

KAREN FOLEY: Hello, and welcome back to the Student Hub Live. So what to eat when studying is, I think, the most popular topic of conversation at the Student Hub Live. And the other day, I was doing an event with the sport and fitness team. And I thought, we've got some amazing people here who know all about nutrition and sleep. So I've invited two of them to come along and answer all your questions for once and for all about what we should eat while we are starting.

Now, I know there'll be a lot of chats going on. We've got some widgets for you. Top three foods for studying, if you could only think of one or two, just put a full stop in and then your results will submit.

When you're stressed, do you reach for the sugar, choose carbs, eat healthily, snack, or eat fatty foods? Do you drink enough fluid in the day? And do you feel rested when you wake up in the morning? And how many hours do you aim to get of sleep per night? So let us know your thoughts on that.

But let me welcome Ben and Natalie. Thank you for joining us--

BEN LANGDOWN: Good morning.

NATALIE DARKO: Good morning.

KAREN FOLEY: --from the sport and fitness team. Now, you two know an awful lot about nutrition from a sports perspective. So fill our students in on what sorts of things they need to know when they're study.

And the first thing I wanted to talk about was blood sugar levels and glycemic index, because some of these biscuits have a lot of sugar in them. And some have oats. And we talk about Hobnobs quite a lot. And we're just not sure whether that sort of combination is a good balance.

BEN LANGDOWN: OK, so the glycemic index is a scale basically. And it looks at foods and their effect on the blood sugar levels. So what you need to bear in mind is, how is the food that you're taking in going to affect your blood sugar level and, therefore, your concentration, your focus, and your ability to stay on task when you are doing your assignments or study material.

And there's three different categories. There is low GI foods. There is medium GI foods and high GI foods. And as you would expect, the low GI foods give you a steady increase across a

long period of time, so you get a slow release of energy.

KAREN FOLEY: So that's our oats and--

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, so--

KAREN FOLEY: Oats is the only I know actually.

[LAUGHTER]

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, porridge oats. So you've got fruits, a generally low GI, vegetables, and also dairy products as well. And then you've got all the way up to the other end of the scale, the high foods. So it runs on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being pure sugar, glucose. And those are the ones that, if you eat them, you get this big spike in your sugar levels.

And you might feel great at the top here. You might be buzzing and really enthusiastic about your work and your study. But then immediately after that, you get this big crash. And your blood sugar levels drop.

And that's where you're going to feel lethargic. You might get a bit moody. You might lose your concentration, lose your focus, be distracted by other things whilst you're working.

KAREN FOLEY: But it happened to you, if you're studying at 11 o'clock for a 12 o'clock submission and then you need that sort of--

BEN LANGDOWN: Possibly, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: --spike of energy rise at the last bit. Are there differences? Because this glycemic index thing has been very popular as a sort of way. And they're different ways of cutting it, aren't there, looking at the food and sort of thinking about good or bad and this, that, and the other?

Does this impact on individuals in different ways? Or are there foods that-- will the glycemic index sort of be predictable? So whilst we know that oats will be a slow release thing for a lot of people, are there individual differences in terms of, for example, how people react to sugar or sugar from fruits? Do you see what I mean?

NATALIE DARKO: I guess that links to some people, for example, have type 2 diabetes. So that will impact on the types of foods that you can eat and should be eating. So it is independent to the individual and the health conditions they might have.

But we know type 2 diabetes can be caused by eating too many of the high GI foods and high saturated fats and increasing your weight. So rise in obesity are linked to type 2 diabetes. So it's independent-- it's dependent on the individual.

But it's still a good indicator for looking at what you eat and eating healthier. But we recognise that it's also linked to your overall diet. So avoiding high saturated fat, reducing salt and sugar is also important as well. It's not just about the GIs as well.

KAREN FOLEY: So you're going to tell us that we just need to eat fruit, because I don't think anyone is going to do it. I'll be honest.

[LAUGHTER]

Look at HJ, he's got a stash of biscuits--

BEN LANGDOWN: I know. He's got--

KAREN FOLEY: --over there. And I bet everyone at home is talking about biscuits.

HJ: I know. Well, this is the problem. Everyone is talking about all these biscuits and food. And I decided to hoard them here, so no one takes my ones.

[LAUGHTER]

But they're all talking about like custard creams dipped in tea and bourbons dipped in milk. And apparently dark chocolate gets rid of colds. So maybe we'll-- I'll have some of those. But Davin doesn't have time for sleep, because he's got cakes to eat.

But I think we'd be very proud of Claudia, who sent in a picture for us. So she said, the best study snacks are cashew nuts. And she's been eating them while studying her international development module. And apparently, that is a piece about cashew nuts in there. So that's interesting.

But Mary says, fresh fruit is good brain energy, or is it fish? And Jane loves porridge first thing-- so lots of food chat. Perhaps, maybe I should try and go for porridge and fish, rather than my biscuits.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, I've been having-- overnight oats is my latest thing. And I just grate apple into some porridge and leave it with some bits and cinnamon and nuts. It's lovely.

What are your top three foods for studying? We asked you to follow in our word cloud. And let's see what you had to say.

So chocolate coming in massively in the lead with biscuits a close second. But fruit and nuts possibly in connection with chocolates. Cakes, salads, pen lids-- no, no, no, no, no. Fruit like the bananas, butter-- oh, dear.

Some non-foods going on here, [LAUGHS] carbohydrates, chocolate-flavored nuts, chocolate, chocolate, shortbread, ice cream-- OK, so some good, some bad foods. Let's talk about nuts and fish are quite interesting. Are they good?

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, so nuts are really good-- low GI. So it's that slow release of energy. It's going to give you the energy to sort of focus and concentrate on your work-- seeds as well. So just [INAUDIBLE]--

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, but, Ben, I have nuts by my desk. I've got--

NATALIE DARKO: Yeah, it's moderation.

KAREN FOLEY: --quite a big jar of nuts.

NATALIE DARKO: It's important--

KAREN FOLEY: I looked at the fat content on the nuts. I stopped eating the nuts--

BEN LANGDOWN: But they're good fats.

KAREN FOLEY: --because they're really high in fat. Is it?

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: So tell us the difference between good and bad fats then.

NATALIE DARKO: [LAUGHS]

BEN LANGDOWN: So you've got saturated fat, and you've got unsaturated fats. And you've also got trans fat. So you've got the good, the bad, and the ugly.

[LAUGHTER]

So saturated fats are the bad ones that can build up cholesterol. And that can lead to things like heart disease later on in life, if you eat sort of large amounts of them. But in nuts and seeds, you've got good fats, which can actually promote the breakdown of cholesterol.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

BEN LANGDOWN: So in terms of a snack, they are fantastic. And some of them were on that word cloud and also fruit and nuts-- cashew nuts that that student had sent in, fantastic for keeping that study blood sugar levels, allowing you to focus and maintain your concentration across the day.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent.

NATALIE DARKO: But the amount you eat is important. So the recommendation is between 25 grammes and 50 grammes, as a snack.

KAREN FOLEY: Just how many?

NATALIE DARKO: A handful maybe, not a big handful, a little handful, but not eating the whole bag. And also some nuts, we have to remember, are coated in sugar. Some are salt--

KAREN FOLEY: Some are coated in chocolate, like Brazil nuts.

[LAUGHTER]

NATALIE DARKO: Yeah, so you want the unsalted nuts as well when you pick them. The ones covered in salt or flavourings, generally you're adding more into it, which you want to avoid.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So nuts are a good sort of snack on the desk for studying. Fish, not so good for snacking at the desk,--

BEN LANGDOWN: Not really.

KAREN FOLEY: --maybe something to sit down and eat elsewhere.

BEN LANGDOWN: So they've got some of the essential oils in, omega 3, which there's been research that proves that it links to--

NATALIE DARKO: Focus.

BEN LANGDOWN: --brain development, focus, concentration, but yeah, brain development, so great source of those essential oils.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, some fish, though, have high levels of omega 3, don't they? Like, there are some things that are better for you or worst for you, like oily fish. Tell us about those.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, so it's the oily fish that have got those higher levels of omega 3 in the fish. So it's better to opt for those ones. And again, like Natalie said, it's about choosing the right method of cooking them. So there's deep fried fish.

KAREN FOLEY: Not so good.

BEN LANGDOWN: Not so good in terms of your overall health. And that's going to have an impact upon how well you study as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Now, when I'm really stressed or have a lot to do, my husband makes me these amazing fish dishes with kale and things, which are amazing, and make me feel so much better. When I'm on my own, I cannot be bothered to do anything like that myself. And I'll often just have something like soup or this, that, and the other. And it's very hard, I think, when you're under a time pressure to sort of know what's good. But sometimes, you can be so stressed that you don't necessarily have the energy to do some of these things or even feel like doing them, because you just want to reach for--

I mean, we asked our audience what they do. And 39% of them say that when they're stressed, they reach for the sugar, which is something I'll often do, or toast. I'll just think, I've got to keep going, I've got to sort of-- what advice can you give us about sort of taking care of yourself with things like that?

Are there sort of quick alternatives, like, I don't know, maybe be a salmon papillote, I guess, just thinking, like if I was going to be really good and quick and easy, I could just chuck some fish in a bit of tin fill-- you know, cling film or something and chuck it in the microwave, all that, with some vegetables. Is Any sort of advice you could give to students who might be really pushing that?

NATALIE DARKO: I think it's about time management. In the same way that you've got to manage when your assignments are due in, you can prep on a Sunday, potentially, or on a day that you have off and make your food in batches. So you could make up your rice, wholemeal rice, brown rice, I'm advocating there, and salads or vegetables, and then prepack it into boxes and take it with you and freeze it. So when you are tired, you could take it out of the freezer. But I think it's

about preparation.

But, again, when you're tired, it is good to opt for vegetables, fruits, salads, as opposed to going for those sugary snacks. Like Ben said, you'll get the highs and the lows. But preparation time and making it in batches and taking it with you can help-- freezing it as well.

BEN LANGDOWN: That's really good advice. And also thinking about, if you are stressed, how can you manage that stress? So using exercise to just take a break from your studies, go out, go for a brisk walk or a jog. Do something that's away from your studying, so that then your brain gets activated again. And you can come back, fresh eyes on your assignments or your study material, and then get back into it, but using the nutrition alongside exercise.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

NATALIE DARKO: Should help you.

KAREN FOLEY: No, absolutely. I also go for a little quick run, even though I often think I don't have the time. But actually, if I don't have a headspace, then I'm not as effective. And I notice a real difference when I come back.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, exactly.

KAREN FOLEY: And I can really focus on stuff. And often, what I thought was really, really important, when I'm running, I can think actually what is really important. And I'll sort of reevaluate maybe my priorities as well. Yes, that can help.

HJ, what are people saying at home? I know we've had lots and lots of different ideas. And everyone's been filling in the widget. So we're going to come back to think about some of those. But any other questions right now?

HJ: Well we are just sharing some of the healthy snacks we have. So Mary suggests sardines and mackerel in a bowl are easy to snack on with salad. Natalie says about cucumber-only diet. So I'm not too sure about that one.

KAREN FOLEY: Fake news!

[LAUGHTER]

HJ: Deborah agrees with you as well. So when stressed, you're kind of just on a survival mode and

you just want to get through. So it's really hard to try and find the energy and motivation to take the time to be healthy and prepare stuff, rather than just grab stuff from the cupboard. And Andrea is wondering is fruit high GI?

BEN LANGDOWN: OK, so fruit is low GI, so really good. The only one that is high GI is watermelon.

KAREN FOLEY: Really? I didn't know that.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, watermelon is high GI. So that will make your blood sugar levels go up. And then you get that crash again.

KAREN FOLEY: But fruit has a lot of natural sugar in it.

BEN LANGDOWN: It does, yeah. But it's a great food source.

KAREN FOLEY: Are some better than others? Like, I'll often think a banana is better for sort of stamina. And maybe, I'll have an orange if I need a bit of sugar.

BEN LANGDOWN: It depends. So we were talking about this earlier. So a banana, in terms of when you eat it, in terms of its ripeness, can change what the sugar levels are in the--

KAREN FOLEY: GI, right, getting more sugary as it gets older.

BEN LANGDOWN: Exactly, yeah. So unripe banana or slightly green turning to yellow is better--

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, better for you.

BEN LANGDOWN: --for lower GI than a yellow to brown banana.

NATALIE DARKO: Same for potatoes as well. The newer the potato, the better. So if you've had a potato in there for a long period of time, could be weeks and it's still looking healthy to you, you're better off having a newer potato than an older potato, because it affects the GI as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, wow, I didn't know that.

NATALIE DARKO: So ripeness is important, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, OK, excellent. Well, Jane enjoys roll 'em ups on bread with no butter. I love roll 'em ups, too. Often, if I'm really busy for lunch, I'll have herring or fish or something like that, because I just think, oh, that's really good with a bit of salad and this, that, and the other.

BEN LANGDOWN: Fresh food.

KAREN FOLEY: So when to eat the food is important. What about when to eat in the day? Are there times that we should bear in mind? I mean, I know some people, like-- well, Davis is too busy to sleep, let alone anything else. But when should people be eating? Are there certain mealtimes? times?

NATALIE DARKO: We were talking about this morning. And I think it's entirely subjective, because people exercise at nighttime, people have families, kids. It's all dependent on your lifestyle. But the most important thing is eating regularly and grazing throughout the day. Don't have long periods of time when you don't eat. So it's important to have breakfast, most importantly.

KAREN FOLEY: Is there a relationship then when you're really hungry just to reach for something very quick and convenient and maybe that isn't good for you? Do you stand more chance of making controlled, better decisions if you have some fuel in you?

NATALIE DARKO: And regularly. Like, I eat every two hours. But some people go 6 hours. But I think it's important that you think about the frequency to make sure that you're eating enough as well and that you eat regularly, because that also can affect concentration and also then can be linked to if you're tired, if you tend to reach for things when you're overtired.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, let's see what everyone said. We asked, when you are stressed, what do you do? And let's see. OK, so 40% reaching for the sugar. Next most popular one is snack.

It's interesting, isn't it? Because people do use food for reasons other than nutrition. It can be an emotional crutch. And it can be something that can see that get us sort of going or distract us from other things. We often talk about food as rewards as well.

And sometimes I think maybe are these rewards helpful, if they are chocolate or jelly beans on a page and things. I can see how that might work for some people. But equally, are they the best thing to be doing?

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, so again, it's that everything in moderation-- so treating yourself to something, maybe when you've finished your studies, but bearing in mind the overall health through life. But there's also the temptation to go and grab something quickly from a fast food chain. But again, all of those foods, you've got to think about what's that going to do to your blood sugar levels. And are you going to have that big dip. And at the bottom of that dip, your brain is going to be craving that sugar.

So the only fuel that your brain can use is sugar. Whereas, when you're exercising, you can use sugar, fats, and some cases proteins. But after you've had that sugary meal, you're going to be craving more food again. So like Natalie said, it's better to graze throughout the day. Treat yourself once you've accomplished a goal during in that day and setting yourself those small goals.

KAREN FOLEY: So food has this sort of value attached to it. But the other sort of really important thing with nutrition is water or fluids. Sometimes, that can be in the shape of fruit, like smoothies and things like that, which I'm always telling HJ to drink instead of his Coca-Cola. [LAUGHS] But the other sort of big thing right now is how much water are you getting per day. And there are all these sorts of devices that people can have in terms of measuring their water intake and things.

We asked our audience whether they think they drink enough fluid during the day. And 44% said yes. 23% said no, which has changed a little bit since. And 28% are unsure. It's quite a lot of people who are unsure.

I must admit, I don't track how much fluid I drink during the day. And sometimes, I'm really, really thirsty, and I'll just drink a pint of water. And other times, it's sort of less obvious. Why is fluid so important in this equation?

BEN LANGDOWN: OK, so there's a couple of things here. There's a bit of a myth that you need to drink two litres of fluid every day, or two litres of water every day. And that's not actually scientifically backed up.

KAREN FOLEY: Fake news.

BEN LANGDOWN: It's fake news, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: We know all about that. We'll do that on our top framework. Don't worry, we've got this sorted.

BEN LANGDOWN: There's also other research out there that shows that, if you get, let's say, 4% dehydrated, your performance, your mental performance can actually drop by up to 25%. So hydration is really important.

But it's not a case of just drinking two litres and then saying, right, I've had enough. Actually, some individuals might need a lot less than that. But other individuals might need a lot more. And it depends on things like activity levels--

NATALIE DARKO: How much you sweat as well.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, sweat rates, perspiration rates, and what types of drinks you're consuming as well. So HJ with his cola is going to be--

[LAUGHTER]

--needing a lot more fluid to replace the fluid that he's losing through drinking that sugary, fizzy drink.

KAREN FOLEY: So how do you know?

BEN LANGDOWN: So there's a couple of ways of measuring or monitoring this. The easiest one is, when you go to the toilet, just have a quick look at your urine colour. And it should be clear, not through to the sort of yellow, dark brown. And that's when you know you're dehydrated.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Is it true that sometimes you're hungry, but you're actually thirsty?

NATALIE DARKO: Can be, yes. And also, you need to aim to 6 to 8 glasses on average a day. Like Ben, said the two litres thing is dependent on who you are, how much you exercise, what you're doing in the day. So if you use that as a tool, that can help.

And also, you don't want to get to the point where you're really thirsty. If you're really thirsty and you've got to drink the pint of water, you know that you've not drunk enough. And then that can then be linked to being hungry. But also importantly, it's looking at what those 6 to 8 glasses are. That does not include alcohol.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, wow, oh.

NATALIE DARKO: That's right. So that does not include-- the recommendations, in particular The Eatwell Guide 2016, is that fruit juice, for example, you should only have 150 millimetres of fruit juice.

So a glass of juice, you want to avoid that, because that's got more sugar in it. So it's looking at what those drinks are as well, I think is important. So think about those 6 to 8 glasses. That can include milk.

KAREN FOLEY: We have to talk about coffee and tea in this equation, because where there are biscuits, there is often something to dunk them in.

BEN LANGDOWN: There is.

KAREN FOLEY: And there's been quite a lot of stuff-- actually, I've been watching on social media, there's been a lot of stuff on caffeine lately. So talk about this caffeine injection that sort of happens in certain types of fluid. That can be a real boost at times for some people. For some people, it can't be. And of course, it impacts on sleep, which we're going to go and talk on in a minute. But what can you tell our audience about the importance of caffeine in a diet tree--

BEN LANGDOWN: So caffeine is really--

KAREN FOLEY: --context

BEN LANGDOWN: --it is actually really helpful, if it's used in the right manner and at the right times during the day. So if people need to focus on a TMA or an EMA, then caffeine can help to stimulate concentration and focus. But you don't want to get to the point where you're relying on that sort of stimulant across the whole day in large quantities. You want to use it sort of tactically-- so if you know that you need to focus for the next couple of hours, having a cup of coffee, and also using naps as well. So have a nap--

NATALIE DARKO: Ben likes naps.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, I love a nap.

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: You're praising your napping, wow.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, exactly. So if you have a cup of coffee and have a quick 20-minute nap, and then whilst the caffeine is getting into your system, then you wake up feeling refreshed. The caffeine--

KAREN FOLEY: --super charged.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, supercharged and ready to type on your computer.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, that's a brilliant idea. All right, I like that. Does that work for you? So let us know what your tips are to get motivated for your study. Maybe you've got a similar tips to Ben about gearing up for an assignment.

Now, we asked what you felt when you wake up in the morning in terms of rest. Let's see what everyone at home said. 61% of people saying that they don't wake up feeling rested. Gosh.

Actually, I probably--

BEN LANGDOWN: That's a lot.

NATALIE DARKO: That's a high number, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: I'd probably agree myself.

NATALIE DARKO: Yeah, we had a discussion about this before we came in as well. If you wake up feeling tired or you feel you need a nap-- Ben likes naps, so that's slightly different-- but if you're feeling tired when you wake up or you feel like you need a nap in the day, then you know you've not had enough sleep.

So you know you need to aim for approximately 8 hours. But that could vary depending on your lifestyle. And I know Ben said something about 6 hours with some people can be appropriate. But if you are waking up tired, then you know you need to go to bed earlier, try and get some more sleep where possible.

KAREN FOLEY: Let's see how much sleep everyone at home is aiming for. So 8 hours is in the lead at 42%; seven, 33%. We do know, though, that accompanying your study is often this whole idea of squeezing time in, often on top of other things that are happening. And sometimes, that can impact on how much physical time is available in the day.

Is there anything that people can do to sort of enhance the quality of sleep? Is it about quantity or quality? And is there anything people can do when maybe the amount of sleep that they have just isn't in their control, if they've got young children, for example, or shift working?

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, so there's something called the circadian cycle. And this is when you're sleeping, you go through this pattern of being in light sleep all the way through to deep sleep and then back to sleep again. And there's research that's coming out now that looks that 90-minute blocks.

So if you can factor that in. So 6 hours is better than having sort of 6 hours 45 or 7 hours, because it's not a multiple of 90 minutes. So if you were going 6 hours or 7 and 1/2 hours or 9 hours, then you're going to wake up feeling more refreshed, than if you have sort of in between.

So there was a lot of people there saying 8 hours. But actually, if you cut that down to 7 and

1/2, you might wake up feeling more refreshed. So it's that 90 minutes, where you've got the cycle of light to deep back to light. And if you're waking up during that light phase, then you're going to feel more refreshed.

But yeah, squeezing enough sleep in when you've got lots of commitments and then you're trying to study you on top can be tricky. So it's about prioritising, planning, thinking what time am I going to go to bed and what time roughly am I going to wake up. And also sleep hygiene. This is a real--

NATALIE DARKO: Yeah, that's important.

BEN LANGDOWN: --buzz word at the moment. So it's thinking about when you go to bed, are you lying there with a phone or a tablet in front of your face and reading and viewing lots of content that's going to stimulate your brain. And therefore, you're not actually going to go to sleep very quickly once you switch that off. So it's thinking about going into your bedroom and your bedroom is for sleeping, not for being on electronic devices.

KAREN FOLEY: There's so much media that's come into our bedrooms-- radios, TVs, phones. For example, it's very difficult to sort of cut that out. And I know, I know it's bad. But I do it.

I'm always there. And I'll check my emails before bed. And I might have a quick look on Facebook. And I might look at some jokes or this or that. And I know it's really, really wrong. But I imagine I'm not alone in doing some of this sort of stuff.

And also, because I use my phone for an alarm, and if my husband's away, I like to be able to have contact. So often, I think, well, my phone needs to be right by my bed. But I might get a ping or a notification or something coming through that will wake me up at 3:00 in the morning. And so I know it's wrong.

What advice can you give people then in terms of trying to manage some of the sleep hygiene and particular ways that might be more manageable than-- I'm not going to sort of all of a sudden remove the TV and this, that, and the other? But I bet that there are some ways that we can sort of try and shut down.

NATALIE DARKO: I think the most important thing, which I think could work, is charging your phone outside of your bedroom. So put it in the hallway and close the door, so that it's hopefully not going to wake you up or charge it downstairs. Try that.

Or look at your phone before you go to the bedroom. Because if we think about it, before we had mobile technology, then what did we do before? We must have had an alarm clock somewhere. I haven't got one. I need to find one.

But we could do that-- try and look at the phone before. That's one thing. You might not be able to physically move the television. But you can, perhaps, charge your phone downstairs and look at it before you go upstairs. And like Ben said, avoid reading module material before you go to bed, because you might wake up thinking about that module material or having dreams about that module material.

KAREN FOLEY: Sometimes, if I'm working late, I like to have a list of stuff to do. So I might-- because often, I'll be lying in bed thinking, I've got to do this, that, and the other. And I'll be mulling things over. And sometimes, I like just to write a list and then just prioritise it quickly, so that even if nothing else, I've just got out of my head onto a piece of paper. And I find that quite useful.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, I do that as well. I just have a little notepad that I can just write down a to-do list. And then, like you say, you don't need to remember it in your mind. You've got it on paper. And you can relax and sleep That's good to--

NATALIE DARKO: And use pen and paper, instead of putting into it into your phone.

BEN LANGDOWN: Exactly, yeah.

NATALIE DARKO: That's better.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, absolutely.

BEN LANGDOWN: So you're not tempted to go on social media quickly.

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So these rhythms, I mean, it's sort of reminiscent of stuff we've been talking about, which is rhythms of study. A lot of people have been saying they like 30-minute chunks. And we've been talking in our boot camps about managing your time and really focusing on tasks and breaking things down into small areas, so that people can really focus. Are there any rhythms with studying as such?

BEN LANGDOWN: Not really rhythms, but, like you say, it's great to break it down into small chunks. So if you try and sit down for a long period of time and try and focus, you're going to have to need a lot of

caffeine that's going to keep you going or those sugary snacks to keep your blood sugar levels up here. But like you say, small chunks, break it up with a bit of exercise, get up and move around. That starts to stimulate your brain again. And then you can go back and hopefully focus.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, do you both do all the things you've been recommending?

NATALIE DARKO: Try to. I was trying to say to Ben today, as well, about sitting less. We all need to sit less. We should be standing more and walking more.

So even if you can't get out and exercise, if you've been sitting for a long period of time while studying, it's good to just get up and keep moving and try and stand more. So we do try and do that. And in the sports team, we're very good at going for lunch at 12 o'clock, aren't we? So we do try and make sure that everyone eats.

BEN LANGDOWN: Try and eat regularly.

KAREN FOLEY: I heard a phrase the other day-- sitting is the new smoking. Is it that bad? [LAUGHS]

BEN LANGDOWN: It is.

NATALIE DARKO: It's not great for you, yeah.

BEN LANGDOWN: Yeah, there's a lot of research coming out about how it's linked to different medical conditions. But it's not just a case of standing up and standing still--

NATALIE DARKO: Yeah, it's moving.

BEN LANGDOWN: --it's moving around and getting the blood flowing.

KAREN FOLEY: We're going to talk later about some creative uses of stationery. And one thing I used to do was I used to have walls in the room. And I used to just chuck Post-it notes on the walls. And then I'd go around and sort of walk around and try to remember them and make links between them. So give us your ideas and tips in our later session about how to use stationery and also any ideas that you've got about taking on-board some of these areas when you're studying.

I think you've given us a really comprehensive account and loads and loads of brilliant ideas. I, for one, am up for the whole make one change today type thing and then sort of bear in mind things in future. And I think what I'm going to do is try and keep my phone out of the bedroom,

because I think that will probably be the most useful thing.

So let us know if there's one thing that Natalie and Ben have been talking about that's really inspired you to just make one change. You can go on and make lots more once you've sort of made that one change. But it's one step at a time, isn't it?

So let us know what you're going to do and also whether you've got any other ideas to share with each other as well in the chat. HJ, let's just quickly check in with you.

HJ: Yeah, we've had loads of great comments. So people have been talking about-- we had a chat about really how much water we drink. So we can really see it's different for some people.

So Davin goes through 1.5 litres. And Louise is at 4 litres a day. But Jane is saying she likes 20-minute brisk walks. So that helps feel really energetic and ready for study. And Natalie does say that she thinks I'm taking the unhealthy beating for the team.

[LAUGHTER]

But maybe that's a good thing. I think I need motivation, because I know all my sleep and diet is terrible. Louise started to knit before bed, because it's really relaxing, so maybe a way to get away from the screen, focus on one small task. And Deborah is terrible reading the iPad before she goes to bed.

But I really like Ronald's comment. He's said, as an old-timer and very mature student, I enjoy reading the comments from my younger student group. But obviously, he's got his diet sorted, because breakfast is yoghurt or porridge; lunch of high fibre sandwich; and evening meal with lots of veg; and, being Welsh, about 2 to 3 pints of tea a day.

KAREN FOLEY: Great. Well, everything in moderation, as you say.

[LAUGHTER]

That's brilliant. Excellent. Well, Ben and Natalie, thank you so much for coming along. I do just have to ask you categorically, are the biscuits a good idea for our students to eat while we're studying? Can we have a yes or no answer? Or is it a bit more complex?

BEN LANGDOWN: Oh!

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHS]

BEN LANGDOWN: I love a biscuit. But if I'm going to be sticking to my word, nuts and seeds, dry fruit,--

NATALIE DARKO: Definitely, I would agree, yeah.

BEN LANGDOWN: --I'd go with that option. But treat yourself every now and again.

NATALIE DARKO: Don't be too hard on yourself. One biscuit but not the whole packet.

[LAUGHTER]

BEN LANGDOWN: Not like HJ.

KAREN FOLEY: Not like HJ. All right, yeah. Everyone at home is really on HJ's side. [LAUGHS] Excellent.
Thank you so much for coming along today--

BEN LANGDOWN: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: --and for sharing that. We're going to have a little video break now. We're going to take a quick campus flyby. And then we're going to show you a rave we did in the library a couple of years ago at the Student Hub Live. And then you can join me for our next session, which is all about supporting you in your studies, where we have Leigh and Karen from the student support team. See you in a minute.