



A DAY IN PARADISE

Find a moment of peace wherever you are, any time of day, with Urban Fruits



Jo Usmar, wellbeing expert
Paradise. What is it, where is it and how can we all find some? The concept of discovering some kind of Elysium in your daily life can seem farfetched – sipping Sangria on a sandy beach isn't an

option for most of us on a Monday afternoon. Yet it's totally possible to find moments of peace in the everyday. Havens amongst the madness. It's just about knowing where to look. Here's how to snatch a little paradise wherever you are.

First thing

7.30am Want to become one of those annoying 'morning people' who leap about first thing? When you get up, open your curtains – don't scuddle around zombie-like in the dark. Natural light reduces the sleepy hormone melatonin in your system, making you feel more awake and more together mentally.

8am Let your mind wake up at its own pace – don't bombard it with social media as soon as you peel your eyes open. Start a 15-minute 'no social media' rule in the morning. Take charge of daily information overload.

8.30am Listen to a 10-minute exercise from the free Headspace mindfulness app on your commute. These teach you how to focus on the present moment. Mindfulness has been proven to increase feelings of wellbeing and reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

Work

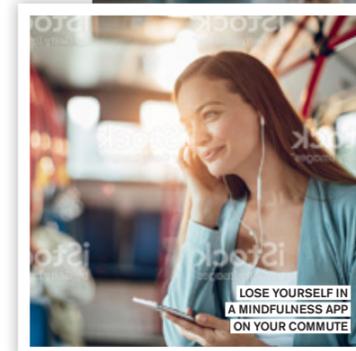
10.30am Take frequent short breaks from your computer, rather than longer breaks every now and then – taking five minutes every 40 spent working is a good place to start. 'Deactivating' from work allows better focus when you return.

1pm Leave the office for no reason at all. We're always *doing*. We always have something we need to achieve, even if it's just getting from A to B. So, once a day, just walk, not to get anywhere, or to *do* anything, simply to walk. 'Green' exercise (getting outside) is proven to lift your mood.

3pm Check in with your body at certain times, like when you boil the kettle. Our bodies act as



MAKE TIME FOR A LONG SOAK TO BOOST FEELINGS OF POSITIVITY



LOSE YOURSELF IN A MINDFULNESS APP ON YOUR COMMUTE



SALMON CONTAINS OMEGA-3 WHICH INCREASES LEVELS OF 'HAPPY HORMONE' SEROTONIN

early-warning systems for our moods, so when fixing a brew, check if your shoulders are hunched, if you're biting your nails or if your fists are clenched. If they are, try a deep-breathing exercise to calm down: put one hand on your chest, one on your abdomen. Inhale deeply through your nose and out through your mouth, counting to five on both. Feel your stomach raise on the inhale, and compress on the exhale. Continue until you feel calmer.

Home

7pm Cook some mood food. Whole grains, complex carbs (such as brown rice and beans) and salmon (which contains omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D) all increase the levels of serotonin – the 'happy hormone' – reaching your brain, while walnuts contain magnesium which can boost metabolism, help you sleep and enhance circulation.

8pm Soak your tired limbs in a tub full of hot, bubbly water. Eighty people who took a bath every day for a fortnight for a study all reported dramatic increases in feelings of positivity. It's the calm, quiet act of giving time to yourself. Bliss.

9pm Encourage sleep by banning all tech for an hour before bed. Electronic devices emit 'blue light' which boosts your attention, reaction times and your mood – great for when you want to feel alert, but rubbish when trying to snooze. Also, get rid of blue light-emitting alarm clocks or bedside lights – swap for 'red wave' bulbs instead.

Jo Usmar is the author of eight books within the *This Book Will Make You* series, out now, £8.99, Quercus

A taste of the tropics



Even the most disciplined among us have to deal with the inevitable daily temptation of a sweet treat looming its sugary head as the clock strikes 3pm. Enter the snack saviours at Urban Fruit. They had enough of that sad-looking banana getting bruised on the way in to work and decided to create a range of deliciously healthy snacks, perfect for when you are on the go.

Unlike a load of other standard go-to snacks, the Urban Fruit crew wanted to make sure that their treats are 100% natural.

They pick the fruit when it is perfectly ripe and bake it gently to keep all of its juicy goodness, so you can tuck in knowing it is totally free from refined sugar and gluten and also, a lot of you will be pleased to hear, completely vegan-friendly.

Track down Urban Fruits snack and sharing packs at all major supermarkets

