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**HEALTH & SAFETY
NEWSLETTER**

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June 2019

Let the **sunshine** in

We need the sun. Too much and we risk skin cancer, but too little and we can end up low in essential vitamin D.

Unlike other vitamins, vitamin D is made when your skin is exposed to the sun's ultraviolet B rays. It's best known for keeping your bones healthy by increasing the absorption of calcium, and low levels may lead to the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis. There is also evidence that insufficient vitamin D may play a role in other diseases, including multiple sclerosis and some cancers.

Deficient in D

Vitamin D deficiency is very common. It's estimated that about 1 billion people worldwide have low levels of the vitamin in their blood. In many places, this is thanks largely to long hours of office-based work, a decline in outdoor activities and the rise in popularity of video games and computers.

An increase in the usage of sunscreen is not to blame. Research shows that regular sunscreen users do not have lower vitamin D levels than people who don't use sunscreen.

You don't need much summer sun to get your vitamin D fix. Just six to seven minutes of exposing your forearms in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon will do the trick.

When winter arrives, however, it's a different story. We tend to bundle up against the cold, so less skin is exposed to the sun. And depending on where you live, the winter sun may be too weak to make vitamin D, or be only able to make it at certain times of the day.

Vitamin D all year round

While in summer, you should be checking the UV levels to ensure you don't get too much sun exposure, in winter UV levels may often be too low to make much vitamin D, especially in the early morning and late afternoon. As a general rule, in summer, just six to seven minutes of exposing your forearms in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon will do.

In winter, try to get out at noon and expose your arms or lower legs for between seven and 40 minutes. The darker your skin or the further from the equator that you live, the more exposure you will need.

In mid-winter many of us won't need sunscreen, but any time the UV index gets above 3, it is recommended to use sun protection. Check the UV levels in your area at sunburnmap.com, or google UV in your area.

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International Men's Health Week runs from June 10 to 19.

This is an important opportunity to highlight men's health and what it means to be healthy. Through a series of promotions, events and publicity, Men's Health Week is designed to provoke thought and discussion about what needs to be done to improve male health.

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5 common exercise myths



A kilo of muscle looks and acts completely different to a kilo of fat, so make a point of looking for non-scale success too.

There's no shortage of information on the best ways to get fit and lose weight, but amongst all the sound advice there are some myths that just won't go away.

1. If you stop training, muscle will turn to fat

Muscle and fat are entirely different materials. They have different biochemical structures, metabolic rates and functions. If you stop lifting weights and become sedentary, your lean tissue will weaken and reduce in size and your fat stores may increase if you're not eating less to compensate for reduced activity. Muscle will not and cannot turn to fat.

2. Sports drinks are the best way to rehydrate

They are marketed as necessary for everyone who breaks a sweat, but the truth is that sports drinks generally only help endurance athletes or people who exercise intensely for 90 minutes or more. Their combination of fluid, carbohydrate (in the form of glucose and fructose) and electrolytes helps rehydrate the body.

For the rest of us, rehydrating with plain old water works just as well. Another good option is a glass of milk, which provides you with fluid, carbohydrate, electrolytes and protein.

3. Crunches are all you need for a strong core

Core work can increase muscular endurance, strength and improve posture. But you need a variety of core exercises to achieve this, says Dr Erin Nitschke at acefitness.org, as well as a strategic combination of cardio, resistance and core training.

Other experts agree, and point to the danger of just focusing on the abdominal muscles.

Stuart McGill, former professor of spine biomechanics at the University of Waterloo in Canada, says that you can't concentrate on strengthening only one set of muscles

within the core, as this will destabilise your spine by pulling it out of alignment.

A core exercise program should instead emphasise all of the major muscles that wrap around the spine, including, but not concentrating on, the abs. This means adding exercises such as side plank and 'bird dog' (from all fours, you raise an alternate arm and leg) to work the important muscles along the back and sides of the core. And definitely no sit-ups, says McGill, as they place far too much load on the discs in your spine.

4. You can spot-reduce fat

If only this were true! We tend to believe this is possible because the fitness industry has traded on the concept of targeting specific body areas for fat removal, such as bums, tums and thighs. But you can't

simply target one place on your body to lose fat. Rather, when you exercise, if energy expenditure is enough, you will lose fat from across the body. The last areas to become lean are generally those areas where you tend to gain fat first. For men, this is the abdominal region, while for women it's hips, buttocks and thighs.

A 2007 study from the University of Connecticut wanted to investigate the spot-reduction theory.

Participants performed supervised resistance training of their non-dominant arm for 12 weeks. Magnetic resonance imaging found no difference in fat loss between the arms and instead found any fat loss to be from across the whole body.

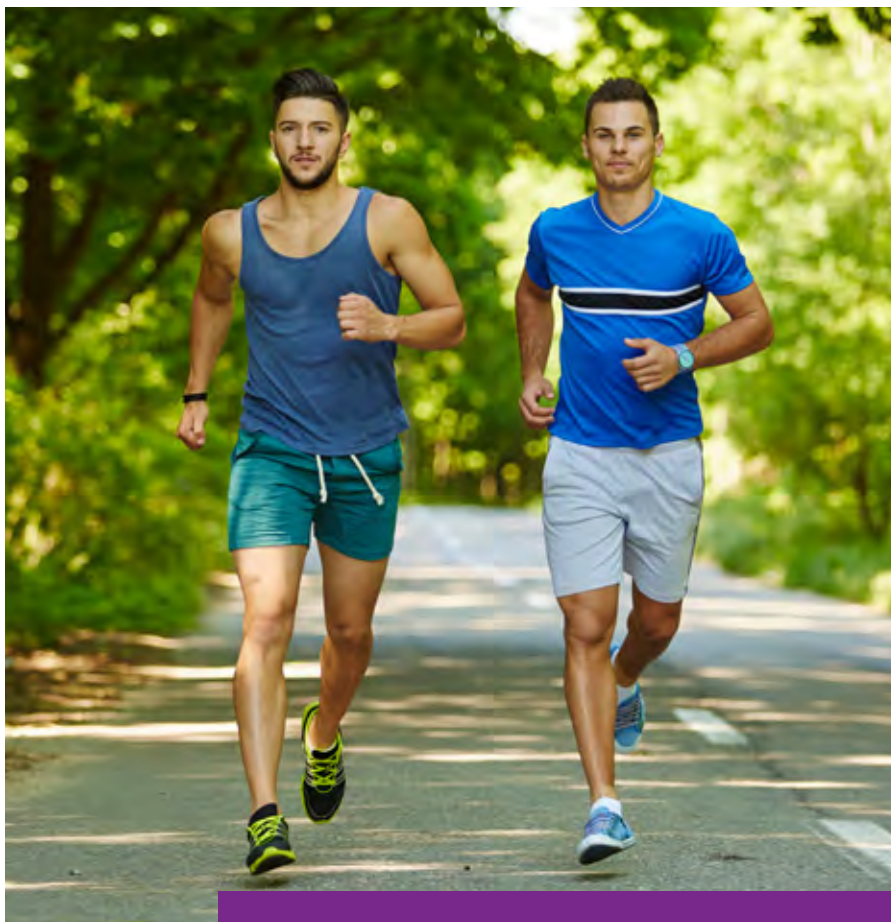
5. If you work out regularly, the weight will drop off

There's no doubt that regular exercise will improve your physical and mental health, whether or not you lose weight. A recent study from York University found that regardless of body weight, fit people are less likely to develop high blood sugar, blood pressure and triglycerides when compared to less-fit study participants.

When it comes to reaching a healthy weight, however, what you do and don't eat is much more important than how much you exercise.

Exercise consumes far fewer kilojoules than most of us think. Thirty minutes of brisk walking might burn 700 kilojoules, but you can easily consume this in two chocolate biscuits, a can of cola or a large glass of wine. If you're looking for a kilojoule deficit, focus first on the food you're eating.

What's more, the number on the scales may not reflect what's happening in your body. While you may be losing fat from resistance training, you will be gaining muscle. You may even see the numbers rise on the scales at the same time as dropping a dress or pant size. A kilo of muscle looks and acts completely different to a kilo of fat, so make a point of looking for non-scale success too. ✕



Fuel up before you work out

Doing a workout out on a full stomach is a definite no-no, but while most people will be fine exercising on an empty stomach, it can leave you feeling lightheaded and lacking in energy.

Make sure you're hydrated before your start exercising, and ideally, eat something 30 minutes to three hours before your workout to give your body the energy to exercise. Combine a source of carbohydrate with protein in the following ways:

- Apple or pear slices spread with nut butter
- Natural yoghurt with muesli or granola and berries
- Dried fruit and mixed nuts
- Egg on toast
- Trail mix
- Soaked oats with berries and almonds
- Corn or rice cakes with nut butter or hummus
- Cottage cheese and chopped fruit
- Small banana with natural yoghurt and chia seeds

Six ways to ruin an apology

An apology is a time to take responsibility for what you did. Here's how to stop saying 'sorry, not sorry'.

They say "love means never having to say you're sorry". Well, we all know that isn't true and, in fact, apologising is a way to get to a better place in any relationship. When we apologise, it should come from the heart and be unconditional. Here's how you can say sorry like you mean it.

1. You say sorry but don't hold yourself accountable. Saying sorry without explaining that you know what you did wrong takes away from the apology. You need to acknowledge that you understand why your actions or words were hurtful.

2. You say sorry but make excuses. If you say 'I'm sorry' but make excuses for your bad behaviour then you're diluting your apology. Saying 'I'm sorry I did that but I had a bad day at work' means you're not taking full responsibility for your actions.

3. You say sorry but lay it on the other person. 'I'm sorry you feel that way but...', 'I'm sorry you interpreted it that way but...' If you're going to offer an apology, don't ruin it by hinting that it's how the other person perceived the situation that caused the problem rather than your actions.

4. You say sorry but blame them. Don't say you're sorry but that you only did what you did in retaliation for something that was done to you. If you're blaming others for causing your wrongdoing then your apology is meaningless.

5. You say sorry if ... You might think you're being sincere but you're not taking responsibility for the hurt you caused if you say 'if I hurt you I'm sorry...' This adds an element of uncertainty to your apology that makes it less powerful.

6. You say sorry but it's all about you. If you apologise but launch into a tirade about how the incident affected you, your apology is meaningless. You might think confessing that your feelings were hurt too will make the apology more sincere but instead it takes away from the other person. Make it about them and if you still feel the need to tell your side of the story, save it for later. ✕



Are you hungry for comfort?



That packet of chocolate biscuits can look more appealing when we've had a hard day but if you find yourself with your head in the pantry or fridge searching for treats on a regular basis, there might be something else going on.

Looking for comfort

Some people lose their appetite when they're stressed while others turn to high-fat, high-sugar snacks to help them calm down when they're upset. It's not unusual for people to eat in response to experiencing a negative emotion such as anxiety, sadness, anger or shame but when it goes unchecked weight gain and its related problems can be the result.

Breaking bad habits

Developing a healthy relationship with food and recognising the link between non-hungry eating and what you're feeling is the key. The solution seems

obvious – simply wait for hunger signals before you eat. But it can be surprisingly difficult, especially if you have been blissfully unaware that you might be eating for reasons other than hunger. Allowing yourself to go hungry from time to time will help you better recognise

the physical feeling of hunger, but a more effective way to start dealing with emotional eating is to consult a psychologist who can help you get to the root of the problem. Ask your doctor to recommend a registered psychologist who specialises in emotional eating. ✕

Weighty issues

You might have a healthy diet most of the time but if you regularly eat in response to emotional triggers rather than hunger, you could be having difficulty keeping the weight off in spite of your best efforts.

All of us experience 'emotional eating' from time to time. But for some people, 40 to 80 per cent of their eating in a day may be non-hungry eating, where they binge, over-eat and emotionally eat. You might find yourself reaching for food when you're bored, sad, angry, or stressed, without a hunger pang in sight. Don't beat yourself up about it because you may not even be aware that you're doing it or you might feel that food is the only way you can cope when you're going through a stressful period.

Snack size tip

If you're aware that you eat for comfort, try the 10-minute rule: when you're stressed or upset and you find yourself reaching for that packet of biscuits or salt and vinegar chips take a 10-minute break. That might be all the time you need to help you work out what is really going on: you can't always change the stressful event but you can change the way you respond to it. If after the 10-minute break you still really feel like a treat, allow yourself to have a biscuit or a small handful of chips and step away from that pantry!

Sleep, interrupted

Are you unusually sleepy and irritable in the day and find it difficult to concentrate? We often dismiss fatigue as just part of life, yet symptoms like these could point to sleep apnoea, a condition that affects approximately one in four men over the age of 30.

Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) is one of the most common causes of daytime sleepiness. When you have OSA you experience episodes of partial or complete obstruction of the throat during sleep. This causes breathing to reduce or stop for a short time, anywhere from 10 seconds up to a minute or more. Your sleep is disrupted for a short time to allow breathing to start again, something that can happen many times – even hundreds of times – during the night.

If you have OSA you may snore, toss and turn, even wake up gasping or choking. Others may notice that you stop breathing during the night. Your sleep is disturbed and you'll wake unrefreshed, despite having eight hours in bed. During the day you may struggle to stay awake.

OSA is a stress on your body and can increase the risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, diabetes, depression and accidents.

In the workplace

There are some jobs that are particularly safety-sensitive, where impaired performance can result in an incident that affects the health or safety of employees, customers, or property. OSA is one of the most common reasons for fatigue at work, which increases the likelihood of accidents, errors and injuries. Driver



fatigue, for instance, is a major cause of motor vehicle collisions.

A 2016 review of studies published in the journal *Sleep* found that the odds of having an accident at work were nearly double in workers with OSA.

Treating OSA

If you experience daytime sleepiness it's important to seek help from your GP. The most effective treatment available for OSA is a mask worn at night attached to a machine (known as a CPAP machine) that prevents the throat from collapsing. Another treatment is the use of a mouthguard which, when properly made, can be effective for mild to moderate sleep apnoea. ✕

The odds of having an accident at work are **nearly double** in workers with sleep apnoea.



Ask an expert about ...

A Men are known for bottling things up, says the mental health advocacy group Beyond Blue, and may need support in seeking help. But supporting someone to see a health professional about anxiety and/or depression can be really difficult.

If you've already had a conversation with your friend or partner about their mental health, keep up the momentum and encourage them to seek professional support.

At the same time, it's also important to remember that they need to feel they are in control and taking responsibility for their

own treatment. If not, they may feel that you are taking over, and there is a risk that they may withdraw from you and further treatment.

The best place to start is the person's GP. Make sure they book a longer or double appointment to allow time for a thorough assessment. The GP may refer the person to another health professional such as a psychologist or social worker to provide psychological treatment.

As a support person, you can be involved in the initial consultation and the ongoing

treatment process, if you have permission. Your involvement at the early stage can be vital in helping your friend/partner to get effective treatment as early as possible. Some people find it helpful to have their support person present at the first part of the session, to help give the health professional information about how the person has been, particularly if they find it hard to express themselves.

If you need help with a mental health condition, ask your doctor for recommendations or visit a resource like [Checkpoint](#) which has links to resources in many countries. ✕

App of the month

Happify

Get access to the best mindfulness, positive psychology and cognitive behaviour techniques with these science-based activities and games, developed by scientists and

emotional health experts. They're designed to help reduce stress, overcome negative thoughts, and build greater resilience by providing effective tools and programs to improve emotional wellbeing. Free from the App Store and Google Play. ✕

News Bites



Use medicines wisely

Certain medications can affect your digestive system, such as common over-the-counter painkillers containing even small amounts of codeine, which can cause constipation. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) – including aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen – can cause nausea, stomach pain, stomach bleeding, ulcers or diarrhoea if you take them regularly or exceed the recommended dose. High blood pressure medications and antacids can cause diarrhoea or constipation, and some antibiotics can cause diarrhoea. To find out more about the side effects of your medication visit www.nps.org.au/medicine-finder ✕



Sweet truth

A recent study of 37,716 men and 80,647 women has found an association between sugar-sweetened drinks and an increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease and increased cancer rates. The results also looked at the connection between artificially sweetened drinks and death and found that replacing a sugary drink with an artificially sweetened one lowered the risk of death but drinking four or more artificially sweetened drinks a day was associated with a higher risk of death among women. ✕

Eggs under the microscope

The threat of salmonella in raw eggs should highlight the need for proper hygiene practices, says University of Melbourne researcher Helen Crabb. She points out that salmonella strains can sometimes be detected inside eggs, and it's the way we handle eggs that is the greatest risk factor in salmonella poisoning. She said egg lovers need to ensure they adopt best practice when handling and cooking eggs, including proper refrigeration and hard-boiling the eggs when cooking them. Never serve foods containing raw egg to vulnerable people, including small children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems.



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THING YOU CAN DO TODAY



Be present

A study by Harvard University found that people report being happiest while their mind is not wandering from what they are doing.

Being present, or as Dr Craig Hassed from Monash University puts it, "paying attention" is one of the most powerful and healthy habits you can develop.

"Inattention is not healthy for the brain – it is like physical inactivity for the body," explains Dr Hassed.

"When we are not paying attention is the time when the mind gets up to 'mischief' in the form of worry and rumination, which are at the very heart of anxiety and depression."

On a brighter note, being present allows you to enjoy and live every moment, rather than being overly concerned with the past or future.

While meditation is the ultimate form of "being present", you don't have to lock yourself away in a room.

Cameron Aggs from Mindfulness Training Australia suggests this exercise for mindfulness at work.

- Stop what you are doing. Begin to feel the physical experience of your feet on your floor, then the sensation of the bottom in the chair.
- Direct your attention to the point where you feel breath as it flows into and out from the body in your chest or belly. Then bring the feeling of the feet, the bottom and the breath into mind simultaneously.
- Hold this awareness of all three points of contact for the duration of five breaths. ✕

EAT SMARTER

Add fresh ginger to your food

Not only is ginger delicious in a stir-fry, curry, or marinade, this flavoursome root is also a health all-rounder. It has been used for medicinal purposes for centuries and is a common ingredient in anti-nausea tablets. You'll find ginger powdered, dried and pickled but fresh is always best. There's more to the healing benefits of ginger than easing nausea and motion sickness. Here are some ways it can help your health:

Blood sugar: Ginger has been shown to lower blood sugar levels in patients with type 2 diabetes.

Cancer: 6-gingerol is a powerful antioxidant found in large amounts in raw ginger. More research is needed but there is some evidence that ginger may be effective against pancreatic cancer, breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Brain function: Studies suggest that ginger can protect against age-related damage to the brain. It can also improve brain function in elderly women.

Osteoarthritis: The symptoms of this condition include joint pain and stiffness, and results of a research trial show that study participants who took ginger extract experienced reduced pain. ✕



- If you are taking medications, consult a health practitioner, as like all herbs ginger can interact with prescription medications.
- Avoid ginger if you have a bleeding disorder or if you are taking blood thinners, including aspirin.



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