Life²

How to eat and exercise well

This booklet is one of a series by Life Squared. Our booklets explore important topics and ideas, and provide practical suggestions on ways you can improve your life.

Life Squared is a not-for profit organisation that helps people to live well - to live happy, wise and meaningful lives within the pressures and complexity of the modern world. We aim to provide you with ideas, information and tools to help you get more out of life, see things more clearly and live with greater wisdom.

We offer guides, courses, ideas and advice on a wide range of topics, from 'how to appreciate life' through to 'how to be alone (and not lonely)', and from 'the problem with consumerism' through to 'how to be happy'.

For more information visit **www.lifesquared.org.uk**.

Life_squared   Life-Squared   LifeSquared

How to eat and exercise well

Be healthier, happier and reduce your carbon footprint!

Contents

Why a Life Shift?

Why a Life Shift?

In many ways we're very lucky to be living as westerners in the modern world. We've got more material wealth than ever before, better education, better healthcare and more opportunities in life.

But things are still not quite right. Evidence (including Layard, 2005) suggests that, although we've generally become richer in the last half century, our increased material wealth has not made us any happier, and many people are searching for more meaning in their lives. Modern lifestyles and societies also present a range of challenges to our mental health – from the pressure we're under to succeed from an early stage in our lives through to the rushed lifestyles we lead.

On top of all of this, the lifestyles we're leading in the western world (which don't seem to be making us happy) are completely unsustainable. We need to live within the boundaries of the one planet we have - and we're currently consuming the equivalent resources of 3 planet Earths. There is a particularly pressing need to reduce our CO_2 emissions to minimise the effects of climate change.

So, is there any way we can make our lives better *and* improve the planet?

At Life Squared we think the answer is an unequivocal 'Yes'. So, we're producing a short series of guides to help people not only lead better, healthier, more meaningful lives, but also reduce their impact on the planet at the same time. This guide is the first in the series, which will also include subjects such as 'How to think for yourself' and 'How to spend your time well'.

Why have we called this series the Life Shift? Because our lifestyles are so far away from where they need to be that we need to completely rethink our assumptions and habits, both as a wider society and in how we live our lives as individuals. Living a well-informed, self-determined life like this will take a significant shift in our behaviour - a reframing of how we live our lives.

This is why we have brought some key areas of life together, and called it the 'life shift' - to help you shift some of your main habits at the same time to make one big difference. It should help you to see and enjoy the effects of these changes together, as they complement each other.

Ultimately, this series is simply about freeing our lives from the modern habits and orthodoxies that are making us miserable, unhealthy, poorer and are damaging the planet.

Introduction

Introduction

How are you? Feeling well? A bit tired? Stressed? Wishing you could lose a few pounds?

At Life Squared, we've spent most of our time in recent years helping people to think about their lives better. But we've noticed that there's one thing we've not focussed on and it's fundamental to the way we think, live and behave - food.

The food we choose to eat is one of the key things that shape our lives, health and happiness. It is also responsible for many of our impacts on the wider world as individuals.

We all have a complex relationship with food, and some people have an extremely difficult relationship with it. Our attitude towards it can be influenced by many factors, from our sense of personal identity to our ethical values. Yet, despite the range of diet books being sold each year, there seem to be very few guides that stand back from the big questions of food in our lives.

In fact, there are a lot of competing ideas and conflicting claims out there about food. And, as we'll see, this should not come as a surprise when there are plenty of reasons why various parties might not want us to gain a clear perspective on food - many of which

revolve around money.

This can make it confusing and difficult for people to make the right decisions about food. It can also make the idea of eating and living healthily can seem extremely complex and demanding, which can put many people off taking positive action.

So, this guide aims to challenge some of our habits and assumptions about food. It briefly explores the role of food in our lives, how we consume it and the habits we've developed in relation to it. It then sets out some practical, simple and yet radical ways we can eat better and exercise better.

If you follow the ideas we set out here, you might notice a significant difference after just a few weeks. You might feel healthier, happier and spend less, as you get rid of unnecessary spending and consumption habits that have emerged over the last couple of decades - daily take away coffee, anyone? Oh yes, and you may well reduce your impact on the planet.

Oh great. Another diet book...

No! This isn't a quack diet or based on gimmicks - our practical, no-nonsense suggestions aren't focussed on changing complex details of your life so that they become yet another thing to worry about. We're not dieticians and we don't go down to the detailed level of recipes and shopping lists. Instead we focus on some big, simple principles you can follow to develop healthier eating habits - principles that may not have

been presented in this way before. Try them and see if they work for you.

One final point before we start, and it's a vital one. We are not doctors or dieticians. Our ideas are taken from our own experience and common sense, as well as from some sources we regard as reliable. Check with your doctor or other healthcare professional before making any significant dietary decisions.

The global nutrition crisis
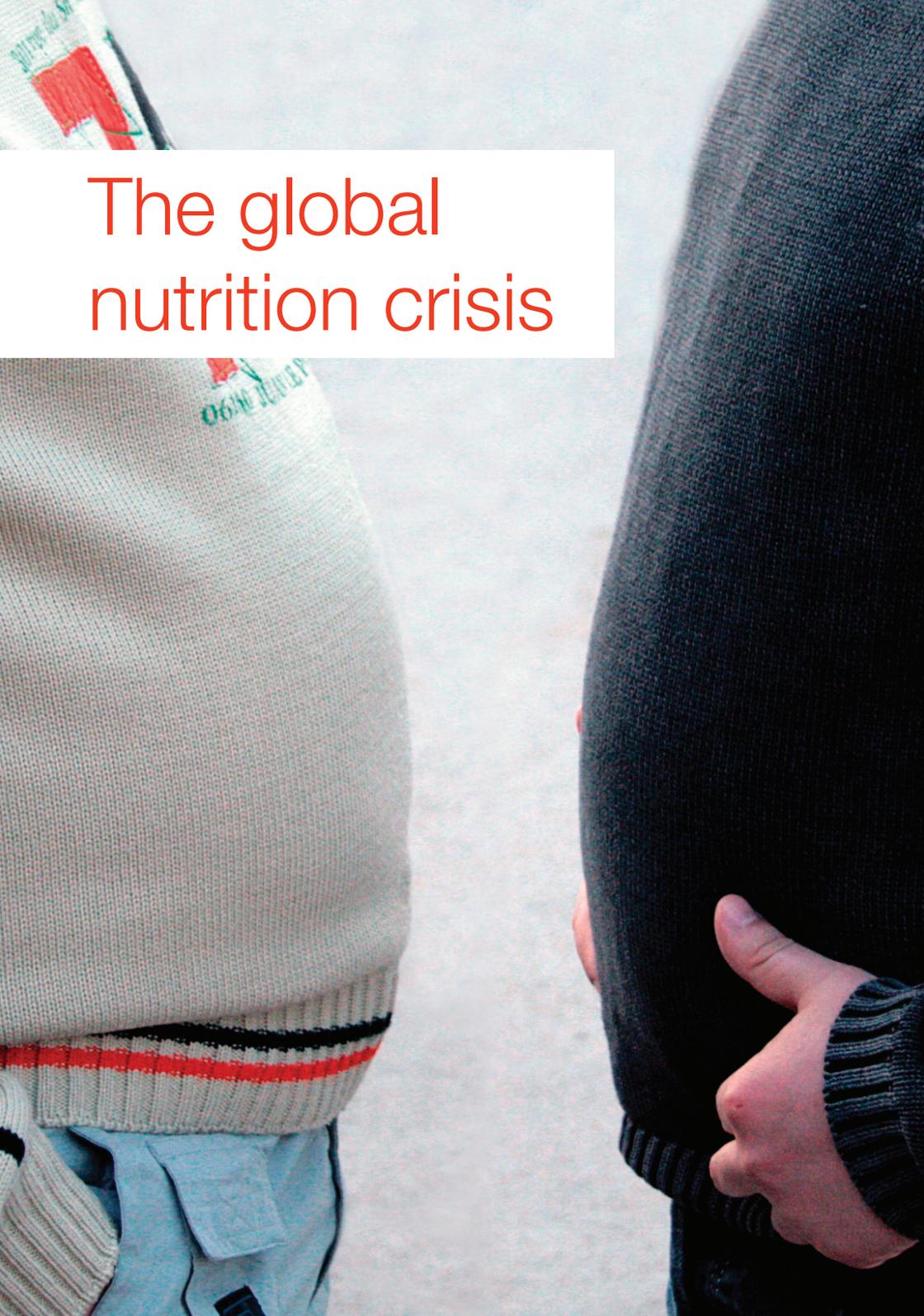
The global nutrition crisis

More than half the UK population is overweight or obese.[1] Globally, things are getting steadily worse - according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), obesity more than doubled between 1980 and 2014 and overweight and obesity are now linked to more deaths worldwide than underweight.

We're clearly in the middle of a crisis. So why has it occurred? The WHO concludes that globally there has been "an increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat; and an increase in physical inactivity due to the increasingly sedentary nature of many forms of work, changing modes of transportation, and increasing urbanization."[2] In short - we're eating too much unhealthy food and not getting enough exercise.

Obesity is not simply a disease confined to rich countries, despite what the traditional view might suggest. To quote a report in The Guardian, "as affluent western markets reach saturation point, global food and drink firms have been opening up new frontiers among people living on $2 a day in low- and middle-income countries."[3]

The result of this is, as the WHO notes, "many low- and middle-income countries are now facing a "double

burden" of disease. While these countries continue to deal with the problems of infectious diseases and undernutrition, *they are also experiencing a rapid upsurge in noncommunicable disease risk factors such as obesity and overweight, particularly in urban settings.*"[4]

Whether in rich or poor countries, food is therefore an issue of social justice. Even within wealthier countries such as the UK, obesity is something that affects the poor more[5], as they are exposed to more "high-fat, high-sugar, high-salt, energy-dense, and micronutrient-poor foods, which tend to be lower in cost but also lower in nutrient quality."[6]

Obesity is killing millions of people. Yet it is preventable. Surely everyone - whether rich or poor - has a right to a nutritious diet, especially if the food exists to feed everyone? And surely our society and institutions should be geared up to promote the most nutritious diets possible? Sadly, as we will see, the reality is that economic competition has prevented this from happening.

Nutrition Facts / V

Per 1/2 package (85

Some facts about eating and exercise

Calories / Calories

/ Lipides 4.5 g*   % Daily

aturates / saturés 2.5 g

Trans / trans 0.2 g

lesterol / Cholestérol 15 mg

um / Sodium 870 mg

ohydrate / Glucides 55 g

e / Fibres 3 g

Some facts about eating and exercise

The NHS states that a healthy, balanced diet means 'eating a wide variety of foods in the right proportions, and consuming the right amount of food and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight."[7]

Weight is generally a question of numbers - if we eat more calories than we burn off, we store this as fat. So, to avoid putting on weight, we need to strike a balance between these numbers. If we want to lose weight, the simple fact is that we need to "eat and drink fewer calories. Combining these changes with increased physical activity is the best way to achieve a healthier weight."[8]

The other point is that it's generally more effective to reduce the amount of calories you put in rather than assume you will burn any extra calories off through exercise. This is because it takes a lot of exercise (perhaps more than you think) to burn off additional calories. For example, one hour of medium paced walking will burn around 323 calories[9] - roughly equivalent to the calories found in one Snickers bar.[10]

So, if you can exercise and reduce unnecessary calories, you put yourself in a better position to

keep healthy.

Here's another simple fact. Some foods are healthier than others. Nutritionists have known this for decades, and their basic dietary advice to people has changed very little over the years. We should aim to obtain our calories from eating a plant-based diet, including fruit, vegetables and grains. We should aim to limit foods and fats of animal origin, including meat and dairy. We should also avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt.

So, those are the basic facts. You might therefore think it might be easy to avoid unhealthy foods, but we live in a world where the food industry spends billions of dollars promoting its products and obscuring the facts (whether intentionally or not) and where there are a whole range of temptations around us. Let's explore this now.

The food industry

The food industry

The food industry is the biggest commercial sector in the world, with global food exports amounting to 1.3 trillion dollars in 2015[11].

Like any other industry, its aim is to maximise the returns it gives to its shareholders. This can create a conflict of interests when trying to balance this priority with the need to produce healthy, nutritious food. In fact, we could argue that the aim of the food industry is *not* actually to produce healthy, nutritious food - merely food that is safe to eat, which sells in high volumes and produces as much profit as possible.

The food industry is also incredibly competitive. This is because there is (broadly) a limit to the number of calories we can each consume - even if we're overeating. But there is an overabundance of food supplied by the industry (certainly in the USA whose food supply produces a daily average of 3,900 calories per person - nearly double the required intake for women)[12], so there is massive competition within the industry for the (relatively) limited number of calories we can each consume.

This leads to the industry producing a vast range of products designed to appeal to people so that they will sell more than the other products on the shelves. Food companies work hard to come up with new products

and to make their products more appealing - in terms of their colour, taste and texture. This often means products with more salt, sugar and fat - given that there is a general preference among human beings for foods that are 'energy-dense' (high in calories, fat and sugar), sweet or salty[13]. Remember, the central aim of the industry is to sell products - not look after our health.

Not only is there heavy competition within the food industry to provide the calories we consume, but also to 'expand the market' by getting people to eat *more* - to consume more calories, more often in our daily lives. For example, food portion sizes have grown significantly over the last 20 years. To illustrate this, here are the sizes and number of calories in an average portion of fries in the US, 20 years ago and today:

20 Years Ago	Today
68 grams	196 grams
210 Calories	610 Calories

So, the portion size in this particular example (from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in the US[14]) has nearly trebled, as has the number of calories - rising by 400 per portion. Many of these increases have happened without us noticing, and have led to our calorie intake steadily rising.

To remain competitive in the marketplace and expand this marketplace the food industry spends a massive

amount of money and effort each year trying to influence us not only to buy its products, but to eat more. Although we may think we're making our own choices about what we eat, this is far from the case. Here are a few ways the food influences our eating choices:

- **Advertising** - food companies spend many billions of dollars on advertising their products. Most of this is used to advertise processed, largely unhealthy, foods. In the US "nearly 70% of food advertising is for convenience foods, candy and snacks, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and desserts, whereas just 2.2% is for fruits, vegetables, grains or beans."[15]

  The food industry spends far more on advertising its products than the government or other groups spend on the promotion of healthy eating, so the messages promoting unhealthy foods vastly outweigh those trying to promote healthy foods or educate people about eating well. This advertising targets people from an early age, with children particularly vulnerable to the novelty, bright colours and branded tie-ins used by food companies. But adults are influenced by advertising too - why else would Coca Cola alone spend $4 billion a year[16] on it?

  In a competitive marketplace that's geared up with the main aim of maximising profit, it's in the food companies' interests to cast as positive a light on their food as possible, even if this obscures the full

picture. For example, as the public became more interested in healthy eating in the 1980's, food companies realised this was another way they could promote their products - by emphasising the positive aspects of their impact on health (from their ability to lower cholesterol through to low levels of fat), whilst conveniently ignoring or drawing attention away from any negative effects they had on health (such as high sugar or salt levels).

This has led to the current situation where many foods are presented as being healthy - or at least given branding to suggest this - when they actually aren't, or where there are much healthier, simpler alternatives available.

Take breakfast biscuits for instance. These are marketed as a quick alternative to breakfast when you're 'on the go' and their packaging implies that they are healthy, containing 'slow release carbohydrates' and made with '5 whole grains'. But research by Action on Sugar revealed that some of these biscuits contain as much as 15 grams of sugar per serving - more than a bowl of high-sugar cereal like Crunchy Nut Cornflakes.[17]

For years we've trusted food manufacturers to give us an objective view about the nutritional value of the food we eat, but as we can see from the notes above, this doesn't happen. We've lived under the misapprehension that the aim of the

food industry is to give us healthy, nourishing food - when in reality it is simply to sell us its products - regardless of how healthy or nourishing they are.

Once we recognise this reality, we can transform our perspective on the food that we buy and take control of what we eat.

- **Influencing and lobbying** - the food industry doesn't just aim to influence our eating choices via advertising, even though this is the most immediately visible channel. It also spends millions each year lobbying politicians and other bodies to maintain legislation that is as sympathetic to its commercial interests as possible. Most of us aren't aware of the level of influence the food industry has 'behind the scenes' of our politics and our lives.

For example, in her book 'Food Politics', former nutrition policy advisor to the US government Marion Nestle (no relation to the company, ironically) describes how food companies in the US have influenced the government's food guidelines over the years to water down their advice about avoiding particular foods - even though there is clear evidence that they are less healthy: "food companies prefer thoroughly permissive principles that encourage consumption of all foods regardless of nutritional value". This leads to the well-known dietary phrases we've all seen in our lives, such as: "balance, variety and moderation are the keys to

healthful diets; there is no such thing as a good or a bad food; all foods can be part of healthful diets; it's the total diet that counts."'"[18]

It's not just about dietary guidelines either - it's whole areas of regulation and policy. To take a UK example, in 1994, the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food published a report for the UK Government at the time (Prime Minister John Major) which looked at the relationship between salt intake and blood pressure. It recommended that salt intake should be reduced gradually from 9g/day to 6g/day. The Chief Medical Officer at the time refused to endorse this recommendation, allegedly following the threat of withdrawal of funds by the food industry to the Conservative Party.[19]

Food regulation and the healthiness of our food is improving in some areas in the UK. Thanks to sustained pressure from campaigners, school meals have improved, the contents of vending machines in secondary schools have changed and food manufacturers are beginning to reduce sugar and salt levels in certain products. But we have a very, very long way to go.

We can therefore see that the economic imperatives of the food industry influence even the politicians, laws and institutions that *should* be providing us with reliable dietary information and helping us look after our health.

With all of these factors coming into play it's no wonder that many of the relatively simple facts around healthy eating have become obscured. Indeed, one could argue that this smokescreen, and the confusion it causes, suits the commercial interests of the food industry when it's encouraging us to eat more of its products - whatever their nutritional value.

The costs of the obesity and illness caused by overeating and poor nutrition are massive - not just to our lives but to our country's budgets. In 2015 cardiovascular disease cost the UK €26 billion[20] - not just including direct healthcare costs, but also the additional costs of the disease, such as costs to economic productivity due to ill health and death.

So, it's clear that we urgently need political change. But until the day that food manufacturers make their food healthier and stop trying to mislead us about their contents, we need to think about this for ourselves.

So what can we do to look after our health and that of our loved ones? We need to be more cautious and critical about the food we buy. We also need to wise up about the role, influence and methods of the food industry, then take control of our own food habits.

The actions we suggest in this booklet are not only aimed to improve your health. They also represent an exercise in political power, where you are sending a clear message to our politicians and the food

industry - that we want it to clean up its act and give us better, healthier good that is more honestly labelled and marketed. Otherwise, we simply won't buy it.

Food and the environment

Food and the environment

Food is a major part of our environmental impact - both as a species and as individuals. From the land used to feed cattle for beef production, to the impact of fertilisers on soil quality, through to the issue of the 'food miles' that ingredients travel - food and its production is one of the biggest effects we have on the planet.

Recent decades have also seen major lifestyle changes in the way we consume food and drink. We're now buying food and drink 'on the go' (as opposed to making it at home) more than ever before, and have been sold the idea that extra food and drink consumption is an essential or trendy part of our lifestyles.These changes have significant environmental impacts, as well as their impact on our health.

Take plastic bottles, for example. In the 1970's, hardly anyone bought drink in plastic bottles. We just brought our own water with us or waited until we reached somewhere to get a drink. We didn't realise that we needed to constantly 'hydrate ourselves' or 'quench our thirst' because advertisers had not yet started telling us this.

Coca Cola introduced its first plastic bottle in 1975.[21] How things have changed. In 2017, to quote an investigation in The Guardian: "A million plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute and the number will jump another 20% by 2021, creating an environmental crisis some campaigners predict will be as serious as climate change."[22]

Another example is takeaway coffee. A couple of decades ago, the idea of 'grabbing a takeaway coffee' was unheard of. Yet now, many people seem to think a daily morning coffee grabbed on the go is an essential part of their daily routine - something that they actually need, and are entitled to. But take away coffee and plastic bottles are just examples of a range of unnecessary consumerist lifestyle accessories that we've been sold, which are increasing our impact on the planet.

Given the massive impact our food and drink consumption habits have on the environment, this is clearly an area where the changes we make in our own lives could have a massive (positive) impact on the environment. We're not going to explore this issue in detail here, but just to give a brief example, reducing your meat and dairy consumption by 75% would save emissions from fertilisers, methane and nitrous oxide – all adding up to a substantial saving of 1 tonne of CO_2 every year. This is aside from reducing the other environmental and ethical impacts that result from eating meat.

Food crosses a range of other ethical issues - from whether to eat meat through to religious practices. This is another area you might wish to incorporate into your diet.

The problem
with diets
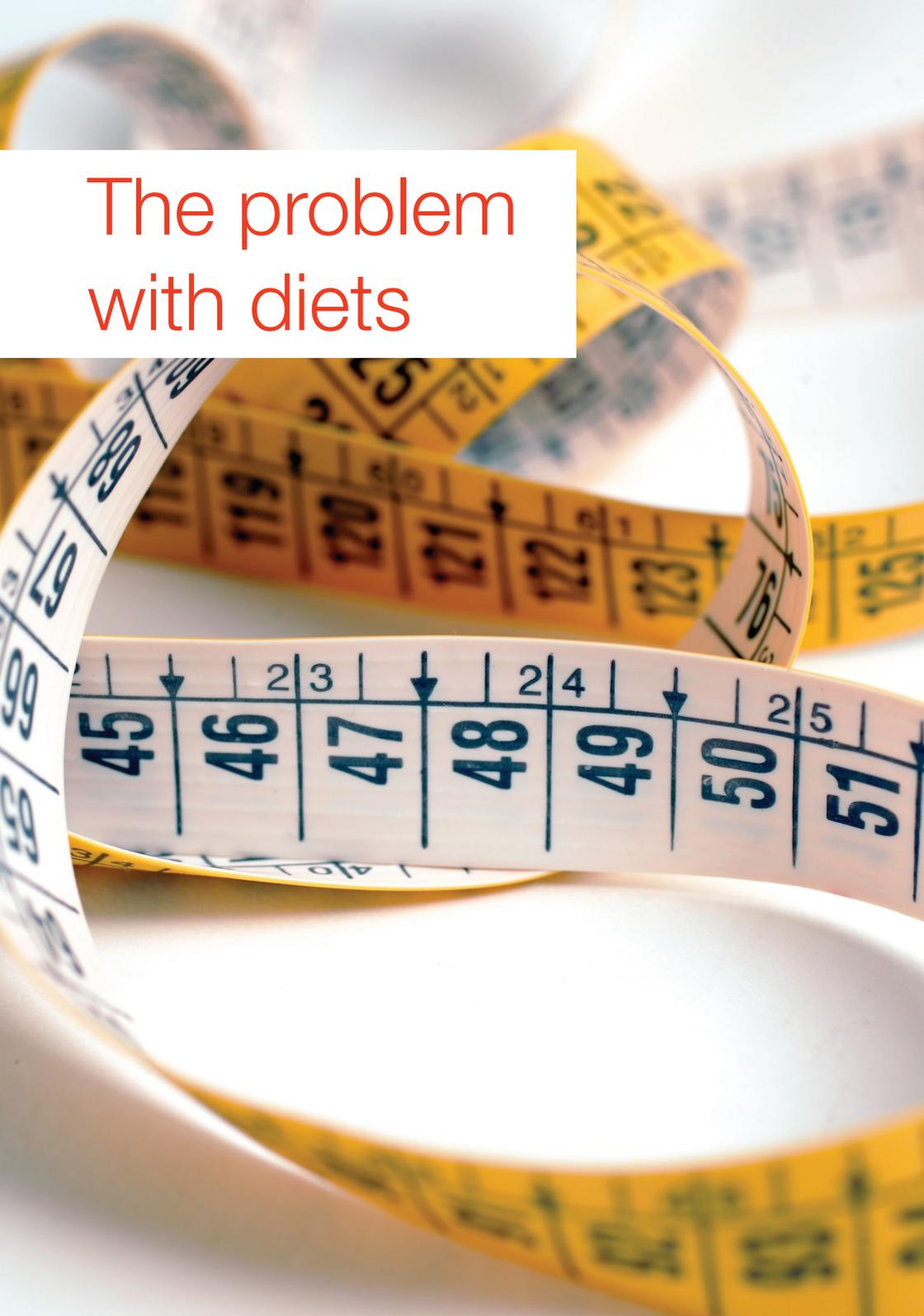
The problem with diets

There are diets everywhere these days. There's the Atkins diet, grapefruit diet, baby food diet - the list goes on.

Dieting is a big industry in itself. The global weight loss and weight management market is expected to reach $206.4 billion by 2019 from $148.1 billion in 2014[23]. Companies within it therefore face a similarly difficult balancing act to the one faced by the food industry - between providing advice and products that help people to eat healthily and lose weight, whilst at the same time providing profits for their shareholders. Again, this can potentially lead to conflicts of interest, where diet companies try to lock people into their diets where there may be healthier alternatives for them, or make exaggerated promises in order to get people to use their products - each of which could have a negative impact on people's health.

With this context in mind, let's explore the problems with some of them:

- **They can actually be unhealthy** - as the NHS points out "many fad diets are based on dodgy science or no research at all, prescribing eating practices that are unhealthy and can make you ill." Some diets aim to achieve a rapid loss of weight through dramatic measures like completely cutting out

certain types of foods or intermittent fasting. There is often little scientific evidence that these approaches work, and they can actually be harmful if undertaken for the long-term, as they can be nutritionally unbalanced.

It could be argued that these diets are symptomatic of our convenience culture, where people want quick fixes to problems rather than putting the necessary work in to address them properly. We need to get out of this mindset. To quote the NHS again "The only way to lose weight healthily and keep it off is to make permanent changes to the way you eat and exercise.'[24]

- **They don't challenge our habits** - some diets like the crash diets above seek dramatic short-term fixes. Others try to reassure people that they can continue the eating habits they are already in, which can produce all sorts of problems.

For example, one of the straplines for Weight Watchers, one of the most popular dieting schemes in the world and a company worth over a billion US dollars, is "Say yes to losing weight, whilst still eating the food you love."

This means that people aren't being asked to challenge the basics of their diets, such as the fact that they eat things like cakes, biscuits and other unhealthy foods. Instead they are simply being told to substitute their existing brands for 'low calorie'

versions of the same products, which, conveniently enough, are sold by the same dieting companies, such as Weight Watchers chocolate biscuits.[25]

'Carry on as usual' diets can lead to us failing to challenge our basic food habits and failing to recognise the reality of what a healthy diet looks like. The 'low calorie' foods that people are encouraged to substitute for their existing ones aren't entirely healthy themselves. For example, the 'diet' chocolate biscuits above are still chocolate biscuits, containing sugar, salt and lots of the other ingredients of chocolate biscuits, and a far healthier snacking replacement for either of these would be a piece of fruit.

The simple fact is that we need to get into the habit of eating certain types of food and avoiding others if we want to eat healthily. Diets that try to obscure this fact aren't helping people.

In fact, we don't need diets at all, if diets are just temporary ways of trying to accelerate weight loss before resuming our previous eating habits. Instead, we need to change our habits permanently.

- **They maintain the status quo** - you might think that the previous point is the biggest problem with modern dieting - after all, how could there be anything more important than people not changing the food they eat? Well, we think there is an even bigger problem, and it's not one that you'll hear

most diet books talking about.

Perhaps the main problem of modern dieting - whether it is crash diets or diets that make you think you can eat anything - is that it is part of a massive global industry and an overarching modern culture of consumerism, convenience and busy lifestyles.

All these things come together so that most diets these days intrinsically accept the status quo of our lives in the modern world. They give us diets that are 'designed to fit into our busy lives', without challenging the very basis of these busy lives.

They also accept many other unhealthy, costly and environmentally destructive habits that we've got used to or even feel that we're entitled to - for example that we 'must have' a skinny latte on the way to work. We need to challenge these things too.

We are not just blaming the diet industry here - we should also be making informed choices as individuals, but we often look for quick fixes or easy ways out of our problems in order to maintain the lifestyles we've build for ourselves (or find ourselves trapped in). We therefore need to challenge not just our diets, but the whole way we live our lives, so that we have more time to feed ourselves well and look after ourselves.

Conclusions on food in the modern world

As you can see, it can be can be extremely difficult in the modern world to make well-informed choices about food given the range of influences that are promoting unhealthy food, dubious diets and upholding a philosophy of life that is neither particularly healthy or good for the environment.

Later in this guide we will therefore set out some simple, broad principles to enable us to get into good eating and exercise habits so that we remove much of the angst and complexity from the choices we're making.

For example, avoid most processed foods. This may sound like a radical idea, but it's beautifully simple and takes much of the worry away from eating. By taking this one step you simplify your life, make your diet much healthier and reduce your environmental footprint.

We're not going to provide detailed diet advice in this booklet. If you'd like some, we have put some initial suggestions for further reading at the end.

What do we want from food?

What do we want from food?

Before we explore the changes we can make, let us consider the different reasons why we consume food.

Here's a big fact. We don't need most of the food that's displayed on the shelves of our supermarkets. Here's another, related, big fact. Most of the food on the shelves of our supermarkets isn't all that good for us. It is there because it sells and makes a profit - because, as we said before, this is the core aim of food companies and supermarkets alike. Their aim is not specifically to provide us with the food we need or food that is healthy. These two facts together should give us a new perspective on supermarkets and how to go about food shopping.

If our main aim when buying food is to feed ourselves and our families with nutritious, tasty food then we only need a fairly small proportion of the food products on offer in the shops. These are the basic, individual foods that form the building blocks of our diet - eg. fruit, vegetables, fish, milk, pulses etc.

They are the foods that in the past might have been sold by dedicated individual shops such as greengrocers, butchers and bakers. The proliferation of other products such as convenience foods and the rise of supermarkets in the last 70 years has

made it much harder for us to see which food we should be eating. It's distracted us from many of the healthy 'building block' foods, and led us towards other 'composite' foods that are backed by massive marketing budgets.

Let's be clear about what we mean by 'composite foods' here, as they are not the same as 'processed foods', which is a much broader grouping. Most of the foods we find in shops are processed in some way, and this doesn't necessarily mean they are unhealthy, as processing can help to preserve them (like canned vegetables) or make them safe for consumption (like pasteurized milk).

What we mean by 'composite' foods are those processed foods that go beyond a single building block ingredient. In other words, those that have multiple ingredients and have been prepared for us, such as breakfast cereals, sausage rolls, crisps, biscuits and ready meals. These foods can sometimes include ingredients such as salt, sugar and fat and many other additives that are added to make them look, feel or taste more appealing, bulk them up or change their texture. These 'composite foods' (and drinks) can form a large proportion of the food on supermarket shelves.

Some of these foods may be OK but it is difficult to tell what ingredients have gone into them, what the quality of these ingredients is and how much sugar and salt they contain.

The problem is that when we buy these other forms of food, we make a number of compromises:

- **Our health** - for example, a ready meal is likely to have much more sugar and salt in it than if you'd made it yourself. If it's a much cheaper ready meal then it may well be even worse in terms of nutrition, as cheaper versions of these composite foods (e.g. cheap sausages) often use poor ingredients and are pumped full of sugar and salt to give them flavour and make them palatable to human beings. It is also likely to contain many more additives that you aren't aware of unless you read the label in detail. If you cook the meal yourself however, you are in control and aware of what goes into it.

- **Our money** - a ready meal is likely to be more expensive than if you'd bought the ingredients and made it yourself - especially if you make a larger quantity and store some for later.

- **Our environmental footprint** - this example ready meal may well have been assembled from ingredients prepared around the world, which have each generated their own food miles. The energy used to produce it is likely to be far greater than that if you cooked it at home. The meat in it may be from an unclear source. And it's likely to contain a far greater amount of packaging than the meal you could have cooked for yourself instead.

So these composite foods can make us unhealthier, cost us more and increase our environmental footprint.

And there is another important point - these composite foods are also unnecessary in our lives. When we buy these composite foods, we are often buying them for reasons other than nutrition, whether we realise it or not. For example, we're not buying ready meals for nutritional reasons - we're generally buying them out of convenience, to fit into our busy lives.

Here are some other reasons we might be buying these other composite (or 'non-essential') forms of food - rather than nutrition:

- **Experiences** - to give us new experiences and experiences we enjoy, such as those of sweetness, saltiness and crunchiness. Items like crisps and sweets fit into this category. These experiences aren't necessary to our nutrition and aren't essential although they can make our lives enjoyable. It's easy to get hooked on these experiences though.

- **Entertainment** - to keep us entertained or give us something to do when we're bored or unoccupied. Food consumed in this way (such as snacks while watching TV) can again be enjoyable but is not really needed at all or can be substituted for something else that's healthier.

- **Convenience** - to enable us to consume food quicker and more conveniently because we're too busy, and are prioritising other things in our lives above our health rather than the other way round. This includes a range of foods - from ready meals to fast food.

So, these foods are either not really needed at all or can be substituted for something else that's healthier.

Let's get straight to the point - *we need to move away from these composite foods and base our diets on building block foods*. As we've just seen, not only are these foods generally healthier, but they also generally have a lower footprint and are often cheaper than the composite foods. Removing them from our diets will also vastly simplify our lives!

Taking this shift may well require us to do more cooking, which could take up a little more time in our lives than putting a ready meal in the microwave. We might need to learn how to cook more. But if we prioritised our health in our lives more, we might slow them down so that we could fit in more time to cook. We could also learn to appreciate cooking again as an immersive, creative and fulfilling activity. This is no different from what our parents or grandparents did!

Aside from these 'composite' foods, much of the other food and drink we regularly consume is completely unnecessary for our diet, and barely serves any nutritional function at all - for example, sweets and

alcohol. We could therefore be healthier, save loads of money and have a lower carbon footprint if we simply avoiding these foods completely.

Before we go on, you may be feeling a sense of dread that we're going to recommend an austere, grey diet of no enjoyment and no fun. But this is not the case. We'll be suggesting a way of eating and exercising that will make you feel a whole lot better and improve your life in a range of ways. It could also make you appreciate and enjoy your food more. So, a first step in making your *Life Shift* on food and exercise is to accept we need to change our entire attitude to the food we consume and how we consume it.

10 rules for eating well

10 rules for eating well

Here are the simple rules we suggest you follow for a healthier (and cheaper) diet. Remember - we're not trying to provide detailed dietary advice here - just some broad principles to make it simpler that no-one else seems to be providing at the moment.

1. **Fit your life around your health** - the first thing to do is shift your attitude. Making sure you're eating well, getting exercise and healthy should not be an afterthought that you fit into the rest of your busy life when possible. Instead, you should build your life around looking after yourself, as your health is the foundation you need to build the rest of your life on. Failing to put it first will inevitably lead to you compromising it, as we so often do in the modern world.

2. **Only eat when you're hungry** - this sounds obvious, and something you might say to a child. But it's a tremendously powerful idea that can really help us to avoid extra calories that we don't need. Many of us snack out of habit (e.g. in front of the TV), when we're bored, or when we see something we fancy (often something unhealthy!). So, if we eliminate this additional unnecessary eating, we can save lots of calories - and money.

One way to make this easier is to ensure we have a sense of purpose to keep us occupied in our lives, rather than just sedentary activities like watching television. This is another reason why exercise is so good, as it doesn't just burn energy - it stops us from eating unnecessarily, because we're otherwise occupied in an enjoyable and immersive activity.

3. **If you have to snack, do it healthily** - if you do get hungry between meals and have to eat something, eat snacks that are healthy. These could include fruit, nuts or something similar. Carry these with you rather than having to buy them when you're out. This saves you money and means you eat something healthy rather than the nearest thing available to satisfy your hunger craving.

4. **Eat food that will fill you up** - it's nice to feel full up, right? This is part of the pleasure of eating for many of us - to feel sated, satisfied and physically comfortable. The British Nutritional Association (BNA) gives the following guidance on how to feel fuller:

   ● "Foods high in protein seem to make us feel fuller than foods high in fat or carbohydrate, so including some protein at every meal should help keep you satisfied. Foods high in protein include meats such as chicken, ham or beef, fish, eggs, beans and pulses.

   ● Foods that are high in fibre may also enhance feelings of fullness so try to include plenty of

high-fibre foods in the diet such as wholegrain bread and cereals, beans and pulses and fruit and vegetables.

- The 'energy density' of food has a strong influence on feelings of fullness or satiety. Energy density is the amount of energy (or calories) per gram of food. Lower energy density foods provide less energy per gram of food so you can eat more of them without consuming too many calories. Low energy density foods include fruit and vegetables, foods with lots of water added when cooking such as soups and stews, and lower fat foods."[26] We tend to eat a similar amount of food each day, but it can differ significantly in the calories it contains. It's therefore worth choosing food with a lower 'energy density', as it'll enable us to eat more food (feeling fuller) than higher energy density foods.

5. **Eat the right amount** - we've already discussed how to limit the amount of eating we do between meals, but we also need to make sure we don't eat too much at mealtimes either. It's easy to over-do the portion sizes of our food, and one of the reasons for the current obesity problem is that we're eating too much food - not just the wrong sort of food.

So, we need to eat less. Here are a few simple ways to help you do this, alongside some of the points above:

- Check the portion sizes of the food you are serving to yourself and others against the recommended amounts (see the NHS site in the 'further reading section), and you may be surprised at how much you are overeating.

- Eat slower.

- Before you have second helpings or eat more because you're still feeling hungry, wait a few minutes and let your body process the food you've just eaten so it can register feelings of being 'full'.

6. **Simplify your shopping** - this is a big one. Most diets go into painful levels of detail to enable you to continue eating the wrong foods (including sweet and processed foods) or 'eat what you like - just less of it'. But as we've already shown this not only means that you end up eating food that isn't much good for you (for example, 'fat free' yogurts often contain loads of sugar). It also still creates cravings for people and complicates things. It still means they have to walk down the supermarket aisle with the biscuits in it and feel bad about it.

So, we're going to chop all of that out and save you from that pain and complexity.

Here's the big, simple point - **you need to avoid 75% of the aisles in the supermarket**. Yep, just don't even bother walking down them.

The trick is to **avoid all the composite foods**.

Instead, just focus your food shopping on the aisles (and shops) containing the 'building block' foods, including:

Fruit and vegetables (fresh, frozen or tinned, as long as the latter is unsweetened).

Dairy (low fat and unsweetened versions where possible).

Fish (fresh, frozen and tinned).

Meat-free options - we suggest Quorn as it's high protein and low fat, but there are other options. Be sure they aren't high fat, salt or sugar though.

Grains, rice, pasta - wholegrain only.

Cereal - try to avoid processed cereals as these tend to contain lots of added sugar and salt - with the exceptions of Weetabix and Shredded Wheat. Instead, buy oats, make your own granola with a drop of honey, nuts and raisins, or make porridge.

Bread - this really counts as as a processed food, so you need to be as careful with this as other processed foods - for example, a third of our daily salt intake can come from bread even though we don't taste it. If you buy it, go for wholemeal and check the ingredients for salt content.

Making this move cuts out a large number of aisles in the supermarket, as composite foods include

most processed foods, ready meals, soft drinks, cakes, biscuits, sweets, crisps, cereals (other than oats etc.) and puddings.

If you can simply ignore these aisles and prepare food yourself, it will have a massive range of benefits for you - not just for your health, wallet and the environment, but will also simplify your shopping.

Aside from avoiding composite foods, here are two other key food types (and parts of the supermarket) to avoid:

Meat - at the very least, minimise your consumption of meat - perhaps to once a week. This is one of the best food-related steps you can take for the planet, as, aside from ethical and animal welfare concerns, eating meat is an incredibly inefficient use of the planet's food resources. "It takes around 7 kilos of grain to make one kilo of beef. Pigs are about 4:1 and chickens are around 2:1. Then there's the vast water consumption (15,415 litres for a kilo of beef) and the CO_2 emissions (27kg for a kilo of beef). If, however, humans were to eat the kilo of grain themselves, that would be that. A kilo of lentils creates only 0.9 kg of CO_2."[27]

There are also significant health benefits of a plant-based diet. As Marion Nestle points out; "the longest lived populations in the world, such as some in Asia and the Mediterranean,

traditionally eat diets that are largely plant-based."

And it's a myth that a meat-free diet leaves you lacking in basic nutrients or needing supplements. As the NHS states, "with good planning and an understanding of what makes up a healthy, balanced vegetarian and vegan diet, you can get all the nutrients your body needs to be healthy without the need for supplements."[28]

If you want to go down the route of processed food just this once, there are some good alternatives to meat products these days - from Quorn mince, chicken pieces and burgers through to Cauldron sausages. Our experience is that dishes made with certain Quorn substitutes - from chilli con carne to 'chicken' stir fries - can be just as good if not better than their meat equivalents, and contain less fat. Be sure to check the fat, salt and sugar content of these products though.

Alcohol - OK, you didn't want to hear this one. But stopping or radically reducing your alcohol intake can eliminate thousands of hidden calories each week (just one pint of beer has 182 calories[29]), not to mention improve your health in other important ways and make you feel better generally. Try it and see how much you save, how much weight you lose and how much better you feel. At the most basic level, it also stops you from consuming yet another unnecessary product and saves you money.

So, as you can see, taken together these foods add up to a large proportion of the supermarket that you can simply avoid. By doing so, you can simply remove these foods from your mind as a possibility or a temptation.

On a practical level this is a great move, as it cuts out loads of dieting complexities and anxieties in one fell swoop. You'll never have to worry about these things or feel as if you're being manipulated by the food industry or fad diets again. For example, you avoid being mislead by 'diet' biscuits or crisps or other products that are labelled as healthy but aren't.

And this doesn't mean you end up eating 'boring' foods - far from it. Instead it enables you to focus on eating the foods that are genuinely nourishing for you. Overall, it could enable you to feel much better, save money, consume less and simplify your life.

Even when we've taken all these steps there's another principle to keep to - **eat less sugar and salt**. We covered this earlier when we discussed composite foods but it warrants its own specific mention. Be aware of where sugar and salt are in your food. This includes cutting down on the amount of fruit juice you drink, and diluting this with water if you have to have it. Fresh fruit keeps more of the goodness in than fruit juice.

As you eat less sugar and salt and fewer processed

foods, your find that your palate becomes much more sensitive. You start to notice subtler flavours more, and may actually start to find some artificially sweetened and salted foods too sweet or salty.

One final point - don't go shopping when you're hungry, as it's incredibly hard to avoid temptation when you do this, and who knows which aisles you might go down!

7. **Make it yourself** - following from point 1, when you prioritise your health and take the time you need to put it first, this is likely to result in you slowing down your lifestyle. A core part of this change is likely to be preparing more food for yourself rather than buying processed, composite products.

This will not only improve your health and reduce your impact on the environment, but also puts you in much greater control of what goes into your food - not just which ingredients but their quality too.

This is likely to mean you'll need to do some more cooking and preparation at home. This is no bad thing and could bring you a lot of pleasure and creativity. We're not going to go into the detail of recipes in this guide, but we've included a couple of good starting points in the 'Further reading' section at the end.

8. **…and take it with you** - this is a really critical point, following on from 'make it yourself'. As we've already noted, there's been a massive shift

in behaviour in the last couple of decades towards buying our food 'on the go' rather than making it ourselves. This is another major way in which we can end up consuming composite rather than building block foods and eating foods for reasons other than nutrition.

We need to go back to the good food habits of our parents and grandparents. Preparing food (and drink) in advance and taking it with us in the day can have a range of important advantages including saving a lot of money (spending £5 per day on takeaway lunch adds up to £100 per month!), protecting the environment (saving packaging and energy) and enabling us to be in control of what goes into our food.

And we're not just talking food here. We have already explored the massive environmental impact of takeaway drinks - from plastic bottles to coffees. These items also have significant health impacts - for example, research by the campaign group Action on Sugar found that "98% of the 131 hot flavoured drinks found in the big high street chains would carry a "red" warning for excessive levels of sugar if the coffee shops were forced to label them".[30] The worst offender contained 25 teaspoons of sugar per serving - three times the recommended daily adult intake.

In short, these take-away foods and drinks are a modern affectation. We didn't need them before,

and we don't need them now. **So simply cut all this stuff out and don't think about it any more**. If you do want to have water or coffee with you, make one yourself and take it with you in a flask.

One final note for this point - we're not aiming to be killjoys here. We love going out for meals like anyone else, but we're simply suggesting that you make home - made food the norm, and *view these other foods as an occasional treat rather than the norm*. It could really make a difference to your health, your pocket and your footprint.

9. Allow yourself an occasional treat - if you still want one - you may feel that avoiding 75% of the aisles in your supermarket leads to a dull, bland diet, lacking variety. It doesn't, but equally our intention isn't to make food something to get obsessed about or seem like a boring, disciplined chore to get out of the way 3 times a day - it should be a pleasure and we should be open to its joys, even if some of them are a bit naughty sometimes. So, allow yourself treats if you want them.

We suggest how you might do this below, but in the end it's up to you to decide how much of the non-healthy stuff you choose to eat. Our aim in this booklet is to make you aware of how much of this non-healthy food is around and how to simply eliminate it as a factor in your life, so that it is no longer an issue.

As we said though, these suggestions are meant to be making your life better, not torturing you. So, if you'd like to have an occasional treat (say once a week), go for it - whether it's a chocolate bar, a beer or whatever. And savour it, don't feel guilty about having it. But don't feel obliged to have it. Notice if you don't really want that treat, as it's become less of a treat because your sensitivity to sugar and salt has increased so much and it now tastes horrible, or it makes you feel bad (like alcohol can if you don't often drink it) or you'd simply rather keep feeling good and eating well.

10. **Try 'mindful eating'** - if you find yourself craving a particular piece of unhealthy food, try this technique, which tells your brain to simulate the experience of eating the food - without actually eating it.

Let's assume you're craving a chocolate bar. Now, close your eyes and go through the experience in your head of what it would be like to eat that particular chocolate bar. How it feels to tear the wrapper off. What the chocolate looks and smells like as you peel the wrapper off. Try to experience it with all your senses. Then imagine yourself eating the chocolate bar - the sensation of biting into it for the first time - the texture of the layer of chocolate then soft caramel as your teeth bite through them. Then imagine the taste of the chocolate and its texture as it melts in your mouth. Finally, consider the feeling as you swallow the

first piece. Repeat this for the number of pieces in this imaginary bar.

And take your time with each piece. Savour it, try to build as detailed an experiential picture as you possibly can, as this will give you the greatest satisfaction. Over time, you can get better at conjuring up these 'mindful eating' experiences. It's like a meditation focussed on re-imagining and savouring the experience of eating something specific.

Once you've finished this you may have gained some of the pleasure you had from eating the real thing, with none of the calories! You may also find that you've unpicked the whole experience of eating that item of food to such an extent that you no longer feel the urge to eat it, as it doesn't seem worth it, as you've had some of the experience.

This means you can be even more mindful when you do have treats, so that you savour every sensory dimension of them so you can store it in your mind in the greatest detail and get the most out of your 'food memories' when you need to call upon them.

How to exercise well

How to exercise well

Exercise is important. The NHS website notes that "it can reduce your risk of major illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer by up to 50% and lower your risk of early death by up to 30%."[31]

We all know exercise is good for us but many people fail to do enough of it - or any at all. In many cases this is because they simply either find it hard to get started or see exercise as a painful chore. So how can we get over these things and learn to incorporate exercise into our lives?

A secret - exercise makes you feel good

Let's start with a secret - something that many people who exercise know, but others may not realise. Regular exercise makes you feel brilliant - in a wide range of important ways. Here are just a few of the ways it can be good for you:

- It can improve your physical health - obviously, including helping you to maintain a healthy weight.

- It can give you a buzz that lasts for hours - one of the most enjoyable things about exercise is the sense of intense well being that you get after a period of moderate to higher intensity activity like running or squash. Whether this is from the release of endorphins or other mood-enhancing

chemicals in our bodies, it's an instant, perfectly legal and healthy high that can stay with you for hours after exercise. It's no wonder that people can get 'hooked' on it.

- It can make you feel great in the longer term - giving you a greater energy, helping you sleep better and providing many other benefits.

- It can improve your mental health - evidence shows that being physically active can improve our mental well-being.[32]

- It gets you outdoors - if you choose an exercise that gets you out into the fresh air this can help you escape your daily routine and boost your sense of well-being even further.

- It can make you feel good about yourself - "some scientists think that being active can improve well being because it brings about a sense of greater self-esteem, self-control and the ability to rise to a challenge."[33]

- It gives you a sense of purpose - if you have an enjoyable activity that you build into your life every day or two, you start looking forward to that activity, perhaps challenging yourself to get better at it. If it's a sport it may even give you opportunities to travel to new places.

- You can make new friends - one of the most wonderful things about getting out and doing a new activity is that it gives you something

in common with a whole host of other people from different walks of life that you wouldn't otherwise have met. Exercise can be a great way to extend your circle of friends and find some strong relationships, based on a shared love of a particular activity, or simply participating in an activity - for example, football.

● It stops you doing other things that aren't so good for you - every minute you spend exercising is a minute where you're not eating out of boredom, smoking, consuming stuff or lying on the sofa. And the more you do it, the more you want to build your life around it, leaving even less time for these other things.

So, re-frame how you see exercise - don't see it see it as a painful chore you have to get out of the way as quickly as possible, but a source of pleasure and fulfilment that you want to build into your life as much as possible.

How long does it take until you feel brilliant? It's hard to say, and it will vary for each individual but once you find an activity you enjoy and build it into your life properly you may well find yourself quickly feeling lots of the benefits above - and more. Let's explore next how you can find exercise you enjoy.

How to enjoy exercise

Exercise should not be a project in self-flagellation (unless you like that sort of thing). If going to the gym doesn't sound like fun to you then don't do it.

The point is this - *find a type of exercise you actually enjoy*. Exercise comes in many forms, and you don't have to do particular activities like going to the gym in order to get fit. It could be a sport - and there are hundreds of them, from the common to the very unusual - but it doesn't have to be. It could be an activity - from gardening to walking to just playing outdoor games. *Your aim should be to try to do the stuff that's fun and doesn't feel like exercise.*

For example, I play beach volleyball. Yes, in England, and yes, outside and throughout each season of the year. It's one of the most strenuous sports there is, but even as a middle-aged participant I don't feel that strain at all. I just love doing it for the fun of it. Playing for one hour is never enough so I play for 2 hours at a time, 3 times a week if I can. But at no point does it ever feel like 'serious' exercise, as it's so much fun.

And the goal should be just to have fun. You don't have to be good at it or win it - just enjoy it. But if improving your skills and adding a competitive edge increases your enjoyment, then go for it.

So, the simple conclusion from this section is *find your fun* when it comes to exercise. Be open minded about it, and there's bound to be something for you out there.

The NHS has some nice ideas on different ways you can get active, at: http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/Activelifestyle.aspx
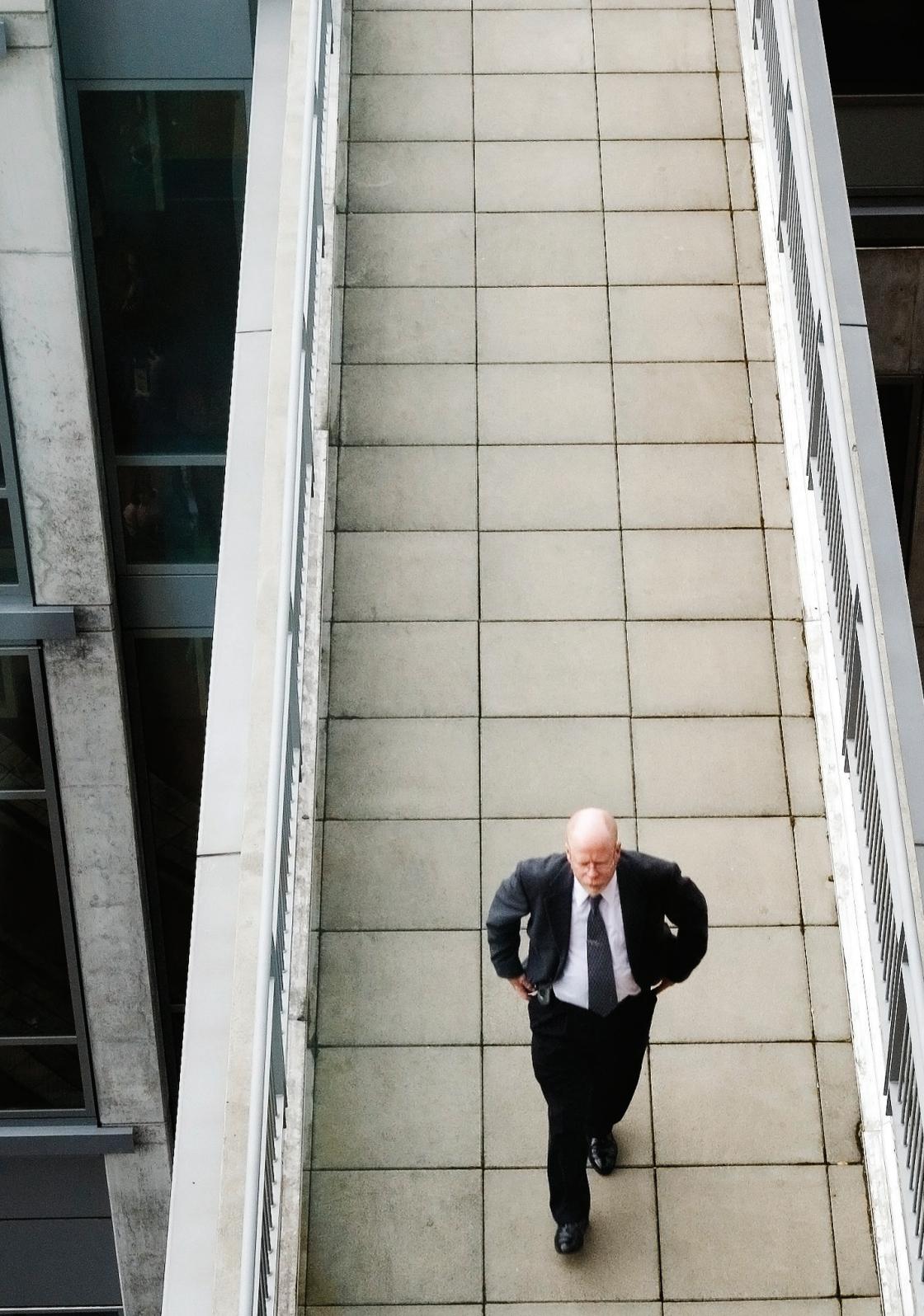
Build your lifestyle around exercise

As we noted earlier, you should put your health first in your life - including enough time to eat, sleep and exercise well. Other things in your life - including work - should come second. When you're planning your day or your week ahead, always look for a slot first for your exercise, and reschedule the other parts of your day around this if you can. For example, I play squash a couple of times a week at lunchtimes, which takes a little more than an hour, so I work the extra time towards the end of the day,

The NHS advice is that "adults should try to be active daily and aim to achieve at least 150 minutes of physical activity over a week through a variety of activities."[34] So, aside from prioritising your health and exercise when planning your time, it makes sense to build exercise into your routine as you go along. This is particularly important when many of us live relatively sedentary lives - sitting at office desks most of the day.

So, choose to do things that keep you active. For example, choose to walk up the stairs rather than take a lift. Or cycle to work rather than take the car if it's not too far - and this is an important choice which could help you really reduce your environmental footprint too.

Productive exercise

Exercise is an important and enjoyable thing to do in its own right. But it can be productive and fulfilling in other ways too (although of course it doesn't have to be).

For example, walking in the countryside can give us a wonderful sense of fulfilment and enjoyment of nature. Walking can also help us to think better, so why not suggest to work colleagues that you have your next meeting on a half hour walk in the park or countryside rather than in a stuffy office? You'll get some exercise, have more fun and may have a more productive meeting!

As another example, you could join a conservation group and using this important voluntary work as a 'green gym'.

How to reduce your carbon footprint

How to reduce your carbon footprint - on food & exercise

The new habits that we've put forward above to shift you towards a healthier lifestyle should also be habits that help to reduce your environmental footprint. In this section, we will list a few additional important habits to help you reduce your footprint further.

Reducing your food footprint

- **Don't waste food** - according to WRAP, "UK households are still throwing away 4.2 million tonnes of avoidable household food and drink annually; the equivalent of six meals every week for the average UK household." For example, we throw away around 24 million slices of bread every day in the UK.[35] So, don't buy too much food and make sure you eat everything that you buy. Also, buy foods that are close to their 'sell by' dates and eat them soon - they won't then be wasted and you may get these at a discounted rate.

- **Buy local and seasonal** produce where possible - this reduces food miles and the minimises the energy required to produce the food in the first place.

- **Buy from local shops too** - buying local food from local shops helps to keep money in the local community and encourage local business and production.

- **Grow your own** - it's satisfying, tasty and you can do it even if you just have a window box rather than a garden. It also uses almost zero food miles!

- **Go organic** - there is disagreement as to whether there is enough robust evidence to suggest that organic food reduces our carbon footprint. Many people choose organic food because they believe it contains fewer pesticides and additives, and is kinder to animals and the environment. To quote The Guardian however, "a 2012 meta-analysis from Stanford did find pesticides residues in non-organic food – but in safe amounts. It boils down to whether you believe in safe amounts or not – and if you can afford to avoid them".[36]

Reducing your exercise footprint

- Don't buy loads of kit for the sake of it. People taking up a new sport can get obsessed with buying gadgets or 'the kit' (which is simply another form of consumerism) rather than focussing on enjoying the activity itself. Try new sports and exercise out but only get extra kit if you really need it. Do the exercise for the enjoyment - not the kit.

- Also - look for alternatives to buying brand new

items. Borrow kit from other people and look for second hand items if you can. Apply general parameters of sensible sustainable living to your exercise activity - for example, exercising locally rather than having to fly or drive extensively to do it.

Conclusions

Conclusions

So, that's the 'how to eat and exercise well' life shift. Some simple but substantial changes you can make that could have a big impact on how you feel, how much you spend and your impact on the environment.

Prove the benefits - with a diary

Why not test this life shift versus your normal lifestyle for a week and see the effect it has?

We suggest living your normal lifestyle for a week first and completing a 'health, happiness spending and impact' diary while you do this. Throughout each day keep a note of what you're eating, spending, consuming (in terms of environmental impact - including food miles, production and packaging) and the exercise you're taking. Then at the end of each day note how you're feeling. Good? Bad? Energised? Tired? Stressed?

Then in the week after, try out all 10 recommendations in our life shift noted above and keep the same diary. Then at the end of the 2 weeks, compare the two diaries - across each of the different areas - from spending to happiness.. Are there any differences? Is it working for you? We suspect (and hope) that it will bring you a lot of benefits!

References

1. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eat-less.aspx
2. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/
3   https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2011/nov/23/corporate-giants-target-developing-countries
4. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/
5. http://adc.bmj.com/content/early/2016/02/08/archdischild-2014-306746
6. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/
7. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx
8. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eat-less.aspx
9. https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/preventing-heart-disease/staying-active/exercise-calorie-calculator
10. http://www.weightlossresources.co.uk/calories/calorie_counter.htm
11. https://www.plunkettresearch.com/statistics/Industry-Statistics-GlobalFood-Industry-Statistics-and-Market-Size-Overview/
12. "Food Politics" by Marion Nestle, University of California Press, London 2013, p.13
13. "Food Politics" by Marion Nestle, University of California Press, London 2013, p.17-
14. https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/portion/documents/pdiwebtxt.htm
15. "Food Politics" by Marion Nestle, University of California Press, London 2013, p.22
16 https://www.statista.com/statistics/286526/coca-cola-advertising-spending-worldwide/
17. http://www.actiononsugar.org/News%20Centre/Surveys%20/2016/178136.html
18. "Food Politics" by Marion Nestle, University of California Press, London 2013, p.91
19. http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk/about/index.html
20. Cardiovascular Disease Statistics 2017 - https://www.bhf.org.uk/research/heart-statistics/heart-statistics-publications/cardiovascular-disease-statistics-2017
21 http://www.coca-colacompany.com/stories/coke-and-recycling-in-the-1970s
22. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jun/28/a-million-a-minute-worlds-plastic-bottle-binge-as-dangerous-as-climate-change
23 https://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/xvpflx/weight_loss_and
24. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/how-to-diet.aspx
25. https://www.weightwatchersshop.co.uk/chocolate-biscuits
27. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/11761701/We-all-need-to-stop-eating-meat-now-and-this-is-why.html
28. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Vegetarianhealth/Pages/Vegetarianhealthqanda.aspx#what
29. https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/understand-your-drinking/unit-calculator
30. https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/feb/17/cafe-chains-selling-drinks-25-teaspoons-sugar-starbucks-costa-coffee
31. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/whybeactive.aspx
32. http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mental-benefits-of-exercise.aspx
33. http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mental-benefits-of-exercise.aspx
34. http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/whybeactive.aspx
35. Household food and drink waste in the UK 2012, WRAP, p.6 - http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/household-food-and-drink-waste-uk-2012
36. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/feb/22/is-organic-food-healthier

Further reading

Nutrition

The **NHS** has good, common sense advice on healthy living -
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eat-less.aspx

It also has the most sensible guidance if you're looking to lose weight
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/how-to-diet.aspx

The **British Nutrition Foundation** has a range of helpful resources, research and guides on how to eat well and stay healthy -
https://www.nutrition.org.uk

Alcohol calorie and unit counter from **Drinkaware** -
https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/understand-your-drinking/unit-calculator

Politics and food

Food Politics by Marion Nestle is a very useful exploration of the food industry and how it influences politics and what we eat. She also has a useful website with reports, research and details of her books on the food industry at www.foodpolitics.com.

Action on Sugar (www.actiononsugar.org) and **Action on Salt** (www.actiononsalt.org.uk) are both evidence-base campaign groups headed by Graham MacGregor, a Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine seeking to reduce the levels (and raise our awareness) of sugar and salt in the food industry and our diets.

Recipes

If you're looking for simple and tasty recipes to make for yourself and your family, check out **Jamie Oliver** and **Nigel Slater**'s books - starting with '30 minute meals' and 'Real fast food' respectively.

How to eat and exercise well

This guide provides a no-nonsense approach to eating well and getting active. It cuts through all the confusion about food and health and makes it as simple as possible to achieve a healthy lifestyle - whilst looking after the planet and saving money.

This guide is part of the *Life Shift* series, showing you how to challenge the conventions of the modern world and shift your life to become healthier, happier and kinder to the planet.