

‘The flaws you may think you have will most likely be invisible to others, but deploying secret confidence tricks that can be done anywhere can literally give you a lift’

When Kate Humble declared this week that living in the countryside takes away all her inhibitions I had to agree.

You can't keep an outdoor girl in and so, at the first hint of warmth in the sun, out I go. Never hesitant, I had changed into my shorts and T' – with a belief I was to be alone. I was, I thought, only going to share my farmyard with pooches and chickens.

With Peter, husband number one, I spent over 16 years between Cumbria and Denmark and found myself influenced by their naturalistic approach. They are the nation of the uninhibited helped I am sure, by their Nordic beauty.

Should you care to spend a sunny afternoon in a Danish park with little more than a smile you will not be given a second glance.

Funny thing is that over time we become less carefree.

So when I found myself rooted to my sun-lounger that day with an unexpected visitor, willing my dog Truly Scrumptious to cover my modesty, it seemed so wrong. Mercifully I was munching a large carrot at the time – my visitor, it turns out, likes my health columns.

Now before coach trips pull up, I am simply promoting a belief that whoever happens to stroll by, or wherever you happen to find yourself, you should have a breezy smile and not a hint of bashfulness. The flaws you may think you have will most likely be invisible to others.

Deploying some secret confidence tricks that can be done anywhere can quite literally give you a lift. Rather than sink inside your body and try to become invisible, or hide under an unsuspecting pooch, you can create your very own



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inner strength that to others is unseen – but it will give you a confident and strong physique.

I meet many of the disheartened – they have spent years believing that sit-ups create flat and supportive abdominals.

Not on their own they don't and, performed incorrectly, they will over-train the 'lid' of your abdominals and make your tummy protrude, albeit with some firmness.

To avoid this mistake you need to train the lower abdominals, the side of your abdominals and the top. It is all from the inside out.

Getting into the habit of engaging the muscle that acts like a tightening corset around the body is easy.

Put your hands on your tummy and draw your tummy button towards your spine. Hold this for 30 seconds while counting out loud. Contrary to popular belief, you can speak while training your muscles to react.

This encourages natural breath which is, of course, exactly what you will be doing once your abdominals are in action.

Keep squeezing as tight as you can without allowing your shoulders to hunch. Do this 10 times, 30 seconds each time and count out loud. You can do this standing or sitting.

Your entire body will change shape when you have that inner support – you will be held together. Your shoulders will naturally fall back and your hips will align. You will then have the confidence to stand tall.

So don't hide away – toss away those inhibitions and set yourself free. You don't need to go as far as Kate Humble who has declared her urge to roll naked down a hill but you can go forth and shine as brightly as that Cumbrian sun and, as the Danes say, “du ser fantastisk” (you look fantastic). 