

ask the EXPERTS

Our team sheds light on the butter versus margarine debate, cooking with spices & low-impact exercise.

nutrition

Is there really much difference between butter & margarine?

Monica Davis, Hunter Valley, NSW



Emma Stirling
Nutrition editor

Chefs swear by butter and insist it's the only option for baking or sautéés.

However, a huge body of scientific evidence shows that a diet high

in 'bad' saturated fat raises blood cholesterol levels and the risk of cardiovascular disease. That's why the Heart Foundation recommends vegetable oil-based spreads, like canola and olive, over butters and dairy blends. If you enjoy butter, savour the taste in small quantities occasionally or keep it for your signature shortbreads.

Nearly every player in the dairy market offers a significantly reduced-fat version (some up to 70%) of their leading margarine. In the past these super light spreads were whipped with air or water. Not only did they fail to perform in cooking, but they often left your toast a little soggy too. These days, new food technology has overcome these problems so you can easily slash the fat and kilojoules.

You can also consider skipping butter or margarine altogether. Try topping toast with natural nut butters, use avocado in sandwiches and a good quality extra virgin olive oil for dipping fresh bread.



I had been exercising six days a week until I injured my hip and had to stop to let it heal. Now I'm slowly getting back into exercise again, but would love to know what I can do without aggravating it. Sandie Henry, Port Denison, Western Australia



Martha
Lourey-Bird
Fitness editor

It may take a while to regain your full strength but the good news is there's a range of effective exercise options available.

- 1 Anything in the water is ideal as there's no impact involved. Think hydrotherapy, water exercises, aqua aerobics, swimming or walking laps around the park.
- 2 Aim to do plenty of cardio exercise such as cycling and walking. Start on a flat terrain, with a short low intensity session, then gradually increase by 5 mins a week.
- 3 Resistance training for the upper body (exercises using shoulders, biceps, triceps, back) are ideal.
- 4 Physio-prescribed exercises and stretches that improve core stability, the pelvic floor and glutes are important but need to be pain free. As you gradually improve, begin yoga and/or Pilates but avoid any painful movements.

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health

How can I encourage my ageing parents to live a better life without lecturing?

Dominique Trotter, via email

Making and maintaining lifestyle changes can be tough for even the most motivated individuals. Keep in mind changes that seem simple to you may be major changes to your parents – the more ingrained the habit, the greater the resistance to change can be. A gentle, sustained effort is the order of the day. If your words are being received as nagging, try opting for a subtle ‘lead by example approach’. The trick is not being too over the top. If, for example, your dad has been eating fatty steaks for 30 years, replacing his steak with tofu won’t cut it. Spark his interest

by cooking a lean steak in a way he’s unaccustomed to and do something special with some vegies. If mum’s hooked on old, fatty cooking methods (baked lamb & vegies in dripping), cook the same dish using healthy olive oil and eat with them. If you have school age kids, ask them to tell their grandparents what they learn about good health at school. Quality experience in small doses, rather than lecturing, should work well.



Allan Bolton
Men's consultant

FACT 14% of people over 50 will be affected by macular degeneration or vision loss.

COOKING

Trying to use more spices, I'm confused by the many types of paprika. Is there one I can use for all recipes?

Christine Smyth, via email



Lucy Kelly
Senior food editor

Sweet paprika is the most versatile & readily available in supermarkets. It's used in Mexican, Hungarian, Moroccan & Portuguese cuisines. For Mexican, combine 1 tsp each of sweet paprika & cumin & add a little chilli powder for heat. Rub onto pork fillets before baking, then slice & serve in wraps with salsa & guacamole. Use 1–2 tbs in veal goulash, chicken paprika or hearty beef stroganoff recipes. The smoked paprika used in Spanish cooking is nice for a change. Chop a chorizo sausage finely & cook it in a non-stick frying pan. Drain on paper towel before adding to tomato pasta sauce or bean & tomato soup. Add paprika when roasting chicken, lean meat or white fish fillets or add to soups for colour.



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**REFERENCE: Stevenson, L., Hunter, D., "Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity of Enviroleaf® Olive Leaf Extracts" Southern Cross University, 2005. Commissioned by Olive Products Australia.

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