

Life etc

Useful stuff to upgrade your every day

WELLNESS
SPECTRUM

WOO TO WELLNESS

From seeing a psychic to get a better reading (pun intended) on a career sitch to repeating a secret mantra for a creativity edge, we check out the science behind the out-there approaches having a moment

By Lizza Gebilagin

PSYCHIC READINGS

If you've noticed more of your girlfriends booking in clairvoyant readings to help them work through life's ups and downs, you can blame the trend on Hollywood medium-to-the-stars Tyler Henry. Let's get gazing...

THE LOWDOWN: "A good psychic is a counsellor, advice giver, coach and a reliable shoulder to cry on," says psychic Rose Smith of Absolute Soul Secrets. During a reading, which can go for 15 minutes or up to an hour, a psychic will "channel into another energetic universe", explains Smith, "[to] see likely outcomes and read energy past, present and future". But don't go into a sesh expecting to find out the exact start

date of that dream job of yours. "It's not all about future predictions," Smith explains. "Good psychics will give options [to problems] that you may not have thought of. They also allow you to vent, releasing pent-up emotions and stress. A problem shared is a problem halved."

THE SCIENCE: Now, this is interesting ... A lab at Princeton University was dedicated to researching the effectiveness of ESP and telekinesis for

30 years (it closed back in 2007). The lab's founder Robert G. Jahn was convinced of the sixth sense possibilities, despite not having the support of his scientific peers. "If people don't believe us after all the results we've produced [in studies], then they never will," Jahn lamented.

VERDICT: Give it a go if you want another (other-worldly) perspective on a situation.

TUNING IN



PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY

SALT THERAPY

Too chilly to clear your head at the beach or soothe your overtrained legs in the ocean? You could instead sit in a salt room as pharmaceutical-grade dry salt is pumped through the atmosphere by a machine called a halogenerator. And you don't even need to get your feet wet.

THE LOWDOWN: "Salt therapy helps relieve the symptoms of many respiratory, sinus and skin conditions," says Angelina Vukobrat, owner of Salts of the Earth Geelong. "It also works wonderfully to help relieve any hay fever symptoms, snoring and helps in sports recovery." So how exactly does it work? "Once the salt particles are deep within the respiratory system and sinuses, they start to draw the mucus and congestion out through osmosis," she says.

"Congestion starts to loosen and can be expelled from within the respiratory system a lot easier." As for skin, Vukobrat says the salt helps reduce inflammation and settles any itch. Each session goes for 45 minutes, and that time is yours to read, listen to music or meditate in the lounge-room setting as the salt does its thing. Vukobrat says you'll get the best results by going in three times a week.

THE SCIENCE: There have been a few studies on salt therapy as an effective treatment for asthma, and lots of anecdotal stories, but Lung Foundation Australia warns that any "claims are not based on any reliable scientific research or current medical guidelines."

VERDICT: If you have a respiratory condition, chat to your doctor before you enter the salt den.

COSMETIC ACUPUNCTURE

You already know that acupuncture can effectively treat a range of conditions including lower back and neck pain, hay fever and headaches, and so does the World Health Organization. But you can also let someone stick needles in your face to put the brakes on ageing.

THE LOWDOWN: Think of cosmetic acupuncture as a facial, supersized with needles (and not of the botox variety). The exact therapy combo differs from expert to expert, but Dr Irene Prantalos, of Salubre Health Solutions, usually incorporates acupuncture (on both the face and body) after cleansing and before moisturising. "We choose acu-points locally on the face, based on your concerns, and

to improve overall health, which in turn slows down the ageing process," Prantalos says. "The emphasis of this treatment is to enhance general health and wellbeing. For instance, darkness around the eyes is a result of adrenal and/or kidney deficiency, and bags under the eyes are a result of spleen deficiency."

THE SCIENCE: While there's lots of science backing acupuncture as a treatment for certain health conditions, there isn't any peer-reviewed research on the cosmetic variety. "This isn't to say it doesn't work," insists Prantalos. "All research comes from practical experience first and then the need for it to be supported by quality peer-reviewed research follows."

VERDICT: It's a good option if botox and fillers aren't your kinda thing.

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

TM - as it's known to Oprah, Lena Dunham and legions of practitioners worldwide - is a form of meditation with a secret mantra. So what's with the all-star following? Many say that this simple, effortless meditation is key to their success as it helps decrease anxiety and ups creativity.

THE LOWDOWN: While other forms of meditation involve trying to control the mind or observe thoughts, TM gives you access to the part of your mind that's already settled and calm, explains Bob Roth, author of *Strength in Stillness* (Simon & Schuster, \$19.99). All it takes is repeating a secret mantra for

20 minutes, twice a day. "Your body will gain a state of rest far deeper than sleep, and gets rid of this build-up of stress, fatigue and tension, and wakes up the creative centres in the brain," says Roth. But you won't discover the mantra on an app. Instead, learning TM involves four

one-on-one lessons with a TM teacher, such as Roth, who'll give a personal mantra (it's considered bad juju to reveal your mantra to anyone). "Unlike an app that you have to keep listening to over and over again, once you've learnt TM you've got it for the rest of your life," says Roth.

THE SCIENCE: There have been a number of peer-reviewed

studies that show TM addresses "the problem of stress at its source", says Roth. A 2013 meta-analysis in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* showed TM can help reduce anxiety.

VERDICT: If you want to get more done, have a crack. But it will set you back about \$1500.

WHAT TO WOO

IF YOU HAVE SOME CRAZY-ASS DREAMS

TRY: Dream consultations. "A one-off session can help you understand a dream," says Jane Teresa Anderson, author of *The Dream Handbook* (Hachette Australia, \$19.99). "It usually includes a dream alchemy exercise, to reprogram any unconscious limiting beliefs revealed by the dream, so you can move forward."

IF YOU'VE TRIED IT ALL BUT YOU CAN'T STOP SMOKING

TRY: Allen Carr's Easyway. "It's similar to cognitive therapy," says quit-smoking therapist Natalie Clays. "But rather than focusing on the negatives, we [look at] why you still smoke despite the obvious disadvantages. For most smokers, just one five-hour session is all it takes to quit easily."

IF YOU JUST CAN'T MEDITATE

TRY: Sound Baths. Gongs and quartz stone bowls are used to generate music aimed at inducing a meditative state. Julia Scott-Russell of Crystal Sound Lounge says, "The sound does the work." **WH**

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The percentage of patients who reported IBS relief after a placebo acupuncture treatment. Mind power! Source: Harvard University