

# STEPS

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## I BEING A LOSER

This edition is about safe and healthy weight loss so that you can achieve a size that you are happy with

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# Editor's letter



## 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)

If you're one of the many people who have tried and failed to lose weight, maybe many times over, this edition is for you. It's all about safe, healthy, effective weight loss—no fads, no extreme diets, no crazy stuff—just solid, reliable, evidence-based ways to shed pounds and get healthier.

If that sounds a touch unexciting, don't be fooled—there's nothing dull about this edition. We look at the cool ways tech can help you with your weight loss efforts (Generation tech—page 14), get down to the nitty gritty of the carbs vs. protein debate (Friend or foe—the truth about carbs—page 4) and teach you some fun facts we're sure you didn't know in Fatspiration—seven reasons to lose weight (page 6).

If that's not motivation enough, check out this edition's health heroes, like Brett Withington who lost a staggering 109 lbs in just a year (page 2). The Champs among you might find you learn some fun ideas and fitspiration from our team of Superchamps at Orange County (Superchamps—page 24).

As for me, the big news is I've joined Vitality myself as part of my health insurance policy, so I'm busy finding new ways to earn points and tracking my everyday activity with a fitness tracker. I've made it to silver so far and have renewed admiration for those of you in the Platinum Club! And yes, I'll confess I've occasionally paced around the house before bed just to get those last few steps to take me over the line!

Oh, and by the way, it really is worth visiting your physician to get your Vitality Check done, even though it's no longer required to earn your wellness credit. I can vouch for the fact that it really is super-quick, easy and painless, and it can earn you up to 3,300 points as well as highlighting any areas of your health you need to work on. What are you waiting for?

If you're an expert at amassing Vitality points, we'd love to hear how you've done it. Equally if you or a co-worker have done something to improve your health or fitness that you're proud of, get in touch and you could help us find the next health hero.

Until next time, stay healthy!

**Patricia Carswell**, health and fitness journalist

## Brett Withington

# Never say diet

If most people had lost a phenomenal 109 lbs in just over a year they'd be shouting it from the rooftops. But Brett Withington, SBU Quality Manager at MCS in Coventry, UK, is surprisingly relaxed about the whole thing—so long as you don't mention the D-word.



**B**rett Withington's weight loss began in a remarkably low key way. He knew he was overweight, but didn't have any major health problems associated with his weight and didn't even know how much he weighed.

"I didn't do any exercise and I was eating too much, with quite a lot of junk in between meals, but there was nothing particularly wrong with my health," he says. "I'd never weighed myself and I'd always justified my size to myself."

**"The app kept me focused on what I was eating. I got a little bit obsessive about it at first, recording and weighing everything, but it was what I needed to drive me."**

He had noticed he was getting breathless using the stairs, though, so in August 2015 he dropped into the medical center at work to find out how much he weighed.

It was then that he decided to do something about his weight. A colleague suggested

he speak with Mark Keal (one of our health heroes last edition) who had lost a lot of weight using an app on his phone. Mark recommended the app MyFitnessPal and soon Brett had bought an Apple watch and downloaded the app.

This was the start of a massive change in Brett's habits. "You put in your height and weight, what weight you want to be and how quickly you want to lose weight. It tells you how many calories you should be eating per day."

Brett started by changing what he ate and followed the plan religiously, cutting out sugar and reducing his carbs.

"The app kept me focused on what I was eating. I got a little bit obsessive about it at first, recording and weighing everything, but it was what I needed to drive me." Although he had made major changes to his eating habits, Brett was adamant that it wasn't a diet. "I called it a change of lifestyle instead of a diet. You can stop a diet, but a lifestyle change is more permanent."

As Brett's weight started to drop off, he began to introduce some exercise. "I didn't join a fitness club or weight loss support group. I got a bicycle, fitted it to a turbo trainer and would cycle on a resistive wheel in my house. It was hard to start with but within a few weeks I could manage half an hour without stopping."







CUT OUT AND KEEP

### Brett's top tips

Choose to do it for yourself—it's the only way to stay focused.

Treat it as a lifestyle change rather than a diet.

Get advice from medical professionals if you need to.

Stay strong—you can do it!

Soon Brett was feeling fit enough to start playing football with friends, and this brought an unexpected benefit. “They really supported me. They knew I needed to lose weight so they would encourage me and help me to make good choices with my food if we were going out to eat.”

At the beginning of 2016 Brett’s brother challenged him to do the Wolf Run with him—a gruelling 10K mud run involving hills, lakes and obstacles. It would have been unthinkable just a few months earlier. They decided to do it together and in September he completed the tough race with his brother and two sons. He is now thinking of training for a triathlon.

Now that Brett has reached his target weight, he is focusing on toning up and has relaxed a little. He has abandoned the app and occasionally allows himself a treat (barbecue Pringles are his favorite snack). He still keeps to a pretty healthy regimen, though.

“I’ll only have a few Pringles at a time,” he says. “I still eat a fairly low carb diet. I don’t eat bread, I have sweet potatoes instead of potatoes and I substitute spiralized vegetables for spaghetti—they’re just as filling, they taste good and they’re healthier.”

He’s managed to stay on track during business travel, too. “It would be easy to fall off the wagon,” he says, “but I keep active. I’ll wake up at 4.30 and use the gym for an hour. I was in California for two weeks recently and came home 1 lb lighter than when I left!”

**“I called it a change of lifestyle instead of a diet. You can stop a diet, but a lifestyle change is more permanent.”**

Brett acknowledges that losing weight isn’t easy. “It is sometimes a test of character. But if you want to change, you can do it.”



# Friend or foe

## The truth about carbs

If there's one issue that divides people the medical and nutrition world, it's the subject of carbs. We explore the truth about carbs and look at whether they're really your friend or your enemy.

On one side you've got the low carb brigade, lined up to tell you that carbs are the enemy. Carbs make you fat, they say, and are responsible for a whole host of diseases from cancer to diabetes, and you should feel free to embrace fats. On the other are the carb-defenders, claiming that starchy foods are still good for you (provided you don't overdo the refined ones) and urging you to stick to the low fat diet your doctor put you on.

And there you stand in the middle, not knowing who to believe.

Carbs  
Matter

Say NO to carbs

STARCHY  
FOODS  
ARE  
GOOD

CARBS = FAT





## What even are carbs?

Let's just remind ourselves what carbs are and why we eat them. The food we eat is divided up into three macronutrients – carbohydrates (or carbs), fats and protein. Carbohydrates are chains of sugar molecules that are hooked together. They are broken down into glucose during digestion and then absorbed into your body's cells to give you energy.

Simple carbohydrates are smaller chains of molecules that naturally occur in fruits, vegetables and milk products, as well as in processed sugars such as candy, honey, sugar and syrups.

Complex carbohydrates are longer chains and are found in wholegrain breads, cereals, rice and pasta.



So far so good—carbs give you energy and fuel your everyday activities. It's when you don't use them up that they make you fat. The first thing your body does with unused glucose is turn it into glycogen which you store in your liver and muscles. If you have more glucose than your body can store as glycogen, it will convert it into fat. That's not all. Put very simply, your body will break down the carbs in a meal before the fats.

## When it comes to losing weight, the evidence suggests there's no magic in cutting carbs

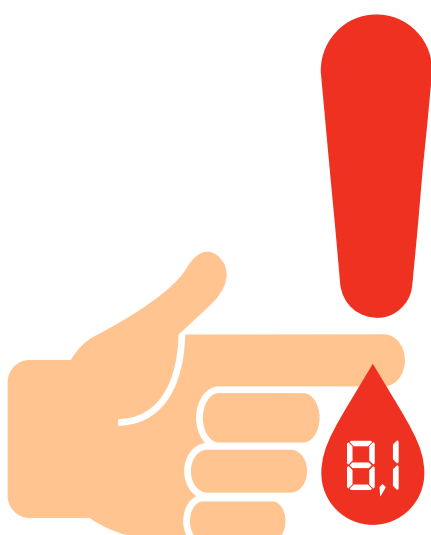
### So what's the big battle about?

Broadly speaking, low carb fans will tell you that carbs are uniquely fattening—more than any other food type—because they raise your blood sugar which prompts your body to produce more insulin. This causes the body to convert the carbohydrates into fat.

The pro-carb advocates insist that carbs are no more fattening than any other single foodstuff. It's eating too much of them that causes the problems.

### They do agree on one thing

Before we look at the evidence, you should know that there's one thing both sides of the argument agree on. Both camps support the notion that too much refined sugar is bad. It sends your blood sugar levels rocketing—whether you're diabetic or not—and has no nutritional benefit other than supplying energy which you can get from more nutritious sources.



So we should all cut back on soda, sugary foods, syrup (even maple syrup), anything with fructose in it and honey. Because it's low in fiber and high in sugar, you should only drink fruit juice in moderation, too.

### And what does the evidence say?

First of all, there's no doubt there's a huge body of anecdotal evidence to suggest a low carb diet can help with weight loss, especially in the very overweight. You've probably met a few people who've successfully lost weight by restricting their carbohydrate intake. Maybe you've even dropped weight yourself on a low carb diet.

But here's the kicker. Studies in which participants have been given diets identical in calories (and have followed identical exercise regimens) with some being given high carb diets and others low carb (or, in one study, swapping between the two after several weeks) have consistently shown that a high carb diet is just as effective for weight loss as a low carb diet.

When it comes to losing weight, the evidence suggests there's no magic in cutting carbs. It's important to remember, too, that if you cut carbs you're losing out on a rich source of vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and, essentially, fiber. And in the world's 'Blue Zones'—areas across the globe where the locals enjoys unusually long lives—the diet is universally pretty high in carbohydrates.

## Your best option is to choose the diet that you think you'll most likely stick to

So why do so many people swear by the low carb diet? The reason may be partly because on a low carb diet you initially lose a lot of weight in water, which skews the early results. Later on, its success may be largely down to the fact that the dieter has a clearly defined set of rules to follow and will regularly have to refuse things in the banned foods list. This can be easier to stick to than relying on good sense and

willpower. It's easier, after all, to say, "I can't have that cookie because it's high carb" than to exercise restraint, knowing that you're technically "allowed" to eat it but probably shouldn't.

### So what should you do?

If you're diabetic or prediabetic, it's particularly worth considering a low carb diet as there is some evidence to suggest it can help manage your glucose levels, but speak with your physician before you do.

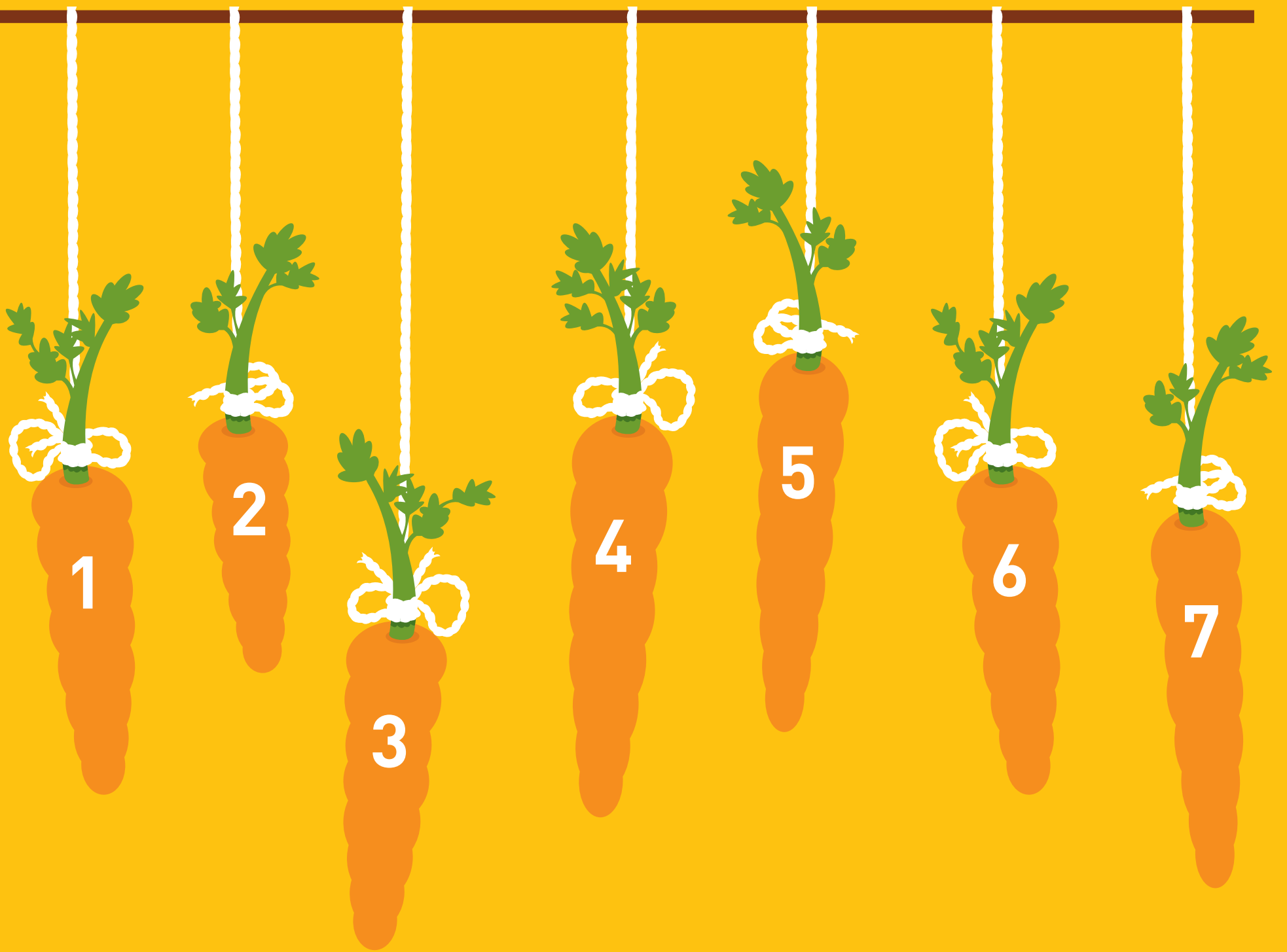
Otherwise your best option is to choose the diet that you think you'll most likely stick to. If you like rules, then a low carb diet might work for you, but be aware that in the long term you could be missing out on essential nutrients.

Either way, you'd be well-advised to cut out sugary foods, so that's Lucky Charms and soda right off the menu.

Whatever you choose to do, let us know. We'd love to hear about your weight loss stories and you could even find yourself as one of our next edition's Health Heroes!

## Both camps support the notion that too much refined sugar is bad. It sends your blood sugar levels rocketing—whether you're diabetic or not—and has no nutritional benefit





# Fatspiration

Losing weight may have obvious benefits, both aesthetic and health-related, and if you have some pounds to lose you're probably sick of hearing about them. But if you need additional motivation, here are seven positive reasons for shedding extra pounds that you might not know about.





#### Healthy food will taste better

Really? Surprisingly, yes. No one knows exactly why, but it seems that people with a higher BMI have altered taste perception. They tend to crave sweeter foods and are more likely to have an adverse response to bitter foods such as kale and Brussels sprouts.

The challenge is that this makes it harder to eat just the sort of diet that will help you lose weight. But if you can manage to reduce your BMI you may well find that you desire sweet foods a bit less and healthier foods a bit more.

### Your risk of developing dementia in later life is significantly lower if you're a healthy weight



#### You'll have a stronger immune system

Excess body fat triggers the production of 'pro-inflammatory' immune cells, which circulate in the blood and can damage our bodies. Fat tissue can contain other inflammatory immune cells which are activated in the overweight.

Put simply, if you're carrying too much weight you have a greater risk of contracting several kinds of infections including gum infections, nose and sinus infections, stomach infections and mouth herpes. If you lose weight your immune system should become more robust, so you'll get fewer colds and infections and be generally healthier.



#### You'll increase your chances of a healthy pregnancy and birth

If you're hoping to become a mom, this is a great reason to get down to a healthy weight. If you're overweight your pregnancy will tend to involve more complications, and obese women are much more likely to have a Caesarean section or to have a more complicated labor and birth.

Of course nobody can guarantee a safe and healthy pregnancy and birth, but by losing weight you'd be giving yourself and your baby the best chance.



#### You may have fewer allergies

If you have asthma or suffer from allergies such as hay fever, they may be connected to your weight. Excess body fat puts stress on your adrenal glands which are involved in managing asthma and allergies.

Research shows that losing weight can reduce your asthma and allergy symptoms and even mean that you can reduce your medication (which of course you should only do under medical supervision).



#### Your mental health may improve

If you're overweight you are more likely to suffer from mental health conditions such as depression. In one study of women, the incidence of depression among those with a healthy BMI was 6.5 percent, but rose to 25 percent among those with a BMI above 35. Another study found the risk of developing mood disorders rose by 25 percent in the obese. You can improve your chances of good mental health by losing weight and getting as close as you can to a healthy BMI.

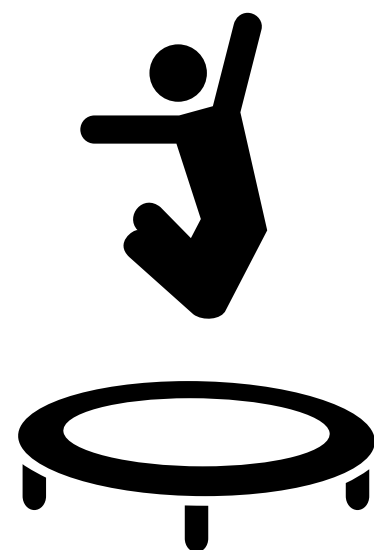
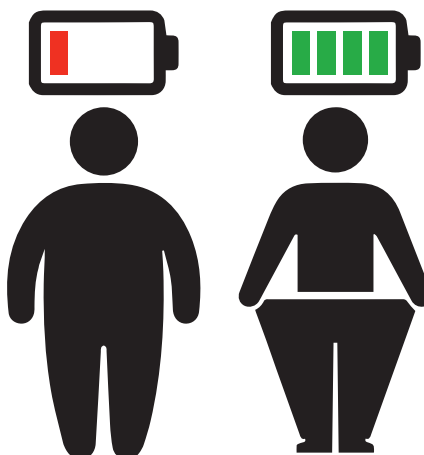
Losing weight can also help you stay sharp: your risk of developing dementia in later life is significantly lower if you're a healthy weight.



#### Your memory will improve

Sorry, what was the question? If you find yourself forgetting things, you might use this as added motivation to lose weight. One study of people undergoing weight loss surgery found that they enjoyed significantly improved memory.

Just don't forget to take steps to do something about it!



#### You'll have better bladder control

Sorry to be indelicate, but better to read it than experience it! There's a strong connection between excess weight and urinary incontinence, as being overweight puts pressure on your pelvic floor.

The good news is losing even five percent of your body weight will make a difference to your pelvic floor health, which gives you greater peace of mind, too.

If this has inspired you to lose weight, you'll find plenty of advice and tips on how to go about it in this edition. Check out Here to help on how Vitality can help you with your weight loss and Generation tech if you fancy the idea of a helping hand from technology.

### If you lose weight your immune system should become more robust, so you'll get fewer colds and infections

## Jim Claflin



For some, turning 50 means the start of a slow decline into old age, or at least an acceptance that middle age is well and truly upon them. Not Jim Claflin. To mark his 50th birthday, Jim ran a 50 km ultramarathon and felt more invigorated than ever.

**A**lthough he has always been fit and active, Jim, a reporting manager at Meggitt Training Systems, Suwanee, GA, is the first to admit that sometimes life gets in the way of working out. “Running ebbs and flows with the balance of life,” he says. “I have four children ...”

Yet nothing was going to stand in Jim’s way when he decided to mark his 50th birthday last year with an ultramarathon.

“How better to celebrate turning 50 than running 50 km?” he says.

Until then, Jim had only ever competed in one marathon, so this was a big step up for him, particularly as the race didn’t just involve a major distance. An off-road trail race in the Tennessee mountains, the Rock Creek Stump Jump involved an elevation gain of 6,600 feet – in other words, a lot of hills.

### “How better to celebrate turning 50 than running 50 km?”

Sensibly, Jim started training six months before the race, in March 2016. He trained five or six days a week, interspersing three endurance sessions involving hills with longer, flatter sessions or yoga practice (which he says is a great help with mobility).

“The training really paid off on the day”, he says. “There were cut-off points during the race where you had to make a certain distance within a certain time, otherwise you were eliminated. We made all of these.”

“We” is Jim, his best friend Robb Young and ultramarathon veteran Jason Miller. The three of them had prepared together and ran the entire race together, linking arms to cross the line at the end.

### “Once you succeed in something it sure makes you feel good.”

Having their support was invaluable, says Jim, especially at tough points in the race. “At one water station near the end, which was five miles from the previous station, we got there and discovered it was dry – they were out of fluid. It was a tough situation—we felt really frustrated—but it helped having someone with me. We encouraged each other.”

There were compensations for the challenging course. The mountainous terrain was very beautiful, with spectacular views and marvelous photo opportunities. “The day started in the 40s and ended in the 60s. It couldn’t have been more perfect.”

Crossing the line was an exhilarating experience, says Jim. “My whole family was there with signs, including my daughter who was there unexpectedly.”

That sense of achievement stayed with him long after the race. “Once you succeed in something it sure makes you feel good.”

Jim and Robb are now planning their next adventure and have their eye on a 60 km race in which the goal is to complete as many laps as you can in six hours. And who knows what he might tackle for his 60th birthday?





 CUT OUT AND KEEP

## Stepping it up— Jim's ultra tips for upping your mileage

If you're thinking of increasing your mileage, Jim has ultra-wise advice for you.

1. Break it down. Make a written plan so you can mark off each day and ensure you stay accountable.
2. Eat well. Try to consume whole foods and eliminate sugar and soft drinks or anything that will slow you down and stop you achieving your goals.
3. Take it slowly. Don't do too much too soon.
4. Yoga can help with flexibility and prevent injury. You can take it to whatever level you want, according to your fitness.



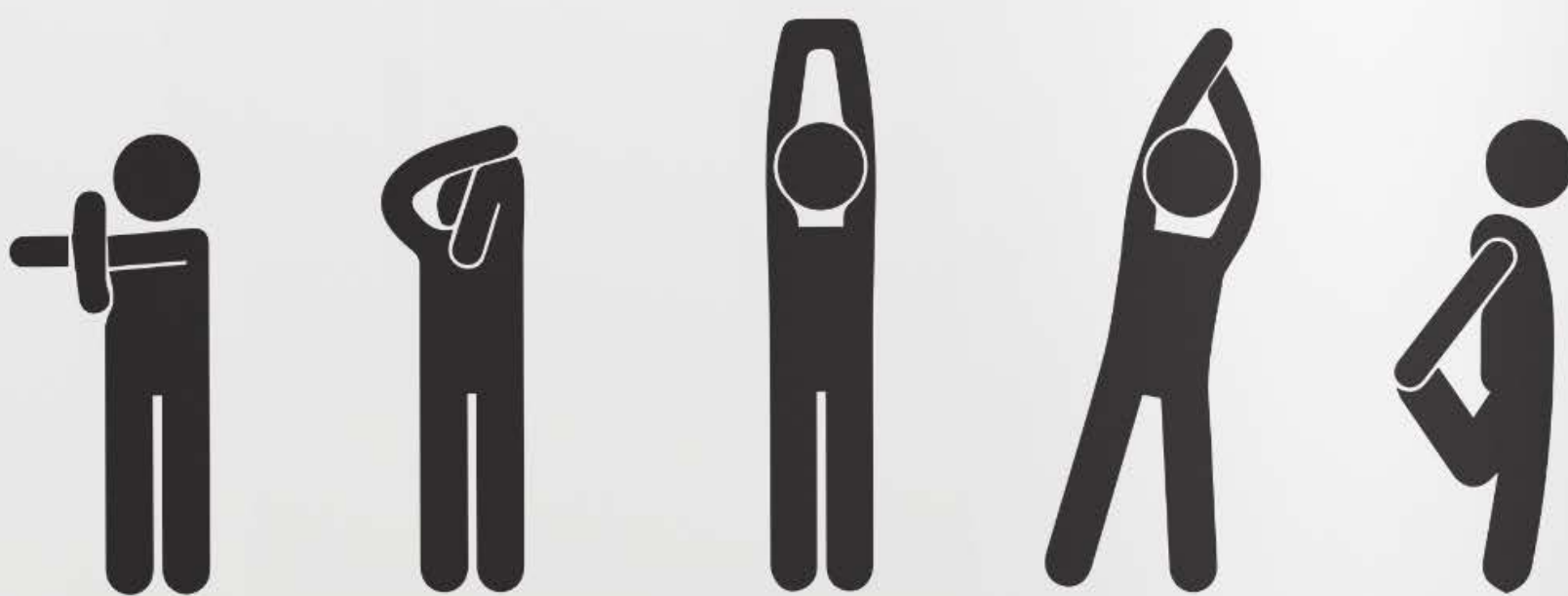
# Absolute beginners —exercise from scratch

Starting an exercise routine from scratch can be daunting, but it's not impossible. With the right attitude and some helpful tips, you can even enjoy it. Here's our beginners' guide to moving without misery.

When's the last time you really exercised properly? At college? High school? Elementary school? Never?

Well, that's OK. However unfit you are, however overweight you are, whatever your track record in the past, it's never too late to start. You just have to start.

**It's never too late to start.  
You just have to start.**



## Ready, steady, GO!





## Put the past behind you

The first thing you need to do, before you invest in sneakers, sign up for the gym or buy a fancy fitness device, is to get your head straight. A lot of people are daunted by the prospect of fitness because of how they perceive themselves or because of being teased at school for being overweight or bad at sport. Maybe a sport teacher made you feel bad because you sucked at soccer. Maybe you've always seen yourself as an unfit person. Maybe you're ashamed by the amount of weight you've put on in recent years or are embarrassed to be seen in Spandex.

Stop right there. You need to put all of that behind you. Starting to exercise isn't about what happened last week, last year, 20 years ago. It's not about how you look. This is all about your present and your future. Decide today that you're going to invest in your own health, no matter what's happened in the past, no matter what anyone thinks about you, no matter how you look in your workout gear.

Why not resolve now to prove people wrong by doing the one thing they thought you'd never do?



## Start small



So you might be all fired up now, ready to sign up for your first marathon and prove that sport teacher wrong. Whoa there! However excited you might be at the prospect of getting started, you need to be sensible. Go at it like a bull at a gate and you'll end up in the ER or at least feeling exhausted and demoralised.

It's not fair to your body or your mind to rush this, so take it slow. Baby steps. Set some easy, manageable goals that aren't going to put undue stress on your body. A 10-minute walk is better than no walk at all and if that's all you can manage at the beginning, then go for that.



## Stop comparing

Remember, this is just about you. It's not about what your co-worker, your neighbor or your best friend can do. Set your own goals that work for you and go at your own pace. You're not in the schoolyard anymore so you don't need to worry about what anyone else is doing. This is not—repeat, not—a competition.



## Find the fun

I promise you that whatever you think, there's a type of exercise out there that you will enjoy. Honestly, there is. If you think you hate exercise it's just that you haven't yet found the right one for you.

Start by broadening how you define exercise. Dancing is exercise. Ultimate Frisbee is exercise. Boxing with Wii Fit is exercise (surprisingly exhausting, actually). Horse riding, trampolining, geocaching, walking with friends, playing hopscotch with the kids, lifting hand weights on the couch or walking on a treadmill while you're watching TV—all exercise. Now that doesn't sound so bad, does it?



## Be bad at it

Be what, now? That's right. It's OK to be bad at it at the beginning (or even further down the line, for that matter). It doesn't matter if you swim like a drowning elephant—you're still swimming. It doesn't matter if someone tells you your squats are skewed. Of course they are—you just started learning them. Accepting that you won't be good at it allows you space to learn. You wouldn't expect a child to master bike riding in one session, so don't put that expectation on yourself.

Rejoice in the fact that you're doing something new, that pushes you out of your comfort zone and is making you healthier. It rocks!



## Embrace the wobble

So what if you wobble when you walk or jiggle when you jog? Nobody wobbles on the couch, so be glad of it—it's a sign you're on the move. See it as a shimmy and nothing to be ashamed of. And the more you do it, the less you'll quiver.

There's one exception to this rule for the women reading. If you're going to do anything more than a gentle walk, do get a decent, properly-fitting sports bra. That's one kind of jiggle that you need to control, for the sake of your comfort and your health.



## Buddy up

Exercise is so, so much more fun if you do it with a friend, and by making an appointment with a pal, you're much less likely to find an excuse and back out. Find a friend who's interested in exercising or join a walking group or a fitness class. The time will fly.

## Take advice

If you're an absolute beginner, learn all you can from others. There's loads of great advice on the Vitality website, [powerofvitality.com](http://powerofvitality.com), and your Wellness Champ can guide you in finding ways to get started. There are plenty of resources online, but be wary of taking fitness advice from just anyone. Make sure you only listen to people who are properly qualified or really know what they're doing.



## Just start

Above all, just start. There's no time like the present, so why not start right now by standing up and lapping the room or the corridor a couple of times. There! You're on your way already!

**Rejoice in the fact that you're doing something new, that pushes you out of your comfort zone and is making you healthier.**



# BODY MECHANICS

## the Floyd Fitness program

If you see employees at Rockmart standing on one leg or waving their arms around, don't be alarmed. It's all part of everyday life at Meggitt Rockmart and it's helping them stay healthy.

No, they're not doing the Macarena or practising for America's Got Talent. This is a flex break at MPC Rockmart. Four times a day Rockmart folks leave their production area and perform a series of stretches, designed specifically for each production area. It's part of a whole program to help employees avoid injury and work safely, which includes training in body mechanics posture and addressing the ergonomics of their work stations.

"What we do at Rockmart is pretty physical—it's not an office setting," says Director of Facilities, Mark Fennell. "We want to keep our employees healthy and able to leave with everything they arrived with!"

It all started with the MoveSMART program back in 2012 which was designed to teach Rockmart employees safer behavior in terms of both physical skills—lifting, balance, and so on—and mental skills such as concentration and focus. The results were impressive: the rate of OSHA recordables dropped by 47% within the first year of the program launch.

Before long, Rockmart was ready to take MoveSMART to the next level, becoming more focused on specific job roles. They brought in a physical therapy clinic called Floyd Physical Therapy as a partnering team to implement a new, advanced

program to continue to reduce workplace injuries. They called it Floyd Fitness and launched it in October 2015.

**"We have some new people who, when they came in, couldn't touch their toes—they could only reach their knees. After a month they could go all the way down to their ankles"**

The main focus was teaching employees how to ensure safe body mechanics and reduce workplace injuries through understanding the posture and repetitive motions involved in each particular role. Floyd's expert therapist, John Goodrich, spent 40 hours at Rockmart, observing every production and office area and job task to identify fatiguing factors and develop different stretching programs based on the body mechanics of each job role.

The flex breaks involve seven basic exercises, broken up into five different groups—Alpha, Beta, Charlie, Delta and Echo—based on the job duties performed. They're all suitable for healthy individuals of all ages. They are mandatory for all operators, who have to perform them a minimum of four times per shift, though some choose to perform additional exercises throughout the day as needed.

The program isn't just about stretching, though. It teaches employees to be aware of their surroundings, maintain strong body







posture, shift their weight frequently, spread overall forces and adjust their workstation accordingly.

Key to the success of the program is the involvement of Meggitt staff in implementing the program. John Goodrich trained up 10 Floyd Fitness Champions from among Meggitt employees, educating them in the overall goals of the program and giving them responsibilities to support it. The Champions had all been MoveSMART Promoters and had seen how effective the MoveSMART program was for the site. They were able to transfer the knowledge gained on the MoveSMART program to the Floyd Fitness program.

The Champions evaluate job tasks, problem solve and help implement solutions. In addition, supervisors, working leads and QA inspectors identify problems, help find solutions and lead the flex breaks.

Floyd Fitness Champion and production trainer Tawana Sims explains what she does as Champion. “I train production personnel as well as being a Champion. During my training for a particular job, I talk with new employees about things they can do to make sure they don’t cause themselves strains or sprains, such as using a proper tool, doing their exercises as they are required to, and reporting strains and sprains rather than waiting until they get to where they can’t do their job. If they do have a strain or sprain we try to figure out better ways for them to do the job or offer them new tooling.”

Champions will often perform an ergonomic evaluation, says Kelly Pruitt, manager of the training department. “A lot of times you may have a work station that isn’t set up to the size or height of the person, so we do an overall ergonomic assessment of the employee, the process they are performing, the operation they are performing and their work station. There’s no time limit on the assessment—we’ll continue to work with employees until the problem is resolved.”

These ergonomic assessments can make a huge difference. “With the gentlemen rolling the wheel shown in the picture (above),” says Mark, “we increased the size of the wheel. Before it was taking 40 lbs of pull to rotate that tank. Once we’d made it larger we got it down to just 8 lbs of pull.”

There is a nurse on site who supports this work and she attends the monthly meetings with Floyd Fitness so she is fully up to speed with the program. She may communicate issues to the team to see if they can help from an ergonomic point of view.

Before the program was officially rolled out the facility held a kick-off event, supervised by Floyd staff, where employees learned about key topics through participation in fun activities. They practiced flex break exercises and discussed ergonomic and anatomical principles relating to their work.

The program has been well received. “The culture is really positive,” says Kelly. “The

team does a lot of work to make sure they know we’re here to help. People are more willing to come forward and report a problem.”

**“We want to keep our employees healthy and able to leave with everything they arrived with!”**

According to Fennell, folks are really seeing benefits from the flex breaks. “We have some new people who, when they came in, couldn’t touch their toes—they could only reach their knees. After a month they could go all the way down to their ankles. Some of them have started doing the stretches at home as well because they have made them feel better.”

Even the office workers, for whom the breaks are not compulsory, have adopted them enthusiastically. “You’d be surprised at how many groups standing at their DLA boards will do the exercises after their DLA meetings.”

For any facility thinking of adopting a similar program, Kelly has wise advice. “Get the right team players. Keeping everyone involved and interested in the program has been key, and reporting back to managers to let them know what we’re working on and what resources will be needed, is important. You have to get everyone involved.”

At Rockmart, everyone gets stuck in, from the top down. “It’s not just lip service,” says Mark.

“The operators see our action put into place,” adds Tawana. “They see new tooling, they see we’re out there addressing their issues. We’re showing them that we’re concerned, that we’re trying to make changes.”





# GENERATION

TECH

## how technology can help you lose weight

More and more people are using the latest technology to track their food and activity to help their weight loss. How do they work, and could they help you?

It's easy to spot someone who's using tech to help their weight loss. They probably have one of those funny-looking watches that buzz if they've been at their desk too long. They might randomly tell you what their resting heart rate is, just because they can. And when they're eating their lunch, they stop before they eat to tap data into their smartphone.

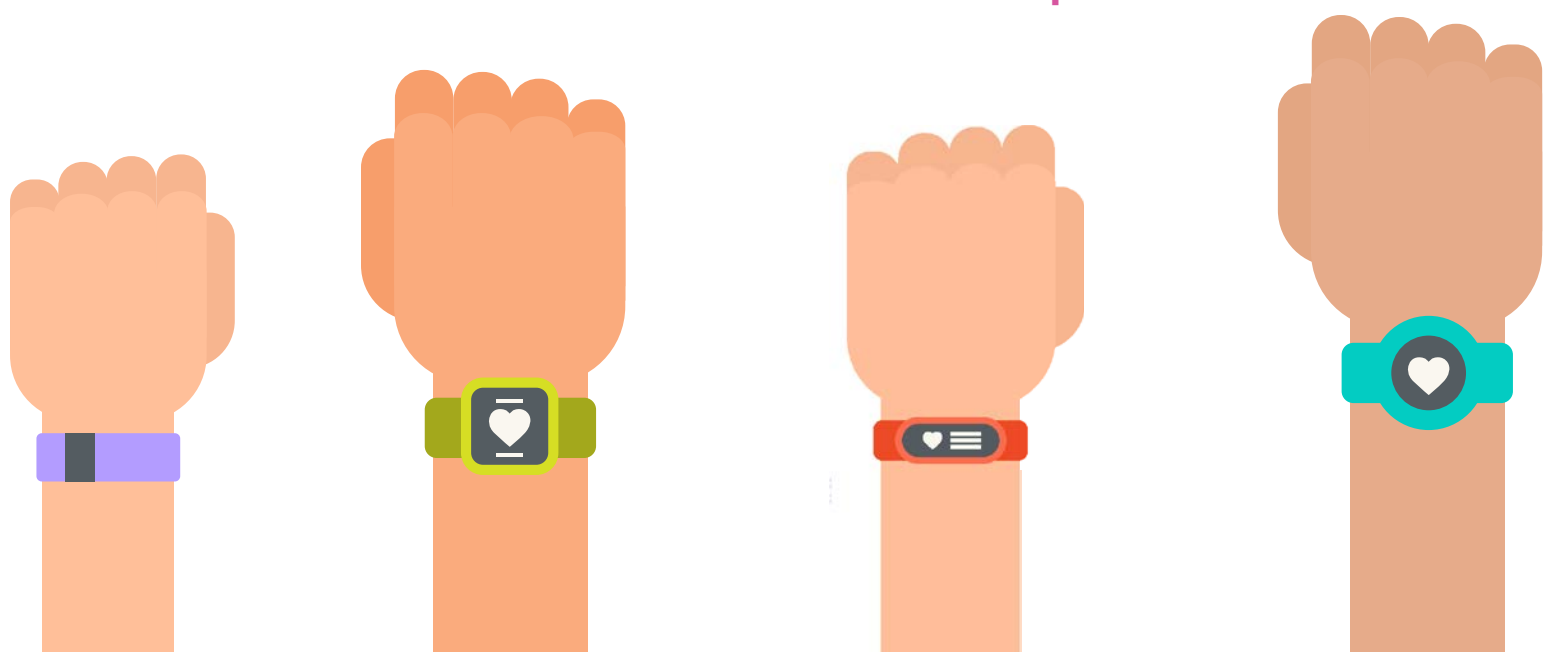
Tech is establishing an increasingly strong track record in helping folks get slimmer and fitter. So what's out there and what could it do for you?

### Track your movement

Most of us don't move nearly as much as we should, yet being active is one of the best ways to get rid of unwanted pounds. One survey of American adults revealed that people took an average of only 5,117 steps per day—just half of the recommended 10,000 daily steps and far fewer than those taken on average in Australia, Japan and Switzerland.

One great way to make sure you move more is to invest in a fitness tracker. An article in the Journal of the American Medical Association reviewed 26 studies involving more than 2,700 participants and found that wearing fitness tracker devices resulted in a 26.9% increase in participants' physical activity.

**Most are really easy and intuitive to set up and operate and your Wellness Champ can always help you if you have questions**



## Make the most of your device

Fitness tracker devices aren't a magic wand. You still have to do your part. Here are our top tips for making your fitness tracker work for you:

### 1. Wear it!

You need to stick with wearing your device. Research suggests that about half of Americans who start wearing a fitness tracker stop wearing them within a year, and one third within six months. This is where Vitality can help; you'll need to carry on tracking your activity to keep earning points.



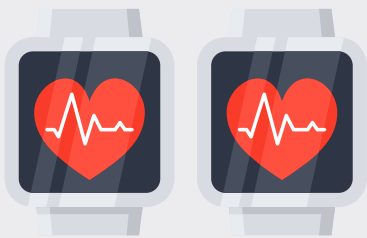
### 2. Be realistic about your goals

When you get your tracker set up, you'll be invited to set goals. If you can streamline these with your Vitality goals, it'll be really helpful so you don't get mixed messages from your device. Either way, make sure they're realistic. Set them too high and you may get dispirited and give up. Set them too low and you'll be selling yourself short.



### 3. Get social

If your tracker has a social function that lets you compare notes and chat to other users, this can be a really good way to maintain your motivation as you lose weight.



### 4. Pay attention

If your tracker buzzes to remind you to move, don't ignore it! It'll only work if you take it seriously.



Vitality partners with Fitbit, Garmin, Polar, Apple Health to help you track your activity using wearable technology. At their most basic these devices are pedometers and at their most advanced give you detailed information about your activity and overall health. If apps are more your thing, you can link the MapMyFitness app to Vitality and monitor your physical activity that way.

Most fitness trackers will tell you how many steps you've taken that day and the more advanced ones have an inbuilt GPS system which will tell you what distance you've covered and give you data about your speed. Some of the Polar and Garmin watches have a wrist heart rate monitor which will allow you to log workouts according to your heart rate.

By tracking your activity you'll earn Vitality points as you move—a sure-fire way of moving up to the next Vitality status—so it's a real win-win. Meggitt even provides a \$25 device subsidy for Vitality members wanting to buy a fitness device through the Vitality Mall, so there's even less excuse!

## An article in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that wearing fitness tracker devices resulted in a 26.9% increase in participants' physical activity

### Track your food

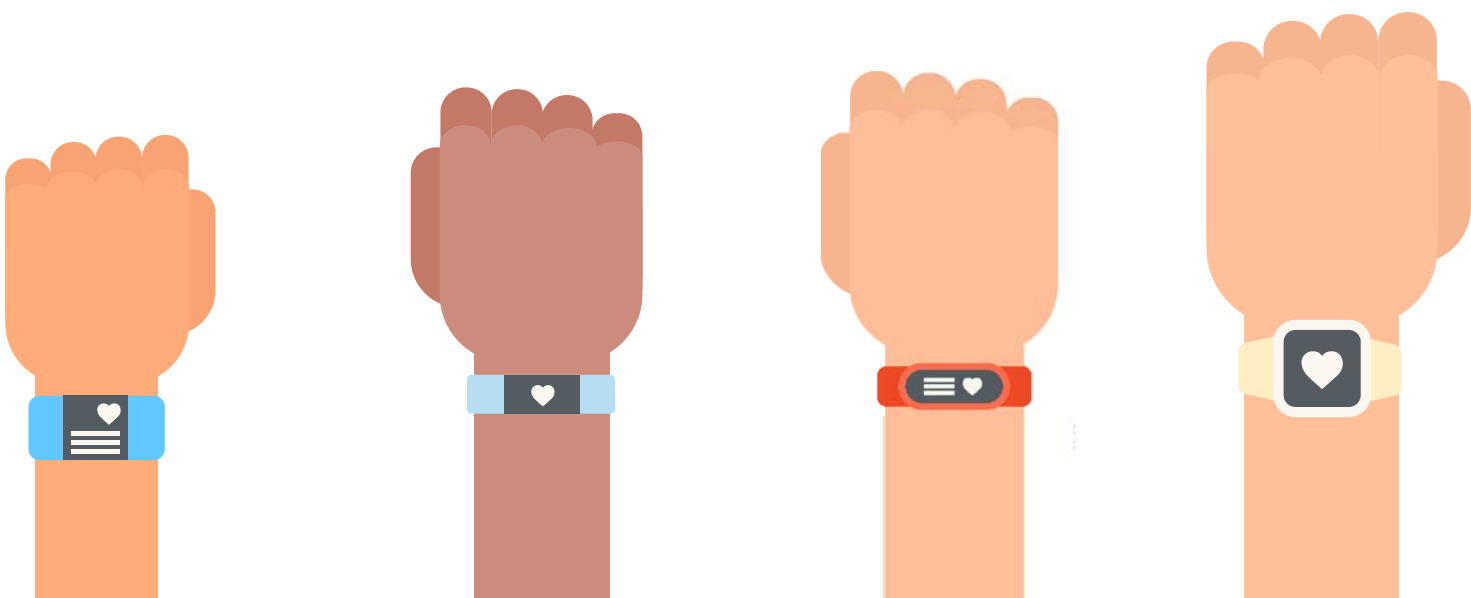
Keeping a record of your calories can be helpful in keeping your food intake on track. Try downloading MyFitnessPal, a free app that helps you monitor your food intake by entering everything you eat (it'll also tell you the balance between carbs, fats and protein, if that interests you). It has a database of about 1 million items, including the entire menus from a long list of well-known restaurants, from IHOP to Cheesecake Factory, and you can add your own food and recipes to make life easier.

There are one or two fitness devices that will help you track calories, too.

### Keep your head

Tracking your food and activity isn't for everyone. Some people find it adds to their stress levels and others find themselves becoming unhealthily obsessive about every step and mouthful they take. If you think you're temperamentally unsuited to food and fitness tracking, think carefully about whether you should—they might not be for you.

If, on the other hand, it's just the thought of using technology that has stopped you from using a tech solution for your weight loss, don't let that put you off. Most are really easy and intuitive to set up and operate and your Wellness Champ can always help you if you have questions.





# How much is too much?

## Knowing when you've lost enough weight

So you've lost nearly all the weight you planned to lose, but suddenly the amazing support you were getting from friends and family is on the wane.

"Do you think maybe you've lost enough weight?" they whisper. Well, have you?

**K**nowing when to stop can be difficult, especially if you've made a dramatic change to your weight and body shape. After a significant weight loss, many people find there comes a point when it feels everyone is against you. Your friends who were once so supportive are now looking at you askance and the regime that worked so well for you until now isn't producing the same results.

### So how do you know when it's time to stop?

It partly depends on what your reason was for starting your regimen in the first place. If it was purely to improve your health, the answer will be a pretty scientific one. If, for example, you've achieved a healthy BMI (see our feature, *Weighty Matters*, on page 18), your blood pressure has dropped, your cholesterol levels have improved and your blood sugar readings are better, then the chances are you've done what you set out to do. Give yourself a pat on the back and start

thinking about how to incorporate your new, healthy habits into your life for the long term to maintain your new state of wellbeing.

If, on the other hand, your reasons were more aesthetic—if, say, you wanted just to look better, to be slimmer, to fit into nicer clothes or look better for an occasion—it can be hard to know when enough is enough.

This is when it gets subjective. You may look in the mirror and see a body that could still do with losing some wobbly bits, whereas all your friends see is a new, fabulously slimline you. If this is so, you need to ask yourself some hard questions. Are you really seeing yourself clearly? Might it be that you actually look great and are now a perfect, healthy weight? Have you tipped over into obsessing about your body, your looks, your food or your fitness? It's easy to lose perspective when you've worked so hard to get to where you are now.



Listen to what people are saying to you and ask yourself why they're saying it. It may be they're just challenged by your new look, when they were used to the cuddlier version. Or perhaps they became envious at the point where you became slimmer than them. If they are caring people who honestly want the best for you and have genuine concerns, maybe you should listen to them.

If you're not sure, find out if your weight has got you into the healthy BMI range, remembering that this is only a rough guide and that if you've gained a large amount of muscle it may give a false impression.

**You may look in the mirror and see a body that could still do with losing some wobbly bits, whereas all your friends see is a new, fabulously slimline you**

The safest option of all is to visit your doctor in person and ask their opinion. They will be able to tell you if it's time to move from weight loss into weight maintenance, or whether it would be advisable or safe to lose more. If you've plateaued they might even be able to help you kick-start your plan again.



Above all, whatever you do, keep on eating nutritious food and exercising regularly. Even if you do decide to quit the diet, that doesn't mean you should return to a life of eating pizza on the couch. Maintaining a healthy body and a healthy weight will not involve a huge shift in your habits and your body will thank you for continuing to treat it well.

**If you've achieved a healthy BMI, your blood pressure has dropped, your cholesterol levels have improved and your blood sugar readings are better, then the chances are you've done what you set out to do**



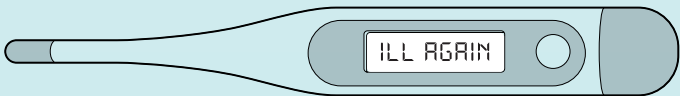
**Time to stop—signs that you've lost too much weight**  
There are some tell-tale signs that you may have lost too much weight and have fallen into the underweight category.



**Your skin has lost its glow**



**Your periods have stopped (not due to menopause)**



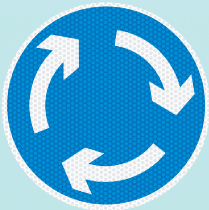
**Your immune system has crashed and you're picking up every bug going around**



**Your energy levels have dropped**



**Your BMI is lower than 18.5**



**You have become obsessive about food and/or exercise, thinking about them a disproportionate amount of the time**

**If these apply and you think you may have lost too much weight, seek medical advice as soon as possible.**



# Weighty matters



## —BMI, body fat percentage and how to know if you’re the right weight

So you want to be sure you’re a healthy weight, but finding out what that should be can get a bit complicated. Some experts talk about BMI, others about body composition and body fat percentage. So what are they and how do you figure them out? Here’s our simple guide to everything you need to know about BMI and body fat percentage.

**BMI**  
BMI stands for Body Mass Index. It’s a formula that was invented in the 19th century by a Belgian scientist named Adolphe Quetelet, so is occasionally known as the Quetelet index. Its purpose is to provide a guide to whether someone is a healthy weight.

The BMI is based on the ratio between your height and your weight. It is calculated by a simple formula:

Height

Weight squared

For the formula to work, height must be expressed in meters and weight in kilograms, so the final figure is expressed as m/kg<sup>2</sup>. To figure it out with feet and lbs, you need a different (and more complicated) formula, but there are plenty of online calculators which will do this for you.

**What is a healthy BMI?**  
A healthy BMI is between 18.5 m/kg<sup>2</sup> and 25 m/kg<sup>2</sup>.

If your BMI is lower than 18.5, you are likely to be underweight and if it is higher than 25 you are likely to be overweight. If your BMI is higher than 30 you are considered to be obese.

The problem with using body fat percentage as a guide is getting an accurate measurement in the first place

**How precise is it?**  
It’s a good general guide. It doesn’t give a complete picture as it doesn’t show your body composition—how much of your body weight is made up of fat, muscle and tissue. Because muscle is more dense than fat, someone who is extremely muscular may have a BMI of over 25 because of the weight of their muscle. On the whole, though, it gives a pretty good picture of how healthy your weight is. If your BMI is outside the healthy range it is a good idea to consult your doctor. Don’t just kid yourself it’s all muscle!

**I’m struggling to work it out**  
If you’re getting in a muddle over the math, or if you only know your height in feet or your

weight in pounds, you can put your data into an online calculator and it’ll figure out your BMI for you.

**Body fat percentage**  
Body fat percentage is, as you might expect, the percentage of your body that is made up of fat. One study has suggested that it gives a more reliable indication of your risk of cardiovascular problems than BMI.

The healthy percentage varies from individual to individual and according to height. The American Council on Exercise has produced this chart which shows the difference between the different categories of individual (most importantly the difference between men and women).

Description	Women	Men
Essential fat	10-13%	2-5%
Athletes	14-20%	6-13%
Fitness	21-24%	14-17%
Acceptable	25-31%	18-24%
Obesity	>32%	>25%

Again, this isn’t a precise guide. There will be plenty of healthy non-athletes whose body fat percentage puts them within the athlete category but at the higher end of the scale it is pretty reliable.

If you’re in any doubt, consult your physician

The problem with using body fat percentage as a guide is getting an accurate measurement in the first place. The traditional measurement is using callipers to take a skinfold test, but this needs to be done by someone with the correct skills and training. It does not show fat around the organs.

Other methods can be controversial. The most common is biometric impedance analysis. Two conductors are applied to the body and send a small electric current through the body. As fat, muscle and tissue offer different resistance to electricity, it is said to show the levels of fat in the body. Again, its success is dependent on the skill of the practitioner and the results are not always accurate.

An increasingly popular method is whole-body air displacement plethysmography which involves sitting in a sealed machine (sometimes known as a Bod Pod) which measures air displacement. This is an expensive procedure and usually only found in medical or athletic settings.

A healthy BMI is between 18.5 m/kg<sup>2</sup> and 25 m/kg<sup>2</sup>

**The most reliable guide of all**  
If you’re in any doubt, consult your physician. They will be able to take appropriate measurements and examine you in person, which is the best guide of all to whether you are a healthy weight. Most importantly of all, make sure you follow their advice once you know how healthy your weight is!





**Did you know?**

Vital facts |  
Breakthroughs |  
Health news |

## So you think you're hungry?

If you've spent the morning thinking hard about something at work, don't be surprised if you're starving by lunchtime. Researchers at Laval University in Canada have shown that although thinking harder doesn't use up more calories, it does make you feel hungrier. Participants asked to carry out mentally challenging tasks went on to eat 253 more calories in just one meal than those told to daydream.



## Don't be blue about your genes

Most of us assume that however healthy we are, there's nothing we can do about our genes. Not so, according to a study by Massachussetts General Hospital, which found that following a healthy lifestyle—eating nutritious food, exercising regularly and keeping your weight down—can cut your risk of heart attack by about half, even amongst those with a high genetic risk. "DNA is not destiny," said Sekar Kathiresan, MD, author of the report.



**1/2 the RISK**

## Peer pressure

If you're trying to lose weight, choose your friends carefully. Researchers from the University of California, San Diego, found that obesity was "socially contagious", so if one person in a peer group became obese, others were 57% more likely to follow. The good news is it works in reverse, too—thinness seems to be contagious as well. It's thought social norms are the reason, so if your friends are getting bigger, be sure you're the one who bucks the trend.



## No sugar, no brainer

You might imagine that by substituting calorie-free, diet soda for sugary drinks you'd be doing your diet a favor. Wrong. When you eat or drink something sweet, your brain swings into action to deal with the expected rise in blood sugar. The problem is it does the same if you have artificial sweeteners. Your brain struggles to compute the sugary taste with the lack of energy content so your cravings for something sweet continue and you can end up eating more and consequently gaining weight. Plain water is a much healthier option.





# Here to help: how Vitality can help you lose weight

Research shows that the toughest way to lose weight is to go it alone. The good news is that you don't have to. The Vitality program supports you all the way with a whole bunch of things that will help you stay motivated and even enjoy the ride.



1. Body goals

The first thing you need to do is set a weight loss goal on the Vitality website, [powerofvitality.com](http://powerofvitality.com). You set a time limit on it and can then check in on a weekly basis to keep track of how you're doing.

It's well known that making goals as specific as possible is the best way to ensure you achieve them, so Vitality doesn't just offer you a general "lose weight" goal (though that is one of the options available).

To help you focus on achievable steps to get you there, you can choose from the following, easier and more manageable goals:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Cut back on sugar
- Select leaner meats
- Start with small steps
- Recognize hunger signals
- Reach a target weight
- Take more steps each day
- Limit fatty foods
- Lose weight
- Switch to whole grains
- Choose low-fat dairy
- Shake the salt habit

Head to the health profile section of [PowerofVitality.com](http://PowerofVitality.com) and get those goals laid down!

If you're worried about the cost of eating a healthy diet, relax. Vitality makes it affordable

2. Get learning

One thing a lot of our past weight loss health heroes have had in common is an enthusiasm for educating themselves about health and fitness. Knowledge is power when it comes to losing weight, and quite a few of them have signed up for nutrition courses on the Vitality website as well as taking advantage of the fantastic recipe base on the site.

So why not get informed yourself? You may think you're already pretty knowledgeable about healthy food, but there's always more to learn. Check out the Health Resources section in the Vitality Learning Center on [PowerofVitality.com](http://PowerofVitality.com) where you'll find lots of articles by experts in nutrition and healthy eating, as well as Action Sets and Decision Points which will earn you Vitality points. And if you're starting to exercise a little more to help you lose weight, you'll find an interactive tool there that shows you how many calories you'll burn doing different activities.



If you have a specific health condition, the Vitality Learning Center may be able to help with information. It has articles about proper nutrition for diabetes and heart disease, food allergies, eating disorders, digestive problems and stress, among others.

The Vitality nutrition courses are a great way to find out about the kind of foods that will assist your weight loss, and with six to choose from there's one for every issue you might have. You can choose between:

- Healthy eating in a modern world
- Attain and maintain a healthy diet
- Achieve a healthy, balanced diet
- Demystifying fats, sugar and salt
- Eating for weight management
- Eating to boost energy levels

It's not just your health that will benefit from your new knowledge. You'll earn a useful 300 Vitality points for each nutrition course you complete (up to a maximum of 900).

3. Healthy eating

If you're worried about the cost of eating a healthy diet, relax. Vitality makes it affordable. Under the Vitality HealthyFood program, you can link up with Walmart or NutriSavings (or both) and get Vitality points for making healthy food purchases (things like fruits, vegetables, beans and grains). Win, win!

How to do it?

If you want to register with Walmart, ask for a Vitality HealthyFood shopping card. You'll earn up to 10% off your groceries and

earn two Vitality points for each Great for You item you buy (up to 50 items per month). Check out the Great for You catalog of eligible foods on [PowerofVitality.com](http://PowerofVitality.com). If you want to register with NutriSavings, you just need to link your grocery store loyalty cards to them. You'll earn two Vitality points for each designated healthy food item you buy (up to 50 per month). You can find a list of eligible foods on the NutriSavings website. You'll get suggestions and coupons for healthy food options and access to articles and recipes on healthy eating.

By the way, there's no need to be concerned about Big Brother keeping an eye on what's in your cart. Like your health information, your shopping details remain entirely private.

Knowledge is power when it comes to losing weight



Get moving

You don't need us to tell you that one of the most effective ways to lose weight is to move more, and fitness devices can be a great help with these (see Generation tech —how technology can help you lose weight, page 14).

Vitality partners with Fitbit, Garmin, Polar, Apple Health and MapMyFitness so you can easily track your activity and earn Vitality points as you move. It even allows you to "check in" at the gym. Better still, Meggitt provides a \$25 device subsidy for Vitality members wanting to buy a fitness device through the Vitality Mall.

Vitality is here to make you healthy, wealthy and wise. What are you waiting for?





# The skinny on calories

With calorie values now being included in many restaurant menus, it's time to get up to speed. What are calories, why do they matter and should you even be counting them?

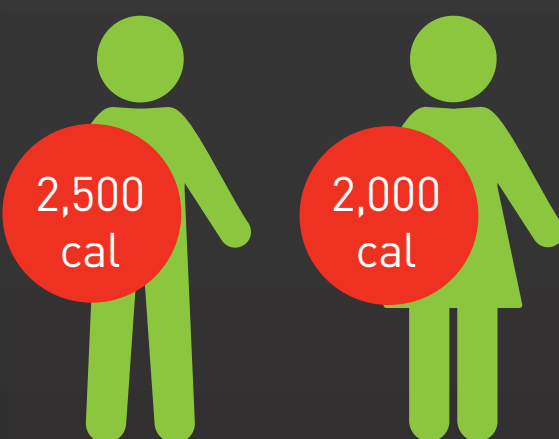
Let's get one thing out of the way right from the start. Calories are not something inherently bad. When we talk about calories we're usually actually referring to kilocalories (which you'll see marked on foods as kcal), but the use of the word "calorie" is so common now, you can assume people mean "kilocalories" when they say "calories". A calorie is simply a unit of energy. It is, in fact, the amount of energy needed to raise one kilogram of water by one degree Celsius.

We all need calories—lots of them—to stay alive. Our heart needs them to keep beating. Our lungs need them to keep inhaling and exhaling. Our brain needs them to keep thinking.

Different types of food have different calorie values. Fats have nine calories per gram. Protein and carbohydrates each have four calories per gram. Vitamins and minerals contain none. As many foods are a mixture of both protein and fats it's not always obvious how many calories are in them so calorie values are usually listed on the package.

## How many calories do I need every day?

Everybody's needs are slightly different. They depend on your age, height, weight, sex, activity level, body composition and metabolic rate. As a rough guide, to maintain a steady weight, the average sedentary adult female should consume 2,000 calories per day and the equivalent man should consume 2,500. Active people will need more than this – some elite athletes burn as much as twice this.



If you eat more calories than your body needs for its day-to-day activities, your body will store the excess calories as fat. If you eat fewer calories than you need, you will usually lose weight

## How do calories relate to weight gain and loss?

If you eat more calories than your body needs for its day-to-day activities, your body will store the excess calories as fat. If you eat fewer calories than you need, you will usually lose weight. You can achieve this either by exercising more so you burn more calories or by eating less (or both).

You may have heard people say that you need to have a deficit of 3,500 calories to lose one pound. It's not quite that simple, in fact. Some people need to burn fewer calories to lose the same amount of weight.



Even if you're not trying to lose weight, you should aim to eat mostly foods that are nutritious

What are empty calories?

This is a term applied to foods that have little nutritional value. They provide you with energy but not much in the way of vitamins, minerals or fiber. You might not be surprised to learn that a Krispy Kreme would score high in terms of empty calories, as would a bottle of soda. Even if you're not trying to lose weight, you should aim to eat mostly foods that are nutritious. A bowl of wholegrain rice with lean chicken, some vegetables and a tomato sauce will do you more good than a burger, even though they may contain the same number of calories.

How can I use calorie counting to lose weight?

The idea is to use up more calories than you're eating. By eating a little less (or eating lower calorie foods) and exercising a little more, you will adjust the calories in: calories out ratio.

Calories are not something inherently bad

How many calories will I burn doing exercise?

It's hard to say. The number of calories you burn varies according to your height and weight, what the exercise is and how hard you're trying—a gentle jog on the flat won't use up nearly as much as a sprint uphill. Here's a very rough guide to how many calories a 155 lb person burns in an hour of the following activities:

Aerobics	457
Cycling (moderate speed)	563
Running (moderate speed)	950
Swimming (breast stroke)	360
Walking (brisk pace)	247

How can I track my calories?

There are books that give you calorie lists, but most people who want to track their calories find it easier to use a fitness app that will make it much easier to log your calories. A word of advice, though: it's easy to become obsessive about calorie counting and lots of physicians and dietitians recommend a sensible, balanced approach to nutrition and exercise without counting calories. Find whatever works best for you and you'll have the best chance of success.

Hidden calories

Sometimes the most innocent-sounding foods can be loaded with calories. Here are five fattening foods to be aware of:

Granola

So healthy it hurts, right? Well, yes and no. Granola has lots of health benefits. It tends to have plenty of heart-healthy oats in it and often contains fruit and nuts which are super-nutritious. But dried fruit and nuts have more calories in them than you might imagine and many granolas are stacked full of sugar and fats, which sends the calorie count through the roof. Check the label and avoid the sugary versions.



Smoothies

Seriously? Afraid so. All smoothies are not equal and some are loaded with full-fat yogurt and syrups that send the calorie count sky high. Even the fruit can be a bit of an issue. Because there's more smooshed-up fruit in there than you could eat whole, you can end up consuming way more of it in one hit than is good for you (fruit contains sugar, too). If in doubt, make your own so you know what's going in the blender.



Honey

Better than sugar? Well, it does have slightly more in the way of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, but it has just as many calories as sugar. Just because your favorite treat contains honey instead of sugar it doesn't mean it'll help you lose weight.



Frozen yogurt

Everybody knows that frozen yogurt is the dieter's answer to ice cream. Except that it can be deceptive. Frozen yogurt can be full of sugar and have just as many calories as ice cream. And if you load it with marshmallows and mini-Oreos you don't need us to tell you it's a major fail.



Trail mix

It certainly looks virtuous, but by the time you've added deep-fried banana chips and yogurt-coated raisins, it's really not a health food any more—it's a giant calorie-fest. If in doubt, just have a piece of fruit and a handful of nuts on their own.



Salads

Salads in restaurants can also be a serious calorie trap! The Oriental Chicken Salad at Applebee's, for example, comes in at a weighty 1420 calories which is way over half the daily average calorie requirement for both men and women! Don't assume that because it's cold it's good for you.



# SUPERCHAMPS



All of Meggitt’s Wellness Champs are doing a fantastic job at promoting health and fitness, but at MSS OC there’s a special buzz. It’s all down to the amazing team of Superchamps. We find out what makes them so special.

If you feel as though you’ve heard a lot about the Vitality activities at MSS OC, it’s because you have. Rarely does an edition of Step UP go by without a report of a fun fitness event—a hike in the beautiful California hills or a Stair Crawl at the local station—or of MSS OC winning a cross-facility Vitality competition. When it comes to Vitality and staying in shape, MSS OC is in a league of its own.

This kind of initiative doesn’t happen by itself. Behind all the fun and the hiking and point-earning and stair-climbing is a hard-working team of Wellness Champs, brimming with enthusiasm. They’re so good, in fact, we’ve named them the Superchamps.

Here’s who they are:

**Francesca Sciortino:** Director of Social and events coordinator

**Jennifer Andres:** Wellness Champ and Zumba instructor

**Sarah Moriarty:** Director of Memberships; recruits new hires to Vitality

**Thien Nguyen:** Director at Large, leader of bike rides and stair crawls

**Fausto Sandoval:** Director at Large, manager of softball team, the Jets

**Christine Whitaker:** Director of the Great Outdoors, organizer of fitness presentations, self-proclaimed foodie

**Sharon Wood:** Director of Seminars, first ever Platinum member at Meggitt OC, lover of the outdoors.

The team has two members at the Sunnyvale location as well: Isabel Villa and Maritess Cruz.

The engine driving the team is, they all agree, Francesca Sciortino – a force of nature, described by one of the team as “Chief Champ, Champ-of-Champs, Champiest Champ”. Full of ideas and passionate about the Vitality program, Francesca, who signed up for Vitality as soon as it was introduced, is an inspiration to the whole team and delights in helping people achieve their health and fitness goals.

Francesca was quickly recruited as a Wellness Champ after an HR specialist had spotted her out walking every day. “I hesitated at first,” says Francesca, “but I’m so glad I said yes!”

She hasn’t looked back. “The program has made me aware that my health is so important and the choices I make can and



Francesca Sciortino



Jennifer Andres



Sarah Moriarty



Thien Nguyen



Fausto Sandoval



will be life altering (for good or bad), plus it gets me outside hiking, biking and skiing. Not to mention the rewards (points, bucks and a healthier me). What more can one ask for?”

Francesca enjoys her work as a Champ. “I love helping others embrace the website, earning Vitality bucks, and most of all coming up with fun ways to exercise, donate to charities and get more points.”

Those fun ways have included Zumba classes, yoga, hiking and the famous Stair Crawls which have employees heading up and down the stairs in the local station, no doubt to the bemusement of the local townspeople.

I love the feedback I get from fellow Vitality hikers about how much they enjoy the hikes, and how grateful they are to be able to earn points while doing them

What makes the team work so well is that each plays to their strengths. If you need anything technical sorted out, for example—your fitness tracker synced, help navigating the Vitality portal or even batteries for your Fitbit—you should make a beeline for Thien. If you need a bit of motivation to reach your Vitality goals, you can rely on Francesca to check in with you and make sure you attend the next hike. If it’s outdoor activities you want advice on, ask Christine, known as Director of the Great Outdoors, who champions the bi-monthly wilderness hikes (as well as doing hiking, paddle boarding and other fitness activities in her spare time). And if you fancy joining the softball team or want to join in the next Stair Crawl, you need to speak with Fausto.

“Our champ team is strong and versatile,” says Francesca. “Each one offers different aspects and feedback to the program. Each person on the team has a specific role and contributes in their capacity. Everyone does a fantastic job.”



Meet the Superchamps

We caught up with a couple of the Meggitt OC Superchamps

Christine Whitaker, Director of the Great Outdoors

Step Up: How long have you been a Wellness Champ?

Christine Whitaker: About three years.

SU: Why did you sign up to be a Champ?

CW: My fellow champ, Francesca Sciortino, recruited me. She was aware that I hiked on a regular basis, and wanted to create an opportunity for other Vitality members to earn points through this fun and healthy activity.

Full of ideas and passionate about the Vitality program, Francesca, who signed up for Vitality as soon as it was introduced, is an inspiration to the whole team

SU: What do you love most about your role as a Champ?

CW: I love the feedback I get from fellow Vitality hikers about how much they enjoy the hikes, and how grateful they are to be able to earn points while doing them.

SU: What do you think makes a great Champ?

CW: I love what I do, and that’s always half the battle!

SU: Tell us about the hikes that you lead.

CW: We are located in Orange County, California. We are best known for our magnificent beaches, but it may surprise folks to know that we also have many wonderful and varied hiking venues to explore. We have many forested areas with canopies of beautiful oak trees and evergreens, wildflowers, streams, lakes, wildlife and much more—and of course we also throw beach hikes into the mix every now and then.

Hike distances vary in length and difficulty; our average hike is around five to six miles. We have many regular participants and are always encouraging new member participation. Vitality hike details and photos are proudly displayed on our overhead monitors throughout the plant to encourage participation.

SU: What exercise do you mostly do yourself?



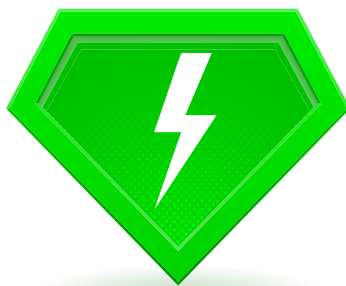
Christine Whitaker



Sharon Wood



Isabel Villa



Maritess Cruz





**CW:** My weekend exercise is hiking. During the week I try to do short workouts in front of the TV, involving either weights, aerobic activity or stretching.

**SU:** How has the Vitality program helped you personally?

**CW:** I love the Vitality program because it encourages us to move, move, move! And to reap a financial benefit from that through accumulating points is an added incentive—particularly from folks who find it difficult to get motivated otherwise.

**SU:** What do you feel makes your team of Champs so special?

**CW:** Our team of champs is great. Worth special mention is Francesca. She motivates and encourages us all and is continually telling folks about all that Vitality has to offer and encouraging participation.

**Sharon Wood, Director of Seminars**

**Step Up:** How long have you been a Wellness Champ?

**Sharon Wood:** About two years.

**SU:** Why did you sign up to be a Champ?

**SW:** Francesca made me!

**SU:** What do you most love about your role as a Champ?

**SW:** Helping people realize it is easy to get points and get lots of Amazon goodies. I love Amazon goodies.

**SU:** What do you think makes a good Champ?

**SW:** A willingness to help others and patiently explain the same thing over and over again. And a good sense of humor.

**SU:** Is it true you were MSS OC's first ever platinum member?

**SW:** Yes, I was the first and only one at MSS-OC the first year of the program. I still have my orange armband that they gave out that year, though orange isn't my color so it's still in my desk drawer!

**SU:** What advice would you give someone who wanted to boost their points and eventually reach platinum?

**SW:** The main reason I got platinum that year and each year since is my horse, "Tex the Wonder Horse", a "going on 28" character who needs care and exercise every day. I found using the MapMyFitness app as I worked around the barn gave me the maximum number of points each day and the way the bonus points were structured in those days I was killing it on the daily workout points.

## The Champ team is great! A bunch of enthusiastic people with a passion they're willing to share

After they restructured the workout points and took out the requirement (and points) for yearly biometrics it's not as easy as it was to make platinum but you can still do it. Consistent, recorded workouts, find the big points available with online courses and join in on the opportunities with the employer-sponsored events like the hiking club and the walking club (325 points for a hike once a month adds up!) and anyone can make it to platinum. My biggest hint is turn on your app each and every day, especially if you have chores or pets you have to take care of.

I was also motivated by the Vitality Bucks. I hunted around on the Vitality site to see where I could gain points/bucks, did all the classes and quizzes, hit a few goals and there you go! Platinum and a Bose stereo from the store—score! As an aside, among

other goodies I've since scored a lovely Dooney & Burke purse and a full set of WeatherTech liners for my new car.

**SU:** Has the Vitality program helped you personally and if so, how?

**SW:** Yes, Vitality has made me think more about the general state of my health and where I need to improve. There's still lots of room for improvement but Vitality kind of turns it into a game with markers and rewards. Did I mention I'm all about rewards?!

**SU:** Do you feel like your team of Champs at OC is particularly special?

**SW:** The Champ team is great! A bunch of enthusiastic people with a passion they're willing to share. Francesca is the key reason for our success: a Vitality cheerleader par excellence. She actively recruits Vitality members, develops them into Champs and applies constant encouragement (and pressure) to come up with more (and wackier) employer-sponsored events.

Three cheers for the OC Superchamps! If you'd like your facility's marvelous Champs to feature in Step UP, email us at [patriciacarswell@gmail.com](mailto:patriciacarswell@gmail.com) and tell us they're the greatest!

**"I love helping others embrace the website, earning Vitality bucks, and most of all coming up with fun ways to exercise, donate to charities and get more points."**





# From health hero to Champiest Champ

## Terri Ahlf

You may remember Terri Ahlf, Payroll and Benefits Analyst at Securaplane, from the third edition of Step UP when she featured as one of our health heroes. Terri had taken up running from scratch to honor her son, who was on a tour of duty in Afghanistan, and had gone on to compete in half marathons. Now she's gone from health hero to Champiest Champ!

Terri does nothing by halves (except for marathons!) Despite only becoming a Wellness Champ in September 2016, in true Ahlf style she has adopted the role with enthusiasm and vigor. In fact she's done so well she's been awarded the first ever Champiest Champ award.

### What is the Champiest Champ?

Champion Champ is a quarterly award to recognize the amazing work done by our Wellness Champs. It's designed to reward those who go the extra mile, inspiring and motivating folks to get healthy and fit.

### Why Terri?

Terri was nominated for the award by Brandi Ingram and Susan Purvance.

Susan said this: "I would like to nominate Terri Ahlf as my favorite Vitality Champ. She is always helpful and is great at keeping us all motivated. Anytime there is an issue or a question about the Vitality program she is my go to person."

Brandi added, "Terri encouraged me to join the Vitality program and inspires me daily to get moving! She has my vote!"



Alecia Fish, of Meggitt's benefits team, has been super-impressed by the work done by Terri and the rest of the team of Wellness Champs at Securaplane. "They do a weekly walk," she says, "where the participants come out even in the rain. They also have very dedicated participants during steps challenges, where team members would come to work hours earlier so they could walk together and gain steps."

As for Terri, Alecia notes that she is incredibly dedicated to her own fitness. "She's been able to accrue her 580th workout milestone since we instituted them at the beginning of the program year last year, which is very impressive."

### Terri says ...

Terri herself was astonished by the win, especially as she didn't even know she'd been nominated. When she received the news, she couldn't believe her eyes. "I read it. Then I read it again, thinking, 'Did that say I won?' It was a total surprise."

Quite apart from the award, Terri is relishing her role as Champ. "Whether I win an award or not, I enjoy inspiring and motivating others. Encouraging others to participate is the best thing about being a Champ."

And remember, folks! Champiest Champ is a quarterly reward. Don't forget to nominate your favorite Champ for the next quarter.





# Vitality events

Once again, our lively network of Wellness Champs have been organizing a huge number of activities and events to make keeping fit and active more fun. Here are just a few of the latest.



## Wheely good

If you've read our Superchamps article (page 24), you won't be surprised to hear that folks at Meggitt OC have been hitting the parks for some long bike rides. Although the rides are designed for everyone from beginners to serious cyclists, they still managed to cover 50km around Harvard Park. Participants earned a welcome 250 Vitality points and got fitter in the process.



## Seeing red

February was heart health month and a bunch of facilities organised a Go Red walk to combine fitness with raising awareness of heart disease—very appropriate as walking is a great way to protect your heart. Participants all wore red—you certainly couldn't miss them.



# 5K winners

Securaplane’s latest physical challenge was to sponsor its employees to compete in a 5K run. They certainly stepped up to the plate, with two employees, Brandon Mahoney and Kevin Maghran winning their age categories. We caught up with Brandon, a graduate engineer in Meggitt’s global program, who won first place in the 20-24 age category.

**Step UP:** Do you run regularly and is this a distance you've competed in before?

**Brandon:** Yes, running has been a hobby of mine and I have run this distance before, but not in a race. I have only have started competing recently. This was my first competitive race.

**Step UP:** Tell us a little bit about the event.

**Brandon:** The race was at 7am and it was a cool morning so it felt good to start running and warm up a bit. I ran the first two miles very comfortably at a pace just below 7min/mile, but the last mile was tough. I slowed down slightly, but once the finish line was in sight, I sped up for a strong finish. I was happy enough since I had run a new personal record and didn't know I had won 1st place until the award ceremony afterwards.

**Step UP:** Are you a member of the Vitality program? If so, what do you most like about it?

**Brandon:** Yes I am! I appreciate Vitality’s well rounded definition of health. It’s not just about being physically fit, but being mentally healthy too.





# 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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