

NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

HEALTHY MIND HEALTHY BODY HEALTHY FUTURE

SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIPS IN YOUTH | 2025-1-PL01-KA210-YOU-000361815



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CASE STUDY 2

ALWAYS ONLINE

Meet Sara (16)

Sara spends most of her free time on social media and watching short videos. She often compares herself to influencers and feels that she isn't good enough. She used to enjoy dancing, but she stopped because she became embarrassed to dance in front of others. She sleeps poorly, rarely goes outside, and says she often feels tired and unmotivated.



YOUR TASK

Prepare a Movement Prescription that helps Sara improve her mood, build self-confidence, sleep better, reduce screen time and enjoy being active again.

1. Diagnosis

Main challenge: Sara spends excessive time on social media, compares herself to others, and has gradually withdrawn from activities she once enjoyed.

Impact on physical and mental health:

- Reduced self-confidence.
- Poor sleep quality.
- Increased stress and negative self-image.
- Limited social interaction and outdoor activity.
- Low energy and motivation.

2. Recommended Activities

- Dance classes or dancing at home.
- Walking with friends or family.
- Yoga.
- Recreational cycling.

3. Weekly Plan and Menu

Movement Plan

Dance: 3 times per week (30–45 minutes).

Walk outdoors: 20–30 minutes daily.

Yoga: 2 evenings per week.

Suggested Nutrition

Because Sara is becoming more physically active, her meals should provide enough energy, protein, complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals to support movement, recovery, concentration, and everyday wellbeing. Regular and balanced meals may also help maintain stable energy throughout the day rather than relying on quick snacks or skipping meals.

- **Breakfast** – energy for the beginning of the day. Choose a combination of a wholegrain carbohydrate, a protein source, fruit or vegetables, and a healthy fat.

Wholegrain toast + eggs + tomatoes/avocado

Oatmeal + natural yoghurt + banana + nuts or seeds

Greek yoghurt + oats + berries + seeds

Wholegrain products provide longer-lasting energy, while eggs, yoghurt, cottage cheese, and other protein sources support muscle maintenance and recovery. Fruit and vegetables add vitamins, minerals, and fibre.

- **Lunch** – a balanced main meal. Aim to combine protein + carbohydrates + vegetables + a source of healthy fat.

Salmon + potatoes + mixed salad

Chicken + brown rice + roasted vegetables

Lentils or chickpeas + wholegrain rice + vegetables

Fish such as salmon also provides healthy fats, while potatoes, rice, and wholegrain pasta provide carbohydrates that are particularly useful for an active person because they help replenish energy used during physical activity.

- **Snack** – supporting energy between meals. Instead of relying on sweets or highly processed snacks, Sara can choose combinations that provide both energy and satiety.

Fruit + natural yoghurt

Banana + handful of nuts

Apple + peanut butter

Wholegrain toast + cottage cheese.

A snack can be particularly useful before or after dance or another physical activity, depending on when Sara's main meals take place.

- **Dinner** – recovery and nourishment. Dinner should remain balanced rather than being skipped or made unnecessarily restrictive.

Vegetable soup + wholegrain bread + cottage cheese or eggs

Baked fish + vegetables + potatoes

Vegetable omelette + wholegrain bread + salad

Including a protein source at dinner supports recovery after physical activity, while vegetables provide fibre and micronutrients.,

- Hydration - Aim for regular water intake throughout the day, with additional fluids around physical activity. A practical starting point is around 2 litres of water per day adjusting according to activity, weather, and individual needs. Sara could also keep a reusable water bottle with her during school, university, walks, and dance sessions to make hydration easier.

Simple nutrition principle for Sara: Instead of following restrictive diets or comparing her eating habits with people she sees on social media, focus on regular meals, variety, balance, and nourishing the body well enough to support an active lifestyle.

Why will the nutrition plan help?

A varied and balanced diet can provide Sara with the energy needed for her increased physical activity while supplying protein and other nutrients important for recovery and overall health. Regular meals can also help her maintain more stable energy during the day.

5. Healthy Habit Challenge: Spend 30 minutes outdoors without social media apps.

6. Motivational Message: "You do not need to be perfect to enjoy moving your body."

