

The Escapist

TRAVEL. WELLNESS. FITNESS



**YOUR GUIDE
TO THE NEW
HI-TECH
VITAMIN PLANS**
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'My week inside the A-List extreme detox clinic'

Austrian bliss:
The celeb
favourite Mayrlife
in Altaussee,
Austria

WELLNESS

Mayrlife is the luxury retreat known for supercharging gut health and resetting the immune system. **Inge Theron** visits

BURNOUT is classified as "a state of physical and emotional exhaustion, a manifestation of chronic stress, that is typically caused by prolonged exposure to stressors". Sound familiar? This stress manifests in different ways for us all and for me it hits like a summer storm — sudden and sharp. As a mum, spa designer, social animal and serial entrepreneur, I know a thing or two about burning the candle at both ends.

I have been tired for as long as I can remember but lately my anxiety levels are at a record high. Running-on-fumes, my Oura Ring confirms the eye rubbing, grey-looking extreme level of knackeredness I'm feeling. The remedy: celebrity favourite May-



Inge ready for her detox

rlife, the gut-first clinic in Altaussee, Austria, which practises the methodology created by visionary Austrian physician Dr Franz Xaver Mayr. He quite rightly suggested that gut health is great health nearly 100 years ago. Today, after countless science-backed studies, we know that the microbiome and gut health is the epicentre of human health. What you might not know is that it is directly and indirectly correlated with mental and physical health. The gut-brain axis — the high-speed broadband connection between the gut and brain — means poor gut health could be one of the root causes of anxiety and

depression. Mayrlife, previously known as VivaMayr, is splintering off into an exciting new chapter and has identified this need to treat mental health and physical exhaustion.

They have created a new vertical of treatment modalities to help when life just gets too much. The new programme places much focus on holistic treatments like Watsu, a form of water therapy — so intense you feel like the kids' dirty football kit rebirthing in a sea of Bold 2 in 1 — acupuncture, yoga and breath work.

This is all performed alongside the non-negotiable, twice daily Epsom salts (or, as I call them, poop salts, which aid digestion) and chew training (a crucial

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pillar of Mayr is that food should be chewed 40 times to switch on digestive enzymes) to support your gut health. Preparation is key and it helps to clean up your diet before arrival by reducing your portions and cutting down on the nightly tipples. But the real trick is to provide your data. You can do these tests on-site in Austria but results can take many days to come back and if you are only going for a week you may not get the full benefit of a bespoke programme.

I did the majority of my diagnostic tests three weeks in advance (at an extra cost). It covers the gamut from glucose tracking to blood tests that look at everything from hormones, thyroid, liver and kidney function through to cardiac health. Mayr's at-home team relieved me of 12 vials which were analysed, before the results were forwarded on to the medical staff in Altaussee.

I arrive late on a Saturday evening. A little portion of cheese and crackers and the dreaded poop salts await in my charming ski chalet-style suite with a wrap-around terrace overlooking the lake. A gorgeous balmy evening, I head out to walk off the three-hour car drive from Munich and am welcomed by hundreds of fireflies jostling for the moon glow, lighting up the well-trodden path around the lake. The location is like chicken soup for the soul. For the first time in as long as I can remember my world is calm and quiet.

The week begins with 11 of the 40 appointments. First up we measure my free radical levels, these are unstable atoms that cause ageing and illness, versus my antioxidant levels, the body's freedom fighters which neutralise the villains. A good result will look low in free radicals (less than 2800IU) and a high antioxidant capacity (more than 2,800IU).

The reality is I am low on both so am encouraged to supplement on vitamins C, B and Zinc. Then a pin-prick blood test detects a high level of monocytes, the white blood cells that fight infection together with high basophils, which means my body is fighting something. You could ignore this data, especially if you feel fine, and hope for



Spa life: Inge Thoren, below; Suki Waterhouse, top right; Rebel Wilson, right

the best but from my experience hope is not a strategy, so a pro tip is to act on the data. After several more tests I discover I have asymptomatic Strep A. I've most likely had it for months and if left untreated could lead to heart disease. My mineral tests have also totally outed me as Dr Doreen now has proof of my nightly red wine habit and warns if the high uric acid continues, I could get gout as I grow older, so I really do need to focus on alkalinizing my diet.

Test, treatment, test, repeat. The routine is punctuated only with a few very quick dashes to the loo and a 40 minute chew on an oat cake after my diet was slashed when the kinesiologist test revealed Candida, a yeast overgrowth in my tummy. Next it's on to the food intolerance test which classifies the foods you can eat regularly as 0 and ladders up to class 4 for those which are an absolute no-go. Thankfully, I have none of those but surprisingly tuna comes in at 3 and eggs at 2, so goats cheese, linseed crackers and

some potatoes will have to suffice. By the second day my head is pounding. It's the coffee withdrawal. I head into the cryotherapy machine for three minutes which does wonders for my mood. I'm also given mitochondrial IV drip therapy, a full suite of B vitamins to drive up my energy levels.

After lunch it's the E-Scan, an oxygen breathing test which is probably the most illuminating and shocking of the week. Good breathing frequency typically for a healthy adult is 12-15 breaths per minute. Mine is double that — I'm breathing too fast and shallow. I'm chest breathing instead of belly breathing which means I have more carbon dioxide than I need. I'm burning sugar but I don't have enough oxygen to burn fat.

I am hastily taken past a sea of patients to see Wolfgang, the myo release specialist. There are a few anxious words in German as I'm handed over like a baton in a relay. One last glare and I'm told "you have to relax". A few minutes later he confirms, my ribcage is higher than it should be because of this anxious, stress-filled breathing and passes me further down the corridor to the IV therapy nurses for some real oxygen.

As I sit for half an hour breathing I realise how bad things have got. I can barely blow up the kids' birthday balloons any more and I've fallen out of my



I had three flights cancelled. This would have sent me into a furious frenzy but I breathed my way through it

twice daily meditation practice which had a huge impact on my breathing.

After the first two days of baseline tests, I pull back. It can get really exhausting shuffling between nine and 11 appointments a day, so the best tip is to prioritise your outdoor time. Mornings are all mine for hiking, paddleboarding and cold lake swimming — the most incredible dopamine-filled, cellulite-slaying experience. Take advantage of the daily yoga, Pilates and E-biking through the glorious Austrian countryside. By the end of my stay, I felt restored, emotionally stronger and ready to take on the world.

To get home I had three flights cancelled and had to stay overnight at a highway motel in Munich. A few days ago, this scenario would have sent me spiralling into a furious frenzy but I breathed my way through it.

I did lose my luggage but what I gained is the most powerful tool in our stress-coping arsenal: my breath. As simple as it sounds, it's the most wondrous tool for coping when life happens.

● One week from £4,390 including accommodation, mayrlife.com



STARS SHELLEY VON STRUNCKEL

Aries March 20 - April 19

Usually your capacity to make, and stick with, decisions is an asset. However, with the foundation on which certain arrangements are based shifting, often more than once, even you are feeling overwhelmed. Yet you're being ignored others' offers of advice and, in some cases, support. Say "Yes," and the sooner, the better.

0904 470 1141 (65p per minute)*

Taurus April 20 - May 20

For ages you've struggled to maintain some longstanding and increasingly challenging arrangements. While, in the past, these were rewarding, times have changed and so have your requirements. For now, explore your options. The better informed you are now, the more swiftly you can respond to potentially rewarding changes.

0904 470 1142 (65p per minute)*

Gemini May 21 - June 20

One of your greatest assets is your sense of humour. Not only does it enable you to boost others' spirits when they're struggling, it helps you maintain an optimistic viewpoint even when circumstances are challenging. Solutions? Forget about analysis or brainstorming with others. Plans of any kind can, and should, wait.

0904 470 1143 (65p per minute)*

Cancer June 21 - July 21

Although the New Moon took place nearly a week ago, the odds are good you're still wrestling with certain longstanding arrangements that must come to an end. While, on one hand, you're sentimental about these, you're also anxious about what's next. Unlikely as it seems, the answer will appear, and within days.

0904 470 1144 (65p per minute)*

Leo July 23 - August 22

Few things are more exciting to a Leo than a promising idea or offer. However appealing what's coming your way may be, turning these into something lasting isn't just complicated, it could take ages. So long, in fact, you're wondering if it's worthwhile. It is. Plunge in and you'll see just how worthwhile.

0904 470 1145 (65p per minute)*

Virgo August 23 - September 22

While every sign is influenced by Mercury's retrograde cycle, which begins on the 23rd, it's actually positioned in Virgo, suggesting some issues, if not misunderstandings, could be personal. If so, view these as an opportunity for reflection and, as you're likely to discover, also, rethinking certain longstanding arrangements.

0904 470 1146 (65p per minute)*

Libra September 23 - October 22

Frustrating as your unrewarding efforts to untangle certain persistent issues have been, don't give up. While these are far more complex than you anticipated, every twist and turn has been informative. So much so, that you're beginning to view the matters in question from an entirely different, and unexpectedly informative, angle.

0904 470 1147 (65p per minute)*

Scorpio October 23 - November 21

For ages you've battled to maintain certain familiar arrangements, despite persistent changes. True, you've suspected that, sooner or later, you'd have to admit these are inevitable. Still, thus far, you've kept things as they are. Now, however, you're recognising these changes aren't just inevitable, they're in your best interests.

0904 470 1148 (65p per minute)*

Sagittarius November 22 - December 21

If you're feeling restless, it's no surprise. Certain longstanding arrangements are important but, recently, you've found them impossibly boring. While ordinarily you'd come up with a plan to keep things interesting, you're short of ideas. The secret? Encourage others to take over. This will keep you and them very busy indeed.

0904 470 1149 (65p per minute)*

Capricorn December 22 - January 19

There are few things worse for you, as a cautious and thorough Capricorn, than discovering you've given others unwise advice or guidance. The irony is, your suggestions were still valuable, and the individuals in question won't have been the least bit bothered about the details you neglected to mention. Don't worry.

0904 470 1150 (65p per minute)*

Aquarius January 20 - February 17

Few things annoy you more than those who pretend to enjoy the company of others, but then complain nonstop. You're not alone in facing this. Ask those around you: they'll have lots of tales to tell. The secret? Discuss the issue in question frankly, do what you can about it, then firmly change the subject.

0904 470 1151 (65p per minute)*

Pisces February 18 - March 19

Ages ago, you committed to plans that made sense for you and others. Better yet, these have withstood the test of time. The problem? Sudden changes are forcing an extensive rethink of these plans. Get others together, and turn the necessary discussions into a joint brainstorming session. You'll be amazed how much you accomplish.

0904 470 1152 (65p per minute)*

IF IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY TOMORROW...

While many regard the period when Mercury is retrograde as bad news, the fact its cycle of reverse movement begins on your birthday will highlight just how exciting even disruptive changes can be. This will, in fact, force you to spot those elements in your life where you've been sticking with the familiar, often at cost to potentially rewarding changes, adventures or thrilling encounters. While you may argue you can't say yes to everything, you can give whatever comes your way a try. And that's what this birthday is all about.

