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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION



Looking after your health is like looking after your vehicle – regular care and maintenance pays off in the long run. You can't change things like your family history, sex or age but there are things you can take control of and change such as your eating habits, physical activity levels, stress levels and weight and you'll improve your overall health in the long run.

## **REASONS TO TAKE CONTROL:**

- **Look and feel better**
- **Feel less tired and have more energy**
- **Live longer**
- **Reduce risk of heart disease and stroke**
- **Reduce risk of diabetes and certain cancers**
- **Manage stress**
- **Improve concentration and confidence**

Get Your Life In Gear is a 12-week programme for drivers. It looks at small changes you can make to become more healthy and helps you to lose or stay a healthy weight along the way.

There is no law that says you have to gain weight with a life on the road – choose the healthy route, even when you are working. What are you waiting for?

- **To go up to the next size in your trousers?**
- **Your GP or partner to tell you to lose weight?**
- **Until you feel unwell/unhealthy?**
- **That big birthday?**

**If you are overweight now don't wait! Aim to lose 1-2 lbs per week – it's a safe level and one you can maintain.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Losing 10% of your body weight reduces the chances you'll die from obesity-related diseases like heart disease and certain cancers, by around 20%

## TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Use the goal chart (p.14-15) to set realistic goals that suit you. Then follow the tips in the booklet to Get Your Life In Gear today!

Take our walking challenge – see how active you are now and track your progress over 12 weeks.

Use the food diary (p.18-19) to see where you can make changes to what you eat:

- Look out for triggers – what makes you eat?
- Identify high risk situations where you might be tempted to break your new habits, such as nights out, holidays, or injury.

## KEEP GOING

- Think positively
- Get support - be active with family and friends
- Find out what's available in your area to help you - e.g. leisure centre, swimming pool
- Remember how well you've done so far. Reward yourself (with non-food treats) for sticking with it, especially when you achieve your goals
- If you slip pick yourself up! It's hard to stay motivated - We all have off days! Just keep at it and don't beat yourself up.

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# EAT WELL

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Would you put petrol into a diesel engine? Of course not! Give your body the same respect and next time you need to fill the tank, choose wisely.

## CHECK LIST FOR A HEALTHY DIET

- Plenty of bread, rice, potatoes and pasta
- Plenty of fruit and vegetables (aim for 5-a-day)
- Some milk, cheese and yoghurt
- Some meat, fish, eggs, beans
- Just a small amount of foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar
- Keep portion sizes reasonable
- Where possible try to eat regular meals
- Drink 8 glasses of fluids a day – you will need more if you're more active. Water and milk are the best choices. Pure unsweetened fruit juice is also a good option.
- Ease up on the tea and coffee as they contain caffeine and choose low fat milk when you can.

**Fill in your food diary at the back of the booklet to see how you're getting on and take note of what changes you could make.**

It's a good idea to bring a packed lunch with you. The next page contains tips to help you choose wisely at service stations.

## MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES ON THE ROAD

HEALTHY SNACKS FOR THE COOL BAG	AT THE COLD COUNTER	AT THE HOT COUNTER
<p>Fresh fruit eg. banana, apple</p> <p>Plain, unsalted popcorn</p> <p>Plain biscuits</p> <p>Low fat yogurt</p> <p>Wholegrain breakfast cereal with low fat milk</p> <p>Plain breadsticks or oatcakes</p> <p>Wholegrain, nut or seed crackers with low fat cheese</p> <p>Brown bread</p> <p>Plain or brown scone</p>	<p>Brown, wholemeal or multigrain bread/rolls/baps</p> <p>Low fat mayonnaise</p> <p>When you choose a moist filling (like coleslaw) skip the butter and mayonnaise</p> <p>Low fat spread</p> <p>Salads that have no dressing or are made with low fat dressing</p> <p>Dressing on the side</p> <p>Low fat cheese, e.g. low fat cheddar edam, gouda, mozzarella</p> <p>Low fat coleslaw or potato salad</p>	<p>Sauces, gravy, dressings or toppings on the side</p> <p>Grilled, oven baked, poached, or casseroled chicken, fish or lean meat dish – not fried</p> <p>Baked, jacket or mashed potato (without added fat - eg. butter or mayonnaise) or rice or pasta instead of fried potatoes, chips or wedges</p> <p>Always try to add two portions of vegetable or salad</p>



# BE ACTIVE



Long days at the wheel might make you too tired to think about getting active in the evening. The truth is that getting enough activity for your health doesn't mean a pricey gym membership, vigorous workouts or even playing team sport. You can build physical activity into your life gradually.

Think of it as an opportunity rather than an inconvenience – it's good for your health, it can be enjoyable and you can even use it to spend some extra time with the family and/or friends. Time for a tea break? Stretch your legs with a 10 minute walk before you get back in the cab.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Any activity is good for you. You need at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity five days a week. You don't have to do it all at once; this can be broken into two or three shorter bouts of at least 10-minutes.

If you prefer vigorous activity such as jogging or playing sport you need to only be active for at least 20 minutes 3 times a week.

To lose weight you need to be active, again at a moderate level, for at least 60-90 minutes a days. This level of activity combined with a healthy eating plan will help with weight loss.



## BE PREPARED

If you haven't been active for a while, visit your GP before starting a physical activity programme. Stretch before and after exercise and wear appropriate footwear and clothing.





## ACTIVITY MONITOR

**Moderate intensity:** Causes a slight but noticeable increase in your breathing and heart rate. You should be able to carry on a conversation. Examples include brisk walking, general gardening and cycling slower than 10 mph.

**Vigorous intensity:** Makes you “huff and puff”, and conversation is difficult. Examples include jogging, cycling, and playing sports such as football, soccer or squash.

## IDEAS FOR BEING MORE ACTIVE

### At work

- If you are going to the shop or warehouse, park further away and walk for 10 minutes
- Try to go for a walk during your break or when waiting on the job
- Walk up and down your trailer or around your vehicle to add valuable steps

### At home

- Wash the car
- Take the dog for a walk
- Mow the lawn or do some gardening- weeding, raking leaves
- Do some housework - or the DIY jobs you have put off
- Go for a bike ride, swim or walk with your family on days off or in the evenings
- Play with your children or grandchildren
- Get up and change the channel instead of using the remote control  
- every bit adds up



## CHALLENGE

Complete the Walking Challenge each day for four weeks to help introduce moderate activity into your life! See page 16 to get started.

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# RE-THINK YOUR DRINK

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Alcohol is high in calories and can also make you hungry. If you are serious about losing weight, you will be more successful if you cut out alcohol altogether until you reach your target weight.

If that is very difficult for you, it may help to:

- Choose water or diet drinks every second drink
- Drink light beer instead of other types of drinks
- Drink more slowly

Drinking alcohol in moderation will not harm your health. For men this is a maximum of 21 standard drinks per week – for women it's a maximum of 14 standard drinks.

## **ONE STANDARD DRINK IS:**

- Half a pint of normal strength beer, lager or cider
- A small glass of wine
- A single pub (25ml) measure of spirits

## **DRINKING GREATER AMOUNTS OF ALCOHOL INCREASES YOUR RISK OF:**

- High blood pressure
- Liver damage
- Mouth and throat cancers
- Depression

# MIND YOUR BACK



Being overweight reduces your activity and flexibility levels and adds further strain to your spine.

Driving in a slumped position can lead to ruptured discs in your back if it is twisted, for example this can happen when getting in and out of the truck or trying to lift loads incorrectly.

## TIPS TO MANAGE BACK PAIN

- While driving, use your head rest at all times
- Adjust your seat so that your back has the maximum amount of support without slouching and you can reach the pedals easily
- When stopped at lights give your back a break by relaxing your arms from the wheel and bending your legs
- Get out of your vehicle and walk around on your breaks
- If you experience back pain don't rest it completely, instead choose low impact activities such as walking to keep you moving
- Do some stretches to maintain flexibility, relieve tight muscles and release tension.



## FACT

You have an 80% chance of developing low back pain at some point in your life

# FIGHT FATIGUE



Don't wait until you're falling asleep at the wheel before taking a rest. Watch out for these warning signs.

- **Your mood changes**
- **You start getting forgetful**
- **You feel drowsy**
- **You're less alert**
- **Your judgement is poor**

## **MYTH BUSTER – CAFFEINE AND ENERGY DRINKS HELP KEEP ME AWAKE**

False! Caffeine dehydrates the body and can cause digestive, heart and other problems including headaches. Your body also gets used to caffeine so the more you take the less effect it has.

Energy drinks usually contain a lot of sugar and caffeine. These drinks don't help to quench thirst. Never have these drinks with alcohol or medication.



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## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FIGHT FATIGUE?

### 1. Eat Well

**See pages 5 & 6 for details and remember:**

- Try to eat three meals a day at regular intervals and choose healthy snacks
- Choose starchy foods like bread and potatoes to keep you going for longer. Sugary foods will only give you a quick energy fix - you will slump quickly.
- A full stomach can make it hard to get a good night sleep. Try not to eat a heavy meal before you go to bed, instead aim to eat your last meal at least three hours before you go to sleep.

### 2. Get active

- Being active can actually make you feel more alert rather than tire you out. Go for a quick 10-minute walk to clear your head – it will energise you and also help you to reach your daily step target!

### Did you know?

People who sleep for 5 or less hours are more likely to feel hungry and start to overeat than those who get 8 hours sleep.

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# BEAT STRESS

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Stress affects us in many ways – physically, socially and emotionally. It can affect your work and your relationship with colleagues. Some signs of stress have short-term impacts but stress can cause many problems in the long term.

## SHORT-TERM SIGNS OF STRESS:

- Being short tempered and irritable
- Over-reacting to problems
- Feeling tired most of the time
- Changes in eating patterns
- Forgetfulness

## STRESS BUSTERS

- Work it off - physical activity helps to produce the body's own 'happy' hormones.
- Get enough sleep to recharge your batteries
- Eat well
- Learn to relax
- Talk about it – or just hang out with friends and family and do something you enjoy!

If you smoke plan to quit. A first step would be to call a Quitline, see the 'further information' section or talk to your GP or pharmacist.

**Use the walking challenge to help you fight stress!**  
**Count up your steps and record them (see page 16)**

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# TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

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You'll find useful tools on the following pages to help you monitor progress and achieve your goals.

## GOAL CHART

- Helps you set realistic goals
- Monitors progress

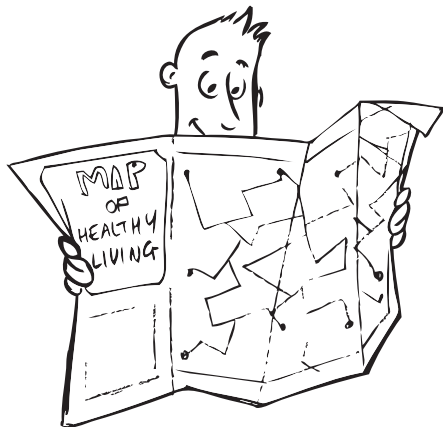
## WALKING CHALLENGE

- Helps you find out how active you are
- Tracks your progress
- Keeps you motivated

## FOOD DIARY

- Makes you aware of your eating habits
- Helps you set goals

# GOAL CHART



To help you on the road to good health set short-term and realistic goals to lose weight and keep it off. You'll be more successful if you can focus on changes you can make to your eating and physical activity habits rather than focusing just on how much weight you have lost. Aim to set weekly goals and build on them as you go along.

**Aim to lose 1-2 lbs per week – it's a safe level and one you can maintain.**

When you think about your goals it is important to remember these golden rules. Your goals should be:

- 1. Specific** - you might have a goal to 'exercise more'. This is fine but is it specific? No. You need to specify how much e.g. 20 minutes each day
- 2. Realistic** – 'walk 5 km every day' is a specific goal, but is it realistic to start with? It may not be for you.
- 3. Measurable** - for a realistic and measurable goal you might say 'walk for 30 minutes 5 days a week'. It is specific, realistic and measurable.
- 4. Forgiving!** – build up exercise levels gradually.

Use this Goal Chart to fill in, keep track of your goals and monitor your weight each week.

Reward yourself on your successes. This will help keep you motivated to carry on continue improving your lifestyle. Frequent, small rewards for meeting smaller goals will be more effective than bigger rewards for more long-term goals. Choose non-food reward such as a new CD/DVD, new clothes, a trip to the cinema or a day/night out with family/friends/partner.



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WEEK	WEIGHT	GOALS BEHAVIOUR / ACTIVITIES	OUTCOME*	COMMENTS	REWARDS
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					

\* OUTCOME: + achieved – keep trying x not a goal for now

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# WALKING CHALLENGE

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This walking challenge will help you see the progress you're making towards becoming more active. Keeping a record will make you aware of how much activity you do and help you introduce physical activity into your life. You can do the Walking Challenge on your own or with a group of friends.

## WHAT I NEED?

A pedometer to count your steps

## WHAT DO I DO?

1. Clip your pedometer to your belt/trousers
2. Start walking - the pedometer counts the numbers of steps you take
3. Record the amount of steps you take in the table provided - you only need to take the challenge for four weeks. We've provided space in the table for the full 12 weeks just in case you feel competitive and want to keep going.
4. Try to improve on the number of steps you take each day - build on this amount by 300-500 steps until you reach your goal. Remember you don't have to do it all at once!
5. When you have completed the challenge – reward yourself & remember to keep up the positive new habits you have developed.



## WARNING

If you are very inactive, have a health problem, or are worried about any aspect of your health, you should consult your doctor before undertaking this walking challenge.

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**START DATE:**

**FINISH DATE:**

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**TIPS TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS**

Aim to build up to 10,000 steps per day for good health.

- Up to 5,000 steps/day**  
**10,000-12,000 steps/day**  
**12,000+ steps/day**
- Good place to start**  
**Great for overall fitness & weight maintenance**  
**Target for weight loss**

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOTAL
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								

If you have been inactive (less then 3,000 steps/day) start slowly. It could take you up to 3 weeks to reach the 10,000 step target.  
If you are fairly active (more then 7,000 steps per day) you will achieve your target in one week.

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# FOOD DIARY

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## WHY KEEP A FOOD DIARY?

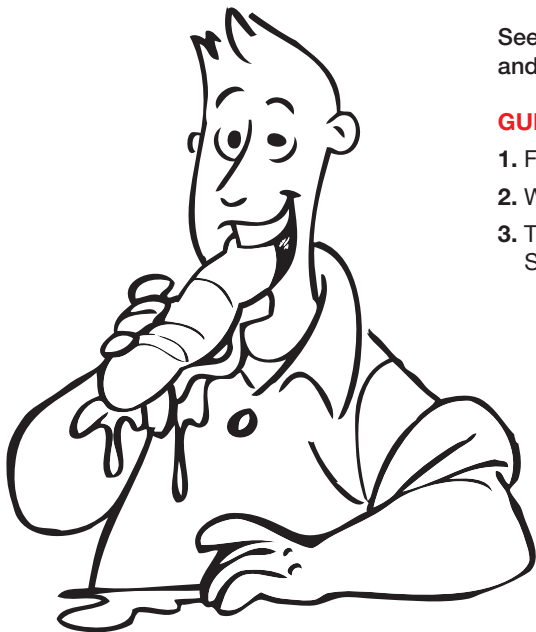
A diary makes you aware of your eating habits, helps you spot problem areas, plan changes and set goals to keep you motivated. Writing it down also gives you the chance to think twice before you act!

It is useful to keep a food diary for three to five days – just to see what your eating patterns are. You don't have to complete it for a full 12 weeks!

See the Eat Well section on page 4 for more advice on what you should be eating and the changes you can make.

## GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING A FOOD DIARY

1. Fill in the diary as you go if possible. Try not to leave it until the next day.
2. Write down everything you eat or drink.
3. Think about why you are eating; are you hungry or is it due to stress or boredom? See what's triggering your eating habits.



## TIP

If you are concerned about your eating habits over the 12 weeks, you can always use the food diary again to see where you might be slipping and then make new goals for yourself that you can stick to.

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DATE	TIME	FOOD & TYPE	WERE YOU HUNGRY?	THOUGHTS & COMMENTS

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# FURTHER INFORMATION

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## **PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR EATING WELL & LOSING WEIGHT**

[www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)

NI: 0800 0851683

ROI: 1850 404 567

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

NI: [www.getalifegetactive.com](http://www.getalifegetactive.com)

ROI: [www.getirelandactive.ie](http://www.getirelandactive.ie)

## **HEART DISEASE**

NI: **Chest Heart and Stroke** – [www.nichsa.com](http://www.nichsa.com)

Tel: 0044 (0) 28 9032 0184

ROI: **Irish Heart Foundation** – [www.irisheart.ie](http://www.irisheart.ie)

Tel: 00 353 (0) 1 668 5001

## **DIABETES**

NI: **Diabetes UK** – [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

Tel: 0044 (0) 28 9066 6646

ROI: **Diabetes Federation of Ireland** – [www.diabetesireland.ie](http://www.diabetesireland.ie)

Tel: 1850 909 909

## **MEN'S HEALTH**

IOI: **Men's Health Forum in Ireland** – [www.mhfi.org](http://www.mhfi.org)

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## **CANCER**

**NI:** Ulster Cancer Foundation – [www.ulstercancer.org](http://www.ulstercancer.org)  
Tel: 0800 783 3339  
Smoking Quitline: 0808 812 8008

**ROI:** Irish Cancer Society – [www.cancer.ie](http://www.cancer.ie)  
Cancer helpline: 1800 200 700  
**Prostate Cancer helpline:** 1800 380 380  
Smoking Quitline: 1850 201 203

## **BACK CARE**

**NI:** Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Northern Ireland – [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)  
Tel: 0044 (0) 28 90 446 250

**ROI:** Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapy – [www.iscp.ie](http://www.iscp.ie)  
Tel: 00353 (0) 1 402 2148

## **FIND A DIETITIAN**

**NI:** British Dietetic Association – [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)  
Tel: 0044 (0) 121 200 8080

**ROI:** Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute – [www.indi.ie](http://www.indi.ie)  
Tel: 00353 (0) 1 280 4839

For further information contact your GP.

