

## WELL-BEING

3 WAYS TO ...

## Chill out

'TIS the season to feel harried. Here are three novel techniques to help you de-stress

1

## Try an adult coloring book

**THESE** books are composed of black-and-white outlines of patterns (such as flowers) that you usually fill in with colored pens or markers. Two adult coloring books are among the top 10 best sellers on Amazon, and finished, colored-in pages are trending on Pinterest and Instagram. Psychologists say coloring within lines can put you in a relaxed, meditative state. "This activity encourages mindfulness—being in the present moment rather than in the future or past," says Martine Faist, an art therapist in Indianapolis.

2

## Learn Acem meditation

**UNLIKE** other forms of meditation, which ask you to empty your mind, Acem doesn't require strict focus. Thoughts and impressions are allowed to come and go freely, which makes this Norwegian version much easier for some people. A great deal of research around the world has shown that meditation, in a wide range of styles, reduces cortisol (a stress hormone), strengthens the immune system and may prevent heart disease. Learn more about Acem meditation at [us.acem.com](http://us.acem.com).

3

## Relax in a sensory-deprivation tank

**FLOAT TANKS**, developed by psychiatrist John C. Lilly in the 1950s, are making a comeback. Lying on your back in a warm, soundproof tank of salt-saturated water has been shown to decrease anxiety, and regular sessions reduce cortisol levels, according to research at the Medical College of Ohio. This lower level of physiological arousal "has beneficial effects for any condition that's worsened by stress," says Tamara Russell, PhD, director of the Mindfulness Centre of Excellence in London and author of *Mindfulness in Motion*. That's partly why floating has been connected to reduced head, back, neck and joint pain. Find a tank center near you at [flotationlocations.com](http://flotationlocations.com). —HANNAH WALLACE

## FITBIT FOR FIDO

**YOU** can help keep your pup's weight in check by boosting his exercise, and a handful of new wearable devices make monitoring his fitness level a cinch. FitBark's cute bone-shaped monitor (\$100; [fitbark.com](http://fitbark.com)), worn around the collar, tracks your dog's activity (and inactivity) and uploads the info to your smartphone. If by 4 PM your dog has mostly lain on the floor, you'll get a friendly alert: "Your dog only reached 30 percent of his daily goal—maybe it's time for a walk." The Whistle GPS Pet Tracker (\$80; [whistle.com](http://whistle.com)) is similar but adds GPS tracking that lets you know if your pet leaves a preprogrammed safe zone; it also provides his exact location. —H.W.

7,000

## THE NUMBER OF BACTERIAL SPECIES

found in the dust of American homes, according to a study of 1,200 households. An additional 2,000 forms of fungi were also spotted. Almost all these microbes are harmless.