Easy ways to get stronger

How about exercise that’s not about getting super-toned but helps you lift shopping without going ‘oof’? Functional training concentrates on muscles working together as they do in real life, says activity expert Paul Sanderson of Loughborough University. Muscle power wanes at 1% a year after 30, says Sanderson, so we need to relearn seven key moves – squating, bending, twisting, lunging, pushing and pulling, and walking. Try these ways to stay fit.

- Semi-squat. Dip your bottom by just 30° instead of level with your knees, then stand up straight, 10 times. Make it harder by raising your hands above your head as you squat. Later, aim to do it while holding weights.
- Briefer walks. Use more energy by upping your pace. Studies show that those who stride out at 2.25 miles an hour in their 70s live longer.
- Chair cardio. Sit on a hard chair, arms crossed, hands on shoulders. Now stand and sit as many times as you can in 30 secs. Once you can do 15, try it from the sofa.

Natural tricks to stay toasty

Women really do feel the cold more than men, says physiology professor Mark Tipton: blood flow to our hands and feet shuts down faster. Show this to your other half when he wants to turn the heat down!

- De-frost digits. Squeeze stress balls to keep hands warm says the Raynaud’s Association. Move every 15 mins, too, to shift blood to extremities.
- Go hands-free. Opt for a shoulder or cross-body bag, because gripping handles restricts circulation in the fingers.
- Warm up with herbs. Chilli and ginger give a short boost but studies suggest that the Swiss-made Tibetan herbal remedy Padma 28 may have longer-lasting results.