

# Primp yourself

**From dog-grooming courses to night riding and learning Gothic hip hop, 2012 could be your year to shine**

Forget ballroom and street dance, it's all **Gothic hip hop** and **Belly-Bolly Fusion** this year. For more on the latest trends and classes, plus video tutorials, visit [moveitdance.co.uk](http://moveitdance.co.uk)

The Raymond Blanc cookery school at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons is introducing a new one-day **fish-cookery course** in 2012. It costs £350 per person and includes lots of lovely eating, too ([manoir.com](http://manoir.com))

Throughout January, London dance and fitness studio Frame ([moveyourframe.com](http://moveyourframe.com)) is running **detox yoga workshops** each weekend, as well as Introduction to Raw Food workshops on 14 January and 11 February with Better Raw

Fed up with Fido looking like a scruffbag? Learn how to pamper your pooches to perfection at **Delights Grooming** in Chiswick ([delightsgroomingcourses.co.uk](http://delightsgroomingcourses.co.uk))

Feel like you need to do more than watch the Olympics on the telly? Join the **Gold Challenge** ([goldchallenge.org](http://goldchallenge.org)) and you can train in one of a host of Olympic and Paralympic sports and raise money into the bargain

Listen up, surfers! Get to grips with hand planing, a "turbo-charged version" of **body-surfing**, at the Extreme Academy in North Cornwall. More details at [watergatebay.co.uk](http://watergatebay.co.uk)

Want to combine **writing a novel** with chilling out in Ibiza in May? Check out **createescapes.com** and get sound advice

from publishing professionals and novelists, including Carol Birch

Time to **stretch your legs** and start running. For training tips, events for all levels, and articles, go to [therunningbug.co.uk](http://therunningbug.co.uk). For more advanced athletes, try running as nature intended and go barefoot ([therunningbarefoot.com](http://therunningbarefoot.com))

Cyclists, worried about crowded streets? Why not go **riding at night**? Many local clubs now organise regular night rides, or go to [bike-events.com](http://bike-events.com) for details of national events

Forget swimming baths that reek of chlorine: take the plunge and go **wild swimming**. For events, details and inspiration, go to [outdoorswimmingsociety.com](http://outdoorswimmingsociety.com)

At the **Gaia House Silent Meditation Retreat in Devon**, you'll be asked to hand in your phone at reception so you can get in touch with your inner zen on a residential course ([gaiahouse.co.uk](http://gaiahouse.co.uk))

Next weekend is the start of **This is My Year To...**, a season of inspirational content from the *Guardian* and the *Observer*. We're giving away a free **Think Yourself Fit** guide and CD, a two-part guide to maximising your memory, 36 comfort-food recipe cards and a guide to managing your time – produced in association with **The School of Life**. Over the next four weeks, you'll find wise words, expert advice and practical tips for making 2012 your best year yet

Learn the fine art of turntablism in classes taught in small groups. Perfect whether you are a **DJing** newbie or you'd just like to brush up on some skills ([pointblanklondon.com](http://pointblanklondon.com))

Impress your friends by turning into Will Hutton. The LSE runs a summer school to introduce you to recent developments in **macroeconomics**. For details, go to [lse.ac.uk](http://lse.ac.uk)

Learn how to handle your negative feelings with **More To Life** ([moretolife.org](http://moretolife.org)), a life-training organisation that runs weekend courses throughout the year. The next one is in London on 27-29 January

Get busy with the cucumber sandwiches and scones and host a **Sunday afternoon tea party** for a group of local elderly people. To sign up, go to [contact-the-elderly.org.uk](http://contact-the-elderly.org.uk)

Don't despair in solitude when you're coaxing your runner beans along: **growington.com** puts home growers, urban farmers and allotment enthusiasts in touch with one another to swap tips and produce. It also features in Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's new crowd-funding platform, [peoplefund.it](http://peoplefund.it)

**The Tree Council** needs you! Become a tree warden, gather seeds or simply go for a wander during Walk in the Woods month in May ([treecouncil.org.uk](http://treecouncil.org.uk))

Wondering what to do next? The two-day **Crossroads** retreat helps anyone facing major life changes. They take place at the Benedictine monastery, Turvey Abbey, but are not faith based. £250, [crossroadsretreats.co.uk](http://crossroadsretreats.co.uk). ■

