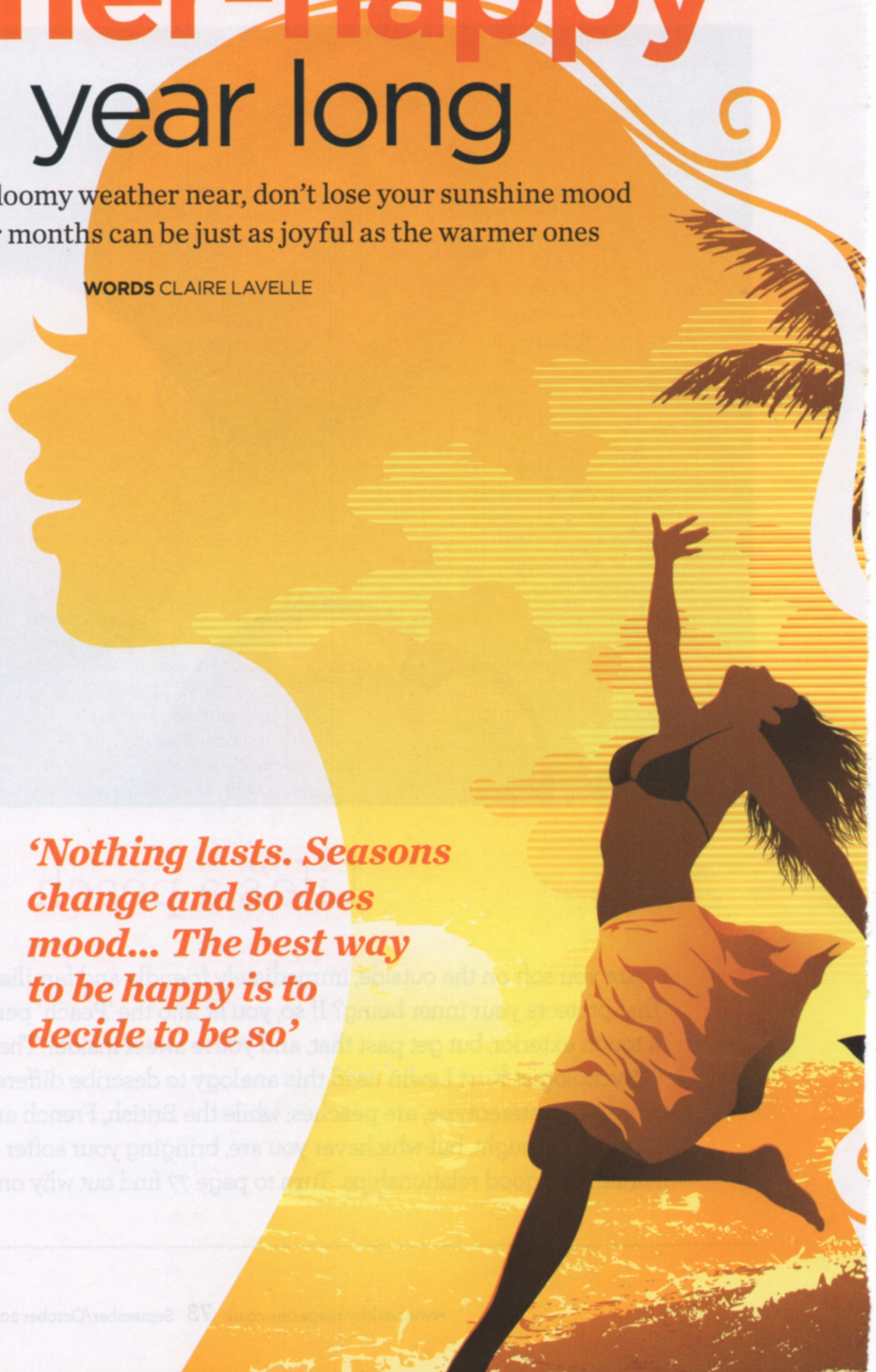
How does summer make you feel? For Fiona Watkins, 40, a sales manager from Shropshire, longer days and balmy evenings signal excitement at the start of festival season and sporting events – two life-long passions. 'Now I have children, I usually watch them on TV, but I don't feel I miss out,' she says. 'It's a state of mind rather than a physical thing.'

For Carla Kenyon, 36, a charity fundraiser from Manchester, getting out into the garden and tending to her vegetable patch is one of the most satisfying aspects. 'The cycle from seed to plate is a very rewarding one,' she says. 'I find it soothing.'

Alison Davies, 50, a financial adviser from Colwyn Bay, finds her summer high by going barefoot as often as she can. And a straw poll of the *healthy* office reveals similarly simple pleasures – lying on freshly cut grass, feeling the warmth of the sun on our faces, swimming in the sea. Perhaps what we love most about summer is its simplicity, from what we wear (or not) to what we do and where we go.

Increased daylight hours and more sunshine is proven to boost our 'feelgood' hormone, serotonin – when the body absorbs UV light, it's able to make more of the natural chemical. Connecting with nature also has a positive effect on our psyche, according to a study by the David Suzuki Foundation, which challenged

'Nothing lasts. Seasons change and so does mood... The best way to be happy is to decide to be so'





15,000 participants to get outside for 30 minutes a day for 30 consecutive days. They reported benefits including better mood, increased energy and an increase in nature-specific emotions such as awe and curiosity. The 'school's out' mentality from our childhood also plays a part – as adults, the working world still turns, but longer days mean we're able to spend more time outside before or after office hours.

Work with the seasons

The reasons we love summer are many, so how do we go about transferring that kick-up-your-heels mentality to the rest of the year? The answer is... we don't. That's not to say we should resign ourselves to spending October to April morose and depressed – rather that we find new ways of injecting joy and purpose into our lives that work with, rather than against, the seasons.

'It's very difficult to be happy "in the moment" if we're hankering after days gone by,' says psychologist Ingrid Collins. 'It's better to allow yourself fond memories of what you did over the summer, then make a conscious decision to tap into the energy of the new season. Autumn is a time

to review and reflect; to build on the work you've done so far this year, now that you're recharged after a summer break; and to plan for the coming year. Work with the flow of the seasons rather than against. Striving for that summer feeling in November will only make you feel exhausted and unhappy, because unless you're prepared to travel to the other side of the world, you can't fake it!'

Professor Lance Workman, evolutionary psychologist at the University of South Wales, agrees. 'It's not entirely desirable to transpose a summer mind-set to autumn and winter,' he says. 'Constant summer can actually be quite challenging. Here in the UK, we're not used to it – when the temperature is constantly around 25°C or higher, we start to grumble. Also, we don't benefit from the contrast effect – without the dull days, we don't appreciate the sunny ones. Studies show that as intuitive as it seems that we must feel happier during summer months, the weather actually has very little impact on our overall happiness.'

'There are just as many reasons that people don't like summer as love it,' says psychologist Anna Hamer (www.ahamer.co.uk). 'For some people, poor body image means wearing fewer clothes or having to wear a swimsuit on holiday is a big cause of anxiety in summer months. Feeling hot and sweaty on public transport or at work is uncomfortable. If you have fair skin and burn easily, constant sunshine is challenging. And we sleep better in the winter months – we're better able to listen to, and go with, our body clocks because it's dark outside.'

If you're really struggling, book a holiday. 'A week away for a sunshine break can "top you up" until next spring,' says Professor Workman.

But perhaps the best way to think of how the transition from summer to autumn and winter will affect you is this: 'Nothing lasts,' says Collins. 'Seasons change, and so does mood. There's a lot to look forward to during the cooler months – harvest festivals and, of course, Christmas. But the best way to be happy is to decide to be so.'

EMBRACE WINTER FOR YEAR-ROUND WELLBEING

Exercise outdoors

'This is important all year round, but never more so than now, when exposure to sunlight is so vital,' says Professor Workman. 'Take a brisk walk for 30 minutes or more, at least three times a week – ideally in the morning or at lunchtime.'

Take a vitamin D supplement

'The body needs sunshine to make vitamin D, as it can be difficult to get the amount you need from your diet; a supplement* can top up your levels and improve your mood,' advises Collins.

Stay social

'In many ways, it's easier to be social in winter,' says Hamer. 'Summer holidays, wonderful as they are, create havoc with work schedules, childcare and regular social arrangements. Plan Sunday roasts, book clubs or fitness activities. You almost always feel better afterwards.'

Use a light box

'This can be useful for people with seasonal affective disorder (SAD),' says Professor Workman. 'It works for 85 per cent of sufferers. You need one of 5000 lux (a unit of illuminance), and ideally use it for an hour a day.'

Set goals

'These can be used as "markers" that help you feel productive or get the creative juices flowing,' says Hamer. 'Find something you love doing so much you're totally immersed. It could be writing, poetry, a form of exercise or a new craft class.' ■

*IF YOU ARE PREGNANT, BREAST-FEEDING OR UNDER MEDICAL SUPERVISION, CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING SUPPLEMENTS. PHOTOGRAPHS: ISTOCK