

FITNESS & WELL-BEING

GIVE AND LET LIVE

Jewellery and watches may be on many Christmas wish lists, but check out these gifts that can help promote a healthier lifestyle, writes Sasha Gonzales



A food processor makes a healthier diet easier.

This Christmas, inspire your loved ones towards a healthier lifestyle with these gift ideas, as recommended by health and fitness experts.

Manuka honey
Recommended by Leonica Kei, director and senior trichologist at the Philip Kingsley Trichological Centre, Singapore
Manuka honey makes the perfect holiday gift. Made only from the nectar of the manuka flower in New Zealand, it is said to have strong antibacterial properties.

Choose one with a UMF (unique manuka factor) of at least 16. UMF is a measure of antibacterial strength, so the higher the number, the more effective it is.

I started taking manuka honey about 10 years ago, and since then, I've rarely fallen ill and feel much healthier and stronger. It's worked wonders for my children, too. They used to catch the flu whenever we travelled during the winter holidays, but since taking manuka honey – usually a spoonful before bedtime – they have not caught the bug. Ora Manuka honey 20+UMF, 250 grams, A\$65, oramanukahoney.com.au



Fitness cue
Recommended by Li Si Yang, personal trainer, journeytofitness.com
So many of us live a sedentary lifestyle. Our bodies fall out of alignment because we're unaware of our poor posture and habits throughout the day. Over time, our flexibility decreases, as does our strength. This, I believe, is the cause of many health problems later in life.

What this fun and portable product does is help people be more mindful of their movement while working out. Made mostly of natural wood, it will help improve posture, increase flexibility, boost mind-muscle connection, lengthen and stretch tight muscles, and strengthen dormant muscles that have been neglected and are weak. The patented grooves detect any imbalances and get both sides of the body to work symmetrically. It offers a gentle cue to maintain good posture and to activate the right muscles.

Fitness Cue, US\$299.95 (includes a free foam roller), fitnesscue.com



Food processor
Recommended by Daphne Wu, registered dietitian and PhD researcher
A food processor is handy to have in the kitchen. You'll be surprised how it can help make your meals healthier. For example, instead of buying ground meat, which is often costly and fatty, you can just buy a slab of lean meat and grind it down yourself. It is also useful for pulverising nuts and seeds, which can then be sprinkled over your cereal for extra fibre and omega-3 fatty acids. You'll have fresher ground nuts and seeds than if you were to buy pre-ground, packaged varieties.

Philips Viva Collection food processor HR7761/00, HK\$748, philips.com.hk

BPA-free water bottle
Recommended by Dr Winnie Mui, general practitioner, Doctor Laura Bramley & Partners in Central
Your loved ones will appreciate a reusable, BPA-free bottle. BPA refers to bisphenol A, a chemical that is used in



Klean Kanteen Classic stainless steel bottle with loop cap (in assorted colours), US\$18.95, racingtheplanet.com

the manufacture of plastics and that may have negative effects on human health.

Staying hydrated throughout the day is important for your skin and body.

Besides, if you carry your own beverages around, you won't have to spend money on the bottled or canned stuff, and you'll save on waste, too. It's simply a more eco-friendly option.



Step counter
Recommended by Dr Hans Schrader, executive medical director, Matilda International Hospital
Few working people in Hong Kong have time to exercise regularly, but we can all walk. By using a step counter or pedometer, your loved ones can just aim for 10,000 steps a day and they will be on their way to preventing heart disease and improving their personal well-being. **Oregon Scientific slimfit 3-D pedometer, HK\$268, hk.oregonscientific.com**

Superfoods
Recommended by Graeme Bradshaw, naturopath and homeopath, and founding director of Integrated Medicine Institute
Superfoods make great healthy

The Fitness Cue is designed to help posture and flexibility.



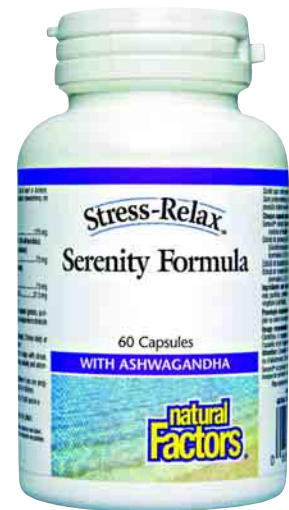
gifts because they are high in antioxidants and phytonutrients.

Renewal Greens by Innate Response is a plant-based "greens drink" that is chock-full of vitamins. It boosts endurance during exercise, is beneficial for cardiovascular health because of its high level of antioxidants, and has an alkalising effect on the joints and kidneys. Restorative and revitalising, it can also help protect against the visible signs of ageing.

Innate Response Renewal Greens, HK\$395, from IMI, 13/F Kailey Tower, 16 Stanley St, Central

Stress-relieving remedy
Recommended by Dr Benita Perch, naturopathic physician, Integrated Medicine Institute
Christmas and New Year can be a stressful time for many of us. If you know anyone who is on the brink of burning out, you may want to give them something that will help them stay calm during the crazy season.

Serenity Formula is a herbal supplement that can bring the body back to balance. During highly stressful periods, our adrenal glands become exhausted, and this formula helps to restore their function, and thus promotes vigour, vitality and



Serenity Formula, HK\$219, from IMI

Bread maker
Recommended by Debbie Tong, health education manager, Matilda International Hospital
When you really care about someone, you want only the best for them, and that includes their health, too.

A bread-maker is perfect for creating fresh, tasty loaves that are free from preservatives and other additives that you'll find in some store-bought bread varieties.

It's so simple to use. Just place all the ingredients in the machine and press the button to get the bread-making process started. Oats, flax seeds or dried fruits can be added to make the loaves healthier and more delicious.

Taking control of one's diet is a sensible first step towards enjoying a better quality of life. **Breville The Custom Loaf Pro bread maker, A\$349.95 (HK\$2,400), breville.com.au** life@scmp.com



Adrian Lowther heads out on a training run. Photo: Nora Tam

WE RUN HK

Rachel Jacqueline
life@scmp.com

The Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon, which started in 1997 with a humble 1,000 runners, has grown into a running festival for the city, with 73,000 racers expected to take part next year. To celebrate the city's passion for the sport, we will be featuring one inspirational local runner each week until the race on February 16.

How important is a measly one minute, 24 seconds? For marathon runner Adrian Lowther, it's everything. It's the driving force behind his tireless regime of early morning runs,

triple-digit training weeks and gut-wrenching speed sessions in pursuit of the elusive sub-two-hour, 30 minute marathon. (His current personal best is 2:31:24).

Lowther, 32, has been running daily for more than two decades, ever since setting off on his first five-kilometre fun run at the age of eight. Despite being the smallest competitor, he finished ahead of all his peers – and most of the adults, too. He's been having the same impact ever since, making his mark at track, road and field events across Britain at a national level.

His first move after arriving in Hong Kong earlier this year was – you guessed it – not to explore the sights, but join a running club. Lowther works as a

communications manager at Cathay Pacific.

My life fits into my running. I train every day and often twice a day. This means before work and immediately after work. My weekly kilometre tally ranges from 90 to 175 kilometres over the course of a year, depending on what races I am prioritising.

My Monday night runs are my favourite. They are usually about 20 kilometres. I don't put any pressure on myself to reach a certain pace and just run how I feel. Sometimes they are quick; sometimes they're just an easy recovery from a hard weekend race. It's a perfect opportunity to set the tone for the week ahead.

I'll never forget standing next to the then marathon world record holder (and running legend) Paul Tergat at the start line of the 2007 London Marathon. Within seconds of the start he was gone and not to be seen by me again, of course. But for those few minutes before the start, he was in my race.

I have opted not to run the Hong Kong marathon next year as I have set myself the goal of running under two hours and 30 minutes. The course in Hong Kong isn't conducive to fast times and, in all honesty, you need people around you when trying to achieve this goal – at the Hong Kong marathon there just isn't the strength in depth

HEALTH BITES

Jeanette Wang
jeanette.wang@scmp.com

Tomatoes may lower breast cancer risk
Post-menopausal women who eat plenty of tomatoes and tomato-based products have a lower breast cancer risk, finds a study in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*. Rich in the phytochemical lycopene, the fruit is believed to work by raising levels of adiponectin, a hormone that regulates fat and sugar metabolism. For two separate 10-week periods, 70 post-menopausal women ate daily either tomato products with at least 25 milligrams of



lycopene, or at least 40 grams of soya protein. Before each test period, the women abstained from eating both products for two weeks. The tomato-rich diet raised levels of adiponectin by 9 per cent, while the soya diet was linked to a reduction in the hormone.

Doubts raised over hip implant effectiveness

The current regulation process for hip implants "seems to be entirely inadequate", say Oxford University researchers who reviewed medical literature for evidence of clinical effectiveness of various hip implants. The review, published in the *BMJ* (British Medical Journal), showed nearly 8 per cent of more



than 136,500 components used in primary hip replacements in 2011 in England and Wales were implanted without readily identifiable evidence of clinical effectiveness.

Moderate alcohol consumption boosts immune system

In a study by Oregon Health & Science University, published in the journal *Vaccine*, 12 rhesus macaques were vaccinated against smallpox, then allowed access to either alcohol or sugar water, along with pure water and food. They were vaccinated again seven months into the test, and all showed comparable responses to the vaccination. After 14 months, the monkeys were split into heavy and moderate drinkers. The moderate drinkers showed enhanced responses to the vaccine compared to the control group, while the heavy drinkers had greatly diminished vaccine responses.



(meaning a large number of fast runners) to be sure of this. I am therefore going to Tokyo a week later to take part in the Tokyo marathon and try to reach my goal. The course is fast and there are a number of fast runners competing. If I get my training right, I will have the best possible chance.

If I manage to run the elusive sub-2:30 marathon then I think I will be able to look back on my career and say that I achieved my potential. I believe – and some sports science lab tests have suggested – that I am physically capable of running a sub-2:30 marathon, but doing it is the hard part. I won't rest until I have.

My first thought as I cross the finish line will be "can I sit down now?"

If I didn't run, I would be hell to live with. But in all seriousness, I would probably become involved in coaching or the administration of the sport. I would like to help develop distance-running talent.