

Jan/Feb 2006 |

Men's Health

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Men's Health New Year – the comeback issue



Morgan Rees
Editor

Aristotle once wrote: "Revolutions are not trifles, but spring from trifles." The same can often be said of resolutions, and as I tucked into my second serving of custardy dessert last Boxing Day, I made a New Year pledge to fit in an extra gym session a week.

This is indeed the season of good intentions. But what today's busy man needs is a formula to turn intentions into actions. And that's what *Men's Health's* comeback issue is all about. Longing to win the battle with the death sticks? To learn about **the latest smoking cures**, turn to p144. Need to boost your finances? Be inspired by our **12-month millionaire plan** (p114). Want to lose weight without subsisting on cabbage soup? Our new Kitchen Classics show you how to shave calories off your favourite meals, starting with the best steak and chips you've ever tasted on p75.

Happy New Year. Let's make it your best yet.



Express checkout 5 essential tips from this issue

1 Winter blues
Boost your mood with pancakes covered in maple syrup. The syrup contains manganese and zinc, which maintain blood sugar levels and combat depression. (p78)

2 Cure toothache
Without opening your mouth. Rub ice on the back of the V-shaped web between your thumb and index finger. The nerve pathways stimulate an area of the brain, which blocks the pain to your mouth. (p120)

3 Raise your weight!
Get more from your pull-ups. Hold a dumb-bell between your feet and perform 6 sets of 3-5 reps, twice a week. Simple. (p167)

4 Alfresco sex
Looking to become a dad? Then get outside for some fresh air. Sperm quality decreases in times of high pollution. (p21)

5 Get ahead at work...
... by shaving daily. Facial hair is a fatal distraction, no matter how fashionable stubble may be. Only 2% of men in higher management have a beard. (p87)

Contributors



Mike Higgins

Mike was the film editor of *The Independent* on Sunday and edited the paper's award-winning Sports Active section. While desperately trying to figure out a project to unite these interests, he pushed himself to the extreme with ski mountaineering and wrote about it for us (p92).

Mike, so what are your New Year's resolutions?

"My New Year's resolution for 2006 is to do the TransAlp Challenge mountain-bike race and get down to my allotment a bit more."



Alain de Botton

To date, Alain de Botton's career has been spent writing best-selling books that tackle questions of everyday life. Alain is using his philosophical knowledge in this issue to analyse some of Britain's celebrity desktops to see what they say about the person (p124).

Alain, what are you resolving to do this year?

"I'm going to resolve not to give up so easily on projects or people. The whole point of New Year's resolutions is that one doesn't stick to them, but that's no reason not to make them."



Kamin Mohammadi

Kamin has written for the *Financial Times* magazine, *Vogue* and *Harpers & Queen* and she still finds time to teach yoga to business leaders in her corporate yoga classes. This month though, she's taken a break from stretching the stresses of the back-broken brokers to help you chill out at work (p90).

Kamin, what are you promising for the New Year?

"My New Year's resolution this January is to remember that creating peace starts within."



Olly Smith

Olly currently has the task of bringing taste to Sky TV – sorry, that should be *Taste* (the food and wine show) on Sky One. He's also BBC Radio London's plonk boffin and is mixing his own case of vino for Virgin Wines. Find out more about him at www.ollysmith.com and about the drink he suggests for our Kitchen Classics on p75.

Olly, what's your resolution?

"To saddle up Brian Blessed and ride him to the peak of Mount Everest before wrapping up in his furry beard and posing as the Yeti."

Yogi in the bear market

Yoga is the warm-up of choice for a new breed of city slickers. Follow our programme, and get your chakra ready to make a killing

Forward contract

With long, deep breaths, stretch into this deep seated forward bend: the *Paschimottasana*. Aim to lengthen the spine – if the backs of your legs feel too tight, just bend your knees. This not only calms and helps relieve the mild depression of an unsatisfactory meeting, it improves digestion and stimulates the organs of elimination – the liver and kidneys – so last night's Krug can be expelled three times as fast. It eases headaches and stretches the back, shoulders, hamstrings and calves.



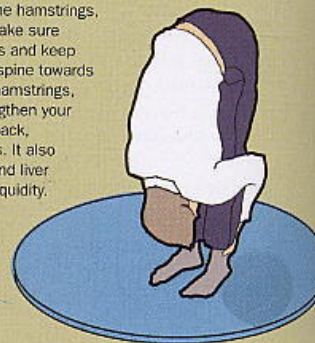
Sole trader

For all of us who spend our days in chairs, the *Baddha Konasana* releases tight inner thigh, groin and hip muscles, which can be the cause of back problems. Sitting tall, press your soles together and bring your feet to your pelvis, letting the knees fall to your sides. This stimulates the abdominal organs, kidneys, prostate glands and bladder, strengthens the back and improves circulation. It even relieves piles, sciatica anxiety and fatigue.



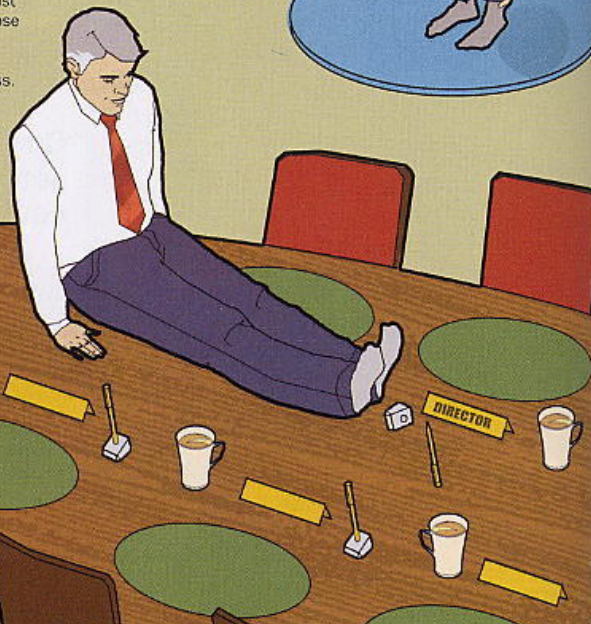
Check your footsie

One of yoga's fundamental poses, *Uttanasana* is also one of the hardest as it stretches the hamstrings, which tend to be stiff. Make sure you don't lock your knees and keep lengthening through the spine towards the floor. This will ease hamstrings, calm the mind and strengthen your entire portfolio of hips, back, thighs, knees and ankles. It also stimulates the kidneys and liver to flush out the week's liquidity.



Sit high, burn low

Sitting tall and straight, stretch your legs forward and flex your feet towards you, pressing your hands into the floor by your hips. It looks like just sitting down, but this *Dandasana* pose is very challenging. Most of us are unused to sitting at a perfect right angle, so it emphasises our stiffness. As well as strengthening the back and stomach muscles, this move stretches the hamstrings, feet and toes. It also makes you really hot, stimulating the digestive organs and expanding the rib cage.



Down, Jones

The "Downward-Facing Dog" pose (traditionally known as the *Adho Mukha Svanasana*) is an all-over, rejuvenating stretch, perfect for strengthening the arms and legs and quieting the mind. Start on all fours, fingers spread, feet hip-width apart facing your hands. Keeping your chest low, push your legs straight and your bottom up to the ceiling, so you form a deep "V". This pose is both energising and calming, helping to relieve stress and mild depression.