

GET FIT, GET A FITBIT!

Denis Kelly, Metering Developments Manager talks football, Fitbits and motivation!

As Kelvin said "If you can't measure it you can't improve it!" A liking for sport and for gadgets made a Fitbit the perfect present for me last Christmas. The app allows daily targets for exercise to be set, and the present and past day's achievements to be viewed. The Fitbit model I use also monitors heart rate and sleep quality. The standard app display shows distance covered, steps taken, floors climbed, exercise completed, a heart rate trace and calories burned.

The main benefit in having a Fitbit is that it pushes me to go that bit further when exercising, whether it is in my weekly 7-a-side match, coaching football during the week or (less enthusiastically!) during trips to the gym. Interestingly, an hour's football burns off about the same calories as two hours in the gym for me. This is probably due to a weights and stretching type gym workout compared to more stamina based exercise on the football pitch. The Fitbit is also a motivator for more casual or incidental exercise. Looking at the display in the evening and noticing you are two flights of stairs off the step target, or that you could reach a weekly distance goal by walking another 0.75k may be enough to encourage that evening walk.

The sleep quality monitor is a useful feature and the app displays both the quantity and quality of sleep gained on a bar chart. Despite seeming to clock up eight hours sleep, actual sleeping time is always less due to naturally occurring periods of restlessness and wakefulness. Indulging in a late meal, coffee, or alcohol can chip away approximately 50 minutes of quality sleep, so avoiding these things and winding down in good time seems to be the key. If you're a night Owl, at a set time Fitbit can also be programmed to tell you to wise up and get ready for bed!

Has Denis convinced you? If so, then turn to page 4 for your chance to win a Fitbit!



Me and my Fitbit! Denis Kelly stepping towards his daily target!

CHICKEN AND CHORIZO STEW!

2 tbsp olive oil
4 skinless chicken breasts cut into rough cubes
1 onions, sliced
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 sticks of celery sliced
300g butternut squash, cubed
410g can chopped tomatoes
300ml chicken stock
100g chorizo, chopped
Grated zest of 1 orange
Fresh parsley, chopped



A healthy warming stew for those colder autumn nights, or reheat for a tasty lunch the next day!

Heat the oil in a large casserole dish and fry the chicken until golden.

Add the onion, garlic, celery and butternut squash and fry until the onion is tender, then pour over the tomatoes and stock.

Bring to the boil then cover and simmer for 35 minutes. Add the chorizo and butter beans simmer for a further 5 minutes.

Just before serving stir in the orange zest and chopped parsley.

You can serve with jacket potatoes, brown rice or wholemeal crusty bread.

TALKING TEAMWORK!



Northern Ireland volleyball star, Zara Bolton (pictured front row, far right) from our Ballymena office talks about the importance of teamwork.

From a young age, I've always had a keen interest in sport and at the age of 14 I started playing volleyball while at Dalriada School, and quickly knew it was the sport for me. This stemmed from having such an enthusiastic and encouraging coach who was also a teacher at the school. Within a year of playing volleyball, I was asked to join training sessions in Craigavon for the NI U16 Girls squad. My commitment to this squad paid off and I competed in the World Youth Games 12 months later.

The next step for me was to join the NI U19 Ladies squad which again involved training sessions in Craigavon as well as Belfast and Ballymoney. The intensity and skill level of these sessions grew as our long term goal was to compete in the Junior European Championships Small Countries Division which were to take place in San Marino in 2009. Again, I was successful in being selected for the team travelling to the Championships which meant more frequent training sessions as well as doing our own strength and conditioning exercises and being careful about what we ate in the build up to the event. I was part of the NI Senior Women's Squad in 2010 and 2011 and, after a three year break to complete my postgrad, I rejoined in 2014 when the team was preparing for the CEV Small Country Division Women's qualifying round. Although we played well against strong teams, we didn't progress to the finals. On a positive note, we were still able to come off court with our heads held high, knowing we had done our best. We are committed to using this experience to learn, grow and develop both as individuals and as a team.

If you are interested in learning more about getting involved in sport in your area visit Sportni.net