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# healthyfood

GUIDE

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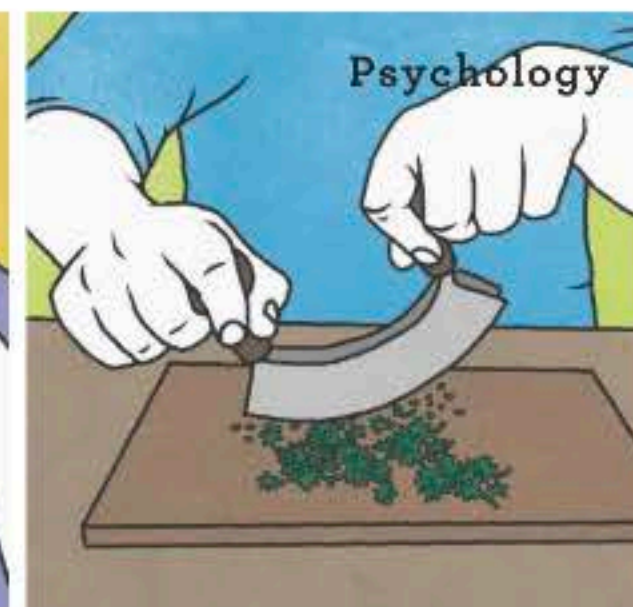
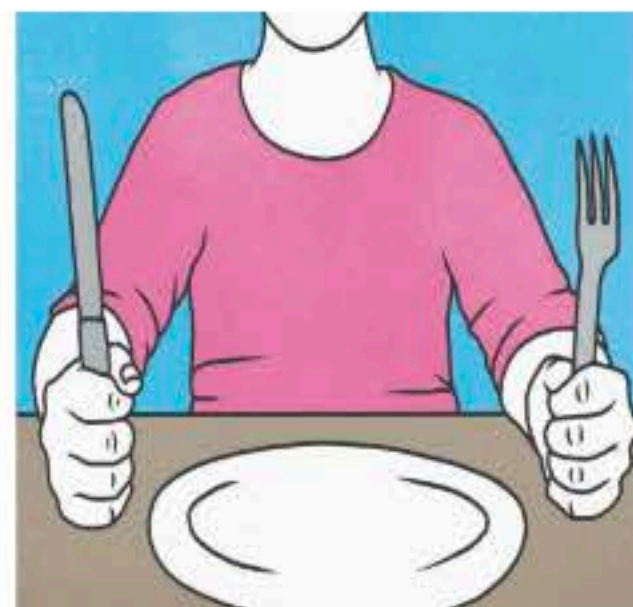
FREE BOOKLET



## How to make the MED DIET WORK

Feel energised & lose weight with our sunshine recipes and kickstart diet plan





# IDENTIFY YOUR & lose weight for good



Pinpointing your personal eating style makes you more likely to get to (and stay at) your target weight, says Dr Meg Arroll, co-author of new book *The Shrinkology Solution*

**W**E'VE BEEN USING PERSONALITY TYPES as a way to get to the nitty-gritty of human behaviour for decades. We often refer to extroverts or introverts, and this way of categorising people has been used in countless psychological studies. One area that has been investigated in detail with regards to personality is health - we know personality traits can be used to predict whether someone will develop a particular condition (those who score high on the personality trait 'agreeableness', for example, are at higher risk of weight-related conditions such as type 2 diabetes). This type of classification system can also be helpful to combat and prevent ill health if interventions are tailored to suit personality. This takes the trial-and-error frustration out of lifestyle changes, making them much easier to stick to.

## Are you a Magpie or a Rebel?

One area that my co-author Louise Atkinson and I believe is in desperate need of this personalised approach is weight loss, since studies show most diets fail pretty miserably over time. Diet plans rarely take into account personality characteristics. That's where Shrinkology comes in. Based on research and evidence of eating behaviours, we have devised six eating personality types: Gourmet, Magpie, Soother, Traditional, Rebel and Scrambler, each with their own unique traits. Which one are you?

**The GOURMET** simply loves food and relishes the process of sourcing and preparing exquisite meals. This means stingy calorie counting diets won't even be considered as the gourmet believes life is for the living!

**The MAGPIE** cares deeply about health and longevity, to the point where every new healthy-eating trend is tried. This flitting from one diet to another means none really ever has the chance to work, and it all becomes rather confusing, leading to weight gain and diet fatigue.

**The SOOTHER** is a deeply compassionate and caring person who usually puts

others' needs first. All this outward care-giving leaves little left in the pot for themselves, so Soothers tend to turn to high-carb food for a feelgood serotonin boost.

**The TRADITIONAL** is rather rigid in their eating habits. They have little patience for new trends and can be dismissive of nutritional headlines. Whereas large portion sizes may have been fine for the Traditional in younger life, as they get older, the pounds steadily pile on.

**The REBEL** is your all-or-nothing sort of person, jumping in head-first and maxing out. Although this allows for an impressive start to most diets, as soon as Rebels hit a bump in the road the diet is abandoned - usually in spectacular fashion.

**The SCRAMBLER** is busy, busy, BUSY! Who has time for diets plans anyway? Juggling work, home, friends, and often kids, takes just about all the time and headspace a Scrambler has, resulting in mindless nibbling and snack-grabbing throughout the day.

## Why doesn't your friend's diet work for you?

Some diets do work for lots of different personality types, but usually only for a short period of time. Clearly, no one would even attempt a weight loss plan if there wasn't some immediate positive

# EATING STYLE

feedback - scales tipping in the right direction, clothes feeling looser, etc. But highly restrictive eating is very difficult to sustain long-term. In fact, most people not only regain the initial weight lost, but also pile on extra pounds.

There's a physiological reason for this. Our bodies will try desperately to hold on to energy stores when we cut back on food as the lack of food is perceived as famine. To survive, our metabolism slows down and waits out the lean times. Of course, in the western world we're surrounded by food outlets and increasingly easy ways to get a calorific fix. But our in-built survival mechanisms have yet to catch up with the rapid change in fortunes.

We can't simply blame physiology, though. Diets that focus only on food ignore the psychological, emotional and behavioural triggers to our eating habits. And they're missing a big trick. There are important drivers formed in early life - the cake or ice cream for a scraped knee, 'eat your veg and you can have a pudding' deals, lunch that always comes with crisps - these are patterns that develop over time.

These eating behaviour blueprints form part of our personalities and are carried through to adulthood. But by this point we're often completely unaware that our mood and feelings may be triggering these food choices - we're now on eating autopilot, barely conscious of the food passing our lips.

## Get personal and work with your type

Identifying your unique personality features allows you to target each overeating trigger in a way that suits you as an individual. There's a misconception of 'no pain, no gain' in weight loss, but long-term healthy eating plans shouldn't feel like punishment. If they do, the chances of maintaining weight loss is minimal, as the slightest divergence can feel like a major disaster (you know: 'I've

ruined it now, so there's no point carrying on'). Whereas if we nudge ourselves into personality-specific eating patterns, new habits can form that are suited to who we really are, not what we feel under pressure to be. Here are some suggestions to kickstart your weight loss...

## Diets that focus only on food ignore the psychological triggers to our eating habits

**GOURMET diet** Compromising 24/7 on the foods you love won't work, so instead try plans that allow you to eat your favourites in an eight-hour time window, or intermittent fasting.

**MAGPIE diet** Magpies need a dose of science to keep a plan on track, so you could try the Med diet, which is based on eating healthy fats, fruit, veg, nuts and legumes, with enough evidence to satisfy curious Magpies.

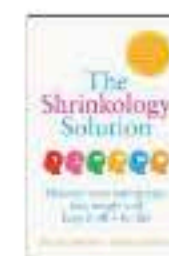
**SOOTHER diet** Soothers often choose a low-carb diet, in the mistaken belief that deprivation equals success. Not only will this fail long-term, but it also wrecks

confidence. Instead, look for a weight-loss plan that offers some social support (such as small local groups) but also allows a little of what you fancy in a structured plan.

**TRADITIONAL diet** Clear guidelines from a trusted source are a must for Traditionals, so check out the NHS Choices website for advice by registered dietitians on how to create a calorie deficit plan.

**REBEL diet** Rebels can use their incredible sparks of willpower to maintain plans such as Dr Xand van Tulleken's 'one meal a day' in his book *How To Lose Weight Well* (Quadrille, £15). This diet cleverly corrals a rebellious nature as you can eat your entire day's calorie allowance in one unleashed sitting.

**SCRAMBLER diet** If budget allows, food-by-post such as Diet Chef and Bodychef can offer a good short-term solution. But it's important to get back into the habit of eating properly, so easy plans like *Cheats & Eats* by Jackie Wicks with Rob Hobson (Healthspan, £9.99) give practical and flexible advice on how to eat healthily, even when time is limited.



**The Shrinkology Solution** by Dr Meg Arroll and Louise Atkinson (Quadrille, £9.99) is out now