

WELLNESS TRENDS: FAD OR FACT?

With the wellness industry booming in recent years, every week seems to bring with it a new craze. From the beneficial to the bonkers, we investigate eight wellness trends and separate the fads from the facts.



PICTURES: ©REXSHUTTERSTOCK/Eve Connolly

GINGER OIL

Ginger oil has been used in traditional herbal medicine for centuries, but it's now been given official cult wellness status.

In fact, last year alone searches for ginger oil on Pinterest soared by 659%.

Its warm and spicy scent not only makes it a great ingredient for aromatherapy treatments, but it has been proven to have tangible anti-inflammatory properties. A little may go a long way, but just a few drops can be put to many uses. Whether it's being used in treatments for joint or muscle pain, psoriasis or eczema, ginger oil can even help to calm nausea and treat dandruff. This trend seems like the real deal.

Top tip: Add a few drops of ginger oil to a tablespoon of honey and one teaspoon of lemon juice for a rejuvenating and softening facemask.



Ginger Pure Essential Oil, Miaroma, £7.25



BAKUCHIOL

Move over, retinol – there's a new, all-natural Vitamin A alternative in town! Retinol has long been hailed as the holy grail of anti-ageing skincare, proven to regenerate skin turnover and clear up acne-prone skin. But, with demand for vegan, plant-based skincare at an all-time high, Bakuchiol is changing the beauty landscape.

Clinical studies have shown it to be just as effective as retinol at reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, lessening pigmentation, preventing blemishes and improving skin's elasticity. It is also much gentler on the skin and is safe to use while pregnant and breastfeeding unlike retinol, though of course it's always worth checking with your doctor or midwife before trying something new. Frankly, we want to get our hands on some pronto!



Bakuchiol Smoothing Serum, Herbivore at Space NK, £45

ELDERBERRIES

These little champs have been found to keep immune systems strong and are said to ward off colds and flu. Recent emerging studies have also shown that they may have some benefits for heart health, including reducing cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Elderberries are packed with lots of goodness like vitamin C, fibre, minerals and antioxidants, improving digestive health and making them a flavourful and useful addition to any healthy diet.

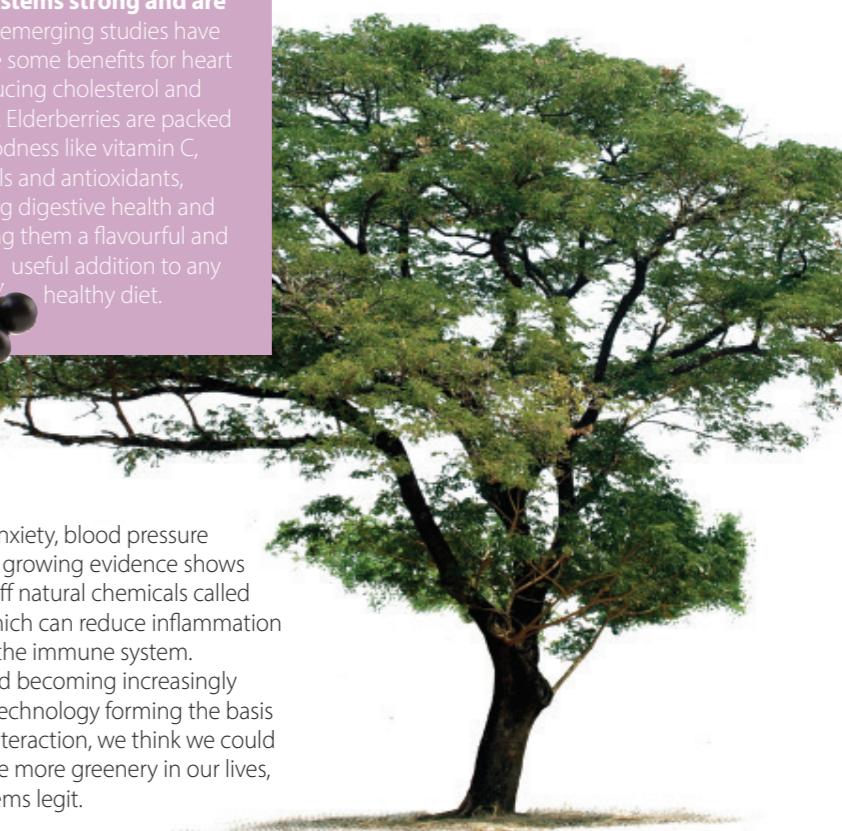


FOREST THERAPY

The Duchess of Cambridge is reportedly a fan of the wellness trend 'forest therapy' or 'forest bathing'. Research by Exeter University reveals that those who spend at least two hours per week in nature are "significantly more likely" to report good physical health and mental well-being than those who don't visit any green spaces at all during an average week. Not only does spending time in nature improve

mood, reduce anxiety, blood pressure and depression, growing evidence shows that trees give off natural chemicals called phytocides, which can reduce inflammation while boosting the immune system.

With the world becoming increasingly urbanised and technology forming the basis of most social interaction, we think we could all do with a little more greenery in our lives, so this trend seems legit.



PEA PROTEIN

The humble pea is jam-packed with protein goodness. As a result, pea protein powders made from ground yellow split peas are being widely used in an attempt to promote muscle growth, balance blood sugar, improve heart health and aid weight loss. Pea protein powders are rich in iron, and because they are all-natural and vegan, they have become the latest ingredient to find their way into protein shakes, pancakes and smoothies. However, health experts have warned not to base entire diets around the ingredient, as not only do most people not need extra protein in the form of pea protein additives, it is lacking in one essential amino acid, methionine. But, as long as you eat a balanced and varied diet, pea protein will do you no harm – it just won't make a whole lot of difference to your health.



Pea Protein Powder 250g, Pulsin, £8.99

EAR SEEDS

Made popular by the queen of wellness trends herself, Gwyneth Paltrow, ear seeding is the latest holistic treatment to reach us from across the pond.

Thought to work in the same way as acupuncture or reflexology, ear seeds are believed to help with migraines, insomnia, joint pain, stress and anxiety. The small beads of 24-carat gold or silver are placed in strategic positions in the ear in order to stimulate specific pressure points that are thought to correspond to different organs in the body. Non-invasive and pain-free, some limited studies suggest that ear seeds may help with pain tolerance and stress. However, more high quality, large-scale research needs to be conducted in order to prove their efficacy. Though some swear by the treatment's results, until we see some hard evidence, we are not completely convinced.



24k Gold Ear Seeds, Vie Healing at Cult Beauty, £29



VIE HEALING



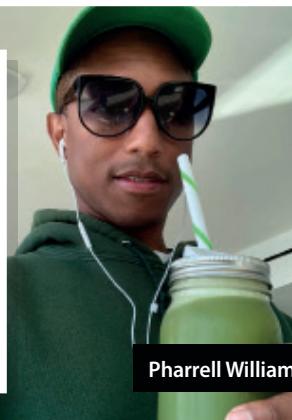
CELERY JUICE

Advocates of celery juice claim that it carries a multitude of health benefits including improving digestion, energy levels, bloating, acne, anxiety, depression and migraines. While there is certainly nothing harmful about drinking celery juice, there is no scientific evidence to support any of the statements made by Anthony William, the founder of the self-proclaimed 'Global Celery Juice Movement'.

Although celery does contain vitamins and minerals like potassium, it is also 90% water and juicing the vegetable removes all of its valuable fibre content. It might be great for hydration, but be wary of any material which sells it as a cure-all, miracle ingredient.



Jenna Dewan



Pharrell Williams

THE 'PEGAN' DIET

The 'egan' diet is a combination of paleo and vegan principles. It emphasises the importance of whole foods, nuts and seeds, while seeking to maximise our intake of fruit and vegetables. Unlike vegan diets, it does allow for the limited consumption of meat and fish, but discourages heavily processed sugars, grains and legumes (lentils, chickpeas, peas, and beans).

According to its creator, Dr. Mark Hyman, being a pegan has serious health benefits including reducing inflammation and balancing blood sugars. However, the diet also controversially prohibits gluten.

The beans, lentils and chickpeas that the pegan diet opposes are packed with nutrients which would be beneficial to any diet and the lack of dairy in the diet can make it difficult to get enough calcium and vitamin D. Although more flexible than going vegan, many of the unnecessary restrictions the diet promotes can lead to nutrient deficiencies and make it difficult to sustain in the long-term. As with all these trends, do your research and speak to your GP before making any drastic changes to your diet.



THE 28-DAY PEGAN DIET



28-Day Pegan Diet by Isabel Minunni and Aimee McNew, Sterling Publishing Co Inc, £14.99