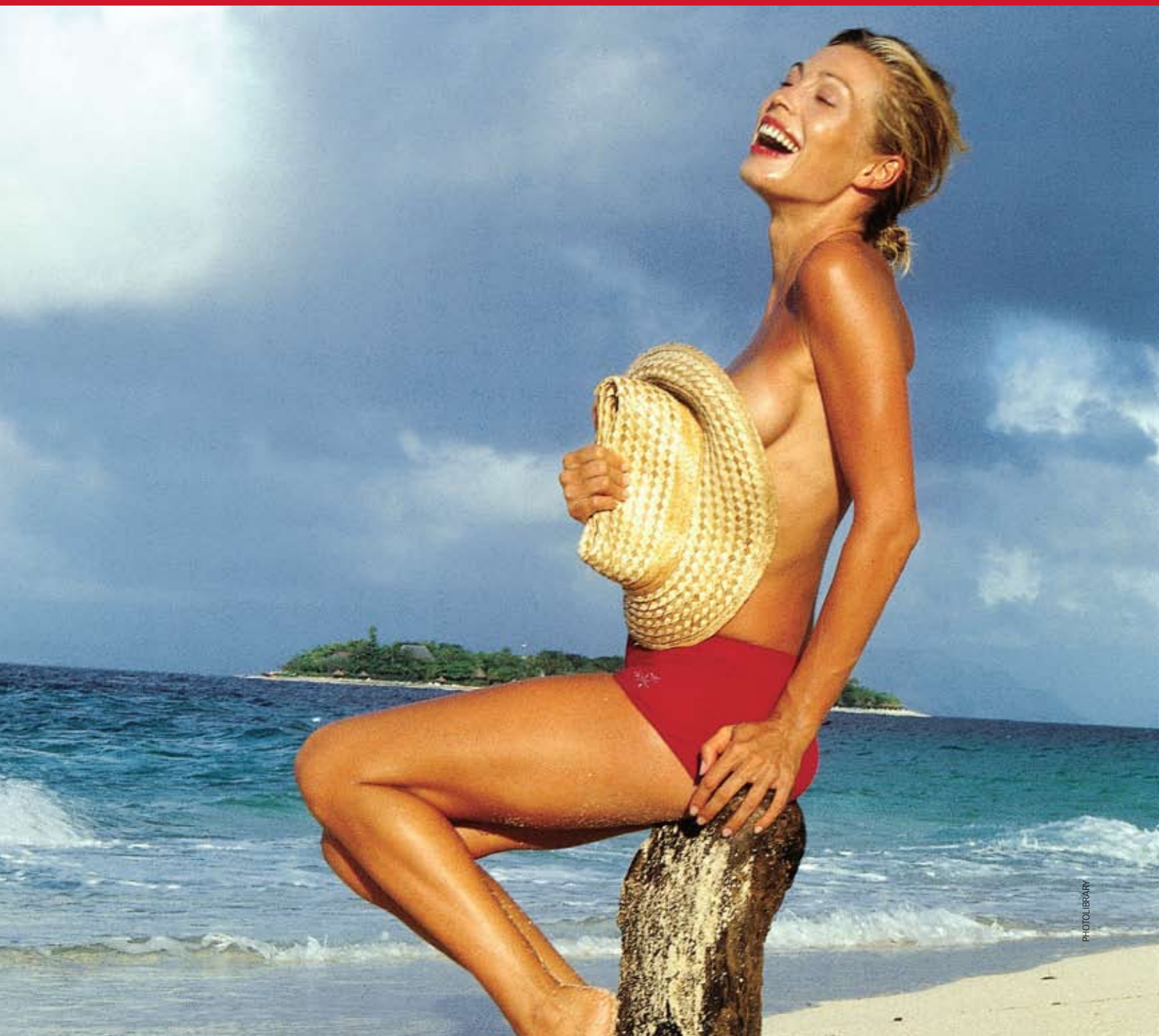


health

# Get a Life!



Are you enjoying life or just going through the motions? **Gillian Nalletamby** gives you 10 tips on how to break out of your routine but you might just have to break into a sweat

**S**o you've ticked most of the boxes; you've bought your first property, you're on your way to a dream career and you have a partner and or children, so why do you feel so unfulfilled? Maybe you're single and all your friends are in relationships? It's easy to become stuck in a rut and think to yourself – is this all there is to life?

It's about time that you took your life off auto-pilot, stop being a spectator of life and become an active participant. Getting a life is not about jumping out of a plane or going deep sea diving, it's about making long-term changes that can dramatically transform your life.

**1 Take every Friday off at work**

Benjamin Franklin said that '... nothing is certain but death and taxes' and there may be things about our lives we can't change such as unaffordable housing, rising interest rates and a long commute to work. However, there are ways to try and break the monotony and routine of our every day lives. With the low unemployment rate and a candidate shortage across certain industries, this may be the perfect time to negotiate a work/life balance with your boss.

You may be able to start work earlier or later to avoid the peak hour traffic or work from home occasionally. Other options may include the possibility to work longer hours from Monday to Thursday and enjoy a four-day week or a Friday off every fortnight. Some employees are also negotiating more annual leave as part of their salary packages or time in lieu. This will give you more time to focus on

your personal goals and the more enjoyable things in life.

**2 Spring clean your life**

It's time to bury the skeletons of the past, move on from regrets and past disappointments and get rid of the emotional baggage that is holding you back. Stop living for other people, trying to please everyone, wishing your life away or waiting to lose weight, save money, get married or [fill in the blank] before you start realising your dreams.

Fire your harshest critic, got rid of toxic friends and negative naysayers that stop you from moving on with your life and living to your full potential. Stop competing with the Joneses or trying to conform to society's expectations and start living the life you have always dreamed of. The time is now.

**3 Learn to fly a plane**

When you're a child, extra curriculum activities are encouraged such as dancing classes, playing a sport or learning how to play a musical instrument but as adults, we lose sight of how important hobbies are for self-development and growth and giving you a strong sense of identity. Whether you're a high-flying corporate lawyer or a busy stay-at-home mum, it's always important to set aside time for hobbies or interests that you can do outside of your work, family and relationships.

Work may pay the bills and put dinner on the table but hobbies can allow you to express different aspects of your personality and make you feel alive. There are a myriad of things to choose from such as taking flying lessons, joining the local theatre group, learning a new language or how to cook, taking an art or photography course or writing a blog.

You can even turn a hobby into a second job or successful business. This will give you money

for the finer things in life and leisure activities. For example, if you spend hours at the gym, you may consider becoming a gym instructor and getting paid for your workouts, if you are passionate about writing, you could try selling your stories to a magazine and if you have a flair for making cakes, you could start your own business. You're still doing the things you love but getting paid for it.



STOCKXPERT

**QUICK TIP: Dress to impress at**

**all times – not only will you look**

**great, but you'll feel good too!**

**4 Set short term and long term goals**

Does life just happen to you or it is well planned out? It's easy to feel disillusioned by rising interest rates, overwhelmed by the thought of losing weight, feel drained at the thought of home renovations and believe you will never reach your personal goals. Break up your larger goals into smaller, achievable goals. You cannot save for a house deposit, lose weight, launch into a new career or tackle a home renovation overnight.

Set short and long term written goals that are specific, realistic and achievable. There is no point in setting yourself up for failure at the start. A central part of goal-setting is that the goals are measurable so make sure you take before and after pictures if you want to lose weight or are tackling a home renovation.

It's also important to reward yourself when you reach your short- and long-term goals.

Planning a long-term goal such as a trip overseas can give you something to look forward to and put a spring in your step. As legendary management consultant Peter Drucker said, "the best way to predict the future is to create it."

**5 Spend one week's salary on a handbag**

Relaxation time is as important for adults as it is for children. You may be the type of person who always puts other people's needs first but you need to listen to your inner voice and make time for yourself. This 'me' time may be what you need to regroup and have a renewed vigor for life. 'Me' doesn't have to be a dirty word. In fact, being selfish and having more 'me' time can lead to a refreshed and rejuvenated 'you'.

Having time to yourself is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. You need to take time out to unwind and reward yourself for the sacrifices you

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are making in meeting your short and long-term goals. This may be something simple, such as going for a walk, reading a book or having a nap in the middle of the day or spoiling yourself with a pedicure or massage, indulging in a shopping spree or going out to an expensive restaurant.

Treat yourself to a shopping spree by all means but everything you do should be in moderation. Spending a week's salary on Christian Louboutin shoes or going away on an expensive holiday can only be justified if you are meeting your savings goals. Retail therapy may give you a temporary high as does a chocolate bar. However, if you're living beyond your means, when the bills arrive it will give you a harsh reality 'cheque' and you may be worse off than before.

knowledgeable in a certain field, you could become a teacher or join an industry association or if you are a journalist, you could work in a related industry such as public relations or copywriting.

### 7 Volunteer

Volunteering is beneficial for a number of reasons. It gives you a sense of purpose, helps develop a sense of social responsibility and it's a good way to make friends.

Find a job to suit your interests such as working with animals, volunteering at a sporting event or helping to save the environment. You can choose from a variety of roles to suit your skill set such as writing newsletters, event management, coaching or umpiring, mentoring young children, campaigning or lobbying or fundraising.

Most organisations have a level of flexibility and you can choose to volunteer one day a week or a month depending on your schedule. As well as feeling great about yourself and giving back to the community, volunteering can be a great way to pad up your resume if you're a university student, a stay at home mum returning back to work or seeking a career change or new challenge. It can also be a great way to meet new people and form new networks.

### 8 Exercise and diet for life

A wealth of research shows a link between exercise and psychological well-being and put simply, exercise is great for our mental health. Change your exercise mindset and start exercising for the mental benefits that it can bring. Exercising makes you release endorphins, which can make you happier, less stressed, and increases your vigor for life.

Exercise should be incorporated into your daily lifestyle. Working out will make you feel better about yourself and



give you a chance to increase your socialisation skills and become part of a community. Most people would be surprised to know that the hardest part to weight-loss is maintenance. Exercise for the right reasons and in the long term, it will be sustain the weight-loss.

Diet, like exercise, is about a lifestyle plan. Regardless of whether you're a size six who can eat whatever they want and stay the same size or you're grossly obese, everyone should have a healthy eating lifestyle plan. Eating healthy will give you more energy throughout the day, help you stay fit and active and assist with your overall health and wellbeing. Studies show that people who eat well are happier and lead more purposeful lives.

### 9 Increase your social networks

It's important to have a strong supportive network. Friendships as a child were much easier to make. As an adult, we tend to become more cautious, discerning and judgmental. As our priorities change, it may be hard to maintain friendships or start new friendships. As mentioned before, volunteering, exercising or taking up a hobby can all help increase your social networks.

The internet has also opened up a world of possibilities such as internet forums, reuniting with old friends using social networking websites such as Facebook and Myspace and internet dating websites. You

could also join a professional networking body and meet people who work in your industry who may share similar interests.

You need to be open to the possibility of making new friendships, be approachable and accepting of other people's differences. They say opportunity only knocks once but the likelihood of the man of your dreams knocking on your door is very slim. You need to create your own opportunities and this doesn't happen sitting at home watching The Simpsons.

### 10 Wear red lipstick to the supermarket

When you're snowed under with housework, feeling pressure from work and barely feel like you have a minute to yourself, it's easy for your appearance to take a back seat. However, if you start to take pride in your personal appearance and improve your image, you will naturally start to feel better about yourself.

Stop dressing for other people or solely for special occasions and make a conscious effort to dress for yourself. Slap on a bit of a lipstick when you go out, get a new hair colour or haircut and ditch the trainers and tracksuit pants. A little effort will pay dividends and go a long way to a happier you. Other people may not notice the difference but the only person you are letting down is yourself. ✨



### 6 Join the circus

Are you in a career slump? Step out of your mental comfort zone. Many people engage in extreme sports like bungee jumping, hang-gliding or rock climbing but play it safe in their everyday lives. Think back to what you wanted to be when you grew up. It's never too late to change your career or move to a different country. Don't let your resume dictate your life. On your deathbed, no one is going to congratulate you for 20 years of loyal service at the same company.

Seek opportunities within your own workplace, find a mentor or enrol in courses outside of work hours to help you secure your perfect job or start your own business. There may also be an option to work in a related industry. For example, if you are