



Style | Wellbeing | Celebrity **Trends**



LITTLESTARS
Make your wardrobe
twinkle with these
sparkly must-buys

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1 Eat blackberries

These deep-purple delights are a fantastic source of beta-carotene, B-vitamins, calcium, manganese and antioxidants. They can help lower the risk of heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure and premenstrual tension. They also have a high iron content so are a good energy booster. While they're in season, enjoy a handful a day on their own, in a smoothie or with organic yoghurt.



2 Passionflower for sweet dreams

Forget lavender: passionflower fruits can help calm nervous tension and induce sleepiness. Native to South America, a cup of passionflower tea before bed will ensure you nap happy.



3 Include nuts in your diet

The unsaturated fats in nuts are good for the heart, lowering bad cholesterol and increasing good cholesterol, while also helping to boost your immune system. Studies show eating a handful of mixed nuts on a daily basis means you're less likely to die from heart disease. Chestnuts are particularly good for the immune system.



4 Get a good night's sleep

It's not called 'beauty sleep' for nothing. My seven steps to sounder sleep are: do an outdoor activity; avoid caffeine (including chocolate) within six hours of going to bed; keep to a regular bedtime; take time to unwind; resolve arguments; remove all light sources; block outside noise (including a partner's snoring) with soft earplugs.



Start me up:

Liz Earle's advice can see you survive winter without flagging

5 Switch on your proprioceptors

Feeling sluggish? There are energising techniques that can activate your 'proprioceptors' – body sensors that control our stability and spatial awareness, and increase blood flow.

My favourite is propeller arms – swinging arms backwards and forwards for 30 seconds. This is a good release mechanism and excellent for loosening the shoulders, unblocking stress points.

As are tip-toe drops (stand up on tip-toes, hold for a moment and then drop back down on to your heels), which send a shudder through the body, activating muscle cells and encouraging them to let go of tightness.



6 Make an elderberry syrup

Often found in hedgerows, elderberries are currently ripe for the picking. They are too bitter to eat raw so I make my own elderberry syrup by cooking up a handful of ripe berries with a little sugar to sweeten – use a ratio of ten to one. Then strain, bottle, store in the fridge and enjoy a spoonful each morning. Use for the vitamin C content (higher than oranges) and immune-boosting antioxidants.



PIC: GEORGIA GLYNN SMITH

Liz Earle's TOP 15 winter wonders

The beauty guru offers her words of wellbeing wisdom to see us through the colder, darker months ahead

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7 Gobble up garlic

A daily dose of garlic can ward off the lurgy in adults. It's best to eat it raw because heat reduces its benefits, but I take a daily garlic supplement instead to avoid dragon breath. Leeks are also a good addition to stews and soups – they contain powerful antibacterial and antiviral sulphur compounds.

**8 Go to the dark side**

Chocolate is often the first thing you cut out but a bar with a minimum of 70 per cent cocoa solids is rich in antioxidants and vital minerals including potassium, iron, magnesium and copper. This gives you the green light to eat a small amount twice a week to reduce inflammation, lower blood pressure and bad cholesterol and help protect our heart and circulatory system.

**9 The health benefits of mulled wine**

A glass of mulled wine – its distinctive aroma signalling the Christmas season – has spices such as cinnamon, cloves and star anise that can boost your antioxidant levels.

LIZ'S MULLED WINE RECIPE

- 2 oranges
- Peel of 1 lemon (unwaxed)
- 100g caster sugar
- A generous pinch of grated nutmeg
- 3 sticks cinnamon
- 6 cloves, plus extra for garnish
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- 2 bottles of cheap red wine
- 500ml water
- 5 star anise

1 Put the juice of one orange into a pan with the lemon peel, sugar and spices apart from the star anise. Add enough water or wine to cover the sugar, then simmer until the sugar has dissolved.
2 Bring to the boil for a few minutes to infuse the spices until you have a sticky syrup. Add the rest of the wine and star anise and heat gently until warm. Be careful not to let it boil otherwise the alcohol will burn off, together with many of the wine's healthy benefits.
3 Ladle into glasses and decorate with a wedge of orange. For a non-alcoholic version, replace the red wine with cranberry juice.

How to stay bright even through the gloomy days

10 Sage to the rescue

The antibacterial benefits of sage mean you can soothe a sore throat by gargling with a warm sage 'tea'. This is made by steeping a bunch of the herb in hot water. Massaging a couple of drops of sage essential oil on to your neck can also help.

**11 Sloe gin**

With its rich, warming taste, sloe gin is a great alternative to regular gin and although traditionally drunk neat, it also works well with tonic. Prunus spinosa, also known as blackthorn or sloe, helps improve digestion and constipation and can help fight a cold. Make your own or buy from the shelf.

14 The trendy toadstool

Fungi are rich in flavour and a wonderful source of selenium, potassium, iron, several B vitamins and lots of other vital nutrients. The vitamin D in mushrooms is vital for good bone health.

**12 The power of breath**

Done right, breathing can help lower stress levels, soothe pain, speed up healing, enhance fitness and boost immunity. Here's how to improve your breathing.

- 1** Sit on a straight-backed chair, feet flat on the floor.
- 2** Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Feel the sensations the air makes in your nose, down your throat and into your lungs. Inhale and exhale slowly.
- 3** Feel your chest and belly expand and subside as you breathe. Focus your awareness on the sensation. Observe it without trying to alter it.
- 4** Try not to criticise yourself. Minds wander, just encourage yours to return to the breath.
- 5** After a few minutes gently open your eyes and take in your surroundings.

**13 Ginger - nature's hangover helper**

For a pep-up, try a few slices of fresh ginger in hot water (sweeten with a little honey if needed). Highly anti-bacterial, ginger is an excellent internal cleanser and a traditional remedy for all kinds of nausea and sickness (even the self-induced kind).

**15 Bring on the baobab**

I'm stocking up on baobab as this raw powdered fruit superfood from Africa is rich in vitamin C, calcium, potassium and antioxidants. It is also made up of more than 50 per cent fibre, which helps contribute to a healthy digestive system. I'll be mixing it into smoothies and my morning porridge.

BY VICKI-MARIE COSSAR

Liz Earle's Wellbeing magazine, £4.99, is on sale now at Sainsbury's nationwide