



YOUR TOP 5 DESK-FASTS

Hitting a sugar slump by 11am? That butter-laden croissant you wolfed down at your desk is probably the culprit. With an increasing number of us now choosing to 'desk-fast' not breakfast, *Grazia* grilled the experts on how to make your morning meal count for more than calories...

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IF YOU CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN YOU LAST sat at your kitchen table and ate a freshly cooked breakfast, you're probably one of the majority of women now opting for 'desk-fast' – that's breakfast at your desk. But experts warn that reaching for calorie-filled lattes and muffins is affecting our mood and concentration throughout the day.

Here, five top nutritionists give their quick and easy 'desk-fast' tips to get your day off to a healthy start.

THE ENERGY SHOT

'Fibre will stop you feeling sluggish at work,' says dietician and Simple skincare nutritionist Fiona ▶

Hunter. 'Eighty per cent of us don't get enough fibre and one in four women have low iron stores, meaning less energy.' Cereals like muesli, which are often fortified with folic acid and iron, can help, but watch out for 'healthy cereals' like granola which, she warns, are full of sugar and fat.

Pack it: *fresh berry and muesli compote*

Mix a handful of mixed berries with 3 or 4 tbsp of muesli (no added sugar) and two tbsp of plain, full-fat yogurt. Pack in a takeaway pot. 'It's delicious and only around 290 calories,' says Fiona.

Buy it: *Belvita Muesli Breakfast Biscuits*

'Some cereal bars, like Belvita, have been scientifically proven to release energy over a four-hour period. Eat one with a pot of yogurt and a piece of fruit for an energy boost that will last until lunch.'

THE HAPPY MEAL

Put down the pain au chocolat! 'Quick fixes interfere with your metabolism and digestion,' says Vicki Edgson, nutritional therapist and author of *Honestly Healthy* (£20, Aurum Press). Instead, opt for foods like cashew-nut butter that are high in magnesium, which has a relaxing effect. Bananas, which contain tryptophan – shown to boost serotonin – and pumpkin seeds which contain zinc, a mood-boosting mineral, are also good choices.

Pack it: *Bircher muesli*

Mix and leave to soak overnight in the fridge. Serve with fresh fruit berries and a tbsp of organic yogurt or crème fraîche.

1 cup organic rolled jumbo oats
½ cup mixed nuts and seeds (unsalted, unroasted), including almonds, cashews, sunflower and pumpkin seeds

1 large apple, grated and juice added

1 cup water

1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp nutmeg

3-4 star anise

1 tsp ground chia seeds

1 tsp ground coconut

Buy it: *nut butter crackers*

Grab a couple of Ryvita Pumpkin Seeds And Oats Crispbreads and top with cashew or almond nut butter and sliced banana.

THE TOXIN FIGHTER

Computer screens, central heating and lack of sunlight lead to toxic overload and cause



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premature ageing. 'Pack your breakfast full of antioxidants, especially vitamin C, to blitz dull skin,' says Hala El-Shafie, who offers nutrition workshops through Nutrition Rocks. Stay hydrated with coconut water and rooibos tea to avoid headaches, bad skin and poor concentration.

Pack it: *oat and banana mash*

Throw together some oats, mashed banana and warm milk. 'Oats are packed with health-boosting nutrients while bananas contain potassium, an important electrolyte that keeps you hydrated.' Top with a 25g bag of unsalted mixed nuts.

Buy it: *fruit and yogurt pot*

Hala recommends blueberries and strawberries, which are high in vitamin C, with Greek yogurt and flaked almonds. Buy a fruit and yogurt pot or mix at your desk.

THE BLOAT BUSTER

If your jeans are feeling tight, try eating more, not less. 'If you don't eat a sufficient breakfast, your body is surviving on adrenalin, causing it to secrete cortisol (the stress hormone), which upsets digestion and causes bloating,' says Alexandra Rehlinger, nutritionist at The Third Space medical clinic. 'Warm breakfasts are easiest to digest,' she says.

Pack it: *brown rice porridge*

Cook short-grain brown rice the night

before and mix with coconut shavings, coconut cream, hazelnuts and cinnamon. Brown rice is full of nutrients and is hydrating. Coconut is high in lauric acid, which helps burn fat, and hazelnuts are a source of protein and omega 3 and 6. Top with soaked dried fruits (apricots or prunes).

Buy it: *morning soup*

Vegetables have a higher mineral content than fruit. Hala suggests heating up a fresh store-bought vegetable soup with chicken or beans served with gluten-free, multigrain bread.

THE BRAIN BOOSTER

'Protein foods like eggs, nuts, chia seeds and smoked salmon all provide omega 3 and 6 for better concentration at work,' says nutritional therapist Amelia Freer.

Pack it: *frittata and fruit*

Whisk four eggs. Sauté red onion, peppers, tomatoes, and greens like asparagus, courgette or spinach, mixed with a little sweet potato and feta. Pour over the egg mixture, wait until the bottom is sealed then place under the grill until cooked. Cut into slices and keep in the fridge for up to three days. Eat with a piece of fruit.

Buy it: *smoothie and chia seeds*

Sprinkle some chia seeds on a smoothie. They are rich in omega 3, which is essential for concentration and focus. ■