

LIVE WELL



WORK WELL

Health and wellness tips for your work and life—
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Many Britons Carry a ‘Sleep Debt’

According to the Sleep Council, nearly 40 per cent of Britons are not getting the minimum recommended amount (at least six hours) of sleep each evening. Over the course of a week, this nightly loss can accumulate into a ‘sleep debt’, which is the difference between the amount of sleep you **should** get and the amount that you **do** get. On average, Britons accumulate a five-hour sleep debt each week. Left unresolved, this debt could increase your risk of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease, affect your ability to learn and retain things as well as impair your judgement.

But, there is a simple solution to correct this imbalance, and it is probably one that you already do—your weekend lie-in. In fact, lie-ins are a natural and necessary part of our sleep cycle, according to researchers at the Sleep Research Centre at Loughborough University. And, based on their research, you only need an extra hour and a half to make up for that five-hour sleep debt.

However, other scientists argue that lie-ins could be potentially **detrimental** to your overall health. According to a recent study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, by sleeping more during the weekend, you disrupt your circadian rhythm—your body’s natural clock. In turn, this may lower the ‘good’ type of cholesterol and increase the level of triglycerides—a type of fat related to poor heart health—found in your blood.

So, should lie-ins actually be avoided? Not quite. What determines whether a lie-in is beneficial or detrimental to your health is the **amount** of time you spend lying in. Most sleep experts recommend that you do not indulge in more than two extra hours of sleep during the weekend. This should be enough to correct any imbalance accumulated during the week without incurring any ill health effects.

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Keeping Illness at Bay

While your first instinct may be to visit the GP when you fall ill, there may be a more beneficial strategy than potentially languishing on a long NHS waiting list. By adopting the following six pieces of health and wellness guidance, you can ensure that your visits to the GP will be kept to a minimum.

1. Exercise for at least 20 minutes, three or four times per week. This could effectively reduce your risk of premature death by up to 30 per cent, according to research conducted as part of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer study.
2. Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, tree nuts and lean meats. According to Cancer Research UK, less-healthy diets cause about 10 per cent of cancer cases in the United Kingdom.
3. Reduce your daily amount of sugary drinks—which include carbonated beverages and fruit juices. This could minimise your potential for weight gain and diabetes.
4. Limit your weekly consumption of alcohol to no more than 14 units—this averages out to 6 pints of beer or 6 glasses of wine. Alcohol is responsible for 10 per cent of Britons contracting diseases and dying prematurely.
5. Take at least 20 minutes each night to reflect and constructively process the day’s events. By regularly participating in this activity, you may experience a more restful night’s sleep.
6. Quit smoking. On average, 100,000 Britons die each year from smoking-related illnesses.

Even though the above guidance is intended to help you avoid visiting the GP, you should still schedule an annual appointment to ensure that you remain in good health.

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Healthy Chicken and Leek Pies

While hearty meals are generally a cold weather staple, you can still eat healthy, yet filling meals—such as these simple chicken and leek pies:

- 1 large sweet potato, cut into thick chips
- 4 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 chicken breasts, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 leek, finely sliced
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 225 millimetres low-sodium chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons wholegrain mustard
- 85 grams light soft cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped tarragon leaves
- 2 sheets filo pastry

Heat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius for a fan oven or 180 degrees Celsius for a gas oven. Then, in a roasting tray, toss the sweet potatoes with 2 teaspoons of olive oil and the salt and pepper. Cook the potatoes for 30 to 40 minutes, or until golden and crisp.

While the potatoes are cooking, heat 1 teaspoon of olive oil in a frying pan, and fry the chicken until it is browned. Remove the chicken, then add the leek, a splash of water and fry until soft—about seven minutes. Then, add the carrot and cook for about three more minutes. Next, pour in the chicken stock and let it boil. When about half of the mixture is left (after the rest has boiled out), stir in the mustard and soft cheese. After thoroughly mixing the ingredients, add the chicken, tarragon, salt and pepper.

Divide the mixture between two small ovenproof dishes. Then cover each dish with a filo pastry sheet and brush them with the last of the olive oil. Cook the pies in the oven with the chips for 15 minutes or until the filo is golden brown.



Fast, Easy Exercise for Busy Days

A 2015 report published by the British Heart Foundation revealed that nearly half of all Britons never exercise. And, according to those surveyed, one chief reason for this lack of activity was the belief that they did not have enough time in their schedule to exercise. However, with high-intensity interval training (HIIT), you can effectively condense a workout into less than 30 minutes.

HIIT refers to any exercise that centres on short bursts of intense activity with less-intense recovery periods in between. The effectiveness of this type of exercise can be found in the less-intense recovery periods, in which your body continues to burn calories to restore itself. The HIIT format can be applied to any type of activity—even walking. To transform your normal walk into a HIIT walk, follow these four simple steps:

1. Warm up with a light stroll for three minutes.
2. Increase your pace to a fast walk or sprint for 30 seconds.
3. Alternate between the two speeds for 30 minutes.
4. Repeat at least three times a week.

Generally, those that regularly practise HIIT workouts have better cardiovascular health and experience a sustained boost to their metabolic rates, which burns an average of 200 calories over the course of 24 hours.

While you may not have several hours free each week to devote to exercising, HIIT can provide you with a fast, easy and effective solution.

Removing Your Health Risk Factors



Exercising more

and

eliminating smoking,



poor eating habits



and

excessive drinking



**could help prevent 40 per cent
of cancers and 75 per cent of diabetes
and cardiovascular disease cases.**

Source: Public Health England