



High-Maintenance Woman trips out on new waves

'London in July is almost more exhausting than in the grip of an icy winter,' thought Henrietta as she opened her eyes resentfully. Even the sunlight playing over the Fortuny wallpaper of her Kensington bedroom failed to lift her spirits – or her energy levels.

God, she was tired – in fact she had been worn out for months. A hair appointment was a challenge to her now-geriatric routine. Among her friends she'd long been a figure of fun for her obsessively early nights, but sleep hadn't really refreshed her since her last visit to Chiva-Som. After three throat infections, she'd had enough. Feebly grasping the phone, she called Christina Barton, a nutritional therapist with a state-of-the-art treatment for boosting the immune system, and begged for an appointment.

Christina had been practising for more than seven years and her serenity was catching. As Henrietta discussed her general health, lifestyle and family illnesses, the weight of her problems grew lighter with every breath. Christina was convinced she wasn't absorbing enough nutrients from her healthy diet (Henrietta ate mostly organic and she had recently given up alcohol), and the candida that lined her gut had formed a nutritional barrier. It seemed the vitamins she needed were being rejected, just as members wearing jeans are turned away from Annabel's.

A searching inventory of Henrietta's fridge and diet was taken. Christina removed cow's milk from the daily menu but indulged her patient's occasional ice-cream raids. Red meat got the thumbs-up and pasta didn't, but most of her favourite foods were easily incorporated into the new diet. There was no nonsense about not putting olive oil on her salad, thank God, but she should start cooking with coconut oil.

The vitamin supplements were the size of suppositories, but thanks to an explanation of when to swallow them, they now held no fear for her. Enzymes encouraged better digestion and absorption of her food.

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Christina's approach wasn't just herbal – she was into hi-tech solutions too. Producing the Auto Clark Zapper, she gave Henrietta an electrode to hold in each hand to help boost the body's cellular energy and to kill any parasites from that trip to Rajasthan. Henrietta lay down on the warm Magnetic Resonance System mat, designed to connect the body to the earth's magnetic force (and originally developed to boost astronauts' immune systems). As suitably spacey music trickled out of the headphones, Christina slid the stimulating flashing-light goggles over her closed eyes. The sensation was how Henrietta imagined a trip to the Mojave Desert with Kiefer Sutherland might feel: weird and wonderful and distinctly... trippy.

Meanwhile, the mat was already relieving stress and encouraging that usually far-flung feeling of wellbeing. No doubt it was also aiding digestion, improving circulation and 'stimulating the bowel' (which made it sound as if her colon were reading an improving book). Christina's reflexology had kicked in too; Henrietta was buoyant but grounded, like a tethered balloon.

Half an hour later, Henrietta came slowly back to earth. She sat up feeling calm yet energised, and quite prepared for lunch at Cipriani with the bejewelled sultana and her colour-coordinated friends. Christina said that after two or three weeks she'd be strong enough for the planned detox (effectively a gentle colonic irrigation in tablet form). 'We need to dig out the roots of any underlying complaints and start afresh,' she said. Put like that, it sounded positively salubrious.

The next day Christina sent her a diet sheet, a fortnight of daily menus to be rotated, and details of her other areas of expertise: skin and digestive disorders, allergies, anti-ageing, even libido. A frisson of excitement at the mere thought of sex was enough to tell Henrietta she was feeling better already. □
For an appointment with Christina Barton, ring 07785 730874 or visit chrisbar.com.