

Easy ways to feel great!

Don't feel so guilty about your failures at healthy living – some turn out not to be problems at all

You go for caffeine, not water

Is coffee really that bad for you?

Enjoy it! Caffeine keeps you focused, plus it helps burn calories during exercise.

'You're less likely to suffer depression if you drink two or three cups of coffee a day,' says Hilly Janes, author of *Latte Or Cappuccino?* (£9.99, Michael O'Mara Books). 'Stick to a maximum of five cups daily, but swap for decaf if you suffer from anxiety or high blood pressure.'

It's not all about straight H2O

'Tea counts in our recommended daily fluids, and foods such as fruit, vegetables and even porridge make up a 20 per cent of our daily intake, so don't stress too much about having enough water,' says nutritional therapist Judy Watson. 'Drinking with meals and when you're thirsty should keep you hydrated – most healthy women get about 11 glasses a day from normal habits.'

You don't want to lose the booze

Swap wine for spirits to save on calories, says Judy. 'Spirits (vodka, gin, whisky) are sugar-free and about 80 calories for a standard shot (25ml), less than half the amount in a large glass of rosé. Avoid mixers like tonic water, lemonade or juice, and go for vodka with soda water and a squeeze of lime juice.'

You never make smoothies

If you feel life's too short to make one yourself, don't fret. 'Mushing up fruit for a smoothie causes its sugar to hit your bloodstream faster than if you ate it whole, and that can lead to bloating and mood swings,' says Judy. 'So unless yours contains yogurt – instead of juice – to slow the fruit down, you're better off not bothering. Instead eat whole fruit – snacking on raspberries is ideal when you're busy. They're low in sugar, and only 40 calories per 100g, which makes them good for grazing on to keep blood sugar stable.'



The one body booster

'B vitamins are essential for energy and mood, and drops are absorbed more easily,' says Judy. 'Try Solgar Liquid B12 2000mcg [£12.41 for 59ml, nutricentre.com].'

You hate the gym

It doesn't have to be formal exercise to constitute a workout. In fact chores can prove an even better fitness regime – with any activity with which you can work up a sweat counting as cardio exercise. 'Doing your windows burns 160 calories an hour while cleaning the car burns 200, and provides plenty of stretching and bending in the process,' says Hilly. 'Vacuuming or mowing the lawn use more energy at 110 and 190 calories respectively for just 30 minutes work. By comparison walking and weight training burn 157 and 182 calories over the same period.'



SLEEP EASY

- ◆ A good night's rest has been proven to help dieters shift more fat, while sleep deprivation leads to more muscle loss.
- ◆ Getting at least six and a half hours a night adds years to your life, with more deaths occurring in 50-plus women who have less than five hours slumber.
- ◆ Sleep also helps curb the inflammation that leads to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, arthritis and premature ageing. A study found higher levels of the C-reactive protein associated with heart disease risk in people averaging less than six hours of sleep.



You're not a hygiene friend

Just wash and go

Traditional advice is to wash your hands for as long as it takes to sing *Happy Birthday To You* in your head twice. But a study has found that lathering for just 10 seconds, then rinsing, removes 90 per cent of infection-causing bacteria. 'It's not a case of how long you wash for, but how thoroughly,' says Sarah Gould, lead infection prevention and control nurse at BMI The Priory Hospital in Birmingham. 'Make sure you apply soap



and rub between your fingers and around the thumbs, wrists and back of hands. You should do this as regularly as possible, for example after going shopping or travelling on trains or buses, as well as when you're cooking or eating. More or less anything you touch can be carrying bacteria, and hand hygiene is the single most important thing you can do to prevent infection.'

Forgotten to floss this morning?

'Swoosh with a good mouthwash instead,' advises Professor Robin Seymour, oral health expert from the Simplyhealth Advisory Research Panel. 'It will clean between your teeth if you use your tongue to push it all around your mouth. Choose one that is alcohol-free and has the active ingredient Cetylpyridinium chloride (CPC) to help to remove plaque.' Try Dentyl Active Plaque Fighter (£3.15, 500ml, Boots).