

The fitness project 2018

 RUJUTA DIWEKAR · THURSDAY, 4 JANUARY 2018

A compilation of all guidelines/ posts/ weekly forms for [#RDfitnessproject2018](#)

Welcome to a one of its kind open participation public health project. i am not sure if anything like this has ever been done earlier, anywhere in the world, but your response totally floored me. We had the first 500 registrations within minutes and in less than 48 hours we had more than 75000 signups from across the globe. Wow! Thats huge and I hope that together our enthusiasm doesn't fizzle out as the weeks go by. Wait, before anything else - Happy New Year, may it be the year of many possibilities, one of them being sustainable fitness.

About the project -

Launch video - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155246240818424/>

Why - because fitness is uncomplicated, inexpensive and something that everyone should have access to. It can uplift life and make you much more useful to yourself and the society than what you already are.

What - we give you one guideline every week that you work at integrating into your daily life. The guidelines will be easy but nevertheless challenging as they progressively add up every week. By the end of 12 weeks or 3 months you will be doing 12 different things or 12 things differently from the way you are currently doing and you will permanently be on your way to fitness.

Who - anyone, anywhere, who is willing to take the effort daily for himself/herself. The guidelines will have specifications, wherever needed, for lifestyle conditions like diabetes, PCOD, Thyroid, etc., and also for which country you are living in.

How -

- a) Starting 2nd Jan, there will be a weekly guideline every Tuesday. You are supposed to follow the guidelines cumulatively. This means that in week 2 = week 1 guideline + week 2 guideline and in week 3 = week 1 + 2 + 3 and so on.
- b) There will be a weekly google form published on this fb page (every Tuesday starting 9th Jan) which will ask you to fill your compliance - whether you have managed to stick to the guidelines,
- c) at the end of each month, the form will also ask you to rate your progress on the health parameters (energy levels, sleep quality, acidity/indigestion, sweet cravings, exercise compliance and PMS/ period pain).

At the end of 3 months we will check our collective progress.

How to register - The week 1 form is closed now. However, you can still follow the week 1 guideline given below and then fill the tracker form released on 9th Jan.

2nd Jan - Week 1 Guideline - Start your day with a Banana or any fresh fruit OR soaked almonds OR soaked raisins and NOT with tea or coffee.

Note -

- Its ok to have chai or coffee 10-15 mins post this meal
- Have a glass of (only) plain water and then have this meal
- Eat this within 20 mins of waking up or post the thyroid pill if you are on one

Banana - for all those who have digestion issues or get sugar cravings post a meal. Buy fresh, local variety. Buy atleast 2-3 times a week and do not bring them home in plastic bags, use a cloth bag instead.

7-8 Soaked raisins with 1-2 strands of kesar - if you have rated yourself as a person with terrible PMS or with low energy through the day.

4-6 Soaked & peeled badam - if you have insulin resistance, diabetes, PCOD* or low fertility or poor sleep quality. Pick the mamra or the local variety of badam, its richer in nutrients. For PCOD - Switch to 7-8 raisins and 1-2 strands of kesar 10 days before periods.

FAQs for Guideline 1 -

Q. i dont like banana, what should i do?

A. Pick any regional, local fruit that is currently in season.

Q. i have a bit of all 3 issues, what should i eat now banana or almonds or raisins?

A. Pick the one you most like eating as the first meal in the morning. Also feel free to eat banana today, almonds tomo, raisins day after. Essentially, learn to be self dependent, thats the name of the game buddy.

Q. So if i am PCOD what exactly should i eat?

A. Soaked almonds and then 10 days before periods switch to soaked raisins and kesar. If you are unable to predict period date, make the switch when you begin to feel bloated or irritated. This can be followed for endometriosis and adenomyosis too.

Q. Why are we soaking the almonds?

A. To unlock the nutrients from it and to allow the phytic acid levels (which can otherwise bind to minerals like zinc and make them unavailable for our body) to go down.

6th Jan - Week 1 - Update

Hopefully, you guys are following the first guideline. Remember that fitness is built one step at a time by small but daily actions. The body rewards consistency over anything else. And consistently having your first meal within 15 minutes of waking up is a big step forward.

Note that -

- you can workout/ do yoga, etc., 15-20 mins after having the banana/ almonds/ raisins
- If not working out, you can have your breakfast within an hour of this meal
- Don't add anything to the water you are having in the morning, just have plain water

9th Jan - Week 2 Guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155263095883424/>

From the shastras to your nanis and dadis and now even the Sunday Mail of London sing its glories. It keeps your company from birth to death, in sickness and health and through the good and the bad. Its been maligned by the food and the weight loss industry for the longest time, demonised even by the medical and the pharma industry but Satya aur ghee ki hamesha jeet hoti hai.

So here comes the guideline for week 2 - Eat ghee. Without fear, without guilt, without doubt.

Add 1 tsp of ghee to breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Especially useful for - PCOD, Diabetes and Heart diseases, BP, acidity, weak joints, constipation, IBS.

Notes -

1. You can have your breakfast about 20-90 mins post the first meal that you are following from week 1.
2. Add an extra tsp of ghee to lunch if you have sweet cravings or experience post afternoon slump where you feel that you are operating on 50% of potential.
3. Add an extra tsp of ghee to dinner if you wake up feeling constipated, have IBS or digestion issues in general or suffer from poor sleep quality.
4. Some other ways to add ghee, especially in winters to keep the joints supple and skin glowing are -

- have ghee roasted makhanas as a mid meal around chai time, say 4pm
- Goond laddoos made in ghee especially if you live in North-India or in parts of the world with harsh winters as a mid morning meal, 2-3 hrs post breakfast
- Ghee & jaggery as post lunch or dinner if you suffer from PMS, fatigue or low Hb levels.

FAQs on Ghee – Guideline 2

Here are answers to some of the FAQs on Ghee. Keeping them short, you can read details in my books or blogs.

1. I have cholesterol/ high triglycerides/ fatty liver/ BP issues. Can I have ghee?
Yes, totally. Ghee regulates cholesterol by increasing contribution of lipids towards metabolism. Cut back on packaged products like biscuits and avoid alcohol not ghee. Ghee is

safe.

2. I am overweight/ have diabetes/ pcod. Can I have Ghee?

Yes, essential fatty acids like the one found in ghee help accelerate fat loss and even help regulate blood sugars (reduce risk of obesity related diseases).

3. We cook in Ghee, do we need to add extra tsp on top of that?

That choice would be yours. Ensure that you are getting around 3-6 tsp of ghee per day/ per person. The key is that ghee should enhance the flavour of food and not mask it.

4. We cook in oil, can we add ghee on top before eating?

Yes, you should add ghee.

5. Is the store bought ghee ok if we can't make at home?

Yes, but then check that it is from desi cow milk. Patronise ghee from small gaushalas and small women cooperatives over large corporations.

6. If desi cow ghee not available, can we make from buffalo milk?

Yes, you can. This is better than buying ghee from big brands.

7. Options for those outside India?

Cultured white organic butter or the clarified butter that is sold in health food stores. Look for free grazing, grass fed cow milk products.

8. Do I need to add ghee on top of non-veg food also? Doesn't it already has fat? Yes, you should. The unique fatty acid structure of ghee is very helpful for the body.

9. How do we know how much ghee to be added in each meal?

It depends on what you are eating and this info is part of our collective food wisdom. Foods like dal-rice, khichdi, roti-sabzi will require lesser ghee compared to puran poli, dal baati, bajra roti, etc. Ask your grandmother if you have any confusion.

Read the Ghee chapter from "Indian Superfoods" for much more details and uses of Ghee.

Online link here- <https://www.juggernaut.in/.../6af082af982b4da786a4708fd3cfb99b>

Don't forget to fill this week's tracker form here - <https://goo.gl/forms/7TEaAgDIemFFiEBk1>
(closed now)

16th Jan - Week 3 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155279265833424/>

Well, all talk about fitness is useless if it doesn't make you rethink the way you are living your life. Its about paying attention to little things that matter and not just talking and googling carbs, protein, fat and calories.

So here is the guideline for Week 3, this one may take you by surprise but not if you know me well.

Guideline 3 - Rethink, reform and regulate the use of gadgets in your life.

Why?

The human head is heavy and we have spent months as babies learning to stabilise it. In a neutral position, ears above the shoulders, the head weighs about 5-6 kg. But then with just a 15 degrees tilt downwards it weighs more than double - about 15 kgs, at 30 degrees its 20kg and at 60 degrees its as much as 30 kgs. What do you think this is doing to your back, shoulders and even to the brain?

Most of us want to let go off fat from our stomachs, sport flatter abs and have narrower waist, but its impossible with all that slouching and "technology posture" as it is called. The technology posture is that much more harmful for people dealing with diabetes, heart heart and other hormonal issues like PCOD and thyroid and it even interferes with the proper functioning of our adrenal glands and hampers cardio-respiratory processes.

How?

So from this week, you will take the first step to developing a strong back, flat stomach and a tall stance. This is what i want you to do -

1. When eating meals, no gadgets - Start doing this at 1 meal a day and over the next 10 weeks, build it to all 3 main meals per day. Today when you fill your form, and don't forget to do that - let me know which meal will you start this from - breakfast, lunch or dinner.
2. Before going to bed, no gadget for 30 mins - So don't delay bedtime, just keep the phone away, switch off your TV and read a book (not on kindle or iPad).
3. When you do use the phone in the day, check for your posture - The correct way is to lift the phone at eye level and not to tilt the neck down. One of the things that this will do, is limit your phone usage to only the relevant and important issues as raising the phone doesn't make for a good picture.

I know this is a tough one, but its worth doing. You have to follow this guideline, along with week 1 and 2 guidelines from hereon.

Fill your week 2 tracking form here - <https://goo.gl/forms/wqeinKz7leE25ZoR2> (closed now)

Sar utha ke jiyo.

23rd Jan - Week 4 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155297614483424/>

I must thank you for the wonderful feedback you send me via Insta/ FB/ Twitter and email. Together we are moving towards improved metabolic health and thinner waists but whether this momentum will carry on in Feb is dependent on what are you eating at your most hungry time, that is between 4-6 pm every evening.

You must have heard this - have a light dinner to lose weight. But how to make dinner light? Well, by eating something wholesome in the evening. This is the make or break meal, this decides whether you will have long lasting fitness or whether it will fizzle out in the next couple of weeks.

Guideline 4 – eat a wholesome meal between 4-6 pm in the evening.

Why?

Our hormone cortisol follows a natural cycle, it rises in the morning allowing you to start fresh, clear bowels, etc., and drops in the evening, to allow for restful sleep in the night. That is why waking up fresh and quality of sleep is one of the health parameters we are tracking in this project. Because this tells us about your metabolic health, your immune response, your hormonal balance and your response to stress.

When we don't eat anything in the evening or kill our appetite with chai or coffee, our body works at producing more cortisol instead of reducing it. This will lead to -

- Overeating at dinner
- Poor sleep
- Slow digestion
- PCOD/ Thyroid issues
- Insulin insensitivity (leading to diabetes and many other lifestyle diseases)

How?

Some meal options for your 4-6 pm meal whether you are at work, on a train, in college, wherever -

1. Handful of groundnuts and chana - regulates appetite, prevents bloating and overeating at dinner time. Do this if you eat early dinners, before 8pm. Very good meal for diabetics, for PCOD and those with low energy levels in the day.
2. Jaggery, ghee and chapati - if you stay active, work away from home, eat dinner post 9pm and struggle to sleep well, suffer from constipation or have low Haemoglobin levels.
3. Poha/ Upma/ Dosa/ Egg toast/ homemade khakra or mathri/ homemade Goond or Besan laddoo - If your work load increases post evening or you have a party to attend or if you have frequent headaches, leg cramps, low immunity this is a good meal. And if none of the above is possible even a grilled vegetable and cheese sandwich, Mumbai ishtyle.
4. Chaat / Samosa/ Street food - yes and this is a good time to have it, but only once a week. And the worst time to have chaat or street food is dinner.

In all cases, expect dinner quantity to naturally drop over the next 4-5 days. This is normal and an expected outcome.

Most important note – The 4-6 pm meal only happens if its planned in advance. Plan for your whole week today itself.

Week 3 tracking form is here - <https://goo.gl/forms/IE2HFYmZMVIQCAB03> (closed now)

FAQs/ additional notes for wholesome meal options for 4- 6 pm -

1. If you have a very early dinner, like at 6:30/ 7 pm – You must be having your lunch early and the 4-6 pm time in your case will be 3-5 pm. You can choose one of the lighter options from the list above.
2. If you workout in the evening – Have your 4 R's post workout (details in Don't lose out, workout), including a banana and a protein shake and this becomes your wholesome meal. If you workout at about 7pm, you can have any of the above meal options latest by 5:30 pm and your dinner immediately post workout.
3. If you have night shift or odd working hours – you just have to move the timing accordingly. Your 4-6 pm meal could be earlier or later according to your work hours.
4. The 4-6 pm meal needs to be wholesome – this means no oil-free, sugar-free, exotic fruits, juices or any 'diet' options. Have a traditional meal the way it is supposed to be. You will lose all of the benefits of this meal if you mess up the basics. As much as possible, stick to the easy and made at home options listed above.

30th Jan - Week 5 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155317536748424/>

Through the fitness project, our efforts have been to highlight the obvious but often overlooked aspects of health and fitness. A lot of you guessed that this week it will be about exercise but it is about something even more basic than that, activity. Because without an active lifestyle, exercise can bring you no benefits.

The problem in our world today is that we sit too much. We are much more sedentary than we ever were. We sit on trains, in cars, in offices, while watching TV, talking on the phone, playing video games, you name it. We are an inactive community, especially all of us in urban and semi-urban setting, and its time to change.

Sitting is now identified as an independent risk factor to lifestyle diseases, much like smoking. It means that even if you are eating right, working out, sleeping on time, not stressed, etc., but sit too much, you are still at a risk of lifestyle diseases and even death.

A very interesting study way back in 1949 on London bus drivers and conductors revealed that drivers were much more prone to heart diseases and stroke as compared to the conductors. On an average a conductor would take 500 - 700 steps more per working day. So they lived longer and stayed healthier. Essentially it boils down to basics - human beings were meant for constant activity and not constant sitting.

Week 5 Guideline - Move more, sit less.

HOW?

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1. For every 30 mins of sitting, stand atleast for 3 mins
2. When you stand, stand with your weight well distributed on your two feet
3. Take the stairs at work or home, everyday. At least climb 4 floors up everyday
4. Park your car as far as possible, keep atleast 500 steps between your car and your destination. Paris btw is banning cars from the city by 2030
5. Once every week, walk around your neighbourhood or walk your child to school/ park/ friend's house/ restaurant, etc. Walking is good not just as an activity, but also at building strong community bonds and for the environment
6. Once every week, do atleast one task that is currently being done by house help or gadget - wash your own clothes, do dishes for the entire household, sweep and swab your house
7. If you are a man, cook a meal and/or clean up after the family has eaten at least once a week. You can make just dal rice or khichdi but building a nurturing environment is crucial for good health too.
8. 100 steps or shatapavli after dinner

You may not realise the importance of movement and activity but it keeps the brain plasticity, especially in older adults, helps prevent back pain, diabetes, heart disease and even depression. Move now, leave sitting for the lesser and later.

And remember, activity is different from exercise, and is not a substitute. We will discuss exercise in detail in coming weeks.

Week 4 tracker and month 1 update - <https://goo.gl/forms/yzEZawOs1pj4ZXzG2> (closed now)

6th Feb - Week 6 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155335376763424/>

This week's guideline is a straight call from the heart - exercise. You know you should be doing it but you are still looking for a good time. Good time aa gaya.

There isn't a person on earth who doesn't want to lose weight but to lose weight you have to gain weight - lean body weight - the weight of your bones and muscles. Most of us lose between 2- 4 kgs of muscles every 10 years. In women, especially after 30, we lose muscle from our thighs and gain intramuscular fat at a fast pace.

This continuous and progressive loss of muscle and bone density can be reversed with exercise. Not just exercise actually, but a structured exercise. One that includes strength (weight) training and follows some basic principles of exercise science.

And this is our guideline for week 6 – Start with at least one session of strength training

every week.

Here are some of the benefits from just one session of strength training a week -

- Prevents Diabetes and if you already have it, has the potential to get you on lowered dosages if not totally off medicines.
- Regulates period cycle and leads to pain free periods. Make conception easy if you want a baby.
- Reduces arthritic pain and uric acid.
- Reduces Blood pressure and resting heart rate.
- Improves functioning of the brain.
- Increases gait speed (can walk faster).
- Reduces depressive thoughts and improves sleep.

List endless hai boss but the thing is that all of us talk about how we gain weight post 30, but we are losing muscle, so then what weight are we gaining? That of fat. The tissue that doesn't add to your mobility, strength, agility or sex appeal. But you cannot measure fatness on the weighing scale. So get off the weighing scale and get under a squat rack.

Notes on strength/ weight training –

1. If you have never weight trained before -

Start now. Schedule a meeting with an expert trainer at a local gym and begin with once a week routine. You can also use the beginner's routine from 'Don't lose out, workout.' You must especially start if you already have insulin resistance, are very obese, have a heart condition, bone loss or diabetes. That much more important for older adults (men and women).

2. If you are already training but are not regular -

Get regular and dedicate at least 2 times a week to strength training. This is especially crucial for all those who have PCOD, breakouts, menopausal or have thyroid. Focus on bringing in progressive overload into your workouts. Read more about it in the 'Strength training' chapter of 'Don't lose out, workout' and follow the intermediate routine.

3. If you are training 3 or more days a week -

Shabash! Drop your reps to 5-8 and focus on the intensity or the actual weight you subject your muscles to (advanced routine from 'Don't lose out, work out'). The biggest gains of strength training come from the load bearing that you train your muscles to do.

Over the next week, i will release facts about exercise science which will help you build a more resilient and solid workout plan.

Fill the tracking form for week 5 here - <https://goo.gl/forms/AAotVoL7QckAYD7I3> (closed now)

'Dont lose out, workout' is free to download on Kindle unlimited, here -
<https://goo.gl/EKT5Ve>

FAQs on Exercise -

Q: I already do cardio/ swimming/ zumba/ dancing, etc, should I strength train?

A: Yes. And the reason is After burn -

Excessive Post exercise Oxygen Consumption (EPOC) or 'After burn' is a process that follows every session of strength training, where the body burns fat at a higher rate for upto 36-48 hrs. This is not the case with aerobic exercises where fat burn, if at all, happens only during the duration of exercise.

This is especially helpful for the obese or those suffering from hormonal imbalances due to excessive body fat.

Q: Is there an alternative to gym that we can do at home?

A: Two scenarios –

1. You have access but don't want to go to gym because you are apprehensive/ shy/ don't have time/ its too loud/ its for body builders only/ etc.

The benefits of weight training outweigh all of the above concerns. Working out in gym is the safest way to weight train as you can use machines and light weights (lighter than body weight) to train with a proper form. By gradually increasing weight, you can make progress in your strength. Follow the link below for videos on how to perform weight training exercises.

2. You don't have access to a gym at all.

In that case, you can learn some basic strengthening exercises that use minimum or no equipment. Follow this link - <http://www.exrx.net/Questions/BasicProgram.html>

Q: I have just started weight training, my blood sugar levels are better, my thyroid is better, my jeans are getting loose, but I haven't lost a gram, in fact I have GAINED a couple of kilos!



A: First things first, change that sad face to a broadly smiling one. Weight training increases fat-free weight, that of your bones and muscles. Obviously that's going to mean some additional grams or kilos to your body mass. Not to forget the fact that as you start storing more muscle glycogen, it adds to body weight too.

Technically you can gain or lose up to five kilos of body weight without gaining or losing a single gram of fat. Body weight is no measure of fatness or fitness. Look at exercise performance instead; it's the sure shot measure of your body's fat-burning ability (health, fitness and risk to diseases). If you are pushing more weight, feeling more enthusiastic about exercise, looking forward to your routine in the gym, it means you are on track. That's it.

12th Feb update -

Rules for exercise planning -

1. Plan for at least 150 mins of total workout time in the week.
2. Keep atleast a 2 day gap between two weight training sessions.
3. If doing cardio also, schedule it a day after weight training.
4. Build in rest days to get the best out of exercise days
5. Yoga asanas are an excellent form of both exercise and recovery (and much more). And can be done daily.

My publishers, [Westland Books](#), have very kindly put out the strength training chapter from 'Dont lose out, work out' on kindle for quick reference.

Read it here - <https://goo.gl/uopMm9>

13th Feb - Week 7 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155353475038424/>

This week's guideline will scandalise you, shock you and eventually stabilise you, your heart, your thoughts and your blood sugars too.

Without much ado - the guideline for Week 7 - *eat dal rice for dinner*.

Why you should eat rice for dinner?

- easy to digest
- increases leptin sensitivity and therefore improves sleep quality
- it is a prebiotic (food for probiotic) and keeps the gut strong. Bye bye constipation.
- the BCAA (branch chain amino acids) in rice have muscle sparing effect (you will see results of workout faster).
- suitable for people of all kinds of constitutions (doshas – vata, pitta and kapha).

There is so much to rice, but here are some of the hidden nutrients –

Methionine – it's a sulphur containing amino acid that helps prevent damage to the skin tone by free radicals, helps detox the liver and slows down the ageing process. Better skin and hair, lesser lines and even lesser greying.

Vit B1 - good for the nerves, heart and helps reduce inflammation and bloating. Also a good source of B3, you can increase values if you soak rice for a while before cooking it.

RS - Resistant starch, a molecule that gets fermented in our large intestines. It helps prevent cancer, improves lipid profile and inhibits growth of the bad bacteria.

Who can eat rice?

Everyone. The way we Indians eat rice, with dal and ghee, ensures that the meal stays low on the glycaemic index and there is a steady blood sugar response. It is therefore perfectly fine for anyone with Diabetes, heart disease or any other disease, for pregnant women, for young

and old, active and sedentary, thin and obese.

Fill the week 6 tracking form - <https://goo.gl/forms/oQtXogUMuuLynQpo2> (closed now)

Read the chapter on rice in Indian Superfoods here - <https://www.juggernaut.in/.../f5c3542d306f433988c9ce3faf33ec1b>

FAQs on rice –

1. How to cook rice?

Cook it the way in which it tastes the best, which is invariably how your grandmother used to.

2. Brown or white rice?

Hand pounded or single polished white rice. Too much fiber in brown rice comes in the way of absorption of minerals like Zinc, crucial for insulin function.

3. Which rice to eat?

There are thousands of varieties of rice in India, each one having its own distinct aroma and flavour. These aromatic compounds provide many nutritional benefits and work like antioxidants in the body, helping defy the effects of ageing. So eat the variety which grows in (or closest to) the region you live.

4. Rice and roti together?

Yes, you can if you have the appetite.

5. What if we have late dinner? Can we still have rice?

Yes, it's the easiest meal to digest. You can have it as khichdi or dal-rice.

6. Can diabetics have rice?

Rice is traditionally eaten with dal/sabzi/meat/dahi, etc., along with ghee, and this lowers the glycaemic index of meals and is therefore totally safe for diabetics.

7. I feel hungry later if I have only dal rice?

Make sure you add ghee to your dal rice and eat slowly and with full attention. Have a glass of milk before sleeping if still hungry.

8. How much QUANTITY?

If you have been having a wholesome meal between 4-6pm and are exercising and are keeping the gadget away during meal times, you will be eating just right. Nothing more, nothing less. More about quantity coming soon in the Fitness project guidelines.

20th Feb – Week 8 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155371295023424/>

When the eyes become clear, body healthy and appetite increases, its a sign of success according to Hatha Yoga Pradipika. No wonder then that when you portion control, force yourself to eat lesser, mask your appetite with tea/ coffee/ chewing gum/ soups/ fibre gels, etc., success, even on the path of weight loss, becomes elusive.

A good life is where you are able to tell the difference between your need and greed. A life where you learn to enjoy food, fitness and health without feelings of guilt, remorse and frustration. But today we feel that we are fat because we eat too much or consume too many calories. The truth is that we live in 'obesogenic environments' - we have created situations and formed habits where its almost impossible for us to nurture our appetite and eat just the right amount.

And so we have the Mental Meal Map to our rescue, a simple tool that anyone can use to understand their appetite and learn how much to eat.

Week 8 guideline – Use the mental meal map as a tool to help you eat the right quantity.

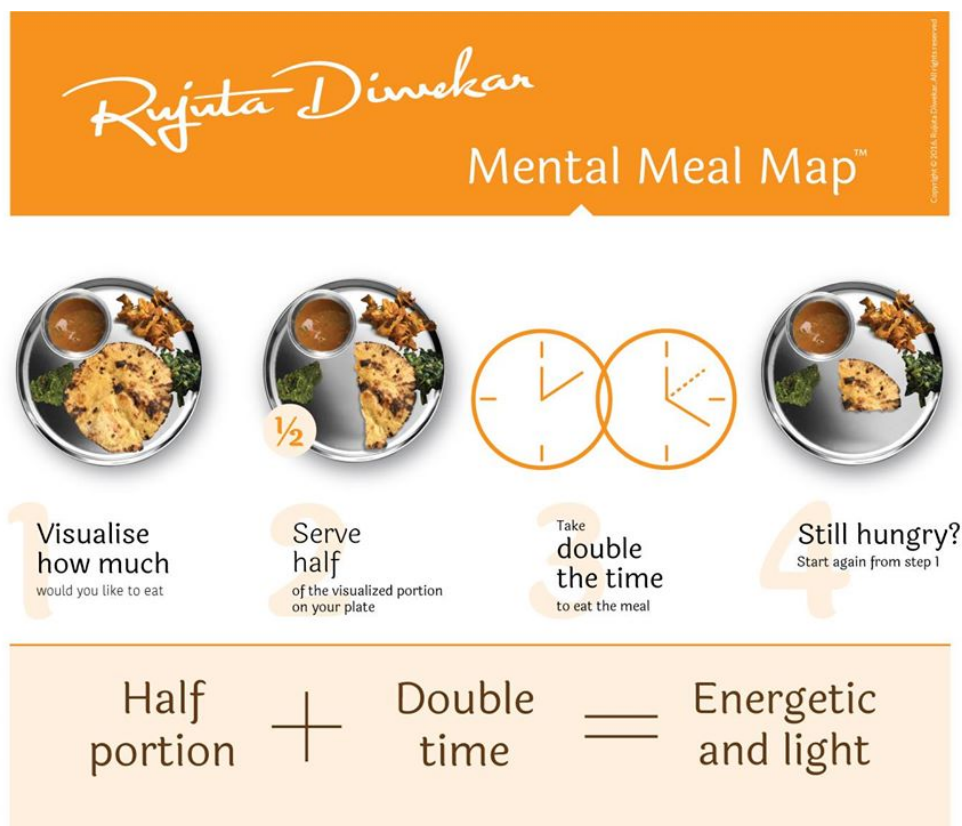
The below infographic explains the simple steps of the mental meal map.

Step 1 - Visualize how much would you like to eat.

Step 2 - Serve yourself half of that portion

Step 3 - Take double the time to eat the meal

Step 4 - If still hungry, start again from step 1.



Along with the Mental Meal Map, follow this eating etiquette -

- Fix a place where you will eat and as often as possible eat at the same place
- No phones, TV or any gadget during meals – you already know that
- Sit down in Sukhasana (if possible) and eat with your hands
- Drink a glass of water before your meal

Start the MMM and the above eating etiquette for at least one main meal every day and

watch it grow intuitively into all other aspects of your life.

Mental meal map is also extremely useful when you are eating out in restaurants or in weddings and party buffets.

Fill the week 7 tracking form here -<https://goo.gl/forms/OPYxcmE6QRcZUia2>

27 Feb - Week 9 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155389216798424/>

Namaskar. We have only 4 more weeks together and till now you have already integrated 8 lifestyle changes into your daily routine and here's the latest one. The one which has stood the test of time, the one that bridges the gap between strength and calm - the one and only, Suryanamaskar.

Guideline 9 - Practice Suryanamaskar daily

In ancient india, it was a practice for children to perform 5 Suryanamaskar everyday as a part of the daily routine along with brushing, bathing, eating, etc. My grandfather or Ajoba died at the age of 87 around noon, but he had done his Suryanamaskar, dusted the house and eaten his lunch - routine was complete. He had a six pack not because he wanted one but because it was inevitable.

Why practice Suryanamaskar?

Top 3 benefits of daily Suryanamaskar practice -

1. Gives you a strong muscular back - given our inactivity, poor posture, etc., we are losing the strength in the back which is required to keep not just the spine healthy but to connect the strength in the physical body, more specifically of the gluteus, to the strength or calm in the mind. If we feel weak in our body and aggressive in our mind its because we don't have a strong back.
2. Offers ageless, radiant skin - this is not just a cosmetic benefit but a real reflection of good health. Skin is the largest organ of our body and if the skin is healthy it means that kidney, liver, heart, all of the organs are healthy and well nourished.
3. Hormonal balance - if there is one exercise that works directly on our glands - thyroid, adrenals, pituitary, then its the Suryanamaskar. From optimum metabolism, pain free period to healthy levels of Vit D, the practice will ensure that the glands work at their best.

How?

Basics of a Suryanamaskar practice -

- Choose a fixed place at home, preferably a well ventilated one
- Fix a time to do it daily - sunrise or sunset are good times or you can even fix your time as pre breakfast or post bath, whatever works best
- Breathe normally and take your time to learn the correct posture, no rush
- One on right, one on left together make one round. Video link below.

Special instructions to make progress -

1. If you have never done Suryanamaskar before -

- Start with 2 rounds every alternate day
- Graduate to 2 rounds everyday from week 3
- Then add 1 round to your practice every alternate week

2. Do it but not very regularly -

- Tie it to a non-negotiable, for example, won't leave from home without the practice
- 5 a day is a good number, sustain that
- If you feel like doing 1 more, wait for 12 weeks. Train the mind to be consistent first.

3. Doing it regularly -

- Don't take a break even on a Sunday
- Don't drop below 5 or go beyond 12
- The idea is to get better with every step and not to mindlessly increase the number

Video of Suryanamaskar - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOlydiuO5oA>

Week 8 tracking form - <https://goo.gl/forms/Hw8DqbArXITloVL63> (closed now)

(Note – we will be selecting 15 participants who have been filling the form regularly for the 'Free consultation day' in April. You can start even from this week).

Update - 3rd March - Suryanamaskar - Special tips

1. Summer tip - On a day you feel too hot, too exhausted, too tired, just drop the right half of the round where the right leg leads. Just do your rounds on the left and see how light you feel.

2. During periods - Feel free to listen to your body. Do them if you are in good shape, drop the number if you are exhausted.

3. A week before periods if there's PMS - Start with 3 full rounds and end with 2 rounds only on left.

4. For back/ knee pain - Focus first on right technique. Skip the postures which aggravate the pain, but do the rest in the sequence.

One full round of SN = Full sequence leading from right leg + full sequence leading from left leg.

One round on left = Full sequence leading from left leg + repeat

6th March - Week 10 guideline

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155407917338424/>

Over the last few weeks, we have been trying to expand the conversation about health and fitness beyond numbers, labels and food groups and we will take it one step further this week.

One of the things we would traditionally do is change what we eat or drink as per the season. As we now enter the summer season, you will notice that you either get lethargic, sick or fully acidic during this time. But the good news is that it doesn't have to be like this. There are easy ways to ensure we stay at optimum health during summers, and this is the guideline for this week.

Week 10 guideline – Have sherbets and other traditional summer drinks through the day.

Here are the options -

1. Nariyal pani – mid morning. Preferably before noon.

Helps keep the acidity and acne down. And if you get enlarged pores at this time of the year, add a small tsp of sabja seeds to your nariyal pani.

2. Chaas (buttermilk) – Just after lunch.

Other than being a good source of B12, this coolant will ensure that you are not bloated in the second half of the day.

3. Nimbu sherbet– with early evening snack.

Add salt, sugar, jeera and black pepper to your nimbu pani. There are many alternative sherbets also - kesudo, vaala, kokum, variyali, bel, etc. Body's natural AC, these micro-nutrient rich sherbets won't let your electrolytes or water soluble vitamins drop, especially important if you are a BP patient. Our grandmoms spent centuries fine tuning these recipes, its our turn now to honour them and keep our cool.

4. Kulith (horsegram) – at dinner.

If you have lost your appetite or feel low on energy or are simply feeling too gassy, this is what you need. Either make a dal out of it and eat it with rice, or turn it into a pithla (like a soup) with dahi and just have that for dinner instead (every region has a recipe for that). You will not just sleep better but also wake up with your skin feeling fresher and tummy flatter. Blame it on the folic acid and mineral rich Kulith, the super pulse of India. Also, very good option for those with diabetes or weak digestion.

Benefits of these traditional summer drinks -

- Help reduce acidity and get rid of bloating.
- Promote growth of healthy bacteria and nurture intestinal mucosa.
- Give a smooth, flawless complexion.
- Prevent UTI and fevers.
- Relief from chronic body aches and pains.

Week 9 tracking form - <https://goo.gl/forms/OTd1NBdBfj9xkI2B2> (closed now)

9th March - FAQs on summer drinks

1. Apart from Nimbu pani, nariyal pani and sherbets, what other summer drinks can we have?

Each region has its own, here are just a few more -

Ambil - mixture of spices with ragi (or nachni) in buttermilk or curd

Panha - the kacha kairi (raw mango) drink garnished with kesar

Neera - the virgin palm drink that can cure everything from insomnia to eczema

2. Can I have sugarcane juice in summers?

It is ideally a drink for winters but if you are drinking it in summer - crush a bit of ginger to it and always drink it before noon and drink it super fresh, the minute the sugar cane is crushed.

3. Its still winter where I live, what about us?

- Instead of chaas (buttermilk), have lassi - either mid-morning or late afternoon
- Make kulith daal and have it with Bajra (pearl millet) for dinner. Ok to have with rice too.
- You can also have amla sherbet (morning time) and Chawanprash, either to begin or end your day.
- Peanuts and jaggery or cashews and jaggery as a mid meal

4. Fresh coconut water is not available, what are the alternatives?

The kokum, nimbu, ambil, panha, bel, even buransh - all these are available even when fresh coconut water is not.

5. You mentioned Kulith, but isn't it a heating food?

All pulses are traditionally harvested in the winter but stored and eaten through the year.

Belonging to an ancient culture means that there is already a system in place to use them based on the season. So in winters you can turn them to Kulith parantha like the Himalayan regions do and in summers you use the same kulith but cook it with dahi or chaas and turn it into a cooling drink, like Kalan in Maharashtra. In both seasons, it helps prevent skin ageing, increases Hb levels and helps boost immunity.

Our grandmothers were a smart lot and we have a lot of catching up to do.

13th March - Week 11 guideline - Kitchen rules

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155426718743424/>

Any conversation about fitness actually begins from our kitchen. That's exactly the place

from where health, harmony and happiness originate. So without further ado, here goes our guideline for this week –

Guideline 11 - Top 3 Kitchen rules for wholesome health -

1. Reduce plastic
2. Bring back the iron kadhai
3. Heat, don't microwave

1. Reduce plastic - for various reasons but because its a major pollutant not just for our environment but also for the hormonal balance in our body. It releases estrogenic chemicals in our body and disturbs the ratio between our male and female hormones. Especially important if you have PCOD, adult acne or are a young girl at puberty. Some quick places that you can start from -

- Use cloth bag instead of plastic bags to shop for vegetables and fruits. Avoid buying veggies and fruits that come individually packed in plastic or thermocol.
- No plastic tiffin boxes, especially for hot food and no plastic cutlery, haath se khao. Also, no cling films for fruits and dabbas. France is the first country to ban plastic cutlery btw. Use steel dabbas and malmal cloth for wrapping rotis, etc.
- Use steel or copper water bottles for drinking water when traveling and not plastic bottles (including mineral water bottles).

2. Bring back the iron kadhai - yes please, inse naata jodo. Say bye to your teflon coated non-stick kadhais that have made you believe that glory lies in avoiding fat (you know now that it doesn't). The iron kadhai is an important and undervalued source of iron in your diet. Cook your poha, upma and sabzis in it. Don't forget to add the ghee or oil and spices and i bet you will never fall short of iron ever again. Also, let go off the aluminium vessels and foils too. You can use stainless steel, pital and other varieties. Exposure to aluminium lowers the levels of zinc, an important mineral for our bodies, especially for brain health and preventing diabetes.

3. Heat, dont microwave - First of all, if you are microwaving, that means you are just overcooking and then overeating, followed by over storing and again overeating. So stop this vicious cycle and if you have to heat food, simply heat it slowly on flame. Microwaving is harmful for the micro nutrients in the food as it quickly heats them at extremely high temperatures where their bonds break and they get oxidised and become toxic for your body.

Socho mat zyada, go back to cleaning up your kitchen. And don't forget to involve the men of the household.

Week 10 tracking form - <https://goo.gl/forms/qF4teOFNinlPo7RJ2> (closed now)

20th March - Week 12 guideline - Bring back the fats

Video link - <https://www.facebook.com/rujuta.diwekar/videos/10155445898748424/>

So well, officially the last guideline but pyaar apna hamesha ke liye rahega just like aap ke khane mein swaad hamesha rahega. And its fat which adds swaad to your food, along with

satiety, satisfaction and sustainability in the diet. And this is the guideline for week 12 –

Guideline 12 - Bring back these 3 fats in your daily diet -

1. Tadka in kacchi ghaani oils

Use oils native to your region – mustard for north and north east India, groundnut or til for central and western and coconut for Kerela. Our native recipes are fine tuned to the fatty acid and nutrient composition of our oils and to make the best out of what we eat, we have to follow it in totality. No jumping on the bandwagon of “heart healthy” or other such promises made by refined vegetable, rice bran, safflower or similar oils. Avoid oil free or fat free at all costs.

And kacchi ghani (cold pressed) because then it means that oil is extracted at a lower temperature and therefore fatty acids, vitamins and other nutrients are intact. Very important for diabetics to have traditional oils.

2. Coconut as garnishing, chutney, etc.

From supporting gut health to helping you calm your nerves to soothing digestion, there isn't one thing that it can't do. The fact that its anti-bacterial, anti-viral is an added bonus. If you are the type that gets UTI every summer, don't forget the coconut. So garnish your food with it, turn it into laddoos and barfis, make chutneys out of it, have the coconut malai and even the dry coconut with jaggery or just peanuts.

3. Cashews as mid-meal or with milk before sleeping

Other than the good fat, its rich in minerals, amino acids and vitamins. The amino acids help, among other things, in the production of serotonin, the natural sleeping pill whose only side effect is a stable, happy mood the next day. The magnesium helps the nerves to relax. Its tryptophan (an amino acid) and vitamin B combination help make kaju a natural anti-depressant. It's the summer nut and you can eat the cashew fruit too (super rich in Vit C). (More details in Indian Superfoods book).

Why?

Essential fat is required for both the body and the functioning of the brain. Without adequate fat in our diet -

- We won't be able to assimilate vitamins like Vit D, minerals and other essential nutrients from our diet.
- We won't produce the right hormones and may suffer from poor joints and nerves. This role that fat plays is especially critical for children.
- The blood sugars will stay unregulated and there will be cravings for sweets after a meal.
- Skin can age prematurely due to lack of nourishment from food.

Week 11 tracking form - <https://goo.gl/forms/W4AntJhGiz3Iyjeg2>

Update 22nd March - FAQs on oils

1. How is cooking in traditional oils and ghee beneficial for diabetics?

Cooking in traditional oils is a marker that you are eating more traditional and time tested meals. It is well known that the main challenge with Diabetes is unregulated blood sugars. Meals that are adequate in ghee and oils, the ones that are not shy of calories or essential fatty acids, are low in glycemic index and have a beneficial effect on the blood sugars. They also help in fat loss and prevent skin pigmentation.

2. Belong to North India but staying in South or vice versa. Which oil to use?

Depends on what you are cooking. If you are cooking a regional recipe use the regional oil and if you are making a traditional dish, use the one you grew up eating.

3. I live outside India, what are my choices?

First of all, your health food stores are now full of ghee or clarified butter and really, Indians abroad are in a way spoiled for choice. So you can pick up cold pressed groundnut oil, sesame oil (when winters are harsh), coconut oil, mustard oil - based on what region of India you belong to.

4. Is cashew ok for high BP patients?

Yes it is. Its rich in minerals that help dilate the blood vessels, making circulation easier and BP more stable.
