



HOW I STAY CALM UNDER PRESSURE

THE YOGA TEACHER

Kirsty Norton is a meditation and yoga teacher. She lives in Hove, East Sussex with her daughter and Staffie dog, Betty.

I make time for the little moments.

I look after myself every day in little ways. Twice a week I have a bath with Epsom salts or essential oils, which are great for detoxifying and relaxation. That is my treat time and something I look forward to. It's really important to carve out those little moments for yourself that are always available. I also love being outside in nature. If it's a nice day, Betty and I will go down for a walk on the seafront.

I have a dedicated lie-in day.

I have my daughter five days a week and Thursdays are my lie-in days. I normally wake up about 7am, but I'll stay in bed until about 9am with all my tech switched off. I'll read or write or listen to something instead. Everything else is so busy during the week so I need to have these periods that are just mine, when I start the day at my own time and pace.

I can recognise overwhelm.

I have been properly burnt out three times in my life and now I can spot the signs. For me, it is feeling a shortness of breath and saying 'yes' to too many



Photography: Lauren Lee

things because I don't have the headspace to decide what I do (and don't) want to do. When I feel myself going into overwhelm, it's time to take a step back. It might be having an afternoon siesta, listening to a guided meditation or even coming off social media for a while. It's about being able to switch off – it's taken me years to realise that it really is that simple.

I don't expect meditation to be 'perfect'.

I meditate every day for 20 minutes. It's lovely when I have time to light candles and add some beautiful rituals, but sometimes there isn't that luxury, so I will sit on my bed against some pillows and allow myself to just sit there. I do a lot of work with soothing our nervous systems and meditation is something else we can feel we have to 'get right'. My practice is to check in with myself to see where I am and what's going on, rather than feeling that I have to change anything. If you let things just 'be', everything does settle down. We interfere so much when really it's about letting go of the resistance. One less thing to control is one less thing to stress about!

Find Kirsty online at www.kirstynortonyoga.co.uk

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Fill up your cup

Wassailing season is upon us, and it's a lovely way to connect with friends, family and the local community. Photographer and author Stuart Ovendon goes wassailing every year with his family: "It's a fine evening of tradition and theatre," he says. "A torch-lit procession starts at the far-end of the village and makes its way towards the orchard. Toast soaked in wassail [spiced cider] is hung on an apple tree, wassail is sipped and there is much singing and dancing." If you're ready to sup a cup, Stuart has shared his wassail recipe with us from his new book, *The Orchard Cook*...

You will need

- * 150g (5¼oz) Crab apples or 6 small dessert apples
* 2 tbsp brown sugar
* 1.5L (6 cups) cider
* 250ml (1 cup) damson gin
* 200g (1 cup) caster sugar
* 1 orange, sliced
* A thumb-sized piece of root ginger, thinly sliced
* 2 cinnamon sticks
* 2 star anise
* 6 allspice berries
* 4 cloves
* ¼ of a nutmeg, grated

Method

*Heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Toss the apples in the brown sugar and transfer to an oven-proof dish; roast for 20 minutes until the apples have partly softened and the skins are starting to split. Set aside to cool. *Stir the cider, damson gin, caster sugar, orange, ginger and spices together in a large pan, then bring to a simmer on a hob or fire. Serve in mugs or handled glasses with toast to dip into the wassail.

Find more of Stuart's delicious tree to table recipes in The Orchard Cook (Clearview Books, £25), available now. www.clearviewbooks.com

AN APPLE A DAY Apples are choc-full of vitamins and antioxidants – including quercetin, a protective compound known to lower the risk of several chronic diseases.

Photography: Stuart Ovendon