

ask the **panel**



Cooking
Lucy Kelly
Senior food editor



Nutrition
Emma Stirling
Nutrition editor



Fitness
Martha Lourey-Bird
Fitness editor



Motivation
Tina Nissen
Weight Watchers Leader

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



Q I've heard that eating too many carbohydrates makes you put on weight and that you should avoid eating them after 6pm. Is this true?

Karen McNally, via email

Emma Stirling replies

A Scientific research has proven that weight gain is due to consuming more kilojoules (energy) than you expend. The truth is that all foods contain kilojoules that count, not just carbohydrates. Many carbs – including fruit, starchy vegetables, pasta, rice and non-fat dairy foods – provide essential nutrients and are vital to your health and wellbeing. In particular, carbohydrate-rich foods are the preferred fuel of the brain and working muscles. The widespread carb caution you have heard about results from fad diet books that share a common theory: carbohydrate-rich foods, especially those with sugar, wreak havoc on your physical and mental wellbeing, and eating these foods forces your body to make fat and leaves you constantly hungry.

These diets contain questionable science and have short-term health risks and negative side effects, ranging from marginal deficiencies of key vitamins and minerals to light-headedness and nausea. Since no one has yet studied these diets in a credible, scientific way, the long-term effects are largely unknown.

These days there's a whole new focus on choosing nutritious carbohydrates like whole grains and balancing intakes with your level of physical activity. Marathon runners may need to load up on carbs, but most of us, for example, should stick to no more than a cup of cooked rice with our stir-fries and curries.

Wholegrain foods contain all three components of the natural grain, including the outer layers rich in fibre and nutrients like B vitamins, iron and magnesium, which are often lost when grains are processed. Wholegrain breads and cereals are generally very high in fibre, low GI and are bursting with potent phytochemicals such as antioxidants. Aim to include whole grains for at least half your grain serves.

Q I've got a fair amount of weight to lose and I know I'll have to be in there for the long haul. How can I stay motivated?

Jacqueline Honey, via email

Tina Nissen replies

A I've lost almost 50kg with Weight Watchers. I joined after the birth of my second child. I lost 20kg in 20 weeks with the motivation of having another child – and it really did work!

I then went back after my third child was three months old. I weighed in at only 1.2kg more than when I stopped Weight Watchers before my last pregnancy.

My next step was Goal and nothing was going to stop me. It took me about a year to lose the remaining 30 kilos but I did it knowing that I'd become a fitter and more active mum.

Sometimes it's hard to stay motivated, but remembering why you started this journey is a great way to refocus and get determined again. Make each exercise opportunity count – whether it's for five minutes or an hour. I used to think about how I looked and felt before and promise myself that I'm never going back



Q I am confused by all the different advice on resistance training. Now I don't know what weights to lift at the gym or how many reps and sets to do. Can you help please?

Lisa, Iluka, WA

Martha Lourey-Bird replies

A Resistance exercise involves resisting against some form of weight such as your body weight, weight machines, free weights or resistance bands. It improves your strength, tone and body shape while also increasing your metabolic rate, improving your posture and helping to prevent osteoporosis. Resistance training should be done for the whole body, so include upper, lower and mid-body exercises such as the following:

- **Upper body:** bicep curls, push-ups, tricep extensions and upright rows
- **Lower body:** squats, lunges, leg presses, leg extensions and leg curls
- **Mid-body:** sit-ups, abdominal crunches and core exercises such as the hover.

It's recommended you do resistance training at least twice a week, consisting of 8–10 different exercises to target the major muscle groups. For muscular strength do 3–5 sets (a set is a group of repetitions) of 8–12 repetitions (reps) of each exercise, while for endurance and tone you can do 1–3 sets of 15–20 reps.



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Q I would like to incorporate more fish into my family's diet, but am wary of some fish being too 'fishy'. What are some mild-flavoured fish varieties? I have also noticed a lot of recipes call for firm fish. Could you provide information regarding mild-tasting firm fish?

Joanne Murray, via email

Lucy Kelly replies

A Small mild-flavoured fish varieties are whiting and garfish and larger fillets are snapper and dory. Firm mild fish varieties are blue eye trevalla, ling, emperor, perch and hapuku.

Different markets have different fish, so it's always good to ask your retailer for the best priced mild fish of the day.

To store fresh fish, remove any wrapping or plastic bags and rinse under cold running water. Pat the fish dry with a paper towel and store in a covered container or on a plate covered with plastic wrap and place in the coldest part of the fridge for up to 2–3 days only.

A great source of information about fish is the Sydney Fish Market consumer advisory service. Email fishline@sydneyfishmarket.com.au or phone (02) 9004 1122.



Aiming to slim down this year or just looking to get fit? Whatever your fitness goal, maintaining a good level of hydration with **Powerade No Sugar** during your workout will help you achieve it. **Powerade No Sugar** is available in three flavours: Tropical, Lemon and Citrus. For more information, visit www.powerade.com.au

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