



David Fairlamb THE FIT FACTOR

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

The most powerful driver for sustained weight loss is a personal desire to improve health. Awareness of available help and strategies is only useful if you have the motivation to change. Is it not time to make that change?

FITNESS TIP

Are you hitting the recommended 150 mins of moderate exercise a week? That's less than 22 mins a day. Think of ways to incorporate into your everyday life, this won't just improve your fitness but also your waistline.

Don't miss David's tips every Saturday in your Journal

RECENT statistics from the UK report that 63.8% of the adult population is affected by obesity (Office of National Statistics 2021-2022). Currently, there are several initiatives in place to help reduce obesity, including public health policies, education, and regulations. But what are these initiatives, and are they enough?

Sugar tax

(Soft drinks industry levy)

Introduced in April 2018, this levy charges manufacturers based on the sugar content in soft drinks. The tax incentivizes companies to reformulate products to reduce sugar levels. Since its inception, the levy has generated £344 million in tax revenue for the UK and has contributed to reducing childhood obesity, particularly among girls in Year 6.

Calorie labeling

As of April 2022, large restaurants, cafes, and takeaways are required to display calorie information on menus and food labels to help consumers make informed choices. This has encouraged many places to change their menus.

Several studies suggest this can

have indirect health benefits for consumers. However, focusing solely on calories omits information on sugar and fat content.

Healthy start scheme

Launched in 2006, this provides vouchers for pregnant women and families with young children on low incomes to buy healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, and milk. However, uptake is lower than anticipated, with only 64% of those eligible participating, falling short of the government's 75% target.

School food standards

Mandatory guidelines set in 2015 ensure that schools provide nutritious meals and snacks to children. These standards limit sugary drinks and snack. However, reports indicate that 60% of schools are not meeting these standards, and the

diets of school-aged children is not improving.

National child measurement programme (NCMP)

Started in 2006, this initiative measures the height and weight of children in Reception (ages 4-5) and Year 6 (ages 10-11) to monitor and address obesity trends. The program aims to raise awareness among parents, provide local governments with statistics to allocate resources for combating childhood obesity, and shape ongoing and future national initiatives.

Change4Life campaign

Launched in 2009, this public health campaign aims to encourage healthier lifestyles through diet and physical activity. It offers resources, tips, and support to families.

Healthy weight strategy

This approach involves multiple sectors, including food retail and advertising. Measures include restricting the advertisement of high-fat, sugar, and salt products before 9pm on TV and online.

NHS weight management services

The NHS offers a range of support services accessible through your GP.



These include weight management programs, personalized plans, online support programs, counseling, and community-based interventions that can include exercise.

Healthy eating in the workplace

Initiatives encourage employers to promote healthy eating options and physical activity among employees. Unfortunately, not many firms have taken the idea forward.

These strategies are good, but in my opinion not enough to make a significant impact on our obesity crisis. One essential change I advo-

cate for is the inclusion of health, wellbeing, and lifestyle education in the national school curriculum from an early age, making it compulsory through the GCSE level. This would provide children with the knowledge to manage their health and lifestyle, and understand the potential consequences of neglect.

Ultimately, the most powerful driver for sustained weight loss is a personal desire to improve health. Awareness of available help and strategies is only useful if you have the motivation to change.

The only bad workout is the one that didn't happen

Motivational quote of the day