

# Health check

*Pamela Allardice checks out the top three ways to wake up happy, upcycled outdoor gear, and surprising uses for probiotics.*

## Expert Q+A: Insomnia



The inability to get a complete night's sleep on most nights over a one month period is considered chronic insomnia, and may be due to stress, anxiety, overuse of stimulants, grief, post-traumatic stress disorder, or sleep apnoea. Treatments include:

- **Avoiding stimulants** - caffeine-containing drinks (tea, coffee, energy drinks, soft drinks), chocolate and supplements (cacao, green tea, Korean ginseng, guarana).
- **Checking prescriptions** – weight loss medications, pre-workout/training supplements and antidepressants can all disrupt sleep.
- **Herbs** - oats, passionflower, chamomile, lavender, zizyphus, kava, valerian, and hops all have a mildly sedative effect.
- Sleep apnoea may be improved through weight loss and dietary changes. Restless sleep may be due to magnesium or B vitamin deficiencies. Testing melatonin levels is worthwhile, as a deficiency can disrupt sleep.

Naturopath and nutritionist Rhianna Smith is a practitioner and writer for Health and Simplicity. [www.healthandsimplicity.com.au](http://www.healthandsimplicity.com.au)

## Editor's choice: Martin & Pleasance Comfrey Cream

Comfrey is traditionally used in Western herbal medicine for the relief of sprains, swelling and bruises. This smooth, paraben-free cream absorbs easily into the skin and comes in a clear glass jar that sits neatly in your bathroom cupboard. It's available in health food stores and pharmacies. Always read the label and use only as directed. If symptoms persist, please consult your healthcare professional. For external use on unbroken skin only. Do not use under occlusive dressing. CHC 71603-06-16

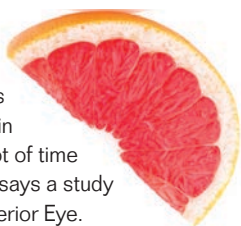


### Wake up happy!

Don't use a raucous or loud alarm clock. Set your phone alarm to gentle nature sounds or cue your radio to classical music. Stretch gently, like a cat, before getting up. And finish your warm shower with a 5-second blast of cold – there's nothing like it for jump-starting your brain and toning your skin.

### In brief ...

- Omega-3 supplements can improve dry eyes in people who spend a lot of time in front of computers, says a study in Contact Lens & Anterior Eye.
- French researchers have found that healthy women who drank grapefruit juice daily had more flexible blood vessels.
- A high intake of olive oil is associated with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, says an American Journal of Clinical Nutrition study.



### 3 things you didn't know about ... probiotics

- Research shows healthy gut bacteria is critical in managing many conditions, including obesity. Now a study shows that taking the probiotic strain Lactobacillus casei Shirota can control insulin resistance, a metabolic disorder leading to diabetes.
- Going to hospital? A study from Italy's University Federico II shows taking Lactobacillus probiotics greatly reduces risk of infection and duration of hospital stays.
- If you suffer from hayfever, try taking probiotics – studies from the US National Institutes of Health show this can really help.



### Upcycle your look

Eco-responsible brand Mountain Designs has released Seawool, a collection of sustainable flannel outdoor clothing crafted from recycled oyster shells and PET bottles. "Upcycling – repurposing waste so it doesn't go to landfill – preserves the natural environment," says CEO Caroline Campos.

### Walk a hound, lose a pound

Among dog owners who go for regular walks, 60 percent meet the criteria for daily exercise; by contrast, less than a third of people without dogs get enough exercise. "It's good for both ends of the leash!" says study author Rebecca A. Johnson.



### Speak up!

According to a study in Menopause, 51 percent of post-menopausal women have unpleasant vulvar and vaginal problems - itching, burning, pain, dryness, urinary frequency, and discharge - which significantly impact their lifestyle and mood. Despite these distressing symptoms, 33% had not seen a gynaecologist to seek help.



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### Industry news



Hypnotherapy is currently unregulated in Australia, which means

anyone can open a business – even with no training - making professional associations vital. As Australia's largest hypnotherapy association, the AHA takes its responsibilities for professional standards very seriously. Fortunately, hypnotherapists are now joining together to form a united voice to promote credible courses, research and recognition. We have a way to go, but it's heartening to see change happening.

Clinical hypnotherapist and counsellor Mailin Colman is the President of the Australian Hypnotherapists Association (AHA).