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Trend zone

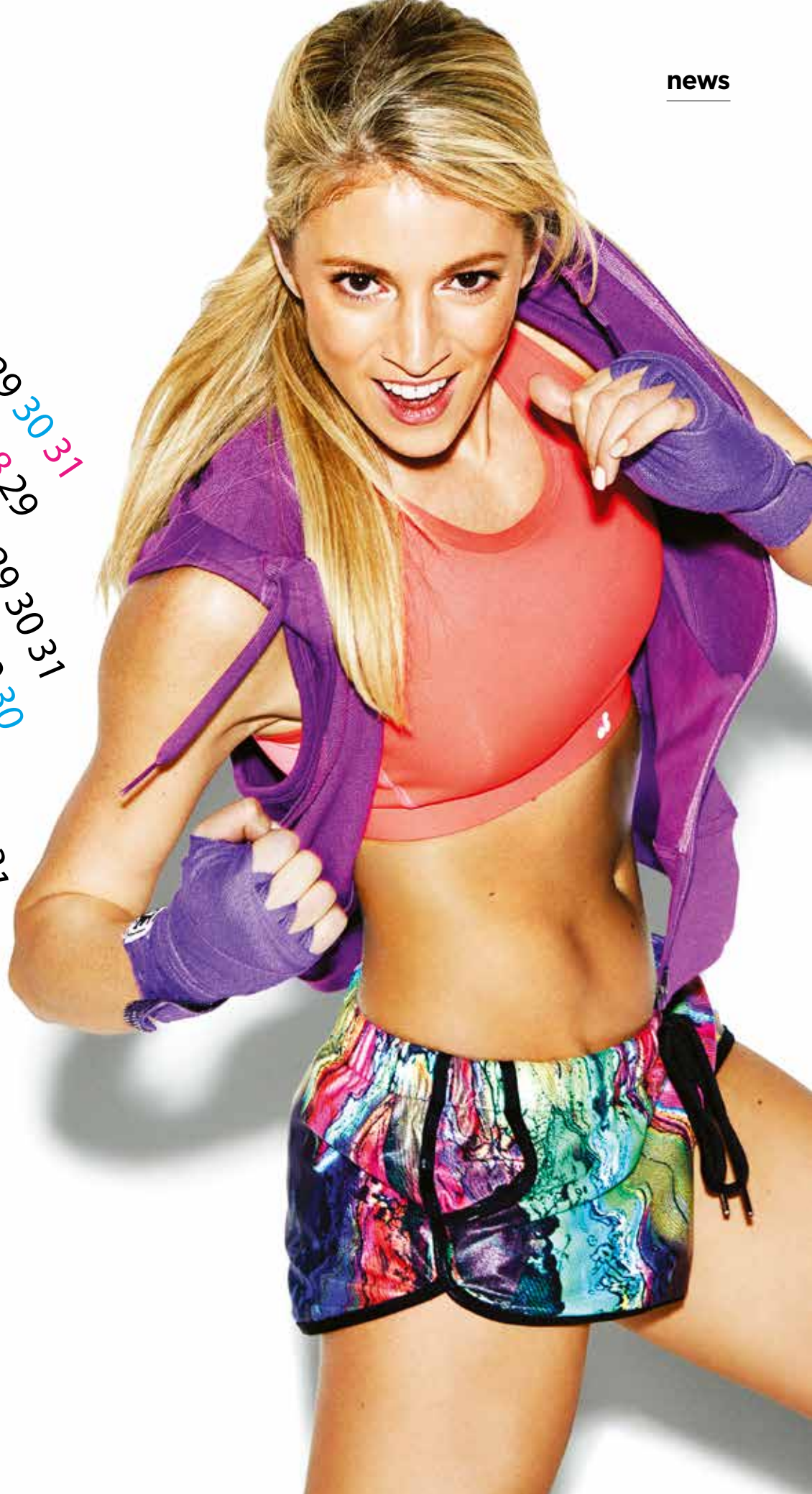
The freshest things in health and fitness for 2016

BY MELISSA SHEDDEN



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At *WH*, we love our jobs – reporting tirelessly on the wellness scene is as fun as wearing stretchy pants on Fitness Gear Fridays (true story). 2015 will forever be known as the year that brought us cauliflower pizza and the activewear parody video. How can 2016 possibly top it? Turns out, it can – and will. We’ve enlisted experts to forecast our future health, food and fitness obsessions. You read it here first.

For a little bit of errything

Work out... and chill out

Next-level cardio, incoming

Next fit things

Some trends are fleeting, others have more staying power than a foundation stain on your white jeans. If you like your fitness like you do your coffee – intense – good news: your kilojoule-torching, strength-building, body weight and HIIT classes aren’t going anywhere. Add **Coach by Colour** to your cardio-burn arsenal (at Virgin Active). Here’s how it works: indoor power-based bikes feature display screens that light up white, blue, green, yellow and red, depending on how hard you’re working – aka accountability. Eep!

Want fitness that’s fun again? Celebrity trainers like Nicole Winhoff, Tracy Anderson and Simone De La Rue are bringing grapevines and star jumps back to a studio near you. “The **new dance aerobics** are not about shaking your hips to Latin rhythms but mixing up strength, cardio and conditioning movements with a killer dance vibe,” says Tara Simich, The Jungle Body founder and KFit Ambassador.

We’ll also see two different movements on the yoga front.

1. **BodyART** (at Kaya Health Clubs Emporium), the ultimate sweat slasher. Drawing on yoga, functional training, tai chi, physio and dancing, you’ll get three-in-one training – strength, cardio and flexibility. In other words, mountain climbers meet downward dogs, to deep house beats.

2. **A yoga slow down** – the back-to-basics antidote to hybrid styles big in 2015 (acro-yoga, we’re looking at you). Basic restorative yoga is actually advanced practice in our culture, says *WH* yoga expert Claire Nettle. “Often we think that unless we’re sweating, we’re not getting the benefit. But slow yoga allows us to focus on alignment and technique and work with any injuries or conditions. If our yoga becomes another form of exercise, then where do we get our yoga?” Word.

Aerobics, sans ‘80s tizzy perms

The Sirtfood diet

Dark choc, kale, red wine, capers, blueberries, miso soup, tofu, olives, blackcurrants and parsley. That’s your sirtfoods grocery shopping list. Say what? “‘Sirt’ is short for sirtuins – a class of proteins in the body important for regulating biological pathways that can affect our health and weight,” explains nutritionist Kim Pearson. The way they work? “It’s believed that sirtuins may mimic the same effects as a kilojoule-restricted diet,” she says. In other words, they switch on the so-called “skinny gene” pathways in your body – the same ones activated by fasting and exercise – but without intense kilojoule restriction or taxing exercise regimes. You don’t have to live off them exclusively, just add them to your eating plan if weight loss is your 2016 goal. Plus, a guilt-free glass of shiraz... boom.

Nutrition trackers

You’re all over counting your steps (thank you, Jawbone), but accounting for every morsel of food? Ain’t nobody got time for that. You might recall inhaling that roast, but you probably couldn’t say how many kilojoules you’d eaten with any accuracy and portion guesstimates definitely hurt weight maintenance efforts. Cue: new nutrition tracking tech. “More than simply kilojoule counting, blogging or posting pics of your awesome meals on Instagram, the nutrition-related side of personal tracking, recording and analysing your diet will be a star feature on your favourite devices or smartphone in 2016,” says *WH* nutrition expert Kristen Beck. Like Fitbit for your food, “Apps and trackers will analyse and report back on individual nutrient intake (carbs, fibre, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals) or overall dietary intake of food groups, which would be my preferred approach,” explains Beck. Good examples? Wholesome and MyPlate, but watch out for a zillion more, she says.

FIND YOUR NEW FIX

If you like
BROCCOLINI...

Try
FIORETTO
Behold, new veg for 2016. The cauliflower blossom is sweeter and milder in flavour than your typical head and will be on the market around Easter, says CEO of Perfection Fresh, Michael Simonetta. Tasty.

If you like
OIL PULLING...

Try
ACTIVATED CHARCOAL TOOTHBRUSHES
Brushes and DIY pastes are hitting the radar. Naturopaths believe the detoxifying benefits extend to teeth, with the bristles' porous granules binding bacteria before they stain. Even Colgate is in on the charcoal whitening action.

If you like
QUINOA...

Try TEFF
Noted. It's a lighter-textured gluten-free Ethiopian grain that's high in protein and fibre, with a hit of calcium and iron, says nutritionist Lola Berry. Makes an awesome pancake, too.

If you like
BONE BROTH...

Try
GELATINE
Your summer substitute is not the type you get from the supermarket baking section, but premium quality from grass-fed animals, says

About Life wellness ambassador, Vladia Cobrdova. "Gelatine's high amino acid content supports a healthy mood, strong bones, smooth skin, proper muscle synthesis – and importantly, overall gut health." Add the off-white pure powder to meals and drinks.

If you like
YOUR FOAM ROLLER...

Try
TRIGGER POINT BALLS
Your new DIY massaging tool to up local blood flow and reduce muscle soreness. Bonus: the smaller surface area allows more pressure control.

If you're
VEGAN...

Try
SACHA INCHI
AKA Inca peanuts, a lightly roasted nut-like seed, rich in omega-3 acids and proteins. Snack on them, sprinkle on your salad or add to a trail mix, reckons GoodnessMe Box founder Peta Shulman.

If you like
SUPERFOODS...

Try
MEDICINAL FOODS
"Think super herbs like Pau d'Arco and Horsetail brewed as teas for a more powerful smoothie. Also, medicinal mushrooms like Reishi, Chaga and Cordyceps, which boost immunity and are loaded with vitamins and minerals," says Sadhana Kitchen's Maz Valcorza.



Urban meditation studios

LA has Unplug, NYC The Path and now SYD has scored Centred Meditation. Yep, like a yoga or pilates studio but solely for de-stressing, drop-in guided meditation studios are set to do away with all of the new-age nonsense and holier-than-thou attitudes that surround the practice. Prayer and chanting free, reserve your armchair for a 30-minute wellbeing workout sequence of breath work, visualisation and awareness to start your day right, beat the afternoon slump or unwind after work. "A wider meditation menu means a greater likelihood of finding what works best for you, so that you can sculpt your brain, tune your mind and open your heart optimally," says *WH* psychology expert Dr Paula Watkins. Much serenity.

Empathy

If the emotional IQ buzzword of 2015 was resilience, this year, it's empathy. Like handling stress well or time management, this is a skill that can be learnt, says *WH* psychology expert Dr Paula Watkins – partly through meditation. "From the perspective of contemplative traditions, meditation has never just been about being less stressed and developing a faster, fatter, fitter and more fabulous frontal lobe. Those things certainly do happen: meditation enables us to be more focused, less distracted and all-round more efficient, calmer and effective. But meditation is, was, and always has been about something more. Something less egocentric, something about ourselves as part of a wider humanity and life experience." We'll see a greater recognition of the heart of meditation and an openness to explore specific techniques designed (and scientifically shown) to build our muscles of compassion and empathy, Watkins says. Bonus: restocking our reserves is good for others and good for us – it boosts our own physical and mental wellbeing too. Winning. Want

a non-OM way of developing the skill?

NeuroSlimming

We know from neuroplasticity that the brain can heal itself. The next step? Changing your brain to change your body. "Your brain is your control centre. It is what determines your food choices, appetite, hunger, motivation and hormones you're putting out," explains Dr Helena Popovic, author of *NeuroSlimming*. The energy in, energy out equation is old news, she says, as science explores the emerging field of mind-body connection. "It's not what you eat, it's how and why." Popovic explains. "Practise simply sitting with your feelings and not suppressing them with food." Her top slim-down tips? Recognise eating out of habit, get friendly with feelings of hunger and frame your shape-up plan in terms of gains (energy and confidence are good ones), because subconsciously, we resist losing anything. This is a mind plan, not a meal plan.



ON THE RADAR

Emergency contraception

Sometimes your a) birth control or b) common sense fails. Come February, there will be a new pregnancy-preventing pill on the market. The main benefit? "It has a longer duration of effectiveness after unprotected intercourse than the current emergency contraceptive pill," explains *WH* sexual health expert, Dr Deborah Bateson.

Phytonutrients

Later, antioxidants, says nutritionist and *Falling In Love with Food* founder, Zoe Bingley-Pullin. These guys will be the new buzzword. "Phytonutrients are a superior type of nutrient to have in your diet. They may help reduce inflammation and affect the function of blood vessels, hormones and systems that regulate cell growth." The natural chemicals give plants their pigment, so darker-coloured fruit and veg tend to have a higher phytonutrient content. Dig in.

Papaya

Digestive enzymes plus prebiotic properties: just two reasons we'll be reaching for this fruit. "Papaya is naturally rich in digestive proteins – in particular papain, which is a protein-digesting enzyme," explains *WH* nutrition expert Kristen Beck. The other big health benefits? Insoluble fibre and anti-inflammatory properties. "It's like pawpaw cream for your insides," explains Beck. Makes a mean smoothie breakfast bowl, too.



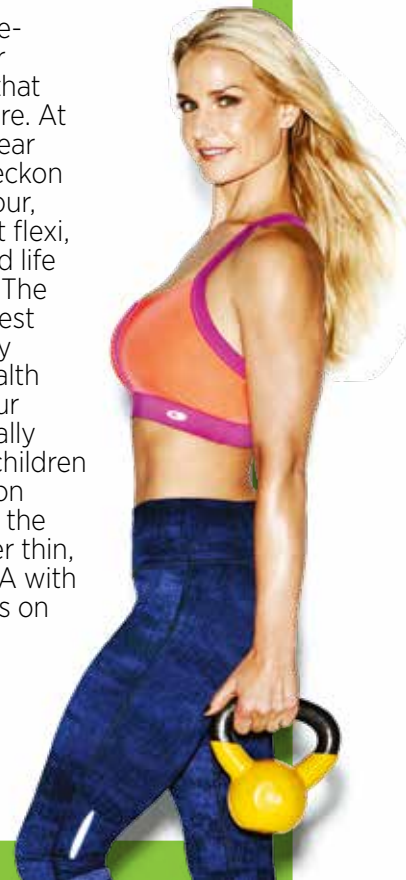
- ➔ **1 Get curious about strangers:** your barista, the chick who's always next to you at your 6pm reformer class, you name it.
- 2 Set yourself the one-a-week challenge:** spark up a convo with someone new every seven days. Got the courage up? Now listen intently, like really listen.
- 3 Ask follow-up questions and press pause on responding verbally (visually is OK) until you consider the speaker's motivation and POV. Non-weather chat preferred.**

Brain-gasms

We can thank the interwebs for Jay Z and Solange's lift fight, and now it's brought us a sensation dubbed autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) – a fancy name for getting tingles down your spine. Watching certain things trigger the feelgood response: whispering, tapping fingernails, folding laundry, getting a haircut, scratching sounds and white noise, to name a few. No one really knows how it works or why, but you'll soon be watching wellbeing-tagged YouTube videos, produced with this goal of intense relaxation.

Epigenetics

Like it or not, your physical make-up is largely determined by your parents' DNA, the double helix that definitively spells out who you are. At least, that's what you learnt in year seven biology. Now, scientists reckon that while traits such as eye colour, height and bone structure aren't flexi, others, including disease risk and life span, aren't always set in stone. The food you eat, chemicals you ingest and stress you perceive, not only help control your short-term health but can also modify the way your DNA behaves, and then potentially transfers those tweaks to your children and grandchildren. It all hinges on a complex chemical code called the epigenome. Think of it as a super thin, snug wrapping around your DNA with the power to switch gene signals on or off. Epigenetics, the study of that coating, shows that most genes are only a predisposition, not a fate; and while you can't change your actual DNA, you can control (to a point) the way it acts. Watch this space...



Pretty fit

Braids will always be on point, says celebrity hairstylist Anthony Nader, of RAW Salon. Want to up your options? "Go for cleaner and shinier hair shapes because they're minimal fuss and always look glam," Nader says. A low, slick ponytail with a deep side part, or hair gathered and directed away from your face into a side chignon secured at the back of the nape area are two new yoga-to-brekkie 'do ideas. On the beauty front, fermentation continues to be big news. While popping probiotics for beautiful skin from the inside out, we'll also be applying them topically – and opting for more naturally-derived skincare, like Swisse's concentrated plant seed oils. You beauty.

Vaginal laser therapy

We're not talking about your six-weekly Brazilian, but a new internal laser treatment that promises to hit refresh on your lady parts. "Your vagina has a delicately balanced natural 'flora' with healthy bacteria creating a 'self-regulating environment'; this environment can be disrupted by a multitude of factors (including lycra!) and changes naturally with ageing," explains Bateson. Vaginal dryness, itchiness, painful intercourse and mild stress incontinence are just some of those delights. "I predict there will be a surge of interest in vaginal laser therapy, but care is needed as there is no clear evidence for effectiveness or long-term safety data," Bateson says. **WH**