

HOT & HEALTHY

Summer is here and the heat is on to get out there feeling great. Whether you'd like to trim a few pounds, tone up, or get smoother skin, our simple three-step 'Well' plan looks at tried-and-tested ways to Eat Well, Move Well and Look Well for all-round body health and happiness.

STEP 1 EAT WELL

We know healthy eating and exercise are important when it comes to getting and staying in shape. But it might come as a surprise to find out just how significant a role diet actually plays. Research strongly suggests that diet is key. A study published in the journal *Obesity* compared a calorie-reduced, low-fat diet, a moderate-intensity aerobic exercise programme, and a combination of the two. The combination approach saw the best results, diet came a close second, and exercise trailed some way behind. The message: keeping an eye on what we eat really is the best place to start in any bid to shape up.

So when it comes to healthy eating for weight loss, which diet is best? Every summer brings more claims of the effectiveness of one diet over another, but the answer to this question remains unclear. A meta-analysis of studies published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggests an interesting answer: none!

It concluded that 'significant weight loss was observed with any low-carbohydrate or low-fat diet', but that 'weight loss differences between

individual named diets were small'. The authors said this 'supports the practice of recommending any diet that a patient will adhere to'. Number one tip: plan a diet you can stick to.

A diet needn't be complicated to be effective. NICE guidance says that to lose weight the average person should reduce their daily calorie intake by 600kcal. This would mean sticking to a limit of 1,400kcal for most women, and 1,900kcal for most men. The NHS suggests this can help us lose weight at a safe rate of 0.5kg to 1kg each week. For faster weight loss, women can try a daily intake of around 1,200kcal for a week or two to kick-start a new way of eating.

For a head start on a lower-calorie diet that's easy to stick to, try our deliciously light weekday suppers on page 24, all of which weigh in at approx. 500kcal per serving.

STEP 2 MOVE WELL

Add in exercise to see greater results. Celebrity trainer and founder of the Get SET Body programme Sam Eastwood has used her dynamic moves to get top actresses into shape for demanding roles on films

including *Mission Impossible*, *Terminator* and *Jack Reacher*. She shares her advice here:

'If you're trying to shift the pounds, I recommend aiming for at least three hours of exercise per week. This can be a combination of activities, such as three one-hour classes or a few 30-minute daily walks. Twelve-week programmes are popular for weight loss as it's just enough time to see results while forming healthy habits that are more likely to last in the long term.

'High-impact workouts like HIIT and running are great fat burners and will kick-start your metabolism and keep it firing throughout the day. But they're not the only solution. Strength training and muscle toning exercises are just as vital as they help support the development of lean muscle mass and help increase your metabolism further.

'I love Pilates and yoga for core strength and muscle conditioning, but running is one of the best cardio activities for weight loss and weight maintenance. Whatever you choose to do, if your heart rate is up and you're sweating it means your body is working for you and you're burning calories at a higher rate.' ➔

These Pilates-based exercises from Sam Eastwood can be done anywhere. All you need is a mat and around ten minutes to complete the session. If you want to go for longer, increase the reps!

JUMPING SQUATS: x10 reps x3 rounds

A great move for the glutes and upper thighs. Stand with your feet wider than hip distance apart, squat your bottom down low (like you're reaching for a chair) without letting your knees fall forward over your toes. Now place your arms up in the air, exhale and, as you jump up, push your arms down. Return to starting squat position with arms up and repeat.

LUNGES: x25 on each side x2 rounds

Lunges are a staple exercise in fitness as they generate a lot of muscle activity which fires up the glutes, hamstrings, hips and thighs, and kick-starts the metabolism. Keep your upper body straight, with your shoulders back and relaxed, chin up and core engaged. Step forward with one leg, lowering your hips until both knees are bent at around a 90-degree angle. Pull back to your starting position and repeat on the other leg.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS: 1 min spurts x2 rounds

Get into a plank position on your hands and knees, legs out straight behind you. Maintaining a flat back, draw your right knee towards your chest then push it back out to starting position. Repeat with the other leg, moving fast as you alternate sides.

PLANK

Try to hold your plank pose for a minimum of 30 seconds to start with, building up to one minute as you improve.

BRIDGE POSE: x2 rounds

Lie on your back with your arms by your sides and your knees bent. Push down through your feet and lift your bottom off the floor. Hold the position for a minimum of 30 seconds, roll back down, rest and repeat.

High-impact workouts are great fat burners and will kick start your metabolism, whilst strength training helps to support the development of lean muscles



Find out more about Sam's Get SET Body programme (a digital fitness initiative rooted in Pilates), plus her 12-week programmes, challenges, meal plans, and running plans at sameastwood.com

STEP 3 LOOK WELL

Our skin spends months of the year cocooned in layers, out of sight and out of mind, so it's hardly surprising it rarely looks its radiant best when it emerges in early summer. Dead skin cells can make skin look dull, as well as being rough to the touch and sometimes suffering discomfort and irritation. It's the natural result of our skin's turnover process (lasting between ten and 30 days), but we can help it on its way.

In your quest for brighter, smoother skin, you might also want to tackle

cellulite. With its 'orange peel' appearance, it affects as many as 90 per cent of women of all shapes, sizes and ages, although it does worsen as we get older and our skin elasticity decreases. Cellulite forms in the layer of fat between our skin and muscle. Tissues connecting these two keep the fat hidden from view most of the time but fat cells can push through – visible as lumps and bumps on our upper legs and bottom, and sometimes elsewhere too.

It may be notoriously difficult to shift entirely, but we can significantly improve its appearance. Liz is a big fan of skin brushing to exfoliate, stimulate circulation and boost lymphatic drainage. Before your shower, use a body brush – choose one with natural bristles and a long handle to get to hard-to-reach areas. Make long, firm strokes over your skin in the direction of your heart, avoiding broken skin and spider veins. This removes dead skin cells and boosts circulation to help banish cellulite.

Sound advice

There are plenty of qualified therapists out there to help us on our way. We spoke to the Federation of Holistic Therapists – the UK's largest professional membership association for complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists – for their tips on seeking out extra help.

Paul Battersby, President, says:

'What we drink is just as important as what we eat when it comes to keeping in shape. Some popular café drinks – such as lattes and cappuccinos – can be high in fat and sugar. Alcohol is also calorific and dehydrates the skin, so save it for special occasions.'

'We are all biochemically unique, which means one diet rarely suits everyone. After an in-depth assessment, a nutritional therapist can recommend a personalised nutrition and lifestyle programme to enhance your health and wellbeing, and meet your individual needs. So too can an Ayurvedic practitioner, based on ancient Indian principles.'

'We all know that exercise is a great way to stay in shape and feel good, but regular massages can also help to keep your fitness goals on track. Different techniques can be used to hone in on areas of muscular tension and imbalance, and ensure optimum joint mobility.'

'Often overlooked, poor posture can cause various aches and pains, lead to injuries when exercising, and even affect your breathing and digestion. An assessment by a sports massage therapist or Alexander Technique practitioner could help you to identify and correct any postural problems.'

Mary Dalgleish, Vice President, says:

'When you feel well, you look well. If you need a gentle kick-start to exercise and eat better, stimulating essential oils like juniper, rosemary and black pepper can help improve circulation and stimulate the mind. Diffuse a few drops or disperse in some milk for an energising bath.'

Maria Mason, Vice President, says:

'Exfoliating body treatments are a great way to get rid of dead skin cells and encourage the absorption of nourishing skincare products. Exfoliated skin is also a must to achieve great results from a professionally applied, contoured fake tan, which is safe and can help you look and feel great.'

All FHT members meet nationally recognised standards and abide by a strict code of conduct and professional practice. To find a qualified, professional therapist you can trust, visit fht.org.uk/findatherapist