

# STEPS



## Diets on trial

Which diets really work and what foods should you put in your cart? We bust the myths and show you where to start.

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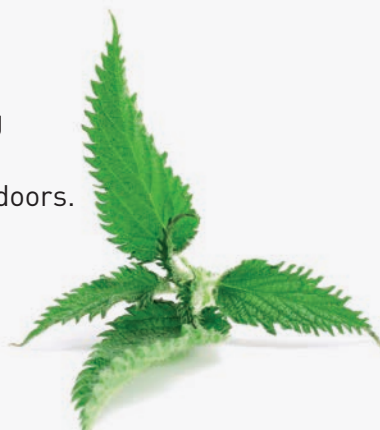
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# Editor's letter



Since we last spoke, you've been getting healthier and fitter all the time.

How do I know this? Well, for a start there are our amazing health heroes. Take Velma Shelton, for example (page 20)—she took the Biggest Loser title at MABS KY with a simple regimen of walking more and eating less. Or Ed Boquist (page 12), who returned to his former athletic self by watching his diet and fitting exercise into a busy schedule.

And then there are the hard figures. According to the Meggitt Vitality progress report, Vitality members are 150% more active than in 2013. 65% of employees have now signed up and done the Vitality Health Review—an important step along the road to great health—which means they're also getting the wellness credit. The good news—aside from what this means for your health—is that because of your efforts, in 2014 Meggitt had near-zero inflation in health costs (down from 15% in 2010). Now, that's worth celebrating.

But there's no room for being complacent. It's hard to stay on track when there are so many delicious temptations around you, which is why this edition is all about food.

If the home fries at your local diner are your downfall you need to read How to eat well in an American diner (page 7). If you're confused about what diets really work, check out Diets on Trial (page 2). And if you want to find what simple, inexpensive food that will improve your health, head for An apple a day (page 18).

Of course we don't neglect exercise, either. I've recently taken up yoga, so was fascinated to hear about Martin Calland's experiences of hot yoga (page 24). And if you want to step up your walking, you'll love our feature on Nordic walking (page 22).

Whatever you do, make sure you do something. And don't forget to tell us all about it—you might find yourself in the next edition!

'Til next time,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Patricia".

Patricia Carswell, health and fitness journalist

## What worked for you?

This is your magazine, so I'd love to hear what you think of it.

- What would you like to read more about?
- How has Vitality made a difference to your life?
- Could you be the next Meggitt Health Hero?

Whatever your feedback, let me know at [patriciacarswell@gmail.com](mailto:patriciacarswell@gmail.com)



# Diets on trial

Every season there seems to be a new diet on the block and all the old rules are thrown out of the window. Carbs, no carbs, some carbs, no sugar, low fat, no fat, healthy fats, fasting ... small wonder if you get a bit confused. And then there's the health side of it. How do you know if a diet is safe when the experts keep disagreeing with each other?

To help you along, we explain five of the most popular diets, and have asked a qualified, registered dietitian, Laura Tilt ([www.tiltnutrition.co.uk](http://www.tiltnutrition.co.uk) / @nutritilty) to tell us whether they're good, bad or ugly.

## Low GI diet

No, GI is nothing to do with the military. It stands for glycemic index—an index that measures the effect of a carbohydrate on a person's blood sugar. Foods containing refined sugars (such as white bread or cookies) are high GI as they raise blood glucose quickly—this triggers the production of insulin, which in turn can leave you hungry and gasping for a Krispy Kreme. Whole grains and carbohydrates with more fiber such as rye bread and beans tend to have a lower GI and keep you fuller for longer.

On a low GI diet you stick to low GI carbohydrates and make up the rest of your diet with vegetables, lean protein and healthy fats. It can get a little complicated—some foods will surprise you (like sweet potatoes which, despite their name, have a relatively low GI), but on the whole it's a pretty uncontroversial, balanced diet.

## Our dietitian says:

Low GI diets can help control appetite and balance energy levels because they are based around carbohydrates that release their energy slowly. It's a sensible approach and avoids restriction of any one food group, which means it's easier to follow. Researchers at Boston University also found a low GI diet to be more effective than a low carb or low fat diet for keeping weight off.

## The Atkins diet

This diet, promoted by Dr Robert Atkins in a series of books (most recently *The New Atkins for a New You*, published in 2010), is a low-carbohydrate diet. The dieter's intake is mostly made up of proteins, fats and vegetables.

In the first, two-week phase of the diet, the restrictions are especially strict, with only 20g of carbohydrate permitted each day. In the ongoing weight loss phase that follows, a little more carbohydrate is introduced, but is still restricted. Thereafter carbohydrates are gradually introduced, though whole grains are encouraged in preference to refined carbohydrates.

## Our dietitian says:

Low carb diets have been found to be as (if not more) effective as low fat diets, at least in the short term i.e. up to six months. The problem is sticking with them—a very low carb diet is difficult to maintain long term and at 12 months, studies often show weight regain. Safety-wise, there appear to be no negative effects in studies up to two years. The higher protein content reduces hunger, but you can get the benefits by eating a little more protein and moderate carbohydrate.





## 5:2 diet

The chances are you know someone who’s on the 5:2 diet—it’s taken the dieting world by storm. It’s really pretty simple: for two days a week you restrict your diet to 500 calories a day (600 for men) and eat what you like on the remaining five days. Fans of the diet say the intermittent fasting has a miraculous effect on their weight, and there are claims that it helps prevent diseases like cancer and heart disease as well as improving blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

The big challenge is coping on the fasting days—if you eat a couple of boiled eggs and two slices of toast with butter or spread you’ve already reached the limit—and the temptation to overeat on the remaining five days can be strong. It is not suitable for pregnant or breastfeeding women, Type 1 diabetics, children or people recovering from surgery.

### Our dietitian says:

Studies on intermittent fasting or 5:2 diets are in the early stages—but they do exist. In the Genesis center in the UK, researchers found women following a 600-calorie diet two days a week lost as much weight as those following a standard 1500-calorie diet seven days a week. There also appear to be other benefits for insulin levels and cholesterol. It’s worth considering this approach if you hate the idea of counting calories every day—but remember it doesn’t give you carte blanche to eat whatever you choose on the other days—you still need to be sensible. Long-term safety is unknown but short-term studies up to six months haven’t highlighted any issues.

600  
calories  
a day

## Paleo diet

The Paleo diet—also known as the paleolithic or caveman diet—is, as you might expect, based on what our ancient ancestors might have eaten. The claim is that our bodies have never adapted to “modern” foods like grains, legumes and dairy, so it’s out with all grains (including whole grains), beans, dairy products, processed foods and sugars (including alcohol) and starches. Fans claim that it makes them feel energised, healthy and strong. So what can you eat? Well, it’s pretty limited. You can eat meat, fish and seafood, fruit and veg, nuts and seeds and healthy fats. So dinner might be steak without the fries, chilli with spaghetti made from zucchini (zoodles) or pizza made from a cauliflower base (yes, really).

### Our dietitian says:

Evidence for the effectiveness of Paleo diets is extremely limited—the positive parts include plenty of fruit and vegetables, nuts and no processed foods. However it restricts all grains and legumes (which are important for fiber) plus dairy foods, which have been shown to benefit weight loss thanks to the calcium which helps regulate body fat. There are better (and easier!) options.



## Mediterranean diet

This diet is based on typical foods eaten in countries bordering the Mediterranean sea in Europe (think Italy, France, Spain). There’s an emphasis on fruit and veg (five to 10 servings per day), whole grains, fish, eggs, nuts, dairy and plenty of healthy fats (such as avocados and olive oil). This is not a low fat diet by any means, but with sensible portion control many swear by it for weight loss as well as heart health.

### Our dietitian says:

Mediterranean style diets have been found to be more effective than low fat diets for weight loss, because in part they are easier to stick with. The fats from oily fish, nuts and olive oil don’t just taste good—they also support heart and brain health. In 2014 research from the Arizona College of Medicine found people who follow a Mediterranean style diet have a lower risk of heart attacks and stroke than those follow a low fat diet.



We hope this helps clear the air a little. Remember, if you’re in any doubt about a diet, speak to a qualified doctor or dietitian. If you are considering attempting any major change to your diet it’s a good idea to consult your physician first to ensure you can do so safely.



Amy Merkley

# Gluten free and easy

A chance conversation with a colleague got Amy Merkley interested in the health benefits of a gluten-free diet. Less than a year later, she has transformed her diet and improved her health. We find out why Merkley is prepared to pass on the pasta.

**A**s Senior VP Integrated Logistics & Operations of Meggitt Customer Services & Support, and with a schedule that has her traveling between 60 and 70 per cent of the time, you might imagine that Amy Merkley wouldn't have time to think about what she ate. You'd be wrong. Merkley pays careful attention to every mouthful she eats—and the result is great health and the energy levels of someone half her age.

It wasn't always so. Until relatively recently, Merkley ate freely. "If it was there and it was quick and easy I would eat it," she says. She particularly loved pasta, occasional fried foods and white toast.

It was a chance conversation with Ed Boquist (another of this edition's health heroes) that got her thinking.

"I went to a workshop in the UK and was sitting next to Ed Boquist," she says. "He had his own snacks on the table. I thought it was odd as it was a catered event and I was teasing him about it. He said, 'Oh no, these are gluten-free.'"

When Boquist explained that he had eliminated gluten from his diet to help with joint pain, Merkley's ears pricked up—her husband had been suffering from pain in his ankles. When she returned home, she and her husband looked into it and read a book called *Wheat Belly* by William Davis, MD. "We read about what gluten does to your body chemistry and we both said we should give it some consideration, especially as we're over 40 and should take extra good care of our health."

**It's a cliché to say that your body is your temple, but it really is. What you put into it is important**





**There's a huge difference in how I feel. I don't get hunger pangs or that blood sugar bounce in the afternoon**

Merkley's husband began a gluten-free diet and less than a month later she followed suit. Several weeks into the new regimen, she started to notice some positive—and unexpected—changes. Pains in her shoulder and hip from sleeping on her side disappeared, and when she exercised she noticed less muscle soreness.

"I always took it for granted that my hips hurt—I never thought it was something that would go away—but I discovered that it isn't just the way it is."

Best of all, over time her energy levels improved. "There's a huge difference in how I feel. I don't get hunger pangs or that blood sugar bounce in the afternoon. If I have a late lunch, I don't get that shaky feeling." Although neither Merkley nor her husband gave up gluten in order to lose weight, this was a welcome side effect. "My husband lost 25 lbs and I lost 14 lbs," she says.

Luckily for Merkley, her husband is an enthusiastic cook and does all of the cooking, shopping and research. "He manages our meal plan," she says. Breakfast is usually gluten-free cereal, yogurt and fruit, and lunch is often stew or soup with vegetables and beans. They might make gluten-free pizza from a gluten-free pizza dough mix, and have been delighted to discover that most restaurants have a gluten-free menu, even if it's not advertised.

Merkley is careful to ensure that she gets all the nutrients that she needs, especially as she is almost exclusively vegetarian. She takes a multivitamin and various dietary supplements (she's careful to choose a gluten-free brand) and when she is traveling will bring healthy snacks with her, such as gluten-free granola bars, just in case she can't find anything suitable.

For all it's benefits, though, Merkley believes that the diet isn't for everyone.

"If you read the literature," she says, "it says that you have to be careful in terms of your nutrition. It's not just about eliminating something from your diet—you have to make sure that you get the right nutrition." For this reason, Merkley is cautious about recommending the diet to just anybody. "It takes a lot of work. A lot of people don't want to put that effort in."

What she does wholeheartedly recommend is being mindful of what you are consuming. Her diet has led her to be aware of everything she is eating, and this is something that she believes everyone would benefit from, whatever their diet.

"It's a cliché to say that your body is your temple, but it really is. What you put into it is important. You should really consider what you're getting ready to put into your mouth and what it will do to you."

Lack of time, she says, is no excuse, and with her hectic lifestyle she is living proof of this. "You always have time to contemplate what you're going to consume," she says. "It only takes five minutes to think about it, or to look up the restaurant before you go there."



**CUT OUT AND KEEP**

**Amy's top tips**

**You are what you eat, so always think before you put food into your mouth.**

**Don't be put off by lack of time—it only takes a few minutes to consider what is in your meal.**

**Always read the label—you might be surprised by what you find.**

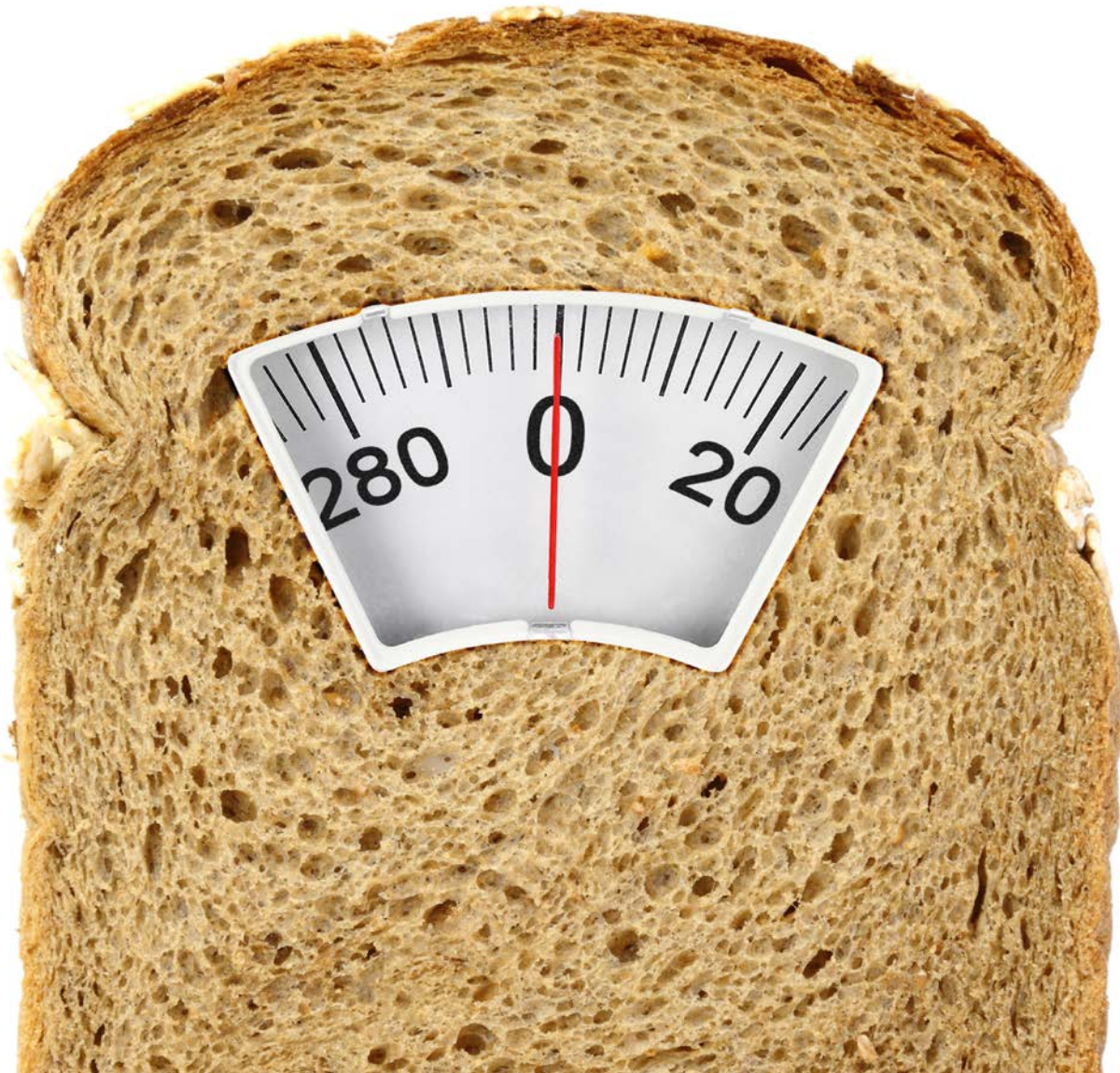
**If you're eating out, do your research in advance. Many restaurants have their menus on-line.**

In addition to watching what she eats, Merkley makes time for exercise. "I try to work out at least three days a week. We have work-out equipment in the house and my husband and I cycle. We're not fanatics—it's more casual—but I like to feel I'm doing something."

When traveling Merkley will always throw a pair of trainers and some work-out clothes into her bag and tries to find a hotel with a gym—not always easy in the UK and Europe.

If all of this sounds like a lot of effort, Merkley's enthusiasm and zest for life are proof that the results are worth it. "I don't want to go back to my old ways," she says. "I feel so much better now."

**It's a cliché to say that your body is your temple, but it really is. What you put into it is important**



# Gluten 101

Many thousands of people are, like Amy Merkley, following a gluten-free diet, and you've probably seen gluten-free labels on food products. So what is it all about, and do you need to be considering a switch to a life without gluten?

Gluten-free diet

Gluten diet



Gluten is a protein found in grains like wheat, barley and rye, so a gluten-free diet omits anything containing those grains (and various other, less well-known ones).

People tend to eliminate gluten from their diet if they suffer from celiac disease or if they are gluten-intolerant. Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease, suffered by about one per cent of the American population, in which the body reacts to gluten by attacking the lining of the small intestine. Symptoms can be severe and range from depression to bone pain and skin rashes. It can be diagnosed by a simple test.

Gluten intolerance is a sensitivity to gluten. Sufferers typically complain of bloating, discomfort, joint pain and various other symptoms when they eat gluten. According to the National Institutes of Health, about six per cent of the American population is gluten intolerant.

A rising number of people follow a gluten-free diet in order to achieve weight loss, and some report a greater sense of well-being following the switch. Some dietitians believe that the apparent improvements to health are simply the result of eating fewer sugary and processed foods, rather than because they have eliminated gluten.

Gluten-free is big business. According to Packaged Foods, sales of gluten-free food are expected to hit \$5 billion by 2015, so there are plenty of people out there keen to persuade you to drop gluten from your diet.

The message seems to be coming across loud and clear—according to one study, one third of American adults say they would like their diet to be free of gluten.

If you are considering cutting gluten out of your life, it's worth bearing a few things in mind.

- Most importantly, if you believe you may have a problem with gluten, go to your doctor and ask to be tested. Celiac disease is serious and should not be ignored. Do not diagnose yourself.
- Gluten-free products tend to be more expensive than their regular equivalents, so you may not want to rush to make the switch unless you need to.
- Cutting whole food groups out of your diet should always be done with caution, and under medical supervision. A 2005 report from the American Dietetic Association warned that gluten-free products tended to be low in a wide range of nutrients, including fiber, B vitamins, calcium, iron, zinc and magnesium, so eliminating gluten from your diet should only be done with great care.
- Whether or not you decide to give up gluten, most of us could benefit from paying more attention to what we eat, reading the label and reducing the amount of sugar, fat and processed foods that we eat.



# How to eat well at an **AMERICAN DINER**



## **WELCOME**

Everyone loves a good, old-fashioned diner. Unpretentious, home-style cooking, unlimited coffee and a side order of nostalgia.

What's not to love? Well, the belt-busting portions, for one. Plates piled high with home fries, sandwiches the size of a doorstep, soda in glasses so big they could quench the thirst of an entire first grade class. It's good, but the problem is it's just too good.

The happy news, though, is that you really can eat healthily at a diner. But only if you're smart. Waltzing up to the counter without giving any thought to what you're going to order will almost certainly end in a calorie-laden grease-fest (those home fries look just sooo good, don't they?)



## **STEP AWAY FROM THE SIDES**

It's not the law that you have to have a side order of fries and slaw, you know. And just as well – they're a meal in themselves and laden with fat and sodium. Stick to the main event and one day your waistline will thank you.

## **DON'T BE BLUE**

Ah, the blue-plate special. Meat-and-three for just two bits (or at least that's how you remember it). Could anything be more nostalgic? Or better value? Or ... ridiculously fattening? If you're tempted by the daily special, just check how big it is first. If it's huge, share it with a friend—then you can feel doubly pious. Win-win.



## **EGG-CELLENT CHOICE**

Eggs get a bad rap, but they're actually a pretty smart choice at a diner—and you don't even need to go for the egg white omelette (because really, who actually enjoys egg whites?) Egg dishes tend to be relatively modest at most diners. Ask for two eggs on toast, or an egg sandwich, or even a hole-in-one, and you'll get a protein-rich, reasonably-sized meal that has plenty of nutrients in it (see An apple a day, page 18). And if you add some veggies, you're allowed to give your halo an extra polish.



## **SURPRISING SANDWICHES**

This may raise an eyebrow, but there are some naughty-sounding sandwiches out there that pack less of a punch than you might imagine. BLT, anyone? Not as fattening as you'd imagine, so long as you hold the mayo. Grilled cheese? Again, more saint than sinner, especially if you have some vegetable soup with it. And don't forget grilled chicken—boring, maybe, but a reliable dieter's choice.

## **MELT AWAY**

If the dish includes the word "melt", you should probably avoid it. Especially if it's combined with the word patty. There's enough grease in there to keep the Meggitt grease guns topped up for the rest of the year. Just don't do it.



## **SUSPICIOUS SALADS**

We've said it before and we'll say it again. Salads can be dangerous. Oh yes, they look so virtuous with their cute little bits of lettuce. But don't be fooled. By the time you've factored in the bacon, avocado, croutons and ranch-style dressing you have a dish that would make a Sumo blush. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

*Let us know what chain you'd like us to cover next. McDonalds? Texas Roadhouse? Chuck E. Cheese's? We'd love to help.*



Switzerland is an orderly kind of country—it's no surprise that one of its biggest exports is watches—so for someone like Courtney Sturniolo, who thrives on routine, living there (and working in the Swiss Meggitt office) made it easy to get into a fitness regimen that worked for her.

"Routine is a big motivation for me," says Sturniolo. "When I know I'm working out every day I don't have to argue with myself about whether I will do it this morning." On five or six days a week, she would get up and exercise for 25 minutes without fail. The kind of exercise she did might vary—she would do fitness DVDs at home and follow different combinations of cardio and strength training—but rarely wavered in her commitment to training.

Her diet was pretty organized, too. "I would try to eat five or six small meals a day and to get a good combination of lean proteins, fruits and veg. This would help fulfil my requirements for working out—I'd need a lot of protein for recovery from the strength training—and I would try to get between five and nine servings a day of fruit and veg. In Switzerland they have a fantastic cafeteria at the office and they thought I was a bit odd for bringing my small meals!"

Her favorite indulgence was Swiss chocolate—she would allow herself some every night. "I can't live on healthy food alone," she says.

A move to California in April this year to become marketing communications manager at Meggitt Sensing Systems in Irvine inevitably disrupted this carefully-organized routine. Sturniolo, her husband and two cats had, after all, moved to the other side of the world.

**In the process of settling in, I fell off the wagon in eating properly and exercising. It was harder to make good choices**

"On the home front we were starting completely from zero," says Sturniolo. "We had to wait seven weeks for everything to arrive by boat and we were living out of a hotel."

This made it impossible for Sturniolo to follow her usual routine. "In the process of settling in, I fell off the wagon in eating properly and exercising. It was harder to make good choices and I couldn't cook properly when I was living in a hotel. I fell out of my exercise routine, too—it was hard to make time to do it."

Fast forward a few months, though, and everything has changed. Sturniolo is enthusiastic about her new home, workplace and lifestyle. "It's a beautiful place with perfect weather every day.



# Courtney Sturniolo New beginnings

When Courtney Sturniolo moved half-way across the world, her carefully-orchestrated fitness and nutrition routine took a nosedive. We find out how she got herself back on track.



I’m settling in well—my new colleagues are wonderful and very welcoming and helpful— and I’m working with an excellent team.”Things have improved on the diet and exercise front, too.

“I feel like I’m finally back on track,” she says. “I’m back up to four exercise sessions a week and I do up to two hours on Saturday or Sunday morning. As I am now able to bring food to work and to cook at home, I’m back to a healthy diet.”

Sturniolo is enjoying the Californian produce and particularly the wide selection of organic food which, she says, is surprisingly well priced compared with elsewhere in the country. “I’m eating plenty of locally-produced fruit and veg,” she says.

Having gained some weight during the weeks following her move to California,




**Routine is a big motivation for me. When I know I’m working out every day I don’t have to argue with myself about whether I will do it this morning**

Sturniolo has signed up for her unit’s Biggest Loser challenge. “I’d be happy losing about five pounds though I’d be ecstatic with 10,” she says. “I don’t see myself winning—it’s more an opportunity to be accountable and the weekly weigh-in will keep me motivated. It’s a nice opportunity to meet new colleagues, and get to know people who have the same goals. It’ll be good to have support and encouragement and to offer it back.”

There are just a couple more obstacles to tackle. She is still looking for a Californian replacement for her Swiss chocolate treat. “I’ve tried cookies and little snack bars but I haven’t yet found an equivalent.”

The west coast timetable is a bit of a challenge, too. “I still find the early mornings a little bit of a struggle—we’re in the office for 7:30 which I’m not used to.” Knowing her penchant for routine, though, we’re sure she can find a way to make it work for her.

CUT OUT AND KEEP

### Courtney’s top tips

Eat little and often. If you have five or six meals a day you don’t get hungry in between. Make sure they’re small meals, though!

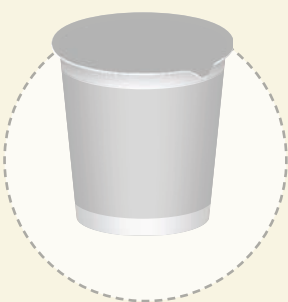
Get into the habit of cooking at home. As I discovered when we moved, eating out six nights a week is not healthy!

Eat plenty of fruit and veg, but allow yourself some treats, too.

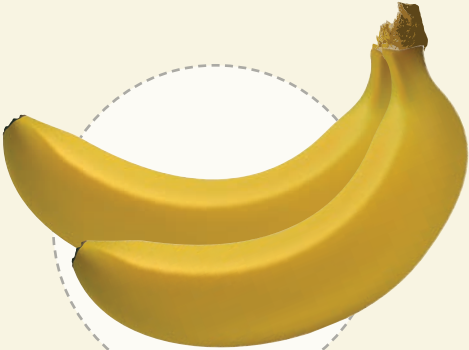
Get into a routine with your exercise. If you know you have to get up to exercise, there’s no argument when the alarm goes off.

## Peanut butter bomb smoothie

(recipe from Vitality website)



1 cup of yoghurt



2 ripe bananas



1 tbs peanut butter

= serves 2

### Instructions:

Preparation time: 5-10 minutes depending on the amount. Combine all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Adjust the consistency of the smoothie by adding water.

Serve in an attractive glass and enjoy

#### Tips to reduce preparation and cooking time:

Freeze the bananas, or add ice to the smoothie to bring it to a chilled temperature quickly.

Make larger quantities of the smoothie mixture and freeze it into lollipops to be enjoyed at a later stage as a healthy snack.

### Analysis per serving:

**Energy:** Calories (kcal): 199, **Protein (g):** 10.0, **Total fat (g):** 4.7, **Saturated fat (g):** 1.1, **Monounsaturated fat (g):** 1.1, **Polyunsaturated fat (g):** 1.5, **Omega-3s (g):** 0.0,

**Cholesterol (mg):** 3.0, **Carbohydrates (g):** 32.3, **of which sugars (g):** 0.3, **Fiber (g):** 1.9, **Sodium (mg):** 134.0



# Food for free

## —a guide to foraging



**Foraging for food might seem a bit Les Stroud. If you're not in the wilderness, why pick your own food when there's a perfectly good store around the corner? But there are plenty of great reasons to get your food from the great outdoors. We find out what the appeal is.**

What could be lovelier than strolling out into the countryside and foraging for your dinner? For some of us—if we're lucky—it's something we associate with childhood, getting scratched and stained filling up on berries on a childhood picnic. For most of us, though, it's just not something we've ever done and we wouldn't even know where to start.

Collecting wild food isn't just a romantic notion. Foraged food can be incredibly nutritious, bursting with fresh goodness and packed with vitamins and minerals. It's also a fabulous way to get kids interested in healthy food without them even noticing it.

But where should you start? What's safe and what's not? Here's our guide to three of the best—and easiest—foods from nature's larder.

### Stinging nettles

No, really. Not only are nettles edible and delicious when cooked—a little like spinach, although creamier—but they are full of goodness. Our ancestors used them as a spring tonic and it's no surprise. What they didn't know is that they have high levels of vitamins A and C, and include manganese which helps absorb iron and vitamins more easily. They also assist with detoxifying the liver, and are thought to have anti-inflammatory properties. For those of you involved with sport, they are known to ease muscle stiffness.

That's all very well, but isn't there the small matter of the sting? Well, the good news is they lose their dreaded sting on cooking. You will need to wear gloves when you pick them, but once they've hit the hot water you have nothing more to fear from them.

You should also pick them when they're young, before the flowers appear—they get tough and stringy when they get tall and mature—and make sure you collect them from a clean place away from roads and dogs (I need hardly explain!)

Here's a great recipe for nettle soup, which is pretty similar in taste and texture to spinach soup.

### Nettle soup

40 mins

#### Serves 4-6

1 medium to large onion, finely chopped.  
3 cups potatoes, peeled and chopped into cubes.  
1/2 stick butter / 4 tbsp olive oil  
300g nettles (about 1 supermarket carrier bag-full)  
4-6 cups good quality chicken or vegetable stock  
Grated nutmeg, salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.

- 1 Heat oil in large pot and cook onion until soft. Add potatoes and cook for five more minutes.
- 2 Wearing gloves, wash nettles and place in boiling water for about a minute. Then cool immediately by immersing in a sink full of cold water.
- 3 By this time the nettles should no longer sting, but you may wish to use gloves at this stage just in case. Add them to the pan with the onion and potatoes.
- 4 Add the chicken stock and some grated nutmeg and seasoning. Cook for about 15 minutes until the potatoes are soft.
- 5 Blend the soup and adjust seasoning.
- 6 Serve with crusty wholemeal bread for a super-nutritious meal.

Wild garlic (ransoms)

These grow in fragrant abundance in the spring by rivers and in shady spots and can be easily recognised by the garlicky tang in the air. If you're not sure if it really is wild garlic, pick a leaf, break it in two and smell it. If it smells strongly of chives then bingo! Pick the youngest leaves from the middle of the plant—they will have the best flavor. This pungent leaf wouldn't be out of place in a medicine cabinet. It's an important part of the Mediterranean diet (see Diets on Trial, page 2) and is thought to be good for lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as containing protein and vitamins A and B-complex.

Wild garlic can be chopped into salads or wrapped around chicken breasts before baking in the oven—it stops them drying out and imparts a delicate flavor. For a really easy and tasty recipe, try this one for wild garlic bread (if you're watching your weight, just go easy on the portions). Your kids will love this!



Blackberries

Blackberries are so good for you we've included them in our list of everyday superfoods (see An apple a day, page 18). Bursting with antioxidants, blackberries are thought to be a powerful weapon in the fight against cancer.

You've probably mostly come across these juicy little fruits in fruit cobblers, but these can expand your waistline. Why not try this super-healthy smoothie instead—all of the flavor, none of the fat.

Foraging without fear

To forage safely and with respect for the environment, here are a few rules it's wise to stick to:

- 1. Only eat what you can identify—especially if you are picking mushrooms which can be highly toxic. A foraging course or guided walk is a good start and there are plenty of books to help with identification.
- 2. If in doubt, do not pick.
- 3. Wash everything you pick before eating.
- 4. Never pick food at ground level near a road or where there might be pollution. Think about where dogs might have been!
- 5. If you're foraging on private land, ask the permission of the landowner.
- 6. No matter where you are foraging, only pick what you need. Don't strip a tree or patch of land of all its produce—leave some for others (including the wildlife that might rely on it for food).

Wild garlic bread

25 mins

Serves 6-8

- 1 double stick of butter, softened
- 2-4 handfuls wild garlic leaves
- Rind of half a lemon, finely grated
- 1 loaf crusty wholemeal bread

- 1 Whizz the garlic leaves in a food processor until finely chopped.
- 2 Add the butter and lemon rind until thoroughly mixed.
- 3 Slice the loaf three-quarters of the way through.
- 4 Spread the garlic butter in between the bread slices, keeping the loaf together.
- 5 Wrap the loaf in foil and bake in a medium oven for about 10-15 minutes, until the butter has melted through the bread.

Blackberry smoothie

5 mins

Serves 2

- 1 1/2 cups fresh blackberries
- 4 tbsp low fat natural yogurt (Greek-style if possible)
- 2 tbsp honey

- 1 Mix everything in a blender. That's it—it really is that simple!





# Ed Boquist

## Paleo, push-ups and positive thinking

If you find yourself sitting next to Ed Boquist, Vice President Government Relations, Meggitt's Washington office, at a business dinner, the chances are you'll have the bread basket to yourself, for Boquist is dedicated to his healthy diet. We find out how skipping the sides and going against the grain have enabled him to get back to his college weight and maintain an exercise regimen that would be the envy of a man half his age.

**A**s a young college athlete, Ed Boquist could have been forgiven for taking his health and strength for granted. He had a basketball scholarship and did track and baseball at high school and college. "It all came easily," he says.

Yet even at a young age, Boquist was never complacent. He took his health seriously. "I've always felt strongly about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and a healthy diet," he says. So seriously, in fact, that he graduated with a degree in nutrition and became the owner of a health food store in Long Island before he started working for Meggitt.

His health food business was not, he says, all about the money. He wanted to help people lead a healthy lifestyle, and is critical of stores whose sales assistants

**I found myself going out to eat more. Part of the job is to take business meals with customers. I found that the business meals were catching up with me**

have little knowledge or understanding of nutrition. "Most don't have a background in nutrition—they have a background in sales."

When he joined Meggitt, Boquist tried to keep a balance with his personal life and continued to run and work out. "The fire was still there," he says. Nevertheless, when the Washington office opened it became harder to keep in trim.

"I found myself going out to eat more. Part of the job is to take business meals with







customers. I then found that the business meals were catching up with me.”

Within five years of the Washington office opening, Boquist had gained between 18 and 20 lbs. “It happened without me even noticing it. I was still running but the weight kept coming. I went from a size 30 waist to a size 34.”

The turning point came when Boquist’s wife noticed the change. “At one point she said to me, ‘You know, you’re really walking around with a watermelon inside you.’ That was a wake-up call. It made me say, ‘Wow, I need to fix that.’”

Boquist went about losing the weight with the same determination he’d always applied to his fitness. He stopped eating bread and adopted a paleo diet (see Diets on trial, page 2), eating mainly lean protein and vegetables. For three months he ate no carbohydrates, and when he reintroduced them he ate fewer grains, less gluten than before and kept foods like white bread to a minimum.

The effects were dramatic. Boquist lost 20 lbs, dropping back to his college weight of 162 lbs, and has managed to maintain this weight since then.

Now Boquist maintains a healthy diet, high in vegetables and lean protein and with limited carbohydrates. He takes turmeric and fish oils to reduce inflammation in his joints and help slow down their natural degeneration.

The benefits of the diet were not just physical—Boquist finds that it has helped his cognitive function, too. “My brain thinks

better and I have more energy,” he says. “I have lost the sluggishness that goes with weight gain.”

Needless to say, business travel and business meals are still part of Boquist’s life, but he manages to stay healthy by skipping bread, potatoes and dessert and eating “what’s green and lean”. It’s not always easy. “People say I should just live,” he says, “but I do! I get pushed by my colleagues—the devil likes company—but I tell them I feel better now. When I tell them the story about me putting on weight and feeling sluggish, they understand. Some think I’m a kook, but that’s OK.”

**My brain thinks better and I have more energy, he says. I have lost the sluggishness that goes with weight gain**

Boquist still maintains an active exercise regimen. He cycles around the DC area frequently, taking any opportunity he can to cycle from his office to Capitol Hill in preference to taking a taxi. Even in summer, when the temperatures rise, he just packs an extra shirt and washes before his meeting. On top of the cycling, he uses an elliptical machine three times a week and lifts weights.

Of course, now in his 60s, he doesn’t have the same strength he used to. “I don’t do heavy weights any more—if you injure yourself at my age the recovery period is much longer,” he says. “My muscles aren’t



CUT OUT AND KEEP

## Ed Boquist’s top tips

**Keep a positive outlook—if you had half a piece of cake, don’t beat yourself up for eating cake, but say it’s a good start you only had half**

**Don’t get on the scales every day—once a month is enough**

**Start small. Start with a smaller piece of pie, and next time you may not want a bigger piece.**

**Get a maintenance plan in place for after you’ve lost weight, otherwise it’s easy to put it back on.**

as strong or as defined.” He can still bench press his own body weight, though—a feat which many younger men would envy.

“I accept that as you age you have limitations. It would take a longer amount of exercise to accomplish the feats I did in college and to retain that capacity. I ran a four-and-half-minute mile in college and I’ll never see those days again, but I can run a nine minute mile. It’s a question of recognising what you can do. If running hurts your joints, walk or use a rowing machine. I can still do most things, but a bit slower. I can still do 50 push-ups the same as I did when I was 30.”

True to his principles, Boquist raised his own children in a healthy lifestyle. “When they were young I was viewed by my friends and peers as a little bit strange as I wouldn’t take them to McDonalds or Burger King. I wanted them to make their own decision when they were older.”

It paid off—both sons, now adults, are very physically active and involved in sports. “They’re conscious of maintaining their temple,” he says.

If there’s one message Boquist would like to spread to others, it’s the power of positive thinking. “Don’t be so hard on yourself,” he says. “Every day you should think of three things you can self-affirm. What went well in my job today? What went well in my diet today? What generally did I enjoy today?” With this attitude, he believes, it’s easier to maintain a healthy lifestyle. “When you’re young you think anything will work. Just don’t forget your youthful optimism.”

# Bulletproof coffee —magic bullet or missing the mark?



Bulletproof coffee—devised by biohacker and entrepreneur Dave Asprey—has been all the rage for months now, showing up in hipster health food stores and juice bars in the smartest parts of town.

But is there any truth in the idea that coffee made with butter and coconut oil instead of milk is good for you and makes you feel any different?

We put bulletproof coffee to the test.

It flies in the face of all the advice we've ever heard, yet it's taking the health food world by storm. Having cream in your coffee is, it seems, so last year. What the foodie fashionistas are all about this year is bulletproof coffee blended, improbably, with a big old lump of butter.

It's the brainchild of Dave Asprey, a self-proclaimed biohacker, who claims that the fats in the butter slow down your body's absorption of caffeine, stopping the crazy caffeine buzz and keeping you fuller for longer. He goes on to insist that it's not just the caffeine that gives you the highs and lows, but toxins formed during the production of mass market coffee.

By using a combination of coffee made with "ultra clean beans"—and yes, funnily enough he does sell his own—together with grass fed butter and "brain octane oil" (which is essentially a concentrated coconut oil), he believes he has come up with a concoction that will keep you full of beans and help you lose weight. Indeed, he attributes his own energy levels and 80lb weight loss to a daily bulletproof coffee (as part of a high-fat, low carb, paleo-style diet that he advocates).

Asprey has plenty of devotees. Facebook groups for bulletproof fans abound, and you can buy bulletproof coffee as far afield as London and LA. An early adopter was Erewhon Natural Foods, one of LA's oldest health food stores at the juice bar alongside traditional coffee, and Asprey is building his own, dedicated bulletproof coffee shop in Santa Monica.

Not everyone is convinced, though. Asprey claims that 70% of coffee is infected with mycotoxins which make you sick and make your coffee bitter, but random tests on high end coffee (including Starbucks) found none testing positive for mycotoxins. The main reason coffee tastes bitter, claim his critics, is that it's been burnt by inept roasters or baristas. It's also worth noting that Asprey has admitted to taking prescription drugs without any medical need to do so. These drugs include Modafinil—an anti-narcolepsy drug. Small wonder he feels full of energy.

Anyway, so much for the theory. What does it taste like?

Well, to save you having to try coffee swimming with butter, we've done a bulletproof experiment ourselves. Our editor, Patricia, boldly took the bulletproof challenge, making her morning coffee with a knob of butter and a lump of coconut oil.

Here's what she had to say about it. "I can't say I was relishing the bulletproof challenge. I'm a bit of a coffee addict, but I usually have mine with 2% milk. I can't say I'd ever reach for butter—or even for cream—when I'm making a cup of coffee.

"I discovered that the most important thing is to blend ... blend ... blend. If you don't whizz it enough, you'll end up with a pool of grease forming a buttery film at the top of the cup, and even butter-lovers aren't going to find that appealing.

"After a couple of minutes of blending you end up with a mix that, surprisingly, isn't buttery at all. It tastes like coffee made with cream. If you like creamy coffee it's actually not bad. There's a faint coconut aroma and taste, but it's not too overpowering.

"As for the effect, I can't say I felt any different. I felt the usual, pleasant caffeine buzz, but didn't notice any great energy later in the day. So would I try it again? Afraid not. I'll stick to my 2%, if you don't mind."



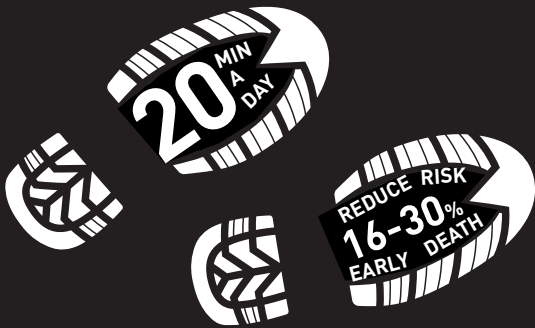


**Did you know?**

Vital facts |  
Breakthroughs |  
Health news |

## Walking is a life-saver

Walking doesn't just keep you fit and help you stay in trim—it could actually save your life. According to a study at the University of Cambridge, England, a brisk, 20-minute walk each day could be enough to reduce your risk of an early death by between 16 and 30%. The impact was greatest in people whose weight was normal (even more reason to work on your weight!) but benefits were felt even by those with a high BMI. Time to strap your walking shoes on and get out there!



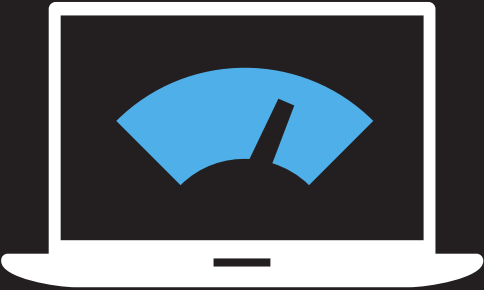
## Chill out, stay young

You've probably heard that mindfulness and meditation can help you relax and stay calm. Now it seems it could keep you young. A new study from UCLA suggests that regular meditation could preserve the area of the brain containing neurons. Researchers studying participants' brains discovered that while everybody's gray matter withered with time, those who actively practised meditation lost less of the neuron-packed tissue. The meditating participants had all been practicing for 20 years or more, so there's no time to lose!



## Log on, lose weight

So you might think that if you're trying to lose weight, the less time you spend on-line the better. Well, not necessarily. A Northwestern University study showed that on-line dieters who regularly logged in, recorded results and interacted with other dieters in their social network lost more weight than those who didn't. Participants who engaged with at least 10 users lost around eight per cent of their body fat in six months. Sounds like a great excuse to hang out on Facebook!



## Beet it

Got high blood pressure? You should be beeting (sorry!) a path to the fresh produce aisle and buying a bunch of beet. A study from Queen Mary University, London, found that just one glass of beet juice a day could significantly reduce blood pressure for those with hypertension. Patients drinking the red juice also experienced a 20 per cent improvement in blood vessel dilation capacity and reduced artery stiffness of around 10 per cent. Beet juice on its own can be a little strong, so mix with some fresh carrot and apple juice.





## Judy Edwards

# When quitting means winning

Judy Edwards, a plater in the fabrication department at Meggitt Sensing Systems in Indianapolis, went from smoking 20 cigarettes a day to none at all. We find out how she motivated herself to quit a lifelong habit.



Quitting smoking is notoriously difficult. Quitting smoking when you're 56 years old and started the habit when you were 12—well, that requires a special kind of motivation.

For Judy Edwards, her 15-year-old granddaughter, Jade, was all the motivation she needed. "I'm single and I'm raising my granddaughter," she says, "so I have to be here for her. I just want to be there longer for her—she's a teenager now, but they still need you, no matter how old they are."

After a lifetime of smoking, Judy had good reason to fear for her health. "I had a nagging cough," she says. "My sleep was interrupted with coughing spells and it was getting to the point where I could feel my lungs. I thought, 'Something's got to give.'"

So on January 18th this year, she had her last cigarette.

It wasn't easy, but it was, she says, a lot easier than she thought it would be. She had a back-up supply of nicotine gum and e-cigarettes for any time when the desire to smoke got too much for her, but never had to resort to them. "If I got a craving I just told myself, 'It'll pass.'"

Jade was a great encouragement, says Judy. "She was a big help. She was very excited I quit. I didn't want her to think it was socially acceptable to smoke, because I don't think it is. I didn't want her to pick it up from me."

Smoking had been an expensive habit, costing her about \$5 a day, so she motivated herself further by visualising all the things she would be able to afford when she quit smoking.

"I put little incentives in front of me," she says. "I envisioned myself in a new car, a Prius—check! I thought, well, I'm not going to have a new car and smoke in it and get it all funky up, so I thought, you know what? You can have a new car once you quit. And

**My sleep was interrupted with coughing spells and it was getting to the point where I could feel my lungs. I thought, something's got to give**

I'd see some cute little heels in a shop and I'd say, 'If you weren't smoking you could afford those.' And I'd be out and see a cute little purse and I'd say, 'If you weren't smoking you could have that.' So I gave myself little goals."

I'd see some cute little heels in a shop and I'd say, If you weren't smoking you could afford those

Although she knew she'd be saving money by quitting smoking, Judy was surprised by how much of her income she freed up by ditching the habit. "I don't know how to stop shopping now!"

She's still shocked when she gets clothes from the closet that date back to her smoking days. "They stink so bad," she says. "For the first time in my life I can't stand the smell. To think that I could have stunk like that!"

The most noticeable thing about Judy's new regimen, though, is her health. "I feel a big improvement," she says. "My lung capacity is a whole lot better. I don't wake up hacking and coughing in the middle of the night—I think I sleep a whole lot better."

She's even considering taking up jogging again—a habit she let slip a long time ago. "I did it before and I felt so good!" There have been some challenges along the way. Without smoking to occupy her, Judy has found herself snacking more, so is careful to ensure that her snacks are all healthy. "We're pretty healthy eaters in our house, so I'm trying to lean towards that." The challenges are nothing, though, compared with the joy of seeing Jade's reaction. "The best bit is how happy it has made my granddaughter. She is really surprised and happy for me."

Judy's advice to anyone who is thinking of giving up smoking is simple. "Tell them if I can do it, anybody can do it. You've nothing to lose apart from a nasty habit and gaining back your health. I thought I was weak, but I'm surprised by how strong I actually am."

CUT OUT AND KEEP

How to be a quitter—Judy's top tips

Have a reason to quit—mine was my granddaughter

Give yourself little incentives. What treat will you be able to afford when you quit smoking?

If you feel tempted to smoke, remind yourself that the feeling will pass.

Just do it. You've nothing to lose but a nasty habit.



# An apple a day

So you've heard all about superfoods and seen those expensive packets full of exotic promise on the shelves of your healthfood store. But eating healthily doesn't have to be complicated, fancy or expensive ... and they won't break the bank, either

**1. Apples:** Yes, really! OK, so an apple a day by itself might not keep the doctor away, but eating apples is officially good for you. A recent study at the University of Michigan found that apple-eaters used fewer prescription medications than non-apple-eaters. Other studies have found an association between apple consumption and a reduced risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease. Why so good? Apples contain quercetin, an antioxidant that resists cell damage.

So pop an apple in your bag or briefcase for a healthy, mid-morning alternative to candy. For a delicious, chewy snack, you can easily dry apple slices yourself by putting them in the oven at a low temperature for a few hours.

**4. Avocado:** The avocado doesn't just taste good—it contains nearly 20 vitamins and minerals. Some people are put off by the fat content. Don't be. The fats in avocado are healthy fats that are good for your body—just eat them in moderation.

For a super-healthy lunch, fill a wholemeal wrap with half an avocado, a couple of slices of turkey and some salad veggies. Sprinkle some lemon juice over it to stop it going brown while you wait. The only problem will be waiting until lunchtime to eat it!

**3. Blackberries:** The health press is full of the virtues of the expensive blueberry, but these glossy beauties deserve the same reputation—and you can pick them yourself to avoid the price tag. Their colour comes from a natural plant colour, anthocyanin, a powerful flavonoid that acts as an antioxidant.

Blackberries are great in smoothies or as a quick snack with plain yogurt. If you haven't got a ready source of them near you, or it's the wrong time of year for picking them, you can find them in the frozen fruit section of most supermarkets.

**2. Bananas:** They're so mainstream they rarely get a mention in superfood lists, but bananas are an excellent source of potassium which helps to protect your heart. They also enhance your body's ability to absorb calcium and increase mood-enhancing chemicals, dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin.

A banana gives you a tasty boost before a workout without filling you up, and if you want to add some protein for a post-workout snack, add a small handful of nuts or some low fat milk or yogurt.

**5. Tomatoes:** We're used to hearing about the benefits of eating our vegetables raw, and raw tomatoes are bursting with vitamin C—but to get the full benefit of tomatoes eat them cooked. This releases lycopene, a powerful weapon against cancer. Roast a handful of tomatoes in the oven with a spritz of oil, or make a delicious tomato and basil soup (just hold the cream).



**6. Swiss chard:** It's so pretty with its dark green leaves and rainbow-coloured stalks, but Swiss chard is also a nutritional powerhouse. It contains betalains, vitamins A, C, E and K, magnesium, potassium, fiber, calcium, choline, B vitamins, zinc and selenium. What more reason do you need to put it in your cart?

Whizz it into a fabulously healthy green smoothie or steam or stirfry it as a side dish. You may need to cook the stalks for a little longer than the leaves, but don't throw them away—they're sweet, juicy and definitely worth the wait.

## Super Swiss smoothie recipe

Here's a super, simple smoothie containing some of our top 10 healthy foods. It'll give you an amazing blast of goodness.

Serves 2

### Ingredients

1 ½ cups apple juice (or coconut water, if preferred)  
2 cups Swiss chard, washed and chopped  
1 apple, unpeeled, cored and chopped  
½ avocado, chopped

### Method

Combine ingredients in blender or liquidizer and blend for about a minute, or until smooth. Add more liquid, to taste, if required



## 9. Sardines:

Tiny, inexpensive and available everywhere, sardines really ought to be classed as a superfood. They contain masses of calcium—great for your bones and teeth—and have as much Omega-3 oils as more expensive fish such as salmon. Why is Omega-3 so great? Well, it improves blood flow, feeds the brain, stabilizes the heart rhythm and keeps inflammation in check.

Try something a bit different and eat your sardines with pasta and a fresh tomato sauce.

**7. Garlic:** Garlic isn't just useful for keeping vampires at bay—it can help protect your heart and is an effective anti-viral agent, containing flavonoids and sulfur. If you're worried about the effect on your breath, follow it with a few sprigs of fresh, raw parsley.

A great way to eat garlic is in home-made hummus. Put a clove in a blender with a can of chickpeas (garbanzos) along with a squeeze of lemon juice, a glug of olive oil and a tablespoon of tahini. Eat it with wholemeal crackers and some carrot sticks for a quick, nutritious lunch.

**8. Cauliflower:** It won't win any prizes for glamor, but don't dismiss the humble cauliflower—it's a mighty warrior against cancer, containing a raft of phytonutrients that reduce oxidative stress in your cells. One study suggests that, combined with turmeric, cauliflower can help prevent and treat prostate cancer.

Instead of cauliflower cheese that's high in saturated fats, why not roast or steam some cauliflower and sprinkle it with a little chilli or anchovy oil?

**10. Dark poultry meat:** You probably know that the more expensive cuts of chicken and turkey—the white meat on the breast—are lower in fat, but don't dismiss the darker leg meat. It contains more B vitamins than white meat and the fat in it contains a hormone called CCK that keeps you fuller for longer.

Have a couple of cooked chicken thighs for your lunch (with the skin removed), add a green salad and a wholemeal roll, and you'll be able to resist the cookie barrel all afternoon.

# Velma Shelton Walking the walk

Despite working 12-hour night shifts and having some tough competition, Velma Shelton, who works in the sub-assembly department at MABS KY, took the title in the facility's Biggest Loser contest. We find out how she did it and what it's like being a fitness role model.

If anyone had an excuse not to lose weight, it's Velma Shelton. Working night shifts is notoriously hard on the body and getting into a healthy routine is even more challenging than for day-time workers. Yet Velma Shelton lost a massive 28 lbs in the MABS KY Biggest Loser contest this year.

Even timing the weigh-ins presented a logistical challenge—Velma had to be weighed just before she went home at 7 a.m. after her 12-hour shift—but she was determined to win the contest.

She had struggled with her weight for the last 10 years, but the prize on offer spurred her on.

"The contest encouraged me," she says. "I really wanted to win as the prize was an extra day off work with pay and 1,000 Vitality points."

Velma's weight loss strategy was simple but effective. "I started cutting back on my portions, I cut out sweets, I cut out soda and I started walking."

For the most part she found the diet element straightforward, finding useful tips on the Vitality website, but it was more difficult when her husband wanted to eat

out. Velma didn't let this deter her, though. "I would try to pick things that were not fattening."

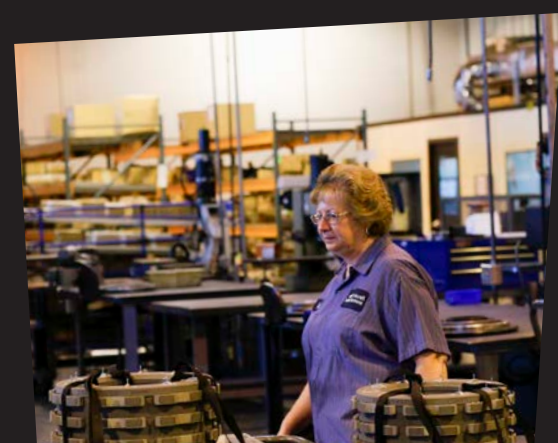
Before long she was walking three miles every day—much easier on her days off. "It's hard to walk after your night shift when you're tired and you want to go to bed."

The exercise, she says, made all the difference. "I don't think I could have done it without the walking."

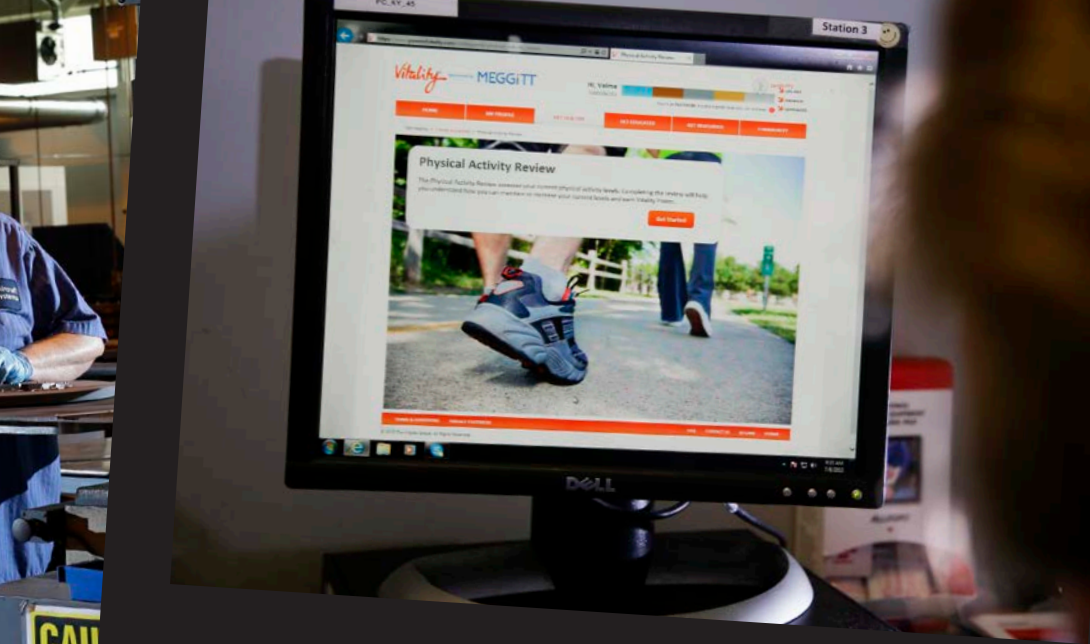
**I started cutting back on my portions, I cut out sweets, I cut out soda and I started walking**

Each week Velma presented herself for the weekly weigh-in, never missing one, and gradually saw the weight drop away. Despite her impressive weight loss, she never grew complacent. "There was one guy who gave me a good race," she says.

As well as enjoying her prize, Velma has felt the benefits of the achievement in her







general sense of wellbeing. “I feel better because of losing the weight,” she says. “I have more energy and can do more stuff for longer. It’s really helped me.”

## I feel better because of losing the weight. I have more energy


Her husband and daughter are delighted, too. “My husband is really pleased,” she says. “He gives me compliments.”

Velma's journey isn't over yet. She continues to walk every day and is determined to lose more weight. “I’m not going to stop here.”

Not surprisingly, Velma has found herself becoming something of a role model for co-workers. “I hope I have been an inspiration,” she says. “Several people have congratulated me and want to know my secret.”

The secret, she insists, is just to do more exercise and eat less. “You don’t want to do it too fast and make yourself sick,” she says. “Hang in there and take it slow.”



 **CUT OUT AND KEEP**

## Top tips from the Biggest Loser

**Have a reward in mind—for me it was the prospect of an extra day off with pay**

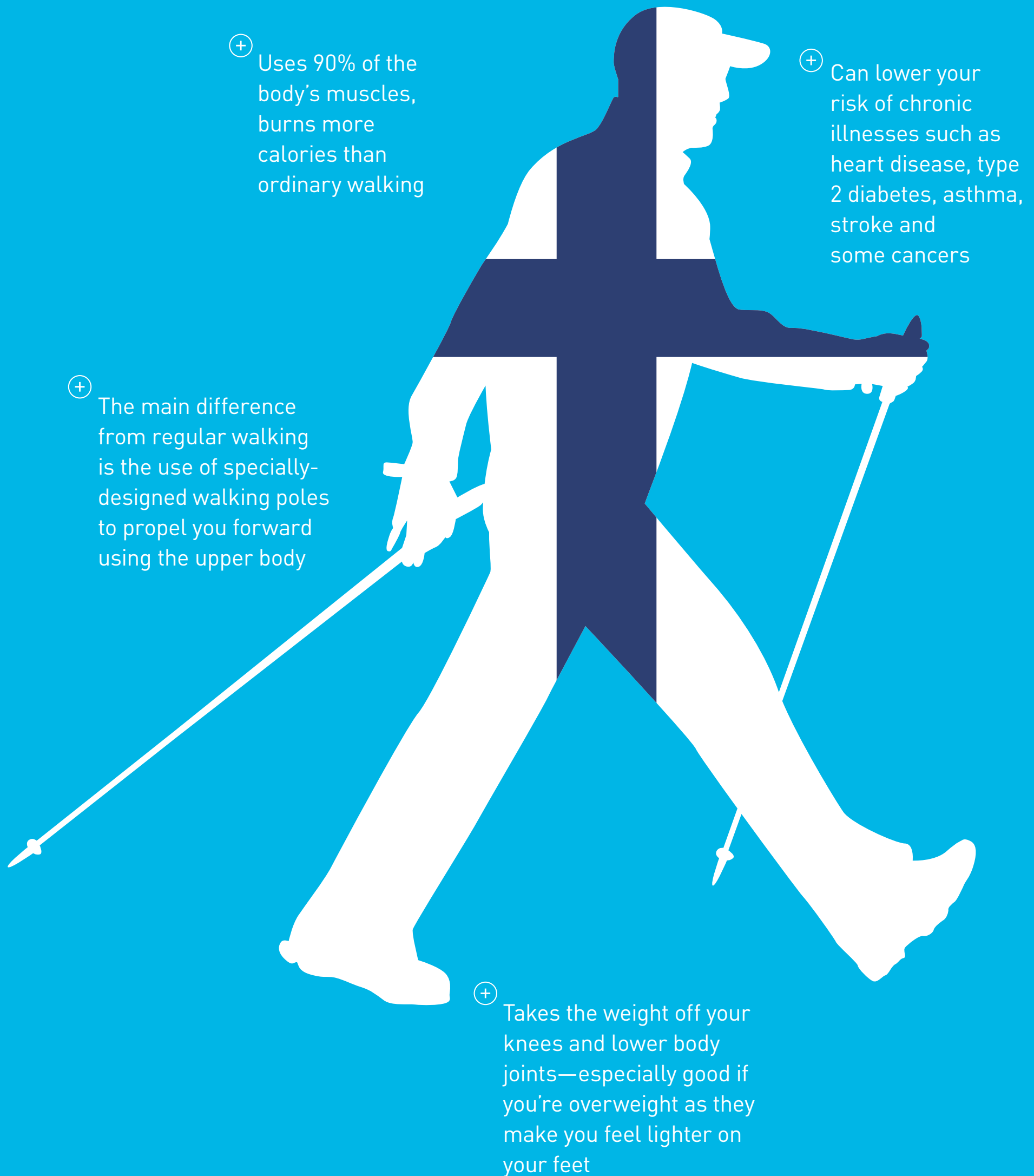
**Take it slow—if you lose weight too fast you’ll get sick**

**Keep it simple. It’s just a question of eating less and moving more.**



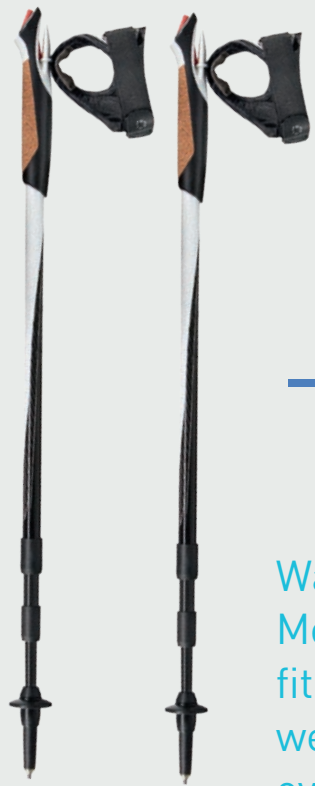


## Why Nordic walking is good for you



# Stepping it up

## —Nordic walking



Walking is one of the fastest-growing forms of exercise at Meggitt, and lots of our health heroes started their journey to fitness with just putting one foot in front of the other. This time we take a look at a form of walking that steps the sport up even more—Nordic walking.

Like many of the best things in life—saunas, Santa Claus, ice skating and even Angry Birds—Nordic walking was invented in Finland. It was developed as a summer training regimen for cross country skiers. Popular across Scandinavia and northern Europe, it is now fast becoming a mainstream sport for people of all ages and fitness levels.

### What is it?

The main difference from regular walking is the use of specially-designed walking poles to propel you forward using the upper body. It turns walking into a full-body exercise.

### Sounds interesting.

#### What equipment would I need?

The only bit of equipment, in addition to walking shoes and sensible clothing, is Nordic walking poles. These are different from regular walking poles that you'd find in a hiking store. If you join a Nordic walking group, you may even find the instructor provides poles for you to use.

#### What's the point of the poles?

Once you get the hang of using them properly, they take the weight off your knees and lower body joints—especially good if you're overweight as they make you feel lighter on your feet. They give your upper body a great workout, too.

#### How difficult is it?

It's not difficult to pick up, but there is a technique that you'll need to learn.

You swing your arms from the shoulder with your elbows straight, and have to plant the pole correctly. You may wish to start with a couple of lessons.

### Why is it so good for you?

It uses 90% of the body's muscles, burns more calories than ordinary walking and—because it is a moderate intensity aerobic exercise—can lower your risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, stroke and some cancers. It shapes your body—think toned arms and perky butt! And because it's low impact and eases pressure on the knees and lower body joints it's great for those with injuries.

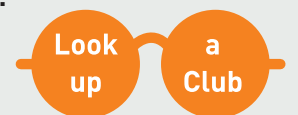


### Do I need to be fit to try it?

In a word, no. It's suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. It's particularly good for people carrying extra weight.

### How do I get started?

Look out for a Nordic walking group or instructor. It's wise to start with a bit of instruction so you can get the technique right, and many people enjoy the social element of a group.



**Elite**

# Martin Calland

## Some like it hot

Lady Gaga loves it. George Clooney is a fan. Madonna swears by it. But what it is about Bikram yoga that hooked Meggitt Group Head of Procurement, Martin Calland?



**B**ikram yoga is the kind of exercise you might associate more with California than with Bournemouth, UK, but as soon as he tried it Martin Calland knew that it would be for him.

Devised by Bikram Choudhury, this form of yoga, which involves holding a series of poses and performing breathing exercises at a stifling 40°C (105°F), isn't for the faint-hearted. Yet according to Calland, the sweltering temperatures and the pouring sweat are part of the attraction.

"The heat is one of the beauties of it," he says. "The warmth is there to help with the stretching—you can stretch more, and stretch safely."

Calland, who describes himself as "not particularly athletic", came to Bikram yoga about three years ago as he wanted to find a form of exercise that would help to keep his muscles flexible. He already did "a bit of swimming and a bit of running", but felt that flexibility was the missing piece of the jigsaw.

He was also aware that his lifestyle was not as healthy as it might be.

"I was traveling a lot," he says. "I found the routine of traveling, where I ended up going to a hotel, having dinner and breakfast, wasn't particularly healthy. I wanted to incorporate exercise into my times away from home. In the summer I might go for a run, but that's not particularly appealing in the winter."

Yoga was something that Calland could do indoors. Equally importantly, Bikram yoga follows a set format, so he could go to a class anywhere in the world and know what to expect—ideal for his life as a business traveler.

Calland admits that the first couple of classes were tough. "It was very intense for the first few sessions because of the heat and the humidity. The lack of oxygen in the room made it challenging." Despite this, though, he says he liked it a lot and now practices it regularly.

Although many swear by the mental benefits of yoga, for Calland it is more about achieving a balance in his exercise regimen. "I don't get any more mental benefits from it than I do from swimming or running," he says, "though that might be because I'm not very good at it! I like the balance between yoga, swimming and running. Swimming is a good all-over body

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conditioning exercise that anybody can do. Running is great for stamina but not so good for your upper body, and yoga is good for flexibility."





Despite all this exercise, Calland has to watch his weight. “I have to be careful what I eat,” he says. “If I don’t watch it, I can bang on the weight.”

He and his wife follow the 5:2 diet (see Diets on trial, page 2), which involves eating fewer than 500 calories (600 for men) on two days each week and normal eating for the remaining five.

**I like the balance between yoga, swimming and running. Swimming is a good all-over body conditioning exercise that anybody can do. Running is great for stamina but not so good for your upper body, and yoga is good for flexibility**

“I have been doing that with my wife for two years, and lost about 14 lbs in weight. Combined with exercise I have found it the best way to lose weight.”

He handles the fasting days by keeping busy from morning until night, and attributes his success to his wife’s own strong self-discipline.

To anyone interested in trying yoga, Calland suggests trying a class. “Do a bit of research on-line and find a type of yoga that suits you.”

He emphasises that yoga classes are open to people of different abilities and body sizes. “They are very welcoming, so just have a go.”



CUT OUT AND KEEP

## Martin’s top tips

**If you’re interested in yoga, research the right type for you.**

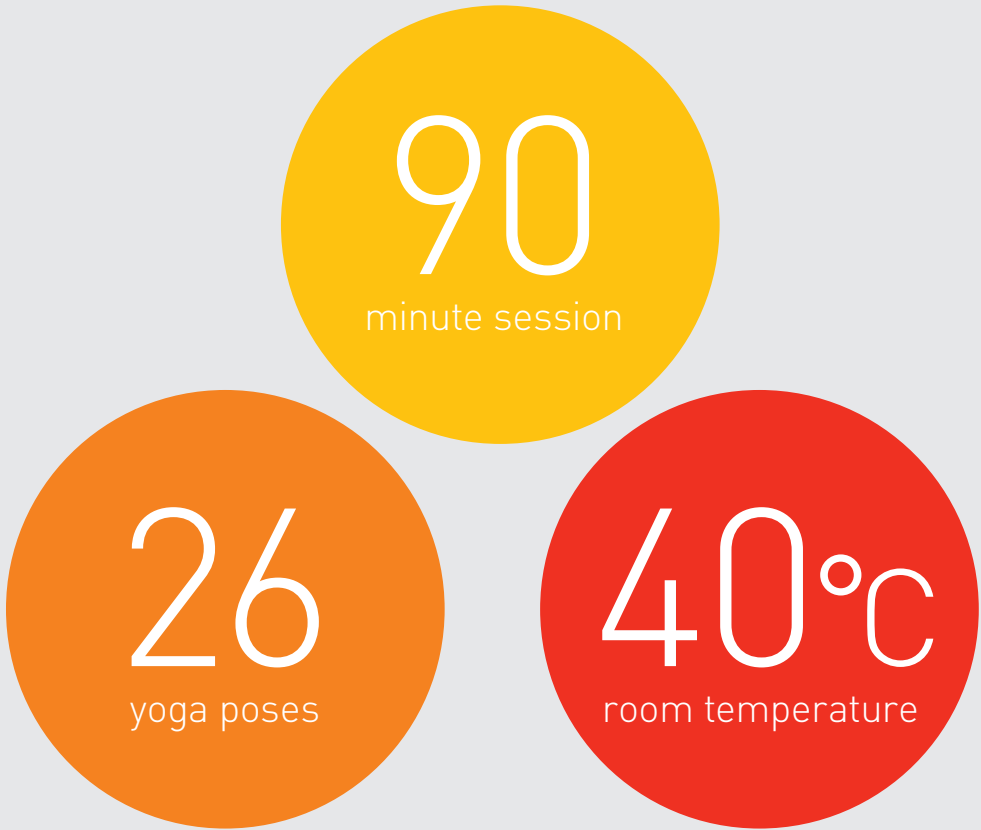
**Find a class rather than teaching yourself at home.**

**For maximum benefit, vary your exercise regimen. Different sorts of exercise work different parts of your body.**

**Don’t beat yourself up if you don’t achieve what you set out to achieve.**

## Bikram basics

### What is it?



Devised by Bikram Choudhury, it is based on regular hatha yoga but performed in high temperatures (up to 40°C/105°F) and with intense humidity.

In other words, you sweat. A lot.

It consists of a 90-minute session in which you perform 26 poses (“asanas”) and two breathing exercises.

The aim is to work every muscle, ligament, tendon and joint, moving freshly-oxygenated blood to every part of the body and restoring it to a healthy balance. Some claim that it burns more calories than regular yoga.

#### Who is Bikram?

Bikram Choudhury learned yoga as a child in India and at 13 won the National India Yoga Championship.

In 1973 President Nixon invited Choudhury to the US to help him improve his health. He copyrighted his 26 poses and became known across the US, with many celebrity fans.

#### Is everyone convinced?

Not quite everyone. A study by the American Council of Exercise at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse reported that no more calories were burned in Bikram yoga than in a regular yoga session.

Some have expressed concerns over the safety of Bikram yoga. While there may be a risk of dehydration if you don’t drink enough, the same research found that well-hydrated people doing hot yoga had the same core temperature at the end of a session as those doing yoga at lower temperatures.

#### I like the sound of the heat, but am wondering if it’s safe for me.

It’s a good idea to seek medical advice before taking up any new form of exercise, particularly if you have any medical problems. Explain to your doctor what temperatures and humidity are involved, and always tell the yoga teacher about any health problems or injuries before the session begins.

#### What else do I need to know about it?

You should bring plenty of water with you.

Don’t eat for two hours before the class, and avoid heavy meals earlier in the day.

The studio may smell a bit sweaty.

Listen to your body—if you feel faint, nauseous or are experiencing muscle cramps, stop and ideally get yourself into a cooler environment.

Expect people not to be wearing very much. Be prepared to see women in just shorts and sports bras and even guys wearing just Speedos! Let’s face it, if you really don’t like Spandex, or if you always complain about the heat on a hot day, Bikram yoga may not be for you.

# Events

It's not just individuals who have been getting active. Once again the Wellness Champs have been coming up with all kinds of creative events to get you moving. Here are just a few of them.



## Getting down and dirty

Meggitt Control Systems in Simi Valley has a super-active group that participates in basketball and softball leagues. This year, though, they decided to get dirty for charity with a 5K Mud Run called MuckFest, raising money for a multiple sclerosis charity.

Wellness Champ Chelsey Pasley tells us more.

"We ran under the team name "Herbal Essence" with the following team members:

Chelsey Pasley, HR Coordinator  
 Kim Chau, Principal Engineer  
 Carlo Lazo, Mechanical Engineer  
 Liz Aguilera, CAD Designer  
 Karen Hung, Final Inspection Supervisor  
 Roberto Nahue, Software Engineer  
 Danny Jabbaz, Engineering Designer  
 Cris Sevilla, Mechanical Engineer  
 Greg Caguimbal, Mechanical Engineering Intern

"Other team members (non-Meggitt employees) were:

Chad Espina  
 Jay Pastor  
 Maggie Sevilla

"All the proceeds from the Mud Run registration fees, etc, went to benefit the MS Society. It was a super fun experience that we plan on doing again as a team in the near future."

It must have taken a while to wash all that mud off afterwards, but what a great cause. Mud Runners, we salute you!





# Be safe, get fit

There’s no end to the imaginative ways MABS KY comes up with to get everyone on the move. This time they marked Safety Day—celebrating a certain number of days without accidents—with a series of active games that had everyone raising a sweat.

According to Wellness Champ Connie Brewer, the participants threw themselves into the activities which included office tennis (played with clipboards for rackets and scrunched-up paper for balls) and Christmas Ball (in which they had to move a Christmas bauble across the floor without touching it, using a box wrapped in Christmas paper as a fan).

“We did the games across the shipping dock. I had the dock marked off with paper tape and we had multiple teams going at once. We had quite a few employees to participate and we had a blast. It was a great break from our normal routine. I found all of the games from the Minute to Win it site.

“We had teams challenging each other and it got pretty competitive. We had folks diving for the paper and everything!”



# Seeing red

February was American Heart Association month and at MUSA in Simi Valley they marked it with a Go Red for Women Day. Employees were encouraged to wear red and join in a 30-minute walk.

Wellness Champ Griselda Esquivel was one of the organizers. “It was a beautiful walk with a bit of a breeze,” she says. “We had a great turnout for it only being our MUSA staff here in Simi Valley. We received 35 Vitality points for walking for 30 minutes and wearing something red.”

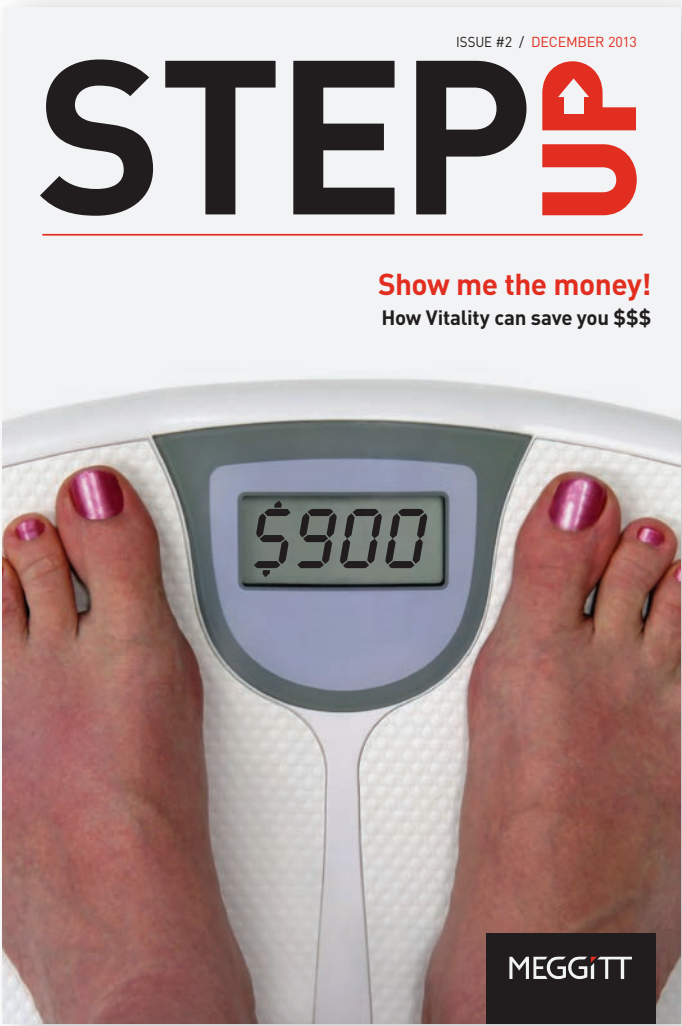
Have you been involved in an active event? We’d love to hear about it. Don’t just put it on Facebook—e-mail us at [patriciacarswell@gmail.com](mailto:patriciacarswell@gmail.com) and tell the world what you’ve been up to.





# Don't miss a step

Did you know there have been five issues of Step Up, packed full of useful diet and fitness tips? You can download all issues at [www.meggitt.com/stepup](http://www.meggitt.com/stepup)



# Your champions

If you have any questions about Vitality and how you can reap the rewards of healthy living, talk to your Wellness Champ. Here’s who they are:

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