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An Intelligent Read For All Women

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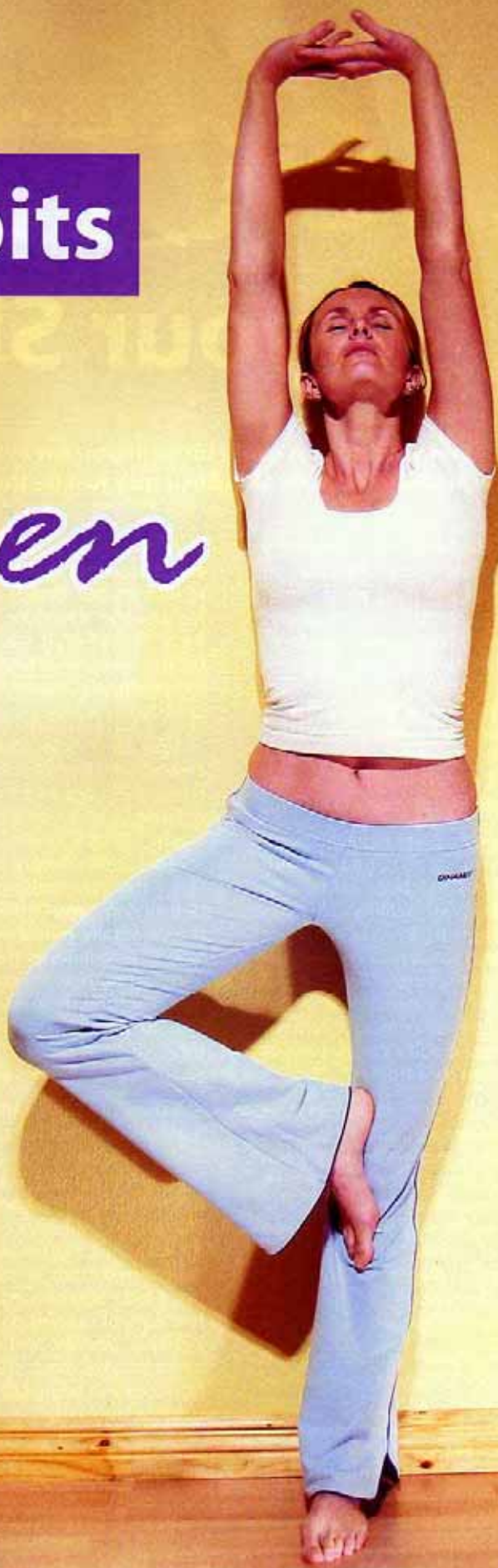
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her wellbeing

# Healthy Habits

for Busy  
Women



**Why do we fail to look after ourselves properly when we are busy?  
Many of us have tried countless ways to combat bad eating habits,  
and tried in vain to transform our exercise habits.**

**W**e all know what we should be doing, but the hard part is staying on track. As we get busier, we tend to let our healthy habits slide and then temptation, frustration and resistance start to set in. The good news is that there are a few easy ways to get you back on track when stress and busyness take over.

#### **Build a buddy system for food and workouts**

Whether it is a close friend, personal trainer or work colleague, aim to pair up with someone who you can be accountable to each week regarding your eating and exercise habits. You want to choose someone who will support your goals and give you a supportive push in the right direction. If they can join you in your endeavour to get healthier, that's even better. You can support each other through the highs and lows.

#### **Eat 5-6 small meals per day**

You've probably heard this many times, but it's so easy to neglect this simple habit when stress sets in and you get busier. Planning is the key to success with this habit. Each week, plan out any snacks you need to purchase and even plan all major meals. Utilise the delivery service from supermarkets to save time. Look at your day and map out realistic times that you can stop and have a break for your meals and snacks. It's easier to stay on track nutrition-wise when you are not hungry, and planned breaks can stave off cravings. Try a protein bar, nuts or sultanas for a great little snack.

#### **Aim for improvement not perfection**

If you have cravings for certain foods such as chocolate or pastries, indulge every few days with a down-sized portion. If you eliminate your 'treat' entirely, you'll crave it even more! As you start to make healthier changes in the rest of your life, these cravings may decrease. If not, it doesn't really matter. You'll find yourself progressing from past habits. Keep in mind that as you start to implement changes, you will fall back into your old habits every now and again. Expect it and then you won't be too hard on yourself. It happens to the best of us! It's unrealistic to think you can become perfect, but always try your best anyway.

#### **Small amounts are still effective**

Try to not get hung up on thinking that you need to work out for an hour for it to be effective. Research has shown that exercise for 10 minutes three times a day is just as effective as one 30 minute session. As you are waiting for your bread to toast, do some lunges. As you bring in the groceries, do bicep curls with the bags. Jump on the treadmill first thing in the morning and do what you can. If you have a favourite TV programme you watch each week, always work out when you watch it.

#### **Strive for activity most days**

For a completely healthy lifestyle, we can't stress the importance of exercise enough. Create time each day to move your body. Either see a Personal Trainer for a programme you can do at home, grab a DVD from the library or just put on those sneakers and head outdoors. Most people need a push from someone else when starting out. Accountability seems to be a strong determinant in starting a lifelong habit, so make sure you have a buddy or trainer to help you out. That's why our clients are successful - they have support from their trainer.

#### **Reward yourself for victories**

Use non-food rewards to treat yourself when you accomplish certain milestones. One client of mine tracks out a treat every 6 weeks for sticking to her workout and eating goals. The treats can include going to the movies, a massage or even an ice cream on the beach. Make it fun and pleasurable so you are driven to keep succeeding.

#### **And finally... Analyse your life**

Experiment on yourself to see what works for you. We are constantly bombarded with information on how we can lose weight, increase our energy and feel fantastic. It's best to pinpoint what really gets you going. Are you motivated more when you think about a certain event coming up? Do you stick to a workout plan if you have a workout buddy? When you slip up and give in to temptation or slack off, what triggered it? Were you unprepared foodwise, or did you leave exercise to an unrealistic time of the day?

Without being overly critical of yourself, track your habits over a few weeks and identify your triggers, good and bad, and modify them to help you in the future.

Awareness is the key for lifelong success. If you can identify it, you can start to make the appropriate changes. Stick at what works for you and you'll be on the path to long-term success.

*By Nalisha Patel*



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*Tom Walker play*