

38 Volunteer. The sense of satisfaction you'll feel will make it all worth it, and there are so many causes to get involved with that there will be one or two that speaks to you more strongly, that provokes in you the healthy, humane responses that should be encouraged.



animals after all! Put the money in your piggybank instead, it'll soon add up. **42** Start recycling. Around 85 per cent of the contents of your dustbin can be recycled. If you choose to ignore this fact then the next time you lug out an un-recycled batch of rubbish, just think: you are personally responsible for polluting the world with that exact volume of excrement you hold in your hands. It's a slightly disgusting

thought. Plastic can take up to 500 years to decompose – that shouldn't be the sort of legacy anyone wants to leave behind. **43** Make eye contact more often. It's polite and it demonstrates confidence, plus nine times out of 10 a person's eyes are one of the most attractive things about them. They're surely preferable to the sight of your forehead anyway – so just lift your neck up. **44** Get a massage. Whether delivered professionally or during a spare five minutes from a friend or colleague, a massage can offer instant pain relief, increased blood circulation, and even the stimulation of sero-



tonin, the happy hormone released by sex, jogging and chocolate. **45** Only use as much water as you need when you boil a kettle. A full kettle's worth is alleged to be as much as some families' from certain develop-



paper or magazine, will lubricate your speech patterns and encourage you to emulate the vocabulary without even realising it. **49** Apply for a new job. Even if aren't actually looking for one, it's a healthy exercise, because it makes you recognise and appreciate your strengths and weaknesses as you make your application. Subsequently, being offered an interview will also boost your confidence and self esteem. Preen your resumé frequently to ensure you don't forget to add anything important.

39 Smile more. It makes you look more approachable, and besides which, it takes more muscles to frown.



40 Go Fair Trade. In other words, make an effort to purchase more products that carry the Fair Trade mark, so you can rest assured that whoever produced what you hold in your hands – be it a chocolate bar, a bag of coffee or an item of clothing – was paid fairly. There are far more Fair Trade

products than you might imagine, find out more at fairtrade.org.uk. **41** Save money. You should aim to save at least 10 per cent of your earnings. Ok, that sounds slightly impossible, but you can try. The next time you're on the verge of buying an expensive coffee, just exercise some self-control – our ability to do this is what separates us from

ing countries use in an entire week. It's horrible if you think about it. **46** Resume contact with an old friend. Dedicate 20 minutes every Sunday afternoon to calling or emailing someone that you haven't heard from in a while. Even if it's just once a year, it's an incredible kindness to let people know they're in your thoughts. **47** Keep a diary. It will help to organise your life and your mind, and will provide endless fascination when you look back at it. **48** Read more. Can't quite speed through 40 pages of a novel in an hour? It doesn't matter. Reading daily, even if it's a single page of a book or an article in a news-



50 Watch less television. If you're an avid watcher of more than one of the major soaps (I won't make you give up EastEnders – the aim of this article is to make you feel better about yourself after all), then you could probably be doing something far more constructive with your time. Try to cut down to no more than an hour a day. But if you must, try and multi-task as you watch so you're that not procrastinating completely – chop the vegetables, polish the coffee table, have sex...

51 Learn to communicate. Whether it's smiling, making eye contact or speaking, human communication is a gift, and connecting and exchanging messages with the people around you is integral for good health.

52 Having problems sticking to your New Year's resolutions? Get a bit of extra help. Health Express claims to have clinically proven treatments to help you quit smoking, lose weight, overcome erection problems and even tackle hair-loss. To find out if they can help you reach your goals, visit healthexpress.co.uk.

53 Try acupuncture

Matt Miles says acupuncture might just mean a new you. A year ago I was at breaking point – run down, stressed out and hit by a heavy cold every other month. Worse, I was prone to paranoid delusions so embarrassing that I could never share them – and I wasn't even taking drugs. A colleague told me to try classical five-element acupuncture at the Kite Clinic in London's Bond Street, insisting that it had helped make him happier and healthier.

I've always had some instinctive faith in ancient and holistic therapies, but then I've always had a healthy dash of cynicism for anything that Joanna Lumley might consider life changing.

Though I suspected that I could be paying to be a pincushion, hope of transformation got the better of me and I booked an appointment. I craved the ability to juggle my job with my personal creative projects (and a boyfriend that makes Madonna look undemanding) without collapsing on the floor with a bottle of red every night. I wanted to look 10 years younger and be at least twice as rich.

The aim of classical five-element acupuncture is slightly more modest: to get your mind and body working in harmony. The treatment became popular in China around 200BC. It is based on "natural laws", in which people's physical and mental health is said to be affected by the balance of the five elements water, wood, metal, earth, fire in their body.

Classical five-element acupuncture aims to affect the quality of the chi (or energy) that flows through the body's meridians (a bit like rivers). Two basic techniques are used to affect to flow of chi. The first is the insertion of fine needles to release the chi of a particular point into the meridian. The second is the use of a herb called Moxa, which is burnt on the skin to warm and supply energy to the acupuncture point.

With your chi (or energy) balanced, it is believed that you can heal the emotional distress that causes many physical ailments, and build



a solid foundation on which to develop.

In the calming and straight-outta-Wallpaper surrounds of the Kite Clinic, each session is preceded by a consultation with practitioner Gerard Kite, in which you discuss your physical condition and your aims, fears and problems. As a gay Londoner, Kite has understanding of the stresses that big city queers can get wrapped up in.

Most importantly, at no point during one of his sessions will you hear a soundtrack of Enya and whales mating.

Your physical and mental status assessed, Kite applies one needle at a time to various points in your body that he's identified as blocks to the smooth flow of your chi. The needle bit is pretty much painless, although you'll feel a strong, momentary ache each time a "block" is unlocked. You might, like me, need several sessions over the first few months, to find what an acupuncturist would term "your balance". But after that, it's a question of maintaining the level, with maybe a few visits every a year.

While I'm not quite Super Gay yet, in the 12 months I've been having treatments I've barely been ill, which is slightly freaky for a London public transport user. I've also knocked that paranoia on the head, become less stressed and more productive at work, and progressed much further with my personal projects than I had in the preceding year.

I'd be interested to see how my life might change if I stopped acupuncture. But, given my fears that it might involve being bitch-slapped by my boyfriend while suffering from super-flu and unemployment, I'm not that curious.

Classical Five Element Acupuncture, Kite Clinic, 73 New Bond Street, Mayfair, London, W1. Call 020 7408 0341 or visit kiteclinic.co.uk.

