

Moore Pilates – Top Tips

Superfoods – Part 2: *everyday superfoods*

What does this mean and how good are “superfood” labelled foods? Most foods ending up on the countless lists of such foods are great additions to your diet., boosting health and energy levels. This is often related to their ultra-potent anti-oxidant content and/or alkalisng ability that both helping to reduce inflammation and oxidant damage caused by exercise and help boost energy levels.

Whether the term “superfoods” is justified is a little more difficult to answer. As a scientist I look for robust scientific evidence and clinic studies to back up their claims. Although there are such studies, in many cases any results are found with quantities of the food far greater than normally consumed. That said I am a big fan and recommend including generous amounts within your diet, combined with overall good nutrition, exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

Probably one of the best pieces of advice I have been given is to aim to have 90% of your daily diet rich in **everyday superfoods**. This can have a tremendous impact on your health. **You don't have to go to the health food shop, many of these foods can be found in any supermarket or even corner shop.**

With so many to choose from here are my top 5 nutrient-packed foods easily purchased from the supermarket. In Part 2, I list my favourite superfoods you may be less familiar with:

Green vegetables (kale, broccoli and tender stem broccoli, spinach, cabbage, watercress, rocket)

Rich in magnesium to support energy pathways and the adrenal to help cope with stress, rich in calcium to support healthy bones, rich in glutathione a powerful antioxidant and also detoxification compound.

How to eat: steam on their own, mash kale with avocado to make a salad (recipe below), add to smoothies or juice; dry steam spinach with garlic as an accompaniment to curries

Organic eggs

The most complete protein you can eat. They make a quick and easy meal at any time of the day. The ultimate “ready-meal”. Also containing vitamin D, increasingly shown to protect against a range of chronic diseases such as Alzheimer's and heart disease, as well as its more well-known role in supporting healthy bones. Aim for organic where possible and /or seek out your local farmer and ask about how the hens are kept and food source.

How to eat: scramble with a flat teaspoon of turmeric and ground black pepper: omelette with added vegetables and turmeric, egg muffins

Avocados

Although high in fat, this remains on my list as the beneficial mono-saturated (omega-3) oils are associated with lowering blood pressure and lubricating joints. The flesh and oils also contain anti-oxidants that act to combat inflammation. High in beta-carotene, glutathione and lutein, all of which support eye health.

How to eat: mashed in kale salad (recipe below), guacamole, as a snack slices with some crumbled feta cheese and half a fresh fig, add to a smoothie.

Bone broth

This is very “in” at the moment, but quite rightly so. Especially good to support joints and cartilage, and also protects and heals the gut lining. The main ingredient is collagen derived from boiling the bones for a long time such that they more or less disintegrate. It is also a natural source of joint supporting nutrients glucosamine and chondroitin, a common supplement. So now is time to swap to a natural food. As an added benefit it is a great way to use up left over bones and vegetable scraps.

How to make: Approx. 1kg of beef bones (preferably from organic, grass fed cows) or organic chicken carcass. (Ask your local butcher or buy a whole chicken and joint yourself). Put in a large pot with 2 sticks of celery, 1 carrot, 1 red onion roughly chopped, 1 roughly chopped leek, 6 black peppercorns, 1-2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar, a large knob of fresh turmeric, peeled and roughly chopped (available from Asian shops and some super markets). The exact mix is not important. Cover with water and put lid on. Simmer on a low heat for 8 to 12 hours or as long as possible until bones break down. (I often don't have time to cook this long, but the longer you do so, the greater the nutrients derived from the bones). Remove bones and strain off vegetables. You can drink as it is, or use as a stock to make soup or casseroles.

Lentils

Lentils of all types are rich in fibre, protein and folate, and low in fat. Plentiful within the Mediterranean diet and their consumption attributed with lower rates of cardiovascular disease in these countries. Also contain phyto-oestrogens, plant chemicals that are converted by intestinal bacteria into compounds that mimic some of the effects of oestrogen (hence their name!). Their consumption has been associated with improving hormonal balance and improving PMS, symptoms of menopause and improving bone density

How to eat: add to casseroles to replace all or half the meat. Green lentils work well with or in place of mince in a lasagne. Add to soups for added protein. Red lentils seem to work well as they cook quicker and break down to help thicken the soup. See Lentil Dhal recipe below.

Puy lentils are a rich brown colour and make a delicious base for steamed salmon. Place ~150g puy lentils in a pan and cover with water. Add rosemary or thyme, bring to boil and simmer for 15 minutes until tender. Drain. While cooking, fry a small red onion thinly sliced, 1 crushed clove of garlic and 1 tbsp grated ginger. Cook 3-4 minutes until soft. Stir in lentils and season. Add cooked peas or beans if liked. Top with pan-fried tuna or salmon.

Final words

Other foods to include in your diet on a regular basis: lean protein (game meats e.g., venison, oily fish (preferably wild), dark coloured berries, coloured vegetables (red and yellow peppers), red onions and garlic, nuts and seeds, bitter leaves e.g., rocket and watercress, shitake mushrooms, coconut oil.

The above are all “**real food**” easily obtainable from your supermarket, local farmers market or corner shop. Include these within your daily meals will help increase the nutrient density of your diet. At the same time, avoid highly processed foods, artificially

altered (homogenised, hydrogenated, hydrolysed, pasteurised) and foods containing chemical additives (food colourings, MSG, aspartame) where ever possible.

RECIPES

Kale Salad

Ingredients

500g kale

2 tsp garlic salt

~ 8-12 cherry tomatoes, halved (allowing for 2-3 per person)

4 shiitake mushrooms, sliced

2 tbsp mixed seeds

Directions

1. Wash the kale and remove any tough stalks. Chop into small pieces and place in a large bowl
2. Massage the garlic salt in the kale, squeezing the leaves until they begin to wilt
3. Add remaining salad ingredients to the kale
4. Place the dressing ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth
5. Pour the dressing over the kale and massage into the salad using your hands.

Allow to rest for 10 minutes before serving

Lentil Dhal

Serve with some additional salad

Ingredients

1 tbsp virgin rapeseed oil or coconut oil

165g red lentils, rinsed and drained

1 tsp ground turmeric

750ml vegetable stock

1 tsp ground cumin

1 medium sweet potato, cubed into small pieces

2 tsp garam masala

1 garlic clove, crushed

2 handfuls spinach, shredded (or frozen)

1 red onion, diced

Juice of ½ lemon

2 tsp finely chopped root ginger

Freshly ground black pepper

1 medium carrot, diced or thinly sliced

Sea or rock salt to taste

Directions

1. Heat oil in large frying pan. Add spices, garlic, onion and ginger. Fry for 1 minute
2. Add carrot and lentils, stir and pour in stock
3. Bring to boil, then fast boil for 10 minutes before reducing heat to a simmer. Add sweet potato, stir and cook for a further 15 minutes or until lentils and sweet potato are soft
4. Stir in spinach and let it wilt. Add lemon juice and season to taste.

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Note: these comments are general in nature and individuals may respond differently. For a personalised consultation and advice please contact: Sam Moore at 07715 182474 or Dr Elizabeth Foot M: 07540 722236, E: eaf.optimanutrition@gmail.com