

10 Actionable Steps to Heal Body AND Planet



Hello and Welcome!

How to use this guide...

I'm Sarah and I've written this guide for you to help you with some ideas on how to get started improving your diet in a way that helps both your health and the planet!



This guide is designed to get you from having no idea where to start, to feeling full of ideas. But rather than just a list that doesn't help you to actually make change, this guide includes the reasons why these changes are so impactful to your health AND the planet, AND there's a section for each on how to actually do it!

This guide is all about you taking action and moving towards your goals, rather than trying to everything at once though, try just making one or two changes at a time and use the checklist at the back of the guide to track your progress! Good luck!



Eat local, seasonal fruit and veg

For the planet:

- Locally grown foods have a lower carbon footprint as they haven't been shipped long distances.
- Eating foods that are in season locally means they have not travelled and also haven't had to be stored in temperature-controlled warehouses, which require energy to run.

For you:

- Foods, especially fruits and vegetables, lose their nutrient content over time, so the longer they have been transported or stored for, the less nutrients your body is getting. Fresh also tastes better.
- Food that has travelled or been stored also has its ripening controlled with the use of chemicals and gases. It's always good to consume as few chemicals as possible as we don't understand how most of them impact us long term yet.



Eat local, seasonal fruit and veg

How to do it:

There are two challenges here, finding the food, and planning and finding recipes that have only seasonal foods in them (so you don't get excited about cooking something and then find you can't get hold of the right veg).

Finding seasonal fruit and veg

- These days it is pretty easy to find your local farm shops and farmer's markets (although, be warned that farm shops can be quite expensive). Google 'Farmers markets near me' or something similar and see where they are selling.
- Some farms offer local vegetable box delivery schemes. These can be found with a bit of searching online or asking for suggestions on local eco Facebook groups or other forums.

Planning and finding seasonal recipes

- You can use Google here and enter the month you are in along with 'recipe' and see what comes up.
- The recipes on my site are filterable by season, so should give you some ideas to get you started!
- To make things really easy, you can buy suggested seasonal meal plans from myself and other people online.

Plan your meals

For the planet:

Meal planning is a great way to reduce waste as the food you buy has a plan for its use, and you won't throw nearly as much food away.

- Uneaten food is a waste of the growing resources and transport costs
- Food that ends up in landfill breaks down to release methane, which is 25x more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas!

For you:

- Throwing food is like throwing away money. Put the cash saved towards buying organic or higher quality foods.
- Meal planning allows you to make deliberate and nutritious choices, ensuring a well-balanced diet and better health.
- Planning can help you to eat a greater variety of foods, rather than simply having the same few go-to meals every week. Variety means a higher chance of giving your body all the nutrition it needs and help avoid sensitivities developing.
- Knowing what you're cooking also saves a lot of stress every evening!



Plan your meals

How to do it:

In its simplest form, it's just taking a pen and paper and thinking of some meals to eat on each day. make a shopping list of the ingredients you don't have and head to the shops.

I would always advise that you start small though, so if you've never meal planned before, just pick a day or two, plan for it and follow the plan. Learn what worked or didn't work for you and build on it.

I take you through all of this in my [Meal Planning Course](#) because getting this right is a super powerful tool for your health and reducing your footprint, but it can be tricky to get working properly as there are quite a few mistakes to be made!

If you'd like some help, [check this out...](#)



Aim for organic or regeneratively grown foods

For the planet:

The organic and regenerative farming movements both champion farming methods which are less damaging to nature, and can even heal our soils. They encourage less chemicals, less soil disturbance, and increased biodiversity.

For you:

The avoidance of chemicals like antibiotics and synthetic pesticides reduces the environmental toxin load that our bodies have to deal with, which helps to optimise our health.

Antibiotics destroy our gut microbiome and when the body is unable to detox foreign chemicals, it becomes inflamed, leading to potential damage to our cells.

Foods grown in healthier soils may contain more vitamins and minerals which our bodies need.



Aim for organic or regeneratively grown foods

How to do it:

Organic foods are available in most UK supermarkets (they should state where the veg are from in the labels), and farmers' markets and farm shops also supply local organic produce.

Organic veg boxes schemes are common now. In an ideal world you can see where the produce comes from and choose which veg you have (from the UK/Europe only). Some of the bigger ones; like Able & Cole and Riverford are organic and most of the veg is from the UK or Europe at least, so it's a start!

At the moment there is no certification for regenerative, but if you are talking to farmers at a farmers market about their produce, you could ask whether they are following any of the regenerative farming principles (cover crops, crop rotation, mob grazing, not ploughing).



Eat a greater variety of foods

For the planet:

Encouraging variety in your diet reduces the reliance on monoculture farming, which depletes soil nutrients, requires excessive pesticide use, and contributes to habitat destruction. A broader range of crops encourages a broader diversity in food species for wildlife, improving biodiversity, and reduces the strain on soils.

For you:

Eating a wide range of foods ensures that you receive all of the essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals that your body needs to function properly.

Your gut microbiome also loves variety to increase it's own biodiversity, and our gut microbiome is important for our health.



Eat a greater variety of foods

How to do it:

- Look for different fruits and vegetables that you haven't tried before in supermarkets and farmers markets (although only try the ones that have travelled a long way sparingly).
- Even varying species can help, so choose a different type of apple next time.
- Meal planning can help here so that you think ahead and find a variety of recipes rather than eating the same meals all the time. [Check out my post on getting started here...](#)
- Try some of the different grains, millet, amaranth, bulgur wheat and use the many different types of beans and lentils.
- Vary up your spices and seasoning, there are lots of different plant compounds in these so they count!
- A way to make this a little simpler is to try different cuisines, as they tend to utilise different vegetables and seasonings.
- Make it a challenge to try something new each week, be it a fruit, vegetable, grain, legume, spice or other food (no, all the different types of processed foods don't count - they're almost entirely wheat and sugar so they don't count as new!)



Buy foods with less packaging

For the planet:

Most of us are aware now of the issues that plastics present, both as they are and as they break down and become microplastics that get everywhere and interfere with natural processes.

If you have to have packaging on your veg, at least make sure it's recyclable or compostable.

For you:

BPA plastics got a lot of negative attention when they were found to be carcinogenic. There are many other similar chemicals in plastics used to contain our foods and there isn't sufficient evidence to prove they are safe. Don't risk it and use something inert like glass where possible.

Avoiding plastic tends to move you towards fresh, whole foods which are generally healthier.



Buy foods with less packaging

How to do it:

Storing food:

- Make some swaps to glass or silicone storage for foods in the cupboards and fridge.
- When travelling out and about, metal or silicone lunchboxes are better.
- Choose metal or silicone water bottles.

Buying food:

- Look for the loose fruits and vegetables in store (and take your own veg bags to buy them in). Try exploring a couple of other supermarkets to see what they have out of packaging.
- Find local refill shops by asking local forums or searching on Google or try some online companies like Able & Cole to buy grains, cereals, butts etc without packaging. Able & Cole certainly aren't cheap, but it is very convenient. I have found that some refill shops are quite similarly priced to the supermarkets though, so they're worth checking out.
- If you can't find out of packaging, buy in bulk to reduce the packaging per gram.
- Always take your own bags with you to the shops to minimise single use plastic.



Swap some meat and dairy for beans and lentils

For the planet:

This is always a very controversial topic! But if 36% of all habitable land is taken up by livestock and produces just 18% of our calorie intake. Whilst 11% of our land is used to grow crops, which account for the other 82% of our diets (and feeding the livestock) then it makes sense that if we can reduce our meat intake, we will have significantly more space to grow more crops to feed EVERYONE without having to clear more land as our population continues to increase.

Cows are also linked to high levels of methane production, so lower numbers should slow global warming.

Intensive cattle farming like the CAFO's typical of the American beef industry release a lot of cattle excrement and drugs into the environment in a local area causing pollution too.

For you:

Red meats have been linked to heart disease and other conditions, mainly because they contain high levels of saturated fats. Eating red meat in moderation is unlikely to cause issues, but if you eat meat every day, cutting down will reduce your risks associated with saturated fats, improve your gut health by forcing a wider variety of foods (which should be higher fibre).



Swap some meat and dairy for beans and lentils

How to do it:

Start by removing meat from one more meal a week, then build up, gradually making more meals vegetarian or even vegan. Try making swaps in some of the meals you know already, or find some vegetarian recipes online. We've been amazed that, the less you eat meat, the less you want it!

What you shouldn't do here is move to the vegan alternatives to sausages, bacon, cheese etc as they are often highly packaged, processed foods based on soy and wheat and with lots of added sugar and chemicals i.e. they aren't healthy!

Here are some ideas for swaps:

- Replace meat with beans, mushrooms or lentils in something with a tasty sauce. i.e. make a veggie chilli, or a veggie curry. The flavour in these comes from the spices, not the meat.
- Lentils and mushrooms swap well into a bolognese, pasta bake or shepherds pie.
- Eat chunky vegetable soups, rather than the meat chunk ones. Homemade are always best and not usually hard to cook.
- Try a large mushroom or homemade bean burgers in place of beef burgers.
- Get the family on board agreeing swaps. Try names like Meatless Mondays to get kids on board - they love a regular meal theme. Get them to pick from a few options so they feel consulted.

If you're really attached to meat in a meal, try these suggestions:

- Reduce the portion size i.e. one sausage or rasher of bacon rather than two. It'll be better for your health too... If you're worried about being hungry, just increase the portions of the plants on your plate or add in some beans or lentils to bulk it up.
- Swap to a less land intensive form of meat. Beef has been shown to be the least eco friendly form of meat. Swap it for pork, or even better, chicken.
- Swap meat for fish as it is higher than omega 3's, a healthy fat that many of us are deficient in. Responsibly fished seafood should have a lower footprint and is certainly better for your health.



Eat fewer processed foods

For the planet:

The processing of foods requires energy. But also, the collection of different ingredients from around the world to put into the product and the onward shipping for packaging all leads to a much larger carbon footprint for processed foods.

The packaging also tends to be much harder to recycle.

For you:

Processed foods often contain high levels of added sugars, unhealthy fats, and sodium. By reducing their consumption, you can improve your overall diet quality, lower the risk of chronic diseases, and maintain a healthy weight.

The processing of foods usually strips nutrients from foods as many vitamins are destroyed by heat or leached out in chemicals. The base foods themselves are often low value anyway, resulting in a very unnourishing food.



Eat fewer processed foods

How to do it:

It would be easy to say 'just don't buy them', but it's rarely that simple!

Here are some tips phasing processed foods out of your life.

- Focus on buying and eating whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, dairy, eggs and lean proteins. These foods are usually fairly minimally processed.
- We often buy processed foods as convenient foods when we're out. Take drinks and snacks with you, ideally water and fruits, dried fruits, nuts or seeds. Portion these out in advance so they're easy to grab and go.
- Make simple biscuits and flapjacks at home to reduce biscuits and cake bars.
- Not sure which are the more processed foods? Look at the food label on the back of a packet. If there are less ingredients, it's usually a good indicator of a less processed food.
- Switch to water and fruit or green teas from soft drinks, sports drinks and added sugar juices.
- Try making simple sauces at home, rather than buying a jar - it's easier than you think and you can control the ingredients.
- Cook a double batch of food and freeze one, so you have an option for a quick dinner rather than take out.
- When you get cravings for sugary foods during the day, try to think why that is. Are you bored? Stressed?
- Cook more at home.



Cook more meals at home from scratch

For the planet:

Foods cooked at home tend to contain fewer chemicals and are more likely to be made from wholefoods, reducing the chemicals, processing resources, transportation and therefore the overall environmental impact associated with their production and transportation.

These foods often come with less packaging too.

For you:

Preparing meals from scratch allows you to take control of the quality and quantity of ingredients in your food, reducing your intake of unhealthy additives like artificial flavours, preservatives, and excessive sodium.

You are also more likely to cook something healthy.



Cook more meals at home from scratch

How to do it:

Consider why you don't cook much at home currently. Is it because you can't cook? Because you don't have time? Or simply that you hate it?

Everyone can cook. If you don't know what you're doing, invest in some simple kitchen tools and find a book for beginners with very simple recipes. Get the ingredients and go for it. It doesn't have to be perfect or gourmet!

If you're short on time, find super quick recipes, and get into batch cooking and prepping on days where you do have more time.

Get clear with yourself why you want to to this and make time!

Get family involved or helping with the chopping so that it becomes a more fun, social time, rather than a chore. Music, singing and dancing can help with this too!

Meal planning is pretty vital to this too, as you're unlikely to start cooking when you have no idea what to cook and haven't bought the right ingredients! [Check out my post on getting started here...](#)



Grow some foods at home

For the planet:

Anything that is grown in your garden has a very small carbon footprint (especially if it's grown in compost from your own veg leftovers).

Lettuce and spinach in particular are rare out of packaging and do not last long in the fridge, so you can remove a lot of packaging and food waste from your life by growing these.

For you:

Food doesn't get fresher than just picked from the garden. Once picked, the nutrients in food decline over time, so these should be full of nutrients and chemical free (if you've not been spraying them!).

The act of growing and caring for plants, and being outside in general is excellent for mental health and provides a bit of exercise. It's very rewarding to eat something you grew!



Grow some foods at home

How to do it:

I love veg plants that you plant and then need little attention. I also like something that you can crop whenever you need it (as opposed to something that gives you loads for a few weeks and has to be eaten or stored then).

So some of the best things to grow at home are lettuces, spinach, chard and spring onions.

These are all easy to grow, and can be grown in a pot, or even on your windowsill indoors. You don't need specialist beds, just dot them in amongst other flowers - rainbow chard is quite pretty with its coloured stems.

Chard in particular can be planted once and offers a crop for most of the year, even lasting into the winter.

Spring onions will also generally sit in the ground until you need them and need little care.

If you have a bit more space, you can try things like french beans, cherry tomatoes, a courgette plant and a kale plant.



Steam rather than fry foods

For the planet:

Oils need growing, processing and transportation, so have a much higher carbon footprint than water. Steaming requires no oil, only water.

You can cook using all three steamer basket levels, so do the rice (not all models) and fish at the same time as all your veg, rather than using multiple hob rings.

For you:

Steaming helps preserve the nutrients in foods as some are damaged by the heat in frying.

Whilst some oils are considered quite healthy, many are not and are processed in harmful chemicals. Also, using the incorrect oil can expose you to rancid carcinogenic fats. And of course, fats are high in calories, which may not be ideal for you.



Steam rather than fry foods

How to do it:

Super simple this one. Buy a steamer, it doesn't have to be a fancy one. Fill with water, stick the veg in and press the button.

Most veg are ready in 10-20 mins (depending on how soft you like them).

You can even add in the rice to some, and steam fish in them, so the whole meal is cooked this way.

If you really can't stretch to the steamer right now; you can put a tbsp of water into your pan and then put the lid on so that the foods steam fry.



Checklist

Tick off the tasks as you get them done! See your progress :)

	Started	Sort of doing	Nailed it!
Eat local, seasonal fruit and veg	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start meal planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose organic or regenerative foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat a greater variety of foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy foods with less packaging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Swap meat and dairy for beans and lentils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat less processed foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cook more meals at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grow some foods at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steam rather than fry foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

It's always hard to make change alone, so come join my community of people in the same boat as you, all trying to make changes for better health and for the planet.

You'll find tips, advice, recipes, motivation and I'll be in the group answering questions. Don't go it alone - join us :)

[Click here to learn more about the community - Eco friendly eating: for people and planet](#)



Serious about all this?

If you really want to make some progress with this you should make sure that you've nailed meal planning and have a good recipe source - it'll help with quite a few of the above steps.

Which is where I come in!

Having transformed my diet, with a lot of help from the meal planning process I've designed, I can help you to make the same change successfully.

I have a course designed to take you through from not knowing how to get started, or having failed in the past, to spending less than an hour a week planning your meals and then following it through.

My 'Eat for Body and Planet Meal Planning Club' is a great add on which provides recipes and a meal planning software to help you make this an easy part of your life, rather than a cause of stress.

Click here to learn more about the How to Make Meal Planning Work for You Course

Click here to learn more about the Eat for Body and Planet Meal Planning Club'

Want a sneaky tip?

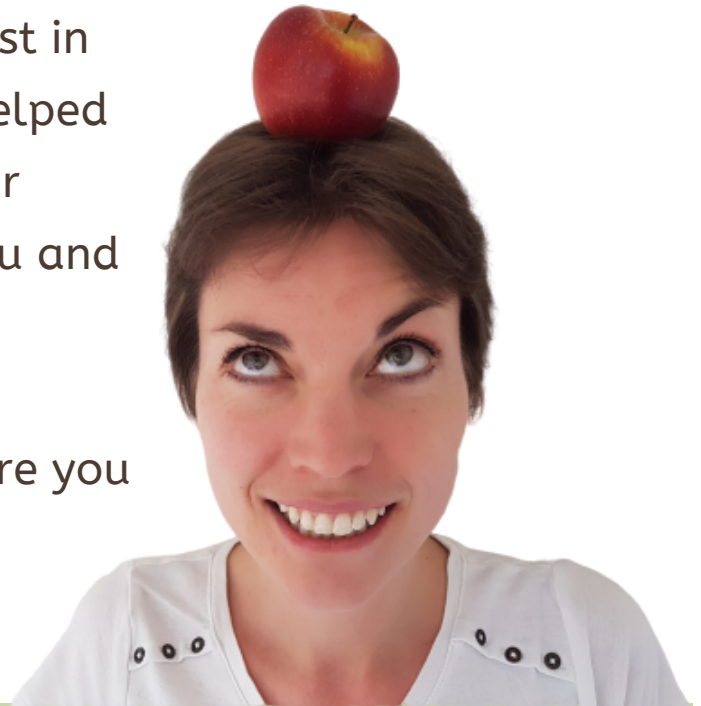
The course is free when you subscribe to the club for a year!



Thank you!

Thank you for putting your trust in me. I really hope this guide helped you take steps forward on your journey to eating better for you and the planet.

This is just the start - where are you going to take this next?



Do You Need More Help?

[Click here to see the options](#)

I have lots of ways I can help, which suit all sorts of budgets (some of it's free!), click the link above and let's see what we can achieve together!

