

ARE CHEAT DAYS EVER A GOOD IDEA?

Our *healthy* panel on fitness post-menopause, how to deal with injuries and taking a flexible approach to nutrition

→ **THE HEALTHY PANEL**



NIKI REIN is founder and creative director of Barrecore (barrecore.co.uk)

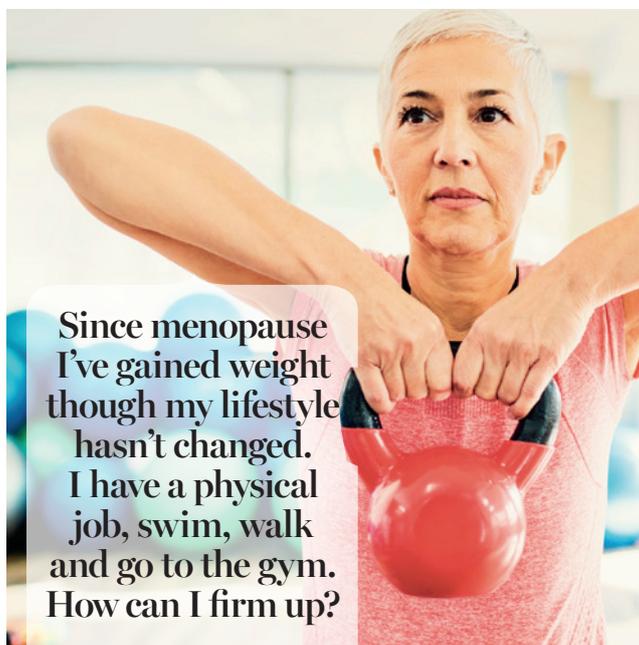


CHRISSIE WELLINGTON is a retired British professional triathlete, four-time Ironman Triathlon World Champion and author of *To the Finish Line* (Constable, £18.99)



KIM PEARSON is a nutritionist and weight-loss specialist with more than 10 years of clinical experience (kim-pearson.com)

Got a burning fitness question? Email healthy@therivergroup.co.uk with 'Fit Clinic' as the subject line



Since menopause I've gained weight though my lifestyle hasn't changed. I have a physical job, swim, walk and go to the gym. How can I firm up?

(A) Niki says: After menopause, body fat tends to accumulate around the midsection, despite activity levels. At this stage in life, carbohydrates become a big enemy so it's best to opt for a low-carb nutrition plan. Because oestrogen levels drop and bone density tends to decline, it's vital to do some bone-density building exercise, such as weight or body-weight training, at least three times a week. Check in with a personal trainer to make sure you're achieving a good resistance workout, or join a group class, such as a body pump or barre class, where weights and/or body weight is used as resistance.

HOW DO I COPE WITH SETBACKS SUCH AS INJURY?

(A) Chrissie says: The psychological impact of an injury can be as debilitating as broken bones, and so healing means addressing both the physical and emotional aspects. Try to learn from what's happened, and address the cause, rather than focusing solely on the injury. This might mean seeking expert medical help and discussing a rehabilitation programme. Consider the injury as an opportunity to do something you may not have otherwise have made time to do, such as volunteering, spending more time with loved ones or learning a new skill. Be patient and stay positive!



IS IT WORTH INCLUDING 'CHEAT DAYS' IN MY DIET?

(A) Kim says: Yes! Personally I prefer to use the term 'treat day' as cheat implies doing something wrong. Treat days can be a great idea as they give flexibility to a nutrition plan. When a plan is too restrictive it's likely to make you feel miserable and be unsustainable. Balance is key and including treats can help us get out of an 'all or nothing' dieting mentality. Ideally, they should be planned so that you feel in control and have something to look forward to. The odd treat can absolutely be part of a healthy, balanced diet. **(b)**



Compiled by Hattie Parish. Photographs iStock