

Rise and SHINE!



Nutritional Therapist and *BBC Freaky Eaters* presenter, **Charlotte Watts** tells us why skipping breakfast is a no-no

It's a cliché but breakfast really is the most important meal of the day. It can either set up good mood, energy and coping capacity for the coming day, or set you off on a giddy ride, ricocheting between craving quick fixes and experiencing motivational voids at the whim of disordered biochemistry that impels you to make all the wrong food choices. Our metabolisms are designed to take in most calories at the beginning half of the day to fuel us for the activity we need to actually find that food. When we don't get enough of this fuel we can crave food later to make up for the deficit, and this is more likely to be laid down as fat.

LEARNING TO LOVE YOUR BREAKFAST

If you are out of the breakfast habit, it doesn't take long to train your body towards its natural rhythm. Start by taking a lighter dinner to kick-start morning hunger and cut down sugar to help your pancreas and liver deal with food first thing. Build up as slowly as you need; even if you only manage a few nuts it really is better than nothing at all. Not having breakfast means you will rely on stress hormones for energy and motivation, ultimately robbing you of both. If you skip it or have too little because you can't get up in time, be assured that a better breakfast aids sleep and regulates energy – meaning you'll wake more refreshed.



VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Breakfast is a meal like any other, and you can get bored and miss out on the full range of nutrients if you get stuck in a rut. Experiment; you really can eat anything at breakfast – even last night's leftovers or a hearty stew on a cold day!



BREAKFAST THE RIGHT WAY

Nourishing yourself isn't just about what you eat, but how you approach this important act:

- Firstly, an optional extra is to start the day with the juice of half a lemon in hot water to wake up your liver and digestion in a clean, healthy way. Drink this about 20 minutes before breakfast – you can also add slices of fresh ginger, to warm up or calm the digestion, and/or cinnamon to sweeten and improve blood sugar balance. That way you can get ready for the day whilst your body prepares to eat.
- Create some space to be present when you're eating breakfast; sit at a table, take a few calming breaths before and chew thoroughly, tasting every mouthful.
- Prioritise this meal and enjoy it. Soon you'll find it becomes one of the most important rituals of the day.
- If you have your breakfast on the train or at your desk, you still need to focus entirely on that – no work or phone calls at the same time!
- If you exercise in the morning, have a smoothie with coconut milk and berries before and then your full breakfast after.

BREAKFAST OUTSIDE THE BOX

– *my personal favourite*

1 Choose from a protein source:

- Eggs – 1–2 boiled, poached, omelette or slowly scrambled
- Fish – smoked mackerel, trout or salmon, or fillet cooked the night before
- Goat's cheese – e.g. feta or soft cheese
- 2 turkey or chicken slices
- As an occasional treat, try good-quality ham or bacon

2 Add a portion (palm-size) of at least two of the following: avocado, tomatoes, asparagus, spinach, watercress, cucumber, cooked beetroot (not in vinegar), rocket or artichokes.

3 Add to 1 slice of wholegrain or rye bread or 3–4 rye, wholewheat, spelt or gluten-free crackers. This is optional; you may find lots more veg and some hummus suits you better.



FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

You'll see that how you start the day can have a positive effect on appetite and cravings, and help level out mid-afternoon energy dips and late-night binges.



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BREAKFASTS

fit for a (very healthy) king



All of the following breakfasts provide quality protein to help sustain energy throughout the day. You can vary through the week or at least change to a difference at the weekend. Protein with breakfast has shown to help reduce weight and help make better food choices for the rest of the day.

WHAT TO DRINK

CAFFEINE DRINKS, like tea or coffee, may be best avoided if they make you feel more stressed. For some of us, though, they provide a healthy lift – but only if drunk with food and only two cups max a day. If having shop-bought coffee, request a single shot so as not to overstimulate.

FRUIT JUICES can have more sugar than the same volume of cola as the fruit fibre is removed. Only drink freshly squeezed and not from concentrate, and stick to a glass a day.



GET THE BALANCE RIGHT WITH POSITIVELY SLIM

Positively Slim's ebook, *Nutrition – Blood Sugar Balance*, is now available on Kindle at Amazon for £2.86. Inside you'll find loads more information and advice on eating enjoyably and easily for good energy, weight, mood and sleep. Click [HERE](#) to buy.



Fruit 'n' Nut

- 1 A small pot of live Greek or plain yogurt.
- 2 Add up to a tablespoon of crunchy oat, granola-type cereal or good-quality muesli – can be gluten-free.
- 3 Pile fruit on top, slicing where needed. Good choices are: pineapple, apple, kiwi fruit, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, plums, peaches and nectarines.
- 4 For protein, add a tablespoon of nuts and seeds – choose from almonds, Brazils, walnuts, pecans, sunflower and pumpkin seeds.
- 5 **Optional extras:** cinnamon, up to half a teaspoon of good-quality honey, unsweetened desiccated coconut.

Bircher Muesli Medley

- 1 Soak 35g rolled oats in water or half water/half freshly squeezed apple juice overnight in the fridge – you can add a dessertspoon of golden linseeds for increased detoxification and digestive health if you want.
- 2 For protein, add a tablespoon of nuts and seeds – choose from almonds, Brazils, walnuts, pecans, sunflower and pumpkin seeds.
- 3 Sweeten only with ground cinnamon and fruit from the optional extras below.
- 4 **Optional extras:** chopped dried apricots, prunes, unsweetened desiccated coconut, grated apple, berries, sliced or stewed plums.
- 5 You can add a dollop of live Greek or plain yogurt to taste.
- 6 For variety or a gluten-free option, quinoa or millet flakes can be used in place of oats.

The Healthy 'British'

- 1 Treat yourself to good-quality, free-range bacon (2 slices) or sausage (1–2 depending on size) and grill.
- 2 If vegetarian (or as a different option), either grill 2 portobello mushrooms with olive oil, grilled halloumi or 2 good-quality veggie sausages instead.
- 3 Either grill 2 halves of a medium tomato or oven roast 4–6 cherry tomatoes with a little olive oil.
- 4 Add a third of a tin of baked beans – choose low-sugar or a brand sweetened with apple juice from a health food shop such as Whole Earth.
- 5 **Optional extras** (or instead of beans): wilted spinach or asparagus.
- 6 You can also have poached or slow scrambled eggs.