

Declare 2015 As Your Year For Eating Productively

As the end of the year approaches, it is advisable for individuals to dedicate some time to thinking about how it may be possible for them to become more productive within the coming year. A common resolution often made at the beginning of the year is to eat a healthier diet. Due to this, it may be possible to achieve both aims with one action.

“You are what you eat” is a common quote which means that to be fit and healthy you need to consume a nourishing diet. Many people do not realise that their choice of food intake can impact their levels of productivity. Florida State University psychologist, Roy Baumeister in the journal ‘Psychology Today’ comments that, ‘complex brain processes are literally fed by glucose that circulates from the gut to the brain’.

As such, there are some energy boosting foods that can help increase productivity levels and some that impede productivity. Baumeister goes on, ‘The human body is undeniably an energy system. Evolution gave us this new and more complicated way of acting, but it is expensive in terms of fuel burned. Being our better selves is biologically costly’. During the work day, it is therefore important to fuel the body in a positive way, and thus getting the most out of it. There are many foods which help in fuelling the body. Some of these foods include:

Berries

Berries contain a potent combination of antioxidants (molecules that prevent cell damage). These antioxidants improve both memory and motor co-ordination. More importantly, berries are

considered the golden foods of productivity. Neuroscientist James A. Joseph states that this is due to the fact that ‘the antioxidants in berries counteract oxidative stress which is an imbalance between free radical overactive molecules and the body’s ability to counteract them using antioxidants. This is indeed a good thing as oxidative stress and function are the evil twins of brain aging’.

Chocolate

A small bar of chocolate is considered to have some health benefits. Whilst most sugary snacks do not have a positive impact on one’s productivity levels, chocolates are an exception. There are certain antioxidant properties which can be found in dark chocolate which increase the production of endorphins whilst enhancing focus and concentration. Milk chocolate is considered to be good for quickening reaction time and improving verbal and visual memory.

Dried fruits

Dried fruits make a great sweet snack and are healthy alternatives to snacks which contain refined sugar. Raisins for example, are high in energy and antioxidants, whilst low in calories and fat. Also, dried figs help to maintain high energy levels whilst controlling the appetite. It is advisable to consume just a handful of dried fruits since they are packed with nutrients that keep you healthy and fit.

Tea, Coffee and Hot Chocolate

These warm beverages aid in increasing one's productivity level throughout the day. Green tea is full of antioxidants and emit neuro-protective effects, (they help the nervous system). Peppermint tea is great for keeping the stomach settled throughout the day whilst perking up the system. The caffeine found in coffee improves memory skills and even protects against eyelid spasms, whilst hot chocolate protects brain cells from oxidative stress.

Fish and Vegetables

A healthy lunch helps maintain productivity levels throughout the afternoon. An ideal option for lunch can be fish and vegetables. Eggplant for example, is a great vegetable that keeps the brain sharp by enhancing communication between brain cells and messenger molecules. Additionally, dark, leafy greens are loaded with vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. An example is iron, an essential trace mineral which helps bring more oxygen to the brain and body and therefore, improves cognitive control (brain power). Fish is high in B-Vitamins, protein and omega-3, and support memory, recall, reasoning and focus.

Whole Grains, Seeds and Nuts

Whole grain foods like brown rice are rich in vitamins and magnesium, which improve cognitive health. Almonds are also great for brainpower, whilst walnuts are full of omega-3 fatty acids assisting in the ability to think more clearly. Furthermore, flaxseeds are great for preventing your eyes from feeling tired and dried out, whilst sunflower seeds are excellent for fatigue.

Also very important, is water which is a key ingredient in our daily diet. It speeds up your metabolism and keeps the entire body hydrated throughout the day.

In an attempt to be more productive our most vital tool is our body. It is therefore essential to fuel the body with a proper diet to ensure the optimal functioning of our organs. A healthy body can improve work productivity and thus the overall quality of your life. *Isn't that a target worth aiming for in the upcoming year?*