



THE FOUNDATIONS



This guide is here to help you on your fitness journey and acts as a gentle introduction.

We believe that feeling strong, confident and healthy comes from building solid foundations.

Inside this guide, we will walk you through what we consider to be the key pillars that support your health and wellbeing.

Exercise- Moving your body

Nutrition- Fuelling your body with what it needs, without fear or restriction.

Sleep- Giving your body and mind the chance to rest and recover.

Recovery- understanding that rest is part of progress.

Hydration- supporting energy, focus and performance.

Mindset- building a healthier, more compassionate relationship with fitness and being kind to your mind.

These areas all impact on one another, working together for wellness.

You don't need to master all of them, all at once, but having an understanding of each area and how they impact us can help to create healthy habits to support each pillar.

A circular logo with the words "SMILE & SWEAT" stacked above "REPEAT" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.



Exercise is crucial for overall health and helps to reduce the risk of chronic diseases.



Regular exercise helps to build & maintain strength & muscle, protect bones & joints, improve balance & mobility, support heart health, energy, and mood. As we get older, staying active helps us remain independent, confident, and capable in everyday life.

Types of exercise

Cardiovascular/ Aerobic

Raises your heart rate and builds stamina. Improves heart health.
Examples: walking, cycling, swimming, rowing, dancing



Strength Training

Uses resistance to build strength. Builds muscle and supports joints and bones.
Boosts bone density.
Examples: Lifting weights, machines, bodyweight exercises

Mobility & Flexibility

Supports movement and reduces stiffness.
Examples: stretching, yoga, mobility work

A balanced routine includes all three.



We are strong advocates for fitness that is functional, that transfers to supporting our real-life movements like standing up and sitting down, carrying shopping, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, and balancing.

The stronger and more mobile you are, the easier everyday life feels.

National Guidelines- (Work up to these! Start small and build!)

- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity (brisk walking) per week or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise (like running)
- Include strength training at least 2 times per week
- Reduce your sedentary time- break up long periods of sitting.





Good nutrition is important so that we have the energy and nutrients we need to feel strong and live well, whilst lowering our risk of chronic diseases.



Your body needs energy (calories) to function..

Calories in = energy from food and drink

Calories out = energy your body uses (movement, daily life, basic functions)

Weight changes happen over time when there is an imbalance in calories in vs calories out, but health is about more than numbers.

Macronutrients (Macros)

Macros are the three main nutrients your body needs in larger amounts for energy and function: Protein, carbohydrates, and fats.

All three are important and a healthy diet requires a balance of all three.



Protein

Protein supports muscle, strength, and recovery, and can help you feel full and satisfied after meals.

Sources include: Chicken, fish, eggs, yoghurt, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are your body's main source of energy and are the primary source fuel for the brain (as glucose).

Sources include: Rice, pasta, potatoes, oats, bread, fruit. Vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, peas, sweetcorn, and squash also contribute

Fats



Fats often get a bad reputation, but they are essential. They support hormone and brain health, the absorption of vitamins A, D, E and and feeling satisfied after meals

Fats we need come from sources such as: Olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds, oily fish
Fats often found in more processed foods are best enjoyed in moderation.

Micronutrients (Vitamins & Minerals)

These are essential for overall health, supporting many functions of the body.

They come from a wide variety of foods including fruit and vegetables. A varied diet is key but fortified foods and supplements can help to fill in the gaps. In the case of deficiencies, medical advice should be sought!





Good sleep supports how you feel, how you move, how you eat, and how well you cope with everyday life. When sleep is off, everything else often feels harder.



Why sleep matters.

A good night's sleep helps to restore energy levels, support mood and emotional regulation, improve concentration and decision-making, regulate hunger and fullness hormones & supports immune health.

When sleep is regularly disrupted, you may notice that you are low in energy & motivation, experience brain fog & find it hard to focus. You may find yourself experiencing increased cravings & changes in your appetite. You might become irritable & feel low in your mood. And in terms of performance- poor sleep can reduce how hard you are able to work.



Lack of sleep can make it harder to stay consistent with exercise and nutrition - not because of willpower, but because your body is tired.

How much sleep do we need?

Most adults need around 7–9 hours of sleep per night. Quality sleep matters as much as quantity and how much we need can vary from person to person.

What can impact sleep?

- Stress and a busy mind
- Screens and blue light before bed
- Irregular bedtimes
- Caffeine later in the day
- A bedroom that's too bright, noisy, or warm



Sleep is influenced by lifestyle, not just bedtime.

Small changes can make a big difference to the quality of your sleep.

- Aim for a consistent bedtime routine
- Reduce screen time before bed
- Create a calm, comfortable sleep space
- Wind down with something relaxing (reading, stretching, breathing)
- Try not to put pressure on “perfect” sleep





Exercise creates stress on the body. Recovery is how your body repairs, adapts, and becomes stronger. Without it, even the best training plan can stall.



Recovery is where progress happens - it's a key part of fitness and should be factored into any exercise plan.

Why Recovery Matters

Taking time for recovery helps to repair muscles after exercise, reduces soreness & stiffness, lowers the risk of injury, supports energy levels & motivation and ensures sustainable progress

When you don't prioritise recovery, you may experience persistent soreness or tightness, fatigue, a decline in how you can perform, more injuries or niggles, feeling 'run down', even when exercising.



This isn't a lack of effort - it's a sign the body needs more support and it's important we listen to what the body needs.

Recovery includes:

- Rest days from structured exercise
- Lower-intensity movement (walking, gentle cycling)
- Taking time for Mobility and stretching
- Managing life stress
- Fueling your body well- it can be tempting to restrict calories on your rest days but the body needs fuel to repair and be ready for more!



Recovery isn't necessarily about doing nothing - sometimes it's doing less, on purpose.

Active recovery helps keep the body moving without adding extra strain. Active recovery can include gentle walks, stretching or mobility work, yoga or pilates, light cycling or swimming.

Active recovery helps circulation, reduces stiffness, and help you feel better between sessions.

Remember, rest supports results. More isn't always better. Listening to your body is important. Know when to push... and when to pause.





Hydration plays a quiet but powerful role in how you feel each day. Water supports almost every system in the body - from energy and concentration to physical performance.



Why Hydration Matters

Staying hydrated is vital for the body & amongst lots of other things, it helps you maintain energy & focus, supports physical performance, supports heart health, regulates body temperature, maintains healthy skin & brain function.

When you're under-hydrated, you may notice you feel fatigued or have low energy, have an increase in headaches, brain fog or poor communication, you may struggle with workouts and become dizzy.

Even mild dehydration can affect how you feel and impair physical and mental performance.



How much do we need?

As a general guide around 1.5–2 litres per day for most adults, more if you're active, sweating, or in hot weather.

Herbal teas, flavoured water or squash, fizzy water & soups or foods with high water content can all contribute towards staying hydrated—you're not limited to plain water.

For most people, water is enough.



Water with added electrolytes (minerals like sodium & potassium, calcium & magnesium that can be lost through sweating) and/ or sports drinks (drinks with water, electrolytes and carbohydrates-in the form of sugars) may be useful if you're endurance training or exercising hard for over 60 minutes.

If you do feel you need more than just water you don't need to buy expensive products, you can make your own home-made electrolyte mix. (e.g. diluted fruit juice with a pinch of salt, or a slice of watermelon after exercise).

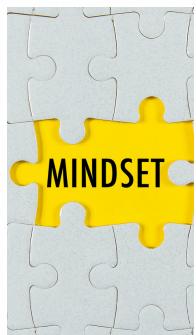
Hydration affects energy, focus, and performance so be sure to drink regularly throughout the day.





“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t - you’re right.” (Henry Ford)

Mindset shapes how we approach movement, food, rest and ourselves.



A supportive mindset can help you stay consistent & let go of all-or-nothing thinking, build confidence through small wins and keep going after missed sessions or busy weeks.

Exercise supports mental wellbeing as well as physical health. Mood follows action.

You don’t need to wait until you feel motivated to move. Move first, knowing it will help lift your mood.

Finding movement that helps you feel calmer, clearer, or more grounded is just as important as our fitness goals. Whether it’s a walk through your local park, taking time to move through nature, or an activity that gives you space to breathe and think- find something that works for you.



The way we think and feel about our bodies, food, and exercise is often learned over time. It can take time to ‘unlearn’ and change our way of thinking.

Many of these messages didn’t come from us. It might be that you heard your parents criticising their own bodies, grew up with advertising that promoted ‘looks’ over health, or you were subjected to diet culture and unrealistic beauty standards.

These were never truly your hang-ups. Recognising where these messages came from can be a powerful first step in letting them go.

Fixed mindset vs growth mindset



A fixed mindset sounds like, “I’m just not fit”, “I’ll never be good at this”, and stops progress. A growth mindset sounds like, “I’m learning”, “This takes time and practice” or even, “I know I can’t do this yet, but I am working towards it.”

When fixed thoughts show up, try gently challenging and reframing them into more helpful thoughts. Small shifts in thinking can create big changes over time.

Asking for support is a strength

Movement can support mood, but if your mood has been persistently low for a long period, it may be worth speaking to your GP or a healthcare professional.





You don't need to change everything at once.



This guide isn't about perfection - it's about awareness, taking small steps, and building habits that last. The foundations you've read about work best when they're introduced gradually in a way that's sustainable for you.

Start small, choose one or two areas to focus on first:

- Moving your body in ways you enjoy
- Adding more nourishing foods
- Improving sleep routines and implementing recovery
- Drinking a little more fluid
- Practice being kind to your mind



Check in with yourself

- What feels most supportive right now?
- What feels realistic to do in my current life?
- What can I do consistently, even on busy weeks?

Progress looks different for everyone.



Support can make a huge difference - whether that's:

- Personal training or coaching
- Small group sessions
- Accountability and encouragement
- Learning how to move with confidence

If you'd like guidance, structure, or support along the way, we're here to help.

REMINDERS:

- Start where you are
- Build at your own pace
- Confidence grows through action

Your journey doesn't need to be rushed - it just needs to begin.





You can use this space to jot down your thoughts and feelings and find ways to move forward. There are no right or wrong answers here - just an opportunity for you to pause, reflect, and set intentions that feel supportive and realistic for you.



Right now, I'd like to work on...

(For example: moving more regularly, improving sleep or working on my mindset and challenging negative thoughts or beliefs, nourishing my body better)

Implementing this could look like...

(Think small, realistic, and doable in your current life)



A positive change I'd like to notice is...

(How you'd like to feel - physically, mentally, or emotionally)



One kind reminder for myself

(Something you can come back to on harder days)





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