

Eating Well When You're Just Too Busy To

Yesterday I sat around a table of 4 bright successful women who are now sleeping with their blackberries on their bedside table, working longer hours, travelling more and really feeling the effects. They like most of us want to feel better and have more energy. They can also see the employees they are responsible for also need resources to feel better, as more and more demands are placed on them.

It's no surprise that working harder and travelling more will cause more physical and emotional stress. It also creates a challenge to eat well however the more strategically you eat, the better you will cope.

The biggest challenge I see people struggle with (and can personally attest to) is breaking the cycle of; using foods and substances to cope rather than choosing foods that will help your body balance itself, so that you can cope better. Things like coffee, chocolate, refined sugar or alcohol give you a little boost, initially but will weaken your body and create imbalance.

To make it super simple, there really are two groups of foods that you need to concern yourself with. Foods that strengthen you and foods that weaken you.

Foods that strengthen you are ones that are closest to their natural state think organic, raw, whole and seasonal. If it grows from the ground in healthy soil then your food will most likely strengthen you. Foods and substances that weaken you, are the ones that are far away from their natural state, highly processed with additives. These foods are usually addictive; foods your instinct tells you that are not good for you but your physiological compulsions override instinct because they either taste so bloody good or give you a buzz, (hint; broccoli does not do this).

Tips for eating on the run

Less is more but think quality over quantity; raw nuts and dried fruits are little power packs of energy and nutrition, you can go a long way on them, days in fact. You can buy a selection of raw nuts and dried fruit and make up large batches of your favourite combinations and then stack them into small storage containers that you can always have a stash in your bag, desk drawer, car or carry on.

Don't drink your calories. Think bottled water. Feel like a drink? Think sparkling water with a little fresh juice. The less alcohol you have, the better off you'll be.

Eat well before you leave home. The time you invest in; getting up early, staying up a little later, cooking while you watch TV instead of just watching TV so that you can make good food for yourself, will be returned in a more productive day, a better nights sleep and less down time with colds and flu.

Avoid eating airplane food. Even if travelling in business class, I bring my own food on board. I call it an airplane picnic; with salads, fresh fruit, vegies, raw nuts, real dense quality breads, organic dark chocolate and well made cheeses. Good food stores would love to organize this for you if you don't have time.

Avoid processed food as much as you possibly can, even processed foods with health claims.

In restaurants choose a salad or serve of vegetables with every meal, make lunch the biggest meal of the day and eat lighter for dinner. If you are entertaining clients and expected to eat several courses, choose 2 light entrees instead of an entrée and main course and remember, Mom's not looking and there are kids in African refugee camps eating better than obese children in Australia... you do not have to finish everything on your plate.

Organize bowls of fruit for your hotel room on arrival and on extended stays find a fruit shop and stock up the mini bar. I'd rather waste a bit of fruit than not have the option there.

If your only option is to eat badly than consider fasting. A few hours of fasting is better than eating food that will mess with your system. Now if you are pregnant or have a condition that makes fasting unwise then you obviously need to be organized so that you have something healthy at hand.

If you are working so much and so hard with little time consider a few things; Get help, someone to come in and shop or make meals for you.

Find a food place that prepares really good quality food and have a few meals waiting in your fridge when you get home.

Shop on the weekends at the markets and start to learn to cook simple things you can whip up in a few minutes.

If you don't have the resources and time to do this then consider what you are working so very hard for, after all what good is working for a lifestyle and retirement when you don't have much lifestyle and don't make it to retirement healthily because you didn't have time.

What you can eat that will strengthen you;

Fruit, think fresh, seasonal, organic, raw and whole (except for fruit with inedible skin).

Green vegetables are powerful for strength and energy.

Veggie packs with dips like hummus and Babaganoush.

Salads with lots of vegetables and homemade dressings, not 'Kraft' premix dressings that use highly processed oils, vinegars and additives.

Dried fruits and raw nuts, find these at health food stores or farmers markets as the selection and quality is much better than a supermarket.