



Many of us live with at least one of the following – low energy, mood and hormonal imbalances, bloating, IBS, food cravings or addictions, lowered immune systems, toxicity, or poor sleep.

But if we understood our bodies better, we'd have the key to improved health and wellbeing. Often, this understanding is intuitive, but when you're in need of an overhaul, these body boosters – tried and tested by **Amerley Ollennu** – could be the answer you've been looking for... >>>

>>> THE DNA TEST

My journey began after a visit to the Palace Henri Chenot Spa in Merano, Italy. After a top-to-toe analysis that comprised allergy and energy testing, along with a full body scan, I was surprised by one of the results in particular. My metabolism was apparently very fast. What? If I have such a quick metabolism, why had I gained so much weight? Of course my tendency towards emotional eating had something to do with it, but there must be more to it than that. Dr Chenot advised I get my DNA tested.

Traditionally, the type of test I would need was previously only used by athletes to determine how best to eat and train, but it has slowly become more mainstream as people look for answers to help improve their health. I signed up with healthy food delivery service Pure Package, which offers not only DNA testing carried out by DNAFit, but also devises a food plan specific to your own genetic make-up – this can really help you see how you translate your results into actual meals, while keeping them balanced and healthy.

The DNA test analyses the way your body metabolises proteins, carbohydrates and fats. My results were eye-opening, and able to answer my weight-gain question, as well as the poor digestion, bloating and exhaustion I had been suffering from. I have a gene variant that makes me sensitive to sugars and refined carbohydrates – my go-to comfort food. I hate to cook, so would often come home and eat a few crumpets, pieces of toast or a bowl of cereal for dinner. My body's high sensitivity means I assimilate sugar more quickly, drawing out more energy (calories) than others. Historically, this would have been great if I spent days working a manual job outdoors, but since I sit at a desk for most of the day, it's not very useful to me. I also discovered that I could keep fit and healthy and manage my weight with low-impact exercise. Having always thought I had to exercise hard and for long periods of time to make a difference to my body, this was a relief. I now knew I could relax a little and just eat according to my genes. Cue my Pure Package deliveries.

The meals were generously sized portions, and packed full of the right things for me. Fish, because I need more omega oils than the recommended daily intake, along with an abundance of antioxidant-rich cruciferous vegetables

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– those belonging to the mustard family of plants, such as broccoli, kale and turnips – as one of my detox genes, GSTM1, doesn't produce the detoxing enzymes coded for by the gene. I'm not alone either – 50 per cent of us have this trait. However, if I stick to eating cruciferous vegetables three times a week, their protective properties will

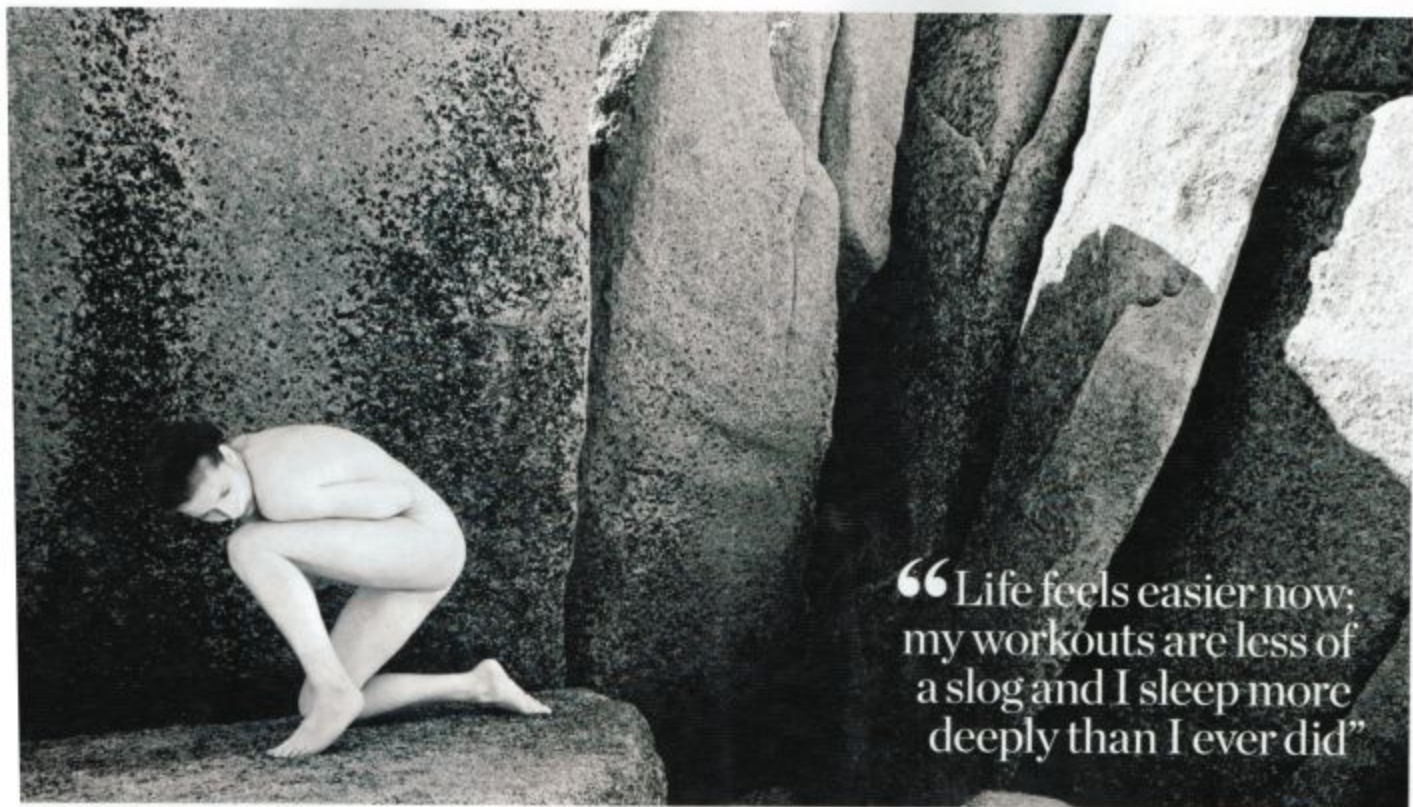
help ward off DNA damage that can ultimately contribute to the development of diseases like cancer. There were carbs too, but the right kind, in smaller quantities, so I didn't feel deprived. By the end of my first week, I felt re-energised, less bloated, and my skin looked great, too.

Prices start from £245 for a DNAFit DNA test without food and £689.50 for the DNA test, a phone consultation and a 10-day Pure Package programme (purepackage.com)

THE WORKOUT

‘Start doing regular strength training using heavy-ish weights, be it dumbbells, barbells or your own body, as this will literally transform you from the inside out,’ says my personal trainer, Dan Roberts. Weight training is incredibly beneficial for the overall health of our bodies. It strengthens connective tissue, bones and muscles, reducing your chance of injury while training. It increases bone mineral density, thus keeping osteoporosis at bay, strengthens the heart and in turn, improves blood pressure. Aesthetically speaking, strength training firms and tones your body, leaving you looking fit but not thin. ‘The common misconception that using weights while you train will bulk up muscles is what's stopping women the world over from training in a way that will truly benefit them in the long-term,’ says Roberts. I've always used weights while training. In fact, I prefer strength training to cardio, and have found after periods of no exercise, my strength doesn't diminish nearly as much as my endurance levels. And since the more muscle you have the faster your metabolism is, I'm keen to stick with strength training for good.

Roberts recommends starting with ‘your body as the weight. Try a mini-circuit of deep squats, press-ups and one-legged deadlifts (with a straight back, lean forward and down while lifting one leg in the air), as these are fundamental compound strength exercises. Do 12



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slow reps of each exercise and take 20 seconds' rest between exercises for a total of 20 minutes each time you exercise.' Overall, strength training will leave you far fitter than cardio workouts. However, don't ditch cardio completely – it should remain a component of your training regime. The aim is to have a balanced approach to training, and including weights in your programme will do just that. danrobertstraining.com

THE SUPPLEMENT

Supporting all 11 systems of the body (from your digestive system to your respiratory system), the Super Elixir, created by nutritional expert and disease prevention specialist Dr Simone Laubscher and none other than 'The Body' herself Elle Macpherson, claims to combat 21st century-induced imbalance. Made up of highly specialised alkalising greens, vitamins, minerals and trace elements, this type of non-synthetic supplement is the future of wellness and vitality. Why? Firstly, it comes in powder form, so it's easily mixed into liquids that are absorbed much more effectively by the body, as the gut doesn't have to break down the ingredients first. Secondly, it supplies the optimum organic nutrition to allow all our cells to work as they should, ridding themselves of toxins and

absorbing as many nutrients as possible from the foods we eat. The Super Elixir was originally formulated for Macpherson by Dr Laubscher and, having gone through many different incarnations, it was finally perfected around her 50th birthday – 'A good thing too,' Macpherson says, as she really began to feel the effects of being a working mum like never before. 'After only a week of taking alkalising greens, I noticed a terrific difference. I felt better, my mood stabilised and I stopped craving sugar, plus I had far more energy. Life feels easier now; my workouts are less of a slog, the effects of jet lag have lessened, and I sleep more deeply than I ever did,' she says.

Personally, I was drawn to the Super Elixir primarily because it eradicates the need for taking any other supplements. I stockpile mine, and the top drawer of my desk at work is filled with fish oils, digestive enzymes, vitamins and minerals. The problem is, I rarely take them. With so many to take and at different times, with food, without, or after, it's hard to keep up. With the Super Elixir, all I had to do was add it to my morning glass of water and I'd be done until the next day. Did it make me feel better? Definitely. My energy levels were much improved. How did I know it was the elixir working its magic? Let's just say if you do forget to take it in the morning, don't take it at night!

The Super Elixir, from £32 for 150g, welleco.com