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Glynis Barber

Exercise is the closest there is to an anti-ageing pill – for both body and soul – Glynis Barber reveals to **Iona Walton**

Crime drama, *Dempsey and Makepeace*, changed Glynis Barber's life forever. Already established as an actress on screen and stage, her role as cop Harriet Makepeace made her famous like never before. And it's where she met her future husband, co-star Michael Brandon.

Since the heady days of playing detective, Glynis has enjoyed stints on *Emmerdale*, *Eastenders*, *Stepping Out* and *Loose Women* (on both sides of the table). She's appeared in numerous theatre productions (more to follow) and is in Tom Cruise's new blockbuster, *Edge of Tomorrow*. Another box ticked.

She has a lot to be thankful for, but Glynis works hard, learns from her experiences and is always looking for new challenges. Determined not to let her anxious temperament steal the show, Glynis gives her mental health as much attention as her physical wellbeing.

"For me personally, exercise is the singularly best stress-buster," she explains. "I've used it my whole life – as much for mind as for body – and it's actually harder for me not to exercise than it is to spend time in the gym. It brings a great feeling of accomplishment."

Born in South Africa, Glynis finds the British winter particularly hard to manage and at times has wrestled with anxiety.

"For me personally, exercise is the singularly best stress-buster"

"I try to be upbeat but do struggle when faced with difficulties and I would say I'm prone to anxiety," she says. "Over the years I've developed various strategies that help. Yoga and meditation are wonderful as the breathing exercises calm my system down."

Brought up a Christian and taken to church as a child, Glynis is not religious today but does lead a spiritual life.

"I have negative feelings towards all religions at the moment," she explains. "Many aspects of them seem illogical and absurd to me now and the terrible actions done in the name of religion put me off. I'm trying to work out whether with no religion I can still have a spiritual side."

Unsurprisingly, stress is a big player in her life and Glynis finds herself withdrawing when she needs to escape.

"We put such pressure on ourselves today to strive to achieve a perfect standard and it's easy to become overwhelmed by responsibility at times," she says.

"Social media and emails have added to the list of things to do from family life to jobs, friends and basic daily living (buying food and paying bills). I do take a break, turn off the computer and try to relax.

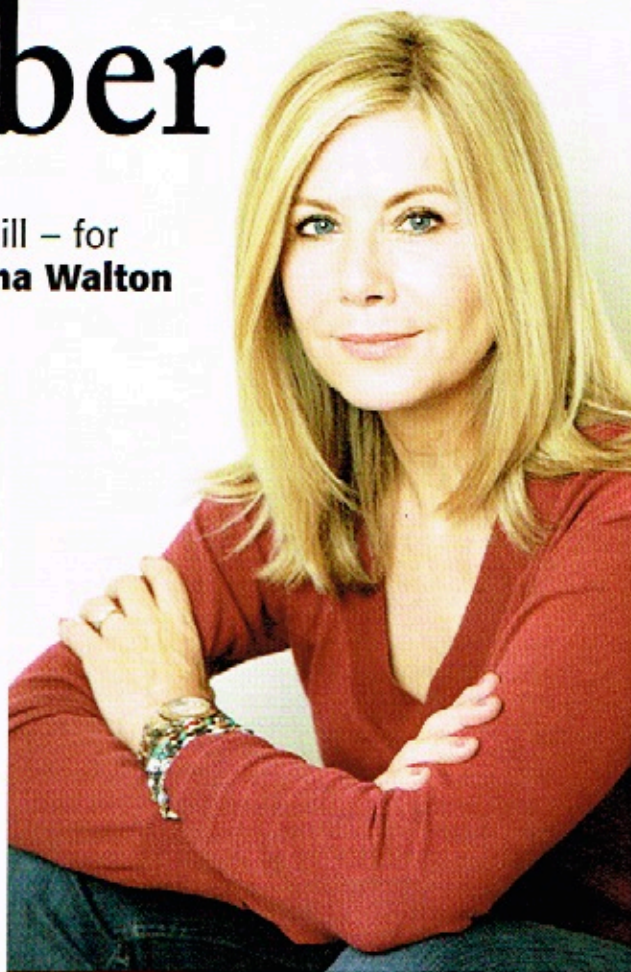
As an actress, Glynis of course makes time for the theatre, and loves TV too.

"Reality TV shows such as *The X Factor* are easy to watch but I try not to get too sucked in and often opt for fabulous dramas such as *Breaking Bad* and *Borgen*. I'm a poor sleeper, however, and need a calm period before bed.

"Green tea and dark chocolate is my fix when I'm low – they are both full of antioxidants – but I'm a big fan of healthy eating, not just to keep me trim but to keep me happy too. At my lowest points in life my instinct is always to eat very healthily. Junk food impulse eating just leads to guilt and a lowering of mood."

Another career high? Playing Lady Macbeth at an open-air theatre in Stafford.

"I love Shakespeare and had always wanted the part," she remembers. "It was dusk, the



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bats were flying around and it was a magical experience."

Just as exciting, however, is the brand that Glynis is building around her website.

"I never was one for school and sometimes feel I've given myself a lot of homework," she laughs. "But I'm so passionate about health and fitness that it's been a natural next step and exciting learning curve, and I've had some wonderful feedback." **MIM**

For more information visit www.glynisbarber.com and www.agelessbyglynisbarber.com.

Top tips for low days, by Glynis Barber



- **Exercise.** Enjoy the positive mood the endorphins leave you with. And it makes you find space in the day for yourself. Even if you don't feel like it, give exercise a go.
- **Breathing.** Either through yoga or meditation or just in your own time and place, deep breathing definitely reduces stress and improves mood.
- **Hobbies.** Whether golf, joining a choir, knitting or making collages, finding a hobby (or giving one time) is one of the best ideas if you're feeling low. It will keep your mind occupied.
- **Talking.** A problem shared always helps. Turn to a friend, spouse or therapist even if it's just to say that you're down in the dumps. Talking can generate solutions, especially if you're feeling helpless or overwhelmed.
- **Supplements.** Not everyone agrees but I'm a big fan of supplements. From general vitamins such as the B vitamins and omega 3 to the more specific (theanine for example) there are lots out there that can improve