

When the going gets tough...



tempting us to squeeze our calendars just that little bit more and adding more pressure to our already tight schedules. And don't get me started on trying to keep up at work in this fast-paced, post-recession economy—suffice it to say, I think we all deserve to cut ourselves some slack. Our mental concentration is like a muscle, and just like how we need to give our bodies time to recover, we need to extend the same courtesy to our minds. Various studies have shown that taking a time-out can actually help us be more productive and happier, since it gives us time to process everything and recharge for when we truly need the energy. I tested the theory last month, when I allowed myself the earliest bedtime I've had

since probably my teens, after a night of pure relaxation, with my phone switched off and tucked away. The next day, despite the fact that I'd barely had time to train and had never done anything like it before, I conquered 22 gruelling obstacles in the searing heat as part of the Desert Warrior Challenge with a couple of my best friends, and was immensely proud to have finished it. If you'd told me last year that I'd have done it, I'd have never believed you, but not only did we finish it, the next weekend we tackled the equally gritty Men's Health Urbanathlon as well, spurred on by the exhilaration from our previous conquest. Both experiences served to remind me that strength and getting through any challenge is both mental and physical—and that a little teamwork goes a long way. If you're feeling burnt out, you *can* get by with a little help from your friends—and by being kind to yourself. That lunchbreak you've been skipping for months? Take it. That sunset stroll on the beach you've dreamed of? Go for it. Keep calm and carry on smiling, and see you in December!

As overused as the expression "Keep calm and carry on" may be these days (you all know those ubiquitous posters that I'm referring to!), it still is one of the best mottos to follow during times of duress. I've never really been one to panic during moments of crisis—keeping a cool head when everything seems to be falling apart just seems to be how I'm built—but instead, I tend to worry about the little things during my everyday life. Whether you're the type of person that just thrives under pressure or is better equipped to handle life when it's smooth sailing, there's no denying that modern day life seems to come with a heck of a lot of pressure, for all of us. Take technology, for instance—while it makes our lives easier in many ways, incessant emails and the irresistible lure (or ensuing guilt) of unanswered messages can take a mental toll. Meanwhile, the constantly buzzing social scene of the Middle East is always fluttering nearby,

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

IF YOU HAVE...

1 MINUTE

Add a sprinkle of spices to your coffee grinds before brewing your morning java: Not only will they add flavour, they'll also give you a shot of antioxidant goodness. "Perk Up!" p.91

5 MINUTES

Sip on some rooibos tea or tart cherry juice, and turn your AC thermostat down to 18°C to 21°C before bed for a solid night's sleep. "You The Instant Expert: Falling Asleep," p.114

10 MINUTES

Set up a Google Alert for your name, then update your photo tag settings on Facebook—taking control of your online profiles could make or break your dream career. "What Your Resumé Can't Hide," p.106

20 MINUTES

Crack open a fresh aloe vera leaf, rub a layer of the sap onto your face and leave it on for 15 minutes before rinsing off to beat redness and hydrate skin. "Smooth It Over," p.27

40 MINUTES

Tone up and torch fat fast with these killer 10-minute strength workouts and a cardio blast of intervals, and get ready to rock that "kini." "The Fastest Beach Body Workout," p.54.

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