

# ASK *the* EXPERTS

We put your fitness, health and nutrition questions to our panel of experts...



**Q** *I have trouble sleeping, will that have an impact on my weight?*

**PIPPA CAMPBELL**, nutrition and weight loss coach ([pippacampbellhealth.com](http://pippacampbellhealth.com)), says:

"When we sleep, we burn most of our fat, so if we don't rest, this can significantly affect weight loss. Interrupted or impaired sleep can cause a pre-diabetic state, which makes you feel hungry even if you've already eaten, wreaking havoc on your weight. If you struggle to get shut eye, remember that what you eat can contribute to a better night's sleep. Avoid starchy carbohydrates and sugars, as they will raise your blood sugar and delay slumber. Later, when your levels drop too low (known as hypoglycemia), you may wake up and be unable to go back to sleep. Instead, eat foods rich in B vitamins, as they encourage healthy levels of melatonin, a hormone that supports sleep – try tuna, chicken and yoghurt. You may need to address your stress levels to help you rest, perhaps through breathing exercises or adrenal supplements."

**Q** *I recently sprained my ankle, but I still want to work out. What exercises can I do with an injury?*

**LYNDSAY HIRST**, physio at **Your Pilates Physio** ([yourpilatesphysio.com](http://yourpilatesphysio.com)), says:

"A sprained ankle doesn't require you to stop exercising, but you will need to modify your routine. Jumping up and down isn't going to allow it to heal and in fact will increase the length of time it will take to repair. A simple sprain will take up to six weeks to fully recover, so it's important to build back your ankle strength and balance to prevent repeat injury. You can

start to do this really early on in the healing phase. Doing gentle exercise such as Pilates or yoga will work to challenge your ankle stability, which is something you lose after a sprain. Start to do balance exercises standing on one leg as soon as you feel comfortable to, usually one to two weeks post-accident. If you want a cardiovascular workout, using the static bike will cause no harm to your ankle and will help to move it, too."

**Q** *How can I combat SAD (seasonal affective disorder)?*

**Naturopath GEMMA HURDITCH**, lecturer at **CNM College of Naturopathic Medicine** ([naturopathy-uk.com](http://naturopathy-uk.com)), says:

"Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is an annually occurring depression, most often triggered by the reduced daylight hours of the colder months, and although spring is basically here, some people still struggle with the lack of light. While the reason behind SAD is not fully understood, there are several ways we can help combat it ourselves. Two out of three sufferers respond positively to light therapy, so you could invest in a certified quality light box with the highest lux (intensity of visible light) rating you can afford, as this reduces the amount of time you need to use it each day. Helpful dietary changes include increasing your intake of vitamin D – choose foods such as oily fish and eggs and take a supplement in the winter months. Increase the quantity of antioxidants you eat, such as berries and dark green leafy vegetables, and reduce stimulants, including coffee, sugar and alcohol. St John's wort is a herb that has been shown to improve SAD depressive symptoms, and is available as a supplement."

## LITTLE HELPERS

Lumie Vitamin L Light, £75, [lumie.com](http://lumie.com)

A. Vogel Hyperforce St John's Wort Tablets, £10.49, [avogel.co.uk](http://avogel.co.uk)

Healthspan Super D Vitamin Gummy, £10.95, [healthspan.co.uk](http://healthspan.co.uk)

