



## David Fairlamb

# THE FIT FACTOR

### FITNESS TIP

Logging all your food and drink is one thing but a more comprehensive diary would be to log all your exercise, including your daily steps. This way you know how and why your waist is shrinking and you can always refer back to it. A combination of healthy food and regular exercise is the number one way to total health and wellbeing

### LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Keep a food diary for all the family and together you can help improve each other's health, leading to a happier and positive home environment

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**W**HETHER you're trying to lose weight or just attempting to lead a healthier lifestyle, keeping a food diary can help you make positive changes. Writing down everything you consume will make you more accountable for what you are eating and give you a clearer indication of where changes need to take place.

Research shows for people interested in losing weight, keeping a journal can be a very effective tool to help change behaviour. In one weight loss study of nearly 1,700 participants, those who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who kept no records.

Here are a few benefits of keeping a food diary.

#### Weight loss

A daily food diary can help reveal those daily unhealthy habits that are stopping you from losing weight. Writing down everything you eat will make you less likely to pick and give you more awareness that you may be eating more unhealthy foods than you think, which is leading to your increased size, eg. everyday snacks that soon add up over time.

#### Food intolerance

Food diaries can also help determine if you have a severe reaction to certain foods. In some cases, reactions to different foods can happen hours after the food has been consumed. Writing down what you eat and how you feel afterwards can reveal what foods your body reacts negatively towards. If you feel bloated and sickly after eating eggs, dairy, or gluten, then you may be intolerant to these foods.

#### Portion control

Keeping a food diary is also an excellent way to manage your portions. It can be more difficult to control in restaurants but if you are looking to lose weight use smaller plates you will soon adapt to them and realise you didn't need to eat anywhere near the amounts you

have previously. The positive weight loss and feel good factor can be life changing.

#### Better nutrition

Keeping track of your every meal will reveal more than just calorie intake and food intolerances; it can also show whether you are eating enough of each food group. If your food diary consists of mainly carbohydrates and proteins, then you're not getting the vitamins you need from fruits and vegetables. Keeping a food diary will allow you to check what foods you are not eating enough of, or which ones you're eating too much.

#### Triggering unhealthy eating

It can be beneficial to record the time of day and mood when keeping a food diary. Keeping track of these things can reveal how stress, work, or certain people affect your food choices eg if you reach for a sugary drink or chocolate each time you enter work, then stressful environments may cause you to crave sugary foods. If you eat every meal standing up, then you're probably rushing and eating more calories



than when you're seated and have time. Using a food diary to note certain triggers can help you eradicate these habits.

#### Water intake

Adding a column to log your water intake is hugely important. Just a small drop in water levels can make you feel tired, lethargic, irritable, unable to hold your concentration for long, affect your sleep and make you hungry to name a few. Keeping your water levels high is

essential for your health and wellbeing, around 2-2.5 litres a day is advisable.

Keeping a food diary and logging everything including those one off bites of your child's dinner or small biscuits that you thought didn't really matter, may shock you. Finally you may realise how much sugar, unhealthy and unnecessary food and drink you are consuming. Try it and make those few changes you need to drop weight and feel more positive and healthy.

*Every new day is another chance to change your life*

**Motivational quote of the day**