



FENTI FITNESS  
HEALTH FITNESS & WELLBEING

# 25 Nutrition myths — busted!

Forget what you've heard about low carbs,  
fat-free, gluten-free and more



Nutrition myths are everywhere today, they are hard to avoid, and they can derail your best intentions. So let's skip the fads in favour of some home-cooked truths.

1

## **A calorie is a calorie**

Yes eating 10,000 calories a day— from fresh and non-processed foods will make you gain weight. But eat that in processed rubbish and trust me you'll feel a lot worse. Our bodies are much more complex than that of simple math. Remember this - every bite you eat can affect your hormones, brain chemistry and your metabolism. Quality and balance of quantity of the calories is key here.

2

## **Breakfast is the most important meal of the day**

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition indicates that there is no difference in weight or general health between those who eat breakfast and those that decide to skip this meal. Experts stress that you should listen to your body and eat when you're hungry. Many people don't wake up hungry, and therefore it is not necessary to force feed yourself just to get that so-called 'most important' meal in.

3

## **You must eat regular small meals to lose weight**

Some experts argue that eating small portions every few hours will keep your metabolism working at a high level. However, for many people, this only makes them hungrier and can end up causing them to consume more calories than needed. The best number of meals to consume are the ones that fit into your schedule, if you are someone who is out of the house for most of the day taking 4 or 5 prepped meals would be a hassle so having 3 meals a day would work best. The timings and amount of meals do not matter as much as the meals themselves!

4

## **Fat-free dairy is better for you**

Fat doesn't make you fat! Having fat in food is actually beneficial, without it, it can taste unpleasant. The majority of low-fat foods are filled with sugars to improve their taste, which we now know is the driving force behind most disease and weight gain.

5

## **A glass of wine at night can help you sleep better**

While wine may make it seem easier to fall asleep, alcohol has been shown to disturb sleep patterns and can cause people to wake up multiple times throughout the night. If the quality of your sleep declines, this can lead to everything from weight gain to lack of muscle recovery.

6

## **Gluten-free food is healthier**

Even if a cookie is gluten-free, it still contains the same amount of sugar. Also, the majority of gluten-free foods tend to be low or free of fibre (especially packaged ones) which is essential for keeping you feeling full for longer. As always a balanced diet is key, there are no good or bad foods.

7

## **Low carb is the best way to lose weight**

All macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein and fats) are vital for a healthy and balanced diet. The best way to lose weight in a healthy and sustainable way is to put yourself into a calorie deficit (approx. 300-500 calories under your maintenance). Prioritise a balance of all nutrients. The carbs people demonise such as bread, pasta, chips, etc can be controlled or lowered to aid weight loss but should not be completely removed. Additionally, most people crave these foods so by restricting you are more likely to not enjoy the weight loss journey (therefore less likely to stick to it) or end up bingeing and feeling terrible/guilty about it.

8

## **Weight loss requires only willpower**

People can often be biologically addicted to sugar; therefore, willpower becomes useless when processed, sugar-laden junk food is in charge of your brain chemistry. Weight loss is better achieved by optimizing nutrition through eating enough of the right kinds of foods, managing stress, and getting sufficient sleep and exercise.

9

## **Eating celery burns more calories than the celery itself**

It's a food myth that celery has "negative" calories, however with less than 10 calories per serving and plenty of fiber, it's a great snack for maintaining a healthy weight.

10

## **To minimize fat and calories, always remove the skin before cooking chicken**

Chicken skin can increase its caloric value by around 25 to 30 percent. Luckily the skin can easily be removed after cooking as cooking poultry with the skin still on helps preserve its natural juices and prevent it from drying out. Cook with the skin on—and then remove before serving.

11

## **Avoid eggs because of their cholesterol content**

Researchers have found eggs don't actually contribute to high cholesterol. In fact, eggs are an inexpensive source of many nutrients, including zinc and iron, antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin, vitamin D, and the brain-boosting chemical choline. However, this research has been debated over the years so don't overdo it - The American Heart Association says one whole egg or two egg whites a day can be part of a healthy diet. Keep cholesterol in check by monitoring saturated fat in your diet.

12

## **Using margarine instead of butter will save calories**

Butter and margarine have a similar amount of calories. While margarine is made from vegetable oils, developed as a more healthy alternative to butter (which contains cholesterol and saturated fat), some margarines can in fact be less healthy due to containing trans fats, which have even more adverse effects on cholesterol levels and heart health.

13

## **Fat-free and low-fat foods are always better than full-fat versions**

When it comes to meat and some dairy products, it's generally true that the less fat, the better. However, with packaged/processed foods, when manufacturers remove fat from certain foods, they need to compensate for the taste by adding other not-so-healthy ingredients such as sugar. In fact, most nutrition experts believe you're better off avoiding artificially fat-free foods and opting instead for whole foods with healthy fats, such as nuts.

14

## **Red wine is good-for-you**

Recent studies have found that ethanol (the stuff that makes alcohol) is what raises levels of good cholesterol and helps reduce clotting factors that contribute to heart attack and stroke. So, in moderation may be classed as healthy, however many studies have shown that red wine and other alcohols can increase the risk of many diseases so should not be drunk in excess.

15

## **Sports drinks are good for you**

Sports drinks are usually full of carbohydrates and electrolytes to help replenish the stores after an intense workout. These drinks may be beneficial to top-level athletes who need to maybe-train again on the same day, help recovery or maintain their energy levels high. An average person does not benefit much from these drinks and may just be adding carbs, sugar, sodium to their diets with no benefits

# 16

## **Eating healthy is too expensive**

While eating healthy may take planning and time in the kitchen, eating healthy on a budget is definitely possible. By stocking up on wholefoods such as brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, dried beans and lentils, and frozen vegetables you are able to keep the price down and then batch cook or meal prep your meals. Finally, avoid pre-washed, pre-cut, individual servings of produce as they are often more expensive, and you get less food for your money!

# 17

## **A detox diet will clean toxins out the body**

There's a huge lack of evidence proving the benefits of dietary cleanses as the truth is it's not necessary to 'cleanse' our bodies as they do that themselves! Our liver, kidneys and gastrointestinal tract perform a personal detox every day. To rejuvenate your body, it is more important to eat more whole foods, drinking water and removing highly processed foods and refined sugars from your diet.

# 18

## **You shouldn't eat anything after 7 pm**

While it is true that the habit of midnight snacking can lead to weight gain or prevent weight loss, this is not due to the time you're eating, instead the amount of unnecessary food you're eating which increases your calorie intake. Also, the comfort foods that people tend to choose as their late-night snack are often highly calorific such as chocolate and crisps which will not help you in achieving your health and fitness goals.

# 19

## **The best way to decrease your sodium intake is to stop using the salt shaker**

The problem isn't as simple as stopping yourself from adding salt to your favourite meals. It is recommended to have no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day however many people consume significantly more than that. Much of this excess sodium comes from the salts added to processed, ready-to-eat foods and restaurant meals. By limiting processed foods and enjoying more fresh, home cooked meals you can easily reduce your sodium intake.

# 20

## **Supplements are a waste of money**

A nutrient-dense, well-rounded diet is the most important way to improve and maintain health, however the correct use of supplements can also be beneficial in many ways. This is especially the case those with health conditions like type 2 diabetes, as well as those who take common medications like statins, proton pump inhibitors, birth control, and antidiabetic medications, as by taking specific supplements they can replace the crucial nutrients in their bodies. Even for the average person supplements can be beneficial such as supplementing Vitamin D during the winter months to keep your immune system and mood increased.

# 21

## **All smoothies and juices are healthy**

Many juices and smoothies are highly nutritious such a nutrient-dense smoothie or freshly made juice composed primarily of non-starchy vegetables, which can offer a great way to increase your vitamin, mineral, and antioxidant intake. However, it's important to remember that the majority of pre-made juices and smoothies contain high levels of sugar and calories therefore when consumed in excess, they can promote weight gain and other health issues such as tooth decay.

# 22

## **Tracking calories and macros is necessary for weight loss**

Although tracking your calorie intake can be a useful tool when trying to lose excess body fat using apps such as 'MyFitnessPal', this can also be detrimental to your health. Obsessing over your calorie intake has been largely associated with an increased risk of disordered eating tendencies, which can result in people becoming extremely unhealthy, both physically and mentally.

# 23

## **You're not allowed treats**

By depriving yourself of foods you love and enjoy this often make us want to eat them even more, therefore you will eventually give in to temptation and abandon your efforts, and this can lead to feelings of guilt and failure, triggering you to indulge even more to make yourself feel better, or go the other way and restrict yourself further which is also very unhealthy. It's important to remember there's no harm in allowing yourself a treat now and again, and that by doing so you're not 'failing' yourself. Plan to have small amounts of the foods you love and savour every mouthful.

# 24

## **To lose fat, do cardio on an empty stomach**

Firstly, it's very important that if you're exercising near maximal capacity (for example HIIT, sprints, heavy lifting, etc.), you should eat one or two hours before, or you're likely to underperform due to a lack of energy. If you do choose to exercise on an empty stomach, opt for some moderate form of cardio (aerobic exercise), such as jogging, as for these exercises performance and energy expenditure are similar in the fed and fasted state. With regards to fat loss, there is evidence to support fasted and unfasted exercise benefits, so instead of focusing on that I would recommend focusing on what works best for you. Some people prefer to work-out on an empty stomach some people hate it so do what feels right to you so that it is easier for you to keep to your training sessions and enjoy them.

# 25

## **Drink More Water to Peel off Pounds**

It is without a doubt that water is crucial for your body, however it is not an effective weight loss aid. This being said, if by drinking water you're kept away from drinking high-calorie drinks, then it can help you lose weight however by simply adding more water to your diet, without changing anything else, makes no difference to your weight.



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