THIS IS WHAT 56 LOOKS LIKE

LISA WEBSTER lives in Essex with her husband, Gary and their sons, Josh, 30, Max, 28, and Jack, 27. She is a personal trainer and co-founder of fitness website kalipilates.co.uk

MENOPAUSE PILATES

I HAD a hysterectomy in 2019, so was plunged straight into the menopause. One of the worst things has been achy joints. I rely on Pilates to build strength and flexibility without putting stress on the joints. I had been teaching it for 20 years but it's a lifesaver now. The breathing exercises help anxiety too. I've set up an online platform, called Kali Pilates.

INSOMNIA BUSTERS

THE menopause affected my sleep. So I take drops of Organic Royal Hemp Oil (£32.99, *amazon.co.uk*) under my tongue, to help me feel calm before bed. I then rub BetterYou Magnesium Sleep Spray (£12.99, *hollandandbarrett.com*) into the soles of my feet to relax my muscles. Plus, I have magnesium baths three times a week, using BetterYou's Magnesium Flakes (£9.99).

HAIR-THICKENING TRICKS

WHEN I get stressed, my hair falls out. It is fine and wispy. It got very bad when I lost my dad five years ago. I used to have hair extensions but now I only have a few in and take supplements, such as Nourkrin Woman Hair Nutrition (£99.99, *hollandandbarrett.com*) as well as IoniCell For Women (£20, *victoriahealth.com*).

BUDGET DIY FACIAL

I'VE had Botox in my forehead in the past but not since the pandemic started. Instead, I use the NuFace Mini Facial Toning Device (£167, *cultbeauty.co.uk*) three times a week for five minutes. It's microcurrent tones the muscles in your face — and, after a year of use, I've noticed a real difference. It's worth the investment.

MAGIC PRIMER

EVERY day, I apply ColoreScience Even Up Clinical Pigment Perfector with SPF 50 (£89.50, *colorescienceuk.com*). It's tinted, giving a natural colour and smooths dark spots. It also contains sun protection. For going out, I wear MAC Studio Face and Body Foundation (£27, *maccosmetics.co.uk*) on top.

■ *DO YOU look good for your age? Reveal your secrets to inspire@dailymail.co.uk*

By FLORENCE SCORDOULIS

Immunity-boosting Negronis. Hangover-beating G&Ts. We put the new wellness tipples to the test and ask...

Can a cocktail EVER really be 'healthy'?

by Louise Atkinson

Picture: GETTY

HURRAH! We're finally allowed to meet up with friends again after our winter of lockdown — a few drinks will definitely be in order.

From today, outdoor gatherings of either six people or two households are allowed, and that means mini get-togethers and selective garden parties.

For those of us who have been hibernating for months, alcohol might be just what we need to ease us gently back into socialising once more.

But if you've gained a little lockdown weight and are keen to limit your calorie intake, is there a less indulgent — even healthy — way to slip into the party spirit?

LOUISE ATKINSON tests a selection of quirky new cocktails which claim to be good for you — in more ways than one.

BOOZY PROBIOTICS

Blood orange Negroni, 142 calories

THE classic Italian gin, sweet vermouth and Campari cocktail gets a calorie-cutting twist with blood orange-flavour sparkling kombucha.

RECIPE: mix 25ml gin, 25ml Campari, 150ml Remedy Switchel Blood Orange (£29.99 for 24 cans, *remedydrinks.com*) over ice and garnish with an orange twist.

HEALTH GAINS: Kombucha is lightly effervescent, fermented tea with a sour, yeasty flavour. This fruit-flavoured kombucha from Remedy is sugar-free and made from fermented raw apple cider vinegar and ginger, so it's full of antioxidants, live cultures and organic acids that claim to aid digestion and aid immunity.

VERDICT: Deliciously fruity with a slightly bitter aftertaste — just like a proper Negroni (which would normally be about 200 calories). The best way to take a daily probiotic. **5/5**

FRUITY LOW-CAL FIZZ

Slowbrero, 150 calories

A LOWER-calorie version of the tequila-based margarita, using a dragon fruit-flavoured sparkling mixer.

RECIPE: mix 25ml tequila, 10ml vodka, 10ml citrus liqueur, such as triple sec, and the juice of half a lime with 50ml Slow Cow (£6.99 for four, *amazon.co.uk*) over ice and serve in a glass with a salty rim.

HEALTH GAINS: Slow Cow is claimed to be the calming antithesis of energy drinks such as Red Bull. Instead of caffeine, it contains herbal extracts to aid relaxation, improve mood, concentration, memory and learning capacity — in theory. It is pale blue (to encourage calmness) and has zero calories.

VERDICT: The blue colour is alarmingly medicinal, and although Slow Cow works well as a mixer, this elaborate cocktail bears little resemblance to a proper margarita. A strong aftertaste of artificial sweetener. **2/5**

SPARKLING CBD

Gin and elderflower, 83 calories

A TWIST on the classic gin and tonic, using a sparkling, low-calorie elderflower and mint mixer.

RECIPE: 25ml gin over ice with a can of Trip (£17.99 for six, *drink-trip.com*)

HEALTH GAINS: Trip is a fizzy low-calorie mixer with 15mg CBD or cannabidiol. This is the non-psychoactive compound found in hemp plants, which won't give you a cannabis high, but is said to balance the body's 'endocannabinoid system' controlling sleep, stress, anxiety, immunity, pain and inflammation. CBD supplements are also claimed to make you feel more creative, less anxious and stressed. Trip contains botanicals, too, such as ginseng and chamomile, to help the body cope with stress. And it only has 19 calories in a can.

VERDICT: The whiff of mint completely dominates any elderflower taste. The cocktail is surprisingly cloudy, with heavily herby overtones making it more savoury than expected. **2/5**

NO-BOOZE COLD BREW

Espresso martini, 81 calories

A ZERO-ALCOHOL version of an espresso martini made with the herb-infused non-alcoholic spirit, Amplify.

RECIPE: Shake 50ml Amplify (£15 for 50cl, from supermarkets), 15ml runny honey, 60ml cold brew coffee and a pinch of salt in a cocktail shaker with ice and pour into a martini glass.

HEALTH GAINS: By drinking this version, you'll be skipping the alcohol and getting hints of juniper berries, coriander seeds, angelica root, lemon peel, lemongrass and ginseng root instead. Add to this the purported health boost of coffee (studies show that the polyphenols it contains can have a disease-fighting antioxidant effect), plus the beneficial micronutrients from the honey.

VERDICT: Sadly, this does not come even close to a proper espresso martini in flavour or decadence. It tastes like sweet black coffee with top notes of lemony floor cleaner. **1/5**

IMMUNITY-BOOSTER

Pina colada, 155 calories

A PINA COLADA is usually off limits to anyone watching their weight, but this lighter version uses coconut water instead of coconut cream, so contains less sugar and fat.

RECIPE: 50ml Aluna coconut rum (£25 for 70cl, *waitrose.com*), 50ml Vita Coco coconut water, 100ml pineapple juice, juice of half a lime over ice.

HEALTH GAINS: Almost 50 per cent fewer calories (a classic pina colada is about 270 calories) thanks to the use of coconut water rather than coconut cream, plus the white rum Aluna boasts a lower sugar content compared to others. Coconut water contains potassium which can lower blood pressure and boost athletic performance. You also get a burst of health-giving antioxidants plus the enzyme bromelain (which can reduce inflammation, improve digestion and bolster immunity) in the pineapple juice.

VERDICT: A refreshing alternative to the sweet and creamy tropical cocktail. The coconut flavour really sings out. **5/5**

LIVER-FRIENDLY G&T

Gin with cucumber and mint, 118 calories

A LOW-calorie garden-party version of G&T.

RECIPE: 25ml gin over ice with cucumber and mint-flavoured Whisp (£10 for four from *whispdrinks.co.uk*)

HEALTH GAINS: Whisp is a low-calorie, flavoured fizzy water with four per cent alcohol (fermented malt) and milk thistle, known to help support liver function and tackle inflammation. In theory, this means it could stave off a hangover.

VERDICT: Cucumber makes this a really summery drink. **5/5**

ANTI-AGEING WHISKY

Whisky tea high ball, 95 calories

A long whisky cocktail with fizzy green tea.

RECIPE: 25ml whisky, ice, and Two Keys green tea mixer (£2, Co-op)

HEALTH GAINS: The Two Keys mixer (40 calories a bottle) is made from a blend of Japanese green teas, which contain bioactive compounds believed to protect the brain from ageing.

VERDICT: A sophisticated, almost savoury mixer. **4/5**

Dr MAX THE MIND DOCTOR

Let NHS psychiatrist Max Pemberton transform your life

You can't blame it ALL on the vaccine

ALL MEDICINES — in fact, all medical procedures — have side effects of one sort or another. Some are rare, while some are common. And to complicate matters, we know that some of the side effects reported are nothing to do with the drug at all.

It's pure coincidence they occurred at the same time someone started taking the medication or had that procedure.

However, people will swear blind that they must be related, even when you assure them that there is no possible way it could have been caused by the medication they took.

I have been fascinated by some of the side effects people have reported with the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid vaccine.

Flatulence, excessive blinking, insect bites and even, bizarrely, losing teeth have all been cited by people as reactions to the jab in a 65-page list of alleged reactions compiled by the UK's drug regulator.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has, of course, dismissed these, but it goes to show how our brains like to make associations and draw conclusions about causation.

Detecting patterns and drawing conclusions from these apparent patterns is an important part of how we humans learn and how we make decisions.

SOME people have even argued that the brain is, in fact, little more than a highly evolved pattern-recognition machine.

Often the patterns our brains see are real, but sometimes they are just chance. The problem is that our brain isn't good at differentiating between these.

Psychologists have called this 'patternicity' — finding patterns and meaning in meaningless noise. This makes sense from an evolutionary perspective. Our ancestors had to quickly make links and associations between cause and effect as a matter of survival. Sometimes it would be wrong, but sometimes it would be correct.

We are programmed to find patterns — even when there aren't any — as this helps provide at least some semblance of order on an otherwise chaotic and unpredictable world.

Our brains are hardwired to look for recognisable images among random shapes. This explains why someone can see the face of Elvis on a piece of burnt toast, for example, or a face in clouds.

The same is true for events: our brains desperately try to find a meaning among random occurrences even though they may be down to chance.

But, as with the case of worry about vaccines, this can sometimes lead us to illogical or unhelpful conclusions.

It reminds me of when I was a medical student and I did a GP attachment with an elderly doctor, who was about to retire.

Working with this GP was fascinating because he had the kind of experience and knowledge that cannot be learnt in a lecture or from a textbook.

He told me of how, a few years previously, he had been holding a vaccination clinic.

Although the link between the MMR vaccine and autism has since been categorically disproved, the doctor who undertook the research struck off the medical register and the original piece of research retracted from the journal in which it was published, the idea that this vaccine can be dangerous still persisted in some people's minds.

LAST week, the House of Lords debated whether school uniform is 'repressive' and should be abolished. Rubbish. From a psychological perspective, school uniform performs a vital function, ensuring all kids — rich or poor — feel part of the same group. It brings them together and is a great leveller.

Even today, many parents worry that, despite the evidence of the immense benefit that vaccination brings, it is still risky.

The GP had done his best to reassure his patients and, slowly, more and more parents were coming to have their children immunised.

One mother asked questions about the safety of vaccination and, after the GP had allayed her fears, she eventually agreed for her son to receive the jab.

The child was crying so the doctor put the child on his knee. He was about to administer the vaccine when, suddenly, the child had a seizure. It didn't last long, but the child didn't receive the vaccine and was sent to the local hospital.

As the GP explained to me, if he had vaccinated the child a minute earlier, the child would have had the seizure *after* the vaccine and the mother would — understandably — have been convinced for ever more that the vaccine had caused the seizure.

THAT mother would then also have told every other parent about her experience and it would have caused great worry and upset.

Even if he had tried to explain that there was no evidence that the jab caused seizures, and it was just a coincidence, no one would have believed him.

In fact, he said he, too, would probably have thought the vaccine had caused the seizure.

Just a few seconds difference, he and a whole community would have falsely abandoned science for what they thought they had seen with their own eyes.

It was an invaluable lesson in making sure that we all trust in the science, not simply what we think is true.

Picture: BACKGRID

How dogs really do heal kids

HELENA BONHAM CARTER (left) has spoken about how her beloved dogs helped heal her family after her split from Hollywood director Tim Burton. She credits getting dogs with helping to remake the family unit for her two children. I agree that dogs are brilliant. They distract, love unconditionally and provide new structure — just what a child needs when faced with the psychological turmoil of a divorce. Dogs are also just fun to be around. In fact, I saw the impact a dog can have on a child's life when I was a junior doctor. Christian was nine, had cerebral palsy and had had several painful operations to help his walking. But he fell while at school and, for months since, had been confined to his wheelchair. The surgeons were baffled and were considering another op. But before this could happen, his mother reported that her son had suddenly started walking again. 'Our neighbours got a new dog and it keeps getting into our garden. One minute Christian was sitting down — the next he was outside playing with it.' The consultant smiled: 'Well, it looks like that dog has done what none of us could do.'

■ *I READ with joy about Kirstie Allsopp's litter-picking campaign in last week's Mail. I'm a great fan of litter-picking and go most evenings. I do it as a mindfulness exercise but it also gives a sense of making things a little better. During my training in mental health, it was drummed into us that our environment has a huge impact on what happens inside our heads. From a psychological perspective, the litter sends a message of disrespect and decay. Litter-picking counters this: it sends a message that you care about your community. Plus it gives you a little boost because you're doing something good.*

DR MAX PRESCRIBES...

SWEDISH DUMBBELLS

I'VE just bought a set of Nuobell Swedish-designed adjustable dumbbells and they've made home workouts so much easier and more effective. They are also rather beautiful. One dumbbell can be adjusted from 2kg right up to 32kg simply by turning the handle. Easy to store and taking up minimal space, now I've got these, I'm questioning whether I need to go back to the gym at all. From £450 for a set, *gymkituk.com.*