



Glynis Barber

INCREASE YOUR ENERGY

Our health guru looks at why you might want to cut the snacks

I'm completely consumed with diet, health and nutrition at the moment. It has filled every waking moment for the last few months as nutritionist Fleur Borrelli and I work to transform *The In Sync Diet* book into an online programme. It's been great revisiting and updating every aspect of our diet, looking at the latest research and trying to set everything out in the most accessible, easy to follow form. We've also shot lots of videos to help people along the way.

However, there's one aspect that still surprises people, although it's not at all unique to our diet. For many years people have been told to eat little and often to keep blood sugar and energy levels up. I myself used to eat this way before I met Fleur, but this was without much success, as my energy would keep dipping and I felt tired most of the time. There's a reason eating this way not only doesn't give you energy, but in fact depletes it. And is the very reason we suggest doing the opposite on the In Sync Diet.

The process of digestion uses a lot of chemical energy. The body needs to produce saliva, stomach acid and digestive enzymes to digest the food and absorb nutrients from it. The pancreas also needs to produce insulin which takes glucose to your cells for energy. It's all rather hard work, so it stands to reason that if you're eating every few hours you're going to feel tired. The other important thing to know is that by snacking and not leaving a good gap between meals, you are preventing your body from tapping into your fat stores for energy. Instead you are constantly topping up your glucose stores and burning sugar instead.

We have found the best way to lose fat and increase energy is to reduce meal frequency. On our diet we start people off having three meals a day with no snacking and then move them toward having two meals a day. When I switched to this way of eating my energy levels went through the roof. People have become frightened of being hungry but it's ok to feel this way. Our genes have not evolved much in the last 50,000 years and hunger is a sign to get moving and forage for food. When our ancestors were hungry they moved first (to find food) and then ate. In other words, we are designed to exercise on an empty stomach.

This is the very best thing you can do to switch your body from being a sugar burner to a fat burner. Burning fat will help increase energy levels as well and allows you to exercise for longer periods of time. In fact endurance activity becomes easier when you train on an empty stomach.

GLYNIS' ADVICE

- 1.** Aim for no more than three meals a day with no snacking in between. Leave at least five hours between your meals.
- 2.** Eat after you exercise, not before. If you eat breakfast and then exercise, you will simply be burning off part of your meal rather than burning fat.
- 3.** Eat foods that support your mitochondria (the fat burning part of your cells) – such as coconut oil, avocado, spinach, pomegranate, blueberries, seaweed, almonds, wild salmon, olive oil, mushrooms, mango and broccoli sprouts.
- 4.** Make sure your meals are a good size with a generous portion of protein, healthy fat, vegetables and a portion of fruit. You should be completely satisfied after you've eaten.

Glynis Barber is an actress, co-author of *The In-Sync Diet* and founder of agelessbyglynisbarber.com

