

ask the experts

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



Nutrition
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Q Quinoa is meant to be full of protein, extremely good for you and low in POINTS values. However, I have no idea how to use it. Can you give me some ideas please?
Donna Chambers, via email

Lucy Kelly replies

A Yes, quinoa (pronounced 'keen-wah') is very good for you and has the same POINTS values as rice; that's 1½ POINTS values for ½ cup of quinoa cooked in water. It's a good source of protein and fibre, and is actually a seed, not a grain. It's also cooked the same way as rice and couscous, making a tasty substitute for them. You'll find it in the health-food section of the supermarket.

To cook, place ½ cup (75g) of quinoa in a large saucepan with 1 cup (250ml) of cold water and bring to the boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 12–15 mins or until all the water has been absorbed. This is enough to serve two. Use cooked quinoa in much the same way you would use rice: in salads, soups, served with casseroles or for a delicious breakfast as a porridge made with skim milk. Serve quinoa porridge topped with honey, almonds and berries or stewed fruit.

Write to Lucy with your cooking question and you could have the chance to win the amazing MinutCook pressure cooker from Tefal, valued at \$249.95. Whipping up your favourite meals for the whole family just got easier—learn more about the Tefal MinutCook, click on www.tefal.com.au



Q I'm conscious of the need to cut down on the amount of salt in my diet. Are there any tips you can suggest?
Leisel Benning, Indooroopilly, Qld

Emma Stirling replies

A These days most people are aware of the dietary guideline to cut down on salt. It's not surprising we've seen a drop in the use of salt at table and in cooking, but that doesn't always equate to eating less of it. About 80% of the salt we now consume is already added to foods. Recent research from The George Institute shows that more than 70% of processed meats, cheeses and sauces in Australia contain unacceptably high levels of salt. However, the Government is starting to set salt targets for different foods so the food industry can work towards a common goal. The first targeted categories are breads and breakfast cereals.

It's a good idea to compare the amount of sodium in the per-serve column of food labels and go the lowest. As well as limiting high-salt foods like soy sauce, cheeses, salty snacks and spreads, watch out for takeaways and processed foods like simmer sauces. It's fine to consume these foods from time to time, especially if your diet is generally based around lower salt choices, but where possible, switch to brands labelled salt-reduced or low-salt. Low-salt foods must have less than 120mg sodium/100g, whereas high-salt foods are anything over 500mg sodium/100g.

Also, look to the delicious range of antioxidant-rich herbs and spices to add flavour to your food without using salt.

Q I'm really keen to make some life changes. What's the easiest way to go about setting short and long-term health goals?
Lee Short, via email

Allan Bolton replies

A One of the best things about effective goal setting is that it leads to can-do thinking, regardless of what it is you want to achieve – be it improving your health, losing weight or running a marathon. The way you think really can be one of the most crucial limits to achieving success in any area of life. Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right."

If your long-term goals are the destination, short-term goals are the journey. Most long-term goals seem initially unachievable because they're overwhelming. Even Olympic marathon runners are intimidated at the thought of running 42.2km as fast as they can. Mentally, most run 8 x 5km plus 1 x 2.2km, because they think and believe they can. To start, take these three easy steps:

HOW TO PAVE YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS:

- 1** First, decide what it is you really want to achieve in the long term.
- 2** Work backwards from there by breaking down your long-term goals into smaller objectives until you reach a point where you can honestly say, 'I can do this today.'
- 3** Go about repeating the steps from what you can do today until you reach your chosen destination.

Just like the marathon runner, you'll be motivated by smaller successes and reach the finish line sooner.



Q I've recently been seeing a physiotherapist for an injury and find it painful to exercise, which makes it hard to lose weight. Can you suggest any other ways I can exercise and keep my fitness up without pain or injury?

Emily Coupar, Berwick, Vic

Martha Lourey-Bird replies

A Before you begin any exercise program, make sure you have GP clearance to exercise and then always start with a warm-up (a gentle 5 min walk before 30 mins at a brisk pace, for example) and end with stretching the muscles you have been using for up to 30 seconds each – but remember, no bouncing.

Apart from doing a warm-up and cool-down, try to avoid factors that lead to injury like poor footwear, uneven terrain, bad technique or poor posture. If you're prone to injury because you have a pre-existing condition or are very overweight, then low-impact activities are best done until you're over the injury or have lost some weight. Such activities might include swimming, Pilates, walking, pool exercises and cycling.

If you do experience pain or injury while exercising, stop immediately and seek professional advice. You may need to rest or get treatment. The sooner you get an injury treated, the quicker your recovery will most likely be, so do not ignore ongoing pain – your body is trying to tell you that something is not quite right and it may be worthwhile to seek the advice of a doctor, physiotherapist, osteopath or chiropractor.

If your letter to Martha is published, you'll win a pair of women's sports shoes from **Rykä**. Don't forget to tell us your shoe size when you write in to *Ask the Experts*, Locked Bag 2020, Broadway, NSW 2007, Australia. Or, you can email us at editor@weightwatchers.com.au

