

The pursuit of happiness



Last month, I read an article about how we can intentionally design a happier life. It said that, according to a professor at the London School of Economics (who also happens to be one of the world's leading happiness scholars), when it comes to assessing how happy we are—or not—most people are actually way worse at being able to do that than we realise. Apparently, finding a balance between what our brains are telling us makes us happy, and what we actually feel, isn't always as straightforward as it sounds... such as getting a dream job that comes with a heinous commute, or getting engaged when you're not quite ready to move in with your partner yet. It theorised that we sometimes think so much about what makes us happy, we can lose sight of what actually feels good day to day.

The first step in remedying that, it said? To start paying attention to what *actually* makes us happy, and then actively try and change your life

to incorporate more of whatever it is that makes you feel so great. In the past few years, I've come to realise that a permanent state of happiness is a myth—and one that, should I spend my whole life trying to chase it, will probably make me wind up, ironically, unhappy. You see, I believe that without the occasional lows, there can't be any highs—and while it isn't always easy to deal with those lows, it does make us appreciate all of the moments of precious, genuine happiness that little bit more. Research backs me up on this theory: A study published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science* found that people who had been exposed to adverse events and hardships had an elevated capacity for savouring life's

pleasures (no matter how big or small). In short, yes, having a bad day may feel awful at the time, but it can also help to make a good day feel even better. Maybe this is why so many of us love to pit ourselves against something tough—overcoming a challenge not only makes us appreciate the good stuff that little bit more afterwards, it can also leave us more confident and sure of ourselves. Just ask our cover star Lauren Cohan (p.93), or any of my companions from my recently-completed trip to the Bear Grylls Survival Academy (p.106). Another challenge that has had its fair share of highs and lows? Bringing you a year of *Women's Health Middle East*. Sure, my team and I have had more late nights in the past 12 months than we can count, but there is nothing that can beat the sheer joy of holding each finished issue in our hands, hoping that you guys will. So here's to our anniversary issue, and another amazing year ahead—let's make it one where we continue to appreciate all of the little things that make us smile. Have a great month, and we'll see you in April!

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

IF YOU HAVE...

1 MINUTE

Feeling disgruntled with your guy after his late boys' night out? Breathe, and analyse the situation before lashing out—it could be more your issue, not his. "Ditch Your Relationship Baggage," p.99

5 MINUTES

Pop outdoors and soak up a bit of sun—the dose of vitamin D isn't just good for your health, it can also improve your temper. "Seeing Red," p.102

10 MINUTES

Give yourself the best at-home manicure you've ever had by following our DIY beauty tips—all you need are the right tools and a bit of direction for salon-worthy results. "Do Try This At Home" p.31

15 MINUTES

Pick up a mini resistance band and try this easy, quick, four-step workout routine that you can do pretty much anywhere, for a tight, toned lower body. "Pack A Bandmate," p.60

30 MINUTES

Grab our handy shopping list, head to the grocery store, and buy what's on it: It'll set up you for a week's worth of healthy, affordable dinners. "Slim Body, Fat Wallet," p.83

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