

LIVE WELL



WORK WELL

Health and wellness tips for your work and life—
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Debunking 3 Common Food Myths

Eating healthy can sometimes feel like a chore—especially when it seems like every month there's a new nutritional study contradicting one from before. To help you sort through fact and fiction, here are three common health and nutrition myths debunked:

- 1. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.** Breakfast does kick-start your metabolism—and that boost of energy is more pronounced in the morning than the evening, according to a 2015 Italian study published in the *International Journal of Obesity*. However, a 2016 UK study in the same journal found that skipping or waiting longer to eat breakfast does not necessarily lead to an increased intake at lunch or make you hungrier during the afternoon. Instead of pinning your hopes on a boosted metabolism to offset your morning fry-up, just opt for healthier fare such as fresh fruit and yoghurt.
- 2. Caffeine stunts growth.** While there are a slew of negative effects linked to drinking too much caffeine, stunted growth is not one of them. Caffeine can actually help protect against type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, according to a study from Harvard University. The European Food Safety Authority recommends a daily limit of 400 mg of caffeine, or 4 cups of coffee.
- 3. The average person must drink eight glasses of water each day.** Although it is true that you need 2.5 litres (or roughly eight glasses) of water per day to stay healthy, you actually get the majority of that from other sources. Your body absorbs water from fruits, vegetables and even things like beer. However, if you are feeling dehydrated, water is the best thing to drink.

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Mindfulness Can Help Ease Back Pain

A recent US study has shown that regularly employing mindfulness techniques may help ease lower back pain, which affects nearly 1 out of 10 Britons, according to the NHS.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is comprised of yoga postures, meditation and an increased self-awareness of thought patterns, and it can be used to treat both mental and physical conditions. This practice is similar to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which is a form of talking therapy used to help manage problems by changing how the patient thinks and behaves. Both practices are a departure from the usual treatment of exercise, spinal manipulation and pain killers.

The study divided 342 participants (ranging in age from 20 to 70 years) that had nonspecific lower back pain lasting for more than three months into three groups: MBSR, CBT and usual care. Those assigned to either the MBSR or CBT groups received eight weekly training sessions with follow-ups performed at six and 12 months. The researchers found at each of the follow-up sessions that both the MBSR and CBT groups were equally effective at significantly improving the participants' motor functions and pain when compared with usual care.

While both MBSR and CBT were equally effective, it may be difficult for some Britons to find NHS-funded CBT, as the treatment is not available everywhere. However, MBSR can be used without the aid of a therapist and can be learned through manuals, online tutorials or apps. As MBSR can be used to treat a variety of conditions, here are two of the best mindfulness apps:

- 1. The Mindfulness App** introduces mindfulness techniques to beginners and is free.
- 2. Buddhify** offers over 80 unique guided meditations. The app costs £3.99 for iOS or £1.99 for Android.



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Simple Summer Mediterranean Pasta

Try this simple, healthy and delicious Mediterranean pasta dish.

- 1 medium red onion, cut into wedges
- 2 courgettes, cut into chunks
- 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 250 grams punnet cherry tomatoes
- 140 grams fusilli or other short pasta
- 1 cup basil leaves, chopped
- 1 block Parmesan, grated

Preheat your gas oven to 220 degrees Celsius or your fan oven to 200 degrees Celsius. While the oven is preheating, put the onion, courgettes and garlic into a large ovenproof dish. Then, coat the vegetables with olive oil, and season with salt and pepper.

Place the dish in the oven for 15 minutes. Then, take the dish out and add the tomatoes. Stir, and then place the dish back in the oven for an additional 15 minutes.

While the vegetables are roasting, bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Once the water reaches a rolling boil, drop the pasta in and cook according to the package's instructions—generally 10 minutes. Then, drain the pasta.

Take the dish out of the oven and remove the skin from the garlic cloves. Then mash the cloves against the sides of the dish and stir them into the vegetables. Add the pasta and basil to the dish and mix well.

Serve the pasta in bowls and top with freshly grated Parmesan.



Trick Yourself Into Drinking Less

Drinking too much? Blame your wine glass. According to a June study from the University of Cambridge, drinking wine out of larger glasses may encourage us to drink more, even when the amount of wine in each glass stays the same.

Over the course of 16 weeks, the researchers observed how the size of wine glasses (either the smaller 250, standard 300 or larger 370 millilitres) used in a Cambridge bar and restaurant affected the number of glasses that customers ordered. To help standardise their study, the researchers limited the pours to either 125- or 175-millilitre servings. Every two weeks, the establishment would change the size of its wine glasses—alternating between the three sizes.

Although the relationship between the smaller and standard glasses were inconclusive, the relationship between the standard and larger glasses revealed something surprising. The bar saw an increase in sales of 14.4 per cent, while the restaurant saw an increase of 8.2 per cent—just from changing the glass size from the standard 300 to the larger 370 millilitres. Based upon their findings, the researchers believe that a larger glass may change our perceptions about the amount of wine in the glass, which then encourages us to drink faster and order more.

Even though you cannot control the size of the glass that an establishment serves your drink in, you can control the amount that you drink. The NHS recommends that adults regularly drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week, or the equivalent of 6 pints of average strength beer or 10 small glasses of low strength wine. By drinking sensibly, you can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and liver disease.

The Many Benefits of Mindfulness

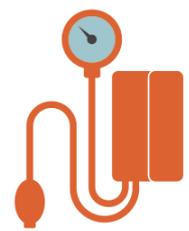
Regularly practising mindfulness can do the following for you:



Relieve stress



Treat heart disease



Lower blood pressure



Reduce chronic pain



Alleviate
gastrointestinal
difficulties



Improve sleep

Source: Harvard Medical School