

As February staggers to a close I peep out today and see shades of pale blue sky - amongst soft grey clouds. I need no persuasion to start thinking about the garden. All the new shoots put a spring into my step but I still greedily long for more of that beautiful early spring sunshine and with that warmth. Easy to transport to those mornings. Sitting yesterday outside Petunia, my beloved Shepherds Hut, I listened to the neighbouring geese cackle as if saying, really? Guilty of being slightly too keen, I will this year stop myself from planting my pots and then moving them to and fro. I have, (as it turns out) De Quervain syndrome because, some twelve years ago, I had a Bennetts fracture - the base of the thumb. Although wired, it has - and I have learnt the hard way - led to De Quervains. I must work with it and look after my hand. A steroid last July has led to fat atrophy (yes, really!). Who knew? Not me. I now find myself gazing at my new look wrist in wonder.

As we emerge from the short days our energy naturally starts to lift. We have - at last - acclimatised to the cold and, curiously, we can't wait (often too early) to peel away those layers. This, of course, could be just me. I find that I begin to layer very heavily in October - not a bit of bare skin to be seen - and then gradually lose the layers as we move through February. It could also just be a sign that I am keen to get my vitamin D. My arms came out last week and it felt wonderful! They soon went back in again.

During these early months of the year I take a vitamin D supplement. Arguably not necessary if you follow a careful diet (and I do) but all the same I take this extra boost. I also take vitamin C and a B12. We need B12 for optimum health. I savour my food and take great delight at my mealtimes. Not for me eating on the hop. I like order and calm before I sit to eat. I feel it is a precious part of the day and want to be able to eat and think. It is something that might be hard to do should you squeeze your mealtimes into busy days. It is worth the effort and it is scientifically proven that eating whilst being distracted by a screen will mean you eat less thoughtfully and by thoughtfully read, without conscience. It is time that is for you and as eating is an essential part of life I believe we should make it an occasion. I will often declare that food is fuel and it is, but it should also be about your health. Less choice and your body will give you clues. Proven that your body can be shocked and in those circumstances can get in a bit of a twist. Possibly literally. Making you feel less than your best self. Keep things simple. I would also like to add that eating your main meal at 2pm is great too! You may at this point be spluttering into your cup of tea and I am sorry but I truly believe this is the case.

I also relish my sleep and am early to bed and early to rise. In actual fact I would not be able to keep my eyes open beyond 10pm without a very good reason. I wake refreshed and fully alert. I also take a 20 minute nap at

2.30pm every day! If this isn't possible (for you) I understand. If you believe you will wake groggy, then drink a cup of coffee immediately before your nap and you will wake with invigorated energy. If you practice this you will fine tune. My naps are exactly 20 minutes and have been part of my life for 27 years!

Am I becoming annoying? I might be. I am seriously able to follow routines. Like clockwork. Drop me into a chaotic situation and I will spin.

Life should be fun and with some foundations in place it can, at the very least, be easier. More energy from eating well and staying active. My final message for this month is eat chickpeas and be happy with who you are. This is the year I celebrate 30 years as a health professional and the last 24 of those employing myself. I have always been unapologetically who I am. It's great to hear other peoples thoughts, but if there is one thing I have discovered during the past 30 years it is this: we all return to type.

In my next newsletter I will be sharing how I have never lost my need for speed!