

Do this... and that

Adding a simple twist to your normal healthy lifestyle practices can double their benefits, as Kim Jones explains

Eat tomatoes and olive oil

Tomatoes are full of vitamins and fibre and are a rich source of carotenoid nutrients, including lycopene, which is thought to help reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease and boost immunity. Studies have shown that when tomatoes are eaten with healthy fats, such as olive oil, the body absorbs more of these fat-soluble carotenoid phytochemicals, all of which means more juicy health benefits for you. So sauté or roast your tomatoes in olive oil or drizzle it over them in a salad.

Do aerobic exercise and yoga

Combining yoga with aerobic exercise is better for the heart than either activity on its own, according to recent research by a cardiac team in Jaipur, India. The team split a group of heart patients into three exercise groups. The two groups that did only aerobic exercise or yoga showed a similar reduction in blood pressure, cholesterol and BMI levels. But the group that combined yoga with aerobic exercise had twice as much a reduction in heart disease markers. It is thought the two forms of exercise help cut mental and physical stress when taken together. So next time you're strutting your stuff at a Zumba session or pounding the pavements, finish off with a few sun salutations on the mat or when you get back home.

Crush garlic and let it rest

"Garlic can help lower blood pressure and reduce cholesterol levels. It acts as a natural blood thinner, thanks to the sulphur-based compounds it produces after you slice or "wound" it, and the more finely you chop it and the more "damage" you inflict, the more of these anti-clotting

properties you generate," says James Wong, author of *How To Eat Better* (Mitchell Beazley, £20; see Express Bookshop on page 81). Use a press for maximum damage and before cooking the crushed garlic leave it to rest for 10 or 20 minutes – long enough for the chemical reaction to take place and produce those good-for-you sulphur chemicals. Cook it too soon and you'll destroy all the benefits.

Exercise and hold something cold at the same time

Next time you go for a walk, a run or to a gym class, take two bottles of icy cold water with you. A study by California's Stanford University School of Medicine found that obese women who held a cooling device in their hands could exercise for longer, go faster and lost inches more quickly. The theory is that if you're not used to exercising or become hot and uncomfortable when you do, anything that keeps your body temperature down can extend and improve your performance and help your body recover more quickly.

Eat an apple and do the weekly shop

If you want to sweep past the sweet, sugary snacks and fatty food temptations and go for the healthy options instead, you might want to crunch on an apple when you next visit the supermarket. Researchers at New York's Cornell University gave either an apple or a biscuit to people going food shopping. A third group was given nothing at all. Those who ate the apple bought 28 per cent more fruit and vegetables than those with the biscuit – and 25 per cent more than those who didn't have a snack. "Eating something healthy helps to create a

mindset which can encourage us to make further healthy decisions," explains consultant dietician Ro Huntriss. "After eating a healthy food option, we're less likely to want to undo the benefits by following it up with an unhealthy choice." That apple will also help regulate your blood sugar levels and the fibre in it will fill you up, further helping to prevent cravings and impulse buys, she adds.

Eat a probiotic yoghurt and eat a banana

The good bacteria in probiotic yoghurts can be crucial for keeping our digestive systems in tip-top condition. "They help to maintain a healthy balance of bacteria in the gut, can aid digestion and have been shown to

