downwards, it forces the other person to accept with their palm upwards, which gives you control of the situation.” Or, if you want to take a passive approach, Phipps suggests letting the interviewer make the first move. “This also allows you to see what sort of handshake is offered up.”

● Talk the talk

No-one likes a big mouth, but before an interview, “have in mind examples of your achievements”, says Mark Garrod, life coach for Mudfish Corporate & Life Coaching (mudfishcoaching.com). “If you’ve run a marathon, mention it – it shows you’re driven.” Garrod also advises preparing a list of questions for your interviewer. “Ask about the company ethos. This reveals you’ve done your research.”

● Dress to impress

A study carried out by *Dragons’ Den* star Peter Jones, revealed that one in five bosses has fired someone for not dressing ‘appropriately’. “Nothing works better than a smart suit,” says Dubai fashion stylist Sarah Maisey. “It’s professional and the last thing you want is an outfit that’s more of a talking point than you are.”

● Hire me hair

Curls might be back on the catwalk, but Kelly Cyndrowski, hair stylist at Salon Ink in Dubai (saloninkdubai.com), recommends a bun. “It’s elegant and always looks presentable,” she says. For something more relaxed, she suggests investing in a blow-dry. “It shows you’re well groomed, which can be interpreted as conscientiousness.”

Nail the 9–5

You’ve got your foot in the door, but now the pressure is on to prove you’re up to the task. “Staying cool, calm and confident in a new job can be hard,” says career expert Ros Toynbee (thecareercoach.co.uk), “but it’s essential that you rise to the challenge and, even if you’re shaking inside, always maintain an air of self-assurance so colleagues will trust and put their faith in you.” Deep breaths… here are her tips on how to sail through some of the most demanding scenarios.

● Your first… board meeting

“Confidence is all about the way you hold yourself,” says Toynbee. “To help you relax before your first big meeting, breathe deeply and allow any tensions in your neck, face or body to fall away.” And rather than taking the stern approach, she also recommends you smile broadly throughout the meeting. “The rest of the team are waiting to see if you’re one of them. Create a rapport by making eye contact.”

● Your first…appraisal

“Appraisals should be a positive experience, where the emphasis is on achievements,” says Toynbee. “Always show enthusiasm for your job by asking questions about career progression.” Should you come across any negative feedback, she suggests tactfully asking your line manager to elaborate. “Comments like ‘you’re lazy’ are useless and unhelpful. Ask for examples of when you’ve exhibited such behaviour. Ultimately the trick is to prepare and, where you think you haven’t met expectations, be ready to take action to address the gaps.”

● Your first… try at a pay rise

If you’re keen to ask for a pay rise, it’s worth noting that a survey by UK-based recruitment agency Office Angels showed four out of five employers were more receptive to requests for a salary increase on Wednesday afternoons, as they considered that the most humdrum part of the working week. But if the thought of going cap in hand *still* brings you out in a cold sweat, Toynbee recommends presenting a structured case as to why you deserve it. “Set it out in an email and request a follow-up meeting, as this shows persistence.” She also advises asking what it would take for you to rise a pay grade. “If the answer is no, ask what responsibilities you should take on to achieve this? Then, in six months’ time, once you’ve demonstrated these, ask again because it’s harder to say ‘no’ a second time!” ●