

Foodsense

Good fats, bad fats

Some simple rules to avoid the 'fat-trap'...

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WHEN IT comes to fats, most people have heard of some being 'good' and others 'bad' for us. Fats are essential to life and without them we could not think, move, feel warm, reproduce or respond to stress, let alone feel happy, slim and satisfied after eating.

They are present in many animal products, such as butter, eggs, prawns or bacon rind as well as oily fish and their oils. The plant-derived fats come from nut and seed oils (for example, coconut, rapeseed oil, sunflower oil, hemp, walnut, linseed), nut butters, fruit oils (like olive or avocado oil) or grain bran oil (such as rice bran oil).

From the biochemical perspective, fats fall into two main categories: saturated (like butter or coconut oil) and unsaturated. The latter are divided into poly-unsaturated - such as sunflower or rapeseed oil, or nut and seeds and

their oils, as well as oily fish (source of omega-3s) - and mono-unsaturated like olive oil.

Until now, we've been told the saturated fats are the bad ones and the polyunsaturated ones (source of omega-6s and -9s) are the good ones - hence the widespread use of margarines or chips sold with 'made with sunflower oil' on the front. Many people also think that eating fats makes them bigger and it can raise their cholesterol level. Is it really true, however?

First, it is the form of the fat that matters more than the type of fat. The fatty acids we derive from fats are essential and cannot be synthesised by the body. However, the hardened fats, like margarines or spreads, are usually hydrogenated which makes them act as strange molecules in the body, rendering even the best ingredients they are made from unusable. The same

fate awaits any other heated unsaturated (or liquid) fats, which change their form to a 'trans' shape and become pro-inflammatory triggers to us. Eating crisps, chips, fried or pan-fried foods or cooking with any unsaturated oils has the potential to deregulate the immune, hormonal and cardio-vascular systems.

The rule of thumb to follow is to eat fats and oils in their natural, unrefined, virgin forms - and raw whenever possible. Plant oils can be used in dressings or poured on top of the meats or poultry or lentils at the point of serving. For cooking, nothing beats butter, coconut oil and rice bran oil. Oily fish can be baked, grilled or steamed ideally and fish oils need to be supplemented if fish is not on the menu. Eggs and butter can be consumed daily and have not been linked to raised cholesterol levels.

Yoga class

Gail Willis continues her series of simple hatha yoga moves

YOGA INSTRUCTOR Gail Willis has recruited her mother Janet Rogers to help demonstrate yoga exercises in *Choice* every month.

In each picture Janet, who is 78, illustrates the basic position for each exercise - the easiest one for the beginner. Gail illustrates the maximum position for each exercise.

You should start following Janet's position and try to increase gradually towards Gail's advanced level.

"Only build up to a level that you are comfortable with," says Gail, who is a full-time yoga instructor in Kettering. "With some exercises you will be able to do the maximum level

of stretch, but with others you will achieve only the basic move. It doesn't matter - even the easiest will be good for you and make you feel good."

Find out more

■ To contact Gail, tel: 01536 515311, mobile: 07762 575118
 ■ To find a yoga class where you live, ask at your local library, county council offices, tourist information centre, sports centre, a local school or anywhere that runs evening classes.

Knee strengthening exercises

This will help strengthen groups of muscles in the thigh that supports the knee.

Janet starts the first of the two exercises, Gail carries out the more strenuous of the two as this exercise also assists the ligaments around the knee that provides the stability and movement in the knee.

Janet sits with a folded up towel underneath the leg to be exercised. Extend that leg by pushing the back of your knee into the towel and pushing your heel away. Do not allow shaking of the leg muscle and hold for as long as you feel comfortable.

Start holding for five seconds and



repeat four times. Then gradually build up to holding for longer but still only four times. Never hold your breath.

For Gail's exercise, turn the extended leg out so your heel is on the inside and your toes go to the outside. Slowly raise the extended leg until you cannot go any further - never lift it above the knee of your bent leg. This again must be started low and held for five seconds, repeated four times with the gradual build up.

Repeat with other leg. Stop if any pain starts and no muscles should shake whilst carrying out these exercises.

Next month: **Hand Exercises**