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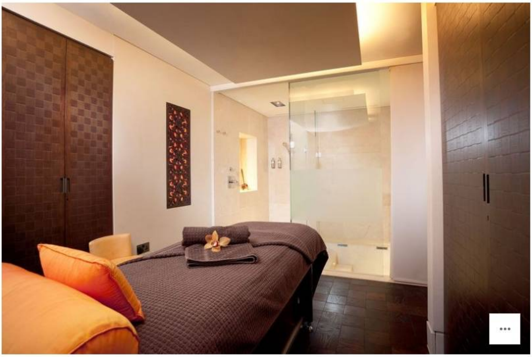
Five Luxurious Massages To Escape The Winter Chill

What could be more comforting in the winter chill than a soothing and warming massage to breathe life into aching limbs? Below, *Vogue* reviews the most luxurious treatments in London, perfectly suited to the season. Book your appointment now and eagerly await a decadent escape from reality for a blissful hour or two.

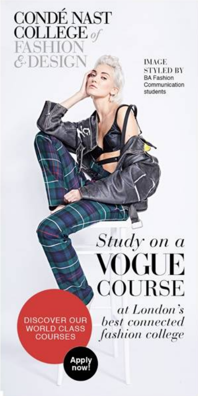
by VOGUE
14 Dec 2017



Warming Herbal Ritual at Ushvani

This serene day spa in the heart of Chelsea is the perfect place to decompress during the busy festive period. Book the Warming Herbal Ritual, a 90-minute treatment that eases you into the colder months with a combination of Thai reflexology and Shiatsu massage. Heated herbal compresses are used to sooth aching joints while the heady scent of essential oils lulls you to sleep. After releasing tension from your muscles, therapists gently coax your body into yoga-like poses, including a deep back bend that relaxes and realigns your spine. You'll feel the benefits for weeks afterwards – and leave counting the days until your next appointment. *RS*

£200 for 90 minutes - Ushvani.com



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Soveral Signature Custom Massage at Agua Bathhouse and Spa, Mondrian

When a spa is not simply a spa, but a “Spa Playground” with creative direction by Tom Dixon, you know you’re in for a treat. Away from the floor-to-ceiling copper teardrop installations, subterranean lounges and luminous pathways are six spacious treatment rooms kitted out for custom massages. The team will blend your own signature oil, tailor the music, lighting, heating - you name it - to you, as well as the actual treatment. Choose from 50 or 80 minutes - it extends a lot longer owing to the relaxation bed your therapist tucks you into post-treatment with a cup of tea and bespoke bottle of oil to take home. Feeling euphoric after an uplifting pampering session? Champagne is also on offer – with skinny prosecco as well as the usual fizzy favourites. Now that’s the sign of a considered spa. *AN*

From £90 for 50 minutes - Morganshotelgroup.com

Surrender By Mauli at Bulgari Spa

A complete body ritual beginning with a full-body salt scrub and ending with a marma pressure point massage, The Surrender By Mauli treatment at London's Bulgari Spa is inspired by Ayurvedic principles and tailored to suit each guest's personal dosha. Utterly calming and decadent, it'll leave you feeling like you've just arisen from a deep sleep (which to be honest, you might have - try staying awake whilst having your feet massaged). Arrive early for your treatment to make the best use of the beautiful pool and steam rooms. *LN*

£330 for 120 minutes - Bulgarihotels.com

Tailored Holistic Massage at Aman Spa, The Connaught

Is there such thing as too long when it comes to a massage? No, is the short answer, and particularly not at The Connaught's Aman Spa, where it's all too easy to let the hours slip away in this luxurious Central London sanctuary beneath one of Mayfair's busiest streets. Its holistic massage is available in a range of session lengths, but for true decadence opt for the two-hour therapy, which begins with a calming foot bath and a holistic consultation to ensure that the treatment is tailored (from focus to fragrance) to your exact needs and wishes. When you eventually do tear yourself away, you'll leave feeling relaxed, rejuvenated and lighter than air. *KB*

£250 for 120 minutes - The-connaught.co.uk

Moody Massage at Cowshed Spa, The Ned

If The Ned's plush interiors aren't enough to woo you inside from the cold, the treatments in the basement-located Cowshed Spa will. Rooms lie behind sturdy oak doorways and treatments come scented in the Cowshed notes you're probably familiar with by now. Nothing feels more suited to opposing the winter chill than the Moody Massage, which works on your personal needs: both physical and mental. The fact that one of London's busiest tube lines runs a few metres away is completely forgotten from the moment you enter the space that also boasts a Cheeky nail bar, grooming space, swimming pool and hammam. This new Cowshed outpost is a bliss in Bank and an oasis the City had long been looking for. *NP*

From £100 for 60 minutes - Cowshedonline.com

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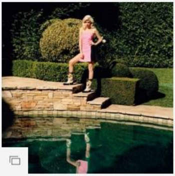

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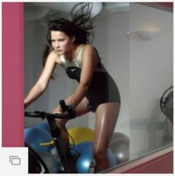

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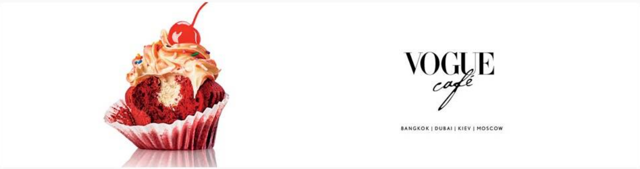

MINI VOGUE

Baby Boom: Vogue's Jessica Diner On Balancing Work And Parenthood

After scoring her dream job as Vogue's beauty and lifestyle director, Diner worried having a two-year-old son might hold her back. But what if it did anything but?

by JESSICA DINER

Tuesday 16 January 2018

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It's 6.30am. My alarm is going off. But rather than one of the annoying, twinkling chimes that my phone has to offer, it's a distant "Mama, Mama" coming from the room next door. I pretty much haven't set an alarm for two years because, you see, my alarm is now a small person who goes by the name of Noah — my son.

CREDIT: GABBY LAURENT

I get out of bed and head to his room. After a quick nappy change, we start our day: breakfast in pyjamas (his preference, Weetabix and "berries blue"; mine, muesli); radio on; post-breakfast playtime (his preference, a safari truck with wooden animals; mine, spelling words with magnets on the fridge) and then it's time to get dressed for the day ahead. It's at this point I check emails for the first time, scanning what's come in overnight, and start to plan my day. Depending on the day, his nanny or my mother arrives at 8am and then Noah and I go our separate ways. Once I shut the front door, it's game-face on and a hurried commute to the office, replying to the most pressing emails and checking the day's calendar en route, making sure that once I'm there I can be so effective that I will make it home in time for Noah's bath and bedtime by 7.30pm. The hours before I leave the house and those on my return are the most precious of my 24, enhanced by the fact that I've had the day to be "working" me. This is my world as a working mother.

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And, of course, I am not alone. It will come as no surprise that the Office of National Statistics has seen the number of working mothers rise from 62 per cent 20 years ago to a healthy 74 per cent today. You only have to look around my industry to see proof of the numbers: Phoebe Philo was one of the first high-ranking female designers to take maternity leave — and, intriguingly, to cite motherhood as one of the reasons for her success as creative director of Celine. Other fashion-industry figures turned becoming a mother into a new career role, creating hip, mum-focused websites: see Miroslava Duma's The Tot and Julia Restoin Roitfeld's Romy & The Bunnies. The message isn't just that you can work and be a mum, but that you can be great at work and be an excellent mother. Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg, in the working woman's handbook Lean In, talks of how you can balance work and family life — you can "have it all".

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by LAUREN MILLIGAN

Noah at Vogue House

Having it all — now there's a divisive term. I always knew I wanted to go back to work after having a child. But in our pro-feminist/"the juggle is real" society, the choice to be a working mum was, for me at least, less about making a statement to the outside world of how much I can do or what I can achieve, and more a matter of personal fulfilment. I love what I do; why should I relinquish it? I simply had to adjust how I organised my days. The phrase "if you want something done, ask a busy person" speaks to a mother like no other, and my levels of efficiency have rocketed since returning to work.

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For while Sandberg might preach the beauty of balance, I am not sure such a thing really exists, or that it needs to. Balance suggests some sort of calm and relaxing handle on time — most of my days feel anything but calm. There are 168 hours in a week, and it's for me to make each one count by whatever means possible. It's less about balance, more about being an expert juggler and prioritising your time. To be blunt: it's about getting shit done.

CREDIT: GABBY LAURENT

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by KATHERINE ORMEROD

I have what you could call an internal priority dial, and on any given day priorities can switch depending on what's most pressing or important. The constants at the top of the priority list are always baby and work. Everything else is variable — husband, house chores, friends, social life, me-time... these factors are what involve the most juggling. On a photoshoot and not going to make it back for bedtime? My husband and I plan in advance to make sure he will be home. A three-day work trip when the husband also has career commitments? Book in at Hotel Grandparents. Not had any quality time with the husband because of said shoot and work trips? Get a babysitter for a date night. Weekends are reserved for catching up on time missed being together in the week. Friday post-work through to Saturday night are strictly for family quality time. No exceptions. It's all about doing your best to be organised and multi-tasking to make things work. Michelle Kennedy, founder of Peanut, a social-networking app that works like Tinder for mothers, agrees: "What I think we do as mothers is juggle. We become masters at it. Sometimes we get it right, sometimes we drop a ball. That's just human. It isn't about balance, it's just how successful I've been at juggling that day."

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The crucial payoff, of course, is that being on top of things at work means I don't work longer hours. I just work harder. My to-do list is iron-clad, helping me to navigate the day with a confidence that I am ticking things off and making the right decisions. Confidence, it turns out, is actually quite key when it comes to being an efficient working mum. "It's all about confidence," says Clemmie Hooper, a midwife and author who is best known as Instagram force @mother_of daughters. As the mother of four girls, she has made being a working mum work. Doing one day a week as an NHS midwife, she spends another three days writing: "You can multi-task so much better when you know what you're capable of getting done in a day. I know my limits with work and family life and when I am trying to do too much, I scale it back. But that's come with confidence over time."

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So confidence is key, even if you feel like you're faking it some days. But the other element that no one talks about is joy. As cliched as it sounds, having Noah has brought a joie de vivre into my life that means my outlook is much more positive on all fronts. I speak about ideas and projects with conviction (I don't have time to waste on any I don't believe in) and I get flashes of work clarity in the most random moments, such as building airports out of Lego or reading stories to him in his cot. Because I've had a moment to step away from my day and find a little bit of perspective, creativity has breathing space. On the upside, accepting that he can be happy and fulfilled during his hours without me means that I don't worry about him so much and can be totally focused on work (save for the intermittent WhatsApp updates that ping in throughout the day). In fact, after a ridiculously early-morning start at fashion week — which meant I missed our usual breakfast routine, I was tired, run-down and so over being jostled around backstage — receiving a video of him conquering the climbing wall at soft play (it was a big deal in our world at the time) gave me a much-needed pick-me-up. If he was making the most of his day, so should I.

> **The phrase "if you want something done, ask a busy person" speaks to a mother like no other...**

Of course, there is always sacrifice. With transparency and honesty about how much you can achieve in a week once you have factored in parenting, working, eating and sleeping, things get lost. Some are trivial: I am beyond behind on TV admin. I've only just started *Game of Thrones* (I know) and never watched *Love Island* (yes, really). But some are not so trivial. After being "on" all day at work — being the best, most bubbly version of myself — sometimes the woman my husband gets in his "slot" at dinner is a tired, crumpled husk. I haven't worked out since I was pregnant, and my social life is hardly vibrant. It plays second fiddle to deadlines and family time.

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In fact, as I write this, I am two hours into an 11-and-a-half hour flight to Tokyo for a new skincare launch — one appeal of the trip being that I would have dedicated time alone to write this piece. I'm afraid time is always going to be of the essence, and never in abundance. But I wouldn't have it any other way.

This article was first published in the February 2018 issue of Vogue magazine

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