



Leigh Community Trust Online Support Hub

HEALTH & WELLBEING

A BLUEPRINT TO
A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER YOU

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INTRODUCTION

This programme has been created to give you the tools and guidance to make positive changes through nutrition, exercise and lifestyle strategies.

Our aim is to help you learn about making positive changes, keeping a healthy lifestyle, and raising your awareness about nutrition, exercise and sleep.

It seems that every time someone takes stock of their health, they feel the need to turn everything on its head; a 'new' diet; a 'new' way of eating; a 'new' secret exercise or exercise program, but there are only so many variables to play with.

Once you have found a healthy method of eating, exercising and relaxing that suits you, you don't need a new one. You keep it that way for life, occasionally shifting one or two elements to account for temporary or long-term lifestyle changes such as becoming a parent, coping with a bereavement or changing to a job which requires more (or less) physical effort.

People often ask:

“What is the best diet or exercise plan to follow?”

The answer:

“The one you will do (and stick to).”

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This programme has been created to give you the tools and guidance to make positive changes through nutrition, exercise and lifestyle strategies.

The four main modules are:

[Making Changes](#) (ctrl + click to jump to section)

[Healthy Eating](#) (ctrl + click to jump to section)

[Exercise](#) (ctrl + click to jump to section)

[Sleep](#) (ctrl + click to jump to section)

In the Appendices, you will find workbooks and handouts relating to each module. Relevant pages can be printed off, or you could take notes elsewhere in relation to each task. It is up to you to find the way which works best for you.

Throughout this ebook, you will also find links to some podcasts. These are available on all the usual platforms; Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Podbean and via your smart speaker by searching Maximum Edge CIC Podcast channel

There are also links to podcasts and relevant There are also some separate work sessions related to each module which you can find in the Appendices

MAKING CHANGES

Positive changes, such as those you are ready to make, can be challenging for yourself and for those around you. It is up to you to learn how to manage those challenges and stay focussed on the results you want. And this is where we can help.

Your main starting point is to think about WHY you want to make these changes. The four main reasons people want to change their lifestyle are:

1. FOR ENERGY

Energy is life, and dragging excess fat around drains your physical and emotional energy. The implications of this energy depletion cannot be overstated. Low energy costs you time, money, relationships, and most importantly, enjoyment of life.

Being tired all the time is awful, and being overweight makes you feel sluggish, sloppy, and sleepy. It's all bad. The solution is to focus on *eating for energy*. You will find all the information you need when you get to the next section "Healthy Eating".

2. FOR HEALTH

You already know...exercise and healthy eating helps to keep blood pressure at normal levels, helps with weight management, and overall well-being. Obesity figures are through the roof, NHS costs are up and people are more stressed out and unhappy with their bodies now more than ever.

You want to be in the best shape possible and look and feel your best, for yourself and for those around you. Health means OVERALL health. If you neglect your body, your confidence

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takes a dive, you don't feel as attractive, your energy levels will be next to zero and your mood will suffer big time.

3. FOR MONEY

People who exercise are more productive. The benefits of exercise extend far beyond fitting into your clothes from five years ago.

- Exercise keeps you alert and focused
- Exercise will kick up your energy level
- Exercise improves brain function
- Exercise can help you find your optimal work-life balance

4. FOR FAMILY

There are perks to be had for your family, from you staying fit and healthy.

- Keeping up with your kids, grandkids, nieces or nephews when they are bounding about in the house or outside.
- Keeping up with your spouse, friends, siblings or parents when they want to plan an activity together like walking, or even a 5K
- The changes you make now for a happier, healthier you could easily transform your relationships with others.

Whatever your reasons are for change, keep them as your motivation and remember them on the days when you are finding it hard.

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Before you move on to the next Module, you can now work through these two Appendices at your own pace

[Appendix 1 “Managing Change”](#)

[Appendix 2 “Unlocking Your Potential”](#)

This Appendix has an accompanying podcast*:

Unlocking Your Potential (40 minutes)

<https://www.podbean.com/eu/pb-bjdv6-8f8f96>

Additional Podcast: **Making Positive Changes** (38 minutes)

<https://www.podbean.com/eu/pb-8b4t2-9f9527>

Podcasts are available on Podbean, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and via your Smartspeaker on the *Maximum Edge CIC Podcast Channel*

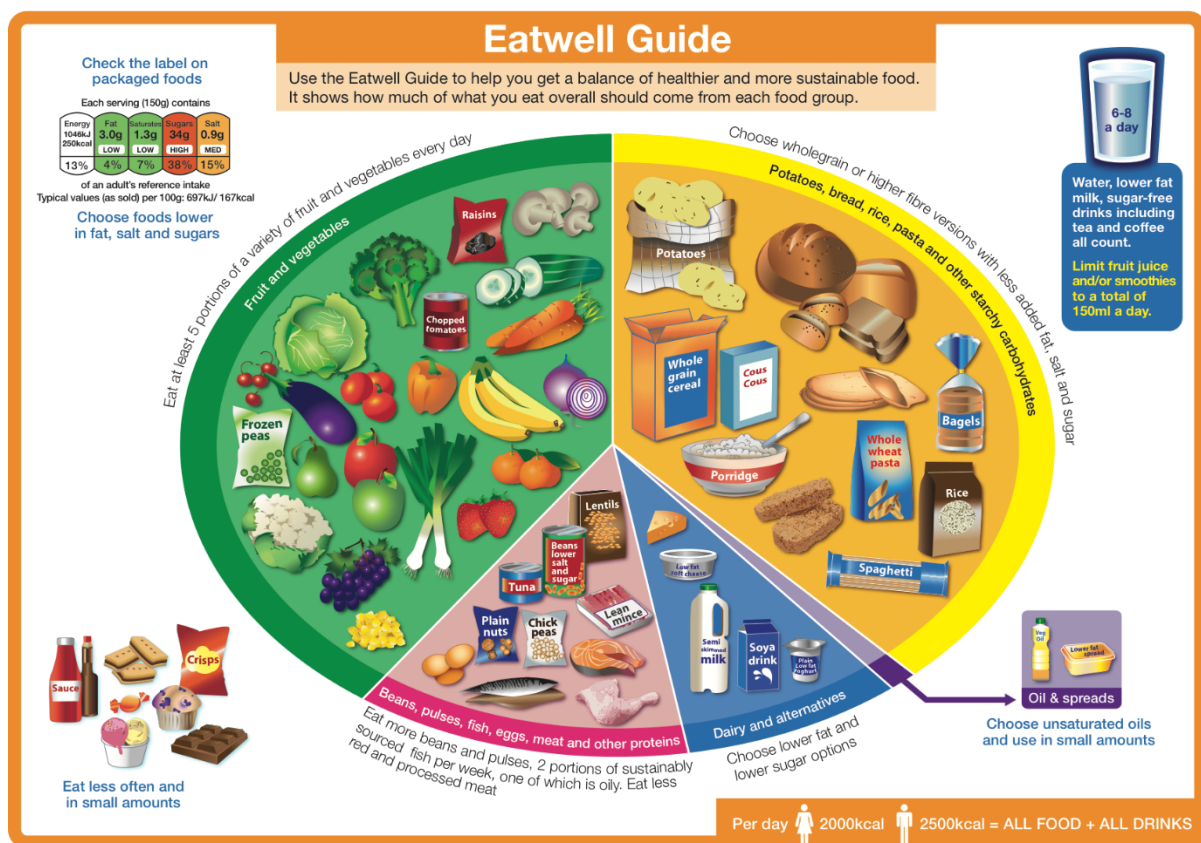
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HEALTHY EATING

Whatever you eat, think **whole natural foods**. If it didn't walk, swim or grow then it is likely not designed to be consumed by the human body

[APPENDIX 4](#) tells you all you need to know about each food type and where to get them from including proteins, carbohydrates and fats. There are also some useful tips on snacking.

But first, this Eatwell Guide shows you how much of what you eat overall should be coming from each food group:



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Once you understand the concepts of Healthy Eating, that's when you can start thinking about Exercise. Without **both** of these things, you will not see any positive changes in your overall health.

PORTIONS

So now you know a little more about why and what types of foods you should be eating for overall health and performance. But how can you be sure you're eating the right amounts without weighing and measuring your food all the time?

To reach and maintain a healthy weight, it's essential that you're eating proper portion sizes based on your individual goals. Just like any other form of nutrition planning -- including calorie counting - this serves as a starting point. So stay flexible and adjust your portions based on your hunger, fullness and other important goals.

For example: If you're having trouble gaining weight, you might add another cupped palm of carbohydrates or another thumb of fats. Likewise, if you're trying to lose weight but seem to have stalled, you might eliminate a cupped palm of carbohydrates or a thumb of fats at particular meals.

- Your palm determines your protein portions.
- Your fist determines your veggie portions.
- Your cupped hand determines your carb portions.
- Your thumb determines your fat portions.

For men:

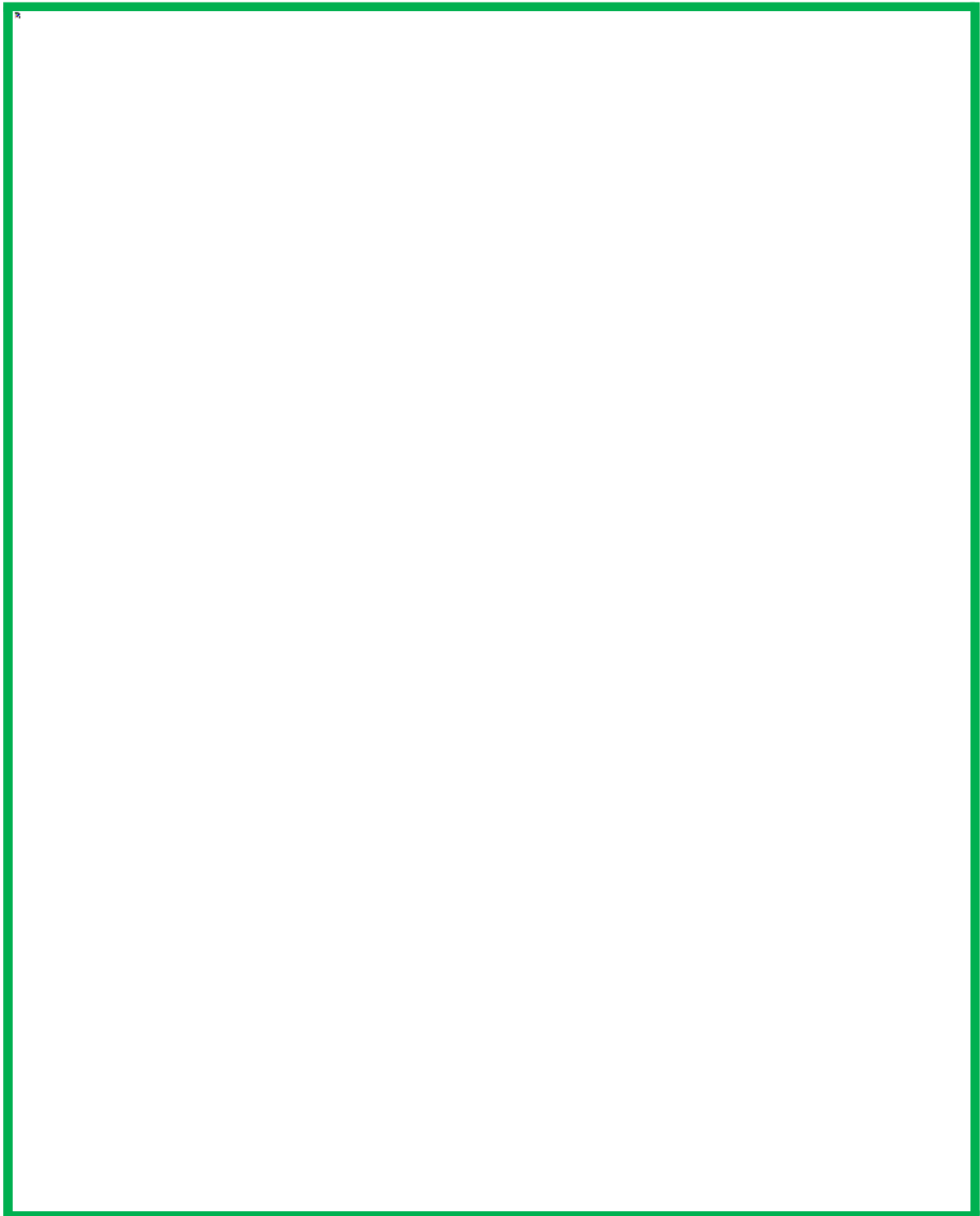
- 2 palms of protein dense foods with each meal.
- 2 fists of vegetables with each meal.
- 2 cupped hands of carb dense foods if including extra carbs.
- 2 entire thumbs of fat dense foods if including extra fats.

For women:

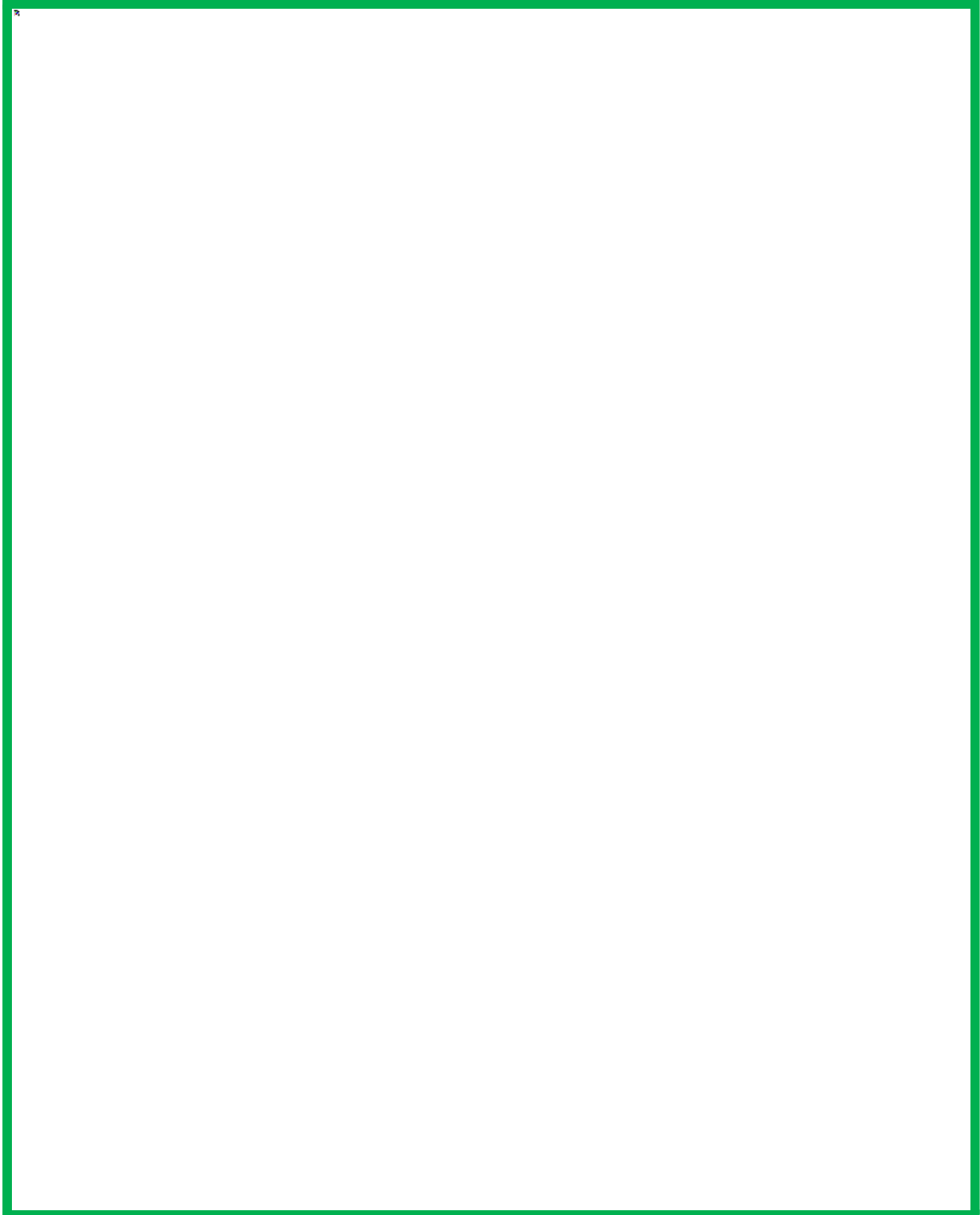
- 1 palm of protein dense foods with each meal;
- 1 fist of vegetables with each meal;
- 1 cupped hand of carb dense foods if including extra carbs;
- 1 entire thumb of fat dense foods if including extra fats.

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CALORIE COUNTING (WOMEN)



CALORIE COUNTING (MEN)



SIMPLE EXAMPLE OF A DAILY DIET

Breakfast:

2-4 scrambled eggs cooked in coconut oil with 2 portions of vegetables made up as an omelette, with an optional piece of fruit to finish

Mid-am snack (if needed):

Apple with 30g cashew nuts

Lunch:

Rice, vegetable and mackerel salad dressed with citrus juice and

Moroccan spices followed by an orange

Mid-pm snack if needed:

Yogurt with berries

Evening meal:

Large pork chop with mixed roasted vegetables (optional baked potato)

This is NOT a meal plan but simply a starting point on how to set up your diet. Your diet should have protein at all key meals (at least a fist full), always include fibre and vitamins (vegetables and fruit), and then have fat and or carbohydrate depending on what fuels you best. This type of structure would work well for most people depending on your goals.

EXERCISE

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

PHYSICAL

- Weight management - helps maintain a healthy weight.
- Improved body composition - how much fat and muscle you have.
- Improved metabolism - How many calories your body burns at rest.
- Improves cardiovascular fitness – enables a person to do more.
- Improves muscle strength and mobility - stronger body
- Helps reduce joint pain - Stronger bones and increased bone density
- Improves posture - *more balanced body*

PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Helps alleviate stress/anxiety/depression - increased natural endorphins
- Helps improve sleep - helps regulate sleep patterns
- Improved confidence - Improves body image and self-esteem.

Tips to get more active:

- Look to build activity into your day by exercising before or after work hours.
- Go for a walk on your lunch hour.
- Take the stairs not the lift etc
- Cycle to work.
- Complete more daily steps (aim to build up-to 10,000 daily)
- Plan some activity for the weekends with your family
- Make the activity fun, revisit an old hobby or sport.
- Involve family members and friends in getting more active

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

We should all aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 2 ½ hours of MODERATE activity. (e.g) 30mins per day, 5 days per week.

We should look to reduce the amount of time spent sitting for extended periods.

- 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate activity over a week
- 75 minutes (1.15mins) of vigorous activity over a week
- Muscle and strength exercises for at least 2 days per week.

SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES

A sedentary lifestyle is a modern problem. This type of living has been heavily influenced by the introduction of passive forms of entertainment, such as television, video games, smart phones and computer use. Along with such inactive types of entertainment, large numbers of adult workers have shifted from physical labour to office jobs. Most people own cars and walk less.

Implications

- Weight gain and obesity.
- Increased risk of heart disease.
- Increased risk of Diabetes.
- Increased chances of certain types of cancer.
- Reduced immune system and more chance of getting sick.

BEGINNER EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION

The F.I.T.T Principle is one of the foundations of exercise, it's simply a set of guidelines that helps you set up a workout routine to fit your goals and current fitness level

FITT stands for:

Frequency - How often you exercise.

Intensity - How hard you exercise.

Time - How long you exercise.

Type - What type of exercise you do.

Examples for a beginner trainee with a goal of general fitness:

Brisk walking –

- Frequency = 5-6 days per week
- Intensity = 55-75% of max heart rate
- Time = 30-40 minutes
- Type = Walking

Resistance Training

- Frequency = 2-3 days per week
- Intensity = light to moderate
- Time = 30-45 minutes
- Type = Weight training using gym machines

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EXAMPLE GYM ROUTINE

EQUIPMENT	BODY PART	EXERCISE	WEIGHT	REP	SET	LEVEL	SPEED	TIME
ROWING MACHINE	CV WARM UP	LIGHT ROWING	LOW INTENSITY RPE 9-11 50-60% MHR			5	20-25	TARGET 5 MINS
Mobility – Each mobility exercise can be performed for 10-15 repetitions as required Body weight squats / Arm circles / Hip circles / Leg swings forward and lateral								
LEG PRESS	LEGS	LEG PRESS		15	2		TEMPO 4-2	
LAT PULLDOWN MACHINE	BACK & ARMS	FRONT PULLDOWN		15	2		TEMPO 4-2	
CHEST PRESS MACHINE	CHEST AND ARMS	SEATED CHEST PRESS		15	2		TEMPO 4-2	
SEATED ROW MACHINE	BACK AND ARMS	SEATED ROW		15	2		TEMPO 4-2	
SEATED SHOULDER PRESS	SHOULDER AND ARMS	SEATED OVERHEAD PRESS		15	2		TEMPO 4-2	
LEG CURL MACHINE	LEGS	SEATED LEG CURL		15	2		TEMPO 4-2	
BIKE	CV	CYCLING	MEDIUM INTENSITY RPE 12-15 60-75% MHR					TARGET 10 MINS
X-TRAINER	CV	X TRAINING	MEDIUM INTENSITY RPE 12-15 60-75% MHR					TARGET 10 MINS
Cool down - 5 minutes light treadmill walking Stretch all major muscle groups holding each stretch for 15 seconds								

If you are new to exercise then this might be daunting for you so try our warm up routine to gauge your fitness level. This is an excellent way to get the body moving in the morning. This warm up is used in martial arts.

<https://youtu.be/UbO2s6kowUc>

SLEEP

Sleep is an important function to us as human beings just like breathing and eating. It is also essential for good overall health. It is vital for the maintenance of the mind and the body. Sleep

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allows the brain to regenerate, refresh and enables us to process information and reinforce memories which in turn prepares us for the day ahead and how well we function during that day.

For millions of years of human evolution sleep patterns remained in sync with the daily variation in light exposure. We rose with the sun, and went to sleep after sundown. This is what our bodies are adapted for.

Nowadays we expose ourselves to artificial lighting from tv's, computer screens and smart phones late into the night. We consume caffeine and alcohol which can all affect our natural circadian rhythm.

THE BENEFITS OF SLEEP

- Enhances memory and mental clarity
- Improves athletic performance
- Boosts mood and overall energy
- Improves immune function
- Increases stress tolerance
- Regulates serotonin and cortisol

LACK OF SLEEP

- Increases stress related hormones such as cortisol ("tired but wired")
- Increases hunger and appetite related hormones (cravings for sugary foods)
- Reduces metabolic rate (slows calorie burning and fat burning)
- Effects our ability to control blood sugar ("blood sugar rollercoaster")

WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE SLEEP?

1. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night
2. Avoid oversleeping at weekends (this encourages poor sleep patterns)
3. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
4. Get to bed early and wake up early if possible, to maximise sleeping whilst it is dark and waking in daylight hours.
5. magnesium can be used as a relaxant or grab some Epsom salts and have an Epsom salt bath before bed in warm, not hot water.
6. Sleep in a totally dark room - any amount of light can disrupt sleep
7. Avoid alcohol before bedtime - this sends you off to sleep, but disrupts REM sleep (Deep sleep)
8. Avoid caffeine late in the day.
9. Limit your exposure to artificial lighting late into the night.
10. Exercise on a regular basis.

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Before you move on to the final section, you can now work through these resources at your own pace

[Appendix 3 “Learning To Relax”](#)

Here is the link to the accompanying podcast

<https://www.podbean.com/eu/pb-eyjs-915ef2>

Podcasts are available on Podbean, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and via your Smartspeaker on the *Maximum Edge CIC Podcast Channel*

PUTTING EVERYTHING TOGETHER

It's important to remember that our health, well-being and fitness does not change overnight. You need patience and consistency with what you do. The information in this document gives you the tools to get started on your journey to better health and performance. But it is you and you alone who must make the necessary changes.

This stuff isn't rocket science, but you do have to get the basics right and apply them consistently over time.

So what are you waiting for....

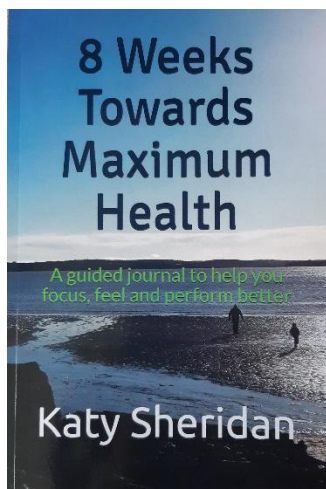
- Clear out your cupboards of anything you do not want to eat in your plan
- Buy a cool bag for packed lunches
- Buy food storage tubs - at least enough for 3 days
- Start a simple exercise program
- Improve your sleep routine
- Buy meat in bulk and make regular trips for vegetables

Start implementing some daily, healthy habits now. Could you...

- Keep a diary every day or every few days?
- Go for a 30-minute brisk walk 3 days per week?
- Increase the amount of walking you do each day?
- Increase your daily water intake to 1 litre
- Eat an extra portion of fruit and veg per day
- Go to bed an hour earlier Monday to Friday

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

8 Weeks Towards Maximum Health: *A guided journal to help you focus, feel and perform better*



This journal will guide you towards your ultimate goals. Included with the journal pages are some tried and tested tools to help you to plan, reflect, and ultimately set yourself achievable goals which you can then focus on throughout your 8 week journey.

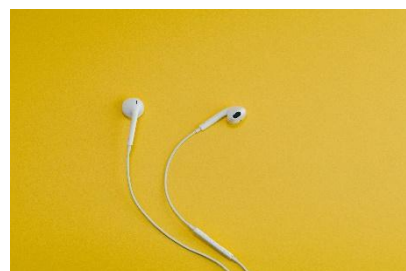
It is easy to get tied up thinking about all the things that need doing now and not giving yourself time to focus on what you really want.

Keeping a journal help us to stay focused and maintain a healthy mind with positivity at the forefront of our minds. Each week, there is space to write down what you want to achieve and also space to reflect on certain aspects of your life. With a review at 4 weeks and a reflection at 8 weeks, it is your kick-start to a Better You. It can be used as a standalone item or as part of a wider project from Maximum Edge CIC which includes podcasts and online resources.

Available to buy on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Weeks-Towards-Maximum-Health-journal/dp/1916350003/>

All recommended Podcasts (and many more) are available on Podbean, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and via your Smartspeaker on the *Maximum Edge CIC Podcast Channel*.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 [Managing Change](#) If you have or are struggling with change and uncertainty around transitioning to civilian life or ending a sports career or even applying for a new job or starting a new relationship this resource is for you make sure you check out the relevant video for each section

(Ctrl + Click to jump to section)

APPENDIX 2 [Unlocking Your Potential](#)

(Ctrl + Click to jump to section)

APPENDIX 3 [Learning to Relax](#)

(Ctrl + Click to jump to section)

APPENDIX 4 [How Much of What to Eat](#)

(Ctrl + Click to jump to section)

1. A process for managing change
2. Increasing your adaptability to change
3. What do I want to change?
4. Overcoming obstacles to change

1. A PROCESS FOR MANAGING CHANGE

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To examine the causes of change
- ❖ To explore a process for managing change
- ❖ To practise using the process

There are many different types of change, such as:

- Children leaving home
- Deciding to leave a job
- Getting married
- Growing older
- Coping with an illness
- Having a new boss
- Moving house
- Starting a new job
- Splitting up from a partner
- Having children
- Getting a promotion
- Adapting to new technology
- Becoming more assertive
- Losing someone you love

Some changes are forced upon us. Others are changes we have chosen to make.

Changes can be good or bad depending on the person, situation, and timing.

ACTIVITY: Write down at least one change you are experiencing at present or want to make. Keep this note for use later on.

ACTIVITY: Handout 1

Using the example you have identified, start to think about the change(s) you have identified to illustrate the various stages of the Process of Change and how it fits in. Which stage are you at now?

ACTIVITY: Handout 2

Start working on completing the form for the change you identified earlier.

Homework

Complete the forms in full **and** start (or continue) putting them into action.

A Process for Managing Change: HANDOUT 1

STAGE 1: Awareness that you want to make a change or change is happening

Sometimes awareness is gradual. For example, you begin to feel you are not happy in a job or relationship. You have become bored through lack of challenge or attention. Or you may realise there is no future in the situation for you. At other times, the change might be inevitable like ageing, the company you work for going bust, or an accident. It might be a habit you want to change such as unhealthy eating.

STAGE 2: Accept responsibility. Acknowledge and state your desired outcome

YOU are responsible for managing the changes in your life. Acknowledge that a change is needed or happening and state what outcome you want from it. This may be to have a closer relationship, become independent, be more assertive and so on.

STAGE 3: What might hinder me making these changes?

Consider all the things that might stand in the way of you making the changes you want. Will the changes affect other people? Do you lack some of the skills needed? Will there be a cost?

STAGE 4: What will help me make the changes?

Are you well motivated? Who will support you? What will be the benefits to you and others?

STAGE 5: Ideas and options to enable me to make the changes

List all the things you will need to do and the various options you have. Consult with friends or professionals who might come up with ideas you haven't thought about. Write down all the ideas, no matter how silly they may seem. Think about what might hinder you and include all ideas on overcoming these.

STAGE 6: Create a plan to manage the changes

The plan may be simple or more complex depending on the change. Think about actions you can take and the different options open to you to help you make the change. Can you break the actions down into a step-by-step process? Each step should be a challenge but realistically achievable for you. That way you will build confidence in your ability with the success of each step.

STAGE 7: State what you will gain from completing the plan

Knowing what you will benefit from the plan will help motivate you to carry it out and maintain progress. In moments of weakness you can remind yourself about the benefits.

STAGE 8: Carry out the plan

The plan will be useless unless you actually carry it out. If you have made it practical and used achievable steps, you will feel that you have taken control of the situation and that it will succeed.

STAGE 9: Regularly review the plan and make adjustments

All plans are projections in to the future and they do not always go exactly as predicted. At set intervals, reflect on how things are progressing. Have there been any setbacks? Perhaps the steps are not challenging enough? What adjustments need to be made to make it work better?

A Process for Managing Change: HANDOUT 2

STAGE 1: What has made me aware that change is happening or I need to make changes?

STAGE 2: Accept responsibility for managing the change, acknowledge and state the desired change outcome

STAGE 3: What might hinder me making these changes?

STAGE 4: What will help me make the changes?

STAGE 5: Ideas and options to enable me to make the changes

STAGE 6: Create a plan to manage the changes

STEP 1 To be completed by (date):

STEP 2 To be completed by (date):

STEP 3 To be completed by (date):

STEP 4 To be completed by (date):

STEP 5 To be completed by (date):

STEP 6 To be completed by (date):

A Process for Managing Change: HANDOUT 2 (continued)

Managing CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

STAGE 7: State what you will gain from completing the plan

STAGE 8: Carry out the plan

STAGE 9: Regularly review the plan and make adjustments

Review date:	Progress I have made so far:	Any adjustments I need to make, to succeed

2. Increasing your adaptability to change

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To be able to change behaviour when required
- ❖ To be able to act after a conscious decision rather than habit
- ❖ To encourage trying new ways to deal with change

Increasing behavioural adaptability means having the ability to decide on the next course of action rather than acting out of habit or instinct. The more adaptable people are, the easier it is to change their behaviour to suit circumstances of any situation. Adaptability tends to make people more positive, less stressed, happier with life and less reliant on will power to make changes.

ACTIVITY: Handout 1

Using Handout 1, self-assess yourself *honestly* by ticking the True / False column against each statement.

ACTIVITY: Handout 2

Using Handout 2, list your current habits and 'flexible options'

ACTIVITY: Handout 3

Using Handout 3, make a list of new things you could choose to do and when you could do them

Homework:

Keep a record of how you feel after you have carried out the changed habit.

Highlight problems which can be reflected on and solved

Increasing your adaptability to change: Handout 1

Which of the questions below are true or false about you?	True	False
I stick to things I know best		
I dislike trying new things		
I don't see any reason to make changes		
I'm set in my ways, if people don't like it too bad		
There is nothing I really need to change		
I don't need to develop or try new things		
I don't change much		

How many true answers? ____

How many false answers? ____

(The more true answers you ticked, the more difficult you are likely to find it to change your habits, and the greater the need to develop flexibility in your behaviour. However, being aware of this is your positive first step)

Increasing your adaptability to change: Handout 2

Current Habits	Flexible Options
Examples: Too much TV, Always quiet in a group Criticise others Never organise anything Wait for others to make contact	Examples: Go for a walk Make two comments in a group Praise someone each day Arrange to meet a friend Ring a friend for a chat

Increasing your adaptability to change: Handout 3

New things to try	When I will do it
<p>Examples: Read a different paper each week Watch a different TV programme Sit in a different place Try a new sport Go to a different supermarket Make a list of ambitions Have a go at something I don't think I'm good at eg art</p>	<p>Examples: Next week Saturday Next staff meeting Sign up on Friday Friday Monday morning Next new term</p>

3. What do I want to change?

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To identify appropriate areas of life for individuals to make changes
- ❖ To generate suggestions for making changes
- ❖ To explore the benefits of making the changes

It is often difficult to know what are the right changes to make. Part of the problems is knowing exactly what it is that you want to change before you change it – like looking at a jigsaw and working out the bits which fit and those which don't.

From this list, choose ONE area of life to work on during this session:

Health and fitness Relationships Social life Work
Home and family Other _____

ACTIVITY: Handout 1

Ensure you are sitting comfortably and take a moment to relax and really think about and look at what your dream or ambition is

Using Handout 1, answer the questions honestly for the **one** area of life you chose.

ACTIVITY: Handout 2

Now using Handout 2, complete the Desired Changes in the **one** area of life you chose.

Then think of the benefits of these changes and write them down.

Homework: Handouts 1 and 2

Carry out the same process for the remaining areas of your life, then look at your complete list and prioritise the changes you will make.

Handout 2 (continued) will help you to reflect on the changes you envisage across your whole life

What do I want to change? Handout 1

What do I truly desire?

What is important?

What is not important and I can let go of?

Who or what is involved?

What would life be like if it happened? How would it feel?

Does it feel right for both you, and those around you?

What emotions are you feeling?

What do I want to change? Handout 2

Complete for each area of your life

Desired Changes	Priority	Benefits
Health and fitness		
Social life		
Home and family		
Relationships		
Work		
Other		

What do I want to change? Handout 2 (continued)

Questions to ask yourself:

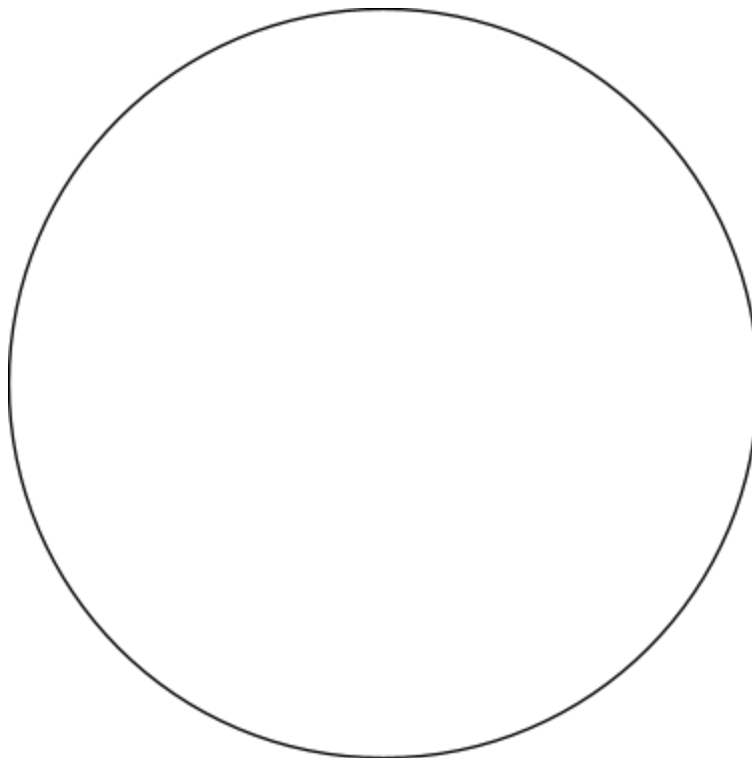
1. Do all the areas balance?
2. Am I concentrating too much on one area?
3. Am I neglecting one area?
4. Are all the areas how I want them to be?
5. Will the changes bring all the areas into line with how I want them to be?

Now you can EITHER:

Picture all the different areas in your mind how you envisage them. Do they balance and fit together perfectly like the pieces of a jigsaw? Do any not quite fit? Are any pieces too big or too small?

OR

Divide up this circle like a pie chart with each area of your life represented by one piece of the pie. Some slices will be bigger or smaller than others. Is **this** how you envisage it?



4. Overcoming obstacles to change

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To explore obstacles to making changes
- ❖ To explore a method of planning to overcome them
- ❖ To demonstrate the value of consulting others

Think back to a change you have made or was inevitable. What was the change and what were the obstacles? They may include:

You didn't know if you could do it	You lacked confidence
You didn't know if you could afford it	You kept thinking it would be a disaster
Your partner did not want you to do it	You had lots of negative thoughts

These are all normal obstacles either from your own thoughts or from others around you, when faced with change or doing something new. Overcoming these obstacles depends on how we respond to them.

ACTIVITY: Handout 1 (example and blank)

Read through the examples then identify a realistic change or goal you would like to make. List all the obstacles that could interfere with you adapting to it or achieving it successfully. Do **not** complete the My Plan section.

ACTIVITY / HOMEWORK: Handout 1

Give Handout 1 to someone else and ask them to study the changes required, obstacles identified, then give them time to complete the My Plan section on how to plan to overcome them. You might choose a friend, colleague, family member. You might choose to ask more than one person.

It can be very powerful to hear suggestions about your change from someone else. It can help you to overcome your obstacles. Were there suggestions in the Plan which you would not have thought of yourself?

Now review the My Plan section, make adaptations to it, keeping the good ideas and adding your own.

Put the plan into action, using a step by step approach if required.

Overcoming obstacles to change: Handout 1 EXAMPLE

Name: Frances Jones
Change or goal I am setting: Go to a social event once a week on my own
Obstacles to achieving: Fear of being on my own Not knowing anyone to talk to Unsure how I will cope Negative thoughts Lacking motivation Getting tense and panicking
My plan is to: Acknowledge fears List benefits so I can keep reminding myself Keep repeating to myself 'I can do this' Practise breathing exercises so I can do them if I start to panic Approach people and say "Hi, I'm new here, my name is Frances, are you a regular?" to start a conversation and get to know people

Overcoming obstacles to change: Handout 1

Name:
Change or goal I am setting:
Obstacles to achieving:
My plan (to be completed initially by others, then adapted by you):

1. Identifying what is important
2. Increasing positive energy
3. Taking stock of your skills
4. The freedom of boundaries

5. IDENTIFYING WHAT IS IMPORTANT

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To acknowledge what is important to you in your life.
- ❖ To recognise what you value and what makes you feel good
- ❖ To improve self-awareness

TASK: Think back to when you were younger, or a child. Think of something you wanted to do or be when you were older. Take a couple of minutes then share that dream with the group or in pairs.

ACTIVITY: My Dream Life (Handouts 1 and 2)

Think about and share some dreams you have *now*, for example:

- ❖ Open my own business
- ❖ Gain a promotion
- ❖ Volunteer
- ❖ Help others more
- ❖ Re-educate myself

Complete Handout 1, filling in the clouds, thinking about your **dream life**. What are your ambitions and hopes? What would you like to be doing? Think about difference aspects of your life such as:

- ❖ Work
- ❖ Social life
- ❖ Family life
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ Where you are

Complete Handout 2

You may now be able to see from both Handouts:

- ❖ What you value in life
- ❖ What is important to you
- ❖ How you want your future life to be

Unl^ocking Your Potential

APPENDIX 2

Are you surprised by what you have written down? How often do you spend time reflecting on how your life is and how you would like it to be? Is it important to have a dream? Why?

TASK: Complete these sentences:

A dream I have

is:.....
.....

What is important about this

is:.....

HOMEWORK: Take **one step** towards your dream. This might be sharing your dream with your partner/friend/parents, doing some research about it, working out an action plan of how to do it, looking at how you manage your time to ensure you have enough time to do what you want.

Identifying what is important HANDOUT 1

“My Dream Life”

The form consists of eight large, empty cloud-shaped outlines arranged in two vertical columns of four. Each cloud is a simple black outline with a scalloped top edge and a flat bottom edge, resembling a stylized cloud. They are intended for the user to write their dream life details inside them.

Identifying what is important HANDOUT 2

Circle the number which indicates how important or unimportant each thing is to you. You could add additional things you value and make you feel good in the blank spaces.

	Not important ←————→ Important				
	1	2	3	4	5
Independence	1	2	3	4	5
Status	1	2	3	4	5
Being creative and using my imagination	1	2	3	4	5
Risk taking	1	2	3	4	5
Helping other people	1	2	3	4	5
Friendships	1	2	3	4	5
Security	1	2	3	4	5
Challenge	1	2	3	4	5
Love	1	2	3	4	5
Learning	1	2	3	4	5
Routine	1	2	3	4	5
Physical challenge	1	2	3	4	5
Being respected	1	2	3	4	5
Having contact with other people	1	2	3	4	5
Family life	1	2	3	4	5
Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
Having fun and enjoying life	1	2	3	4	5
Having pleasant surroundings	1	2	3	4	5
Promotion	1	2	3	4	5
Personal values	1	2	3	4	5
Making decisions	1	2	3	4	5
Being able to do things I want to do	1	2	3	4	5
Having time alone	1	2	3	4	5
Recognition	1	2	3	4	5
Variety	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5

6. Increasing positive energy

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To explore barriers to positive energy
- ❖ To discover personal energy drains
- ❖ To develop a system to increase positive energy

Most people are conditioned to accept life as it is, and they should accept the best of their situation. They run around sorting out problems and dealing with things they would rather not deal with. They may feel they have no choice, and it is easier to leave things as they are than risk trying something new. Examples are cleaning up after others, or putting up with your own lack of confidence (which becomes the reason not to apply for a new job).

If it was just one thing it might not be so bad, but most people tolerate lots of things – in ourselves and from others. Time is spent ‘putting up’ with situations. We think this is normal and we accept these *energy drains*.

ACTIVITY: Think about and share some of the things you put up with from yourself and from others. What could you do to stop accepting the situation? For example:

Put up with from others	Put up with from myself
A teenage daughter who never says thank you	Not decorating the kitchen
Always doing what my partner/friend wants	Not making time to contact a sick friend
A friend who I support never supports <i>me</i>	Wasting time watching TV that bores me

ACTIVITY: Increasing Positive Energy (Handout 1)

Using the handout, write down five things you put up with that you would like to change. In pairs or the group, discuss ideas about how you could stop accepting the situations. Complete the Handout with the solution which would work best *for you*, and give yourself deadlines.

TASK: State out loud to the group or in pairs, the first thing you are going to change.

How? And When?

HOMEWORK: Carry out at least one of your chosen changes. Your confidence will grow with each task you achieve. You will feel your energy begin to grow in a positive way and be able to do what you want to do. Maybe keep a diary, or notes on your phone about how you feel after you achieve each goal and work your way through them.

When you have reached your five goals, sit down and write out five more!

Keep using this process when you feel that energy is being drained away. Use your energy in a positive way.

Increasing positive energy HANDOUT 1

Things I put up with that I want to change	What I will do to stop accepting the situation	I will carry this out on (date):
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

7. TAKING STOCK OF YOUR SKILLS

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To explore personal skills
- ❖ To discover which skills will help achieve personal goals or dreams
- ❖ To plan to develop additional skills needed to reach your goals or dreams

We all play different roles in our lives. You might be a friend, gardener, cook, peacekeeper, motivator, dog-walker, parent, accountant, manager, cleaner.

TASK: State something that you have a talent for and are good at doing. It might be:

- ❖ Organising things
- ❖ Cooking
- ❖ Cleaning
- ❖ Keeping a diary
- ❖ Cheering people up
- ❖ Taking responsibility at work
- ❖ Volunteering

ACTIVITY (Handouts 1 and 2)

With the group or in pairs, discuss all the roles you have in life. Then each person should make their own list on Handout 1.

Now choose one role from your list which you really enjoy. Discuss and write down on Handout 1 all the skills you have developed to fulfil that role.

Using Handout 2, write down a goal, ambition or dream that you have and the skills you have discovered that will help you achieve it.

TASK: Share your goal, ambition or dream in pairs or with the group, the skills you have discovered you have to help you achieve it, and any new skills you may need to develop.

HOMEWORK: Repeat the exercise for each of the roles you wrote on Handout 1. As you complete this for each role you play, you will discover additional skills you already have, which will help you achieve your goal, ambition or dream.

Taking stock of your skills HANDOUT 1

We all play different roles in our lives. You might be a friend, gardener, cook, peacekeeper, motivator, dog-walker, parent, accountant, manager, cleaner.

In small groups, discuss all the roles you have in life, and each person make their own list.

Roles I have in life:	
1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

Now choose **one** role from your list which you really enjoy, and discuss and write down all the skills you have developed to fulfil that role.

Role	Skills I use to fulfil this role are:

Taking stock of your skills HANDOUT 2

Write down a goal, ambition or dream that you have and the skills you have discovered that will help you achieve it.

My goal, ambition or dream is:

The skills I already have to help me achieve this are:

New skills I need to develop are:

8. THE FREEDOM OF BOUNDARIES

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To understand what boundaries are
- ❖ To explore personal boundaries
- ❖ To set personal boundaries

Boundaries are the rules we all set so that other people do not harm us. Discuss with the group:

- What are we protecting?
- What happens when we have weak boundaries or none at all?
- What happens when we have strong boundaries?

ACTIVITY: Complete Handout 1, using the first examples as a guide

As difficult as it may feel, at some point, you *will* need to sit down with the person involved with the boundary issue, and talk through what you feel is unacceptable behaviour and what you want to happen instead.

ACTIVITY: Working in pairs, choose **one** unacceptable behaviour and use role play to create the scene of what you would like to happen, discussing and explaining what you want with the person involved.

To ensure boundaries are maintained, you should be aware of ‘warning triggers’ that anticipate that the boundary is close to being challenged. This gives an opportunity to remind the other person involved about the boundary.

ACTIVITY: Complete Handout 2, using the first examples as a guide.

State to the group, or in pairs, a chosen boundary, the warning trigger and what you will do when the boundary is challenged.

HOMEWORK: Use the processes we have introduced to decide on boundaries you want to set, and begin working on them one at a time.

The freedom of boundaries HANDOUT 2

Person	Boundary	Warning trigger	What I will do
Example: Sister	Belittling my ideas	Not listening	State “you are not listening, you’re watching the TV. Please turn it off and listen to what I have to say”
Example: Partner	Taking advantage	Saying he has arranged to do something when he has agreed to look after our daughter	State that he needs to discuss it with me before committing himself to anything else, or he will have to cancel

1. Finding time to relax
2. Relaxing the body
3. Relaxing the mind
4. Using calming self-talk

1. FINDING TIME TO RELAX

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To discover how much time individuals spend relaxing
- ❖ To examine how leisure and relaxation time is used
- ❖ To explore different ways to relax

Task: How do you relax?

Spend five minutes thinking about the things you do to relax. It could be watching TV, reading, spending time with someone, drawing, gardening, listening to music etc.

- What does having fun and relaxation time mean to you?
- How do you feel if you have nothing to do?
- How much leisure time do you think you should have?
- Do you make the best use of the time you currently have?

Task: What is out there?

Write down, without thinking too hard, all the leisure time activities you can think of. Include those you currently do, but also those that other people do. They should include active, passive, self-development, indoor and outdoor activities, lone activities, group activities, challenging, easy, creative, mundane activities. Write them all down.

Using this list, write down the top ten activities you would like to continue to do, or would like to try.

Activity: Handout 1

Using the examples on Handout 1, draw a pie-chart of how you currently spend your time and how you would like to spend your time.

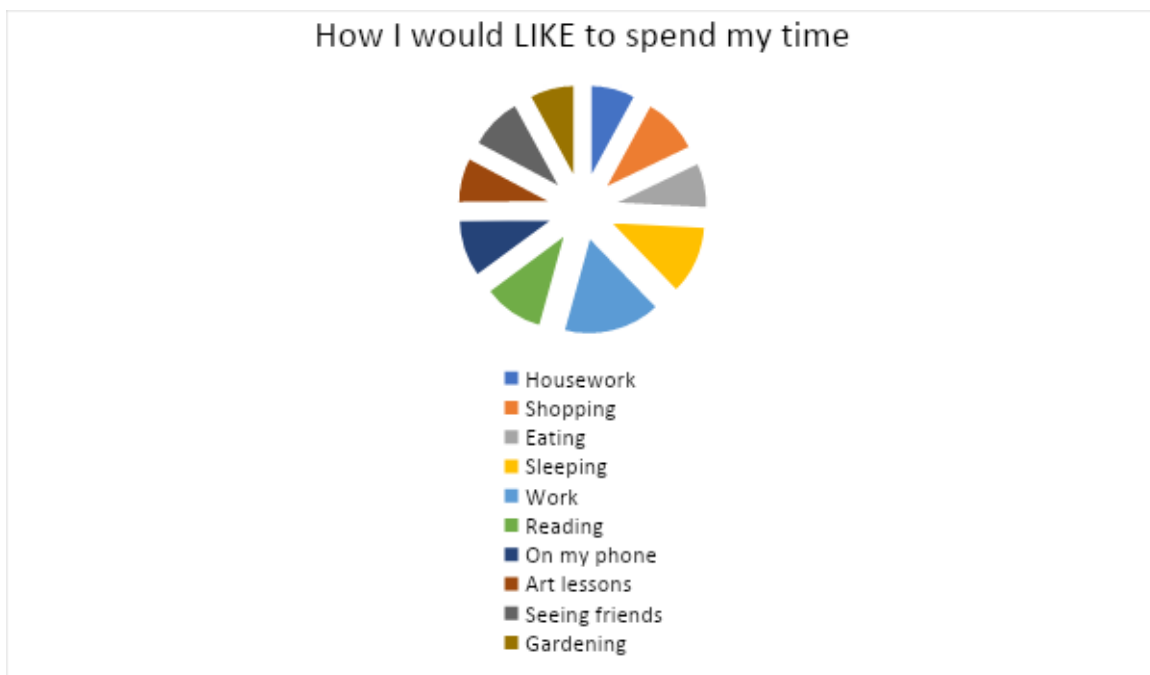
From your 'ideal' pie-chart, you will be able to see how you would like to use your leisure time. What changes can you make which will enable you to get closer to this ideal?

Activity: Handout 2

Using Handout 2, write down the changes you would like to make.

Homework: Start to implement one of these changes. When you have succeeded, move on to the next and so on.

Finding time to relax: HANDOUT 1





Finding time to relax: HANDOUT 2

Changes I would like to make to how I use my time are:

The change I have decided to make first is:

How I will do this is:

When I will do this is:



2. Relaxing the body*

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To understand the cause of physical tension
- ❖ To become aware of physical tension building
- ❖ To practise methods of relieving physical tension

*For this session, you will need access to, or you will first have downloaded our Podcast “*Ten Minute Relaxation with Yoga Steve*”. This can be found for free by searching iTunes, Spotify or Podbean.

Do not listen to it yet

Physical tension comes from our “fight or flight” mechanism in the body, when the body reacts to *perceived* danger. It prepares the body to deal with danger and cope with vigorous exertion like fighting or running. Breathing becomes faster and shallower, the heart rate increases and blood pressure rises. Muscles become primed for action and tense up, ready to move quickly.

In modern times this response is no longer the right response in most stressful situations such as a job interview, an argument, a difference of opinion, giving a presentation etc. However, some people find themselves in the fight or flight mode most of the time. It is this which has a negative effect on our bodies long-term, and causes physical tension and can lead to stress-related illnesses.

Activity – Take a moment to stop and really think about how your body is feeling *now*.

One way of relieving physical tension is to take up an active activity like swimming, cycling or walking. This helps to avoid physical tension from building up. It will also help:

- Promote a sense of well-being
- Build confidence
- Promote better general health

Activity: Handout 1

Carefully read through Handout 1 “Controlling Breathing” and have a go at controlling your breathing to bring it under control.

Activity: Podcast “*Ten Minute Relaxation with Yoga Steve*”

This relaxation can be carried out lying on the floor, or sitting upright with your legs and feet slightly apart. Please try to remove all possibilities of distractions before you begin, and do **not** listen if you are driving or operating machinery.

Listen to the full relaxation podcast now and feel your body completely relax.

Homework - Practise breathing control and methods of relaxation. Consider a regular physical activity you can start to help control your physical tension. Find out all the details, decide when you are going to start, and start it.



Relaxing the body: HANDOUT 1

Controlling Breathing

- Sitting down, with your feet hip distance apart, place one hand on your stomach
- Breathe in through your nose to the silent count of four, allowing your stomach to swell
- Breathe out gently through the mouth to the count of six, allowing the stomach to return to normal
- Count to two and inhale again
- Try to get a rhythm going, counting to four on the in-breaths and to six as you exhale. You are aiming to take about 8-12 breaths per minute.

At first this will feel uncomfortable and as though you are not getting enough air. However, with practise, this slower rate of breathing will feel comfortable, and also make you more aware of what your normal breathing rate is.

When you feel anxious, you will be able to bring your breathing back under control.

NOTE: A quick method to relieve muscle tension and achieve a state of relaxation in an emergency, taking about *one minute* is to:

- Take a deep breath in and slowly exhale
- As you breathe out, imagine the tension and stress draining away when you exhale
- Repeat twice more



3. Relaxing the mind

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To understand the need for mental relaxation
- ❖ To raise awareness of mental and emotional tension
- ❖ To practise a method of relieving mental tension

People are often able to relax in their spare time when they are doing something they enjoy or a hobby. However, they find it difficult to relieve tension when it starts building or they are in a situation that is difficult to handle. Relaxing or calming the mind quickly can be particularly difficult.

Activity: Handout 1

Complete the questionnaire on Handout 1, then study your answers to see what you can learn about yourself from your answers.

Visualisation uses imagination to calm the mind down. You can use the imagination to create scenes and sensations that you find relaxing and calming. You use imagined smell, taste, touch, sight and hearing.

Activity: Handout 2

Spend a moment to think of a scene or setting where you feel calm. It could be a beach, a forest, at home in your garden, swimming. Anywhere that you feel happy and relaxed. Now using Handout 2, your aim is to feel relaxed and calm within one or two minutes. The first couple of times you do this, you may need to use the handout, but after that, you will be able to do this exercise without it.

Homework

Practise using the visualisation technique. Experiment with different scenes, but always ones which make you feel happy and relaxed



Relaxing the Mind: Handout 1

Tension symptoms	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Do you worry constantly?			
Do you feel anxious?			
Do you feel you can't cope?			
Do you experience mood swings?			
Do you like everything to be perfect?			
Do you feel irritated?			
Do you worry about making decisions?			
Are you depressed?			
Do you take things personally?			
Do you have panic attacks?			
Do you get things out of perspective?			
Do you feel trapped?			
Do you feel inadequate?			
Do you have relationship problems?			
Do you withdraw from socialising?			
Do you feel overwhelmed by life?			
Do you feel angry?			
Do you take things too seriously?			
Do you feel that things are hopeless?			

The more 'frequently' boxes you ticked, the more likely you are to feel mental and emotional tension (which leads to physical tension)





Relaxing the Mind: Handout 2

Visualisation

- Sitting down, feet hip distance apart, focus on your breathing. Ensure it is even and normal.
- You may feel that you want to lower your eyes to the ground or close them completely.
- Think about – and feel – all your muscles relaxing. Imagine all the tension draining, flowing down your body and out of your feet in to the ground.
- Think about your imaginary scene and concentrate on it. Feel every sensation, including the sounds, the smells, how you can feel a breeze on your skin for example. All the time you are doing this, breathe naturally.
- Allow calmness to take over. If you are distracted, don't worry. Let the thoughts drift in and out of your mind. You might want to silently tell them that you will let them back in later.
- Continue to focus on everything you can see, smell, feel, taste and hear, until you feel calm.
- When you are calm, let the scene fade away, and bring your attention back to the present moment.
- Important: Remain seated for one more minute, with your eyes open, and your full attention in the present moment, before you get up and start moving around again.

You have just completed your first visualisation!

The scene which you use can be changed and experimented with to find the one(s) which work best for you.

Regular practise helps to conjure up the imagined scene quickly when you need to and calm the mind. This might be at the dentist, a job interview, if anger is building up, or any other time when mental or emotional tension is building up.



4. Using calming self-talk

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- ❖ To learn to use calming self-talk to avoid tension and anxiety building
- ❖ To combine calming self-talk with other tension relieving methods
- ❖ To work out individual plans to avoid tension and anxiety building in difficult situation

Self-talk is what we say ourselves in our minds. The thoughts can be helpful or unhelpful. They can be the trigger that leads to physical and mental tension. The aim is to stop the unhelpful thoughts from triggering tension and anxiety and replace them with helpful and calming self-talk that enables us to stay calm, achieve what we want and prevent tension from building. It is useful when you know you are going to be confronted with a situation. If you practise, you when start using it automatically when a situation crops up.

Activity

- Think about the most tense person you know. What do they look like? What kind of things do they say? What is their posture like? Their breathing? Is their lifestyle healthy? How do you feel when you are with them?
- Now think about situations which make you tense, anxious or angry. How do you feel before, during and after these situations?

Activity: Handouts 1 and 2

Handout 1 is the completed example of how to deal with a situation which creates tension, before, during and after the situation. After reading through Handout 1, think of a situation which causes you tension and use the blank copy, Handout 2, to prepare for that situation in the future

When you have completed Handout 2, think about how you feel now, about facing that same situation.

Activity

As opposed to the most tense person you know, now think of the most *relaxed* person you know. What do they look like? What kind of things do they say? What is their posture like? Their breathing? Is their lifestyle healthy? How do you feel when you are with them?

Homework

Put your plan from Handout 2 in place

Work out a plan (either in writing or in your head) for other situations which cause you tension.



Using calming self-talk: Handout 1 (Example)

Situation: Ask my brother to look after my Mum who is ill, for a weekend, while I have a short break. He always says he is too busy and it's inconvenient. I hate confronting him because it ends in an argument and I get very angry and upset.

Before the event

Unhelpful self-talk	Calming self-talk I can use
I can't do this I will lose my temper There will be an argument I'm no good at this type of thing	I can work out a plan to handle this I can manage the situation I can control my temper There will be no need for an argument
Physical and mental relaxation methods I can use:	
Before I leave home, practise physical tense-and-release exercises Visualise myself calmly dealing with the situation Just before I got in his flat, do by breathing exercise and imagine my favourite calming image	

During the event

Unhelpful self-talk	Calming self-talk I can use
He will wind me up He's doing it again He doesn't care about me or Mum This is hopeless I could hit him I'm going to cry	Stay calm, stay relaxed Remain calm. You have nothing to prove Don't jump to conclusions. Look for positives Slow down, take a deep breath and relax. He is not being reasonable but keep calm and make your point confidently Getting angry or upset won't help. Take a deep breath. He must be really unhappy himself.
Physical and mental relaxation methods I can use:	
Watching my breathing and keeping it under control. Let my calming picture flash into my mind	

After the event

Unhelpful self-talk	Calming self-talk I can use
Just as I expected I'm on my own in this I can't cope if I don't get a break What am I going to do?	That wasn't as bad as I thought. I stayed in control. I made my point without getting angry or crying. He won't look after her but will pay half towards a carer. I'm improving



Using calming self-talk: Handout 2 (Blank)

Situation:

Before the event

Unhelpful self-talk	Calming self-talk I can use
Physical and mental relaxation methods I can use:	

During the event

Unhelpful self-talk	Calming self-talk I can use
Physical and mental relaxation methods I can use:	

After the event

Unhelpful self-talk	Calming self-talk I can use

PROTEIN

High protein intake is vital for an active individual, helping facilitate muscular recovery from training and exercise.

In general, I recommend consuming as much as 2 grams per kg of body mass. Even for those who aren't really undergoing a training regime, a high protein intake has a host of health benefits and provides a greater feeling of fullness than any other dieting approach.

Even if you aren't planning on lifting weights (though it is highly recommended that you do, regardless of your goal and age), an intake of 1.4kg per kilo of body weight is a good starting point.

With all foods, it's important to assess how you feel eating certain ratios of food. If you feel better eating more protein, feel free to do so. There is no issue with eating a high amount of protein if that's what makes you feel good and perform at your best.

Protein should be consumed 3-5 times per day to optimise muscle repair and growth. Protein contains roughly 4 calories per gram.

IDEAL PROTEIN SOURCES

- **Meat & Eggs** - I always recommend buying meat which is local, free range and from somewhere with high animal welfare standards. Toxins from animal feeding practices are stored in fat, so if you *are* consuming lower quality meat, opt for 'lean' meat choices and cuts, and add fats to your meals from other sources i.e olive oil, nuts, avocado, dairy etc.
- **Dairy** - Low fat is not necessarily a bad thing. Semi-skimmed milk and low fat Greek yoghurt are handy protein sources (just check the calories as some products add sugars which ramps calories back up), but whole dairy will have the greatest nutrient profiles, and the research shows the most benefit for recovery and health when used in this manner so if calories allow, opt for full fat wherever possible.
- **Pulses** - They tend to be viewed as a carbohydrate source if not a vegetarian or vegan, but they can be a great source of protein in your diet too. Chickpeas, kidney and black beans can provide fibre, carbohydrates and protein very effectively, and are a very cheap food to purchase in cans or dried.
- **Quinoa** - one of the few vegetarian sources that contain all nine essential amino acids required for growth and repair in the proper amounts – quinoa can be used as a breakfast cereal, in a salad or added into hot dishes.
- **Tofu and Quorn** - great vegan sources of protein for those who are avoiding animal products
- **Protein powder** - While protein powder is not an 'ideal' protein source as it's a refined powder, having a whey protein, or vegan protein at your disposal can be very handy. It is by no means an essential to have, but it can be convenient to have on hand when travelling, making smoothies, using after the gym when you want

something quick and convenient, or adding to food or meals to boost your protein intake.

FAT

To take fat out the diet, as has been popular in the past, would be highly detrimental to health.

Although fat yields the greatest energy per gram (and thus taking it out the diet easily creates weight loss), an active individual should never reduce fat intake below 25% of their overall caloric intake for any extended periods of time.

On the flip-side, the latest craze for unnecessarily high fat intake is also misguided.

As always, moderation and common sense should win when deciding on the fat content of your diet, likely between 25-45%.

If anything, your primary focus should be omega 3 fats from fish, grass fed beef or lamb, and monounsaturated fats from olive oil, avocados and nuts.

Then your final thought will be saturated fat, which will be accounted for in anyone's diet with a good protein content without having to focus on it exclusively.

Again, balance is key, as unsexy as it sounds, let's not be extreme for any particular fat source; they are all important.

Fat contains 9 calories per gram

IDEAL FAT SOURCES

- **Nuts & seeds** - Fantastic natural fat sources that come with a plethora of micronutrients. Enjoy all nuts and seeds such as macadamia, almond, peanut, cashew, pistachio, pecan, brazil, linseeds, sunflower, sesame, chia, pumpkin etc as well as in butter form, like peanut and almond butter.
- **Dairy** – Full fat sources such as cream, butter, yogurt, milk, ghee and hard cheeses. Grass fed wherever possible, such as milk from Jersey cows or alternatively goats products
- **Fruits** - such as avocados and olives
- **Oils** - Best to opt for organic cold pressed virgin oils where possible such as coconut, avocado, canola, ghee, nut oils and olive oil (choose normal olive oil if using it to cook with, and extra virgin olive oil for salads/dressings)
- Coconut oil and red palm oil.
- **Fish oil supplement** - Fresh fish can often be cost prohibitive for some, and not a chosen protein source due to the ‘fishy’ taste. In this case, opt to have a fish oil as part of your daily regime, opting for a high-quality product getting a total of 2g EPH/DHA per day

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates, especially of late, get a bad rep, but avoiding them completely would leave us lacking in a lot of essential vitamins, minerals and fibre. It would also cause our bodies natural detoxification pathways to suffer due to lack of antioxidants, phytonutrients, vitamins, minerals, enzymes and potentially leading to health issues and weight retention, and of course a reduction in exercise performance and recovery.

In our modern diet, the foods that are often over consumed and relied on are carbohydrates, such as baked goods, cereals, breads and confectionery. Yes, they might be fortified with a few vitamins and minerals, they are far from ideal and not what we are trying to focus on with our carbohydrate intake. As a rule, we need to run the “single” ingredient - ‘short shelf life’ rule for 80-90% of our eating, especially when it comes to our carbohydrate sources. Keep these other foods for when you have a high energy need, or when you REALLY want them.

Remember balance is key and no food should ever be considered ‘off-limits’. They should be eaten more mindfully than is the norm in our modern diet. Carbohydrate is essential in muscular hydration and is the preferred fuel source during more intense activities, such as weightlifting, running, jumping and sprinting. Carbohydrates are not the reason people get diabetes, nor do they make you fat – overeating any of the macronutrients will cause you to gain weight. They have their place in the diet, and a key principal is that carbohydrate can very much be used to our advantage, if consumed mindfully, but everyone will have their sweet spot. As with everything, the devil is in the dose- too much and you could cause yourself to have erratic energy levels, and too little could cause you to lack performance, in many areas!

Like protein, carbs contain roughly 4 calories per gram.

IDEAL CARBOHYDRATE SOURCES

- **Vegetables** - such as potatoes (sweet and white), peppers, squash family, beetroots, carrots, parsnips, the more colourful the better
- **Fruits** - both fresh and dried – Apples, mangos, oranges, bananas
- **Grains** - such as corn and rice
- **Cereals** - like oats or wheat or products such as bread
- **Legumes & Pulses** - such as black beans, lentils and chickpeas

Anything that's not strictly a protein, or fat, is likely to be a carbohydrate in some form and should be eaten with variety and abundance in your diet. The above examples are me just touching the surface, the supermarket is full of all sorts of colourful and interesting carbohydrate sources, so get trying and eat as much variety as possible, focusing the bulk of your intake on fruits and vegetables as these are the most micronutrient dense sources of carbohydrates.

WATER AND FIBRE

Water is vital for the body's detoxification pathway's, hydration, optimal brain function and for muscle contractions to occur. It's vital for all bodily functions!

As a rough guide, I would generally suggest a fluid intake of 30ml per Kg of body weight. So take your weight in kilos, times it by 30, and then you have a number to loosely work from. Tea, coffee, and other hot drinks can all contribute to fluid intake but should not dominate your fluid intake.

FIBRE

Fibre is another important component of the diet, if you are eating a good amount of leafy veg, skin on fruits and an appropriate amount of starchy carbohydrates from things like whole grains, beans and chickpeas, you will probably have little to worry about. As a rough guide for those taking a very close eye to their diet, a good minimum intake is 10-15 grams per 1000 calories consumed.

Water & Fibre

Common, easy sources of Fibre to add to meals

- Beans, chickpeas and blends such as hummus can be an excellent source
- Leafy green veg, such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage
- Wash and leave the skin on fruits such as apples and pears
- Salad items like cucumbers, peppers, leaves, tomatoes and beetroot
- Oats and other whole grains, or high fibre cereals

SNACKING

Snacking can be a pain when you're out and about due to poor options. Ideally your main meal should include enough protein to keep you full with no need to snack. But it happens to us all from time to time. So below are some options. Just remember when it comes to snack bars, quality can be a difficult thing to find. The majority are highly processed that give you a lot of calories and very little fullness.

Some good snack bar options are:

- Coco chia bars (available on the internet)
- 9 bars (found in Tesco's & other shops, best of a bad bunch)
- Trek bars (decent option, coconut one is lovely)
- Eat Natural bars (best commercial option if out and about, choose one with nuts in to slow the carbohydrate breakdown)
- Naked bars (made from puréed fruit and nuts)
- Not a snack bar - but biltong and biltong blends are a great high protein option
- Quest bars, which are a protein bar

Other snacks:

Other snacks should largely be mini versions of what you might have at mealtimes. Ultimately, we're looking for the highest quality nutrition 80-90% of the time, so the usual snacks may be off the menu as they tend to be junk. Fruit, vegetable sticks or meat are a mainstay in the diets of many successful dieters and athletes alike, as they understand the value of real food 90% of the time. Cottage cheese with a few crackers and fruit, a banana and peanut butter and simple chicken legs make fantastic snacks.

Craving something sweet?

Supergreen berry drinks, Protein shakes with some fruit blended up, Protein Pancakes (eggs, bananas, oil and a little honey make a great quick snack)

How Much of What To Eat?

APPENDIX 4

When in a dash: cooked meat, raw veg, salad pots, greek yogurt, cottage cheese