



## Best foot forward

**Y**ou should take care of your feet in this season. Most women ignore their feet, but clean and pretty feet make a woman look well turned out. Try to keep your feet squeaky clean. You should take care of your feet, as dirty, ill-kept and cracked heels spoil the look of the best of outfits. You can make a wonderful home-made exfoliator / massage / foot mask for your feet.

### BEAUTY

Zarin Saleh Hussain

- Disorders of the feet –**
  - Blisters
  - Corns
  - In-growing toe-nails
  - Athlete's foot
- Pedicure –**

A pedicure is the best way to care for the feet, legs and toe nails.

  - **Purpose of pedicure –**
    - To keep the feet in good condition.
    - To nourish the tissues.
    - To improve circulation to the feet.
    - To help in relaxation.
    - To prevent foot ailments.
    - To stimulate foot and leg muscles.
    - To improve the appearance of the feet.
  - **Feet protection –**
    - Drink more water.
    - Spend two to five minutes every day in brushing your feet before a bath.
    - Remove as much dead skin as possible with a pumice stone.
    - Make a healing footbath by mixing two tablespoons of sea salt, a few drops of olive and one tablespoon castor oil in warm water. Soak your feet until the water gets cold.
    - Using long smooth strokes, brush your feet, toes and soles and then the front and back of your legs.
    - Sandalwood is one of the best sunscreens. Mix a little calamine with two drops of sandalwood oil and apply evenly all over the skin (feet). This helps remove the tan and smoothen feet.
    - Always moisturise your legs. They have fewer oil glands than the rest of your body and can become dry easily.
    - Moisturise your feet two or three times a day.
    - Use a light moisturiser or cream or oil during the day and a heavier one at night.
  - **Scrub –**
    - Soak your feet in warm water before scrubbing them well with soap and pumice stone.
    - Mix two tablespoons of yoghurt with one teaspoon of vinegar, and use it as an effective scrub.
    - Use a gentle foot scrub on the problem areas, oil is a natural defence against the elements. Be careful not to over dry the skin.
  - **For cracked heels –**
    - Remove the hard skin of your heels by rubbing it with a pumice stone everyday.
  - **For dry feet –**
    - You can apply a foot mask on them or gently massage them with foot cream or oil.
  - **Massage –**

A good foot massage is a great way to not just relax, but also allow proper blood circulation. To strengthen your toe nails, warm a little olive oil. Then, soak your feet in the oil for two to three minutes. Wipe off the excess. Then, wear a pair of socks, or you can do this before going to bed and keep it overnight.
  - **For tired feet –**

Bathe tired feet in a basin of hot water with two large handfuls of salt or two tablespoons of vinegar dissolved in it.
  - **Effective foot mask –**

Mix mashed overripe banana with two spoonfuls of honey. Cover the paste with a thin muslin cloth. After you wash it, put some fresh cream (malai) on your feet.

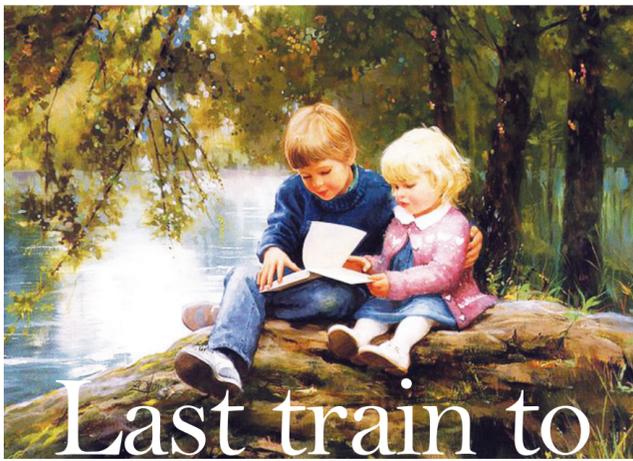
    - If your feet have a darker skin tone due to exposure to the sun, apply the following foot mask –
    - Mix *masur da* and *besan* and make a thick paste. Cover your feet in this paste for 20 minutes and then rinse off. Then massage with cream or oil.
  - **Remember –**
    - Don't ever wear tight or ill-fitting shoes. They chafe at your feet and cause corns, the most common foot problem.
    - Open toed shoes and sandals cause dry feet or cracked heels.
    - Dry your feet and apply talcum before wearing socks.
    - Soak your feet at the end of the day without agitating the skin.

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**I**f you want to experience the giddy-headed, heart-thumping buzz of being in the scariest place on the planet, I suppose you've got to be bobbing perilously in a dinghy as a tropical thunderstorm sucks the breath out of you. Or you would be skiing frantically downhill as an avalanche of snow and rocks roars behind you. Or would it be when you are face to face with a monster grizzly, growling, teeth bared, as you grope for your flimsy hunting knife? We get a vicarious kick out of watching these scenes on *National Geographic* and one is willing to put up with the boredom of our plodding, routine lives because it offers us safety and hope, no nasty surprises. Sometimes, about the only scary thing you have to put up with is when the ATM doesn't work.

But the fear factor can creep up on you even in the midst of everyday life, with its minor goals and small irritations. It happened to me last week, when I found myself caught in a school project. No, let me rephrase that. I was the school project. So, one day, when we should have been having iced lemonade, or indulging in an afternoon siesta, or doing whatever it takes to cope with the blazing heat of a muggy September afternoon, I sat before a group of school students and their teachers. They had a sheet of questions for me to answer and as they waited expectantly, my brash self-confidence turned tail and fled. I could actually feel my words shrivel up and vanish down my throat. With a sinking feeling, I knew that what I had to say was nothing more than shopworn platitudes and dusty clichés. I had nothing new to offer them, no directions to give. I wish I could have told them, "Hang in there, it's not so bad. The best is yet to be. That stretch of the road is slippery, watch that pothole. Always alert, avoid accidents. Sharp curve ahead. May the evil eye not have his face blackened. Don't try to overtake and keep an eye on the rear-view mirror. Enjoy the view - the wind among the trees, the glistening river beyond, the humble people going about their lives. Take a detour now and then and treat yourself to surprises. Savour the journey, don't obsess on the destination. We will all get there, by and by."

But, of course, I said none of these things. I was not even sure I was supposed to provide a road map to living. I did talk about books though - both reading and writing them. And to my dismay, none of the faces lit up with anticipation. May be the word book conjured up an arid world of facts and figures, lessons to be learnt by rote, endless hours spent cramming the distilled wisdom of the ages. Then I spoke about how books could set us free. A glimmer of interest there. Yes, they were teenagers. Freedom was dear to them, freedom from parental supervision, the tyranny of school, the bondage of homework assignments. They were galley slaves rowing the boats of their parents' dreams. They were often told to shut up and not ask questions. It was dinned into them that life was about rules, about conforming, seeking the safe and tested path. The road less travelled? That was for losers and weirdos. And I promised them this - they could escape from the boundaries of their controlled lives through the pages of books. They could be anywhere, be anyone. They could dig for treasure or lead a revolution, be a man, a woman, a child or a bird or even an Arctic sled dog. They could walk down a foggy Lon-



## Last train to innocence

don street with Sherlock Holmes or hide in the mountains of Sierra Maestra with Che Guevara. Books were not just dry facts, but unexplored worlds of experience and perception. You could laugh, cry, fear, despair, hope and remember as if what happens to the people in that magic kingdom of the imagination is what happens to you in real time. And then, with a sense of wonder, you realise that it is almost as if, like a cat, you have nine lives, and this gives you a heady sense of liberty, a sense of being free, as boundless as the sky above. When that happens, no class test can get you down.

If the young are not reading these days, I think we have to think beyond blaming the consumerist culture and modern stress. A class friend of mine is one of the last lingering human species who loves books. When we meet now and then, we animatedly discuss the books we had recently read. One day, he sheepishly admitted his eight year old was not reading books and he wanted a quickfix solution.

"Why not read him bedtime stories?" I suggested. "Read to him every night. It would help you bond and also fire his imagination." In a short while, his wife came to the room with tea. "Well, dear," he said cautiously. "I've got a job for you."

"What?" she asked, good humouredly, making a face.

"Well, she suggests that I read bedtime stories to Vicky, to make him like books. Now, I think that's your job."

So, they went back and forth, mildly arguing about who would read to the boy. I knew that Vicky would not have the cats' many lives, but only one, and he would be denied entry to an enchanted world just because for his parents, reading was more a chore than a passion. If we have more people like that, you would have to

one day, buy tickets to see books in museums, locked in glass cases.

I think I also talked to the children about the magic of everyday life. Now, my mother is an expert on this. Many summers ago, when we lived in Shillong, my mother would throw open our living room windows and trill excitedly. "Isn't it a marvellous day?" It was the same old scene, dreamer houses lining a zig-zag street, may be a pony cart clip-dropping along, but her words were infectious and suddenly, we seemed to see with new eyes the blue sky, the cotton tuft clouds, and felt the naughty little breeze on our faces and our spirits soared. Anything was possible on such a day - an unplanned picnic in Hydari Park, racing to infinity in the Golf Links... anything. And in April, when the peach and plum blossoms burst open on the twisted branches down in the ravine by the chattering stream, she would spy the pink and white confetti and with a cry of pleasure, send our Nepali maid scurrying to get big armfuls. These she would arrange in her vases on the mantelpiece above the stone fireplace, and I think she had tears in her eyes, moved by the beauty of those blushing flowers and it was like a prayer of thanksgiving, this daily realisation of heaven's bounty.

When talking about the magic of everyday life, I also remember a great scholar of Assam - the late Krishna Kanta Handique. I was a very close friend of his granddaughter and once, she confided to me how she spent her holidays in her famous grandfather's home. Access to him was difficult. He was closeted for long hours in his library. But once a day, she met her grandfather. Seated at his table, among his books and papers, he would lift his head and ask her the same question every day. It was "What have you learnt today?"

She told me that she was often terrified of this

question, and could never quite think up an answer to satisfy him. And today, I think not one but two girls were powerfully moved by this simple question. Decades later, I have never forgotten it, and feel that a day spent without learning anything new, be it from books or life, is a day wasted.

We adults like to think we are doing the best we can for our kids. But we conveniently forget all the little cruelties we inflict on them. We worry endlessly what the child will become in the future, yet, we forget that he is someone today. When we were children, at the end of the day, we would always listen to Radio Rangoon, which aired a wonderful programme of western classical music. As we sat entranced by the Chopin and Debussy symphonies that seemed to conjure up vast, sweeping seascapes or towering mountains, my father would very often ask us: "A penny for your thoughts?" I think it was this little game by which Dad encouraged us, in his gentle, unobtrusive way, to express what was abstract, the nebulous. We were thus able to make observations on everyday life. I think we found our voice. Even more than that, we got the dignity of being taken seriously. What we thought and experienced mattered to him, and that gave us that much needed belief in our individuality. I think that "a penny for your thoughts?" is the foundation on which my entire future was based, because when I realised my thoughts were worth a penny, I spent the rest of my life expressing them, for all they were really worth.

Together with this awareness of individuality, we also need a sense of identity. They say we must give our children both roots and wings. I think parents these days are quite manic when it comes to giving their kids wings. From tennis lessons to summer camps, motivational lectures to Boy Scouts, Junior is made to cover the whole nine yards. It is almost like coaching for the world triathlon. But roots? I am not so sure. Families are breaking up into smaller and smaller units. First cousins have to be actually introduced at family functions. Grandparents barely get to spend time with grandchildren, let alone spin fairy tales. The child has no one but his parents as emotional anchors. This alienation is very difficult to cope with. Even more so when next door neighbours are strangers who keep their doors bolted and want nothing to do with you. There is no sense of community, no feeling of belonging. It is as if the world doesn't care. And without the experience of sharing one's life with others, a young boy or girl is incapable of developing loving, supportive relationships. This is a disability that requires the urgent attention of parents, teachers, mental health experts and social workers. It is every bit as serious as a physical disability, for it will act like a canker that eats into the very fabric of a family, and then, a society.

Writing then, is so much easier than meeting children. You don't have a ring of expectant faces around you. You don't have to pretend you are more interesting than you are. You don't feel like some scam artist, selling impossible dreams. But meeting the young is good medicine for your ego. You realise you are no wiser than when you first started out, and perhaps even more clueless than them. That sure is a sobering thought.

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## The Last Exorcism

Cast: Patric Fabian, Ashley Bell, Iris Bahr.  
Director: Daniel Stamm.

**W**hen he arrives on the rural Louisiana farm of Louis Sweetzer, the Reverend Cotton Marcus expects to perform just another routine "exorcism" on a disturbed religious fanatic. An earnest fundamentalist, Sweetzer has contacted the charismatic preacher as a last resort, certain his teenage daughter, Nell, is possessed by a demon who must be exorcised before their terrifying ordeal ends in unimaginable tragedy. Buckling under the weight of his conscience after years of parting desperate believers with their money, Cotton and his crew plan to film a confessional documentary of this, his last exorcism. But upon arriving at the already blood drenched family farm, it is soon



clear that nothing could have prepared him for the true evil he encounters there. Now, too late to turn back, Reverend Marcus' own beliefs are shaken to the core when he and his crew must find a way to save Nell - and themselves - before it is too late.

## The American

Cast: George Clooney, Paolo Bonacelli, Thelka Reuten.  
Director: Anton Corbijn.

**A**cademy Award winner George Clooney stars in the title role of this suspense thriller. As an assassin, Jack (played by Clooney) is constantly on the move and always alone. After a job in Sweden ends more harshly than expected for this American abroad, Jack retreats to the Italian countryside. He relishes being away from death for a spell as he holes up in a small medieval town. While there, Jack takes an assignment to construct a weapon for a mysterious contact, Mathilde (Thelka Reuten). Savouring the peaceful quietude he finds in the mountains of Abruzzo, Jack accepts the friendship of local priest Father Benedetto (Paolo Bonacelli) and pursues a torrid liaison with a beautiful woman, Clara (Violante Placido). Jack and Clara's time together evolves into a romance, one seemingly free of danger. But by stepping out of the shadows, Jack may be tempting fate.



### MOVIE WATCH

Vikram Baskataki

### TOP 10 Hollywood

- Takers
- The Last Exorcism
- The Expendables
- Eat Pray Love
- The Other Guys
- Vampires Suck
- Inception
- Nanny McPhee Returns
- The Switch
- Piranha 3D



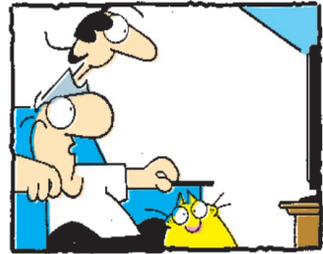
"I'm putting together a presentation about things we can do to improve our marriage, but I'm going to need a bigger hard drive!"



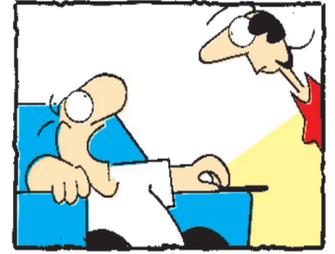
"I'm looking for a phone app that will drive my car while I send text messages!"



"They found errors in my old history textbook. I'm being recalled to third grade!"



"I like variety, but do we really need The Worm Channel?"



"You can be the boss of this house, but I want a paycheck on Friday!"

## FORECAST

SEPTEMBER 13 - 19, 2010

- ARIES (MAR 21-APR 19)**  
You are in the early stage of renewal on Monday, and it is uncomfortable and slow going. As early as Tuesday, you'll feel a lot sprightlier. On Wednesday, bound out of bed early and be the first person in to work. Thursday and Friday find you flexing your muscles, getting things done and polishing your reputation. Saturday and Sunday, deliciously happy about your recent successes, you will want to get out a long strip of butcher paper and map out the rest of your life.
- TAURUS (APR 20-MAY 20)**  
The intensity of what you're going through speaks volumes about how much this person means to you. You don't necessarily want to publicise how you feel, but people can see it written on your face; talking about it may be a better strategy than pretending to ignore it. A philosophical conversation with an acquaintance on Wednesday will be more useful than you ever expected, and Thursday and Friday find you grounded, curious and happy. And in the mood to travel. You could use a vacation. Get through the weekend - of power struggles and weird interactions - dreaming of sandy beaches.
- GEMINI (MAY 21-JUN 21)**  
Life is laid out like a math problem for you on Monday, and you spend the day trying to determine which are the relevant variables. This calculating mindset cuts through everything else and will be helpful on Tuesday and Wednesday as well. Thursday and Friday, your interactions with others are more difficult than usual, especially interactions related to business. Saturday and Sunday, you are submerged in big ideas.
- CANCER (JUN 22-JUL 22)**  
Monday isn't the time to get involved with anything long-term and binding. Tuesday and Wednesday, do something rejuvenating (a trip to the spa? a swim?) and Thursday and Friday, don't worry about doing very little (what's on TV?). Saturday and Sunday offer plenty of opportunities to see friends. Just be careful you don't get into a spat over money.

- LEO (JUL 23-AUG 22)**  
A beautiful antique makes its way into your life on Monday - or maybe it's something else you've been collecting. In any case, Monday is like that: rewarding, slightly self-centred, not super energetic. Then, Tuesday, a comet of love crashes into Earth and the scorching fires of romantic bliss burn brightly through Wednesday night. By Thursday morning, the fires will have died out and you'll be returned to everyday terrain, albeit with a few embers glowing in the corners. Friday, you are preoccupied by others, but this weekend, your mind returns to the topic of love.
- VIRGO (AUG 23-SEPT 22)**  
You are interested in someone else's perspective on Monday, but that doesn't necessarily mean you'll agree with them. Tuesday and Wednesday, your vim and vigour is no match for the inactivity everywhere else, which drags you down a bit, at least until Thursday. Thursday and Friday are bright days filled with hot air balloons and sweet romance. Be open-minded this weekend, and you'll learn a fantastic and effortless new way of doing something that's always been a pain in the neck.
- LIBRA (SEPT 23-OCT 22)**  
Being good with your money is not just about being selfish, it's also about being smart. Tuesday and Wednesday are about feelings and expression; your current projects are challenging you in ways you didn't expect. Thursday, you wake up feeling weird for no discernable reason, and Friday finds you feeling nostalgic about nothing in particular. The weekend offers focus, romance and fun.
- SCORPIO (OCT 23-NOV 21)**  
You are the sun and your friends are the planets; you are their centre of gravity. Tuesday and Wednesday are defined by philosophical questions and the likelihood of being led along by others - you might find yourself buying something you have little use for - but Thursday and Friday, you are something, someone and in control. Less can be said for this weekend. There is tension at home, and a shared, determined says may spark an unexpected outburst. But look on the bright side: At least it will clear the air.

- SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22-DEC 21)**  
You're in deep processing mode on Monday, and you might feel like being alone. Your friends may be of some help in sorting all this out on Tuesday and Wednesday - an exploration of some kind is perfect for the group's energy - and Thursday and Friday, putting your eyeballs in front of some art is a fine idea. Saturday and Sunday, you talk so much - to friends, to strangers, to yourself even - that your jaw hurts.
- CAPRICORN (DEC 22-JAN 19)**  
You are in the right mindset to make some long-term decisions on Monday, but you want to make sure all your ducks are in a row. (Your ducks may not be as orderly as they appear.) Tuesday and Wednesday, discipline is key. You may have sudden pangs of worry that what you thought was possible isn't possible. Pish posh! Ridiculous! You can do anything, as Thursday and Friday attest. Your accomplishments by week's end are impressive, but you've only just begun. This weekend, you clear off the kitchen table and set to work on a number of new plans.
- AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18)**  
Monday is a typical Monday, except that you have some major nagging questions in the back of your mind as well. Commiserate with friends on Tuesday to get some perspective. Then, you'll go into Wednesday with a sense of expansiveness, a sense that anything is possible. Let this feeling last. Thursday and Friday, you have too much to do to be abstract and future-thinking, but Saturday and Sunday are great, inspiring days.
- PISCES (FEB 19-MARCH 20)**  
If you have a transaction to take care of on Monday, make sure you do it in person. Tuesday and Wednesday, you don't have to be as careful, but pay extra attention and take care to do the right thing, and you'll make major headway on several plans you once thought impossible. Thursday and Friday, a friend is in need of some help and might not know how to ask for it. Anticipate this. Saturday and Sunday, you're in a giving mood as well.