

**ADDING,
NOT RESTRICTING**

Restrictive eating has been the mainstay of the diet industry for years.

We're not just talking eating less, but the Atkins, Dukan and keto diets demonised food groups such as carbs. "The main message was that cutting out whole food groups or severely limiting calorie intake would help you lose weight," says nutritionist Beanie Robinson. "However, these approaches place very little focus on nutrients to support the body long-term." Now, the goal is to add to your diet, rather than take away, to ensure we have all the nutrients for a happy gut, glowing skin and focused mind. A good physique is a bonus.

Scientists are telling us to eat as many different plants as possible, but at least 30 in a week. And to eat bread, pasta and potatoes – albeit, the wholegrain variety as much as possible to reap the benefits of fibre – and a little sugar to keep yourself sane. "Functional eating encourages people to eat foods with a high nutritional value," says Beanie. "It is sustainable, much less restrictive and incorporates flavour and taste, so the food we are eating is enjoyable."

**FLEXI,
NOT VEGAN**

Around 2% of Brits are vegan and 6% are vegetarian, but many more dip in and out of this lifestyle.* These people, known as "flexitarians", have mostly cut back on meat, but they aren't completely ditching animal-based foods. Until recently, there has been blind faith that any product labelled vegan was healthier for you. However, vegan products are often highly processed and are as high in salt and fat as the real stuff. Take alternative milk, for example. "Interest in plant-based milks has been rising rapidly," says nutritionist and gut health specialist Lucy Williamson. "However, they aren't a nutritional alternative to dairy milk, notably in terms of calcium. Oat milk can make a nice change of flavour, but bear in mind it will give you a higher blood sugar spike, which is not helpful for weight control." So order that full-fat-milk coffee, because studies suggest people who eat full-fat dairy are slimmer.**

**STRONG,
NOT SKINNY**

Kate Moss famously said in 2009: "Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels," and it went on to define a generation. There was no such thing as body-positivity, nor a curve on magazine covers or the catwalk. Now, thank goodness, the emphasis is not on skinny, but on strong, whether that be physically or mentally. "There has been a complete cultural shift towards valuing strength in recent years, which has come from scientific research, social media and the change in society's attitude as a whole," says personal trainer Caroline Idiens. "Strength training contributes hugely to building and retaining muscle tissue. Doing it for just 30 minutes three or four times a week consistently can have amazing results. But start with light weights and build it up gradually."

**LISS,
NOT HIIT**

HIIT (high-intensity interval training) has long been seen as the best exercise for people who want to lose weight in as little time as possible. But we've recently gained a more neutral approach to exercise – one that doesn't involve slamming the body to the floor and wheezing for breath. Cortisol-conscious workouts – AKA those that don't add more stress to the body – are gaining traction. It's all about LISS (low-intensity steady-state) fitness, such as mindful walking, soft hikes, barre and Pilates. "Diet culture from the '90s and Noughties taught us that exercise was a form of punishment for our bodies – the focus was on burning calories and losing weight as the only form of 'results', with movement associated with awful phrases such as 'no pain, no gain'," says personal trainer Nancy Best. "Thankfully, exercise is now identified as a fundamental tool for managing emotional wellbeing, as well as your physical health." **F**

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**LONGEVITY,
NOT ANTI-AGEING**

Figures show that we are living longer than ever. According to the ONS, in 2022, around 15,000 people in England and Wales reached the age of 100 – more than double the number in 2002. But instead of rejecting ageing, we are now embracing longevity, living healthily for as long as possible. It's why the Netflix documentary *Live To 100: Secrets Of The Blue Zones* proved such a hit. "Blue Zones" are parts of the world where the greatest number of centenarians live, and they share nine specific lifestyle habits, regardless of differing cultures or geographic location. Specifically, beans are the cornerstone for Blue Zoners, with meat eaten five times per month, on average. They don't shun alcohol, but drink it moderately, and socialising into old age keeps their brains young. "People aren't just seeking to lengthen their lives, they want to live better-quality ones, aided by scientifically proven nutrition, sleep and exercise," says Olivia Houghton, an analyst at The Future Laboratory.

THE NEW DIET RULES

Remember the days of low-fat, Atkins and Special K plans? Well, now there's a fresh take on how to eat right

BY SUSAN GRIFFIN

It's hard not to look back on health fads over the years without feeling immense discomfort. The fat-shaming of the '90s and Noughties drove many women to try dubious diets – grapefruit, cereal, cabbage, the list goes on. And who can blame them? Super-skinny models dominated fashion spreads, Victoria Beckham was made to weigh herself on a chat show and Bridget Jones, Betty from *Ugly Betty* and Natalie in *Love Actually* were all portrayed as the "fat" ones. But in the past two decades, there's been a huge shift away from restrictive diets to those that focus on health and wellbeing, rather than your dress size. The pressure for women to look good (AKA small) is probably never going to go away, but it's certainly fizzling out. Here, we look at what's taking its place.