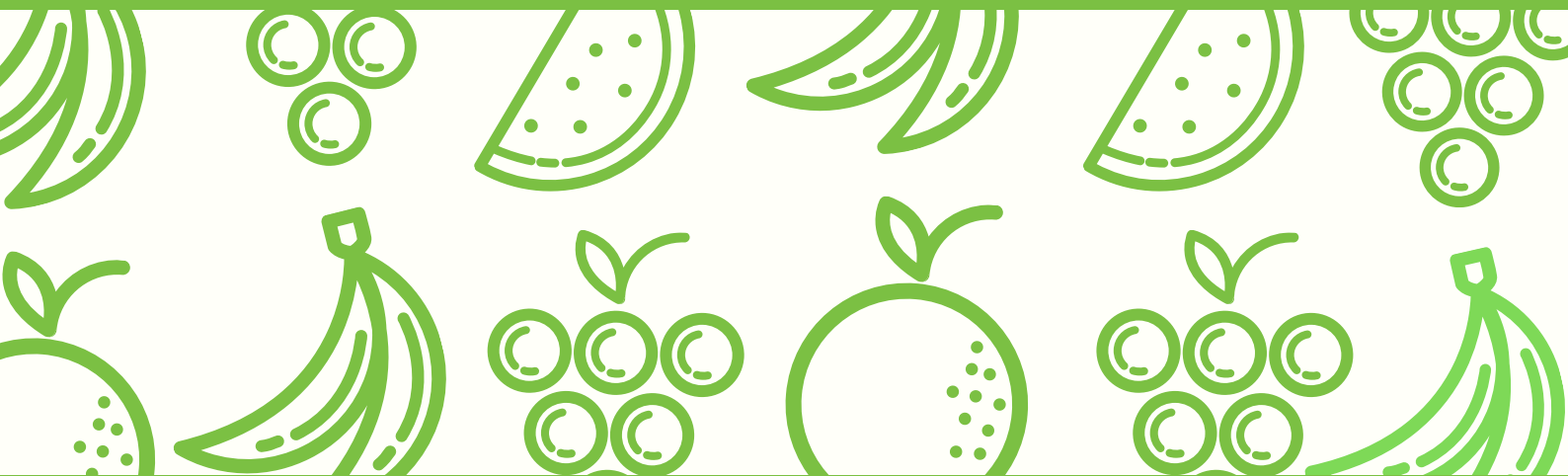




headcoach

A short guide on how to improve your mental health using physical activity and healthy eating



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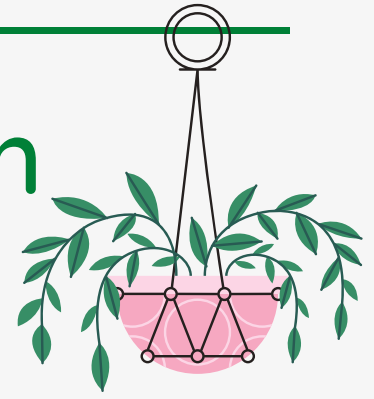
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INTRO TO NUTRITION

Maintaining your mental health is just as important as maintaining your physical health. Like our bodies, our minds need training too! But unlike training your body, it's not always obvious what you can do to train your mind. Here are some tools that you can use to reach your potential and lead a fun and fulfilling life



Our Mental Health



Mental health and mental illness - we hear these words used all the time, but what's the difference, and how does it link with our physical health?

Mental health relates to the way that we think and feel, and is what helps to navigate the ups and downs of life. It's normal to feel a range of emotions depending on the things that are going on in your life; sometimes we feel good, and sometimes we don't - and that's okay. Mental health is a spectrum, ranging from feeling positive and being mentally 'healthy', to feeling down and under the weather. Mental illness refers to when certain emotions or behaviours (what we might call "signs and symptoms" continue for a long time (usually two or more weeks), and stop us from doing things we usually enjoy doing.

When these signs and symptoms get in the way of our day-to-day functioning, we may need to reach out for some extra support. In this chapter, we'll explore:

- What mental health is, and how it's different from mental illness;
- Things that can contribute to developing mental health challenges;
- How to take care of our mental health; and
- What we can do if need some support to manage our mental health.

We'll also introduce a 'mental health bank' - a collection of activities we can do when we're not feeling too flash.

What is mental health?

We hear the phrase "mental health" and "mental illness" used all the time. But what does it actually mean? To explain this, it's helpful to think about mental health on a spectrum.

At one end of the spectrum is mentally healthy. In this area you feel able to work and study, feel connected to others, be involved in activities in your community and 'bounce back' when life's changes and challenges come along.



Mental Illness



At the other end of the spectrum is mental illness. Mental illness is a general term that refers to a group of conditions, such as anxiety, depression or eating disorders.

These conditions can significantly affect how a person feels, thinks, behaves and interacts with others. Almost half of the population will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives.

In between these two ends there is a 'coping area', where people might feel some pressure but are doing OK, and a 'difficulties area' where people might feel like they aren't doing so well.

It's important to know that everyone sits somewhere on this spectrum, and where you are can change from day-to-day or week-to-week, depending on many factors..

Something important to remember is that everyone has mental health - it's actually what helps each of us respond to the ups and downs of life, and anything in the 'healthy', 'coping' or 'difficulties' parts of the spectrum. We all have mental health, and it's important for us to know what can help us keep a healthy headspace.

Our physical health is closely linked to our mental health, so throughout this guide you'll be able to build the tools to help support your wellbeing with that in mind.

Mental illness might be referred to with a range of different phrases, like:

- Mental ill health
- Mental health difficulties
- Mental health challenges
- Mental disorder

Whilst the phrases above are commonly used when talking about mental illness, there is also a range of other language use that is relevant within different communities and cultures.

Everyone can experience the signs and symptoms of mental illness from time to time. It's common for people to have times in their life when their sleep, mood, motivation or energy are not going as well as they would like.



Your mental health

If these signs and symptoms are happening for a few weeks or more, and are starting to have a bigger impact on things like relationships, or work and study, it's a sign that we might be heading towards the 'difficulties' area of the spectrum. If you've noticed these sorts of changes, it's important to look after yourself, learn a bit more about what's happening for you, and enlist the support of family and friends. By finding the right support and strategies, things can get better.

Signs and symptoms of mental illness:

- not enjoying, or not wanting to be involved in things that you would normally enjoy;
- changes in appetite or sleeping patterns;
- being easily irritated or having problems with friends and family for no reason;
- finding that you aren't performing at school, TAFE, university or work like you used to;
- being involved in risky behaviour that you would usually avoid, like taking drugs or drinking too much alcohol, or depending on these substances to feel 'normal';
- feeling sad or 'down' or crying more often
- ;having trouble concentrating or remembering things;
- having negative, distressing, bizarre or unusual thoughts;
- feeling unusually stressed or worried;
- feeling things have changed or aren't quite right.

MEET SABRIN

How and why do you engage with exercise?

Exercise is a powerful outlet for me. It helps me balance my emotions and release any pent up frustrations, stress or excess energy from the day. Simultaneously, exercise allows me to challenge myself and has taught me resilience, patience and working on yourself in a loving, positive and open manner. I play sport for many different reasons, I am hooked on footy (AFL) for its competitive nature but love basketball, badminton, tennis, yoga for all the many different qualities these sport offer.

What's your favourite kind of exercise and why?

Playing footy and game-sense AFL drills. I love learning new tactics and strategies, and it's a sport that keeps me on my toes.

Do you find regular exercise and eating healthily help your mental health?

Yes, exercising keeps you in the present and keeps everything in perspective for me, whilst a balanced diet increases my volition and stops the feeling of sluggishness that comes from fast food. I think it all comes down to moderation and finding different strategies to reward yourself each time you achieve a goal.



WHAT CAN I DO, IF I'M NOT FEELING GREAT?

If you're feeling... you should try!

Stressed

- meditation
- yoga
- journaling
- playing video games
- draw, paint or colour
- start a to-do list
- go cloud watching or star gazing
- declutter your room
- hydrate
- use a weighted blanket
- listen to some music
- set yourself and others boundaries
- have a cold shower

Tired

- Go for a walk outdoors
- exercise
- take 3+ deep breaths
- stretch
- make yourself a drink or snack
- take a break
- hydrate!
- try yoga
- meditate
- go to bed early
- sit outside
- massage yourself

Sad

- colour in
- create something
- journal
- call or visit a friend
- make yourself some tea or a snack
- clean up around your desk
- turn off or disconnect from electronics for a few minutes
- ask for help/reach out
- practice your skin care routine
- delete apps that have an emotional toll on you
- change your bedsheets
- say 'no' to something causing you to be upset

Angry

- practice mindfulness
- journal
- call a friend
- do a hard workout
- try deep breathing
- take a bath or cold shower
- listen to an audiobook or podcast
- watch something funny
- watch your favourite show
- play a video game

hopeless

- exercise
- call a mate
- journaling
- complete a task you know you can do
- dance
- check in with yourself and your emotions
- go play with your pet
- have a self-date
- make a gratitude list
- try manifestation
- get outdoors
- spend quality time with someone

Good
vibes

What should I do if I need help?



If you are experiencing mental health difficulties, it's important that you reach out to a trusted friend, family member, teacher or Elder to share what you are going through. Alternatively, you can get in touch with your local headspace centre or use our online or phone-based service at [ehespace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au).

If you ever feel unable to cope because of overwhelming or intense emotions, or if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, then ask for help immediately.

For immediate help contact: triple zero (000) if it is an emergency.

National 24/7 crisis services: Lifeline: 13 11 14 | [lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au)

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 | [suicidecallbackservice.org.au](https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

beyondblue: 1300 224 636 | [beyondblue.org.au](https://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Additional youth support services include: headspace: visit [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au) to find your nearest centre or contact [ehespace.org.au](https://www.eheadspace.org.au)

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 | [kidshelpline.com.au](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

ReachOut: [reachout.com](https://www.reachout.com) SANE Australia: 1800 187 263 | [sane.org](https://www.sane.org)

The Butterfly Foundation (eating disorders and body image support): 1800 33 4673 | [butterfly.org.au](https://www.butterfly.org.au)

Q Life (LGBTIQ+ support): 1800 184 527 | [qlife.org.au](https://www qlife.org.au)

INTRO TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity is very important for our health, and we should aspire to do a little bit of physical activity everyday! We should aim to get at least 30+ minutes of physical activity per day, and this can look like many things. Such as;

- Walking/running
- Climbing stairs
- Playing sport
- Carrying groceries
- Swimming

Physical activity can be categorised according to how difficult it is and these terms will be used often in this handbook. These categories are:

- Light: these are physical activities you can do while still talking to another person such as walking, gardening or cleaning
- Moderate: these are exercises that get your heart pumping, but can be sustained! This may look like going for a jog, lifting weights or cycling at a steady pace.
- Vigorous: this form of exercise is very intense, and cannot be sustained for long periods of time. This can look like sprinting, lifting very heavy weights or playing sports like tennis where short bursts of energy are required.

In this chapter, we will look at physical activity and why it is vital in supporting our physical & mental health. We will do this by highlighting training principles, techniques, some myths, and the recommendations for exercise, as well as inspecting how our mental health can improve with regular physical activity.



What is physical activity?

Physical activity is very important for our health, as keeping our bodies active is a great way to prevent many illnesses and diseases, while also having many benefits for our mental and emotional health. Physical activity is not just exercising at the gym - physical activity is any sort of movement or activity! This can be walking, jogging, skipping rope, playing sports or games, weight training, pilates, yoga, climbing stairs and more. Basically, if you are moving you are getting physical activity.

Why is staying active important?

Worldwide, physical inactivity (or sedentary behaviours) are attributed to approximately 9% of premature deaths, as there are several serious illnesses associated with decreased physical activity. These illnesses include:

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD): atherosclerosis (hardening of your arteries), heart attack & stroke, heart failure, hypertension (high blood pressure);
- Type II diabetes, pre-diabetes & insulin resistance: our body cannot respond to sugar efficiently;
- Metabolic disease: the combination of diabetes, high blood pressure, and a high blood triglyceride level;
- Osteoporosis, muscular atrophy (muscles shrinking) & bone density loss (bones getting weaker, and more breakable);
- Depression & anxiety.



Meet Daniel

Do you find regular exercise helps with your mental health?

Yes, absolutely. Exercise makes an enormous difference. It helps me become calmer, improve my own sense of self-esteem, helps me feel productive, and really just makes me feel better about myself especially when trying to maintain weight (Daniel's illness causes him to experience extreme weight fluctuations).

What is your favourite kind of exercise?

I don't like going to the gym because I don't really like the culture. I've always felt very uncomfortable there, I have to go alone or with very close friends, I can't just go with anyone. I don't like going for runs or working out at home, but I really, really love team sports. I'm very team-sport orientated and I am super competitive! I love training for soccer matches at an intense level, the more intense, the better. I also really love the social aspect of this, it helps majorly, as I have a lot more friends because of it, I have rekindled old friendships, and even formed stronger bonds thanks to team sports. It really just solidifies your friendship group.

How do you navigate exercising with a chronic illness?

I definitely need to know my limits, and what I'm comfortable doing and know what I'm not comfortable doing. I won't be silly enough to keep pushing myself and I've come to realise that my body can't do certain things for example, I used to be able to do 200 sit ups a night, now I can only do 50. I need to respect my body. Do not feel embarrassed either, you manage it the best you can, do what you feel comfortable doing, find a way you can exercise happily and safely, do what your body tells you to do. If it hurts, stop. It'll cause you more grief long term as opposed to doing stuff you know your body can do and can handle. Also it can be very, very scary while playing sport, because when you have a chronic illness you can sometimes feel like there are no second chances. If someone injures me, if I get hit wrong, that's it. My recovery periods are much longer, much more strenuous. But it's worth it.

Intro to physical activity

Now, you cannot prevent any of these diseases occurring as your genetics, environment and socio-economic status will play a significant role. However, keeping physically active will definitely help decrease your risk in developing these illnesses. For example, there is a very strong relationship between keeping physically active and preventing the onset of type II diabetes and insulin resistance.

This is because when you have type II diabetes, you have too much glucose (sugar) in your blood, and your body actually uses glucose as an energy source when you exercise. So, it helps your body control the level of glucose in your blood and thus, helps control diabetes!

What is the difference between planned physical activity and incidental physical activity?

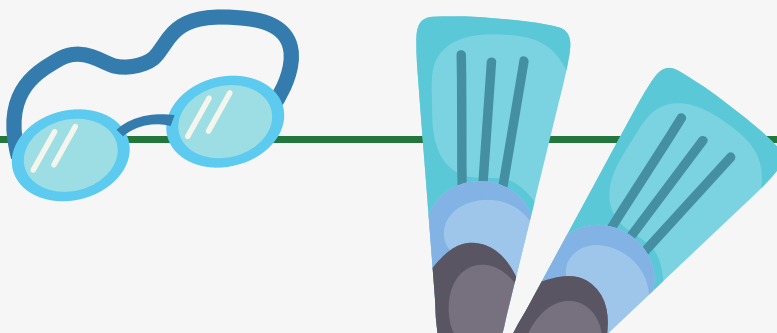
Physical activity and exercise are often used interchangeably; however, they can be used to describe two very different things.

- **Physical activity** is any sort of activity where you use energy, and this can include gardening, household chores, climbing stairs, and playing games.
- **Incidental physical activity** is when you are getting exercise in a way not traditionally associated with actual exercise, for example carrying groceries or walking around the shops.
- **Exercise** is much more deliberate, and is often done with a goal in mind. Exercise can include playing sports, going to the gym, running, swimming and more.



What are the recommendations?

For young people between the ages of 13 to 17, they should be getting 60+ minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. These should include a wide variety of activities including aspects of strength training, and cardio. Young people should exercise to strengthen their bodies around 3x per week as well.





Types of physical activity

What are the types of physical activity?

There are so many types of physical activity!

Based on your individual goals, you will need to determine what sort of training you want to do. From bodybuilding, crossfit, pilates and calisthenics, there is something for everyone. Down below we have listed some of the many, many types. We encourage you to find out the rest, and enjoy yourself while you experiment with different kinds of activities.

Aerobic, cardio & conditioning

All of these terms refer to the same type of exercise, so don't be wary. This exercise looks like any form of endurance work and has to be performed for a longer duration, and this includes running, walking, cycling, rowing, jogging and skipping .

Strength Training

This is a very broad type of training, typically used by professional athletes to be well-rounded and will often be used alongside conditioning/endurance based exercise as well. Strength & Conditioning training when combined aims to improve an athletes mobility, stability, strength, endurance, power, speed, agility and performance.

Hypertrophy training

Hypertrophy is typically associated with body building but is a very common outcome for all sorts of training performed. Hypertrophy of the muscle fibres results in the increase of size of said muscle. This is done by exposing the muscle fibres to strenuous exercise and heavy resistance loads, whilst being in a caloric surplus.

Body Weight Training/Calisthenics

Body weight training is as simple as it sounds. You use your body and engage with larger muscle groups to improve upon your physical health. This can look like squatting, lunging, pull ups and push ups without the use of weights.

Pilates & Yoga

Pilates and Yoga focuses on the whole body, and encourages conscious breathing, meditation, and increasing our range of movement. Pilates works at a faster pace than yoga, while yoga has a greater emphasis on how our body and mind interact.



Different methods of exercise

There are also many different methods of exercising:

High Intensity Interval Training

HIIT is a cardio session arranged as short bursts of very intensity work. The goal of high-intensity training is to increase the intensity of your cardio. For HIIT to be effective, when performing this training you need to ensure 100% effort.

As Many Reps as Possible

Another form of HIIT Training, AMRAP is typically used in conjunction with other training styles to increase endurance and cardiovascular capabilities. For example, on your last set of push ups instead of doing 20 reps as per the previous sets you go to failure.

Supersetting

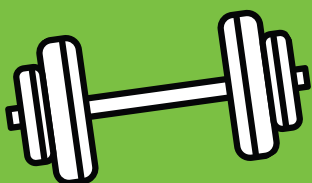
Supersetting is done by completing 1 set of a specified exercise then switching to another exercise and performing a set of that without break. Similar to AMRAP, Supersetting can be used in conjunction with other training styles. It is an effective way to decrease the duration of your workout sessions whilst increasing intensity.

Circuit Training

You would usually find this training at your bootcamp sessions. Having multiple stations with a different workout at each, circuit training is pretty straight forward. You would complete a list of said exercises and then repeat once finished.

Split Training

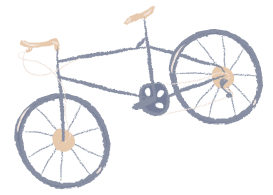
Split training is a way you can undertake weight training evenly focusing on the different areas of your body. It will typically be split two ways; upper-body and lower-body. Sometimes it can be split three-ways; upper-push, upper-pull, lower-body. 'Push' refers to exercises that you typically 'push' with, being your chest, and biceps. 'Pull' refers to exercises you 'pull' with, including your back muscles and triceps.



Different methods of exercise are great, and I'd encourage you to have some fun while testing these out. If they don't work for you, that's ok! You'll find an exercise you love soon!



WHAT ARE THE LINKS BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH & EXERCISE?



Disclaimer: if you are using exercise to help your mental health, please do not go off of your medication if you are taking some. You should only ever change your medication or frequency if you discuss this with your doctor or psychiatrist.


Sedentary behaviours are strongly linked to anxiety and depressive mood disorders, and there have been several studies conducted on this. Recently, Deakin University studied how sitting for too long can increase someone's level of anxiety as it over-excites their flight or fight response, and they recommend that you do not sit down for durations longer than 30 minutes or ensure to stand up periodically.

It is also well-founded that:

- Just 10 minutes of walking in nature can decrease fatigue and tiredness, and have a positive impact upon your mood
- Moderate to vigorous intensity exercise can improve mood, symptoms of depression and anxiety, and can be beneficial to those with PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder)
- Exercise and physical activity can help reduce stress and feelings of anxiety
- Exercise can improve the quality of sleep
- Physical activity can help improve upon your ability to concentrate
- Physical activity helps you feel more energised during the day
- Exercise can help foster a greater sense of self-efficacy and confidence within yourself
- Partaking in exercise can help someone build resilience, and provides a healthy coping mechanism



Meet Alex



Hi! My name is Alex, I'm 17 and I live in Werribee. I love playing team sport. It keeps me motivated and I really enjoy the environment it provides – working together towards the same goal. I find it difficult to stay motivated to exercise, but body image generally spurs me on and knowing how important physical activity is to my health. The lack of team sport has made this period really difficult for me to stay motivated. There's a few challenges stopping me from exercising, such as school pressure and studying, but also the balance between my preference for playing team sport and not being able to easily join sports teams as a transgender young person and the barriers that come with that.

Ciao! Mi chiamo Alex, ho diciassette anni e abito a Werribee. Mi piace giocare a sport di squadra. Mi dà motivazione e mi piace l'ambiente che fornisce – lavorando insieme verso uno scopo comune. Trovo è difficile a rimanere determinato al moto, ma immagine corporea generalmente mi incita e sapendo come importante attività fisica è alla mia salute. La carenza di sport di squadra fa questo periodo davvero difficile per me a rimanere motivato. C'è un po' sfide che mi smette da esercizio, come la pressione di scuola e attività di studio, ma anche l'equilibrio tra il mio preferito per giocare sport di squadra e non posso facilmente mi iscrivero alla squadra siccome sono transgender e le barriere sono associato con quello.

How can I exercise safely...

Sometimes, we may feel unsafe exercising. Whether it's walking in a park alone, or we are scared of others in the gym. It can be hard to try and navigate this, and we would encourage you to exercise in areas you feel safe and if put in a situation you are uncomfortable with, please remove yourself from it immediately.

With a chest binder?

Exercising with a binder can be dangerous if not taken seriously, as the binder restricts the capacity for the lungs to inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide (CO₂). During exercise, our body demands more oxygen than usual, as our muscles are producing lactic acid. If you are not getting enough oxygen, you won't be able to sustain the exercise and if you keep pushing, you can get quite sick, quite fast.

It is recommended you do not wear a binder while working out but instead try for a sports bra, compression gear, or layer some shirts so you don't exacerbate your dysphoria. Avoid plastic wrap, duct-tape or bandages for binding, as you will be sweating a lot while working out. Please also ensure you are well hydrated, and taking adequate rests and breaks from working out.

Ultimately, ensure that you are listening to your body. If you need to stop for whatever reason, you can stop. Your health is the number one priority. If you are apprehensive or have other health conditions, please check in with your doctor before binding during exercise.



RESOURCES

INSTAGRAM

- @thisgirlcanvic
- @thenutritional_advocate
- @thebutterflyfoundation
- @find.food.freedom
- @hgoodrichrd
- @theintuitive_rd
- @thenutritiontea
- @encouragingdietitian
- @strengthcoachtherapy
- @foodsciencebabe
- @lucymountain
- @thebodylovesociety
- @feelgooddietitian
- @no.food.rules
- @laylafsaad
- @drjoshuawolrich
- @joetherapy
- @i_weight
- @aubrieb
- @pinkmantaray
- @your.latina.nutritionist
- @haes_studentdoctor
- @dylanmurphy.rd
- @diet.culture.rebel
- @emilyfonnesbeck_rd
- @theshirarose
- @chr1styharrison
- @the.lovelybecoming

LGBTQIA+

These are some really fantastic resources online if you wish to do further research!

- <https://zbgc.org.au/resources/for-trans-and-gender-diverse-people/chest-binders/>
- <https://www.queerspace.org.au/>
- <https://www.rainbownetwork.com.au/resources>
- <https://qlife.org.au/resources>

ADVICE?

When it comes to exercise and nutrition advice, you should only trust registered and accredited professionals. They have a high level of education, and industry experience that can help you achieve your goals.

Registered Exercise Physiologist
Registered Physiotherapist
Registered Physical Therapist
Registered Nutritionist
Registered Sports Dietician
Registered Dietician

There is a lot of garbage and misinformation online coming from people who have no business and no qualifications talking about fitness and nutrition. Please, only listen to reliable resources and question everything you see online as it is very easy to manipulate data and information.

Working out from home

Sometimes, we cannot always go out to exercise, and in recent times, the only way we can get exercise is within our own homes. There are many ways you can workout from home, and there are so many benefits to doing it. It is a fantastic way to keep active, while being resourceful and creative.

In this chapter, we will discuss how you can:

- Safely exercise at home using simple cues and techniques to get the most effective workout you can;
- Write a balanced program, and provide you a nifty 'exercise bank' you can refer to when you are lacking ideas;
- Stay motivated to work out at home; and
- How to use common household items to make your exercise session better

We also will provide you with what we call an 'exercise bank', a compilation of exercises you can try at home that you may not have already thought of!



Exercising safely at home

In recent times, how we engage with exercise has changed greatly. All over social media we see recommendations, tutorials, and exercise programs galore. However, you do not need to go to the gym, own the latest tracksuits and buy apps in order to get your daily workout in. Turns out, you can exercise at home with minimal equipment without the same price too!

How do I write a program?

It all depends on what you want. Looking to keep busy and have fun? Achieve a new personal best? Additional training to help you in sport? Want to get stronger?

A clear and reasonable goal is the first step of making a program, and definitely the most important. Make sure your goal is based around something that is not aesthetic. Goals that are based upon getting stronger, faster and healthier are the best, as we can see our results better rather than focusing on our bodies (which can in fact de-motivate us, and encourage negative health behaviours).

Now, find something you like. If you like boxing, base your exercise routine off of that. If you enjoy sports, run drills in your backyard. If you love to lift heavy weights, try body composition training! Do some research on the types of exercise you may be interested in doing. Remember, exercise is meant to be fun and enjoyable! You will be better at maintaining a higher level of physical activity if you genuinely like what you are doing. Also, everyone is different and will like different types of exercise - and that is 100% okay. Find what you like, and do it! Look back at chapter two if you need some inspiration on types of exercise!

Programs & technique

What's a 'balanced' exercise program?

A 'balanced' exercise program is a program that doesn't just focus on one or two areas of the body, but equally works them all. For example, if you just exercise your chest and arms without exercising your back, you can actually cause an imbalance and possibly cause postural (posture) issues. It's best to make sure when exercising different parts of your body, that by the end of the week you have exercised them all!

A balanced exercise program is fundamental in building your strength and endurance. Plus, there is no loss to get stronger overall.

Exercise techniques

Cueing and exercise technique is very important as it can help prevent the chances of injury while improving our overall performance. Below are some common exercises with the correct techniques to keep in mind next time you are performing them.

Push up

Ensure the core is locked in, with the glutes tensed. Hands at our shoulders or chest, pushing using our arms and chest, not dropping our hips!

Plank

Keep the core tense, with the hips tucked in. Arms can be placed shoulder-width apart or on our elbows. Don't drop your pelvis, otherwise your core will not be engaged.

Glute bridge

Lay with your back to the floor, feet shoulder-width apart. Place arms on your chest or by your sides. Drive your hips up in a straight line and tense when your chest meets a diagonal line with up to your knees - you don't need to go further as you can hurt your back.

Squat

Ensure your core is super tight, and your back remains straight as a squat shouldn't see your chest drop down otherwise you can hurt yourself and strain your lower back. The bar (when squatting) should remain in a straight line, and not move about.

Deadlift

Again, your core should be tight to prevent injuries. Your spine should be straight, and stay straight. You are lifting with your legs, not your arms. So, push down on the floor as you lift the weight off the ground, and don't curve your spine.

Bicep curl

Your elbows should stay straight, and you shouldn't be relying on physics to move the weight around. The weight should be controlled on the way down, and on the way up. Swinging the weight does nothing and can in fact increase your chances of injuring yourself.

Ultimately, keep your core engaged - it is the key to any exercise.

Your core will most likely be utilised in every exercise as your main source of stability, so don't underestimate the importance it has in all different types of exercise!



How to workout at home using what you have

You do not need a barbell or a fancy at-home gym set to exercise and get your workout on! You can use household items, and can get creative without spending any money. For example, if you own a backpack, you can fill it with heavy textbooks and use that to deadlift at a high rep range. You can use grocery bags to do farmer carries and work your upper traps out. You can use your couch or a chair to do bulgarian split squats or a tea towel on wooden floors to get an ab workout in! Don't be afraid to use what you have and look for inspiration online.



Exercise bank

Here is a small exercise bank you can use for inspiration to spice up your workout, and get a great workout in without doing the same thing over, and over.

Arms

- Bicep curls
- Tricep dips
- Tricep push up
- Close-grip curl
- Diamond push up
- Side curl with band
- Underhand kickback
- Tricep kickbacks

Legs

- Lunges
- Squats
- Deadlifts
- Plie squat
- Narrow squat
- Bulgarian split squat
- Jumping squats
- Calf raises
- Box jumps
- Squat onto chair
- Jumping lunges
- Kettlebell swings
- Goblet squats
- Front squats
- Sumo deadlift
- Romanian deadlift
- Wall sits
- Leg press

Glutes

- Frog glute pump
- Glute bridge
- Hip thrusts
- Fire hydrants
- Donkey kicks
- Split squats
- Speed skaters
- Single-leg bridge/thrust
- Clamshells
- Crab walks
- Standing kickbacks with resistance bands
- Single-leg deadlift

Back

- Shoulder press
- Lateral raises
- Chin ups
- Pull ups
- Row
- Overhead press
- Bent over row
- Renegade row
- Inverted row
- Kettlebell swings
- Front raises
- Renegade rows
- supermans

Chest

- Chest push ups
- Narrow push ups
- Wall push up
- Chest dip
- Incline push up
- Decline push up
- Time-under-tension push ups
- Chest fly
- Floor press
- Diamond push ups

Core

- Sit ups
- Russian twists
- Leg raises
- Bicycle kicks
- Crunches
- Plank
- Side plank
- Knee raises
- Deadbugs
- Shoulder taps
- Butterfly sit up
- Wood chops
- High boat to low boat
- Side bends
- Candlestick dippers
- Jackknife

Setting goals & staying motivated

Goal setting is important as it can help you stay on track with your interests. By setting goals you are planning your success. From studying to lifting weights, you can implement a basic recipe that can be applied to anything. Staying motivated is hard enough for the best of us, with all of the life stressors it can be hard to stay on track with everything.

In this chapter, we will be highlighting the importance of goal setting when it comes to achieving all of our goals as well as discussing the different types of motivation that can influence you, how to find out which one you are, and to implement simple strategies that can catalyse change in a person.

These strategies will look like:

- The application of SMART goals;
- Understanding the types of motivation, and what motivates you; and
- Implementing and maintaining behaviour changes

There are so many different kinds of goal setting strategies, and types of motivation that may influence how you can instil change in yourself. On top of other factors like genetics, socio-economic status, early life, and more.



Maintaining motivation

The process of behavioural change is a long and quite a hard journey, as you cannot undo habits you have held for years, overnight. Everyone is different, and will respond to all kinds of strategies as everyone has different ways of motivating themselves. What works for you, may not work for others and vice versa.

There are two kinds of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic.

- Extrinsic (or external): motivation comes from outside factors, including friends and family.
- Intrinsic (or internal): motivation will come from within yourself and your desire to change

It's important to take a moment and realise what motivates you, and how you can engage with this to create a goal you can follow through with. It's also important to note potential barriers you may experience that could jeopardise your goal, and create an action plan as to how you will overcome them.





Breaking through barriers

Barriers can often sneak up on us, and can be obvious things like money, and less noticeable things like our perception of tiredness. If you find you are someone who says “but I’m” a lot, this section may just be for you. Here are some common barriers to exercise, and how we can change it!

“I don’t have the time”

Try and incorporate exercise into your everyday life. Take stairs instead of elevators, do calf raises at your desk or ride your bike to the store, instead of drive.

“I’m too tired”

If you are coming from work or school, bring a spare change of clothes so you can exercise when it finishes. Instead of going home to get changed, you can immediately work out. If you go home, you may get distracted and feel even less motivated and stay home.

“Lack of resources/equipment”

Find activities you can do with the stuff you have around the house! If you have a bike, take up cycling. If you have nothing, try a body weight workout or yoga!

“I have no one to work out with”

If you don’t have friends or family who enjoy exercising, you can join a gym or workout group and make new friends with the same interests. If not, you can join an online community where you can receive support - many gyms will have an online forum where you can connect with other members.

Meet Steph

Est-ce que tu penses que ta santé mentale s’améliore après une séance de sport?

Parfois elle s’améliore pendant la séance, parfois plus tard, cela dépend de mon humeur et de mon attitude de la journée. Je sais à quel point l’exercice physique peut être important et précieux, donc je pense que ça m’aide beaucoup à me dire que j’ai fait quelque chose de bien après avoir dépensé de l’énergie. Je sais que même s’il y a des jours où tout ce que j’ai fait se réduit à une partie de netball ou quelconque mouvement de n’importe quelle nature, comme une balade à pied ou un petit jogging lent, c’est toujours quelque chose de véritablement gagné, comme cela peut prendre beaucoup d’énergie de vouloir faire face aux gens ou dépenser de l’énergie durant une journée difficile ; mais je suis toujours fier/fière de moi car je fais le pas et je fais l’effort.

Do you find your mental health improves after a workout?

Sometimes it improves during, sometimes delayed afterwards, it depends on my mood and attitude that day. I know how important and valuable exercising can be so I think that really helps me to feel like I have done a good thing after I have exerted some energy. I know that if there are days where all I have done is played a game of netball or done any kind of movement, maybe a walk or a small slow jog, then that is still a really solid win, as it can take a lot of energy to want to face people or exert energy on a tough day; but I am always proud of myself for taking that step and making the effort.

SMART GOALS

Keeping track of your progression is a great way to see the results of your hard work, and this can be applied in your schooling, learning a new language or instrument, and your training.

A clever way to keep on track with your nutrition, fitness and mental health is by using the SMART Goals system.

- Specific
- Measureable
- Accurate/achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound

When making goals around physical activity, and exercise, we should aim to have these aspirations set around how we can progress and become fitter, compared to basing goals off of how we physically look. There have been many studies that demonstrate that motivation does fluctuate massively when trying to maintain a habit like exercise, and they all conclude that our goals should not be based upon physical appearance as it can actually de-motivate us!

Plus, it is much better for our mental health to focus on getting stronger, running further and jumping higher, than looking for physical changes.

SMART goal settings help break down your aspiration into smaller steps, and these can help map out your journey to see improvements. We will break down how to set a SMART goal with a worked example!

SMART GOALS

1. Specific: ask who, what, where and why.

I want to be able to run 5kms without stopping.

2. Measurable: you can track your progress.

I will run on a running track and use an app that will show me how far I have run, so I can see how I am going and know how I am tracking.

3. Achievable/accurate: make your goals ambitious but not unreachable.

I want to be able to run 5kms uninterrupted within 3-months time.

4. Realistic: make sure the goal is consistent with your other long-term goals and acknowledges the ups and downs of life.

I currently play a lot of sport, and improving my cardio fitness will only help me further. Plus, I run a lot during our training sessions so I know I can run at least twice a week.

5. Time-bound: set a date and hold yourself accountable to your progress.

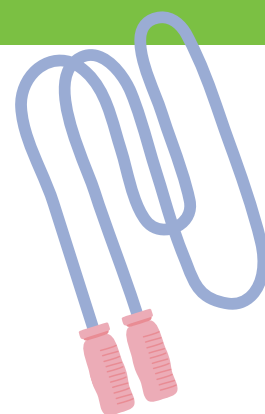
I plan to do this for the next 3 months so I can see the improvements in my training.



Typically, after starting a new program, goal or a project it is easy to find your enthusiasm and effort dropping after a couple weeks. Finding your inspiration and harnessing it is one of the best ways to stay motivated if you're struggling. You need to study frequently to learn and improve your mind, and it is the same with your physical body. However, this does not mean you should be beating yourself up about it if you lose motivation or don't exercise as much as you would like as this doesn't achieve much except create some negative feelings.

Trying to achieve your goals will not look like a linear path as there are bumps along the way which may set you back from time to time. This may make it challenging and quite hard at times, please keep in mind these challenges are the most rewarding in the long term, as long as you do your best and try to improve yourself every day, you're on the path to success.

Meet Steph

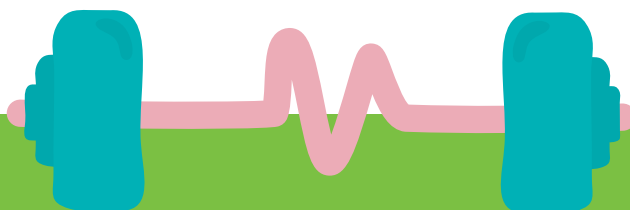


How does eating a balanced diet help your mental health?

Whether I realise it or not, eating a healthy, balanced diet plays such an integral role in overall function. Of course we think about how good food is going to help our bodies, but we forget about how it helps our brain. The better quality nutrients we consume will (most of the time) make for a well functioning brain. There is also the added mental bonus of knowing I didn't eat poorly for some time, or I can give myself praise for prepping a healthy well balanced meal as a form of 'self' care, something that should be a regular activity of daily living. It helps my mental health because I know I have made an effort for myself to do something good for me, that I deserve. And if it's still delicious that is even better!

What's your favourite type of exercise?

This totally depends on my mood - I love netball, and with group sports, I always have the mental time in advance to prepare for the social side of things (which can sometimes be overwhelming even if I have played with the same people for many years!). Sometimes walking can be really therapeutic and enjoyable if it is a wondrous day! And the gym is always good for when I want to feel like I have accomplished something really cool.



Intro to nutrition

Nutrition is a very complex topic, as every single body is so incredibly different - even between two siblings, the way we process certain nutrients, our energy intake and needs will deviate so much. There is also a lot of misinformation everywhere regarding nutrition, and it can become quite a sensitive topic to talk about.

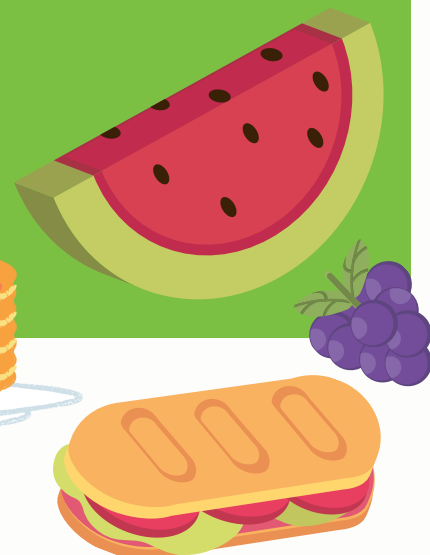
In this chapter, we will be looking at the basics of nutrition and finding out what it is, why it is important, and what we should be doing to optimise our health. We will be doing this by breaking down the idea of good nutrition, and how we can improve what we eat with some simple behaviour changes.

We will be using some complex language like:

- Macronutrients: carbohydrates, proteins & fats.
- Micronutrients: vitamins & minerals.

As well as looking at the kinds of nutrients, such as:

- Vitamins: water-soluble & fat-soluble.
- Minerals.



Nutrition at its simplest is food, and most importantly it is nourishment. We eat to function and live. By eating healthy you can improve your performance, both mentally and physically. There are many links to eating a range of vegetables, fruits and proteins and improving our mental health. It's also wonderful to do for our body, and can improve our feelings of fatigue, frequency and intensity of mood swings, and improve our digestive health.

What are calories?

You've probably heard the term calories and kilojoules before. Simply put, calories and kilojoules are just units of energy that we use to help measure how much energy our food will give us. Your body needs calories for energy in order to sustain itself. Calories are not evil, and there is a lot of misinformation surrounding how many calories someone should eat in a day.

Our daily caloric intake is impacted by many things, such as how fast our metabolism is, our age, how much physical activity we do in a day, our height and weight, if we're sick or healthy, are diagnosed with a chronic or acute illness (like Crohn's disease which can affect our absorption of nutrients), and gender.

Nutrients

On TikTok, a lot of young people are spreading the idea that someone should eat 1,200 calories per day and this is also present in a lot of dieting apps - this is absolute garbage. In fact, that's how many calories a 2-year-old child should eat in a day! For someone between the ages of 12 to 17 years old, you should be eating around 2,000 calories per day, and that's without even looking at other external factors that can influence this. This is what your body needs to survive, so don't accept anyone telling you that you should be eating less. Your body is growing a lot during this time period.

What are nutrients?

To begin with, a nutrient is a substance that comes from food that can provide nourishment for our bodies to live, grow and exist within. 'Nutrient' is an umbrella term for some sub-categories you may have heard of:

- Macronutrients: proteins, fats and carbohydrates.
- Micronutrients: vitamins & minerals.

These can be broken down even further as well.



What are macronutrients?

A macronutrient is a type of food human bodies require in large amounts and are our main sources of energy (or calories). Our diets can be broken down into these three groups and require certain amounts of each in order to live!

What is a carbohydrate?

This occurs in foods that are made up of sugars, starch and cellulose and need to make up 45 - 65% of our diet. These foods are fruits, whole-grain breads, cereals, vegetables, potatoes, and more.

What is protein?

A protein is a food type that is made up of amino acids and is often found in animal products including meats, poultry, fish, shell-fish, beans and tofu. It is essential to building muscle mass. This needs to make up 15 - 25% of our total daily intake of food. There is not a lot of research that acknowledges any benefits to eating higher amounts of protein as our body will excrete anything it does not need.

What is fat?

Fats are made up of triglycerides and are both a food source, and means of storing energy away (for a rainy day). Our body primarily uses fat as an energy source when we are at rest so don't buy into anyone trying to tell you about 'fat burners' and other nonsense. It is our body's preferred source of fuel. Fat should make up about 20 - 30% of our daily nutritional intake.



Vitamins & Minerals



What is a micronutrient?

This is a nutrient that isn't needed in large quantities in order to sustain life. These are your vitamins and minerals.

What is a vitamin?

Vitamins are organic substances that occur in food, providing nutrition for the body to survive and thrive on. Your body needs vitamins to perform certain tasks and there are 13 essential vitamins, including:

- Vitamin A, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7, B12, C, D, E, K, and Folate

Vitamins can be classified into two categories: fat-soluble and water-soluble.

Fat-soluble vitamins

These are vitamins that dissolve in fat that your body can also store. You don't need as much of these vitamins as compared to water-soluble vitamins. Fat-soluble vitamins include Vitamins A, D, E and K.

Water-soluble vitamins

These are vitamins that need water in order to be absorbed by the body, and therefore are also excreted with the fluids in your body. You need to replenish these more often than your fat-soluble vitamins, with a fresh supply recommended every day. Water-soluble vitamins are vitamin C and B.

What are the vitamins we need?

Vitamin A

This is a fat-soluble vitamin that is involved in our immune system, vision, and cellular communication. Vitamin A is found in meat, liver, orange coloured fruits and vegetables, and full-cream dairy products.

Vitamin C

This vitamin helps the immune system, metabolise proteins and helps absorb iron. It can be found in all fruits and vegetables, especially citrus fruits, strawberries, paw paw, mangoes, kiwi fruits, capsium and tomatoes.

Vitamin D

Helps control calcium levels in the blood, and is needed for our bones to stay strong, muscle contraction and overall health. The body can only absorb a limited amount of Vitamin D however, so increased time spent exposed to UV won't help our vitamin D levels. You can also get vitamin D from fish and eggs, and some fortified foods like milk.



Vitamin B

There are quite a few B-vitamins with different names just to confuse you. Let's break them down below.

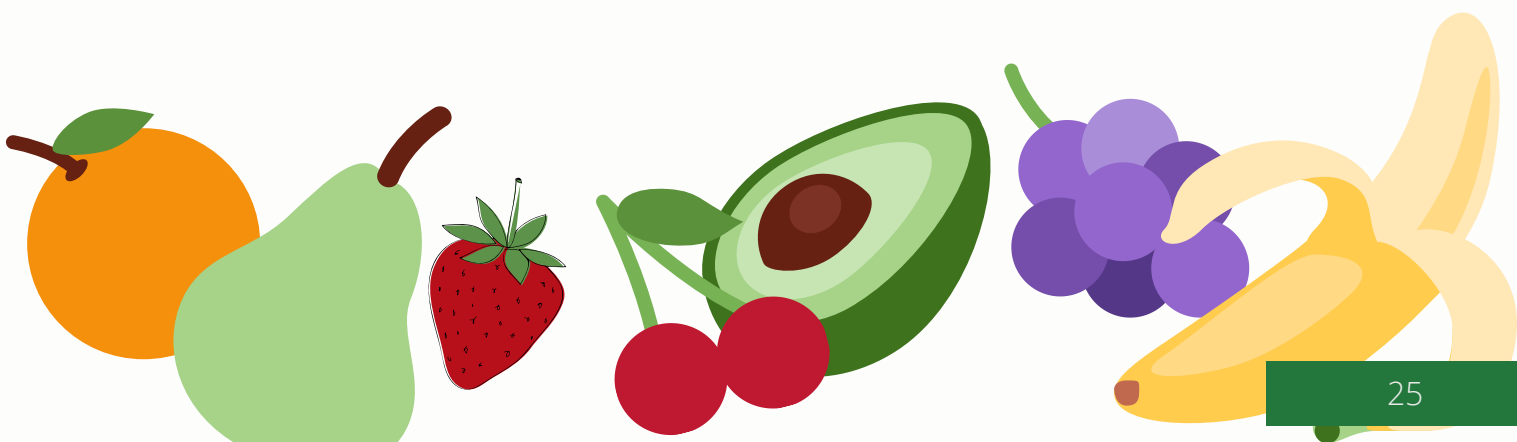
- B1 (Thiamin): helps the process of turning carbohydrates into energy, and helps support your heart, digestive and nervous system. This can be found in wholemeal breads and cereals, oats, fish, pork, nuts and seeds.
- B2 (Riboflavin): helps support tissue growth and repairs in the body. It can be found in dairy and dairy products, leafy green vegetables, meats and enriched breads and cereals.
- B3 (Niacin): Helps the process of turning food into energy, as well as our nervous, digestive and integumentary system. This can be found in poultry, meats, fish, peanuts, leafy green vegetables and enriched breads and cereals.
- B5 (Pantothenic acid): Helps turn food into energy for our body to use and is found in a wide variety of foods.
- B6 (Pyridoxine): helps breakdown proteins and carbohydrates in the body, makes red blood cells, and supports brain function, our immune, nervous and muscular system. This can be found in meats, fishes, poultry, vegetables and fruits.
- B9 (Folate): helps make new red blood cells, supports our nervous system and its development. This can be found in legumes, green leafy vegetables, oranges, bread, seeds, cereals and more.
- B12: helps create red blood cells and nerve cells, helps break down fats and carbohydrates for the body to use. This can be found in meat, fish, poultry, dairy products and eggs.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E is important in helping many of our major organs functions, it helps our immune system, maintain healthy skin, and good vision. It is also an antioxidant that helps protect our cells. This can be found in some oils, egg yolks, nuts and seeds, wholegrain products, and liver.

Vitamin K

Vitamin K plays a major role in blood clotting, bone metabolism, as well as regulating blood calcium level. Our bodies need vitamin K in order to produce prothrombin which is a protein and clotting factor. Most people are not at-risk of a deficiency unless you have a malabsorption issue like short-bowel syndrome, cystic fibrosis, celiac disease or ulcerative colitis. In modern medicine, newborns actually receive a vitamin K injection! Vitamin K can be found in foods like cabbage, leafy green vegetables and milk.



Minerals

What is a mineral?

A mineral is a substance that occurs naturally in foods that our bodies need to develop and function optimally. These include: calcium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, chloride, magnesium, iron, zinc, chromium, copper, fluoride, and more. Certain minerals will have specific functions within the body.

What are the main minerals we need?

Potassium

This mineral works in conjunction with sodium, and helps maintain fluid balance, muscle contraction and nerve transmission. It can be found in meats, milk, fruits and vegetables, whole grain foods and legumes.

Calcium

This is a vital mineral, and it is very important in helping keep our bones healthy and preventing bone-density loss later in adult life. It also plays a role in muscle contraction, blood clotting, blood pressure regulation, nerve functioning and more! It can be found in milk and dairy products, canned fish fortified tofu, and certain green vegetables (broccoli etc.)

Sodium

This is a very common mineral we get, sometimes we get too much - so we need to keep an eye on our sodium levels as too much can lead to hypertension (high blood pressure), which can increase your risk of having a heart attack or stroke later in life. Sodium is necessary for fluid balance, muscle contraction and nerve transmission. It can be found in soy sauce, processed foods, breads, and table salt.

Zinc

This is necessary for making protein in the body, and has a role in healing wounds, fetal development, and immune health. It is found in meats, fish, poultry, whole grain foods and vegetables.



Iron

This is a very important mineral, and is a common deficiency for vegetarians and vegans. It is found in red blood cells which help carry oxygen throughout the body, and is also necessary for energy metabolism. It is found in abundance in red meats, fish, poultry, eggs, legumes, dark leafy green vegetables, iron-fortified breads and cereals, and more.

Magnesium

This mineral is found in our bones and is necessary for muscle contraction and relaxation, helps with muscle cramping, nerve transmission, helps make protein in the body, and more.

It's found in nuts, seeds, legumes, leafy green vegetables, seafood and dark chocolate!



What does a balanced diet look like?

What does a balanced diet look like?

Too much of anything can be detrimental, but for nutrition there are some simple, and basic principles you can apply throughout your whole life when navigating the complex world of food.

There is a wide variety of food groups, and eating a well balanced diet means consuming an abundance of whole-grains, vegetables, fruit, red meat, poultry or fish.

Confectionaries are treats, like lollies and chocolates which contain little to no nutritional value. But that doesn't mean we should ban them from our general diets either! Moderation is key when it comes to nutrition as too much or too little of any nutrient can impact our health. If you feel like a treat, have one! Restricting yourself is not good for you or your mental health, food has no moral value and certain food groups should not be perceived as evil.

A balanced diet can look like many things, as what we eat in a day is greatly dependent on our culture, socio-economic status and geography. Not everyone can eat the same, so don't compare yourself to the people you see on Instagram or YouTube - they aren't you and you aren't them. Most of these influencers online are being paid by sponsors and can afford personal trainers, personal chefs and personal dieticians. You're a student - you're not expected to live the same lifestyle as our rich and famous counterparts.



balanced diets?

Why do we need a balanced diet?

Our body is very demanding and needs fuel to run, which makes sense considering it is operating every moment of your life. So, you want to fuel it with the best food possible! If you do not eat a balanced diet and start to leave certain food groups out, our bodies may not be able to attain those nutrients. This could lead to our bodies getting sicker quicker and more seriously, infections, fatigue, low performance and decreased mental health.

For example, if you are vegan or vegetarian your body cannot produce certain nutrients on it's own and needs to attain those nutrients from our food. It would be wise to consult with your doctor and ensure you stay on top of your health by getting regular blood tests as low iron and B12 can cause major fatigue issues, blood pressure instability, depression, irritability, disturbed vision and more.

What is an unbalanced diet?

An unbalanced diet means that there is either an excess or deficiency in certain key vitamins and minerals. Eating an excess amount or restricting certain food groups can result in this.

Common deficiencies

- Iron deficiency
- Iodine deficiency
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin B12
- Calcium deficiency
- Vitamin A deficiency
- Magnesium deficiency

There are some signs you can keep an eye out for if you are worried about whether or not you are getting enough vitamins. You can look out for these signs, and make sure you consult your doctor before you go down the rabbit hole of google search. Your doctor can test you and depending on the results, create a treatment plan just for you.

- Brittle hair and nails
- Ulcers and cracks in the corner of your mouth
- Bleeding gums
- Poor vision in the dark
- Scaly patches of skin
- Hair loss
- Red or white bumps on the skin
- Wounds being slow to heal



Eating healthy & your mental health

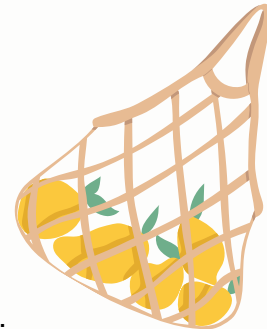
It is well-known that poor nutrition can lead to several physical health problems, such as obesity and diabetes. In recent years, there has been an exploration of how our diet impacts our mental health.

A poor diet can make us feel lethargic, tired and sluggish, while increasing our symptoms of depression and anxiety. If you eat a wide variety of different foods from all types of food groups, you can see improvements to your mental health. Certain foods are also better for our mental health like fish which has omega-3 fatty acids. It is recommended you eat these twice a week to see improvements and there is evidence to demonstrate that this can help stabilise our moods.

Sometimes, it can be a challenge trying to eat healthy. This may be from a sense of tiredness, a lack of motivation, loss of your appetite, irregular meals and financial constraints. So, how can you address these issues?

Lack of motivation & tiredness

- Learn to prepare quick and easy meals, and use frozen pre-cut vegetables to help save time;
- Meal prep in advance;
- Use online shopping and delivery services;
- Use frozen or home-delivered meals such as HelloFresh; and
- Pre-prepare smoothies



Loss of appetite and eating irregularly

- Break down meals into smaller ones, and eat more frequently;
- Ensure snacks are more nutritious options (like having fruits or vegetables compared to store bought bars and candies); and
- Try and maintain a schedule when you can, so you can train your metabolism

Financial issues

- Go grocery shopping and look for quick sales in the fruit and vegetable section and freeze them;
- Use frozen vegetables; and
- Learn some recipes that use minimal ingredients but are still nutritious



Nutrition Labels & Advice

Nutrition labels can appear to be very complex and overwhelming. Sometimes, companies will try to trick you into thinking your meal has different nutritional values than what they lead you to believe. When reading a nutritional label, you should break it down into steps.

Step 1. Look at the serving size.

The serving size is usually the amount a person should eat at the one time, and sometimes the serving size will be the whole chip packet, and sometimes the serving size will say 25g while the packet is 100g (which means if you eat the whole packet, you are eating 4x the serving size). This can be quite silly at times, at some cereal packets will recommend the serving size to only be 50 grams - but who actually only eats 50 grams of cereal at a time?

Step 2. Check out the total amount of calories for the food

Step 3. Look at the percentage daily intake

Food labels will list the nutrients and energy contributions in a few different columns.

If the column says 'percentage daily intake', it will show in a percentage format of how much of that food is contributing to your total daily intake. For example, if it says it has 17% of your RDI (recommended daily intake), then it has 17% of the 100 you are meant to be eating in a day.

If the column says 'per serve', then we are using the knowledge we gained from above and implementing that in our interpretation of the label. If our chip packet has 4 serves and is 100grams, then the per serve will be 25grams and we are looking at the nutritional contributions per 25 grams, not the whole packet.

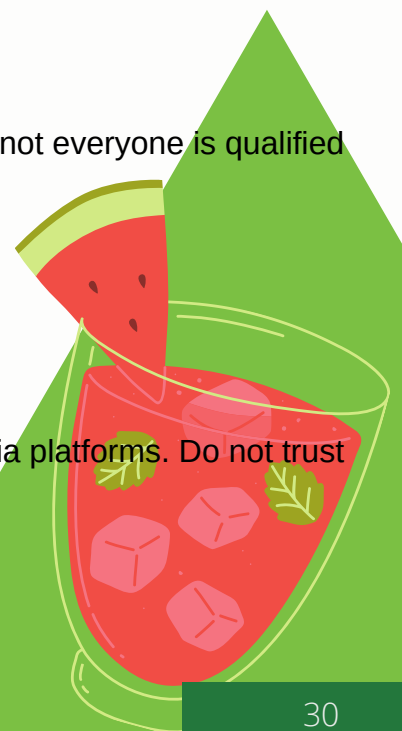
If you wish to learn more about deciphering nutrition labels, you can visit eatforhealth.gov.au to find more resources presented in greater detail.

Who should I trust for advice?

When seeking nutritional advice, it is important you exercise discretion as not everyone is qualified to discuss such a sensitive and complex topic. You should only speak to:

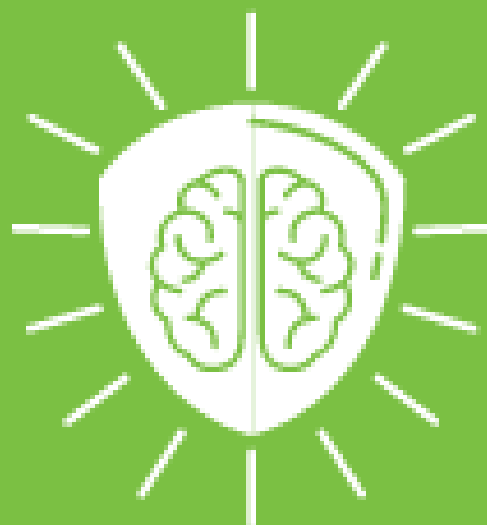
- Your doctor
- A registered dietician
- A registered nutritionist
- A registered sports dietician

Ensure that you also question information presented to you on social media platforms. Do not trust or believe in everything you see on the internet.



What are the recommendations?

Type	recommended	what we do eat	serving size
Grains and cereals (mostly whole-grain and/or high-fibre varieties)	5 - 7 serves per day	4.5 serves per day	1 slice of bread, ½ cup of cooked rice, pastas, noodles and more
Vegetables	5 - 5 ½ serves per day	1.7 - 2.1 serves per day	75 grams which can be ½ cup of cooked green or orange vegetables, beans, peas or lentils.
Fruits	2+ serves per day	1.5 serves per day	150 grams which can be a medium sized apple,
Protein (meats, fish, poultry, tofu, beans)	2 ½ serves per day	1.7 serves per day	65g of lean red meats, 80g of poultry
Dairy products	3 ⅓ serves per day	1.5 serves per day	2 slices of hard cheese, ¾ of a cup of yoghurt
Fats, butter and oils	1 ½ - 2 serves per day	2 serves per day	A 7 - 10g of a butter-like spread
Confectionary	0 - 3 serves per day	5 to 7 serves per day	2 scoops of icecream, 30g of salty crackers, 2 - 3 sweet biscuits
Sodium	460 - 920mg per day	2000mg + per day	sodium can come from soups, chicken, table salt, pizzas, take-away meals
Iron	16.3mg per day *menstruating bodies will need to consume more iron than non-menstruating bodies	9mg per day **approximately	Good sources of iron include liver, beef, kangaroo, leaf green vegetables, salmon, canned tuna, pork, iron-fortified cereals, beans, spinach and more.



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