

Women's Fitness
GUIDE

**BUSY
GIRL'S GUIDE**

15 MINUTE
FITNESS

Slim down fast!

**Why short
workouts work**

**Easy-to-follow
8-week meal plan**

**Top foods to burn
fat and beat stress**



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Deciding to improve your lifestyle, by adopting healthier eating habits and a sustainable fitness routine, is a great choice... but healthy eating and regular exercise can sometimes feel like just another chore, can't it? In our already busy lives, we often feel we don't have time for fitness, and the thought of dieting (not to mention feeling hungry all the time) leaves us cold.

But what if we told you there was an easier way to slim down fast than slogging it out in the gym for hours on end, or going on an unsustainable crash diet? What if we told you that you simply need to find just 15 minutes in your day for a short burst of exercise, and that to slim down, there's no need to feel constantly hungry at all?

In this issue, we reveal that just 15-minutes of exercise is all it takes to see a big change in your fitness levels – and your overall health. Discover the amazing health benefits of these short bursts of exercise, on page 10, plus how to make exercise more fun, on page 22.

Of course, it's not just your fitness regime that matters – what you eat plays a huge part, so from page 24 you can check out our nutrition guide, which includes the best fat-burning and stress-busting foods, plus an eight-week nutrition plan that will leave you feeling satisfied and energised, and see you slim down fast. Enjoy!

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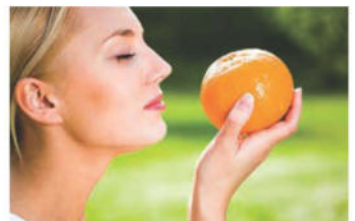
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IT STARTS WITH YOUR HEAD

- ✓ Get the right mindset for change
- ✓ The health benefits of exercise
- ✓ Why consistency is crucial for results



Busy life? That's no excuse!

If you're busy, it can be tempting to skip a workout because you have too much on your plate. But exercise can actually help you cope with pressure and solve problems. Here's how to get yourself motivated...



When you're busy and don't think you have any spare time to stop what you're doing and exercise, you may be surprised to hear this is probably the best time to take a break. When you get stressed, your ability to think clearly can be impaired, and it's easy to work yourself into a frenzy about what needs to be done and ponder how you are going to get everything finished. This is the time when you need to be able to think clearly, and find yourself some

time and space to work out a plan to complete your tasks.

Rather than taking a break that involves eating an unhealthy treat because you're stressed, or wasting time watching mindless TV, now is the perfect time to exercise. If you work from home, get out of the house and go for a run or a brisk walk. Or try a short workout – even 15 minutes of exercise is enough to give your mind a break.

Some people use exercise as a chance to switch off and zone

out. For others, it's a chance to solve problems and work something out in their mind. It's not uncommon for those who exercise to report being able to think more clearly afterwards. When you exercise, blood flow to the brain increases and your brain receives more oxygen. Better blood flow to the brain also means more nutrition for the brain,

which means you will be able to think more clearly and work more





efficiently. The hippocampus, which is the area of the brain that's critical for learning and memory, is active during exercise, so your brain function improves. Aerobic exercise can also reduce shrinkage of the hippocampus, which occurs with age. Scientists also believe that regular exercise can alter your brain, causing more blood vessels to form, leading to better brain function.

So, when you need a clear head to be able to solve your problems, stop and work out for 15 to 20 minutes. Choose something you enjoy, so that you're likely to stick to it, and remind yourself of all the health benefits.

POSITIVE APPROACH

Talk show host Trisha Goddard relied on regular running to help her maintain a positive outlook while she was having radiotherapy for breast cancer. She credits it with helping her recover – she's now cancer-free. But she also used her beloved trail runs to help her stay positive and take back control. She would even turn up for radiotherapy sessions treading mud from her trail run into the hospital ward, and would get told off by the nurses. She had no fear.

'I think they thought I was a bit mad, but then as my treatment

went on, they could see that my blood oxygenation was coming up to 100 per cent,' she recalls.

Former *Dragons' Den* star Kelly Hoppen says she starts her day with an hour of exercise, lifting weights as well as doing boxing and Pilates.

To get yourself motivated to exercise when time is tight, here are a few simple ideas you can put into practice:

front door, rather than skipping a session.

🍏 Do it early if you can

Not everyone relishes the idea of exercising early in the morning, but if your schedule for the day has the potential to be unpredictable or you think there's a chance you may have to work late, then get it done early and it's out of the way. This

'BETTER BLOOD FLOW TO THE BRAIN ALSO MEANS MORE NUTRITION FOR THE BRAIN, WHICH MEANS YOU WILL BE ABLE TO THINK MORE CLEARLY'

🍏 **Make a plan and stick to it**
Decide when you are going to exercise and put your laptop down or whatever else you're doing when the time comes. Set an alarm on your phone as a reminder.

🍏 **Prepare your kit in advance**
If your exercise routine involves going to the gym, out for a run or anything else that entails leaving the house and taking items with you, plan ahead and get your kit ready. If you're going to the gym, have your gym bag packed and ready by the front door. If you're going for a run, have your running gear laid out on the bed, along with a water bottle, MP3 player and anything else you need. Make it as easy as possible to get out of the

will also give you a feel-good glow for the rest of the day!

🍏 **If you don't feel like doing it, do it anyway!**
Follow the 15-minute rule. Tell yourself you're just going to exercise for 15 minutes. If you get into it and want to do more, there's no reason to stop, but if not, you've done what you set out to do.

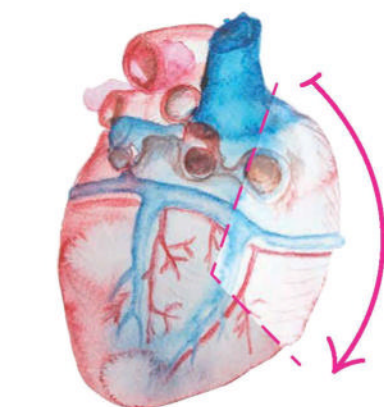
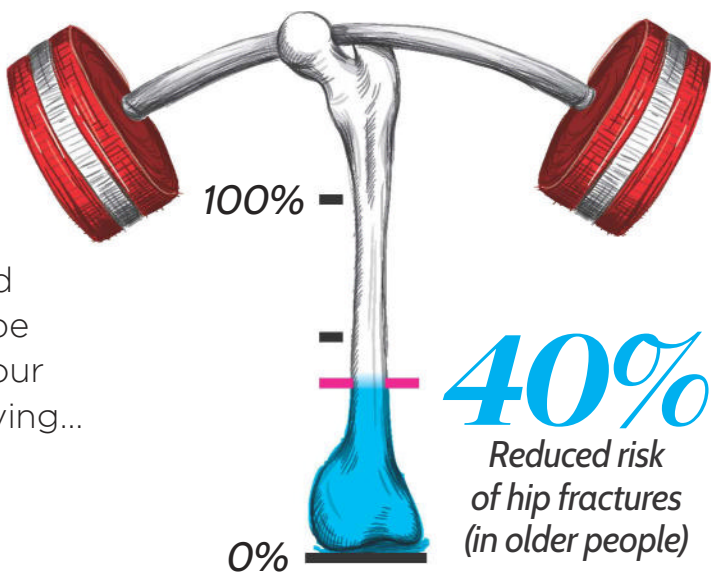
🍏 **Remind yourself how guilty you'll feel if you don't do it**
Remember how great you'll feel afterwards. It's also worth reminding yourself of your fitness or weight loss goal – you need to do this workout to bring you a step closer to your goal of getting fitter, leaner and more toned!

Run the numbers

Exercise won't just help you slim down – it will help you live for longer and reduce the risk of disease. Read on and we defy you to not be inspired to pull on your trainers and get moving...

Do you often lack motivation to exercise? If so, it's worth remembering that even a small amount of regular activity during the week can significantly improve your health, as well as your waistline. While this may sound obvious, you might be surprised how significant those benefits are when you look at statistics from the World Health Organization. So, when you need motivation to exercise, consider these benefits and you'll be more likely to want to get active.

In short, regular cardiovascular exercise, such as running, jogging, brisk walking, swimming, cycling, or any continuous movement that raises your heart rate and leaves you moderately out of breath can reduce the risk of disease...

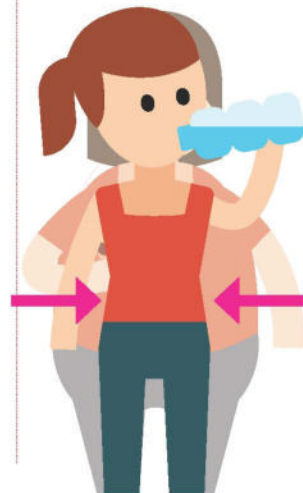


40%

Reduced risk of developing coronary heart disease

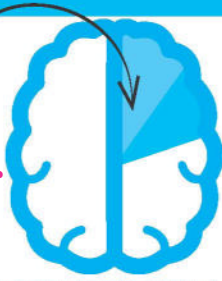
30%

Reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes



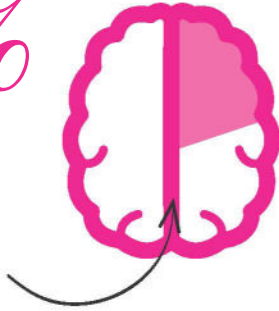
20-40%

Reduced risk of having a stroke



45%

Reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's disease



CALM YOUR MIND

Apart from the physical boost of feeling fitter, regular exercise offers numerous mental health benefits. The charity, Mind, recommends regular cardiovascular exercise, such as running, cycling, swimming or exercise classes, to help reduce symptoms of mild to moderate depression. Running outside on your own can give you time to overcome problems and deal with dilemmas in your head, or you can use it to switch off from your problems and focus on your breathing. It can be quite meditative. Outdoor exercise can also provide a fantastic mental boost. The variation of scenery, colours, sights and sounds can stimulate your senses and mental wellbeing in a way that busy urban environments often can't, so make the most of the great outdoors and go for a run on the trails, or head for a long walk in the countryside.



EXERCISE FOR BETTER SLEEP



Regular cardiovascular exercise can improve your sleep patterns. Even those who exercise in the evenings (provided it's not too strenuous and not too close to bedtime) often report being able to get to sleep more easily. A study published in the *Journal*

of Clinical Sleep Medicine took a small group of sedentary, older adults who had insomnia and prescribed aerobic exercise for 16 weeks, three times a week. By the end of the 16-week period, they were getting an extra 45 minutes of sleep per night compared with the control group in the same study, who did no exercise.

10-20%

Reduced risk of falls



INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY

Those who are active can expect to live longer. According to the World Health Organization, being sedentary is one of 10 leading causes of death and disability. But being regularly active is thought to increase your life expectancy by up to five years, while some studies claim it can help you live longer. In a study from Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US, published in *PLOS Medicine*, experts found adding low amounts of physical exercise to a daily routine resulted in a gain of 1.8 years of life expectancy after the age of 40. Just a total of 75 minutes of brisk walking a week made a difference. For those who brisk-walked for 150-299 minutes a week, the gain in life expectancy was 3.4 years.

30%

Reduced risk of breast cancer



The health benefits of exercise

Live longer, reduce your risk of disease – what's not to love about regular cardiovascular exercise? Here's how it can help keep you healthy for longer...

REDUCED RISK OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is known as the 'silent killer', as there are no symptoms, and it can increase your risk of heart attack and heart failure. It can also damage blood vessels, as well as causing kidney disease and stroke. Monitor blood pressure regularly and get it checked if you're concerned. A normal blood pressure range is 120/80 to 140/90. Regular exercise combined with a healthy diet can help to reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

REDUCED CANCER RISK

Exercise can reduce your risk of certain diseases. It's been proven that regular cardiovascular exercise,

such as running or cycling, can decrease the risk of certain cancers. Cancer Research UK says bowel cancer risk can be reduced, as exercise increases the rate at which food moves through our bowels, which reduces the amount of time the lining of the bowel is in contact with harmful chemicals.

Insulin levels in the blood are also reduced. Scientists think insulin can turn on signals that tell cells to multiply. Cancer starts when cells multiply out of control, so reducing insulin levels could stop some types of cancer from developing.

REDUCED OBESITY RISK

Exercise can help to manage your weight and therefore reduce your

risk of obesity. Being active increases your total energy expenditure, which can help you stay in energy balance or lose weight if you consume less than you've expended. Regular exercise will also decrease fat around your waist, as well as your total body fat, which will slow the development of abdominal obesity.

Those with larger waists have a higher risk of premature cardiovascular disease than those who carry more fat around hips and thighs. Abdominal obesity is linked with type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as death. In one study, women with a waist measurement higher



‘REGULAR CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE IS PROVEN TO DECREASE THE RISK OF CERTAIN CANCERS’

than 35 inches had nearly double the risk of dying from heart disease, compared with women who had waist measurements of less than 28 inches.

We can't alter genetics and some of us may naturally have larger waists than others, but regular exercise and a healthy diet will get your waistline under control.

REDUCED RISK OF DEVELOPING DEMENTIA

Regular physical exercise will reduce your dementia risk and can make you mentally sharper. According to Alzheimer's Society, several studies into the effect of aerobic exercise in middle aged or older people have shown improvements in thinking and memory.

Combined results of 11 studies have shown regular exercise can significantly reduce the risk of developing dementia by about 30 per cent and for Alzheimer's disease specifically the risk was reduced by 45 per cent (Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia).

EXERCISE INCREASES ‘GOOD’ CHOLESTEROL

We have two types of cholesterol – high density lipoprotein (HDL) and low density lipoprotein (LDL). The latter can enter blood vessel

walls and start to build up, creating fatty deposits in artery walls. In time, these narrow your blood vessels. However, HDL can pick up excess cholesterol in your blood and take it back to the liver, where it's broken down. The higher your level of HDL (or 'good') cholesterol, the less LDL ('bad') cholesterol you'll have in your blood.

BE MENTALLY SHARPER

Aerobic exercise can also benefit your performance in mental agility tests. Pulling together the results

of 29 clinical trials, Alzheimer's Society found that a month or more of regular aerobic exercise resulted in improvements in memory, attention and processing speed compared with regular non-aerobic exercise, such as stretching and toning. If you already exercise, you've probably discovered that taking a break from your work to go for a run or do a workout at the gym has helped you to clear your head and solve problems, making you more resilient and productive.

So, if you want to feel more alert and become better at solving work dilemmas and other problems, make time to lace up your trainers and go for a run, or jump on the spin bike!





Be consistent, get results!

Missing the odd workout here or there is not an excuse to give up altogether. If you can broadly stick to an exercise routine, even if you miss the odd day, you'll still reap the rewards and get fitter

When you skip a workout, it's common to start feeling de-motivated and skip another. And then another. And before you know it, you've given up your latest fitness routine and gone back to your old habits. You feel bad about yourself... and you feel like you've failed. It's a vicious circle. But here's the important thing: every single workout counts. Every session will add up in terms of calories burned and every workout you do will help keep you on track mentally. Every workout skipped will increase feelings of negativity and make you feel you aren't in control of your life. When you stick to a workout

regime, you feel empowered. You feel like you're taking control. So make a commitment to yourself to work out consistently, but keep it realistic – perhaps five short, 15-minute workouts a week. And if you do miss a workout or two, don't beat yourself up. Just get back on track. If it helps with motivation, each time you exercise, tick it off in your diary, on your phone calendar, or in a fitness notebook. Write down how you feel at the end of each workout. Do you feel proud, pleased or motivated to do the next one? Even if you feel tired during the session, you will more than likely feel motivated at the end of the session and proud of what you have accomplished.

JUST KEEP GOING

The key is to make sure you stay active. Forget about those days that didn't go to plan – when the gym closed before you got there, or you didn't have the energy to get up and go for that brisk walk.

Simply focus on being active today, tomorrow... and keep going. Here's why every workout matters:

- Regular cardiovascular exercise, including running, cycling, swimming, brisk walking, exercise classes or anything else with a continuous element, will raise your heart rate and improve the health of your heart, lungs and cardiovascular system.

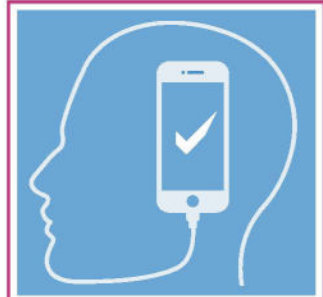
- Regular cardiovascular exercise will enable you to burn calories – a 15-minute run can burn anywhere from 150 to 200 calories, depending on your age, weight, fitness level and how hard you push yourself.

- Regular exercise, especially high-intensity intervals where you work hard for short bursts of time, will create an 'afterburn' effect that lasts way beyond the exercise session. This is known as Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption (EPOC), where your metabolic rate stays elevated for anywhere from 24 to 48 hours after your workout. EPOC, also referred to as 'oxygen debt', is the amount of oxygen needed to return your body to normal after a workout. Exercise that places greater demands on the body can increase the need for oxygen after a workout, creating the EPOC effect.


- Science backs up the effectiveness of short workouts. A study published in the *American College of Medicine's Health & Fitness Journal* showed that short bouts of regular exercise are effective for losing weight off the hips and waist, as well as helping to lower blood pressure. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends exercising for three to five times per week, for 20 to 90 minutes each time. Shorter, more frequent workouts will help you achieve results.


- Being consistent with your workout routine will give you the motivation to stick at it and move yourself closer to your goals. The more you work out, the more in control you will feel.


- Getting into a regular routine of exercising at a certain time of day will help you make exercise a regular part of your life – once it becomes part of your routine, it will be something you're less likely to skip.




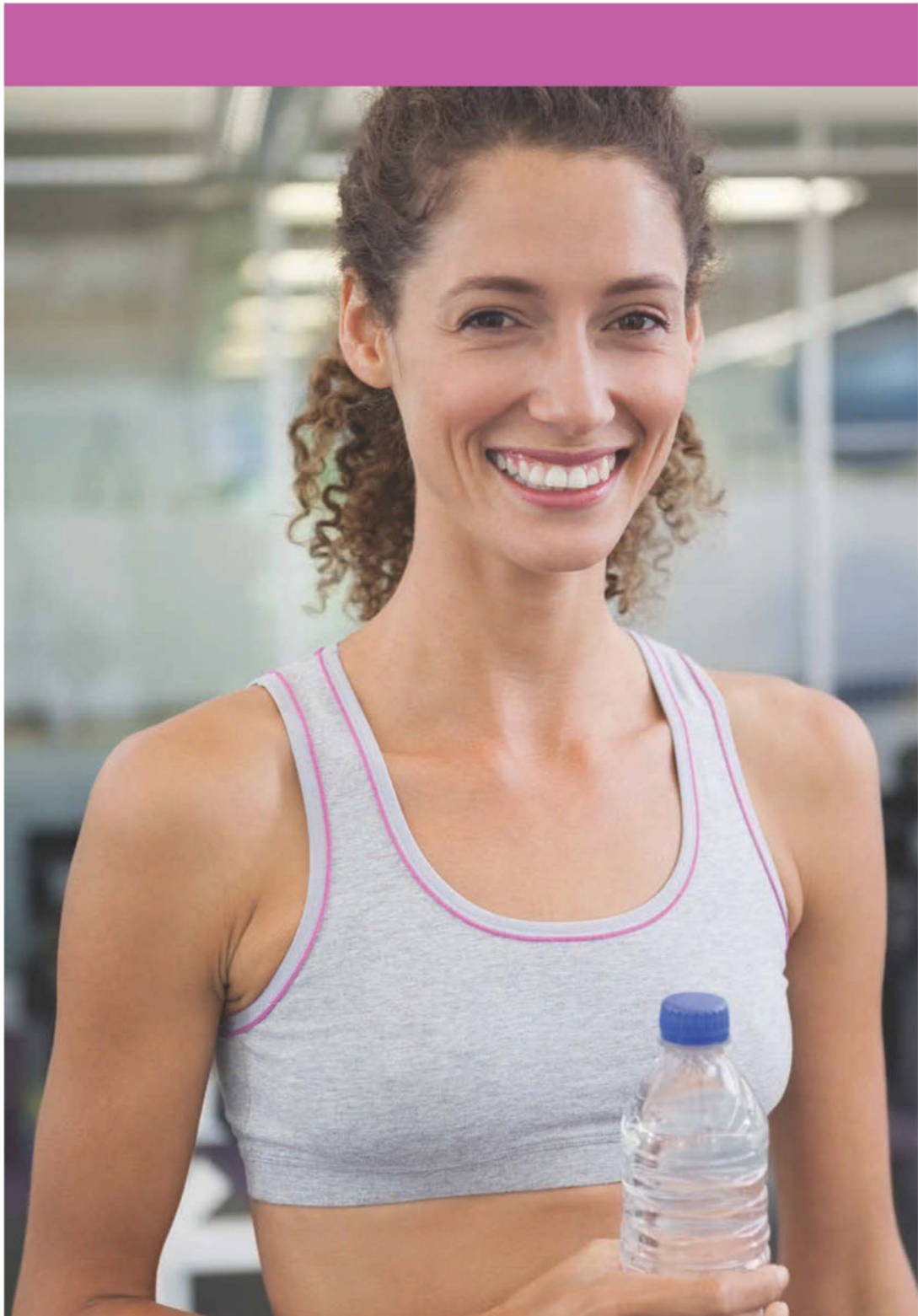
Motivational fitness apps

 **STRAVA** Upload your workouts and compete against your friends. You can upload workouts from your iPhone or sports watch, including Garmin, Suunto, Timex, Soleus and TomTom. Analyse your data and compare your fitness efforts against your friends. It may motivate you to work that little bit harder next time.

 **GYMBOSS** This has a range of pre-set intervals, so you don't need to worry about keeping an eye on your watch – it's ideal if you want to do a run/walk programme, or a HIIT session.

 **TABATA** An app that offers timed Tabata intervals – Tabata comprises eight rounds of effective, high-intensity exercises in a 20-seconds on, 10-seconds rest sequence.

 **MYFITNESS PAL** You can log your workouts and food intake, with a food diary that counts the calorie, fat and carb content of everything you eat.



SHORT, SWEET AND EFFECTIVE

- ✓ The best express fitness classes
- ✓ How often you need to exercise
- ✓ Easy ways to make working out fun





The best *fitness* *classes*

Burn fat, tone up and work up a sweat with our guide to the best exercise classes for helping you get the body shape you want

Taking part in a weekly exercise class is a great way to boost motivation and add variety into your training. But if weight loss or toning is your goal, you'll need to choose the right type of class. Fortunately, if time is tight, there are a variety of options that don't take a whole hour of your time. Many gyms now offer express workout classes, as they know many people are pressed for time. Here are some of the best workout classes you can do to burn fat and calories in the least amount of time. Just one or two classes a week will boost your results, and offer you variety and stimulation...

KETTLEBELLS

Most gyms offer kettlebell classes, which involve moves like kettlebell swings, as well as lifts and presses, that you perform continuously. Great for improving strength and tone, you'll also find your heart rate will increase and you'll soon begin to feel like you're working hard. A kettlebell swing works the whole body and will feel strenuous. Typically, a class will last for around 30 minutes, including a five-minute warm-up at the start and a few minutes of cooling down at the end. Don't worry if you're not sure about the correct exercise technique... instructors will assist those who need help.

SPIN CLASSES

A popular class and with good reason. One 45-minute session can burn around 500 calories, depending on your weight, fitness level and how hard you work. It combines sprint intervals with periods of recovery and hill climbs. Great for leg strength, it's a workout that will make you sweat! Make sure you have the seat at the right height before you start – ideally, it should be at hip height when you are standing next to the bike and your knee should be slightly bent when you pedal downwards.



MANY GYMS NOW OFFER EXPRESS WORKOUT CLASSES, AS THEY KNOW PEOPLE ARE PRESSED FOR TIME'

CIRCUIT TRAINING

These can range in duration from 30 minutes to an hour, but many gyms offer mini-circuits classes lasting from 25 to 30 minutes, including the warm-up. The instructor will set up various workstations, including bench dips, press-ups, bodyweight squats and jumping jacks, and you'll do one exercise for a set period of time before moving to the next, with little or no rest. At the end of the circuit, you'll rest for a minute, and then repeat the circuit again. You'll work the entire body and your heart rate will soar.

BE MILITARY FIT

Ideal for those who love to exercise outdoors, these classes take place in parks across the UK and offer fun and variety for those who prefer to

exercise in a group setting. Again, moves tend to be bodyweight exercises, such as press-ups, star jumps, burpees and competitive games, often interspersed with running intervals. There is also a digital offering, giving members access to more than 200 on demand classes and live sessions each week. For more information, visit bemilitaryfit.com.

BOXERCISE

These classes are fun and varied, offering a range of exercises mixed with boxing moves. You don't hit anyone else – you'll either do shadow boxing or use pads and gloves. You'll warm up for five minutes with a light jog around the studio, and then you'll do a variety of boxing moves mixed in with exercises like jumping jacks, squats

and lunges. Some gyms offer shorter express boxing classes lasting for 30 to 45 minutes.

EXPRESS ABS

If you want to get your stomach strong and toned, then a short express abs class can be a good way to go. Abs classes typically include a five-minute warm-up and then you'll be doing abdominal exercises for around 10 minutes, before cooling down. So you can be finished in as little as 15 to 20 minutes and feel good about working out and strengthening your core. Ideal for those who tend to skip abdominal workouts when exercising alone!

GRIT

Now offered in many gyms, courtesy of Les Mills, the company that brought us BodyPump, BodyAttack and BodyBalance classes, GRIT classes focus on increasing fitness and burning fat. They switch rapidly between strength work and cardiovascular training, and you're working at high intensity throughout. A typical class lasts around 30 minutes.

BODYATTACK

This works the entire body and is a high-intensity interval training class that combines cardio exercise with strength and core moves, to tone and shape your body. A typical class lasts for an hour, so you'll need a little more time on your hands, but the results will speak for themselves.





How hard, how long?

How often should you exercise and how hard should you work? You'll have to work harder during those shorter sessions...

How often do you need to exercise to get the best results?

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends exercising three to five times per week, resulting in an expenditure of between 1,000 and 4,000 calories in total (over the whole week) and working at an intensity of 57 to 94 per cent of your maximum heart rate. To work out your maximum heart rate, deduct your age from 220. It also recommends exercising for 20-90 minutes each time. If you're new to exercise, committing to short, regular workouts is a great idea – around 15 minutes, plus a five minute warm-up, such as a brisk walk, can be ideal. If you have more time on certain days, then doing more exercise will

obviously burn more calories. As well as doing regular structured exercise, it's also a great idea to aim to increase the daily activity you do when you're not working out. Try to...

- 🍏 Walk to work or to the station, rather than driving.
- 🍏 Cycle to and from work if you can – it's a great way to get your cardio exercise levels up.
- 🍏 Park further from the office if you drive to work, so you have to walk further to and from the car.
- 🍏 Get your friends and family active – try to get them to go out for a walk or go to the park and do some exercise, rather than spending time with them that involves drinking, eating or watching movies.
- 🍏 Get involved in domestic tasks – yes, vigorous housework can be classed as a workout! Cleaning

or hoovering the floor, or cleaning windows will work your muscles and get your heart rate up.

SHORT SESSIONS WORK!

When you exercise, you will not only burn calories during the session itself, but your body will also become more efficient at using fat as fuel. This is due to increased levels of oxygen delivery and oxygen extraction in the muscles.

Fitness trainer Julia Buckley, who lost 10lbs when she switched from long, time-consuming endurance runs to short, sharp sessions, recommends working very hard. But do it only for a short period of time.

'Choose intense workouts that leave you totally spent in a short period of time – definitely less than an hour,' says Julia. 'My motto is, "Go harder, not longer". When people are used to long training sessions it can take some time for them to learn to really go all-out for shorter durations, because they're so used to holding back so they can keep going. Often they'll come to me saying, "I think I'm too fit for these short sessions, I feel like I'm not training very hard". This tells me they are not pushing hard *enough*. If you look at elite sprinters, they can be wiped out by the end of just 100m.'

LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE BEHIND!

If that sounds too scary, don't worry. Julia adds: 'Please don't get me wrong, I'm not saying people have to be able to run like elite sprinters

to do this. It doesn't matter how fast or slow you are – what I'm talking about is the amount of effort you're putting in. It's about training outside of your own comfort zone. It takes a while for people with an endurance background or who are just used to long workouts to stop holding back their reserves, but with practise, they find that extra gear and start

to build more explosive fitness, which does amazing things for their bodies. A lot of people are under the impression that all exercise has the same effect on the body, so therefore it follows that 40 minutes jogging at a comfortable pace would produce better fat-loss and fitness-boosting results than 20 minutes of intense HIIT. However, this just isn't the case!



Still not convinced that short workouts work?

Scientific evidence supports the benefits of short workouts, if they are carried out frequently and with a more challenging intensity. The session should have periods where you work very hard, followed by periods of recovery. You should break a sweat and be very breathless during the harder intervals. Julia Buckley adds: 'In many ways, the first 20 minutes of any type of workout is the most beneficial, because that's where you bring your body out of a sedentary state and, if you like, kick up the engines to get energy burning, your heart pumping and blood flowing to your muscles (and brain). Make it 20 minutes of HIIT training and do it on a regular basis, and you could be dramatically improving your fitness levels and torching fat.'

10 easy ways to make exercise more fun!

If you get bored, you'll be tempted to give up. Instead, keep your workouts fun and varied, by following our top 10 tips that will make exercise seem like a breath of fresh air, instead of yet another chore...



2 PUSH YOURSELF Try something you've never done before that pushes you out of your comfort zone. It could be trying a boxercise class for the first time, or taking up an entirely new form of exercise, such as tennis or rock climbing.



3 GET HELP FROM EXPERTS Whether you're swimming, running or taking a yoga class, ask the experts to help you improve. Hire a swimming coach so you can work on your technique, or join a running club. If you're doing yoga for the first time, book a few one-to-one sessions, so you're comfortable with the technique and know the poses before you join a class. The better you are at something, the more confident you will feel and you'll be inspired when you begin to improve.



1 MIX IT UP If you do the same routine each time you train, your body will adapt, it will become easy and, most importantly, you'll become *very* bored. You will reach a point where you'll feel like you're merely going through the motions. Instead, try some different classes, sign up for something new and vary the order of the exercises you're currently doing.

4 SIGN UP FOR A CHALLENGE There are plenty of running events, obstacle races, triathlons (of various distances), swimathons and other charity events you can enter, to raise cash for a good cause and give yourself a target to get fit and train for. When you're training for an event, you'll have a great incentive to exercise – there's nothing more motivational than knowing you have to be fit to run, cycle or swim a certain distance by a certain date!



15-Minute Fitness



5 MASTER THE TOUGHEST CARDIO MACHINE

This takes some discipline, but if you are finding that the cross-trainer or the stationary bike in the gym is becoming easy, find a cardio machine that really challenges your fitness. It could mean running on the treadmill, or cranking up the resistance on the rower. The harder it is, the fitter you will become, as your body will need to adapt in order to overcome the challenge of taking on something new.

7 TRAIN FOR AN EVENT WITH SOMEONE ELSE

Whether it's your partner or a couple of friends, sign up for an event, such as a triathlon or half marathon, and train together, so that you can support and inspire each other. It's great fun to have the same goal in mind, plus you'll be more likely to stick with it.



8 CREATE A PLAYLIST

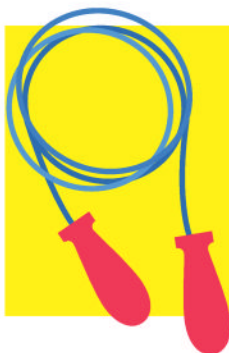
Decide how long you're going to exercise for and create a playlist of the same length. Make sure you have upbeat tunes and don't stop exercising until your playlist has finished.

6 TRY CIRCUIT TRAINING WITH A FRIEND

You don't have to join a class; you can devise your own circuit to do in the gym or at home. If you're in the gym, warm up for five to 10 minutes on a cardio machine of your choice, then do a short circuit together. You could choose bodyweight squats, lunges, push-ups, bench dips and abdominal crunches. If you're at home, warm up with a brisk walk or jog around the block first. Doing a mini-circuit together is great fun! Try 30-45 seconds on each move, or 15-20 reps, before moving on.

9 CUT THE REST BREAKS

Make your workout more dynamic by keeping rest breaks short. If you normally rest on a machine for 60 seconds, cut the rest period to 30 seconds. Or you can supersets, which means moving from one exercise to another without breaks. This could be for the same muscle group, such as leg press followed by squats, or it could be working opposing muscle groups, such as lat pull downs for your back, followed by the chest press. It's the ideal way for busy people to train!



10 MAKE IT A GAME

Remember how you used to exercise at school? You didn't think about it – you just ran after a ball or chased friends. You weren't counting calories burned or worrying whether you'd done enough. If you're bored, ditch your normal routine for a day, head to the park with a friend and throw a ball around. It doesn't have to be competitive.



EAT SMART, LOOK GREAT!

- ✓ 20 best fat-burning foods
- ✓ Eat to beat stress – and feel better
- ✓ Your complete eight-week meal plan
- ✓ Mindful eating – how it can help
- ✓ Stop comfort eating today!





20 best fat burning foods

Whether it's foods that make you feel more full and help to prevent you from overeating, or foods that actually boost your metabolism, we reveal the best choices to help you lose weight and stay slim

If only there was a magic potion to melt away those extra pounds and keep them off for good!

Unfortunately, no such thing exists and the only way to lose weight for good is through changing your diet. Fortunately, this isn't as difficult as we are often led to believe. It's simple – eat the food that grows naturally and avoid the food that doesn't. Stick to homemade meals over highly processed ready meals,

and choose the foods that fuel and nourish. There are three rules when it comes to successful weight loss, which are:

- 1** Don't go hungry
- 2** Create a calorie deficit
- 3** Eat protein – but don't ditch fat and carbohydrates

The truth is, whichever way you look at it, these three rules are non-negotiable!

Confused? Don't be! Stock up on the following foods and eat your way to a slimmer, healthier you...

QUINOA

It might look similar to cous cous, but quinoa is actually far superior. It contains almost three times the amount of (complete) protein and it's a complex carbohydrate to



boot. This means it's perfect to pad out lunchtime salads and keep tummy rumbles at bay well into the afternoon. Buy it ready cooked for speed and convenience.

AVOCADO

Poor old fat has been demonised for far too long. Not only do we need fat to burn fat, but it also keeps your brain happy and is the king of satiety. One study, published in *Nutrition Journal*, proved that those who ate half an avocado with lunch were 40 per cent less hungry for two hours afterwards. But avocado isn't just for lunch – serve it with breakfast to help quell the mid-morning biscuit cravings.

LENTILS

Chewing a tablespoon of lentils takes some time – so imagine how long they take to digest! This is due to their high fibre content, so put simply, they will keep you fuller for longer. Lentils are a high-density, low-calorie food – making them weight-loss friendly. Not to mention they're also loaded with energy-producing iron – essential for those extra gym sessions!

BROWN RICE

An easy way to lower the GI of your meal and stabilise your blood sugar level is to simply swap fluffy, white rice for its nuttier counterpart. Brown rice is what your white rice used to look like before it was stripped of its fibrous hull. It's far fleshier than white rice

when it comes to nutritional value, too, as it's rich in B vitamins and minerals, such as calcium, magnesium and potassium.

HOMEMADE SOUP

Perhaps you've heard that drinking water with your meal will make you feel fuller, quicker. However, a study from Pennsylvania State University found that consuming the same amount of water within a soup with your meal, rather than as a drink, means you'll go on to eat less of that meal and less throughout the rest of the day. What better way to use up your leftover vegetables?

EGGS

Forget what you think you know about eggs. They are not responsible for high cholesterol,

but they are nutrient powerhouses and one of the best sources of protein around, sitting up high on the Satiety Index scale.

Hard-boiled eggs are the perfect, pre-packaged snack – just keep the shell on until the last minute to avoid offending sensitive noses in the office!

LEAFY GREEN VEG

Kale, spinach, swiss chard and other dark green leafy veg are low in calories but packed with our friend, fibre. You can double (or triple) the size of your meal using leafy greens without doubling the amount of calories. You will, however, boost your body-friendly nutrient and antioxidant intake. Pack them into salads, melt them into pasta dishes, or shred and add to your stir-fries and curries.





GREEK YOGURT

Put the fruit-flavoured 'diet' yogurt down and get yourself to the Greek! It may add a few more calories to the pot initially, but it has a higher protein content and far less sugar.

According to a 2015 study published in *Food Science And Nutrition*, you should aim to consume more of your calories from protein, in order to help with hunger control, preservation of muscle mass and gain better overall

calorie-zapping powers. Try a few heaped tablespoons topped with fresh fruit as a post-workout snack, to soothe your muscles and keep that 'after cardio' appetite at bay.

CHILLI PEPPERS

Hot herbs and spices are thermogenic. This means they cause thermogenesis – a process within the body that turns calories to heat and thus allows us to utilise them more quickly. Enough said – start spicing up dinners!

PORRIDGE

Yes, we should eat fewer carbohydrates if we want to lose an inch or two – but should we cut them out altogether? Absolutely not. Carbs are essential for optimal brain function and they provide energy – something you need if you want to make that HIIT session count. Stick to complex carbohydrates, such as porridge, to give you longer-lasting energy. Try a bowl of oats before bed to balance blood sugar levels and help you sleep soundly until morning. Their high phosphorus content (which you can super boost by adding a tablespoon of mixed seeds) also aids muscle recovery.

CINNAMON

This warming, sweet, super spice helps to control blood sugar levels, which in turn can curb a sweet tooth. Shake generously over your oats or yogurt in place of honey.

CHICKPEAS

Researchers in Australia asked a group of volunteers to add a serving of chickpeas to their daily diet for 12 consecutive weeks. Results showed that the participants ate less food – particularly grains – during this chickpea-fuelled three months. Make like our friends down under and add these knobbly legumes to your stews and soups. Or blend with some good-quality olive oil, lemon juice and garlic, to whip up homemade hummus in a flash.

'CINNAMON HELPS TO CONTROL BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS, WHICH IN TURN CAN CURB A SWEET TOOTH'

DARK CHOCOLATE

Chocolate for weight loss? Not quite. But denying yourself everything you enjoy won't work long term. Damage limitation is the key to this one – opt for a couple of squares of good-quality dark chocolate in the evening and you'll not only satisfy a sweet tooth, but you'll get the added benefits of heart-friendly flavonoids and cholesterol-lowering nutrients, too.

POPCORN

Ditch the crisps for this movie favourite and not only will you consume fewer calories, but you will also boost heart health and protect against age-related disease, thanks to the polyphenols and antioxidant properties of the mighty popped corn. Keep it plain, rather than eating sugary varieties.

CHIA SEEDS

These trendy little seeds magically expand in water (and in your stomach), so they keep you satisfied for hours. It's not really magic, though – it's indigestible fibre. The nutritional profile of chia seeds shows that they are high in carbs, but because the majority of those carbs are fibre, you won't get the same insulin spike that comes with your average high-carb food. Chuck them over your muesli or into a smoothie for a gut-filling fix.

COLD, BOILED SPUDS

When cooled, white, boiled potatoes develop large amounts of

resistant starch – a substance similar to fibre – which keeps you full for an age. Slice your leftover boiled tatties and add to a frittata, for a filling brunch or hearty lunch.

XYLITOL

On the whole, artificial sweeteners should be avoided at all costs. Not only are they chemically loaded, but they also do nothing to stop sugar cravings, as they still wreak havoc on your blood sugar levels. However, xylitol – an extract from the South American stevia plant and a far more natural product than the name suggests – contains no calories at all, is 300 times sweeter than sugar, has absolutely no effect on blood sugar and even helps to whiten your teeth.

OILY FISH

Fish such as salmon, mackerel, trout and herring are renowned for their beneficial, anti-inflammatory healthy fats. They also contain iodine – a nutrient essential for a properly functioning thyroid that in turn is responsible for the optimal running of your metabolism.

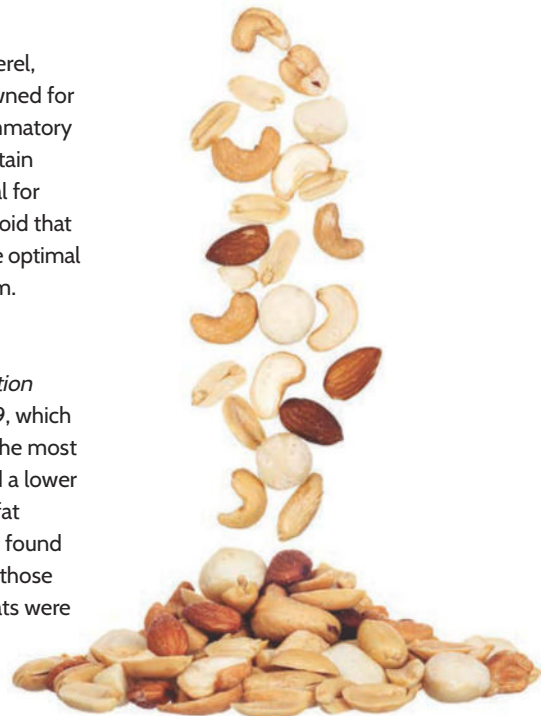
NUTS

The *British Journal of Nutrition* conducted a study in 2009, which found that those who ate the most unsaturated fatty acids had a lower body mass index and less fat around their middles. They found this was primarily because those eating more unsaturated fats were eating foods of a higher overall quality. Still

a fat-phobe? Nuts also contain vitamin E, which can actually help to prevent a fatty plaque build-up in your arteries. Not to mention they taste great, too. Try adding 25g of mixed, unsalted nuts (not including peanuts) to your daily fruit snack, or top two oatcakes with a heaped teaspoon of almond or cashew nut butter.

CRUCIFEROUS VEG

Vegetables that take some chewing, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts, are high in fibre and contain more protein than water-based salad vegetables. Try roasting them and adding to salads or, better yet, keep them raw and dip them in hummus.





Beat stress, *get leaner*

Stress can lead to weight gain and make you more likely to overeat. We reveal how to eat to beat stress

We live in an increasingly hectic world, and stress is an unwelcome fixture in many lives. Emotional stressors are something we have to deal with on a daily (or in some cases, hourly) basis, and we are frequently exposed to physical stressors, too. Alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, pollution, lack of exercise, over-exercising, poor sleep patterns and that inconvenient time of the month all add to the stress that is threatening to tip you over the edge and lead to low mood.

You might think stress is for the weak – that it's just a buzz word, something that can simply be palmed off while you power

through life. But high blood pressure, an aching back or neck, diarrhoea, dizzy spells, fatigue, weight loss or gain, insomnia, frequent colds and lack of concentration are all – among others – very real symptoms of a stressed body.

When the body is stressed, the small structures that control your hormones, known as the adrenal glands, go into overdrive, causing a rise in your metabolic rate along with a rampaging hormone storm! For the body to try to counteract this, we 'use up' nutrients faster than we can replace them. Couple this with a typical 'pick me up' diet of sugary, carbohydrate-rich, grab-and-go foods, and stress quickly gives way to anxiety, depression and illness. So,

next time you are feeling the pressures of life, try ditching the wine and ice cream, and munch on the following stress-busting foods instead...

FISH

Fish is high in vitamin B12, which is essential for combating irritability, depression, anxiety and insomnia. B12 works in synergy with folic acid, so combine your fish with folate-rich spinach for a nutrient double whammy!

PAPAYA

Add this exotic fruit to your morning smoothie. Vitamin C is used in large quantities by the adrenal glands, therefore long-term



'OUR PROTEIN STORES ARE USED UP QUICKLY DURING PERIODS OF STRESS'

stress can result in a depletion of this immune-boosting antioxidant – hello frequent sniffles! Guava, strawberries and kiwi fruit also warrant a thumbs up.

PUMPKIN SEEDS

These nutty nibbles contain L-tryptophan, an essential amino acid that causes a boost in serotonin (the body's natural anti-depressant) and melatonin (our natural sleeping aid). As it's not produced within the body, we have to consume tryptophan-rich foods. Other sources include turkey and baked potatoes.

ALMONDS

Magnesium deficiency, a common side effect of stress, can magnify its symptoms. Due to modern farming and processing, much of the food we consume is lacking in this vital mineral – therefore we have to try harder to include foods that are naturally rich in this disease-combating marvel.

Nuts, in particular almonds, are rich in magnesium and should be included in small amounts, daily. During your period, your hormones also fluctuate somewhat and this can also result in a magnesium deficiency. Help to combat this by snacking on magnesium-rich foods before your symptoms kick in.

SWISS CHARD

During periods of stress, we excrete more potassium than usual, which can lead to some pretty unpleasant side effects over time. Almost every organ, cell and tissue needs potassium in order to function optimally. It also aids smooth muscle contraction (including the muscles that control digestion, which is why stress and irritable bowels often go hand in hand). Dark leafy greens, such as swiss chard, can go some way to help rectify this.

TEA

Apparently there's a reason us highly stressed Brits stick the kettle on when things get too much. According to a study conducted by University College London, four cups of black tea per day may promote a feeling of calm and aid in de-stressing. If you find you're caffeine sensitive, stick to herbal teas, such as chamomile, or try Pukka's Night Time tea for a soothing alternative. Probably best to avoid the biscuits, though!

EGGS

Not only are eggs rich in a whole host of valuable nutrients,

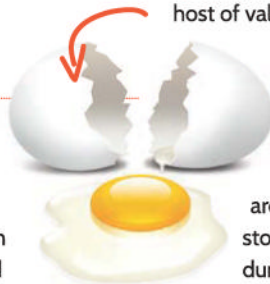
including zinc, which is an essential immune booster, but they are also one of the best sources of protein

around. Our protein stores are used up quickly during periods of stress

and, considering protein is used in almost every function right down to cellular level, it's essential that stores are replenished regularly. Keep your emotional and physical wellbeing on the straight and narrow by including 20g protein (80g turkey or tuna) with each main meal and 10g protein (100g Greek yogurt or two small boiled eggs) as part of a healthy snack twice a day. Other sources of complete protein include meat, fish, dairy products, tofu and quinoa.

HONEY

Sleep-inducing and tranquilising, honey truly is one of nature's best remedies. Try drizzling over your morning oats for breakfast or stirring into some warm milk for a blissful night's rest.



YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN







Top tip

Try matcha green tea powder, a known natural fat burner. Green tea extract is rich in catechins, which has thermogenic properties and promotes fat oxidation. Add a quarter or half a teaspoon to hot water and drink, stir into a pot of plain yogurt, or add to a smoothie.

KICK-START YOUR WEIGHT LOSS!

This week is designed to boost metabolism. The

focus is on protein-rich meals, with plenty of veg and some healthy fats. This will stop you feeling hungry, making it easier to stick to the plan. Each day throughout the eight-week plan, remember to stay hydrated, opt for low-glycaemic carbs, include good fats (such as oily fish, nuts, seeds, olives and avocado), as these stimulate metabolism, and only snack when hungry – the snacks in the plan are purely suggestions. Don't snack if you're not hungry!

week 1	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>Fat-burning green smoothie Blend together a handful of spinach leaves, ¼ cucumber, ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, 100g chunks of pineapple (fresh or frozen), 1 scoop vanilla protein powder and 250ml water.</p>	<p>Overnight porridge The night before, soak 2 tbsp oats, 15g chia seeds and 15g flaxseeds in almond milk. Cook in the microwave or on the hob in the morning. Top with 50g blueberries.</p>	<p>Morning protein shake Blend a handful of spinach leaves, 1 orange, ½ banana, 1 scoop protein powder and almond milk until creamy.</p> 
LUNCH	<p>2-egg omelette with 30g feta cheese and a large mixed salad.</p>	<p>Smoked mackerel fillet (120g) served with large handful of mixed lettuce leaves, ½ chopped cucumber, 2 chopped tomatoes and ½ chopped red pepper. Drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil and balsamic vinegar to taste.</p>	<p>Marinated salmon with salad Buy a pre-cooked marinated salmon fillet (100g). Serve with a large mixed salad and toss in ½ can cooked chickpeas.</p> 
DINNER	<p>Pan-fried sea bass (150g) with 100g each of steamed broccoli, green beans and asparagus.</p> 	<p>Chicken curry Heat 1 tsp coconut oil in a pan. Add 1 tsp Thai curry paste and ½ chopped onion, and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add 120g cubed chicken breast and 100ml chicken stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes or until cooked. Tip in 150g frozen mixed vegetables, cover and simmer for a further 5 minutes until cooked.</p>	<p>Cauliflower-fried rice Blitz ½ a small cauliflower in a food processor to form 'rice' pieces. Sauté in a little coconut oil with a chopped courgette, ½ onion, 1 garlic clove, and flavour with tamari soy sauce and a little sesame oil. Toss in 150g cooked prawns or tofu chunks to serve.</p>
SNACKS	<p>Bag of kale crisps, 2 oatcakes with 1 tsp nut butter.</p> 	<p>½ avocado, 100g natural yogurt.</p> 	<p>Small savoury muffin, 30g nuts.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

CHICKEN CURRY














INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 tsp Thai curry paste
- ½ onion, chopped
- 120g chicken breast, cubed
- 100ml chicken stock
- 150g frozen mixed vegetables

PREPARATION

Heat the coconut oil in a pan. Add the curry paste and onion, and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the chicken breast and stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the veg, cover and simmer for 5 more minutes until cooked.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Scrambled egg with smoked salmon Scramble 1 egg with 30g smoked salmon and a handful of spinach. Serve with a handful of cherry tomatoes and sliced cucumber.</p> 	<p>Chia bowl The night before, soak 2 tbsp chia seeds in 250ml almond milk. In the morning, blend with 100g fresh or frozen berries and serve with 1 tbsp Greek yogurt.</p> 	<p>Chocolate shake Blend together 1 banana, scoop of chocolate protein powder, ½ tsp maca powder (optional), 60g mixed frozen berries and almond milk.</p> 	<p>Berry fruit salad Mix together ½ cup each of blueberries and raspberries, plus 5 sliced strawberries. Top with 100g 0% fat Greek yogurt.</p> 
<p>½ carton New Covent Garden Vegetable Soup Serve with 60g low-fat cottage cheese, ½ avocado and 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>100g cottage cheese served with a small baked sweet potato and large mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Ham and feta frittata Cook 2 beaten eggs in a pan with a little coconut oil. Scatter over 2 slices chopped wafer ham and 30g crumbled feta cheese. Place under the grill to brown the top. Serve with a large green salad.</p>	<p>Easy tuna salad Chop a little gem lettuce and mix with ½ chopped cucumber, ½ chopped red pepper, 2 sticks of celery, 30g walnuts and top with 150g drained tuna (in water). Drizzle with 1 tbsp plain yogurt and a little lemon juice.</p>
<p>Spicy turkey mince Heat 1 tsp coconut oil in a pan and add 150g extra-lean turkey mince with a spoonful of Thai red chilli paste, ½ can chopped tomatoes, ½ chopped red pepper and 4 sliced mushrooms. Cook for 10 minutes. Serve with a large mixed salad or steamed green vegetables.</p> 	<p>Pesto-baked cod Spread 1 tbsp pesto onto a 125g cod fillet. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes or until cooked. Serve with 100g each of cooked courgette, asparagus and broccoli.</p> 	<p>Chicken stir-fry Heat a little oil in a pan and stir-fry 150g chopped chicken breast for 2-3 minutes. Add a bag of stir-fry vegetables, a splash of sweet chilli sauce and soy sauce, and cook until the chicken is cooked through.</p> 	<p>120g lean steak Trim off any fat, grill, and serve with 100g each of steamed broccoli and cauliflower florets, and 100g carrots.</p> 
<p>Beetroot juice, 30g trail mix.</p>	<p>1 hard-boiled egg, ½ grapefruit.</p> 	<p>100g natural yogurt with ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, celery with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 	<p>Protein shake (add ½ tsp matcha green tea powder), 2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Top tip

Make use of bags of frozen vegetables – simply blanch in a pan or steam, for a speedy addition to meals.



Keep it lean!

This week, the focus is on lean protein, to help boost metabolism and support muscle recovery after exercise. Protein is also more satiating than fat or carbohydrate, so you're less likely to overeat.



week
2

BREAKFAST

LUNCH

DINNER

SNACKS

MONDAY

Mushroom omelette

Heat a little oil in a pan and sauté 4 sliced mushrooms. Pour in 2 beaten eggs and cook until lightly golden. Serve with 30g low-fat cottage cheese.

TUESDAY

Protein porridge

Cook 3 tbsp porridge oats in water until soft. Stir in 1 scoop protein powder and 2 tbsp natural yogurt to serve.



WEDNESDAY

2 scrambled eggs with wilted spinach and chopped tomatoes.



Quick bean chilli

Place ½ chopped onion, a pinch of chilli flakes, ½ can mixed beans in chilli sauce, ½ can chopped tomatoes, ½ chopped red pepper and 1 chopped courgette in a pan, and simmer for 10 minutes until tender. Serve with green salad.

100g lean roast beef slices

served with large mixed salad. Mix a little horseradish sauce with plain yogurt and drizzle over the salad.



Fruity chicken salad Mix together 1 sliced cooked chicken breast, ½ chopped cucumber, 1 chopped tomato, 2 chopped celery stalks, 1 chopped spring onion and a handful of sliced seedless grapes. Stir together a little curry powder with 2 tbsp plain yogurt and a drizzle of lemon juice, and mix through the salad.

Grilled cod fillet with baked sweet potato and a steamed bag of frozen broccoli and cauliflower florets, or a mixed salad.



Turkey burgers with steamed green vegetables. Use 150g extra-lean turkey mince, and flavour with garlic and onion. Shape into patties and grill until cooked. Serve with steamed vegetables.

Olive-baked fish Spread 1 tbsp tapenade over 120g cod fillet. Grill for 10-15 minutes, or until cooked. Serve with steamed vegetables and 30g cooked brown rice.



Protein shake, 2 tbsp low-fat cottage cheese with celery sticks.



Handful of olives, 1 apple.



2 tbsp cottage cheese with celery sticks, protein shake.





OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

FRUITY CHICKEN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- Cooked chicken
- 1 spring onion
- ½ cucumber
- Handful grapes
- 1 tomato
- Curry powder
- 2 celery stalks
- 2 tbsp yogurt

PREPARATION

Slice the salad ingredients and grapes, and mix with the chicken. In a separate bowl, mix a little curry powder with the plain yogurt, and spoon over the salad.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Protein pancakes Mash together 1 small banana with 2 eggs and 1 scoop vanilla protein powder. Heat a little oil in a pan and drop in spoonfuls of the batter. Cook on each side until golden. Serve with a spoonful of natural yogurt.</p>	<p>Soaked muesli The night before, soak 40g muesli in almond milk in the fridge. In the morning, top with a handful of berries.</p> 	<p>Matcha protein smoothie Blend together 100g frozen mango, 1 scoop vanilla protein powder, a handful of spinach leaves, 250ml coconut water and ½ tsp matcha green tea.</p> 	<p>Spicy tofu scramble In a frying pan, sauté 100g chopped firm tofu, 2 chopped spring onions, a pinch of chilli powder, ½ chopped red pepper and a large handful of spinach leaves.</p>
<p>Seafood salad Mix 100g mixed cooked seafood with a little lemon juice and olive oil, and serve with a bag of mixed green leaves, ½ chopped red pepper, 4 cherry tomatoes and ½ chopped cucumber.</p> 	<p>½ carton New Covent Garden Lentil & Smoked Bacon Soup, plus 1 boiled egg and 2 rice cakes.</p> 	<p>Mixed bean salad Mix together ½ can mixed beans, 50g sweetcorn, 1 chopped tomato, 2 chopped celery stalks, 1 little gem lettuce and ½ chopped avocado. Drizzle with lemon juice to serve.</p> 	<p>Curry chicken salad Combine 120g chopped cooked chicken breast with 2 tbsp yogurt, 1 tsp mango chutney and 1 tsp curry powder. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 
<p>One-pot turkey chilli In a pan, add 120g lean turkey mince with ½ can mixed beans in chilli sauce and ½ can chopped tomatoes. Add a pinch of chilli powder to taste and 200g mixed frozen vegetables. Cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes, until the meat is cooked through.</p>	<p>Thai chicken kebabs Toss 150g cubed chicken breast in 1 tbsp Thai curry paste mixed with 1 tbsp coconut milk. Thread onto skewers with chunks of red pepper, red onion and button mushrooms. Grill until cooked and golden. Serve with steamed vegetables.</p>	<p>Salmon with pesto vegetable noodles Grill a salmon fillet until cooked. Use a spiraliser to make noodles from 1 carrot and 1 courgette. Sauté briefly in a pan with a little oil to soften, then toss in 1-2 tbsp prepared pesto. Serve with the salmon and a green salad.</p>	<p>Stir-fry tofu or prawns Stir-fry 150g tofu pieces or cooked prawns with a bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables, grated ginger, garlic and tamari soy sauce. Serve with 30g wholegrain rice.</p> 
<p>30g sliced ham, handful of celery sticks and 2 tbsp hummus.</p> 	<p>Small savoury muffin, 150g melon.</p> 	<p>Hard boiled egg, ½ grapefruit.</p> 	<p>Protein shake, 8 strawberries.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Top tip

Try oats! Packed with slow-release carbohydrates and plenty of soluble fibre, they will sustain your energy levels through the day, helping you avoid slumps. Keep a packet of oatcakes in your bag and munch on them if you feel hungry.

Boost fibre

Including more fibre-rich foods in your diet will help to fill you up and stabilise your blood sugar levels, which in turn will help to curb those cravings!



week 3	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>100g low-fat Greek yogurt with 1 cup fresh berries and 2 tbsp low-sugar granola.</p> 	<p>Overnight muesli The night before, soak 2 tbsp gluten-free oats in water with 1 tbsp mixed seeds and 1 tsp ground flaxseed. In the morning, stir in 1 grated apple and top with a little plain yogurt.</p>	<p>Berry protein shake Blend together 50g frozen berries, 1 banana, a handful of spinach leaves, 1 scoop protein powder and 250ml almond milk.</p> 
LUNCH	<p>Tuna pita bread Fill 1 wholewheat pita with a mixture of 100g tuna in water (drained), 1 tbsp low-fat yogurt, and sliced lettuce and tomato. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Pineapple chicken salad Mix together 120g shredded cooked chicken breast with 50g pineapple chunks, ¼ chopped avocado, spinach and watercress leaves, ½ can mixed beans and 2 chopped tomatoes.</p>	<p>Kale, chicken and quinoa salad Sprinkle 100g chopped kale with sea salt and 1 tbsp lemon juice, then massage together to wilt the kale. Add 100g shredded cooked chicken breast, 30g ready-to-eat quinoa, 1 chopped tomato, a handful of pitted olives and chopped red pepper.</p>
DINNER	<p>Meatballs with courgette noodles Form 150g extra-lean mince into balls. Lightly fry for 6-7 minutes in a pan until golden. Tip in a can of chopped tomatoes and simmer. Spiralise a courgette to form noodles and add to the pan. Accompany with salad.</p>	<p>Prawn stir-fry Pan fry a bag of stir-fry vegetables with soy sauce and a little chopped garlic. Add 120g cooked prawns to serve.</p> 	<p>2 vegetable/tofu burgers with a small baked sweet potato and a large mixed salad.</p> 
SNACKS	<p>2 oatcakes with 2 tbsp hummus, 1 hard-boiled egg.</p> 	<p>1 bag of kale crisps, protein smoothie.</p> 	<p>100g natural yogurt with handful of goji berries, 1 apple.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

LAMB STEAK WITH MINTED CUCUMBER
















INGREDIENTS

- Lean lamb steak
- Fresh mint, chopped
- ¼ cucumber, chopped
- 2 tbsp natural yogurt
- Green beans
- Broccoli
- Asparagus

PREPARATION

Grill the lamb steak for 6-7 minutes, until cooked. Mix the chopped cucumber with the natural yogurt and a handful of chopped fresh mint. Steam the green beans, broccoli and asparagus, and serve.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Chia vanilla pudding The night before, soak 3 tbsp chia seeds with 250ml almond milk and 1 tbsp vanilla extract. In the morning, stir through a little plain yogurt to serve.</p> 	<p>Creamy pear green smoothie Blend together a handful of spinach, almond milk, 1 ripe pear and ½ tsp matcha green tea powder.</p> 	<p>Protein porridge Cook 3 tbsp porridge oats in water and stir in 1 tbsp protein powder. Top with a handful of berries.</p> 	<p>2 poached eggs with sautéed mushrooms and tomatoes.</p> 
<p>Goats' cheese omelette Beat 2 eggs and cook with 30g goats' cheese. Serve with a large mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Prawn, orange and avocado salad Chop a little gem lettuce and mix with ¼ chopped cucumber, ½ chopped avocado and 4 halved cherry tomatoes. Segment an orange, reserving the juice, then mix the juice with 1 tsp olive oil. Add the orange to the salad and drizzle over the dressing.</p> 	<p>Mixed bean salad Toss 1 can mixed beans with romaine lettuce, 50g cooked sweetcorn, chopped tomato and cucumber, and serve with 1 small pitta bread.</p> 	<p>Grilled lamb steak with minted cucumber Grill a lean lamb steak for 6-7 minutes, until cooked through. Mix ¼ chopped cucumber with 2 tbsp natural yogurt and a handful of chopped fresh mint. Serve with steamed green beans, broccoli and asparagus.</p>
<p>Roasted salmon with lentils Roast 120g salmon fillet in the oven with a little olive oil for 15 minutes, or until tender. In a pan, sauté 2 chopped tomatoes with 2 chopped spring onions and ½ can cooked lentils, and serve with the salmon and salad.</p> 	<p>2 bean burgers served with chopped mixed salad and a small sweet potato baked.</p> 	<p>Coconut chicken curry Sauté 120g chopped chicken breast with chopped red onion and garlic until golden. Add 1 tsp Thai curry paste, 150ml coconut milk, 1 chopped tomato and 100g green beans. Simmer until cooked. Serve with mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Can of sardines or mackerel, 1 small sweet potato and mixed salad.</p> 
<p>2 tbsp hummus with vegetable sticks, ½ grapefruit.</p> 	<p>2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter, 30g cashew nuts.</p> 	<p>½ grapefruit, 1 hard-boiled egg.</p> 	<p>100g mixed berries, 2 oatcakes with nut butter.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Top tip

Great healthy fat options can be found in oily fish, avocado, nuts, seeds and olives.















HEALTHY FATS

Don't shun healthy fats if you want

to feel great and lose weight! Certain fats, such as omega 3, found in oily fish, have been shown to boost fat burning – aim for three to four portions this week. Adding in some healthy fat also leaves you feeling fuller for longer and more satisfied after a meal.



week 4	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>Smoked salmon scramble Scramble 2 eggs with 30g smoked salmon. Serve with chopped tomatoes.</p> 	<p>Banana porridge Cook 3 tbsp oats in water, then stir in 1 chopped banana and 2 tbsp natural yogurt to serve.</p> 	<p>Yogurt with berries Top 150g 0% fat Greek yogurt with 100g mixed berries and 1 tbsp seeds.</p> 
LUNCH	<p>Courgette feta salad Using a potato peeler, slice long strips from one courgette. Place in a bowl with a bag of mixed salad leaves and ½ chopped red pepper, 30g olives and 50g crumbled feta cheese.</p> 	<p>Salmon nuggets Cut 150g skinless salmon fillet into thick strips. Dip in egg and coat in ground almonds. Pan fry in a little coconut oil until golden. Serve with salad.</p> 	<p>Quinoa and prawn salad Mix 30g cooked quinoa with 100g cooked prawns, a handful of spinach leaves, chopped cucumber, tomato and red onion. Mix together a little lemon juice and olive oil, and pour over to serve.</p> 
DINNER	<p>Spiced mackerel Make 4-5 deep diagonal slashes into the skin of 2 mackerel fillets. Mix 2 tsp curry paste with a little olive oil and 1 tbsp lemon juice, and brush over the mackerel. Grill for 5-8 minutes until cooked through. Serve with a large mixed salad and 1 small sweet potato.</p> 	<p>Asian tofu Pan-fry 100g cubed tofu in a little coconut oil until golden. Add a 200g bag of stir-fry vegetables and 2 tbsp black bean sauce. Serve with 30g cooked rice.</p> 	<p>Minute steak Take a thin, minute beef steak and bash between clingfilm to flatten. Dust with a little flour and paprika, then pan-fry for 2-3 minutes each side. Serve with a small baked sweet potato and steamed vegetables.</p> 
SNACKS	<p>30g walnuts, 1 tbsp nut butter with 1 sliced apple.</p> 	<p>Handful of nuts, protein shake.</p> 	<p>Carrot sticks with 2 tbsp soft cheese, ½ grapefruit.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

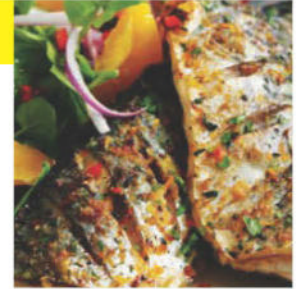
SPICED MACKEREL













INGREDIENTS

- 2 mackerel fillets
- 2 tsp curry paste
- Olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Mixed salad
- 1 small sweet potato, baked

PREPARATION

Make 4-5 deep diagonal slashes into the mackerel skin. Mix the curry paste, a little olive oil and the lemon juice together, then brush over the mackerel. Grill for 5-8 minutes, until cooked. Serve with a large mixed salad and the baked sweet potato.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Spicy scrambled eggs Scramble 2 eggs with a few chilli flakes. Serve with mixed veg or salad and prepared salsa.</p> 	<p>Yogurt granola pot Spoon 150g Greek yogurt or coconut yogurt into a bowl. Top with 2 tbsp granola and 1 chopped pear.</p> 	<p>Matcha protein shake Blend together a handful of spinach leaves, ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, 1 banana, 1 kiwi fruit, a scoop of protein powder and water.</p> 	<p>2 scrambled eggs with grilled tomatoes and mushrooms.</p> 
<p>Hot smoked salmon salad Flake a cooked hot smoked salmon fillet into a bowl of mixed lettuce leaves, chopped tomatoes, beetroot, cucumber and olives. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar to taste.</p> 	<p>Mixed bean and vegetable soup Serve with 60g cottage cheese, a side salad and 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>Spicy baked eggs Sauté ½ onion in a pan with 400g can chopped tomatoes, a little tabasco sauce and ½ chopped red pepper for 5 minutes. Crack in two eggs, cover the pan and simmer for 5 minutes, until the eggs are cooked. Serve with a mixed salad.</p>	<p>Bowl of New Covent Garden Lentil & Smoked Bacon Soup, a mixed salad, and 2 wholegrain rice cakes with nut butter.</p> 
<p>Grilled mustard chicken Place a chicken breast between clingfilm and bash until thin. Smear with Dijon mustard, then pan-fry on both sides until golden. Add a little chicken stock and crème fraîche and stir to make a sauce. Cover the pan and simmer for 5-6 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked wholegrain rice and mixed salad.</p>	<p>Baked fish with pesto Spread 1 tbsp pesto over a cod fillet. Grill for 8-10 minutes and serve with a selection of steamed vegetables.</p> 	<p>Quick chilli Add 120g extra-lean lamb or beef mince to a pan with ½ can kidney beans in chilli sauce and 150g mixed frozen vegetables. Pour in a little stock, cover and simmer for 15 minutes until tender. Serve with salad and top with 1 tbsp natural yogurt.</p>	<p>Lamb kebabs Marinate 120g cubed lamb in 2 tsp sesame oil, 1 tsp honey, grated ginger and garlic. Thread onto skewers with cherry tomatoes and chunks of red pepper. Grill for 8-10 minutes until cooked. Serve with 3 tbsp yogurt mixed with chopped mint and steamed vegetables, plus 2 new potatoes.</p>
<p>Small bowl of blueberries, protein smoothie.</p> 	<p>1 hard-boiled egg, celery sticks and 1 tbsp nut butter.</p> 	<p>1 apple, handful of beef jerky.</p> 	<p>8 strawberries, 2 tbsp cottage cheese with celery sticks.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN








Top tip

Try maca powder. Maca is an adrenal adaptogen herb, meaning it helps the body cope with stress. Available as a powder, add it to smoothies, porridge or desserts. Cinnamon also improves insulin function and balances blood sugar. It's delicious added to porridge, smoothies or stewed fruit.

Tackle stress

The stress hormone cortisol can increase food cravings, blood sugar imbalances and tummy fat. This week, try eating foods that help to control those cravings and tackle stress.



week 5	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>Chocolate maca shake Blend 250ml almond milk, 1 tbsp raw cacao powder, 1 scoop of protein powder, a handful of spinach leaves, 1 tsp maca powder, a pinch of cinnamon and 1 banana.</p>	<p>Protein porridge Cook 30g oats in water. Stir in 1 tsp maca powder and 1 scoop vanilla protein powder. Top with 1 tbsp mixed seeds to serve.</p> 	<p>Matcha green tea chia pudding The night before, soak 2 tbsp chia seeds with ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, 250ml coconut milk and 1 tsp xylitol. In the morning, top with a handful of berries.</p> 
LUNCH	<p>Sardine salad Toss a can of sardines in tomato sauce into a mixed salad and serve with 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>Red pepper and halloumi skewers Mix the juice of ½ lemon with 1 tsp olive oil and chopped mint. Pour over chunks of red pepper and 50g cubed halloumi. Thread onto skewers and grill for 8 minutes. Serve with a green salad.</p>	<p>Lentil and egg salad Boil an egg for 6 minutes, then cool and peel. Tip ½ can of cooked lentils into a bowl with chopped little gem lettuce, 2 chopped spring onions, ½ chopped red pepper and 1 chopped tomato. Add to the egg and drizzle with balsamic vinegar.</p>
DINNER	<p>Meatballs with vegetable noodles Roll 120g extra-lean mince mixed with a little garlic into small balls. Use a spiraliser to make noodles from 1 carrot and 1 courgette. Sauté the meatballs in a little coconut oil until golden. Add ½ can chopped tomatoes and simmer for 5 minutes. Toss in the noodles and cook until soft.</p>	<p>Turkey laksa Sauté 2 tsp Thai curry paste in a pan with 120g cubed turkey meat for 1 minute. Add 250ml chicken stock and simmer for 5 minutes. Pour in 100ml coconut milk and a bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables. Simmer for 6-8 minutes until everything is cooked through.</p>	<p>Grilled salmon Grill a 120g salmon fillet until cooked, and serve with steamed mixed vegetables and 30g cooked wholegrain rice.</p> 
SNACKS	<p>Stewed apple with cinnamon, 30g nuts.</p> 	<p>1 wedge of melon, 150g 0% fat Greek yogurt.</p> 	<p>30g cottage cheese with vegetable sticks, 1 apple.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

TURKEY LAKSA







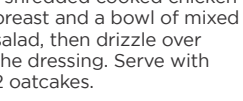









INGREDIENTS

- 2 tsp Thai stock
- 100ml coconut milk
- 120g turkey meat, cubed
- 1 bag mixed stir-fry vegetables
- 250ml chicken stock

PREPARATION

Sauté the Thai curry paste in a pan with the turkey meat for 1 minute. Add the chicken stock and simmer for 5 minutes. Pour in the coconut milk and the bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables. Simmer for 6-8 minutes, until cooked through.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>30g smoked salmon, ½ avocado and 2 wholegrain rice cakes.</p> 	<p>Tofu scramble Mash 100g firm tofu with 2 chopped spring onions, a handful of spinach and a chopped tomato. Heat a little oil in a pan, then sauté for 4-5 minutes until cooked.</p> 	<p>Maca porridge Stir 1 tsp maca powder into 30g oats and cook in milk. Top with a spoonful of yogurt to serve.</p> 	<p>Berry oatly protein shake Blend together 250ml almond milk, a handful of mixed berries, 1 tbsp oats, 1 scoop protein powder and a dash of cinnamon.</p> 
<p>Quinoa and feta salad Toss together 30g cooked quinoa, 50g crumbled feta cheese, 2 chopped tomatoes, ¼ cucumber, 30g olives and ½ chopped red pepper.</p> 	<p>Mayo prawn salad Mix 2 tsp mayonnaise with 100g cooked prawns and serve with a large mixed salad and 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>Chicken and mango salad Mix a little curry powder with 2 tbsp yogurt, 1 tbsp mango chutney and 1 tbsp lemon juice. Stir together 1 shredded cooked chicken breast and a bowl of mixed salad, then drizzle over the dressing. Serve with 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>Smoked salmon frittata Beat 2 eggs with 50g smoked salmon and a handful of frozen peas. Cook in a pan over a low heat for 10 minutes until cooked. Serve with salad.</p> 
<p>Cod provençal Pan-fry 120g cod fillet until cooked. Heat a 400g can of ratatouille and serve with salad.</p> 	<p>Lentil curry Heat a little oil in a pan and sauté ½ chopped red onion with 2 tsp curry paste. Add ½ can cooked lentils, ½ can chopped tomatoes, 100g cubed butternut squash and sweet potato. Add a little stock and simmer for 10 minutes, or until cooked. Serve with a green salad.</p> 	<p>Stir-fry tofu Stir-fry 150g tofu pieces with a bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables, grated ginger, garlic and tamari soy sauce. Serve with a side salad.</p> 	<p>Lamb with minted beans Season a 120g lean lamb steak. Pan-fry for 3-4 minutes on each side. Steam 100g each of green beans and broccoli, then toss in a little mint sauce. Serve with a side salad.</p> 
<p>Small savoury muffin, bowl of berries.</p> 	<p>Stewed apple with cinnamon, protein shake.</p> 	<p>Bowl of berries, 1 hard-boiled egg.</p> 	<p>Bag of kale crisps, 1 apple with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN










Top tip

Eggs are a wonderful source of cheap, high-quality protein. Versatile and quick to cook, they are perfect for a speedy meal. You can also use protein powders, as they're easy and convenient when time is short - use them in breakfast smoothies or post-workout, to support recovery.

Muscle up

By now, you should be noticing improvements in your body shape and muscle tone. This week, to complement your exercise plan, we focus on building toned muscle, by including sufficient lean protein at each meal and snack.



week 6	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>Spinach scrambled eggs Scramble 2 eggs with a handful of chopped spinach and serve with 30g cottage cheese.</p> 	<p>Creamy protein tropical shake Blend together 250ml coconut milk or water, 100g pineapple, a handful of spinach leaves and ¼ avocado.</p> 	<p>Protein porridge Cook 30g oats in water, then stir in a scoop of protein powder and top with 2 tbsp yogurt and 30g berries.</p> 
LUNCH	<p>Tuna bean salad Toss together 100g canned butter beans, 100g drained tuna with a bag of mixed salad, a handful of cherry tomatoes and olives. Drizzle with lemon juice and olive oil to serve.</p>	<p>Beef wrap Spread a wholegrain wrap with a little mustard or hummus. Layer with slices of roast beef and lettuce. Roll up and serve with a large mixed salad.</p>	<p>½ carton of vegetable soup Serve with 2 plain crackers and a mixed salad.</p> 
DINNER	<p>Curried chicken Heat 2 tsp curry paste with ½ chopped red onion and 120g cubed chicken breast. Sauté for 5 minutes, then add a bag of mixed vegetables and a can of chopped tomatoes. Simmer for 5-10 minutes until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked rice.</p>	<p>Grilled soy fish Drizzle a salmon fillet with soy sauce. Grill for 5-6 minutes until cooked through. Serve with a selection of steamed vegetables and green salad.</p> 	<p>Turkey burgers with salsa and salad Mix together 120g lean turkey mince with a little onion and garlic, and shape into patties. Pan-fry for 6-8 minutes until cooked. Serve with a mixed salad and prepared salsa.</p> 
SNACKS	<p>2 tbsp cottage cheese with a slice of melon, 30g nuts.</p> 	<p>Bowl of berries with 100g Greek yogurt, 30g nuts.</p> 	<p>1 hard-boiled egg, small savoury muffin.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

COTTAGE CHEESE FRITTATA






INGREDIENTS

- 2 eggs
- 30g cottage cheese
- Handful of spinach, chopped
- Green salad

PREPARATION

Beat together the eggs, then mix in the cottage cheese and chopped spinach. Pour into a frying pan and cook for 5 minutes, then place under the grill and cook until golden. Serve with the green salad.










THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>50g cottage cheese, 1 chopped tomato, a wedge of melon and 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>Cherry protein shake Blend together 100g frozen pitted cherries with 1 scoop protein powder and 250ml almond milk.</p> 	<p>2-egg omelette with chopped tomatoes and spinach.</p> 	<p>Banana protein pancakes Blend 1 banana with 1 egg and a scoop of protein powder. Heat a little oil in a frying pan and place spoonfuls of the batter in the pan. Cook until golden on each side. Serve with ½ cup blueberries and a spoonful of yogurt.</p>
<p>2-egg omelette with 30g wafer ham. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Mackerel and beetroot salad Flake a hot smoked mackerel fillet into a large mixed salad, with 2 sliced cooked beetroots. Mix together 1 tsp horseradish sauce with 2 tbsp natural yogurt and drizzle over the salad.</p>	<p>½ can lentil and smoked bacon soup, salad and 1 sliced, cooked chicken breast.</p> 	<p>Cottage cheese frittata Beat together 2 eggs, then mix in 30g cottage cheese and a handful of chopped spinach. Pour into a frying pan and cook for 5 minutes, then place under the grill and cook until golden. Serve with a green salad.</p>
<p>Miso grilled cod Mix together 1 tbsp white miso paste with 1 tsp tamari soy sauce and 1 tsp mirin, then spread the mixture over a cod fillet. Place under the grill and cook through. Serve with steamed vegetables.</p> 	<p>Mince with rice Sauté 120g lean mince with ½ chopped red onion in a pan for 2-3 minutes to brown. Add ½ can chopped tomatoes, 200g mixed frozen vegetables and a dash of Worcestershire sauce to taste. Cover and cook for 10-15 minutes until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked rice.</p>	<p>Lamb tacos Sauté 100g lamb mince with ½ can chopped tomatoes, a pinch of chilli powder, chopped onion and garlic. Add a handful of frozen vegetables and cook through. Serve in 2 warmed taco shells and accompany with salad.</p> 	<p>Chicken with olives Sauté ½ chopped red onion with 120g chicken cut into strips for 2 minutes until golden. Add a can of chopped tomatoes and 30g black pitted olives. Simmer for 10-15 minutes until cooked. Serve with a mixed salad and 30g cooked quinoa.</p> 
<p>100g Greek yogurt with 1 tbsp goji berries, 30g nuts.</p> 	<p>2 tbsp hummus with carrot sticks, protein shake.</p> 	<p>1 pear, 30g nuts.</p> 	<p>Small savoury muffin, 1 apple with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Spice it up

Adding spices, such as chilli, to dishes is a great way to boost your metabolism, as well as adding more depth of flavour to your savoury dishes.



week 7	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>Spicy scramble Scramble 2 eggs with a dash of Tabasco sauce, plus chopped tomatoes and red pepper. Serve with 2 wholegrain rice cakes.</p> 	<p>Berry protein shake Blend 100g frozen berries with 1 scoop protein powder, 250ml almond milk and a handful of spinach leaves.</p> 	<p>Oatmeal cinnamon pancakes Combine 30g oats, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 banana, ½ tsp baking powder and 1 egg in a blender. Add a little milk if needed, to create a thick batter. Heat a little coconut oil in a pan and fry the batter in batches. Top with a handful of blueberries and 2 tbsp natural yogurt.</p>
LUNCH	<p>Grilled spicy sardines Rub two gutted sardines with a little curry paste. Place on a tray and grill for 6-8 minutes, until cooked through and golden. Serve with a large mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Kale salad Place 100g chopped kale into a bowl. Sprinkle with garlic salt and lemon juice, and massage the kale until it wilts. Toss in ½ can chickpeas, 30g feta cheese, a handful of cherry tomatoes and chopped cucumber.</p>	<p>Mixed bean tuna salad Toss 200g can cooked mixed beans with a mixed salad and 50g tuna (drained).</p> 
DINNER	<p>Minted lamb steak Flatten a lamb steak with a rolling pin, brush with oil and pan-fry for 3-4 minutes each side, until cooked. Drizzle with a little mint sauce, and serve with steamed vegetables and a mixed salad.</p>	<p>Chilli fish tacos Slice a haddock fillet into thick chunks. Dust in a little flour mixed with chilli powder, then pan-fry on each side until golden. Spoon into two taco shells with lettuce and serve with mixed salad, ½ avocado and ½ can mixed cooked beans.</p>	<p>Chicken curry Sauté 1 cubed chicken breast in a pan with ½ chopped red chilli and 2 tsp curry paste, until golden. Add 200ml coconut milk, chopped sweet potato, red pepper and green beans, and sauté until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked brown rice and salad.</p>
SNACKS	<p>2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter, ½ grapefruit.</p> 	<p>150g 0% fat Greek yogurt, 30g nuts.</p> 	<p>30g goji berries, celery sticks with 2 tbsp hummus.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE





INDIAN CHICKEN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- Chicken breast chutney
- Tandoori spice mix • 2 tbsp natural yogurt
- 1 tbsp mango • Mixed salad

PREPARATION

Bash the chicken breast with a rolling pin to flatten. Rub with tandoori spice mix and griddle for 3-4 minutes on each side, until cooked. Mix the mango chutney and yogurt together, to form the dressing, then serve together with the mixed salad.











THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>2 slices smoked salmon, 1 poached egg and ¼ sliced avocado.</p> 	<p>Chocolate chia pudding The night before, soak 2 tbsp chia seeds in 250ml milk blended with 1 scoop chocolate protein powder. In the morning, top with a handful of blueberries to serve.</p> 	<p>Muesli 40g low-sugar muesli with almond milk, topped with a chopped apple.</p> 	<p>Green protein cleanse Blend together a handful of spinach or kale with 1 banana, 1 kiwi fruit, coconut water and 1 scoop protein powder.</p> 
<p>Grilled mackerel fillet Brush a mackerel fillet with a little Thai curry paste, then grill until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked quinoa and mixed salad.</p> 	<p>2-egg omelette cooked with a pinch of chilli flakes and 30g goats' cheese. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Crayfish salad Mix 100g cooked crayfish in a little natural yogurt and Dijon mustard. Serve on top of a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Indian chicken salad Bash a chicken breast with a rolling pin to flatten. Rub with tandoori spice mix and griddle for 3-4 minutes on each side, until cooked. Mix 1 tbsp mango chutney with 2 tbsp natural yogurt, and serve with salad topped with the dressing.</p> 
<p>Turkey burgers Make from 125g lean turkey mince (flavour with salt and pepper) and pan-fry or bake. Serve with steamed vegetables and 1 small sweet potato cut into wedges, then bake until crisp.</p> 	<p>Pan-fried cod with bacon Chop 2 slices of streaky bacon, then sauté in a pan until crisp. Remove from the pan, then pan-fry a 120g cod fillet on each side until cooked through. Serve with steamed broccoli and cauliflower florets.</p> 	<p>Turkey chilli mince In a pan, cook 120g turkey mince with ½ can mixed beans in chilli sauce and ½ can chopped tomatoes, until tender. Serve with steamed vegetables and a green salad.</p> 	<p>Asian seared tuna steak Drizzle a 150g tuna steak with a little sesame oil and tamari soy sauce, then pan-fry until cooked through. Serve with a large mixed salad and steamed veg.</p> 
<p>2 squares dark chocolate, 150g mixed berries.</p> 	<p>2 seeded crackers, 1 kiwi fruit with 100g 0% fat Greek yogurt.</p> 	<p>Handful of mixed seeds, beef jerky.</p> 	<p>2 tbsp guacamole with 2 oatcakes, 1 apple.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Treat and celebrate!

This week, we include a few treats to keep you motivated. We also increase the carbs a little, to help you transition into a long-term healthy eating lifestyle.



week 8	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>½ pink grapefruit, 1 soft-boiled egg and 1 slice wholemeal or gluten-free toast.</p> 	<p>Chocolate protein shake Blend together 250ml almond milk, a handful of baby spinach, 1 banana, 1 tbsp raw cacao powder and a scoop of chocolate protein powder.</p> 	<p>150g 0% fat Greek yogurt, topped with 30g chopped nuts and 100g mixed berries.</p> 
LUNCH	<p>2-egg omelette with 2 slices of chopped bacon. Serve with a large mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Hoisin wrap Mix 100g shredded cooked chicken with 1-2 tbsp hoisin sauce. Spread on a seeded wrap with lettuce and tomato. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Chickpea and tuna salad Toss together 100g drained tuna with ½ can chickpeas and mixed salad. Drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil and lemon juice.</p> 
DINNER	<p>Lamb or tofu kebabs Marinate 100g cubed lamb or firm tofu in 2 tsp sesame oil, 1 tsp honey, grated ginger and garlic. Thread onto skewers with button mushrooms. Grill for 8-10 minutes, until cooked. Serve with steamed vegetables and 2 new potatoes.</p> 	<p>Oriental cod Place a cod fillet on a piece of parchment and drizzle with soy sauce, rice wine and a little honey. Seal and steam for 10 minutes, until cooked. Meanwhile, stir-fry a bag of mixed vegetables.</p> 	<p>Stuffed peppers Halve a red pepper and deseed. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes. Mix together 30g cooked rice, 1 chopped tomato, 2 tsp pesto and 2 tsp Parmesan cheese, then stuff into the pepper halves. Bake for 10 minutes to heat through and serve with a mixed salad.</p> 
SNACKS	<p>2 squares of dark chocolate, kale crisps.</p> 	<p>Nakd bar, 150g plain yogurt with a handful of blueberries.</p> 	<p>30g trail mix, 2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

GRILLED STEAK WITH MUSTARD DRESSING
















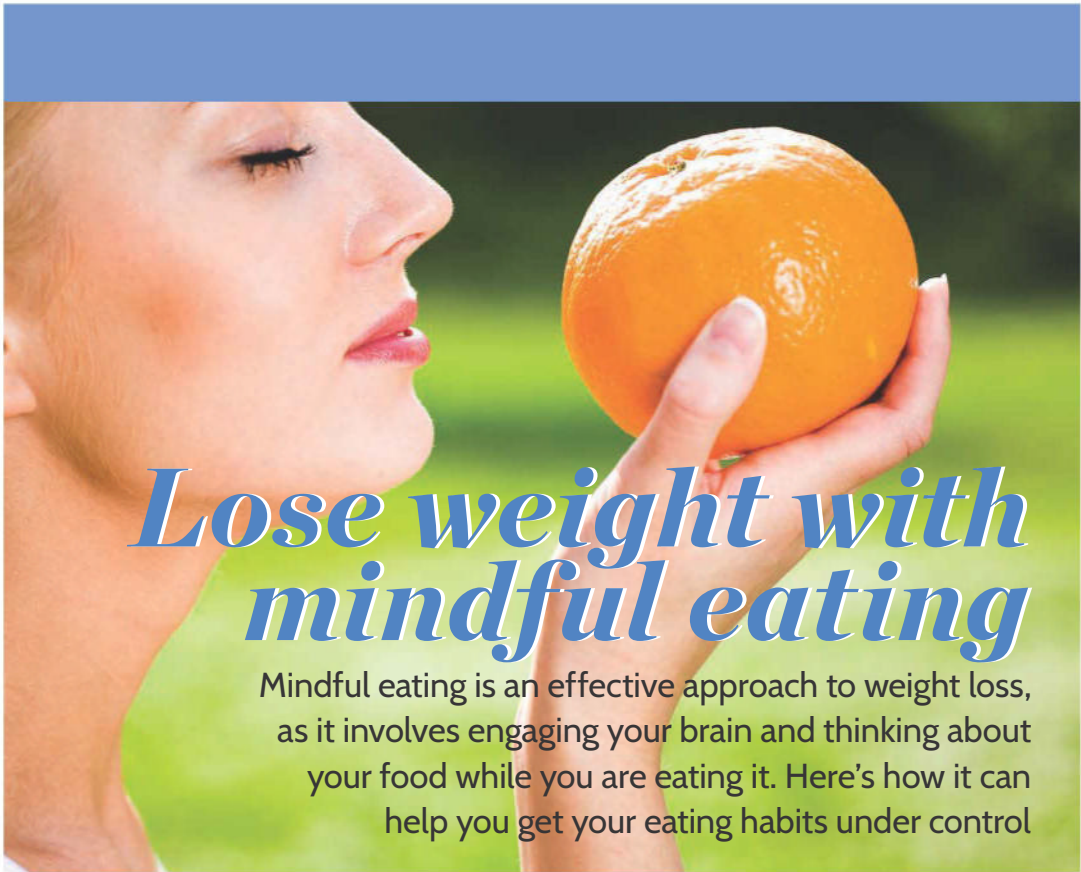
INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp olive oil
- ¼ tsp mustard
- 1 tsp vinegar
- Drizzle of honey
- 100g steak
- Mixed salad
- 1 cooked beetroot, sliced
- Green beans, steamed
- Handful of cherry tomatoes

PREPARATION

Mix the olive oil, mustard, vinegar and honey. Season the steak and brush with olive oil, then grill until cooked. Slice and serve on the salad, plus the beetroot, green beans and tomatoes. Drizzle with the dressing to serve.

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Small savoury muffin, ½ grapefruit.</p> 	<p>Overnight muesli The night before, soak 40g low-sugar muesli in almond milk. In the morning, top with 1 chopped apple to serve.</p> 	<p>1 toasted seeded bagel with low-fat soft cheese. Serve with 1 slice of melon.</p> 	<p>2 scrambled eggs with 30g smoked salmon and grilled mushrooms.</p>
<p>Smoked mackerel fillet served with a large mixed salad and 2 new potatoes with 1 tbsp mayonnaise.</p> 	<p>Turkey with rye Serve 120g sliced cooked turkey breast with 1 slice rye bread, ¼ avocado, 1 sliced tomato and mixed salad leaves.</p> 	<p>¼ carton New Covent Garden Vegetable Soup Serve with a large mixed salad and 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>Rice and chickpea salad Mix 50g cooked rice with ½ can chickpeas and 30g goats' cheese. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 
<p>Vegetable chilli Simmer ½ can chopped tomatoes, ½ can mixed beans, ½ chopped onion, 1 chopped courgette and 1 chopped red pepper in a pan, along with a pinch of chilli powder and paprika. Add a little stock if needed. Serve with 30g cooked quinoa.</p> 	<p>Egg-fried quinoa Sauté 50g cooked quinoa in a pan with ½ chopped red onion and 200g frozen mixed vegetables. Stir in 2 beaten eggs, and continue stirring until cooked through. Serve with salad.</p> 	<p>Grilled steak with mustard dressing Mix together 1 tsp olive oil, ¼ tsp mustard, 1 tsp vinegar and a drizzle of honey. Season 100g steak and brush with olive oil. Grill the steak until cooked. Slice and serve on a bed of mixed salad, plus 1 sliced beetroot, a handful of steamed green beans and a handful of cherry tomatoes. Drizzle with the dressing to serve.</p>	<p>Chicken or tofu and vegetable stir-fry Stir-fry 120g diced chicken breast or cubes of tofu with a handful of sliced mushrooms, baby sweetcorns, sugar snap peas, carrots and broccoli florets. Season with tamari soy sauce, garlic, chilli and ginger. Serve with 3 tbsp rice.</p>
<p>Handful of grapes, bag of kale crisps.</p> 	<p>Vegetable sticks with 2 tbsp hummus, slice of watermelon.</p> 	<p>1 apple, 30g nuts.</p> 	<p>150g plain yogurt with handful of blueberries, protein shake.</p> 



Lose weight with mindful eating

Mindful eating is an effective approach to weight loss, as it involves engaging your brain and thinking about your food while you are eating it. Here's how it can help you get your eating habits under control

Many of us can follow a diet or weight-loss plan for a period of time, before we start feeling restricted. Then we resort back to our old eating habits, which often involve overeating when we're stressed or eating purely for enjoyment, rather than because we're hungry. Mindful eating is a useful way to help prevent you from overeating and it will almost certainly improve your relationship with food.

So what is it exactly? Mindfulness is a practice with its roots in ancient

meditation and was discovered more recently in a modern sense by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who founded the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts in the Seventies. More recently, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) was developed in the Nineties by Professor Mark Williams, John Teasdale and Zindel Segal, with the aim of helping those who were suffering from depression.

MINDFULNESS EXPLAINED

Mindfulness means being in the present moment and

focusing on that moment. It's about switching off negative self-talk and inner chatter that can hold you back, and avoiding the temptation to dwell on the past or worry about the future. Put simply, it's about focusing on how things look, feel and smell in the present moment.

When it comes to food, mindfulness can be an effective way of controlling the amount you eat. Rather than gulping down food quickly, because you're distracted or you're not thinking of the food you're eating, mindful eating is about savouring every mouthful, being aware of how it tastes and

'EATING WHEN YOU'RE BUSY IS BEST AVOIDED, AS YOU'LL GULP FOOD DOWN IN A HURRY'

when your body is starting to feel full. To do this, you need to focus on the food in front of you. Many of us lead busy lives, and we tend to grab snacks and meals when we can, often in front of a computer screen at work, or while watching TV. Eating becomes almost secondary to the task you're focusing on or the programme you're watching. As you're less aware of what you're eating, because you're distracted by something else, you're less likely to be thinking about whether or not you're feeling full and more likely to absent-mindedly eat everything on the plate, just because it's in front of you.

Eating when you're busy is best avoided, as you'll gulp food down in a hurry, regardless of whether you need all of it or not. Try to eat when you're not busy and without the TV on. This will give you a chance to focus on the food you're eating. Ask yourself how every mouthful tastes, chew slowly and think about the texture of the food.

THINK AHEAD

The practice of mindful eating can be applied before you even start putting food on your plate. Think carefully before you prepare your food. Ask yourself how hungry you are and how much you need. If you're the kind of person who eats

everything on their plate, because you hate the thought of wasting food, then consider using a smaller plate if you're not too hungry.

Before you load food onto a plate because it's breakfast or lunchtime, check in with your body. Don't just eat out of habit, or because it's lunchtime. Ask yourself if you're genuinely hungry.

Many of us have complex issues with food and often rely on it to self-medicate for comfort when we're stressed. Sometimes it's tempting to overeat when we have something to celebrate, or we may use food to help us unwind. We enjoy it at the time, but afterwards it's easy to feel guilty. If you're a comfort eater and rely on food to cope with stress, you could try meditation techniques to calm down instead.

Mindfulness meditation is now well respected by the medical profession, because it works. Various studies have proven its effectiveness. In one US study, participants in an eight-week mindfulness-based stress reduction group had significantly less stress and anxiety than their counterparts. Similarly, it has been used as a treatment for those with recurring depression and has been proven to reduce recurrence rate by up to 50 per cent.

How to practise mindfulness meditation

Find a quiet room or space where you won't be disturbed. Or you can try it when you're going for a walk or even a run, but try to exercise in a quiet area, such as a park, away from noisy traffic. Remember, it's about being in the moment, so look around you. Notice your surroundings, and focus purely on what you see, hear and smell, and on your breathing. Another option is to work around the whole body, starting with your upper body and working your way down. Start with the shoulders: tense and relax them, elevating them up and down, while taking six breaths in and six breaths out. Do the same with the rest of the muscles in your body, working your way down to your feet. While you're concentrating on tensing and relaxing, and breathing in and out, you'll be able to switch off other thoughts. It takes practise, but try it and you'll soon see that it works.



Master your eating habits



Be in control of what you eat and how often, and the weight you've lost will stay off. Here's how to adopt a sound and healthy approach to food

You now know from personal experience that exercise can help boost weight loss, but don't underestimate the importance of a healthy diet, as well. Experts believe it's 75 per cent diet and 25 per cent exercise in order to lose weight and keep it off. More than 700 weight-loss studies showed that people who get the best results for weight loss are those who watch what they eat. And remember, it's much easier to cut calories than burn them off. It would take you around 20 minutes of running to burn off 200 calories – by comparison, it would take you around two minutes to eat a chocolate bar containing around that amount of calories or more! It's always easier to watch what you eat, so long as

you're not being too strict. At the same time, remember that exercise is an important part of weight loss. If you diet and don't do any exercise, you might be losing lean muscle tissue and bone density, not just fat. Weight-bearing exercise, such as resistance training, will increase your ratio of lean muscle tissue, and muscle is more metabolically active, which means you'll burn more fat even at rest.

Try to keep your blood sugar levels stable, by eating five to six smaller meals throughout the day, rather than going for long periods without eating. Each snack should be about 200 calories, and contain lean protein and healthy, slow-releasing carbohydrates. Make sure you keep your energy levels stable, as you'll be less likely to crave

sugary foods and overeat if you feel satisfied and energised. Here are some top food and snack ideas, to help boost your energy levels...

🍎 Porridge with a sprinkling of nuts or seeds

A great way to kick-start your day, as oats are high in calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, B vitamins and protein. So, as well as helping improve your skin, oats are brilliant if you're feeling tired.

🍎 Almonds, walnuts or Brazil nuts

A palmful makes the perfect power snack. A study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* suggested that almonds can help increase vitamin E levels and red blood cells, and also lower cholesterol levels.

‘TRY TO KEEP YOUR BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS STABLE, BY EATING FIVE TO SIX SMALLER MEALS THROUGHOUT THE DAY’

Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant and almonds are also thought to help reduce the risk of developing colon cancer. Brazil nuts are high in selenium, which can support your immune system and also help to regulate thyroid levels, which can in turn boost weight loss. Walnuts are a good source of healthy fat and are rich in omega-3, which can aid brain and joint health.

🍏 Fresh fruit

Eat with a spoonful of low-fat, low-sugar yogurt and a sprinkling of seeds. The protein in the seeds and the yogurt will slow the energy release of the fruit, helping to keep you going.

🍏 Wholemeal bagel and banana

Quick, easy and very effective! Bananas are rich in potassium and fibre, as well as vitamin C and vitamin B6, which can help to boost immunity and support heart health.

🍏 Sweet potato

Even better for your energy levels than a regular potato, try it straight out of the skin, or mash it up and serve with some roast chicken and roasted vegetables. Totally delicious!

🍏 Eggs

With a combination of healthy fats, energy-boosting B vitamins and some vitamin D, eggs boost brain efficiency and provide clean protein energy, as well as a host of nutrients. A boiled egg and soldiers is a great breakfast or snack, or an omelette and salad is a great meal for energy.

🍏 A chicken or turkey wholemeal sandwich

This contains plenty of slow-release and lasting energy, plus there is minimum fat content, so it won't slow you down.



Juicing solution

If you feel you don't always get your daily intake of fruit and veg, try juicing. The nutrients in juicing will help boost your energy levels and make you feel revitalised.

Some experts believe the nutrients in juices can help with skin conditions, such as eczema and psoriasis. Juicing may also help you lose weight, as the vegetables should fill you up (provided you use the right ingredients and don't add too much fruit). Juicing can aid digestion, as the ingredients contain enzymes, which help with digestion and prevent your metabolism from getting sluggish. Juicing enables you to add a wider variety of vegetables to your diet. Many of us tend to eat the same foods, but when juicing, you may add vegetables that you wouldn't normally choose to eat.

Where possible, choose organic fruit and veg, and start gradually – add in small amounts of greenery at first, such as celery, fennel and cucumber. If you're not keen on vegetables, try to dilute them and mask the taste with fruit, such as a banana or a handful of blueberries. Keep an eye on portion size though – you wouldn't eat two bananas in one sitting, so don't double up on ingredients just because you're juicing! If you're juicing after a workout, you could add a scoop of protein powder or a tablespoon of natural yogurt, to aid recovery.



BEAT STRESS, STAY SLIM

- ✓ The benefits of yoga for stress relief
- ✓ 15-minute relaxation yoga workout
- ✓ Reduce your stress levels – today



The benefits of yoga

Great for stress busting, improving flexibility, and making you look leaner and fitter, even short bursts of regular yoga will have benefits



BURN MORE FAT

When it comes to burning fat, we don't tend to think of yoga as an obvious choice. But the right type of yoga can get you working up a good sweat and burning more calories than you might imagine. If you want to try yoga to burn fat and get lean, the more strenuous types of yoga include Vinyasa, Ashtanga and Power yoga, all of which are more energetic. Vinyasa yoga is made up of a series of sun salutations that you work through quickly, which means you won't have time to recover in-between each pose and your heart rate will rise, leading to a higher metabolic

rate. Ashtanga yoga is a series of non-stop poses that lasts for 90 minutes. Similarly, Bikram yoga, also known as hot yoga, lasts for 90 minutes, but is performed in a room with a temperature of more than 100 degrees. Both can boost weight loss and you'll feel like you're working hard during the class.



IMPROVE TONE AND SHAPE

Yoga will help you tone up as well as lose weight, as many of the moves involve supporting your own body weight, which

effectively means using your body weight as resistance, instead of dumbbells. Vinyasa yoga involves holding certain poses for long periods of time, which means your heart and lungs will be working harder to deliver fuel and oxygen to your muscles. Even the more gentle forms of yoga, such as Hatha yoga, can help with weight loss, and of course it can also improve your posture, making you look taller and leaner.





REDUCE INJURY RISK

When you're doing high-intensity interval training sessions, or any session where you're exercising for a shorter period of time and working very hard, you may find your muscles feel stiff and tight afterwards if you don't stretch properly. And even if you do stretch at the end of a workout, regular cardiovascular workouts can still cause you to get stiff. Yoga will improve your flexibility and therefore reduce your injury risk. Many injuries occur because you ask your body to move in a position that it's not used to. Joints may not have the range of movement or the stability (control) needed to get you into the correct position, which means your injury risk can increase. Yoga will help improve flexibility and strength around the joints.

If you want to get lean and toned, you may want to choose yoga over more strenuous types of strength training. When you do classic strength exercises, such as

deadlifts or squats with weights, there is a greater risk of injury (as you are doing them with weights) if your technique isn't spot on. With yoga, injury risk can be lower.

BOOST RECOVERY

Yoga can also help you recover faster from your workout sessions. This is because it can flush out toxins, such as lactic acid, which build up in the body during exercise. A study that was published in *The Journal Of Strength & Conditioning Research* in November 2014 revealed that a single bout of yoga appeared to reduce muscle soreness in women.



BETTER BALANCE

Yoga often involves doing poses such as tree pose, where you stand on one leg, and some moves throw you away from your centre of gravity, which strengthens the ligaments in the knees and ankles. This can improve your balance and prevent injury. Better balance is also useful during certain

cardiovascular exercise, such as running, where you are effectively hopping from one foot to the other. The better your balance when you run, the more efficient you will become as a runner.



BETTER SLEEP

Many people who practise yoga regularly report better sleep patterns. If you've managed to calm your mind during a yoga class, you will feel more relaxed and will be more likely to get to sleep.



Choosing the right form of yoga

You can do the exercises over the page in the comfort of your home, or on a yoga mat in the gym. However, if you can spare an hour a week to do a yoga class, you'll reap the benefits.

Good yoga classes for beginners include Hatha yoga, which is a gentle, slower-paced class; Iyengar yoga, which focuses on detail and is slow paced; and Kripalu yoga, which is also gentle with slow movements.

If you would like a more strenuous class, Ashtanga or Power yoga may be better suited to you, but bear in mind that some of the above, slower classes will give you more time to get used to the various poses.

15-minute yoga

Yoga can improve your flexibility, as well as help you unwind, feel less stressed, and improve your strength and balance. Here is a 15-minute yoga session you can do anywhere.

Make sure you are warm before you try these poses... brisk walking, jogging on the spot or using one of the cardio machines in the gym, such as the treadmill or cross-trainer, to warm up for five minutes is ideal. Hold each pose for 30 seconds to one minute and repeat the sequence twice.

TREE POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: INNER AND OUTER THIGHS, HIP FLEXORS, BOTTOM, CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand on one leg, press your hands firmly together in front of your chest and release the tension in your shoulders.
- ◆ Draw the other leg up and place the sole of your foot against your standing leg's inner thigh or calf.
- ◆ Keep your pelvis in a neutral position.
- ◆ Lengthen your tailbone towards the floor.
- ◆ Firmly press the sole of your bent leg against your standing leg, while resisting the pressure with your standing leg.
- ◆ Focus on a point in front of you to aid balance.

Be safe

Only lift your leg as high as feels comfortable. Placing your foot lower down your leg is fine.



DOWNWARD-FACING DOG

AREAS STRETCHED: SHOULDERS, ARMS, REAR THIGHS, CALVES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on the floor, placing your hands shoulder-width apart.
- ◆ Lift your knees off the floor, pushing your sit bones up to the ceiling and elongating your spine.
- ◆ Press your heels into the floor.
- ◆ Contract your thighs and try to straighten your legs.
- ◆ Position your head in-between your arms.

Be safe

Don't over stretch and be careful if you have high blood pressure.



LOW LUNGE POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: FRONT THIGHS,
HIP FLEXORS, STOMACH MUSCLES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel down on a mat.
- ◆ Step one leg forwards and place it in-between your hands.
- ◆ Lower the knee of your back leg to the floor and rest the top of your foot on the floor.
- ◆ Inhale and lift your torso to an upright position.
- ◆ Extend your arms up towards the ceiling.
- ◆ Tilt your head upwards.
- ◆ Hold the position for one minute.
- ◆ Return to the downward-facing dog and repeat with the other leg.



Be safe

If your back knee hurts, place a towel underneath it.

WIDE-LEGGED FORWARD BEND

AREAS STRETCHED: BOTTOM, REAR THIGHS,
INNER THIGHS, DEEPER BACK MUSCLES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet three to four feet apart.
- ◆ Keep your feet parallel to each other.
- ◆ Lengthen your spine and contract your stomach muscles.
- ◆ Bend forwards from your hips.
- ◆ Place your hands on the floor in line with your shoulders.
- ◆ Ensure you keep your back straight.

Be safe

Be careful if you have lower back issues.



COBRA POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: DEEPER
BACK MUSCLES, BOTTOM, CHEST,
STOMACH, SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your stomach on the floor.
- ◆ Bend your elbows and place your hands flat on the floor, next to your chest.
- ◆ Push your pubis, thighs and tops of your feet into the floor.
- ◆ Lift your chest off the floor, pushing your hands into the floor.
- ◆ Push your shoulders down and back, and elongate your neck while looking slightly up.
- ◆ Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.



Be safe

Be careful if you have back problems. Only lift within a comfortable range of motion.



BOUND ANGLE POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: HIPS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, exhale, bend your knees, pull your heels towards your pelvis, then drop your knees out to the sides and pull the soles of your feet together.
- ◆ Bring your heels as close to your pelvis as you can. With the first and second finger and thumb, grasp the big toe of each foot.
- ◆ Always keep the outer edges of the feet firmly on the floor.
- ◆ Hold the ankle or shin if you can't grasp the toes.

Be safe

Never force your knees down.



PIGEON POSE

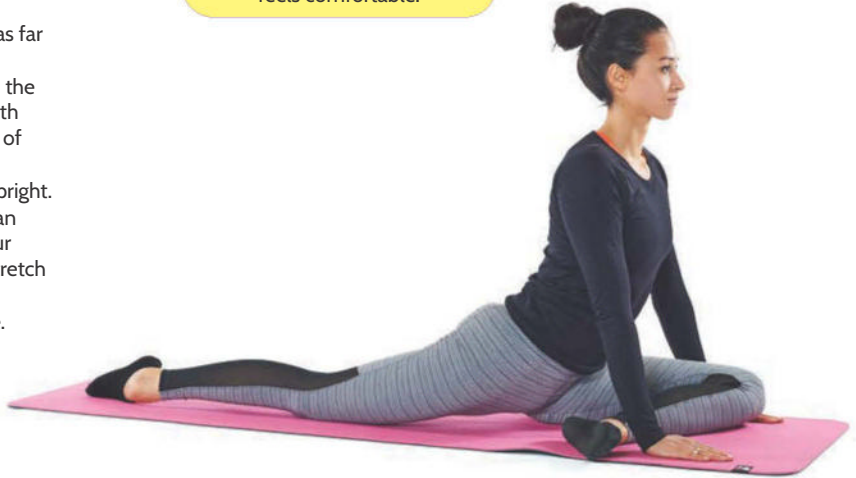
AREA STRETCHED: GLUTES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Place your hands shoulder-width apart with your legs behind you.
- ◆ Slide your left knee forwards, towards your left hand.
- ◆ Slide the other leg back as far as your hips will allow.
- ◆ Keep your hips square to the floor, facing forwards, with a slight external rotation of the bent leg.
- ◆ Keep your upper body upright.
- ◆ If this feels easy, then lean forwards and rest on your forearms, to make the stretch more intense.
- ◆ Repeat on the other side.

Be safe

Only stretch as far as feels comfortable.



CHILD'S POSE

AREA STRETCHED: BACK

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on the floor.
- ◆ Touch your big toes together and sit on your heels, then separate your knees about as wide as your hips.
- ◆ Exhale and lay your torso down between your thighs.
- ◆ Lengthen your tailbone away from the back of the pelvis.

Be safe

Don't tense your stomach muscles too much, as it will prevent you from stretching.



How to reduce your stress levels

You may be exercising hard and watching your food intake, but if you don't combat stress, you might find it hard to achieve your fitness goals. Here's how you can banish stress...

Stress can make you gain weight. How? Firstly, you'll be more tempted to overeat and snack on unhealthy treats. Secondly, when you are in a stressful situation, your brain tells your cells to release a burst of adrenaline, so you can fight or run from the 'danger' it perceives you to be in. You also get a surge of cortisol, which tells your body to replenish energy, and this can make you very hungry. Your body will continue to release cortisol while you remain stressed, so prolonged periods of stress can have a significant effect on your waistline.

Thirdly, being stressed or overly concerned about an issue can

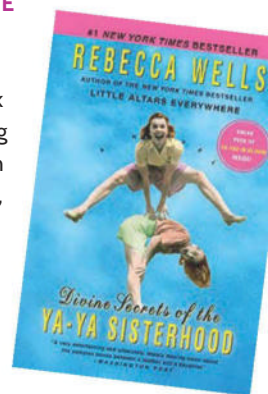
interfere with your sleep, which can change the hormone balance in your body. This in turn can increase hunger. Leptin is a hormone that signals when you are full, and when you don't get enough sleep, the release of leptin slows down. Sleep deprivation also causes your body to release ghrelin, the hunger hormone. So lack of sleep through stress, or being unable to switch off your mind, can mean you'll overeat and your body will naturally want to store more fat.

So how can you get your stress levels under control, so you can lose weight and get fit? Yoga or meditation will help, but there are other things you can do that will also make a difference. Reducing

sugar and caffeine intake can help, as these can affect your mood and will do little to reduce your stress levels. See page 30 for a list of top stress-busting foods.

SWITCH OFF YOUR BRAIN BEFORE BEDTIME

Try to switch your brain off at night. Read a good book (avoiding anything too extreme, such as a horror story!), so you have a chance to distract yourself from the day's events before you go to sleep.



‘MAKE SURE YOUR BEDROOM OFFERS THE CALMEST POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT’

CLEAR THE CLUTTER

Make sure your bedroom is tidy and free from mess. Leave technology out of the bedroom. Switch your phone off, and put tablets and laptops away. Pick up any stray items of clothing on the floor, or towels you meant to put away earlier. Make sure your bedroom offers the calmest possible environment and is a sanctuary where you can truly relax.

SHUT THOSE BLINDS

Try to make your room cave dark, so you can sleep well. Switch off anything that brings light into the room, like mobile or portable phones that charge overnight. Draw the curtains or shut the blinds as tightly as possible.

JUST SAY NO

If your stress is caused by others expecting too much from you, either at home or at work, set some boundaries. Don't be the first to volunteer to take on new tasks or projects at work, especially if you've already got a lot on your plate. If someone asks you to do something and you genuinely

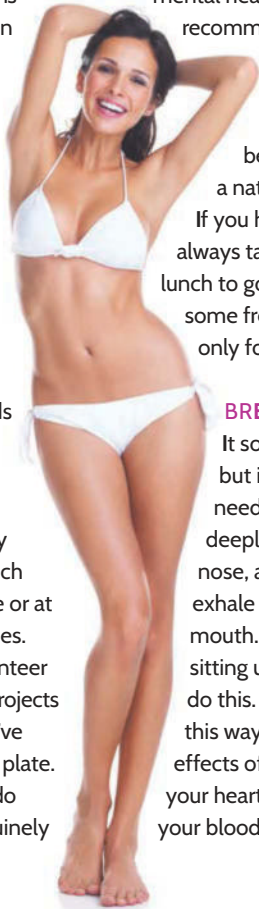
think it will add more stress and pressure, say no. Be polite. Just be honest. We are so conditioned to doing what others want, but in the end, it can make us both stressed and miserable.

GO OUTSIDE

Get plenty of fresh air. The mental health charity Mind recommends outdoor exercise as a great way of improving your mood, as being outside is a natural mood booster. If you have a stressful job, always take some time at lunch to go for a walk and get some fresh air, even if it's only for 10 or 15 minutes.

BREATHE DEEPLY

It sounds so simple, but it works. All you need to do is inhale deeply through your nose, and then gently exhale through your mouth. Make sure you are sitting up straight as you do this. Deep breathing in this way can reduce the effects of stress, by slowing your heart rate and lowering your blood pressure.



KEEP A STRESS DIARY

Get some perspective, by making a note of anything that happens that stresses you out during the day. Then maybe, over the course of a week or two, you can give some thought to how you can eliminate or control those stressors. It might mean being more assertive and learning to say no, or avoiding certain situations that add stress.

WATCH CHEERFUL TV, SLEEP WELL

Avoid horror films or graphic scenes of violence before bedtime, as this can increase your heart rate and your stress levels. If you like to watch TV before bed, watching a comedy show is a much better choice.

SHARE THE LOAD

Find a friend or trusted confidante to whom you can unload and get your stress out from time to time. You may need to do the same for them, too!

MAKE A TO-DO LIST

If you're stressed because you have so much going on and so many tasks to complete, make a to-do list for the next day before you go to bed, so you're less likely to lie awake worrying about everything you've got to get done. Prioritise the tasks on that list the next day and make sure you only do the important tasks first. Closing your mailbox and web browser for an hour or two while you complete the most important tasks will help you get them done more easily.

You've done it!

You look and feel great! So, how do you create permanent habits to make health and fitness part of your life for good?

You've done the workouts and followed the meal plan; now make sure you maintain your new figure. But how can you ensure the weight doesn't creep on again? The first thing to consider is how much better you feel. You've probably found being fitter has boosted your confidence in all areas of life. Here's how you can maintain that positive outlook – as well as the figure you've worked hard to achieve...

🍏 Make exercise part of your daily routine Do something active every day, even if it's just for 10 minutes. This could mean going for a walk at lunchtime or walking to the station rather than driving. The more active you are, the more calories you'll burn and also the more empowered you'll feel.

🍏 Set yourself a new goal Many people who lose weight do it to look good for a special occasion,

such as a wedding. The deadline they have gives them a focus, but once this passes, they relax and the weight can creep back on. Set yourself small, regular goals to stay motivated – anything from losing another half a stone to running your first 5K.

🍏 Make goals specific Choose a goal and make it **SMART**: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-framed. That way, you'll know when you've reached it. So, if you want to run 5K, for example, set a date you want to achieve it – perhaps eight or 10 weeks from now. Make sure it's achievable, in that you're giving yourself enough time to train. Each week, you'll see yourself

able to run further, which will motivate you.

🍏 Make it meaningful Your goal must mean something to you. And it must be *your* goal, not something that someone else has suggested would be good for you. If you want to complete your first triathlon, for instance, what would achieving this mean to you? How would it make your life better? For some, the motivation to get fit comes from knowing they will be able to run around with their kids. Make sure your goal means something to you.

🍏 Watch what you eat As the saying goes, you can't out-exercise a bad diet. If you train hard but eat too much, or eat the wrong foods, the weight will eventually creep back on. Stick to healthy choices (using the meal plans in this guide for ideas) and have a cheat day just once a week.



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