- Habit

HEALTH TRENDS worth trying

It's time to head into the new season with a little extra oomph...



75%

of Brits say they want to try a new wellness trend this year, found Platinum Spas.

Instead of being sad that summer's drawing to a close, embrace that 'back-to-school' feeling and try something new – it could transform your body and mind. But do you struggle to know which fads are worth a shot and which social media crazes should be avoided? Our experts have rounded up the latest advancements that are not only proven to make a positive impact, but are super easy to take on board. So, what are you waiting for? Here's what you need to know.

Get creative with flour

Alternative flours continue to hit our shelves. Look out for fruit and vegetable options, such as banana or cauliflower flour, and new super-flours blended with potassium, calcium and fibre to boost your bakes, such as millet, fava and lupin.

Eat more anti-inflammatory foods

Inflammation is thought to contribute to numerous health conditions, including Alzheimer's, asthma and arthritis. Eating anti-inflammatory foods may reduce pain associated with inflammation and improve overall health. Get your fill of avocados, broccoli, berries, dark chocolate, green tea, kale, oily fish, nuts, spinach and tomatoes.

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Stack mushrooms

Some mushrooms contain 'adaptogens' – an ingredient that can help the body deal with stress, anxiety and fatigue, and 'stacking' certain types together can give you added benefits. The right type of stack depends on what health benefits you seek. Turkey tail and chaga is immune-strengthening, lion's mane and reishi can relieve anxiety, and cordyceps and chaga boosts energy. Head to your local health food shop or hollandandbarrett.com.

Sleep the Scandi way

Struggle to sleep next to your partner, but don't want separate rooms? Instead of unpacking your usual autumn/winter bedding, try two single duvets instead, popular with couples in European countries. For those experiencing sleep disturbances related to menopause symptoms, for example, it can be game-changing. 'Having a light duvet can help alleviate hot flushes during the night and ease sweating,' says sleep and body clock scientist Dr Kat Lederle. 'Plus, it gives you your own space, which really matters if your partner runs hot at night.'

Cut back on plastic

Chemicals contained in plastic can be bad for health. Some of those, including Bisphenol A (BPA) – which studies have linked to a higher risk of heart disease and breast cancer – can migrate into our bodies. Simple ways to avoid ingesting harmful plastics include investing in a reusable coffee cup, ditching damaged plastic containers and avoiding using cling film on hot food. Challenge yourself to stick to it until Christmas, and you'll find it soon becomes natural.

Paint by numbers

Need a hobby to cosy up with? 'Short-term benefits include stress reduction, improved concentration and enhanced problem-solving skills, while in the long term, they can improve resilience, patience and a sharper mind,' says NHS GP Dr Zoe Williams. Visit ravensburger.co.uk to spark your artistic side (prices from £13.99).



Become a stargazer

Feelings of awe from stargazing and looking up at the sky – known as skychology – can help release happy hormones serotonin and dopamine, lifting our mood, says research*. For tips on when and where you can stargaze near you during autumn, visit gostargazing.co.uk.

Take up amateur birdwatching

Enjoying the local wildlife could help improve your mental health, says research by North Carolina State University. September and October are the perfect time to look for nuthatches, blackbirds and other thrushes, as well as warblers. Visit wildlifetrusts.org to find your local bird-watching site. Just 30 minutes a week should be enough to have a noticeable impact on your mental health.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tapping – also known as EFT (emotional freedom technique) – is highly effective in helping people to get free of their past, ditch emotional baggage and let go of self-limiting beliefs, explains EFT practitioner Suzy Glaskie. Search YouTube for free guided tutorials.

FITNESS FADS YOU'LL LOVE

Get moving this autumn and burn calories without even realising...



✱ PLAY PICKLEBALL

Combining elements of badminton, tennis and ping-pong, it's one of the UK's fastest-growing sports, with venues popping up all across the country. Armed with wooden paddles, you hit a small ball over a net to score points. Find a club at pickleballengland.org.

✱ EMBRACE SLOW RUNNING

There's no shame in sticking to a slow and steady pace – in fact, it can reduce your risk of injury. Leave your tracker at home and simply enjoy moving outdoors.

✱ DOWNLOAD AN AI TRAINER

With gym membership fees increasing, 53%** of us are now exercising at home – and artificial intelligence is on hand if you need a coach. 'AI can save you time and money,' says personal trainer and generative AI expert Jon Lipsey. Use ChatGPT prompts to help find warm-up and cool-down routines, challenges and recovery strategies. Visit chatgpt.com for information.

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