

EasYoga Nutrition Tips

A beginner's guide to Nutrition



Lets Start with the Basics



Nutrition can be a minefield, so it's a good idea to start with the basics..



We need nutrition to keep healthy and stay alive. This means that our bodies do not produce any nutrition, so we need to source this from food and water. Nutrients are vital for disease prevention, growth and good health. These are then broken down into two categories: Macronutrients and Micronutrients.



Macronutrients come in the form of actual large quantities of food and help to provide your body with energy. These are protein, carbohydrates and fat.



Micronutrients come in the form of vitamins and minerals which are only needed in small amounts.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the energy blocks from your food. They contain good sugars which help to fuel your body for everyday activities e. They help with brain function and the main central nervous system (sending nerves throughout your body). Carbohydrates can also help protect against diseases such as cancer.

Sources of Carbohydrates

Not all carbohydrates are good ones. You are aiming to go for the non-processed ones with no refined sugars to them, for example, wholemeal bread, wholewheat pasta, noodles and rice. These are better than the white varieties as they will not give your body a sugar spike (insulin spike). Wholewheat foods release this sugar (insulin) slowly so your body has time to use it in the correct way. Also aim to eat beans and fibre rich vegetables, including carrots, beets, broccoli, artichokes and sweet potatoes. Different fruits have high fibre content in them. For example, apples, bananas, oranges, strawberries and some exotic fruits. All these are a great source of good carbohydrates.



Fats

Fats

Fats usually get quite a bad rap, but they are an essential part of a healthy diet. Healthy fats help with the absorption of vitamins and minerals, help to build cells, help with movement of muscles and are a great energy source. Healthy fats can also help with balancing blood sugar levels and improve brain function, helping to reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.



Sources of Fats



Unsaturated fats are really good for the body. They provide essential fatty acids your body can't make. Saturated fats should be limited as these can have the reverse effect on the body.

The most commonly known unsaturated fats are omega 3s and omega 6s. These are mostly found in nuts, seeds, fish (salmon), oils such as avocado, flax seeds and olives. Another amazing oil is coconut oil as this is plant-based so has a faster uptake by the organs to use as fuel to the body.

Saturated fats come in the form of animal-based sources, for example butter, cheese and red meat, processed meats including sausages, mincemeat, animal skin, bacon and fatty cuts of meat. Limit your intake of these to reduce heart disease. For example, a small matchbox size piece of cheese once a day.

Protein

Protein

Protein is amazing for muscle repair, not just for gym bunnies but in everyday life. It is part of every cell, every tissue and organ in the body. It also helps to produce hormones. Protein helps with the building of antibodies to help prevent and fight disease.

Proteins come in the form of amino acids and the body needs 20 of them to stay healthy. They are then broken down into essential amino acids and non-essential amino acids. There are nine essential amino acids which are not made in the body so need to be found in the form of food. There are 11 non-essential amino acids which are made by the body.

Each protein is constantly being broken down. The body does not store proteins like it does other nutrients, so this needs to be given to the body in the form of food every day. Therefore, most of your portion control should be based around protein as the body needs it to repair and grow constantly. Most of the protein we need to fuel and repair our bodies comes in the form of high-quality protein. This mostly comes from animal or plant-based sources.

Sources of Proteins

Lean white meat is a good place to start, for example chicken or turkey.

Fish, including salmon, haddock, and bass - any type of fish.

Dairy products, for example eggs, milk, cheese, and yoghurt.

Plant-based food such as tofu, nuts, beans, and pulses.



Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins

Vitamins and minerals are needed to help keep the body functioning correctly. They help to fight off any diseases and repair bones and tissues. They heal wounds and help boost the immune system. They can also help to repair cells and convert food into energy.

Vitamins can be split up into two groups. They are water soluble and fat-soluble vitamins.

Water soluble vitamins are found in all types of foods. They are absorbed into the blood stream and help the body to release energy, to build energy, to help repair broken cells, and make collagen which helps to repair wounds and forms a base for teeth and bones to be built upon. Water soluble vitamins are Bs and C.

Fat-soluble vitamins help to keep your eyes, skin and lungs all in good condition. They help to build bones and protect the body with antioxidants.

Fat-soluble vitamins are A, D, E and K. They can be found in fatty foods and oils.



Minerals

Minerals help with the daily function of the body. They help to build strong bones and teeth (calcium) as well as build hair, skin and cells. They also help with metabolism in the body.

There are several major minerals the body needs to function daily. They are: calcium, zinc, iron, fluoride, chloride, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium and sulphur. Some of these help keep the water balance right as most of our body is made up of water (around 60%).

You will source most of these vitamins and minerals from a healthy balanced diet.

Water

Water is probably one of the most important nutrients you need for your body to function correctly. We are made up more of water more than anything else. Water will help ward off dehydration. It helps to improve your overall mood and helps with brain function. It helps to carry nutrients around in the bloodstream faster and carries more nutrients to all the cells. It also helps with the digestive system and keeps the intestines flowing by preventing constipation.

We should aim to drink around two to three litres of water each day to keep the body functioning at its best. Water doesn't just have to come from a tap. It can be found in fruits and vegetables such as watermelon, cucumber or spinach. It's a good idea to drink around one pint of water when you first get up in the morning and then around one pint just before bed. This will kick-start the kidneys and urinary tract to wake up and function well. You can tell your hydration state by the colour of your urine. If it's very yellow and has a strong smell then you are dehydrated. If it is a faded yellow colour and not smelling, then you are perfectly hydrated. This is what you are aiming for.



Healthy Foods to Eat



Here is a list of a few foods to eat. These will give you all your nutrition for your daily requirements.

- Greek yoghurt, natural yoghurt
- Small matchbox size cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Butter
- Whole Milk, almond milk, coconut milk
- Eggs
- Lentils
- Quinoa
- Meat (lean white meat e.g. chicken, red meat in small amounts)
- Fish (tuna, salmon, white fish)

- Spinach
- Green beans
- Peas
- Beetroot
- Pomegranate
- Broccoli
- Courgette
- Carrots
- Lemon
- Avocado



- Chilli
- Ginger
- Sweet Potato
- Pepper
- Broccoli
- Kale
- Onion
- Tomatoes
- Mushrooms
- Aubergine

- Butternut squash
- Corn on the cob
- Bananas
- Peaches/nectarines
- Kiwi
- Cherries
- Melon
- Strawberries
- Pears
- Natural nuts not flavoured or salted (pure cashews, peanuts, almonds)

- Seeds (Chia seeds, Flax seeds)
- Dried fruit
- Hummus
- Cucumber
- Olives
- Tofu
- Rye bread, sourdough bread
- Pesto
- Protein shake
- Good quality dark chocolate 70% or more

- Wholewheat pasta, wholewheat rice, wholewheat spaghetti, noodles, freekeh
- Good quality granola
- Nut butter, for example peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter
- Coconut oil
- Water, green tea, herbal teas

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Snacks

I've devised a few meal plans. Feel free to add or takeaway anything. You need to make sure you are eating roughly every three hours. This is to accommodate your blood sugar levels to stay at a constant level. For example, if you eat at 7.30am, try and eat around 10.30-11.00am which would be a snack. Then lunch, a snack in the afternoon and then dinner.

► Healthy Breakfast's

- - Scrambled, poached eggs, omelette
- - Greek yoghurt with fresh fruit and honey
- - Good quality granola, yoghurt, fresh fruit
- - Porridge with honey, fresh fruit and seeds
- - Fresh fruit and vegetable smoothies with chia seeds
- - Protein powder smoothie
- - Soaked overnight oats with seeds, berries and fruit
- - Smoothie bowl
- - Protein pancakes with honey and fresh fruit



Healthy Lunches

- Baked sweet potato with small amount of butter, with either tuna mayo, hardboiled egg, chicken, or feta cheese
- Salads with two hardboiled eggs, whole chicken breast, feta cheese with olives such as a Greek salad, chicken pesto, or chicken quinoa and rice salad
- Tuna pasta, chicken pasta
- Quinoa burger
- Salmon curry
- Stir fry
- Turkey and avocado sandwich
- Yoghurt
- Fruit
- Small amount of good quality dark chocolate
- Tofu and avocado sandwich



Healthy Dinner's

- Stir fry with lots of vegetables and lean meat or tofu
- Tuna steaks
- Chicken burrito bowls
- Tuna wholewheat pasta bake
- Baked salmon fillets with vegetables
- Cod, lentil and broccoli
- Homemade salmon fish cakes and vegetables
- Roast chicken or turkey
- Teriyaki glazed chicken salad
- Mediterranean chicken
- Buddha Bowl
- Chicken or turkey wholewheat pasta with feta cheese sauce
- Homemade Thai chicken curry
- Lean meat with loads of veg
- Homemade chicken or turkey pie with veg
- Homemade burgers grilled and not fried
- Meatballs
- Kale Caesar salad
- Spelt or cauliflower rice pizza
- Sweet potato lentil bowls





Processed Foods or Refined High Sugar Foods

- ▶ This is a huge subject, but we will just concentrate on the basics.
- ▶ Sugars will be hidden in most foods which tend to be processed. There are different processing procedures in the food industry. We all know which foods are good for us and which are bad. For example, crisps, biscuits, varieties of chocolate, sweets, cakes etc. The list is endless. We should only eat these foods in moderation. Sugars can also be hidden on the ingredients list, for example named as sucrose and fructose.
- ▶ If a food has been through a process to get to its final product, then it can be bad for you. You are aiming for it to be as unprocessed as possible. For example, milk, whole milk is better for you than skimmed as it's gone through less processes to get to its final product state. Just use your common sense for most of the foods you eat.

Use your common sense



So all in all just use your common sense.

You know what is healthy and good for you and you know what is bad for you.



If you know your body well enough, then it will be telling you how it feels. I know when I eat sugary foods, after about 2 hours I get a blood sugar crash and feel tired and sluggish.



You will find what works for you. Try a few things out and see.

Your body may respond to 3 meals per day better than responding to smaller meals every 3 hours. Or it might like food every 3 hours. Just see what works for you.



We have covered the basics and as you are probably aware this subject is huge, and I could talk about it all day. Take what you want from this and lead a healthy lifestyle making the right choices for you.



**Good luck with your
nutrition journey.**

**I am here to answer any
questions you may have.**

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