

20 Health & Nutrition Tips - For Easy Everyday Wins!

1. *Get rid of your sugary drinks*

The sugar that comes from fizzy drinks like pop, soda, & we are going to include juice as well, is stored as excess calories that convert to fat unless you are drinking a can of coke & going for a 30 min run. Plus sugar depletes a protein called BDNF which is involved in depression & anxiety. For more info click [here](#).

2. *Avoid processed food*

For example - Crackers, Candies, Chips, Cakes, Cookies, Cereal etc etc...if you are seeing a pattern here you can use my theory, which is **C** stands for **CRAP**. Avoiding them all is hard, and sometimes we can't, I get that. I like crackers too but I choose ones with 10 ingredients I can pronounce. **Fast Food** (McDonalds, SuperMax, Wendy's, BurgerKing etc), **Take-Aways** (Chinese, Chippers, Pizza etc), should just be avoided full stop.

3. *Fruits and Vegetables* are key to maintaining a healthy body and mind and it's only asked that you eat 5-7 of them a day. That's not actually a lot when you know what that means. For example 1 serving of peas is approx. 5 tbsp, 75g or ½ cup & a medium apple counts as 2 servings of fruit.

Considering that such small amounts of fruit and veg will help your bowel movements, cardiovascular health, reduce the risks of cancer, contribute to your water intake, and provide protein and carbs, which your body can convert to energy. Along with those benefits they can also contribute to weight loss when prepared well and part of a healthy lifestyle. For more info click [here](#).

4. *Meeting your daily protein intake* is important as it is an essential component to how your body builds and repairs; it acts as a building block for bones, muscles, skin, blood and cartilage. Helps to form enzymes that make hormones, and guess what...your hair and nails are made mostly of protein as well (16). So needless to say keeping levels up is good for you physically, inside and out.

Making sure you get good quality sources of protein is equally as important. Lean meats like chicken and fish, nuts, seeds (flax, chia, sunflower, pumpkin, and linseed), beans, eggs, tofu, and whole grains are good natural sources.

The recommended amount of protein a day, as a general guideline, is 0.8 grams of protein for every kilogram of body weight. So for example an 80kg person would require 64g of protein per day ($0.8 \times 80 = 64$).

5. *Eat Fatty Fish*, the benefits range from brain to heart health. Try using the acronym SMASH (Salmon, Mackerel, Anchovies, Sardines, Herring) as all contain EFAs (essential fatty acids) like DHA and EPA. These help to support brain function and development, immune and cognitive function, many areas of cardiovascular health including reducing inflammation, and have been used as an effective aid in reducing symptoms of depression (10). Eating 3-4 servings a week can help achieve this. For more info click [here](#).

6. *Eat more fibre*. It helps you to eliminate waste, from excess estrogen to stools and we need fibre to keep our pipes clear so to speak. There are 2 types;

Soluble, the type that dissolves in water and can help to lower cholesterol and stabilize blood sugars. Found in Oats, Apples, Carrots, Peas, Beans and Citrus Fruits as some examples.

Insoluble, this is the kind that promotes bulk in your stools and helps with the movement.

Whole-Wheat Bran and Flour, Vegetables, Nuts, Potatoes and Beans are just some examples of this form.

Because Fiber helps to fill you up and has a slow digestion time it keeps you feeling fuller longer and this can potentially help with maintaining weight as well. Women should be getting 21-25g daily and Men 30-38g (13).

7. **Drink water**, it's your best friend, I cannot stress this enough. If you had to pick 1 healthy habit to improve on or stick with this would be the one my friends. Water boosts your skin health, lubricates your joints, regulates body temperature, flushes out waste, cushions your brain and spinal cord, helps deliver oxygen around the body, keep your kidneys healthy, can help with weight loss (you could be thirsty, not hungry) and is essential for athletic performance (15). If you drink no water start small and increase that to 1 pint glass a day for a week, then 2, then 3 and poof in 3 weeks you are just meeting your minimum water intake. You won't regret this lifestyle perk I promise! For more info click [here](#).
8. **Eat nuts**, most nuts, and especially **Almonds** contain fiber, protein, magnesium, manganese, and Vitamin E, all highly beneficial to your diet and health. In addition to tasting good they are full of antioxidants which may help lower cholesterol, blood sugars, and blood pressure. (3). A small handful of *almonds* is only around 160 calories and 10-15% of those calories aren't absorbed since the fats aren't accessible to some of the digestive enzymes (2). Now don't go crazy here, stick to small portions. **Walnuts** are another amazing little nut that can be eaten on it's own or in lots of salads and baking. Through fatty acids (DHA, EPA, and ALA) they help to moderate cholesterol, blood pressure and can contribute to the prevention of some cardiovascular diseases by helping to balance the Omega 3 to 6 ratio (4). In short nuts (bar peanuts) are good for you, of course, moderation is key and I am talking about raw unsalted nuts here.
9. **Coffee and Chocolate are not bad for you**
Coffee - 1 to 2 cups a day of good quality coffee, i.e. sustainably sourced beans roasted and ground, organic if you can afford it, has health benefits. In recent years it has been shown to protect against Parkinson's, Type 2 Diabetes, Uterine and Liver Cancer, Cardiovascular diseases and may even improve Cognitive Function (6,7). Try Xylitol or Stevia in moderation to replace sugar and use whole milk or unsweetened Almond milk when you can.
DARK Chocolate - The 50-90% cocoa solids kind is high in antioxidants that mop up free radicals and help prevent oxidative stress reducing your risk for heart disease, diabetes and neurodegenerative diseases. Flavanols are the primary component in dark chocolate that can help to reduce blood pressure and cholesterol, ultimately leading to a reduction in the risk of heart disease when combined with other healthy lifestyle measures (8,9). Just make sure you read the label and don't pick ones with too much sugar, less than 25g per 100g bar just as a reference point.
10. **Get a good night's sleep** this goes without saying but yet most of us are lacking in this one extremely important component of our health. Adults require 7-9 hours and the benefits range from boosting brain function, reducing blood pressure and cardiovascular risks, forming and retaining memories, to the regeneration of energy which can aid in physical performance (12). Try to avoid screens 30-60 min before bed, do something relaxing close to bed even if it's just deep breathing, have darkness and silence, and avoid food at least 1 hour prior to sleep to help maximize your chances of a good night's sleep. For more info click [here](#).

Additional tips to help you on your journey...

11. **Go Vegetarian 2 days a week** - it will help you meet your fiber and vegetable intake while boosting your antioxidant intake helping to reduce oxidative stress. Plus if you like cooking, it's fun to see what you can do with vegetarian food. Good for your guts and the planet, win win.
12. **Take a Vitamin D supplement if you don't live in the sun** - the lack of Vitamin D intake has been an issue for a long time, especially if you live in places where the sun may not shine daily. A high quality Vitamin D supplement can help improve your immune function and overall health. Look for a supplement containing 400-800 IUs and this will ensure that you get your daily intake.
13. **Use Extra Virgin Olive Oil** - Vegetable oils and sprays are not doing you any favours. Due to our increased consumption of them as an attempt to avoid butter (which is not that bad for you), we are over consuming them and increasing inflammation in your body due to the high Omega 6 to 3 ratio. Long story short, the likes of soybean, peanut, sunflower, canola, and sesame oils contribute to health risks and the less you consume the better. Extra Virgin Olive oil is better for you all around so make the swap.
14. **Exercise 30 - 60 min daily** - Walking, Strength training, Cardio, HIIT, Yoga, Swimming, it doesn't matter how you get your exercise just get it. From children to adults we all need at least 30-60 minutes of exercise a day and if you can make 30 min of that outdoor time as well then you're going to find yourself physically and mentally healthier. For more info click [here](#).
15. **Try Yoga, Stretching or Meditation** - For those of you who suffer from aches and pains, low mood, anxiety, or any imbalance that causes you unnecessary mental stress then yoga, gentle stretching and meditation could be of serious benefit. They are all backed by science but I'm not going to delve into that here. I can vouch myself for the yoga and improvements in digestion and mood because of it. Try something and judge whether it's beneficial to you or not.
16. **Listen, read, do, or watch something positive everyday** - Again I've read lots on this and I won't slow you down with the details but just apply common sense here...if you see, hear or read something positive you feel happier. It's that simple when you boil it down. So listen to a podcast on your drive to work, read The Good News Network news (it's awesome honestly), or even hold a door for someone. Doing good gives you that hit of dopamine that brings your mood up and puts a smile on your face, win win :)
17. **Eat Seeds** - Super easy snack that will give you protein, fiber, fat, vitamins, minerals and flavour. 25g of Sunflower or Pumpkin seeds mixed with 25g of almonds and walnuts is a great snack. Or add the same amount of Chia, Linseed, Hemp or Flax seeds to your breakfast be it porridge or a smoothie. One of my favorite snacks is peanut or almond butter on rice cakes with a pinch of cinnamon and 2 tbsp of hemp seeds.
18. **Have Variety** - Don't get stuck in an eating pattern or a termed way of eating like Low Carb, High Fat, Low Fat, High Protein, Paleo, Keto etc etc...you get the idea. The more you label your eating style the more you limit yourself, feel pressured to only consume certain foods, miss out on essential nutrients that may come outside of your set foods, and ultimately you lose the battle as what you've done is called dieting. If you want to eat a certain way by all means do, but try to incorporate other foods into your diet at least 2 days a week. Fruit is not bad for you and neither is fat, every whole food has its place in a healthy diet and variety is the spice of life!

19. **Don't Trust All Labels** - Gluten Free, High Fiber, Low Fat, even Organic...doesn't always mean healthy. Industries know what consumers want and have sneaky ways of marketing them to appeal to most of us. Often high fiber foods are high in carbohydrates and sugar and not really nutrient dense. Low Fat often means more sugar and Gluten Free can be highly processed and full of oils that are devastating the planet, like palm oil. For more info click [here](#).
20. **Get outside** - Seriously spend at least 30min outdoors each day or whatever you can fit in. Even if you just sit and stare at people, read a book or go for a walk, nature is nurture and the effects of being out in nature are even more beneficial than just being outdoors alone. Whether it's sun on your face, rain, snow or none of the above because it's cloudy where you live, even the colour green will help to calm you and refocus your thoughts...so find a tree and try it for yourself to see.

****Disclaimer...not every suggestion works for every person, try things out and adjust as needed. It's your body, your mind, your life. Why not spend it in the best you form you can be!****

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