**Be who you “wannabe”**

**Discover who you already are**

If you are here, reading this, it might be because you’ve come to find that the leap into a fitness journey might be OK when we are full of motivation, new year pump and our Pinterest boards are brimming with quotes that make us feel like Wonder Woman, but staying there, with that same “uumph” proves difficult. I know. I’ve been there too. Left deflated 12 weeks into a program, unable to see, no matter how much I squint my eyes, a Victoria’s Secret model staring back at me.

I’ve been a personal trainer since 2014 and I’ve been obsessed with getting the body I thought I wanted since 1996.

Somehow, up until a few years ago, something in me felt like I didn’t deserve the life I wanted, let alone the body.

Being comfy with who I am and knowing I deserve the life I want, is still a big work in progress, but, the fact I am still working on myself is also the reason I might remotely qualify to run a workshop or write this guide.

I say this with such an open heart. NO-ONE, NO-ONE is better than anyone. If I can learn to love myself, trust myself, get fit, find balance, find the courage to even take a workshop or write this here, anyone can.

You all deserve the lifestyle you want.

All I want to do is make you feel like everything you feel is valid, and everything you want is possible.

How can I be sure that everything we want is possible? OK I’m not God or Oprah… but I do believe in one of them wholeheartedly (here’s looking at you Ms Winfrey) and they say very similar things.

**What you desire, and who you want to be already resides in you.**

All the hope and passion, all the good intentions and love and kindness and joy that you need to A) get the body you want B) the life you want or C) the strength to get both; you have that power in you, because we all do.

Yes, some people have “better” circumstances or opportunities. But it may just take a change in perspective and how you look at things, to start believing that you DO have what it takes to be happy, comfy in your skin and evolve into the person you ‘wannabe.’

**Prelude: The Summer of 1996**

Being who we ‘wannabe’ is an odd concept, because it changes over time. What does it really mean? Who I wannabe often contradicts with a lot of what I do or how I act and I find myself never quite getting it right.

I want to be a “zen” person, yet I shout at the bus when it doesn’t stop. I want to be wild and free spirited, but I’m a control freak. I want to love myself deeply, but, I find self hate talk far too easy…

Since the age of about 11, I have felt this desire to be pretty, to be special, be worthy, be more, be enough.

I think that we are sold this story that we need to change. We need to do better, be better, we need to get that long glossy hair ‘cos Pantene says so and we need to get that thigh gap ‘cos Heat magazine told me to and we need to get the dream job, whilst going out partying all the time because we are fun as well as career minded. It’s totally exhausting.

We should fit in seeing friends, our family, network, go to yoga, the gym, climb a famous mountain, stay in posh hotels in Bali, have nice shoes, not care if we have nice shoes, learn to speak Spanish, read the full series of that book Sharon told you about, eat all the good food because life wouldn’t be life without experiencing it ALL. But also…. be slim, healthy, fit, have a bum, don’t have a bum, boobs, but not fake ones, a waist, and abs and own ALL the Gymshark (if only we could get on the website whilst they still had it in stock.)

And whilst trying to do, and be all of this, above all… don’t try too hard at it, whatever you do, and if you do, don’t make out like you do. Or worse still, absolutely DO NOT say that you love your life or yourself because *God forbid* you would be so arrogant and entitled to believe or think that if you do get the life you want, you can love yourself, and if you don’t get the life you want, you can *still* love yourself.

Basically, you can be anyone you want to be… but not like that.

I was 11. It was the summer of 1996 and ‘Wannabe’ by The Spice Girls was playing on the radio for like the 100,000th time and I was dancing in my undies to it, for the 10,000th time and I was free and beautiful and full of joy and hope and gratitude and love. That whole summer as I danced away and I got ready for my last year at primary school I didn’t notice those soft long pubes growing on my fanny, or that B.O smell under my pits. I didn’t see that ‘muffin top’ as ‘muffin top’ because until you know it’s a ‘muffin top’, why would you perceive it to be anything other than skin?

To be fair, I didn’t notice that I was losing that ‘muffin top’ all summer long. Because I hadn’t noticed it had existed. That puberty was doing something with my hormones and I was ‘slimming down’- I didn’t notice ‘cos I hadn’t noticed I was ‘fat’ to begin with. I didn’t notice the need for a thigh gap or the want for hair that didn’t frizz. I was quite preoccupied with just ‘being’ me, and getting the dance moves right.

And then, on this one day, as the summer ended, I got out the bath naked, dancing to my favourite song “Now here’s the story from A to Z…” and I caught myself in the mirror and stopped, startled.

I saw these half-filled boobs in the mirror, pointing sweetly outwards. My belly was less prominent than it had been which made my fanny pad all the more noticeable with those soft hairs covering the swollen, puffy surface area…. and I recalled what my grandma had said to me a few weeks before.

**“You’re so pretty now, look at you, you’ve lost all that puppy FAT”**

I stood there and took this all in. This deep dark sinking feeling and I no longer heard Mel B rapping in the background. Something was different. I didn’t feel how I had always felt. A light bulb had gone out. If I had known then what I know now, it was this distinct feeling of discomfort and disconnect. The distinct realisation, that when I had felt pretty before, all those many other times- when I looked in the mirror and proclaimed, “Mum I’m pretty”- that actually, in fact, I hadn’t been. Because it would seem that I had been mistaken. **Now** I had lost that belly and my face had slimmed down and the chub had fallen away. **NOW** I was pretty.

I didn’t know that feeling would stay with me for another 20 odd years. I didn’t know that, that one thought “I hadn’t been pretty before” and those thoughts that followed after, would bury themselves deep inside me and inform my beliefs and my actions in the future. I didn’t know what work I was going to have to do to get that little girl back, pre-summer of 1996. I didn’t know that ‘who I wanted to be’, was who I already had been and that I was going to take 20 odd years to rediscover her. Then, one day, hopefully, I would be able to share that journey and help others do the same…

**‘Be who we wannabe, and discover who we already are’**

**Exercise 1: Discover who you already are.**

Close your eyes… Take a deep breath. In through your nose and out through your mouth.

I want you to think back to a time when you were really happy. When you felt free, open, without a care in the world. Take it back to a time before school, before life came and got in the way. Picture yourself in a body that you hadn’t put into any context yet, a body that you loved. A body that you didn’t compare or judge.

Take your time. Breathe in, breathe out. Sit with this memory as still and as clear as possible.

This is who we were before we stopped believing in ourselves, before we started second guessing ourselves, before we started to believe all the thoughts we subliminally picked up along the way about needing to be more, needing to be better, needing to be enough. Who we were before that moment, IS exactly who we are. I think what we need to do rediscover that person.

**Before that though…**

We have to admit we actually want all the things we want, that we want to be who we say we want to be. Because somehow, along the way, we have got so good at getting bogged down in beliefs that hold us back, that we become addicted to them. The beliefs that we attach ourselves to perversely make us feel safe. Allowing us to never try, to never push ourselves out of this comfort zone. However, in this safe space, nothing grows, adapts or evolves, so we must try as hard as we can to get past these thoughts.

“But I don’t feel safe.” I hear you say.

No, you probably don’t. Do you feel depressed and agitated? Frustrated that you’re not in the skin you want to be in, living the life you want to live? Because, surely, if it didn’t feel safe to us somehow, why would we still be here, doing this, living this lifestyle we don’t want? Why haven’t we changed it? If we really wanted it, wouldn’t we just be able to get it? And if we haven’t, are we willing to do what it takes? Will we agree to step out of our comfort zone? Will we decide that we do want to change our story, discover our old one so that we can be aware of what we hang onto, what we chose to believe, so that we can just… **let go?**

We are all force-fed this idea that we need to suffer in order to get what we want. And whilst you may not entirely believe it yet, you are suffering.

You are suffering, believing that there is a limit to how happy you can be. In believing that happiness will come from reaching the end goal. In believing deep down, somewhere, somehow that choosing to believe that we are not pretty enough, skinny enough, smart enough, funny enough, popular enough, we can find that ‘enough-ness’ by relying on someone else’s standards, someone else’s expectations.

This is *living in fear*. And there is no reason whatsoever we should have to live here.

The stories we tell ourselves, are just that. *Stories.* So why not tell ourselves ones filled with joy and happiness?

One way to start really moving towards happiness is to discover what thoughts make us unhappy.

**Thoughts are our biggest power.**

Our thoughts are what ignite our feelings and our thoughts are based on a set of beliefs. About who we are, who other people think we are, who they think they are and what we think life is.

An example of our thoughts affecting our emotions is as simple as the belief that “grey, rainy days are miserable.”

Are they? Really? As in, is it really shit that it’s raining outside or are you telling yourself that? What if, you looked at the rain and thought, “Ah, I’m going to make use of the time to stay indoors and do some productive chores… or watch Housewives of New York?”

The belief that because it’s grey and rainy it’s therefore miserable and going to be a shit day has been embedded into us since we were little. Who knows when we first ever attached ourselves to this notion, but we did, and in doing so I would bet 80% of us feel miserable on a grey rainy day.

If we were willing to believe this- something that had nothing to do with our worth or anything of great importance, what things were we willing to believe, since we were little, that we subliminally *did* attach to our worth? Our thigh circumference? Our ability to dress a certain way? Did someone call us bossy? Ugly? A pain in the arse? Did we believe them? And if so, how have we subconsciously behaved since?

**Exercise: Who do you think you are?**

You’re sitting with a group of strangers, and you chat for an hour. You have to leave early so you say your goodbyes. You leave. You’re on the way home and you start to think about the time you spent with them and what they might think of you.

*What two things do you think they might say about you, that you might worry about once you got home.*

If you think only lovely thoughts, then amazing, my work here is done.

The idea is that who we worry people think we are, is *who we worry we are*. Our own embedded judgements of ourselves that consequently inform our actions.

If we were to order our belief system it might go a little like this…

Our beliefs.

Our thoughts about our beliefs.

Our emotions about these thoughts.

Our actions that are a consequence of our emotions.

For example: *we feel sad, we cry, we feel threatened, we compare, we feel lonely, we seek comfort.*

Our beliefs about who we ‘think’ we are, will give us a good idea about how we “do” life.

We can then look at health and fitness and our wants for this ‘dream’ bod and what ‘thoughts’ are holding us back, how they hold us back and then how we can overcome them.

**Exercise: Finish off the sentences.**

My beliefs

I am\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (use the stranger in the room exercise to help with this one)

I think\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (about what I believe)

These thoughts make me feel\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This in turn makes me act\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I was twenty four I did this exercise and was sure as hell pissed off about what I discovered.

I am **obnoxious and boring**

I think obnoxious and boring people are **unlikeable and are ‘try hards.’**

This makes me feel **self-conscious, anxious, uninteresting**….

This in turn makes me be **self-deprecating/try very hard to be funny**/**close off from people i don’t trust.**

Once you have got your head around this exercise, rewrite your negative “I am’s” with positive ones.

I am **self-assured.**

Then fill in the blanks.

I think **self-assured people are admirable confident and interesting.**

This makes me **feel warm and fuzzy**.

Because I feel **warm and fuzzy, this in turn makes me present, calm and care-free.**

If we look at bothe of these thought systems, one elicits positive behaviour and the other creates negatives.

It’s quite easy to then look at the things we want and discover if we really do want them.

**Exercise: Tell me what you want, what you really, really want?**

Take a pen and paper and write down how you *feel* about fitness and health. Your opinion on what you have to do to get the body you want and what you might have to do to get there. What do you think of people who have already got there and how do they make you *feel?*

Here were my thoughts when I first thought about these things.

**Fitness is hard work.**

**Fit people try too hard, are boring and obnoxious.**

**Being healthy is tedious, boring and a chore.**

My thoughts about fit people and fitness were the very fears I had about myself. How on earth I thought I would be happy to get on the fitness journey to get the body I ‘thought’ I wanted, whilst thinking these thoughts, was madness. I needed to get out of my own way, stop living in fear of who I thought I was, what fitness would make me be, let go of my story and move on.

But there’s some weird, irritating little ‘pay-off’ for staying in our stories. Some sadistic bullshit that we thrive off.

What could I possibly get out of being so down on myself? On believing, that everyone thought I was boring and pitying myself for not having all the things I ‘wanted’ yet wouldn’t make the effort to ‘do’. All of the things I moaned about, all of the things I judged? What could I possibly get from doing this to myself?

**The Pay Off???**

Whilst we are stuck in our fear, we don’t have to risk failing, risk wasting time, risk putting effort in. *We don’t have to take responsibility*. We can blame circumstances or others around us.

I’m big boned, I’m not clever, my mum doesn’t believe in me, my teacher told me I wasn’t a good singer, my ex cheated on me, exercise is too much hard work…

In choosing to believe these thoughts and these stories, it enables us to stay safe; away from accountability, away from the fact that really, we have the control, the power and everything inside us, to do the things we want and be who we ‘wannabe.’ It’s easier to forget that, than rediscover who we already are…

**Exercise: Want your dreams more than you want your drama.**

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in and then a deep breath out and picture yourself in the best version of your body, feeling the best you’ve felt. Where are you? Who are you with? What are you wearing? How do your clothes fit? Maybe you’re naked. How does that feel looking at yourself in the mirror? Imagine it is 5 years time and you wake up in this body, in a bed that you love, next to either someone you love, or happy and comfortable that your bed is large and all for you.

You get out of bed and you see yourself in the mirror. You smile, think nice thoughts and then you head to the bathroom where you do a morning wee. Contemplate your day. What are you going to do on your best day in your best body? How does it make you feel thinking of your day?

**Breathe.**

Now slowly open your eyes and write down 3 things that really stuck out about how you felt, what you saw in the mirror, the day you were about to lead. How did all of it make you feel?

Get excited. Rethink, reiterate, rewrite it over and over. Stop processing your blocks and putting focus onto your why nots and start working towards your how to’s.

Note down any negative thoughts that came up in your best day in your best self. Any resistance. For example. You may have imagined waking up in a big open bedroom with large bay windows and then gone “I won’t be able to afford a house like that.” Or when I asked you to look in the mirror and take in your body, perhaps that doubt snuck in that said, “You won’t have a body like that.” Be aware of these thoughts. These are the sneaky buggers that fuck our shit up!

**Exercise: The shit fucker uppers**

Write down 3 points that are getting in the way of your dreams. Then. Rewrite them. Look at them differently.

· I won’t be able to afford a house like that becomes…

· I will have a house like that if I desire, because I deserve to as much as anyone else and if I stay focused, this will be my reality!

A question that comes up is often, why should we focus on the positives and not the negatives? Don’t the negatives help propel us to make change? Wellllll…

Not really. When we feel like shit because of these stories, we aren’t really in the state to go do all the things we want to do. Tell yourself that “the gym is boring and exercise is horrendous and I am unattractive and life is unfair?”

Well, there is no way in *hell* that that way of thinking is gonna get me inspired, motivated or pumped to pull on my expensive Lululemons (that I bought to encourage me to get to the gym) and go do the gym. Instead, I’m gonna eat all the cake for that instant gratification rather than long term gain. When really, we could think rainbow fluff and unicorn poo thoughts AND eat cake. We really can have our cake and eat it too.

You do not have to obsess over your old story, just be aware of it and move forward. An old teacher of mine, John Osborne Hughes, used to say, just let it go. I would moan and complain (because at 24, I was still living in fear) and I would say “I can’t. It’s not fair that I didn’t book that acting job, or I’m angry that I don’t look like Kate, the tall blonde fit girl that can eat all the cake all the time and not put on weight”

He would respond with “Take those thoughts like a pencil in your hand, and just, drop them…” He was kind with his sternness. I will always remember the time he pointed out that I moaned a lot. I was flabbergasted. “No I do not” He smiled. “Yes, you do, it’s OK, just ask yourself why. What do you get out of moaning?”

Once I was aware that that was what I did, and when I became aware of why. I let it go. Just like that. I still moan occasionally, but I see it, and I stop it. Rather than dwelling.

Dwelling and worrying is not useful.

*“Worrying is like wishing for the things we do not want”* **Jen Sincero**

*“What we give focus to, comes to us in abundance”* **Every self-help guru. Ever.**

*But it is so very true.*

**Exercise: The Blue Elephant.**

Look around the space you are in. I want you to find all of the blue things. Anything you spot that is blue, note it in your head. Be aware of it.

Great. Did you find blue things? Things you hadn’t even noticed before?

Now look again. And I want you **NOT** to look for the colour red. Whatever you do, **do not spot the red things.**

Take a few more seconds. Look around the room.

**Do not look for the red things!**

Did you manage it? Did you manage to avoid the red things around the room?

Nope, me neither. Every time I do this game along with clients, I can never ever **not** see the things I ask them not to.

If you ask someone to NOT think of a blue elephant, immediately they will think of a blue elephant.

**‘What you give focus to comes in abundance**.’

The question then, is always, how do we switch our focus? How can we stop concentrating on the negatives?

Simply, start focusing on the positives. Those ‘why’s’ you came up with. Tell them to yourself over and over. Before bed, when you wake up, when you go sit on the toilet and do a poo.

**“I want to get in shape because when I picture my perfect day in my best self I felt free and comfortable and energised”**

Your thoughts are *your* choice. *You* have the power.

That is scary beyond belief, but also so utterly amazing that it makes me want to get naked and dance to The Spice Girls.

**Exercise: Grateful for unicorns.**

Write down 10 things you are grateful for…

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Now, we have looked at what things can shift your focus to the HAPPY and why we should even bother, I know you still have a niggle.

The niggle that surely if you get the dream job and the dream body and the dream man… *then* you will be happy. You made a deal with yourself. You have pinky promised to yourself that, “body, when you look the way I want you to, I promise I will be happy and then, when I am happy I will act it, but until then, I am going to act miserable and pray that somehow that grump will push you to just BE how I want you to be. OK? Deal?”

“Great, fabulous, see you soon when you look fabulous, I’m gonna go eat a whole pizza and a pot of ice cream, ‘cos as I said, I’m miserable. YOU make me miserable, so I guess you could say this is your punishment and my pleasure, sort of, I think… Hang on wait… Nope sorry I was just choosing which flavour Häagen-Dazs. See ya on the other side. We can go to the gym tomorrow, hungover on sugar, OK? Perfect. We’ve got a good deal going here body. A good deal”

**Why** **isn’t it helpful to get the body you wantfirst, or get the job first, or indeed, get the man first? Why shouldn’t we wait?**

The simple answer is that chasing the dream body is often about still feeling ‘less than.’ We believe that “we will be complete when…” so that we get to the ‘when’ and we have the ‘dream body’ but we still have these thoughts and patterns we haven’t dealt with and we will still act from the negativity which creates negative actions.

Whereas if we already **feel complete**, the need for the dream body won’t be a necessity; rather it will just be a Brucey Bonus (you’ll get this if you are British and born in the 1980’s!) - an enhancement that will be far easier to obtain because we are living from this place of gratitude and joy. When we don’t act from fear, we focus on excitement. Instead of acting from a feeling of inferiority, we begin feeling ‘enough’. And ultimately, when we are able to think and feel positively, practical habits can be achieved far more easily.

“But to have the life (or the body) we have never had, we have to do the things we have never done” **Jen Sincero.**

***Which is what Part Two is all about.***

***Taking the joy, letting us create the life we want and allowing us to be who we “wannabe”***

**PART 2: The Practical work**

**All Diets Work:**

The reason I started with the ‘mind-set stuff’ is because I truly believe that this practical work will not work, unless you have worked on you view yourself first. The two can coincide, but, the real joy in this is that if you get the ‘mind-set stuff’ down, the practical bit will feel so much easier and be so much quicker.

Really, we give so much heart-ache and time to the DIET. To the EXERCISE. We read about it, watch about it, ask about it. We try these different versions of a diet time and time again. And I don’t think anyone would disagree that they work. They do, you see results, because ALL DIETS WORK!

Atkins, Ketogenic, intermittent fasting, Slimfast (ugh) low carb, high carb, Slimming World, Weight Watchers, Paleo…. They all freaking work.

They work because they have one thing in common. And they don’t work because the also have one thing in common.

They work because they promote ways to put you in a calorie deficit. If nothing else, they will tell you to cut out ‘soul foods’; vegan diets cut out meat and dairy, Atkins cuts out carbs, GI cuts out starchy carbs, Paleo cuts out all processed foods. And some control the calories more loosely, but essentially you will be in a calorie deficit without knowing it. Slimming World is a good example. The weeks you don’t lose, you’re not in a deficit. The weeks you do. You probably are.

When I discuss things in Part Two, please know there are grey areas. There are exceptions to the rules. Rachel may have lost weight by becoming vegan, but that doesn’t mean a vegan diet will make you lose weight. Paula might do fasted cardio and have a six pack, but that does not mean Paula got a 6 pack because of fasted cardio.

**The one reason diets don’t work…**

*They are not sustainable.*

The ‘diet’ to choose, if you must diet at all, is the one that WILL work, for you. The one that you can adhere to in the long run for your lifestyle.

The problem with diet is that they enable a feeling of being ‘less-than.’ The idea that we *need* to ‘diet.’ That we *need* to lose weight or fat or change.

For who and why is always the question. BUT. I do have to shove in a disclaimer: **You are allowed to want to change/enhance/make progress**.

If you’re not happy in your job, you can change it. If you’re not happy in a relationship, you can work on it or leave. If you are not comfy in your skin, you can make progress on it and it does not mean that you are wrong/shallow/lacking in self-love.

**BUT**

*Needing* to change, and letting your happiness be reliant upon how you look, is not coming from a place of love.

Imagine if you wanted to make progress or enhance your wonderful amazing body because you loved it. You wanted to nourish it out of love. Care for it, be kind to it because you decided you deserve to. Then amazing. Go for it. Do it! But in order to do it and adhere to Part One, we need to think positive thoughts, and the one issue (actually there is more the one, but the main issue) is that ‘diets’ have such a *negative connotation.*

We associate the ‘D’ word with restriction, starvation, boredom, HELL.

We also assume they are temporary (usually because we associate them with hell.) There is no way we would ever do this for longer than twelve weeks. We have been force fed the idea that diets are crap, because the way we look at them, they seem to be. They make us groggy, irritable, hungry, ill. They often create this need to give up and then we feel like failures. We then go eat *all the foods*, stop exercising and wallow in our shame. Only to get so shamed with our shame that we repeat. And in all the cycles and all the repetition, Mr Diet sells you his latest ‘Magic Diet.’ Why this one **will** work and why **you** fucked up the last one. All the while making you feel worse and worse and more reliant on outside sources for validation. Mr Diet knows how to FIX you, he wants to fix what **YOU** broke.

But here’s the secret. **YOU didn’t break ‘you’**. You are in fact **NOT broken**. Mr Diet (the industry) wants you to believe you are, because then he can sell you all the things. The glue, the tape, the screws, the blue tac, the string. Whatever they think might put you back together. But this is just another point where I remind you….

**YOU *ARE* AND *HAVE* EVERYTHING YOU NEED ALREADY IN YOU!!!**

When you decide you are everything and have everything, and you want to take your first step into making progress with your health and fitness…

Then… Step 1 would be: *Change your language*.

**Exercise: Come up with 3 different ways you could talk about this journey…**

Rather than the “Oh God, diet starts on Monday” You could say “I cannot wait to get this healthy eating feeling like a habit so I can feel better in my skin.”

“I’m going to have to drag myself to the gym” could change to, “I can’t wait to challenge myself and do something I’ve never done in the gym today.”

I know, you think it’s wank. You can’t be bothered with all this Unicornshit.

OK cool. Here it is put simply and practically:

Diets work because fat loss is about creating a calorie deficit. Healthy eating works because it endorses balance and giving your body what it needs. But you need to be consistent in your efforts and that will not happen if you do something you hate/can’t stand/find really hard.

To make things easier, brighter, lighter, more fun, it’s good to think positively about things. When you feel positive, you do things more, when you do things more, you keep doing them and they make you feel good because you’re not doing the dreaded horrible ‘diet.’ We have found something that works for us and in doing so, we stay consistent!

**Consistency is what will get you results**

Ask yourself…

**Am I clear in WHY I am doing this?**

**Am I willing to really put the effort in?**

**Am I willing to change?**

**Am I willing for this to take time?**

**Am I willing to be as consistent as I can be?**

**Have I been dieting and spinning my wheels before?**

**Am I currently eating too little?**

**Do I lack energy?**

**Do I lack general good health? Fresh colour in my skin? am I tired? Feeling weak?**

All of the above can help you determine what your next move will be. Replenishment? Getting used to just eating well? Moving? Lifting? Focusing on habits not extremes?

**Exercise 2: Change your habits.**

**Find healthy habits before you cut calories and do extreme exercise.**

Get comfortable changing your eating patterns and making your healthy lifestyle a habit. You eat whole food, fruit veg, good amount of protein, useful fats and carbs 80% of the time. You have stopped eating **‘trigger foods.”’** You have stopped feeling guilty about **‘soul food’** You have become active because it makes you feel good.

[ER2]

[ER3]

**Your Base:**

Finding your base is a good thing to do before deciding to ‘cut’. A ‘cut’ is a different word for a calorie deficit. **A calorie deficit is burning more calories than you are consuming.**

A cut is cutting fat/weight. Using this language may seem, samey, but essentially, we do not connect the same emotions to the word ‘cut’ like we do to the word ‘diet.’ We need to be mindful of these simple syntax changes.

So you have got your healthy eating underway. You decide you want to ‘cut’ some weight. It is best to discover what your maintenance is. *What calories you eat to maintain your weight*. Knowing this will allow you not to severely drop calories in order to drop some weight.

The thing that always gets me is that we want to do as little as we can, whilst still seeing results. Why do more than we need to? We want to make this easier on ourselves.

**The Maths:**

To figure out what your body does and doesn’t do before you start any programme, is to see where you really are.

*So the idea is to track*. For 2 to 4 weeks just see what your body does.

With clients, I encourage them not to do anything crazy with eating except reach their protein and fibre goals and be *mindful*. Eat how they normally do, be it ‘well’ or not, but to be conscious of what and when they are eating. Often being conscious of what we are eating is enough to help change.

Essentially, calories are the be all and end all (to weight loss or gain) but weight is not the be all and end all to body composition and body composition is not the be all and end all to happiness. **(Just another reminder, getting annoying yet?)**

There is usually resistance to taking 2 to 4 weeks to see where someone’s maintenance really is. I was the same. I could not fathom a week or two where I wasn’t potentially going to see weight loss. Maintaining weight for a month? Or worse still, what if I regressed, what if I gained weight?

But this goes with anything in life. Slowing down, taking the time to see what you need, is beneficial if not fundamental.

We think taking a week off work will lose us business income; or not seeing our new partner will mean he will stop fancying us; or missing a few weekends out with friends will mean we won’t get invited out anymore…

But this isn’t true. Taking some time off work can mean we refuel and re-energise for a full on 6 months. We re-focus, we find our threshold for what is too much work and what isn’t; what is too little calories and what isn’t. We should be able to look at our schedule from an objective point of view and see what we need to do to have a productive few work months.

Taking a week off from seeing that guy we just started dating will more than likely ignite your passion for each other or keep it burning for longer. You will give each other the time and space to miss one another so that when you do re-connect, it will feel even better.

Skipping a few nights out will have you reassess what you really want out of your friendships, spare time and weekend. Perhaps you will decide getting drunk each weekend isn’t conducive to reaching your goals. maybe it will be obvious how much you needed the ‘rest bite’ (my word for respite!)

I know all of these examples may not be useful to you, but you get my point. Take the time for you, for your body, to really assess what it needs, what your soul wants and go from there.

**Step 2:**

Choose to eat at what we believe is our maintenance level.

Weigh ourselves every day.

Take an average weight for week 1.

Take an average weight for week 2.

Take your average calories for both weeks.

Et voila.

**Why weighing isn’t the worst thing in the world…**

When you weighing yourself everyday you can watch fluctuations. I know there is a lot of talk about #Screw the scales and as a marker for your happiness, this is a very good point. Screw them!

But for help in determining energy input vs output, weight is useful. Plus I find, weighing daily and seeing fluctuations desensitises our response. “Oh look the scale went up, so what! I had a higher carb day!” That attachment to what we weigh and what we think it means can be taken with a pinch of salt or lost entirely.

**Why tracking isn’t the worst thing in the world…**

There is also heat about tracking at the moment. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TRACK. I just find it helpful to determine what I am eating and see food as this less scary entity and more as a fuel giving me energy. Use tracking to find balance as a stop-gap between not understanding food and intuitively eating. Maybe one day I will think differently, but for now, I am a supporter of tracking if someone feels it can help them achieve some goals.

**Exercise: Numbers**

Take your weight in pounds and x it by anything between 12 to 15.

There is a scientific formula to why this works, but I thought it best not to put all the nitty gritty bits in as I talk enough already. However, it’s a tried and tested formula and can be found on the internet on many sites. For your 2 week maintenance check, you don’t have to be specific about fats and carbs, but this table can help in the future.

If in a sedentary job with little to no exercise, choose the lower end of the scale. If busy and active daily and doing exercise quite a bit, choose the higher end of the scale.

For example (a very active job and training) 130lb woman x 16= 2080 versus (a sedentary office job and no training) 130 x 12 = 1560

Note that this will be trial and error and other things will change this. If you have chronically dieted before, sleep, hormone imbalance, but this usually falls 5% within the correct marker.

So, let’s say we are figuring out Lucy’s maintenance… Lucy weighs 145lb. She’s in a sedentary job, so we x by 12, but we’ve added in 3 workouts a week so we will x by 13)

Lucy needs to try eating around 1885 calories per day over the week. This does not need to be consistent. Averages over the week is what will be important. The less fluctuations the better, (it is easier to balance out non-extremes and it doesn’t trigger binge/over-eating and then restriction) but remember you DO NOT have to eat the same amount every day.

**WEEK 1**

**Mon 1600 weight 145**

**Tues 1950 weight 146**

**Weds 1850weight 145.5**

**Thurs 2000 weight 146**

**Fri 1800 weight 148**

**Sat 1800 weight 146.5**

**sun 2000 weight 146.5**

Average add up all these and divide by 7… do the same with weight.

1860 calories

146.2 weight. Remember this doesn’t mean that much in context yet!!!

**WEEK 2**

**Mon 1800 weight 146**

**Tues 1600 weight 144.5**

**Weds 1800 weight 145.5**

**Thurs 1400 weight 146**

**Fri 3000 weight 145.5**

**Sat 1700 weight 147**

**sun 1600 weight 146**

Average cals 1840 calories

145.7 weight

We then look at the 2 weeks:

Average calories 1860 + 1840 = 3700 / 2 = 1850 cals

The difference between average weight week one which was 146.2 and week two which was 145.7 is 0.5.

This is half a pound difference. I would say this is on the low end of maintenance and would mean I would be ready to give a client a deficit I would be confident would work. We now know Lucy’s maintenance calories are around 1850 (and up to 2000 as there is always leeway.)

**The Options:**

If you lose weight and you don’t want to just settle in guessing a higher maintenance, i.e: Lucy probably maintains on 2000, I suggest taking the time. Really, Lucy may in fact still be in a deficit at 2000 for all we know. If there is a chance to eat more, take it. Your deficit amount still doesn’t give you your threshold amount, so take the time to add in some calories.

Food is always a good thing!

So I suggest adding 100-200 calories per day for the next week, taking down your daily weight in the same way as you did before. At the end of week three, calculate your average weight and take away from week two’s average weight.

If you maintain, the rules apply as per above; if you lose again, you can add another 100-200 per week until you gain or maintain.

If 1850 calories is a surplus for Lucy, she freaks out and thinks she has ruined her life. Lucy has not ruined her life!

**WHAT NOW?**

Lucy now can reduce calories by 10% to find how she goes for the next week. 1850 becomes 1665.

Do the same with the average weight and calories… Note it down.

Week one weighed 146.2

Week two weighed 147.5 1lb weight gain on 1850

So Susan gained 1lb eating 1850 calories

Week three Susan decides to eat 1665 calories on average. After a week of weigh-ins her average weight Is 146.5 (Now we know!)

· Eating around 1700 calories (slight weight loss) possible maintenance

· Eating around 1850 calories (weight gain)

· Anything between 1665 and 1850 calories would be a rough maintenance.

**Once you know your base line:**

Once you have decided your maintenance calorie intake, you can decide if you want to reduce calories by 10-20% to create a deficit. This percentage usually works.

**Important points:**

This deficit you have reached needs to

· sustain your energy levels

· sustain muscle

· sustain your sanity

**How to gauge the above:**

· Do you feel weaker in the gym, tired, fatigued and are you getting DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness) every session?

· Do you feel like you are losing weight, but you feel a bit fluffy and not tight? Is your weight going down, but your measurements aren’t?

· Do you feel restricted and annoyed and helpless? Do you hate yourself and what you are doing and long to just eat a piece of cake (if you do feel like this, eat the bloody cake.)

If you create a deficit that you are able to adhere to, you will avoid these negatives.

Extreme quick fixes like skipping meals, restricting ALL treats, eating the same old things day in day out, usually equates to:

* Binging/overeating
* Giving up
* Loss of muscle as well as fat

**Exercise: Negative habits.**

Name three negative things you normally do when you ‘go on a diet/choose to be healthy.’

And now counter it with three ways you could make this healthier, and produce a more sustainable longer-term focus.

Example negative statement: “I stop going out for dinner and drinking with friends for 12 weeks.”

Counter response: “I could go out for dinner and choose the healthier options and I could have 2 to 3 drinks instead of getting wasted on a whole bottle of wine.”

**Lose fat or build muscle first:**

A lot of people struggle to decide what they want to do first. Most newbies don’t need to make the strict decision. Building muscle and losing fat is possible for most people, some easier than others. But you really need to know your volume threshold and ‘energy in’ vs. ‘energy out.’

*Eat enough to build some muscle but not enough that you gain all the weight.*

A lot of girls are wanting to “build a bum” and yes, a surplus of calories is going to be needed for this. But there are always a few questions I ask before deciding whether you should go all out eating loads more at this moment in time.

Are the extra calories you are eating going to come from protein and nutritious carbs/fats or are you going to eat an extra MacDonald’s a day?

(Essentially this won’t matter, but certain foods are going to make you ‘feel’ better.)

How do you feel in your skin currently? Do you feel bloated, uncomfortable, heavy? If so, don’t force yourself to eat more, making yourself feel more uncomfortable. Focus on a good ratio of foods.

80/20 whole foods/soul foods. A good amount of protein, grains, veg, fats etc. *Train*. Use the calories for fuel etc. Your body composition will improve because you will be nourishing your body.

How do your clothes fit? Do they fit nicely and you feel you can move and go about your business all day unaware of jeans digging in etc? Same applies as above.

Would others tell you you’re are slim but you **feel** you are overweight?

Often this may mean that in fact you want to feel better naked, maybe feel tighter (toned.) This is about building more muscle, yes. Eating at maintenance, but weight training will get those muscles working, bringing blood to those muscles, helping them look better, nourished, and more dense as the fibres work harder. You will be changing your body composition.

If the scale went upwards would it affect you mentally? Again, don’t add a large number of calories and ‘bulk’ if this will mentally send you into a dark place. Instead, focus on maintenance and a balanced way of life whilst training. Then see how you look and feel.

I know deciding where you’re at may be a tough one for anyone that suffers from body dysmorphia, but here’s how I would figure it out.

Really ask yourself if you have a high weight or fat % or if other people would call you slim. Yes, you may feel overweight but truly be honest with yourself.

Do you lack definition, but other people would often think you are slim?

Then again, eat at maintenance and focus on your training. You will build a better body condition and a body recomposition will happen.

Often people spend time trying to lose fat when in fact they would feel 10 times better if they built some muscle. Add muscle to your body rather than forcing it to lose fat that **your body does not want to lose.**

**Really focus on ADDING to your lifestyle and not taking away from it.**

Your body WILL fight you!

Our bodies get comfortable. They like balance. Losing fat or building muscle goes against *homeostasis*, the balance of your body and its comfort levels.

It will fight to be back time and time again. A good way to get past this is: *Stop fighting your body*!

Build upon your body rather than take away, take time, do it in phases, decide if it you really should be forcing it to lose weight or not.

Our bodies have a set point fat %. Through years of training I have discovered my body likes to hold around 14 to 15 kilos of fat without trying (the body will always hold fat, it is meant to, so don’t be offended by this.)

For some people, genetics set them up; some bodies will hold less fat, for some, more. Your body also gets used to a certain amount and feels very comfortable at that point.

It’s very hard to go from the number it loves and is used to, to a different one, and stick to it, which is why fat loss might come but, keeping it off is hard.

*You want to make this a lifestyle*. You want to make this sustainable and yes we want to try and change our bodies set point in the long run.

*OR* allow our body to hold the fat % it likes, and nourish it, build it and feel your body changing without having to restricting it.

Also building muscle in certain areas will change our shape proportions.

***SIDENOTE****: You cannot change the natural shape of your muscle, your glutes are the shape they are, even if you stripped off your fat, they will always be that shape*.

But changing the size of individual muscles will change the shape of your body proportions. Again, is it about less fat? Or maybe just building up different proportions?

**SIDENOTE:** *Your body needs love more than anything.*

**Why all the protein?**

Sometimes it’s not about eating less. Sometimes it’s about eating more (or the same) but in different ratios. Body compositions change. Changing the ratio by adding more protein into your diet and switching out some carbs or fats will mean that your body will be more nourished.

*Protein helps build our muscle*. The denser our muscle, the better it looks. The firmer it is, the smoother our skin looks over it. As we get older our elasticity loosens and our muscles looks less tight. Focus on getting sufficient protein even if you don’t weight train, your body still wants to use protein synthesis. The building of muscle, just from everyday activity like walking will still help.

*Plus*, protein is also good for hormone balance and for growing hair and nails. So for any older folk who want to keep shiny, thicker hair and long strong nails, as well as help their hormones balanced, a good amount of protein is essential.

**How much protein? Here is how to calculate how much protein you need per day:**

**0 .8g-1.2g x 1lb of body weight. WHAT IS THIS**

**Exercise 6: Name 3 things you do that negatively affect your health and fitness goals.**

*Now write 3 things you can start to do that will help improve your health and fitness life positively.*

For example:

· I restrict and then binge massively at the weekend.

CHANGE TO

· I will instead have some treats in the week and at the weekend focus on nutritious meals where I can. I could even have lower calorie days in the week and higher on the weekend, but without too much extreme.

**BALANCE! You don’t have to stop eating out: I swear:**

Your main focus is how you eat day to day. Nourish your body daily, 80/20. That’s 4 out of 21 meals a week that could be non-nutritious and you would still see results and/or not ruin progress.

Decide what is important to you about eating out. Is it, hanging out with friends? Is it tasting new foods? Is it just a chance to indulge?

You must be honest with yourself.

**Exercise: Your experiences.**

*Name 3 key reasons you love going out to eat with your partner, friends or family.*

*Now name 3 key things that would ruin a night out to eat with these people.*

If you want to throw caution to the wind and eat whatever you want, you can. Just knowing how to balance is beneficial if it throws you in a tizz.

Your calorie intake is a continuum. Your body doesn’t divide your days into 7 days per week. It’s ever-changing and moving. We just use a weekly marker to sustain control and have a gauge point.

But if you eat 3000cals one day, the body will not automatically gain weight. It works over a greater time span. Yes, the scale may go up the next day due to water and volume of food but this won’t be fat.

Take what you eat on average over the week if you are looking to make progress.

So eating out and having 3000 calories in one day, might be 1000 calories over maintenance. You do not have to severely restrict in the lead up or afterwards to make up for this.

**SIDENOTE:** *You do not have to “make up for this.” It’s just food, it’s yummy and how it affects your body composition has no bearing on your worth or happiness.*

But, to balance your ‘energy in’ vs ‘energy out’ you could eat 140 calories less per day. THIS IS NOT SEVERE NOR SHOULD IT FEEL HORRENDOUS!

It is the equivalent to

· 2 spoons of peanut butter

· A large flat white

· 1 bag posh popcorn

· 1 slice chunky bread

· 1 small choc bar

·

People feel that post a big indulgence they need to restrict severely the next day. Look at the bigger picture… How does this affect your week?

You also must remember the facts. It takes around 3500 calories extra, on top of maintenance, to gain weight. One meal here or there will not affect you if you make some smarter choices.

*Things to think about:*

· Starter or dessert?

· Share some fries?

· Protein main rather than the pasta?

· Booze or cheesy risotto?

**Just a reminder:**

Your intake is on a continuum and you can balance out your calories over the week. Your body does not work in 24 hr increments or know what Monday is versus Saturday. It will not gain 1 lb of fat over 24 hours. Look at your intake over the week. Average out your calories over the week and things will become so much more flexible.

**What your week can look like:**

Monday 1200

Tues 1700

Weds 1500

Thurs 3000

Fri 1900

Sat 1800

Sun 1600

It’s the average that matters regarding energy input/output. It’s how intuitive eating works. People who eat intuitively aren’t eating exactly the same amount every day. Some days people eat less and some days more. Some days we feel hungrier than others, some days we go out for date night, some days we just want ice cream J and other days maybe all we want to do is eat green nutritious foods. (Ok so maybe we need to reteach ourselves that we do.)

But honestly, when you start eating all the healthy things, you crave them more and more because they do truly make you feel great. And when you begin to see food as something yummy to enjoy, when you start to give food less power, when you can enjoy it for what it is, the soul food will feel amazing when you eat it too. It won’t be shrouded with guilt. Why would we feel guilty for eating something that tastes so good?

**Mmmmm Cake!**

The only fundamentals, whilst allowing your variables are your *consistents*. These are protein and fibre. The rest is up to you.

If you like fats like bacon, avocado, nuts, oils, then have a higher fat diet.

If you prefer potatoes, pasta, rice- focus on carbs and lower fats.

Essentially, choose what’s best for you and your lifestyle.

*Remember, ALL DIETS WORK! Find the nutrition plan that works for you, LONG TERM! No dieting! Just eat!*

**Exercise: What to eat when cutting, maintaining or bulking:**

· Make a list of what foods you do not eat when cutting (dieting)

· Make a list of all the foods you eat when you are in everyday non-cutting mode..

· Now, write down which foods you generally don’t eat when you are in every day non-cutting mode.

When you are cutting or in a deficit, your main focus will be on getting enough nutrients to feel healthy, enough volume to feel full, enough carbs not to feel fatigued, enough protein to maintain muscle and enough soul food to stay sane. But you can still eat chips, chocolate and ice cream. The amount and how often will vary per person, but you CAN still eat your favourite foods!

The ratios of what you eat may differ

50% nutrient dense

20% muscle maintenance

15% food for energy

5% foods to fill up i.e. volume

5 %soul food

When you are maintaining or in a surplus, your goals are different and you will not need to focus on the same things as intricately as when you are cutting. Your focus will be getting enough nutrients to feel as healthy as always. Enough carbohyrdates to lift more load as you will now have the room to do more in the gym and build muscle, enough protein to grow muscle and enough soul food to stay sane, but not go over the top and gain excess fat.

The ratios of what you eat may change**.**

**SIDENOTE:** *These are random numbers, I’m just giving an example to how what you eat- these may alter very slightly in ratios.*

50% nutrient dense

15% muscle maintenance (easier on more food)

15% food for energy

0% foods to fill up

20% soul food

**Exercise: What do you want to eat?**

Find food that you like to eat.

The obvious ones like pizza and cake can spring to mind. Write them down in a list. But also write all the foods you love. Meals included. Spaghetti bolognese, chicken kievs, pie, roast veg, sweet potato. Don’t forget to list all the healthy foods you like too.

Once you have listed them all. Look at the list of non-nutritious foods you love. Which ones trigger you or lead you to eat more? Cross them out.

Which foods on the whole list could you really not live without. Highlight them.

Which foods could you live without out of the non-nutritious ones left. Put a question mark next to them.

Now put a star by all the nutritious foods you like. And highlight them.

If there aren’t many, find more. Really think about the nutritious foods you like. Whole foods like grains, veg, and protein like fish and meat.

For example:

Pizza ?

Ice cream

Snickers

Mccoys

Popcorn

Latte

Cheese on toast

Beans on toast

Spaghetti bolognese ?

French fries

Fanta

Milkshake

Jacket potato ?

Pasta with cheesy sauce?

\*Chicken thighs

Salmon

\*Cod

\*Broccoli

\*Green beans

\*Sweet pots

Oats

Crunchy nuts

The starred foods will be ones you will focus your nutrition on daily. They are healthy, and nutritious so make your meals mostly from those things and really get creative. Don’t just stick to broccoli and salmon if this bores you. **Go on Pinterest** and look for a healthy salmon dinner. The options are endless.

The foods crossed out: don’t add them in, they are triggers. You can find alternatives and see if popcorn won’t trigger you the same as McCoy’s perhaps, but it will be trial and error.

Vegetables taste amazing when paired and cooked with seasoning. Sweet potatoes roasted are so delicious. Overnight oats are easy and carby and can be made sweet or savoury and fill a hole.

And treat yourself to a shared pizza, some ice cream. When you know it is not restricted, you won’t feel the urge to EAT IT ALL!

Remember: What don’t you want to sacrifice? Date night, drinks with gals?

What are you willing to sacrifice? Daily donuts, 30 minutes of my IG scrolling time for exercise? Find ways to make this new lifestyle work for you.

**How To Build Habits:**

· Create new habits that match your goals.

· If you slip into old habits, don’t beat yourself up.

· Move on and try and get back to the new ones you are creating, but remember and recall your “why”.

· Find exercise that you find doable, enjoyable and can see progression in.

· Eat the foods you enjoy.

**Don’t Rush:**

It is really easy to want to rush into this new lifestyle with the same enthusiasm as a My Little Pony who has spotted a gold pot at the end of a rainbow. But truly, if you keep galloping towards that colourful, bright, “end goal” before you know it, you’ll be out of steam, lethargic on that measly grass you ate for breakfast, lunch and dinner and willwonder why your little pony self didn’t eat more, or do less burpees because maybe then you would be able to reach that pot at the end of the rainbow.

Instead, you get side tracked by the pot of peanut butter, also known as unicorn poo and get stuck in. Why not eat it with some of that yummy cake Fluttershy made you the day before when you thought she had just been trying to ruin your fitness journey, but maybe, maybe she was just being kind.

Ok, so I’ve gone off piste a little bit, but you get the gist. Don’t do ALL the extreme dashing to get to this magical place on an empty stomach and miss all the good things that are around you already. That sunset you ran past. It was pretty. That night in with the gal dem ponies. It would have been fun. Same with the trees you dashed past, the laughs you weren’t having, all because you thought you could gallop down to the finish line, but you got tired before you made it, you got bored, you got irritated, you got your My Little period and decided to sleep for a week, and if you did even make it, to the end of this magical rainbow, if you did, what then? Whilst you are still thinking the rainbow is going to bring you happiness rather than the other things that you missed trying to get there, where do you get your happiness now? More rainbows? More chasing? More running yourself into the ground?

Ok I’ve digressed again… but this really does lead onto a really important point.

**Using extreme measures like detoxes, soup diets, low calorie hell hole strategies will NOT fast track you to where you think you have to go.**

If you use up all of your energy or you don’t eat all of your nutrients… when you slow down or plateau, where do you go from there?

Leave room in the tank to play with, so you are able to get to where you need to go.

Taking your time is not a bad thing. You need to build habits to enable consistency and doing things step by step will enable the brain and the body to let things stick.

For your first week or two post figuring out your maintenance, as an example, you may have only been getting 40g protein. Add in 20g per day which is equivalent to 1 fillet of meat, fish or protein shake. For veggie/vegans this could be the equivalent to a can of chickpeas, 2 Linda McCartney sausages or 140g tofu.

Once you have got the hang of this for two or so weeks, then focus on upping by another 20g per day…

Take your time. Eating 60g is better than 40g so don’t think there is no point unless you hit the exact number. This fitness lark is all about consistency, and habit. So, find a way that makes the habit stick rather than going all out bat shit crazy.

The same goes for exercise. Take your time.

**Which brings me to my point about training volume.**

We are fed another bullshit line, that in order to get fit and healthy we must eat *LESS* and *DO* more!

When in fact, how does that really affect us? Is that really the answer?

When we go from doing zilch to something, what if that is enough of an energy shift to create some change? When we first start to ‘cut’ or try to ‘drop’ fat, maybe losing a couple of non-nutritious mindless foods will be enough to create a deficit gap big enough to elicit change? What if we do drop loads of the things we ‘think’ we shouldn’t eat and then do ALL the training we ‘think’ we should do, how do we have enough energy to

1) Maintain our muscle

2) maintain our energy

3) Maintain our sanity

From taking advice from my favourite people (who you can find below) and my own assessments made with my own clients and also my own experience, I find it best to:

Use nutrition for fat loss

Use training for muscle gains or maintenance

When cutting, fill up on whole, voluminous foods. Drink all the water. Treat yourself 5-20% of the time and save your energy for doing “life” and maintaining that muscle. If you feel fatigued, do a bit less or eat a bit more. Listen to your body.

When maintaining or gaining, eat a bit more, use the food for more energy day to day at the gym and of course, utilise it for muscle growth, strength gains or just pure recovery.

Enjoy treats 15-30% of the time. Reign it in a bit when you feel you indulged a bit more than your body is used to, listen to your body.

· **Fatigued. Do less.**

· **Tired, sleep more.**

· **Hungry. Eat more.**

This ‘eat less do more’ philosophy is pretty much the motto of any January fitness starter pack, every magazine telling you to get in shape for summer, every Tom, Dick and Susan tells you this to encourage quick fixes that regress just as fast. Who can keep up with 6 x per week in the gym (unless it’s your job) I am not saying don’t make time, I’m just saying you doon’t need to give it as much time as you thought.

Essentially training, in your fat loss journey is 10% of the results…ok maybe give it some more credit. 15% at a push. Your main efforts will come from nutrition. (for fat loss)

Training should be utilised for **building muscle or for maintaining it**. I am not discrediting training, I actually think it should be way high up there on the priority list in our journeys. I think we give way too much time to nutrition *in terms of the details (such as meal timings and supplements and what gram of carb should I have with this gram of fat)* and possibly a little bit too little time on the importance of training (smart training) *ie we just go balls deep in exercise rather than figuring out what really works for us,* essentially. Because training is not only one of the best things I have found for my mental health, it can also be used for ‘adding’ to your body. Adding to its foundation. Making you stronger, making it work more efficiently, making you feel more capable, energised, grounded. But that’s only IF we train smarter.

You can manipulate training slightly to give your nutrition and fat loss that extra push if you are in a particular phase of your journey. Adding in some LIIS or a 10 min HIIT in some sessions can be great. But essentially, creating a bigger deficit with your nutrition is so much more time beneficial and energy saving.

It’s a lot less effort to eat one less pack of crisps, than to spend 40 mins on the stair master trying to burn those calories off. You could use that time lifting to build muscle and get stronger, or doing mobility to get more flexible. You could use it to go read a book or listen to a podcast to add to your knowledge or self-care. Maybe you just need the time to go and do a poo.

Instead of sweating away energy and time on the climber trying to ‘lose’ what we put into our bodies, why not just find balance with what we eat, enjoy it and spend our time more wisely?

I know it seems mental. The idea of ‘giving up’ some of the things we love, but I am not saying give up ALL chocolate bars, I’m saying maybe just one.

If you get your nutrition in check, to a place where you’re not restricting anything and you are eating voluminous foods, you won’t feel

the need to snack on non-nutritious foods as much, as you won’t crave them. You won’t feel guilty for eating them because you know that one chocolate bar won’t ruin progress, and hey, if you have three, hopefully after reading this you will realise, three chocolate bars will NOT ruin your worth!!!

**Recap:**

· Too much volume whilst in a deficit means we could lose muscle/burn out

· Too little volume whilst in a surplus, may mean we gain more fat than we like whilst building muscle

Changing your exercise to suit nutrition is one way to keep making progress, balance increase of calories, not get fatigued and make gains when we can.

**Volume with training and energy balance:**

12-24 sets per muscle group per week on large muscle groups such as

Glutes

Back (lats/rhomboids)

Quads

Hammies

Chest

Shoulders (rear/front delts too)

6-12 sets per week on smaller muscle groups such as

Triceps

Biceps

Abs

Divide these by how many days you want to train.

Manipulate the volume (How much you lift i.e. sets & reps) and the intensity (how much load you lift i.e. the weight) as well as density, how much load you lift in what space of time...

Other forms of intensity may be how hard an exercise is, how much time under tension the lifts are and how much rest you have between exercises.

Dependent on goals, where you are in your training and how your body is feeling will allow for different phases of volume/intensity

**In a deficit focus on:**

Main lifts like compound ones that use more than one muscle and give you more bang for your buck because it’s more intense to do a heavier squat, than it is doing a leg extension for example.

But, keep intensity high; lift with heavy loads toward failure if you can. Volume of training is lower (so less sets or reps) and intensity (load lifted) is high…

**SIDENOTE:** *Listen to your body.*

For example, if you are deep into a cut maybe you want to stick to 12 sets per week on your main muscle groups by focusing on the compound lifts.

You could do 4 sets per muscle group per session 3 times a week.

Bear in mind, biceps, triceps and core will get used in all the compound lifts that you do.

1 session could look like…

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Glutes/hammies | 4 x 6-10 | deadlift |
| Back | 4 x 6-10 | BB Row |
| Quads | 4 x 6-10 | Squats |
| Chest | 4 x 6-10 | Chest Press |
| Shoulders | 4 x 6-10 | Shoulder Press |

In a surplus, however you could use the higher volume range of 24 sets for muscles you really want to make progress on.

24 sets on these over the course of a week, however you like to split it, but let’s say 4 times per week as a guide. Maybe 16 sets per muscle group that you are less bothered about for now (you can change this up in your next phase.)

Focus on working all muscles at all angles using more volume and variety.

Per week:

Glutes 24 sets

Hammies 24 sets

Back 20 sets

Chest 12 sets

Shoulders 16 sets

And you could include the smaller muscles that you may want to isolate.

Example session:

Glutes 6 sets

Hammies 6 sets

Back 5 sets

Chest 3 sets

Shoulders 4 sets

Because we want to utilise a variation of exercises for a variation of angles and isolate some muscles to illicit growth. We could do:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Glutes | 6 x 4 | Hip thrust |
| Hammies | 3 x 12 & 3 x 10 | RDL & leg curl |
| Back | 3 x 12 & 2 x 20 | Seated row & Bk extension |
| Chest | 3 x 12 | DB Chest press |
| Shoulders | 4 x 10 | BB push press |
| Tris/bis | 3 x 15 & 3 x 15 | Tricep ex & bi curl |
| Abs | 3 x 20 | Hanging leg raise |

Programming can get complicated. When to do what and when can make your head spin. Some people like to just go to the gym and ‘do whatever’ and whilst I think this can work for some, to a point, and you can see progress this way, I find the majority of us spin our wheels or can plateau easily. Not having some form of utilising progress on how to beat those plateaus, how to work around the nutrition as discussed above, how not to burn out, how to steer clear of injuries, how to get stronger and also build muscle, doesn’t help progress.

The one thing that is 100% guaranteed, is that to see progress in the gym, or training at home, you need to utilise progressive overload. This means the gradual increase of stress on your body over time.

The body adapts, as stated above and this magic happens when you adapt. Put stress on the muscle, let it recover (adapt) and then go again. Eventually the muscle/body gets used to the stress you put on the body and you need to increase that stress.

Here are some forms of progressive overload to include: Which can be daily/weekly/monthly

· Weight/load lifted

· How many reps achieved with the weight lifted

· How much you lift over a time given

· Rest in between sets

· How hard the exercise is

· How long you lift the weight for (tempo)

This below is how I like to roughly gauge my programming. This could be anywhere between 9-12 months.

Mid volume/Mid intensity UTILISE When you’re **starting** your journey to go up or down from

Mid volume/High intensity UTILISE as you start to **drop** calories

Low volume/High intensity UTILISE When in a deficit

Low volume/Low intensity UTILISE this when you are **de-loading** between phases

Low volume/Mid intensity UTILISE when maintaining

Mid volume/Low intensity UTLISE when maintaining

High volume/low intensity UTILISE at the **start/end** of a block

High volume/Mid intensity UTILISE whilst **upping** calories

High volume/High intensity UTILISE When having high at **peak** calories

When you begin training, always figure out how many days you really WANT to train and how much time you can really give to train.

You will make some compromises somewhere. If you only want to train 30 mins twice a week, but you only have one spare 30 mins per week, you will probably have to rearrange your priorities.

I like to train 4 days a week. I have trained 6 days and you can choose to, but I would work out what recovery you may need. What is your volume threshold? Some can do more than others and need less recovery, but you NEED that recovery, so allow yourself time if you can.

I change my training focus over the course of the months. I don’t believe it’s great to train ALL muscle groups with full throttle **all** the time, and changing the volume over phases really helps keep me from burning out.

Some months I will focus on my glutes and back and other times I might focus on my quads and my shoulders.

Ie) when focusing on glutes and back, I will do 20 to 24 sets per week and the rest of the muscle groups will be 12-16 sets.

Through it all, if this seems overly complicated remember…

You want to have fun. Find what you find fun. If it’s following someone’s programme, then do it, but don’t worry about going full throttle and burning yourself out if it feels too much. If you can’t do all the exercises, do not worry, the ability to, over time, get better at them or do more of them, will be where the magic happens.

If a newbie to training, don’t over complicate it. Take your time, step by step. Leave room in the tank, work on form, work on the compound moves before trying all the fancy schmancy stuff that you might see on Instagram. Remember your journey is YOUR journey and what someone else might do, might not work for you.

Learning to squat, deadlift, shoulder press and row with a good load of weight will see you some amazing results without the need to add in loads more. So, get the basics of both nutrition, training and mindset down before making things harder for yourself.

Fitness, mindset and nutrition have soooo many grey areas, so much detail I could go into. Which is why I am going to list all the people I have felt inspired by, been motivated by and learnt from. The information I have passed on is a mixture of my own experiences, experiences with clients, articles I’ve read, podcasts I’ve listened to, Instagram posts I’ve liked.

What I find helpful may also resonate with you.

So here goes…

Instagrammers:

**Self love/improvement:**

Brene Brown

Gabby Bernstein

Nayyirah.waheed

Bymariaandrew

Girlpoweryourenough

Jenpastiloff

Eatingpsychology

Alex\_elle

Supersoul

Butterfliesandpebbles

Circlesofchange

Rupikaur\_

Nineforwomen

Garyvee

Tonyrobbins

Chinaealexander

Squatmango

Psychandsquats

Dollyalderton

Hllylzbth

wayofgray

**Fitness/nutrition:**

Shredbyscience

Cartergood

Syattfitness

Bretcontreras1

Soheefit

Physiqonomics

Hannahbronfman

Caloriefixes

Adam\_pine

Repsandrice

Dannylennon\_sigmanutrition

biolayne

Achangpt

Chroniclesofstrength

Rippedtoshredz

Avatarnutrition

Thealanaragon

Rhitrition

Nessasphere

Kerispilatesroom

Activleyrees

Justfitjo

**Exercise inspo:**

Soheefit

Hannahbower2

Katiecrewe

Massy.arias

Alexia\_clark

suzie\_kb

shona\_vertue

jtm\_fit

the\_nattyprofessor

**yoga/flow/mobility:**

amandabisk

sirisyoga

lind.slaaay

achangpt

massy.arias

the\_southern\_yogi

dr.jacob.harden

theprehabguys

rehabscience

chelseasyoga

PODCASTS

Bengreenfieldfitness

Bucciradio

Mindpump raw fitness

Shreddedbyscience

Sigmanutrition

The ATP project

The mind muscle project

Low tox life

Super sou conversations

The Academy of Miracles

**BOOKS/authors**

Brene brown: Any of hers

Gabby Bernstein: Any of hers

Jen Sincero: Be a Badass

Elizabeth Gilbert: Big Magic

Echart Tolle: A new Earth or The Power Of Now

Russel Brand: Recovery

**Youtube:**

Gracefituk

Jeffnipard

Stephaniebuttermore

Athlean-x

To end it here I just want to say a massive thank you for sharing the workshop with me and for making it what it was. I hope the day has helped impact what I have given in this pack and also this pack has helped back up some of what you learnt on the day.

[ER1]I don’t understand this sentence

[ER2]Please can I have the original word document of this too?

[ER3]Original document pease

[ER4]Can we look at this paragraph. I don’t think it quite makes sense

[ER5]What is this bit for?