

A T I M E T O T H R I V I N G

# Successful Student Transitions

**Fundamentals for Well-being**  
*Dynamics for THRIVING*  
*through change*

**Episode 26**  
**Nutrition on a budget**

# Welcome to Successful Student Transitions – A Time to Thrive

This podcast series is for you if you are:

- A student leaving full-time education and moving into the world of work.
- A student moving to university or some form of higher education.
- An educator, parent or counsellor supporting students as they take the next steps in their journey from school/college/sixth form into the world of further education or work.

**For many students this represents the first big life transition. It can be an exciting and challenging time.**

This podcast series provides strategies to develop self-awareness, understanding and the ability to thrive through times of transition.

**This episode is part of Series Three: Fundamentals for Well-being – Dynamics for thriving through change and transition.**

This is the full transcript with links to associated episodes.

You can also access the show notes, resources and worksheets mentioned in the podcasts by registering [HERE](#).

## About Your Hosts

### Elizabeth Gillies

**Elizabeth is an Education Psychologist based in London who has worked in schools as a psychologist at the individual, group and systems level for over 30 years.**

She has been fortunate to live, work and raise her family in America, Japan, and Australia so, unsurprisingly, she is interested in the challenges and opportunities of transitions.



Elizabeth is a CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) specialist. She works in schools, on-line and, near her home base in South London, incorporating walking with talking therapy in green spaces.

At the crunch points at the beginning and end of the school year, Elizabeth runs workshops for young people, teachers, and parents to help them understand common patterns of transition and how to use this knowledge to help themselves during this time and future changes.

Together with a great group of professionals in London, Elizabeth is growing a multi professional support service called Special Networks and can be found [HERE](#)

Elizabeth is a member of FIGT (Families in Global Transition) and with Louise and another FIGT member, is a co-chair of the FIGT UK affiliate. Link to FIGT. Connect via LinkedIn [HERE](#)

## About Louise Wiles

**Louise Wiles is a well-being, change and transition consultant, trainer and coach and the parent of two teens.**

Alarmed by the recent explosion of well-being challenges amongst children and teens, especially during exam years and through times of change and transition. Louise believes we should be better preparing young people for life beyond school and university so that they can thrive through the natural highs and lows of life.



Louise combines her professional background in organisational psychology (MSc) and coaching, with her expertise as a wellbeing, positive change and strengths practitioner and her personal experience of life on the move, to develop training courses and coaching programmes that help her clients prepare for, and thrive, through the challenge of change and transition.

You can connect with Louise on LinkedIn [HERE](#)

Website [HERE](#) and contact Louise [HERE](#)

Louise is also the author of *Thriving Abroad: The Definitive Guide to Professional and Personal Relocation Success*

## About Our Guest Rob Hobson

Rob is a registered nutritionist and sports nutritionist who is passionate about everything to do with food, nutrition, health, and sport. His ethos is to keep it real in making things achievable when working with individuals and organisations.

His career has been incredibly varied working in public health, with NGOs, the NHS and education to help improve the health of school children, older people in care, and hospital patients. Currently his consultancy RHNutrition works with individuals and across many spaces where his knowledge and expertise can bring about change.



‘The Detox Kitchen Bible’ and ‘The Art of sleeping’ by Rob are both excellent reads.

You can find out more about Rob on his website: [HERE](#)

## Introduction

*“Yeah, definitely. And get together with your mates, you know, if you live in a shared accommodation, then just why don't you take it in turns. If you can't be bothered to cook then why don't one of you take it in turns to cook across the week, but you all share that food. That's a good option. You know, also if you want to have, if you want to eat healthily, the other option is to you know, have dinner parties with your mates and you all chip in to cook something healthy together. You know, that's good fun. I'm sure you'll have a glass of wine or two with it, but that's okay. So, so yeah, batch cooking is really important. And just getting into that, get yourself sort of four or five key dishes that you can batch cook.” Rob Hobson*

Welcome to Successful Student Transitions. As you may have guessed, today we are talking all about eating healthily on a budget with our expert nutritionist Rob Hobson and his co-star, his dog (you probably heard him in the background), and if you want to hear what Rob's five key dishes are – listen on.

If you're facing a big life change, moving to university, a year abroad, a work placement or out into the world of work, then this podcast is for you. Times of change like these can be both exciting and challenging. Our aim is to support you as you step out and find your new gear.

Using the latest from research in this field we share ideas from evidence-based practice to help you enhance your well-being in times of change. Our mission - to help you settle well and thrive in this next stage of your life.

We all know the benefit of healthy eating - in theory. This episode is packed full of fun and budget friendly ways to help you move from theory to practice and eat nutritiously as you settle into your new environment.

We hope it inspires you to new culinary heights.

**Elizabeth Gillies 02:18**

Welcome to Successful Student Transition - A time to thrive. And today when we're talking about professionals that work around this transition time, for people leaving school, going off to university, going into jobs, we're delighted to talk with Rob Hobson. He's a Registered nutritionist and a sports nutritionist. He's an author. He's written the detox kitchen Bible, look out for it, because it's a great read. And today, we're going to be talking with Rob, about that, particularly about the transition into university and Freshers Week, making sure your immune systems working. And really, he's got a lot of great tips about budgets and eating the food that you need to eat. So, Rob, do you want to introduce yourself a little bit more? What do you think is that enough?

**Rob Hobson 02:53**

So yeah, I'm Rob. Like you said, I'm a registered nutritionist and sports nutritionist. I've been doing this now for, I qualified in 2002. So, for quite a long time now. And I've worked in public health. And I've, you know, I now do lots of cool stuff with companies and private clients and all sorts of business. But food budget, especially with the cost-of-living crisis that we're going through, seems to be a common strain with everything that I'm currently doing. So, it's really nice to talk to you about it today.

**Elizabeth Gillies 03:25**

Yeah. So, you see individual clients, I meant to say, and you also connect with all that food and well being kind of industry. So, a nice kind of balance of all those things, what you're going to share with us first what you're going to what you want to talk about first.

**Rob Hobson 03:41**

So, I thought a good way to do this is to think about the student journey. So, you've arrived at university and you're very excited for Freshers week, I've done two fresher's weeks with my degrees that I got. And I think it's, there's no point telling people not to drink, right, because you're going to drink. So, I think the first thing is to think about, you know, the effects of drinking. I don't want to sound boring, but you know, I would avoid trying to go hell for leather to start with. If you're going to burn the candle at both ends, it's not going to be pretty. And we've got this, you know, the so-called fresher's flu that a lot of kids get. So, it's also a time of year, you know, we're going into winter, it's the time of year where your immune system needs to be in tip top shape. Because the last thing you need to do when you start university, is to get sick, it's really going to set you off kilter, it's going to affect your mental health, it's just, you're just not going to feel great, right? So, I mean, with the alcohol, you know, drinking lots of alcohol continually is going to deplete your body of certain nutrients. So, things like the B vitamins, and these are vitamins that are needed for the body to convert food into energy, they can help with our mood, and things like that. So, you've also got the effects of the hangover. So, you know, thinking about what you're eating the next day, don't start grabbing greasy foods and all that kind of stuff, bits of pasties, and whatever it is, to get you through, you know, you want to make sure to be eating really properly during this time as much as you can. So, think about just whole foods in the morning, if we're thinking about a budget, if you've got bit of a hangover, something like scrambled eggs on toast is dead easy to make, it's really cheap. It contains something called cysteine, which helps the body to break down alcohol. So that's another benefit. You know, don't go out on an empty stomach, this is not going to do you any favours. Try and drink some water between your drinks, maybe have slightly less

alcoholic drinks, you know, water down your wine, if you have wine. And you know, a lot of people know this. It's just try and put it into a bit of action if you can, and always watch your drinks when you're away, you know, make sure you always keep your eye on your drink, and you don't leave your friends when you're out, is a really important point.

**Elizabeth Gillies 05:55**

You know, Rob, when we've been talking with students, you kind of reminded me, a couple of them said, I did the drinking too much in that first year. And of course, you want to do it to be social. But also, it's about making sure that you're looking after yourself well and eating well and stuff like stuff like that. I mean, how do students, what would you say to someone going off to university, what's really important, what are the important things to eat and kind of be thinking about in your diet.

**Rob Hobson 06:26**

So, everything that involves eating a healthy diet, right, so it doesn't have to be complicated. If you think about what you're going to eat, you want to eat some vegetables on your plate, you want to eat a good source of protein with all your meals. So, budget proteins we're thinking about canned tuna. You know, you can get mince, you can get chicken thighs, all those kinds of foods are good proteins, I would always include a nice healthy carb. So, you know switching from white to brown is not a bad idea. And you know, there's a lot that used to be more expensive but these days there's brown pasta, brown rice, it's all kind of sort of the same price. So just making it as wholesome as possible. If you don't know how to cook, then even just a jar of sauce with mince and a chopped pepper with some pasta, that is perfectly healthy. And also, you know, you could get two or three meals like that - four meals. So, if you keep in the fridge, and then you're seeing your way through. You know, I know some beans on toast, it's not the worst meal in the world, right? You've got loads of fibre in your beans, it's one of the five a day, you've got plenty of nice carbohydrate in the bread to sort of keep your blood sugar levels nice and balanced. So yeah, scrambled egg on toast, all those kinds of things. These are sort of really simple foods that can meet those sort of healthy eating guidelines if you like, it doesn't have to be fancy.

**Elizabeth Gillies 07:49**

And they're kind of quick as well, aren't they? You know?

**Rob Hobson 07:54**

Yeah - I mean, the time it takes to put one of those horrible beige sort of, you know, whatever it is breaded whatever it is in the oven. By the time you've mucked about with all of that, you could just be you know, putting a jacket potato in the oven, just have it with some tuna mayonnaise and just a bit of salad or, or whatever it is you want to make. I just think, try and think about cooking yourself something first before just reaching for that ultra-processed food because it's not satiating. It doesn't make you feel very great. It's not very nutritious. It's just quick and salty. Kind of, you know, you can see why people want to eat it, but it's not going to do your body any favours.

**Elizabeth Gillies 08:33**

And you know, there's a kind of idea for students about buying in bulk and cooking in bulk isn't there?

**Rob Hobson 08:39**

Yeah, definitely. And get together with your mates. You know, if you live in a shared accommodation, then just why don't you take it in turns. If you can't be bothered to cook then why don't one of you take it in turns to cook across the week, but you all share that food. That's a good option. You know, also if you want to have, if you want to eat healthily, the other option is to you know, have dinner parties with your mates and you all chip in to cook something healthy together. You know, that's good fun. I'm sure you'll have a glass of wine or two with it, but that's okay. So, so yeah, batch cooking is really important. And just getting into that, get yourself sort of four or five key dishes that you can batch cook. You know, I would go for a Bolognese, a Chilli you know, something like some sort of curry whether it's chicken or tofu or corn that you stick in your curry. A good veggie soup can do you quite well you know, with a big crusty piece of bread, that's perfectly nourishing. And maybe some sort of like a Tagine thing. It sounds complicated, but all it is, is a different flavoured source, with a bit of chicken, some vegetables and maybe some sultanas or something. So just make sure you've got that, you know, stock up on the carb staples as well. You know, make sure you've got couscous, make sure you've got rice, or some other grains. Whatever it is you want. I'm not sure you're going to be eating quinoa at university. But if that floats your boat, then go for it. My other favourite actually is canned pulses and I think people don't really eat them, but they're really good nutritious additions to dishes. So just keep them in your cupboard. If you want to give your dish like that an extra boost, just chuck a can of beans in there or use half the mincemeat with beans to make that dish go much, much further. And then you know, beans are still a source of protein, as meat is, and then you just get more servings out of it. But you're still not lacking the nutrition. If you see what I mean.

**Elizabeth Gillies 10:34**

I really liked that idea of having five dishes that you can make, you know, that Bolognese, the chilli, the curry the soup, the tagine, whatever it might be, because I think having things like that, you know, that you can do it's good for your health, but also good for making friendships too, isn't it because you can say I'm making this who wants to come?

**Rob Hobson 10:55**

Yeah, I think so. And also, the social side of food is really interesting because that's one of the cultures all around the world, whether you're living on the whatever, the plains of Africa, in a jungle, or you're sat in a fancy restaurant in London, you know, there's always a connection around food. And actually, this is really important. If you've got any friends that are suffering with their mental health, then get them round, get them involved, and you know, include them in these activities because I think that as well, it is really important. And a way that could really benefit some students.

**Elizabeth Gillies 11:29**

So, taking charge of your health, cooking, and buying good ingredients. I guess it doesn't have to be expensive what do you think about frozen foods, like frozen vegetables?

**Rob Hobson 11:42**

Love them, I mean, they're just as nutritious, if not more nutritious in some cases because they've been frozen as soon as they're picked. Personally, I think they work nicest when you just chuck them into a dish, rather than served them alone. And actually, do you know what? Keep them in the fridge and

remember that they're there, because then that's just getting one of the five day, without even really having to think about it. I mean peas, you can chuck them into anything right? You know, literally anything. And if you're cooking the diced mixed vegetables they can go into, you know, you can chuck them into any Chili, chuck them into Bolognese sauce, I know that might be a bit weird, but you can just add anything you can to boost your nutrition. So, I always see those as like the nutrition boosters that you can chuck into your food.

**Elizabeth Gillies 12:30**

So, what you're saying is don't put it off by frozen, don't be put off by canned foods because they are really kind of quick and easy things to put into stuff.

**Rob Hobson 12:40**

Yeah, not at all. And also, when you're first at uni, don't get snobby about this yellow sticker food that you get in the supermarkets because it's a really good way to save money. And you know, even if food looks like it's right on the turn, the vegetables, well take them home, cut them up and put them in a bag and freeze them yourself. You can even freeze avocados, it's a really expensive food, but it's really nice. So why not freeze, take it out of the skin, scoop it out, put it in the bag, and then it's great for smoothies, if you want to make guacamole. The other place to get cheap veggies, I'm lucky enough to have a little food market near me on the Portobello road, but there's loads of food markets, right? Or even shops, you know, you get these sorts of, these shops on the corner that have baskets of vegetables, they're actually a really cheap place to go and buy some of this food and you might get - I've gone past there before at the end of the day, I've got 10 Avocados for a quid in one of those little plastic tubs you know, freeze it or whatever you get to do. Those shops are a bit like wholesale shops as well. So, if you group together, you get those massive jumbo bags of rice as well. And things like that, which is really good. And you know, wholesale food shops, they're sort of all over the place like what used to be Cash and Carry's. I don't know what they're called these days. But if you put a kitty in, maybe in the house, and you go out and buy staples together, then you can all share those staples across the week or the month.

**Elizabeth Gillies 14:07**

So, buying smart, isn't it? Because Rob and I were, we were both looking at kind of similar website. It's called Save The Student. Is that what it's called?

**Rob Hobson 14:16**

Yeah, it's a brilliant website.

**Elizabeth Gillies 14:19**

And there was a statistic on that about that the average student so, who knows who they are. But they've done a survey. They spent £116 a month on groceries and £50 pounds on takeaways and eat outs. So that's a kind of like, you know, a lot of takeout, of course people are not all going to do that. And this is not including any beverages or anything like that. So, I mean, there's maybe for your student year, you're not there all the time, there's £1,500. So, it's a bit of money to use, carefully sensibly, isn't it?



**Rob Hobson 14:55**

Yeah, I mean, that website is so funny. They've got literally all the tips, even the best way to reheat your Domino's pizza in the morning. And it's, I mean, it's brilliant, right? You don't want to waste any food. And there's loads of other websites you know, where you can find food in Pret or wherever you are at the end of the day that's going cheaply, I think some of the sushi places as well. So, you know, get really savvy, you can eat this stuff the next day, just because it's the end of the day doesn't mean you can't eat it the next day. So, if you're going to buy out, get quite savvy. We talked about a website called Approved Foods, have a look at that as well. Because Approved Foods sell, you can buy online food that's up to its sell by date and it's absolutely fine to eat that for a time afterwards. I think one of the things to think about when you've come from home, don't get obsessed by sell by dates. Because use your sense, right? If it doesn't smell gone off, the chances are it isn't gone off and you can still eat it. So don't get funny about that. Just use your senses and your common sense to start.

**Elizabeth Gillies 16:03**

And it might be that, you know, before people maybe go off to university or before they go living on their own. They've never really done a lot of grocery shopping because it's been done for them. So good to start knowing what to look for and what to buy in supermarkets. And I think like you say at the end of the day buying, you know, the things that they're selling off, because it's going to be off in the next few days or something.

**Rob Hobson 16:26**

Yeah, I'm sorry, I was just interrupting you. But when you're doing that, also think about ways that you can use those ingredients in other clever ways. So, if you've got a soup, and it's there for 20p because it's on a discount, you could turn that soup into some sort of source, if it's a tomato soup, well, that can be used to make your Bolognese or your Chilli or whatever it is, and it's going to be cheaper than the jar of sauce. So always think about clever ways that you can use these ingredients. Another thing to do is, if you've never shopped for yourself before, once you've done that first shop, why don't you just go through your receipt and think about ways that you could have done that a bit cheaper. So, if you've bought loads of fresh vegetables, well, maybe think about what you could have swapped those for, for frozen. You probably would have saved yourself a bit of money. If you've bought a packet of beef, or two packs of beef, why buy two when you just buy one and get some canned pulses. And like I said before, make that dish go much further. So just really think cleverly about what you're buying. And where you can make changes to make it a little bit cheaper. Because there will be ways that you can do that, you know, fresh fruit, I'm not being funny, I know fresh fruit is lovely, but there's nothing wrong with frozen fruit. If you may feel like making smoothies and you're using fresh fruit, you're bonkers. Why not use canned peaches or canned pears? For a fraction of the cost? Fruits only really got a bit of folate and vitamin C in, and you'll still get that from the canned foods.

**Elizabeth Gillies 17:53**

So, I'm going back to that, that having a list when you go shopping. I mean, it sounds like a no brainer. But you know, if you go shopping without a list, and you're a bit hungry, you going to over shop, aren't you?

**Rob Hobson 18:08**

Well, we do it don't we as grown-ups, as we say. I mean, if I go to the shop hungry, and I eat a lot of food, because I do a lot of training. I mean, I'm literally walking around the shops eating the bits of food. So yeah, I think it's about, just try and get into the idea of planning, plan ahead what you're going to cook and then plan your shopping list. And really try and designate, even if it's like just on a Sunday, an hour to batch cooking for the rest of the week, because there's a good chance you'll say I'm going to cook Bolognese on Wednesday and Chilli on Thursday, and then it comes around to it, your friends talk you into going to the pub. And then there's a good chance that food is never going to get cooked. So, when you've got the motivation, and do it as a group in your house, batch cook, go to Poundland get some of those microwavable little containers and just stick it all in there. And I wouldn't even keep it in the fridge, I'd put it straight in the freezer. And then it's all there for you to reheat. If you get in after a night out and you're thinking you're going to waste your money on McDonald's just come home and put a big fat chicken curry in the oven and it's healthy. You know if you have it there, then you're good to go right with all that lovely, lovely healthy food.

**Elizabeth Gillies 19:19**

Yeah, I mean, I think that's a message for us all, not just students. What about, so we've talked a bit about dinner? What about? What about those three meals in the day? What would you say about that? Or what about eating through the day? What would you say Rob about that?

**Rob Hobson 19:34**

So again, be prepared. So, I think you're probably going to try and have breakfast at home, it's much cheaper than grabbing something on the way so, if it means getting up a little bit earlier, if you're not much of a morning eater, just a bit of yoghurt and fruit and some nuts, some nuts or granola that you've bought cheaply, or whatever it is. They're quite easy to make, even a breakfast smoothie, like I said with canned fruit, you might have a bit of spinach or and some milk or whatever it is you make a smoothie with, orange juice or whatever, just have something on the go. Because also that's really important, because you're going off to school, your brain needs to work so you need to make sure that your blood sugar is nice there, you've got a nice source of energy to get you through and it's going to stop you from snacking. If you're going to want to snack and you end up spending money on snacky foods that are expensive and not good for your health so yeah, don't leave without that. Lunch leftovers. And think of savvy ways that you can use the leftover. I've made use of leftover curry, I've just put it in a wrap with some chopped peppers and a bit of mango chutney and that was my lunch. It was delicious. So, get online and think about ways that you can reuse your food the next day in interesting ways. Taking a grain, I find couscous is literally the easiest thing to take the next day because it takes like a minute to cook, and you don't even have to boil it, you just put boiling water on top of it. So, if you can't be bothered to cook something like that and you haven't got it in the fridge, couscous is always a good option as far as I'm concerned. And then yeah, we've discussed our dinner. We've had that, take some nourishing snacks with you.

**Elizabeth Gillies 20:16**

What snacks are good for us then?

**Rob Hobson 20:19**

So, I would go for, definitely think about, you can make your own fruit pots. So, we talked about those bits of canned fruit earlier why not decanter into little pots and you've got a fruit pot. Chop veggies, you can make your own health bars, they're dead, dead easy. You can use, often they use you know dates, a bit of cocoa powder and some nuts. So, I know those ingredients sound like they might be expensive but you can actually buy them online in bulk and they're not expensive at all. Or if you're going to Holland & Barrett sometimes, they do two packs for one, all that kind of stuff. Yoghurts really good. Humous, so you can buy humous really cheaply. Why not take that in with some chopped pitta bread Yeah, those kinds of foods, I would say, are probably good options. And actually, there's nothing wrong with taking, if you've got a flask, and you've made a soup, you know, soup is a good snack, or even a smaller little portion of something you've made for dinner, you know, it doesn't have to be a meal, it could just be a smaller snack, you might have made a grain salad or a pasta tuna salad and just take a little bit of it in your bag.

**Elizabeth Gillies 22:26**

So, I mean and that's in the planning too, isn't it? So, when you're planning your kind of meals, or what you're going to eat through the week, you're thinking about, and I can also use that for lunch? Or I can use this for another time, or this can be used, being flexible about how you use your food?

**Rob Hobson 22:42**

Definitely. I mean, I definitely think that you should get used to getting the essentials in, so your staples, you canned foods. And I know, it's really hard, because, you know, I'm making a generalisation here, but if you're living in a house, often it's not very tidy. So, try and keep your cupboards and fridge a bit tidy. So, food doesn't get lost at the back of the fridge or cupboard and goes off, and it's wasted. So just keep an eye on what's there and how you can make best use of it so that you're making the use of your budget. I'll share this, my little bagging hacks with you, but they I mean, there's so many different ways to reuse food, so peeling some vegetables, keep them in a bag, you can turn them into crisps by cooking them in the oven at the end of the week. You can use all the little tops of carrots to make a pasta sauce with, I mean, there's so many different ways, interesting ways, to use leftover bits of food. I mean, you need the motivation, and you need to be into it. But if it becomes a thing that you do in your house with your housemates, then you get into the habit of it. Because I think a lot of this has to do with habit. You know, I've got one here, the meats that you choose, why not have a roast with your mates on a Sunday. A whole roast chicken is not expensive these days, and then just really get all that meat off the bone and you've got something to turn into something else the next day. So yeah, there's loads of options to do this.

**Elizabeth Gillies 24:06**

And of course, you know, a lot of this needs to happen before you go to university or before you're out on your own somewhere. So, it is about trying to experiment, when you're maybe still at home, or you're in a kind of place where it's kind of safe to experiment with before you go off and do it, the real thing. So, I mean, Rob, do you ever run any kind of cooking courses for young people who are kind of just about to transition into, you know, leave home and go somewhere else? Do you ever?

**Rob Hobson 24:37**

Yeah, interestingly, I'm actually starting up something similar, but for sports people, so where they will come to a kitchen, we'll talk about the importance of nutrition, then we'll talk about how to budget properly, and then get in the kitchen in the afternoon to start cooking some dishes, some interesting dishes, because I think, and then you can sort of do that for anybody. It can be students, the importance of student nutrition, and then a budget and whatever. So yeah, I do, I do deliver that. And it's often part of a corporate wellness, but maybe it's something that universities need to invest in. Because it is fun. And, you know, I think it's really important. Another reason why this stuff's really important, because mental health is a big issue for students. And you know, once you start not eating properly, you run the risk of becoming deficient in certain nutrients. So iron is really common, especially amongst girls not having enough iron. And when you don't have enough iron, you're at risk of anemia, and that means, that's going to make you feel quite depressed, it's going to make you really tired. Other nutrients like magnesium, B vitamins, if you're not eating your whole grains, and vegetables, you know, you could become deplete in those, which can cause really a lot of tiredness and fatigue. So, making sure you've got a lot of nutrients from your food is really important from that angle, because food is really closely related to mood, you know, we talk about eating breakfast and lunch, if you're eating across the day, you're providing your body with a source of energy that will keep you nice and balanced. So, you're not getting 'hangry' and also, you're able to manage your mood a little bit better. You know, magnesium is very closely linked to mood, when you're anxious and you're stressed the body gets very depleted of magnesium very quickly. So, you know if that's the case, if you're really, really stressed, I might recommend that you maybe just invest in a magnesium supplement, they're really cheap. In fact, I think all students should just take a multivitamin, you know, it cost you a couple of quid for a month's supply. Just do that as a little backup.

**Elizabeth Gillies 26:35**

Yeah. Because you're right that that time when you go, it is stressful, it's going to be enjoyable but it's stressful because it's all new and everything's kind of different and you got to learn, make friends do all that kind of new stuff. So, looking after your body and making sure you're eating well and are getting the right sort of nutrients is really important.

**Rob Hobson 26:59**

Get into the mood. Because when you feel you're low in mood, and you can feel yourself starting to get a bit depressed, there's two things that can happen, you can either overeat and start eating junk food, which is going to feel worse, or the anxiety could stop you eating. And then that puts you at risk of, you know, vitamin and mineral deficiencies and all that kind of stuff. So really try and focus on food the best you can. And actually, when you feel like that, that's when you need to batch cook when you're in the mood, and then you've got everything to hand and you don't need to think about food, just pull it out, put it in the microwave, and you've got a nice meal there to nourish you.

**Elizabeth Gillies 27:34**

Great advice. What about, talk to us a little bit about hydration as well then, about keeping hydrated,

**Rob Hobson 27:41**

It's really important to keep hydrated, because if you want to maintain your energy levels, and your alertness in the classroom, then keeping hydrated is really important. It doesn't have to be water. Honestly, coffee, milk, tea, whatever people say about coffee it's still hydrating, herbal teas. I walk around these days with one of those hot sort of flasks, and I've always got a herbal tea, a mint tea or something and I actually have chamomile because I get quite anxious at work. So, I've always got some sort of remedy tea in there. Even soup, fruit, you know, you can get some hydration from food. And, you know, this is another thing, if you've been drinking, you're going to be really dehydrated. So really try, and on that booze thing, really try not to do too much in the week, because honestly, I can't tell you how good you feel when you are not drinking and you get sleep, you're so much more alert. And it's so much easier to focus and get on with your work. Or even if you say, well every other day, or whatever it is you do, but really try and get a grip on that.

**Elizabeth Gillies 28:47**

Yeah. So, all of those things, I think, hydration, and you know, people talk about those six to eight glasses. Is it really that? Or is it do you have to listen to your own body?

**Rob Hobson 29:00**

I think listen to your own body. I mean, when you're thirsty, it's a sign that you're already dehydrated. So just keep hydrating across the day, you know, use your common sense. Always have a bottle of water on you, one of those refillable Chilly bottles or wherever you use, make sure it's always always filled up. Yeah, and also, I'm a bit of a water guzzler. And it's really not the best way to do it. Try and drip feed across the day because you spend your whole time running to the loo, because your body can only take on so much. So, if you're wondering why, if you don't want to do it because you think you're always running to the loo, just drink more slowly, little bits across the day, is a good one. I mean, I guess the other thing that I haven't really talked about, is sleep. But that can become a real issue. So, I wrote a book on sleep called *The Art of Sleeping* and I looked at something called BED which is 'Behaviour, Environment and Diet' and they are the three components that you need to look at when you are really struggling to sleep. You know, your behaviours. And this is really hard, especially if you're a student, is trying to get to bed at the same time every day, trying to wake up at the same time, you know, in the morning, trying not to stay up all night watching TV. Try and organise your time so you're not stressed and trying to meet those deadlines at three in the morning. Try and get into a really consistent pattern. Your environment, you know, student houses are not often the nicest places, bit too noisy. You know, when you look, if you're struggling to sleep and you're looking for student accommodation, make sure you really think about; am I on a busy street? because it's not going to do you any favours for the whole year. So really use your common sense here. And make sure you've got curtains that block all the noise out. Make your bed really comfortable. Get some fairy lights, just make it a real nice sleep oasis, get a scented candle so that you're going to want to go to bed and you're going to want to go to sleep when you get into bed. Try and make your room just for sleeping. I know we people get up to other stuff, but we're not going to talk about that. But you know, don't make it a place where you're going to eat. And you're going to do work. Otherwise, you're going to get anxious about going into that room. Every time you go in that room, you're going to associate anxiety with work, with sleep and then diet it's just about eating a healthy diet. There are lots of, avoid caffeine all day long

that's going to help you, alcohol doesn't help you to sleep, foods rich in something called tryptophan are really good so that's your meaty foods to try and have, if you're vegetarian, tofu or meat and combine it with a carbohydrate to help with the uptake of that tryptophan at night, that can make you quite drowsy. Yeah, when you get up, so you know get up with a bang you know, that's another important thing. Don't just lie there, open the curtains, get some sunlight, put some music on and you know really get out of bed in style, you know ready for the day ahead.

**Elizabeth Gillies 31:59**

I like that Behaviour, Environment, Diet, BED

**Rob Hobson 32:05**

I felt very clever coming up with that.

**Elizabeth Gillies 32:07**

I'm very impressed with it, because we actually have one on sleep. So, I'm going to use that when we talk about our sleep one, because, I think you're right, because we've got these body clocks, but also our organs have clocks, don't they? And so yeah, our stomachs got a clock. So, it's about you know, it has to eat, it has to have that regular input of food, to get us into cycles, so that we are kind of digesting things not late at night, we're doing it and having most of our food in the daylight and stuff, so I really love that thing about diet.

**Rob Hobson 32:44**

It's really important. And I can give you, I'll share, I'm sure I've got an article that I've written on that, so I'll share it and if there's some tips, don't think the books very expensive these days, if you want to buy a book, go for it.

**Elizabeth Gillies 32:57**

Well, the detox, well what would you buy? The Detox Kitchen Bible? What would you say, a book for someone going off to university/leaving home.

**Rob Hobson 33:07**

You can buy my book if you want, but I think maybe have a look for more of a budget book. I mean, nothing in the Detox Kitchen Bible is particularly expensive, because we deliberately chose ingredients. You know, I've worked with a girl called Lily Simpson who has a company called The Detox Kitchen. So, she chose ingredients that are, you can buy in any shop. It's not fancy. But it does take a bit of cooking. So, there's plenty of cookbooks out there. I can't remember off the top of my head, but that use very few ingredients, and probably tailored towards students. And also, if you don't want to buy go to BBC Good Food. There's even a filter for budget foods recipes.

**Elizabeth Gillies 33:45**

So, there's no reason not to cook. There's no reason not to eat well, then because you can. You know, once you're thinking and planning about how you go about it sounds as if it's possible.

**Rob Hobson 33:56**

I guess one more point is nobody wants to cook in a dirty kitchen. So also, try your very best to keep that kitchen tidy, because honestly, if there's plates everywhere, and you haven't washed the pans, it's just one extra step to get to actually cooking. So, it's a bit of trying to be a bit organised. And get yourself a decent pan. You only need one pan. A deep sided, big frying pan is all you need at university, you can stir fry, you can do a one pot meal, you don't need loads of pans, get yourself a good pan, a good knife, a wooden spoon.

**Elizabeth Gillies 34:36**

And you're set

**Rob Hobson 34:38**

And a small saucepan and you're done.

**Elizabeth Gillies 34:41**

Thank you, Rob, we're going to on the website there'll be Rob's going share some links and resources with us. There's some good websites out there he's mentioned and also some things that Rob's written on his own. Rob I feel your passion for this good eating and of course nobody can see you. But I can say you're a kind, you're a healthy, you know, person. You look great. So, you're obviously not just talking about it. You're doing it yourself.

**Rob Hobson 35:13**

Yeah, I'm living the brand as they say Elizabeth, as they say.

**Elizabeth Gillies 35:20**

I've really enjoyed this. I've learned so much today I'm going to look up Approved Foods. And I'm also going to be thinking about that BED anagram about the art asleep. Thank you so much. I guess you know people write books about this. It could go on and on, forever. But if we really, I think we've got some really good kind of fundamental things there about planning, budgeting, what you need to do to eat well throughout the day. Be careful, Be mindful about over or under eating and how you're caring for yourself because food is that, it is that self-care thing, what you're putting into your body is so important.

**Rob Hobson**

Yeah. Great.

**Elizabeth Gillies**

Thank you, Rob. And we hope to maybe chat with you another time too. But thanks very much for all your information and advice and I look forward to reading some of your other things as well.

## Resources:

Thank you so much for listening. Some really great tips and advice there for you about planning and preparing to eat well on a budget.

I love Robs ideas for making it a social activity, involving housemates and friends in both the preparation and the eating.

Without a doubt, in challenging times, healthy nutrition plays a very important part in boosting and feeding our well-being, maintaining out physical and mental health.

Rob mentioned sleep at the end and his BED mnemonic, if you want to think more about sleep then why not go and listen to the Sleep Episode – Episode 24: Why Sleep Matters [HERE](#)

The websites mentioned were: [Save the Student](#) and [Approved Food](#).

### Other resources from Rob included:

His own Website: [HERE](#)

Blog post on Sleep - Are Sleep Trackers Useful [HERE](#) – Lots of other interesting blog posts there as well, take a browse.

**Book: *The Detox Kitchen Bible***; Lily Simpson and Rob Hobson.

**Book: *The Art of Sleeping, for a happier, calmer more successful day***; Rob Hobson

I hope you enjoyed today's episode and that it gave you lots of food for thought. I look forward to welcoming you to the next episode, next week, when we will be talking about rest and recovery. Bye, bye for now.

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