What to eat for better sleep

The importance of sleep should never be underestimated. Without sleep, we are useless, it doesn't matter what food or drink we put into our body, without adequate rest, we will never be feeling or performing our best.

But do you often find yourself tossing and turning at night, counting away the hours until your alarm tells you to give up?

Insomnia and poor sleep can be down to a number of different factors and can have a knock-on effect bigger than we normally give it credit for.

Interesting facts
- Stress, diet and exercise can cause insomnia
- Lack of sleep can cause headaches, irritability and weight gain
- Staying awake for 16 hours decreases your performance as much as if your blood alcohol level were almost at the legal driving limit
- Lack of sleep is likely to lead to increased appetite
- Regular exercise helps to encourage a healthy sleep pattern

Establish your meals and snacks around the following foods to encourage a healthy sleep cycle. Below is an example of foods to get started with:

Protein
- Pulses
- Lean meat
- Fish
- Natural or Greek low-fat yoghurt

Vegetables

Aim for 2 types to cover half of your place

- Spinach
- Mixed lettuce
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Cabbage
- Courgettes
- Peppers
- Aubergine
- Squash

Whole grains

Aim for whole grains instead of refined versions

- Whole wheat pasta
- Brown or wild rice
- Whole grain bread
- Quinoa
- Oats
- Bulgur
- Rye
- Spelt
- Corn

Fruit

- Berries
- Orange
- Banana
- Apple
- Kiwi
- Peach
- Nectarine
- Melon

Fluid

- Drink at least 1.5 – 2 litres of water each day, more if you are partaking in exercise or in excess temperatures
- Stick to water, and limit the amount late into the evening to avoid bathroom trips where possible

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