



COPING UNDER QUARANTINE; FOOD FOR THOUGHT





INTRODUCTION TO FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Are you worried about being overweight?
- Are you worried about your health and how your lifestyle might be affecting this?
- Do you have difficulty exercising because of your weight or because of health problems you might have?
- Do you feel low in mood, or suffer from low self-esteem because of your weight?

If you answered yes to any of the above statements, then this booklet might help you.

This booklet offers information on how you can improve your health and wellbeing by making changes to your eating habits and activity levels.



GETTING AND STAYING MOTIVATED

An important first step in addressing lifestyle habits is to understand the need to make changes and keep motivated. When we change our habits, it is incredibly difficult to stick at it, as our mind and body adjust to new behaviour. Here are some steps you can take to stay on the right track:

- Think of reasons why you want change: Create a picture in your mind of how you would like to be, or make a list of all the benefits of change. Keep your list somewhere handy to remind yourself of why you are making these changes - it will help make it easier to get there
- What are the obstacles that might get in the way?: Think about what obstacles might get in the way of your goals and how you can overcome them. Try and list the reasons for change with possible obstacles side by side.
- Be kind to yourself: Try not to criticise yourself when things get hard. Everyone lapses and makes slip-ups during the process of making change, so don't be too hard on yourself if this happens. Don't forget to congratulate yourself for any steps you take forward too! The fact that you are reading this booklet shows you have taken a positive first step to making change.



LIFESTYLE CHECKER

To be able to make change, you need to understand your eating habits and activity levels as they are at the moment. To do this effectively, keep a food and drink diary; what is going on at the time and what your activity levels are like. Keep this going for a week or two - you may find this difficult at first, but here's why it's important:

- It gives you a baseline of what you already do
- It helps you to recognise your eating habits
- It helps you recognise whether you have a balanced diet or not
- It helps identify any triggers you may have to overeating or restricting your eating
- It helps identify what is getting in the way of you eating more healthily or exercising
- It means you can see when progress has been made; an important step to help keep you motivated
- It helps you to remember what you have done and the progress you are making

You should make a note of your eating and exercise patterns for at least a whole week so you can look at whether there are any differences from day to day. If this is difficult, try to document one day of the week really well. Document the time, what you ate, what was happening and your activity levels.

To analyse your habits, consider the following:

- What has surprised or worried you about your eating habits or activity levels?
- Do you know when you are hungry and full?
- What foods are you eating or avoiding?
- When are you eating? How big are the gaps?
- How much food are you eating? What are the portion sizes like? How do you feel about the sizes?
- What are your activity levels like? Are you always on the go or do you find it difficult to exercise? Does how active you are impact your eating?
- Are there any patterns you can identify?



There are things you can do to change the way you eat and adjust your activity levels, that will help you to successfully lose weight while improving your health. You can see how throughout the rest of this booklet.

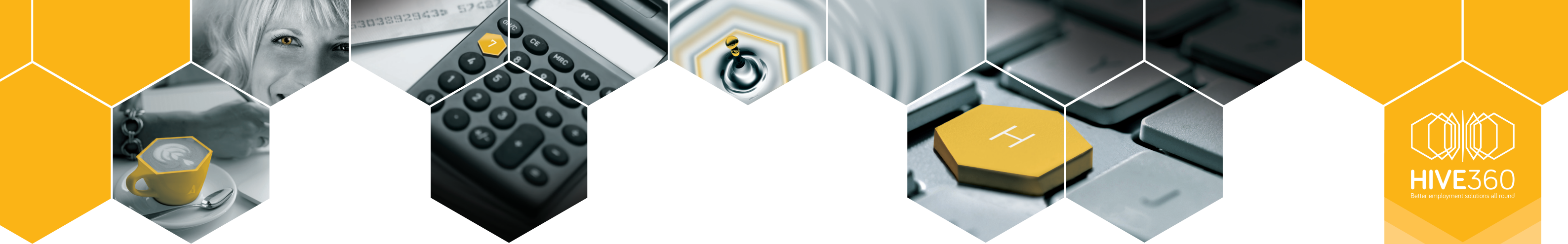


WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

New miracle diets come out all the time. Unfortunately, research shows that diets don't work. The aim of a diet is to eat less and therefore lose weight, however these often aren't long-term adjustments. Most diets are unsuccessful because they make people feel deprived, fed up and frustrated, which leads to diet breaking or over-eating, resulting in feelings of failure and in turn, more eating. The consequences are usually that any short-term weight loss is likely to be put back on again.

Diets can also knock confidence and self-esteem when slip ups happen, making it harder to socialise, be active or to do exercise; all of which make it difficult to continue to lose weight or keep weight off.

Dieting also affects how well our bodies can manage what we eat, and this can make it harder to lose weight too. The metabolism adjusts to how much we consume, which can often lead to weight gain after a diet due to it being slowed down.



ADOPTING A HEALTHY EATING PLAN

Despite popular belief, healthy eating and dieting are not the same thing. Diet means the mixture of food someone eats, whereas healthy eating is a way of eating that will keep you healthy, and you can stick to for the rest of your life.

Healthy eating isn't about 'super' foods or restricting your intake. Healthy eating is about having a balance to what you eat, and there are no foods you should avoid or must eat. It's not about quick weight loss either. It is called 'healthy eating' because it is important for keeping you well and improving your health.

Making changes to your eating pattern doesn't mean you'll see immediate weight loss, but as you lose fat and build muscle through healthy eating and regular exercise, you will notice a change in your body shape.

One pound of body fat (1lb/0.5kg) has an energy store of approximately 3,500 calories. To lose 1lb of weight you need to find a deficit or gap of 3,500 calories. Divided by 7 (days) = 500 - 600 calorie deficit per day. In theory, this should lead to a weight loss of 1lb per week; which is where 'creating a 600 calorie deficit' originates. You can do this by:

- Monitoring your food intake and activity levels using a diary
- From your diary identify food choices or patterns and activity that you can alter.
- Reduce portion sizes of high energy foods that you eat regularly
- Alter the frequency of certain foods e.g less biscuits, crisps, chocolate and more fruit and vegetables
- Change the types of food you eat e.g lower fat or sugar varieties
- Increase your energy output by doing more activities you enjoy or already do regularly

If you notice weight loss from your waist, this shows you are losing some of your fat stores. Weight loss is likely to be slow, but the advantage of this is it has a much better chance of being permanent weight loss. You'll also be less hungry and have more energy.



WHAT IS HEALTHY EATING?

For a nutritious, balanced diet we need to consume a variety of different foods. Technically, there is no such food as a 'bad' or 'forbidden' food that you should avoid. Some foods are healthier for our bodies than others, and some contain more minerals and nutrients, but there is no such thing as a food you should never eat.

Psychologically, when we try and ban a certain food from our diet, the food becomes extra tempting; it's human nature! You are also more likely to criticise yourself for eating the 'banned' food, which takes pleasure away from eating and can have a negative psychological effect, which in turn can make you eat more. Denying yourself certain foods is not healthy eating.

Healthy eating is having a mixture of foods that provide your body with the right balance of nutrients to stay healthy and reduce the risk of developing certain diseases.

The main nutrients are protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals, as well as fibre and fluid.

- **Proteins:** These are the basic body-building materials that help us grow, replace and repair damaged and worn parts.
- **Carbohydrates:** These keep us warm and provide energy for breathing and activity, including the brain and central nervous system cells. They are also known as 'starchy' foods.
- **Fats:** These provide us with energy and keep us warm, and also provide certain vitamins and essential fatty acids. Fat cushions our vital organs and insulates us against extreme temperatures, and also helps to prevent overeating as it helps us to feel full and controls appetite.
- **Vitamins and Minerals:** These are essential nutrients needed by our bodies in small amounts and are found in a wide range of foods.
- **Fibre:** This keeps our digestive system healthy, and can help with appetite and regulates cholesterol and sugar in the body.
- **Fluid:** Sufficient fluid intake helps prevent dehydration and keeps the digestive system healthy. Sometimes when you feel hungry you may need to drink rather than eat something. 6-8 drinks a day should be consumed, equivalent to 1 1/2 litres.
- **Fruit and Vegetables:** These contain active ingredients that react with our bodies to prevent diseases. Fibre, vitamins and minerals can be provided by fruit and vegetables, and frozen or canned fruit and vegetables are just as healthy as fresh variations.



PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCES

Hunger isn't the only thing that makes us eat. Celebrations, boredom, habit and negative feelings can all be reasons for eating. Comfort and compulsive eating can be used as a way of masking feelings and needs instead of dealing with them.

Using eating as something that gives you other positive things rather than simply making you feel full and giving you energy could be an obstacle to healthy eating; we often eat with our heads instead of our stomachs.

It's important to remember that maintaining your weight isn't just a matter of self-control, there are many influences to what we eat and when. By recognising your habits and the ways you eat to help you cope with life, you can begin to find other ways of coping with the same situations.


Try and practice mindful eating; bringing the attention to the present moment by being fully aware of everything that arises from eating. This encourages you to slow down your eating to be fully engaged and aware. It takes 20 minutes for the stomach to tell our brain we are full.

INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

Combining healthy eating with regular exercise can help you to lose weight long-term. Any activity is better than no activity, so don't push yourself too hard or too quickly. Endurance can be built up over time.

If you are worried about your current level of fitness, start with a low-impact activity such as walking. Regular walking can reduce heart disease, strokes, diabetes and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and stress. Walking also burns the same amount of calories as jogging!

General advice recommends doing 30 minutes of moderately intensive activity five or more times a week. You can break the 30 minutes down into chunks, such as three lots of ten minutes or six lots of five minutes, which can make it much easier to adjust to when you are going from no activity level.





IMPROVING BODY IMAGE

It can be very easy to believe that you are only attractive if you are the 'ideal' size - whatever that may be. As a result of this, you may be struggling with your body image and confidence.

There are a few ways you can improve your own body image:

- When looking in the mirror, don't focus on the bits you dislike - compliment the bits you love!
- Write a list of a few positive things about you or things you are proud of, compliments people have paid you or times you have felt good about yourself
- Look out for men and women who are larger and attractive; recognise that size doesn't define attractiveness
- Don't put yourself down with negative self-talk; focus on the positives with daily affirmations in the morning.
- Take up an activity that helps with toning, like yoga, gardening and walking
- Walk tall and proud - don't slouch. Push your shoulders back and hold yourself with pride!
- Purchase clothes that make you feel confident and attractive, don't wait until you lose weight! You can look good as you are!

STAYING FOCUSED

Most people find that working towards and completing goals are motivating and satisfying, but you need to give yourself the best chance of achieving this first. Change isn't easy, especially when sticking with it and remembering that slip ups are part of the journey. Set yourself **SMART** goals to stay on track.

To stay motivated, find ways of rewarding and valuing yourself for what you have achieved so far. Be kind to yourself. Don't try to make big changes at once, keep making small steps. Avoid setting yourself unrealistic goals as this can lead to demotivation and upset.

Stay focused on why you are making a change, and remember that everyone slips up from time to time; this is all part of the journey. Just make sure you have a system in place for how you can get back on track.

Meal planning and keeping alternative coping strategies for managing difficult times can help you to stay on track, as well as talking to family and friends if you start to struggle.



We hope this resource has helped you, if you need any further resources around mental and physical wellbeing, please visit our

Business continuity and keeping your employees engaged through Covid-19

page on our website, you will find everything we offer our clients employee's there, for free during this time. We hope you get some comfort and value from these.

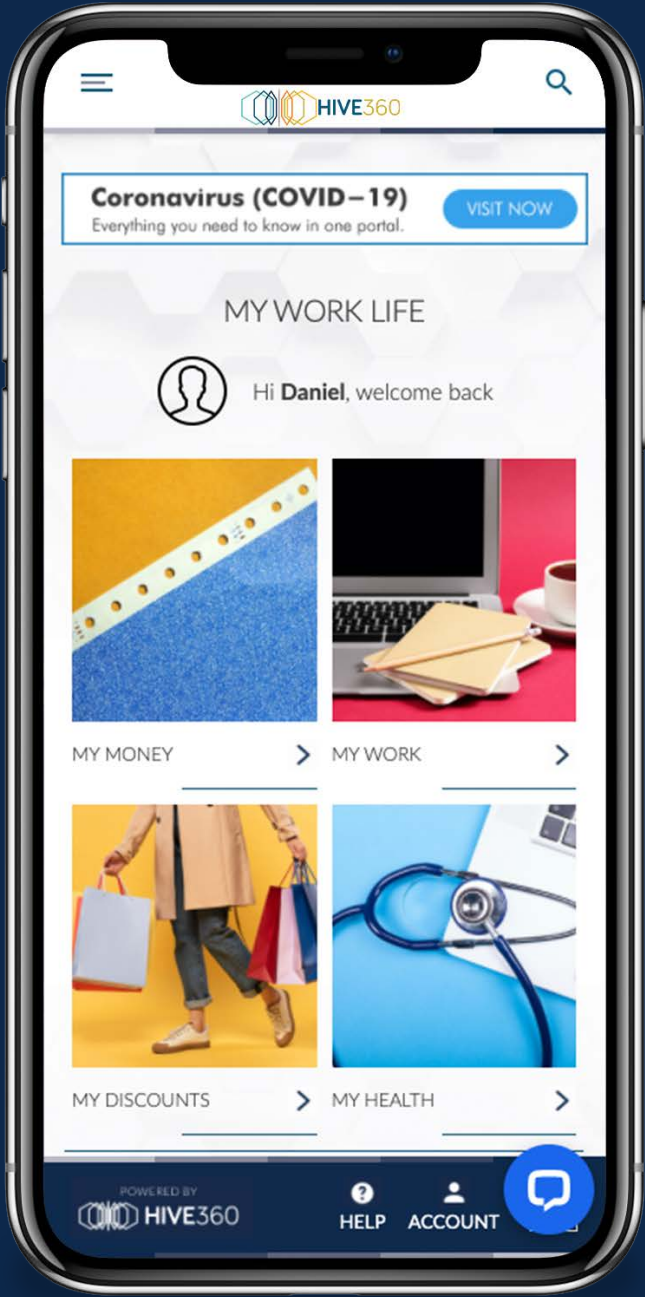
Stay safe, stay healthy, stay at home.

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Hive360 empowers businesses of all sizes to achieve better engagement with their people.

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