

ask the EXPERTS

Our team explains how to sleep better, reduce exercise pain, cook smarter and eat gluten-free food.



I'm attempting regular exercise again but finding I am quite stiff and sore after a workout. I know I should stretch but I'm not sure how much to do. Any advice?

Christine Smyth, Shoal Point, Queensland



Martha Lourey-Bird
Fitness editor

Stretching can increase mobility, prevent injury, improve overall performance and posture as well as reduce stiffness. To get the most out of stretching, do it when you're warmed up – at the end of an exercise session, not at the start. If you need a stretch but haven't worked out, housework or a brisk walk should do the trick. Static stretching is ideal – where you stretch to the point of resistance or mild discomfort and hold it still, without bouncing. Try it 2–3 days a week, holding for 10–30 secs and up to 3–4 reps per stretch. Stretching should never be painful so if it starts to hurt ease off a bit.

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 Experts, Locked Bag 2020, Broadway, NSW 2007, Australia. Or, you can email us at editor@weightwatchers.com.au



NUTRITION

I've recently been diagnosed with coeliac disease and am wondering if there are any particular considerations for weight loss?

Lesley Dawes, via email



Emma Stirling
Nutrition editor

Coeliac disease is a permanent intestinal reaction to gluten, the protein portion of wheat and other grains. Gluten reacts with the small bowel

lining, damaging it, and causes flattening and inflammation, plus malabsorption of nutrients.

People with coeliac disease must follow a gluten-free diet, which is complex as the key grains and their components with gluten are used widely as food ingredients.

The Coeliac Society of Australia is a great place to obtain food advice. Your gastroenterologist will also refer you to an accredited practising dietitian who specialises in the area. They'll give you a plan to help ensure that you're enjoying your diet safely and meeting all nutrient requirements.

According to advanced accredited practising dietitian Dr Sue Shepherd, "It's not difficult to choose highly nutritious low-kilojoule gluten-free foods. People new to the gluten-free diet often overeat as they're busy trying all the new foods. A sensible approach will ensure unnecessary weight gain is prevented."

COOKING



Lucy Kelly
Senior food
editor

I've heard that coconut milk powder can be successfully used for Thai and Indian curries. Can you please explain how to use it correctly?

Elenora Stepanova, Notting Hill, Victoria

Coconut milk powder is fantastic. You don't have to use much as it's so concentrated and it adds great flavour. I add a couple of tbs to the dish and stir it in. It thickens the cooking juices as well. Use stock as the liquid base instead of water for more flavour. Allow 2½ POINTS values per tbs of coconut milk powder.

Letter of the month writer, Elenora, wins a Sunbeam MX003 Mixmaster. The only model to have two glass heat-resistant bowls, the MX003 Mixmaster features a 350 watt, Italian-made motor and 12 speed options. The electronic torque control maintains the selected speed regardless of the mixing load, while Sunbeam's famous three-way beating action ensures thorough mixing and optimum baking results.



motivation

I normally look forward to spring because of the sunny early mornings. This year I'm waking earlier but can't seem to get to sleep earlier. Any tips that might help?

Jeff Payne, via email

Healthy adults require between seven and eight hours of sleep every night. Inadequate sleep can affect your performance at work and home which, in turn, can impact on your weight-loss efforts. If you follow these tips on a regular basis, you'll find you sleep better and your daily energy levels increase.



Allan Bolton
Men's consultant

- 1 Go to bed and get up in the morning at constant times whenever possible – a routine helps the Zs.
- 2 Develop a relaxing pre-bed routine that lets your brain know that sleep is imminent. For example turn off bright lights, read something, listen to calming music or do some meditation.
- 3 Your bed was purpose built for sleep and sex: use it only for these. If you have a TV in the bedroom, consider removing it.
- 4 Avoid clock-watching. Turn the face of your alarm clock away so that you can't see it when you roll over.
- 5 Regular exercise improves sleep quality, but try to avoid any intense exercise two to three hours before bedtime.

AD