

IN GOOD HEALTH NEWSLETTER...



Volume 4 - Issue 1

Valerie Smith, MS, ACM JIF Wellness Director

- 10 steps to a Healthier New Year
- How to Make Your Exercise Habit Stick
- January Wellness Idea
- Fall Vegetable Quinoa Soup

January

10 Steps to a Healthy New Year & a New You

How to Make Your Exercise Habit Stick

10 Steps to a Healthier New Year!



1. Review the Past Year

Take a look at what your diet and health have been like for the last 12 months.

- How does your weight compare with a year ago?
- Do you feel healthy and have a lot of energy or are you tired all the time?
- Do you take vitamins or other nutritional supplements?
- Do you eat at home most of the time? If so, what types of foods? Whole fresh foods, boxed foods or TV dinners?
- Do you dine out frequently? What types of restaurants do you like and what kinds of foods do you choose?
- How physically active are you? Do you exercise regularly?
- Do you eat healthy portions, or do you stuff yourself with every meal?
- Do you smoke?
- How much alcohol do you drink each week?

2. Set Goals

- Do you want to [lose weight](#)? Do you want to be able to run up and down your stairway without becoming winded? Do you want to reduce cholesterol or lower your blood pressure? Decide what you want to achieve over the next month, and over the next year.
- Start with your statistics. Take [body composition](#) measurements and make your goals.

3. Determine Your Dietary Needs

- Do you have high blood pressure? If so you may wish to reduce [sodium](#) in your diet by avoiding canned and packaged foods.
- Are you overweight? You need to decrease your calorie intake or increase your amount of physical exercise. You can choose a [low-carb diet](#) or a low-fat diet, just be sure to watch your calories and portion sizes.
- Do you have diabetes? If so, then you need to reduce your sugar intake.
- Do you have high cholesterol? Increase your intake of soluble fiber like the fiber found in oatmeal. It will help lower your cholesterol levels. Reduce your intake of saturated fats and increase your intake of omega-3 fatty acids from fish, flax, walnuts, and [canola oil](#).

4. Dietary Supplements

A healthy diet should give you all of the vitamins and minerals you need, but many people take vitamins just to make sure. There are several formulations available, but all you need is a simple multivitamin and multi-mineral supplement. Speak with your health care provider before you take any additional supplements or if you have any health conditions.

5. Design Your Healthy New Diet

Here's what you need to know to design your new diet:

- How many calories do you need to eat each day to reach your weight gain or weight loss goal?
- How do your eating patterns fit your lifestyle?
- Do you feel better with three large meals per day or five smaller meals per day?
- Will you continue to eat in restaurants often?
- What types of fruits and vegetables do you like?
- A healthy diet should give you five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day, 25 to 38 grams of fiber per day, five or six ounces of protein per day and a small amount of omega-3 essential fatty acids. To stick with your new diet, you'll want to include foods you enjoy. If you love hamburgers, that's okay. Make them at home with whole grain rolls and cut down the size of the burger patty, or use ground turkey. Add lots of lettuce, onion, and tomato. Serve your burger with a salad instead of fries.

6. Shopping and Cooking

Make a grocery list before you go shopping. Stay away from the snack food aisles and the prepackaged foods aisles when you shop. Choose fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, lean meats, fish, and legumes. Avoid foods high in saturated fats, sodium, trans-fats and sugar. **The best cooking methods are essential for healthy nutrition, too:**

- Sautéing is better than deep-frying. Frying foods adds fats and calories and doesn't add any nutrition.
- Steam your vegetables instead of boiling them to mush. Steaming will preserve the vitamins found in the vegetables.
- When you cook your healthy meals at home, be sure to make a little bit extra to take to work or school the next day.

7. Start a Food Diary

If you're serious about changing your diet, losing (or gaining) weight, and improving your health, you'll find that keeping track of things is key to your success in a simple food and exercise diary. This will help keep you motivated and help you get back on your diet if you have a temporary setback.

Be sure to note the portion sizes and write down the calories you eat every day. Add up the number of calories per day and your total for the week. If you need to lose weight, decrease the number of calories you need to eat each week by 500. For most people, that adds up to one pound per week. You can make your own food diary or keep track of your healthy new diet online.

8. Exercise, Fitness, & General Health Goals

Good nutrition is just one part of a healthy lifestyle. Another component of health and fitness is exercise. If you lead a sedentary lifestyle, you need to get out and get moving. If you want to lose weight, it is important to increase aerobic activity like walking or running. If you need to increase your strength, then you need to start resistance training such as lifting weights. There are health clubs, gyms, personal trainers as well as at-home equipment to get you fit and healthy.

Do you smoke? If so, you'll do yourself a favor by quitting. Smoking has been connected to many chronic diseases, plus you will save a lot of money over the next year if you quit smoking.

How much alcohol do you drink? One drink per day has been shown to be beneficial. More than one drink per day can be detrimental to your health, however. If you find yourself drinking more than four ounces of wine, two ounces of liquor or twelve ounces of [beer](#) each day, then you may need to decrease your consumption of alcohol.

[Exercise for Beginners](#)

[Tools to Quit Smoking](#)

9. Reduce Stress

Stress is detrimental to your health. Stress includes daily events like constant deadlines at work; long drive times with excess traffic; more activities than time to do them; and emotional trauma like death or divorce.

10. Motivation & Maintenance

Sometimes getting started with a new healthy diet and fitness plan is the easy part. Many of us hit occasional roadblocks due to busy schedules, loss of motivation, and sometimes we hit weight loss plateaus.

Those are the times when we feel like we do everything right, but the scale doesn't seem to budge. When this happens, don't give up. Here are some articles and resources that will keep you motivated:

[Are You Resolved?](#)

[Keep Your New Years Resolutions](#)

[Making Your Resolutions Work All Year Long](#)

[Reward Yourself!](#)

[Staying Motivated](#)

How to Make Your Exercise Habit Stick



1. Plan your cues

- Studies of successful exercisers find that what works is choosing a very specific cue. Think of this cue as a kind of ritual that triggers your brain to think, "This is the time to exercise." This might be:
- Scheduling your workouts on your calendar - Pick times and days you know you can squeeze in exercise, even if it's just 5 minutes. Maybe a walk after lunch every day or after dinner.
- Putting on your workout clothes as soon as you wake up or get home from work.
- Doing some other healthy behavior before your workout - Drink a glass of water, take some deep breaths, go for a quick walk or do some stretches. Sometimes just doing that one thing can put you in the mindset of exercise.
- Write down your workout plan and put it next to the bed so it's the first thing you see when you wake up.

At the same time you're doing this, look at other cues you may have been following, the ones that trigger your urge to skip your workout.

Maybe you hit the snooze button instead of working out. Maybe you sit on the couch when you get home instead of changing into workout clothes. Just like you have a habit of sitting on the couch, you can create a new habit of exercising instead.

2. Plan Your Workouts

This is the critical part and often where we make our biggest mistakes. Because we're so eager to lose weight, wanting to make up for lost time, we tend to go too far with our workouts. Maybe you try to go back to a [level of exercise](#) you used to be able to sustain, or maybe you plan your workouts based on what you think you're supposed to do, such as workout for [an hour every day](#), do [high intensity interval training](#) and/or [lifting heavy weights](#).

The problem with that approach is that you're not going to get a great reward. What you will get is very [sore](#), a possible injury, and the question of why anyone would do this to themselves. The only way to really make exercise a habit is to make your workouts so easy and so doable that it feels silly not to do them.

- **Start Small - one of the key ingredients to making exercise a habit is the belief that you can do it. Forget working out for an hour or doing [hardcore cardio training](#), and think more about workouts you can do no matter what, even when you're tired, [stressed](#), or low on motivation.**

3. Plan Your Rewards

Some of the rewards of exercise come naturally. Just completing a workout can feel good and, over time, if you're consistent you'll crave that feeling. You can also create your own rewards such as:

- **A guilt-free hour of TV**
- **Pay yourself.** Give yourself \$5 for every workout you complete and plan what you'll get with that money at the end of the month.
- **Buy a new song or album**
- **A new book to read**
- **A new app** - You probably won't be surprised to learn that there are apps out there that offer rewards. [Charity Miles](#) allows you to earn money for charity while you walk, run, bike or do any kind of activity. [Bounts](#) is an app that connects to a variety of fitness apps and tracking devices. Every time you workout, you earn points and use them for things like discounts from big name retailers.



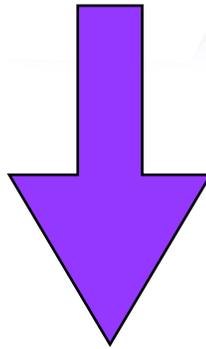
**Tips For Making Your
Workout Habit Stick**

- Try doing your workouts at the same time every day.
- Create a ritual around your workout. Put on your workout clothes first thing or, if you're leaving from the office, put your gym bag in the seat next to you so just seeing it will remind you of your goals.
- Log your workouts. Keep a simple calendar and put an 'X' down every day you workout.
- Do something you like. You don't have to love it, but it should be an activity you know you can do without too much pain or discomfort.
- Focus on the habit first, then the results. Too often we're so focused on losing weight that we end up quitting when that doesn't happen soon enough. Instead of focusing on that, focus on just doing the workouts, no matter what those workouts are like.

The key to creating an exercise is to make it as easy as possible to do your workouts. Choose accessible activities that you like, keep your workouts simple and focus on just showing up. Getting started is often the hardest more, so the easier you can make that, the more successful you'll be.



**JANUARY
WELLNESS IDEA!**



Have a Healthy PotLuck Lunch!

- **Choose a date that works well for your location**
- **Create a sign up sheet with 2 columns, one column employee name and another column for the name of dish**

OR

- **Use your wellness money and have a vendor come to your location and do a live cooking demonstration (reach out and I can locate a vendor for you)**

OR

- **Have a “Healthy Shake Day”, either order shakes for employees or again, use wellness money, purchase a blender, healthy veggies, fruits, and make healthy shakes at lunch time**

Fall Vegetable Quinoa Soup

This healthy soup is perfect for a chilly day and it freezes well too!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and chopped
- 2 cups chopped butternut squash
- 3 bay leaves
- 4 cans (14 1/2 oz each) reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cans (15 oz each) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme
- 2 cups chopped kale, ribs and stems removed
- Salt and black pepper, to taste



DIRECTIONS:

Heat olive oil in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, and celery and cook until onions are translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, sweet potato, butternut squash, and bay leaves. Cook until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Stir occasionally so they don't stick to the bottom of the pan.

Add the vegetable broth, tomatoes, and chickpeas. Stir in the quinoa and season with fresh rosemary and thyme. Cook for 15 minutes or until quinoa is soft. Stir in the kale and cook for an additional 5 minutes. Season with salt and black pepper, to taste. Serve warm.

Note-this soup freezes well. To freeze, cool completely and pour into a freezer container. When ready to eat, defrost and reheat on the stove or in the microwave.

All images and text ©Two Peas & Their Pod.