

ISSUE #1

SEPTEMBER 2024

Act Natural

Performance & Nutrition

Are you getting
enough
PROTEIN?

Optimise your
VITAMIN D

Could
**SEED
CYCLING**
Help Your Cycle?

HELPING PERFORMERS &
CREATIVES FEEL THEIR
BEST, NATURALLY



ActNatural

Performance & Nutrition

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Disclaimer

All information provided in this booklet is for educational purposes only and does not replace the advice given to you by your GP.

ABOUT

ActNatural

Feeling sluggish?

Worried about your vocal health?

Hormones driving you crazy?

Low energy effecting your stamina?

Did you know, the food we eat can have a huge impact on our health and wellbeing and can impact our training and performance?



Act Natural Performance & Nutrition is dedicated to understanding performers and creative professionals, listening to why you feel the way you do, tackling the root cause of your symptoms and supporting you, naturally so you can perform to your optimal potential.

I'm Emma and I'm a qualified Nutritional Therapist, singing teacher and performer. I've performed professionally for the past 5 years across the UK as an actor, singer and aerialist. But none of that could have happened without the help of good nutrition!

I studied Biochemistry and Nutritional Therapy at the College of Naturopathic Medicine in 2019 and during my 3 years of intensive study, it completely changed my life! Now, I want to help others feel better too.

I want to help other performers to be able to perform to their optimal potential, so I hope this magazine provides you with some information that leaves you feeling empowered about your health. You can find out more about me, my health journey and my business on my [website](#) or by scanning this QR code on page 18.

Emma

What is Nutritional Therapy?

Nutritional therapy uses nutrition science to identify potential imbalances in the body and understands how they may be contributing to the root cause of health conditions and symptoms.

Using a holistic approach, nutritional therapists recommended a unique nutrition, supplement and lifestyle programme to promote and maintain physical and emotional health and overall wellbeing .

Nutritional therapy could help you if you want to make healthy food choices, want to enhance your lifestyle and performance or need help managing chronic health conditions.

Whatever your goal, Emma can provide professional guidance to navigate you on your way to feeling your best, naturally.



All About Vitamin D

Did you know Vitamin D is not strictly a vitamin? It is actually a hormone that is produced when sunlight hits the skin.

Could you be vitamin D deficient?

Although it's very common for people in the UK to have low vitamin D, testing should be done to determine levels before supplementation. This is because vitamin D is stored in the body for 4 months. It's best to test your vitamin D levels every 3 months, your nutritional therapist can organise a test for you.

Vitamin D synthesis is usually highest during the summer months, even on cloudy days however sunscreen will block synthesis. You may need your vitamin D testing if you;

- Spend a lot of time indoors
- Wear sunscreen
- Have menstrual irregularities
- Suffer with atigue
- Have depression
- Prone to low immunity
- Diagnosed with osteoporosis
- Suffer with uscle pain

Naturally optimise your vitamin D

Food sources of vitamin D are rather limited. Mushrooms, oily fish and egg yolks are the best sources but the quantities in food won't compete with the sun.

To optimise natural vitamin D absorption, make sure your shadow is the same height or shorter than you when you're outside. 10-30 minutes of direct sunlight a day is all that is needed for adequate vitamin D absorption (with no sunscreen).

We will never overdose from vitamin D naturally obtained from sunlight as the body knows when to make enough.



Benefits

Vitamin D may;

- Support bone health
- Regulate calcium and phosphorus absorption
- Support the immune system
- Regulate gut function
- Support mood

Could *Seed Cycling* Help Your **MENSTRUAL CYCLE?**

Seed cycling is a natural, non-invasive approach to balancing hormones through diet. It involves consuming specific seeds during different phases of the menstrual cycle to support hormone production and regulation. These certain seeds may promote hormone balance by providing essential fatty acids, lignans, and other nutrients that support oestrogen and progesterone levels, often used to address hormonal imbalances, PMS, irregular cycles, and menopausal symptoms.

Follicular Phase

(Day 1 to 14)

The follicular phase starts the 1st day of your period until ovulation, usually around day 14 of the cycle.

Flax seeds + Pumpkin seeds

Flax seeds contain lignans* that help modulate oestrogen levels. Pumpkin seeds are a rich source of zinc, important for progesterone production in the luteal phase.

Luteal Phase

(Day 15 to 28)

The day after ovulation until your period begins.

Sesame seeds + Sunflower seeds

Sesame seeds contain lignans similar to flax seeds and provide selenium for antioxidant support. Sunflower seeds are abundant in vitamin E, which aids progesterone production and reduces inflammation.

*compounds found in plants known as phytoestrogens which modulate oestrogen in the body

HOW TO SEED CYCLE

Take one tablespoon of each type of seed per day depending on what part of your cycle you are at. Ground the seeds before consumption to enhance nutrient absorption. For potential benefits, continue the seed cycling routine over a few months.

Scientific research on seed cycling is limited, however there is evidence and some research from traditional and holistic health practices that support the protocol.

Follicular Phase (Days 1-14)



1 tbsp Ground Flaxseeds
+
1 tbsp Ground Pumpkin Seeds

Luteal Phase (Days 15-28)



1 tbsp Ground Sesame Seeds
+
1 tbsp Ground Sunflower Seeds

Essential Fatty Acids	Crucial for oestrogen and progesterone synthesis, which affect mood, menstrual cycles, and fertility.
Fibre	Aids bowel movements, facilitating the detoxification of oestrogen.
Zinc	Key mineral for several hormones, supports normal development and release of eggs during each menstrual cycle
Selenium	Vital for follicular phase and ovulation.
Vitamin E	Antioxidant that supports fertility and hormone balance.

Seed cycling can be done whilst on contraception but should complement a balanced diet rich in whole foods, including vegetables, fruits, protein, and healthy fats. Monitor symptoms and adjust the protocol as needed, ideally with the guidance of a nutritional therapist.

Seed Cycling Bites

VEGAN • DAIRY-FREE • GLUTEN-FREE

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Serves: 20

Prep Time: 40 minutes

These seed cycling bites are a nutritious and delicious way to support hormonal balance and overall health. High in iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium, vitamin E, selenium, omega-3s and lignans.

Ingredients

- 150g pitted dates
- 60g raw pumpkin seeds (first phase of cycle) or sunflower seeds (second phase of cycle)
- 60g raw flaxseed (first phase of cycle) or sesame seeds (second phase of cycle)
- 30g cup cacao powder
- 120g almond butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp Himalayan salt
- 15-30ml water (if needed)



Method

1. If the seeds are not already ground, prepare the seeds by blending into a fine powder in a food processor or coffee or spice grinder. Set aside.
2. Blend the dates in a food processor to form a paste.
3. Add the ground seeds (pumpkin seeds and flaxseed for the first phase of your cycle or sesame seeds and sunflower seeds for the second phase of your cycle), dates, cacao powder, vanilla extract, almond butter, and Himalayan salt to a food blender and process until combined.
4. Gently press some of the mixture between your fingers. If the mixture falls apart, add 1-2 tbsp water and blend again until mixed.
5. Using your hands, roll the mixture into small balls, about 2.5cm in diameter.
6. Place the seed cycling bites on a parchment paper-lined tray and refrigerate for 30 minutes until firm. Can be stored in an airtight container or store in the freezer until the next phase of your cycle.

Nutritional Details (per ball)

Calories: 110 kcal

Protein: 3 g

Carbohydrates: 10 g

Fiber: 2 g

Sugars: 6 g

Fat: 7 g

Saturated Fat: 0.7 g

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: 1 g

Calcium: 30 mg

Iron: 1 mg

Magnesium: 40 mg

Zinc: 1 mg





Note down every food only once within the next 7 days to assess your diet's diversity. Red and white onions count as 2 different foods, bread and pasta count as just one, i.e. wheat. Herbs, spices and oils all count as individual ingredients.

Singers, actors, presenters, teachers...

What are you doing about your *Vocal Health?*

Maintaining vocal health isn't just for singers. For anyone who uses their voice, be it voice-over artists, stand-ups, presenters, teachers... if you use it, you must look after it. Over the past 10 years as a vocal teacher I've had students from all different backgrounds come to me needing some kind of vocal support and it always amazes me how even professionals don't take the time to look after their voice.

Here are 4 simple things you can do to ensure you're looking after your voice:

1. Hydration

I know, you'll have heard this so many times before. But are you doing it? Contrary to belief, water doesn't immediately hydrate the vocal cords. Instead, it is absorbed into the blood stream through the intestines and is then distributed throughout the body hydrating cells and tissues, including the larynx. Constant hydration throughout the day is the key.

2. Adequate Sleep

When we are asleep, it is the optimal time for our bodies to heal and rejuvenate. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep to support your body's natural healing process.

3. Warm-Up

Making sure you gradually warm your voice up before you use it will increase blood circulation to the vocal cords and surrounding muscles, bringing oxygen and nutrients to the tissues. This will prepare the muscles so they can adjust to increased activity, improve flexibility and range, reducing the risk of strain or injury allowing the voice to be used more dynamically and with more control.

4. Steaming

Steaming after prolonged or intense use of the voice will add moisture directly back into the vocal cords and surrounding tissues. Reducing inflammation and loosening mucus, steaming can also be beneficial if you have a sore throat or cough to support recovery. However, this method shouldn't replace good vocal practise and should not be used as a recovery method alone. Remember, prevention is better than cure!



5 Healthy Habits

to add to your

Daily Routine



1 Eat Organic

Organic products have a higher nutrient density than non-organic. Not only that but chemicals used to grow and protect produce can disrupt our hormones.

2 Have a savory breakfast

So many breakfast foods contain sugar! It's more than likely that if you have something with a high sugar content for breakfast, you'll experience sugar cravings and energy dips throughout the day. Start your day with a savoury breakfast, full of protein, fibre and healthy fats to set you up for the day.

3 Get outside in nature, whatever the weather

Being outside in nature can calm the nervous system. Try and get outside soon after you've woken up to reset your circadian rhythm. When we are in a calm state whilst eating (not on the go or eating mindlessly), our body can optimise digestion.

4 Eat your last meal 4 hours before bed

Our body goes into its healing process whilst we sleep. If we eat close to going to bed, our body will prioritise digestion over areas of the body that need to repair.

5 Move your body everyday

Our bodies aren't made to sit behind a desk all day! Remaining stationary, especially with so many calorific options widely and so easily available to us, can impact our health negatively. Moving doesn't have to be boring! From walking and yoga, dance or swimming. Make sure you move your body between 30-60 minutes a day, at least!



Are You Getting Enough

Protein?



Ever have that mid-day slump? Not able to build or retain muscle? Feel like you're always coming down with something and it's effecting your training?

It may be that you're not getting enough protein.

Today's diets tend to be carbohydrate heavy and calorific. In fact, many food products are

designed to be that way so that it makes you want to eat more so you have to buy more. And although we certainly need carbohydrates and increased calories to support our body, especially as we train, it may be that protein is lacking.

Low dietary protein is one of the most common issues I see in my 1:1 clients, both performers and regular clients.

So, what exactly is protein and do we need it?

Protein is made up of molecules called **amino acids**. Our body requires **20 amino acids** and without them, we would lack the basic building blocks to stay healthy. Our bodies make some but others we have to get from our diet, these are referred to as **Essential Amino Acids**.

We need protein to:

Regulate blood sugar	Produce anti-bodies to fight infections	Provide cell-to-cell communication
Create the right enzymes needed for biochemical reactions in the body	Store and transport important molecules such as oxygen and iron around the body	Balance pH in the body
Produce collagen, keratin and elastin which provide structural support of cells and tissues	Promote the feeling of fullness	Muscle repair and function
Create hormones such as insulin and growth hormones	Balance fluid in the body	Provide us with energy



Calculating protein

Calculating protein depends a few factors such as weight, physical activity, life stage and specific goals. You can use the table below as a rough guide for working out how much protein you may need to aim for.

	Amount of protein in grams
Sedentary adult	0.8g
Active adult	1.0-1.2g
Endurance athlete	1.2-1.4g
Strength athlete	1.6-2.2g

x body weight in kg

Example: $1.2\text{g} \times 54\text{kg} = 64.8\text{g}$ of protein per day

It is recommended to add an additional 6g/day during pregnancy and an extra 11 g/day(0-6 months) or 8 g/day (6+ months) if breastfeeding. However, it is always best to speak with a health professional before you make any changes to your diet during these life stages.

Protein Sources



	Protein amount per 100g
Chicken Breast	30g
Beef	27g
Salmon	25g
Tofu	12g
Puy Lentils	9.8g
Greek Yoghurt	9g
Kidney Beans	8g
Egg*	7g
Quinoa	4.5g
Almond Butter**	3g

Animal-sourced protein contain all 9-essential amino acids, and are hence considered a 'complete protein'. Vegans and vegetarians can still get a complete protein if they include a variety of legumes, grains, nuts and seeds during the course of a day. Here is a list of just some great protein sources.



*based on 1 egg not 100g
** based on 1 tbsp not 100g

What's in Season?

Eating seasonally means that vegetables are harvested at their peak, meaning they will retain more vitamins, minerals and antioxidants than when out of season.

It may also mean reduced pesticides and chemicals are used and a lower carbon footprint as often the in season produce will not need to be stored for as long or not transported as far.

Eating seasonal also supports a diverse diet throughout the year, meaning we take in more variety of nutrients which is always a good thing!

Fennel

Rich in dietary fibre, vitamin C, potassium and other antioxidants, fennel may support digestion and immune function.



Leeks

High in vitamins A, K and C and a great source of folate, the anti-inflammatory properties of leeks may support the cardiovascular system.



Parsnips

Providing dietary fibre, folate, manganese and vitamins C and K, these complex carbohydrates may support blood sugar levels.



Roasted Fennel, Leek and Parsnip Medley

VEGAN • DAIRY-FREE • GLUTEN-FREE

This recipe is ideal as a side dish or a light main course. It pairs well with a protein source like chicken or fish for a more complete meal.

Ingredients

- 2 medium fennel bulbs, trimmed and sliced
- 2 large leeks, cleaned and sliced
- 3 medium parsnips, peeled and cut into sticks
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp fresh thyme, chopped
- Himalayan salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)



Method

1. Preheat your oven to 200°C.
2. Trim the fennel bulbs, remove the tough outer layers, and slice thinly.
3. Clean the leeks thoroughly to remove any dirt, then slice them into rounds (using only the white and light green parts).
4. Peel the parsnips and cut them into sticks of similar size for even roasting.
5. In a large mixing bowl, combine the fennel, leeks, and parsnips. Drizzle with the olive oil and add the minced garlic, thyme leaves and evenly coat with the oil and seasonings.
6. Spread the seasoned vegetables in a single layer on a large baking sheet and roast in the preheated oven for 25–30 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender and golden brown, stirring once halfway through to ensure even cooking.
7. Remove the vegetables from the oven. Drizzle with lemon juice and garnish with freshly chopped parsley before serving.



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Serves: 4

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Nutritional Details

Calories: 150 kcal

Protein: 3 g

Carbohydrates: 2 g

Fiber: 8 g

Sugars: 7 g

Fat: 7 g

Saturated Fat: 1 g

Introducing the First in the #TourLife Series

Deciphering Product Labels:

Finding Hidden Sugars

We're kicking off the first in the #TourLife series what to look for to find hidden sugars in packaged food.

We've all been there, tour or no tour, right? We've been on the go with no other option than to buy a supermarket meal deal or some kind of packaged snack with limited choice of anything remotely healthy.

Companies are clever. They use buzzwords and phrases such as "low-sugar" or "no added sugar" to make them sound healthier so you choose their product. In reality, they're more than likely filled with sugar, it will just be under a different name.

Products with no/low sugar claims often contain a low-calorie sweetener or sugar substitute but this isn't actually any healthier. These alternatives are used so companies can jump on the low sugar, low

calorie bandwagon whilst maintaining sweetness or taste of the product. That way, they tick all the boxes for looking healthier than they probably are.

But what about artificial sweeteners? Research indicates that artificial sweeteners may be hindering our health instead of optimising it with claims that they may alter the gut microbiome, potentially leading to digestive issues, increased cravings and weight gain.

Naturally Occurring Sugars vs Added Sugars vs Artificial Sweeteners... What's the difference?

NATURALLY OCCURRING SUGARS

Found in whole foods (unprocessed food) such as fruits (fructose), dairy (lactose) vegetables and some grains (glucose).

Whole foods have more nutrients in them such as vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants.

ADDED SUGARS

Examples; table sugar (sucrose), high fructose corn syrup, honey, maple syrup.

Rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream causing blood sugar spikes then crashes

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Added to processed food such as baked goods, sauces, confectionary and drinks. Common names; aspartame, sucralose, saccharin and ace-k.

No nutritional value.

May increase risk of weight gain, type 2 diabetes, tooth decay and even heart disease.



What can we do?

The best thing to do is to be prepared and make your own food so that you always know what is in it (the Seed Cycling Bites on page 8 are an excellent on the go snack!).

However, there will undoubtedly be times when you're faced with this situation - on the go and need to grab something to eat from somewhere that may not be the healthiest of choices.

It's important not to beat yourself up when you're in this situation. Instead, make sure you know how to read the product label so you know what you're purchasing.

Don't just rely on the front of the packaging to deem whether or not food has any added sugars or artificial sweeteners, check the ingredients list. Ingredients are listed in order of weight.

Use the chart below which identifies just **SOME** of the alternative names to sugars and sweeteners to help you make healthier food choices.

Agave	High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS)	Molasses	Sweetener	Nectar
Caramel	Lactose	Sucrose	Ethyl maltol	Galactose
Dextrose	Honey	Maltodextrin	Cane Juice	Muscovado
Fructose	Maltose	Syrup	Fruit Juice	Isoglucose
Glucose	Sugar	Treacle	Sucanat	Fruit juice concentrate
Malt	Saccharin	Drimol	D-ribose	
Ace-K		Sucralose	Aspartame	



We'll be looking at more #TourLife tips as the magazine continues so make sure you join us for more!

Where To Find Me



Act Natural Performance & Nutrition is based in the heart of the North Shields Cultural Quarter and doubles as a vocal performance studio in the North Tyneside Business Centre.

Emma Deborah Ward
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Don't forget to follow me on
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not replace the advice given to you by your GP.*

*Herbs, spices, supplements, food and beverages mentioned in this document may
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seek medical advice from your GP before consuming.*

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