

FOOD FOR FORCE

Maintain your energy levels throughout your walk with a packed lunch created by Emma Wells, nutritional therapist and founder of www.smartnutrition.co.uk



PLAIN NUTS

"Always carry a selection of unsalted nuts with you," says Wells. They pack a protein punch which will improve your performance and endurance plus decrease muscle injury, too.

GO BANANAS

Bananas are the perfect portable snack. "They're easy to digest and full of fibre," says Wells. "They keep you feeling fuller for longer as well as being a high-energy food, so they are great when you're lagging behind."

DIG IRON

Dried apricots are a great source of iron. "They give you a boost and help you to carry your oxygen to your tissues, combating fatigue," says Wells.

GET THE BIRD

"A wholemeal sandwich with chicken or turkey contains lots of the amino acid tyrosine which will perk up your adrenaline levels," adds Wells. Alternately, as a veggie option, a wholemeal bagel with peanut butter will suffice. "Sugars are released slowly and your energy levels stay stable."

TAKE ON WATER

"Keep hydrated as a 1% drop in hydration leads to a reduction in muscle performance," warns Wells. "Carry plenty of water and keep sipping throughout your walk."



£200M WASTED New figures reveal 3.6 million people joined a gym in 2008, at an average cost of £372, yet 500,000 never went and 800,000 only went once or twice a month. The price of a walk? Free!

STOP AT THE LIFE-SAVER'S ARMS

The next time you're looking for a suitable stopping point on your walk, think about the health of your heart – and hit the pub. According to research from Penn State University, USA, the contents of two half-pints of beer – or two glasses of wine – and a fistful of nuts are an ideal combination to prevent blood clotting.

WALKING HELPS...

My family bond!



Name: Siski Green

Age: 37

Lives: Ealing, London and Michigan, USA

Occupation: Writer

"Getting outside is our family's way of bonding. Whether we're walking through woodland, over moors, or along beaches, this is when we can focus just on enjoying each other's company. Every weekend, wherever we are, we go walking. As a result, we've had wildly different explorations: frosty mornings on the Chiltern's, leisurely barefoot meanderings along the beaches in Chile and braving Lake Superior's fierce shore winds. But regardless of where we're walking or what the weather is like, it reaffirms our closeness. Liliana, our daughter, is so transfixed by what she sees in the trees and skies, that she hardly utters a word and never cries or moans. That gives me and my husband the opportunity to talk about funny things we've experienced recently that somehow didn't seem important enough to bring up at dinner or breakfast, or big things like plans for the future which need a bit more time."

3 STEPS UP THE CAREER LADDER

How you can literally walk into a great job.

YOU'LL STAY SHARPER FOR LONGER

Once you stop selling yourself as 'youthful and dynamic' and instead flag up your vast experience, then it's definitely time to get walking too. Research from the University of Illinois, USA, confirms that as little as three hours a week of brisk walking can actually reverse the brain deterioration brought on by ageing. Walking not only boosts the brain's 'grey matter' neurons, it also puts a stop to the shrinkage of 'white matter' (the communication routes through the brain).

YOU'LL TAKE FEWER SICK DAYS

More US studies show that regular aerobic exercise such as vigorous, tri-weekly walks make you up to 50% less likely to miss work through sickness than sedentary types. Research from Appalachian State University, in North Carolina, reveals that regular yomps send disease-fighting cells charging into action throughout your body.

YOU'LL RUB SHOULDER WITH THE BOSS

In a bid to combat the stresses of tough economic times, more and more top brass types are walking out the door and heading for the hills. Walking holidays feature in the top five pastimes of business leaders, while a 2007 survey of 500 UK business owners and managers by the Institute of Leadership and Management found that a third of all male bosses and 40% of female managers have a background as outdoor activity team leaders and players.

WHAT WALKERS CAN LEARN FROM...

JULIA BRADBURY



One of TV's most experienced and versatile presenters, Julia Bradbury fronted the BBC's 'Wainwright Walks' in which she walked in the footsteps of legendary fellwalker and guide writer Alfred Wainwright.

WATER WAY TO GO...

"Even if you're only going for a 'short walk' make sure you have plenty of water with you. Short strolls often turn into bigger hikes when you become taken with the scenery or take a wrong turn. I refill bottles rather than using a backpack water holder because I like to leave my backpack free for all the other equipment and supplies."

REUSE YOUR ROUTE...

"Check the weather forecast prior to departure and brush up on your map-reading skills. Essential and useful <http://mapzone.ordnancesurvey.co.uk> is the ideal place to start. We all hope we won't get lost, but you never know."

GET IN THE PICTURE...

"Don't forget your camera or to enjoy the views while you're out there. Sensory exposure to beautiful scenery is one of the most gratifying and stress-relieving activities we human beings can enjoy!"

