

EXERCISE AND... HEALTHY EATING

WHAT IS IT?

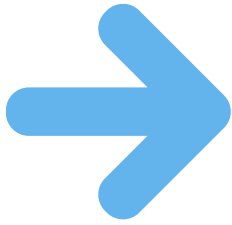
HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

WHAT EFFECT WILL EXERCISE HAVE ON IT?

WHAT IS IT?

You may be saying to yourself, "It's obvious!" But, there's more to consider about healthy eating than you may first think... **A healthy diet consists of foods and drinks that primarily enable your body to perform essential functions, like digesting food, thinking, speaking, and even breathing!** Secondary to these, we need food to perform movement- whether it's getting out of bed, doing a hundred press-ups, or running a marathon, your body needs extra energy that comes from foods and drinks. The energy that is used comes in the form of calories, and calories come in many guises! Carbohydrates, Fats, Proteins, Vitamins, Minerals, Water and more, need to be taken in a careful balance to ensure we can fulfil our body's incredible potential!





EXERCISE AND... HEALTHY EATING

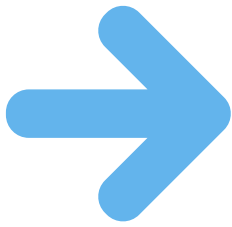
WHAT IS IT?

**HOW DOES IT
AFFECT ME?**

**WHAT EFFECT
WILL EXERCISE
HAVE ON IT?**

HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

If you take on more calories than you need on a daily basis, regardless of what form they come in, the excess will either be stored or excreted! Depending on the type of food (usually carbohydrates and fats), storage is the first option the body takes. If too many carbohydrates are taken on (for example; pastas, breads, cereals, sugar, fruit and vegetables) the body breaks the food down into a form that it can use for energy- glucose! If your body doesn't need it for energy, the carbohydrate will be broken down into a storable form- glycogen, which is stored in the liver and muscles. If you take on too much fat, you're asking for trouble! Although fat has more than twice as much energy (per gram, for example) than carbohydrates, our bodies find it very difficult to break it down and use it for energy. So, any excess will simply be put in storage for a rainy day! **In an ideal world, our body would like a constant intake of "good" calories throughout the day, as and when it needs it. But this would require non-stop nibbling- not a practical solution! So, with regular, small, balanced meals, you are maximising your body's chance of using what you intake, and minimising the chances of storing too much of what it can't use!**



EXERCISE AND... HEALTHY EATING

WHAT IS IT?

HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

WHAT EFFECT WILL EXERCISE HAVE ON IT?

WHAT EFFECT WILL EXERCISE HAVE ON IT?

Ever been ill, so you have to stay in bed all day, or on holiday, lazing around doing not a lot? Do you also remember not feeling that hungry at these times? Simply, the amount of food you take on should reflect the amount of energy you expend! **The more exercise and activity you do, the more calories your body burns up to produce energy to use for your workouts.** If you don't have enough readily available glycogen to use, or if you are still exercising and have almost run out of this source, your body will turn to another. Usually this is stores of fat, but as we've said, this is not easily broken down and you will find that your mental and physical performance is reduced dramatically if your carbohydrate (glycogen) stores are depleted severely. This forms a strong case against "low-carb" diets like the Atkins Diet, where low/no intake of Carbohydrates can lead to increased fat breakdown, but because the brain's preferred food is glucose, is not good for the sharpness of concentration!

You're probably thinking, "I'll just eat less than I need and I'm bound to lose weight!" Think again! The body tends to hang on to fat and other stores if you simply don't give it enough to function- this is a safety mechanism, as your body goes into self-preservation mode. **The key to healthy eating revolves around the Energy Balance; the amount that goes in versus the amount that goes out!** A drastic imbalance will lead to the self-preservation mode at one end of the spectrum, to dramatic weight gain at the other end! An equal balance will be the best for weight maintenance; an imbalance slightly in favour of energy 'out' will favour safe weight loss; and an imbalance (of the right kinds of foods) in favour of energy 'in' will favour safe weight gain.

If weight gain is your goal, it is probably because you want to gain muscle mass! Healthy Eating has a massive part to play in this goal, as muscles will need proteins to build stronger and bigger. When you perform any vigorous exercise, say several sets of bicep curls, you are actually breaking down the muscle tissue. What determines the success of the workout is what you give the muscle to help rebuild it after you finish lifting. A combination of carbohydrates (to replace lost glycogen and blood sugar) with a safe amount of protein, as soon as possible, will enable the tissue you have just broken down to grow back stronger and more efficient! Don't be fooled into taking on too much though (possibly in the form of too many "Protein Shakes"), as the excess protein that the body does not need is excreted and can actually damage the kidneys if continued for a long space of time.

So, if the Energy Balance mindset can be adopted, you'll never go far wrong! And don't just think about energy expenditure in your workouts- there's 168 hours in a week, and 4 workouts barely makes a dent! Combine great gym work with an active lifestyle and a healthy diet, and your Energy Balance will look after itself!