



*Harrison's  
Journey*

START YOUR  
JOURNEY

**7** **STEP**  

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**GUIDE**

READY?

The HJ 7 Step Guide to a  
Healthier, Fitter, Happier Life...

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## SO WHAT DO WE DO TO START THE JOURNEY?

**TALK TO YOUR CHILD** - I never used the word "Fat" I would hate to be told now I'm fat and not great for self-esteem even at a young age. I approached the subject from a health perspective - Explain how our bodies work - how blood is pumped around our body by our heart. When we carry extra weight our heart has to work harder to pump blood which affects the way how other important organs in our body work such as our lungs for breathing. We need to help our heart to do this. It's not scare mongering at all - its educating - use diagrams of the body to explain - it doesn't have to be related to talking about body weight - put the thought and knowledge there. Talking about being fit / physically active / lean or eating for health are more positive ways of addressing the chat with your child. The word "DIET" is banned - this is a lifestyle change and not a diet ...

There is a big importance of having a healthy home environment to help kids with weight management. Supporting a healthy life style would have a positive effect on kids behaviours.

### STEP 1

## FACING THE PROBLEM

You've obviously got a concern, or realized there is a potential problem and taking action before the situation gets worse is your first step. Of course you are growing, but you may feel, like we did, that you gained weight seemingly overnight. Perhaps your clothes don't fit quite right and you're buying sizes which are bigger than they really should be. Or perhaps you're finding sports difficult at school and are starting to miss out on opportunities to take part. It could even be that you have received the dreaded and impersonal NCMP Letter – or as Harrison called it the "Fat Letter".

Whatever your reason, understanding and facing the problem is you and your families first step on your healthy journey.

### KERRY'S VIEW

Some of the issues faced by parents in addressing this first step range from a lack of knowledge about the problem and not knowing how to talk with their child about this subject to feelings of guilt.

You're not alone. Many parents don't know how to help their children make healthier decisions. When they're young, you can pretty much control children eat, so laying strong healthy lifestyle foundations is great. But let's face it, when they're older, you're not with your child twenty-four seven, and if you're not at home and temptation is in hand, your child is going to help themselves.

It's a difficult situation. You need to communicate the importance of changing eating habits or increasing exercise without lowering your child's self-esteem, which potentially could already be low.

You may think (or know from experience) that your child will perceive you as nagging or annoying. They may come back with an: "I'm sick of you telling me what to eat and what not to eat", "will you stop going on about it".

As a parent feeling responsibility for the situation you are in is part and parcel of the journey. I know I asked myself constantly if it was my fault. Was it the way I cooked or the size of portions I served? Did I make food too available? Should we have eaten together more? Should I have said no more? And do you know what? In reality the answer to all of these is probably - yes, I should have!

## ROLE MODEL BEHAVIOUR

### STEP 2

The whole family must get involved with this journey as the old saying goes "learn by example" and "practise what you preach".

One of the best ways to install good habits in your child is for you to be a good role model. One of the most powerful ways to encourage your child to be active and eat well is to do so for the whole family.

Set good examples by going for walks or bike rides instead of watching TV or being on your phone/ internet.

Playing in the park, or going for a swim with your child shows them being active is fun

and it's a great way to spend time together.

One step at a time - any changes you make to food or lifestyle will be accepted easier if they are in small amounts and involve the whole family.

# FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

STEP **3**

**WE ARE NOT ALL NUTRITIONISTS** so knowing what is best for our families when it comes to meal time, isn't necessarily easy, but I think we all know that processed foods are laden with high sugars, high fats and lots of calories. So our main tip is - go back to basics. First, establish what you're eating on a daily basis, keep a simple food diary - (Click here to download a HJ food diary now).

The whole family can take part in this - it's a bit of fun to help start your journey! Just record what your child is eating throughout the day. The activity can be turned into a game, once you have completed the week - sit down and have a family discussion around the diary and look at what you have eaten. Take a look at the NHS Eat-well guide which will give you the balance of what your plate should look like. If the meal has been a healthy, balanced meal, then mark with a tick or a smiley face. If not, then mark with a cross or a sad face.

You can then develop the game with the aim of getting three fewer crosses the following week.

## Other things to watch out for on your food diary:

- Aim to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day this can be fresh / tinned / frozen or dried - allow an extra tick / face for this .
- Unsweetened 100% fruit juice, vegetables juice and smoothies can only ever count as a max of one portion of the 5-a-day this should also never be more than 150ml per day - when fruit is blended or juiced, it releases the sugars which increases the risk of tooth decay.
- Discourage children from having sugary or high fat foods like sweets, cakes, biscuits and some sugary cereals and sugar- sweetened soft and fizzy drinks. These are high in sugar / fat and low in nutrients.
- When having more starchy foods such as bread/potatoes/ pasta and rice always try to use wholemeal.
- Switch sweetened soft drinks for water
- Your child's plate during meal times should ideally be made up of 1/3rd fruit and veg / 1/3rd starchy foods with the rest being split into dairy and proteins. You can download a guide to the eat well plate [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eat-well-guide](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eat-well-guide). The eat well guide applies to most of us part from children under the age of 2.
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts - unsaturated fats are healthier fats and include vegetable / rapeseed, olive and sunflower oils. It is important to get some fat in your diet.
- Snacks - 2 per day of 100Kcals or less is the new NHS guidelines - try fruits / dried fruit / nuts/ chopped veg - carrot/celery or cucumber sticks with a hummus dip
- Check out our recipe pages for healthy balanced meals desserts and snacks.

STEP **4**

# PORTION CONTROL

## A GROWING LAD NEEDS FOOD...

Portion size was one of the main factors for Harrison gaining weight. But he was a growing lad and he needed feeding! Well that is what I thought. I still struggle sometimes now with his portion size and so does he. Harrison eats with his eyes and will go for the largest portion on offer. Even now - in his eyes - bigger is better!

It's a slow process but educating our children on big isn't always best is key. As time goes on we as adults and kids alike can not recognise hunger so we have to help them with that. There's very little official guidance on precisely how much food children require, so a lot of it is to use your own judgement.

## OUR TOP TIPS FOR PORTION CONTROL ARE:

Knowing the calorie content of foods can be useful for us as adults - information to help you can be found here - [www.nhs.uk/livewell/loseweight/pages/understanding-calories.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/loseweight/pages/understanding-calories.aspx)

Start Meals with small servings and let your child ask for more if they are still hungry.

Learn and explain to your child how to get the balance of their diet right using the eat well guide - this will also help when looking at the food diary.

Try not to make your child finish everything on the plate or eat more than they want to.

Avoid using adult size plates for younger children it can encourage them to eat oversized portions. You could use a Healthy portion plate - check out our tried and tested page - these are the best as a guide line.

Encourage your child to eat slowly and have set meal times.

Snacking - If your child is asking for a snack offer up fruit or vegetables if they refuse this then they are not hungry otherwise they would take it - could be down to boredom or routine.

# STEP 5

## PLAN AND PREPARE

### THERE ARE MULTIPLE BENEFITS TO MEAL PLANNING & PREPPING:

Less cheating! Yep this is sooo true. When I prep meals every Sunday, I make a point to only buy the items that are on my shopping list so this helps keep those little moments of weak-ness under control because guess what, if it's not in our house, then we can't eat it!

Saves you money. At least this is true for us! Before meal planning I tended to just wing it each night, either by running out to the supermarket after work to make whatever we were in the mood for, putting a frozen processed meal in the microwave or spending even more money on a take away. This could also be true for our lunches! School lunches every week and a costa/Starbucks for my lunch I was spending SO much money each week on lunches and dinners. Now I am able to plan a week's worth of breakfasts, lunches, dinners and even healthy snacks for all within a budget each week. We don't waste as much food now either!

HUGE time saver. Not only does meal prepping help us stay on track with a healthy balanced diet and a control on portion sizes, but it also gives us more time in the evenings to work out, relax, have quality family time or really do whatever we want besides rushing home to cook! Before planning and prepping, I tended to want to either skip the gym or order take out af-ter working a long day...

Helps meet fitness goals. I know I already said this, but this is really important. When you plan out your meals ahead of time not only are you learning portion control, but fueling your body with nutritional food just makes the changes so much easier. It's so true when they say that "abs are made in the kitchen" – It's a bit over the top to want your child to have abs I know but your child's body requires healthy food for energy, strength and brain power even weight loss.

Gives a great variety! Sometimes planning out meals each week can get a little boring. There will be a few go-to meals that you will be addicted to making, but one thing we have committed to doing is trying out at least 1 or 2 new recipes each week! If we like the dish then we'll add it into the pot and if we don't, well we just won't make it again.



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### THERE ARE MULTIPLE BENEFITS TO MEAL PLANNING & PREPPING:

All children need about 60 minutes of physical activity a day for good health, but it doesn't need to be all at once. Several short 10-minute, or even 5 minute, bursts of activity through-out the day can be just as good as an hour long stretch.

For younger children, exercise can take the form of active play, such as ball games, chasing games, like "it" and "tag", riding a scooter and using playground rides such as swings and see saws.

For older children exercise could include riding their bikes, skateboarding, walking to school, skipping, swimming, dancing and martial arts.

The really great news is that overweight children don't need to do more exercise than slimmer children. Their extra body weight means they will naturally burn more calories do-ing the same activity.

There are so many ways to get more active. Start walking more or cycling short distances instead of using the car or bus. Walking and cycling are great ways to get active together as a family. It will save you money too.

### CHANGE4LIFE

Take a look at the [www.change4life.co.uk](http://www.change4life.co.uk) for some great advice. You can join change4life for free and your child will get their own personalised activity plan full of good ideas for getting moving.



### 3 DAYS EACH WEEK CHILDREN SHOULD BE DOING VIGOROUS EXERCISE THAT CHALLENGES THEIR BODIES.

You have to be the role model for this. You have to enjoy exercise. You have to keep doing exercise and you have to make sure it's something you do for life, this will help your children develop a happy, fun and healthy relationship with exercise and fitness.

Find a sport, hobby or activity you enjoy and want to do regularly and then get your children involved. Don't be afraid of what it is and that your children won't be able to do it. They can get involved with anything from triathlons, swimming, footballs, yoga or even cross-fit.

## GET ACTIVE

# STEP 6

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# LESS SCREEN TIME AND MORE SLEEP

## IT'S TIME TO MOVE IT MOVE IT!

STEP

7

Alongside the advice to get kids moving more is the need to reduce the time they spend sitting or lying down in the day.

Limit the time they spend watching TV, playing video games and playing on electronic devices.

It also helps children stay trim if they sleep well. It's been shown that children who don't have the recommended amount of sleep are more likely to be overweight.

Help your children avoid sitting and lying around too much as this makes them more likely to put on weight.

There's no hard and fast advice on how much is too much, but experts advise that children should watch no more than 2 hours of television each day. And remove all screens (including mobile phones) from their bedroom at night.

The less children sleep, the greater the risk of them becoming obese. Lack of sleep can also affect their mood and behaviour.

**BELOW ARE THE APPROXIMATE HOURS OF SLEEP NEEDED BY CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGES, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE MILLPOND CHILDREN'S SLEEP CLINIC.**

3-5 YEARS	- 11.30 HOURS+
5-10 YEARS	- 10.00 - 10.30 HOURS
10-15 YEARS	- 9.00 - 9.30 HOURS
16 YEARS +	- 9 HOURS+



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