

FIT FOR LIFE with Carol Westmorland

Out and proud: why I've gone back to my curly roots

It may surprise you to know that studies of human behaviour show that if we find someone attractive, 90 per cent of us touch our hair. It is also well known that following a relationship breakdown we rush off to the hairdresser and 'cut that person right out of our hair'.

Hair plays a vital role in our feel good factor. There is a multi-million pound company that trades under the name ghd (good hair day).

Growing up in the Eighties allowed my wild mop to be just that, wild. It took me 32 years to discover that I could control my hair albeit not without a fight.

Now, eight years down the line and with considerably less hair, I am on a mission. Compared with my sisters, I have always been the more challenged in the hair department. Joanne favours the immaculate approach and Gilly the more haphazard. I dreamt about waking up with a thick glossy mane that, after a quick comb, would see me swish through the day. It was never to be.

Then something rather interesting happened – I began to drink milk. Having been a vegan for fourteen years, I felt that my bones deserved a treat. Being me, I threw myself in wholeheartedly and now polish off over two pints per day. I was surprised to see my hair begin to change. It began to feel so much better; much thicker. Reading up I found that milk contains many of the B vitamins essential for healthy hair. It felt like the right time to make friends with my hair and show it some love.



I started to question my devotion to the straighteners. Giving up any sort of dependency takes time and should be approached gradually. I made it a rule that only my hairdresser could straighten it. Do you know that straighteners are the equivalent to sticking your head in a 200-degree oven?

I more often appeared in public curly. My resolve was only weakened on the days when I felt I needed to show control. Curly hair yells chaos and mischief.

With an extra helping of pumpkin seeds, which contain zinc and essential fatty acids, my hair pinged quite literally into life. I was taken aback to realise that people I see every day thought my hair was naturally straight – they had clearly not seen me following a rain shower. How could I have been so disloyal to my curls?

I am now true to my roots and wear my curls with pride, and as a result I now recognise other tortured, suppressed curlsies.

In summer, we should let our hair dry naturally and let the hairdryer go. Kerastase have a new hair system. It's nutrition for hair. I take two tablets daily for three months and massage a potion into my scalp.

I may never be Rapunzel but I am having fun trying.

Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.co.uk

**LIFE COACH** with Jo Hampson

'Yeah, but': two little words that hold us all back

Yeah but, no but, yeah but, no but...

Why do we stop ourselves from doing the things we want to do? Long before Little Britain used their "yeah but, no but" line we were talking about "yeah but" – those words in our heads saying "yeah but... there's no point applying for that job, I'll never get it."

"Yeah but... Australia's ever such a long way..." "yeah but... if I do buy that amazing outfit will I look good in it?"

A 'yeah but' is that doubt in your mind when you are thinking about doing something differently – from changing the way you look to changing your job, leaving your partner, to leaving the country.

It nags away at you, whispering – "yeah, but are you sure you can do it?"

"Yeah, but what happens if it all goes wrong?"

"Yeah, but what will people think if I fail?" These thoughts nibble away at your self esteem and sap your confidence until eventually you convince yourself that it is all too risky, too difficult and you may walk away without doing something that would have been terrific.

We are frequently surrounded by "yeah but" people.

Friends and family may be all too happy to talk us out of doing anything different. You may recognise their words: "Yeah, but why would you want to do that?"

"Oh, but it's a harsh world out there," they say. "Will you be able to do it?"

"No, but you are better off staying

where you are," and on they go. They will have their own reasons for wanting you to stay the same. Yeah, but they may be preventing you from choosing the best path for you.

So when you hear that little voice of doubt in your head, or you hear people doubting your ability to do something differently – whether a hairstyle or a lifestyle – listen and decide whether it's a valid reason or a "yeah but".

If it is a "yeah but," recognise it for what it is, dismiss it and get on with the adventure of life!



Jo Hampson and Georgina Perkins run life-change company Stepping Off, based in Shap