

7 | Energy

“You’ve got plenty of energy,” said Jenny, as Maeve ran past at full tilt. Maeve slowed down, circled back and collapsed on the bench next to Jenny and Emma, who were sharing a bag of popcorn.

“I don’t think so,” she managed to pant out after a few moments, catching her breath. “I don’t feel like I’ve got any energy left at all!”

“Why are you doing so much running anyway?” asked Jenny. “I saw you out yesterday and again this morning.”

“I’m just running to get fit for hockey,” replied Maeve. “We start the season next week and I’ll need all the energy I can get.”

“But you just said that you’re out of energy,” Emma butted in. “How can you have more when you play hockey if you use it all up running now?”

“Well,” panted Maeve, “if I get fit now, I’ll certainly be better for it next week. Last year, I didn’t do any pre-season training and I completely ran out of puff by half-time. And my muscles were really sore after the game.”

“Yeah, I know what you mean,” said Jenny. “I come up better if I’m fit before the netball season starts. But it’s strange, what you just said. Does getting fit give you more energy, or does it use it up?”

“It must give you more,” said Emma. “After all, where else would it come from? You said it yourself – if you’re fit, you always feel like you’ve got more energy ... Do you want any popcorn?” she added, seeing the way Maeve was staring at the bag.

“Yeah, great,” said Maeve, holding out her hand. “I’m always starved after I’ve been for a run. Dad says I eat like a horse in the hockey season.”

“That’s probably where all the energy comes from,” Jenny put in. “Mum always says food is like fuel for the body, and cars get their energy from fuel, don’t they? That’s what makes them go, and it probably makes you go, too.”

“So I should drink a cup of petrol before the game, hey?” laughed Maeve, and they all joined in at the thought of this. Then she settled down and said, “Yeah, I guess there’s energy in food – see, they’ve got it on the side of the packet: Energy, so many kilojoules per 100 grams. How do they work that out, I wonder?”

“Yeah, I wonder too. And I wonder how getting fit gives you more energy, if you use it up getting fit ... and I wonder how the body gets the energy from food – it can’t just light a little fire in your stomach, can it? And anyway, foods don’t burn like fuels, do they?” Emma was lost in thought.

“Well, gotta run, as they say,” shouted Maeve, getting up. “Thanks for the popcorn. I’ve got my energy back, so I’ll do some more training. See ya,” and off she ran.