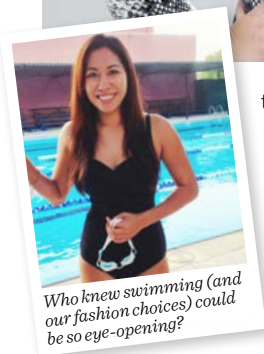


From the Inside Out



Last summer, a friend of mine—who had been on an intensive fitness kick prior to his wedding—leaned over the dinner table and said to me excitedly, “You know Yi-Hwa, I’ve realised something: Shopping starts in the gym!” I couldn’t have agreed more. It wasn’t just that his leaner physique made him feel more attractive—it was that it made him feel confident enough to wear things he might not have considered before.

I don’t think there’s such a thing as a one-size-fits-all perfect figure, but I do believe the best accessory is a body that you truly love, that enables you to feel comfortable in your own skin, whatever that may mean to you. The confidence that comes with it can be a powerful transformative force, but having said that, it works both ways: fashion itself can boost our morale, too. A report in *Qualitative Research in Psychology* found

that the mere thought of certain items in our wardrobe can boost our confidence, while a University of Hertfordshire study found that what we wear can indeed affect our emotional state, and that a majority of women believe that what we wear impacts how confident we feel.

Back in February, I signed up to participate in a Speedo Swim Squad with the aim of “swapping the gym for a swim.” It had been years since I’d swum for sport, so I bought myself a stylish retro-inspired swimsuit hoping it would make me feel a little more sure of myself in the pool.

Yet by week three, after pulling on another new swimsuit that had been designed for performance, I surprised both my coach and myself:

not only did I tackle techniques I didn’t think I’d had the skill to try before, I was faster too. The new gear had made me feel more streamlined and stronger, both inside and out.

Which is why I’m particularly excited about our fashion bonus this month: Whether you’re in need of a power dress to ace that interview or a training bra that’ll go the extra mile, we’re here to help you find what you need to give you a boost, in addition to all of the great fitness, health, beauty, relationship and lifestyle advice you love from *Women’s Health Middle East*. Enjoy the issue—until next month!

Yi-Hwa

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

IF YOU HAVE...

60 SECONDS

Switch off any electronic devices that you aren’t currently using: it’ll save both energy *and* money, and is better for the environment. “8 Ways To Live Greener,” p.84

5 MINUTES

Swap the Dhs100 notes in your wallet for a Dhs500 one instead: You’ll be less likely to spend or break one big bill than many small ones. “The Lure Of The Score,” p.18 of our Fashion Bonus section

15 MINUTES

Start your day by doing three full Sun Salutations. Not only will it calm you before a busy day ahead, yoga can also blast some calories and improve your flexibility. “The Best Yoga For You” p.37

30 MINUTES

Whip up some Whole-Wheat Spaghetti with Sweet Peppers and Chicken Sausage for a guilt-free, tasty pasta fix. “Ciao Down,” p.63

1 HOUR

Try a new activity with your man, be it skydiving, a cooking class, a painting session or a fishing trip, and rekindle your spark. “10 Secrets Of Super Happy Couples,” p.80

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