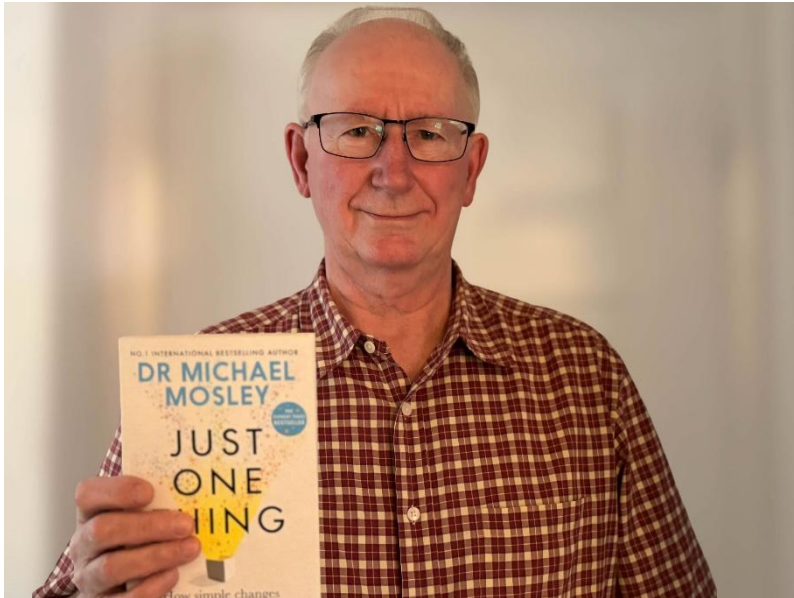


Wealden Business Group

Book Review: "Just One Thing" by Dr Michael Mosley

Report by Bill Ferguson, Wed 30 October 2024



Went missing on 5th June 2024, body found on 9th June 2024. Died from heatstroke. (Don't do as he does, do as he says)

When Dr Mosley died he was working on Just One Thing, a television version of his hugely popular BBC podcast/radio series of the same name, which had been running since 2021.

He filmed enough for just two episodes: the benefits of cold showers is the first. Each instalment of the podcast was short and simple. In less than 15 minutes, Mosley would examine the idea that one easy shift in habits could improve your health.

Do cold showers make you happier? Well, as anyone who swims outdoors on a regular basis will be eager to tell you, it is very likely that it does indeed do you good. The daily cold shower proves to be energising, your body slowly adjusts to regular immersion in cold water, and the resulting stress relief is exactly as he describes.

In episode 1, Mosley immerses himself in a bin filled with ice water in his garden, to test the theory. He is filmed by his wife, Dr Clare Bailey. "In theory this is doing me all sorts of good" he says, "but it doesn't feel that way" as he shivers for our entertainment. This is one of his endearing qualities: he doesn't ask you to do anything that he hasn't tried himself.

He is highly regarded for making health accessible, backed by science, and easy to incorporate into daily life.

Our book is based on his popular "Just One Thing" BBC podcast. Short chapters make it quick to read, and the advice is presented in an easy-to-understand and engaging way. The content is easy to dip into whenever you feel like it, with tasks organised for

different parts of the day.

The suggested activities are supported by scientific research, mostly current, and new findings that haven't made their way into mainstream awareness yet. I was surprised when I first heard him talk about eccentric exercise for strength training.

The book covers a wide range of simple activities, from physical exercises like standing on one leg while you brush your teeth, doing squats while waiting for the kettle to boil, to mental health practices, like mindfulness and boosting productivity with houseplants, and nutrition such as eating an apple or eating beetroot.

I think it is more of a reference book than an engaging read. Even though the book is not very long, there is a lot of padding and repetition. The main points could probably fit on a couple of pages. I think we are paying for the convenience of having all the tips in one place.

I don't doubt that incorporating small habits from the book will lead to noticeable improvements in health, such as increased strength, reduced pain, and better emotional well-being.

The organisation of the book is based on the 'triangle of health', a paradigm that has been around for a very long time. Recognising the importance of physical, mental and nutritional health to promote overall health.

Keep an eye out for our local GP surgery who are keen advocates of Dr Mosley's advice. They are hoping to spread awareness. And a little bird tells me that at least one of the partners brushes his teeth while standing on one leg.

The 11 most interesting tips According to the Telegraph news feed

Stand on one leg while brushing your teeth

Although hard at first, this trick engages multiple muscle groups, including the core, gluteals and legs. Regularly doing this exercise can strengthen these muscles, improve your coordination and balance, and enhance your overall physical performance.

Chew slowly

Chewing your food for longer breaks it down more, which in turn helps your stomach to digest it more easily. Chewing slowly also lets your hormones tell your brain you have

eaten, reducing hunger and making you feel full, so helping you reduce weight.

Break up exercise into chunks

Breaking up exercise into short 5-10 minute chunks across the day is actually just as beneficial than doing it in one 30-minute burst. Doing this provides similar health outcomes in terms of fat, glucose and insulin levels – and is often much easier to fit into your day.

Put yourself under pressure

Putting your body through short bursts of stress – such as doing maths under pressure, or public speaking – has been shown to be good for us. It enhances cognitive and physical performance with wide-ranging effects on the brain, body, cardio and immune systems.

Sing

Singing can increase the levels of endocannabinoids in your brain, to give you a genuine high. It exercises the brain and body, improves posture, breathing and muscle tension. Some studies show it is effective in pain relief. Plus it reduces the stress hormone, cortisol. Reading a poem has similar benefits – and can help boost cognitive health.

Eat chocolate

Eating just two squares of dark chocolate every day can have clinically significant effects on blood pressure and heart health – and it can even boost blood flow to the brain. This is all down to the flavonoids in the cocoa. But – it has to be dark.

Volunteer

Volunteering can increase your self-esteem and well-being, and alleviate symptoms of depression. Some studies have even shown it lowers blood pressure and cholesterol. Those over 65 who volunteer have both better physical and mental health.

Take a cold shower

Michael Mosley was a big fan of cold showers. Studies have shown chilly dips can reduce blood pressure, the effects of type 2 diabetes and chronic inflammation. Cold water swimmers also get less infections and have fewer sick days.

Walk backwards

Walking backwards has been shown to improve your balance, waistline and reduce lower back pain. It strengthens core and leg muscles, improves balance and flexibility while reducing fall risk. It also burns more calories and may help with reducing body fat.

Walk in the rain

Walking in or after the rain is good for us – apparently because of negative ions. These are odourless, invisible molecules which are created near moving water – such as when raindrops hit pavement. It is thought these ions make air cleaner and boost our mood, relieve stress and give us more energy.

Be kind

Surprisingly, a little altruism can have big benefits for our own health. It can lower inflammation and reduce the risk factors of many major diseases. It can also reduce stress and boost our emotional well-being.

Channel 4

Channel 4's "Secrets of Your Big Shop", spied on people's shopping habits and Dr Mosley tested several internet health trends with an impressive level of dedication, only to report back that, TikTok's insistence on shoving raw garlic cloves up your nose to stave off a cold isn't all that effective, or that upping your beetroot intake is probably as good an idea as everyone says it is.

My personal experience:

You can cook beetroot in the microwave, but I don't recommend it. Stab it like a baked potato and you will have boiling, red juice spraying out as it cooks. Messy!

Recommended viewing:

Just One Thing can still be found on iPlayer.

Secrets of the Shopping Trolley is still available on the Channel 4 app (4 programs). Also on Channel 4 is "Who made Britain Fat?" Where Dr Mosley tried to uncover why our legislators have failed to control the large wealthy corporations who make up the food industry.

Bill Ferguson
30 October 2024