

A photograph of a young couple embracing on a beach. The woman is in the foreground, smiling broadly with her arms around the man's shoulders. The man is also smiling and looking towards the camera. They are both wearing light-colored clothing. The background shows a sandy beach and a clear blue sky.

25 ways

Has your get up and go just got up and gone? Then check out Azmina Govindji's tips on revitalising your routine.

1 Make friends with stress
Feeling stressed may sound like a pain, but you could see it as a positive alarm bell — a signal that's sent from your body to your brain to nudge you into doing something about it. You have two choices at this stage: either ignore it or listen to it. Take heed and use this message to make some lifestyle changes. Perhaps you give yourself too much to do? Discipline yourself to do very little, for a set chunk of time, every day. Maybe stroll in the park, enjoy your children, friends, family or pets or simply allow yourself to daydream.

2 Find time to eat
Eating erratically may fit in with your lifestyle, but it doesn't do your digestion or overall health any good. Get into the habit of having regular meals and snacks throughout the day.

to shine this summer

3 Rise (slowly) and shine

If you're not a morning person, then take your time getting out of bed. Obviously, this means setting your alarm a little earlier, but allowing yourself those extra few minutes to stretch, maybe have a glass of water, and ease yourself out of bed may make all the difference between having a grumpy or energised day.

4 Stock up on energy boosters

Your energy levels can go up and down as your blood glucose levels rise and fall. Low-glycaemic carbohydrates like porridge, nuts, dried fruit, beans, pulses, wholegrains, fruit and vegetables can help to keep your blood glucose levels steady throughout the day. Include something from this list at every meal or snack.

5 Be kind to your tum

If you have a sluggish digestion, you can feel bloated and lacking in energy. You might want to try a probiotic yogurt or drink to help keep the 'friendly' or beneficial bacteria in your gut working at their best.

6 Picture the new you

Behaviour consultant Nina Puddefoot, co-author of *The Hot Body Plan* (Vermilion, £6.99) offers a visualisation tip. 'Draw a picture or make up a pin board of pictures cut out from magazines that would reflect your ideal lifestyle: a beautiful garden, someone playing a sport, a stunning outfit, a fit body, sipping cocktails on the beach, and so on. Hang this picture up and look at it often. The more you internalise your healthier, fitter lifestyle, the more you will find ways to help make it happen.'

7 Plan to have fun

'When you decide to improve your eating, activity or work habits, it pays to have a realistic plan,' Nina adds. 'Stay focused, take consistent action in line with achievable stages, review your progress and renew your goals. And, mostly, have fun along the way! Having goals reminds you of being alive.'

8 Get the 'I did it!' feeling

Enjoy the huge sense of fulfilment we get by performing simple tasks well, just for the fun of it. This could include a crossword or puzzle,

playing a musical instrument or taking part in a sport. You will find that the greatest satisfaction is gained when your experiences match your abilities.

9 Dance yourself dizzy

Two left feet? No such thing! Just embrace the challenge of a dance class, be it elegant and graceful ballroom or fast and furious Latin. Both styles exercise many parts of your body and engage the brain as you concentrate on the music, find your rhythm and remember sequences. All this helps to energise you, as it distracts you from everyday worries.

10 Be up for a challenge

Be open to 'newness': new possibilities and experiences and challenges of various kinds. Let go of attachments that hold you back and take some calculated risks. Put the sparkle back in your life.

11 Don't be a stranger

Our sense of wellness is maintained through social contact. Make it a goal to meet like-minded people in whatever way takes your fancy: you could join a club or sign up for a new interest that excites you. Embrace any opportunity to focus on people.

12 Try some nice surprises

For a real feelgood measure: do someone, possibly a stranger, an anonymous good deed. This could include letting someone out in traffic, sending a card or leaving a note for a family member or a friend. These small acts of generosity can inspire others to do the same. Doesn't it feel good when someone does that for you?

13 Go natural

Our physical and mental health are improved through regular contact with nature. Every day, aim to take time for a walk or just enjoy being outside. Are you stuck at work? How about using a wireless headset, so you can walk around and make phone calls?

14 Get your teeth into it

Personal trainer Lucy Wyndham-Read, author of *The No-Gym Workout* (Rodale, £12.99) suggests: 'When brushing your teeth do some squats – great for toning your legs and bum. Just stand with your feet hip-width distance apart, bend your knees, lower 6 inches and come up again. Do this twice a day and by the end of the week you will have done 15 minutes of squats – that's about 150 extra calories burnt.' ►►

"Embrace every opportunity to focus on people: social contact helps our sense of wellness"



turn ar
of line

15 Try a trolley swap When doing your food shopping, swap your trolley for two baskets: it will give your arms and legs a workout and stop you filling your shopping basket up with junk food!

16 Traffic-light toner Get toning your abdominals while driving: pull your belly button in towards your spine, hold for 10 seconds and release. Do this every time you are stuck at lights to tone your deepest abdominal muscles.

17 Turn the page and tone As you read this, you could be toning your calf muscles! Simply sit with your feet close together and flat on the floor, with your knees bent. Slowly rise up onto your toes and hold for five seconds; lower and repeat.

18 Go for two at a time We all know to take the stairs instead of the lift, but to work a little harder now, take two stairs at a time and avoid using the handrail so you have to work more muscles.

19 Stretch while you work Take a tip from chiropractor Dr Jason Hare: 'If you have a desk job, you really need to get up at least every hour, have a stretch and if possible, go for a short walk. Checking your posture as you work and getting up for a stretch are great ways to help prevent back ache.'

20 Go to work on breakfast Okay, so your mother used to tell you to eat breakfast and it's old news. But the good news is that it actually helps to fire your engine for the day. Your blood glucose is low after your overnight fast, and you really need to break that fast and get your system swinging into action again. It helps with your concentration, it's a good time of day to get your fibre and calcium intake up with a bowl of wholegrain cereal and milk, and there is research to show that breakfast eaters are better able to maintain a healthy body weight.

21 Fire up the fibre You really do need a good daily dose of fibre as it helps your body to remove toxins and wastes much more efficiently. Choose wholemeal or granary bread, wholegrain cereals, nuts, fresh and dried fruit, vegetables, beans and pulses.

“Make time to do very little, for a set time, every day”



22 Go for a healthy glow What goes on on the inside shows on the outside. So if your skin looks as if it needs a boost, feed it with antioxidants by eating different-coloured fruit and vegetables – at least five a day.

23 Get wet, wet, wet Did you know that almost two-thirds of your weight is made up of water? Every cell in your body is dependent on water for good functioning. When you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated, so the trick is to get into the delicious habit of drinking water regularly throughout the day. Headaches, tiredness and loss of concentration are common symptoms of dehydration. Try to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day (equivalent to 1.5 to 2 litres).

24 If in doubt, check it out If you have diabetes, keep a regular check on your blood glucose. You know that fluctuations in blood glucose are not helpful, but how will you know your glucose levels are fluctuating if you don't test them? Even levels can enhance your mood and also give you more energy.

25 Put your feet first When was the last time you cared for your feet? If you have diabetes, it's especially important to check your feet regularly and also to get them seen by your GP or a specialist if you have any concerns or worries. We stand on our feet all day and often abuse them with ill-fitting shoes, so take some time to give them some TLC! ■

About Azmina

Sweet's expert is consultant nutritionist and registered dietitian Azmina Govindji, who runs her own practice working with national organisations such as the British Heart Foundation, World Cancer Research Fund and the Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation.

Azmina regularly appears on TV, including ITV's *This Morning* and Five's *The Wright Stuff*, and has written 14 books, including *Healthy Eating for Diabetes* with Antony Worrall Thompson. See page 20 for a selection of recipes from her book and visit Azmina's website, www.govindjinnutrition.com, for more about her.

