

HEALTH



How I Find Balance

Harriet Tinka, 42, senior accountant, Office of the City Auditor, Edmonton
DOING AN ULTRAMARATHON OFFERS A DIFFERENT KIND of personal satisfaction than I get from other parts of my life. When you run a 125-km race (like the Canadian Death Race relay, which I ran in 2014), only the first 20 km is running; from there on, it's all mental toughness. You have to tell your body the pain is part of the race and that every step forward is one step closer to the finish line. I also like to set a goal and see if I can achieve it. For example, for the [next] ultramarathon I'm running (the 161-km Sinister 7) my goal was to run 80 km to 100 km a week. Some days I'll do 10 km first thing in the morning and 15 km when I get home; then I might take a day off. On weekends, I do long runs.

To fit in time for my family, my volunteer work and my business, Empowered Me (workshops for preteens and adolescents on topics such as self-esteem), I have a routine. For instance, I commit time, especially Sundays, to spend with my children; I mentor students on my lunch hour and every Wednesday night I speak to women who are facing domestic violence. I also write everything down in a mini-calendar and colour-code each activity.

Whatever obstacle you hit, you deal with it — you might have to change your plan, but you keep going. I'm grateful for everything I have, even for what happened to me in university. (After being abducted and stabbed by a former classmate, I met a young woman in the hospital whose outlook was positive despite losing both parents in the accident that left her in a wheelchair.) If it hadn't happened, I don't think I would be the person I am today. I want to inspire others; I think once you have a vision and a plan, you can achieve anything — you just need that passion. — *As told to Wendy Haaf*

STRESS-BUSTING TIP OF THE MONTH

See green

WE HAVE KNOWN for a long time that nature is good for our health, but now we have solid numbers to prove it. A new study led by the University of Queensland in Australia found that people who spend at least 30 minutes in parks each week are less likely to develop heart disease and poor mental health. Researchers found regularly visiting a local urban green space resulted in 9% fewer cases of high blood pressure and 7% fewer cases of depression, as well as reduced stress and anxiety. — *Martha Beach*



Pasta la vista

AS WE HEAD INTO WINTER, many of us start to crave heartier meals such as pasta. However, with the trend toward low-carb diets and the belief that it's fattening, pasta is often one of the first things to go. But new research from Italy shows that, as part of a healthy diet, pasta is actually associated with a lower body mass index. The Institute for Research, Hospitalization, and Health Care Neuromed in Pozzilli, Italy, studied the daily eating habits of more than 23,000 people and concluded that eating pasta according to the body's needs contributes to a healthy weight, lower waist circumference and improved waist-hip ratio. — *MB*