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# MailOnline

## A colourful way to reduce stress

by SARAH STACEY

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Colour beathing is a technique pioneered by ex-nurse Alison Bourne. The participant discovers which colour calms them the most

Sometimes love exacts a high price.

'Collateral damage' in war zones usually refers to civilians caught in the line of fire, but other civilians - notably the families of those fighting - can suffer psychological consequences which are nearly as devastating as the soldiers'.

Sarah Horvath's husband Steve, an army medic based in Northern Ireland, was in a Ballykelly pub in December 1982 when a bomb went off inside. Steve, who wasn't severely injured, got on with rescuing others. But he had to deal with many more traumas during the years he was a soldier - watching friends die and working in a mortuary.

Sarah, a mother of two, met Steve in 1997, after he'd left the army.

"Although he'd had nightmares for years, he was OK until January 2005 - then it all came to a head. He dropped our son home after school, then drove to his local fishing spot and tried to gas himself in the car." Steve was diagnosed with combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The strain of his illness has affected Sarah so badly that she was registered disabled in June 2007, is on medication for depression and insomnia, and has been told (though there is no formal diagnosis) that she has secondary PTSD.

According to Sarah, 36, and Steve, 46, the NHS has virtually no resources to deal with veterans with PTSD: "In

September 2006, Steve had a complete breakdown.

"He left home and ended up living in a veterans' hostel in London for nearly a year, which really supported him. Steve then got in touch with David Walters, a former weapons engineer on a nuclear submarine who now runs 'stress resilience training' for people with PTSD. Because of his own experience, he understands that the vets have seen horrific things - different to most civilians."

Walters uses a combination of techniques in his telephone counselling and residential courses to help clients release their traumas and deal with stress - these include emotional freedom therapy (EFT) and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP).

Steve returned home in September 2007 and is much better, although he still suffers from flashbacks and nightmares and is obsessive about tidiness.

He also has a major anger management problem: "I can blow up instantly. I'm never physically violent to my family - though I have smashed up things ? but I get verbally aggressive, although I'm learning to manage it," he says.

Despite everything, Sarah says they are "back to being a happy family".

She attended a spouses session on the third day of Steve's three-day residential course at Walters's clinic in Lincoln where, in addition to massage and EFT and NLP techniques, she learned about colour breathing, a therapy pioneered by ex-nurse Alison Bourne.

"I was sceptical but gave it a go," says Sarah.

"You are shown a spectrum of colours, each one a circle on a card.

"You focus on each colour in turn while you breathe slowly to find out which colour calms you the most.

"I found blue relaxing." Sarah uses her blue disc to help her visualise being in a safe place: "I 'go to' my blue room, my own chill-out zone where I can shut out the stresses of PTSD for a few minutes. It's so simple and effective, and works better than the drugs.

"It helps me relax more than anything else."

*David Walters, [helpmeovercome.com](http://helpmeovercome.com); Alison Bourne, [colourbreathing.com](http://colourbreathing.com)*

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### **Beat statin side effects**

Debilitating muscle pain and weakness is a common side effect of statins, the cholesterol-lowering drugs - and, if they affect heart muscle, they can be fatal.

I wrote about how taking coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) can decrease the problem, and research published in The American Journal of Cardiology confirms this.

Statins block the synthesis of 'bad' LDL cholesterol but also disrupt the production of CoQ10, which is vital for muscle and liver function. CoQ10 production reduces with age, possibly leading to periodontal disease and heart muscle weakness, so you can, arguably, take it as a supplement even if you're not on statins.

LifeTime Vitamins Co-Enzyme Q10 100mg, £16.95 for 30 softgels (one daily), from Victoria Health, see below.

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### **The hottest relief for pain**

Warmth is incredibly comforting for aches and pains, but you can't always carry a hot-water bottle.

Hotteeze self-adhesive pads give 12 hours of heat, and can be worn on underclothes (not next to skin).

An elderly friend loves the fact they can't be seen: "I don't like to own up to my age or the aches and pains that go with it!"

• £9.99 for ten, from Victoria Health, see below.

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### **WEBSITE OF THE WEEK**

**Fresh -network.com**

A 75-year-old reader with long-term arthritis writes to say that she has been free of pain for six years since she joined the Fresh Network, which promotes a diet high in raw food.

"I do lots of gardening and dancing and feel 40 - unthinkable ten years ago," she says.

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*All products mentioned, unless otherwise specified, are available by mail order from Victoria Health, tel: 0800 3898 195; victoriahealth.com*

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*E-mail Sarah at [s.stacey@you.co.uk](mailto:s.stacey@you.co.uk)*

Sarah reads all your e-mails but regrets that she cannot answer them all personally.

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