

ask the *panel*

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



Cooking

Lucy Kelly
Senior food editor



Nutrition

Emma Stirling
Nutrition editor



Fitness

Martha Lourey-Bird
Fitness editor



Motivation

Sonu Sodhi
Weight Watchers Leader

Q I feel like I'm wasting my POINTS values on fruit. How much do I really need?

Emily Slade, Fremantle, WA

Emma Stirling replies

A In the nutrition stakes, fruit is at the top of the list. It's one of the most nutrient-dense food groups and is packed with an array of essential vitamins and minerals for glowing good health. As a food group, fruit makes a significant contribution to our carbohydrate, dietary fibre, vitamin C, beta-carotene, folate and potassium intakes.

While the official Australian recommendation is 2–4 serves of fruit per day for adults, research suggests we could benefit from more as fruit contains a vast array of naturally occurring plant components called phytochemicals. Phytochemicals, which include many potent antioxidants, keep your body cells and health protected for longer. According to the World Health Organisation, a low intake of fruit and vegetables is estimated to cause about 31 per cent of heart disease and 11 per cent of strokes worldwide.

The Weight Watchers *Good Health Guidelines* recommend at least two serves of fruit a day. Go for plenty of variety so you maximise your intake of different nutrients. Select sweet and sensational fruits, top breakfast cereal with sliced banana or peaches, pack snack tubs of canned fruit in natural juice and mix frozen blueberries with low-fat yogurt.



Q I'm feeling my determination start to slide. This is my second attempt at Weight Watchers. I didn't reach Lifetime Member status the first time and really want to this time, but with only a few kilos to go, I feel like I am getting nowhere. What strategies did you use to keep your determination?

Melissa Benham, Brisbane, Qld

Sonu Sodhi replies

A Losing weight requires planning. Ask yourself how much you want to lose, what you need to do to achieve that and when you want to achieve it. A weight-loss tip that my current members give to new members is to always track their progress, and this technique has assisted me, both in my professional and personal lives. Also, keep a realistic Goal weight in mind. Break that into weekly mini weight-loss goals, and always have your progress chart and tracker with you. These will remind you of what you're trying to achieve. The journey may not be going as planned but keep going – you will get there.

Q I have been jogging everyday now for four months. I started by walking and jogging in small intervals for 40 minutes. Now I jog the entire way and it only takes me 33 minutes. I am keen to take it to the next level. Do you suggest I increase my time or distance?

Janet Raleigh, Port Lincoln, SA

Martha Lourey-Bird replies

A Congratulations on your achievement so far! Your next step is to overload. This is where you push your body harder so that you continue to improve your fitness and get more out of training. There are two ways to achieve this:

1. Increase the duration and distance. Walk or jog further so you exercise for 45 minutes instead of 30 minutes.

2. Increase the intensity by including some hills, stairs or intervals within your jogging route. Since you are now jogging, you might want to increase speed for one-minute intervals after every four minutes of jogging.

The general rule is to increase duration first as it's less taxing on the body and then, when you are comfortable with the time commitment, start upping the intensity. There is no need to increase the duration longer than 60 minutes for general fitness, unless you are training for a particular sport or a specific event such as a fun run.

Be careful not to overdo it. Because jogging is a high-impact activity, it's important to have a day off each week and/or include some low-impact activity as well.

Variety is good for the mind and the body, so you can also change things around a bit by having shorter, faster sessions on some days and then longer, slower ones on others.



If your letter to Martha is published, you'll win a pair of women's sports shoes from Rykå. Don't forget to tell us your shoe size when you write in to *Ask the Panel*, PO BOX 1961, North Sydney, NSW 2059, Australia or email editor@weightwatchers.com.au



Q Are there tricks to beating egg whites to form soft peaks? Mine are often flat.

Sonia Baccan, North Rocks, NSW

Lucy Kelly replies

A There are some golden rules to beating eggwhites to perfect peaks.

- Wash your hands thoroughly before you break the eggs.
- When you separate the eggs, make sure no yolk gets into the whites as this will prevent them forming peaks.
- Use the freshest eggs you can and keep them at room temperature to get better volume.
- Crack the egg and drain the white into a saucer while keeping the yolk in the shell.
- Check the white for traces of yolk or shell before adding to a bowl with other eggwhites and set it aside if you see any yoke. This way you don't waste the whole batch of egg whites by accidentally getting some yolk in them.
- Before you start, make sure your bowl and beaters are clean and dry.
- If there is any trace of oil or grease on your equipment the eggs will not form peaks.
- Now your whites are ready to beat. The whites form a peak when you lift the beaters out and the peak folds over softly to one side.
- Be careful not to overbeat the whites. Test by lifting the beaters out after a couple of minutes and then keep testing the peaks every 20–30 seconds until soft peaks form.
- When combining with other ingredients, fold beaten eggwhites gently with a metal spoon to maintain as much volume as possible.

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Write to Lucy at *Ask the Panel*, PO Box 1961, North Sydney, NSW 2059, Australia or email editor@weightwatchers.com.au

