

# THE *busy* MUM'S *survival* GUIDE

5 things you need to create calm and feel fantastic



Are you happy with your *energy levels*?  
What about your *weight*?  
And your *health* in general?

I wonder how you would really rate your health right now, or your overall satisfaction with life. You love your kids, and your partner (if you have one), and yet... There's nothing really wrong, but you are feeling exhausted, and you're not really sure why. Your body has never quite recovered from growing your small people. You look at yourself in the mirror, and it feels like a stranger is staring back.

Although you feed your children well, your eating is out of control. You're carb cycling – and not in the way exercise gurus talk about. Seriously, you've wondered whether it's possible to be addicted to carbs and sugar. And although you know what you should be eating and doing to feel better, it just seems out of your grasp. According to your doctor, there's nothing medically wrong with you. And yet your hormones are all over the place, you're anxious for no readily apparent reason, and the weight keeps creeping on even when you think you've been 'good' for a while.

I get it, and I want you to know that, even though this is the way many mums feel, it's not OK. But you don't need to just suck it up and hope things will magically improve. I've been there. I was that person, and I'm sorry to tell you that it won't improve unless you're ready to do these 5 things:

1. Choose that it's no longer acceptable to feel the way you do.
2. Choose to make yourself and your health a priority for the first time in a long time.
3. Plan everything the way you want it to be.
4. Bring everyone along on your healthy journey (most of the time).
5. Commit to taking some time out for yourself every day.

And here's a little extra one... Do something that's different today – it almost doesn't matter what it is just so long as you start.

Are you ready for the revolution (even if it's only a quiet and pretty small one)?

*Let's get started.*



## How to use this book.

It's easy to think 'there's nothing really wrong' and to plod on regardless, managing any annoying health symptoms that come along. In truth, things could be so much better. The first step is to really get present to how many symptoms you are experiencing on a regular basis to understand the degree to which your health is under pressure.

Complete the health and energy review to get an overview of your health. When you work with a nutrition and lifestyle coach on a one-to-one basis, they are able to help you prioritise what's most important in terms of health and match this up to the results you want to achieve. Importantly, they will also support and motivate you to make changes in a way that fits with your unique personal challenges because the knowledge of what to do does not always have you take action where there is no accountability.

# 1. Decide where you are *right now*

## How would you rate your health & energy?

Complete this questionnaire, and then add up your scores. In which areas do you score the highest?

- Use this information to set your health goals. **1=disagree and 5=agree**

### Health Score

Tired most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
Overweight	1	2	3	4	5
Prone to hormonal symptoms	1	2	3	4	5
Dark circles / bags under your eyes	1	2	3	4	5
Suffering from poor memory / concentration	1	2	3	4	5
Often feel anxious / stressed	1	2	3	4	5
Dry skin in need of daily moisturisers	1	2	3	4	5
Often constipated (rarely go once a day)	1	2	3	4	5
Difficulty sleeping	1	2	3	4	5
Low or depressed	1	2	3	4	5
Prone to indigestion / bloating after food	1	2	3	4	5

What's your score?

Ideal score: 16 or less

### Energy & Blood sugar Score

Often have mood swings / difficulty concentrating	1	2	3	4	5
I get dizzy / irritable if I go 4-6 hrs without food	1	2	3	4	5
I often over-react to stress	1	2	3	4	5
I often crave something sweet coffee after meals	1	2	3	4	5
I have less energy than I used to have	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel too tired to exercise	1	2	3	4	5
I am gaining weight and struggle to lose it	1	2	3	4	5
I get energy slumps during the day or after meals	1	2	3	4	5
I still feel tired 20 minutes after getting up	1	2	3	4	5
I need caffeine/ something sweet to get me going	1	2	3	4	5
I crave chocolate / sweet foods/ bread / cereal or	1	2	3	4	5

pasta

What's your score?

Ideal score: 16 or less

# How did you *fare*?

I'm guessing that what came up for you is a very similar scenario for most busy mums: low energy, cravings, mid-afternoon slump, poor sleep and too much caffeine.

The purpose of this book is to help you get clear on the most pressing issues and take action to improve one area of your health. As soon as something shifts, there is the promise of more and more positive change. As you move through the book it may be that you choose to work on improving the way you eat or you might decide to work on a specific area like meal planning, sleep or stress reduction in the knowledge that, if you could just fix that one thing, everything else would fall into line. All of this is much easier with the help of a coach – just saying – and you know where I am if you need me.

Even taking action in one of these areas may be enough to stop the downhill spiral and make a real difference to your energy levels – and how much you actually enjoy being a mum!





## 2. Make yourself a *priority*

Way back when women always used to report higher levels of happiness than men. That was before the majority of women had jobs and were then expected to juggle work, look after kids, managing the family and the kids' diary (the child-related admin being one of the most time-consuming and thankless tasks that no one even knows you're actually doing), the cooking and any other chores around the house. No wonder you're exhausted!

So, here's a question for you: If you could wave a magic wand, would you want things to be different? No 'yes, buts' and 'what ifs'. Just a yes or no.

Let's imagine that change is possible in one or more areas of your life and your health, will things change on their own? Who is the only person who can make change possible? Again, no 'yes, buts'. It's you. Only you can change things but you must choose to do so.



Make yourself a *priority*



## *Change is a choice.*

You may not be able to change everything and have it just the way you want it, but you have to start somewhere. The job now is to make a choice right now as to whether you are prepared to keep going as you are now. Or whether you will commit to change. There is a caveat. Whichever of these you choose, you have to be satisfied with your choice.

If you don't want to make changes, that's OK, but you are then a victim of your life (sorry to be all dramatic). If you want to move more quickly to the light at the end of the never-ending tunnel of child rearing, choose change.

## *What will you change?*

You can't do everything at once but often there is something that is a tipping point. Change that ONE thing and other things begin to fall in line. For many of my clients, that tipping point is usually meal planning or sleep. Simply focussing all your efforts in that one area has an effect all over your life.



### 3. *Plan* everything the way *you want it to be*

It might be that not everything you plan actually comes to fruition. Such is life. But unless you actually have a plan, whether you achieve what you want is completely left to chance. You know what they say; a goal without a plan is a wish. And you can probably do better than that!

When I'm working with busy mums like you, planning is THE thing that makes the biggest difference. That means planning not only your meals but also when you will exercise, when you will do those 'mummy admin' jobs and when you will take time out for yourself to relax and recharge your batteries. It probably makes sense to start with planning family mealtimes and what everyone will be eating when.

If your house is anything like mine, there will be almost constant requests for what the menu looks like on a particular day. It is very stressful not to know, not least because you will continue to be pestered. Better to have it all figured out ahead of time. Here's how:

Plan your planning. When will you sit down to plan the weekly menu? Try to pick a regular time each week so it can become a habit. Write down breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack options for everyone. I find it easiest to start with all the main meals so I can plan to make leftovers for lunch or to form the basis of another meal (roast chicken, for example, becoming the basis for a chicken pie).



## 4. Bring everyone along on your healthy journey *(most of the time)*

As soon as the household figures out that you are making changes, you may find your good intentions met with resistance. Only you know your own family. Sometimes you might tell them what the changes you are making are – but be sure to let them know what's in it for them, that they are having to change. Or you might choose to keep them in the dark (about hidden veggies in their dinner, for example).

No one should have to cook a raft of different dinners every evening, so it makes sense to adapt what the rest of the family has with what you (or indeed any other grown-ups) might be having.

The basis of a healthy diet includes following these 3 very basic rules:

1. Eat protein at every meal and snack.
2. Pack in as much veg as you can.
3. Be careful with starchy carbs – these make you stack on extra weight and kill your energy. Losing weight and regaining your va-va-vroom means cutting back on starch like potatoes, rice, pasta and couscous. I should mention that stealing the kids' sweets and eating their leftovers is also off limits if you want to improve your health!





## Reduce meal-time *stress*

One of the easiest ways to reduce meal-time stress is to have a family conference. I often suggest to my clients that they sit down with their little (and big) people and get together a list of meals that they love to eat.

I would even say this this is ESSENTIAL when you are really busy. There's nothing worse when you are breaking your neck to provide a delicious home-cooked meal and everyone pronounces it disgusting! My children are so much better at eating these days but when they were small they each had to choose one meal a week. I found they are more likely to eat the other one's favourite if they have their own day.

# Super-fast nutritious meals

## *everyone will eat*



### Mild curries made with coconut milk

Deliciously creamy. You can add a little extra spice for the adults if you're eating after the children. Add in as many veggies as you think you can get away with. Serve everyone else with rice and yourself with cauliflower rice.



### Soups

Blended veg in soups works well and disguises the vegetable-ness. Add extra rice or mini pasta to bulk up for the kids. Alternatively, you might serve theirs with a bread roll, while you have a couple of oatcakes spread with hummus.



### Ragu or tomato sauce

It's possible to hide minced mushrooms, onion, garlic, Italian herbs like basil, rosemary and oregano, plus finely diced red pepper, grated carrot and even some very finely chopped greens like kale or spinach into a tomato-based sauce without anyone noticing. Everyone gets a health upgrade!



### Spaghetti Bolognese

Use the trick above with the ragu sauce, then use courgetti (or half courgetti and half spaghetti) for your 'pasta' side.



### Lasagne

The hardest part is in making the components like the ragu sauce. When you assemble the rest of the family's, consider creating yours with thin slices of aubergine or butternut squash to act as the lasagne sheets instead.



# Super-fast nutritious meals

## *everyone will eat*



### Things in breadcrumbs

It's pretty easy and not as time-consuming as you think to coat fish or chicken in breadcrumbs for the kids. While you have the meat or fish out and you're cooking theirs, you could wrap your fish/ chicken in foil with garlic, chilli, ginger and lashings of soy sauce for a quick Asian-inspired meal.



### Shepherd's pie

Made with half sweet potato and half white potato. You can take a similar approach to a fish pie or – better still – replace the potato with a cauliflower mash top.



### Fajitas

Mum has the filing with extra salad.



### Fancy a pizza?

Choose a super thin base like Genius sweet potato wrap, then add the tomato sauce and fillings on top.



### Traybakes

Throw anything in. Chicken, chops, halloumi, veggies of all kinds including tomatoes, butternut squash, mushrooms, onions, garlic, courgettes, sweet potatoes. Everyone's favourite in one tin! Season with anything you like.

# The myth of the 'left over' fish finger

One of the things that plagues my clients is picking food off their kids' plates at tea-time or buying 'treats' for the kids and then eating them and feeling guilty.

We both know what's going on here. I used to frequently end up with a few extra fish fingers or chicken nuggets and I was brought up not to waste them. How could you bin them when there is so much hunger in the world? Surely, you should be grateful not wasteful?

And you really would be 'good' if it weren't for those treats lurking in the cupboard, destined for other tummies rather than yours.

I have two things that might work for you if you are committed to making some changes.

- 1 Store the junk somewhere else and just don't visit that place.
- 2 If you know you are ravenous by tea-time and your resolve is likely to weaken, plan a healthy snack around this time and make an agreement with yourself that you don't eat leftovers EVER. When you catch yourself, fingers poised, heading to the plate, stop yourself. We don't do that any more...





## 5. Commit to taking some *time out* for yourself *every day*



When you are up against it (and when aren't you as a mum?), things seem difficult. Stressful. LIFE is stressful. This is a direct order from someone who's been there. You NEED to take care of your self-care.

It's really easy to think that this is something that other people have time to do, but listen up; I want to tell you something. Self-care is not selfish. In fact, self-care is essential for every mum. You have to do this. Not sure what self-care is? It's those little things you must do every day just for your own enjoyment. It's different from a non-food reward, which is something you might do as a special treat for work well done. This is not even the baseline for what you need to do to make your life OK and survivable. Self-care is the recognition that only YOU can make yourself happy and that, if you make sure that you dedicate some time EVERY DAY purely for yourself, you will have more fun, you will be more fun to be around, and you will have far greater reserves to deal with the stresses of everyday life.

At the same time, it's also worth thinking about how you reward yourself. That might be for just getting through the day sometimes, or it might be for a week of eating well. Typically, women tend to go to chocolate or wine to fulfil this role. It's not that either of these is bad for you as such, but if you're not happy with your energy levels or weight, these will definitely be working against you.

“Caring for myself is not *self-indulgence*,  
it is *self-preservation*, and that is an  
act of *political warfare*.”

**Audre Lorde**





Do something *different* today



I'm sure you've heard before that if you do what you always do, you'll get what you've always got. This is, of course, true. Where will you begin? What will you do differently? What is the tipping point for you that, if you change that ONE thing, you start to gain some traction in your life?

If you've been struggling to make the changes yourself, it's likely not because you don't know what to do but that – on your own – you struggle to make your own health a priority or that you are a great starter but need someone to hold you accountable for making changes. There's nothing wrong with you not being able to take action on your own. People generally don't. I'd love to help by supporting you to actually make the changes in your life. You know where I am. Email me, book a free call, let me know what you need to get started.