



# NUTRITION

## EXECUTIVE PERFORMANCE CHEAT SHEETS

**Nutrition... sometimes confusing, often dogmatic and always contradictory. Isn't this fun?**

In this short resource we'll cover 3 different diets to improve your mental performance, how to make (or break) a habit and a list of 21 superfoods which make up an optimal diet.

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**Pg 2.** The 3 best diets to improve your mental performance.

**Pg 5.** How do you make (or break) a habit?

**Pg 7.** The 21 Superfoods of a healthy diet.

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# Eating for Brain Power - 1

Nutrition is heavily focused on fat loss and body composition, but a healthy diet can do much more.

Skim over each method and consider adopting some of the principles below to optimise your decision making, memory, problem-solving and focus.

## INTERMITTENT FASTING

Intermittent fasting (IF) is the current fad in dieting for fat loss and longevity, but it has a myriad of powerful cognitive benefits too.

The two common methods of IF are:

- 16:8 - Fast for 16-hours then eat within an 8-hour feeding window.
- 5:2 - Five days of normal eating with two fasting days (500-600 calories).

The benefits of fasting have been well known for centuries and current research is supporting this:

- **Fasting increases the rate of neurogenesis** in the brain (creation of new brain cells) which is linked to brain performance, memory, mood and focus.
- **Fasting boosts the production of BDNF** (by 50-400%), a protein which plays a role in neuroplasticity, making you more resilient to stress and more adaptable to change.
- **Fasting boosts human growth hormone (HGH)**. Along with HGH's powerful longevity and anti-aging benefits, it also improves cognition, provides neuroprotection and further increases neurogenesis.



# Eating for Brain Power - 2

## The MIND Diet

In 2015, leading scientists put together a diet consisting of the scientifically-validated best foods for brain health. It's a combination of the DASH and Mediterranean diets, emphasising leafy green vegetables, berries, nuts, beans, whole grains, fish, poultry and olive oil.

Many of the benefits circulate around neuroprotection, slowing cognitive decline as you age. **Research has also shown immediate improvement in cognition (using tests such as the recall of 10 words from a random list and backwards counting), memory, language and executive function.**

As it's still a relatively new diet there is only a small pool of research behind it, but the initial tests look positive. When you take into account the strong evidence behind both the DASH and Mediterranean diets, the MIND diet looks to positively enhance cognitive function.

### **MIND DIET**

- Scientifically-validated best foods for brain health
- Emphasising leafy green vegetables, berries, nuts, beans, whole grains, fish, poultry and olive oil.



# Eating for Brain Power - 3

## The 'No Alcohol' Diet

Alright, I made this one up, it's not a thing and I probably won't win any fans with it.

Alcohol, by its chemistry and effect on the body, is a toxin.

It negatively affects your brain in a variety of ways. In the short-term, there are the obvious drunken effects of impaired decision-making, memory impairment and recklessness. More than that, **alcohol decreases the amount of grey matter in the brain, slowing higher cognitive function. There's proof alcohol actually reduces the size of your brain.**

Luckily, research shows that with abstinence from alcohol (even just for a few months) the brain can increase its volume and higher function can be repaired.

As always, there is a contradiction to the rule. The MIND diet promotes the consumption of red wine (not too much). Find what works for you and your brain.

"Find what works best for you"



# How to Make (or Break) a Habit

Your habits are all the tiny decisions and actions (conscious and subconscious) which make up your day. According to behaviour-change ninja James Clear, **all habits follow a cycle.**

First, there is the cue. The cue triggers your brain to initiate a behaviour because it predicts a reward. Next, we have the craving. What you crave is not the habit itself, but the change in state it delivers. The response is the actual habit you perform. This can be a thought or an action. Finally, the response delivers a reward.

The four steps together form a neurological feedback loop that ultimately allow you to create automatic habits. **We can use this framework to design good habits and eliminate bad ones.**

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Step	Designing Good Habits	Breaking Bad Habits
Cue	Make it obvious	Make it invisible
Craving	Make it attractive	Make it unattractive
Response	Make it easy	Make it difficult
Reward	Make it satisfying	Make it unsatisfying



# Specific Healthy Habit

## Making/Breaking Examples

### CUE

**"I want to eat healthier snacks."**

How can I make it obvious?

*Put healthier snacks (such as fruit) out on display.*

How can I make it invisible?

*Hide (or better yet - don't buy) unhealthy snacks.*

### CRAVING

**"I want to cook more."**

How can I make it attractive?

*Throw on your favourite TV show/music while cooking.*

How can I make it unattractive?

*Remember how sick you felt last time you ate at KFC.*

### RESPONSE

**"I want to go to the gym in the morning."**

How can I make it easy?

*Set out gym gear the night before and pre-pack bag.*

How can I make it difficult (to not go)?

*Invest in a gym membership/personal trainer to keep you accountable.*

### REWARD

**"I want to drink less alcohol."**

How can I make it satisfying?

*Visually measure your progress - put an X for every successful day and don't break the chain.*

How can I make it unsatisfying?

*Create a consequence - you must pay a friend \$20 for each alcoholic drink you consume.*



# 21 Superfoods

The following list is from Precision Nutrition – one of the world's leading nutrition coaching companies. It's not extensive or in any particular order, but **a diet consisting of mostly these foods will lead to good health.**

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1. Lean red meat (93% lean, top round, sirloin)
2. Salmon
3. Omega-3 eggs
4. Low-fat plain yogurt (lactose-free if you can find it)
5. Supplemental protein (milk protein isolates, whey protein)
6. Spinach
7. Tomatoes
8. Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower)
9. Mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, etc.)
10. Oranges
11. Mixed beans (kidney, navy, white, etc.)
12. Quinoa
13. Whole oats (large flake)
14. Mixed nuts (a variety of different types of nuts including pecans, walnuts, cashews, brazil nuts, etc.)
15. Avocados
16. Olive oil (extra virgin)
17. Fish oil (salmon, anchovy, menhaden, krill)
18. Flax seeds (ground)
19. Green tea
20. Greens supplement
21. Any other personalised supplement recommendations

Don't select foods you are allergic to or intolerant of.

\*If you are plant-based I'm happy to provide a separate Superfoods List



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