

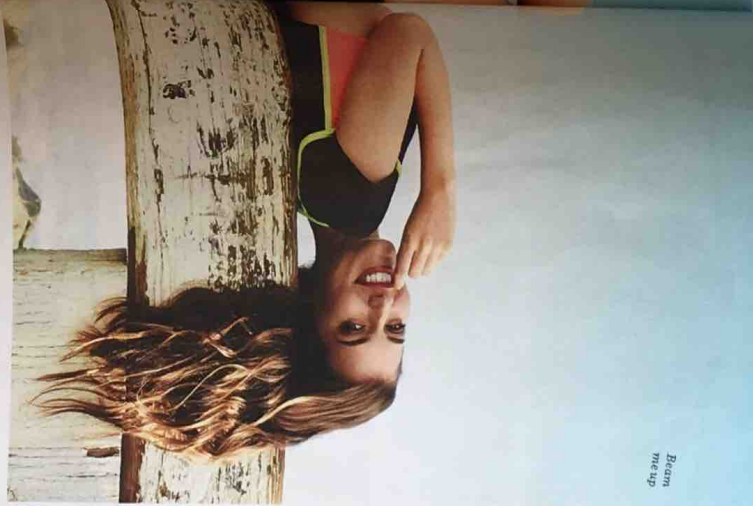
Brammie up

SLIM DOWN cheer up

Turn the war on fat into a party for your synapses. With these tweaks, you'll shed 3kg in a month and dose up on happy hormones

WORDS RUTH EMMETT

Expanding your mind as you reduce your waistline isn't rocket science; all you need is a little entry-level neurology. The hormone serotonin is often referred to as the happy hormone due to its ability to send positive vibes around your body. You may already know that it's responsible for that post-coital high and post-workout euphoria – but did you know that making a few small tweaks to your diet could also lift your mood as the needle goes down on the scales? We're not claiming weight loss is a mind-altering experience, but with these foods and healthy habits, you'll increase the happy hormones buzzing around your brain, preventing low moods from dragging down your motivation and sending your weight soaring. In fact, the only thing that'll be down is your body-fat percentage.



GET TRYPPY

Dose up on serotonin at least once a week. A standard 120g steak contains a meagre amount of tryptophan, an amino acid that's crucial for the production of serotonin. Compared with beef, you'll also save 12g of fat and 5g of sat fat per serving. If deer is too dear, you'll also find an uplifting amount of tryptophan in tuna, cod, chicken, turkey and prawns. **Calories cut: 515 | Mood lift: 7%**

FEELIN' ALL WHITE

Forget hard liquor – the nightcap for sweet dreams is a glass of the white stuff. Research published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found milk lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which has been linked to excess belly fat. It also fills you up, so you'll find it easier to avoid a big breakfast in the morning. Drink 71ml daily for the full effects. **Calories cut: 200 | Mood lift: 7%**

SPREAD A LITTLE LOVE

Love it or hate it, Marmite will cheer you up. Two slices of toast spread with the sticky stuff provides half your RDA of folate. Running low on this vitamin scuppers your serotonin production, reports the *Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience*. Plus, by swapping sugary jam out of your breakfast, you'll feel less bloated and your body will store less fat. A middle-aged spread we can all get on with. **Calories cut: 80 | Mood lift: 5%**

TASTE THE TROPICS

Make up to 200ml of pineapple juice. You'll save calories over OJ and fill up on melatonin, which aids sleep, according to Northumbria University. It's good for your mood because your serotonin levels fall when you're not getting enough shut-eye. When you sleep well, you're also less likely to snack in the day and several studies have shown that vitamin C helps to oxidise fat, putting your wobbly bits on a downer. **Calories cut: 20 | Mood lift: 8%**

LIGHTEN YOUR MOOD

Go for three-40-minute sunlit runs a week. Regular exposure to light helps you shed 2% more body fat, according to a Canadian study. Exposure to natural blue sky and green space leads to an instant uplift in your mood. Now go and hug some trees, man. **Calories cut: 400 | Mood lift: 14%**

NIB BAD MOODS IN THE BUD

You need a once-a-week treat, and this one's non-negotiable. Cocoa nibs are chocolatey beans that have no added fat or sugar, but are packed with tyrosine (remember him?). Why not stir a handful into porridge, or add to a spicy couscous or chilli dish for a mellow kick. Aim for 31bsp per week. **Calories cut: 180 | Mood lift: 6%**

WEED IT OUT

Got the munchies? Nix 'em with some homemade seaweed crisps. Bake the sea vegetable nori for 15 minutes at 200°C. Seaweed is one of the best natural sources of tyrosine, an amino acid your body uses to make the happy hormone dopamine. If that's not reason enough, in a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, dieters lost an extra 4lb when taking seaweed snips. **Calories cut: 150 | Mood lift: 6%**

AND BREATHE...

You don't have to be moving to shed fat. Simply sit still and let this hip wash over you: practise breathing techniques half an hour before a meal to de-stress. You'll also strengthen your resolve not to go crazy at the all-you-can-eat curry buffet. Karma over korima, every time. **Calories cut: 170 | Mood lift: 15%**



CRACK A BROAD SMILE

Get on board with a broad bean. A US university* found that they contain a compound called levodopa, which increases dopamine. Plus, research shows the dietary fibre in beans encourages you to eat less. Not keen on the beans? Peas are a great alternative. High in tyrosine, too. Boom. **Calories cut: 120 | Mood lift: 8%**



HAPPY PILLS

Safe, sane, scientifically proven potions to boost your pound loss...



Equi Fundamental 555
This super-powered multivitamin supports optimal gut function with powerful probiotics and enzymes to aid nutrient digestion and prevent bloating.



Solgar Therapeutic Complex with Stevia, £24.99
Choline reduces excess fat in the liver by boosting the metabolism, while chromium contributes to maintaining healthy blood glucose levels.



Better You Magnesium Oil Spray, £12.20 for 100ml
Magnesium is essential for detoxing and weight loss, but it absorbs through the skin more quickly than the stomach. Mix on a little to boost your metabolism.