



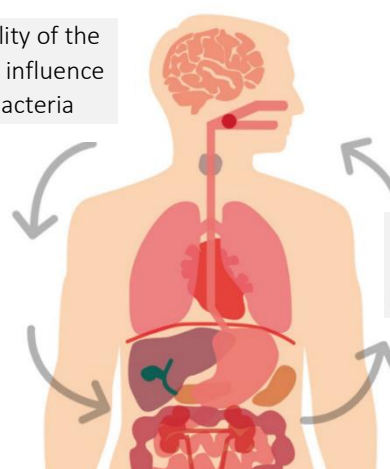
Week 9 – Healthy Eating for High Performance

Mental health is more than just the way we think. It's also what we eat, how we move, how we sleep, how we socialise and how we live.

What may seem simple but is often forgotten, is our mental health affects our physical health and vice versa, e.g.

- IBS
- Chronic pain
- Migraines
- Menopause
- Autoimmune conditions

The ability of the brain to influence gut bacteria



The ability of gut bacteria to influence behaviour and mood

Stress – it's a two-way thing! What we put into our bodies not only affects our mental wellbeing but it impacts our energy and productivity levels. To be able to perform to the best of your ability at work, remember to stay hydrated and eat nutrient-dense foods – and remember to prioritise taking a lunch break! Working through your lunch and not taking the time to refuel your mind and body will negatively impact your ability to perform at work in the afternoon.

So, let's start with the basics...

Drink a glass of water as soon as you wake up before drinking tea or coffee. Take a glass to bed and put it on your bedside table, then drink it as soon as your alarm goes off! Why?

HYDRATED:

- Improved Alertness
- Improved Energy
- Better Concentration
- Enhanced Cognitive Performance
- Detoxification

DEHYDRATED:

- Fatigue
- Dry Skin
- Muscle Cramps
- Constipation
- Sweet Cravings
- Headaches

The Morning:

We've all heard "breakfast is the most important meal of the day" and the truth is, it is! You should always have breakfast, even if it's once you get to work. It doesn't have to be a full meal, a piece of fruit will do! Ideally, your breakfast won't be sweet, and it will include protein.

Breakfast Proteins:

- Oats
- Chia seeds
- Natural, full fat yoghurt
- Milks
- Nuts and seeds
- Peanut / nut butter
- Eggs
- Chicken
- Salmon
- Ham (occasionally)
- Feta cheese
- Protein shake
- Avocado

At the Office:

On a Sunday, plan your lunches for the week, invest in some lunch tubs and spend an hour or so forward planning and batch cooking for the week so you've not got to worry about it during the week. Or, when you're making your dinner in the evening, cook enough to take for lunch with you the next day.

If you are eating out at lunch time or getting something from the shop most local to you, avoid eating sandwiches and the sushi. Make sure protein outweighs the carbs otherwise you're going to experience that carb crash in the afternoon and your energy levels will plummet.

If you're working late or exercising after work, try to have a small snack around 5pm to ease hunger and give your body the energy to keep going until dinner.

Snack if you need to...

You don't have to starve yourself between meals and you should never go too long without food. We're discussing how to eat for high performance, and this would have the opposite effect. Snack if you need to but be mindful of what you snack on. Avoid the sugar, try to have protein-based snacks and make sure it's not thirst before snacking! Good snacks include:

- A piece of fruit with some nuts
- Apple and nut butter
- Oatcakes and nut butter / hummus
- Hummus and veggies

- Natural yoghurt
- Energy bites / balls
- Slice of brown toast with peanut butter
- Dried fruit and nuts

No caffeine after 2pm!

Ask why you need coffee – are you thirsty? Is it an energy craving? You could replace it with a protein-led snack, herbal tea or water.

Top 10 Stress-Busting Foods

- Green leafy vegetables
- Apples
- Berries
- (Grass Fed) beef
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds
- Bananas
- (Organic) chicken and turkey
- Dark chocolate
- Oily fish such as salmon and mackerel

Avoid:

- White sugar
- White rice (including sushi!)
- White bread
- White pasta
- Low fat and 0% fat
- 'No added sugar'
- Sweeteners
- Margarines

Replace With:

- Honey or maple sugar (if you have to)
- Brown rice
- Brown bread
- Brown pasta
- Full fat dairy products
- Butter

Don't punish yourself if you make the wrong choice with food during the day. We all have habits and on average it takes 66 days before a new behaviour becomes automatic.

If you take anything from this week, let it be awareness and bring awareness to what you put inside your body. Pay attention to your eating and drinking habits and notice the impact that has on your energy, concentration and stress levels. You can then, using the above, start taking steps towards a healthier, more productive version of you.