



How I Find Balance

Franco Alfieri, 45, Montreal

I'VE BEEN PLAYING GUITAR SINCE I WAS 12 YEARS OLD and it was always one of my dreams to have a nice little collection. For the longest time, I had two or three guitars, including my Fender Strat [Stratocaster], which I've had for 22 years, and one I had custom-built when I was 17 — Mauro Liberatore, who used to design and build guitars for musicians such as Howard Leese of Heart and Aldo Nova, made it for me. Finally, I decided if I could get some good deals, I would. Now, I have electrics, acoustics and a nice resonator (an acoustic guitar with a metal cone that acts as an amplifier). My friend Corey Diabo, who plays guitar for Jonas & The Massive Attraction, was kind enough to fix them up a bit.

My favourite guitar? It depends on my mood. If I play a Strat, I tend to be more bluesy; if I feel like playing a 12-string, I tend to be more like Supertramp. This collection keeps me entertained when work gets really tense. I admire anyone who makes the sacrifice to focus on art, but for me, family comes first, and music is something that's part of me.

Besides the guitar, one of my earlier passions was going for long bike rides. I hadn't ridden in 20 years when I saw an advertisement for the Ride to Conquer Cancer. Cancer runs in my family, and the event benefited a hospital we care about, so I bought a bike through Kijiji for \$130 and started going for rides. I registered and, mostly thanks to generous donors, raised close to \$3,700. It was a two-day ride, totalling 230 km, from the outskirts of Montreal to a suburb of Quebec City. I enjoyed the experience immensely and it was a great way for me to get back something I had let go for so long. — *As told to Wendy Haaf*

STRESS-BUSTING TIP OF THE MONTH

Cut down on Facebook

WANT TO BE MORE CONTENT? Lay off Facebook.

In a study from Denmark's Happiness Research Institute, 1,095 participants were divided into two groups: one stopped using the social network for one week while the other continued. Afterward, 88% of the nonFacebook group described themselves as "happy" and 84% reportedly appreciated their lives, compared with the Facebook users, at 81% and 75% respectively. What's more, Facebook abstainers had less trouble concentrating and felt they had a richer social life, but the other group did not report the same change. — *Martha Beach*



The digital walking dead

AN IPSOS SURVEY done for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons found distracted walking to be a big problem. Seventy-eight percent of those surveyed believe doing something else (such as emailing or texting) while walking is a serious issue. And, study spokesperson Alan Hilibrand says, the dangers are growing: more distracted walkers fall down stairs, trip on curbs or step into traffic. In fact, ER visits for injuries involving pedestrians on cellphones more than doubled from 2004 to 2010, according to a 2013 study in the journal *Accident, Analysis & Prevention*. — *MB*