

# Weight off your Mind (WOYM) Course

## About our course

Our course aims to teach you the skills you need to lose approximately 5% of your body weight (and keep it off!). Research shows that a modest weight loss of 5-10% body weight can bring a wide range of health benefits, such as reducing the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and cancer. This course also aims to address and improve your relationship with food.

The course is free of charge to all patients and has six sessions plus a final masterclass.

We run two sessions per month, with each lasting up to 90 minutes.

You won't be judged about your weight here. Everyone who takes part in this course will be fully supported and we can help encourage you if you're finding it difficult to stick to your goals.

## Additional Information Course Outline

- **Yellow Week**
  - Managing plateaus
  - Managing cravings
- Glycaemic index
- Managing your relationship with food
- **White Week**
  - Buying and using your own pedometer
  - Drinkaware
- **Blue Week**
  - Choosing healthier fats

## Ground Rules

When you join, we kindly ask that you follow our ground rules. These are to make sure you get the most out of the course, and that our team can help everyone that has signed up.

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As part of the course, we ask that you:

- Try to arrive to each session on time, as the dietitian will start promptly at 18:00 (17:45 on your first session)
- Aim to attend at least four of the sessions and the masterclass; if you're unable to attend a session, please email or call the dietitian's office.
- Be polite to all staff and members; if you're aggressive or rude to others you'll be asked to leave
- Don't share any information from group sessions with other members of the public
- Commit to self-monitoring and keeping track of your progress; you can use the *Food, Activity and Feelings Diary* and *Progress Record* in this pack
- Tell us if your circumstances or details change or you feel it's not the right time to take part on this course. If you do leave, we'll ask you to complete a short exit questionnaire

If you have any questions about our course, or you have suggestions for future groups, don't hesitate to contact our team. We're happy to help where possible.

**Call: 0118 904 3251**

**Email: [VirtualWeightManagement@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:VirtualWeightManagement@berkshire.nhs.uk)**

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## Food, Activity and Mood Diary

### Why keep a diary?

People who monitor their behaviour (e.g. keep a food and activity diary) are **much more likely to succeed** in losing weight and keeping it off.

The diary in this pack can help you become more aware of what you do and understand some of the reasons why.

Try to record as much as you can, and as accurately as you can.

The more accurate your notes are, the more likely you are to succeed in managing your weight.

### Completing your diary

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Keep your diary every day for at least three days to help you to find out exactly what, how, when and why you eat.

Make a note of everything you eat and drink, the time and place you ate, how hungry you were, and how you were feeling at the time. Please also record any activities you do, like walking or running.

Try not to change what you eat and drink whilst keeping your initial food diary. The aim is to examine your **usual eating habits**.

Don't complete the entire day's diary in the evening – do it as you go along to avoid missing anything out.

## What to write down

### Day, Date and Time

Make the day and date as clear as possible, as well as what time of day you eat.

### Food and drink

Jot down **everything** you eat and drink throughout the day – **don't leave anything out** however small it may seem.

Record the type of food you have eaten e.g. semi-skimmed milk or full cream milk; and the way the food was cooked e.g. fried, poached, boiled, etc.

Judge the **amount** of food eaten using simple measures e.g. number of slices, tablespoons or cupfuls. Also think about:

- Are you targeting the energy dense high fat foods?
- Do you have a **good portion** of starchy carbohydrate at each meal?
- Are you including adequate amounts of **fruit and vegetables**?
- Is **alcohol** included in your meal?
- Do you have a very narrow food choice or several '**banned**' foods?

### Feelings

Use the 'Feelings' columns to record any thoughts or emotions you're having before and after eating, or anything that upsets you, or makes you feel sad or angry.

Doing this will help you to unravel some of the underlying reasons for your eating behaviour, and to plan ways of adapting it.

### Activities

Making a note of your activities can help you see when you might feel most hungry, why you may eat quicker at certain times and whether you're doing this before or directly after exercising.

1. **Sedentary behaviour:** means sitting or lying down e.g. watching TV, sitting at a desk, driving etc. Record this as number of hours in a 24-hour period.
  2. **Lifestyle activity:** is the typical activity that is part of everyday life e.g. walking, housework, gardening, using the stairs etc. This can be estimated using a pedometer and should be recorded as number of steps per 24-hours.
  3. **Formal exercise:** is any activity that involves physical effort e.g. power walking, running, swimming, cycling, an exercise class etc. It should be recorded in number of minutes spent per day.
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## Other details to think about

### How did you eat?

Describing your eating behaviour is very useful in helping you understand your behaviour of when you're likely to make meal choices, such as:

- Where you were
- Who you were with
- Were you doing anything else whilst eating e.g. driving, working, watching TV, reading etc.?
- Did you eat directly **from the packet** or from a plate with a plate, knife and fork?
- Did you eat quickly or savour your food?
- Do you **plan** what you are going to have in advance?
- Does 'black and white thinking' (i.e. having strict dietary rules instead of flexible guidelines) lead to episodes of overeating?

### How active were you?

- How much time do you spend being inactive (sitting or lying down)?
- How many steps do you do?
- Did you notice any patterns to your activity levels; for example, are you more active on weekdays or at weekends?
- What steps could you take in future to help you lead a more active life?

### Looking for patterns

- Have you been recording your food intake accurately?
- Are you sure you're recording absolutely everything?
- Is anything stopping you from recording accurately?
- Have you been reviewing your progress regularly?

<b>Food, Activity and Feelings Diary</b>		Day: Date:
<b>Time</b>	<b>Food &amp; Drink</b> <b>How much and what type?</b>	<b>How did you feel before eating?</b>
7.30am	<i>2 medium slices of white bread and butter (spread thin). Cup of tea, full fat milk and one sugar</i>	<i>Bit rushed. Otherwise okay.</i>
9.15am	<i>Cup of tea – full fat milk and one sugar</i>	
10.30am	<i>Danish pastry</i>	<i>Stressed and irritable</i>
Midday	<i>Chicken salad – chicken breast, lettuce, tomato, peppers, cucumber, onion. No dressing, one can of diet coke</i>	<i>Okay</i>

3.15pm	Cup of tea	
5.15pm	Raided fridge! 2oz cheese, cold roast chicken (2 slices), 2 glasses of apple juice	Tired, stressed, hungry!! Out of control
7.30pm	Chicken pie, 2 tbsp peas, 2 tbsp carrots, glass of water, mini trifle	Tired, still more relaxed
9.30pm	3 digestives, cup of tea	Looking forward to a sit down
9.45pm	2 packets chip sticks, cup of tea	Feel like today is a write off!!
<p><b>Sedentary (sitting or lying down)</b> _____ hours / 24</p> <p><b>Lifestyle activity (walking)</b> _____ steps</p> <p><b>Formal exercise (swimming, aerobics, etc.)</b> _____ minutes</p>		

<b>Food, Activity and Feelings Diary</b>		Day:
		Date:
<b>How did you eat?</b> Where you out? Sitting or standing? What speed? With company? While watching TV?	<b>How did you feel after eating?</b>	
Standing in kitchen getting kids' drinks	Pleased I had breakfast today	
At desk		
At desk while working	Bit guilty	
Canteen, with colleagues	Okay, still wish I hadn't had the pastry	
Kitchen, standing by fridge alone. Wolfed it down quickly	Really annoyed with myself. Why did I do it?	
Kitchen table, with family	Didn't really enjoy – still wish I hadn't pigged out earlier	

<i>Kitchen, standing alone</i>	<i>Feel guilty, shouldn't have eaten those</i>
<i>In front of TV with husband</i>	<i>What a mess, start again tomorrow</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. 8 hours in bed; 9 hours sitting; lots of sitting at desk and in front of TV</i></li><li><i>2. Good – went for a walk at lunchtime</i></li><li><i>3. 8,300 steps on pedometer</i></li></ol>	

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## How to analyse your food diary

### Be positive

Congratulate yourself for the things you have achieved, rather than giving yourself a hard time about the areas that need further work.

### Use support

A close friend or family member may notice patterns that you don't and will be good to bounce ideas off when you're planning further changes. They are also an important source of encouragement (not nagging).

### Hunger

Sometimes hunger can be a good sign, as it can make you're looking carefully at how much you're eating. But, being too hungry can make you vulnerable to episodes of over-eating.

- Are you feeling hungry?
- Are you eating at regular intervals throughout the day?
- Are you eating sufficient amounts at mealtimes?

## Check your eating patterns

- Do your patterns change significantly from one day to the next?
- Are there any times when you eat very little?
- Are there periods when you eat excessively or binge?
- Do you eat **regular** meals and snacks throughout the day?
- Do you eat **enough** at mealtimes or are you hungry again within the next hour or so?

## In which situations are you most likely to overeat?

- Are you prone to stress-related eating?
- Are you liable to eat when bored, tired or lonely?
- Do you frequently use food as a treat to yourself?
- Does 'black and white thinking' (i.e. having strict dietary rules instead of flexible guidelines) lead to episodes of overeating?
- Are there any other noticeable patterns to your eating habits?
- What steps could you take in future to help you more towards a healthier eating pattern?

Notes:

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# Food, Activity and Feelings Diary

Day:

Date:

Time

Food & Drink  
How much and what type?

How did you feel before eating?

Sedentary (sitting or lying down)

\_\_\_\_\_ hours / 24

Lifestyle activity (walking)

\_\_\_\_\_ steps

Formal exercise (swimming, aerobics, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ minutes



# Food, Activity and Feelings Diary

Day:

Date:

Time

Food & Drink  
How much and what type?

How did you feel before eating?

Sedentary (sitting or lying down) \_\_\_\_\_ hours / 24

Lifestyle activity (walking) \_\_\_\_\_ steps

Formal exercise (swimming, aerobics, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ minutes



# Food, Activity and Feelings Diary

Day:

Date:

Time

Food & Drink  
How much and what type?

How did you feel before eating?

Sedentary (sitting or lying down) \_\_\_\_\_ hours / 24

Lifestyle activity (walking) \_\_\_\_\_ steps

Formal exercise (swimming, aerobics, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ minutes



# Progress Record

## Activity Goals

FITT (frequency, intensity, time, type)

- **Frequency and Time:** 30 minutes / per day, 5 days a week. Ideally all in one go, but 10-15 minutes also beneficial
- **Intensity:** to improve cardiac fitness **60-80% maximum heart rate**. Maximum heart rate =  $220 - \text{age}$  e.g.  $220 - 65 = 155$  beats per minute. Target: 60% of 155 = 93, 80% = 120
- **Type of activity**

Date							Master Class
Waist (cm)							
Weight (kg)							
Body Mass Index							
Estimated Energy Requirement							
Clothes Size							

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ (m)

5% Weight Loss Target: \_\_\_\_\_ kg

Final Target Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ kg

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Goals should be **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**imed.

An example would be to increase vegetables portion sizes at lunch three times per week for the next two weeks.

1. I intend to

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This might be difficult because

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2. I intend to

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This might be difficult because

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3. I intend to

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This might be difficult because

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4. I intend to

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This might be difficult because

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5. I intend to

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This might be difficult because

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## Masterclass Session

Achieved?

### Dietary Goals

1.....

2.....

3.....

### Activity Goals

1.....

2.....

3.....

### Behaviour Goals

1.....

2.....

3.....

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## Weight Progress Chart

180																		
175																		
170																		
165																		
160																		
155																		
150																		
145																		
140																		
135																		
130																		
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90																		
85																		
80																		
75																		
70																		
65																		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	20

Week

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# Yellow Week

## Managing Weight Plateaus

A plateau is when you reach a point when you don't feel you're making improvements in either weight change or mood. It's a normal part of weight management and can occur from time to time. You might've slipped back into old habits (like eating more or exercising less), by your body taking time to catch up with your reduced energy intake, or by you having gained muscle mass (muscle weighs more than fat; check how your clothes fit).

Reaching a plateau may affect your motivation. You may think your efforts aren't working anymore because there is no change on the scales. Don't become discouraged, if you keep up the good work it will pass.

### How to manage plateaus

- Plan ahead: be aware that they're a normal part of managing your weight, so keep on top of your self-monitoring and practice the techniques below that help you to keep focused
- Avoid slipping back into old habits by not having more calories/ doing less exercise than before
- Use a diary to keep track of your portion sizes, types of food you're eating, and activity levels
- If you're sure that you're sticking to your calorie allowance and doing your exercise, continue with what you're doing
- Don't start being even more strict with your intake; drastic changes won't be sustainable and will increase your likelihood of relapsing into old ways
- Make sure your goals are attainable and realistic
- Focus on your achievements so far and make sure your goals are short term and are meaningful to you
- Make sure you're getting good support – this could be friend, family, groups or carers
- Other positive activities in life can help keep you focussed and energised
- Be wary of your thoughts, especially if you're being too self-critical
- Increase your activity levels where possible with different intensity, frequency or duration
- Congratulate yourself on all the changes you've made, and keep track of how far you've come
- Remember to limit weighing yourself to once a week, using tramlines of 1.8kgs (4lbs) up or down (considering whether you have gained muscle mass, or have more fluid on board), in the same clothes at the same time of day

Weight loss happens in steps, not a straight line, and if you continue with the changes, you will start losing weight again.

## Managing Cravings

Cravings can be very difficult to resist. The thing to remember is that a craving, like an emotion, will pass. We can either tackle it by improving our skills to ride out the craving, or by avoiding situations which trigger cravings, such as stress.

You can use different skills to help you, such as:

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- **Problem solving:** consider situations that cause unnecessary snacking and experiment with solutions to find the ones that work for you
  - **Stimulus control:** avoid things which trigger overeating, e.g. don't shop when you're hungry, avoid walking past the bakers on the way into work, don't leave the biscuit tin in an easy to reach place on the counter
  - **Urge-surfing:** try to avoid giving in to cravings. When you do crave a type of food, acknowledge it as a craving (rather than hunger) and tell yourself you'll eat the food in 5 minutes.  
For those 5 minutes, distract yourself by doing something else, and if you still want the food 5 minutes later, eat it and enjoy it like a food critic. Each time you resist a craving, the craving becomes less strong next time
  - **Check your thinking:** are you eating for emotional reasons? Are you having all or nothing thoughts such as:

*If I open a packet of biscuits*

*I have to eat them all*

*These foods are naughty so I might as well have a "bad" day today and finish them all off now and start again tomorrow with none*

*I've had 3 biscuits which I hadn't intended to, I've completely ruined it now*

Remind yourself to put things in perspective and think flexibly.

If you eat three biscuits, this is about 240 calories. This won't undo the hard work you've done so far. Instead, it's an opportunity for you to understand why you decided to snack.

People who are trying to lose weight tend to put high-calorie foods up on a pedestal, thinking 'I shouldn't have that because I'm trying to lose weight'. Instead, really taste the food like you're a food critic and consider 'Is this food actually that nice?' and 'Is it good enough for me?'

Remind yourself of why you're trying to lose weight.

**It's not what we eat but how we eat it that causes us to lose control.**

The practical first step is to identify the trigger, then plan a strategy to help deal with it. If you do give in to a craving, don't resort to all or nothing thinking. You can keep your good efforts by challenging the unhelpful thoughts, so that it doesn't become full-blown overeating.

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## What is a Glycaemic Index (GI)?

**Glycaemic Index (GI)** involves ranking carbohydrate foods based on their effect on blood glucose (sugar) levels.

Traditionally, carbohydrate foods have been divided into 2 groups:

1. **Starchy Foods** (complex carbohydrates) such as bread, pasta, potato, rice and cereals
2. **Sugary Foods** (simple carbohydrates) such as confectionary, soft drinks, cakes and biscuits

Carbohydrates are broken down during digestion to form a simple sugar known as glucose.

This **glucose** is absorbed into your bloodstream, which is used by your body as fuel.

The amount of glucose in your blood can be measured over a period of time.

**Insulin**, a hormone produced by your pancreas, helps to regulate the amount of glucose in your bloodstream.

Pure glucose is one of the most rapidly absorbed carbohydrates. It has been given a nominal value of 100 on the Glycaemic Index (GI). All other carbohydrate foods and drinks are then measured against this.

The tables on the next few pages will show how some complex carbohydrate foods cause a rapid rise in blood glucose levels, whereas some foods which have a high sugar content have a slower effect on blood glucose levels.

### Low glycaemic foods (low GI)

These are foods which are broken down and absorbed into your body slowly.

They cause a gradual rise in your blood glucose levels and need only low levels of insulin. This means they're a better choice if you have diabetes.

Low glycaemic foods can help fight off hunger pangs, because the body feels full for longer. This can help if you're trying to lose weight.

Low GI foods can also help you burn more fat and less muscle, so your metabolic rate is higher.

Foods with a glycaemic index of less than 55 are low GI foods.

### High glycaemic foods (high GI)

These are foods which are broken down and absorbed into your body quickly.

They cause a higher rise in blood glucose levels and trigger the release of large quantities of insulin from your pancreas.

This means that if you have diabetes and / or insulin resistance, your blood glucose levels may stay raised for longer, contributing to high blood glucose levels.

A large amount of insulin in your blood can trigger a process of converting the excess glucose into fat and make you feel hungry, so that you're more likely to eat more high GI foods to satisfy your cravings.

Foods with a GI of more than 70 are high GI foods.

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Controlling your body's insulin production is helpful particularly for those with insulin resistance e.g., pre-diabetes, diabetes, PCOS.

Eating mostly low GI foods can help to provide a steady supply of glucose to the bloodstream, while not over-stimulating insulin production. This can help achieve:

- A better control of blood glucose if you have diabetes
- Improved sporting performance with a more sustained supply of energy to the muscles
- Weight loss, as low GI foods can be more filling than high GI alternatives. The naturally high water and fibre content of many low GI foods increases their bulk without increasing their energy content.

## What can influence the GI of a food?

A food's GI number can be determined by many different things:

### **Type of Starch**

The less 'swollen' the starch, the slower the rate of digestion. Foods with less 'swollen' starch include basmati rice, pasta and oat products.

### **Physical Form of Foods**

Foods containing a fibrous or coarse outer layer breakdown slowly. These include foods such as beans, lentils, wholegrain bread and barley. Raw foods are digested at a slower rate and so reduce the glycaemic index.

### **Type of Fibre**

Fibre which forms a gel-like substance and swells when mixed with water (soluble) can reduce the speed of digestion. Examples include oats, beans, lentils and fruit.

### **Fat**

Fat slows down the emptying of your stomach and slows the digestion of starch. But remember, foods containing a large amount of fat should be avoided if you are trying to lose weight.

### **Acidity**

Acids in food slow down emptying of your stomach, therefore slowing the rate of digestion. Foods with a high acidity include citrus fruits like lemons and limes, and vinegar.

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## Glycaemic food index charts

### Breakfast Cereals

High	Medium	Low
Cornflakes Frosted flakes Muesli (containing sugar) Instant porridge Rice Krispies Bran flakes Coco pops Cheerios Crunchy nut cornflakes	Shredded wheat Weetabix Sultana bran	Porridge oats All bran Oat bran Muesli (low sugar; oat based)

### Grains / Pasta

High	Medium	Low
Rice	Basmati rice Brown rice Long grain rice Couscous Gnocchi Rice noodles Udon noodles Polenta Wild rice	Barley Semolina Buckwheat Bulgar wheat Egg noodles Pasta (including fettuccine, penne, lasagne, linguine, spirali, macaroni, ravioli, farfalle, tagliatelle, spaghetti, conchiglie, vermicelli)

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# Managing Your Relationship with Food

Building a healthier relationship with food - whether you're dealing with emotional eating, binge eating or food-related guilt- requires a compassionate and structured approach. It's important to address both the emotional and physical sides of eating.

Below are practical, evidence-based strategies to support you on this journey:

## 1. Recognise Emotional Triggers

Binge or emotional eating often stems from feelings like stress, boredom, loneliness, or anxiety. Keeping a *Food Activity and Feelings Diary* to track what you feel before and after eating can help identify patterns and reveal emotional triggers that drive eating episodes.

## 2. Separate Food from Morality

Avoid labelling foods as “good” or “bad.” This kind of black-and-white thinking can lead to guilt, shame, and cycles of overeating. Instead, aim for a balanced, flexible approach that allows all foods in moderation—without judgment.

## 3. Practice Mindful Eating

Before eating, ask yourself: “*Am I physically hungry?*”

During meals:

- Eat slowly and without distractions like your phone or TV.
- Pay attention to the taste, texture, and smell of your food.
- Tune in to your body's hunger and fullness signals.

## 4. Show Yourself Compassion

Be kind to yourself. Healing isn't linear, and setbacks are a normal part of the process. Speak to yourself with the same empathy and understanding you would offer a friend.

## 5. Eat Regular, Balanced Meals

Stick to a consistent eating schedule with regular meals. Each meal should ideally include protein, fibre, and healthy fats to help you stay full and reduce the likelihood of unplanned or binge eating.

## 6. Try Urge-Surfing

If you feel the urge to eat when you're not hungry, pause and delay the action for 15–30 minutes. In that time, try doing something else:

- Go for a walk
- Call or text someone
- Take a shower
- Do a quick breathing or grounding exercise
- Avoid keeping binge-triggering foods in the house while you're building this skill.

## 7. Prioritise Sleep and Limit Alcohol

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Lack of sleep and excessive alcohol can impair judgment and increase impulsive eating. Try to get adequate rest and be mindful of alcohol's effects on your emotional state and eating habits.

## 8. Develop Healthy Coping Strategies

Instead of turning to food for comfort, create a toolkit of other ways to manage difficult emotions:

- Journal your thoughts
- Meditate or do breathing exercises
- Engage in physical activity
- Talk to a supportive friend or therapist  
Consider keeping a “coping list” on your phone for easy access during tough moments.

## 9. Do More of What Fulfils You

When your life feels more meaningful and enjoyable, the urge to seek comfort from food may naturally decrease. Spend time doing things that bring you joy and purpose—whether it's hobbies, creative pursuits, volunteering, or connecting with others.

## 10. Seek Long-term Support

Professional help can make a significant difference. Therapists trained in **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)** or **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)** are especially effective in treating binge eating and emotional eating. You don't have to do this alone.

# White Week

## Buying and Using Your Own Pedometer

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## Use a pedometer and walk more

Using a pedometer is an excellent, easy way to find out how many steps you've taken and help you set your next activity goal.



## Before you buy

All pedometers count steps, but some do it better than others. The technology used and the quality of the parts can greatly affect their accuracy and reliability.

Many pedometers offer extra features such as distance walked, calories burned, minutes of continuous activity accumulated.

These might be appealing to some, but the important thing is to make sure they count the steps accurately.

A good quality entry level pedometer won't cost a fortune. A retail price of £20-£40 should certainly get you the product you need.

There are other features to consider:

- Clear, good-sized screen
- 'Non step filter' (or similar)
- Simple battery-change procedure
- Strong fastening clip
- Mechanism to avoid inadvertent stop reset / loss

## Ready to wear

Even the best pedometer in the world will struggle to perform well if it is not worn correctly.

It's important to read the instructions to be clear on how to wear and use it.

Most pedometers are typically worn on your waistband and must be clipped in an upright position. Other means of attaching them, like a security lanyard, can help you avoid damaging or losing it.

## What else do you need?

A pedometer on its own can help to make you aware of the need to take more exercise but won't necessarily give you the incentive to keep going with any increase in physical activity. The best way of doing that is to find out how active you are now and then set incremental, realistic goals which can be achieved and then reviewed. You may also have, or want to consider, a smart watch which will track activity, nutrition, and calories burned. Some also monitor heart rate and blood pressure. These watches can help you reach your fitness goals faster.

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# Managing your alcohol intake

## Drinkaware

The Drinkaware website has information on how to cut down your alcohol intake at home and when you're out.

Find out more [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

## Make cutting down on alcohol as easy as possible

### 1. Take the right approach

Gradually cutting down on alcohol is more likely to be something you will stay committed to as opposed to cutting out all alcohol immediately AKA cold turkey.

### 2. Ask for support

Tell friends and family that you're trying to cut down on alcohol. While they are likely to be supportive, some people don't like to have their drinking behaviour challenged. Be prepared to talk about your decision by remembering the benefits that cutting down on alcohol brings.

## How to cut down on alcohol at home

### 1. Keep track of the alcohol units you're drinking

The government advises that people should not regularly drink more than the daily unit guidelines of 2-3 units of alcohol for men and women (equivalent to a 175 ml glass of wine). 'Regularly' means drinking every day or most days of the week.

Using our **unit calculator** will make the calculations easier or you can sign up to **MyDrinkaware** to track your drinking over time. You may wish to download the MyDrinkaware App to track your consumption.

### 2. Know what you're buying

Check out the **Alcohol by Volume (ABV)** on a bottle of wine before you buy it. It's not uncommon for a bottle of wine to contain 15% ABV, which could easily push you over the daily unit guidelines if you drink more than one glass. Luckily producers are increasingly introducing 10% or lower ABV wines that are every bit as palatable as their stronger counterparts. Look out for them when you're next buying a bottle.

### 3. Small differences

A really easy way of cutting down on alcohol if you're a wine drinker is to buy small (125ml) glasses for the house rather than the large 250ml ones. You're more likely to spread one 750ml bottle over a few days if you're not unwittingly pouring a third of it into a large 250ml glass.

### 4. Home measures

It's worth buying an alcohol measure for when you next pour yourself a spirits-based drink at home. There'll be no more guess work involved, and you'll be able to keep track of how much

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you're drinking. Getting your measures spot on will also ensure your favourite drinks taste exactly as they do when you order them at the bar.

### **5. Dinner only drinking**

Instead of opening your whole evening up to drinking, why not just allocate dinner as the time you enjoy a drink? This gives you a leisurely period of time to have a glass of wine or beer, which can then be followed up nicely with a healthy dessert or hot drink.

### **6. Get inventive with your wine**

You might not see any harm in polishing off the last part of the bottle of wine you've been drinking, but in reality, it could be what sends you over the daily unit guidelines. It's a myth that wine doesn't keep overnight, you just need a good bottle stop.

You can also use leftover wine by freezing it, using it for cooking or for making a vinaigrette.

## **How to cut down on alcohol when you're out**

### **1. Beware of rounds**

Drinking in rounds may be a British tradition, but they can be expensive, dangerous if it means keeping pace with the fastest drinker in your group and a nightmare if you're trying to cut down on alcohol. Stay in control (and save cash) by opting for smaller rounds with only a couple of friends within your group or giving rounds a miss.

### **2. Eat up**

After-the-pub grub is another drinking tradition, but why wait until the night's nearly over to load up on fast food? A healthy meal before you go out, and snacks between drinks can help to slow down the absorption of alcohol and so helps you stay in control. With less alcohol inside you that greasy pizza or kebab will look a lot less appetising at chucking out time too.

### **3. Track your drinking on the go**

If you're out and about use the free [MyDrinkaware](#) app on your smartphone to track the alcohol you're drinking. It will help you stay within the daily unit guidelines.

### **4. Small is better**

Make the daily unit guidelines go further by having bottles or halves of beer instead of full pints or choose a smaller glass of wine. Buying spritzers or shandies can help keep unit count down.

### **5. Make space**

Sipping a soft drink or water between alcoholic drinks slows down the rate of your drinking and means you'll drink less over the course of the evening.

If you're out clubbing, take a bottle of water out with you on the dance floor.

If you're in the pub or even at home, you could try a non-alcoholic mocktail, a premium soft drink, or just a glass of water.

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## Why cutting down on alcohol is good for your health

### 1. Remember the short- and long-term effects of cutting down alcohol

Drinking less reduces the longer-term risk of serious diseases such as cancer, liver disease and stroke; improves the condition of your skin; can have a positive effect on sleep patterns and can even boost your sex life. Worth remembering next time you're at the bar.

### 2. Stress less

Some people drink alcohol to relax, but in reality, alcohol can make you feel even more stressed out. Try not to make alcohol key to your after-work wind down and try some alternative stressbusters like going to the gym or opting for a bath with bubbles instead of a shower.



# Blue Week

## Choosing Healthier Fats

### Unsaturated Fats

Monounsaturated	Polyunsaturated	Omega 3
Olive oil Rapeseed oil Avocado Nuts and seeds e.g. almonds, cashews, peanuts and pistachios Some spreads made from the above	Corn oil Sunflower oil Soya oil Nuts and seeds e.g. walnuts, pine nuts, sesame seeds and sunflower seeds Some spreads made from the above	Fish oil Oily fish e.g. herring, mackerel, pilchards, sardines, salmon, trout and fresh tuna

### Saturated Fats

Saturated	Trans fats
Butter Hard cheese Whole milk Fatty meat Meat products Biscuits Cakes Cream Lard Dripping Suet Ghee Coconut oil Palm oil Pastry	Pastries Cakes Biscuits Crackers Fried foods Takeaways Hard margarines Foods that have 'hydrogenated oils' or 'partially hydrogenated oils' in the ingredients list are likely to contain trans fats