



HOW TO WIN THE RYDER CUP

Tony Jacklin is the most successful European Ryder Cup captain of the lot. We asked the Pilsner Urquell ambassador about the leader's role.

CREATE A HAPPY CAMP

The most important job is to get everyone on the same side and give every player the best chance of winning a match — they need to know that you're there for them. The more confident they feel, the more likely they are to play their hearts out. I used to talk to the caddies and say "keep them up, keep them up" no matter what.

KNOW YOUR PLAYERS

You don't tell these players how to play but the captain has to learn what makes them tick and nurture the relationships — stroking them a bit, maybe offering the right words to help the younger guys like Rory McIlroy understand the Ryder Cup or giving the older ones some extra responsibility.

GET THE PAIRINGS RIGHT

Human beings feed off each other and certain personalities and characteristics get the best out of one another. Finding what combinations work best just on that weekend or even just that afternoon can be critical.

GET POINTS ON THE BOARD

When I was a player you'd put your strongest out last in the singles but as captain I couldn't see the point of Seve going last if we'd lost, so I flipped it on its head. Jack Nicklaus said, "You can't do that!" It's a battle out there so you do what you can.

A SCEPTIC'S GUIDE TO ALTERNATIVE HEALTH

Author Tim Parks was a cynic until he embarked on a journey into the bowels of alternative therapy. Here's his verdict on five different approaches



ILLUSTRATION BY LEANDRO CASTELAO | GETTY

and Prada." Stuff, he admits, he used to stare at in shop windows.

The more famous he becomes, McIlroy's desire to hang on to a normal life will be severely tested. Last September, he was having a drink in a St Andrews' pub during the Dunhill Links Championship. He was stared at without being mobbed. Such nights out in public may be numbered. "I don't know if that's true," McIlroy disagrees. "It depends how the public perceives you. You can be the No1 golfer in the world, but if you seem personable, you'll be able to do it. Tiger put up a barrier up so no one could get to him. I would much rather have my life than Tiger's. Even before his scandal broke. I am determined to hang on to my ordinariness." He makes you believe he will.

McIlroy looks certain to partner his friend, countryman, new US Open champion Graeme McDowell, in the Ryder Cup. The word in the locker room is that they will lead off the European team against the USA at Celtic Manor in October. By lunchtime in Newport, there is no doubt Katherine Jenkins will know exactly who Rory McIlroy is. 🍀 *The 38th Ryder Cup is at Celtic Manor Resort, 1-3 October, live on Sky Sports (www.rydercup.com)*



Let's not confuse scepticism with phobia. You may not believe in something, but that doesn't mean you can't try it. What though? You only look for alternative therapies, obviously, when traditional medicine has let you down; pain is pushing you to places you wouldn't normally go. As a rule of thumb, if the therapy is offering a quick fix in return for cash, it's charlatanism. The alternative therapies that have something going for them are almost always asking for a profound change of lifestyle.

01



SHIATSU

Nobody should go through life without at least a couple of sittings of shiatsu (a type of pressure-point massage). I went with chronic pains in the bladder area. The guy picked up my foot, studied it, pressed a finger at a point in the sole. Pain shot from foot to bladder and back. "The water meridian," he said. I enjoyed the crazy talk about meridians, dreams and astrology and felt better when I left. However nutty the science, the guy's hands certainly knew things other doctors didn't.

02

AYURVEDIC MEDICINE

I went to a practitioner in Delhi. *Ayurvedic* means "knowledge of health" based again on the idea that illness arises from an imbalance between five elements in the body. "We could address your symptoms with herbal enemas," I was told. "But you will never get over this problem until you confront the contradiction in your character." I was gob-smacked. But deep down I knew what he meant. When he insisted we needed an astrological birth chart, I backed out. But maybe I should have gone with it.

03



ACUPUNCTURE

Since so many people swear by it, I signed up to a dozen sittings. Pins in my feet, my groin, my stomach and my chest. You sit there alone for 20 or even 30min trying not to feel stupid. I got absolutely no benefit and it gave nothing like the pleasure that shiatsu gives. But I did feel odd tinglings and strange connections between the strategic points where the needles were placed. I'm glad I did it, if only to discover that the needles are painless.

04

VIPASSANA MEDITATION

Vipassana requires huge mental discipline. Basically, you are learning to sit cross-legged, back upright for an hour at a time, emptying your mind of words and observing every sensation in every inch of your body. You begin to understand what relaxation really is, what acceptance is, what a crazy mental state you're in. Two years on I still do an hour a day. This sorted out my chronic pains and (how I hate to say the words) changed my life.

05



VEGETARIAN DIET

Is this a therapy? Can we say "alternative" about something practised by millions? After my fourth Vipassana (meditation) retreat I decided to stop eating meat. Meditation does that. I recommend it if only because it forces you to think about what you're eating and have a better relationship with your food. I can't prove it, but I have the impression I feel lighter and calmer. *Teach Us To Sit Still* (Harvill Secker) by Tim Parks is out now

SELF-IMPROVEMENT #1

HOW TO BREATHE BETTER

Can Transformational Breathing really help a stressed out Will Hersey to relax?

IT'S HARD NOT to feel like a cliché when you arrive red-faced and late, blaming Tube delays, mobile phone in hand, for an alternative therapy that claims to offer sanity for stressed urban professionals. That cliché just gets worse when the man you've come to meet, Alan Dolan, the UK's go-to man for Transformational Breathing, just smiles benignly. Tanned, relaxed and unflappable in loose-fitting white cotton, he embodies what a diet of yoga and natural yoghurt can do.

Claims for Transformational Breathing, which originated in the States two decades ago, are certainly bold. Dolan tells me we only use 25 per cent of our breath. By upping this to 70-80 per cent through improved technique and practice, we can deliver more oxygen to our lungs, so improving our energy levels, boosting our immune system, reducing stress — the list goes on, right up to the less tangible clearing of "emotional baggage".

Dolan cites an England rugby player

who uses it for getting an extra edge on his fitness, and a psychotherapist who likened its emotional power to the equivalent of two years of therapy.

As the benefits are reeled off, I question the numbers — how is that 25 per cent statistic measured? Is lasting emotional change possible in just a few sessions? Is it really £4 for a Zone 1 single without an Oyster? Still, his aura of calm is strong and I vow to do as much breathing as necessary to get a piece of it. Well, an hour at a push.

The session itself can only be described as traumatic. I'd assumed that TB would be breathing of the slow, deep variety but, lying back on

a massage bed, I am guided into a rhythm of short sharp breaths that never feel controlled or comfortable. Throughout, Dolan works with his hands on pressure points in the body, at one point provoking a sharp pain in my abdomen that he slowly kneads clear. He later explains this as a blocked energy meridian, which, in my case, suggests a reluctance to hit my true potential. My cynical side wonders if it wasn't a tight muscle.

"Be careful over the rest of the day," he says. "You might feel different." He's right. Walking back to the office I feel dazed. Oddly obscure memories flit into my brain and there's a sense of altered frequency, that the world is a subtly different place. Was this the first step to transformation? Or was it more down to the fact I'd been panting for an hour with a man I'd never met in a darkened Marble Arch hotel suite when I should have been at work? The mysteries of the mind. ☹️ (www.breathguru.com)

