

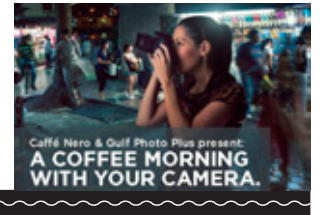
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LIFESTYLE

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Pick

FLASH NEWS

Caffé Nero and Gulf Photo Plus are offering a 90-minute session with a professional photographer who will teach you how to make full use of your digital camera and help you turn random snaps into enchanting professional photographs. Head to Caffé Nero, DIFC today between 11.30am and 12.30am. Sessions are free but registration required at www.gppme.com/cafenero.



Bilingual benefits

Speaking two languages keeps brain's ageing at bay

IF YOU SPEAK more languages than one, it is good not only for your social image but also for the health of your brain, research says.

Bilingualism has a positive effect on cognition later in life. Individuals, who speak two or more languages, even those who acquired the second language in adulthood, may slow down cognitive decline from ageing, the research found.

"Our study is the first to examine whether learning a second language impacts cognitive performance later in life while controlling for childhood intelligence," said lead author Thomas Bak from the University of Edinburgh. Bilingualism is thought to improve cognition and delay dementia in older adults. While prior research has investigated the impact of learning more languages than one, ruling out "reverse causality" has proven difficult.



Photos: Getty

"The crucial question is whether people improve their cognitive functions through learning new languages or whether those with better baseline cognitive functions are more likely to become bilingual," Bak asked.

For the current study, researchers relied on data of 835 native speakers of English who were born and living in Edinburgh, Scotland. Some

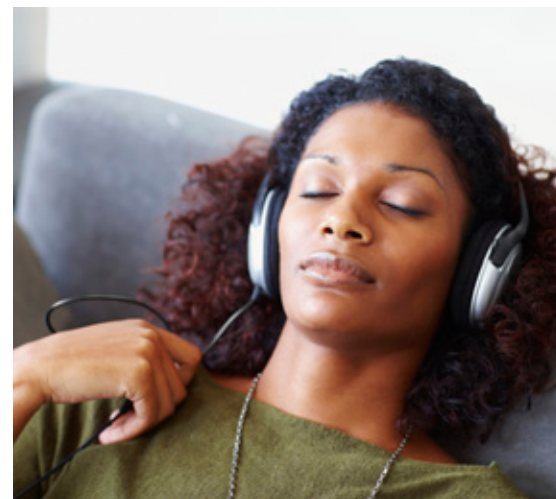
262 participants reported to be able to communicate in at least one language other than English. "The findings indicate that those who spoke two or more languages had significantly better cognitive abilities," the researchers added. The strongest effects were seen in general intelligence and reading. The effects were present in those who acquired their second

language early as well as late.

"These findings are of considerable practical relevance. Millions of people around the world acquire their second language later in life. Our study shows that bilingualism, even when acquired in adulthood, may benefit the aging brain," Bak concluded.

The study was published in the journal *Annals of Neurology*. IANS

Sleep tight with hypnosis



DO YOU GRAB that bottle of sleeping pills every time you have trouble nodding off? Try hypnosis instead.

Researchers have shown that restorative slow-wave sleep, or deep sleep, can also be increased without medication - using hypnosis, a method that can influence processes which are very difficult to control voluntarily.

"It opens up new, promising opportunities for improving the quality of sleep without drugs," said biopsychologist Björn Rasch from University of Zurich in Switzerland.

The study involved 70 healthy young women who came to the sleep laboratory for a 90-minute mid-day nap. Before falling asleep,

they listened to a special 13-minute slow-wave sleep hypnosis tape over loudspeakers, developed by hypnotherapist Angelika Schlarb, a sleep specialist, or to a neutral spoken text.

Highly suggestible women experienced 80 per cent more slow-wave sleep after listening to the hypnosis tape compared with sleep after listening to the neutral text. For older adults and patients with sleeping problems, the results could come as a sigh of relief as in contrast to many sleep-inducing drugs, hypnosis hardly has any adverse side effects.

The study appeared in the journal *Sleep*. IANS

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Feng Shui demystified

The surge of the New Age wave across the world has suddenly pushed Feng Shui to the forefront. Everyone seems to be buying books, enrolling in courses and turning into a certified Feng Shui consultant overnight. However the growing popularity of this ancient Chinese science has many facets, which remain unexplored in the mainstream interpretation of Feng Shui. All that people follow these days is the belief that they should use wind chimes and display bamboo plants while implementing Feng Shui. However no one wants to know the origin of the suggested cures/items and what they can do for you. Suggested Feng Shui cures are displayed around the house without much explanation and soon enough people start to wonder what the reason behind a particular item on display is.

One of the most commonly used items in Feng Shui is a metal wind chime. To understand what it can do in your environment, you first need to look at the element interaction cycle.

As per the productive cycle, earth produces metal. Therefore whenever there is too much earth energy in your living environment - which directly translates into sickness, stagnation or some kind of misfortune, metal wind chimes are suggested to weaken the earth energy. It is also recommended to buy a wind chime that has six metal rods, as six is the number for metal as per Feng Shui calculations. When the metal rods create a melodious sound, it helps in cutting through the earth energy purely based on the sound vibrations. A simple symbolic cure, that will help you to maintain good health and improve career energy in your home.

Another popular item widely used in Feng Shui is a bamboo plant. Lucky bamboos are available in supermarkets and can be easily displayed in corners of your home. The bamboo plant is one of the most resilient plants. It can grow in water or soil or simply be used in plantations. It gives shade, and the wood is used to make things. It represents flexibility, adaptability and growth in Chinese culture. Therefore when one wants to improve fire energy in the home, a bamboo plant is used, as wood helps in generating fire. The ideal number of bamboo sticks to be displayed is three, as it is the number representing the wood element in Feng Shui.

Once you understand the philosophy behind the use of suggested Feng Shui items, you will then understand the interaction between different elements and its importance.

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