

# FLiP Magazine

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FEBRUARY 2016

FLiP Magazine

FLiP for

Top 10 SONGS TO WORK OUT TO

FLiP PLANK WORKOUT

**COVERGIRL!**

**ASHLEY PARK**

IS

*Miss Asia USA*

How to Be Okay *Being Single*

**OHM SWEATY:**

*My First Bikram Yoga*

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## Letter From the Editor:

Hello FLiP Magazine Readers-

We are all well into 2016 now and there is no turning back-but why would you want to anyway? The new year is off to a great start and you are hitting the ground running – we hope! And if not, our latest issue is here to re-steer you on the right path.

Our *Tutorial Time* articles on *Strobing* and *Push Up Plank to Oblique Mountain Climber* will keep you looking great while you work to achieve your goals using articles like *Slow Travel-Being About the Journey* and *How To Repair Your Credit* to be the independent financially free people you want to be! We even have an introductory article to feng shui your space with *Bringing Positive Feng Shui Energy to Your Home through Art*.

Plus, Valentine's Day is upon us and FLiP is here to help you prepare for the day; whether it be with finding the perfect gift for a loved one in your life by using our article *Priceless Valentine's Day Ideas* to guide your shopping or craft endeavors, or taking the time to appreciate and honor yourself with *What's in a Name-How To Be Okay Being Single*. Afterall, until you are fully whole on your own, there isn't much to offer or gain from a partner.

And we can't forget our covers, the newly crowned Miss Asia USA Ashley Park opens up about keeping her Korean culture alive at home stateside for the W side while our publisher Frank Monahan catches up with R&B songstress Morgan James on the M side to learn more about her life on the road and on Broadway.

There is so much more to enjoy this issue and I hope you'll flip on through, to see for yourselves!

As always, if you think you might have a subject, article, editorial, or event that could interest us, please feel free to reach me at [alexisnichols@flipmagazine.net](mailto:alexisnichols@flipmagazine.net).

I hope this latest issue inspires, encourages, and fulfills you as much as it does all of us here at FLiP Magazine.

So what are you waiting for? Flip on through the pages of FLiP Magazine!



Alexis Nichols  
FLiP Magazine Editor in Chief



Photo By Steph Girard  
([www.stephgirardheadshots.com](http://www.stephgirardheadshots.com))



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HOW TO BE OK BEING SINGLE



## Credits ...



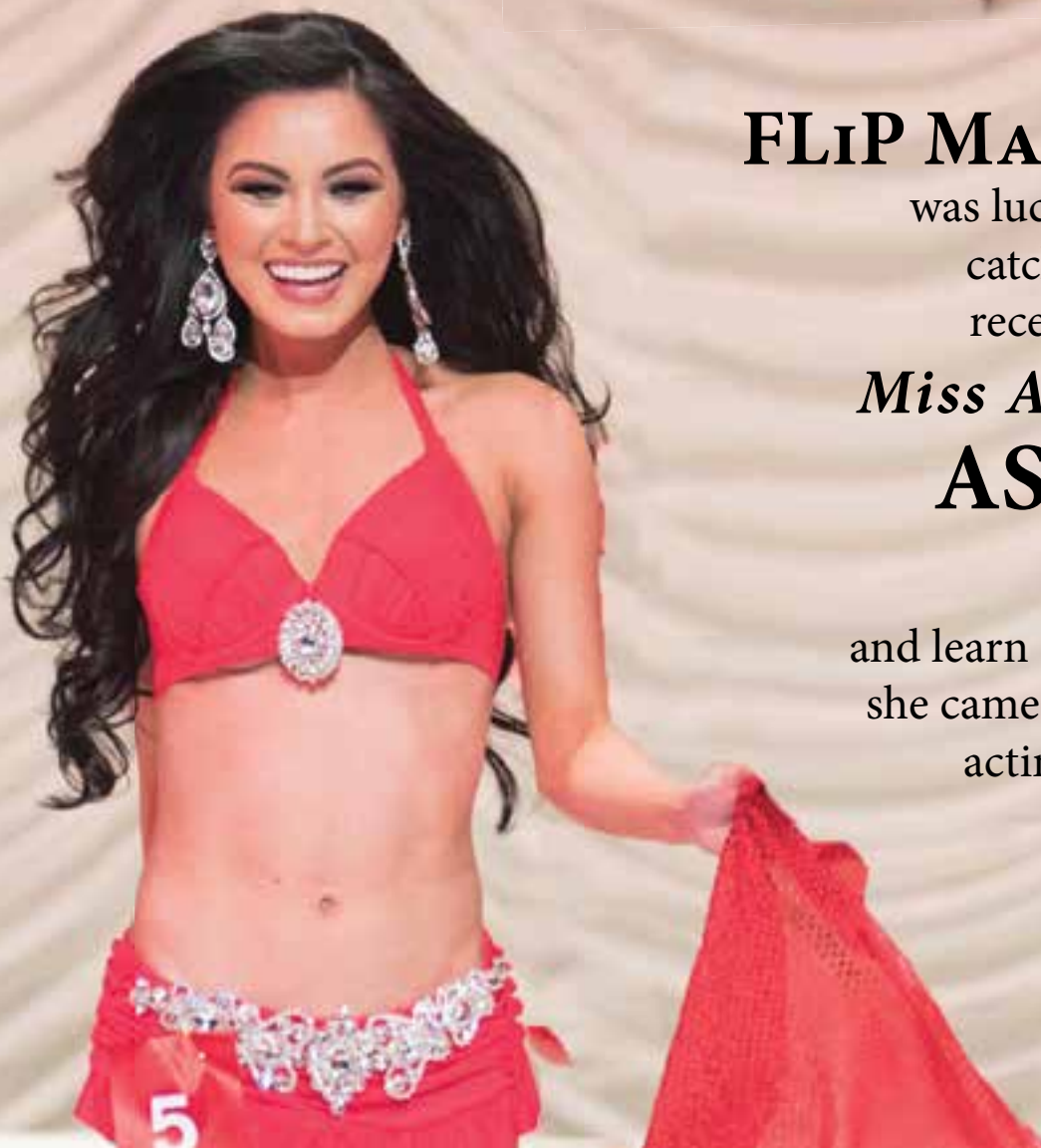
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**COVER GIRL**  
**Miss Asia USA 2015**  
**Ashley Park**



**FLIP MAGAZINE**

was lucky enough to  
catch up with the  
recently crowned

*Miss Asia USA,*

**ASHLEY**

**PARK**

and learn all about how  
she came into her title,  
acting experience  
and more!

# ASHLEY PARK

By Alexis Nichols

Photography by Shana Lemos, Haeng Nam and Kin Vong

What inspired you to get involved with pageantry?

*Initially, I was approached by a former Mrs. Asia USA titleholder. She thought I would be a potentially good fit for the Miss Asia USA competition. But I had never considered pageantry, so I was hesitant from the very beginning. However, after speaking with the pageant director, Virgelia Villegas of Virgelia Productions, I decided to accept the honor. I was given the title of Miss Korea USA 2015, and had the privilege of representing Korea throughout the past year and at the 2015 Miss Asia USA pageant.*

Was this your first pageant or have you been doing this for some time?

*Miss Asia USA was my first pageant experience. This was also my first time to train for a performance on a big stage, so I had a lot to learn. As an actress, I am used to the camera, but the stage is an entirely new ball game. The attention to detail required in a pageant is truly indescribable. Luckily, the coaches and staff at Virgelia Productions were very instrumental in helping us all prepare properly for the night of the competition.*



Might you have any advice for girls aspiring to do pageants?

*As delegates for Miss Asia USA, we went through a rigorous weekly training program to prepare for the competition. It was truly one of the best experiences of my life. Virgelia Productions is currently accepting applications for the 2016 Miss Asia USA and Miss Latina Global pageants this November, and I can honestly say that they put on unbelievably beautiful shows. My advice would be to train harder than you think you need to. If you put in the work, you'll be ready for anything that is thrown at you when you step onto the stage.*

How did you prepare to earn the title of Miss Korea USA 2015?

*I worked with wonderful coaches, and I practiced a lot on my own. I had never been on a big stage before, so I knew I had to be ready for anything. And I was! I felt so comfortable on stage. In elementary school, my dad made me memorize a quote that I believe sums it all up: "The one way to the top is by persistent, intelligent, hard work."*

When they announced you as the winner for Miss Asia USA, what was the first thing that went through your mind?

*It was surreal. I think my face in all the photos taken at the pageant probably sums up my feelings at that moment! I was in complete shock, which was eventually overtaken with some hybrid of shock and joy.*

Pageants have been in the forefront of the news recently with Steve Harvey crowning the wrong contestant for the Miss Universe pageant. What are your thoughts on that? And how would you have handled it had you found yourself in a similar situation?

*It's very difficult to say how I would have handled it. It's easy to speculate and say what I would have done in any given situation, but I honestly don't know. It was very unfortunate for everyone involved, and I felt for both contestants. We are all human, and mistakes are made. As an actress, I am incredibly used to handling disappointment, so I'd like to think I would have handled it with a positive disposition.*

What brought on your interest in acting?  
*I loved to perform for my family as a child, so I suppose it makes sense that I returned to my first love later in life. I was an intern at Seventeen Magazine in NYC when I stumbled upon an acting school. Honestly, the rest is history. It's like everything clicked into place when I walked into that school.*

What was it like working on the popular soap show *Days of Our Lives*?  
*It was a wonderful experience. The actors were incredibly kind and welcoming, and I enjoyed working on such an efficient set. Soaps require incredibly talented actors, casting directors and crew, and I have so much respect for everyone who works on them.*

We see you are working on a project with another former FLIP W magazine cover model Tracey Birdsall, called *Rogue Warrior: Robot Fighter*. What can you tell us about that film and working with her?  
*Tracey is an incredibly talented actress, and is a blast to work with. She stars as Sienna in **Rogue Warrior: Robot Fighter** (directed by Neil Johnson), and if you've seen the stills that have been released recently, she looks incredible in all of them. **Robot Fighter** is a desert sci-fi in the vein of **Mad Max** and **Star Wars**. I love this wave of futuristic, sci-fi movies that have been taking Hollywood by storm*

# Ashley Park

## Miss Asia USA 2015

*as of late, and I was lucky enough to book two sci-fi films this past year.*

What has been your favorite project you've worked on thus far?  
*I couldn't possibly say! I've enjoyed almost every opportunity I've been given thus far. Some projects I've worked on may stand out above others, but I absolutely love being on set, so just about every experience has been wonderful in its own way. Perhaps I could say that the Miss Asia USA pageant stands out to me as one of my favorites, simply because I think I came out of it a stronger, better person.*

Growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, how did you keep your Korean culture alive?  
*Luckily, I always had an interest in language. I was an avid reader as a child, and I spent a lot of time speaking Korean with my mom. I still do! I also grew up on a diet that consisted of many Korean delicacies. My mom is an amazing cook, and I got to enjoy many amazing Korean meals while listening to her incredible stories of growing up in Korea.*

We understand you are quite the athlete, would you tell us about







how you keep in shape?

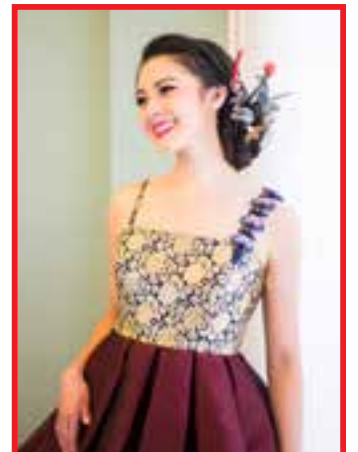
*Yes, I was mainly an endurance athlete, and focused my attention on cross country, track and swimming. Although I certainly don't run nearly as much as I used to, I do still love to run as a way to stay in shape. Once a runner, always a runner! I still do quite a bit of endurance training, but I stick to cross training more so than running. I love to mix up my workouts, so I rarely do the same thing. It's a great way to shock your body.*

In a recent interview you said, "I think that actors and actresses of Asian descent have traditionally been somewhat under-represented in American film and television. That is slowly starting to change, and I hope to be one of the pioneers to help move the trend forward, even if only in some small way." We love that idea! How do you plan to be a part of that movement?

*Simply by working hard. I believe actresses of Asian descent (myself included) have to prove that we belong in the forefront of film and television. This movement of diversity is finally starting to take Hollywood by storm, and I couldn't be happier. It fuels me to persevere, and to take every opportunity I receive to the next level.*

We can't wait to see and hear more from you! Where are the best place(s) our readers can connect with you online?

*My website is [www.theashleypark.com](http://www.theashleypark.com), and IMDB is always a great place to see what projects I'm working on at any given time. I have quite a few projects being released this year, and I am preparing to shoot a few more in the coming months. The best places to connect with me directly would probably be Instagram or Twitter, at @xoashleypark.*



**FACIAL CREAMS, TONERS, SCRUBS, SOAPS, PEELS** and the list could honestly go on. It amazes me how much we will spend in the name of 'better' skin or 'clear' skin, but is what we are purchasing safe? It's a harmless assumption to believe that the FDA regulations govern how our products are labeled right? Wrong! Did you know that in the US, cosmetic companies are not regulated to include everything that is included in your facial products?

# THE TRUTH ABOUT SKINCARE:

**Simple DIY Skincare Tricks** *By Jackie Learmond*

In fact, in order for skincare products to be labeled "organic" that only 70 percent of the ingredients used have to be certified organic. That leaves an incredible 30 percent filled with synthetic chemicals, toxins and fragrances, which are all linked but not limited to skin issues, cancers, birth defects and hormonal imbalances!

The skin is the largest organ we have and it is extremely permeable. Certain chemicals and toxins invade the skin in high amounts. The skin behaves more like a sponge than a barrier. I've included *some* of the most common synthetic chemical and toxins added to some of the most popular skincare products despite their harmful capacity.

✘ **Phthalates** A plasticizer chemical and hormone disruptor linked to breast cancer and early puberty in girls.

✘ **Triclosan** A pesticide that can affect the body's hormone systems (especially thyroid hormones) and may disrupt normal breast development.

✘ **Parabens** A group of compounds used as an antifungal agent and preservatives are absorbed through the skin and have been through biopsy samples linked to breast tumors.

✘ **Fragrance (*perfume*)** Because they're considered trade secrets, fragrances fall into an enormous loophole where cosmetic and skincare companies are not required to acknowledge the several chemicals used to create that scent. Some of these chemicals include formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane.

✘ **Petrolatum** Mineral oils and paraffin are all petroleum byproducts and have no business on your face much less your body.

## Here's my skincare GOLDEN RULE:

What you put **IN** your body shows through to the outside; what you put **ON** your skin will affect it inside!!! The more we know the better we can care for ourselves. And the best way to know what goes into our skincare products is to make it ourselves. That's right! So with all that being said I've included some really amazing do-it-yourself at home simple skincare tricks.

*... for skincare products to be labeled "organic" ... only 70 percent of the ingredients used have to be certified organic.*

# FACIAL SCRUBS/MASKS



## ***Kiwi Greek Yogurt Honey Facial Mask***

There are high amounts of Vitamin C and E in kiwi, which keeps the skin moisturized and well conditioned. The pulp is used for the regeneration of skin cells and collagen to aid in youthful skin. Greek yogurt is loaded with probiotics to treat and rid your skin of pimples and blemishes. Honey is a humectant that contains antibacterial agents that destroy bacteria.

- 1 C crushed kiwi pulp
- ½ C Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 2 Tbsp safflower oil

Mix all ingredients and place on your face for 15 minutes. With a warm cloth clean face.



## ***Pumpkin Facial Mask***

Pumpkins contain Vitamins A, C, K and E, potassium, iron, and beta-carotenes. Pumpkins heal skin and clears blemishes. Also, contains zinc, which helps control hormone levels and oil production.

- 2 Tbsp cooked pumpkin (cooled)
- 1 Tsp raw honey
- 1 Tsp apple cider vinegar

Mash pumpkins and mix well with honey and apple cider vinegar. Apply to face for 15 minutes. Rinse with cool water. (Side note: this is great for acne prone skin, oily skin, and dull skin)



## ***Oatmeal Acne Pimple Scrub***

- 2 Tbsp oatmeal
- 1 Tsp cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp honey

Oatmeal will cleanse the skin of oil. Cinnamon is an antiseptic that will help reduce the bacteria on your face and even help dry out existing pimples. It also stimulates blood flow, oxygen, and nutrients to the skin. Mix all ingredients together and apply to the face, scrubbing softly in a circular motion. Leave on for 15 minutes then rinse with warm water.



## ***Honey and Brown Sugar Scrub***

- ¼ C brown sugar
- ¼ slightly warm honey

In a small bowl stir sugar and warm honey and in a circular motion rub on face. With lukewarm water rinse off after 5 minutes.

*(Side note: this is especially great for dry skin and lips)*



# FACIAL TONERS

Now my favorite....ROSES!!! Rosewater is a natural astringent and aids in tightening the skin. It's healing properties reduce inflammation and swelling of the skin. In other words ladies and gents, rosewater is the fountain of youth. Rosewater is perfect for those looking to even out their complexion and reduce the appearance of wrinkles. Also, a great cleanser that peels away dirt and trapped grit and oils from skin flakes. Used alone it makes a great facial mist during the day especially in drier climates. Or for use after rinsing off a mask or scrub.



## **Rosewater Ice Cubes**

*1/8 C rosewater*

*1/8 C purified water*

*A handful of freshly cleaned rose petals*

*An ice cube tray or mold*

An Icelandic practice used to reduce puffy eyes and dark circles under eyes. Begin by filling the mold with rosewater then place a couple petals of roses then fill with rosewater. Place in the freezer until ready. This is also a great trick to use before wearing makeup. It tightens the skin allowing it to be a great primer.



## **Rosewater Toner**



*1 C rosewater*

*1/4 C witch hazel*

*A handful of spearmint leaves*

Bruise the mint leaves slightly then add rosewater and allow to sit for at least 20 minutes allowing the oils from the mint leaves to mix with the rosewater. Pour the witch hazel in and shake well. This is perfect for use after washing your face.

Well, there you have it! Simple skincare tricks that you can do yourself and the beauty is knowing what you are actually putting on your skin. No harsh chemicals, toxins or secret ingredients you don't know about. If there is a skin complication that you need a skincare trick to or questions please feel free to ask away.

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Jackie Learmond is an actress in the upcoming web series *New Yorker's Guide to LaLa Land* set to premiere late spring. In addition, as an herbalist, Jackie has founded Dear Powder Room, a natural and homemade soap and skincare line dedicated to providing honest and pronounceable ingredients available for purchase early April.

# oops.

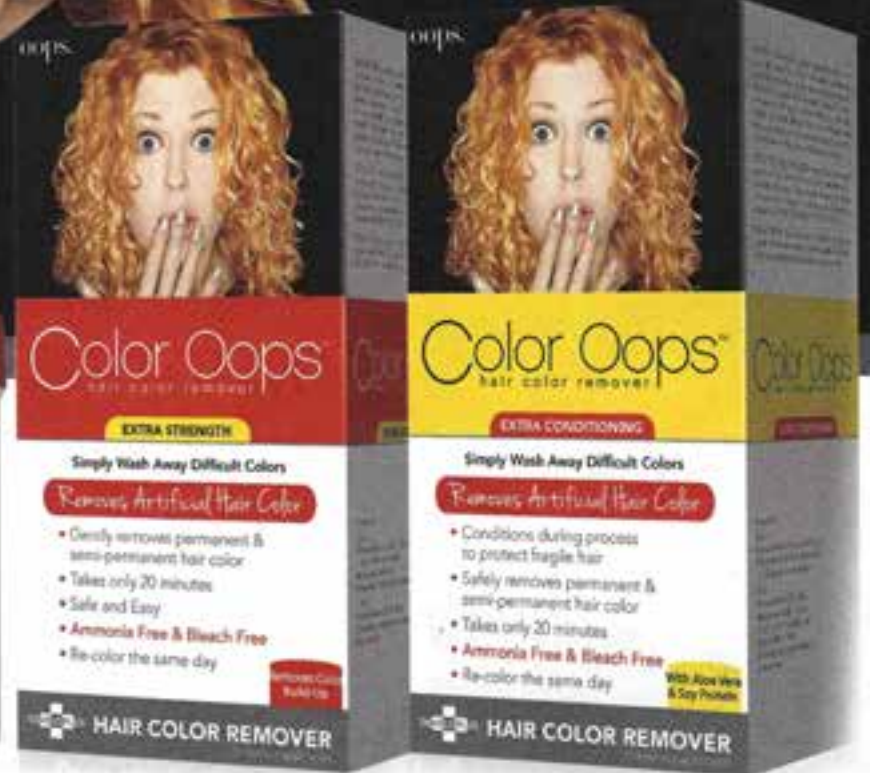
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**D**id you know that the average airplane travels approximately 550 miles per hour at a cruising altitude of 36,000 feet above sea level? That's pretty high and pretty fast. But here's a question: on your next trip, while traveling 550 mph, 36,000 feet above sea level, how many new experiences will you have? If you are an avid traveler and a frequent flyer, probably not many. How many new people will you meet? Maybe two if you're the type to strike up a conversation with your seatmates. Put that way, the fast and efficient travel by air doesn't seem very great at expanding your life experiences does it? Not particularly. That's why this month's article is all about slow travel, and enjoying the act of traveling as much as the destinations themselves. Don't believe me? Here are five reasons why you should try to incorporate slow travel into your next adventure.

# **SLOW TRAVEL: BE IN THE JOURNEY**

BY AERI ROSE



## **1.) DELIGHTING THE SENSES**

First off, what IS slow travel? Slow travel is seeing more by seeing less. It does away with the tours that offer a mad dash overview of a place; of stopping just long enough at each site to snap a photo in front of this famous building or that ancient sculpture before rushing off to the next attraction. No, slow travel moves at a relaxed pace. It is walking or biking in a city, it is taking the train or the boat to the next destination, and it is quietly observing and absorbing the beauty that surrounds you. How often have you traveled the same routes at home, barely registering the changing scenery on your daily routine? With fast travel it is easy to pack that ambivalence and take it along with you. With slow travel, you can leave those blinders at home. Open your senses to your surroundings. Explore the plants on your trip. What colors are they? How do they smell? Listen. Is this city full of street performers? Are the bird songs different from park to park? Has the enticing scent of a corner bakery attracted your nose? Go in and have a snack. Taste something new and decadent. With slow travel, your trip will be a delight for all your senses.

## **2.) MEETING NEW FRIENDS AND TRAVEL ANGELS**



As mentioned above, slow travel is about exploring all modes of transportation, and taking roads less taken. Sometimes that means you'll get lost. It does. Trust me. But that's OK! Because with slow travel you don't have to have a schedule. So you're never lost, you're never running late, you're just taking a different route. And despite what language or alphabet you're trying to decipher, the expression for "bemused confusion" is pretty universal. So if you're feeling uncertain, don't be afraid to ask for help! Ask for directions. Ask for advice when ordering a meal or planning a day trip. The kindness of strangers is a real and wonderful thing, and often locals will happily offer advice, directions, or recommendations. I have lost count of the number of times travel angels have come to my assistance when alone and lost. They have hailed me cabs, driven me across town to catch ferries, helped me order, and protected my luggage. Some I met only once, and some I'm friends with to this day.

### 3.) IMMERSING YOURSELF IN NEW CULTURES



Did you know that in China some travelers pay for a train ticket with no seat? They stand in the aisles, or sit on a stool they bring along with them. Often travelers with seats will take turns in the aisle, offering their seats to these other travelers.

Did you know that on the days long train journey across the Russian Siberia you can always find someone in the meal car willing to play cards. Or that at every stop there are old ladies selling delicious fresh piroshki and smoked fish?

Did you know that in Morocco it is common to share a cab with strangers if you are both going in the same general direction?

Travel is an important part of any culture. So to truly immerse yourself in a new country, you should make every attempt to try to travel like the locals do. You are really denying yourself a gratifying and enlightening experience if your only travel experience is the flight in and the cab to your resort.



### 4.) BOLSTERING YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE

While living in Hangzhou, China, I discovered that the most difficult thing to master was the public bus system. Bus stops had giant maps with complex bus routes smeared with Chinese characters. Even the numbers were written in Hanzi, rather than Arabic numbers. It took weeks of riding busses just to see where they led, getting unbelievably lost, and eventually hailing a cab home in exasperation, until I finally got a halfway reasonable understanding of the system. It was an incredible victory the day that I finally rode the bus from my apartment across town to the imports grocery store without getting lost. That French cheese was victory cheese. I was powerful, clever, and self-reliant. I had conquered that bus! Never mind that I got lost again the next day. Because I knew that I could figure it out eventually. And that is a great feeling.

### 5.) FINDING HIDDEN GEMS AND SURPRISE DISCOVERIES



I know it is tempting to chase after each ancient tourist site, infamous restaurant, and trendy bar recommended by Lonely Planet, Trip Advisor, and WikiTravel. But do you know why those trendy places got discovered in the first place? Because some travel writer out there knows that the real secret to exploration is to wander the less beaten paths looking for the hidden gems. Be your own trip advisor! You go find those surprise discoveries, and then you can be the clever traveler that impresses all your friends with little known wonderful recommendations.

**I** hope I've convinced you. Slow travel is wonderful travel. It is delightful, relaxing, enlightening, and inspiring. But don't take my word for it. On your next trip, try to slow it down a bit, and be amazed by all the incredible experiences you'll have. I guarantee it.



*Have you ever had the urge to just drop what you were doing, pack a bag, and set out on an adventure? Seven years and over two dozen countries later, Aeri Rose is proof that excitement, independence, and discovery await those who are bold enough to say "yes" to life's craziest choices. When not exploring the world with her little grey backpack, Aeri Rose can be found living a nomadic lifestyle traveling the United States as an artist and entrepreneur. To follow Aeri on all her adventures, check her out online at [travelingwithaeri.com](http://travelingwithaeri.com); or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/aerirose](http://www.facebook.com/aerirose).*



## TUTORIAL TIME

# STROBING 101

By: Sheridan Hayley (<http://sheridansoderstrom.wix.com/shartistry>)  
Photography By: Harvey Branman ([www.harveybranman.com](http://www.harveybranman.com))  
Model: Alexis Nichols ([www.alexisnichols.com](http://www.alexisnichols.com))



Gone are the days of heavily frosted cheeks and disco-like sheen. Thanks to new refined textures, highlighting or “strobing” as it is commonly referred, can make an impact while retaining its wearability.

*Let's get glowing!*

**YOU'LL NEED: A FAN BRUSH ~ A FLUFFY DOMED EYESHADOW BRUSH ~ POWDER HIGHLIGHTER**



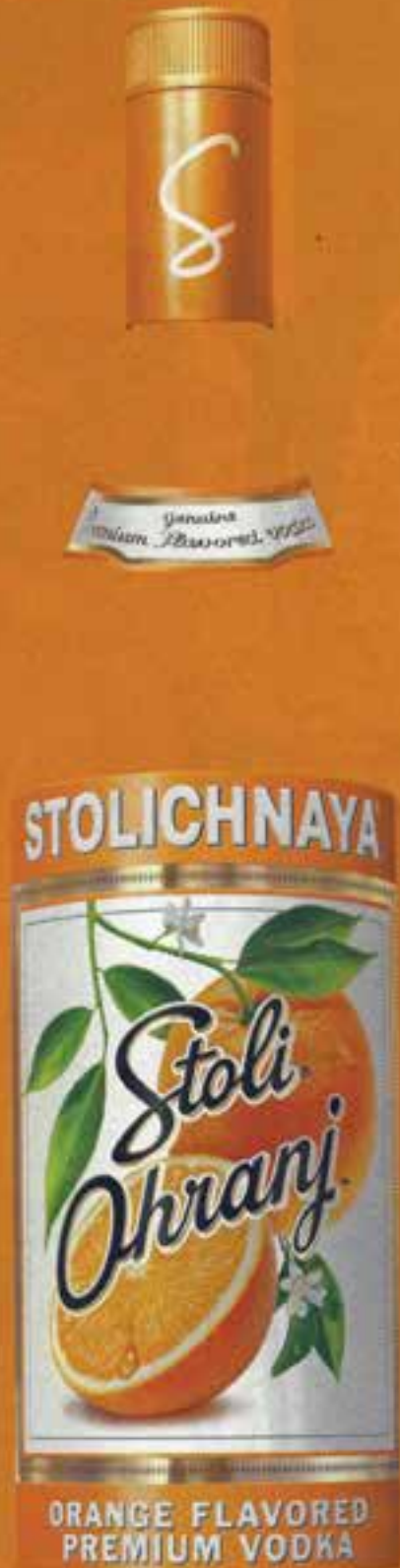
1. Start with a solid base. This includes having your foundation buffed, your concealer set, and your powder in place.
2. Once the basics are complete, you may move on to additional parts of your routine such as blush and bronzer. Adding color to the face will create more dimension and marry beautifully with the highlight.
3. Next, it is time to select a highlighter of your choice. Cream and liquid luminizers are fantastic however; I typically opt for powders due to the longevity of wear. Tip: Take note of your undertone and choose a highlighter that will flatter your skin tone. A shade that works on everyone? A neutral champagne.
4. Take your fan brush and lightly dip into the product. Locate the highest part of the cheek and sweep across. Once you have the desired intensity, proceed to the other side. Tip: If you are oily, avoid taking the highlighter too far in towards the nose as it can make you appear shiny.
5. Highlighting the eyes is a great way to tie an eye look together as well as create a well-rested effect. Take your fluffy eye brush and brush the product on the brow bone and the inner corner of the eye.
6. If you want to emphasize a sexy pout, take the same eye brush or even your finger and pat above the cupid's bow. For even more fullness, take the highlighter and dab some on the center of your bottom lip for volume.



**THE  
VODKA  
WITH  
"OH"  
IN THE  
NAME.**

**AND THE  
TASTE.**

*Stoli*  
**THE  
VODKA**



# Bringing Positive Feng Shui Energy to Your Home through Art

By Gail Reaben



*Waterfall by Jeff Sheldon*

More than we know, we are conditioned psychologically by the pictures on our walls. They “talk” to us every moment we are in our houses. If you’ve been living alone for a long time, there’s a good chance you have art that has a single object in it, like one flower instead of a pair or bunch of flowers. Maybe you have a beautiful picture of the beach with one woman or one man stretched out on a striped towel basking in the sun. Nice, yes but unless you are Mother Goose and need time alone, this picture reinforces yourself as a single person. If you are married, having paintings of any single entity reinforces the individual, not the couple.

This applies to wildlife photos or paintings too, not just humans. For instance, you may have a picture of a leopard reclining in a tree. Wonderful image but again, it reflects a single entity. If you have a photo or painting of two leopard cubs playing in a field, that brings good energy and fun to the couple who live in the house. Pairs are the key to reinforce a couple’s togetherness. I had a client whose husband worked several states away from where they lived and they only saw each other a few days a month. Not easy to keep a marriage strong with so much separation. I noticed when I first visited their house that there were pairs of objects in every room. They didn’t know anything about feng shui but unconsciously, when they purchased things, they always bought two of them, such as two cookie jars just alike, two red vases, a painting of a couple dancing, or two identical cardinal bird pictures. They obviously saw themselves as a couple, no matter what the circumstances.



*Marriage in Form Set by Bob Stocksdale and Sekimachi*

It’s healthy to have a balance – some art reflecting who you are as an individual mixed with other pieces that reflect the personality of you and your significant other as a team. Here’s a photo of an art piece that is perfect statement of a healthy relationship – two beautiful bowls, each a bit different in design, reflecting the individual personality, yet the same in size and shape reflecting similar goals as a couple. If you were to have this photograph in your house, along with other reinforcing positive art of pairs of people, objects or wildlife, the relationship would tend to stay balanced and equal. In fact, the name of this piece is *Marriage in Form Set* by Bob Stocksdale and Sekimachi, at Yale University Art Gallery.



by Gail Reaben

Another piece of art excellent for maintaining relationships is this simple watercolor about love. When you have art that reflects tenderness and caring, the vibration flows all around your environment.

Another excellent type of painting for bringing fun into your life and potentially, an interesting relationship, is a tango dance painting like this one.

I suggested a similar painting to a client who was recently divorced. After hanging it in a certain feng shui area of her home, she signed up for tango lessons and started what turned out to be, a long relationship with a another dancer she met there. Another client who

I also suggested a tango painting to, found without even consciously realizing it had incorporated two people dancing into an art piece she made. There are so many kinds of images that inspire us in ways that can improve our lives. For any person living alone, or if in a marriage where one would like to up the fun quotient in the relationship, I have found that these tango paintings can sure get the energy stirred up.



Tango Under the Sun by Ted Cowart  
<http://cowartfineart.com>

If you are in a relationship where you feel the other person you live with is dominating you and you want to stand up and say, “Hey, I’m here!”, or if you are living alone and liking it, then it’s good, in my opinion, to have an individual subject matter piece that is strong and reflects your inner Superman or Superwoman such as this photograph called “Galaxy” where you are center of your own inner universe.



Galaxy by Gail Reaben

Pictures of groups of people (as pictured below) are excellent to have in your house, especially the public areas such as a room like your den or kitchen, as they would tend to make the inhabitants want to do things with friends or family, perhaps participating in such events as dinners with neighbors or spending a fun day at the beach.

In your home or office, paintings or pictures of roses that are alive with warmth can bring gentleness, friendship as well as loving feelings to any space it occupies. This also applies to fresh flowers! This painting below of roses in a crystal vase is one that brings positive and happy energy to any room.



15 Fun Fair at the Beach by Edan Cohen  
[www.splashbase.com](http://www.splashbase.com)



*Rose Grouping II by Ted Cowart*  
<http://cowartfineart.com>

It is truly amazing how much art affects us at deeper levels. For one of my clients who lived alone and mostly came home from work and watched television, there was little art in her house to encourage reaching out to others. She had some exquisite art pieces but they were of individual objects and lonely landscapes. I suggested a painting or photograph of people having fun at Mardi Gras to lighten the energy in her den. Within a few months of hanging it, she was enjoying herself hosting dinner parties and inviting friends over to watch her sports team on television. As we walk through our houses the furniture, the paintings, the photos, and the colors, are all sending us messages. When they are positive ones, good things happen.

To further create happy vibes in your house, do take a walking tour through each room. Look at the subjects of your paintings as well as the colors. Are your subjects enjoying themselves or do they look sad or lonely? Do they look menacing or aggressive? How do you think you would feel if there were photos of the Holocaust around you every morning when you got up?

Greetings, it's a gray battlefield or monster staring you in the face to start your day, and continues throughout that day, evening and the next day, next month . . . Do you think that would be able to maintain a happy and positive attitude amongst such gloom and doom? Of course not and I used that example that was just to make a point by showing a contrast of how important it is to have photographs or paintings of images that lift your spirit.

Landscapes can bring peace, harmony and joy to a house as well. If a painting lifts your spirit, you will spread that joy or peace to others around you. If you are a couple it's even better as the joy multiplies. This landscape, *Green Fields* by artist Ted Cowart is a quite positive one, lifting the spirit with its feelings of well being from his bright colors, sense of calm waters, and a lovely blue sky.



*Green Fields by Ted Cowart*  
<http://cowartfineart.com>

This is another type of image that elicits a totally different feeling and shows how much the opposite type of image can affect us at a deep level. This example isn't particularly sad or painful, but is an image that can affect one's ability to make decisions. Imagine how this picture might affect a person who has this one in a prominent place in their house: a wonderful photograph of soft gentle grays with good composition of an early morning fog on the water. Artistically, it's definitely a well done, professional photograph with lots of feeling. Let's imagine you have this photo prominent in your house and every single day, every time you pass by it, you see a fog of soft white and grays – no color. You can't make out any shapes clearly of any people in the water, any ships or even the sun. And in this case, the fog never burns off as it stays hazy. Your world starts to become unclear and you look for definition. There's a good chance a person who has a blurry or foggy painting in their house might have difficulty making decisions as you can't "see clearly" what it is you want to do. No matter how hard he or she would try, they just couldn't focus or make clear what was in front of them. Are those ships, canoes or battleships with a telephoto lens? One starts to squint to bring definition, but alas . . . the fog continues.



For good Feng Shui and for a happier outlook on life, you want to only have art that uplifts you such as the photograph of a clear waterfall at the beginning of this article, with its strong greens and blues. It is alive and it's energetic – a great piece for home or office.

When you walk into your kitchen or your den, take a look at the art you have hanging. Again, does it make your heart sing when you see it – or come close at least! If it makes you feel a little melancholy or sad, you might consider replacing it with something that makes you smile when you look at it. Scientists have discovered that when a person smiles or looks at something that makes them feel good, certain chemicals are released which strengthen the immune system. In other words, peaceful, joyous and happy art is healthy!

The French have created some of the world's greatest artists. Many of The Impressionists of the late 1800's, early 1900's, have given us happy colors and subjects to brighten any house. Some of their art can brighten a home forever like Van Gogh's Sunflowers or Renoir's paintings of children and his friends.



*Roadside Garden II* by Ted Cowart  
<http://cowartfineart.com>

See his *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, (below). It can bring energetic, happy energy to a home. Fortunately, reproductions of these paintings are easily available on the internet. These all bring good energy to any environment! Some people have been able to get raise their spirits and mood to a more positive one by simply changing the art in their house.



This is probably a good time to say that you don't have to be wealthy to have great art in your house! Pier 1, Hobby Lobby, and Kirkland's all have wonderful posters you might like. And there are also poster companies on the internet such as art.com where you can buy beautiful, uplifting art. You may also contact any of the artists mentioned in this article. Make your house alive with joy and according to many sages, blessings are soon to follow.

*Luncheon of the Boating Party*  
by Auguste Renoir  
French Impressionist Painter, 1882

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What's in a Name? -

# HOW TO BE OK BEING SINGLE By Arielle Nieshalla

“How to Be OK Being Single”, “Sex Tips to Drive Him Wild”, “10 Signs He’s Cheating on You”-theses are the types of articles we all scoff at... and then secretly read when no one else can see our shame. We can’t help but think that maybe this article will be the ONE. The “one” that has all the answers, that can unlock some secret in the universe that makes our issue easier to cope with. Let’s be real, they all basically say the same thing and leave us with a feeling of futility- like there’s no real hope for change. I can’t promise that I’m writing the only article ever that will NOT be like that but I hope I can give you something different.

This is the part where I’m supposed to say that you’re a “strong independent woman who don’t need no man!” (which, obviously is true, you’re a bad ass!) But I think the subject is more nuanced than that. It’s more than just giving you permission to embrace who you are. It’s more of a question of HOW. And before we get into that, I think it’s important to look at a definition of the word “single”-

*“Single: Only one in number; unique; sole; a single example.”*

Whether or not you’re “with” someone, I think we can all agree that every person fills this description- you are a beautiful, single example of yourself, one that no one else can copy. And it’s so important, *vital*, to hang onto that, whether you’re in a relationship or not. So this is for ALL you ladies out there, regardless of your love situation.

Getting to know yourself and then being ok with who that person is, takes a while. Not only is it time consuming but it’s also something that needs

constant re-evaluation. You’re constantly learning and growing- whether you’re aware of it or not. A few years ago, I ended my first relationship- it was a sad, scary, and lonely part of my life. Because it was so lonely, I tried to force other romantic relationships to work, even if I knew it was a bad idea. Not surprisingly, each one left me more devastated than the last until; eventually, I learned that I had to be ok being by myself before

I could be with anyone else. This was incredibly liberating. There were new things I could go after, old things I desperately wanted to discard. Things that had changed within me due to this break up and things I still needed to work on changing in myself. It took a long time for me to fully embrace the person I really was. When that happened, the pre- break up me was just a shadow of the authentic person I discovered hiding under all the nonsense. After a few years, I found another person to give it a shot with and, because I was

solidified in myself, I was able to stand firm in that relationship. Fast forward two wonderful years later and we’re still together. While it’s been a journey I wouldn’t trade for the world, I recently turned inward and realized that I had subtly let go of a lot of things that made me inherently me. Sometimes you can lose focus on yourself as you



*Arielle Nieshalla is a writer, actor and all around dabbler in the arts living in LA. She loves reading and looking contemplatively out of windows whilst it’s raining. She’s a contributing writer for the fabulous HelloGiggles website and you can follow some of her writing at <http://hellogiggles.com/praise-real-father/3/or>; if social media is more of your thing, catch her adventures in Instagram @Aribelle89.”*

try to exist with another person. It dawned on me that I had lost a lot of the unique “single example” of myself and, in doing so, I had lost the ability to be happy with myself- to be ok being with the single-ness of *me*. I made a list of all the things that make me happy, things I wanted to do outside of and separate from my relationship. Not out of anger or spite towards my boyfriend but out of the need to retain who I am. I’ve started to tackle each of those items on my list one by one and each time I knock something off, I feel lighter, more centered. I’m satisfied in a deeper way than any other person could make me.

So, that’s my secret for “how to be ok being single”- never wear it as a badge of shame but rather, *claim* it for yourself with pride. Don’t think of “being single”

as a thing to end but rather, a thing to continue being *always*. A relationship isn’t the end goal; another person isn’t what you need to go after. You, in all your unique, sole, single example of yourself are the one who’s going to be there every day for the rest of your life. If you can embrace THAT person, everything else will fall into place.

Keep seeking yourself out, discovering yourself can be the great romance. Let’s put away the negativity that gets tacked onto the word “single” for, what is it really? A word. An empty word that looks to us to fill it, to give it meaning and *that* meaning is what defines it. After all, would a rose by any other name smell as sweet?



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# Get an International Friend

HAVING A **WORLD VIEW** CAN CHANGE THE WAY YOU VIEW **YOURSELF IN YOUR WORLD.**

By Isabel Herrman

We've all come across the phrase "eat, pray, love" made popular by the author, Elizabeth Gilbert and familiarized with the Julia Roberts film. However, in my humble opinion it gave travel and self-exploration a romanticized affect on one's heart, soul, and mind. Part of discovering your self is digging deep and viewing yourself from another's perspective. In the United States it's easy to go from state to state with out feeling any big culture change. Yet, on other continents crossing borders means speaking another language, following different laws, and even behaving in a modified manner. It's that ability to adapt with fluidity, that having an international friend just might be one of the best relationships you have... for yourself.



the most important things I have ever learned. So if you need to re read that last bit, trust me it sticks.

While visiting we were able to experience life [their] way. They were in no means in poverty class, rather upper middle class. They could afford 2 homes, private school, and leisure. We traveled from countryside to city, down the coast to Kushasai, and all the way to Istanbul. All the while I was picking up the language like a sponge. The more diverse the atmosphere the more I wanted to communicate, absorb, and divulge. I wanted to break the stereotype of Americans single handedly. So, I mimicked my host sister. Her behavior at home, out in the "world", and towards her family. Her life was the life I wanted. I gave up the reins of my self-control, and rather than adapt as myself, I became someone else. This is where that part of discovering a deeper side to your self via influence is so very crucial. My host sister, was handed everything in life. It is 'their' culture to treat daughters and women like princesses. Hard to believe that a Middle Eastern

and I to Turkey to visit a foreign exchange student that we hosted the year before. Inexperienced with travel, the world, and life outside of Kansas... I'm happy to say I went into this trip with a very open mind. Upon arriving we traveled 30 minutes from the Izmir airport to their "winter home", Foca. Everything seemed so lovely, and my host "sister" like a princess. In my eyes. Their life was so exotic. The house they lived in was small to an American's standard, but as Sheya communicated, "we don't

Not long ago, actually... Almost 10 years ago, I was a fortunate 19 year old that had a mother who loved

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**PART OF DISCOVERING YOUR SELF IS DIGGING DEEP AND VIEWING YOURSELF FROM ANOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE.**

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her. My mother saved her teacher's pay to take my younger brother

'live' in our house. We live out in the world." This is probably one of







culture treats women well? Well, if they are educated and cultured, they do... and I wanted that life. So, I demanded it from my own mother. Which was not “normal” for me to be a demanding brat.

Our trip neared its end and I was invited to stay an additional month. I wanted this trip to never end, absolutely, “YES! Mom I want to stay!” My mother’s response? “I’ve already paid for the tickets home and an additional ticket to get you home will be too expensive for me.” Unacceptable. I had to put my foot down. I was a princess now. I was in Turkey. I was no longer that country Kansas bumpkin. I’ve been to another part of the world! I was now special... This is the only real regret I have in life. Treating my mother disrespectfully, because that is how I “thought” I needed to behave in order to fit the mold. I was wrong; our Turkish hosts were not spoiling their daughters like princesses, they were treating US like guests. The Turkish culture is very hospitable, and holds the ability to have guests to a high standard. It was my LACK of understanding that made me exactly the stereotype

I so dreadfully did not want to become. Sheya NEVER behaved the way I did, it was I that understood wrong. Our trip came to an end, me on the plane with my mom and brother. At the time I did not see the importance of the travel as a cultural exploration, I saw it as a privilege. This is where I was oh-so-wrong.

It wasn’t until the next semester of university when I met my friend Tamiko, from Japan, that I had learned the error of my way. Tomiko, a student, from an upbringing similar to my own. Modest, yet, education driven. I listened to her express her gratitude in “just breathing the air on the other side of the world”. This gratitude of exploration was an insight to her and WHO she was. Look, I was 19. I don’t expect ANY 19 year old to know who they are, but to be able to carry ‘yourself’ in another culture respectfully is key. Tomiko did JUST that. It was my time spent with her, that I gained insight to her culture, and her into mine. We laughed about generalizations, quirky culture icons, and disagreed on several out dated traditions.

I was able to learn from Tomiko how to be myself in a “strange” land. This friendship couldn’t have been more important. The next year I was a fish out of water, no mom to watch over me, and no one to keep “me” in check... other than ME! I left dear ole’ USA and studied abroad in the furthest place (geographically) I could think of, Australia. Upon arriving, I thought, “I can be ANYONE, no one knows me here.” I smiled, laughed out loud, and let that thought go. I didn’t want to BE anyone else. I wanted to learn about this other culture, so that it could ADD to ME. I made friends there that will be friends for life; I even learned that trusting yourself is always the BEST self. I came back with heaps of stories (those will be for another article), both good and bad; I had a different view on the world. There is a LOT out there, and I am just a small part of it all. But I GET to be a part of it. Having an international friend(s) can broaden your horizon or influence you in a way you’ve never expected. In my experience, welcome all from everywhere, you’ll at least have gratitude... and that’s a whole lot!

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*Isabel Herrman is an artist first, believes in humanity and strides everyday to make the world a better place. Her experiences and stories are shared to further connect us all. When she's not writing about life, you can find her at the beach or in a coffee shop soaking in the world's beauty or simply people watching.*



# How to Fix a Bad Credit Score

By Alexis Monahan

Let's talk about **MONEY**, HONEY!

Credit is a HUGE part of everyone's life. And we have all the commercials and pop-up ads to prove it... Bad credit can mean that you may not be able to get that loan, that credit line increase, or even that job. Obviously, the best way to have good credit is to keep good credit, but sometimes life gets in the way and you need to fix a broken credit. This article will focus on how you can fix your bad credit score.

First things first: **How is your credit score calculated?**

Several factors are considered:

- ◆ **35% YOUR PAYMENT HISTORY** *Do you pay on time or do you have late fees?*
- ◆ **30% YOUR DEBT TO CREDIT RATIO** *The amount of debt you have compared to how much unused credit you have.*
- ◆ **10% NEW CREDIT** *Have you recently opened a lot of new credit?*
- ◆ **15% LENGTH OF YOUR CREDIT HISTORY** *How long have you had/been paying on your debt*
- ◆ **10% CREDIT MIX** *What type of credit do you have (variable credit cards or fixed rate car or personal loans)?*

There are only a few of these factors you, personally, have any control over.



Let's start with **Your Payment History**.

If you have late payments on your credit cards or loans that will most dramatically affect your credit score. To fix this, it is important do your best to pay on time in the future. Even if it is just the minimum amount due, being on time with the payment will show that you are getting your credit act together. You can't change the past, but you can do better going forward.

Next, here is how you can help **Your Debt to Credit Ratio**.

Many people think that when they get in credit trouble they need to immediately cancel all of their cards. This is exactly the opposite of what you should do!!!



Closing your cards will reduce the credit portion of this ratio. You want to keep the amount of your credit as high as possible while paying off the debt part (slow and steady wins the race here).

What is important is to not use those credit cards anymore. If you don't have the will power to not use the card, then cut the card up...but keep the account open to keep your credit high. As you continue to pay off your debt this debt to credit ratio will keep getting better and better.

For **New Credit**, it is pretty simple. Unless you need new credit to pay for something you actually "need" and don't just "want" there really is no reason for you to be opening up new credit all the time.

There is nothing you can really do about **Length of Your Credit History** except to wait and let time work in your favor.

It is similar when it comes to **Credit Mix**. Most of us have installment loans in student loan debt. And most of us have variable loans in credit cards. So we already have a mix of credit. But there are also personal loans, car loans, mortgages, etc. that can affect this mix. Just focus on not taking out loans on things you don't need to buy or can't afford. It may not be fun, but it is important for your financial future.

In the long run, having a good credit score is going to save you a lot of money!

- You will have lower interest rates on any credit you do have/need.
- You will be able to get emergency credit easily should you need it (no need for *PayDay Loans*).
- A good credit can mean you get a better job with better pay.

I hope this article has helped you understand your credit score a little better and how you can make it any better!

Most any credit card now offers you a look at your free FICO Score every month, which is great information for you. You can also look at your credit history online for free every year at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)



By Laci Paige

**Q:** My four best friends and I just went through breakups right before Valentine's Day. Any ideas how we should celebrate together and make it a girl's day, like *Park's & Rec's* "Galentine's Day"?

I had to research Galentine's Day; I've never seen an episode of *Park's & Rec*. It sounds like a really neat idea though. I'd say take a vote between your closest girlfriends and see what they want to do. It's all about what everyone will enjoy together as a group. Some ideas to think about:

- ∞ Rent a limo and have a day/night out on the town.
- ∞ Spa day.
- ∞ Host Breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- ∞ Craft day.
- ∞ See a local band.
- ∞ Wine tasting.
- ∞ Host a dessert party.
- ∞ Host a sex toy party.
- ∞ The options are endless really. I want an invite!

I love boots in the fall and winter but I don't know which ones to get that flatter my figure. Are there any rules for length or style of fashion boots?

Yep, you betcha. The overall shape of your body actually makes a big difference when shopping for boots.

**Are you petite?** Chose boots that will hit above your knee to lengthen your legs. Petite and curvy? Don't go too high.

**Muscular?** Ankle boots with a heel will show off the work you've put into your legs, and that added heel will flex your hard earned muscles as you walk.

**Slim?** Any boot fits slim legs, but over the knee will give you a little more shape to your legs.

**Short?** Any higher than ankle boot, but lower than the knee otherwise it will make you look shorter. If you're short and curvy stay away from higher than knee or calf length they both give the illusion that your legs are shorter.

**Tall?** Small heel or flats to let your natural height take over, and low cuts will make those long legs stand out. Tall and curvy? Any length, but steer clear of anything higher than the knee.

**Misc info:**

- ∞ Boots that are busy with accessories and add-ons will look best on tall leggy people.
- ∞ Thinner heels look best on slender people, and wider heels look good on curvy people - wedge heels included.
- ∞ Stacked heels are best for the curvy figure.

More than anything, Laci Paige, author of the **Silken Edge Series** enjoys spending time with her family. She and her husband support their children on the soccer pitch and off. Laci enjoys the outdoors, travel, and of course reading and writing (and chocolate). Their family lives in Hampton Roads, Virginia where Laci's adult muse wakes up late at night. Follow Laci on facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/authorlaci Paige> and twitter at [https://twitter.com/laci\\_paige](https://twitter.com/laci_paige).

# Lemon Merengue Pie

Make this delicious pie for Valentine's Day or any special occasion with your loved one.

Lemon merengue pie looks so beautiful with its soft merengue top and slightly browned edges and the taste cannot be described sufficiently with words. You must taste it!

First of all, let's start with the crust. We made ours in a heart shaped pan, just because we can!

## PIE INGREDIENTS

*1/2 cup flour  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 tablespoon cold salted butter  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1/4 teaspoon white vinegar  
1-2 tablespoons cold water*



## LEMON FILLING INGREDIENTS:

*1 large egg, white and yolk separated  
2 tablespoons plus 4 teaspoons sugar, divided  
2 teaspoons cornstarch  
1/4 cup water  
1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest  
2 tablespoons lemon juice*

## PIE DIRECTIONS:

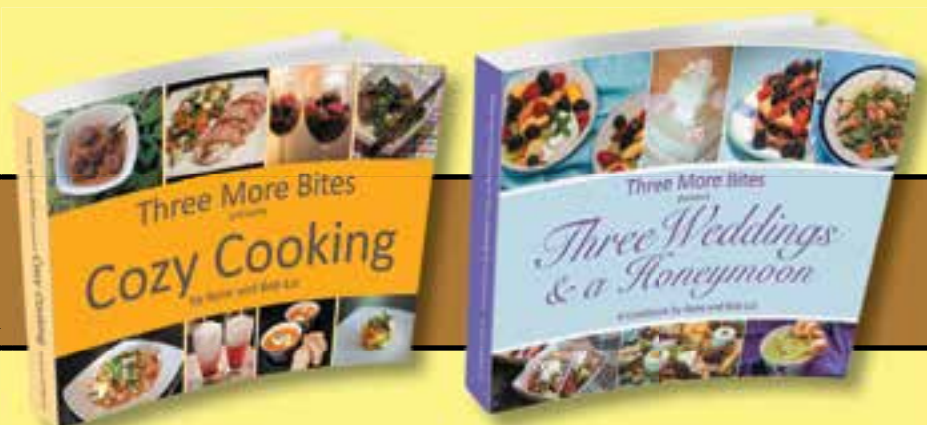
- ∞ Mix flour and sugar together in a bowl. Cut the butter into chunks and knead them into the flour with your fingers. It will start to crumble and look like dry oats. Keep kneading until you have very small pieces of butter all covered in flour. Add the olive oil and vinegar and knead together to form a firmer ball of dough. Gradually add the water until you can just knead it together but it's not sticky. Place in an airtight container and leave in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- ∞ Roll out the dough so it fits in a 15cm (6 inch) round or heart shaped pie pan. Then cut out a piece of parchment paper to put in the bottom and then grease the sides with butter to prevent the dough from sticking to it while baking.
- ∞ Bake at 190 C (375 F) for 20-25 minutes until the edges are slightly golden brown. Let cool and remove from pan without breaking it into pieces (this is always the most nerve wrecking task).
- ∞ Turn up the oven till 220 C (425 F).

## FILLING DIRECTIONS:

- ∞ Separate the egg into white and yolk and mix the yolk with 2 tablespoons sugar until it turns white fluffy.
- ∞ Add the cornstarch and mix again.
- ∞ Heat the water, lemon juice and zest in a small pot till it boils. Remove from heat.
- ∞ Gently pour about half of the lemon juice into the egg yolk mixture and stir until combined. Pour back into the pot to mix with the rest of the lemon juice and place it back on the heat on medium and stir for 2-3 minutes until it turns into custard and make sure there are no lumps.
- ∞ Spread the lemon custard over the piecrust in an even layer and all the way to the edge.
- ∞ Beat the egg white until it forms soft peaks, gradually add the 4 teaspoons of sugar and keep mixing until stiff peaks are formed.
- ∞ With a spoon, place the merengue on top of the lemon custard. It does not need to cover it completely. Make some peaks in the merengue with the spoon and place it back in the oven for 5-8 minutes till the edges turn slightly brown. Keep a close eye on this one as it happens really fast.

Serve right away!

-Enjoy!



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# OHM SWEATY: BIKRAM YOGA CLASS

BY JOANNA KELLY

**M**y good friend is obsessed with Bikram yoga. She loves it more than anything, and has even been known to go to more than one class in a day. Each class is an hour and a half, so that is *three hours* of 105\* exercise. She might be clinically insane, but I figure if she loves it that much, I should give it a whirl. For those of you that have never heard of Bikram Yoga, it is a class consisting of 26 postures performed in structured sequence in a heated and humidified room. According to the Bikram Yoga LA website, heat is used in Bikram yoga “in order to allow you to go deeper and safer into the yoga postures, reducing any risk of injury. You will find that practicing yoga in the heated room creates a satisfying feeling of achievement. The heat also promotes detoxification through perspiration.”



teacher. The room continues to heat even more and we move on to some stretching poses. I am relieved when the snoring stops. It is getting pretty warm, but I can also feel the sweat starting to roll and surely this means I am detoxifying my body.

The teacher encourages us to resist drinking water until after the first three poses. He fails to mention that we will be doing each pose twice, holding them for a minute or two each. By halfway through the second pose I feel like I have been transported to the

side of a kiln, except with the humidity of the rain forest.

I guzzle water as soon as allowed, and instantly realize that was a poor choice. Now my guts are filled with water, and it sloshes around as I move to the next pose. But I push onward. I can feel my muscles working and my flexibility increasing with each pose.

About half way through the class and the room has the heat of a thousand suns. Then the teacher turns on the overhead fans. I feel as though I have been saved. The sweet breeze hits my drenched body and I am freed from the captivity of oppression! This is short lived. As soon the top layer of sweat begins to dry, the fans effect becomes an accelerant for the hot air. It is as though someone is breathing down my neck except all over my body. Just as I think I cannot take the overhead fans any longer, the teacher turns them off. It is still hot as Hades in this room.

About two-thirds of the way through the class the heat has gotten so intense I start to have visions of what the witch’s oven in Hansel and Gretel ovens must have felt like. My lungs burn when I breathe. I take another sip of water even though the stainless steel cap of my water bottle burns my hand and the glass bottle is only one degree away from being molten. I can’t decide which is worse, feeling so thirsty from the desert in my mouth or feeling full and bloated from the water, which instantly starts to boil as it passes my lips.

I show up to the studio with my mat, towel and a bottle of water in my most sweat resistant lululemon, ready to feel a satisfied sense of achievement. Or maybe just a little bit skinnier. I sign a waiver that basically says, “This is a bad idea. The room will be 105\* or hotter, and will probably make you feel like shit. If you choose to participate, it isn’t our fault when you want to barf.” I might be paraphrasing. I pay for class, sign my life away, and head into the room.

As I enter, there are about 10 yogis in various stages of repose on their mats. The room is warm, but feels more like cozy snuggles than the inside of a convection oven. I am buoyed and think it can’t be any worse than other styles of warm yoga classes I’ve taken.

We start with some breathing exercises as the room heats up. I am accustomed to ujjayi breathing in all the yoga classes I have taken. You constrict the back of your throat just a bit so your breath sounds like the ocean (or like Darth Vader). The yogis in this room sound more like a Giant with sleep apnea or a dying asthmatic cow. I try hard to focus on the



I stay the course because if you leave the room you are not supposed to come back in. Maybe there will be some deep yogic revelation spiritual awakening if I stay. The founder, Mr. Bikram, has made claims his yoga can cure cancer and that practitioners can live to be 100 years old. Maybe the thought, "I'm dying" that has been going through my head for the past hour really means that I am going to live a long time!

Near the end of class, the teacher opens the door to the studio and I wish I had had the forethought to take a space nearer to the door. I could have had a sip of fresh cool air from the lobby. I would give that woman by the door my life savings to trade spots with me. He turns on the fans again and despite the slight chill I feel disheartened because I know it is temporary and I will feel like I am burning to death again shortly.

As I get up from Salabhasana (*Locust Pose* - or as I renamed it *Low-Cuss Pose* because of the whispered expletive that came out of my mouth) I look at my mat and wonder what Rorschach would think of my sweaty outline on the mat. And that when I die in here from heat stroke the cops won't have to make a chalk outline because I've already made one with perspiration.

When class is finally over I head to the lobby to sit for a minute and thank my lucky stars for fresh air and towels and water (and let's be frank trying not to collapse from the exertion of nearly dying) and wait for the feeling of accomplishment. It is slow to come, but soon I realize I made it through 90 minutes of heated torture and give myself a little pat on the back. *Ohm shanti motherf\*ckers.*



Born and raised in Houston, Texas and a graduate of New York University, Joanna Kelly now resides in Los Angeles where she works as an actress, model, and writer. In her free time she enjoys sharing her wisdom with up and coming talent, coaching children of all ages for modeling and acting. Joanna is also an avid blogger. To learn more about Joanna and her work, check out her websites: [www.waitingforlefty.blogspot.com](http://www.waitingforlefty.blogspot.com) and [www.joannakelly.me](http://www.joannakelly.me).

A woman in a black leotard is performing a hula hoop routine. She is holding a large, colorful, illuminated hula hoop that is spinning and creating a rainbow-like pattern. The background is dark, making the colors of the hoop stand out. The text "Use Code fitness10 at checkout for a 10% discount!" is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

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