

Catching up with...

# SUZANNE SHAW

The singer and West End star explains how going sober changed her life, and reveals all about her new wellbeing community

### What inspired your health transformation?

'I was always hoping I would wake up one day and not have depression – that I'd get better with the help of external things that would make me happy. I've had such a wonderful career and I have wonderful children and a fantastic partner but, ultimately, no job, holiday or amount of money could fix my anxiety and depression. I realised I had to put the work in myself. And that started with not drinking alcohol.'

### How did you find going sober?

'It's been a journey, but a wonderful one. I've been sober for almost two years and it's changed my life. I was never an alcoholic, but the self-sabotage and dark thoughts were getting too much. And I genuinely worried that if I carried on in that way, there could be a time when I did something to myself. I realised I was the only person responsible for my happiness.'

### What other changes did you experience?

'Drinking often led me to unhealthy eating, and I also had digestion issues with animal products. Shortly before going sober, I followed a plant-based diet for two weeks, felt amazing and never looked back. Being sober also created much more space in my life to think about what I was putting in my body,



*'I followed a plant-based diet and never looked back'*

and I even did a nutrition course which really opened my eyes. It's not until I started food journalling and really educating myself that I realised how unhealthy the world we live in is.'

### Tell us about The Happy Health Club?

'I created The Happy Health Club to help people with their wellbeing in an easy, accessible, enjoyable way. It's a free Facebook community that runs 28-day challenges, and the ethos is "eat plants, try sober, get fit". We share lots of recipes, how-to videos and advice from in-house doctors and PTs, and I bring in a different wellness expert each week to talk about anything from gut health to childhood trauma. We also provide courses to learn about our three pillars of sobriety, plant-based eating and fitness. I've had wonderful messages from people saying it's changed their lives.'

### How important is fitness in your life?

'I used to only work out to get fit for jobs or if I'd indulged, but the pandemic took away my day job and my baseline of fitness. Initially, I started running for my mental health but it's a consistent part of my lifestyle now, just like plant-based eating. I recently ran a 19-hour challenge for The Samaritans and it was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I did it so that when people asked me "why did you run for 19 hours?", I could say "well, did you know that 19 people in the UK take their lives every day?". Suicide is a tough subject to talk about. I wanted to let people know we all have intrusive thoughts at some stage of our lives, but you are not alone.'

**The Happy Health Club is an online wellness community to help members with nutrition, fitness and sobriety. The next 28-day challenge starts on January 3, 2022. Visit [thehappyhealthclub.com](http://thehappyhealthclub.com) to sign up.**

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