

We get energy from food (and some drinks) and we measure that energy in units called calories or kilocalories (kcal).

But calories are just units of measurement for energy in the same way that a centimetre is a unit of measurement for distance.

**Calories are not bad. They're just as essential to your life as oxygen.**

The Pyramid of Things Worth Worrying About is a tool I use all the time in clinic to show a hierarchy of what is most important.

The basic idea is, it's not worth worrying about one level until you're doing the level below properly.

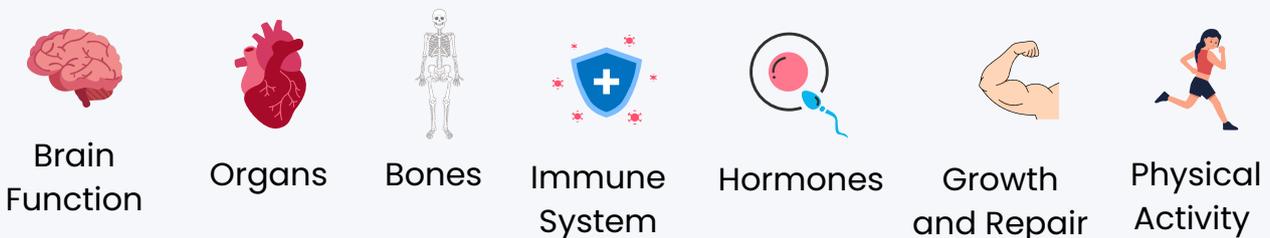


The fundamental thing about the pyramid is that the foundation is "energy".

Without enough energy, there is no way your diet will sustain health and performance in the long run.

## What does your body do with that energy?

You can think of your energy intake like money you get on payday; You spend that money on rent, bills, food, etc, but your body spends it's energy on:



## How to Tell if You're Underfuelling

Weight loss is not the only marker of underfuelling. In fact, many people with REDS (Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport) are maintaining their weight.

You can tell if you're underfuelling if your body is in a "low power mode" - shutting down "non-essential" functions to help it last as long as possible on a limited energy budget. Some of the symptoms of this low power mode are on the next page.

## The Underfuelling Symptom Checklist

Be aware, diagnosing Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport or the Female/Male Athlete Triad is something that should be done by an appropriately trained professional. This checklist does not replace proper medical advice.

This is not a comprehensive list.

**This is intended for information only so you can spot the signs that could let you know that you are underfuelling.**



- **Low Mood**
- **Low Motivation**
- **Less able to concentrate**
- **Irritable**



- **Higher heart rate during exercise**
- **Lower heart rate the rest of the time**
- **Indigestion**



- **Picking up colds and infections more easily**
- **Injuries take longer to heal**



- **Worse recovery after training**
- **Blunted training response**



- **Late or missed menstrual periods**
- **Fewer than 5 morning erections per week**



- **Reduced strength, speed, stamina**
- **Less enjoyment of sport**
- **Training feels harder**