Get rewarded for being healthy

Dubai Health Authority plans to incentivise healthy lifestyle as it prioritises prevention and well-being as key elements of its strategy for 2016-2021.

In an environment where one in five people in the country are diabetic and obesity levels are high, chasing off a healthcare strategy for Dubai is a daunting task.

The healthcare strategy for Dubai is a daunting task. So wonder it took meticulous planning and extensive stakeholder engagement that included harnessing opinion, both from the health sector and the public in general to update Dubai's Healthcare Strategy that will take it through to 2022.

In an exclusive interview with Better Health, Humaid Al Qatami, Chairman of the Board and Director-General of the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) takes us through the highlights of the strategy and explains why prevention and wellbeing are now the focal point of Dubai's Health Strategy.

**Incentivising Health**

The 2016-2021 Dubai Health Strategy is an updated and refreshed strategy. It has 98 initiatives that are divided into immediate, mid-term and long-term plans. One of the key areas of focus is prevention and well-being.

The strategy has clear objectives aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle and disease prevention programmes, not only at the social and environmental levels, but also at the individual level.

One such initiative that aims to influence insured members' behaviour is about providing incentives in the form of rewarding points to those who are actively pursuing healthy lifestyle options.

The rewards points programme will be linked to the mandatory health insurance scheme in Dubai. Rewards could include free access to specialised health professionals or services, healthy meal vouchers, gym memberships, free subscriptions to health magazines etc.

According to Al Qatami it also opens up opportunities for the private sector to align themselves with the government's objectives in promoting a healthy lifestyle for the community in general.

In this scenario that information gathering becomes a critical tool. DHA is hoping to tap into the vast reservoir of data generated from the widely-used fitness tracking apps. That along with inputs coming from participating outlets, both government and private, will help in rewarding the healthy user.

**Insurance on Track**

Meanwhile the roll-out of the mandatory insurance scheme is nearing completion with end of June being the deadline for the last phase of compliance. “So far 75 per cent of the population in Dubai is already covered by insurance,” says Al Qatami and believes that they are well on track to achieving at least 95 per cent compliance by the end of June.

The DHA has linked the health insurance scheme to visa issuance and renewal, in partnership with the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs (GDRFA), a move that has contributed to the success of the implementation process.

Health insurance provides every individual with peace of mind. At a sector-wide level it helps in reducing costs, ensures financial stability and creates an environment favourable for health investment.

**Good health will pay dividends**

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Dubai makes it easy for health tourists to access facilities, discounts

Since the launch of the Dubai tourism strategy in 2014, 630,831 medical tourists visited 26 hospitals, out of which 332,472 are from the UAE and 298,359 (46 per cent) came from abroad.

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“The Essential Benefits Package provides access of individuals to health while carefully balancing cost on the economy; it promotes positive competition between providers; ensures peace of mind. At a sector-wide level it helps in several ways; it provides people with good access to health while making sure there is minimum impact on the economy and the companies providing this insurance package.

Dubai are orthopedics, aesthetic surgeries, dental procedures, preventive health and wellness and fertility treatments. Patients who book medical tourism packages using the website will get preferential rates on partner hotels available on the website,” said Dr. Abdul Al Marzouqi, Director of Health Regulation and Dubai Medical Tourism Project.

“A tourist can log on from anywhere in the world and choose his medical tourism package, book flights on Emirates Airlines, hotels, purchase medical insurance, book leisure activities etc. A tourist can log on from anywhere in the world and choose his medical tourism package, book flights on Emirates Airlines, hotels, purchase medical tourism insurance, book leisure activities etc. “The website is the first-of-its-kind in the world as it is the only single electronic medical tourism window that provides all medical tourism related facilities under one website. A tourist can log on from anywhere in the world and choose his medical tourism package, book flights on Emirates Airlines, hotels, purchase medical tourism insurance, book leisure activities etc.

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At Marzouqi said Dubai’s attractiveness as a destination and the availability of high quality medical care are the key drivers of the medical tourism initiative. “Purpose driven research in the field of medical tourism has identified that the top specialties accessed by medical tourists in Dubai are orthopedics, aesthetic surgeries, dental procedures, preventive health and wellness and fertility treatments.”

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Obesity weighs down pregnancy options

BY KAMAKSHI GUPTA

Obesity is the biggest threat to women's health in the region and is a major roadblock to getting pregnant, warns Dr Muna Tahlak, CEO of Latifa Hospital.

"It boosts fertility as it solves several fertility problems such as irregular periods, need for induction of labour, and stillbirth."

In many cases, weight loss itself solves several fertility problems such as irregular periods. "It boosts fertility as it regulates the hormones in the body," said Dr Tahlak. "Women's bodies are put on certain medications and need for induction of labour, and stillbirth."

"Women who are obese have higher chances of miscarriage, hypertension, pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, infection, blood clotting, need for induction of labour, and stillbirth."

Dr Tahlak added that losing weight also helps reverse the condition of polycystic ovaries (PCOS), which is a common cause of infertility. "It is not easy because the disease causes increase in weight, and then weight gain itself is a factor that can cause the disease. It is a difficult cycle to break with a dedicated meal plan and exercise we have seen excellent results," she said.

Dr Amal Al Mulla, Consultant Gynaecologist and Infertility Specialist at Latifa Hospital, said patients with polycystic ovaries are put on certain medications and a meal plan which includes foods that do not spike blood sugar levels.

"Women with PCOS should weight train at least three times a week to help regulate the hormones and ovaries. The results we see within a few months of lifestyle modification prove that a healthy lifestyle is vital for reproductive health in women."

Dr Aysha Ali Karam, Consultant, family medicine in women's health unit at the Dubai Health Authority's primary healthcare sector, said, "Obese or overweight women who get pregnant, need to follow their antenatal plan carefully to prevent complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Firstly, we advise them to eat healthy foods during pregnancy and limit their weight gain to only 12-15kg during pregnancy."

The risk of overweight and obese women developing gestational diabetes is much higher than those with a healthy weight. There's a risk of pre-eclampsia and the chances of C-section delivery increases by 20 per cent. "We monitor them more closely and also ask them to regularly visit their dietician and monitor their weight gain," says Dr Karam.

MAKE THE CHANGE

Besides maternal health, obesity could severely aggravate symptoms of pelvic organ prolapse, stress urinary incontinence and increase the risk of endometrial polyps and symptomatic fibroids.

Drhbanat Makk Al Ahmed, nutritionist at Latifa Hospital, explained that a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight and a BMI over 30 is considered obese. "Ideally, women should aim to achieve a BMI in the range of 19 to 24," said Ahmed.

"Weight loss is linked to lifestyle and daily habits and while nutritionists and doctors can provide all the right knowledge and information, at the end of the day, it boils down to whether the patient is ready to make the changes needed to achieve the desired results."

More than a 225,000 calls answered in 2015

The Dubai Health Authority's (DHA) call centre (800 342) has extended its working hours and now functions round-the-clock, said a top health official.

Shailkha Al Rahoomi, Director of Customer Relations at the DHA, said the move is in line with the Authority's vision to provide convenience to its customers.

"We have extended our working hours from March this month to improve customer satisfaction and help address queries," said Al Rahoomi. "Customers can call us for any queries on DHA services, including licensing and regulation, medical fitness, hospitals, health centres and so on. Our call centre agents speak five languages: Arabic, English, Urdu, Farsi and French. In 2015, the DHA call centre received 235,543 calls, which is a significantly high number."

Al Rahoomi added that the percentage of calls answered was 98 per cent and the remaining 4 per cent amounted to calls missed.

Of the calls received, 57 per cent were queries about licensing and regulations and the remaining were about DHA hospital services, locations, feedback and complaints, medical fitness, and so on.

Al Rahoomi said DHA issued a customer service charter last year and so far the department has conducted more than 25 training workshops for DHA customer service officials so that they are aware of the charter and their roles and responsibilities.
Superfoods are nutrient powerhouses that pack large doses of antioxidants, polyphenols, vitamins, minerals, and more. Incorporating them into your diet is a great way to reduce the risk of chronic disease, look younger, and stay mentally alert. Numerous studies have shown that people who eat more superfoods regularly are healthier and thinner than those who don’t.

Superfoods are hardly a trend or fad and have been around for millennia. Take for instance Chia seeds that are an ancient superfood that date back as 3500 BCE. It was the third most important crop for the Aztecs, who recognized it as a superfood and prized it so highly. Flavoured with honey, dabei or cinnamon, it was cultivated in Babylon as early as 600 BCE and has since been used in Chinese medicine for centuries.

Read about several foods that are considered super and how to make them a part of your daily diet.

### Blueberries

These sweet and at times tart berries are full of phytonutrients that neutralise free radicals. The antioxidants protect against cancer and reduce the effects of age-related conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. Consuming a cup of blueberries every week is a great way of lowering blood pressure and speeding up your metabolism. Studies suggest that blueberries can lower levels of bad cholesterol, reducing the risk of coronary heart disease.

**Add it:** You can sprinkle blueberries in your yoghurt or use them in baking breads and muffins or even add them to wholegrain waffles topped with banana, cinnamon, and nut butter, or try them in a smoothie.

**One cup = 84 calories.** One serving of berries contains 14 per cent of your daily vitamin K, which is good for bone health and should be eaten with some fat, such as olive oil, avocado, nuts or seeds.

### Kale

Kale is a nutrient powerhouse and packs with antioxidants such as vitamin C, beta-carotene, kaempferol and quercetin. Kale is so nutrient-dense, which means eating it a few times a week is enough. It packs in more nutrition than any other whole food. A cup comes with 44 per cent of your daily calcium, 859 per cent of daily vitamin A and more than 900 per cent of your daily vitamin K, which is good for bone health and should be eaten with some fat, such as olive oil, avocado, nuts or seeds.

**Add it:** Use it in salads, soups, or as a sautéed side with grilled chicken. A kale pesto goes well with pasta and you can get imaginative and make a kale tabbouleh and even toss it into oriental stir fries.

A cup of uncooked kale = 33 calories.

### Acai

Native to the rainforests of South America, the açaí fruit contains very high levels of antioxidants in the form of anthocyanins, which help fight cancer and heart disease. Acai tastes like a vibrant blend of berries and chocolate, because fresh açaí is often unavailable, it’s sold frozen or in tablespoons, powders, or juices. Packed full of antioxidants, amino acids and essential fatty acids, the Açaí pulp contains a remarkable concentration of antioxidants that help combat premature aging, with tens times more antioxidants than red grapes.

**Add it:** You can add the frozen pulp on top of your pancakes or waffles or used in cakes as a substitute for other fruits. Acai juice can be substituted for all other juices in your cooking. It works great for marinades, sauces and salad dressings.

A cup of acai juice = 100 calories

#### Deceptive Food Labels: How to Know What’s Truly Healthy

The dangers of excessive sugar intake are well-documented, especially in the UAE where obesity is a pandemic leading to a list of lifestyle diseases.

The first move in avoiding sugar is usually to substitute with an artificial sweetener contained in diet versions of food items, but Carol advises staying away from these too. They’re highly processed and unnatural – be weary of label ingredients like aspartame, saccharin, high fructose corn syrup, cyclamates and saccharin. Rather use raw honey, coconut sugar or fruit to sweeten – they’re all natural and better for you.

#### Quinoa

Although it acts like a grain, quinoa is actually a seed, small and often light yellow. Cultivated in the Andes for more than 5,000 years, quinoa boasts an impressive nutritional profile. It’s a whole grain that also has enough essential amino acids to make it a complete protein. It is packed with minerals, higher than most grains such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and potassium as well as being low in fat and sodium.

**Add it:** You can use quinoa as a great substitute to rice. Mix cooked quinoa with honey, dried fruit, and nuts for a breakfast option or use it in salads, soups, burgers and pilaf.

200g of cooked quinoa = 222 calories.

#### Ready to take your clean-eating game to the next level? Power up the health benefits of your favorite snacks and meals by adding one (or two, or three) of the nutrient-packed ingredients here

Last on Carol’s no-go list are artificial food preservatives – monosodium glutamate (MSG), artificial sweeteners and artificial flavour enhancers. With greater understanding comes power to the next level. Power up the health benefits of your favorite snacks and meals by adding one (or two, or three) of the nutrient-packed ingredients here.
Goji Berries

Native to Tibet and Inner Mongolia, these orange-red tangy berries are rich in plant-based antioxidants and compounds. Considered both a fruit and an herb, goji berries are an excellent source of antioxidants. Apart from helping to reduce cancer risk, these berries have also been known to boost the immune system and protect the eyes. They are also an excellent source of vitamin C and can reduce tough cold symptoms. Goji berries are one of the very few plant-based foods that can provide a complete protein. This means that the berries contain all of the amino acids, which are the building blocks of proteins that your body cannot make for itself.

Add It: Use goji berry powder when baking or soak them to blend in with a smoothie. You can eat them raw or soak them in hot water. You can add goji berries to trail mixes, smoothies or as a garnish on cereals, salads or yogurts.

A 1/4 cup of goji berries = 90 calories

Black Beans

These dark, delicious beans are packed with many of the most essential nutrients your body needs to perform at peak levels. They are a great addition to any diet. They are a great source of protein, fibre and antioxidants and because of their low glycaemic index, they are a great dietary choice for those trying to naturally maintain healthy blood sugar levels. Fibre is nature’s regulatory board, helping maintain optimum digestion and absorption of nutrients. Just one cup of cooked black beans can provide you with about 30 per cent of the daily dietary fibre needs of an adult, which is important for healthy weight gain. They are also a great source of trace minerals like copper and manganese. They assist in blood sugar control and also have loads of magnesium that most diabetics tend to be deficient in. The vitamin E in almonds helps your heart and also keeps the collagen fibre in your skin intact, thus preventing wrinkling and other signs of ageing.

Add It: Use it in cereals, salads and trail mixes or to create desserts as well as fish and chicken. Use almond flour where possible and almond milk is a healthy alternative as well as almond butter, which is far healthier than its dairy counterpart. 28g of almonds = 129 calories.

Almonds

Almonds can improve heart health and aid in diabetes management. People who eat almonds have a lower risk for obesity and weight, and they are one of the richest sources of vitamin E, which is one of the most difficult nutrients to obtain in your diet. These nuts can help control cholesterol. Blood sugar and reduce inflammation, they do this without causing unwanted weight gain. They are also a great source of trace minerals like copper and manganese. They assist in blood sugar control and also have loads of magnesium that most diabetics tend to be deficient in. The vitamin E in almonds helps your heart and also keeps the collagen fibre in your skin intact, thus preventing wrinkling and other signs of ageing.

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Kefir

Kefir is a cultured dairy food. It is a probiotic rich food that has medicinal benefits. The name comes from the “Turkish word keif,” which means good feeling. Milk kefir is a thick, yogurt-like cultured drink traditionally made from dairy milk, but can also be made from coconut milk or assorbed nut milk varieties. As it ferments, it develops a complex matrix of beneficial microorganisms that improve the health of the colon and entire gastrointestinal tract as well as boost immune functions. Kefir contains high levels of vitamin B12, calcium, magnesium, vitamin K2, biotin, folate, and other vitamins and probiotics.

Add It: It is best to drink kefir on an empty stomach first thing in the morning. You can also add small amounts to protein shakes. A serving of kefir has 96 calories.

Goji Berries: 90 calories
Black Beans: 230 calories
Almonds: 129 calories
Kefir: 96 calories

10 Tips for Reading Nutrition Facts

1. Look at the list of ingredients. Check for contents like partially hydrogenated and hydrogenated oils, as these signify the presence of trans fat. Fats like these are linked to high cholesterol and heart disease.

2. It’s important to look at the serving size so you don’t eat more than what the serving size shows. You need to multiply all nutritional contents accordingly.

3. Calories are very important if you’re trying to lose weight. Pay attention to the number of calories per serving, and the calories from fat. The calories from fat are not that significant, but the type of fat is crucial.

4. Look for the total fat per serving and the grams of saturated, trans, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. These amounts are rounded to the closest whole number. If 0.4 gram would be 0.5, 0.9 gram as 1 gram. If you are cutting down weight, you have to limit your saturated fat to 5 per cent or less of your total calories. Divide your body weight by 12 to get the total daily limit of saturated fat in grams.

5. Limit the intake of trans fats completely. Trans unsaturated and monounsaturated fats are healthy, so you don’t have to avoid it unless you are limiting calories.

6. The cholesterol content is mentioned, but it’s usually as irrelevant as food cholesterol levels depend more on saturated fat and trans fat.

7. Carbohydrates matter too. Dietary rules do not need labels to list the difference between whole grains and processed grains. Look for the information on dietary fibre. It’s vital that men should take in more than 38 grams of total fibre per day and women should have more than 25 grams.

8. When it comes to sugar, less is better. Unfortunately, it does not specify the difference between natural and added sugars, so check the list for added sugars.

9. Protein is generally listed as total protein. If your protein intake is sufficient, you can actually ignore that.

10. You’ll also see each nutrient’s percentage of your total daily intake based upon the assumption that you take in 2,000 calories a day. This amount of calories is for someone who is extremely overweight, so this section is quite irrelevant.

How can I know how much water I should drink per day? When I cannot track an exact amount, because water intake depends on a person’s daily activities or the amount of exercise a person does per day. A good rule of thumb is to calculate it as per body weight. On an average, everyone should drink at least 30 to 35 ml of water per kilo of body weight. For example is someone is 60 kilos, they should drink 1.8 to 2 litres per day.

Western diet vs Mediterranean diet: A 1/4 cup of goji berries = 90 calories

Serving size per recipe | 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 salmon fillets (120 g each)
• 1 tsp of dried basil
• 1 tbsp of fresh parsley
• 2 garlic cloves finely minced

DILL SAUCE:
• 1 tsp of sour cream
• 1 tsp of chopped dill
• 2 tbsp of lemon juice

Salt and pepper to taste
I t’s perhaps the oldest, and most compelling trick in the book when it comes to guar-anteeing holistic well-being. Whether you want to be healthy, fit, and mentally equipped to handle life’s many challenges, running has always been one of the first things trainers, doctors and experienced peers will recommend.

According to various research, running for about 30 minutes five times a week not only helps you maintain fitness levels and a healthy mind-body-soul balance, but also prevents obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, strokes and even cancers. Plus, exercise in general, and running in particular, helps you combat anxiety, depression and stress as you experience the feel-good hormones known as en-docannabinoids seep through your body. In fact, a 2006 study published in Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, stated that even a single bout of exercise – 30 minutes of walking on a treadmill – could instantly lift the mood of someone suffering from a major depressive disorder.

“If you’re running, you’re moving, which is key,” says Lee Ryan, a 33-year-old athlete and fitness instructor from the UK. “Moving is healthy for the body and mind. No matter what age or gender, humans are meant to move and not sit still. Moreover, running can be used to reduce the impact of fast fact, there is a quote: ‘If you can't find the answers to your questions after a four-hour run, you never will’.” Ryan has been in this in-dustry for 11 years and lived in Dubai for nine. The endurance athlete is not only snel hooves the Guinness World Records, but was also voted the Middle East’s top personal trainer in 2012, by Shape magazine: his fun ap-proach towards fitness is equally at do with it. “You don’t have to run for hours or run a marathon to be a runner. If you can run, you can be a runner because it is because you can step out your door, get your shoes on and run. It is no membership. The world is your gym and it’s free to use.”

Fiona Donald is a 41-year-old fitness instructor with Urban Energy Fitness. She is training for her first marathon now, but has been in the game for nearly a decade. To Donald, running is an unparalleled experience in well-being. “The benefits of running are many,” she says. “It is a weight bearing exercise so it helps to strengthen your joints and bones, it strengthens your mus-cles and improves cardiovascular running is a great stress releiver as well. I would recommend running to anyone who is willing to give it a try! We have seen many beginners barely-able to run 2000m who have gone on to run 5k, 10k and even half marathons. The sense of achievement is amazing, and I think it spills over to other areas of people’s lives.”

However, running without a plan and diet can quickly diffuse all the hard work you put in on a daily basis. If you’re a beginner, both Ryan and Donald empha-sise starting small. “Have a goal and make a plan,” says Ryan. “Give yourself a finish line to reach and take each day at a time. There will be ups and downs, listen to your body, learn how it responds. But most of all make sure you have fun. If it’s not fun, you will find an excuse not to do it.” Another myth that runners deal with is that you can eat anything when you run. Ryan advises runners to drop sugary drinks, nicotine, junk etc from consumption habits entirely, and eat a well-balanced diet.

Donald concurs. “With the in-creased demands on your body due to exercise, healthy eating becomes even more important. Make sure to include plenty of fresh vegetables, protein and healthy fats at every meal. Car-bohydrates are important too — in moderation — but choose wholegrain, unprocessed ones.” Many think that the UAE’s weather is not suitable for run-ning, but it’s not. Running about four months in a year, the coun-try’s climate is ideal for runners. Early mornings and evenings are the best times to run, but what’s vital is to drink lots of water. Donald also recommends drinking electrolyte in case you lose excess salt through sweat.

It helps to join a running club or club too, to remain motived. For instance, Urban Energy has recently announced a May to August package for just Dhs 500, featuring unlimit-ed classes. “Running in a group is very motivational, especially for beginners,” says Donald. “It encourages you to give it out of their comfort zone.” And of course, everyone encourag-es solo running. “You need to push yourself harder than ever when training for a race, you will be run-ning as an individual.”

Top Running Tracks in Dubai

**Safat Park**

Features a 3.3-km track on the perimeter, so you can run anywhere.

**Palm Jumeirah**

It’s not all run, sand and luxury here. This shoreline track is about 4km, while the crescent track is 30m.

**Jumeirah Corniche**

Arguably the best track in the city. Runs along the road from the Buja Al Arab down the beach. The views are spectacular.

**Zabeel Park**

In the heart of Old Dubai, this 4-km track runs outside the perimeter of the park.

**Dubai Creek Park**

The oldest park in the city. Features a 4.7km track for scenic runs by the Creek.

**Desert Road Runners**

Squad in 2009, Desert Road Runners (formerly Dubai Road Runners) is the emirate’s oldest running club. It organizes an annual 10K race, as well as weekly events — such as the Prediction Run at Safat Park — that are meant to train and test the skills and abilities of its members and participants. DRR has produced many capable runners who have gone on to win international championships.

**Abras AC**

With an evident focus on endurance running, Abas AC is a not-for-profit club that trains members of mixed abilities in accordance to the UAE’s racing calendar. Training is customised and includes both maid and track sessions with drills and tempo runs thrown in. Abras AC has earned a reputation for discipline and focused running, although it’s not all hard work — the club also hosts various social events throughout the year.

**Dubai Creek Striders**

For just 30 years, DCS has been promoting a healthy lifestyle and the importance of running among all age groups. Its members have won several prizes at the Dubai Marathon – no doubt enabled by their expert tips – and the club has been hosting training sessions for beginners and improves every week at various locations across Dubai. DCS also organizes the Johnson Arika Dubai Creek Striders Half Marathon every year.

**Miraf Dfilers**

Over 1000 kids on the block, the Miraf Dfilers run three times a week at the Al Aqrah Park, Miraf wardha (thawarwa). This beginners’ group meets once a month to train and encourage one another. Dfilers have run the Dubai Marathon, the ultra in Dubai and other long distance races. The group most effectively. Running as part of a group is of great importance here, and the club also meets once a month socially to develop team spirit and camaraderie.

**Nike+ Run Club**

Get your head in the game and push yourself harder than ever when you partake of Nike’s running club. This is a fairly recent entrant in the Dubai running scene, but getting bigger and popular. A five community club, eager runners offer coaching, mentoring and nutritional tips to anyone who turns up at its training sessions at Safat Park, But Park Island and Al Mamzar Business Hub in downtown.

**The Colour Run**

This mad event caters to every fitness level and encourages you to be the beast you know you are. Fitness levels are marked off the charts, so if you’re aiming for it, you better be prepared.

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**Spartan Race**

This mad event caters to every fitness level and encourages you to be the beast you know you are. Fitness levels are marked off the charts, so if you’re aiming for it, you better be prepared.

**Standard Chartered Marathon**

A must-attend race in every running calendar. Featuring a 42km marathon and 10K race, this one is a real feather in your cap.
In our daily life, we often find ourselves flitting from one task to another. Whether you're checking your phone, sending an email, or writing a document, it's common to be interrupted and have to switch tasks. This can lead to a lack of focus and productivity, as well as increased stress and anxiety. The butterfly brain, a term coined by neuroscientist Josh Davis, refers to our tendency to be easily distracted and switch between tasks. 

**Butterfly Brain: Are Smartphones to Blame?**

Like most of us, Maria Lally spends most of her life flitting from her phone to her laptop and back again, but is it really making her less smart? 

### 5 Ways to Calm Butterfly Brain

1. **Go Back to Black**
   - If you can’t resist spending too much time on your phone, reverse the settings. You can reverse the contrast on your phone or tablet (on some phones, go to settings > accessibility > invert colours) so that when you either send a message or receive a notification, the white background you have whilst writing in a black background will affect your brain's sense of light that affects your brain's circadian rhythm, impacting your sleep/wake cycle.

2. **Get Moving**
   - Exercise has been proven to sharpen your mind and increase your concentration. If that takes out a chunk of your day, it will help you get more done in less time.

3. **Eat Well**
   - Eat a protein snack to help calm a busy mind. A study from Ohio University found that foods rich in tryptophan (like turkey and tuna) can help decrease anxiety. Wholegrain sugary foods and too much caffeine or too little sleep can make your mind boggle and less able to focus.

4. **Keep Connected**
   - A study by De Montfort University in New York and author of Two Awesome Hours, research director at the NeuroLeadership Institute and founder of online course, www.twoawesomehours.com, Josh Davis, explains that distractible individuals are more drawn to these activities because they naturally have short attention spans and are unclear at this stage. However, lead researcher, Dr Lee Hadlind suggests that... 

5. **Plan Tasks**
   - Leave your least important and easiest task at the end of the day. The last half hour or so of your working day is often spent flitting around from task to task because you feel spent and stressed. 

It’s the type of information that takes its toll on our state of mind. If you click on a heartbreaking, news story about a war, and then a social media photo that makes you feel inadequate, no wonder you feel spent and stressed.

So how to break the cycle? Besides a digital curfew, Josh recommends taking non-digital breaks during the day — whether it’s a walk, a coffee, or even just staring out the window. 

**Computer Vision Syndrome**

Staring at the tiny text in our text and scrolling through dozens of tweets can lead to eyestrain, blurred vision, dizziness, and dry eyes. And blurred vision plus sore necks can cause headaches. If you’re experiencing dys-saccades, move your phone’s font size bigger.

**Nomophobia**

Short for no-mobile-phobia, this is exactly what it sounds like: the fear of being without your cell. According to a study of 1,000 people in the UK, 66 per cent of the population fears losing their phone and 64 per cent reported anxiety at any given time. Some of the symptoms can include anxiety or negative physical symptoms if you have lost or cannot use your cell phone, checking to make sure you have your phone with you, and constantly worrying about losing it. In fact, the study found that women suffer from this more than men.

**Phantom Puck Vibration Syndrome**

If you didn’t just get a text message! A professor at Indiana University found that 90 per cent of the undergraduates in her study experienced phantom vibrations in their phones when their phones weren’t actually vibrating. The study also found that these vibrations were associated with both text messages and social media notifications. 

**Addiction**

Seriously bad side effects of your smartphone addiction (And what you can do to help yourself)

1. **Text Claw and Cell Phone Elbow**
   - This non-medical term used to describe all of the finger cramping and soreness that come from continuous scrolling, texting, and gaming on smartphones. An even more common side effect. Using your phone too much can cause inflammation in your tendons and enhance existing conditions, like tendinitis and carpal tunnel. Similarly, Cell Phone Elbow describes tingling or numbness in ring and pinky fingers after bending your elbow for long periods of time.

2. **IPOSTURE and TEXT NECK**
   - Bleaching over your phone for hours at a time is running your neck and hurting your back muscle. Butrere or Text Neck are just two of a few phrases doctors throw around to describe the excessive stress on neck muscles. According to a study of young adults in the UK, 84 per cent of those tracked experienced back pain during the last year, mainly due to being hunched over smart phones, tablets, and computers.

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Nervous System Re-Programmed

Nambudripad Allergy Elimination Treatment (NAET) that reprogrammes the nervous system. NAET is the brainchild of Dr Derv S. Nambudripad, a California-based doctor who de- vised the treatment in late 1990.

Dr. Lanulap Chapman Dunn, the first NAET practitioner in the UAE at the Chiron Clinic in Dubai, says: "People arrive in a state of dis- nct about the nervous system. It is everything. With millions of receptors in our brain, we are constantly in fight or flight mode and the second set of these recep- tors are in the gut.

"Through a combination of Eastern and Western medicine, comprehensive use of selective energy balancing, acupuncture/ acupressure, allotropy, chiropractic, psychonautic, nutrition, and kinet- ological disciplines, NAET tries to relax the body's nervous system to have a normal response to an allergen be it a food component like milk or an environ- ment like dust."

NAET, says Dunn, is at least 80 per cent effective in treating most allergies and the targeted cure is a holistic one. It treats the patient at the physical, chemical and emotional level.

How Does It Work?
The process first starts with a thorough consultation with the practitioner, who might request IGE testing for Type 1 allergies (that cause an immediate response), IGG testing for Type 1 allergies, without steroids and side effects.

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