



BACK TO BASICS

ON FOOD

Victoria Midwood

INTRODUCTION TO BACK TO BASICS ON FOOD

This is a guide designed to help you get really clear on the basics of food and take away some of the confusion you may have about what is 'healthy' and what is not so healthy.

I will not be giving you a 'diet' to follow or telling you what NOT to eat.

But I will be explaining...

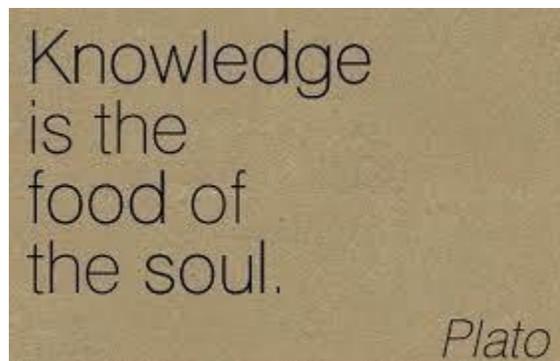
NUTRIENTS- THE KEY FACTOR TO TAKE ON BOARD

I am not going to refer to foods as good or bad, but rather whether they are HIGH or LOW in NUTRIENTS.

We ALL need to follow a way of eating that is packed full of nutrients if we want to prevent diseases like Cancer, Diabetes Types 2 & 3 (Alzheimer's), Heart attacks & strokes.

Most of you will have learned the basics at school but over time and with the explosion of new man-made, GMO, processed & manufactured foods things seem a bit more confusing!

Let me invite you then to refresh your basic knowledge on the main NUTRIENTS and to simplify what can seem a complex subject.



Main Nutrients

Natural food (not man made) comes from ANIMALS, PLANTS & TREES

All foods contain all the BIG & SMALL nutrients below. It is the amount of nutrients that determine what we class them as.

PROTEIN

FAT

CARBOHYDRATE

These are the BIG nutrients that we use to put foods into categories to make it simple and the ones our bodies need more of.

Then we look at SMALLER nutrients. We need fewer of these but all of them work together to help our body to function optimally.

Imbalances and deficiencies of these nutrients can make us believe we have a serious illness like depression or chronic fatigue, so these are vital to our wellness & disease prevention, what are they?

FIBRE, VITAMINS, MINERALS & WATER

Now, let's look at why we need these nutrients and what foods are the best sources of them.



PROTEIN

WHY DO WE NEED PROTEIN?

Protein is an essential nutrient, responsible for multiple functions in your body, including building tissue, cells and muscle, as well as making hormones and antibodies. Proteins are made of amino acids.

All ANIMAL foods are complete sources of protein

Fish **Shell fish**

Eggs **Poultry**

Beef **Lamb**

Pork **Game**

Organ meats

Nature has designed these PROTEIN foods to work well with our requirements for fat for energy, and so ALL animal sources of protein also contain the NATURAL FATS your body loves and uses along with a good variety vitamins & minerals.

Some of these proteins contain MORE NATURAL HEALTHY FATS than others.

Great sources of fats & protein are: -

WHOLE EGG

OILY FISH (Mackerel, salmon, sardines, tuna, trout & herring)

DARK POUSTRY MEAT

MEAT WTH MARBELLING (fat running through it)

SKIN ON CHICKEN & PORK

NON-ANIMAL SOURCES OF PROTEIN

Quinoa Buckwheat

Soy Quorn

These are complete proteins like the animal ones are. This means they contain all the amino acids your body needs.

Many non-animal sources of protein have some, but not all those amino acids which means its vital to eat a good variety of non-animal protein sources. If you eat eggs & dairy foods, it's a little easier to obtain all of them.

Beans (All types) Lentil

Broccoli Spinach

Kale Peppers

Nuts (all types) Peas

Cauliflower Yogurt

As with the animal proteins, nature has combined fat in vegetarian sources too. Nuts, coconuts, seeds & avocado being the best choices.

Most of these vegetarian protein foods are also CARBOHYDRATE rich too

PROTEINS to avoid are the pre-packed processed ones

Sausages Meat Pies & Burgers

Quorn Breaded Chicken nuggets

Sliced meats Fish fingers

Protein Bars Veggie burgers

These are mixed *with gluten, sugar, fillers & vegetable fats all of which cause inflammation in the body* and provided little if any good quality protein that your body can use.

TAKE AWAY on Protein

Animal sources are complete proteins that also have natural fats your body loves

Vegetarian sources are also rich in carbohydrates. A good variety need to be eaten to obtain all the required amino acids.

Vegeterian Protein Chart per 100g (3.50z)

				
Greek yogurt 17.3g of protein	Egg 13g of protein	Beans, all types 23.6g of protein	Lentils 24.6g of protein	Avacado 2g of protein
				
Green pepper 0.9g of protein	Sunflower seeds 21g of protein	Broccoli 3g of protein	Spinach, raw 2.9g of protein	Quinoa 14g of protein
				
Walnuts 15g of protein	Peanuts 26g of protein	Cauliflower 1.9g of protein	Peas 5g of protein	Kale 4.3g of protein

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FATS

Without fats, food—and eating—just wouldn't be the same. But with attention focused on reducing fats in our diets, we may forget the important role fats play in foods

Crucial for healthy [Brain function](#), [Nerve function](#) & [Hormone production](#). Fats also carry and **help the body absorb the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K**. What's more, dietary fats help us feel satisfied following meals.

Some fats are solid at room temperature some at liquid. The difference between solid and liquid fats relates to the type of fats they contain. All fats are a mixture of saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. For simplicity I will just look at the ones that are SATURATED & the ones that are not.

Fats with a **higher level of saturated fats are firmer at room temperature** and need more heat to melt.

Saturated fats are typically found in higher amounts in meats, egg yolks, whole milk, milk products & butter (animal sources) as well as palm, palm kernel, and coconut oils.

Fats with a [higher level of unsaturated fats tend to be liquid at room temperature](#).

Unsaturated fats are found in higher amounts in fish, nuts, olives, avocados and liquid vegetable oils

Why do we like fats so much?

Their unique mouthfeel supplies the rich, smooth, creamy sensation that distinguishes fats from other foods.

Fats also absorb and blend ingredient flavors and aromas to produce the distinct taste of individual foods.

Fats DO NOT make you fat, in fact fats help your body use up its stored fat for energy.

They provide 9 kcal per gram (more than twice the 4 kcal per gram found in protein & carbohydrates) and keep you satisfied for longer, so you eat LESS overall.

GREAT FAT SOURCES

Olives & Olive Oil	Coconut Oil
Butter	Ghee
Lard	Seeds
Nuts	Meat
Oily Fish	Cheese
Milk	Egg Yolks
Nut Butters	Avocado Oil

BEST FOR COOKING ON HIGH HEAT; Butter, Ghee, Coconut oil, Lard

Essential fatty acids

Omega 3 Fatty Acids are vital to cell membrane renewal and reducing inflammation, are known as ESSENTIAL this means the body has to get them from the diet it cannot make them from other sources.

WHERE TO GET OMEGA 3S

When possible, try to get omega-3 fatty acids from foods rather than supplements. Aim to eat fish high in DHA and EPA omega-3 fatty acids two to three times a week.

These include:

- Anchovies
- Bluefish

- Herring
- Mackerel
- Salmon (wild NOT farmed)
- Sardines
- Sturgeon
- Lake trout
- Tuna

FATS TO USE WITH CAUTION

All manufactured & processed fats:

Vegetable oil	Corn oil
Rapeseed oil	Nut oils
Margarine	Butter like spreads
Fried foods	Processed pre-packaged ready meals
Take-aways	Shop bought salad dressings

TAKE AWAY on Fat

Fat does not make you fat. Fat is essential to brain, cell metabolism and nerve function. The body loves **natural fats** from protein (meat, fish, eggs & dairy) & fruit and nut sources (coconut oil, olives, olive oil, avocado, flaxseeds)



CARBOHYDRATES

The primary functions of carbohydrates are to provide your body with energy. In addition, many natural carbohydrates are a great source of fibre, vitamins, minerals & phytonutrients.

Most of the carbohydrates in the foods you eat, are digested and broken down into glucose before entering the bloodstream.

If your body has enough glucose to fulfil its current needs, excess glucose can be stored as glycogen in the liver and muscle.

These stored glucose molecules are released into the blood to provide energy for movement & exercise and help maintain normal blood sugar levels between meals.

Your body can convert excess carbohydrates into triglyceride molecules and store them as fat when the glycogen stores are full and when there is too much glucose in the blood.

These are our NATURAL Carbohydrates

[All Grains](#)

[All vegetables](#)

[All fruits](#)

**Pulses & beans are also great sources of both carbohydrates & protein

***We used to believe the Brain could only use glucose for fuel, we now know that it functions very well on fat as ketones. The high fat ketogenic diet was first used to treat Epilepsy (a problem with brain) meaning that carbohydrates are NOT as vital for brain function as first thought and in excess they cause big mental health issues.

WHY DO WE GET SO CONFUSED ABOUT CARBOHYDRATES?

There are three types of **carbohydrates**: fibre, sugar and starch.

Nature is amazing at providing all the nutrients our body needs at a time when it is most useful by having certain carbohydrates grow better at certain times of the year

ROOT vegetables and bulbs that grow under the soil in Winter time are STARCHY vegetables which usually need to be COOKED before consuming these are often referred to as 'complex carbohydrates' they are a great source of slow releasing energy.

Below is a list of all the NATURAL starchy carbohydrates

STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES

White potatoes	Sweet Potatoes	Rice
Swede	Turnip	All grains
Celeriac	Radish	
Fennel	Yam	
Garlic	Onion	
Mooli	Beetroot	
Parsnip	Carrot	
Squash	Artichoke	

If we peel & cook these vegetables then mash them or caramelize them, the carbohydrate gets broken down into glucose very quickly just like the simple carbs (further down) beginning in our mouth.

A WORD ON PEAS, BEANS & LENTLS

These are also starchy vegetable carbs but are higher in protein & fibre so don't raise the blood glucose levels as quickly as the list above. These are the types of carbohydrates we need to eat in small amounts & combine with other fibre rich carbohydrates, natural fats & proteins.

NON-STARCH or FIBROUS CARBOHYDRATES

Leafy green veggies are the stars of the CARB FAMILY.

Cauliflower	Cabbage
Spinach	Collard
Spouts	Spring green
Asparagus	French beans
Runner Beans	Courgette
Marrow	Aubergine
Peppers	Salad leaves
Snow peas	Mange tout
Herbs	Beetroot leaves
Celery	Chicory
Bok choy	Chinese leaf
Bean sprouts	Okra

These are the carbohydrates we need to eat in larger amounts than the starchy ones and should feature in EVERY meal.

The more variety the better to provide your body with plenty of fibre, water, vitamins & minerals & phytonutrients.

They need to be chewed well to break them down in the mouth before swallowing
They are vital in healthy digestion and keeping things regular!

SUGARY OR SIMPLE CARBOHYDATES

Ripe fruit	Table Sugar
Dairy (Especially low fat)	Honey, treacle, maple syrup
Bread	Pasta
Sweets	Cake
Tortilla chips	Sweet popcorn
Biscuits	Ice-cream
Breaded & Battered foods	Pizza Dough
Bagels	Wraps
Fruit juice	Jam
Jelly	Dried fruits
Cereals & cereal bars	Bought sauces & dressings
Pie & pastries	Coffee Syrups

Simple rule of thumb if its man-man comes in a box or packet its going to contain simple carbohydrates.

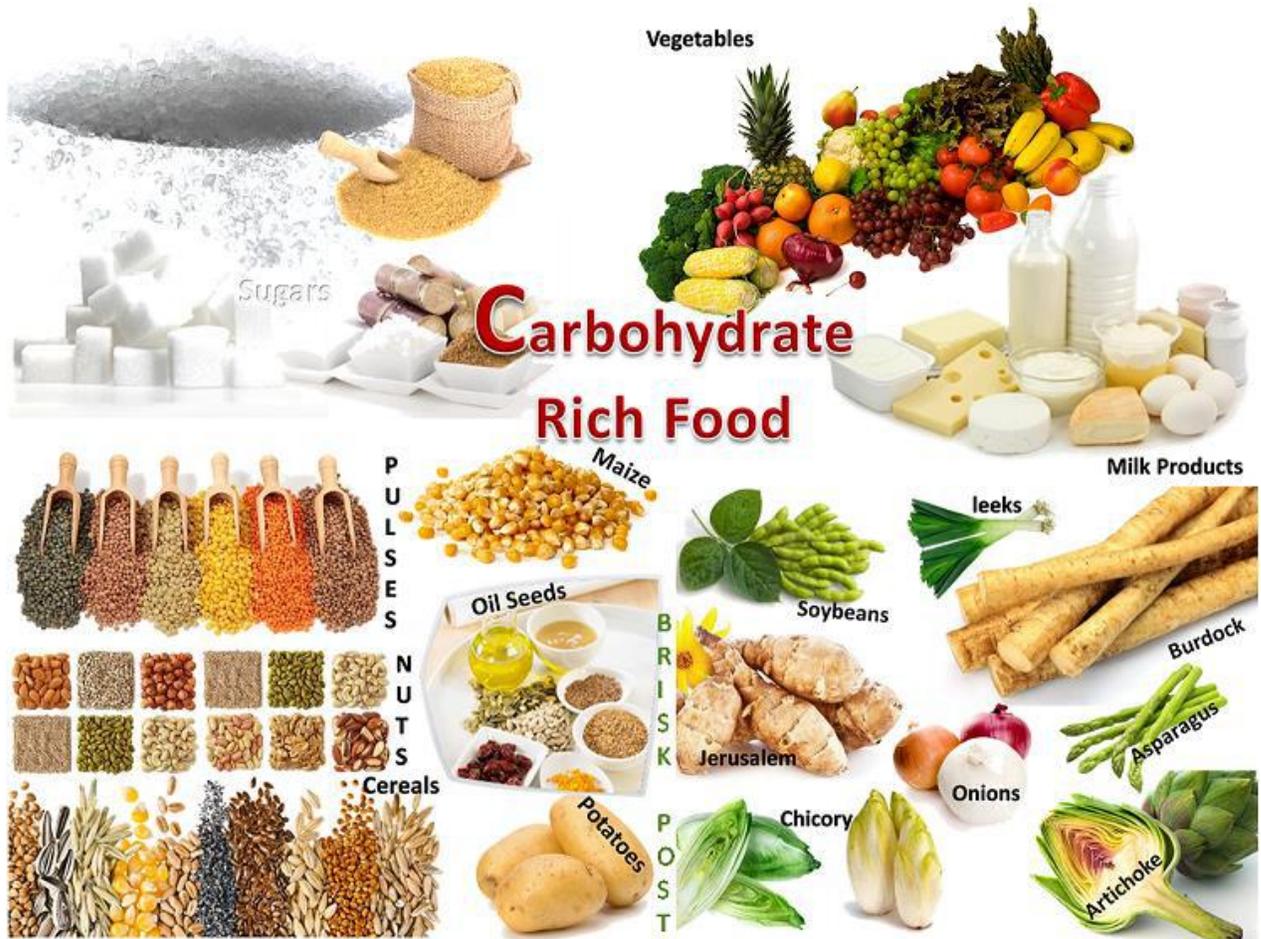
TAKE AWAY on Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates provide energy, fibre, vitamins & minerals, its portion size & type that counts. Rather than 'banning' carbohydrates think about the different foods that contain carbohydrates on a spectrum.

On one side are the foods you can eat in unlimited quantities — nutrient-dense, fiber-rich natural carb sources like green veggies and fruit.

Towards the middle are nutrient-dense, but also carbohydrate-dense, foods such as white potatoes, carrots, parsnips, rice that should be balanced out with those at the 'eat as much as you like' ones.

On the other end of the spectrum are foods like breads and pasta, juice & fruit. These still have a place in YOUR diet, they require balancing out in order to create a diet that provides nutrients we need, so no daily or multiple times a day, and better eaten post intense exercise. Eat these carb sources with a good source of protein and use them as a 'side dish' rather than the bulk of the meal. you can still enjoy them!



VITAMINS & MINERALS

Vitamins, minerals are vital components to sustaining life!

They are organic compounds that are required by the body for healthy living. Proper balance ensures proper mental and physical functioning.

On its own, the body cannot produce all of the vitamins, minerals and amino acids that it needs, so we need to get them from food sources.

There are 14 recognised vitamins (I have included the names that you may see listed on ingredients labels)

The FAT Soluble ones are:

Vitamin A (retinol, retinal, beta carotene) D, E & K

BEST Sources

Vitamin A: beef, liver, eggs, shrimp, fish, fortified milk, sweet potatoes, carrots, pumpkins, spinach, mangoes (**Eyesight, growth, appetite and taste**)

Vitamin D: Fortified milk and cereals, fatty fish, Sun (**Helps maintain normal blood levels of calcium and phosphorus, muscle strength, immune system**)

Vitamin E: vegetables oils, leafy green vegetables, whole grains, nuts (**Antioxidant, Protects vitamin A and certain lipids from damage**)

Vitamin K: Cabbage, eggs, milk, spinach, broccoli, kale (**Activates proteins and calcium essential to blood clotting**)

The WATER Soluble ones:

B-1: (thiamine) ham, soymilk, watermelon, acorn squash (**Nervous system, digestion, muscles, heart, alcohol-damaged nerve tissues**)

B-2: (riboflavin) milk, yogurt, cheese, whole and enriched grains and cereals (**Growth, skin, nails, hair, sensitive lips and tongue, eyesight, the breakdown of protein, fats & carbs**)

B-3: (niacin) meat, poultry, fish, fortified and whole grains, mushrooms, potatoes
(Metabolism, skin, blood cells, brain, and nervous system)

B-5: (pantothenic acid) chicken, whole grains, broccoli, avocados, mushrooms
(Metabolism, helps make fat, neurotransmitters, steroid hormones, and hemoglobin)

B-6: (pyridoxine) meat, fish, poultry, legumes, tofu and other soy products, bananas
(Preventing skin conditions, nerve problems, helps the body absorb protein and carbohydrate)

B-7: (biotin) Whole grains, eggs, soybeans, fish **(Metabolism, glucose synthesis break down of fatty acids, bones and hair)**

B-9: (folic acid) Fortified grains and cereals, asparagus, spinach, broccoli, legumes (black-eyed peas and chickpeas), orange juice **(Production of red blood cells, lowers levels of homocysteine and may reduce heart disease risk)**

B-12: (cobalamin) Meat, poultry, fish, milk, cheese, fortified soymilk and cereals
(Making red blood and the formation of the nerves)

Vitamin C: Citrus fruit, potatoes, broccoli, bell peppers, spinach, strawberries, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts **(may lower the risk for cancers, immune system, collagen, antioxidant, eyes, hormone production)**

Antioxidant Vitamins (A, C & E) are known as ACE

B Vitamins all work towards health metabolism & energy, gut health, mood & hormone production, as well as great hair, skin, muscles & eyes and we all need to ensure we get enough.

Minerals

Minerals are another component to a healthy mind and body.

Minerals are required for building strong bones, producing hormones and regulating heartbeat.

Minerals are divided into two categories: Macro (Ones we need more of) minerals and Trace minerals (ones we need in smaller amounts)

Macro

Calcium: yogurt, cheese, milk, salmon, leafy green vegetables (**bones and teeth, nerve function, muscle contraction, blood clotting**)

Chloride: salt (**Balances fluids in the body. A component of stomach acid, essential to digestion**)

Magnesium: Spinach, broccoli, legumes, seeds, whole-wheat bread (**Converting energy from food, cell repair, building strong bones, teeth and muscles and regulating body temperature**)

Potassium: meat, milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes (**Balances fluids in the body. Helps maintain steady heartbeat and send nerve impulses. Needed for muscle contractions**)

Sodium: salt, soy sauce, vegetables (**Balances fluids in the body. Helps send nerve impulses. Needed for muscle contractions. Impacts blood pressure**)

Trace:

Chromium: meat, poultry, fish, nuts, cheese (**helps maintain normal blood glucose levels, and is needed to free energy from glucose**)

Copper: shellfish, nuts, seeds, whole-grain products, beans, prunes (**iron metabolism and immune system. Helps make red blood cells**)

Fluoride: fish, teas (**bone formation. Keeps dental cavities from starting or worsening**)

Iodine: Iodized salt, seafood (**Thyroid function, helps set body temperature and influences nerve and muscle function, reproduction, and growth**)

Iron: red meat, poultry, eggs, fruits, green vegetables, fortified bread (**Red blood cells and muscle function, white blood cells and the immune system**)

Manganese: nuts, legumes, whole grains, tea (**Helps form bones. Helps metabolise amino acids, cholesterol, and carbohydrates**)

Selenium: Organ meat, seafood, Brazil nuts (**Helps regulate thyroid hormone activity, antioxidant**)

Zinc: meat, shellfish, legumes, whole grains
(**Immune system, taste, smell, the breakdown of protein, fat and carbohydrate**)

Minerals work with vitamins to help optimise health especially the function of the endocrine system, and hormone production, bone, nerve & muscle function, blood oxygenation, immune function, blood pressure & heart function

Many women experiencing weight gain, low energy & feeling everything is an effort, are often told its menopause or their thyroid and are offered HRT, Thyroxine or anti-depressants, when actually they are vitamin & mineral deficient.

As you can see Iodine and Selenium are vital for thyroid function and body temperature regulation (as is a good night's sleep)

Zinc, magnesium and all the B's are vital for metabolism and energy.

This is where supplementation comes into play if you know you probably are not getting enough or a variety of all of the above nutrients.

This is something I work through with my coaching clients, (Please get in touch if you feel drawn to work with me to help you get your Nutrition, Health & Lifestyle back on track to a fitter happier future)

One prescription does NOT fit all

That said, because of the poor soil quality and the fact that even fresh food may have been sitting in storage for months before it reaches the supermarket shelf, we would ALL benefit from taking a good quality Multivitamin & Mineral supplement along with an omega 3 daily.

My recommended brands are at the end.

CALORIES

I CANNOT TALK ABOUT FOOD BASICS WITHOUT LOOKING AT CALORIES

Calories DO count but I do not advocate YOU count calories, as not all calories are broken down and utilized by the body in the same way. Calories are a way of measuring energy.

The body does NOT work on the simple math's equation Calories in = calories out.

You WILL lose weight if you eat fewer calories than your body needs but it's how you create that deficit, and the TYPES of NUTRIENTS you eat, and when you eat them, that will determine whether that is water weight, muscle weight or fat weight.

Knowing the basics of calories in foods is very useful in general, for example it is good to know that an average chicken breast or an average 100-gram portion of beans – both protein foods Contain around 120-160 kcal

And an average 100-gram portion of broccoli or cauliflower - both fibrous carbohydrates Contains around 25 kcal

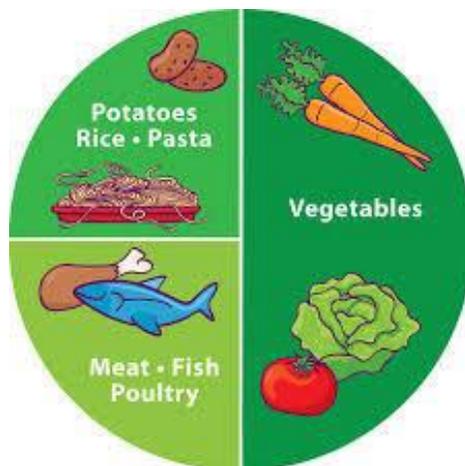
One **tablespoon 15 grams** of olive oil or coconut oil – both great fats

Contains 126 kcal

An average MEAL containing good fats, protein & fibrous carbohydrates IDEALLY will

Contain 400 kcal

add in some starchy carbohydrates too to take it up to around 500-600 kcal.



How do you know how many calories YOUR body needs?

To **maintain your current weight** simply take your weight in POUNDS & add a Zero.
Example: Current weight 140 pounds + zero = 1400 kcal

This amount will keep your body functioning if you stayed in bed all day and do pretty much nothing! Its known as your 'base' metabolic rate.

Start moving around and your body will use up more calories. Just moving around in general used to add up to a lot of calories hence we got the average calorie requirement of a women as 2000 kcal and for a man 2500 kcal (they are usually taller and have more muscles so use more calories doing the same activities) we used to walk more, clean our homes manually, have active jobs that didn't require us to be seated all day long,

But in today's world we are much LESS active than we used to be. It makes sense then that we should aim to revise the average number of calories we think we need, to reflect how ACTIVE we are.

NB: Busy does NOT = active!

The other thing to know is that just because a food contains a certain number of calories, it doesn't mean our body can access all those calories to use as energy.

Meaning that the kcal figures of foods are a **GUIDELINE** not an absolute.

Finally, on calories

YOUR body does not use up the same amount of calories day in day out, it varies from day to day, so the amount we eat should also vary from day to day!

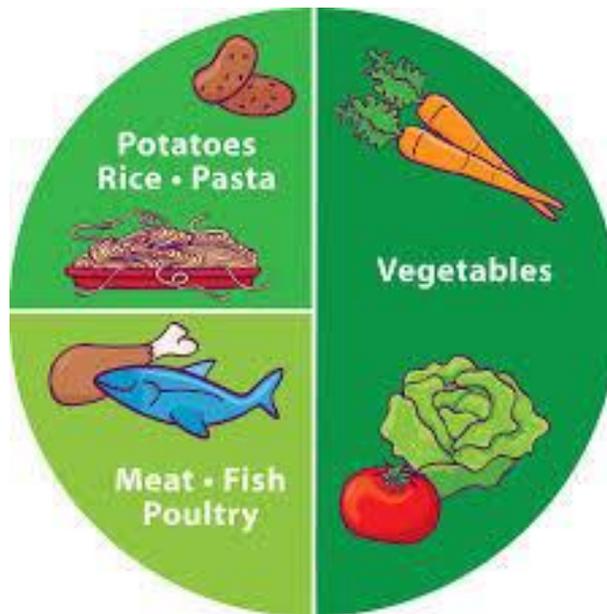
This is what makes the 5:2 diet or intermittent fasting so effective at improving health and weight loss, you DO not eat the same amount of food each day.

Generally, the 'eat less do less', 'eat more do more' protocol is much more effective at weight management than the old 'eat less, do more' model that leaves you craving and miserable and leads to yoyo weight loss & weight gain as its unsustainable long term.

Your Health & Happiness is powerfully linked to what you eat and how much of the nutrients from those food choices your body absorbs.

This book is designed to be your 'Basics Bible' to food. I don't cove Digestion, hormones, inflammation or medications which al will pay a role in how well your body handles its food!

PUTTING A MEAL TOGETHER



The bulk of our meals should be built on veggies, natural fats & proteins with smaller amounts of starchy carbohydrates than we may have been used to.

Have fruits as dessert to 'finish' the meal and save the higher fat higher carb desserts like ice-cream, cheesecake, pies with cream or custard or cake and pastries as a one or twice a week only thing.

Actually treat these foods as 'treats' NOT as your daily diet and your heart & brain will thank you (not to mention your hormones, muscles & joints!)

Keep it simple, buy fresh organic where possible, grass fed meat & butter, wild salmon not farmed, but above all eat food you LIKE!

Play around with different herbs & spices, different methods of cooking and different types of cuisine.

Make food fun! Eat with others, focus only on your food - not the telly, computer or a book - slow down and chew every mouthful well to help your body access all those lovely nutrients to help it repair & function at its best.

Brands of supplements I recommend from personal use are:

[Phil Richards Performance](#)

[CYTOPLAN](#)

[BIOCARE](#)

[VIRIDIAN](#)

[SOLGAR](#)

I do hope this Back to Basics on Food has been helpful and cleared up some of your confusion about what food is what and how we should be eating for health.

Please contact me by email vixmid@yahoo.co.uk if you know you need personal one to one guidance and help on implementing lifestyle changes, getting to grips with your diet, hormones, stress and relationships.

Whether is one to one coaching in person or online or the phone, or a Reboot retreat I am here to help you FEEL happier and get healthier for life!

It all begins with you being Aware first, then taking Responsibility second for the lifestyle choices you make, because choices matter.

Lifestyle IS LIFE

Your Coach

Victoria Midwood

www.thrivenotstrive.com

Join the *Lifestyle IS LIFE* group [here](#)