

HOROSCOPE



ARIES (MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

Pamper yourself. Make friends through physical activities. Channel your energy into passionate interludes with your lover. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Help out an old friend. Try not to spend too much money. Cultural activities will be quite enlightening for everyone. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Use your intellectual approach. Get back in shape. Your ambitious mood may annoy loved ones. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CANCER (JUNE 22-JULY 22)

Be self-reliant. Be careful as to not reveal secrets. Take time to visit someone who is ill. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



LEO (JULY 23-AUG 22)

Try to keep an open mind. Try not to take more than you can handle. Upgrading is not a bad plan. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Try not to hurt someone's feelings. Your ideas can be put into action. You need to put some trust in others. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LIBRA (SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

Disputes at home may be hard to avoid. You will enjoy interacting with people from different backgrounds. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Emotional upset at work is likely. Be aggressive and colourful to get your way. Refrain from arguing with your mate. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Join humanitarian groups. Take time to make physical improvements. Focus on your domestic scene. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Someone left a real mess for you to fix. Socialising will bring about contact with important individuals. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Get busy on home improvement projects. Try not to argue about trivial matters. You may find acquaintances being deceptive. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MARCH. 20)

Try some property purchases. Don't expect others to do your work. Your mate may not have been honest with you. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

SKIP THE GYM...GET FIT

BY KARIM WAHEED



If I could, I'd take up manual labour but unfortunately, it doesn't pay well. If you're rolling your eyes, try to count the number of overweight people working on the streets you've come across. Right. Besides being an enabler in getting plump, desk jobs are a pain in the back. Literally.

Slouching over a desk results in loose back muscles. We have been training, unknowingly, to provide our bodies with imbalances. Now think long hours of sitting at the desk. It's just ludicrous if you think about it. This self-destructive training starts early too - at schools!

Thus, back pain has become a frequent complaint.

Fret not. You can minimise the damage. An effective way to address back pain is working on your core strength to increase flexibility of muscles that are tight, which will provide better stabilisation of the spine.

You can integrate core strength training exercises into your workout, rather than doing just the traditional crunches and sit-ups.

One way of improving core strength is by breathing effectively. Deep breathing

UNDO THE DAMAGES OF A DESK-BOUND JOB

will utilise the diaphragm muscles that will help support the spinal column and lengthen the spine, which is great for the lower back.

The plank exercise can help reduce back pain and strengthen the core muscles as well. Start by getting into a push-up position. Rest your weight on your



forearms, not on your hands. Your body should form a straight line from shoulders to ankles. Engage your core by sucking your gut in.

The hip flexor stretch is also quite effective in alleviating lower back pain. Begin in a lunge with your right foot forward. Slowly lower your left knee to

the floor. Once you're in a stable position, grab your left foot with your left arm. Pull your foot toward your pelvis to increase the stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Change sides to stretch your right hip.

And since we can't do away with sitting, here's how to have better alignment:

Keep your feet are on the ground, toes pointing straight ahead.

Make sure there's a slight arch in your lower back.

Relax your ribcage.

Relax your shoulders.

Lift your chin.

Relax your jaw.

Don't sit back- keep moving and keep fit!

FYI

Sugar: the new tobacco

Haven't we all at some point of our lives dreamt about becoming Charlie in 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'?

In today's world of constant access to processed foods, irresistible desserts are sufficient to make us forget that we pledged not to touch anything sweet just two days ago.

Scientists from Cambridge University have found that excessive consumption of sweet food items is as bad as alcohol and smoking – it overloads your liver, causes insulin resistance and is highly addictive.

Many nutrition experts say that moderate amount of sugar consumption is fine for most people. But, in excess it can lead to metabolic problems beyond just weight gain. Studies show that any fructose (sugar found especially in honey and fruit) you eat, goes straight to your liver and gets turned into droplets of fat called triglycerides.

It is generally advised by nutritionists to follow the World Health Organisation's guidelines, which recommends that only 5 percent of your daily calorie intake should consist of added, or 'free' sugars and that adults and children should consume no more than six teaspoons daily.

When you are gulping down your third cupcake/doughnut of the day and planning to go for the fourth, something at the back of your mind reminds you not to - begs you not to - cries and screams you not to. But you are helpless in front of the

sugary delight that sometimes can make the world a better place for you in an instant!

"This is the last one..."

"A little bite won't hurt..."

"I worked hard all day, I deserve this waffle..."

These are just some of the things we say to justify our excess craving for something we know is bad for our health. Even after taking such great caution, at the end of the day, we end up with an intake score of one glass of Nutella shake, one doughnut, one diet coke and a few spoonfuls of chocolate fudge ice cream cake. Oops!

We forget that we should not be consuming so much sugar because it carries no nutrients, no protein, no healthy fats and no enzymes. Furthermore, Sugar causes blood glucose to spike and plummet exceptionally high and low, which is of course not healthy.

Irregular blood sugar levels often lead to mood swings, fatigue, increased uric acid levels, headaches and cravings for more sugar. Cravings set the stage for a cycle of addiction in which every time you eat something sweet, it makes you feel better temporarily but, a few hours later, more cravings and hunger set in.

Unfortunately, it is not just sugar that's killing us, but scientifically manufactured "sugar" as well. Artificial sweeteners such as aspartame and sucralose are also a big no-no, since they actually come with a whole new range of health problems that

are much worse than what sugar can bring.

Making a few changes in your diet plan can help you cut down on the unnecessary sugar consumption:

Reduce the sugar you add to your daily cup of coffee or tea. Do so gradually so that your taste buds get used to it.

Avoid low-fat 'diet' food items because they tend to be high in sugars. Instead have smaller portions of the regular versions.

Be careful of 'sugar-free' food. These often contain artificial sweeteners which will not satisfy your sweet tooth; instead they may send confusing messages to the brain, which can lead to over-eating.

Balance your carb intake with protein items like fish and chicken - protein foods slow stomach emptying, which helps manage cravings.

Reduce the sugar in recipes and add spices to boost flavour and taste.

For occasional cravings, have a jar filled with various kinds of nuts or try plain yoghurt.

Sugars do not ruin your health- unless you eat like there is no tomorrow and refuse to exercise. So, exercise regularly.

Instead of holding sugar culprit for your expanding waistline, remember that sugars do not make you fat- overeating does! So, do not go for that fourth doughnut!

By Tahmina Begum