

Healthy Habits - Healthy Lifestyle

How to develop healthier habits for a healthier, happier you.

Staying Healthy For A Life Time

“This New Year I’m going to go to the gym four times a week”, “My resolution is to quit smoking”, “I will lose 20 pounds and look great for summer”...We’ve all been there at some point or other, the New Year starts and so do our resolutions.

And why not, the New Year is all about new beginnings, hopes and dreams. The problem can be when we’re not realistic about our resolutions or don’t plan them out appropriately it can be difficult to accomplish all our goals.

By now, we all know the important link between the foods that we eat and how they play an important role in our health. We also know how smoking, excessive drinking and lack of exercise can affect our health for the worst.

If you’ve been putting off starting your healthy habits because it seems like too much of a daunting task or just haven’t had the motivation, **today is a great time to get started**. This e-book will give you information on staying healthy and keeping your body in optimum shape, by incorporating new habits as small achievable steps into your everyday life.

So, if you want to lose weight, have more energy, feel healthier all around this year and beyond read on...

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Your Mindset - Your New Body Starts Here

Before starting your new healthy eating or exercise regime, you'll need to work on your current mindset and identify patterns that have stopped you from accomplishing your goals in the past.

The first thing to do is throw out the window any labels and negative thoughts that have been cast upon you throughout your life by others or even yourself.

Thoughts like - "My sister is the pretty one and I'm the smart one", "I've always been the dumpy one in the family", "I can't lose weight no matter how hard I try". These thoughts can be counter productive to your best efforts. You don't have to be tied down by labels or negative thoughts.

Think of this opportunity as a clean slate, a fresh start – you can do anything you want to do. It may sound cliché but it's so true, set your mind to what you really want and make it happen. **You deserve to have the things you want** and if you don't act now the year will pass and you'll be in the same place, making the same resolutions next year.

So Let's Get Started!

What do you really want to accomplish health wise? Is it to quit smoking, lose 20 or 30 pounds, have more energy? Write it down and look at what you've written.

Visualize just how much different your life would be if you accomplished these goals. Go beyond the physical aspects of say losing weight (although that's a big incentive) but also think of things like how much healthier you will feel, how much energy you'll have. You'll need extra motivation beyond looking good to keep you going.

If you want to quit smoking then visualize just how much better your life will be. Think of those that love you and how terrible it would be for them to see you suffering from a smoke-related illness.

To get ahead, you'll need to get rid of these negative thoughts and patterns once and for all. Who says you're big boned and why should you believe it. Okay you may not be able to physically look like a super model (who really wants to any ways) but you can certainly shed a little extra weight, have more energy and tone up.

Chuck the labels out the window and get ready to create the life you want... remember

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a clean slate and new beginnings.

Vanishing Bad Habits

Do you reach for the donuts as soon as something goes wrong in your life? Does a stressful incident send you running to light up you another smoke? It's time to banish these habits and the hold they have over you. Stop telling yourself you're a comfort eater, if you say it long enough you'll start to believe it and it won't help your best efforts.

You really don't need that cigarette or drink if something stresses you out. You can cope with the things life throws your way without resorting to comfort from other influences.

A good way to banish these bad habits is by positive reinforcement. **Tell yourself daily you can cope with things**, you don't need that extra serving of ice cream, you don't need that drink.

Take time to think about why you're doing these things rather than just doing them. Many times you'll be able to trace these habits back as far as childhood. Did you see one of your parents lighting a cigarette or having a drink every time they got stressed out? Did your mother always comfort you with a nice slice of homemade apple pie?

More than likely you can learn why you're doing these things in the first place and this is the first step to making a change.

You're not alone when it comes to bad habits, we all have one or two things we could do without. Realize many have been there for a life time and we've conditioned ourselves to accept these bad habits as "just part of who we are". That's absolute garbage, you may have certain bad habits but you don't have to live with them. **This is YOUR life, you make it what you want.**

And finally be kind to yourself, it won't be easy to change a life time of bad habits. Don't beat yourself up if you do have that extra cookie or can't make it to the gym. That's not saying you should slack altogether but we all make mistakes and have setbacks, accept these little setbacks and being just that. This doesn't mean you'll NEVER Lose the weight it just means you're human and as we all know no human being is perfect.

By giving in to self defeating behavior you'll only feel worst and you'll be less than likely to pick up and get back on track.

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One Small Step at a Time – Exercise and Diet

Now that you're ready to get started, you've probably written out some big health goals you want to accomplish, but have you been realistic?

Your goals should be clearly defined and be achievable. So for example, can you really go to the gym five times a week? Or is it more likely that your schedule will only allow you to make it two days?

When you're starting a new fitness routine, look at your schedule and lifestyle and remember even our best intentions can't account for the kids getting sick or your boss asking you to work late. **Be realistic into how much exercise you can actually do.**

It may be better to squeeze in two gym visits a week and two walks around the neighborhood in the morning or during your lunch break at work. Be really honest with yourself and remember you're more likely to stick with your routine if it's flexible and adaptable to your family life.

By the same token you do want to make sure you're getting enough exercise overall. If you have an active lifestyle already such as walking rather than using the car or having active hobbies like gardening, etc. You may not need that much extra, but if you sit at an office desk all day then drive home and sit on the couch you will need to seriously increase your activity levels.

In this case you may need up to five 45 minute sessions per week, but approach to exercise shouldn't be just about hitting the gym (unless you really enjoy it of course) but instead should be about having an active lifestyle overall.

If you have a naturally active lifestyle this is much easier to keep up than going to the gym five times a week. You can increase your activity levels by taking your kids for a walk every weekend, gardening, washing the car, cleaning the yard, walking instead of driving, taking the stairs. You may have heard these tips before and for good reason, they work.

Think active for everything you do. If you're vacuuming the floors put a little extra effort in it. If you can walk why take the car? Modern conveniences have made it much too easy for us to be inactive. Simply get out there and be more active, move your body. Whether you do five gym sessions or walk everywhere, it's all about moving your body and burning calories through movement.

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So if you can't make it to the gym, think of other ways to stay active and increase your calorie expenditure.

The same thing goes for healthy eating, you don't have to drastically change your diet in one sweep. Will it be really possible for you to eat this way for the long term is the question you should ask yourself? **Is your healthy eating routine something that's really achievable for longer than one week?**

If you set the bar too high and fail miserably within a few days, you'll be disappointed and give up. So why not set the standard a little lower but actually achieve those small goals.

Now if you're the type of person that thinks "big" and is very all or nothing this will be a little tricky, but multiple amount of research has proven that people achieve more when they break their goals down into small measurable steps and if that's not enough to change your mindset look at it this way – would you rather be completely healthy for 5 days or overall generally healthy for a lifetime?

Start by making a few changes to your diet. If you have a larger amount of weight to lose even small changes will make a big difference to start. If you have a smaller amount of weight to lose – say 10 to 20 pounds it may be a little more difficult, but you can adjust your goals accordingly to how your body reacts and how much weight you need to lose.

For example, how about switching from white based flour products such as white bread, pasta and flour to whole wheat based products? Once you get used to the texture and wholeness of these products you will start to enjoy them. And if you really can't stand brown rice, that's okay, how about switching everything else and having white rice one or two times a week, rather than four times a week.

Remember, many of these white based flour products have very little nutritional content and have been processed to lose most of their goodness. By making this switch you will feel better overall and you will naturally shed a few pounds in the process.

Another small goal is to give up drinking soda pop or even juice, instead aim to get your five a day from fresh whole fruits. If you eat enough fruit you don't need juice at all. Most juice has been sweetened and even natural juices make it easy to consume larger amounts than when you eat fresh fruits. And as far as soda, these can be toxic for the body (even the sugar free varieties). There is zero nutritional content in a soda and yet we seem to drink tons of it per year. This stuff really isn't good for your body;

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make a pact to give it up altogether. If that's too much to start, than limit yourself to one per day until you can eventually wean yourself off it for good.

By switching to water as your main source of fluids you may be cutting out a huge number of hidden calories you didn't even know you were consuming. Some fruit juices have up to 150 calories or more per glass. If you get bored of water have some nice herbal teas on hand and include a couple of cups of green tea. Green tea has many beneficial antioxidant effects which help fight disease in the body and as an extra bonus has been shown to help speed up weight loss.

Overall try to aim for three balanced meals per day and two healthy snacks along with exercise.

Aim to include vegetables with every meal. This may seem like a bit of work at first and it is, but vegetables have so many health benefits. Many of us fall into the trap of eating very little fresh food, in fact some people will have bread or cereal for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch and fast food for dinner... where are the vegetables and fresh fruit? If your diet looks anything like this it may be time to make some serious changes.

Even if you can't give up pizza, how about adding a big fresh salad along with your pizza, you'll find you probably eat less pizza and your body will get the much needed nutrients it needs from the salad.

Have a couple of pieces of fresh fruit on hand daily as a quick healthy snack. If you're going out pop a couple of apples into your bag and have those once you feel hungry. And make sure you don't run out of fruit, if you get home and there's nothing in the fruit bowl you'll probably reach for the chips. Get to the supermarket or local fruit stand a couple of times a week and stock up.

When it comes down to it losing weight is all about having the right mind set. Instead of vowing to give up pizza forever, take it one small step at a time and make a few healthy changes to your diet. Start becoming more aware of food and the effects it has on your body.

If you eat that burger and fries how does it make you feel afterwards? Maybe you could skip the fries and have the burger and a salad instead, it may not be ideal but it would certainly help you feel better – not to mention cut out at least 400 calories from the meal.

If you feel like snacking but aren't sure what to snack on have a piece of fruit (or two)

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and a glass of water. Look at the clock and give yourself 15 minutes. If in 15 minutes I'm still hungry then I'll have something a little more substantial. If you're still craving that piece of chocolate after the 15 minutes then go ahead and have a little bit, it's better than denying yourself altogether and having the whole box.

Avoid Processed Foods.

These foods have little nutritional content and have been proven to actually damage the body. Processed foods include hydrogenated fats which have been linked to cancer and heart disease. They also include large amounts of sugar and salt.

Try to think of quick meal ideas that you can put together with little effort but are still healthy. Try a quick 10 minute pasta, boil and add a some vegetables or a salad, some cut ham or rotisserie turkey or tuna and you have an fast healthy meal.

Think of easy meals you can have on hand so that if you're tempted to reach for the phone and order that pizza you can resist because you have something easy and healthier you can quickly make. Your body and purse strings will thank you for it.

Try to Reduce your Sugar Intake

Refined sugar can be damaging to the body in many ways, it lessens your ability to fight off disease, and drastically raises your insulin levels giving you the "sugar highs" and inevitably the "sugar lows". Sugar also ages your skin by causing inflammation and damage to the skin cells amongst a number of other damaging effects.

Naturally it won't be easy to give up sugar especially if your body has gotten used to it. So again, start small. Don't just say you'll never have sugar again. Of course if you can do this that's great but it may not be realistic. Instead reduce any sugar or processed sugary foods you now eat. Try adding a little sprinkle of Watkins cinnamon in place of sugar for a touch of sweetness. Get used to drinking coffee or tea without sugar.

If you crave something sweet have a banana or a handful of dried apricots. If that doesn't help, try a couple of pieces of chocolate (preferably dark chocolate with a high cocoa content). Chocolate has a lower GI than other sugary treats which means it won't cause the high insulin reactions that having a donut will, but proceed with caution, it may be better for you than the donut but still has a lot of calories – moderation is key.

Reduce Saturated Fats and Choose Heart Healthy Fats

Animal fats and processed hydrogenated fats are saturated fats that contain bad cholesterol. The difference between good cholesterol versus bad cholesterol can

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mean the difference between a healthy heart and coronary disease. Cholesterol is not a fat, but it is closely related to fats. LDL or the "bad" cholesterol can contribute to atherosclerosis, in which the blood vessels are narrowed by deposits of fatty tissues, all of which are made up of cholesterol. This can cause angina, and also increases the risk of a blocked artery in your heart causing a heart attack.

The HDL or "good" cholesterol essentially protects the heart against attack. According to researchers, the HDL carries the cholesterol away from the arteries and back into the liver, where it is eventually passed from the body. They even go so far as to say that HDL removes excess plaque from the arteries.

Stay away from foods which contain large amount of cholesterol such as eggs, shellfish, shrimp and liver. Avoiding unsaturated fats; use vegetable oil when cooking; and drink skim milk instead of whole milk. Choose lean cuts of meat; skinless chicken; lean beef and pork; and try to limit the portion. Cook and bake with a healthy vegetable oil like grapeseed oil. It's one of the few foods known that not only reduces LDL (the bad cholesterol), but raises HDL (the good cholesterol). This helps to keep arteries clear, which may contribute to another benefit of grapeseed oil - its potential to guard against impotence.

Reduce Caffeine and Alcohol

Caffeine is a stimulant and alcohol is a depressant. With our coffee shop culture and drinks being a natural part of every dinner party or social event it may be hard to give these things up altogether. Instead of giving up you can limit your coffee intake to having one weak coffee a day and then treating yourself to a coffee shop latte or cappuccino once a week.

You can do the same with alcohol, try to limit to a few drinks per week. Opt for wine (specifically red wine) instead of beer or hard liquor. Red wine in moderation has been proven to have some health benefits. If you're at a party alternate a wine spritzer with water and you'll end up consuming less overall.

As with everything in life, it's much harder to give things up altogether and moderation may be a better approach. There are some things, however, such as smoking where it may be beneficial to just quit altogether. You may need to seek professional help to do this as smoking is highly addictive but it's harmful to your body and you should try to give up as soon as possible.

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Here are a few tips that help you on your way to a healthier life style:

- Drink water instead of soda or fruit juice.
- Banish white processed carbs and instead have the whole wheat/ whole grain variety.
- Add vegetables / salad to every meal.
- Snack on fruit first and if you're still hungry have a little something else.
- Instead of reaching for the sugary snacks, have some dried apricots, raisins or a banana instead.
- Give up processed foods or limit yourself to one or two per week to start.
- Reduce your caffeine consumption.
- Reduce your alcohol consumption.
- Get active, walk, clean, run, go to the gym, it doesn't matter just start moving your body.

How many of these can you accomplish? Look through them and be realistic with yourself. If it's too overwhelming to do all at once choose one or two things. Once you have accomplished those cross them off your list and add another couple.

Use moderation and start thinking about your body rather than just going through the motions of life. Start to feel how your body reacts to foods, exercise or bad habits. Learn to connect with your body again and treat it with respect and love and you'll be on the way to a healthier lifestyle and a healthier, happier you.

Recipes to support your goal of staying healthy for a life time!

You find a sampling of healthy recipes here, if you would like more free recipes please visit www.watkinsonline.com/thacker as well.

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Hearty Oatmeal Bake With Creamy Vanilla Yogurt Sauce

Hearty Oatmeal Bake

3 cups/750 mL old-fashioned oats
1-1/4 cups/300 mL skim milk
2 eggs (or egg substitute)
1/2 cup/125 mL unsweetened applesauce
1 cup/250 mL sugar
1 grated apple, skin on (any kind)
2 tsp/10 mL Watkins Baking Powder
2 tsp/10 mL Watkins Cinnamon
1 tsp/5 mL Watkins Pure Vanilla Extract
Pinch of salt
1/4 cup/60 mL raisins (optional)
Slivered almonds, handful (optional)

Creamy Vanilla Yogurt Sauce

1 cup/250 mL plain yogurt
1/4 cup/60 mL sugar (or sugar substitute)
2 tsp/10 mL Watkins Pure Vanilla Extract
Dash of Watkins Cinnamon

Hearty Oatmeal Bake

Combine all ingredients and pour into a 9 x 9-inch/23 x 23 cm square cake pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350 F/180°C for 30-40 minutes. Cooking times may vary, use toothpick to determine when oatmeal bake is done. Serve with yogurt sauce, if desired.

Creamy Vanilla Yogurt Sauce

Combine all ingredients, stirring well. Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour or until ready to serve.

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Scallops and Linguine in Marinara Sauce

This tasty low-fat dish is a snap to make. The Marinara sauce can also be made without the scallops and used as a topping for any hot cooked pasta.

Ingredients

12 oz/340 g dry linguine or spaghetti, cooked per package directions
1 pound/454 g bay scallops, thawed if frozen
1/2 cup/125 mL chopped onion
1 small zucchini, cubed
1 tsp/5 mL Onion Liquid Spice
1 can (28 oz/890 g) crushed tomatoes in tomato purée
1 tbsp/15 mL light brown sugar
2 tsp/10 mL red wine vinegar
1-1/2 tsp/7.5 mL Oregano
1 tsp/5 mL Garlic Liquid Spice
1/4 tsp/1.2 mL salt, if desired
1/4 tsp/1.2 mL Red Pepper Flakes

Cooking Directions

In nonstick skillet or saucepan, sauté scallops in their own liquid (add a bit of water if needed) just until they begin to turn opaque, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from skillet with slotted spoon and keep warm; discard liquid. In same skillet, sauté the onion and zucchini in the Onion Liquid Spice until crisp-tender. Add the crushed tomatoes and remaining ingredients; bring to a boil and cook 5 minutes. Add scallops and heat through. Serve over cooked pasta.

Nutrition Facts Makes 8 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 260, Protein 16 g, Carbohydrates 41 g Sodium 320 mg, Fat 3 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 19 mg, Dietary Fiber 3 g

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Chicken Paprikash

This traditional Hungarian dish usually consists of chicken and onions browned in bacon drippings, then braised with paprika and other seasonings. The sauce is then made by adding sour cream to the braising liquid. Watkins has substantially "lighted" the fat grams by substituting skinless chicken breasts and reduced-fat sour cream; a simple change you can make to your own favorite recipes. You will notice that this dish contains a huge amount of paprika (as is the case with most Hungarian dishes). Don't worry - paprika is made from exceptionally sweet and mild peppers, so it's not hot but it's healthy .

Ingredients

1 tbsp/15 mL Watkins Onion Liquid Spice
2 green peppers, cut into 1-inch/2.5-cm chunks
1 red pepper, cut into 1-inch/2.5-cm chunks
1 large onion, sliced
12 ounces/340 g uncooked extra-wide curly egg noodles (no-yolk or a whole wheat variety if desired)
2 tbsp/30 mL all-purpose flour
2-1/2 tbsp/40 mL Watkins Paprika
1/2 tsp/2.5 mL Watkins Garlic Granules
1 pound/454 g skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into 2-inch/5-cm chunks
1 cup/250 mL water
2-1/2 tbsp/40 mL Watkins Chicken Soup Base
1/2 tsp/2.5 mL Watkins Black Pepper
1/2 to 3/4 cup/125 to 180 mL reduced-fat sour cream

Cooking Directions

Sauté peppers and onion in Onion Liquid Spice until crisp-tender, stirring occasionally. Remove to a bowl. Prepare noodles according to package directions.

In zip-top bag, combine flour, paprika, and garlic granules. Add chicken chunks and shake to coat. In same skillet, add chicken and any remaining flour mixture. Cook chicken 1 to 2 minutes per side or until just beginning to brown. Add water, soup base and pepper; mix well. Heat to boiling; reduce heat and simmer 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in sour cream and reserved pepper mixture. Drain noodles and put on serving platter. Spoon paprikash mixture over noodles.

Makes 6 servings. Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 420, Protein 29 g, Carbohydrates 57 g, Sodium 420 mg, Fat 8 g, Saturated Fat 3 g, Cholesterol 49 mg,

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Dietary Fiber 4 g

Winter Vegetable Soup

Note: This is a chunky vegetable soup and you can omit or add vegetables to suit your taste. You can replace the potatoes for sweet potatoes for a sweeter tasting soup. Leeks and winter cabbage also work well.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium cabbage cut into quarters
- 2 tablespoons Watkins Grapeseed Oil
- 4 carrots, peeled and finely sliced
- 2 celery stalks, finely sliced
- 2 parsnips, peeled and diced
- 7 cups Watkins chicken soup base
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 zucchinis, diced
- 2 cups of cauliflower florets
- 2 fresh tomatoes, seeded and diced
- Watkins Sea Salt and Watkins black pepper to taste
- Watkins parsley to garnish

Instructions:

Slice the cabbage quarters into thin strips. Heat the oil in a large soup pan and add the cabbage, carrots, celery and parsnips cook over low heat for approximately 10 minutes, stir often so vegetables don't stick to pan. (you may need to add a tablespoon of stock).

Stir in the stock and bring to a boil. Add the potatoes, zucchinis, cauliflower and tomatoes with a little chopped fresh parsley and salt and pepper to taste. Bring back to a boil, cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer for approximately 15 to 20 minutes until the vegetables are tender.

Serve into warm soup bowls and garnish with a little parsley.

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Chocolate-Zucchini Snack Cake

Ingredients

2-1/2 cups/625 mL all-purpose flour
2 tsp/10 mL WATKINS Baking Powder
1/2 tsp/2.5 mL baking soda
1/8 tsp/0.6 mL salt
2-1/2 cups/625 mL shredded, unpeeled zucchini
1 cup/250 mL sugar
1/4 cup/60 mL WATKINS Baking Cocoa
1-1/2 tsp/7.5 mL WATKINS Cinnamon
1/3 cup/80 mL WATKINS Original Grapeseed Oil
1/3 cup/80 mL low-fat buttermilk
2 tsp/10 mL WATKINS Watkins Original Double-Strength Vanilla
1/2 tsp/2.5 mL WATKINS Butter Extract
1/2 cup/125 mL egg substitute, thawed if frozen or 3 large egg whites
1-1/2 tsp/7.5 mL powdered sugar

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F/180°C. Coat a 13 x 9-inch/33 x 23-cm baking pan with no-stick cooking spray. Combine all of the remaining ingredients except the powdered sugar in a large bowl; mix well. Spread in prepared pan and bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on wire rack. Dust with powdered sugar.

Nutrition Facts: Makes 18 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 160, Protein 3 g, Carbohydrates 26 g
Sodium 90 mg, Fat 5 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Dietary Fiber 2 g

I wish you good luck in creating healthy habits for a healthy lifestyle!

Sincerely,

Melody Thacker

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