

THEWEEK

JUNE 2020

# SMART *life*

LIVE HEALTHY, STAY FIT

Decoding personality  
through pen strokes

An author's battle  
with a rare syndrome

Best of Washoku  
cuisine

Baking  
hacks with  
**Shivesh  
Bhatia**

**Kirti  
Kulhari**  
Keeping it simple





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## Letter from the Editor

*Dear Reader,*

**Life in the time of Covid-19** has not been particularly easy for people with critical illnesses like cancer. No one can explain it better than Payel Bhattacharya, who has been battling von Hippel-Lindau syndrome—a rare condition associated with tumours in multiple organs—for the past 40 years. In this issue of Smart Life, which comes in digital format, she shares the story of her ongoing battle, the pain, the agony and the tears shed. Apart from discussing the complications associated with the condition, she also talks about the challenges of daily life in lockdown. Head to our Pause section to read all about it.

Have you ever wondered why success seems elusive for some despite working hard? Maybe it is the way you form and space your letters while writing; at least, according to graphology. With anecdotal evidence, graphologist and logo expert Sudhir Kove shares his story of turning failure into success through handwriting, signature and wristwatch analysis. The logo guru also talks about how flaws in company logos can have detrimental effects on the organisation and its employees. Head to Expert Talk to read all about the what, why and how of graphology.

In this issue, we have our cover girl Kirti Kulhari talking about breaking stereotypes. After the recent success of her show on Amazon Prime—*Four More Shots Please!*—the 37-year-old actor is the talk of tinsel town. She also talks about how people give her different tags because of the roles she does. “There is a sadistic pleasure that I have started deriving out of breaking people’s idea of who I am on-screen. I have also started doing it off-screen. It just feels so good. As a celebrity, you start taking the burden of how people see you, how they want to see you and, also, what they are comfortable seeing you as. You start taking that burden unknowingly. And this results in you defining who you should be,” Kulhari says.

In One Shot, food stylist and baker Shivesh Bhatia talks about his journey into the world of baking, food styling and blogging. He also shares some baking hacks and six dessert recipes from his new book, which is yet to be released. And don’t fret about gaining weight after all the sugary treats because we have got you covered. Head to Fit Bit to know about simple exercises which can be done at home without any equipment. This will not only help you lose weight but also aid in toning and strengthening your muscles.

So, grab your yoga mat, relax and enjoy this issue of *Smart Life*.

Stay safe, stay healthy and, most of all, stay at home.

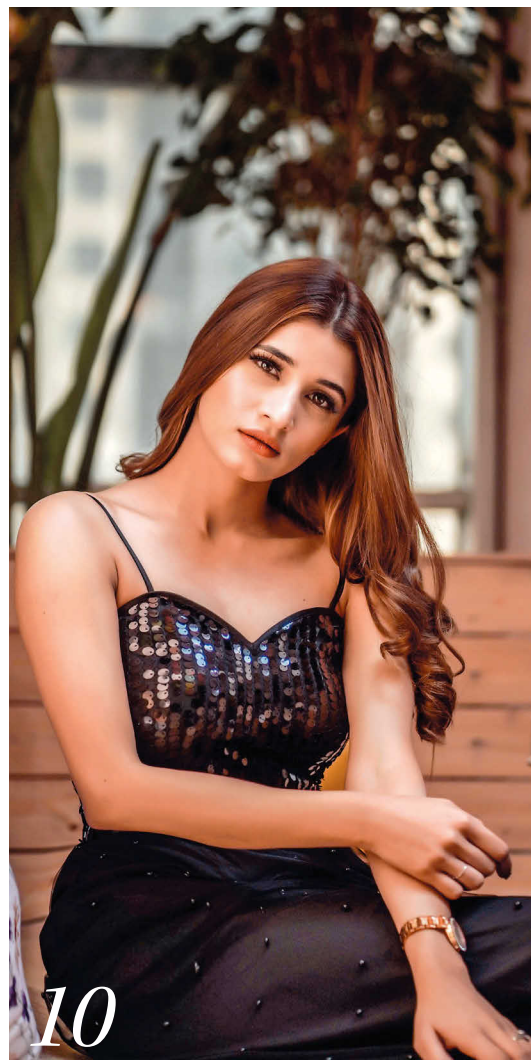


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PHOTOGRAPH BY RAHUL JHANGIANI  
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STYLIST: PRANITA SHETTY  
BRAND: APPAPO  
HAIR & MAKEUP: ELISHA BHAMBHANI AGARWAL & SAMALI



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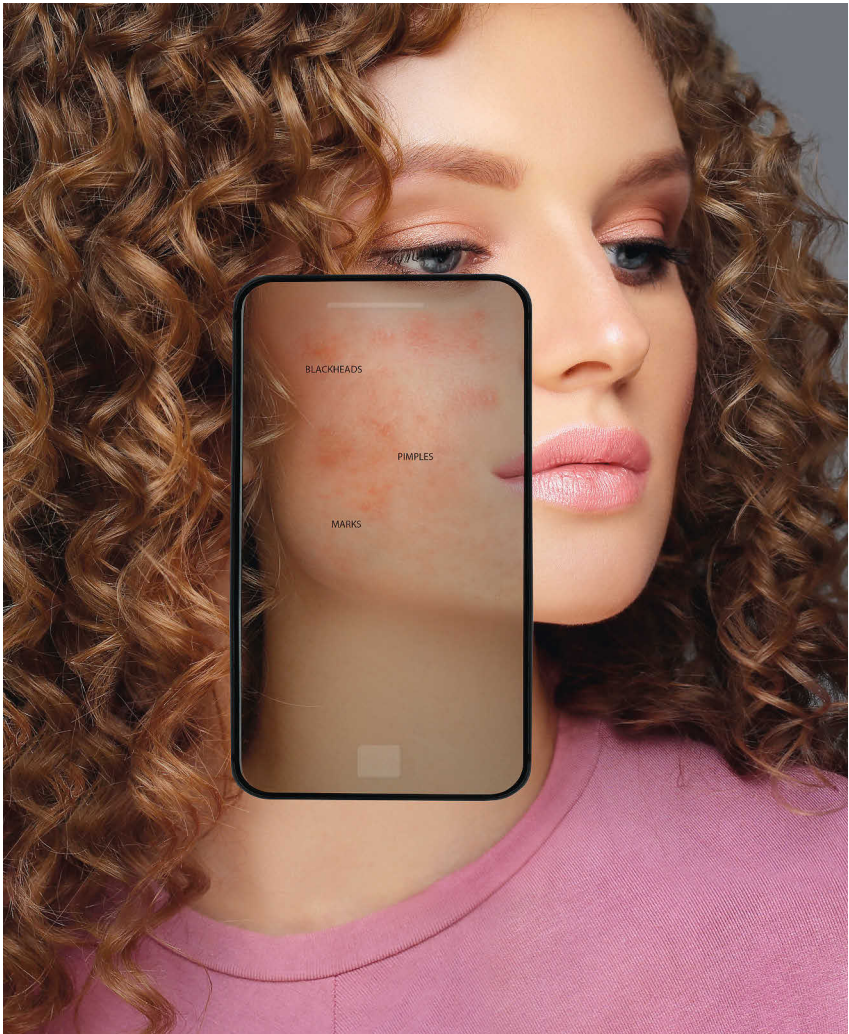
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# Different shades

## Tips to reduce hyperpigmentation

BY DR RINKY KAPOOR

Let you have heard of melanin. Almost all face cream brands make a mention of it in their sales pitch. Melanin is the pigment that is responsible for the colour of the skin, hair, and eyes. The lower the melanin count, the fairer the skin. It is produced by specialised cells called melanocytes that are present under the basal layer of the skin. The most

important task of melanin is to protect the skin by absorbing the harmful UV rays. Normally, melanin is supposed to be evenly distributed on the skin but sometimes it does not happen that way because of several known and unknown reasons. The result is skin pigmentation, disorders which affect the colour of your skin.

Have you noticed the small brown

spots that appear on your skin out of nowhere? This is because of hyperpigmentation. Exposure to the sun is the most common cause of hyperpigmentation. Medications such as the chemotherapy drug, melasma, pregnancy hormones and endocrine diseases such as Addison's disease and genetics are also factors that can lead to this condition. There is also post inflammatory hyperpigmentation that is caused because of acne or injuries that have not had the time to heal properly.

The most effective way to treat pigmentation is to consult a dermatologist the moment you notice the first brown or white spot. Conditions like vitiligo can be managed by treatments such as depigmentation, light treatments and surgery or simply using makeup techniques like permanent makeup to match the skin colour.

- Here are some simple ways to curb pigmentation.
- › Wear a broad brimmed hat if you have to step out between 12pm to 4pm. Even a few minutes of sun exposure can undermine weeks of treatment.
  - › Apply sunscreen more often if you are sitting in the balcony or near the window.
  - › Make a mix of equal amounts of apple cider vinegar and water and apply on the dark patches twice daily.
  - › Dab some fresh aloe vera on the spots before going to the bed and wash it in the morning.
  - › Seep some black tea leaves in water for two hours, strain. Dip cotton in the tea water and apply on dark spots. Do this twice daily.
  - › Lactic acid in milk can reduce the dark spots. Apply milk on the face and other areas daily.
  - › Face packs made of red lentils can help reduce hyperpigmentation. Red lentils are rich in antioxidants and it evens out the skin tone.
  - › Tomato paste mixed with olive oil can help reduce pigmentation drastically.

Kapoor is a cosmetic dermatologist and dermato-surgeon, The Esthetic Clinics.

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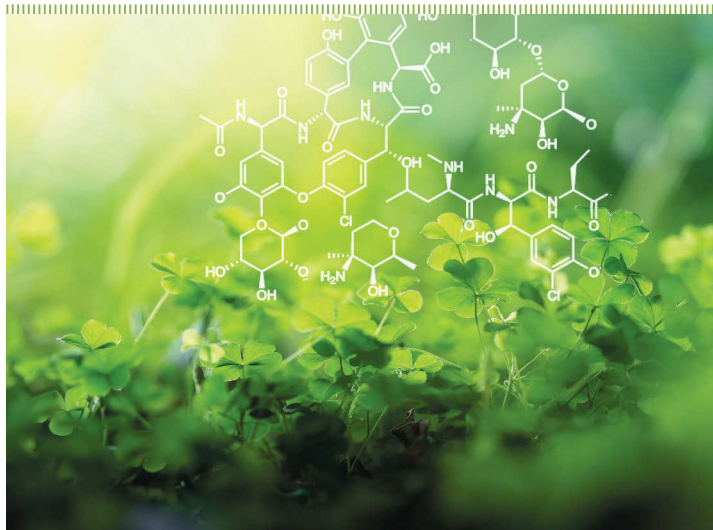


## Music for the heart

According to new research by the University of Belgrade School of Medicine, listening to 30 minutes of music a day significantly reduces the risk of further heart health problems after a heart attack. Based on the findings, researchers believe music therapy can help all patients after a heart attack, not only patients with early postinfarction angina—ischaemic chest pain. In the seven-year study, 350 people who had experienced a heart attack and had postinfarction were observed. Half of them were given only the usual treatment while the other half received 30 minutes of music therapy. The music was tailored to each individual; the researchers determined how calming the music is by measuring the dilation of the patient's pupil when different genres of music were played. The most calming tempo and tonality were selected and played every day. The patients reported less anxiety and chest pain post the music therapy.

## Good community for longevity

A study that appeared in the journal *Social Science and Medicine* suggests that certain community characteristics may affect life expectancy. The research also suggests that the authorities should consider taking community characteristics as well as other well-known predictors of life expectancy into consideration when making public policies. Researchers found that places with residents who stick together more on a community or social level appear to do a better job of helping people, in general, live longer. However, there are limitations to the study's findings as it only makes associations between community characteristics and life expectancy but it is not clear why or how these factors affect longevity. However, from a policy making perspective, understanding specific community characteristics may be helpful.



## Eat those greens

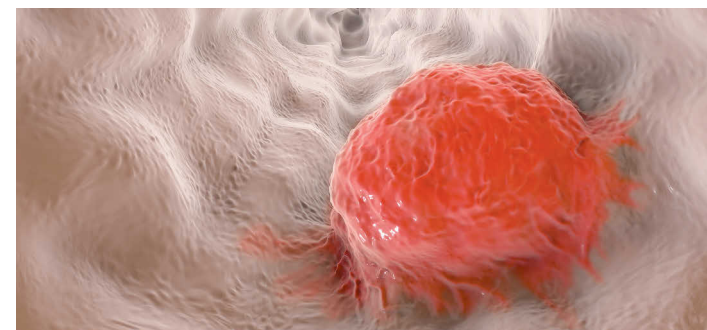
Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia are paving the way for an oral therapy that could heal bones quicker in people with diabetes. People with diabetes are not only at risk of breaking a bone but they also take longer to heal than the general population. The research team's work involved introducing specific proteins to plant cells. They introduced human insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1)—a protein that plays an essential role in the development and regeneration of muscle and bone—into lettuce. The plant then began to express that gene in its cells. Once the protein was produced in its leaves, the team freeze-dried and powdered the leaves to create a drug with a shelf stability of three years. When the researchers fed the drug to mice, the rodents showed an increase in IGF-1. When mice with diabetes consumed the drug, they showed signs of boosted healing with improved bone volume, density and area.

## super FOOD of the month



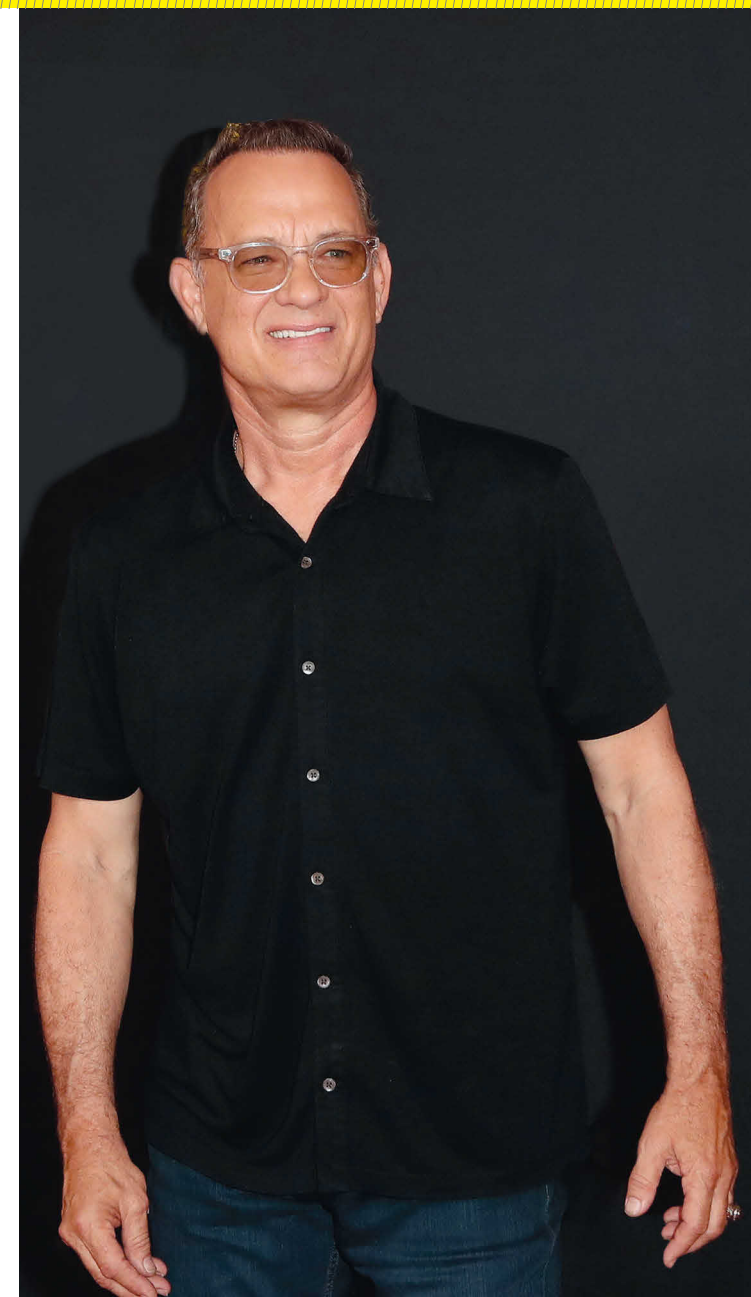
### Oregano

- ✿ Oregano is considered a staple herb in many cuisines around the world. It has a strong flavour and brings warmth to dishes along with a hint of subtle sweetness.
- ✿ It is high in antioxidants which can help prevent damage by neutralising disease-causing free radicals.
- ✿ It also contains certain compounds that have potent antibacterial properties. A test-tube study showed that oregano essential oil helped block the growth of *Escherichia coli* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, two strains of bacteria that can cause infection.
- ✿ It improves insulin resistance and regulates the expression of genes that affect fat and carbohydrate metabolism.
- ✿ It is also known to restore damaged liver and kidney tissues.



## Good gut

A recent study published in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* suggests that a type of gut bacteria could be a valuable ally in cancer treatment. The researchers reported in their study that various species of *Bifidobacterium* (bacteria found in the gastrointestinal tract) can find their way into gut tumours. Once inside the tumour, the bacteria seem to activate the wider immune system and, in the process, enhance a type of cancer treatment called CD47 blockade immunotherapy. Several clinical trials are underway using other anaerobic bacteria namely *Salmonella typhimurium* and *Clostridium novyi-NT* to destroy tumours. However, these are pathogens. As *Bifidobacterium* are harmless commensal species, they may be a safer alternative for treatment of tumours or for enhancing immunotherapy.



“If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it. It's the hard that makes it great.”  
—TOM HANKS



# Highly organised



Actor **Isha Chawlaa** says she does not live with regrets



## Current projects

I'm currently working on a web series, along with a few other projects that I, at present, can't disclose. But I'll definitely keep you guys in the loop! I'm also exploring filmmaking on the side, as that is something that really interests me. I'd definitely love to get my hands on creating films in the near future. Because of the way I see it, the possibilities with filmmaking are endless! And that is what really inspires me!

## Memorable times

Some of my most memorable times are the ones I have spent with my family! From our family vacations to simple days of doing nothing together at home, some of my most precious memories are with my family. And I also thoroughly enjoyed working in my latest web series, *Class of 2020*. From the cast to the crew, I loved how everyone was in high spirits all the time. It made me feel like it was less work and more of just hanging out with my buddies. I enjoyed every bit of it.

## Greatest challenge

I think my greatest challenge would be competing with myself every day to polish myself as an actor, and as a person. I also challenge myself to think out of the box constantly, and that's a great way to give my mind the exercise it needs. And the conscious effort to think out of the box turns challenges into opportunities. And that's a jolly good way to live life! It almost feels like it's all green signals all the way, no barriers. And that's beautiful!

## Strengths

I don't trust people too soon. So, I'm the last person that can be taken for a ride! Laughs Jokes apart, I think my strength would be my passion. I'm extremely passionate about acting,

and that makes me want to work harder to achieve my goals. I also am a very emotional person. Although this can be counted as a weakness by many, I think it is definitely a strength for me. I think my emotions act as a moral compass and help me make good judgments and decisions. On a side note, being an emotional person isn't a bad thing if you know how to manage and control your emotions.

## Weaknesses

I can be vulnerable at times, and I fall into this mental trap where I just assume things, and that could be dangerous when the reality doesn't match up. Another thing that can be counted as my weakness would be that I tend to overthink. The only way to break the chain of thoughts is to actually get up and do something, instead of sitting inside your own head all day. Physical activity is the enemy of an overthinking mind.

## What do you binge-watch?

I like binge-watching *Friends*. I don't know anyone who doesn't like this show, and it always puts me in a good mood!

## Lessons learned

I have learned to always be grounded no matter how successful I am or not. And there will always be someone prettier, richer or more famous than me, and that these things may or may not last forever. So, I taught myself to not get caught up in these things, and focus only on doing the best I can, and leaving the rest upon God.

## Diet mantra

I don't believe in maintaining a particular diet, as the nature of my job as an actor doesn't allow me to follow any diet to a T. But I do believe in maintaining a clean diet and eating loads of vegetables and fruits. I particularly like citrus fruits as they're the main source of Vitamin C, and I absolutely love my broccoli. I can have broccoli as one whole meal. I boil them, and season them with salt, and maybe some paprika, and it tastes the best. Rice is a super food for me, and I mostly have rice an hour before my workout.

## Ways to unwind

My list of things that help me relax would be cooking, shopping, Netflix-ing, and



going for long massages. I particularly like the deep tissue massage and the hot stone massage. I also indulge in cupping therapy every now and then.

## Dream for the future

I'd love to see myself on the big screen! Although web series have their own merits, working in films is something that I aspire to do. The silver screen has whole different magic to it!

## Making a mark internationally?

I would love to work in international films as it will be an all-together different

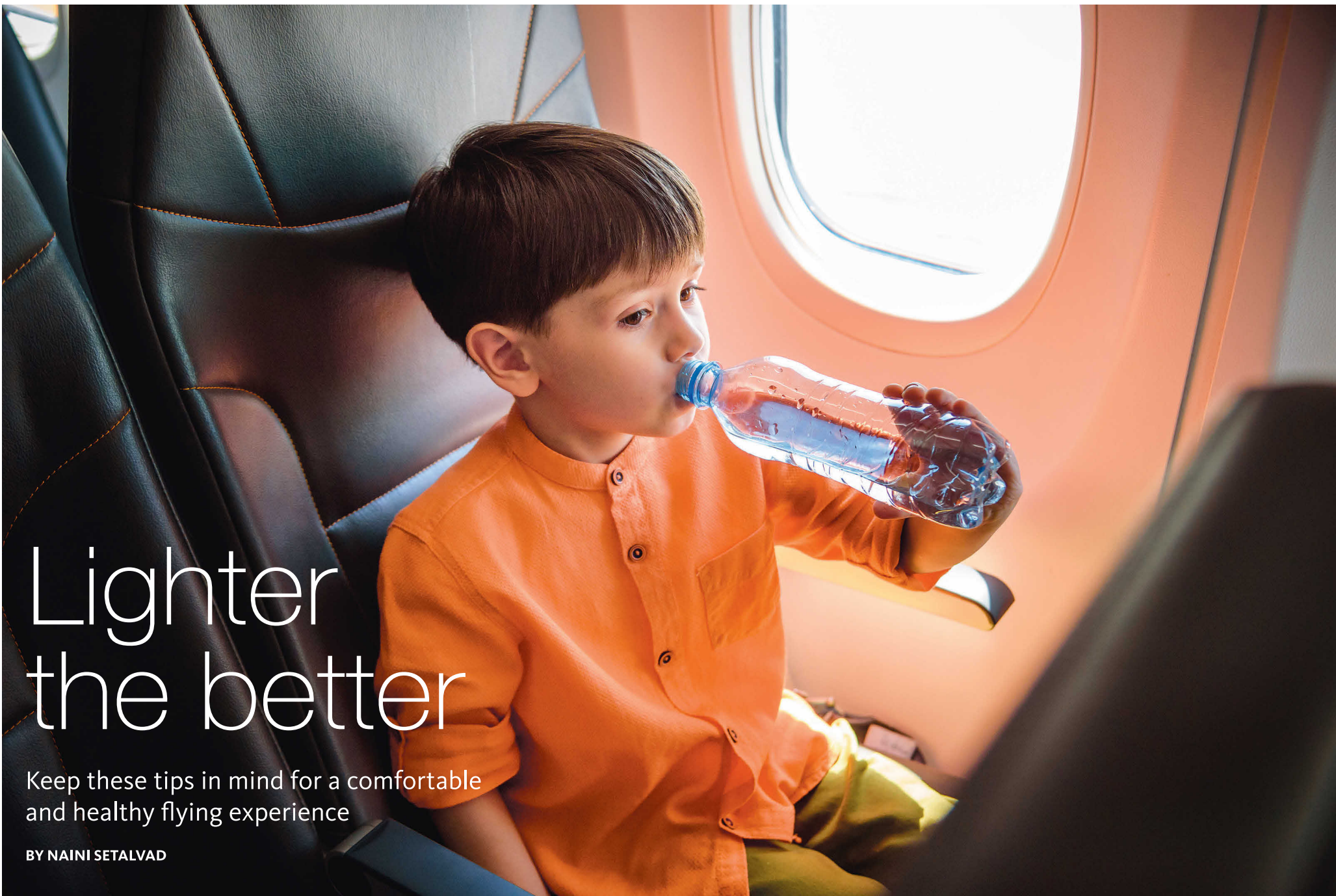
experience, and there'll be so much to learn, too, along with the blending of cultures! Absolutely breathtaking, if I think about it.

## Why do you think your life is smart?

My life is smart because I'm a highly organised person, and that reduces my stress on so many levels. I don't worry too much, and that itself brings me the energy to live my life fully. I also don't waste time thinking of what I could have done, and instead, focus on what could be done. I don't live with regrets.

As told to Oshin Grace Daniell





# Lighter the better

Keep these tips in mind for a comfortable and healthy flying experience

BY NAINI SETALVAD

**T**he last thing you want to feel when you are 39,000 feet up in the air is sluggish, sickly or, worse, 'hangry', especially during the time of Covid-19 when we are tense about travelling.

Crammed seats, cabin pressure, blocked ears, greasy food, too many

layovers, changing time zones and cold air—all combine to tax our body and mind in more ways than one. Let me go through some problems that may occur during the flight and how we can cope with them.

The common ear pressure problem has simple solutions. One is to keep

sipping water during takeoff and landing as the act of swallowing prevents the ears from getting blocked. Another simple solution is to keep chewing as constant chewing increases the swallowing of saliva. I also recommend that you try chewing on cardamom and fennel seeds or chew on one or

two clove pieces which you can carry from home. This will also clean up your throat and prevent the bronchial tracts from being congested.

For anyone taking a flight that is longer than an hour, I always tell them they must get up frequently. If this is not possible because of social distanc-

ing, stretch in your seat. You could rotate your neck, ankle and wrist, move your feet up and down, or stretch your hands in circular motions. This helps to relieve the tension and prevent cramps and blood clotting, and improves blood circulation and oxygen supply in the body.

I have also noticed that most people do not drink water on flights. Keep sipping on room temperature water or warm water, if possible, to prevent a dry mouth and improve blood circulation and oxygen supply in the body. Avoid cold water as it can make you catch a cold or cough. You need an additional litre of water on flights compared with when you are on the ground because it is very easy to get dehydrated while on a flight.

My go-to remedy for preventing or retarding air sickness is to suck on lemon and chew on small pieces of fresh ginger root. This prevents the nausea that is commonly associated with air sickness.

So, I recommend carrying a mini travel condiment box containing ginger, clove, fennel seeds, lemon slices and cardamom.

If you carry smart food, you can prevent bloating, an upset stomach and dehydration. Moreover, food may not be available at the departure gates because of Covid-19. So, it is always better to carry your own food.

I recommend fruits and nuts as they are easy to carry and I make sure that every client of mine has a good supply of them when they are flying. Pears, apples, oranges and grapes travel well. Pistachios, cashews, almonds, walnuts or any nut that you like, including the humble peanut, are good in-flight snacks. The nuts will keep you full for a longer time as fats have a high satiety value.

Additionally, on long flights one could always pack a vegetable and roti meal or a vegetable sandwich. These are packed with enough energy and the correct nutrition to help you stay light, yet nourished. Put them in your handbag in small air tight containers or bags.

It is imperative that you stay away from aerated beverages and alcohol and cut down on your coffee and tea consumption since they are the root cause of dehydration and can cause a dip in your energy levels. You must also try to avoid fruit juices since they only add excess calories while taking out the fibre from the fruit. All fried snacks should go out the window as they will hamper your immunity.

If you are purchasing food in-flight, use the option to choose beforehand and try to order a healthy, low-fat meal. These days there are plenty of options such as fruit platters, special meals for diabetics, heart-friendly meals and vegan meals. If food is available in airports and you are buying from there, please try to see that your food is packed hygienically.

While all these might take a bit of planning, organisation and preparation, the benefits of better blood circulation and sleep quality on board, no tummy troubles, reduced jet lag and, not to mention, a trimmer waist line make it worth the effort!

Lastly, if you are on medication, make sure you check with your doctor about when and how to take them since your timings are going to change.

## Smart eating tips for long flights:

- ❖ Make sure to sip on water throughout the day
- ❖ If you feel hungry then you can have a fruit mid-flight
- ❖ You can follow that with a vegetable sandwich
- ❖ In between, you can snack on a handful of nuts or with your meal if you are still hungry
- ❖ As dinner or lunch after landing, you can have a vegetable soup with sautéed vegetables and roti or rice as well as dal or curd or egg or fish or chicken. Avoid red meat and cold cuts

So, don't just have a safe flight. but also a healthy one.

Setalvad is a nutritionist based in Mumbai.

Got a question for Naini? Write to us at [slife.theweek@gmail.com](mailto:slife.theweek@gmail.com)





# Is bigger, better?

Myths related to obesity and the risk associated with a higher BMI

BY DR APARNA GOVIL BHASKER

Obesity has emerged as one of the biggest silent killers of this century. Unfortunately, as we struggle to perceive obesity as a disease, it has already attained epidemic proportions. There are many myths that are associated with obesity as a disease. Here are a few of them.

## Fat means prosperous

This is one of the biggest myths about obesity. Most people in India think that

a chubby child looks cute or having a protruding tummy is a sign of good health. However, it is high time we realise that rates of childhood obesity are increasing manifolds in our country. Children suffering from obesity are prone to develop diseases like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol at a very young age. As for adults who suffer from obesity, they get affected by a host of diseases that include type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol, sleep apnoea, liver and lung disease, gout, joint pains, infertility, PCOD, gall stones, hernias and a higher risk of certain cancers. Obesity affects the body from head to toe and is the root cause of many diseases.

## No or less physical activity+ unhealthy diet=obesity

While unhealthy diet and low level of physical activity are the two big causes on which treatment of obesity tends to be based, there are many other contributors that are neglected. Obesity is a multifactorial disease and some of the other causes include psychosocial stress, heredity, fatigue, chronic pains, psychological stress, sleep deprivation, medications, endocrine issues and some syndromes. With recent advances in obesity research, the advice to just “eat less and move more” may be too simplistic and patients need to be evaluated in much more detail. A personalised framework must be created for every patient and root cause of obesity needs to be addressed.

## Needs motivation

It is commonly believed that individuals suffering from obesity are less active. People are generally biased against them and tend to label them as lazy individuals with low will-power. While it is absolutely important to be physically active, it is not necessary that patients suffering from obesity are not as active as their non-obese counterparts. Many patients that come for weight loss consultation have actually tried numerous activities and methods

to lose weight. The usual story is that they put in a lot of effort in physical activity and lose weight. But as soon as the activity is stopped because of some reason, even for a few days, the weight tends to come back with a vengeance.

## Diets don't fail, patients do

Most people who come to a weight loss clinic have usually tried multiple diet plans. They have been through supervised and unsupervised diets and have usually done it all. Most people lose about 5 per cent to 10 per cent of their body weight in the short term but they regain almost all the weight back within 1 to 5 years. What we need to understand is that, it is not about being able to lose weight, it is about being able to maintain the weight loss. While we tend to blame the weight regain on the patient, there are multiple neuroendocrine, hormonal and metabolic factors that are responsible and contribute to weight gain. Weight regain is not a failure of a diet plan, but it is the natural progression of a chronic disease that is obesity. Next time before you blame yourself for failing a diet, do remember that it is not entirely your fault. Sometimes, the disease may be stronger than the treatment provided.

## If you have enough willpower you can lose weight

Obesity is not a choice. If one could choose, one would never choose to be obese. As doctors we need to remember that the same weight loss interventions may lead to very different results in different patients. One size certainly does not fit all patients and there are some patients who can be classified as “poor responders”. It is not always a case of poor willpower that a patient may not be able to achieve the desired weight loss results. Many a times, patients are putting in a lot more effort than the result achieved and this must push the doctors into probing in more detail about the possible reasons for ineffective weight loss. This can also be an indicator to escalate treatment





in the form of drug therapy or bariatric surgery.

### Weight loss, the yardstick of weight management

While weight loss numbers are important, success of a weight loss programme must not be measured only in these terms. Too much focus on weight loss can lead to undesirable outcomes like unhealthy food choices, body image issues, fluctuating between weight loss and weight gain, eating disorders and reduced self-esteem. On the other hand, weight loss programmes must focus on reduction of associated diseases and improvement in overall quality of life. Our focus needs to shift from weight to health and wellness.

### Risks associated with higher BMI

In addition to the above myths we also need to focus on risks associated with higher BMI. It is generally observed that as the weight and BMI increase, the risk of associated diseases starts going up and the quality

of life becomes poorer. Obesity is associated with type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and higher risk of heart disease. Obesity is also associated with a higher risk of strokes and intracranial hypertension in some cases. It is also associated with gout and joint related issues. In case of older patients, it is common to see knee joint issues which may require an early knee replacement. Patients suffering from obesity also suffer from back pain. Obesity has also become one of the most common reasons for diseases of the liver such as fatty liver, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) and cirrhosis of liver. Obstructive sleep apnoea and other lung issues are also commonly seen with obesity. Most patients find it difficult to walk even a few steps without feeling breathless.

Obesity specifically affects women at every stage in life. Adolescent girls are prone to develop polycystic ovarian disease (PCOD) which may lead to insulin resistance in future. Women suffering

from obesity also have difficulty in conceiving and respond poorly to fertility treatments. They also have a higher chance of miscarriages and a higher chance of having a caesarean section. Women suffering from obesity also have a higher incidence of breast cancer and endometrial cancer of the uterus.

In conclusion, obesity is a debilitating disease that affects the body from head to toe. Increasing weight and BMI increases the chances of developing obesity associated comorbidities and decreases the quality of life. We need to be less judgemental about patients suffering from obesity and instead of fostering myths we must look deeply into the reasons for obesity and provide solutions as per the stage of the disease. As the disease gets more severe, we need to escalate the treatment options which may vary from diet and lifestyle modification to drug therapy to bariatric surgery in selected patients.

Bhasker is a bariatric and laparoscopic surgeon at Apollo Spectra Hospital, Mumbai.

# ▶ inhale

ABREAST OF LATEST TRENDS, DEVELOPMENTS



If you are having trouble relaxing your nerves, bergamot can be useful. It is a citrus fruit that grows exclusively in the coastal region of Southern Italy. Bergamot oil is extracted from the fruit's peels and it has an aromatic scent. One study found that women who inhaled bergamot had lower levels of saliva cortisol (stress hormone). There are also studies that have linked the scent to positive mood changes as well. The oil is commonly used in flavouring Earl Grey tea, scenting perfumes, and in aromatherapy to reduce anxiety. Additionally, citrus bergamot lowers blood sugar levels, promotes good cholesterol and reduces fatty deposits in the liver. It is also rich in polyphenols which help protect the body against cardiovascular disease, diabetes, bone loss, cancer and other health disorders.



# Washoku way

With exclusive cooking styles and interesting plating, Japanese cuisine offers an abundance of gastronomical delights

BY RUPALI DEAN

Japanese cuisine, also known as 'washoku', is full of precision and discipline. Though it has been majorly influenced by other food customs, it has managed to build its own identity. The Japanese have developed their own exclusive cooking styles and also eating habits. Time-saving cooking methods have been adopted from the west, which are widely accepted in all parts of Japan; these include instant ramen noodles, instant miso, pickling mixes as well as an electric rice cooker. The Japanese take their produce very seriously, they believe in using fresh ingredients while preparing a meal. They also like making their food plate look beautiful, hence they believe in the concept of arranging their food properly. Its popularity has increased over the years and its flavours have travelled across the globe. Here are the top five places in India where one can indulge in the best of Japanese cuisine.



Spicy crispy salmon skin at Megu

## Megu

**The Leela Palace Hotel,  
Chanakyapuri, Diplomatic Enclave,  
New Delhi**

*Meal for two: ₹10,000 plus taxes  
without alcohol*

A combination of contemporary design with roots from early Japanese culture, Megu looks remarkable featuring a signature crystal Buddha raised over a pool of water with a Japanese bonsho bell suspended from the ceiling. The 800lb bell represents the traditional Japanese handiwork in the Todaiji temple in Nara, Japan. Each dish is served in a precisely envisioned handcrafted plate or bowl inspired by the dish itself. It is the first and the only restaurant to offer sparkling sake, each available by either carafe or bottle. On offer is an impressive wine list of nearly 300 labels including some of the world's best labels like Domaine de la Romanee-Conti, Richebourg, Petrus, La Tache and Dom Enotheque that perfectly complement the culinary odyssey! "It has been a very exciting and challenging journey so far. It is challenging because you have to cater to a large vegetarian audience which also makes it exciting at the same time, as it motivates to do something new and interesting. It is truly a prestigious reward when these guests visit again and again with more of their friends and family," says Shimomura Kazuya, head chef, Megu.

### Must try

- Shira Ae, tofu, spinach, bubu arare, sesame sauce
- Crispy Asparagus, asparagus coated with kakinotane
- Spicy Baked Eel, Tobiko, Mayonnaise
- Grilled Rock Lobster, Garlic, Butter, Citrus, Oba Leaf, Scallions
- 24 Hours Braised Pork Belly, Kakuni Sauce
- Sashimi, sushi and House special rolls



## Yuuka

**The St Regis Mumbai**  
462, Senapati Bapat Marg,  
Lower Parel, Mumbai

*Meal for two: ₹8,000 plus taxes  
without alcohol*

The restaurant has minimalist décor and assertions of Portoro marble, high gloss mirrors interplayed with Japanese brocade to form a reviewed origami pattern. The space is focused around the black and gold reef enthused wall watching the shared Sushi Bar where chefs handroll fresh sushi to the pleasure of all guests. Creativity of chef Ting Yen with the touch of Nikkei style cuisine put together with years of experience in Japanese cuisine with a contemporary touch makes Yuuka stand out from the others. Salmon on fire is a trendy style, and this exclusive eatery was the first in India to get the practice locked down, and their mastery of flavour, top-notch service and a princely sake list, keeps the distinctive occasion crowd coming back.

### Must try

- › Salmon on fire, Yuzu, and Kabayaki marination, served over flaming coffee beans.
- › Tiger tear maki, traditional uramaki with a touch of Indian flavour avocado tartare and kewpie mayo.
- › Shiro miso, pacific black cod, sweet shiro miso sauce and hajikame.
- › Peruvian truffle seabass steamed and grilled marinated in truffle salt and truffle oil and served with truffle garlic white sauce and freshly shaved truffle.
- › 40-layer green tea cake, tamago style crepes layered with matcha cream.



Salmon on fire at Yuuka



## Ebisu

**Palm Spring Plaza, Golf Course Road, DLF Phase 5, Sector 54, Gurugram, Haryana**

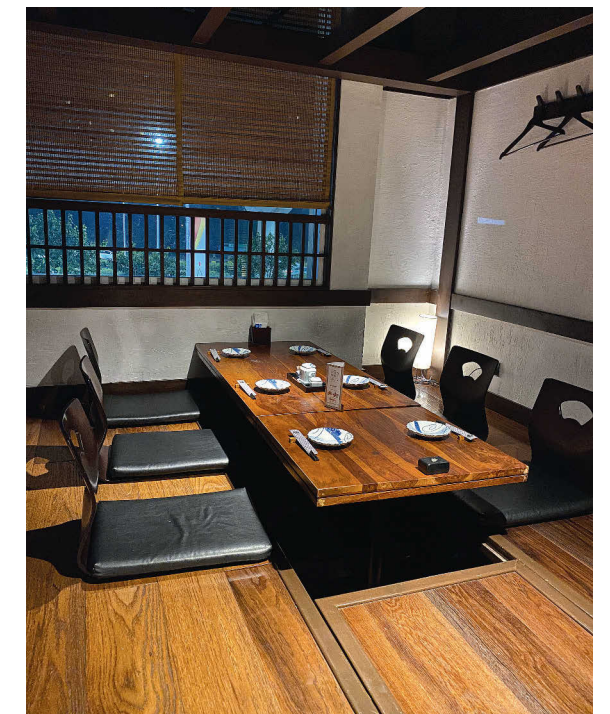
*Meal for two: ₹2,500*

Elegant, warm and welcoming along with a few tatami rooms (private dining), Ebisu offers classic Japanese cuisine. In addition to their top-tier sushi, expect to find a delightful feast of sashimi, mouth-watering tonkatsu and a stunning grilled aubergine glazed with a sweet miso sauce. The kitchen serves a nice assortment of crispy fried tempura, a scrumptious katsu curry, hot udon noodles in a well-balanced broth, sticky rice and an irre-

sistible miso soup. The overall meal experience is outstanding, as each dish is exceptional in its own way and will not leave you disappointed. The service is tremendously warm and friendly and makes the dining experience worthwhile. Head chef Hisayuki Nishioka, previously head Japanese chef at Marina Bay Sands Hotel in Singapore is a decorated Japanese chef with over 25 years of experience in authentic Japanese cooking.

### Must try

- › Nigiri Jyushu Moriwase, Sushi
- › Maguro Carpaccio, Tuna salad
- › Yaki Gyoza, pork dumplings
- › Tonpei yaki, Japanese style stuffed omelette
- › Buta Stamina yaki, quick cooked pork with garlic
- › Una Ju, rice and eel bowl







Kampai sashimi platter

## Kampai

**Worldmark 1, G-02, Aerocity, New Delhi**

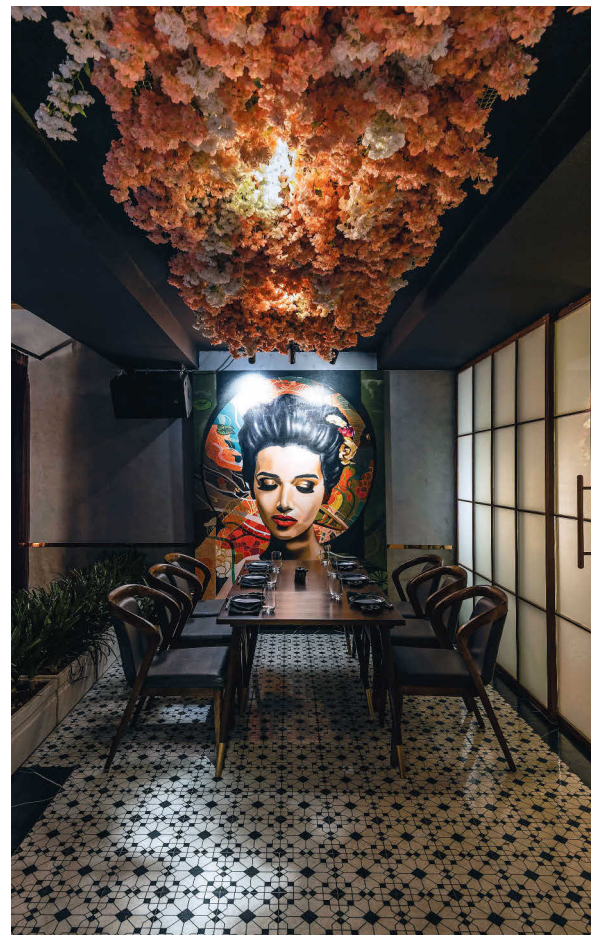
*Meal for two: ₹2,200 +taxes*

Kampai is one of the few stand-alone contemporary Japanese restaurants in Delhi. With a consulting Japanese chef, it boasts of a 65 per cent Japanese clientele. The interiors will transport you to Japan, with its cherry blossom ceiling, tatami style private dining rooms and a unique projection of the skyline of Tokyo. There are two private dining rooms, which are traditional Japanese style tatami rooms that can accommodate up to 12 people each. Some tables are placed directly under a ceiling of sakura flowers, which are in bloom throughout the year! There are tables that are tucked inside unique drapes to give you privacy, and there are regular tables on the main floor along with bar seating.

There is also a serene outdoor area which is designed like a Japanese Zen garden. Patrons get to experience this beautiful cuisine which is way beyond just Sushi and Tempura along with some delicious cocktails in a cosy and relaxing ambience.

### Must try

- › Tofu miso soup
- › Tantan men ramen Tahini and shrimp broth with minced chicken, bok choy, leeks and spring onion
- › Tori no karaage karaage style fried chicken
- › Maguro katsu maki sushi roll signature sushi. Panko fried roll stuffed with cheddar cheese and topped with chopped tuna
- › Horenso No Goma-ae Salad, spinach salad with a toasted sesame dressing
- › Three mushroom gyoza pan-fried Japanese dumplings with three varieties of mushrooms, cheese and hint of truffle oil



Yaki soba at Sakura

## Sakura

**The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, Delhi**

*Meal for two: ₹3,000+taxes*

Sakura is India's first Japanese eatery. This award-winning fine-dining restaurant with its three elegant private dining rooms offers the best of Japanese cuisine. The vital manifestation of flavour is the emphasis here. The window blinds are deliberately designed to look like interior accents common to most houses in Japan. The stone floor and the colour found on the walls suggest soothing, natural elements that draw stimulus from the earth. The rich fabrics and chief grade wood furniture gives the restaurant a current and warm look, but also upholds the equilibrium between tradition and avant-gardism.

### Must try

- › Edamame
- › Buta shoga yaki, ginger pork
- › Asparagus tempura roll
- › Ebiten temaki, fried shrimp sushi
- › Salmon steak
- › Yaki soba, classic stir fry noodles





# STAY HOME, STAY FIT

Get your spirits up during this lockdown with some quarantine workout

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL



Telecommuting got a whole new meaning during this lockdown. The concept of ‘work from home’ has not only contributed to a minor form of lethargy among people but has also resulted in an erratic lifestyle. With restrictions on movement, the pressure of social distancing and the frustration of being stuck within the four walls of our homes, many resorted to the social media trend of quarantine cooking. From no-bake cakes to pan pizzas, people have been experimenting in their kitchens. And where does all this food go? Right down the food pipe, into our stomach resulting in layers of adipose.

With the calorie intake directly proportional to the likes that one gets on Instagram for every food post, quarantine weight gain is something

that everyone is talking about. While restrictions on businesses may ease soon, public spaces like gyms and parks will stay closed for months to come. The big question is, what will the fitness fanatics do?

No matter how the lockdown situation goes, don’t let your fitness goals go down the drain this year. Lack of access to workout equipment is simply no excuse to be a couch potato.

If you are looking for a straightforward workout that will really get the blood pumping, then this is it. Esha Singh, managing director, Myprotein, shares a full body workout, designed to help you build strength and blast stubborn fat. It is equipment free, so you can get your sweat on wherever you are and whenever you want.

However, don’t overdo it; start small and work your way up.



## Bodyweight squat

- ◆ Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and toes slightly pointed outwards.
- ◆ Inhale and hinge at the hips and bend into the squat position, keeping your knees behind your toes, chest up, and back straight.
- ◆ Push back up through your heels and exhale, bracing abs throughout movement.

**Tip:** Squats target the thighs (mainly quadriceps and hamstrings) but are also great for building bigger, stronger glutes and abs.





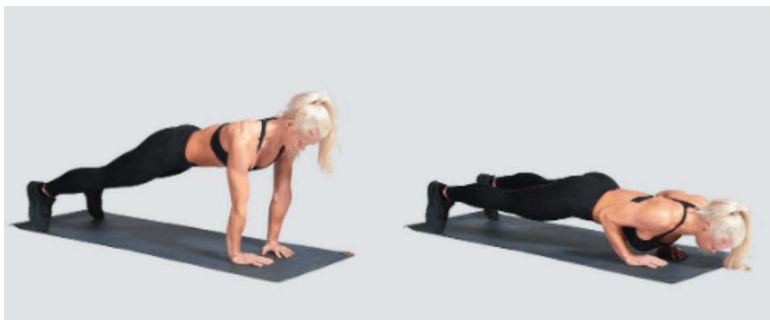
### Bodyweight reverse lunge

- ◆ Standing upright with your hands on the hips, take a big step backwards with one foot.
  - ◆ Bend your legs so that your front leg is parallel to the floor and your back knee is just off the ground.
  - ◆ Slowly straighten and repeat on the other leg.
- Tip:** Reverse lunges are also great for the lower body, working mainly on hips, glutes, thighs and even calves.



### Plank hold

- ◆ With your face down on the floor, plant your hands directly under your shoulders, like you are at the top of a push up.
  - ◆ Squeeze your glutes and abs to stabilise your body and keep your back straight.
  - ◆ Hold this pose for as long as you can without compromising your form (don't let your butt dip).
- Tip:** Planks are a surprising effective exercise as they are ideal for the ab muscles and engage all the major core muscle groups of the body.

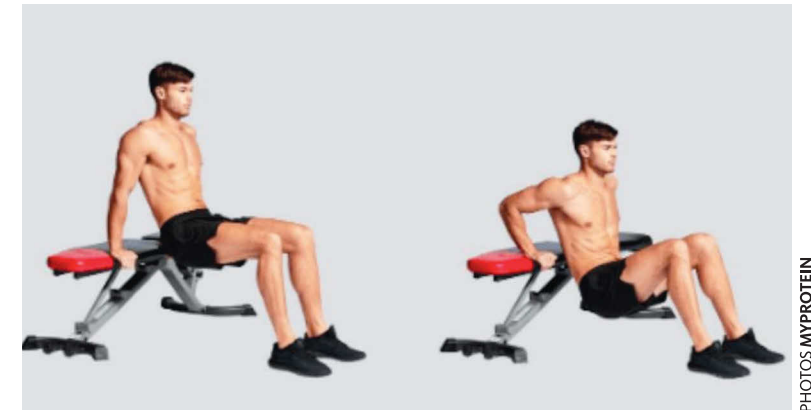
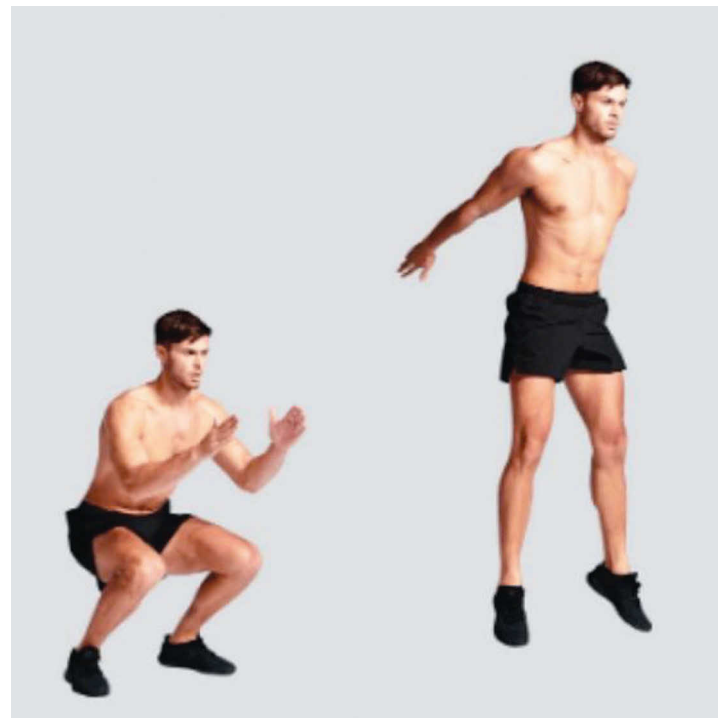


### Press-up

- ◆ Lying on your chest, place your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and push up onto your toes.
  - ◆ Keep your body straight by engaging your core muscles and then push up until your arms are straight, keeping your elbows reasonably close to your body.
  - ◆ Lower your back to the starting position and repeat.
  - ◆ If you can't manage a full press-up, take it down a notch. Try doing them on your knees instead of your feet.
- Tip:** Press-ups, also called push-ups, really work on your upper body strength. The muscles they work are your triceps, pectorals, shoulders, lower back and abs.

### Jump squat

- ◆ Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes slightly pointed outwards.
  - ◆ Inhale and hinge at the hips and bend into the squat position, keeping your knees behind your toes, chest up, and back straight.
  - ◆ Push back up through your heels and as you do, jump up, using your arms to propel you upwards.
  - ◆ Land as softly as you can and then repeat.
- Tip:** Jump squats work on the lower body muscles as regular bodyweight squats. It also increases your explosive power, improves upper body and lower back strength, and burns calories faster.



### Tricep dip

- ◆ Position your hands behind you, shoulder-width apart, on the edge of a stable bench or chair when sitting.
  - ◆ Straighten your arms, with a slight bend at the elbows (to take the pressure off your joints) and then lower your body off the chair and towards the ground to a 90-degree angle.
  - ◆ Press back up to finish the move and then repeat.
- Tip:** These dips mainly work on the triceps. It is great for toning the shoulders and chest as well.



# Read between the lines

Graphologist Sudhir Kove talks about gauging one's personality through handwriting analysis

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL



**T**hey say the key to success is hard work. But graphologist Sudhir Kove believes there is more to it than just hard work. According to him, factors like logos, symbols and handwriting play a pivotal role in attaining success. As controversial as it sounds, many who support this pseudoscience say that it can be used to evaluate personalities and thereby

resolve problems. Graphology is the study of handwriting as used to infer a person's character. Every stroke and slant points to an attribute associated with the person's behaviour. But the question is, doesn't the way we write change with time? It does, and so does our behaviour, according to Sudhir. Citing anecdotal evidence, he says that a subtle change makes a big difference.

Known as 'Logo Guru', the Pune-based software engineer-turned-graphologist sheds light on the little-known science of personality evaluation through handwriting, symbols, signs and logos.

## *What made you choose graphology over software engineering?*

Growing up, I never really had a good relationship with the ones around me.

But, I had the desire to be better and this desire made me look out for solutions. It was in 2006, during my final year that I came across graphology. Initially, it started off as an interest but as I delved deeper, I realised that I started understanding myself better—the way I behave, why I behave the way I do and my emotional drifts. I also started to understand the people

around me. It changed the way I looked at myself, my behaviour and my thinking pattern. I read plenty of books on graphology but books don't teach you everything so I took up short-term courses conducted by experts. I also did a lot of research on my own.

## *Was the transition from software engineering to graphology difficult?*

The change in career did have its own set of problems in the beginning. I come from a lower middle-class family and my parents just wanted me to finish my engineering degree and get a decent job. I did my undergraduate studies in Mumbai and I got a job in a software company soon after my graduation. It was not that I wasn't good at software engineering but I felt that graphology is my calling. Software had a boom that time and leaving it seemed like the most foolish thing to do. My father stopped talking to me for about two months when I decided to take up graphology seriously as a full-time profession. He kept on complaining and warned me against making choices on an impulse. I quit my job and started a firm on my own.

## *What were the challenges you faced?*

When I started my firm, I had low confidence. I was passionate and I had the know-how but I did not have the knowledge on how to incorporate certain aspects into my business model. After the initial six months, I backed out of the business that I pioneered. But I was not afraid of taking risks and I started two other businesses; I failed in both. Usually people don't play with fire once they know that it burns but I was not ready to give up. I started a business in Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation and it got considerable success. The failures helped me understand the pattern associated with success. I watched how successful entrepreneurs operated; I analysed their handwriting, signature, the logo of their companies and other graphological aspects that were associated with their success. It took

me seven years to understand the challenges of running a business first hand. Soon I was able to recognise various patterns and the core of graphology.

## *How does the concept of graphology work?*

Good question. In the case of the medical field, doctors look at several symptoms that point to a possible condition the patient might have. Graphology is hard core science. It tells you the actual problem to a point of perfection. The science also enables one to resolve those issues and not just treat the symptoms. I call it a blend of art and science. Identifying the patterns and then connecting it to different attributes is science and diplomatically putting it forward to a person is art. Most times, people don't take it in the right way; they feel put down or blamed for their failure. Entrepreneurs are our main focus group, and the first thing that we do is study their business model. We look at the current position of the company, its strengths, weaknesses and thrust areas that need improvement. While designing the logo, we do not compromise on the positives of the company; we keep the strength of the company intact. We usually take 25 days to come up with a logo. However, if the logo is good, then we change the signature of the entrepreneur or the director of the firm because the company is their vision and they are responsible for changes in the company; it is the way they think that can make or break a company.

## *What, according to you, is a good signature?*

The first thing is clarity. One needs to have a legible signature as it shows that there is clarity in the thoughts of the person. The clearer your thinking is, the clearer will be your plan. I firmly believe that unforeseen accidents and sudden medical emergencies happen to people because individuals are not clear about what they want. An unclear signature means that you are not effectively communicating with the universe. The





impact promotions, salary hike and financial success. After changing the signature, I ask my clients to practise it for at least 45 minutes every day.

*Even wrist watches are symbolic of certain things. What are some things associated with it?*

I started wrist watch analysis 10 years back. They say time is money. It can even change your relationship. Everything is a manifestation of time. Wristwatch is indicative of time and is a very powerful tool to mend certain areas of life. I usually fix on the kind of watches to be worn based on the profession of the person. It also depends on the personality traits of an individual. For example, I recommend a watch with Roman numerals for individuals who work in the marketing field as it aids in meeting and interacting new people (as per graphology).

*Can somebody fool a graphologist?*

I don't think so. A person may be able to change the style of writing when it comes to three or four sentences but there will always be a break in pattern to the actual one when an individual is asked to write more than that. These shifts in patterns are easily recognisable; it is called involuntary action. The best analogy I can give you is the way one walks. Every individual has a unique way of walking. If they are asked to walk differently, the individuals may do it for a short period of time but not more than a kilometre or so.

*Is graphology only for entrepreneurs?*

I think everybody must visit a graphologist once in their lifetime. Individuals get to recognise certain flaws and personality problems that may impede them from attaining success. People get answers to various questions related why they are not becoming successful or why they are not able to move ahead in life despite all the hard work that they put in. As a career option, it is an amazing path to take. One can easily earn ₹2-3 lakh per month in this field but it is not a cakewalk. □

second important aspect of a good signature is the underscore. A bold underscore is symbolic of confidence and conviction in whatever that person does. Number three is having an upward angle. It is necessary to have a signature that is at a 20-25-degree angle upwards. It shows that the person is optimistic and hopeful about life.

*Do people take you seriously?*

Graphology is not as popular as numerology or *vaastu shastra* but more and more people are becoming sensitised about it. Last December, I

met the person in charge of Fortune Vastushilpa Developers LLP. They had trouble with manpower, documentation and finance. We changed the logo and most of their issues got sorted. The company was able to recover money in a matter of months post the logo change. It also got a new set of employees who increased the efficiency of the company. I charge a considerable amount for changing the signature so that people don't take these things lightly. Usually it takes around six months for people to start experiencing changes. The change can directly

# || pause

HOLD THAT THOUGHT, INTROSPECT, QUESTION



Getting a cold wax done for hair removal might be the easiest option when you are in a hurry to get somewhere. But regularly using cold wax can damage the skin. The hair on your skin usually grows back in two to four weeks. Most people go for hot wax instead which is said to be more effective than a cold wax and lasts longer. The downside to hot waxing is pain, which can be intense in sensitive areas, or for people with sensitive skin. It is also common to experience redness, puffiness, bumps or irritation and ingrown hair from waxing. Redness and irritation however subside in a few hours, if not within the same day. Working at a slightly higher temperature than normal "warm wax", hot wax makes shorter and more stubborn hair easier to remove and can be a much more comfortable way of removing intimate hair. It works well on small patches of strong coarse hair and hot wax tends to have a better grip of hair than cold wax. The warmth of the wax also opens the pores, so in theory it should make the treatment less painful.



# The good fight

The resilience of an author who has been battling von Hippel-Lindau syndrome all her life

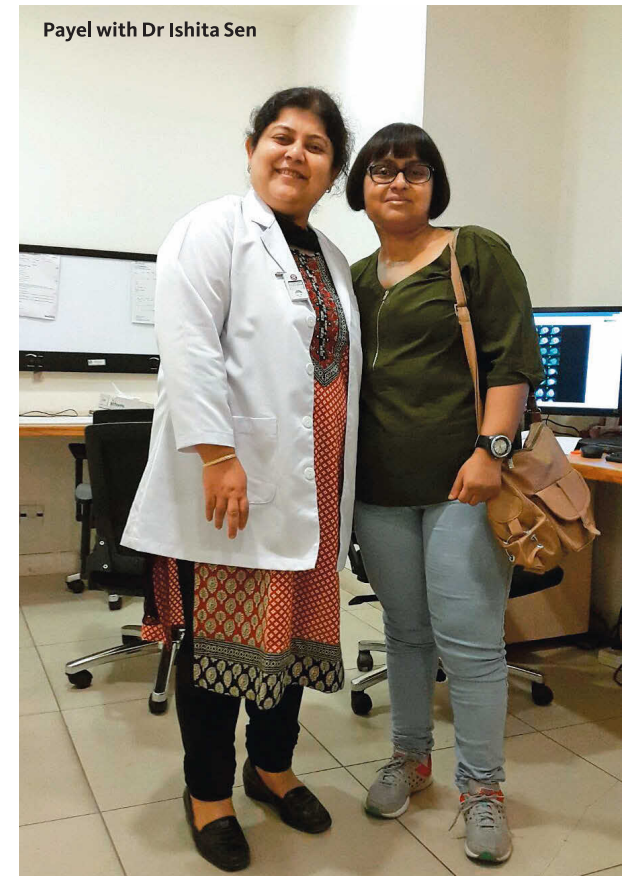
BY POOJA BIRAIA JAISWAL

Even as the world wages a war against Covid-19, Payel Bhattacharya has been fighting a battle of her own. For the last 40 years she has been living with a rare disease and complications arising out of it, and in the prevailing scenario that mandates a strict lockdown, the challenges of daily living have compounded like never before.

Bhattacharya was diagnosed with von Hippel-Lindau or VHL syndrome in her early teens. It is a rare, genetic multi-system disorder in which the capillary growth goes out of control. Capillaries that usually branch out like trees in normal people form knots or non-cancerous tumours in different organs of a VHL patient. Slow-growing hemangioblastoma—benign tumours with many blood vessels—may develop in different parts of the body including the brain, spine, retinas, near the inner ears, lungs, liver, pancreas and kidneys. When the tumours are treated

in one organ, they move on to the next organ and so on. When she began experiencing frequent headaches, loss of balance, dizziness, weakness of the limbs, vision problems and deafness in one ear, she went for a quick check-up. A mutation test revealed how the tumours were slowly affecting her organs. The VHL disease is so rare that one in 36,000 people across the world have the VHL gene and the disease manifestation is even rarer. Many patients die before they turn 30.

In Bhattacharya, VHL became the underlying condition leading to several other life-threatening complications such as trigeminal neuralgia and hypoparathyroidism. Till date, the writer of psychological thrillers, who lives with a sexagenarian mother in suburban Delhi, has survived 15 surgeries, frequent bouts of stabbing pain, thyroidectomy, a liver transplant, multidrug resistant tuberculosis and kidney cancer. In all her 40 years with



Payel with Dr Ishita Sen

the disease, not a single day has passed where she didn't have to take medicines—12 on average now and heavy immunosuppressants, too. Not once did she feel like a “normal person” who could perform rudimentary cognitive functions, one who could hop, skip and jump without a care in the world. Her food intake is limited to liquids, soft and mashed food and she cannot remember the last time she tasted chocolate, relished an ice cream or any other dessert for that matter.

“I never had a normal childhood,” says Bhattacharya. “All my life-saving surgeries and treatments and diagnoses happened in the nick of time. One of those malicious tumours sitting on my optic nerve in the brain makes me partially blind. Not even those killer sessions of radiation therapy could shrink it. Those tumours, especially the nasty ones popping up in my brain make living every day a constant fight.” About a year after her liver transplant, Bhattacharya lost her father.

She needs assistance for daily activities as she is not allowed to climb stairs, lift weights and is restricted in her movements, necessitating the use of a walking stick. Moreover, after undergoing



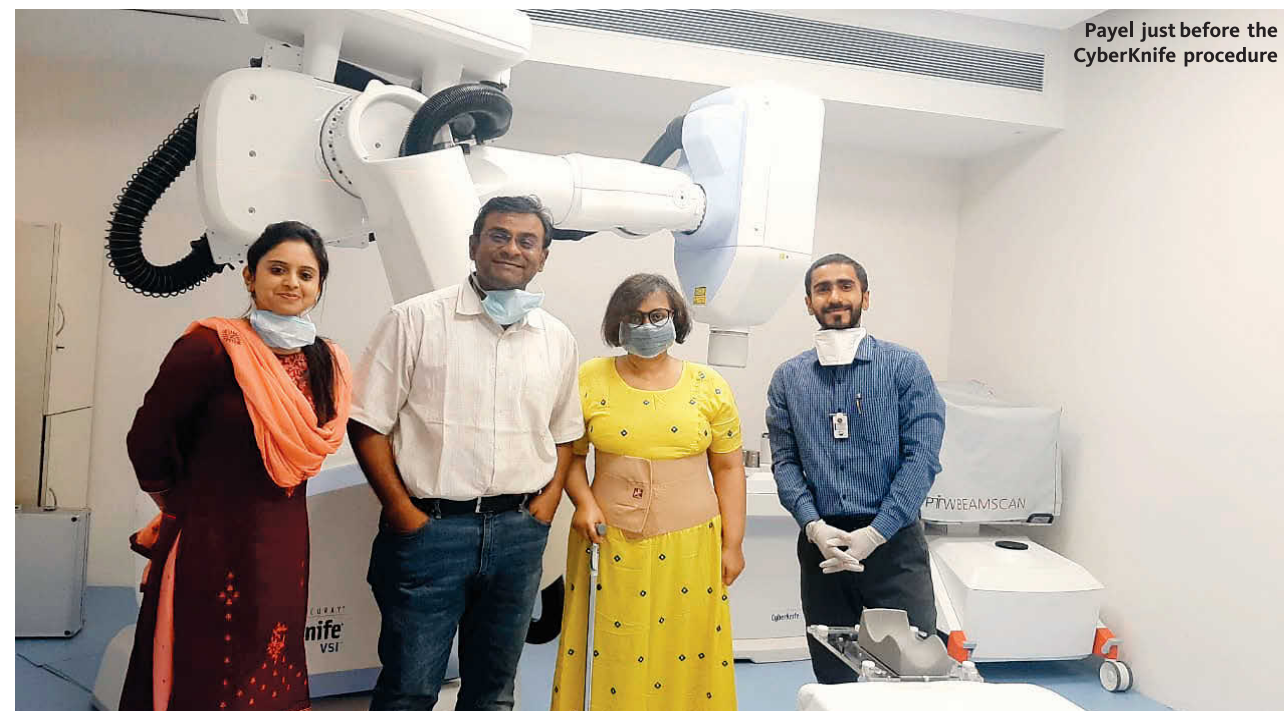


Payel with her mother and as a baby (below)



trigeminal neuralgia, which acts on facial muscles, she has also had trouble speaking for long durations. In 2008, she underwent a liver transplant for multiple hemangioblastomas in the liver. That was the first time the tumours resulting from VHL were seen and Bhattacharya and her family knew it was only the beginning. It was only a matter of time before the tumours would move to the other organs. Prior to that, she had hemangioblastoma related craniotomy and thyroidectomy. Thereafter, she developed multiple symptoms of VHL involving different organs and underwent CyberKnife radiosurgery for lesions. CyberKnife is an advanced form of radiosurgery that delivers high doses of precisely targeted radiation to destroy tumours or lesions within the body.

“Because of VHL she had multiple tumours in her liver for which she underwent liver transplant. That in turn led to medicines such as immunosuppressants which reduce the immunity of the patient so that the body does not reject the transplanted liver. Because of those drugs, her immunity went down and she contracted tuberculosis of the knee and the abdomen. Again, the VHL acted up and that led to lesions or tumours in the brain for which she underwent radiotherapy. So, each time, a certain disease was tackled, the other one would pop up,” explains Dr Ishita Sen, director and head, department of nuclear medicine, Fortis Memorial research institute, Gurugram. She treated Bhattacharya and detected a tumour in her kidney. “Such patients are also prone to having malignant tumours of the kidney. So, we had to take out a part of her left kidney and kept the rest of the kidney intact. During all this time, the tumours in the brain kept mushrooming due to the VHL,” explains Sen. Even now there is one tumour which is pressing against Bhattacharya’s optic nerve, which is why she is partially blind in one eye. “But there is nothing much we can do about it,” says Sen, explaining that the



Payel just before the CyberKnife procedure

techniques do not allow for the touching of such sensitive areas.

Bhattacharya never got married. Doctors had mentioned that the disease she is carrying has a high chance of being passed on to her progeny. Hailing from a wealthy Bengali family, she was the most cared-for child of her parents’ two children, until her father passed away. Since then, life has never been the same.

In March 2015, she underwent partial nephrectomy of the left kidney for malignant tumours. The same year, she received external beam radiation therapy (EBRT), which is the conventional technique for administering radiation therapy to the brain, again for the tumour near the optic nerve and hypothalamus. Bhattacharya has also had incisional hernia repair and this year in March, just as Covid-19 was spreading in the country, Bhattacharya completed CyberKnife treatment for her right trigeminal neuralgia. She was due for CyberKnife surgery for her bilateral trigeminal neuralgia, for which she would have had to travel to Mumbai on May 17. The lockdown spoiled her plans. She lives with her

mother and tries to read up all she can on VHL. “She is an extremely spirited girl and knows more about her condition than even the best of us,” says Sen. Bhattacharya is also actively helping others who may be suffering from rare diseases just like her.

“It seems that my time with surgeries, medicines, hospitals and doctors will never end, and I will die with it all,” says Bhattacharya, sounding sombre over the phone. According to Dr Thyagarajan Srinivasan, senior consultant liver transplant and hepatobiliary surgeon and chairman of Medanta Institute of Liver Transplantation and Regenerative Medicine, Bhattacharya might encounter surgeries multiple times in her lifetime. “This is because VHL varies in multiple organs. There is no consistent set of symptoms in each person. Every incidence of the disease has its own diagnostic evaluation and it can’t be predicted how many and how often tumours might recur in specific organ systems, creating problems and leading to further surgeries,” he says. Treatment of VHL varies according to the location and size of the tumour. In general, the objective

of the treatment is to treat the tumour before it grows into a size large enough to cause permanent problems. “It is a very rare and debilitating disease and has affected every organ of the body. These are sinister, very malignant tumours,” says Sen, talking about lesions resulting from VHL.

It is anybody’s nightmare to be in the situation in which she finds herself, feels Bhattacharya. “I try and write books, and the pain that comes along with typing continuously on the laptop with one eye, is indescribable,” she says. “There have been moments when I have felt as if my eyes were on fire, even as tears kept trickling down my cheeks. The pain at the back of my head doesn’t budge and the body’s many aches subside only momentarily. My trust in the cosmic spirit who created me and my will to enjoy this beautiful world with mum where little birds still sing on the trees and there is still warm sunshine waiting for me, make me bold enough to fight the cruelty of the pain gnawing into me and destroying my life. I have waged a war against VHL and I will not submit to it.” □



# Breast is best

A guide for new mothers on whether to nurse their babies during the pandemic

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

At a time when mankind is grappling with a global health crisis, any form of skin-to-skin contact raises concern. The pandemic has not only brought in panic among people but also a sense of paranoia. Especially among new mothers who have to closely associate with their babies on a daily basis. The act of breastfeeding is said to develop a strong emotional bond between the mother and the baby as it stimulates the release of the hormones serotonin and oxytocin in both of them. Although there has been no case of Covid-19 being passed from the mother to the baby through breastfeeding, precautions are to be taken since they fall in the vulnerable group.

Says Dr Preeti Ganga, IBCLC certified lactation consultant and paediatrician: "Post parturition (childbirth), women are generally low on immunity. Their body systems are in the process of recovering from the load of pregnancy and delivery. The initial four to six weeks are critical when it comes to recovery. During this time, it is best that she stays away from any form of infection. We always tell our patients to avoid visitors during this period. In the background of the pandemic, regular precautions should be taken like washing hands, disinfecting areas of the house that are frequently touched and maintaining respiratory hygiene."

Some new mothers tend to stop breastfeeding within six months after parturition due to several reasons like inverted nipple, flat nipple and in some cases, women just loathe the experience of nursing their babies. For new mother Maria Philip, the

whole act of breastfeeding was overwhelming initially. "The pressure associated with breastfeeding is a real thing and not many women are sensitised about it. I had always planned on nursing my daughter until she turns two but things did not go as I planned. She was born by emergency caesarean nearly three weeks early and my little girl did not really have an understanding of the concept of latching," she says. As she dreaded even the thought of nursing, she switched to formula milk sooner than recommended. "I started off with formula when my daughter was six weeks. I won't lie but I was filled with guilt for depriving my baby of all the nutrients she could get through the breast milk. This is the time when the country went into a complete lockdown and things just got harder. It had been over two weeks since I stopped lactating and I felt that I had dried up completely," Maria says. Although relactating is something that most mothers don't talk about or consider doing, the low availability of formula milk got many new mothers thinking.

According to Dr Mahima Bakshi, woman and child wellness consultant and author of *Birthing Naturally*, relactation is possible in case of a mother who has stopped lactating for about four to six weeks. "It is important for the mothers to stay calm as stress reduces milk supply. High levels of stress in breastfeeding mothers can lead to a difficult let-down reflex. Considering the pandemic stress, I think mental health of mothers is something that should be taken seriously. New mothers should engage in yoga, music therapy and other relaxation techniques in







order to prevent post-natal depression as well. As a matter of fact, early weaning is a result of stress and depression,” she says. Nutritional deficiency is another factor that reduces milk supply is deficiency. Nourishment is a must not just for a new born but also for a new mother. “Deficiency is a common problem among women after parturition. It can be anything—vitamins, proteins or good fats. I usually ask women to consume a calcium-rich diet, lots of fruits with natural vitamins (minimum of three fruits a day) and high protein meals. It not only helps with postpartum stress but also improves the immunity of the mother. Post-natal exercises also help in strengthening the immune system,” says Mahima.

She also emphasises on the importance of holding the baby close to the mother as it stimulates the release of hormones that support breastfeeding and mothering. “There are natural microbiomes present on the mother’s skin and skin-to-skin contact increases the baby’s immunity. It enables colonisation of the baby’s skin with the mother’s friendly bacteria, thus providing protection against infection,” she says. Skin-to-skin contact is also said to relax both the mother and the baby. The act regulates the baby’s heart rate and breathing, helping them to better

adapt to life outside the womb.

Although it is important for the mother to have a regular physical contact with her baby, there is also a fear of infections being transmitted through this touch. The coronavirus infection does not affect the foetus adversely, in terms of causing miscarriages or any other abnormality but women who are in their third trimester affected by the virus have a higher risk of getting into preterm labour. There is no clarity on whether the baby can get affected by the virus during labour. According to Preeti, a child’s immune system is not completely developed until the age of two and hence, it is essential for the child to be protected against any form of infection, be it Covid-19 or any other virus. “There are a lot of antibodies present in the breast milk but a child can get Covid-19 antibodies from the milk only if the mother has been exposed to the virus and has recovered from it,” she says.

In the absence of breast milk or formula, Preeti says cow’s milk or buffalo milk can be given as substitutes. Though Mahima firmly believes that mothers should try to relactate, given a situation where the mother cannot feed her child, she suggests on considering options like expressed milk or getting milk from donor milk banks. □

## Tips to relactate

- ❖ **See a lactation consultant:** A paediatrician or professional lactation consultant will assess both the mother and the baby. This will help the new mother prepare for the process effectively. In case the mother is on any medication, the expert will identify if it can have adverse effects on the baby.
- ❖ **Stay calm:** Stress usually increases the cortisol levels and this can have negative effects on the milk production. Also, don’t pressure the baby to suckle. Be optimistic and give the body time to adjust.
- ❖ **Commit to pumping more:** Milk production is based on demand and supply. So, the more you stimulate or pump, the more milk will be supplied. In case the baby does not latch, try using a hospital-grade breast pump to stimulate the nipples. Aim for 20-30 minute sessions every two to three hours with two of those sessions happening at night.
- ❖ **Skin-to-skin contact:** Make sure that the baby is close to the mother as this enables the child to familiarise with the process of relatching which will aid the process of relactation. The hormones released during the physical contact will not only relax the mother but also enable her to produce more milk.
- ❖ **Consume feed-stimulating food:** Food with lactogenic properties include green leafy vegetables like spinach and kale, and also berries. Try having oats, flaxseeds, almonds, avocados and bananas every day.
- ❖ **Drink a lot of water:** It keeps you hydrated which is crucial for milk production. If the body is not hydrated, then it will not have enough fluids to produce. Drink at least 10-12 glasses of water every day.

# ◀ exhale

CELEBRATE LIFE, CHOICES AND CHALLENGES

Have you ever wondered why most Koreans, Japanese and Chinese have glassy and flawless skin? The secret is barley tea. The drink, popular in Korea, Japan and China, is widely believed to provide health benefits including weight loss, blood sugar regulation, relief from digestive problems and even improvement in male fertility. In Korea, the drink is called bori-cha (bori meaning barley and cha meaning tea). In Japan, the drink is called mugicha and in China, the drink is called damai cha or mai cha. The primary ingredient in barley tea is roasted barley. Barley is popular with healthy eaters because of its high fibre content and mild taste. The flavour of barley tea is often described as light and nutty. However, some Korean tea makers include roasted corn in their recipe to boost sweetness. What more, it is caffeine-free.

## Get brewing

- Add about two tablespoons of the roasted barley to a medium pot (eight cups) of water and bring to a boil.
- Reduce the heat to a simmer and allow to cook for 15 to 20 minutes depending on your taste. Remove from heat and allow to cool.
- Reheat the barley tea to serve as a warm tea drink or refrigerate the barley water and serve cold.







# Wild & wonderful

This could have been  
Kirti Kulhari's year.  
It could still be

BY PRIYANKA BHADANI





# W

With the clouds of lockdown not clearing up, actor Kirti Kulhari feels a little unsettled as she misses the busyness synonymous with being an actor.

Though it may still take some time for things to get back in order, the comfort at the moment is in the recent success of the second season of *Four More Shots Please!* (FMSP). Revolving around four Mumbai girls, one of them being Kulhari's character Anjana Menon, the second season of the Amazon Prime Video series that started streaming in April, has stood out on many fronts. The show did get a large chunk of criticism for going beyond the convention and making the girls too wild. However, it was applauded for breaking taboos, creating uninhibited female characters who don't shy away from exploring sex and alcohol, and, more importantly, for giving women a more-than-equal representation on-screen as well as off-screen (the creator, writer, director are all women).

After spending some time at her parents' place in Kharghar, Kulhari is back in her Goregaon house, where she lives with her model-actor husband Saahil Sehgal. There is a small wooden hut-like structure in the housing complex which she finds very peaceful. She sits there during our conversation as

this is part of her daily evening routine during the lockdown. She knew that FMSP Season 2 is going to work well. "I have a sense of what is going to work. The previous season was great, no doubt about that. But for the second season, I knew that it was going to be better than last year when we read the script and, also, by the way we were shooting and going about it," she says, not taking away from the fact that the current situation, of people being locked up in their houses, may have played a part, too. "It added new loyalty to the show. There are a couple of people who ended up watching just season two by itself. The lockdown, of course, helped. But, I think season two worked better. Also, in season one, the characters were still being established," she says, adding that the familiarity of the audience with the characters may have helped as well.

Anjana is one of the two characters Kulhari credits for changing her career graph; the first being her intrepid portrayal of Falak Ali in *Pink*. Both the characters are unflinching, confident women in different scenarios. And, expectedly, both have led to some sort of discourse in their own way. In 2016, when *Pink* released and grew on word-of-mouth publicity, making 'no means no' a part of the popular discussion,

the character of Falak Ali stood out for taking a stand.

In the case of FMSP, Kulhari is both 'amazed and amused' by the reactions she got from the public to the character of Anjana—a divorced, single mother who has her head set on excelling as a corporate lawyer even if she has to stand up for biases at work every now and then. At the same time, her headstrong character is not hesitant to dump a boyfriend because she has a commitment phobia. It doesn't stop there, though. Anjana is not even wary of starting an affair with a married man who convinces her that he has an open marriage, and then not silly to not accept that she faltered. Anjana is flawed and real.

"Sometimes, people take your characters so personally. There are fans writing to me and comparing my other work with FMSP. They are telling me that I should not do shows like this. There are some hating me for dumping Arjun (Ankur Rathee). There are others who are telling me how Shashank (Sameer Kochhar) and I had great on-screen chemistry. And then, some are wondering about that bit of 'sleeping around with men' and are inquisitive if I am like that in real life as well," she says.



PHOTOGRAPHER: RAHUL JHANGIANI  
LOCATION: MANDARIN STUDIOS  
STYLIST: PRANITA SHETTY  
BRAND: APPAPO  
HAIR & MAKEUP: ELISHA BHAMBHANI AGARWAL & SAM ALI





## AT A GLANCE

**What are the languages you speak?**

Hindi, English, Marathi, Bengali, Rajasthani, Gujarati.

**What is on your reading list?**

I am reading *Close to the Bone* by Lisa Ray, her autobiography. I am also reading *A Thousand Seeds of Joy: Teachings of Lakshmi and Saraswati* by Ananda Karunesh and *The Bastard of Istanbul* by Elif Shafak.

**Your favourite sport.**

Badminton.

**What about sportsperson?**

I love Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

**A board game that you enjoy playing.**

I enjoy pictionary.

**Roles that changed your career graph.**

Falak Ali in *Pink* and Anjana Menon in *Four More Shots Please!*

**One role you regret turning down.**

There is one that I was offered (*Ram Prasad Ki Tehrvi*). It was written and directed by Seema Pahwa ji. I think Konkana (Sen Sharma) played the role that I was offered. I have not seen the film yet, but I regret not taking it up.

**Which decade do you think is the best in terms of movies made and why?**

I think the last 10 years have been pretty good for sure. I also enjoy the black and white era; I don't know what decade, but the 40s and also the 50s were absolutely lovely.

**One big change that you want in the entertainment industry.**

I want the whole hierarchy system to disappear. I want people to be treated equally; I want everyone and the unit to be treated equally—whether an actor has a five-minute role, two hours, or more. I think people just need to be more inclusive and treat others as their equal.

**Is there a director you are dying to work with?**

If you talk about Indian directors, I want to



work with Zoya Akhtar, Vikramaditya Motwane and Shakun Batra. I would also love to work with Mahesh Mathai.

**What about actors?**

I would love to work with Ranbir Kapoor. I have always wanted to work with him. I think he is a wonderful actor. I think I want to do something with Vicky again [after *Uri: The Surgical Strike*]; Rajkummar Rao, too. I would love to work with Vidya (Balan) again; also Vikrant Massey.

**A song that you can't stop singing.**

'Kaise Hua' from *Kabir Singh* and 'Nit Khair Manga'.

**Who is the first person you call when you want to deliver some news?**

I think I would call my husband and my parents.

**The funniest thing you have read about yourself.**

Some people have commented on my picture saying that I look like Michael Jackson. I am still trying to figure out how and from which angle. I was like... "Ok, what does that mean?" I have a very sharp nose and, of course, Michael Jackson had what he had. But it really amazes me. The first time I read it, I was like "what (laughs out loud)?" If you do see a similarity, please let me know.

**What inspires you the most?**

I think the more I am understanding life, the more I am understanding myself. I get very excited about every day, about learning something new and discovering myself. That is what really inspires me.

**The most inspiring people around you.**

I have learned a lot from my husband Saahil Sehgal. I have spent the maximum time with him and got to learn so much from him. There are times when people who you thought you know surprises you with something they say or do. It is amazing. I look forward to being inspired by everyone. If you talk about acting, I love Meryl Streep. She is one person in the world who really inspires me to be a good actor.

**One memorable vacation.**

I went to South America early this year to see the Amazon jungles and I was there for a week. That one week I spent there taking Ayahuasca

(a psychoactive brew) has been the most memorable ever.

**What is the most fulfilling thing in your life?**

Being the actor that I am and also just being on this journey of self-discovery.

**How did you meet your husband?**

We met during an advertisement shoot for Nivea in 2008.

**What was that moment when you decided that he could be your life partner?**

It was in 2014. We were not in touch for about five-six years. We met again at an audition in 2014 and after that, we started dating pretty quickly. Within two months, we were engaged. We were at his house in Visakhapatnam and there was this moment when I was like "So, where do you want to take this?" And he asked, "Are you proposing to me?" To which, I said, "Get down on your knees and say what you need to say." That was the time when we both decided.

**A suggestion you would give to your younger self?**

Love yourself. Learn to love yourself first.

**The one thing you look forward to after everything gets back to normal?**

Shooting and travelling.

**What has been your quarantine fitness regimen?**

I have been working out every single day. I work out in the morning and I happen to have some weights at home so I do weights and I also practise yoga. I work out for three days and then I take a break for a day and then three days again. I have been very good with my workout and diet.

**What do you eat on a typical day?**

My diet is very simple. I cook most of it and it is mostly Indian. So, I am a very daal-roti-sabji kind of person. I love eggs as well. So, breakfast is always eggs with some toast or milk. Then, in the afternoon and evening, it is roti-sabji. Nothing fancy. I don't know how to cook fancy first of all, but I personally also just enjoy nothing more than healthy *ghar-ka-khana*.



“Every time you break that image, it is like you are breaking an idea in their head and most people are not comfortable with that”

Kulhari is amused at the fact that the audience start connecting to characters like it is real. “They form an image of you. Every time you break that image, it is like you are breaking an idea in their head and most people are not comfortable with that,” she says, as she strikes a parallel with real life. “Parents are so used to seeing their child a certain way. When the child does something out of the box, parents find it difficult to just take it. We all as a society, as humans, are so used to putting everybody in boxes that we tend to see them in a certain way. The moment it changes its course, we just don’t know how to handle it.”

As for Kulhari, she loves breaking the mould, the idea of sticking to one image, both on- and off-screen. “I love doing it. There is a sadistic pleasure that I have started deriving out of breaking people’s idea of who I am on-screen. I have also started doing it off-screen. It just feels so good. As public figures, you start taking the burden of how people see you, how they want to see you and, also, what they are comfortable seeing you as. You start taking that burden unknowingly. And this results in you defining who you should be,” she says. Step by step, she is breaking stereotypes with something as simple as encouraging ‘simple living’. Her posts on Instagram are a testament to that. Photos of a simple

plate of dal-roti-sabji as a meal or just a regular mud-pack for her skin care breaks the idea that celebrities always indulge in ‘fancy’ things. She enjoys the comments on each of these posts, where people wonder if a celebrity life could be so regular.

It took her time to embrace social media and put out things she wanted to talk about. “There was a time when I was really anti-social media. I thought I don’t know how to do this, what to post or what to talk about. I really had no interest in being out there, except for showing my work as an actor. There was no other interest,” she says. Then, last year, for some random reason, she got back to social media and ‘it just organically started happening.’ “I started talking about things that matter to me without comparing my account to somebody else, or without trying to imitate somebody else, or without trying to be about what is trending in the world,” says the 37-year-old actor.

Interestingly, her life has been full of such epiphanies. She remembers a time when she was six or seven, growing up in Thane. Her mother was a homemaker and her father was with the Navy. She was a shy and reserved child who often made excuses to skip school and used to come back home in the middle of classes on some pretext or other, worrying her parents and teachers alike. But tables turned when

she was in Class III. Although she does not recall the exact moment when it happened, she distinctly remembers that it started with playing badminton. “It was like a butterfly came out of her cocoon,” she recalls. Her inhibitions were shed and there was no looking back from that point. She was the front-runner in every extra-curricular activity. “For me, the transition from being a reserved child to becoming an all-rounder is one of my favourite periods from my childhood. So much changed in me during that time. I think this period is the reason why I became an artiste. I think that is when it all started.”

Just when it all seemed to go well, her father got a transfer to Visakhapatnam; she was in Class VI at the time. The new crowd was unaware of her achievements and this impacted her in a way she never anticipated. “Suddenly, I was not the most popular kid,” she says. Kulhari had to start afresh and prove herself all over again. “In the process of trying to fit in, I started becoming this person who would frequently gossip and bitch about people.”

It was an undiscovered aspect of her personality that was coming out. It prevailed until her elder sister, who is now a doctor in the Army, called her out. “Why do you bitch so much?” she asked Kulhari. “I was getting into my teens



PHOTOGRAPHER: RAHUL JHANGIANI  
LOCATION: MANDARIN STUDIOS  
STYLIST: PRANITA SHETTY  
SHIRT BRAND: MASSIMO DUTTI  
HAIR & MAKEUP: ELISHA BHAMBHANI AGARWAL & SAM ALI



“It has been a difficult journey, but I don’t know anybody whose life that has been easy; everybody goes through their share of difficulties”

and I had lost some connection with myself. I was busy going very outward for validation, for respect....” Surely, it was all a part of growing up and being a teenager, but Kulhari feels it is a part of her life that she wants to weed out.

The epiphanies continued to play their role even later. The family was back in Mumbai in six years. But the acting dreams were yet to take shape. It was not an idea she had harboured, as she always thought that one has to be really pretty to be an actor or a ‘heroine’. She did not even have the self-esteem that would stimulate her to pursue acting. But, in college, while doing an activity for the Navy, All India Radio heard her voice. She was called for a project. It turned out to be a Films Division project—a women-centric Odiya film, *Dharini* (2002)—in which she got a role. She even skipped a semester for the shoot. The film never saw the light of day, but the experience awakened her desire to act.

After finishing college in 2007, she sought permission from her parents to pursue acting seriously. She did not want to live with regrets. Fortunately, her parents were supportive, but the journey was not a cakewalk. The initial few years were spent getting to know the industry, doing TV commercials

and preparing herself with theatre and other acting workshops. She started off her journey with actor Neeraj Kabi’s theatre group, and later moved on to others, acquiring new skills along the way. As tedious as it sounds, Kulhari says she wouldn’t have asked for any other way to fulfil her dreams.

There were films like *Khichdi: The Film* that fetched her some recognition, but was soon forgotten. Or, as she puts it, “It did not translate into something substantial for Bollywood to take notice of me.” Then, *Shaitaan* (2011) released and she got Bollywood’s attention. But, even that did not last long. “I don’t know why. Maybe, I wasn’t at the right place at the right time, or not doing enough PR. I missed out on the opportunities that *Shaitaan* could have brought.”

In an introspective moment, she says, she could have become a typical ‘Bollywood heroine’ after *Shaitaan*. Instead, she chose *Jal* (2014)—an art-house film set in the Rann of Kutch that highlights the issue of water scarcity. “I play a Kutchi girl in the film; an unglamorous role. I took up the role because I was very serious about acting,” she says.

The film had a successful festival run, but like most films in the art-

house space, it went unnoticed. But things changed with the release of *Pink*; it put her in the spotlight. She bagged a lead role, heavy-lifting Madhur Bhandarkar’s *Indu Sarkar* on her shoulders. She sparkled, but the film tanked. But by now, Kulhari had made her mark as the actor who brought her years of experience in her craft. “It has been a difficult journey, but I don’t know anybody whose life that has been easy,” she says, quickly adding that it may sound clichéd but it is true that, “everybody goes through their share of difficulties”.

But as they say, ‘every cloud has a silver lining’. And Kulhari saw hers in 2019. She played a small but significant role (flight lieutenant Seerat Kaur) in *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, followed by *FMSP*’s first season, then the scientist Neha Siddiqui in *Mission Mangal*, and a Balochi woman, Jannat Marri, in *Bard of Blood* (Netflix). If not for the pandemic that has left us locked in our houses, 2020 would have only been better with the success of *FMSP*’s second season and the release of the Indian remake of *The Girl On The Train*. But everyone is clinging to hope of a better future and so is Kulhari, who is now raring to get back to shoot as soon as the virus makes an exit. □





## Breakfast like a king

Actor **Priya Banerjee** talks about her diet and fitness regime

**A**fter my debut in 2013 in the Telugu film *Kiss*, I got a chance to work in my second Telugu film *Joru* with Sundeep Kishan and Rashi Khanna as other leads. It was quite random how I started my acting journey. I never planned to move from Canada to India to work as an actor; it all just happened when I randomly auditioned for *Kiss*. I got the part and I enjoyed every bit of being in front of the camera which made me realise this is what I want to do for the rest of

my life. And the rest is history. I have been able to be a part of some really nice projects in different languages—Telugu, Tamil and Hindi. I debuted on the silver screen with *Jazbaa* which was a fantastic film. I have also done a couple of web series. From Vikram Bhatt's *Rain* being the first, I have done *Bekaboo*, *Fuh Se Fantasy*, *Baarish*, *Hello Mini*, and my latest one is another project by Vikram—*Twisted 3*.

In my free time, I love dancing and watching series. I have

also started reading books; I just started reading *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life*. I am also learning to play the guitar. When it comes to fitness, I am not really the gym-going kind but I love running; even when I am shooting, I find time to go for a run. My diet keeps changing but I go by the aphorism—eat your breakfast like a king and your dinner like a pauper. I don't really play sports but I follow a

lot of hockey, probably it is the hidden Canadian inside of me. Even my family enjoys watching hockey. They mean the world to me and they will always be my number one priority. I am a big fan of homemade snacks and one can find me munching on them when I am up late in the night. However, I try to make it a point that I sleep before midnight but schedules change when I am shooting.

As told to Oshin Grace Daniell

Prebiotics, like onion, garlic, leek, asparagus and whole grains, and probiotics like fermented vegetables—cauliflower, cabbage and carrot—are great for good gut which in turn improves skin, hair and nails.

Karishma Chawla, nutritionist and lifestyle educator.



### Her diet

**Early morning:** I start my day with warm water, lemon and honey. It keeps me glowing.

**Breakfast:** I usually like eggs, fruits and a nice cup of coffee.

**Lunch:** I prefer having home-cooked meals. A simple dal or vegetable curry with some Indian bread.

**Snack:** I munch on homemade snacks, fruits and nuts.

**Dinner:** It is usually very light. A vegetable salad or some soup. This way, I think my metabolism is kept on tab.

### Nutrition advice:

- \* Starting the day with lemon water is brilliant as it kick starts the metabolism for the day. A breakfast comprising of eggs and fruits are great, too.
- \* Add a smoothie with green leafy vegetables or a single-fruit smoothie. Super charge it with chia seeds.
- \* For lunch, a bowl of salad is a good addition as fibrous food improves gut health and promotes better skin
- \* It is best to consume fruits in the first half of the day. In the latter part of the day, try having sprouts, salads, raw nuts and seeds.
- \* For dinner, try a single serving of carbohydrates like quinoa, oats, amaranth and red rice poha. Also add a portion of protein such as eggs and paneer.

smile

INDULGE YOUR SENSES, HAVE FUN



Changes in the colour of your teeth may be subtle and it usually happens gradually; in most cases, some yellow colour is inevitable. Teeth can look more yellow or darker as one grows older. The outer layer of your tooth is called enamel and the inner part is dentin. Your natural tooth colour is a combination of the reflection of light off your enamel and the colour of your dentin. According to experts, the enamel layer contains pores that pick up stains over time from things like coffee, wine and tobacco. But is avoiding these beverages a solution? How about a homemade paste? A blend of baking soda and hydrogen peroxide is said to remove plaque buildup and bacteria to get rid of stains.

### How:

Mix 1tbsp of baking soda with 2tbsp of hydrogen peroxide to make a paste. Rinse your mouth thoroughly with water after brushing with this paste. You can also use the same ratio of ingredients to make a mouthwash. Or, you can try baking soda with water.



# Sweet lockdown

Food blogger and stylist Shivesh Bhatia shares some baking tips and recipes from his yet-to-be-published cookbook

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

Imagine starting your day with some vanilla-infused sugar, a cake slice and everything sweet that screams nice—glorious, isn't it? If you are one of those calorie-counters who smirks at sweet baked goods, then Shivesh Bhatia's studio kitchen is definitely not the place to be. In here, one can find everything from vintage-looking utensils to chocolate slabs to variants of different baking paraphernalia. "If the genie in the lamp granted me a wish, I would ask for unlimited supply of chocolate chips," says Shivesh. The 24-year-old baker has a huge fan following not only for his recipes but also for his food styling and photography skills. But neither did he go to one of those patisserie training schools or do any photography course. He did his undergraduate degree in political science from Hindu College, Delhi University, with aspirations to become a lawyer. Though Shivesh enjoyed what he studied, the self-taught baker always felt at home among his pots and pans. "My classes used to get over by 1pm and I was not really doing anything after that. That is when I decided to invest more time in baking. I was already doing it, but I took it up more seriously—I started styling my dishes, photographing it properly and sharing recipes on my blog, Instagram page and YouTube channel. By my sophomore year, brands started approaching me to create content for them," he says.

Shivesh Bhatia has over 200k

followers on Instagram and his own channel on YouTube, making him one of the most popular food bloggers in the country. He has been featured in *Vogue India's* '20 Under 20' list and been awarded the Cosmopolitan Food Feed of the year in 2019. He has also created content for several brands, including Cadbury's, California Walnuts, Epigamia, and Dabur. To add to his kitty of achievements, he is the author of *Bake with Shivesh* and is in the process of launching his next book, *Desserts for Every Mood*. Brushing off the compliments, Shivesh says his family and friends keep him grounded. "They are my direct contact with reality and they make sure I am the same person they knew before I got into social media. I take feedback from them. My twin sister keeps complaining that she has to go to the gym because of me," he says.

Even during the lockdown, Shivesh has been quite active on social media with interesting posts almost every day. He started a new series on his IGTV, 'Feel Good Fridays', where he launched one of his best friends, Kritika Khurana, also known as ThatBohoGirl. "We did not want to stop with our videos so we decided to shoot it separately from our own homes; it was a 'guess the brand' challenge. I have also been sharing new recipes every day and I think these will make for a perfect treat to snack on during a fun family game night," he says.

## Nothing down about lockdown

With so much time on hand, I think one can't help but introspect. This lockdown has led to many learnings and realisations:

1. Housework is no joke and our house-help really puts a lot of effort into keeping our homes neat and clean. Now that everyone in the family is doing their share of house care, I think everyone realises the importance and effort that goes into it and I shall always remember it from now on.
2. Staying at home is really not that bad. Before the lockdown I was out of the house for long hours of the day, everyday. Life was all about getting from one place to another, going to new places, working on new projects and meeting people. Used to this lifestyle, I really thought the lockdown would be a tough time but honestly, I have been enjoying myself to the fullest. It has given me the opportunity to get back to things I did not have time for and to do a lot of things on my own.
3. Being mindful of the things around you and making the best of it. In our busy schedules and daily stresses, I think we often forget about the resources that we have, be it social, financial or physical. We are so used to doing things a certain way that we never think of making changes and finding alternatives. But this lockdown has been all about being aware of what I have at hand and using that in new ways rather than running to the supermarket and buying new things.





### Top five things in Shivesh's basket

1. Nutella
2. Mangoes
3. Amul Cheese slices
4. A pack of chia seeds
5. Orange juice

### Shivesh's list of must-haves for every baker

- › A decent oven. You do not need a fancy oven to be a good baker. I use a borosil oven and it has been working beautifully for me.
- › A sense of style and aesthetic. If you want your desserts to stand out, you need to ensure they look amazing. Don't be afraid and come up with your own aesthetics.
- › Basic tools such as a sturdy spatula, a cake stand, measuring cups and spoons, hand mixer or a stand mixer. All of these really make your life easy.
- › Cook books. The more books you have, the more inspired you will feel. Reading is a great way to gain insight.
- › The will to experiment. If you want to grow in your field and hone your skills, the best way to do that is to experiment. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and try out things you have been running away from.
- › The time to practise; it really does make perfect. No matter what you choose to do, if you want to get better at it, you need to practise and you need to experiment.
- › Some basic recipes up the sleeves. It is very important to have some very basic and classic recipes ingrained in your minds. Once you perfect these, it gives you a great deal of confidence. This includes the perfect cookie recipe, the perfect sponge cake recipe, the smoothest frosting recipe and so on.
- › A chef's knife. Chopping chocolate and cutting fruit is an everyday task for a baker. Having the proper knife makes life much smoother.
- › A proper knowledge of ingredients. If you are using something in your dessert, you should know all about its composition and how it will react with other ingredients. This is exceptionally helpful for

when you are creating your own recipes.

- › All information about storing different elements and ingredients. You will be surprised by the shelf life of some things that we use for our desserts. They stay fresh for longer periods of time if you store them correctly. A lot of people become lazy during this step and end up wasting elements. This is a big no-no.

### Note to all bakers

Don't be stuck on what you don't have and try to use everything else that is available to you. I promise you, almost always, there is an alternative. Keep creating and keep sharing.

### 10 baking hacks

1. Egg substitution can be done in most recipes. Most common egg substitutes include greek yoghurt, bananas and applesauce.
2. If you are out of cupcake and muffin liners, use butter paper to make some. Cut out butter paper in medium size squares and stuff them in your muffin tray. It works just fine.
3. If you are making a dessert such as a rose panna cotta or a lemon tart and you want to amplify the colors of your dessert, you can use a tiny bit of food coloring.
4. The best way to make sure you have ample supply of seasonal fruits like strawberries and mangoes is to buy them in bulk while they are in season and then properly freeze them so that you can use them whenever you like.
5. I always use vanilla infused caster sugar in my studio kitchen. I just put a vanilla pod in the same container in which I store my caster sugar. It makes all the difference in how my desserts taste.
6. No matter what you are baking, unless it is specified, always use room temperature ingredients. Everything gets incorporated better this way.
7. If a recipe calls for caster sugar but you

have only granulated sugar, all you need to do is blitz the granulated sugar for a few seconds till the sugar granules are smaller. Do not over blitz it or you will end up with icing sugar.

8. If you need to make a frosting but you are out of heavy cream, you can use fresh cream. Make sure the temperature of the fresh cream is extremely cold and all the equipment you are using is also cold—your bowls and whisk. Make an ice bath and then whip your fresh cream. This will take time but it will word decently.

9. If a recipe calls for just egg yolks, use the extra egg whites to make meringue kisses or whip up an egg white omelette for yourself the next day.

10. If you are afraid of taking out cakes after they have baked, buy removable bottom cake pans. These are so useful and completely stress-free.

### Must-follow bakers on YouTube

- › Cupcake Jemma
- › Pick Up Limes
- › Sarah Carey
- › Bon Appetit
- › Gemma Stafford
- › Laura Vitale
- › Matt Adlard
- › Karim Bourgi

For Shivesh, baking has come to mean many things over the years—memories of seeing his grandmother make cakes to spending hours experimenting in the kitchen and sharing the joy with friends to baking becoming his quiet refuge after a hectic day. In his second book, Shivesh shares a range of desserts—gooey caramel chocolate tart, fresh mint lemon chiffon cake to an exotic litchie rose tiramisu—that have helped him through difficult and happy times alike. Here are six recipes from the maverick baker's book *Desserts for Every Mood* that promise to transform any day and beat the blues. □

### Mango kulfi ice cream

#### Ingredients:

- Full fat milk- 4 cups+ 1/3 cup extra
- Milk powder- 4tbsp
- Sugar- 4tbsp
- Mango purée (4-5 small mangoes)- 1 cup

#### Method:

- In a heavy bottom pan with high sides, add in 4 cups of full fat milk. Let this mixture come to a boil. Meanwhile, work on other components..
- In an electric grinder mixer, add in mango chunks and sugar. Blitz this till it reaches puree consistency. Set this aside
- In a small bowl, mix 1/4 cup of remaining milk with milk powder. Once the milk has come to a boil, add this mix into the boiling milk, stirring continuously. Now reduce the heat and let the milk simmer till it is reduced to half its quantity.
- Once the milk has reduced, transfer it into a clean bowl and let it cool down completely. Once cooled, mix in the mango puree.
- Pour the mango kulfi mix into kulfi moulds or any other moulds that you might want to use. Cover the mould with foil and stick in ice cream sticks.
- Refrigerate for eight hours or overnight for best results.





## Blueberry mousse

### Ingredients:

#### For mousse-

- Frozen blueberries- 1cup
- Caster sugar- ¼ cup
- Lemon juice- 4tbsp
- Cornflour- 1tbsp
- Water- 1tbsp
- Whipped cream- 1 cup

#### For crumble-

- Butter- ¾ cup
- Caster sugar- 1/2cup
- Flour- 1½ cup

### Method:

- In a saucepan set over medium heat, cook frozen blueberries, sugar and lemon juice until the sugar melts and blueberries begin to break down.
- In a small bowl, combine cornflour and

water. Add the slurry to the saucepan in which the blueberries are cooking and bring the mixture to a boil.

- Set it off heat and allow it to cool completely.
- Meanwhile, using an electric mixer, beat the whipping cream until stiff peaks form.
- Carefully fold in the cooled blueberry mixture into the cream and refrigerate.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- To make the crumble, combine butter, sugar and flour in a large bowl to reach a coarse, sandy texture.
- Spread the crumble onto a baking tray lined with parchment paper or a silicon mat. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until it becomes golden brown.
- To assemble the mousse, add a generous amount of crumble to a glass. Pipe the mousse on top of the crumble and top it with fresh/frozen blueberries.

## No oven vanilla cake: Eggless recipe

### Ingredients:

- All purpose flour (maida)- 1 + ½ cups
- Baking powder- 1tsp
- Baking soda- ½ tsp
- Yoghurt- 1 cup
- Caster sugar-¾ cup
- Vegetable oil- ½ cup
- Vanilla extract- 1tsp

### Method:

- Take an 8-inch nonstick pan and grease it with some vegetable oil. Take another

10-inch pan and set these two aside.

- In a bowl whisk together flour and baking powder and set a side.
- In a separate bowl, add the yogurt and sprinkle baking soda over it and set it aside to foam up.
- Whisk together caster sugar and oil in a separate bowl until pale and well-combined.
- Now pour the yoghurt mixture into the oil and sugar mixture and mix well.
- Add the vanilla extract.
- Gently fold in the flour and mix until everything is well-combined there are no large flour pockets in the batter. Do not overmix at this stage.

- Pour the batter into the 8-inch nonstick pan. Take the 10-inch non stick pan and place the pan with the cake batter in this bigger nonstick pan.
- Now put both of these pans on the heat and bake at low heat. Let the cake cook for 5 minutes and then add some water in the 10-inch nonstick pan, making a water bath of sorts. Keep refilling the water after every 15 minutes.
- Put the 8-inch pan over it again and bake for 40-50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. If you are using an induction, fix the temperature at 160°C and bake for 40-50 minutes.





## Orange chia seed cake

### Ingredients:

- All-purpose flour- 1 + ½ cup
- Baking powder- 2tsp
- Baking soda- 1/2tsp
- Zest of one large orange
- Vegetable oil- ½ cup
- Caster sugar- 1 cup
- Eggs- 3
- Fresh orange juice- 1/2 cup
- Chia seeds- 2 tbsp

### Method:

- Pre-heat the oven to 180°C. Line a loaf pan with parchment paper
- In a bowl, combine flour, baking powder,

baking soda.

- In a separate bowl, beat vegetable oil and sugar together. Add orange zest.
- Add eggs, one at a time, and beat well after each addition.
- In three batches, gently fold in the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients alternating with orange juice. Make sure to not overmix the batter.
- Fold in the chia seeds.
- Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan.
- Bake at 180°C for 30-40 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

## Pineapple lemonade

### Ingredients:

- Pineapple- ½
- Lemon juice- ¼ cup
- Simple syrup/honey syrup- 2-3tsp
- Water-2 cups

### Method:

- Take half of a pineapple and cut it into medium sized cubes. Put these in a food processor and blitz the pineapple. Do this till you reach a

liquid consistency.

- To this pineapple liquid, add in lemon juice and honey syrup or simple syrup. Blitz this mix again.
- Now add 2 cups of water to this mixture and mix it well.
- Put some ice cubes in your serving glasses and pour this mixture over it. Garnish however you like. I used some charred pineapple pieces.
- Serve immediately.



## One Shot



## Lemon curd

### Ingredients:

- Eggs- 2
- Sugar- ¼ cups
- Fresh lemon juice- 4tbsp
- Unsalted butter- 2 tbsp
- Lemon zest- ½ tbsp

### Method:

- In a bowl, whisk together eggs, sugar and lemon juice until blended.
- Place the bowl over a saucepan of simmering water and stir continuously to prevent curdling

- Cook the mixture until it becomes thick and covers the back of your spoon. This will take approximately 10 minutes. Do not pause whisking,
- Remove from heat and immediately pour through a sieve to remove any lumps
- While the mixture is still hot, add butter and mix until it melts and is well incorporated
- Add lemon zest. Cover the mixture and let it cool in the fridge.
- Use the lemon curd after it's cooled down completely or store it in the fridge, in an airtight container for up to two weeks.





# Not in my dictionary

**Oshin Grace Daniell** talks about getting past failures

**A**lbert Einstein once said: “In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” At no time is it more relevant than during this lockdown. The past couple of months have been chaotic but have certainly brought out the best in many. Who thought staying at home for a few days with limited supplies would make us super-creative?

This was not the case in the initial days of lockdown. There was confusion and panic all around; most people were whining about what they did not have and how they cannot go out. After a few days, the glitterati crowd started putting out social media posts that reflected the bright side of staying at home and the importance of looking beyond the vicis-

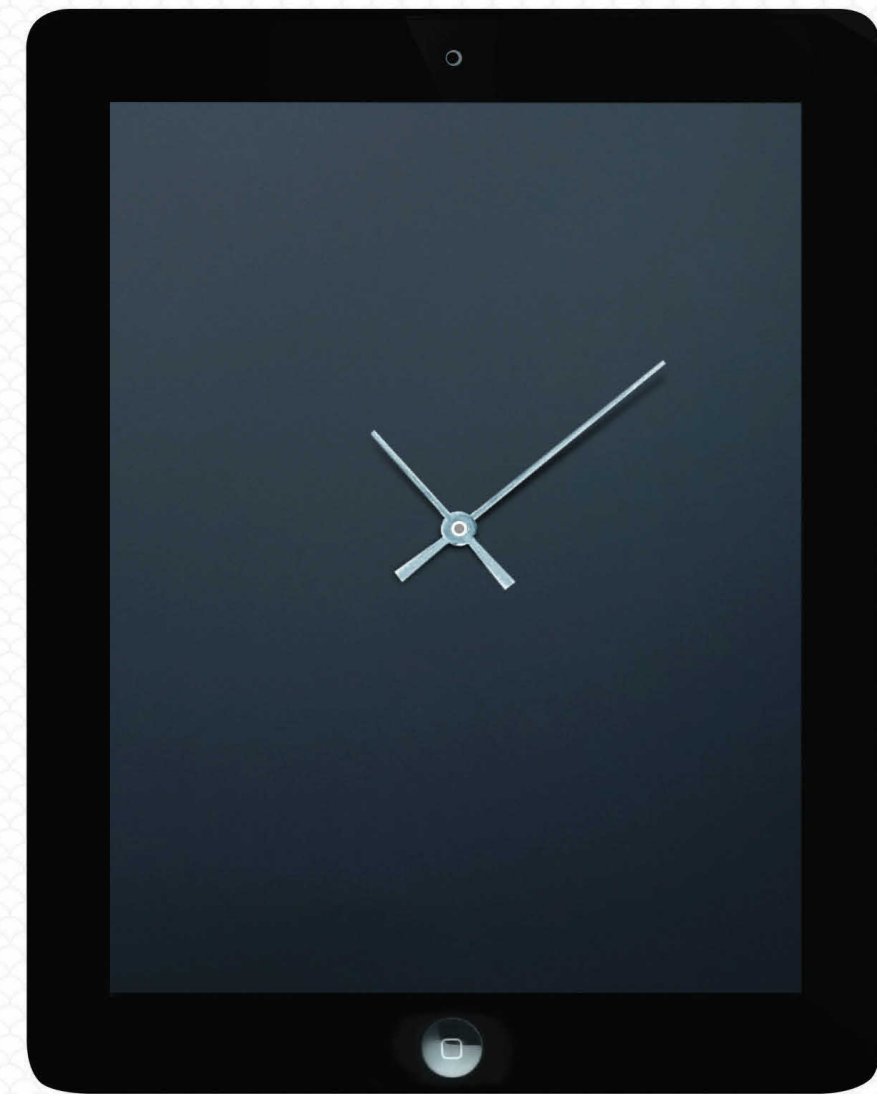
situdes of pandemic-affected life; this got people intrigued. From the fancy Dalgona coffee to super-sugary Oreo cakes, people began flooding their Instagram feeds with stills that showcased their culinary skills. Many more started entering their kitchens to whip up good-looking food for those Insta-worthy photographs. Apart from messy dishes, this marked a dramatic increase in the number of proud mothers. It does not stop there though. The cooking spree also brought in several uninvited guests like love handles, flab and a spike in blood sugar levels. And this led to the next big trend on social media—lockdown workout regimen.

While most of my friends got busy posting pictures of their cooking exploits

and their new-found love for home workouts, I decided to take up my first online course. I was on a baking and fitness spree last year when there was no pandemic and hence, I did not get into this new hoopla. Although the thought of taking up an online course had been running in my head for quite some time, it took a lockdown and a couple of days at home to finally get myself to register for it. The fact that there are so many interesting courses online made it difficult for me to zero in on one. But after some thought, I decided to register for a course by musician Henry Olsen called ‘Fun Beginner Ukulele Course.’ I won’t lie, it was definitely the word ‘fun’ in the title that made me choose this course over the rest. From learning the notes to tuning the strings, I enjoyed every session and finished the course earlier than I expected. I felt accomplished and gloated over my achievement.

Since I aced the first course, I felt ready to take up the next one; this time, I decided to take it a notch up on the difficulty level. So, I registered for a software coding course with the hope of becoming a super coder at the end of the course. But the enthusiasm died as soon as I finished the first session. I could not follow a word the tutor was saying. I played the first lesson multiple times and still found it Greek and Latin. I reached a point where I regretted my decision. Though I attended the next couple of sessions in a passive manner, I just could not make it to the end of the course. Not only did it damage my ego but it also made me question my ability to understand things; I felt stupid and decided that I will not take another online course. As I closed the window with the module of my fifth coding lesson, another popped up with an advertisement for a sketching course. “No more of this,” shouted the memory of my recent failure, but that did not stop me from reading the course description. After a couple of scrolls, I hit ‘register’ and started the sketching course. A week was all it took to complete it and then I registered for the next one. The experience taught me to treat failure as a detour and not a road-block. As they say, what does not kill you makes you stronger. □

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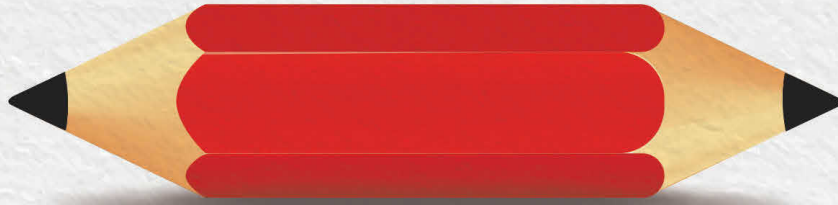
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