

7 Doctors



7 DOCTORS

WATER

Water serves many essential functions to keep us all going. Our bodies are about 60% water and many factors (internal and external) affect your need for water. It regulates our body temperature, helps lubricate and cushion our joints, filtrates the body and eliminates toxins through efficient kidney function. It also enhances your strength, power and endurance, reduces hunger and aids in nutrient absorption, assists in weight loss and improves blood oxygen circulation. Water helps prevent hangovers, relieves fatigue and prevents overall dehydration which, by the way, can lead to kidney stones, seizures and brain swelling, occasionally resulting in migraines and headaches. And if those reasons don't inspire you to drink more water, I don't know what will!

FUN FACT – We lose a litre of water a night just through our breathing.

We can endure weeks without food but only days without water. Our bodies can trick us into believing we are hungry when we are thirsty, so adopt the habit of drinking a large glass of water when you start to experience hunger or food cravings.

Trust your thirst! It's there for a reason.

We only get about 20% of our daily water intake from food, so we need to drink plenty of water each day.



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4 ways to increase your water intake:

1. Purchase a water bottle that sparks joy and carry it with you everywhere. (We absolutely love our Awake Academy Hydro flasks which you can purchase on our website).

www.awakeacademy.com.au/shop

2. Monitor your intake and ensure you are drinking 2-3L a day.

3. Pace yourself to have consumed half of your daily intake by midday and the remainder no later than an hour before bed.

4. Download a Hydration app such as Water Minder, Daily Water Tracker Reminder or Hydro Coach to help you stay on track.

EXERCISE

Exercise is our body's natural anti-depressant.

There is a mountain of research backing up the many benefits of exercise, but if you struggle to commit to making the time for it, you're not alone. In America, for example, less than 5% of adults participate in 30mins of physical activity each day. Recent reports suggest that by 2030, 50% of the population will be obese.

We all know that we have to exercise to stay in shape, keep fit and stay healthy. However, subscribing to the belief that exercise has to be hard, or adopting the outdated "no pain no gain" mentality, can shatter our motivation, feed excuses and keep us on the couch.



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Exercise is defined as any movement that makes your muscles work and requires your body to burn calories, elevating your heart rate to about 50-60% of its maximum. The maximum heart rate is commonly 220 less your age, so do the math and choose an activity you enjoy. Swimming, surfing, dancing, paddle boarding, walking, yoga, cycling, are a few of my favourites.

Regular exercise, carried out at least 4 times a week, offers incredible benefits that can improve nearly every aspect of your health from the inside out. It can improve your mood, increase your energy levels, increase bone density, burn calories, improve sleep and memory, and even boost your sex drive.

FUN FACT - You use 22 muscles to take a single step forward (there are about 650 skeletal muscles in the human body).

Whether you practice a specific sport or follow the guideline of 30 minutes of exercise a day, you will inevitably improve your health in many ways. If you can't find 30mins, break it up into two 15minute workouts or three 10minute sessions. It's your decision to make exercise a priority, and it's never too late to start building your strength and physical fitness. Something is always better than nothing. Research has found that people who do strength-based exercise have a 23% reduction in risk of premature death and a 31% reduction in cancer-related death. Daily push-ups and sit-ups may add a few extra years to your lifespan!



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Incremental moments of exercise such as taking the stairs instead of the lift or escalator, window shopping and doing housework are easy ways to sneak more movement into your day. Just ditch the all-or-nothing attitude, be kind to yourself and manage your expectations.

You didn't fall out of shape overnight (if you are out of shape) and you won't transform your body instantly either. Health, fitness, feeling good about oneself, energising the body, oxygenating the brain are all excellent so don't just find the time, make the time!

4 ways to make exercise a habit that sticks:

1. Start small and keep it simple.
2. Find a fitness friend (AKA accountability partner).
3. Choose activities you really enjoy.
4. Reward yourself with something you really look forward to like a hot bath or coffee (healthy rewards that don't sabotage your efforts)!

Click on one of these links if you don't know where to begin.

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-to-start-exercising>>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/how-to-start-exercising-and-stick-to-it.htm>>

(available in Resources Section)



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HEALTHY DIET

The healthy food pyramid was created in Sweden in 1972, becoming adopted globally as the best practice food guide. At the time, the aim was to encourage people to eat a varied and balanced diet, based on foods that were nutritious and cheap. It was advised to eat mostly grains, cereals, bread, fruits and vegetables, while the 'eat least' segment contained fats, oils, sugar, salt and alcohol. The fact is, this pyramid and its endorsement was not based on actual science. Instead, an invention of necessity when Sweden was struggling under the plight of high food prices in the early 70's.

Understanding what to eat, how to eat and when to eat can be confusing and overwhelming due to the immense amount of research and scientific studies readily available at our fingertips. If you are free of chronic disease or mental health challenges, trusting your intuition and listening to your body is one of the simplest ways to recognise what works for you and what doesn't. The body whispers before it screams. Unfortunately, we often fail to hear the whispers and only begin to pay attention once the screaming starts!

Our diet evolves over time, influenced by many factors including environment, social and economic circumstances. Everything we consume has an essential effect on our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. To have a healthier diet, we need to enjoy a variety of foods, to ensure we receive all the nutrients we need in optimum quantity. We need different amounts of various nutrients at different stages of life to stay healthy and active.



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FUN FACT – Apples are more effective than coffee at waking you up in the morning! (Apples contain 13gm of naturally occurring sugar which promotes a similar response to caffeine. Slowly released throughout the body, they make you feel more awake without the mood swings, jitters or crash).

Instinctively, we know what foods are good for us and what foods aren't. Broccoli, salad and whole grains like quinoa are healthy alternatives to bread, chips, and white rice. Willpower and a bit of peer or social pressure can often lead us astray.

Making the commitment to reduce refined carbohydrates and processed foods, increase lean proteins and healthy fats and remain adequately hydrated can have a profound long-term positive impact on your health and wellbeing.

Carbohydrates – not all carbs are bad! Some are nutritious and healthy such as fruit, vegetables, legumes and whole grains like quinoa and oats. The not so healthy ones, referred to as refined or processed carbs, appear in two forms:

- (i) Processed Sugar – eg agave syrup, high fructose corn syrup, dextrose and rice syrup.
- (ii) Refined Grains – Foods such as white flour, white bread, white rice, pasta, soft drinks and breakfast cereals have been stripped of their nutritional value and can interfere with digestion.

Studies have shown a diet high in processed carbohydrates has been linked to mood swings, fatigue and depression.

Processed foods – These are high in calories, sodium and sugar and low in fibre, vitamins and minerals. Examples include common breakfast cereals, dried fruit, margarine, basically anything that doesn't appear in its natural (or nearly natural) state.



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Lean proteins – Lean proteins are rich in protein but low in fat. Foods like skinless chicken breast, turkey, cold-water fish such as salmon and tofu, tempeh and edamame are the highest plant-based proteins.

Healthy fats – Believe it or not, there are very nutritious and healthy high-fat foods, in moderation of course! Avocado, whole eggs, raw nuts (eg almonds, cashews, macadamias) olive oil, coconut oil and quality dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa).

There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to our diet. However, there are some basic principles you can follow to live a healthier and more balanced life.

4 steps to a healthy diet:

Step 1 : Always shop with a list.

Step 2 : Increase your protein intake (more info on protein below).

Step 3 : Cook at home more often.

Step 4 : Eat from smaller plates to reduce portion sizes.

Despite what is written about the “Fast 800 Diet” designed by Michael Mosley, my husband and I embraced the 5:2 diet in 2006 and still commit to it today. We love it. We schedule it into our lives, commit to it when it’s convenient and enjoy our holidays without it. Personally, the health benefits have been profound. We have managed to maintain a healthy weight and enjoy a vast variety of delicious and nutritious foods on fast days and a few guilty pleasures without the guilt on non-fast days.



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Protein

Proteins are the main building blocks of your body, used to make muscles, tendons, organs and skin, as well as enzymes, hormones, neurotransmitters and various tiny molecules that serve many essential functions. Without protein, life as you know it would not be possible.

There are about 100,000 different types in the human body, each with a lifespan of two days or less. They are responsible for many processes such as growing, healing, forming cell structure, carrying oxygen, protecting against disease, growing hair and nails, allowing eyesight, providing energy and more.

If you're eating animal products like meat, fish and eggs, or raw nuts every day, you're likely doing pretty well protein-wise already. Tofu, tempeh, lentils, quinoa and legumes are great sources as well as hemp seeds which contain a complete highly-digestible protein and essential fatty acids in a ration optimal for human health. Broccoli and brussels sprouts are tasty sources of protein and high in fibre.

However, if you don't eat animal foods, getting all the protein and essential amino acids your body needs may be a bit more challenging. In this case, you may be interested in this article on the 17 best protein sources for vegans and vegetarians.

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/protein-for-vegans-vegetarians>

(available in Resources Section)



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FUN FACT - The human body cannot store protein like it stores carbs and fats, so we need to include a daily intake to stay healthy.

Start your day with protein to curb food cravings, late-night snacking, and afternoon sugar crashes. A high protein diet increases fullness and reduces hunger caused by the improved function of the weight-regulating hormone called ghrelin. Often termed as the hunger hormone, its primary purpose is to increase your appetite because it signals the brain to eat. One way to keep this pesky hormone at bay is to eat foods that make you feel fuller for longer while reducing your intake of processed carbs and refined sugars.

Your immune system is made up of proteins and it naturally weakens if you don't consume enough of it. Protein helps you maintain your muscle mass and promotes muscle growth. People who eat more protein tend to have better bone health and lower risk of osteoporosis. It's one of the best ways to reduce age-related muscle deterioration.



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Here are 4 simple ways to increase your protein intake and improve your overall health and wellbeing:

1. Replace cereal with eggs – Many breakfast foods are low in protein, high in sugar and processed carbohydrates. Studies have shown eating eggs for breakfast satisfies your appetite for hours, resulting in fewer calories consumed throughout the day.

2. Snack on raw nuts – Almonds contain 6gm of protein in a 28g serving, are high in magnesium and fibre and good fats. Cashews, pistachios and macadamias are tasty options as well.

3. Add lean protein to your salads such as chicken or turkey (30g of protein per 100g), tuna (26g of protein per 100g), salmon (25g of protein per 100g) and plant-based proteins such as chickpeas, quinoa, lentils and kidney beans.

4. Have a protein smoothie for breakfast or throughout the day as a healthy snack between meals. Protein powders make it easy to have a high protein and delicious meal and there are many forms to choose from. My personal preference is a plant-based powder because I am lactose intolerant, so my go-to is either brown rice, pea or hemp protein as they are easier to digest and have a delicious nutty taste. I also add them to my raw treats like bliss balls and slices.



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SUNSHINE

I'm solar powered! Just 5 minutes in the sun completely recharges my internal batteries, instantly elevates my mood, clears my mind and boosts my immune system, enhancing my overall health and wellbeing. Fortunately, these claims have also been reinforced by scientific evidence and research.

FUN FACT - The earth is approximately 93 million miles away from the sun, so it takes about 8 minutes for sunlight to reach our planet.

According to a variety of studies, a moderate dose of sunshine has significant health benefits. These include lower blood pressure, strengthening of bones, improved brain function, eases mild depression by increasing levels of natural antidepressants, improved quality of sleep, boosts growth in children and reduces the risk of certain cancers.

Experts recommend no more than 15 to 30 minutes a day of direct sunlight for a healthy adult. Remember, your skin type, where you live, time and length of exposure and how much skin you expose need to be considered and will determine how much Vitamin D you can produce.



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4 ways to invite more sunshine into your life:

1. Walk or ride to work – Changing your commute to work and incorporating exercise will set your mood for the rest of the day.
2. Eat lunch outside – It's a healthy way to escape from work, connect with nature and ground you in the present moment.
3. Nature is your playground – Go for a bushwalk, bike ride or a scenic hike to boost your physical activity and fulfil your daily quota of sunshine.
4. Start a herb or veggie garden – The daily ritual of watering your plants and checking them for pests or dead leaves will give you a great excuse to go outside

This link may be helpful if you want to learn more about the surprising benefits of sunshine.

<https://doctormurray.com/7-little-known-benefits-of-sunlight/>

(available in Resources Section)

LAUGHTER

Laughter is the best medicine. Why? Because it is a free and convenient stress management tool which elevates our mood, lowers our blood pressure and connects us with others. Laughter is contagious!

All of us can use a little bit more laughter in our lives. It is the perfect way to distract our attention away from anger, guilt, stress and fear. When I was about nine years old, I distinctly recall my dad angrily disciplining me until the word “Fuck” accidentally rolled off his tongue. He did his best to keep any ‘colourful’ language to a minimum in front of his kids. I immediately brought this ‘slip’ to his attention which made him laugh, instantly diffusing his anger, letting me off the hook from a potential grounding or smack on the bum!



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Many studies have shown the positive effects of laughter. It can relieve pain, induce higher levels of happiness, increase immunity and provide a physical and emotional release.

Laughing in stressful situations can shift our perspective from seeing a threat to viewing it as an opportunity, making it less threatening and more positive. I often laugh when I am scared or uncertain, which distracts my focus, alters my perspective and creates the space in my mind to devise a solution.

FUN FACT

The average adult only laughs about 15 times a day, but a healthy child may laugh as much as 400 times per day.

The common stress response, freeze, fight or flight is the body's automatic natural response to a perceived threat or danger. Learning to laugh when you are stressed triggers the relaxation response; rest and digest, or pause and please.

This activation of the parasympathetic nervous system is the body's calming counterpart to the stress response and helps the body return to a physiological balance. Laughter reduces all of our stress hormones, such as cortisol and dopamine and increases our health-enhancing hormones like endorphins, which are the body's natural pain killers.



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Four ways to bring more laughter into your life:

1. Find humour in your life – Instead of complaining or getting frustrated, learn to laugh at how ridiculous the situation may be. This attitude will help you become more light-hearted and less stressed. People with a more positive outlook tend to fight disease better than those who tend to be more negative.

2. Watch an animated kids' film – The shriek of delight you hear when kids are watching a movie is a good indication of the effortlessness of humour. Some of my personal favourites are Toy Story, Madagascar, Bolt and Despicable Me. Share your recommendations with the tribe.

3. Laugh with friends – Go out to dinner or a comedy club, or invite your friends over for a dinner party or games night. If you have certain friends who you share a good old belly laugh with, connect with them often and laugh your way to better health and toned abs!

4. Fake it 'til you make it! Studies have shown the body can't distinguish between fake laughter or real laughter (apparently my husband can)! The physical benefits are the same and fake laughter may lead to real laughter. So, laugh and live longer!



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REST

Do you perceive busyness and exhaustion as part of the job or a part of life? Is persevering and performing through fatigue a sign of toughness? It's hard to stay alert, remain vigilant, process information or execute complicated plans when you are fighting fatigue.

Overwork is overrated. Today we treat overwork as a signal of our passion and productivity and the need for rest as a weakness or moral failing. How much you work has become an easy way to demonstrate how productive and committed you are.

In his book, 'Rest - Why you get more done when you rest', Alex Soojung-Kim Pang suggests we can learn to use rest to help stimulate our creativity and improve our quality of life. His Masterclass on the Calm App titled 'The Power of Rest' is the source of much of the information below.

When I was studying for my HSC many moons ago, I learned the value of focussing intensely for about 60 - 90 minutes, then taking a walk around the block to give myself a break, promoting the absorption of the information. Science has shown taking active rest breaks restores our capacity to work and enhances our long-term productivity. The default mode network in our brains keeps working on unsolved problems that have recently occupied our conscious attention. It's the source of significant insights appearing when we allow our minds to wander or rest.



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As a professional athlete, however, I was accustomed to training long and hard, committed to showing up and pushing through every session despite any signs of injury or illness.

My key strengths were perseverance and discipline, so when the symptoms started to appear, I interpreted them as an indication of my own failings of not being strong enough.

I decided I needed to work harder to overcome them. The harder I worked, the more my body screamed, until my whole system collapsed, resulting in burn out, two bouts of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, injuries and depression.

I didn't take rest seriously until I came to understand the importance of it. Finding tiny competitive advantages, such as learning to rest, meditation, play and taking breaks from surfing refreshed my mind and reinvigorated my passion for competition and life.

Physically engaging and mentally absorbing activities do a better job of providing psychological detachment from work, boost creativity and restore our mental energy, just as exercise can leave us more energised than a couple of hours of staring at a screen. Music, chess, painting or baking are mentally absorbing and restorative. Engaging in long walks, swimming, running, surfing, gardening, physical activities that give you a sense of mastery and control and allow the mind time to wander, are active and restorative. The higher your level of detachment from work, the more therapeutic your time off.



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FUN FACT - Your holidays only need to be one-week-long! Recovery during a vacation hits a peak around day 8, and either remains stable or declines. A 2-week or 2-month holiday will not make you any happier or any more relaxed than a week. The psychological boost you receive from your holidays lasts about 2 months. Take the holiday that fits your life. The only bad holiday is the one you don't take.

Work and rest are partners, not competitors. Neither can succeed on its own. Work too long without rest, and you will burn out. But if you only rest, you will never become immersed enough in a problem to get the default mode network interested in it. You need work to advance most of the way on problems, but you need rest to incubate new ideas and allow moments of insight to flower.

We see rest as the absence of work, not as something that has its own value. Leading us to undervalue rest. The more you love your job, the more you need to take a break from it. Sometimes long hours are necessary, but it's unhealthy to do it all of the time. We treat rest as a luxury or a sign of weakness, and we tell ourselves we will rest when we have time, not when we make time.

There are many things you can't change in your personal and professional life, but you can control how much you choose to rest. Science shows that we can all work better, be more productive and lead happier lives when we learn how to balance work and rest. It's a skill we can always get better at.

We cheat ourselves when we treat rest as a weakness or something that we can choose to do. It can increase your strength, alertness, creativity and productivity.

Use rest to be your best!



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4 ways we can integrate daily rest

1. Take rest seriously – a block of time never magically makes itself available for rest. You have to make the time and defend it.

2. Layer work and rest – Alternate periods of focussed work with periods of deliberate rest. Resting after periods of focussed work gives your subconscious mind time to discover solutions to problems that are alluding your conscious effort.

3. Detach from work – quality rest is essential, so if you are checking your email at the dinner table or scheduling calls during holidays, you have less chance to detach and you defeat the whole purpose of your holiday and downtime. The more you love your job, the more time you need away from it.

4. Detach from devices – leave the office at the office. Put down your phone periodically and commit to being present, without distractions.



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JOURNALING

Journaling is simply writing down your thoughts and feelings to understand them more clearly. If you struggle with stress, depression, or anxiety, keeping a journal is a great way to create a sense of calm and clarity. It can help you gain control of your emotions and improve your mental health by getting the words out of your head and transferring them onto paper.

It's a complementary partner to the first drawing exercise in Round 1, helping you make sense of, and expressing your feelings. Similarly, journaling is a beautiful way to capture significant moments of happiness, success and love.

I have been writing a journal since I was about six years old. It started as a daily account and evolved into a confessional, a catalogue of all the events, insights and knowledge I have acquired over my lifetime. Keeping a journal helps me create order when my world feels like it's in chaos. You get to know yourself by revealing your most private fears, thoughts and feelings.

FUN FACT – regular journaling strengthens immune cells, helps manage stress and has been shown to decrease the symptoms of asthma and rheumatoid arthritis

It's impossible not to grow when it comes to journal writing. That's what makes it such a powerful tool, whether it's about achieving goals, venting frustrations, becoming a better person or just general personal development. No matter what you use it for, you'll eventually see yourself growing as a person.



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FOUR STEPS TO JOURNAL WRITING

1. Purpose and objective – What do you want to gain or achieve from writing a journal?

My journal serves as an emotional outlet and haven to freely express my thoughts, desires, frustrations and joys. For me, it's a form of self-care while others use their journal as a place to record business plans, strategies or the events of the day. Feelings drive action, so if you feel good about the concept of journaling, you are more prone to do it.

2. Choose your platform – I'm a very tactile person, so my preference is paper and a pen, while my husband keeps an electronic diary, daily. Whether you go with paper or electronic, there is no right or wrong mode to use, go with what is most convenient and comfortable, and keep it simple.

3. Create a writing time and space. Journaling before going to sleep helps me clear my mind, decompress and de-stress, which aids my sleep, so I tend to journal in bed in the evening. Whether you are at the kitchen table or a comfy corner chair, find a comfortable place where you won't be interrupted and defend the time. Mornings are also good because you may find you are less distracted by the day ahead. Give a few different times a go until you find a time that works for you.

4. Remain judgment-free – Allow whatever is on your mind to flow out onto the page, without fear, judgment or criticism. You may have a stream of consciousness or a single sentence. The key is allowing it to be a brain dump to create more space in your brain to boost your creativity, productivity and happiness.



**“Awakening means you’ve come home to yourself, that
consciousness has shifted back to it’s original nature”**

- Maria Erving

