- Exercise

WEEK 1 Building the foundation



DAY 4 Today focus on moving more

Physical activity and keeping mobile has immediate and long-term health benefits



Make it easy

Schedule your exercise like an appointment. Treat your workouts as non-negotiable events in your calendar, and commit to them the same way you would a meeting or important task.



Regular exercise can support our physical and mental health in many ways, from supporting our ability to cope with stress to strengthening our cardiovascular system. New evidence suggests that exercise can increase the variety of good bacteria in our gut. Moderate movement, such as walking, cycling, or yoga, has been linked to improved gut health, while more intense activities, like running or strength training, can also benefit the microbiome. However, it has been shown that excessive or extreme exercise can have a negative effect on our gut biome, potentially leading to imbalances.

Regular, balanced movement is key to optimising gut health.

How much movement should we do?

Trying to include moderate level activity three-five times a week should be sufficient to support your gut health. Don't worry, you don't need to suddenly take up extreme sports – a brisk walk, especially if this is something you don't already do, will hugely enhance your physical (and mental) health. Also think about more social sports or class activities, such as netball, football, yoga or Zumba – if it's something you enjoy, you're more likely to stick at it.



4 simple ways to add in more movement

Try out these easy to implement steps to get you up and moving each day

TRY THIS!	THE DETAILS
Baby steps	Aim for 30 minutes of walking or cycling each day. Take the stairs or walk during lunch breaks.
Simple exercises	Do 10x bodyweight exercises (like squats, push-ups, or planks) in the morning before your shower.
Productive 'me time'	Add a 10-15-minute stretching or yoga session to your routine to improve flexibility and reduce stress.
Make it social	Instead of meeting for coffee or drinks, plan activities like hiking, dancing or a group fitness class with friends.

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Recipe taken from *The Ambitious Kitchen Cookbook* by Monique Volz, photography by Kristin Teig, published by Random House, £30.



RECIPE OF THE DAY

Chipotle chicken with Pozole greens

The chicken and yoghurt provide protein to replenish your muscles

Serves **6** | Prep **10 mins** | Cook **40 mins**

For the veggies

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp dried oregano

For the soup

- 800ml (3½ cups) low-sodium chicken broth
- 400ml tinned tomatoes
- 450g (1lb) boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 800ml (25oz) tin of cornmeal, rinsed
- 1 tsp salt

For the bean base

- 400ml (14oz) tinned cannellini beans
- 2-3 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, plus 1-2 tbsp of the sauce, to taste
- 115ml (½ cup) low-sodium chicken broth

For the mix-ins

- 120g (¾ cup) sweetcorn
- Juice of 1 lime
- A handful of coriander, finely chopped

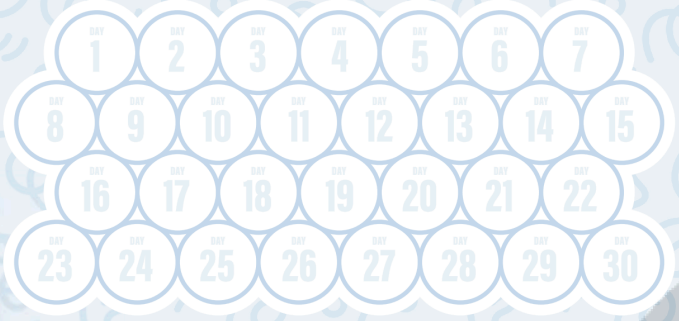
To garnish

- Tortilla chips
- Greek yoghurt
- Shredded cabbage
- Sliced avocado
- Jalapeños, thinly sliced
- Fresh coriander, chopped
- Lime wedges

1. In a large pan, heat the olive oil, then add the onion and pepper. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until the onion begins to soften, 5 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin, coriander and oregano and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
2. Add the broth, tomatoes, chicken, cornmeal and salt to the veggies. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is cooked through and no longer pink. Remove the chicken, use two forks to shred it thinly, then return it to the pan.
3. Combine the base ingredients together in a blender until smooth, then pour into the chicken pan. Stir in the corn, lime juice and coriander, then simmer for 10-15 minutes. Season.
4. Transfer to bowls, then garnish with tortilla chips, yoghurt, cabbage, coriander, avocado, jalapeños and lime wedges for squeezing.

Habit tracker

Tick the days you've moved for 30 minutes or more



Daily reflection

Document how moving more has affected your daily wellbeing

On the days I moved more I felt...

On the days I moved more my energy levels were...

PLANT FOOD OF THE DAY

Banana



How much?

A superfruit you can always pack in your workout bag. As one of the most portable fruits you can eat, this is your fitness best friend.

Why are they great?

Bananas are rich in fibre and high in potassium, which helps maintain fluid balance in the gut and support digestion. They also contain natural compounds that may help reduce inflammation in the gut, making them beneficial for conditions like Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

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