



Did you know that certain scents—namely pumpkin pie and vanilla—could spice up your love life? According to a study by the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation, the combination of lavender and pumpkin pie had a strong aphrodisiac effect on men, increasing blood flow to the subjects', er, members by 40 per cent. Dr. Alan Hirsch, the foundation's director, says that vanilla works best on older gentlemen, while pumpkin pie works on younger men.

Good Scents: Air Wick Homemade Holiday Black Edition Scented Candle in Vanilla Butter Cream Cupcake, \$11

FLU 411

Each year, the flu vaccine is created with the three strains of the flu that are expected to be common from fall all the way through to mid-spring. But what about other strains? According to a 2013 Canadian study published in *BMC Medicine*, you could still be protected against mismatched strains. Dr. Mary Vearncombe, microbiologist and medical director of Infection Prevention and Control at Sunnybrook Hospital, says that even if the virus mutates, you still have partial protection against the new strain since there is generally not a dramatic change from one flu season to the next. The study shows that the vaccine can reduce your risk of getting the matched strain by up to 83 per cent and a mismatched strain by 54 per cent. For more info on the flu shot, go to shoppersdrugmart.ca/coldandflu. Also, enter to win a gift basket full of cold and flu remedies at glow.ca/coldandflu.

STAND TALL

“People say ‘Sit up straight’ or ‘Stand up straight’ to get good posture,” says Sahra Esmonde-White, co-developer of Essentrics (essentrics.com), an exercise technique that uses muscle-lengthening moves—leg lifts, side bends, pliés, arm pulses—to create a strong, long physique. “But it’s not as simple as that.” To look tall and to elongate your back, you’ll need to loosen up your hip and hamstring muscles.

Esmonde-White’s DVD promises a svelte look. You can do it as a full-body, hour-long workout or in shorter commitments such as the Thigh-Thinning routine (40 minutes) or Hips, Back and Hamstring Stretch (37 minutes). It combines standing positions and floor work, so the only equipment required is a chair and a mat or towel.

This approach to exercise is indeed unique, and what really strikes me is how Zen I feel afterward. Also, my spine feels decompressed (thanks to raising my hands overhead and keeping my head lifted toward the ceiling) and my joints feel loose, not stressed. My abs are tight from side bends with my arms in “fifth position” (the ballet pose that has you holding an imaginary

beach ball overhead). A tight core acts like a girdle, says Esmonde-White. “It sucks in your waist.” My favourite move is the psoas stretch, since I can feel the tension melting away around my hips. Similar to a lunge, you place one foot on a chair in front of you, leaning into it with the leg bent. You bend the back leg as well. This lengthens the muscle that runs from your lower back through the hip and the thigh bone.

The program, which has slim devotees like Sarah Gadon and Lily Cole, promises to keep you in shape in a low-stress way. “We want to tone, we want to look lean, but we don’t want to do that and compromise the health of your body at the same time,” says Esmonde-White.



Don't be a slouch with your workouts. Exercise for better posture.

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