Hollywood’s addiction to franchises reaching new extremes

Escape Room challenges teams to work together, search for clues, crack codes and solve puzzles to escape a locked room within 45 minutes. Several items need to be unlocked and figuring out the code is part of the fun in this new game.

CRACK CODES, SOLVE PUZZLES TO ESCAPE

CAMPUS
• Bhavan’s Public School celebrates Annual Day

COMMUNITY
• Month-long campaign ‘Together for Virtue’ ends

FOOD
• To the rescue: The freezer and home-cooked beans

FITNESS
• If food’s your reward, you can’t win

TECHNOLOGY
• How to make your PC more secure?

LEARN ARABIC
• Learn commonly used Arabic words and their meanings
You’re Indiana Jones in the map room, positioning the Staff of Ra to reveal the secret location you’ve been searching for. You’re Harry Potter in the TriWizard Tournament, and you must solve the sphinx’s riddle in order to pass. You’re the star of “National Treasure,” and you’ve just found the red and blue glasses in the hidden brick, and now there’s another message on the back of the Declaration of Independence.

You’re you, trapped in a DC basement, frantically searching for clues to root out the spy defector and the authorities are coming and time is running out and —

“Do you want a hint?”

The voice comes through the loudspeaker in the corner of the room, and you’re shaken from the adrenaline-fueled mission that had you feeling like an adventure movie hero. Then you remember you’re in a setup. That you paid for.

The name of the game is “Escape Room” — a literal description for a complicated endeavor. A team of people sign up to be locked in a room, and they must find clues and solve puzzles to complete a given mission and find the key to escape.

After taking off in Asia, Western Europe and the West Coast, these attractions are popping up across the country. In the DC area, one opened in College Park, Maryland, in May, another that opened in Washington in October is already expanding, and a branch of a New York City room escape is set to open in DC’s Chinatown neighborhood in late February.

It could be just a fad. Or, in a world where screens are the constant source of entertainment, it could be just the kind of shake-up people want.

The escape room adventure at Escape Room Live DC starts with a descent into what was once a basement adventure. The vibe is meant to be fun and cozy — as cozy as being locked in a room can be.

Here’s how it works: A group ranging from two to 12 people is briefed with the story line by the “gamemaster.” They are spies breaking into the office of one of their co-workers, who is believed to be leaking information to the enemy. Tomorrow, this evil spy is going to drop off information in a secret location in the city. The mission is to find out where. But as they enter the room, they will trip the security system. The door locks behind them and they have 45 minutes to find the key before being “caught.”
The timer is set, the rules (no breaking stuff, there are no clues inside the electrical outlets, etc.) are recited, the door is shut, and then, it’s go time.

The room (more chevron here) appears at first glance like a well-decorated office. Then, the group tears it apart, looking for clues. There are locked suitcases — where to find the combination? Books — will one contain a hidden message? Broken clocks — should you pay attention to the time it’s stopped on?

All the while, the clock is ticking.

“It’s hilarious to see how different groups handle the pressure,” said Ginger Flesher, the owner of Escape Room Live DC. She’s a retired math teacher and her husband, Darren Sonnier, works in intelligence. They first tried an escape room while visiting Prague this past summer. By the end of their trip, they had completed five escape rooms all around Europe, and Flesher was determined to open one in DC.

She and her employees have watched (via video monitor) hundreds of people tackle the game. On the weekends, her customers are typically co-workers using the room as an exercise in team building. On the weekends, the groups are mostly friends, families or dates. She’s had many birthday parties, a few bachelor and bachelorette parties, and is hoping to attract couples who want to use the room for baby gender reveal parties. Congrats, you escaped! Also, it’s a boy!

In the 12 weeks this escape room has been open, its reviews on Yelp and TripAdvisor have been overwhelmingly positive. That’s seemingly true for escape rooms in every city, regardless of who runs them. Frank Lantz, director of the NYU Game Center, points to similar computer-based escape games as the starting point for physical escape rooms. He believes their success is unsurprising, given current trends in gaming. And Sigmund Freud, obviously.

“Freud has the concept of the repressed,” Lantz said. “If you try to repress something that is a powerful force, it comes back in a stronger form.”

In this case, the powerful force is the human desire to play games that are both social and physical. Sports have always been this way, for example. “For a long time, video and computer games had become very solitary,” Lantz said. “But now, we’re seeing the emergence of the social and the physical.” Video games like “Call of Duty,” allowed players to talk to other gamers playing at the same time. Then came the incredibly popular Wii, which was entirely about being physical while gaming. Today, video games are moving toward headsets that completely immerse the user in another world. Even games that are solitary, like “Minecraft,” are commonly made social. Gamers live-stream themselves playing on websites like Twitch.tv and post completed games on YouTube for others to watch and comment on.

Escape rooms tap into that desire for social and physical while also providing intellectual stimulation and a bit of a thrill. Some rooms try to make the experience slightly scary, to add to the rush of the time crunch.

“When we’re just the right level of aroused — which can happen from fear, stress, anxiety, fun, etcetera — we perform better,” said sociologist Margee Kerr, who is known for her work studying the effect of fear on the brain. “This is the well-tested finding that a little stress is good when doing something like taking a test or completing a challenge.”

Escape Room Live DC is set up so about 30 percent of participants can escape in time without help from the gamemaster. But most end up with the minutes ticking down, wigs and trench coats and puzzles scattered all over the floor, stuck on some clue that they can’t figure out or don’t know they got wrong — the perfect time, most find, to decide on an answer for “do you want a hint?”
Bhavan’s celebrates Annual Day

Bhavan’s Public School celebrated its 5th Annual Day at Al Arabi Volleyball indoor stadium recently. The KG programme was inaugurated by Girish Kumar K R, President, ICC, and Raj Kumar Singh, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India inaugurated the primary and secondary programme.

The Guests of Honour were Eiman Al Marzouqi, Ambassador to Qatari-UK Graduates Forum, Col Abdullah Khalifa Al Muftah, Director of Public Relations, MOI, Hamad Mohammed Al Ghali, Director, Private Schools, SEC, and Lt Al Hasan Al Muhannadi, Dept of Community Police.

The presidential address was delivered by J K Menon, Acting Chairman, BHPS. The school calendar for 2015-16, magazine Mirror and the curriculum plan 2015-16 were released by the dignitaries.

Prizes were distributed to the winners of sports and Talent day events followed by various cultural programmes by the students.

V L Balasubramaniam, Principal, Prabhavathy, Vice Principal, Philip N P, Head Master, Abdul Kader, Vice-Chairman, P N Baburajan, President, Manikantan, Vice-President, Anil Kumar, General Secretary, Anjana Menon, Director, Administration and all other Board members of Bhavan’s Public School were also present.

PEC students put theories to test in science expo

Pakistan Education Centre organised a science and technology fair recently. The expo provided the young scientists a platform to let their imagination fly and innovate something new by having a sneak peek into the research field.

The students of grades III to XII participated in the expo and showcased their models and projects at the exhibition.

The young geniuses displayed their scientific knowledge, culture and innovation in the field of living sciences, chemistry, physics, biology and information technology.

Dr Adnan Fahad Rashed Al Ramzani Al Naimi, Inventor and Invention International judge, was the Chief Guest of the event.

He interacted with the students who explained the various scientific projects that were on display to the visiting guests. The guest lauded the efforts of the young scholars, their teachers and the school management for putting up such a creative and innovative display of aptitude and innovation.

Nargis Raza Otho, the school Principal also applauded the enthusiasm and effervescence of the students, their teachers and the parents for making the fair a success.

Students of Girls Wing demonstrating electric guitar to the chief guest.
COMMUNITY

HOPE Qatar celebrates 9th Annual Day

HOPE Qatar Center for special needs recently celebrated its ninth annual day at Qatar Foundation Education City.

The event was attended by parents, well wishers and guests who witnessed a visual treat by children who demonstrated agility and confidence on stage amidst their challenges and differential abilities.

Theme ‘All is well’, the program saw children from Junior, Intermediate, and Senior divisions of the center don colorful costumes and take the stage to perform various dances and different skits.

Jumma Ismail Al Boeinan, former Director of Administration at Qatar Petroleum, who is also the Patron of HOPE Qatar and the event’s chief guest, applauded the commitment and dedication of the centre’s teachers.

Dr Ciby Mathew, Director of HOPE Qatar, highlighted the various achievements of the students during the academic year.

While one of its senior students has been given a job offer by a leading Qatar-based bank, other senior students have fared well in the National Open University examinations for 10th graders in India. Many of HOPE’s students have also been successfully re-integrated into mainstream education in various schools here.

Talking about the origin of the centre, Dr Rajeev Thomas, the founder and advisory board member of HOPE Qatar, said the centre started as a dream of two parents to find meaningful educational opportunity for their son with special needs. Owing to the lack of adequate facilities in Qatar at that time, they had to start one themselves.

HOPE Qatar which began as a part time activity with the support of the Indian Embassy and the Indian Cultural Center, has grown into a full fledged training center, providing high quality and personalised attention to children with special needs here.

BPS student honoured by KPPA

A M Salman, a seventh grade student of Birla Public School (BPS), who is a campaigner of ‘Unicef 1 in 11’ a film with Lionel Messi and Serena Williams, was honoured by Kodiyathur Pain and Palliative Association (KPPA), Qatar Chapter.

Salman, now training with Al Ahli Football Club Qatar, has a three-year experience in Aspire Academy. Salman was selected for the film from contestants from many schools in Qatar.

E K Mayin Master, Patron, KPPA Qatar presented a memento to A M Salman for his participation in the Unicef short film.

The Peninsula
Month-long campaign ‘Together for Virtue’ ends

Inaugurating the closing ceremony of the month-long campaign, ‘Together for Virtue’, organised by Women’s wing of Indian Islamic Association Qatar (IIAQ), Badarinya Muhammad Yakbooth, DR unit supervisor, women’s wing of Qatar charity, emphasised the importance of social service in Islam. “Islam advocates social service as a noble task for both Men and Women,” she said.

Safiya Sharafiya, women’s council member of Jamaathe Islami Kerala, delivered the keynote speech at the function held at the Qatar charity tent in Azizia. She called for joint efforts towards the preservation of eroding values of society, “Family, the state machineries, local social bodies, teachers, and all social organisations are bound to come together to prevent the increasing trends of immorality grasping our society,” she said.

IIAQ President K C Abdul Latheef, Najat Muhammad Turab and Sheikha Safa, members of the visaor, women’s wing of Qatar charity, IIAQ President K C Abdul Latheef, Najat Muhammad Turab and Sheikha Safa, members of the visaor, women’s wing of Qatar charity, Badarinya Muhammad Yakbooth, DR unit supervisor, women’s wing of Qatar charity, Badarinya Muhammad Yakbooth, DR unit supervisor, women’s wing of Qatar charity, emphasised the importance of social service in Islam. “Islam advocates social service as a noble task for both Men and Women,” she said.

Qatar customers will get chance to buy world’s longest handmade chain

Joyalukkas has helped manufacture the world's longest handmade gold chain which was officially certified by the Guinness Book of World Records. The 5.5km is completely handmade and is an initiative that celebrates the 20th edition of DSF. The historic memento will now be available to purchase in all Joyalukkas showrooms.

“This is our tribute to the Dubai Shopping Festival and the dynamic spirit of Dubai. There are very limited pieces of this inspiring memento available to purchase, hence would urge UAE residents and tourists to not miss the opportunity to purchase it,” said Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group.

Customers purchasing the ‘Dubai Celebration Chain’ at Joyalukkas will also get the opportunity to win 100kg gold. Every variant of the ‘Dubai Celebration Chain’ will entitle buyers to raffle coupons to win the prize. The 100kg prize can be won by shoppers as; daily prize of 1kg gold (one winner), weekly prize of 5kg gold (one winner) and a mega draw wherein 4 winners will take away a total of 40kg (10kg for 1 winner, 10kg for 1 winner and 5kg for 2 winners).

Sony launches lens-style camera

Fifty One East and Sony Middle East and Africa recently announced the launch of the latest lens-style cameras to provide customers the flexibility of sharing images on the smartphone with the imaging power and creative options of a premium camera.

The new lens-style cameras are currently available at all Fifty One East outlets located in Lagoona Mall, Al Maha Center and City Center Doha in addition to Virgin Megastore at Villagio and Landmark malls.

The lens-cameras can be connected to the smartphone via Wi-Fi. One-touch connection performs by near field communication (NFC) for all lens-style cameras and improvements to the PlayMemories Mobile app.

The latest release of Sony’s free PlayMemories Mobile app version 5.0 for Android and iOS smartphones enables easy control of each lens-style camera. A new user interface simplifies the photography experience and makes it easier to operate with one hand. Framing shots on the phone is more intuitive thanks to on-screen guidelines that are now featured in the app. GPS adds location information to images that’s transferred to the smartphone while shooting. The camera can share pictures from the touchscreen and also automatically to the phone.
Sometimes, more than anything, you need something easy. Easy to make, easy to eat. Maybe it’s because you’re exhausted from holiday travelling, or maybe it’s because you’ve just gotten over a little bout of sickness that has left you a little woozy. Maybe, as was my case a couple of weeks ago, it’s both.

Was I ever glad to have such an overstuffed (if not exactly well-organized) pantry, fridge and freezer. It meant that when I was tired of road food, then even more tired of eating takeout on the couch as I recovered, and ready to (gently) get back into the kitchen, I had some options that didn’t require a trip to the store or an order from a grocery delivery service.

At the top of my list of thank-goodness-I-have-this ingredients are beans, cooked from dried, and refrigerated or frozen in their cooking liquid. I can’t stress enough to the unconverted how much different these taste from the canned variety, and how happy you’ll be to have them if you’ve planned a little in advance and cooked up a pot. I do it every week or two, and I never regret it.

As it turns out, I had the chance to prove the difference to myself, all over again. A helpful colleague made for me a batch of a potato-bean stew, recipe courtesy of the inimitable Mollie Katzen, using canned (and rinsed and drained) pinto beans. Perfectly satisfying. Then a few days later, I made the same thing, using a few cups of beans I thawed from the freezer, plus the elixir that is almost as good as the beans themselves: the flavour-charged liquid they had cooked in.

This time, it was sublime. And thanks to that overstuffed freezer, it was every bit as easy.

**Potato-Bean Stew**

6 servings (makes about 12 cups)

Serve with grated fresh, mild white cheese, toasted pepitas (pumpkin seeds), crema and/or minced cilantro.

**Make Ahead:** The stew can be refrigerated for up to 5 days.

Adapted from Mollie Katzen’s *The Heart of the Plate: Vegetarian Recipes for a New Generation* (Rux Martin/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013).

**Ingredients**

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped (1 1/2 to 2 cups)
- 2 teaspoons chili powder, preferably chipotle chili powder, plus more as needed
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 large sweet red bell pepper, seeded and cut into small dice
- 1 to 2 medium poblano chili peppers and/or Anaheim chili peppers, seeded and cut into small dice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, or more as needed
- 1 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, scrubbed well and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 cup bean-cooking liquid or water, plus more as needed
- 3 cups drained home-cooked pinto beans or 30 ounces canned, no-salt-added pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 13 ounces canned, no-salt-added diced tomatoes and their juices
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Juice from 1/2 to 1 lime

**Method:**

Heat a Dutch oven or soup pot over medium heat for about 1 minute, then add the oil and swirl to coat. Add the onion, chili powder and cumin; cook for 5 minutes, stirring often.

Add the bell pepper, chili peppers (to taste), garlic and 1 teaspoon of the salt; cook for 5 minutes, stirring a few times. Stir in the potatoes and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt. Reduce the heat to low; cover and cook for 5 minutes, stirring once or twice. Add the bean cooking liquid or water, cover and cook for 15 to 30 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender but not mushy. Add more cooking liquid or water if the mixture seems dry.

Gently stir in the beans, along with the tomatoes and their juices. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low; cook, uncovered, for 5 minutes.

Taste and season generously with the black pepper, plus additional salt and/or chili powder, and the lime juice (to taste). Serve hot.

**Nutrition** | Per serving: 300 calories, 11 g protein, 50 g carbohydrates, 8 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 780 mg sodium, 11 g dietary fiber, 6 g sugar
Adelle's new album delayed

Singer Adele's highly anticipated follow-up album to "21" that was
expected to arrive by the end of 2013 has reportedly been delayed until
February 2014. "The album will be released when it's ready," the music
superstar has reportedly said. "I will not be rushed into releasing it.
Adele has reportedly been working on the album for the past year and
a half, with producers like Paul Epworth and Ryan Tedder helping
shape the record. The album is expected to feature a mix of pop,
R&B, and soul-influenced tracks. Adele is known for her powerful
vocals and emotional lyrics, and fans are eagerly anticipating her next
musical offering.

I am very lucky: Reese Witherspoon

Actress Reese Witherspoon is having a "wonderful year" and says she's
"having so much fun" after being nominated for her second Oscar.
"It's purely about the numbers. You have time for everything if you
plan carefully," said Mark Harris, author of "Asian Film Directing.
The result, say many observers, is a slate of movies that endlessly
replay what people already know. There is no dip in the superhero
genre. It's 'Man of Steel' and 'The Amazing Spider-Man 2,'" said
Phil Contrino, an analyst at BoxOffice. "While there is no sure thing in
Hollywood that it can revive box office addiction has reached new
extremes. The strategy has paid off for Disney, whose stock has increased
to $13bn. In 2013, the movie director and film reporter for The
Hollywood Reporter, produced a film of his because I can't carry it. I am not
qualified enough to do his films."

Roman Beckham boosts Burberry sales?

Actor Roman Beckham, son of pop icon David Beckham and
supermodel Victoria, has reportedly signed a contract with Burberry's
controversial luxury brand. He has not yet starred in a Burberry
campaign but he is expected to become a "global brand ambassador,"
 translating into huge sponsorship deals for the brand. Burberry's sales
have been rising steadily, with annual revenue growing at a rate of 40%
over the last three years. The deal is a great success for Burberry's
American CEO, Angela Ahrendts, who is said to be "very
to be cast as a 60-year-old man when I was in my 20s in "Shamitabh,"
Anupam Kher is confident that Sooraj Barjatya's Prem
Ratan..." will be monumental: Kher

Former veteran actor Anupam Kher is confident that director’s
Prem Ratan Dhan Payo (2014) will turn out to be as big as the
box office hit from 1983 Hema Malini starer Ramayan. "I am not
qualified enough to do his films."

Hollywood's addiction to franchises reaching new extremes

Hollywood, once known for its independent, artistic films, has
been increasingly relying on the proven appeal of brands and
franchises. In 2013, the most comprehensive long-term study
defines itself by who can make something and in 10 years maybe it
something and in 10 years maybe it's a lot of money. I am not

Adventurous Priyanka gets short haircut

Actress Priyanka Chopra, who recently cut off her long black hair,
revealed her new look on social media last week. The star is said to
be in New York for the NBC TV show "This Is Us," and fans are
wondering if her new hairstyle is for a role in the show or simply a
c change of pace. Priyanka has previously shown off her
long, flowing locks, but her new short cut is a drastic change for
the actress. It remains to be seen whether this new look will
be permanent or just a temporary change for a role.

I’ll not do Big B’s films, says Dhanush

Director Shankar launched his new film, “Prem Ratan Dhan Payo,”
which stars Dhanush and Sonam Kapoor. Dhanush, who will
star with Becham in "Shamitabh," said: "I am not qualified enough to do
his films."

Elba to join 'Men in Black'

British actor Idris Elba is set to star alongside the Snipes and
Smiths in Men in Black: International. "Men in Black is a franchise
that audiences won't get tired of and it's a huge bet by Disney to
revive box office addiction has reached new extremes. The strategy has paid off for
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Catalonia’s push for independence

Catalonian leaders are hoping that a regional election this year will keep alive a fading independence drive and force the hand of Spain’s central government.

GDP PER CAPITA (PPS)*
2013, EU-28 = 100

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UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Percent


* PPS = Purchasing Power Standards

Sources: Statistical Institute of Catalonia; Instituto Nacional de Estadistica; Eurostat; Generalitat de Catalunya; Reuters.
If you’ve ever exercised to lose weight, there’s a good chance the following thought has crossed your mind: “I worked out so hard, I deserve a treat!” It’s also pretty likely that you indulged post-workout in some food you’d deemed forbidden — or consumed more than usual — and in so doing ate back all the calories you burned, and then some.

The food-as-reward dynamic that hinders so many people’s weight-loss efforts was tested by Brian Wansink, director of Cornell University’s Food and Brand Lab and author of Slim by Design. He had two groups of people take a two-kilometre walk around a lake. One group was told the walk was exercise; for the other group it was a “scenic walk.” Those who “exercised” ate 35 percent more chocolate pudding afterward than those who went on a “scenic walk.”

The study points to a reason why many people who exercise to lose weight fail to do so: They overcompensate with calories post-workout. It’s also part of a flourishing body of diet research that probes beyond what and how much we eat and focuses on why we eat.

Researchers like Wansink have spent decades examining the environmental, psychological and emotional triggers that shape eating habits. But now, as mindful approaches are being used to tackle stress, diabetes, addiction recovery and more, weight-management plans that focus on the “why” behind consumption seem to be more popular than ever.

A dizzying barrage of magic-bullet diets has left people confused about gluten, carbs and calories, and even farther from their feel-great weights. “Some of it has to do with the frustration and the disappointment people feel after changing the content of what they eat — say, cutting out fat, sugar or flour — and finding that it doesn’t make a difference,” said Susan Albers, a psychologist at the Cleveland Clinic and author of Eat Q: Unlock the Weight-Loss Power of Emotional Intelligence.

There is a wide variety of mindful-eating approaches. But at their core, many of them urge people to become more aware of the frustration and the disappointment people feel after changing the content of what they eat — say, cutting out fat, sugar or flour — and finding that it doesn’t make a difference. Researchers are using advanced 3D facial imaging techniques to detect autism early.

Using advanced 3D facial imaging techniques, researchers at University of Missouri have identified facial measurements in children with autism that may lead to a screening tool for young children and provide clues to its genetic causes.

“We wanted to detect the specific facial traits of the face of a child with autism. Doing so might help to define the biological differences between children with autism and potentially enable early screening for the disorder,” explained Ye Duan, associate professor of computer science.

Duan and professor Judith Miles used a system of cameras to photograph and generate 3D images of children’s faces.

The children selected were between 8 and 12 years old. One group of children had been diagnosed with autism while the other group consisted of typically developing children.

Researchers photographed the faces of children using 3D imaging which allowed scientists to measure distances along the curvature of the face rather than in a straight line as had been done in previous tests.

The analysis revealed three distinct subgroups of children with autism who had similar measurement patterns in their facial features.

“Using 3D images and statistical analysis, we created a ‘fine-tuned map’ of children’s faces and compared these measurements to the various symptoms they exhibit,” Miles added.

“Identifying genes associated with each subgroup of autism would potentially lead to the development of more effective treatments and drug therapies,” she concluded.

DNA molecules can act as a glue to hold together 3D-printed materials that could be used to grow tissues and organs in the lab, researchers report.

According to Andrew Ellington, professor of chemistry and biochemistry at The University of Texas - Austin, researchers have used DNA to assemble objects so tiny that humans cannot see them with the naked eye.

Making them into larger, visible objects is cost-prohibitive. Current methods also do not allow for much control in the types of materials that are created.

With this in mind, Ellington’s group set out to create a larger, more affordable material held together with DNA.

The researchers developed DNA-coated nanoparticles made of either polystyrene or polycrylamide material.

DNA binding adhered these inexpensive nanoparticles to each other, forming gel-like materials that they could extrude from a 3D printer. The materials were easy to see and could be manipulated without a microscope.

The DNA adhesive also allowed the researchers to control how these gels came together.

“They showed that human cells could grow in the gels, which is the first step toward the ultimate goal of using the materials as scaffolds for growing tissues,” the authors noted.

The process was described in the journal ACS Biomaterials Science & Engineering.

**By Jennifer Van Allen**

If food’s your reward, you can’t win

If you’ve ever exercised to lose weight, there’s a good chance the following thought has crossed your mind: “I worked out so hard, I deserve a treat!” It’s also pretty likely that you indulged post-workout in some food you’d deemed forbidden — or consumed more than usual — and in so doing ate back all the calories you burned, and then some.

The food-as-reward dynamic that hinders so many people’s weight-loss efforts was tested by Brian Wansink, director of Cornell University’s Food and Brand Lab and author of Slim by Design. His research showed that people who exercised to lose weight failed to do so: They overcompensated with calories post-workout. It’s also part of a flourishing body of diet research that probes beyond what and how much we eat and focuses on why we eat.

Researchers like Wansink have spent decades examining the environmental, psychological and emotional triggers that shape eating habits. But now, as mindful approaches are being used to tackle stress, diabetes, addiction recovery and more, weight-management plans that focus on the “why” behind consumption seem to be more popular than ever.

A dizzying barrage of magic-bullet diets has left people confused about gluten, carbs and calories, and even farther from their feel-great weights. “Some of it has to do with the frustration and the disappointment people feel after changing the content of what they eat — say, cutting out fat, sugar or flour — and finding that it doesn’t make a difference,” said Susan Albers, a psychologist at the Cleveland Clinic and author of Eat Q: Unlock the Weight-Loss Power of Emotional Intelligence.

There is a wide variety of mindful-eating approaches. But at their core, many of them urge people to become more aware of the frustration and the disappointment people feel after changing the content of what they eat — say, cutting out fat, sugar or flour — and finding that it doesn’t make a difference. Researchers are using advanced 3D facial imaging techniques to detect autism early.

Using advanced 3D facial imaging techniques, researchers at University of Missouri have identified facial measurements in children with autism that may lead to a screening tool for young children and provide clues to its genetic causes.

“We wanted to detect the specific facial traits of the face of a child with autism. Doing so might help to define the biological differences between children with autism and potentially enable early screening for the disorder,” explained Ye Duan, associate professor of computer science.

Duan and professor Judith Miles used a system of cameras to photograph and generate 3D images of children’s faces.

The children selected were between 8 and 12 years old. One group of children had been diagnosed with autism while the other group consisted of typically developing children.

Researchers photographed the faces of children using 3D imaging which allowed scientists to measure distances along the curvature of the face rather than in a straight line as had been done in previous tests.

The analysis revealed three distinct subgroups of children with autism who had similar measurement patterns in their facial features.

“Using 3D images and statistical analysis, we created a ‘fine-tuned map’ of children’s faces and compared these measurements to the various symptoms they exhibit,” Miles added.

“Identifying genes associated with each subgroup of autism would potentially lead to the development of more effective treatments and drug therapies,” she concluded.

**DNA ‘glue’ can help grow tissues, organs**

DNA molecules can act as a glue to hold together 3D-printed materials that could be used to grow tissues and organs in the lab, researchers report.

According to Andrew Ellington, professor of chemistry and biochemistry at The University of Texas - Austin, researchers have used DNA to assemble objects so tiny that humans cannot see them with the naked eye.

Making them into larger, visible objects is cost-prohibitive. Current methods also do not allow for much control in the types of materials that are created.

With this in mind, Ellington’s group set out to create a larger, more affordable material held together with DNA.

The researchers developed DNA-coated nanoparticles made of either polystyrene or polycrylamide material.

DNA binding adhered these inexpensive nanoparticles to each other, forming gel-like materials that they could extrude from a 3D printer. The materials were easy to see and could be manipulated without a microscope.

The DNA adhesive also allowed the researchers to control how these gels came together.

“They showed that human cells could grow in the gels, which is the first step toward the ultimate goal of using the materials as scaffolds for growing tissues,” the authors noted.

The process was described in the journal ACS Biomaterials Science & Engineering.
Making your PC completely secure from any type of virus and hacking is impossible, but Jack Schofield explains how to make Windows much more secure.

**How can I make my PC completely secure from any type of virus and hacking?**

You can’t, because of the old computer industry phenomenon known as PEBCAK, or “Problem exists between chair and keyboard.” A lot of hacks depend on “societal engineering,” which means manipulating people into handing over their passwords or other details. It can be as easy as phoning up and pretending to be from your bank or, apparently, trading passwords for bars of chocolate. Linux and Mac OS X are more secure than Windows, but PEBCAK is a problem with every operating system.

You could equally well ask, “How can I make my house completely secure?” Some simple precautions will protect you from casual theft in a nice neighbourhood but not even bars and barbed wire will stop a gang equipped with explosives to blow your doors off. So, the real problem is to decide how much security you need. This will depend on who you are and where you live.

Who? In computing, you need a higher level of security if you are an obvious target or have access to very valuable information. Obvious targets include celebrities, activists, and investigative journalists. You may also have valuable information if you work in finance, or at an important research establishment, or for some government agencies, etc.

Where? In computing, you create your own neighbourhood. If you visit sites that specialise in hacking, cracking or pirate software, then you’re at much more risk than if you only visit mainstream sites for shopping and social networking. Since that often free music or software are more likely to be dangerous than ones that offer the paid-for equivalents. Remember, if it’s free, somebody is probably making a buck somehow, even if it’s just by installing adware.

**Standard defenses**

In general, get a good anti-virus programme, which will scan your system and all your software up to date. The vast majority of Windows hacks are based on exploiting holes that Microsoft closed months or even years ago. Yes, sometimes there are “zero day” exploits for which there is no patch, but those are worth a lot of money and mainly used on high-value targets.

To keep Windows up to date, turn on auto-updates. Microsoft will install patches on or shortly after the second Tuesday of each month. However, recent versions of Windows, if patched, are no longer the main target. As a priority, you must also make sure your browser (including IE), all Adobe and Apple programs for Windows, and Oracle’s Java are up to date. Uninstall Java if you don’t really need it. Indeed, uninstall everything you don’t need: it will reduce your attack surface.

Several programs can help. I use Secunia’s Personal Software Finder, which checks for unpatched programs and helps update them. I also use SlimWare’s SlimCleaner, which checks and rates your software (it should all be Good), and lists programs that need updating. It also packs in lots of other useful tools including a cleaner, a disk analyser / defragmenter / wiper / shredder and duplicate file finder, and a Hijack log.

You should also run anti-virus software. Many people use the built-in Microsoft Security Essentials or Windows Defender. Those who need something heavier can install a free program such as Avast 2015 or AVG Free. If you require more complete security, install a paid-for suite such as Kaspersky or Bitdefender Total Security 2015. Beyond anti-virus, it’s worth running the occasional check for hidden rootkits using Kaspersky’s TDSSKiller.

**Browser protection**

The web browser is your interface to the net, and therefore most likely to be attacked. Most leading browsers are reasonably safe, if kept updated, and Google Chrome may well be the safest. Although Chrome has the highest number of vulnerabilities, they get patched quickly, and it has a “sandbox” to help insulate it from the rest of your PC. Attackers therefore need two exploits: one for the Chrome browser and one for the sandbox. If you need more security, you can run any program in its own sandbox, using Sandboxie. Gizmo’s Freeware also suggests using DropMyRights to reduce the damage that malware can do while you are surfing.

Use Qualys BrowserCheck or a similar website to check that all your browser plug-ins are up to date. Most online attacks use JavaScript, so you can increase security by turning it off. Unfortunately, a lot of websites and most web-based apps use vast gobs of JavaScript, so this may be impractical, but using NoScript (or perhaps ScriptSafe for Chrome) allows you more control over where scripts run. Either way, turn off cross-site scripting, I also use Ghostery, but that’s more for privacy and ad-blocking than security.

For high-risk users, perhaps the ultimate protection is to sandbox all your computing by using a transitory or virtual machine. The simplest way to do this is to boot a new operating system from a Live CD or USB thumb drive – typically Linux but it could be Windows – and then dump the whole thing afterwards. With Returnil SystemSafe, you can spawn a clone of your current operating environment and discard it when you’ve finished with it. Some people use “virtual PC” programs such as Oracle’s VirtualBox for the same purpose.

**Incoming threats**

Any computer that’s online will find its ports being scanned from other computers, some of which will be worms (viruses), and some of which may be human attackers. It’s therefore important to have a firewall, and the one built into Windows 7 and 8 is good enough for most users. If you want more protection, there are plenty of alternatives, and you may already have bought one as part of a security suite. If not, read Gizmo’s guide to the Best Free Firewall Protection. Your PC must have some ports open to connect to the net, but all your ports should be closed or “stealthed”. Run a firewall test at AuditMyPC or GRC (Shields UP) etc. NirSoft’s tiny CurrPorts will tell you which ports your PC is currently using, if you want to check for suspicious activity.

For very high-risk users, or corporate networks, the ultimate protection is to use a separate PC or server as a DMZ (demilitarized zone). However, your PC is probably behind a NAT router that does network address translation between the external internet and your internal network, and this protects against a lot of inbound traffic. Of course, it’s important to make sure your router is protected by a strong password, not any default it may have shipped with. Also, if it’s a wireless router, your Wi-Fi must be set up to use WPA2 (Wi-Fi Protected Access) encryption for security. The old WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy) system can be cracked in minutes.

To sum up, most ordinary Windows users should be fine with Windows as shipped, if all its defences are turned on and all software is kept up to date. If you’re at risk, you can install programs that increase the level of security. After that, the biggest risk is social engineering, even if it’s just getting you to click something you know you shouldn’t.

People who need a high level of protection may find it worth following more of the tips outlined above, but if you’re being targeted by GHQ or America’s three-letter agencies (or the Chinese or Russian equivalents), then you’ll need to take even more drastic steps.

The Guardian
LEARN ARABIC

Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partridge</td>
<td>Hağal</td>
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<td>Blackbird</td>
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<td>Crane</td>
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<td>Goldfinch</td>
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<td>Lark</td>
<td>Qoubbara</td>
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<td>Heron</td>
<td>Malik alhazeen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicks</td>
<td>Firaţ alddaţaţaţa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calf</td>
<td>Gîl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrier-pigeon</td>
<td>Hamama zaţila</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nightingale</td>
<td>Boulboul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swallow</td>
<td>Sounoonoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ç = ‘a’ in ‘agh’ when surprised

Baby Blues by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman

Hagar The Horrible by Chris Browne

Zits by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

ALL IN THE MIND
Can you find the hidden words? They may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forwards or backwards.

H T O A S T E D L O D D D I R Q Z Y Z
Q Z W B R A I S E S S E E G T F A B V
B B T R I E B M F C P P P M R T O P P
G G O V O H C E E H O A S A I L R X
O E N I S A B G E R A E O T A E L V K
P W D E L E S T S C P V F N U L T L L
F D C P M T S T H A D A L A S L T S I
R U O I B A R B E C U E E T M W A Q Q O
Y Q O C V N W T U P R C C O D D L E R
I P K E K I T E S H X V E A T D V O B
N E Y K R F R I T S K H M Y P E O L T C
G P B I H A S I O Y I J B T A L W Z A
P P V R H M L C I C L Y A W I N F P N
A A E A E K E U R R G G L L N G Y R Q O
N R X K R P A O Z V P O G E E I I V P
Q N N I S Q W A V G Z P B V T G E R E
E E I M B A K E L L I T E N O N D N N
W G F D V M W C O N D I M E N T B S E
P O E E D Z K D O Z I S S A U C E V M R

O P E N E R, C H E F, C O D D L E, C O N D I M E N T, C O O K, C U P S,
R E C I P E, R E L I S H, R O A S T, R O L L I N G P I N, S A L A D, S A L T, S A U C E,

Today in History

January 19, 1915

▲ Germany carried out the first Zeppelin air raid against Britain, attacking the eastern coastal towns of Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn. Four civilians died

1825: Ezra Daggett and his nephew Thomas Kensett received a patent for their process of storing food in tin cans

1915: French physicist Georges Claude patented the neon sign

1975: Arab gunmen attempted a grenade attack on an El Al jumbo jet and then seized three hostages at Orly Airport in Paris, injuring 20 people

2010: Prominent Hamas member Mahmoud al-Mabhouh was killed in Dubai, allegedly by Israeli agents

Picture: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS

Baby Blues                       by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman
Zits  by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman
Hagar The Horrible                                                  by Chris Browne
**How to play Hyper Sudoku:**
The Hyper Sudoku puzzle is solved by filling the numbers from 1 to 9 into each blank cell. In Hyper Sudoku, unlike Sudoku, there are 13 regions (four regions overlap with the nine standard regions). In all regions the numbers from 1 to 9 can appear only once. Otherwise, a Hyper Sudoku is solved like a normal Sudoku.

**How to play Kakuro:**
The kakuro grid, unlike in sudoku, can be of any size. It has rows and columns, and dark cells like in a crossword. And, just like in a crossword, some of the dark cells contain numbers. Some cells will contain two numbers. However, in a crossword the numbers reference clues. In a kakuro, the numbers are all you get! They denote the total of the digits in the row or column referenced by the number. Within each collection of cells - called a run - any of the numbers 1 to 9 may be used but, like sudoku, each number may only be used once.

**Easy Sudoku:**
Place a digit from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains all the digits 1 to 9.

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**Crosswords**

ACROSS
1 Knock silly
5 Some Summer Olympics year
10 "Spider-Man" girl
14 Stone, e.g.
15 "The Alchemist" novelist
16 Facial words of understanding
17 Backdrops for the final scene of Antonioni’s "L’Avventura"
18 How some legal proceedings are conducted
19 Apocryphal beast
20 #1
23 Comic ___ (typeface)
24 Seaside bird
25 Revolutionary body?
28 New York City’s ___ Galerie
30 Odds, e.g.
33 #2
36 Sleep with, in slang
37 Simpleton
38 Afflictions known technically as hordeola
40 This, to Tomás
41 Comparably sized
43 #3
45 "Not in a million years!"
47 Mode of transportación
48 Shape of a timeout signal
49 Genesis’ "man of the field"
50 Symbol of softness
52 #4
58 Waiting room distribution
59 Something that’s on the record?
60 Where Macbeth, Malcolm and Duncan are buried

DOWN
1 1965’s "I Got You Babe," e.g.
2 "No" voter
3 Brass section?
4 Solide and liquide
5 Condition of being awesome, in modern slang
6 Hillary Clinton wardrobe staples
7 Start to pop?
8 Gen. Robert ___
9 Like many works in minor keys
10 "It’s Raining Men," for one
11 The place to be
12 Abbr. on a historic building
13 ___ insist!
16 Facetious words of understanding
17 Backdrop for the final scene of Antonioni’s "L’Avventura"
18 How some legal proceedings are conducted
19 Apocryphal beast
20 #1
23 Comic ___ (typeface)
24 Seaside bird
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**Star with three planets larger than Earth discovered**

Nasa’s Kepler space telescope has discovered a star with three planets only slightly larger than Earth. The star, EPIC 201387065, is a cool red M-dwarf about half the size and mass of our own Sun. At a distance of 150 light years, the star ranks among the top 10 nearest stars known to have transiting planets.

“...a thin atmosphere made of nitrogen and oxygen has allowed life to thrive on Earth. But nature is full of surprises. Many exoplanets discovered by the Kepler mission are enveloped by thick, hydrogen-rich atmospheres that are probably incompatible with life as we know it,” said Ian Crossfield, the University of Arizona astronomer who led the study.

“Most planets we have found to date are snowballs. This system is the closest star with lukewarm transiting planets,” added University of California Berkeley graduate student Erik Petigura.

Petigura discovered the planets Jan 6 while conducting a computer analysis of the Kepler data Nasa has made available to astronomers.

“There is a very real possibility that the outermost planet is rocky like Earth, which means this planet could have the right temperature to support liquid water oceans,” he noted.

After Petigura found the planets in the Kepler light curves, the team quickly employed telescopes in Chile, Hawaii and California to characterise the star’s mass, radius, temperature and age.

The star’s proximity means it is bright enough for astronomers to study the planets’ atmospheres to determine whether they are like the Earth’s atmosphere and possibly conducive to life.

The next step will be observations with other telescopes, including the Hubble Space Telescope, to take the spectroscopic fingerprint of the molecules in the planetary atmospheres. “If these warm, nearly Earth-size planets have puffy, hydrogen-rich atmospheres, Hubble will see the telltale signal,” Petigura said.

The paper has been submitted to Astrophysical Journal and is freely available on the arXiv website.

**Zebra’s stripes function like air coolers: Study**

The distinctive monochrome fur pattern in zebras keep the animals cool under the hot African sun, shows a recent study.

Scientists from the University of California in the US compared the stripes of zebras from 16 different sites with their living conditions.

A clear link was revealed between temperature and coat pattern, with zebras from the hottest areas having the most stripes.

Earlier, it was thought the stripes’ main function is to create an optical illusion that dazzles lions.

“It was argued that the stripes act as camouflage by making the animals’ temperature, the Daily Mail reported.

“...and off heat create refreshing currents of air that regulate the animals’ temperature, the Daily Mail reported.

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