

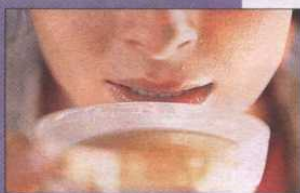
BRUNCH

10

Mood lifters

When you're exhausted, out of sorts or just plain blue, don't give up. UPALA SEN lists ten perk-me-ups, all of which are guaranteed to make you feel on top of the world again

1 A HOT CUPPA



It's like those advertisements — furrowed forehead, a face as long as a urinal queue, and then a sip of a hot cuppa. And hey presto! Worry lines melt, knitted brows unravel, a wide grin emerges, and the body reconfigures itself — smart, smarter, smartest — in the twinkling of an eye. According to Charu Dua, nutritionist, Max Heart And Vascular Institute, the magical properties of tea owe themselves to caffeine — a stimulant — and a host of antioxidants — they alleviate hypertension and are good for the heart. Clarifies Charu, "Coffee too can cheer you up but only when it is consumed in moderation."

2 SWITCH OFF



If you are thinking prayer rug and flying *fakirs*, stop. We are merely asking you to switch off. All those times when the whole world seems out to get a piece of you or you are trying to please everyone but to no avail, just distance yourself.

Says yoga therapist and author Bijoylaxmi Hota, "Meditation involves taming the mind by focusing — either on a sound or a word or a chant or even an idea." According to her, humans have different kinds of brainwaves — beta, alpha, theta and delta. Says Bijoylaxmi, "Of these, alpha waves indicate the most calm state of being. And meditation generates alpha waves." But one should take meditation lessons before practicing on one's own.

3 GREEN COMFORT



The first thing in the morning and the last thing at night — the silent exchange between planter and plant is nice therapy for frayed nerves. Dikshun Kukreja, a Harvard-trained architect, speaks from oodles of experience in landscape designing. He says, "At its simplest, gardening involves tending to a couple of potted plants. The activity takes one's mind off humdrum worries. At its more evolved best, gardening involves a lot of exercise and the volume of output is directly proportional to aesthetic and other returns." Dumb pets did you say? Well, they talk back with their leaves, soothe with their green and smile with their flowers.

4 PUT YOUR FEET UP



What is it about putting one's feet up that is so relaxing? According to psychiatrist Jitendra Nagpal "This simple act (of putting up your feet) revises the circulatory capacity of the blood, the venous blood flow to the heart is multiplied, the oxygen capacity increases and the end-result is a coffee-like phenomenon — rejuvenating." And the physiological difference has psychological implications as well. The action works not so much as a full stop as a comma — a welcome pause wherein you engage in an activity of your choice, be it watching TV or reading a book or simply doing nothing.

5 MAKE A MEAL



Chopping, grinding, grilling, boiling... Come to think of it, cooking is a string of some of the most violent activities. Then why is it the ace stress-buster

that it is? Food consultant Marut Sikka will have none of the violent fundas and prefers a sprinkling of romance. He says, "Cooking is like love, you should enter into it with complete abandon or not all." Marut concedes that when cooking is a daily chore where you have to produce a certain quantity every day, it can hardly work as a feel-good factor. "But if you wield the ladle occasionally you will realise it is the simplest and most satisfying creative exercise possible," he says.

6 FEATHERED DELIGHTS



You might say why not the pet dog or cat. And you would be right in asking. Only there is something so gratifying about feeding pariah birds that you have to do it to know what it feels like. One reason could be that they make a pretty sight, first flocking, then pecking away daintily (they don't gobble like cats or dogs). It could also have something to do with the no-strings-attached nature of it.

7 LEG WORK



There is nothing quite like a pedicure from a professional. At home, you can scrub and scratch and slather on all the lotion in the universe, but you cannot even begin to approximate the effect. Says Kamayani Kanwar of the Asian Roots Luxury Day Spa, "Feet are the most used part of the body. A pedicure works on the rough edges, cleanses dirt and works like an ablation for the mind too."

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the two is more delicious. Qualitatively different from the kind of sleep you sink into at the end of a day, it recalls interminable summer vacations. But why is that a short nap works better than a long one? According to Bijoylaxmi, "The body is made up of tissues which are really mini humans. They reproduce, excrete

8 DOZE OFF
An obscenely heavy family lunch followed by some heavy-duty napping. It is difficult to say which of

and die and they need time to restore themselves. Napping facilitates this. But during the day it is the job of the body to eliminate toxins. If you sleep too long, you impede the digestive process."



9 A GOOD CRY
Recommending a cry to cure sagging spirits might sound a bit like prescribing a heart attack to someone down with flu. Dr Jitendra Nagpal, however, says, "It is really a period of opportunity, a time to optimise on the stress." As he sees it, distress, despondency and despair are inevitable when it comes to keeping oneself emotionally and physically in sync with one's immediate environment. One should always allow for a precipitation of these accumulated woes and then a nice lusty cry is just what you need!



10 HOT SEX
At its most evolved, it works like a meaningful conversation between bodies. At its simplest it is ice-cream for the mind. The list is endless. According to Dr Prakash Kothari, Professor of Sexual Medicine at KEM Hospital, "Good sex works as an analgesic. You could be down with anything serious but you can rest assured that good sex will alleviate it. As they say, pleasure lies between the two ears and not between the two legs." You are listening aren't you?