

# PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

January 2018

**New Year Resolutions:  
make 2018 the year  
you achieve your goals**

**How to feel more  
awake at work**

**Become a happier  
person on 2018**

**Tips for beating  
Blue Mondays**

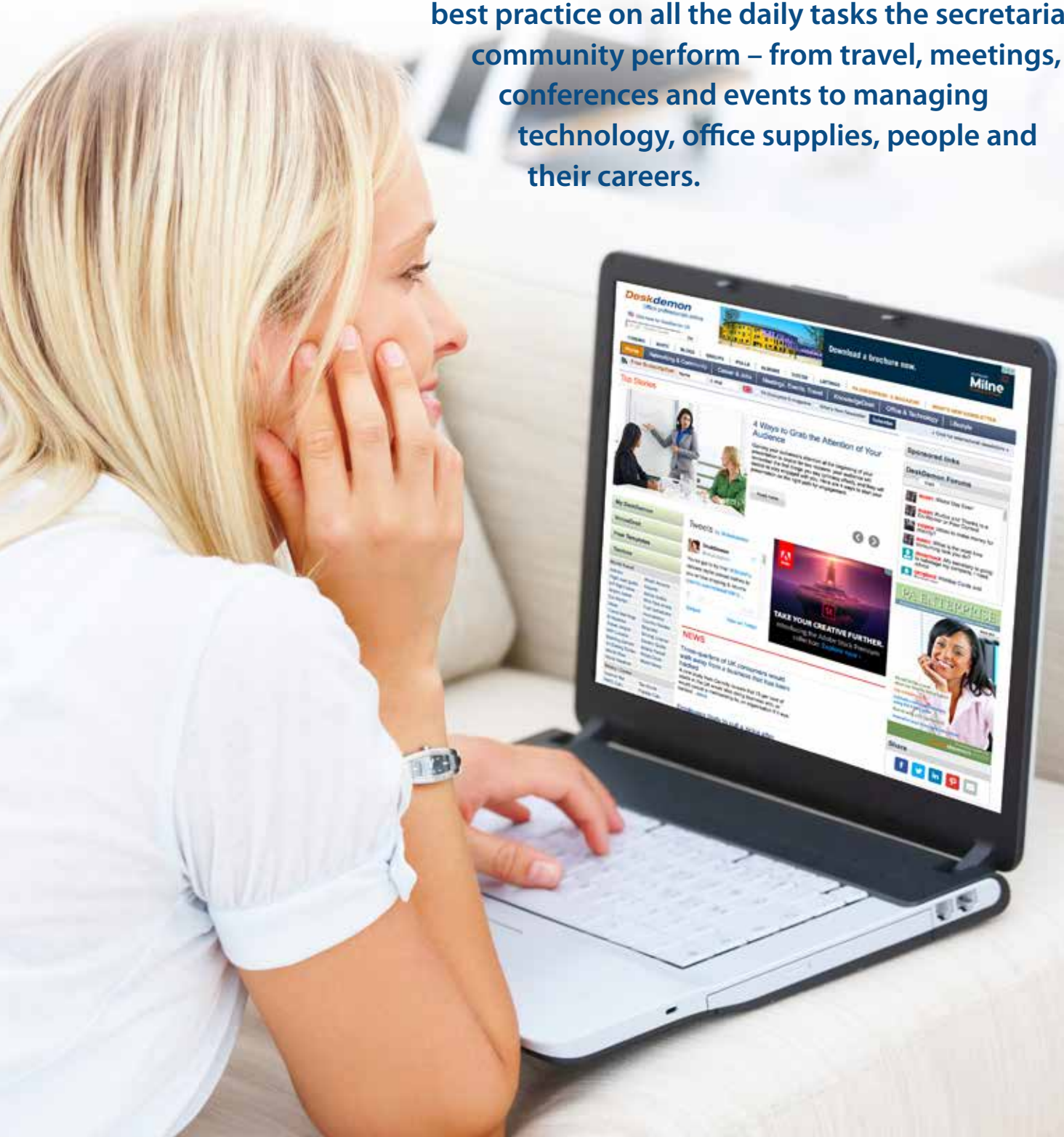
**Mindfulness increases  
creativity at work**

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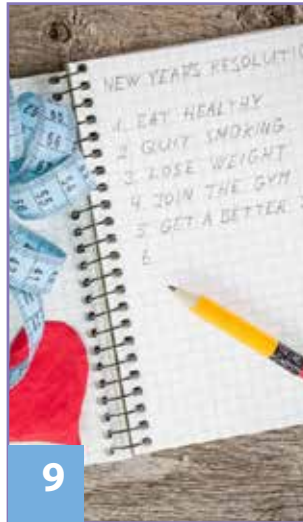




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# How to feel more awake at work

*We've all been there: one too many drinks on a weeknight, or too many late nights on the weekend can leave you feeling groggy at work. Research shows that too many late nights could have a serious effect on the health and productivity of employees.*

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The average UK worker loses six days of productivity to sleep deprivation. The cost to businesses can be even higher, with employees working slower and taking less care.

In the short term, lower productivity, irritable employees and missed workdays can make day to day business difficult. The long term consequences of sleep deprivation are much more serious and lead to memory loss, high blood pressure, stroke, obesity, depression and many other ailments.

Lack of sleep has a greater impact upon productivity than smoking, drinking and overeating, according to SleepyPeople.com. Less than five hours of sleep a night can have the same effect on the brain as being drunk.

But there are simple ways to combat tiredness at work:

## **Stand up**

Standing up increases blood flow through the body, which helps to improve concentration. Standing desks are becoming more popular in the UK but they should not be the preserve of those with bad backs.

## **Work in natural light**

Researchers for a 2012 Swiss study found natural light exposure boosts productivity and that workers whose offices had windows received

more natural sunlight sleep longer, obtained better quality sleep and had a superior quality of life.

### Nap

Napping might seem like a treat reserved for students and Sunday afternoons. But some companies, like Google and Hubspot, have installed nap spaces. A nap of 10 to 30 minutes is thought to provide a much-needed boost part way through a busy day and that concentration, alertness and productivity are all noticeably improved afterwards.

### Take breaks

It's well known that employees ought to take lunch breaks away from their desk to improve productivity. A long day in front of the computer can also be bad for workers' eyesight and backs and result in sleep loss at night.

### Limit caffeine

Most of us reach for coffee when we are feeling tired. But caffeine can leave people feeling even more exhausted after its effects wear off. Water or herbal teas can have a much longer lasting effect.

### Reduce stress

Reducing or avoiding stress can have a big impact on how well you sleep at night, though this isn't always the easiest one to put in practice. Some 43% of adults report that stress has caused them to lie awake at night in the past month and the common causes of this are workplace pressures and financial worries.

# 10 minutes of mindfulness can make employees more creative

*Employees who take part in a ten-minute mindfulness session are more likely to generate original ideas according to new research*

Researchers have found that employees who participated in guided mindfulness meditation for just ten minutes, generated a 22% wider range of ideas, compared to those who took part in fake meditation, or just "relaxed".



Participants of the study were asked to present as many business ideas for the use of drones as they could within a limited time. One third had a guided meditation session, one third had a fake meditation session, and one third were just told to "relax and let their thoughts flow freely". Although all three groups produced roughly the same number of ideas, the group that took part in guided mindfulness meditation produced significantly more inventive uses for drones, such as washing windows, extinguishing fires and even feeding giraffes.

According to the researchers, mindfulness essentially removes our innate "fight or flight" response, meaning that meditating participants feel significantly less restless, nervous and irritated, allowing them to focus on being creative.

This research provides managers with a cost-effective way to increase creativity in the workplace.

"Mindfulness meditation is not only an effective creativity booster, it is affordable, accessible and easy to organise in the work place: all it needs is a quiet place, a comfortable chair and access to one of the many mindfulness exercises that can be found online or in apps." says researcher Evgenia Dolgova.

# Easy ways to become a happier person in 2018

*2018 is a new year and an opportunity for you to hit restart. Even though there is no fundamental difference between making a change on December 31st compared to January 1st, it can be helpful to use a specific moment (like a new year) to catalyse these transitions. That being said, a large percentage of people do not stick with their new year's resolutions. There are a variety of reasons for this, but, at the core, it is because they are not sustainable.*

Part of it is a matter of finding what you can get behind consistently. That means you can either think really hard about it, or you can try many different things and see what sticks. Here are 18 things you can do to be happier in 2018. Even adding a few to your life can have a drastic impact on a better new year.

## Exercise more frequently

You hear it all of the time, but exercise makes you feel better. The release of endorphins and energy that come with working out are extremely valuable. In order for this to be effective, though, you have to be consistent. That means finding what you need in order to really go to the gym, go for runs or workout from home multiple times a week.

## Eat healthier

Despite the instant gratification that comes with unhealthy food, it makes you feel worse. Providing your body with the right nutrients, and avoiding negative ones, will have you feeling much better and energetic each day. It is okay to have an occasional treat, and living in absolutes can often be much more challenging. A concentrated focus towards healthier eating, though, will pay off.

## Spend more time outside

Being outside has been proven to make people feel better. Enjoying nature and spending time in places that you love will help you relax and become more present. Despite how busy things might seem, it is easy to integrate the outdoors into your daily routine.

This could mean walking around a park to catch up with a friend instead of getting coffee or reading in your backyard instead of on your couch.

## Be more grateful

Gratitude has been another proven way to increase happiness levels. Remembering how lucky you are and reflecting on the positives of life can be powerful. Making even a small effort to write down three things you are grateful for at the end of each day will improve the way that you feel.

## Spend more time with people that you love

This goes without saying, but being around people that you love makes you happier. It is easy to spend time with those that you do not truly enjoy being around. Cutting those people out of your life and replacing them with those who give you energy will make for a more meaningful year.



### Worry less what others think

When we worry about what others think of us, we are taken out of the present moment. Plus, doing so does not accomplish anything productive. Instead, do what you want to do, regardless of how others might perceive those actions. There are enough amazing people in the world that will love you for you to worry about the ones that do not.

### Meditate

Meditation has also been proven to increase happiness. Plus, it is incredibly easy to get started. Just five minutes a day focusing on your breathing will yield benefits within a week.

### Smile more

Studies have shown that smiling triggers positive associations in your brain that spark happiness. This externality does not take much extra effort from you. Not to mention that smiling makes you come across as a warmer person which could attract more friends or potential partners.

### Love yourself

You have to love yourself for who you are. When we think poorly of ourselves or our actions, we are committing a disservice. Instead, accept who you are and the way that you act. You will not always make the right choices or be happy

*Continued* ►

### Learn a new skill

Progress makes people happier. Getting caught up in the daily routine can be boring and demotivating. Finding a skill to pick up over the next year can give you something to work towards and a tangible item of growth to be proud of. Skills could include artistic talents, athletic feats or even something like stand-up comedy.

with how others see you. That is okay, though. As opposed to judging, just accept where you are in your life and think about what you can be a better version of yourself. Doing so will eliminate many of the negative sentiments we often experience around self image.

### Have more experiences

Experiences tend to have a much stronger influence on happiness than material things. Therefore, do what you can to have more experiences in 2018. It doesn't even have to be expensive vacations. Rather, you can have little experiences. Find the hidden gems where you live, go make memories with your friends and push yourself to try new things. These experiences are both fun in the moment and trigger positive memories upon reflection.

### Give back

Helping others can give us a sense of warmth. Whether it is giving to charity, doing community service or finding other ways to help, doing so can will you happier. Plus, you get to add good to the world.

### Find artistic outlets

Whether you perceive yourself as an artist or not, spend more time with artistic pursuits. This could be learning to play a new instrument, trying your hand out at poetry or even joining an improv group. These activities spark creativity in our brain and different juices than we are typically used to. They tend to help us feel hyper-present and are purely enjoyable.

### Laugh more

Laughing warms our hearts and bodies while adding to life satisfaction. Therefore, find ways to laugh more. This could be watching comedy, spending more time with people who make you laugh, or even just taking life less seriously.

### Push yourself

When we really challenge ourselves, there is a deep level of satisfaction. Think about some of the most challenging things you have done and the way that you felt afterward. This is not to say to do something crazy or unhealthy for the sake of doing it.

Rather, pushing yourself in your workouts, the activities that you care about, or in other ways can invoke a sense of accomplishment that resonates deeply. Think about starting a side project to bring in extra cash. The goal is to push yourself to new levels.

### Eliminate the things you do not enjoy doing

This one also seems obvious. Yet, seriously think about the way that you allocate your time. There are some things you will not enjoy that you have to do, but likely many others that you could eliminate. Cutting these out of life will give you more time to do what you enjoy.

### Spend less time on social media

Social media leaves us craving something more. We feel like we do not stack up against our peers and we care more about our external images. Using social media less will remove you from those types of sentiments and make you happier.

### Stay with it

Life can be extremely challenging and sometimes there is nothing that you can do about that. Over the course of 2018, be persistent. Love yourself and accept that not every day will be the best. Just because one day was bad, though, does not mean it has to carry into the next. Each day you wake up, you get to have whatever mindset and perspective that you would like. This is powerful, and taking control of how you feel is a major step on the path towards greater life satisfaction.

By John Rampton [www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com)



# New Year resolutions: make 2018 the year you achieve your goals

*People have been pledging New Year self-improvement for thousands of years (ancient Babylonians first made start of year promises back in 1894 BC). And the trend caught on. Last year, more than 20% of UK adults said they would be making resolutions for the year ahead. Celebrity resolutions this year include Meghan Markle's annual pledge to 'stop biting my nails, stop swearing and re-learn French', while Kim Kardashian wants to 'be on my phone less and be more in the moment'. In 2017, Britons keen to make a change vowed to eat better, exercise more and spend less money, according to a YouGov poll.*

However, while many embark on their New Year to-do Lists with vigour on 1 January, the majority are broken just days later. In 2017, one in five people failed to keep to all of their resolutions in just the first week. So what is the key to sticking to your resolutions and achieving your aims?

Three experts - a psychologist, a doctor and a fitness expert - offer their top five tips to help you achieve your goals in 2018.

## **PSYCHOLOGIST EMMA KENNY:**

### **1. Pick out the top five things you want to achieve - then prioritise them**

Focus on one goal at a time and work on that fully before moving on. For example, don't resolve to "get a whole new body" - instead pledge to lose a dress size by March, and thereafter lose 2lbs every month. By setting milestones and time-bound goals, you stand a much better chance of success.

### **2. It's natural to slip up - but don't let minor setbacks crush your plans**

If one day you don't make it to the gym, it's not the end of the world. Don't use it as an excuse to beat yourself up and eat the cake in the cupboard. Instead, change your mindset and turn it into a definitive "critical moment". Fit in a five-minute walk instead and get back to your gym routine tomorrow.

### **3. Reward yourself for success**

Don't think of what you're giving up, but what you're gaining. For example, if you're giving up smoking, save all the money you would have spent on cigarettes and spend the money on a holiday at the end of the year.

### **4. Buddy up with a partner - they can reinforce your resolution and share in your pain**

Appoint an accountability manager - a relative

*Continued* ►



or a good friend who wants to see you succeed - you stand a much better chance of succeeding with someone keeping an eye on your progress.

### 5. It's not always about giving something up

Your resolution can be to start something new - a pottery class or salsa dancing. The key is for it be something fun and constructive, plus you get to learn a whole new skillset at the same time.

#### FITNESS EXPERT LAURA WILLIAMS:

### 1. Don't ditch your favourite treat/tipple at the same time as embarking on a new exercise regime

You'll feel fabulous and empowered on day one, but by day 14 you'll be dreaming of Domino's

under the duvet. Undertake one thing at a time if you're in it for the long haul.

### 2. Get fitness savvy fast

Do a little bit of research before you hit your post-Christmas bod with daily HIIT sessions. Is the nausea-inducing burpee really where you need to be? Or would a well-rounded routine that ticks multiple fitness boxes and which you can sustain week in, week out be a better fit?

### 3 Think feel-good factor on every level

Yes, the spinning studio makes for a good selfie and will help to whittle your waistline but having a goal to keep fitness sociable will help keep you feeling excited and optimistic about exercise. You can even fit altruism into your routine with a running club like GoodGym, which combines

exercise with community projects.

#### 4. Have a “dream goal” and a “settle-for” goal

Two goals are crucial for navigating your way to long lasting change. Losing two stone for Valentine’s Day is a big ask; initially committing to lose a couple of pounds a week, for at least six weeks through diet and exercise will get you good results that you’ll be happy with.

#### 5. Pay attention to the maths as much as the macros

Calorie counting is making a comeback as we realise that all the coconut oil and cardio in the world won’t get us to where we want to go shape-wise if the maths don’t add up. A little awareness around the energy content of what you’re eating versus the energy expenditure of what you’d doing is often enough to result in some serious shape-shifting. So don’t burn your takeaway menus just yet.

#### DOCTOR ELLIE CANNON:

##### 1. People often aim too high when setting fitness goals

An example is signing up for a gym and then planning to go four times a week. Aiming lower is not copping out. In fact walking for 30 minutes, five times a week could actually be better for you.

##### 2. Sleep is underappreciated

If you’re aiming for a less stressful 2018, improving your sleep quantity and quality can do wonders for your mental health. Aim for a couple of early nights per week and see how it makes you feel. You will be surprised at how much better you feel once you are getting enough sleep.

##### 3. Be proactive

In the UK we tend to be reactive about our well-being, rather than embracing preventative healthcare. Check if you’re due any vaccinations or check-ups. Women can get up to date with smear tests, men over 65 should book aneurysm

tests. Now’s the time for asthma check-ups, NHS over-40 health checks and flu jabs too.

#### 4. Disconnect

Social media and online connectivity are good things in many ways, but they are also disruptive of relationships and can be damaging to mental health. It is unrealistic to cut yourself off from all social media, but a small reduction is doable. Ring fence one hour per day when you disconnect - maybe first thing in the morning or during your journey to work - and read a book instead.

#### 5. Conduct a friendship audit

Isolation and loneliness are bad for both your physical and mental health. Taking time to reconnect with people who make you feel good and nurture your resilience is a powerful thing to do, and will set you up for the year.

With forward planning, a little will-power and plenty of determination, 2018 could be the year you achieve your goals. Good luck!

### Top 10 New Year resolutions

1. *Lose weight - 48%*
2. *Exercise more - 41%*
3. *Save more money - 32%*
4. *Improve diet - 31%*
5. *Something else - 22%*
6. *Pursue a career ambition - 15%*
7. *Spend more time with family - 14%*
8. *Take up a new hobby - 12%*
9. *Decorate at home - 11%*
10. *Cut down on alcohol - 9%*

By Bethany Minelle, Sky News

# On average we send 10,296 texts a year - to people in the *same* house!

*Brits send a staggering 10,296 texts and messages a year – to people in the samehouse, with ‘can you bring me a cup of tea?’ and ‘I love you’ among the top texts sent to partner’s only metres away.*

New research of the nation by Broadbandchoices.co.uk has revealed the extent to which we are using text, WhatsApp and snap chat as a primary communication tool within the home - with many of us even chatting away for hours to family members in the *same room*.

The research suggests we also send a staggering 96 picture messages and up to 100 emojis each month to people within the same house.

According to the poll, mums are the biggest culprits for text communication in the home, firing off regular demands such as ‘Lights off’, ‘Turn the TV down’ and simply ‘BED!’ among the top messages sent from mothers to kids.

According to the poll, more than four in ten of those polled said they have full on conversations with people in the same house via a gadget rather than talking to them face to face.

A quarter of those polled said they communicate through their iPhone out of sheer laziness, while three in ten said it’s simply the quickest way to get a response.

16% of the 2,000 families polled said firing off a message is the only their kids will listen to them and if they have the conversation in person it will end up as an argument.

Other common messages that get bandied around British homes are ‘Turn the heating up’, ‘Where is the remote control?’ and ‘That’s it, I’m going without you.’

Vix Leyton, consumer expert, [www.b00roadbandchoices.co.uk](http://www.b00roadbandchoices.co.uk) says: “With mobile phones now a semi-permanent extension of ourselves, it is unsurprising to see that people are even resorting to texting each other in the same room.

“Whether out of laziness, to broach a sensitive subject that you can’t quite articulate, or just seeing if a headache is on the cards this evening, texting within the home is clearly on the rise.

“Technology means we have never been more connected, even when we are only physically in the next room.”

The most common emoji to send to those living in the same house was a smiley face, followed by a laughing face and a heart.

One in ten said the most common emoji they send is the poo and 14% like to send a simple coffee cup to their nearest and dearest when they are feeling parched. One in twenty Brits said they send a picture of a pig snout more than any other emoji to their family.



## MOST COMMON MESSAGES SENT WITHIN BRITISH HOMES

**I love you**

**Dinner is ready**

**Can you bring me a cup of tea?**

**Can you turn the TV down?**

**What is for dinner?**

**Night night**

**Turn the heating up**

**Are you coming to bed?**

**Are you ready yet?**

**I'm tired - going to sleep now**

**I'm sorry**

**Is dinner ready?**

**Please turn down your music**

**I don't feel very well**

**Can you put a wash on?**

**BED!**

**Can you make me a sandwich?**

**Tidy your room!**

**There is someone at the door**

**Do you fancy sex tonight?**

**Where is the remote control?**

**What is that noise outside?**

**Have you done your homework?**

**When are your friends leaving?**

**It's bedtime, lights off**

**Can I have a lift? Can I have a kiss?**

**That's it - I'm going without you**

**It wasn't my fault**

**SCHOOL!**

**Shall we get an early night?**

**I hate you**

**Can you move your car?**

**Can we make friends?**

# 1 in 3 office workers are unable to make the most of breaks at work

*A third of office workers feel that their employer and/or working environment does not allow them to make the most out of taking a break at work, according to the results of a new survey.*

Conducted by One Poll on behalf of Nestlé Professional®, the survey also highlights the potential need to 'seize the the break', with 13% of office workers failing to take a break during an average working day and 19% only taking time out for lunch.

Despite this however, 97% of office workers say taking time out of the working day to have a break would make them feel more positive about their work or more organised in the way they work. Meanwhile, 73% of respondents indicated that having a break makes them feel better able to solve problems or handle their work load more easily.

Paul Lumley, Brand & Channel Lead at Nestlé Professional® commented: "As office workers, it can too often be easy to get bogged down with seemingly never-ending to-do lists, hitting deadlines, back-to-back meetings or conference calls. However, our research indicates that taking just a few minutes out of the day to refresh and regroup could not only impact positively from an individual standpoint, but also for businesses themselves.

"With more than one in five respondents saying a varied selection of food and drink offered in or near their workplace is the most important factor to them when taking a break, businesses

should consider the merits of having readily accessible refreshments for staff. This is an area we can particularly support in, with our range of coffee and confectionery brands available to help workplaces make the most of their break times."

The research has also revealed that when it comes to time away from the desk, it appears that 10 minutes is all you need, with more than a third of office workers taking breaks of between 6-10 minutes on average. The most popular time of the day to take a break is between 10am-11am, followed by 3pm-4pm.



Nestlé Professional® is offering businesses the chance to win a 'seize the break' experience for their workplace with £1,000 worth of KITKAT® and NESCAFÉ® AZERA® coffee up for grabs as well as a £250 Red Letter Day for your office hero. To enter this special competition, visit [www.nestleprofessional.co.uk/your-business/nescafe-azera-prize-draw](http://www.nestleprofessional.co.uk/your-business/nescafe-azera-prize-draw).

# Single mum who 'battled the odds' to become one of the top 20 female ground breakers of 2017

*Ali Golds, a single mum from West Sussex who has been empowering women business founders and single mum entrepreneurs since 2012, has been recognised alongside international politicians and sportswomen. Ali's achievements have earned her an entry in The Independent's 20 Extraordinary Women of 2017 review.*

Ali, a business coach, has not only made extraordinary strides to support and mentor women but has achieved remarkable things personally – mostly against the odds.

Journalist Harriet Marsden, who compiled the impressive roll call of achievers describes Ali as a rare person who has managed to channel negative experiences into positive achievement.

"A survivor of childhood and domestic abuse who left school when she was 16 with few qualifications, and a single mum who faced bankruptcy when her marriage broke up in 2005, Golds is now a successful businesswoman."

Through The Juno Project, Ali more recently created the 'This Is Me' programme, working with girls aged 14-16 who've experienced difficult circumstances. It is designed to give them the confidence to achieve whatever goals they set themselves.

Ali said she is overwhelmed by the honour of the top 20 listing: "The Independent recognised my fight against adversity, and my passion for supporting vulnerable women and girls to achieve their goals and dreams despite their own adversity. It is humbling to be in such grand company too."

"My eldest son is extremely pleased to find his mum listed alongside Chelsea striker Eniola Aluko, who of course has done remarkable things

uncovering racism and discrimination in the game."

Ali started delivering start-up skills to women in 2012 to support those who wanted to work for themselves.

Ali, who is based in West Sussex, found that a lot of the women who came to her workshops were single mums, some who were also escaping domestic abuse, desperate to support their families. As a single mum herself, Ali knew the pressures and was determined to help; so she published her first book *How To Be Your Own Boss As A Single Mum* which reached #8 in the Amazon Small Business and Entrepreneurship chart - and told her all she needed to know (and had suspected). There were a mass of single mums out there who wanted to learn how to run a business!

[www.aligolds.com](http://www.aligolds.com)

[www.thejunoproject.co.uk](http://www.thejunoproject.co.uk)



# Remember the mini cassette?

*The favourite of the typing pool and the first telephone answering machines, has come a long way – over 3 million miles of tape in over 150 million cassettes produced since 1967.*

As the mini-cassette turns 50, it's hard to describe just what a big impact this tiny object had after its introduction by Philips in 1967. Over 150 million have been made to date and contained over 3 million miles of tape, enough to cover the distance from the earth to the moon 13 times.

## Take a letter please Sandra. Dear .....full stop!

Back in pre-personal computer days, the typing pool was a huge area of employment, and any senior manager would have a nominated typist to type letters and documents. Today Philips Speech Processing has replaced typists and the typing pool with a Cloud-based, Artificial Intelligence powered service, SpeechLive, capable of automatically translating speech to text with 99% accuracy, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Around 5 million cassettes a year were produced at the peak, and even today Philips Speech Processing still produces mini-cassettes, but admittedly now on only a single machine at the company's factory in Vienna – with our own NHS still a customer.

The total production numbers may be huge but it's still hard to explain to younger generations used to digital products just how much the mini-cassette was once involved in day-to-day life.

The mini cassette was developed from the compact cassette – also a Philips invention – beloved of teens wanting to record the latest Beatles track from the radio. The compact cassette could produce high quality stereo recordings but was originally considered far too



large for a portable recording device.

By removing many of the key parts for music recording on the compact cassette, the mini-cassette and its recorder could be made much smaller while quality was still ideal for the spoken voice and recorded passages could be repeatedly played and rewound, rapidly moved backwards and forwards.

These characteristics also made the mini-cassette ideal for the first telephone answering machines - meaning that for the first-time consumers could avoid the frustration of calling an unanswered number while also giving many businesses a new way to hide from angry customers!

Philips Speech Processing now focuses on sophisticated digital devices and innovative speech-to-text software and cloud-based services, but nostalgic consumers can still purchase both mini-cassettes and cassette recorders from specialist stores and from general merchandisers such as Amazon.



# Green tea versus turmeric versus cocoa

*Nutritionist Georgios Tzenichristos reveals which 'superfood' he considers to be the best*

With Christmas over and New Year resolutions looming, most people are looking to popular superfood ingredients, especially turmeric, matcha tea and cocoa, to help them recover from the festive excesses.

London-based nutritionist Georgios Tzenichristos has looked into the benefits and nutrient content of each of these popular superfoods and has come to some surprising findings.

According to Georgios, each of these food ingredients have a key active molecule, responsible for the vast majority of their health benefits. Turmeric has curcumin, green tea has a molecule called EGCG while cocoa contains flavanols, all at different concentrations in relation to each other. So which super-ingredient is more "super" than the rest?

"It's a no brainer", Georgios comments. "If I had to choose one of those famous actives, that would be the humble green tea. A cup is easy to prepare, costs next to nothing and provides you with a whopping 7% active molecules (EGCG), the most of any other drink or food. This is in contrast to turmeric, which is a hassle to prepare and only contains 2% active (curcumin). Plain cocoa fares even worse, as it usually needs milk and sugar to be palatable and only contains 0.5% actives (flavanols).

All three superfood actives have quite similar yet diverse health benefits, with curcumin more known as an anti-inflammatory, EGCG well known



as an all round antioxidant and cocoa flavanols renowned for their cardiovascular health benefits. So looking at the evidence, no scientist can really agree on which ingredient is best, quality-wise.

However, quantity-wise, things are much simpler. Looking at the concentration of each active, it is quite easy to pick a winner: green tea contains 14x more polyphenols than cocoa and 3.5x more curcumin. Green tea takes five minutes to prepare, is super cheap and is widely available. On the other hand, curcumin needs to be added to another drink, such as a protein shake or a latte, and will stain your teeth and everything it gets in contact with. And cocoa also needs a protein shake or milk and sugar - not the healthiest drink you can have.

"So if you are looking for a super ingredient to help you recover from the holidays and fill your body with antioxidants this year, green tea is the simplest and most effective choice", Georgios concludes.

# Tips for beating Blue Mondays

*Blue Monday (15th January 2018) is reported to be the most depressing day of the year. With the New Year in full swing, diets and fitness routines beginning and the colder weather creeping in, it is no wonder many are feeling down in the dumps. So why not try these tips to beat those Monday Blues and lighten your mood!*

## TIP 1: Change your perspective

Clayton John Ainger, a motivational speaker and author of best-selling book *The Ego's Code*, describes how negativity is in fact, a very natural and normal process. "By labelling negativity as bad, we provide it with more fuel. By changing our perspective on negativity and the meaning behind it will undoubtedly have a positive effect on your life. Feeling down is not meant to hinder you, it is there to learn from, so embrace your negativity and move on," he says.

## TIP 2: Book a Winter Sun break

The summer months are the most popular time for sun holidays, but there are plenty of opportunities to escape to warmer, sunnier weather during the winter months. Booking a sunny break can increase your levels of serotonin which can make you feel more calm and focused as well as making you feel more productive when you return to normal life. "Holidays are a great way to break your stress cycle and promote positivity and there are some great savings to be made in the winter months", explains Debbie Stevens from



The Cruise Line The Cruise Line.

## TIP 3: Book a Staycation

If your bank balance doesn't allow for an extravagant holiday abroad, why not book a long weekend away instead? If you are in need of a rural escape from city life, look out for some of the countryside's hidden gems, like Stapleford Park in Leicestershire. From outdoor pursuits like off-road driving, a round of golf on an award-winning course and luxury treatments in their on-site spa, it is amazing how refreshed you will feel after 48 hours away from everyday life!

## TIP 4: Snuggle under the Covers

It is ok to admit you are having a blue day, so don't bother trying to fight it! Once you've finished work for the day, transform your bedroom into a tranquil sanctuary where you can take the time and rest you need. Stephen Volkins from Big Brand Beds has this sound advice. "Make sure it is dark and a comfortable temperature with a source of light air flow, and remove light sources like TVs and LED clocks. Take a tip from Feng Shui and make your room softly curved and coolly



McLachlan from Monkey Puzzle Training.

### **TIP 6: Beat the blues with a brew**

Tea has a range of psychological and physical health benefits that can improve your wellbeing. The fantastic drink has been used for centuries across the world to help with relaxation, improve spirituality, nourishment and healing and speciality teas have a range of exciting ingredients that promote health. "Studies reveal that tea can increase blood flow, lower anxiety and improve sleep quality and blends such as peppermint, rooibos and green can fight against insomnia, regulate blood sugar and stimulate your metabolism", explains Paresh Thakkar, founder of Oteas.

### **TIP 7: Challenge the rut**

Carla Watson and Shelley La Mancusa, authors of *Getting Out of a Rut* suggest that the only way to combat self-improvement is to concentrate on who and what you surround yourself with. "It is hard enough sometimes for us to get out of bed in the mornings and shower ourselves with compliments, without the aid of other people commenting on the choices you make. A supportive network of friends and family is vital to achieving inner happiness and avoid negativity," explains Carla and Shelley.

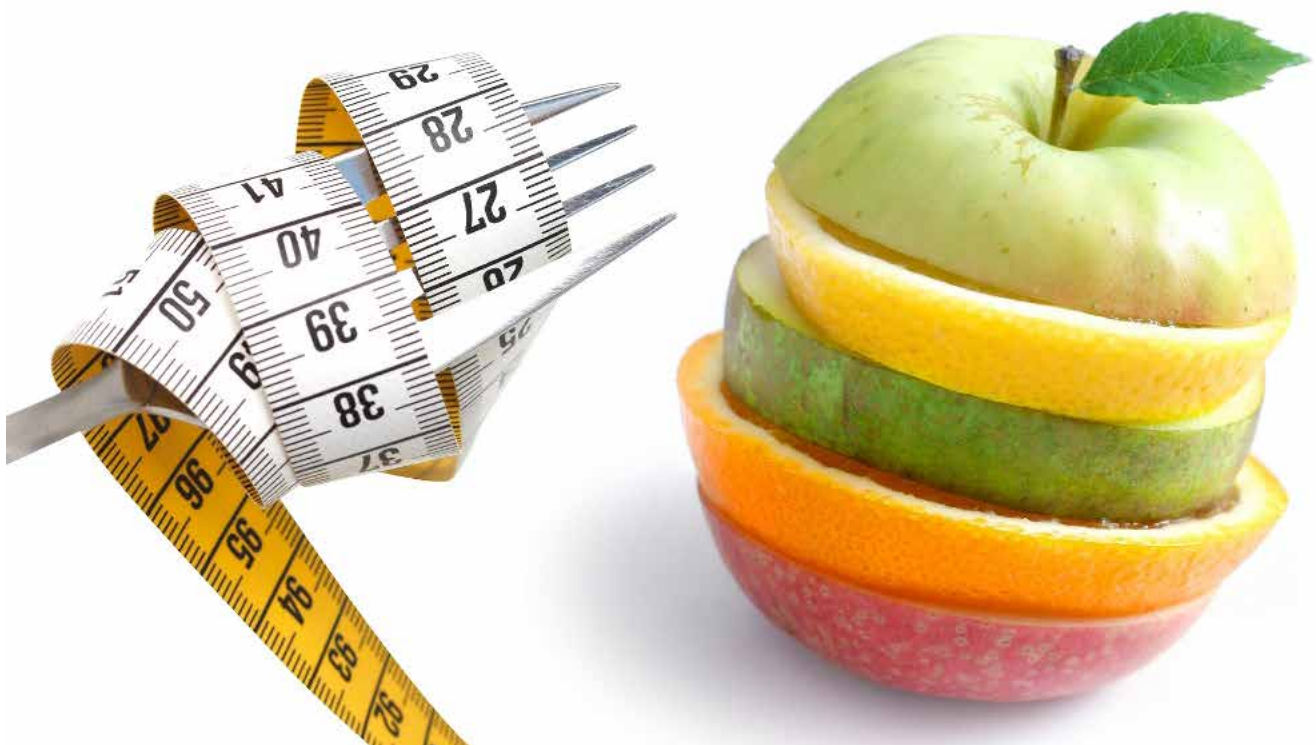
coloured – avoid sharp angles and dominant colour schemes in order to calm the mind and spirit for a really relaxing night's sleep."

### **TIP 5: Identify your negative thinking triggers**

What sends your thinking into a spiral of negativity? Does seeing your friends going on great nights out on Facebook make you feel inadequate? Or perhaps you have some people in your life who are negative and that brings you down. It could even be the news on the TV before bedtime that send you to bed feeling unsettled or bad. Once you know your triggers you can avoid them or cut down on them, advises NLP Master Trainers Karen Meager and John

# The average Brit will start (and fail) 189 diets in their lifetime

*Researchers from Laughing Cow studied the health habits of 2,000 Brits and revealed, as a nation we attempt three diets every year (on average) which will be entirely unsuccessful.*



The survey also showed Brits stick to a diet on average for just seven weeks in total, with both men and women seeing the most weight loss after five days.

But after that, it's all downhill according to the research, with Brits aiming to shift more than 10lb on a diet – however the reality is an average 5lb loss – most of which will be put back on again shortly after giving up on the diet.

In fact, over half (55%) say they “always” fail when they go on a diet – with the nation’s men claiming to find it easier to diet than women (26% of the men polled said dieting was “easy”, compared to just 13%).

However, when it comes to long term genuine diet success, 61% of Brits believe that females have the upper hand in terms of the weight loss game.

Therefore, it will come as a surprise to learn that in fact women are most likely to throw-in the towel on a diet following just one “snaccident” – with over half (51%) saying once they’ve fallen off the wagon, that’s it for the diet.

Juliette Kellow, registered dietitian says, “Snacking is in the spotlight right now with regards to children following a new campaign from Public Health England. However, it’s just as important for adults to snack healthily. The key to healthier snacking is to cut right down on traditional sugary snack foods that are usually high in calories and low in nutrients such as biscuits, chocolate, sweets and baked goods. Instead, opt for foods that are lower in calories and provide plenty of nutrients such as protein for keeping muscles healthy, calcium for bones and teeth, and fibre to help fill us up. Paying attention to portion sizes is also vital. Individually wrapped portions of reduced-fat spreadable cheese combined with fresh fruit or vegetables are a great choice.”

But the nation’s men have a more moderate approach - with 58% of men saying they will carry on regardless of a slip up.

Almost half (43%) of Brits admit they snack out of boredom, with a further 15% admitting they sometimes don’t even taste the food they snack on.

Findings were revealed to coincide with The Laughing Cow’s Snaccident campaign which promotes mindful snacking. Alexandra Labaisse, Brand Manager at The Laughing Cow comments “By being smarter with your snacking you are much more likely to uphold a healthy balanced diet for longer.

“With so many of us partaking in drastic diets, just one snaccident can lead to enough frustration to make us want to throw in the towel, causing millions of diets to prove unsuccessful due to this.

However, if you ensure that you are planning a variety of enjoyable and mindful snacks with plenty of protein and flavour, this won’t only satisfy your taste buds but will also make you feel



fuller for longer whilst helping you maintain a long-term diet.

The Laughing Cow offers the perfect portion controlled snacking solution starting from 25 calories per triangle, each of which is packed full of calcium and protein to help you continue a healthier balanced diet.’

When it comes to the foods which are most likely to tempt us away from our diets, beer (29%) and curry (13%) emerged as men’s Achilles heel.

For women, chocolate (45%) and crisps (30%) were the ultimate weaknesses.

A begrudging 42% of women say they HATE it when their partner is more successful on a diet, compared to a more generous spirited 30% of men.

When it comes to where we want to see weight loss – the nation’s men said their stomach (65%), whereas 22% of women said they would be happier with thinner thighs, and 15% said they wanted to shave a couple of pounds off their hips.

Surprisingly, a staggering 61% of both men and women enjoy starting a diet – but inevitably lose motivation after a short while.