



Did you know? By the age of 18, women cry four times more than men, possibly due to higher levels of the hormone prolactin.



6 WAYS TO LIVE LIKE A MAN... AND BE HEALTHIER

Women might generally be regarded as healthier than men, but it turns out we can learn a thing or two about health and happiness from the opposite sex. By **Kimberley Gillan**

1 Stop emotional eating

Ask any woman when she's most likely to abandon her healthy-eating plan and she'll probably have one answer: "When I'm stressed".

"If you look at women who put on weight, 70 per cent of them are emotional or stress eaters," says Professor Ian Caterson from the Boden Institute of Obesity, Nutrition, Exercise and Eating Disorders.

Men, on the other hand, tend to eat poorly when they're bored or out with mates. "It's a lot easier for them to change their eating patterns when away from their usual environment, as their poor choices are usually related to habit rather than emotions," says David Rawlings, from Sydney's OnTrack Health Retreats.

The good news is that emotional eaters can learn new strategies to handle stress. "One way is to find another distraction that doesn't involve food

– it might be ringing a friend or going for a walk," clinical psychologist Dr Louise Adams says. "Exercise has been found to release that same serotonin response that high-fat, high-sugar foods can release, so you'll get that buzz you desire."

2 Build strength

Walk into any gym and you'll probably see the weights room filled with men doing bench presses, while the stretch classes are 99 per cent female. This needs to be reversed, says Greg Stark, from Better Being Personal Training.

"Women have lower bone density and it becomes more apparent the older they get," he says. "Weight-bearing exercise increases their bone density to reduce their chances of developing osteoporosis."

Strength training also helps your body use stored fat and tone up. "Use free weights – they increase the demand for joints to be stable

as you move, whereas fixed machines guide the movement so the joint stability isn't there," Stark says.

But that doesn't mean you should give up the stretch classes. "It's important to have a balance between mobility and stability," Stark says.

3 Control cravings

Ever wonder why guys can stop at two squares of chocolate, while you want to devour the whole block?

"There's a substance in chocolate that gives women a real buzz that doesn't happen when men eat chocolate," Dr Adams says. "Plus, we crave more high-fat, high-sugar foods around our periods."

Try indulging the craving in a smart way. Dietitian Hanan Saleh says: "Have fun-size bars of chocolate, not the whole block."

4 Love your body

Studies show up to 90 per cent of women want to change an aspect of their appearance. "Women can learn from men not to be so concerned about their body shape," Professor Caterson says. "Men are comfortable in themselves."

Danni Rowlands, education manager for The Butterfly Foundation, which supports people with eating disorders, says sticking to a balanced lifestyle can help us focus on the things our bodies do, rather than how they look. "As soon as we engage in restrictive dieting or excessive exercise regimens, the focus is lost."

5 Don't dwell


Experts agree women tend to be more in touch with their emotions, which is fantastic until we start over-analysing.

"Problem-solving and analytical skills are a bit more developed in some men," Dr Adams says. She suggests anyone who labours over decisions develops problem-solving skills. "Accept problems as they pop up and decide what you're going to do about them, rather than dwelling on how unfair or difficult they are."

6 Put yourself first

When it comes to multi-tasking, women are experts – we're mums, employees, friends, counsellors, chefs and taxi drivers... all before 9am.

"Women have more complicated connections between the brain hemispheres so we are better at multi-tasking, whereas men tend to be better at focusing on one thing," Dr Adams explains. "Women could learn to prioritise their time more. Remember, you're part of the picture as well."

Free up your time by planning meals and cooking big dishes to last for multiple dinners. "I also try to get busy women to include incidental activity, like walking to the shops," Saleh says. 

bodyandsoul.com.au



+ Putting on weight eating with your partner? Read about "man meals" at bodyandsoul.com.au

