



Nutrition
Emma Stirling
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Fitness
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 MSpSc, BSpSc (ExSc)
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Cooking
Lucy Kelly
 Weight Watchers
 Senior Food Editor



Motivation
Rodney King
 2007 Slimmer of the Year
 finalist, NSW/ACT

Ask the panel

Your one-stop shop for any questions about fitness, nutrition, emotions and cooking...
 You ask, we answer!

If you have a question for a panellist, write to: *Ask the panel*, PO Box 1961, North Sydney, NSW 2059. Include the name of the panellist you wish to address (sorry, no personal replies) and if asking a fitness question, please include your shoe size.

On nutrition

Q I know wholegrains are better for you than refined ones, so how many serves a day is optimal for good health?
 LH, Wauchope, NSW

A **Emma Stirling replies:** Foods made with wholegrains do offer superior nutrition as they harness the whole goodness in grains like wheat, oats, rye, barley, rice and corn. Unlike refined grains, all three layers of the grain, including the bran, the germ and the endosperm, are utilised in wholegrain foods. It's these important outer bran and germ layers that are naturally nutrient-rich, being high in fibre, vitamins, minerals and protective components like antioxidants.

Based on a review of the international scientific literature and in line with current Dietary Guidelines, nutrition advisor Go Grains has launched a campaign encouraging people to eat at least four-plus serves of grain-based foods a day. Four serves are regarded as the minimum daily requirement as most active children and adults will need more than this to supply nutritious carbohydrates for energy.

Wholegrain consumption has been shown to be linked to improvements in

insulin sensitivity and type 2 diabetes and a reduced risk of coronary heart disease by 20-40 per cent. However, the best news for Slimmers centres on their weight-loss benefits.

Research shows that higher intakes of wholegrain cereals are consistently associated with a lower body mass index (BMI), waist circumference and overweight. In essence, wholegrain foods fill you up without filling you out. Their high dietary fibre content and low glycaemic index help provide the fullness factor known as satiety, with relatively few kilojoules or **POINTS** values. That's why wholegrain foods are encouraged as part of *Weight Watchers* Good Health Guidelines.

Top choices include a bowl of porridge or flaked, wholegrain cereal for breakfast; grainy bread or wholegrain crispbread at lunch and wholemeal pasta or brown rice at dinner.



On fitness



Q How do I know if I am exercising at the correct heart rate for my fitness?
 JR, Carrum Downs, Vic

A **Martha Lourey-Bird replies:** A great way of knowing you're not pushing it too hard – or taking it too easy – is the tried-and-true 'talk test'. That is, if you can talk – but not sing – this usually indicates you are exercising within your Aerobic Training Zone.

Your Aerobic Training Zone is a heart-rate range with an upper and a lower limit – as long as you stay within this limit, you are exercising appropriately for your fitness level plus gaining lots of health benefits along the way, such as weight loss, improved heart and lung function and prevention against disease.

However, if you want to be more

On cooking

Q Can you please suggest ways that I can thicken curries and casseroles without adding fatty ingredients, such as cream and coconut milk? Naomi Waldron, via email



A Lucy replies: The healthiest and tastiest way to thicken curries is to use vegetables. Firstly, create a paste of puréed onion, ginger and garlic with your spices or curry powder. And then, to thicken your curries – as well as casseroles, stews and soups – is to add other vegetables, such as finely chopped pumpkin, potato and tomatoes, which break down in the cooking to make a lovely thick sauce.

You can also thicken dishes by adding lentils or split peas. If you are looking for an alternative to cream, try adding a little low-fat sour cream, light coconut milk or light cream – a little goes a long way to add that creamy texture.

Yoghurt is often used in Indian cooking and is best dolloped on top when serving, as it can curdle and go watery if added while cooking.



If your letter to Lucy is published, you could win a prize. This issue's lucky letter-writer wins a Tefal VitaCuisine Steamer, RRP \$159.95. The Tefal Steamer range is available nationally from selected department and electrical stores. For stockists, please visit www.tefal.com.au or call (02) 9748 7944.

On motivation

Q I've been losing weight for a few months. Do you have any tips on how to get my family onboard with my new food and exercise plan? ST, Fairfield, Qld

A Rodney King replies: From my experience, the benefits of your weight loss will become apparent to your family when they see how important it is to you and, more importantly, the advantages for them, too.

I found that the more weight I lost, the more energy I had. This meant that we, as a family, started to become more adventurous, going places we hadn't been and becoming more involved in the kids' [Rodney has two teenagers] sports.

As for eating, sit down with your better half, and flick through a few *Weight Watchers* recipe books. (For your copy of the *Core Plan Cookbook*, pictured, see p95.) Find meals that everyone will enjoy, and get your children involved in picking a meal one or two nights a week – even have them help or prepare it themselves. Get them involved with your healthy-eating plan, so they can understand how it all works, what foods are good and what's not so good. By doing this, you become a great example of how important healthy eating can be, not just for you but the whole family.

A tip from my experience is rather than making big changes all at once which your kids may be fearful of – and immediately reject – go slow. For example, start making their sandwiches with one slice of white bread and one slice of wholemeal, then gradually introduce multi-grain. Try buttering just one slice rather than both, or start buying a low-fat milk rather than going straight to skim milk. I hope this helps. Good luck and enjoy the rest of your journey!



scientific about determining your Aerobic Training Zone, try this simple calculation:

Step 1. $220 - \text{Age} = \text{Maximum Heart Rate (MHR)}$

Step 2. $\text{MHR} \times 0.6 = X \text{ Beats Per Minute (BPM)}$

Step 3. $\text{MHR} \times 0.8 = Y \text{ BPM}$

Step 4. Therefore, your Aerobic Training Zone is between X and Y.

Here's an example for a 20-year-old:

Step 1. $220 - 20 = 200 \text{ BPM}$

Step 2. $200 \times 0.6 = 120 \text{ BPM}$

Step 3. $200 \times 0.8 = 160 \text{ BPM}$

Step 4. Therefore, the Aerobic Training Zone for a 20-year-old is 120-160 BPM.

You will need to take your pulse a couple of times while you exercise to determine you are within the correct range. To do this, slow down your pace and use three fingers to either find your carotid

pulse (in your neck) or radial pulse (in your wrist) and count the number of beats for 15 seconds (eg, 35) then multiply that by 4 (eg, 140) to get the BPM. (Practise this so you learn to do it quickly and it doesn't interrupt your training.)

If you're a beginner, you will find it easier to stick to the lower end of that range but as your fitness improves, you should push it towards the higher end.

If you want to get more specific, you can buy a heart-rate monitor for between \$80-450 (visit www.rebelsport.com.au), which straps around your chest and sends heart-rate information to a watch face you wear on your wrist. Whatever method you choose, why not try it when you do the cardio sessions detailed in the "Olympic Fitness Challenge 2008", see p77-81.



If your letter to Martha is published, you'll win a fabulously comfy pair of women's sports shoes from Rykå. Don't forget to tell us your shoe size when you write in.