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Local Resources

Indoor and outdoor walking routes at school
Resources for school employees

**Remember to check our website,
www.stepaheadprogram.com for information and online tools!**





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WELCOME TO STEP AHEAD!

Welcome to Step Ahead, a program that promotes healthy eating and physical activity to help employees at your school prevent weight gain and lead a healthier life.

Step Ahead is part of a research study sponsored by the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This study will develop and test programs to prevent weight gain among adults in worksite settings. Step Ahead is unique because it focuses only on public high school employees.

Step Ahead activities will take place during the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. We hope all employees at the Step Ahead schools will make use of our materials – they are for everyone!

At each of the 12 participating schools, about two-thirds of the employees also are taking part in the evaluation portion of the research study. They have completed the first round of measurements and questionnaires, and there will be two more rounds, in winter-spring of 2011 and 2012. All employees are encouraged to use our materials whether or not they are enrolled in the evaluation portion of the study.

Background of Step Ahead

Most Americans slowly gain weight once they become adults, usually one to two pounds each year. This may not seem like a lot, but over the course of a lifetime it adds up. This is one reason why overweight and obesity have become such a problem in our country. Obesity prevention has been deemed a national public health priority.

Step Ahead encourages employees to make healthy choices throughout their work day. Each choice may seem small by itself, but small steps are likely to lead to success over time. Drastic changes are very hard to maintain for a long period of time. It is best if people build healthy eating and physical activity into their lifestyle.

Research shows that there is more than one way to prevent weight gain. Many factors determine whether a person makes a healthy or unhealthy choice. At the worksite, these factors include the overall school environment, co-workers and the social environment, and the employees themselves.





THIS STEP AHEAD EMPLOYEE RESOURCE BOOK

This book provides information and tools about healthy eating, physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight for you to use. It has been prepared by a team that includes nutritionists, health education specialists and behavioral scientists. The materials are based on scientific evidence and the currently accepted “best practices” for weight management for adults and for worksite health promotion programs. The eating patterns and physical activity patterns advocated here are appropriate for most healthy adults to follow whether or not they want to lose weight.

We hope you will look through this book and return to it often for ways to increase your physical activity; tools for tracking your activity; foods eaten and body weight; and more.

We will deliver additional items for this resource book about four times a year over the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. This first installment covers the “basics” of healthy eating, physical activity, weight management and resources at your school. The recipe booklet in the front pocket of this resource book consists of simple recipes and suggestions using vegetables and fruits, whole grains, and foods low in saturated fat. In the coming installments you’ll see ideas for physical activity, eating and weight management for the specific season, and more!

In addition to the resource book, see our website, www.stepaheadprogram.com, for information and interactive tools, and look for our weekly email newsletter delivered to your inbox. Paper copies of the newsletter will be available for employees that don’t have email inboxes at school. Each issue has a spotlight article, a healthy tip and the recipe of the week.





HEALTHY EATING

Eating a variety of healthy foods every day while limiting unhealthy foods is important for your health. It is an important part of weight loss efforts. Even if you do not want to lose weight, healthy eating improves your energy, helps you fight diseases by strengthening your immune system, and helps you achieve a healthy weight. Healthy eating, along with physical activity, also helps to reduce your risk for heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis and many cancers.

WHAT IS HEALTHY EATING?

Healthy eating does not mean completely changing the way you eat. Think of healthy eating as a way of life, not as a "diet". Small choices about what you eat scattered throughout your day add up. Did you know that most adults gain one to two pounds per year, every year? You only need to cut 10 to 20 calories each day to avoid that weight gain.

HOW DO I EAT HEALTHY?

The key to healthy eating is the right balance of foods and modest portion sizes. Protein such as chicken, beef, eggs, beans and dairy; fruit and vegetables; carbohydrates such as rice, bread, pasta and potatoes; plus fats, oils and sweets are all part of healthy eating. Here are a few important guidelines to help you add healthy eating into your day:

Eat colorful fruits and vegetables every day. There are lots of ways to do this. Add extra lettuce, shredded carrots, sliced peppers and tomato to your sandwich, or frozen vegetables to spaghetti sauce. Snack on cut melon, baby carrots, red grapes or a crisp apple. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories but full of vitamins, minerals and disease-fighting antioxidants.

Choose whole grain carbohydrates. Whole grains such as oatmeal, brown rice, whole wheat bread and pasta have more fiber and nutrients than their white, more processed versions. For breakfast have oatmeal or whole wheat toast and peanut butter. Try whole wheat spaghetti with your favorite sauce.

Choose leaner sources of protein such as chicken, eggs, turkey, fish and beans. Beef, pork, fried fish and hamburger are high in saturated and hydrogenated fats. These bad fats are linked to heart disease and cancer. Try mixing turkey with hamburger in American Chop Suey, meatballs and other dishes to keep flavor and reduce saturated fat.





Choose low-fat milk, cheese and other dairy products. Replace regular cheese with a lower fat cheese. Put milk in your coffee instead of cream. By doing this you will have less saturated fat and calories but not less protein.

Eat on a regular schedule. Try not to skip meals. Eating regularly will help you avoid hunger pangs and overeating later in the day.

Thirsty? Drink water. Drinking water throughout the day will improve your energy and prevent you from getting dehydrated.

Cut back on drinks that are mostly sugar, like regular sodas, juices, and sport drinks. These calories add up quickly. Even switching to a 12 oz. from a 22 oz. soda will save you about 125 calories! Take a look at “Wat-er You Drinking?” for more ideas.

Limit sweets and desserts that are high in calories and sugar. There are plenty of healthy snacks that are also good for you. Snack on yogurt for calcium and fruit for fiber and vitamins. Looking for a crunchy snack? Try lite popcorn, baby carrots or baked chips instead of regular chips.





EAT A RAINBOW OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES!

Eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables with bright or dark colors. They give your body a full array of vitamins and minerals it needs for health.

RED

Red foods can guard against cancers and colds and are good for your heart, eyes and bones. Tomatoes (fresh, cooked or canned) have lycopene. This may help protect against many cancers, and promote healthy hearts and eyes. Tomatoes and strawberries have Vitamin C. Strawberries also have antioxidants, which may help protect against cancer.

GREEN

Green leafy vegetables include spinach, kale, mustard, turnip and collard greens, Brussels sprouts and lettuces. These contain folic acid and potassium, important for a healthy heart and blood pressure. The darker the leaf, the more nutritious it is. Green vegetables have nutrients that help promote good vision. Avocados are loaded with folic acid, potassium and lots of fiber. Broccoli is a winner with almost all the Vitamin A and twice the Vitamin C you need for a day, fiber, Vitamin K for healthy bones, and important antioxidants. When you enjoy a Kiwi, you are eating 95% of the Vitamin C you need for a whole day.

ORANGE/YELLOW

Deep orange vegetables and fruits protect your vision and immune system. Carrots, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, squash, cantaloupe, yellow & orange peppers (red ones too) contain beta-carotene. This is an important protector against cancer. They're also rich in Vitamin A, needed for good vision and a strong immune system.

One orange gives you all the Vitamin C you need in a day. It helps to keep many parts of your body healthy, such as teeth, gums, and skin.

You can improve your health by adding colorful fruits and vegetables to your meals!



Fill Your Plate

Use this plate diagram to help you to put together complete, healthful, and filling meals in the best portions, for breakfast, lunch and dinner.. Include one cup of water or skim/1% milk with each meal. One proven way to help control portion size is to use smaller plates, bowls, glasses and spoons



Understanding Food Labels



What is the **servicing size**?

How many **servicing** are in this container?

How many **calories** in 1 serving? (1/3 of a muffin)

STOP&SHOP

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size **1/3 muffin** - 2.08 oz (59g)
 Servings Per Container **About 12**

Amount Per Serving	
Calories	200 Calories from Fat 90
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat	10g 16%
Saturated Fat	2g 10%
Trans Fats	0g
Cholesterol	30mg 10%
Sodium	160 mg 7%
Total Carbohydrate	25g 8%
Dietary Fiber	<1g 3%
Sugars	13g
Protein	2g
Vitamin A	0% • Vitamin C 0%
Calcium	0% • Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400 mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Serving Size: All of the information (calories, fat and other nutrients) is given for one serving. The manufacturer determines the serving size and the number of servings per container. Remember that a package that looks small may have more than one serving in it. As the label above shows, one muffin may be more than one serving!

% Daily Value: The percentages are based on a 2,000-calories diet, which may be higher or lower than you need.

Total Fat: This includes all the fat in one serving and is listed in grams (g). There are good fats and bad fats; avoid **Saturated Fat** and **Trans Fats** and partially hydrogenated oil, which have been linked to significant health problems. **Polyunsaturated Fat** and **Monounsaturated Fat** are healthier, and most of the fat you eat should be these types.

Cholesterol and **Sodium** are associated with health risks, and it is wise to limit your intake of these.

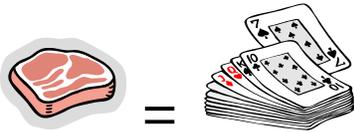
Total Carbohydrates: This includes all the carbohydrates in one serving, whole grains (healthy) as well as refined (white and less healthy) carbohydrates. Dietary fiber and sugar are types of carbohydrates. **Dietary Fiber** is important for health and you should try to eat plenty each day. **Sugars** includes all forms of sugar, and they offer only flavor and provide little nutrition, so they should be avoided.

Ingredients: Ingredients are listed in another location on the package, not in the nutrition facts panel. Ingredients are listed from largest to smallest amount by weight. Avoid partially hydrogenated oils and high fructose corn syrup.

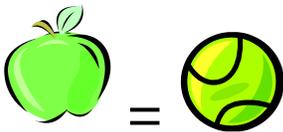


SEVEN WAYS TO SIZE UP YOUR PORTIONS

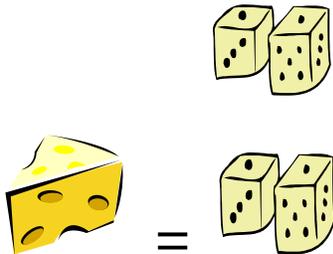
- 1.** Three ounces of meat is about the size and thickness of a deck of playing cards.



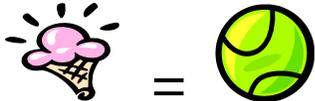
- 2.** A medium apple or peach is about the size of a tennis ball.



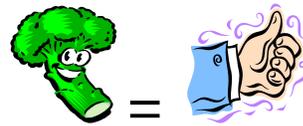
- 3.** 1 ounce of cheese is about the size of 4 stacked dice.



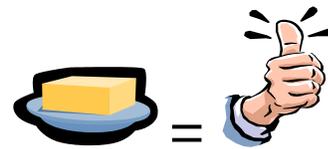
- 4.** ½ cup of ice cream is about the size of a racquetball or tennis ball.



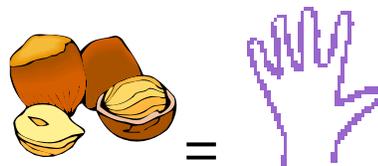
- 5.** 1 cup of broccoli or mashed potatoes is about the size of your fist.



- 6.** 1 teaspoon of butter or peanut butter is about the size of the tip of your thumb.



- 7.** 1 ounce of nuts or small candies equals one handful.





Reduce Your Portion Sizes

Research shows that when people are served more food and beverages, they eat more food and drink more. Try these strategies to control the amount you eat and drink.

- **Eat slowly** so your brain can get the message that your stomach is full.
- **Don't take second helpings.** If you do, take seconds of vegetables and salads instead of meats and desserts.
- **Use smaller plates, glasses and spoons.**
- **Avoid eating in front of the TV.** It is easy to lose track of how much you are eating.
- **Stop eating when you begin to feel full.**
- **Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables.**
- **Keep your serving of meat to the size of a deck of playing cards.**
- **Don't take an entire bag of chips or container of ice cream to the couch.** Serve yourself a portion in the kitchen first, then eat slowly and enjoy!
- **When eating at a family or friend's house, try everything in very small amounts.** This way, you show your appreciation for your host's efforts without overeating.
- **Start a meal with a salad or bowl of broth-based soup.** Filling up on lower-calorie foods will help you avoid overeating higher-calorie items.
- **Eat meals at regular intervals.** Skipping meals or leaving too much time between meals may lead you to eat larger amounts of food later.
- **Choose single-serving prepackaged snacks.**
- **Just cut back. Eat less.**



WAT-ER You Drinking?

The beverages you choose can have a big impact on the total number of calories you consumer. Save many calories throughout the day by making simple substitutions to what you drink!

- Choose water and other zero or low-calorie beverages.
- Use skim or 1% milk in coffee or tea, or use a smaller amount of higher fat milk.
- Add less sugar to your coffee or tea.
- Try flavorings such as cinnamon stick, citrus peel or wedge, or mint leaves.
- To your sparkling water, add a splash of fruit juice.
- Choose smaller portions of higher calorie beverages.

Instead of	Calories	Try this ...	Calories	Calories saved
Coffee, extra extra, 10 oz.	240	Coffee with milk and sugar, 10 oz.	80	180
Starbucks Café Latte, 2% milk, 16 oz.	190	Coffee with milk and sugar, 16 oz.	128	62
Starbucks Black Tea Latte, 12 oz	270	Tea with milk and sugar, 12 oz.	96	174
McDonald's Sweet Tea, 21 oz.	150	Ice tea unsweetened, or with 1 sugar packet	0-15	135-150
Coffee Coolatta, 16 oz.	350	Coffee Coolatta with skim milk, 16 oz.	170	180
Starbucks Hot Chocolate with 2% milk, 16 oz	300	Starbucks Hot Chocolate with skim milk, 8 oz.	140	160
2% or whole milk, 8 oz.	120-150	Skim or 1% milk, 8 oz.	90-105	30-60
Commercial smoothies, 16 oz.	360	Homemade smoothie with skim milk or nonfat yogurt, and fruit	160-210	150-200
More than 8 oz. fruit juice per day	120	Tomato juice or seltzer added to fruit juice	70	50
Lemonade, fruit punch, kool-aid, 16 oz.	200	Water with lemon	0	200
Soda, 20 oz. bottle	250	Water	0	250
Energy drinks such as Red Bull, Monster, Amp, Rock Star, etc	200	Water with lemon	0	200
Sports drinks such as Gatorade, Powerade, 16 oz.	100	Powerade Option or G2	20	80
Vitamin Water/Life Water, 20 oz.	125	Flavored water < 10 calories	10	115
Regular beer, 12 oz.	150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a lower-calorie option. • Have fewer drinks. • Have smaller drinks. • Alternate alcohol with water or other zero or low-calorie non-alcoholic drink. 		
Light beer, 12 oz.	110			
Red wine, 4 oz.	80			
Dry white wine, 4 oz.	75			
Margarita, 4 oz.	168			
Martini, 3.5 oz.	140			



Keep Track of What You Eat

Research has shown that keeping track of what you eat is a powerful tool for changing eating habits and for weight management. Keeping food records helps people understand their eating habits. It can help them stick to their plan of when, what and how much to eat. Some people even find that they prefer not to eat something rather than bother to write it down.

Records give people the opportunity to look back and identify patterns in their eating. For instance, they might see that on days when they eat a piece of fruit or a yogurt in the afternoon, they eat a smaller dinner. They might be surprised to see how much soda they are drinking or how many snacks they have. People also might find patterns they would like to change. Instead of eating a cookie or muffin as usual, they could try eating half, or eat fruit instead.

Try the log on the following pages for a couple of weeks. To use this log:

- 1) Set a goal for the week. There are a lot of ways to use a goal. Use the same goal for a few weeks, or change every week. It could be about what you eat (for instance, I will eat 2 servings of vegetables a day), or how much you eat (for example, I will eat $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of ice cream) or what times of day you eat (such as, I will not eat after 8 pm or I will eat breakfast.) Or, your goal might be to complete the food record for the entire week!
- 2) Write down everything you eat including beverages. Estimate how much you eat, and write down the time of day. For example, large coffee with low-fat milk, whole wheat bread two slices, butter 1 teaspoon, 10 am.)
- 3) Be honest! This is for YOU. There isn't a right or wrong way here.
- 4) Pay attention. At the end of the week, look back over your foods eaten, how much and when. Were there times when you ate more than you had planned to? Did this happen with particular foods or at certain times of day? Do you see repetition or patterns? Did you reach your goal?
- 5) Pay attention to your feelings, too. Some people also find it helpful to jot down how they were feeling when they ate something. This can help them see if their eating patterns are related to emotions or conditions like stress, fatigue, sadness, or anger.

There are different ways to keep food records. If you find that you don't keep up with this one or if you don't find it helpful, check www.stepaheadprogram.com for other log options. One idea: Write down changes you would like to make in your eating habits, and then give yourself a check mark every time you do that. For example, if you are trying to eat whole grain instead of white breads and cereals, give yourself checkmarks for your whole-grain cereal and your sandwich on whole-grain bread.



WEEKLY FOOD LOG

Week starting _____

Goal for the week: _____

This log will help you keep track of your eating habits. Write down each food you eat, how much you ate and the time of day. For example: large coffee with lite cream, whole wheat bread 2 slices, butter 1 teaspoon, 10 am.

Get the most out of this food log!	Sunday			Monday			Tuesday			
	Meal/Snack Item	Amount	Time	Meal/Snack Item	Amount	Time	Meal/Snack Item	Amount	Time	
<p>1. Be honest! This is for YOU.</p> <p>2. There is no right or wrong here.</p> <p>3. Try to write <u>everything</u> down. Make that your first week's goal!</p> <p>4. There are many ways to use the "goal for the week". Keep the same goal for a few weeks or change more often. Goals can be about what you eat, how much, or times of day when you eat.</p> <p>5. Some people find that they prefer <u>not</u> to eat something rather than bother to write it down.</p> <p>6. Look back over your log every few days. You may find patterns of eating that you want to follow more often. Maybe at lunch time you always have vegetables and a whole grain. Can you work in something similar at dinner?</p> <p>7. You may see some eating habits that you would like to change. For example, you may find you are usually eating a large cookie or muffin. Try eating a smaller portion and a piece of fruit.</p>										





PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity is important for people of all ages. If you are physically active on most days of the week, it can make you healthier. Combined with healthy eating, physical activity helps you lose any extra weight and keep from gaining weight over time. Physical activity helps reduce your risk of many health problems such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes and some types of cancer. It also reduces your chances of falls and injuries, and can help reduce stress and feelings of depression.

HOW ACTIVE ARE YOU?

- Adults should get 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week.
- Research shows that almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of American adults do not get this much physical activity.
- Being active for a total of at least 30 minutes each day can improve your weight, your health and the quality of your life.

WHY BE ACTIVE AT WORK?

Most adults spend much of their time at work. By the time the work day is over, it can be tough to fit activity in. By making the workday as active as possible, you can reduce your risk of certain diseases and keep extra weight off.

CAN'T FIND THE TIME?

It may seem difficult to squeeze physical activity into your work routine, but you don't have to do it all at once. By making some simple adjustments, it is easier than you may think to get the recommended levels of activity during your work day. Try some of these ways to add physical activity into your work routine. Remember that a few minutes of physical activity here and there during the day will add up!

Take the stairs. Going up and down stairs is a terrific way to add more activity into your routine.

Take an exercise break instead of a coffee break. It will wake you up just as much as coffee does and it's good for you! See the "Quick and Easy Workout on Your Break" in this section of the Step Ahead resource book.

Walk with a buddy or group at lunch or dinner break. Spend half of your break taking a walk either inside the building or outside on the grounds. Step Ahead has indoor and outdoor routes for your school in this resource book.



Set goals for physical activity and stick to them! Keep track of the number of steps you take using a step counter, or write down the number of minutes you exercise, or the number of flights of stairs you walk.

Park your car at the far end of the parking lot so you will walk more at the beginning and end of the day.

Come in a few minutes early or stay a few minutes late and walk up and down the stairs or around the building.

Set a reminder to remind you to take an activity break. Use your schedule book, computer or PDA to set aside time and create a reminder to yourself to take an activity break. Use this time to quickly stretch or take a quick walk, or use part or all of the workout in this resource book.



Walking for Exercise

Looking for an easy way to be active, increase your fitness and improve your health? Take a walk! Walking is one of the most natural forms of exercise for your body, and it is safe, simple to do without practice or coaching, inexpensive, can be done almost anywhere, lends itself to socializing while you do it, and it's good for you. Walking can help you manage your weight, control cholesterol, reduce your risk or help manage type 2 diabetes, lower your blood pressure, improve your mood, live longer, and stay strong and fit.

Dress for success. Wear comfortable sneakers or walking shoes and appropriate socks. A wicking sock may be more comfortable than 100% cotton. Keep a pair of walking shoes and socks at work or in your car! Wear loose, comfortable clothing with layers you can remove if you get too warm. If you are walking outdoors after dark, wear reflective clothing for safety.

Have a realistic goal. Guidelines suggest 30 to 60 minutes a day, 5 or more days of the week. Give yourself several weeks or longer to reach that goal if you haven't been walking regularly.

If you are just starting to walk for exercise, start slow and easy. Try walking a few minutes at a time. Over several weeks, add two minutes per walk each week. Also increase the number of times per week that you walk, and walk faster. Eventually you should walk 30 to 60 minutes on five or more days of the week at a moderate pace (20 minutes per mile) or faster.

Add it up: If you can't free up a 30-minute block of time to walk, try for two or three shorter walks, 10 to 15 minutes each. It all counts.

Warm up before and cool down after each walking session. To reduce stress on your heart and muscles, begin and end each walking session by walking slowly for about five minutes.

Keep track of your progress. Most people find that keeping track of their walking helps them stick with it and build up their strength and fitness. Track your time spent walking; walk a known, pre-measured distance; or use a step counter or pedometer (see the pedometer page in this book). Then write it down! Use one of the logs in this resource book, or use one of the online tools at www.stepaheadprogram.com or many other websites. And if you don't stick to it, don't give up. Think about your goals, adjust them if needed, and go for a walk.

Make it fun! A lot of people stop exercising because they get bored. Vary your route to keep things interesting, or walk with friends. See the Walking Group toolkit in this book for ideas. Use a treadmill or walk in place in front of your tv. Choose a "destination" that is 50 or 100 miles away, and add up your distance walked till you reach it – then choose a new destination farther away.

Adapted from www.mayoclinic.com/health/walking and www.pbs.org/americaswalking/health/



Using a Pedometer

A pedometer, also called a step counter, is a device no bigger than a cell phone, usually worn near your hip or waist. It counts the steps you take while walking, running or going up or down stairs. See how much you usually walk, and then find ways of adding steps during the day.

On many pedometers you can enter your own stride length to estimate the miles you walk, and your weight to calculate the number of calories you burn from walking.

Wear your pedometer all the time. This way you will not forget to use it when you go for a walk. You may be surprised to see how much you walk during the course of the school day!

Set daily step goals. Step Ahead recommends simply *increasing* the number of steps you walk. Try to add at least a few steps every day, even if it is only 5 or 10 or 100 steps more. Some experts recommend 10,000 or more steps a day as a goal.

Keep track of your progress. Use the Step Counting Record sheet or Step Ahead Individual Walking Log on the next pages in this book, or go to www.stepaheadprogram.com.

Look for ways to add a few more steps. Do an extra loop in the halls, tackle a few stairs, or push a shopping cart longer in the store. Your overall fitness can improve through short periods of exercise throughout the day.

Every step counts!





WALKING GROUP TOOLKIT

Walking with other people on your breaks is a great way to stay physically active. This toolkit is designed to help you and your co-workers organize a walking group. It includes the following items:

- Developing a Walking Group check list
- Tips to get you started
- Group walking log



DEVELOPING A WALKING GROUP CHECK LIST

- Identify co-workers who are interested. Don't worry if you start small. Others will catch on.
- Identify several days/times that are convenient and the amount of time or distance the group would like to walk.
- Schedule and go on your first walk. If possible, try to create a schedule for a few weeks in advance.
- Identify both indoor and outdoor walking routes, so that the weather will not get in the way.
- Keep a pair of comfortable walking shoes at work.
- Send out a reminder note or email the day before your first walk that includes starting time and location.
- After each walk, remember to update your Walking Group Log, so you can keep track of your group's progress.



TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

Here are some guidelines, and tips, to help get your group going!

Trouble finding the time? It is best to schedule your walk ahead of time, rather than do it on the fly. *Still feeling the time crunch?* You can use the walk as a time to talk about work-related issues.

Be prepared. Keep comfortable walking shoes at work at all times. You may even want to keep a set of walking clothes at work. Remember to bring a bottle of water when the weather gets warm.

Set goals for your group. There are lots of ways to help your group get motivated.

- Walk to a fun “destination”. By keeping track of your progress, your group can set a goal to walk “across the state” or a place you’d all like to “visit” by counting miles.
- Get competitive. Find another walking group to compete against. Set a goal to achieve, like total number of minutes, total number of miles or steps, or a destination. Whoever gets there first wins! A prize could be a Potluck lunch or breakfast sponsored by the other team.

Want to know how you’re doing? There are several ways to monitor how your group is doing. Step Ahead has developed a Group Walking Log that allows you to:

- Track the amount of time your group walks.
- Track the distance that your group walks by counting steps. Your group members will need to wear pedometers, or step counters.
- Track the distance that your group walks by counting miles. Have your group walk along a route with measured distances. Step Ahead has walking routes that will allow you to do just that.
- Track the number of days per week each person walks.

Reward yourselves! Once you’ve reached your goal, do something special. Have a healthy group breakfast or lunch or do something else fun.

Getting bored with the same walking route? Step Ahead has indoor and outdoor walking routes right here at school for you to use. Have more than one route, and alternate.

Be flexible. Once your group gets going, you may find that not everyone wants the same things. Some may be looking for an opportunity to talk about work, while others may not want to talk about work at all. Some may want quick and easy walks, while others may want more challenging walks. It is okay to break into smaller groups and form new groups to meet the needs of everyone!

Strength Training

What is strength training? Strength training, also called resistance training, is working your muscles a little harder than usual in order to strengthen them.

Why is strength training important? Research shows that strength training significantly improves health for women and men of all ages and abilities, not just athletes and body builders. A regular strength training routine will make it easier for you to do your daily activities. Health benefits include:

- Losing weight and preventing weight gain
- Preventing osteoporosis
- Improving balance
- Preventing injury
- Decreasing risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease
- Reducing physical problems that are common as people get older
- Feeling better physically and mentally



How is strength training done?

- Strength training exercises can be done with or without equipment that adds extra resistance. Common equipment includes “free weights”, machines like those found in a gym, resistance bands and tubes.
- You should work each of the major muscle groups (arms, legs, chest, back, abdominals).
- It’s important to let your muscles rest at least one day between sessions.
- Start by doing each exercise 10 times without a break (10 “reps” or repetitions.) If you aren’t feeling tired, try doing another 5 reps of the exercise, or take a break for a moment and then do another set of 10 reps of the same exercise.
- As your muscles strengthen, it will become easier to do the exercises. To get the full benefit of your training, you need to keep increasing the amount of work you do as you get stronger. You can add reps to each set, add sets to your routine, or use a stronger resistance band or heavier free weights.

How long does it take? How much does it cost? Strength training doesn’t require a trip to the gym. In fact, it can be done almost anywhere. And it doesn’t require too much of your time. A routine exercising all major muscle groups can be done in 10 to 15 minutes. Also, it does not have to be expensive. Resistance bands, for example, are inexpensive, can be used almost anywhere and give a great workout.

How do I start?

- Try the “Quick and Easy Workout on Your Break” resistance band workout on the following pages in this resource book. It is designed to strengthen each of the major muscle groups and you can do one set of each exercise in about 10 minutes. It can be done just about anywhere!
- Try a class or coaching session through a gym or community education program.
- For a worksite that combines exercises with weights and exercises without extra equipment, see “Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults”. Use the interactive version online or download the booklet for free from the website <http://growingstronger.nutrition.tufts.edu/>.

QUICK AND EASY WORKOUT ON YOUR BREAK

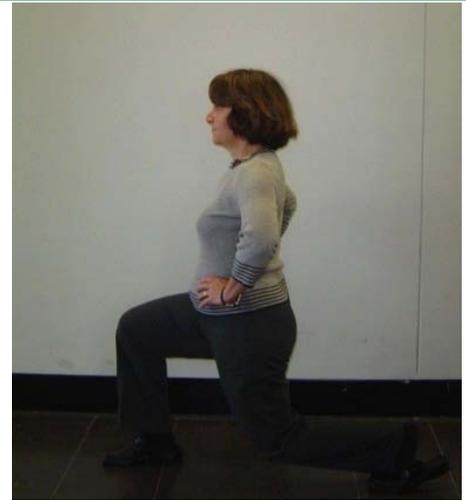
This routine using an exercise band is a great way for you to get a whole-body muscle workout in just ten minutes. Do the workout as part of your meal and/or coffee break!

Begin by doing the workout two times each week, with at least one day in between. On the days in between you can take a walk or do some other exercise instead. As you get better at this workout, you can add repetitions or do the workout more often.

Do the exercises slowly and try to position and move your body as described and shown in the pictures. Work up to at least 10 repetitions of each exercise.

1. LUNGES (done without the exercise band)

Stand up straight with your feet together. Step forward with one leg, about 2 to 3 feet. Lower your body toward the ground by bending your back knee. Bring your knee as close to the ground as you are able to. Keep the knee of your front leg behind or even with your toes. Slowly push up. Repeat 10 times on the same leg, then change legs. Use a chair for balance if needed.



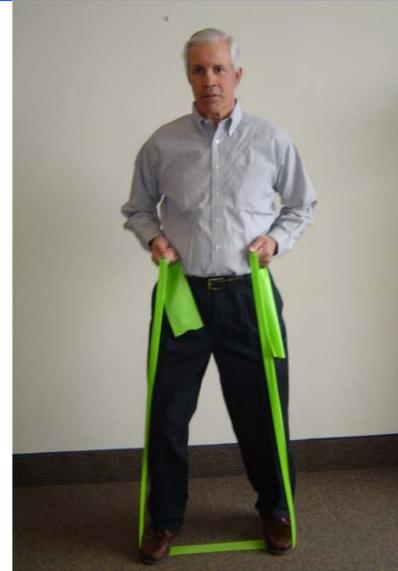
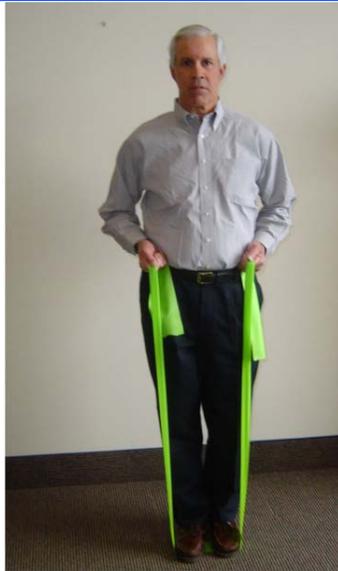
2. SQUATS (exercise band is optional)



Place the band under the arches of both your feet. Hold one end of the band in each hand. Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart. Keep your abdominal muscles tight. Bend your knees and press your buttocks back into a seated position until your thighs are about parallel with the floor, while keeping your back in a natural arched position. Keep your heels firmly planted on the floor. Slowly return to the starting position.

3. OUTER THIGH SIDE STEPS

Stand with your feet together and your back straight. Do not lock your knees. Place the center of the band under the arches of both your feet. Hold the ends of the band in each hand, and pull them up close to your body as much as the resistance of the band will allow. Side step with your right foot as wide as you can, then step together with your left foot. Then side step with your left foot as wide as you can, then step together with your right foot.



4. PLIE SQUATS (done without the exercise band)



This is done without the exercise band. Stand with your feet very wide apart and your toes pointing out 45 degrees. Slowly bend your knees, lowering the center of your body until your thighs are parallel with the floor. Make sure that your knees do not extend beyond your toes. Slowly stand back up into the starting position while squeezing your inner thighs. If you can't easily balance while bending your knees, put your hands on a table or desk top.

5. UPRIGHT ROWS

Place the center of the band under the arches of both your feet. Stand with your feet together and your back straight. Do not lock your knees. Hold one end of the band in each hand. Start with your arms hanging straight down at your sides, with your knuckles facing forward. Pull your hands to shoulder level, leading with your elbows and keeping your hands close to your body. Slowly return to starting position.



6. BICEPS CURLS



Place the center of the band under the arches of both your feet. Stand with your feet together and abdominal muscles tight. Do not lock your knees. Tuck your elbows in close to your sides. Keeping your elbows still, start with your arms hanging straight down and your palms facing forward. There should be no slack in the band. Slowly and smoothly raise your hands to 90 degrees, while keeping your elbows at your sides. Slowly lower to the starting position.

7. TRICEPS EXTENSION

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and abdominal muscles tight. Do not lock your knees. Hold the band behind your back so that one hand is grasping it at waist level and the other is grasping it at neck level. There should be no slack in the band. Keeping your hand at waist level, extend the top arms above your head by moving just your elbow. When your arm is extended, it should be next to your temple and your palm should be facing forward. Slowly lower to the starting position. Repeat 10 times then switch arms.



8. CHEST PRESS



Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, back straight and abdominal muscles tight. Do not lock your knees. Wrap the band around your upper back, under your arms, and hold one end in each hand. Raise your elbows to chest level, keeping your arms parallel to the floor. Extend your arms straight in front of your body, without locking your elbows. Slowly return to the starting position.



9. UPPER BACK

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and back straight. Do not lock your knees. Hold the band so your arms are slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and there is no slack. Hold your arms straight in front of you at chest level, parallel with the floor. Slowly pull your shoulder blades back, keeping your elbows slightly bend, while pushing your chest slightly forward. Return to starting position.



10. OBLIQUE CRUNCHES



Place the center of the band under the arches of both feet. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your back straight. Do not lock your knees. Hang both arms at your sides and hold the band in each hand, so that there is very little slack. Slowly bend to one side at the waist, keeping your upper and lower body aligned. Slowly return to starting position. Do the same exercise on the opposite side.

11. STANDING ABDOMINAL CRUNCH (done without exercise band)

Stand with feet together and abdominal muscles tight. Do not lock your knees. Place your hands behind your head. With one foot firmly planted on the floor, slowly lift the other knee till your thigh is parallel to the floor. At the same time bend forward at the waist, with your chest toward your bended knee. Slowly return to starting position. Repeat 10 times. Do the same exercise on the opposite side. If you can't easily balance on one foot, put the hand opposite the leg you are lifting on a table or back of a chair.





Fourteen Easy Ways to Get More Physical Activity

1. Start today. Go for a walk on your break or after school.
2. Go up and down the stairs. It's a little more work than just walking, and that's a good thing!
3. Park farther away from the school building and from the grocery store, mall, movie theater, bowling alley, or gym. You won't waste gas looking for a closer spot and you'll get more exercise.
4. Walk or bike to work or to do errands, instead of driving the car. This is another way to both improve your health and be green. You might save money, too.
5. Take a longer walk with the dog. You know she wants to and it will be good for both of you.
6. Straighten your classroom, rearrange the furniture, wipe your boards clean, clean your house, mow your lawn, rake leaves, yank out weeds, wash your car or your outdoor furniture. You'll be glad you got your chores done, your world will look great, and you got some exercise too.
7. Dance! Put on music at home or take a dance class, or go out on the town. It's all great activity.
8. Exercise in front of the tv with resistance bands or free weights, a treadmill or rowing machine, or just walk in place. Store your equipment near the television so it's always handy whether you have just a few minutes or enough time for a whole program.
9. Try an exercise video. Borrow from the library to see what you like before you buy one.
10. Add physical activity to your social life. Instead of, or in addition to meeting up with friends for a meal, go for a walk or a hike or a bike ride together or play tennis or golf or basketball. Hold a party at the bowling alley or the skating rink or the rock climbing gym.
11. Add physical activity to your family life. Go for a family walk or bike ride, head for the pool together or play with your kids at the park.
12. Be active for a good cause. Join in fundraising walks or fun runs. Good for you, good for the community.
13. Take a walking break instead of a coffee break. It can help you "clear out the cobwebs" or get the change of scenery or focus you need without the caffeine, and even a few minutes of walking is good for you!
14. Try new things or switch among a few different activities, so you don't get bored with the same old exercise routine. Try an activity that uses different muscles or uses them in a different way (swimming instead of tennis, for example.)



HEALTHY WEIGHT

Achieving a healthy weight requires a balance of healthy eating and regular physical activity. A healthy weight reduces your risk of many diseases, and positively affects how you enjoy life.

What do we mean by a “healthy weight”? One way to determine whether your weight is healthy is by using the body mass index, or BMI. BMI is a measure of your body based on your height and weight. To calculate your BMI, use the BMI table in this section of the Step Ahead resource book, or use the online calculator at www.stepaheadprogram.com. Healthy weight does not necessarily refer to how you look from a cosmetic or fashion perspective, but working towards a healthy weight for you should help you feel better about yourself.

WHY NOT “DIET”?

People often try dieting when they want to lose some weight. “Diets” are designed to help you lose weight over the short term, but staying on a “diet” over a long period of time can be hard and often unhealthy. As a result, “diets” are not a good approach to maintain a lower weight over time. In fact the average diet lasts only 42 days. Here are several reasons to stay away from dieting.

- Even when people lose weight on a diet at first, that weight and more is often gained back.
- When people can’t follow a diet, or when they gain back weight, they feel like they have failed. That feeling can make it even harder to try to lose weight again.
- Some diets are not healthy to follow because they are not balanced. They may not include the foods your body needs to be healthy, or they suggest large amounts of foods that aren’t good for you, such as red meat which is high in saturated fat.

TRY A LIFESTYLE APPROACH INSTEAD

What is the best way to achieve a weight that is healthy? Try for a balance between the calories in the food you eat and your activity levels. In other words, you will not gain weight if your use of energy being active equals the energy (calories) you eat over time. That's why it's so important to make changes in your lifestyle that you can maintain for the long term.

Scientists have been studying people who have lost weight and kept it off. They also have studied people who make changes in their lifestyle that are related to their body weight, such as increasing physical activity. Ask yourself these questions to see if you can make losing weight easier.





HOW ACTIVE ARE YOU?

Regular physical activity makes it much easier to manage your weight. Physical activity is the way to balance out the calories you eat every day. Also being active can help you feel less hungry, and gives you something to do instead of eating!

If you are not an active person, why not? The most common reasons people give for not getting enough exercise are that they don't enjoy it and that they don't have time.

Here are some ideas for people who don't like formal exercise programs:

- Walk as often as you can in your daily routines.
- Try a sport you like.
- Try a sport you have never tried.
- Try walking or hiking or bike riding.
- Yard work and housework are excellent ways to get physical activity.
- Dance.
- Walk and talk with a friend to make the time pass quickly. The friend can help you stick to your goals to be active, too!
- Maybe a mix of different types of exercise will work better than always doing the same thing. Try walking a couple of days a week, dancing once a week and a quick workout three times a week.

If you don't have time to exercise:

- Do it in small blocks of time (10 minutes a few times a day adds up).
- Choose an activity you can do without going out of your way, such as climbing up and down stairs, or walking to do errands. Or, come in to work a few minutes early or stay a little late and add 10 minutes of stairs or walking.

WHAT DO YOU EAT?

The idea that some foods are “bad” gets people into trouble. If you eat healthy foods in appropriate portion sizes most of the time, an occasional small treat of less healthy foods is fine. In fact, allowing yourself to eat all kinds of food in moderation may make it easier to eat healthy in the long run. Healthier foods include fruits and vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains. Don't forget about what you put in your salads, and on top of your food. Use low fat dressings and condiments.

What do you drink? Fruit juices, soda, and energy drinks can have a lot of calories. Try drinking unsweetened or diet drinks like water, tea, coffee, or sodas. Don't forget about





what you put in your coffee and iced coffee drinks. Use skim or low-fat milk instead of full fat milk or cream. *Alcohol calories do count. A 12 oz. beer has between 150 - 170 calories, light beer 110 calories and a 5 oz. serving of wine has between 100 - 110 calories. Watch out for mixed drinks. For example, a 12 oz. rum and Coke has 361 calories. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. See “Wat-er You Drinking?” in the Healthy Eating section for more ideas.*

How big are the portions you eat? Most portions that Americans eat are much too big. For example, three ounces of meat, about the size of a deck of cards, is considered one portion. Most Americans eat much more meat than that. Just because food is put in front of you, you don't have to eat the whole thing. See the pages on portion size in the Healthy Eating section.

How is your plate organized? Usually we consider the meat the main dish and the vegetables and grains and starches as the side dishes. Try viewing vegetables and fruit as the main dish, with meat and grains or starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn) as smaller side dishes. The Healthy Eating section has more information.

Why are you eating? Before you eat, ask yourself, *Am I eating to feed my body what it needs to be healthy, or am I eating for other reasons?* Become familiar with your body's messages that it is hungry or satisfied. Understanding this may actually help you keep a healthy weight for the long term. Often we eat for other reasons than what our bodies need. This can make reaching a healthy weight difficult. Trying to understand why you want to eat is an important step to changing your lifestyle. A common reason for eating is enjoyment. Other common reasons include habit, feeling stressed, boredom, situations where you are sitting such as driving in the car or sitting at the computer, celebrations such as birthdays, and being polite in social situations. Think about the long term consequences, not just the immediate gratification, when you decide when and what to eat.

ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?

Lack of sleep can cause you to gain weight. That is because lack of sleep can impact levels of hormones that are linked to appetite, leptin and grehlin, causing increases in appetite. Try to get eight hours of uninterrupted sleep every night .

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR WEIGHT AND YOUR EATING AND ACTIVITY HABITS OVER TIME

Monitoring yourself is an important way to reach and maintain a healthy weight. By paying close attention, you are less likely to overeat, skip physical activity and to notice small amounts of weight gain. This is true for weight, eating and physical activity.





Keeping records, or logs, is a helpful way to do this. See the Step Ahead logs in this resource book or online to help you get started.

SET GOALS

And stick to them! Here are some general rules you can follow to help you make realistic goals for yourself and achieve them.

- Your goal should be very specific.
- Your goal should cover a very short period of time, like a week or two.
- Your goal should be realistic. Make it something you can reach, such as keeping your weight the same or losing one pound.
- Have some goals that are not about weight or a number of pounds to lose.
- Imagine yourself achieving or working toward that goal.

Here are some ideas for goals:

- Five days this week I will write down everything I eat.
- When at work this week, I will have fruit for dessert.
- This week I will eat one extra piece of fruit.
- When at work this week I will walk from the farthest corner of the parking lot.
- I will stop eating when my body has had enough and before I feel “full”.
- I will move the candy jar off of my desk.
- Two times this week I will meet my friends for a walk break instead of a coffee and snack break.





What is a Healthy Weight?

How do you know if you are at a healthy weight? One way is to use the body mass index, or BMI. BMI is a measure of your body based on your height and weight. You can calculate your BMI by using the chart on the next page in this resource book. There are many websites with online BMI calculators including the Step Ahead website www.stepaheadprogram.com , and also <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/> , and <http://www.bmi-calculator.net/>.

Adult BMI (over age 18) is classified by ranges indicating healthy weight, overweight or obesity. They are:

Healthy weight	19-24.9
Overweight	25-29.9
Obese	30 and above

BMI above 25 may put people at a greater risk of health problems, and the risk is even greater with BMI of 30 and over. If you would like to lose weight to lower your BMI, talk with a health care provider and review the healthy eating, physical activity and healthy weight ideas and tools in this resource book. This is a slow, steady, lifestyle approach to losing weight and keeping it off, and we have based it on scientific evidence of what works over time.



Body Mass Index Table

	Normal						Overweight					Obese						Extreme Obesity																		
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																																			
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322	328	334
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443

Source: Adapted from *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report*.



Keep Track of Your Weight

Research shows that people who are successful at keeping weight off over time have several habits in common. One thing these successful “losers” do is to weigh themselves frequently, at least weekly and usually every day. This helps them recognize a small weight gain early so that they can make changes in their eating or exercise habits and prevent more weight gain. Regular weighing also reinforces their healthy eating and physical activity habits, giving them proof that they are maintaining their weight loss.

You can keep track of your weight in many different ways. Some people like to use a notebook or diary. On the next page of this resource book is a weight change chart that will give you a picture of changes in your weight. This chart also is available at www.stepaheadprogram.com.

This chart is designed to start at any weight. Weigh yourself today and write in your start weight at the left. One week from today at the same time of day, weigh yourself on the same scale. If you weigh the same, fill in the box in the week 2 column, in the “0” row. If you have gained weight, go up to the row for the number of pounds you gained. If you have lost weight, go down to the row for the number of pounds lost.

Each week, use the same scale and weigh yourself on the same day of the week and try for the same time of day. Add or subtract from the previous week’s weight and mark the appropriate box. You will be able to see very clearly if there are upward, level or downward trends over time.

Some people like this chart because it takes the focus off of the actual number you start at, and helps you concentrate on the change you are trying to make.





Step Ahead Employee Resource Book

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Remember to check our website,
www.stepaheadprogram.com for information and online tools!



Snacking Can Be a Good Thing

Too often we snack without thinking about it because we're bored, stressed, or sad, rather than physically hungry. Sometimes we snack just out of habit. We tend to eat these extra calories in addition to the other foods we eat, and they can add up and contribute to weight gain.

A planned, healthy snack can be good for you. By planning in advance and carefully selecting healthy snacks, you can avoid mindless snacking on less healthy foods and prevent yourself from overeating.

Tips for Healthy Snacking at Work

- Ask yourself if you are really hungry. Maybe you are just thirsty, and a drink of water would satisfy you. Some people make it a habit to always have a glass of water before they eat a snack.
- Maybe what you need is a break in your routine for a few minutes. See if a short walk helps.
- Steer away from tempting but unhealthy snacks available at work in vending machines, the school store and the cafeteria. Instead, make healthy choices or bring healthy snacks from home.
- Do not keep a candy or snack dish on or in your desk. If you keep snacks in your desk, stick to things that are packaged in single servings like a bar or one serving of nuts or cookies. An open large package may lead you to eat more than you really want.
- Watch portion sizes, especially with snacks that can be eaten by the handful, like popcorn, chips, jelly beans, M & M's and nuts. Read the label of a packaged snack and note the amount in one portion. Remember, you don't have to eat the whole thing. Instead, share or save some for another day.
- Avoid grabbing snacks that your co-workers bring in to share, like donuts and baked goods. Just because it is available does not mean that you have to eat it.
- Don't snack mindlessly! Appreciate every bite and remember that snack calories do count.
- *ALWAYS read the label on packaged snacks.* Choose snacks using these guidelines:
 - 5g Total Fat or less per serving (Total Fat includes saturated fat and *Trans fat*).
 - 30g Total Carbohydrates or less per serving (sugar is included as part of carbohydrate).
 - Juices should contain at least 50% juice; have 12 ounces or less.
 - Milk, including plain or flavored milks should be low-fat (1%) or fat-free. Have 12 ounces or less.
 - Drink water, diet soda or iced tea, instead of regular soda or sweetened iced tea.





Healthy Snacks for Every Craving

Thirsty?

- flavored water
- sparkling water
- carbonated sugar-free (diet) beverages or sugar-free ice tea
- tea with honey or lemon
- small non-fat milk
- tomato juice or V8 juice (look for low sodium)
- to-go packets of Crystal Lite or other low-calorie or zero calorie mix

Hungry?

- whole wheat toast, English muffin, whole-grain low-fat crackers or 1/2 bagel with jam
- High fiber cereal, hot or cold, with fresh fruit , and skim or 1% milk
- low-fat or non-fat yogurt
- reduced-fat cottage cheese

Craving sweets?

- applesauce (available in snack packs)
- piece of fruit or a cup of cut melon, berries or grapes
- low-fat granola bar
- small low-fat pudding (also sugar-free)
- sugar-free gum
- hard candy
- cherry tomatoes
- two Hershey kisses enjoyed very slowly (only two)
- fruit pieces in light yogurt
- chocolate or vanilla soy milk

Need something salty or crunchy?

- celery sticks filled with low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter
- vegetables dipped in low-fat yogurt, fat-free sour cream, or low-fat or fat-free salad dressing
- piece of toast (try whole wheat toast) or whole-grain low-fat crackers with peanut butter
- small bag of baked chips
- hummus with cut vegetables, pita bread, or low-fat crackers
- 1 ounce of nuts (roughly a small child's handful)
- Apple with peanut butter

Looking for snacks from a cafeteria or a vending machine?

Many healthy options are available. Look for fruit (fresh and dried), nuts and cereal bars. The guidelines on the previous page can help you make healthier choices.

References:

American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol. 76, No. 3, 518-528, September 2002
Fit City/Fit Schools Campaign in San Antonio, TX; Bexar County Community Health Collaborative, San Antonio TX
Alabama Dept. of Public Health Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit, Guide to Healthy Vending Choices





Stay Physically Active in Colder Weather!

Exercise can help you stay healthy. There are benefits of physical activity that are particularly important in the winter:

- Exercise helps the immune system. Regular moderate exercise (brisk walking, aerobics, swimming, and other similar activities) can lessen your chances of catching the bugs going around during the winter.
- Exercise improves balance and strengthens muscles, which help reduce the risk of falling, especially important with ice and snow.
- Exercise also increases your energy level, helps you sleep better and can lift your mood.

What if you have a cold or other illness? If you have a mild cold, you may feel better after light exercise. It is best not to exercise if you are ill, especially if you have a fever or pain from the flu. Let your body recover by eating healthy foods, drinking water, and resting. If you have a fever, wait at least 48 hours after it is gone to exercise. Start slowly, and listen to your body.

Have fun outside! Exercise increases your rate of metabolism, which may help you feel more comfortable in the cold. Enjoy the brisk cool air while ice skating, sledding, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowboarding or snowshoeing. Rental equipment is often available through sporting goods or outdoor stores, if you want to try something new. Check your town or city recreation department or the Y for classes, moonlight skating or skiing trips, and more. Here are some things to remember if you plan to exercise outdoors:

1. Cold weather can make some health problems worse. If you have medical problems, check with your doctor before you spend a long time outside or exert yourself in the cold.
2. Equip yourself for safety. Wear reflective clothing in the dark or in poor light. If it is icy or slippery, be sure your shoes or boots have a good tread, or add strap-on treads. For skiing or snowboarding wear a helmet.
3. Dress for the weather.
 - Layer your clothes to stay warm and comfortable.
 - Wear a “wicking” synthetic fabric (usually polyester or microfiber) next to your skin that will pull moisture away as you sweat. Cotton long johns or tights next to your skin will get wet and stay wet. Over the wicking layer put something warm for insulation, like fleece or wool. On top, choose a layer that is windproof, waterproof and breathable.
 - Warm the air you breathe with a facemask or a scarf over your mouth.
 - Remember your hat and gloves!
4. When on foot, skis or snowshoes, plan your route so that the wind will be at your back when you finish up. This will help keep you from getting chilled when you’re sweating.
5. Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after your workout.
6. Be aware of wind chill. If wind penetrates your clothes it will remove warm air from next to your body. Also, fast motion like running, cycling or skating can create wind chill by increasing the movement of air around you. Stay indoors if the temperature is below 0 degrees F, or if the wind chill is below -20 degrees F.
7. Watch for frostbite, which shows up as a patch of hard, pale cold skin. Get out of the cold and slowly warm up the part of your body that is affected. If it stays numb, get emergency care.
8. Know the signs of hypothermia, often called “exposure”: intense shivering, slurred speech, loss of coordination, and fatigue. Seek emergency care immediately if you suspect hypothermia.



Be Active Indoors!

There are many ways to be active indoors during the cold winter months:

- Check local malls or schools for indoor walking groups or programs.
- Try an exercise class, lap swimming or exercise machines at a gym.
- At home, borrow an exercise DVD from your library, check out the exercise programs on television, or put on some lively music for dancing.
- March around the room, do strength training with bands or weights, or simply keep on the move while you watch TV.
- At work, use the Step Ahead indoor walk routes, or spend a few minutes before or after work going up and down stairs for a little extra exercise!

Choosing Fitness Videos. Here are some tips to choose from the hundreds available:

1. What are your goals and how fit are you? Do you want to build endurance? Strength? There are specific workout DVDs designed for specific fitness goals. Read the DVD cover to give you a flavor for what it is about and the fitness level it's geared toward.

2. Look for a known and respected instructor, one you like or are familiar with. Good instructors should be professionally certified. They speak clearly and give easy-to-understand directions. The instructors should demonstrate the moves and show you how to change them to make them easier or harder. They should include a warm up and cool down, and walk you through safety concerns.

3. Get opinions. Talk to friends, neighbors, co-workers or people at a health club or recreation center who use fitness DVDs or videos or are familiar with the best instructors. Visit some Web sites and see which names keep popping up. Read the instructor biographies and any available reviews.

4. What space and equipment do you need to do the workout? Do you have enough space in your home? Are you able and willing to buy any equipment that's required?

5. Try before you buy. Local libraries and video stores have fitness videos you can check out, and you can find fitness and exercise programs on cable television. Trying out a video before you buy is a great way to go. Check to see if:

- It's at the right fitness level for you
- It's geared toward an audience you relate to (beginner, competitive athlete, older person, limited mobility)
- It's easy to follow, not too fast-paced or confusing
- It's fun and not boring
- You like the instructor's style
- The music suits you
- It doesn't make unrealistic claims, such as promising results in one week.

6. Check the web. There are several online resources for free or inexpensive routines that you can stream to your computer. Some examples are www.workoutsondemand.com, www.exercisetv.tv/workout-videos/, and www.sparkpeople.com/resource/fitness_videos.asp.

For more information: www.strongwomen.com, <http://sportsmedicine.about.com>, www.webmd.com, www.mayoclinic.com, www.aarp.org

Ettinger, W.H., Wright, B.S., Blair, S.N. 2006. *Fitness after 50: Add years to your life and life to your years*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.





Goals

Setting goals for yourself is a powerful tool and an excellent way to make changes in your lifestyle or habits. Research over several decades shows that using goals is effective. Goals help you direct and focus your attention and efforts, energize you, help you persist in your efforts, and help you put your skills and knowledge to use. Here are suggestions for setting goals and making the most of them.

Choose goals that are moderately challenging. If goals are extremely difficult or too easy, you are less likely to stick with them.

Make your goals realistic.

- Choose something that you can actually do. It's easy to dismiss goals you can't possibly achieve.
- It may be more realistic to attack a very large change in stages, rather than try to change all at once.
- Set yourself up to succeed! Keep in mind the limitations of your particular schedule and situation. Going to the gym every day is a great goal, unless your other responsibilities make that impossible. In that case, it is just a frustration. "Exercise for 30 minutes five days a week" might be the perfect goal for your schedule and level of fitness.

Make your goals very specific. Include *what* you are going to do and also some kind of *time frame*. You are more likely to succeed if your goal is "I will do a 30-minute exercise DVD four times next week" than if your goal is "I will get more exercise."

Choose goals you can measure. How will you know when you have reached your goal? Set a goal that clearly states when you have met it. For example: *I will eat only one portion of dessert or sweets a day.* You can easily count the number of servings of sweets you have. This is a measurable goal. Be creative – there are a lot of ways to count or measure success. "I will be able to wear a smaller size of clothes" is one good way to "measure" weight loss.

One goal or several? There is some difference of opinion about whether it's better to focus on one goal at a time, or to attempt several goals at once. One recent study suggests that people working on several goals at once had more success than people focused on only one. Try it both ways and see what works best for you.

Make a commitment. You are more likely to succeed with goals you are committed to. Writing your goals down is one common way that people make their goals seem more real, more relevant and more permanent, and harder to ignore or forget. Make a formal written contract like the one on page HW-12. You can make a contract with yourself, or with another person who will help you stick to your goal. Keep your contract handy, so you can refer to it.

Identify your reasons and motivations for achieving this goal.

- This will reinforce and help focus your efforts.
- It may help to think of reasons for yourself (such as wanting to feel good, to be stronger or to have more energy) and also reasons for the people who are important to you (for instance, wanting to be a good example or role model, wanting your family or friends to do activities with you, or wanting to be around for your family.)
- Revisit your reasons frequently, and add to them whenever you can. For example, your initial reasons to lose weight might have been to look better and for better health. As you lose weight, you may find you have fewer aches and pains, or it is easier to climb stairs, and your clothes fit better. Those also are good reasons to lose weight – add them to your list!



What will be the challenges or obstacles to reaching your goal? How will you deal with them?

If you can anticipate some of the probable pitfalls in advance and have a plan to overcome them, it will be easier for you to reach your goal. For example, if your goal is to exercise three times a week but you tend to get bored, plan a variety of different activities. Swim one day, walk one day, and dance one day. Ask a “buddy” to go with you if it is easy for you to skip your activity when you are alone.

Go back and review your challenges and strategies often. You may find that some have been resolved, and that new ones have come up that need your attention.

Where and who are you now? Think about your current activities and behaviors, your own history of successes, your likes and dislikes, and life circumstances such as where you live and work, that are related to your goal. For example, answer these questions if your goal is to add more activity to your life.

- What activities have you done in the past?
- Did you ever walk for exercise?
- What activities do you like to do now?
- What activities can you start doing now on a regular basis?

Or, use these questions to come up with ones that refer to healthy eating or weight loss if those are your goals.

Don't give up. Expect that there will be times when you don't follow your plans or when you will not make much progress. This is a **normal** part of making changes.

Learn from your slips:

- Don't be hard on yourself; everyone slips. It will NOT ruin everything.
- Get back on track as soon as you can. Gained weight over vacation? Make your next meal a healthy one!
- What caused you to slip?
- How can you avoid slipping in the future?
- How can you better manage slips when they happen?
- Reassure yourself that you are not a failure just because you slipped.
- Talk to a supportive person.
- Focus on all that you have accomplished!

Have a plan. Many people find that a well-defined plan is the best way to reach their goals. Look at the example on page HW-11 and tailor it for your own use.



Plan to Succeed!

Here is one process you can use to reach your goals:

- Set a goal,
- Make a plan for how to achieve your goal,
- Evaluate how well your plan is working and figure out solutions when problems arise,
- Make changes to your plan and try again,
- Keep track of your progress toward your goal,
- Modify your plan further if your progress is not as desired, and
- Reward yourself for a job well done.

Here is the way one school employee used these steps to lose weight.

Step	Strategy for success
Set a goal	John was determined to lose 12 pounds before his “big” birthday on March 1, about 8 weeks away.
Made a plan	John planned to stop eating dinner leftovers late at night, stop bringing home junk food, and take walks after school.
Evaluated the plan and solved problems	John successfully stopped eating dinner leftovers. Instead of eating late at night, he decided to have a cup of decaf coffee or tea or a low-calorie hot chocolate. John’s wife brought home junk food and it was hard for him to stop eating it or to ask her to not bring it home. John successfully took walks after school when the weather was good.
Changed the plan and tried again	John came up with a plan to walk inside the school for 30 minutes when the weather was bad. John asked his wife to help him cut down on junk food and they decided to limit the amount and variety they brought home.
Tracked progress	John lost 1 to 2 pounds during each of the first three weeks and then his progress slowed down.
Modified plan further to improve progress	John made two more changes to his plan: to drink only water or zero-calorie beverages, and to eat smaller portions by having his meals on a smaller plate.
Continued to track progress	John’s weight loss picked up speed again, and he lost a solid 2 pounds each week.
Rewarded self for achieving the goal	John felt great about himself when that “big” birthday arrived. He used the money he saved from not buying sodas and expensive coffee drinks and junk food, to take his wife to a concert.





Personal Contract

I _____ promise myself that I will improve my health by adhering to the following contract.

My long-term goal is:

My short-terms goals are:

I want to make these changes because:

What gets in my way of change:	Strategies to help me make the change:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

My reward to myself when I accomplish this goal is:

Date: _____

Signed: _____



**Get a good start on your New Year's resolution for a healthy weight!
Use your food records to find patterns and new ideas.**

This grid gives you another way to use the Step Ahead food record on pages HE10 and 11 of your Employee Resource Book. Look over your record for the past week and answer these questions.

1. What foods and beverages added the most calories to your diet during the past week? Write them down in the left column.
2. In the right column, write which is more realistic for you:
 - Eat or drink this food less often
 - Eat smaller portions of this food
 - Replace this food with a food that has fewer calories.

Foods and beverages that added the most calories	Eat less often, eat a smaller portion or replace with a lower-calorie food?



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Healthy Weight

Keep track of your successes

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Remember to check our website, www.stepaheadprogram.com
for information and online tools!





HEALTHY WAYS TO DINE OUT OR “TAKE OUT”

Many of the meals Americans eat are at restaurants or delivered or take-out from restaurants. This makes it hard to limit saturated fat and calories. Here are some ways to maintain healthy eating habits:

Choose a restaurant with a varied menu that prepares food to order. This gives you more choices.

Avoid buffets. All-you-can-eat buffets promote overeating.

Take your time making selections. Read the menu carefully. Some menus identify healthier items.

Order first. Research shows that if you order after other people, your choices are influenced by theirs.

Ask for dressings and sauces on the side. This allows you to control the amount that you eat.

Ask how food is prepared. Order foods that are grilled, boiled, broiled, roasted, steamed or poached. Stay away from anything that is fried. Even chicken, fish and vegetables are not healthy choices if fried. Order skinless chicken, or remove and discard chicken skin before you eat the meat. Also avoid food described as: a la mode, alfredo, au gratin, battered, bisque, breaded, buttered, cheese sauce, creamy, crispy, deep-fried, escaloped, hollandaise, pan-fried, rich or tempura.

Make special requests. Many items can be prepared in healthier ways. For example, ask to have foods prepared without creamy sauces or buttery toppings. Ask that chicken or fish be baked or grilled.

Ask for substitutions. For instance, instead of french fries, ask to substitute a vegetable side dish, baked potato or salad.

Watch portion sizes. Often a single restaurant meal provides enough calories for at least two meals. If possible, order a smaller portion. Order an appetizer as a main course (shrimp cocktail, for example.) To reduce portion sizes without wasting food, ask your server to box half of your meal, even at the beginning of your meal, so you can bring it home with you.

Share. Sharing entrees, appetizers and desserts allows you to sample items that you really want without eating too much. It is still important to make healthy menu choices.

Keep your salad healthy. Salads aren't necessarily good for you. Many restaurant salads and salad bars include unhealthy ingredients like croutons, creamy dressings, high-fat cheeses and fried chicken.

Start your meal with a broth-based soup instead of fried appetizers.

Move temptations (butter, bread basket, chips) out of reach or ask the server to take them away.

Drink two glasses of water before your food arrives.

Drink alcohol in moderation. Mixed drinks, wine and beer are expensive and high in calories. Drinking may allow you to lose sight of your plan to eat healthy.

When your food is served, first eat the healthier items (vegetables, grilled entrees). Then move on to the less healthy items (fries, mashed potatoes).

For dessert, order low fat desserts, fresh fruit, or sorbet.



Every restaurant has healthier choices and foods you should avoid. The following suggestions can help you make healthier decisions when eating out.

CHINESE FOOD		MEXICAN FOOD		INDIAN FOOD	
Healthier Choices	Foods to Avoid	Healthier Choices	Foods to Avoid	Healthier Choices	Foods to Avoid
Wonton soup	Egg drop soup	Gazpacho	Tortilla chips	Tamata salat (tomato salad)	Anything made with coconut milk or cream (coup, curries, etc.)
Hot and sour soup	Fried wontons	Chicken fajitas	Nachos	Mulligatawny soup (lentils and vegetables)	Fried breads
Steamed dumplings	Egg rolls	Chicken/vegetables	Entrees with chorizo (sausage) or carnitas (fried beef)	Chicken or beef tikka	Pakor (fried dough with vegetables)
Stir-fried or steamed chicken, fish, beef, tofu or vegetables	Fried dumplings	enchiladas, without cheese	Refried beans	Tandoori chicken, fish or beef	Samosas (fried vegetable turnovers)
Moo-shu vegetables	Fried rice	Arroz con pollo	Beef tacos	Chicken, fish or beef saag (spinach)	Korma (meat with yogurt sauce)
Steamed rice	Egg fu yung	Grilled fish or chicken entrees	Cheese or beef enchiladas	Chicken, fish or beef vindallo (potatoes and leeks)	Saag paneer (cheese in spinach with cream)
Soy, duck and plum sauces	Noodles with sesame sauce	Frijoles a la charra	Quesadillas	Shish kabob	
Fortune cookies	Cashew chicken	Borracho beans and rice	Burritos with cheese	Gobhi matar tamatr (cauliflower with peas and tomatos)	
	Lemon/orange chicken (if fried)	Soft chicken or fish tacos	Chimichangas	Matar pulao (rice with peas)	
	Sesame chicken	Cheeseless burritos	Guacamole and sour cream	Papadum or papad (lentil wafers)	
	General Tsao chicken	Ceviche	Churros and sopapillas (fried dough desserts)		
	Sweet and sour chicken or pork	Salsa and pico de gallo			
	Lobster sauces				
	Spareribs				
ITALIAN FOOD		AMERICAN/PUB FOOD		FAST-FOOD	
Healthier Choices	Foods to Avoid	Healthier Choices	Foods to Avoid	Healthier Choices	Foods to Avoid
Roasted peppers	Fried mozzarella	Salads with light dressings and no cheese, avocado, bacon, ham or fried chicken	Cream-based soups	Bagel with jelly	Biscuits
Mussels	Garlic bread	Broth or vegetable-based soups	Caesar salads	Pancakes (no butter)	Danish
Marinated mushrooms	Caesar salad	Turkey, veggie, roast beef and chicken breast sandwiches (not fried)	Buffalo wings or chicken tenders	Green salads with lite dressing	Egg sandwiches, especially with sausage or bacon
Italian bread	Sausage, meatballs or pepperoni (in sauces or sandwiches, on pizza or in calzones)	sandwiches (not fried) ordered with no cheese, bacon, avocado or mayonnaise	Fried vegetables	Plain hamburgers	Cheeseburgers
Minestrone	Ravioli (cheese and meat filled)	Hamburgers, turkey burgers and veggie burgers with no cheese, bacon, avocado or mayonnaise	Cheeseburgers	Grilled chicken sandwiches (no sauce or cheese)	Fried chicken or fish filet sandwiches
Grilled calamari	Lasagna	Sirloin, tenderloin or filet cuts of beef	Philly cheese steaks	Turkey burgers	French fries
Steamed clams	Baked ziti	Loin cuts of pork	Grilled cheese, reuben, tuna melt, egg salad or chicken salad sandwiches	Veggie burgers	Baked potatoes with butter, sour cream or cheese
Pasta with marinara sauce	Manicotti	Baked potatoes with salsa, ketchup, marinara sauce or Dijon mustard	Fried fish or chicken	Lean roast beef or turkey sandwiches (no mayo)	Nachos
Pasta primavera with tomato-based sauce	Fettuccine alfredo	Steamed vegetable dishes	Hot dogs	Baked potatoes topped with salsa, ketchup or vegetarian chili, mustard, low fat dressing or barbeque sauces	Onion rings
Pasta with clam sauce (red or white)	Pasta carbonara	Broiled, baked, grilled or blackened fish or chicken	Potato salad		
Chicken marsala	Shrimp scampi		French fries		
Chicken cacciatore	Veal of chicken scaloppini		Fried appetizers, like potato skins and fried mozzarella		
Veal or chicken piccata	Veal, chicken or eggplant parmigiana				
Vegetable pizza or calzones	Thick crust pizza				
Cheeseless pizza	Deep dish pizza				
Thin crust pizza	Cannoli, spumoni and tartufo				
Whole wheat crust					
Italian ice					



Athletic Shoes

Check your shoes regularly. Look over and replace your shoes regularly. Checking and changing your shoes is one of the best ways to reduce the chance of injury. Check all parts of your shoes for wear. Make sure the outsole is not worn through. Make sure that the heel counter is not tilted in or out. Check for holes worn by the pressure of your toes.

Select socks carefully. Consider socks made of synthetic fibers that keep moisture away from your feet. They may work better for you than cotton socks.

Choose a shoe designed specifically for the activity you will be doing. Each activity and sport has a different impact on your feet and legs because of the different ways that your feet and legs move. To lessen the chance of injuries, get a shoe specific to each sport you participate in.

Here are guidelines for buying new athletic shoes:

1. Purchase at a store that specializes in athletic shoes and has a good reputation in your community. Ask at the gym, or ask a sports medicine professional.
2. Wear the same type of sock to the store that you use for the sport or activity. If you use an insert or orthotic, bring that to the store with you. Some experts suggest you bring old athletic shoes with you to the store; they can provide information about fit and stress points.
3. Try on athletic shoes after a workout or run, or at the end of the day. Your feet will be at their largest.
4. Have your feet measured each time you purchase shoes. As you age, your foot size may gradually change. Shoe manufacturers sometimes make changes to a shoe that are not obvious when you look at it. Even if you have purchased what looks like the identical shoe in the past, it is still essential to try shoes on and walk around in them.
5. Look for these things when deciding if the shoe fits:
 - You need the width of your index finger between your longest toe and the end of the shoe.
 - When the shoe is on your foot, you should be able to freely wiggle all of your toes.
 - The shoe should bend at the ball of your foot where your toes actually bend.
 - The shoe should fit firmly around your heels. Your heels should not slip as you walk or run.
 - The shoes should be comfortable as soon as you try them on, without a break-in period.
6. Wear the shoe for at least 10 minutes in the store to see how it feels. If you are buying running shoes, run a few steps too. They should be comfortable.
7. Check the shoe for defects. Examine the exterior of the shoe for tears or other problems. Place the shoes on a level counter and make sure the shoes line up evenly and that the heel is straight.

And finally, don't wear new shoes or socks for a long walk or in a race! Take your old socks and shoes along instead, or plan ahead and wear the new ones for a few weeks in advance.

This information is taken from the websites www.orthoinfo.aaos.org of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, and from www.aapsm.org, of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine. More detailed information is available at both of these websites.



Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise, also known as cardio or endurance exercise, is any activity that causes you to breathe faster and more deeply, increasing the amount of oxygen in your blood. In aerobic fitness, your heart, lungs and blood vessels transport oxygen more effectively throughout your body, making it easier to do physical work.

Aerobic exercise includes any physical activity that uses large muscle groups and increases your heart and breathing rate. Walking, jogging, biking, swimming, dancing, water aerobics, fitness classes, many sports — even leaf raking, snow shoveling and vacuuming can be aerobic activities.

How often? Start out with two or three times a week. As you become more fit, add more days and exercise longer. Aim for at least two hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity or one hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity. It's best to spread your activity across the whole week.

How hard? Start slowly and work your way up to a “moderate” level of exercise. A moderate level is a brisk walk (about 14-23 minutes to walk 1 mile) or a similar amount of effort in another activity. Moderate-intensity activity causes a slightly increased rate of breathing, and it feels “light” to “somewhat hard”. You can easily carry on a conversation while exercising at this level. Examples of a vigorous level of activity are walking a mile in less than 14 minutes, jogging, cycling, and playing endurance sports . These activities result in increased rates of breathing and sweating and feel “somewhat hard” to “very hard.”

As you become more fit, you need to exercise more to get the benefits of exercise. Increase your speed or intensity of exercise, increase your time spent exercising, or exercise more often.

What will aerobic activity do for you? It helps you control your weight, increase your stamina and reduce fatigue, activate your immune system and make you less susceptible to illness, reduce your risk of chronic disease, manage high blood pressure and diabetes, strengthen your heart, boost your “good” cholesterol, and lower your “bad” cholesterol, improve your mood, reduce cognitive decline in older adults, and live longer!

We recommend:

- Work up to at least 30 minutes of activity a day.
- Be active most days of the week.
- Include a warm-up period before and a cool-down period after each exercise session.
- Make exercise part of your routine.
- Add in some variety to keep it interesting and get a “cross training” benefit.
- There are many good online resources about aerobic fitness. Look at www.mayoclinic.com, www.sportsmedicine.about.com , www.sparkpeople.com, and the USDHHS Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans at www.health.gov/paguidelines .

How fit are you? See how you measure up.

Adapted from www.mayoclinic.com

Four key areas of fitness are aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, flexibility and body composition. Estimate each of these and get an overall picture of your fitness.

Supplies and tools for the test:

- A pedometer or a walking route where one mile distance is known
- A watch that can measure seconds or a stopwatch
- A yardstick
- Heavy-duty tape
- Someone to help you with the flexibility test
- A scale to measure your body weight
- A cloth, plastic or paper measuring tape to measure your waist
- The Fitness Log on the following page, or some other way to keep a record.

1. Check your aerobic fitness: Brisk one-mile walk

Take a brisk one-mile (1.6-kilometer) walk. Record how long it takes you to walk the mile, and your pulse (heart rate) before and after the walk. To check your pulse over your carotid artery, place your index and middle fingers on your neck to the side of your windpipe. To check your pulse at your wrist, place two fingers between the bone and the tendon over your radial artery — which is located on the thumb side of your wrist. When you feel your pulse, look at your watch and count the number of beats in 10 seconds. Multiply this number by 6 to get your heart rate per minute. For example, if you count 15 beats in 10 seconds, multiply 15 by 6 for a total of 90 beats per minute.

2. Measure muscular fitness: Push-ups

If you're just starting a fitness program, do modified push-ups on your knees. If you're already fit, do classic push-ups. For both types:

- Lie face down on the floor with your elbows bent, palms next to your shoulders.
- Keeping your back straight, push up with your arms until your arms are extended.
- Lower your body until your chest touches the floor.
- Push your body upward, returning to the starting position.

Count each time you return to the starting position as one push-up. Do as many push-ups as you can until you need to stop for rest.

3. Assess your flexibility: Sit-and-reach test

To estimate the flexibility of the backs of your legs, your hips and your lower back:

- Place a yardstick on the floor. Secure it by placing a piece of tape across the yardstick at the 15-inch (38-centimeter) mark.
- Sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you. Sit so that the soles of your feet are even with the mark on the yardstick and one end of the yardstick is between your legs.
- Ask a helper to place his or her hands on top of your knees to anchor them.
- Reach forward as far as you can, holding the position for two seconds.



- Note the distance you reached.
- Repeat the test two more times and record the best of the three reaches.

4. Estimate your body composition: Waist circumference and BMI

- Measure your waist circumference just above the hipbones.
- Weigh yourself and determine your body mass index (BMI), a ratio of weight to height which is an indicator of healthy weight. Use the BMI calculator at www.stepaheadprogram.com or the BMI table in your Employee Resource Book.

5. Monitor your progress

Keep track of your progress. Take the same measurements about every four to six weeks. Each time you repeat your assessment, celebrate your progress — and adjust your fitness goals accordingly.

Date	1 mile walk			Push-ups	Sit and reach measurement	Waist	BMI
	Pulse before	Pulse after	Time				





Keep Track of Your Successes!

Brian Wansink, the author of Mindless Eating, has conducted very interesting research into the factors that influence how much we eat. Wansink suggests this type of journal as a possible alternative to a detailed food journal. Give it a try! In the left column, write down the small changes that you are making in your eating and exercise habits. Some examples are: walking up and down stairs for 5 minutes, doing 4 strength training moves, eating smaller portions, eating nothing after 8 p.m. Each day, give yourself a check mark for the ones that you complete. If you like, total up your checkmarks at the end of the week. Use the chart you've filled in to plan what habits you want to develop or reinforce next week.

Changes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday



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Remember to check our website, www.stepaheadprogram.com
for information and online tools!



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Selection and Storage Guide

Fruit

Apples - Apples should be firm and heavy for their size, with no soft or brown spots or indentations. Wash very well before using. To core an apple, cut it in half, then in quarters, and using a knife make a circular cut around the seeds and seed casings.

Avocado - A ripe avocado will be slightly firm, but give to gentle pressure. To remove the pit, wash the avocado, and then cut it in half lengthwise, going around the pit. Twist the two halves to separate. Use a spoon to remove the pit and to scoop out the flesh. Throw away the peel. Sprinkle the avocado with lemon juice if you are not using it right away to prevent it from turning brown.

Blueberries - Blueberries are not as perishable as other berries. Discard overly soft berries. Carefully and pull off any attached stems. Wash well and then dry on paper towels before eating or using in recipes.

Watermelon - A ripe watermelon will smell sweet and give a hollow thud when thumped. Seedless varieties of watermelon aren't really seedless, but have very small, tender, edible seeds.

Grapes - Look for bunches with the grapes held tightly to the stems. Wash grapes very well before using. Store covered in the refrigerator.

Kiwi - A ripe kiwi will give to gentle pressure from your thumb. The skin and black seeds are edible. Wash just before using and peel the skin if you prefer.

Oranges - A fresh orange feels heavy for its size. Ripe oranges may have green streaks and it does not affect taste or quality. Most oranges are dyed orange before reaching grocery store shelves. Oranges keep well in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.



Apricots - Choose plump apricots that are not too soft and do not have cracks in the skin or white spots. Cut the apricot in half and remove the pit. Apricots may be eaten skin and all. To peel, put in boiling water for 10-20 seconds then plunge immediately into cold water. The peel will slip right off.

Mangoes - Mangoes should smell sweet and be soft when pressed with the fingers, but mangoes should not be not wrinkled. Color isn't a reliable indicator of ripeness. To prepare a mango, hold it upright and cut down along one of the fat sides, moving your knife to avoid the large oval pit. Repeat on the other side. Cut the flesh away from the peel. Trim the rest of the fruit off the pit.

Cantaloupe - Ripe cantaloupes smell sweet and give slightly when you gently press against the vine end of the melon (larger indentation). Make sure to wash the cantaloupe before you cut it, to prevent food poisoning. Gently scoop out the seeds with a spoon.

Cranberries - Cranberries are in season in October and November. Look for plump cranberries that are not wrinkled. Discard soft or wrinkled cranberries. Wash before using. Cranberries freeze very well.

Honeydew melon - Melons should be heavy for their size and give slightly when pressed with your fingers. They should also smell sweet, like honey. Wash well before slicing and gently scoop out the seeds.

Lemons and limes - Lemons and limes should feel heavy for their size. To get the most juice, gently roll on the countertop to break down the cell structure. Store on the countertop not the refrigerator.

Star fruit - Star fruit are ripe when yellow and give slightly to pressure. The entire lemony fruit is edible. Just wash and slice.

HE-16

Berries - Strawberries, raspberries, boysenberries, gooseberries, and blackberries are very perishable. Try to use them the day you buy them for best quality. Wash in cool water, sort, and place on paper towels to drain. Wash right before using.

Papaya – A papaya is ripe when it gives slightly with pressure from your palm. Wash the fruit and remove the peel, then scoop out the seeds if you'd like. The black papaya seeds are edible and have a peppery taste.

Pears - Pears are ripe when they feel firm and have a smooth skin. They feel heavy for their size. Ripen pears by letting them stand at room temperature for a few days. Bosc pears (brown-skinned pears) are best for cooking; Anjou and Bartlett are best for eating fresh.



Cherries - Ripe cherries feel heavy and firm and have a tight skin. Wash very well before eating.

Peaches - Ripe peaches are yellow with a reddish or pink blush, give slightly to pressure and smell sweet. Always wash peaches right before using. The skin is edible but to remove the skin, put peaches in boiling water for 30 seconds then plunge into cold water. The skins should slip right off.

Pineapple - Ripe pineapples smell sweet and give very slightly when pressed at the bottom. To prepare, wash, then grasp the leaves and twist off. Cut the pineapple into four sections, and cut the flesh away from the prickly peel. Remove the hard core and slice the fruit.

Vegetables

Artichokes - a ripe artichoke squeaks when you squeeze it. Artichokes should be compact, firm and heavy for their size. A slight brown tint in the artichokes is good because it tastes sweeter. Wash an artichoke well before cooking. Artichokes can be boiled or steamed until the leaves are easily pulled off.

Asparagus - Choose firm spears with tightly closed tips. Asparagus can be peeled if you prefer. Rinse the spears well, since they can be sandy. Then hold the spears in both hands and bend until they snap. The spears will break naturally at the point where they are tender. Steam or roast them until tender.

Beets - Fresh beets should be firm, round and smooth with no soft spots. Cut off the beet stem, leaves and root, and wash and scrub the beet thoroughly before cooking. Beets can be boiled, oven roasted or steamed. After cooking, the skins will slip off easily. The red stain from beets is permanent, so cover your work surface with waxed paper as you work.



Cucumbers - A ripe cucumber feels firm and should not have any soft spots. Most cucumbers in the grocery store have a waxed coating to help them stay fresh longer. Peel cucumbers to remove the skin and waxed coating. Cooked cucumber has a delicate taste and tender texture.

Greens (Collards, Kale, Swiss Chard) - Choose deep green, large leaves that are not wilted. Store unwashed in refrigerator in a plastic bag. When ready to use them, wash greens very, very well as sand and dirt collect in the leaves.

Jicama - A ripe Jicama feels heavy with no soft spots. Wash, peel, and slice to serve. Jicama is a fresh, crisp root or tuber that has a sweet apple-y flavor. Use in salads and salsas.

Tomatoes - Fresh tomatoes should be firm, but give gently when pressed and should smell sweet like a tomato. Unripe tomatoes have no smell. Wash very well before eating. Store at room temperature. To remove the seeds, cut in half and gently squeeze to remove the seeds. To peel tomatoes, dip briefly in boiling water until the skin begins to split. Cool by plunging into ice water, and the skin will slip right off.

Broccoli - Choose firm, plump heads with no yellow florets. Broccoli florets and stalk can be eaten raw or cooked. Wash well before using. The stalks can be peeled and cut into thin pieces.

Broccoli Rabe - Choose firm stalks with crisp leaves. Some yellow flowers are fine. Wash well before cooking.

Cabbage - Green or red cabbage should be firm and heavy, with leaves tightly attached. Wash the cabbage and remove the outer tough leaves.

Carrots - Small carrots tend to taste sweeter! If you are buying carrots with green tops, remove the tops before refrigerating. Wash carrots right before you use them.

Cauliflower - Ripe cauliflower feels firm, heavy with white florets and no brown spots. Wash well before and cut the stem (if there is one) before using. Cauliflower can go bad quickly. Buy no more than 3 days before using.

Corn - Fresh corn on the cob feels firm and heavy and has bright green, tightly attached husk and light, dry silk. Remove the husk from the cobs right before cooking and pull off the 'silk'.

Winter Squash - Winter squashes have a hard skin that should be firm, and a dry, attached stem. Store in a cool dark place. Winter squash is often baked. Pumpkins, butternut squash, delicata, hubbard, acorn and spaghetti squash are common varieties.

Summer squash - Choose firm, small summer squashes with no soft or brown spots. Wash very well. The skin can be eaten. Summer squashes can be eaten raw or cooked. Varieties include yellow summer squash, crookneck and scalloppini.

Salad Greens - Salad greens can go bad quickly. If you buy loose bunches, choose crisp, tight heads. Wash the leaves carefully and dry well. Prepackaged salad greens are very convenient but make sure to wash them very well.



Leeks - Fresh leeks should have crisp, dark green leaves, with no yellow spots and should feel heavy for their size. Leeks can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Rinse leeks very well right before using as they are grown in sand and the sand can hide in between the leaves.

Mushrooms - Choose mushrooms that are firm with no brown spots. Store in a paper bag in the refrigerator. Rinse quickly before using. Do not soak the mushrooms in water, or they will absorb lots of liquid and be watery. The thin membrane under the cap that covers the gills is called the veil. Mushrooms are fine if the veil is open and you see the gills. Try the different variety of mushrooms like portobella, crimini, morels, shiitake, and oyster mushrooms.

Onions - Buy firm, solid onions with no wet spots. Do not store onions in the refrigerator, or they will soften. Store in a cool dark place separate from potatoes as it shortens the potatoes' shelf life.

Peppers – Sweet peppers can be red, yellow, orange or green. Hot varieties include jalapenos and habaneros. Choose firm, brightly colored peppers and store covered in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 days. Wash, cut and remove seeds before slicing or chopping. Be very careful when preparing hot peppers to not touch your eyes, nose or mouth because you may feel a burning sensation.

Potatoes and yams - Potatoes should be firm, heavy, and should not have any sprouts, soft spots or bruises. Wash potatoes very well, and remove any sprouts and green areas. Store in a cool dark place separate from onions as it shortens the onion's shelf life.

Spinach - Purchase fresh spinach with crisp, deep green leaves with no bruises or soft spots. Baby spinach leaves are tender and taste sweet, Wash very well to remove sand. .

Zucchini - Choose firm, smaller zucchini with smooth skin and no soft or brown spots. Larger zucchini can be tough and bitter. Zucchini can be eaten raw or cooked. Wash well before using. The skin is edible, so you can peel it or not as you like. Store in the refrigerator for up to four days.

Quick and Tasty Ways to Cook Vegetables

Guide to cooking a variety of fresh and frozen vegetables with recipes to try

MICROWAVE

Place vegetables in a large microwave safe dish (preferably glass). To preserve most nutrients, use very little liquid. **Fresh vegetables:** use ¼ cup of liquid for every pound of fresh vegetables. **Frozen vegetables:** use 1 to 2 Tablespoons water for every 10 to 12 ounces of frozen vegetables. Cover tightly with a lid or microwave-safe plastic wrap and microwave on high until tender (time will vary depending on microwave and if using fresh or frozen vegetables).

Cauliflower: (serves 4 – 6)

Fresh: Cut into 1-inch florets. Place in a large microwave-safe baking dish. Add ¼ cup dry white wine, broth or water. Cover tightly and microwave on high about 4 minutes.

Frozen: place frozen cauliflower florets in a large microwave-safe baking dish. Add 2 Tablespoons liquid, microwave on high until tender.



OVEN ROASTING

Oven roasting releases the natural sweetness of vegetables (called caramelization). Onions, white and sweet potatoes, brussels sprouts, green beans, cauliflower and carrots are just some of the vegetables that roast well.

General Instructions: Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Spread vegetables on baking sheet or pan large enough to hold them in a single layer. Coat with olive oil (generally 2 teaspoons oil for every pound of vegetables). Sprinkle with a little salt. Roast until tender and browned in a few places. Roast harder vegetables such as potatoes, beets or brussels sprouts for 30 to 40 minutes. Roast softer vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli and cauliflower for 12 to 15 minutes.

Oven roasted green beans:

1 pound green beans (washed and ends trimmed off)
2 teaspoons olive oil.

Pre heat oven to 425 degrees.

In large bowl, coat green beans with olive oil.

Place on pan large enough to hold them in a single layer.

Sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt.

Put in oven. Roast until tender and beginning to brown about 12 minutes.



GRILLING

Grilled vegetables are colorful with a bright and intense flavor.

General Instructions. Wash vegetables very well. Cut vegetables to expose the maximum surface area to the grill. Smaller vegetables may need to be wrapped in aluminum foil. Brush or spray the vegetables with a little oil before placing vegetables on the grill. Season with a little salt and pepper. To avoid burning, the grill should be medium-hot. Test by holding your hand 5 inches above the grill grate. If you can hold your hand there for 3-4 seconds the grill is ready.

Grilled Zucchini or Summer Squash

Trim off both ends of the zucchini or squash and slice the long way into ½-inch thick planks.

Spray vegetables with oil and season with lemon pepper. Place vegetables on grill.

Grill 8–10 minutes, turning once half way through the cooking time.



SAUTÉING

Sautéing is a quick way to cook almost any fresh or frozen vegetable. Very little oil, spray, broth or water is needed especially if using a nonstick pan. Two teaspoons of oil or broth is needed for every 1 pound of vegetables.

General Instructions: Spray pan with vegetable spray or add 2 teaspoons oil or broth to pan and turn heat to medium. Add vegetables. Cook 3 to 5 minutes until tender. Season with salt and pepper.

Sautéed Lemon Swiss Chard: (serves 4)

2 teaspoons olive oil

3 cloves garlic, sliced

1 head Swiss chard, washed and chopped into large pieces

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ cup lemon juice

1 to 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Heat olive oil in skillet over medium heat. Sauté garlic until slightly browned.

Add in Swiss chard and salt, cook until wilted.

Turn off heat and toss with lemon juice and balsamic vinegar.



References: Cooks Illustrated May & June 2001; www.eatingwell.com; Foundations of Food Preparation 6th ed. Simon & Schuster Company.



Move outdoors!

Tie those walking shoes, buckle your bike helmet, grab your golf clubs or racquet, your camera or your suit and a towel! Try some of these suggestions to enjoy the great outdoors this summer.

Massachusetts has one of the largest state parks systems in the country! Our **state Parks and Forests** feature a huge variety of facilities, from fresh and saltwater beaches to hiking and bike trails to golf courses and more! There are parking fees for day use ranging from \$2 to \$9 per day; a ParksPass good for a calendar year is available for \$35 to state residents. <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/>. Be sure to check the website for information on which beaches and facilities are closed.

“Outdoors This Week” is a weekly listing of outdoor-oriented activities sponsored by a variety of regional organizations in the Boston metro area. To subscribe, go to www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org, choose the “What We Do” tab from the home page menu, and click on “Outdoors This Week”.

In addition to the state, federal and regional resources listed here, many **cities and towns** have conservation areas or other public recreation facilities with trails. Check out websites!

Walking/hiking groups, trails and more

Bay Circuit Trail www.baycircuit.org 180 miles of blazed multi-use, passive recreational trail in more than 32 cooperating towns in an “outer emerald necklace” between routes 128 and 495, from Plum Island in the north to Duxbury in the south, with the westernmost points in the Marlborough, Southborough and Ashland area.

Massachusetts Audubon Society www.massaudubon.org
Properties and facilities in many communities around the state. Some facilities charge a nominal fee for trail use to non-members.

Midstate Trail <http://www.midstatetrail.org>
The 92-mile hiking trail extends from the border of New Hampshire to Rhode Island.

New England Wildflower Society www.newfs.org/garden.htm botanic garden, courses, programs
Garden in the Woods, Framingham,.

Northeast Region, US Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Refuges
Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, Hudson, Maynard, Stow and Sudbury,
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/assabetriver/index.html>.

Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Bedford, Billerica, Carlisle, Concord, Lincoln, Sudbury and Wayland. www.fws.gov/northeast/greatmeadows/



Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, Ayer, Shirley, Harvard, Lancaster: .

www.fws.gov/northeast/oxbow/

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Newburyport., Kayaking and canoeing (entrance fee for boating). www.fws.gov/northeast/parkerriver/

Sudbury Valley Trustees www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org.

Properties in many local towns, and trail maps are available at their website as well as information about their events and programs. Free use of trails, charges to non-members for some organized events.

Trustees of Reservations www.thetrustees.org

Properties in many communities around the state. Many of the facilities are free to the public.

Walk'N Mass Volkssport Club offers free non-competitive events including walks, bikes, and swims. Their most popular events are walks of 5 and 10 kilometers on a well-marked trail with directions and a map to get you back where you started.

<http://www.ava.org/clubs/walknmass/>

Biking groups and a few trail suggestions (paved trails are also good for walking or roller-blading)

MassBike information on biking throughout the state ; it is a fabulous resource with information, links and maps for 29 trails in Metro Boston and Central Massachusetts alone (not to mention all of those in the rest of the Commonwealth!) www.massbike.org

Nashoba Valley Pedalers bike club www.nvpbike.org

Seven Hills Wheelman bike club www.sevenhillswheelmen.org

Assabet River Rail Trail Hudson to downtown Marlborough www.arrtinc.org/index.asp,

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Lowell and Westford www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Mass Central Rail Trail www.masscentralrailtrail.org 25 miles of a proposed 104-mile Boston-Northampton trail are open now. See also www.wachusettsgreenways.org for information on the sections open from Sterling to Oakham in Central MA.

Minuteman Bike Trail Bedford to Cambridge <http://www.minutemanbikeway.org/>

Nashua River Rail Trail Ayer, MA to NH <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/>

How to be a big loser

Q: I want to lose 60 pounds. Seems impossible! How can I reach my goal?

A: Losing 60 lbs. is possible but not everybody does it. Here are 10 steps to becoming one who does it.

- 1. Believe.** For long-lasting weight loss, believe two things: 1) that it is hard work and 2) that you can accomplish hard work. You cannot lose weight without exercise and healthy dietary control. You must believe that you are capable of the hard work of lifestyle change. Are you? Say YES because you ARE.
- 2. Time Is On Your Side.** You didn't gain this weight overnight, so you will not lose it overnight. Count on a minimum of 18-24 months to get close to this goal. People too often give themselves short periods of time to work toward their goal and then give up when they haven't reached it. Give yourself PLENTY of time. DON'T focus on the 60-pound goal, but on smaller, shorter-term goals, such as 5-pound increments. Think of it as 12 five-pound steps to 60 pounds. Allow yourself 4-6 weeks to lose each 5 pounds. Some will come off quicker, some may take more time.
- 3. Know What You Put In Your Mouth** The necessary evil of weight control is keeping a journal of what you eat. It is the single most effective weight loss strategy. A recent review of 22 weight loss studies found that diet journals *consistently* predicted weight loss outcomes (Burke et al 2011). Users swear by www.MyFitnessPal.com mobile application, a very handy diet and exercise tracker with a social network.
- 4. Fall in Love With Exercise.** Stop saying "I hate exercise." It's simply not possible that you hate all forms of bodily movement. The objective is to find an exercise that you enjoy. Try a few different things. Pick the one(s) you like the most. Learning to embrace exercise is essential to long lasting weight loss.
- 5. Race for Your Cure.** A lot of "big losers" do races as a motivational tool. Sign up NOW for a distance walk or run (5K, 10K, etc). This gives you a fitness goal to strive for, and it will help you stay on track with your exercise. If you sign up for 3 or 4 of these a year, you will always be in training. Find races near you at www.active.com. Race for a charity close to your heart to make it even more meaningful. Increase the distance of races over time (e.g., after 2-3 5Ks try a 10K) and strive to beat your previous race time at every race. Your physical limits are FAR beyond your imagination. Cross that finish line, it's one of the biggest highs in life.
- 6. Face the Scale.** Weigh yourself once a week or more. NEVER allow a week to go by where you haven't weighed yourself. Routine weighing is another common denominator of successful "losers."
- 7. Your weight loss trajectory is not going to be a straight line.** Expect many bumps in the road. You might have a week where you gain a couple of pounds, and weeks in a row where you plateau. The bumps are all part of the process, NOT a sign of failure. Too many people get frustrated at the first sign of slowed weight loss and quit. Big losers DON'T do this, they forge ahead. They are unstoppable!
- 8. Develop a Regular Eating Pattern** Never let 3 hours go by without eating something. Appetite control involves avoiding extreme hunger. Never skip meals and plan snacks for times when you start to get hungry. By avoiding extreme hunger your tendency to overeat will dramatically decline.
- 9. Conquer your sleep and stress issues.** If you are chronically sleep deprived or overstressed, weight loss will be extremely difficult to impossible. Sleep deprivation and stress both stimulate the hormones that increase appetite.
- 10. Start building your "community" because you cannot do this alone.** Support and accountability are essential to this process and need to come from people **who are on the same road**. With My Fitness Pal you can be "friends" with other users, see each other's progress, support each other, and chat. Also, take advantage of social networking, Weight Watcher groups, or blogs to build your community. Check out these blogs of people who lost from 50 to 140 pounds, add your comments, and think about starting your own blog: <http://www.chicagonow.com/blogs/cubicle-dad/>, <http://www.344pounds.com/>, <http://diaryoffatwoman.blogspot.com/>, <http://www.fatgirlfightsback.com/>

By Dr. Sherry Pagoto, condensed from Healthy Worcester blog. www.healthyworcester.com



Your lucky numbers!

What you eat and drink, how active you are and how much sleep you get are among the factors that affect your weight.

Use this once-a-day tool to keep track of everything during the week. Aim for the red numbers!

	Monday / /	Tuesday / /	Wednesday / /	Thursday / /	Friday / /	Saturday / /	Sunday / /
7-8 hours of sleep	# of hours _____						
5 servings of fruits and vegetables	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____						
At most 2 servings of alcohol for men, 1 for women	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more
1/2 hour or more physical activity	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 min. or more Activities I did: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 min. or more Activities I did: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 min. or more Activities I did: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 min. or more Activities I did: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 min. or more Activities I did: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 min. or more Activities I did: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 30 min. <input type="checkbox"/> 30 min. or more Activities I did: _____ _____
0 soda or sweet drinks	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more
Portion sizes	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Oversize						
Healthy breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						



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Remember to check our website, www.stepaheadprogram.com
for information and online tools!



Fruit and Vegetable Seasoning Guide



Herbs and spices add flavor, color and interest to fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables without added fat and calories. Here's a list of herbs and some ideas for fruit or vegetables to try with them.

Dried herbs can go stale, so be sure to store in an air-tight container away from heat. Most dried herbs last about a year. Add fresh herbs toward the end of cooking for the most flavor. When substituting dried for fresh herbs, use 1 teaspoon of dried for 1 tablespoon of fresh.

<i>Herb or Seasoning</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Fruit or Vegetable</i>
Basil	Fragrant, savory and sweet	tomatoes and tomato sauces, lettuce salads, potatoes, peas
Caraway seeds	Nutty, with a slight licorice flavor	beets, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, turnips, winter squash
Chervil	Subtle flavor of licorice and lemon	asparagus, eggplant, peas, potatoes, mixed salad greens
Chili Powder	A blend of spicy flavors	potatoes, corn, tomatoes
Chives	Mild onion flavor	potatoes, cucumbers, corn, tomatoes, brussels sprouts, carrots, mixed salad greens
Cilantro	Lively, with hints of citrus and evergreen	tomato salsas, avocado, Asian salads
Cinnamon	Warm, spicy and sweet	apples, pears, cooked winter squash, sweet potatoes, yams
Dill	Fresh, light licorice flavor	asparagus, carrots, corn, potatoes, beets
Garlic	Strong and sharp, softens and mellows when cooked	tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, swiss chard, collard greens
Ginger	Aromatic, warm and spicy with a "bite"	apples, pears, carrots, green beans, winter squash, sweet potatoes
Marjoram	Similar to oregano with a minty, basil-like flavor	tomato sauces, beans, carrots, corn, eggplant, parsnips, cauliflower, salads
Mint	Cool and refreshing	oranges, grapefruit, peas, fruit or vegetable salads
Nutmeg	Spicy and sweet	cooked spinach, kale, potatoes, apples, pears, winter squash
Oregano	Savory, sweet and peppery	potatoes, corn, mushrooms, summer squash, tomatoes, salads
Parsley	Herbal, bright and fresh	corn, potatoes, peas, salads, tomatoes
Rosemary	Subtle, pine-like aroma and flavor	potatoes, broccoli, turnips
Sage	Soft, sweet and slightly minty	eggplant, sweet potatoes, peas, winter squash
Thyme	Delicate and savory, with a slight lemon flavor	eggplant, carrots, corn, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, winter squash, tomatoes, lettuce salads

Sources: Frontierherb.com, mayoclinic.com, whfoods.com, www.foodnetwork.com.



Are you looking for new and fresh ideas to eat more fruits and vegetables? Here are some easy ways to get started.

Dip it: snap peas, baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, red pepper slices, and celery sticks are great for dipping. Dip in your favorite bean dip like hummus, or low-fat ranch dressing. Dip strawberries, pieces of melon, grapes, sliced apples or pears in your favorite low-fat or fat-free yogurt.

Salads: Make it a rainbow! Add a variety of colorful fresh, steamed or grilled vegetables; fresh seasonal fruit or even frozen peas to your salad.

Time saving tip: make a large salad for a few meals throughout the week. Store it in an air-tight container in the refrigerator.

Breakfasts: Add fresh or frozen fruit to oatmeal, cold cereal, low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese. Top waffles or pancakes with fruit instead of syrup.

Sandwiches: Add extra tomato slices, lettuce, baby spinach, shredded carrots, chopped or sliced peppers, cucumber slices, or sliced apples on your next sandwich or wrap. Substitute sliced cucumbers or baby carrots for chips. Instead of two slices of bread on your next peanut butter sandwich, serve it open faced and top it off with sliced bananas or sliced apples.

Snacks: Take single servings of unsweetened applesauce to work. Fill a small snack bag with red or green pepper slices, grapes, fruit slices, baby carrots or small cherry tomatoes. Frozen grapes, mango pieces and bananas make excellent snacks on hot days.

Soups: Add shredded carrots, fresh or frozen peas, spinach, cut broccoli, or cauliflower to your favorite broth-based soup or chili.

Pasta sauces: Add shredded carrots, diced zucchini or yellow squash, fresh or frozen spinach to your favorite pasta sauce.

Eggs: Add fresh or frozen broccoli, spinach, mushrooms, hot or sweet peppers, tomatoes, or onions to your next omelet, egg sandwich or egg scramble.

Grilled vegetables: Onions, mushrooms, zucchini, tomatoes, red, yellow and green peppers taste great when grilled. Throw on extra vegetables to use later in the week and add to sandwiches, pita, wraps, salads and pasta sauces.

Grilled fruit: Grilled pineapple slices, peaches, or nectarines make a great dessert. Grill extra to use later in the week.

Dining out or take out: Ask for extra vegetables and less cheese or meat when ordering your next pizza. Instead of having potato or rice, ask for two vegetable sides or a small side salad.



Question: What is the best form of exercise?

Answer: The one you will stick with.

This is not a joke! Sometimes the hardest thing about exercise is staying with it over the long term. Here are some ideas and findings from research about what seems to help people stay active.

A structured program of exercise seems to work better than an unstructured one.

Research shows that people enrolled in programs for exercise are more likely to continue than people who receive a recommendation to exercise but no program. Going it alone is especially hard to maintain. Sign up for a class or a team or a walking group, hire a personal trainer, or make a commitment to an exercise companion to walk or run together or carpool to the gym.

Have short term goals that you can realistically achieve, and when you achieve those goals, create new ones. The process of creating success through setting and achieving goals is a proven way to stay with your exercise plan. Also, setting new goals as you achieve earlier ones is a way to maintain your fitness. Over time, your body adjusts to your workout and you need to work harder or longer to keep your level of fitness.

Be positive. Picture yourself reaching your goal, crossing the finish line or swimming that mile or standing at the summit. A mental image of what you want to accomplish can help give you the energy you need to succeed.

Keep it interesting. If you are bored with your walk or exercise routine, do something different. Cross training, activities working different muscle groups, is another way to improve or maintain your fitness.

Move ahead. When you have a weekend when you are too busy to exercise, put it behind you and move on. Don't think of it as a setback. Maybe there is something you can learn from the experience that will help you the next time.

Track your fitness progress by writing down your time spent exercising or distance traveled, or by wearing a pedometer or step counter. Several studies have shown that wearing a pedometer all of the time is an effective way to increase physical activity. Keep increasing your number of steps or distance to get the most out of this approach.

Use the power of momentum. Momentum builds quickly and can lead to great results. Start a personal streak: How many weeks in a row can you complete three workouts? How many days in a row can you walk for 30 minutes? Your streak can help carry you to your goal! And the longer you go, the better your chances are of staying with it for the long term.

Try exercising outdoors. Some research suggests that, compared with exercising indoors, exercising in natural environments is associated with greater feelings of revitalization and positive engagement, decreases in tension, confusion, anger, and depression, and increased energy. Participants reported greater enjoyment and satisfaction with outdoor activity and declared a greater intent to repeat the activity at a later date.



TOP 20 *BEST* REASONS TO EXERCISE (OUT OF 1000)

by Sherry Pagoto, Ph.D., Associate Professor, UMass Medical School

reprinted from www.fudiet.com.

Reason to exercise #593: Exercise removes you from the presence of people who annoy you for a good hour.

Reason to exercise #643: Exercise removes YOU from the presence of people YOU annoy for a good hour.

Reason to exercise #124: Tollhouse wants you to feel better about the “cookie dough incident” just as much as you do.

Reason to exercise #213: Because it puts the fad diet people out of business.

Reason to exercise #321: Brisk walking/running is good practice for the next time you need to get out of jam right quick.

Reason to exercise #560: Exercise gives you some good solid time to plan a strategy to get back at that son-of-a @#&!

Reason to exercise #333: In the event you need an alibi you can say, “what?! I was out on my walk!” and everyone will believe you.

Reason to exercise #756: Exercise opens up an entirely new wardrobe category and therefore reason to go SHOPPING.

Reason to exercise #299: Exercise is the only excuse to get out of a family gathering that receives an OH WOW! *“Gotta go train, I’m walking for cancer next week!”*

Reason to exercise #765: Walk/running races are a great way to build a t-shirt collection that you think you didn’t pay for.

Reason to exercise #32: Socially acceptable way to escape your children for an hour.

Reason to exercise #764: Because drug companies are counting on us NOT to.

Reason to exercise #12: Because gyms hope you sign up and then never go, so by going you just tick them off which is always fun.

Reason to exercise #423: Because all the cool kids are and back in the day that was reason enough for you to do MUCH stupider stuff.

Reason to exercise #901: Cure for PMS that doesn’t involve punching someone in the face.

Reason to exercise #233: Because Target sells thingys to hang your clothes on that are far cheaper than a treadmill.

Reason to exercise #716: Because Charlie Sheen does and look how much good it’s done him. (Perhaps not the best example).

Reason to exercise #671: Because your sofa called and said he’s feeling smothered lately.

Reason to exercise #211: Because all of life’s answers lie between the cracks in the pavement, as does the occasional spare change.

Reason to exercise #999: Because you can’t possibly come up with this many reasons not to.

9 Ways to Increase Your Weight Loss Potential in Less than 1 Minute per Week
By Sherry Pagoto, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Medicine
Preventive & Behavioral Medicine Division, UMass Medical School
Excerpted from www.fudiet.com

Living a healthy lifestyle requires time! Having no time is the **#1** excuse for not following through. Here are 9 strategies to improve your **weight loss potential** that require less than 1 minute each (and some may even SAVE you time).

1. Running on Empty. A big mistake I see people making is exercising on an empty stomach. Morning exercisers often do this because they pop out of bed and immediately dive into a workout. The problem here is you are working out after a 12 hour fast which means your blood sugar is low and your energy levels too. You will feel more fatigued during the workout and run out of energy much sooner than if you had eaten more recently. Keep in mind also that fatigue and overexertion can make your workouts less enjoyable, which can negatively impact your motivation to continue. Eating in the hour prior to a workout will give you more energy during your workout. I recommend eating something small and easily digestible (spoonful of peanut butter, wheat toast, Carnation instant breakfast drink, Kashi bar, etc) at least 15 minutes before working out. The other time of day people often exercise on an empty stomach is when they exercise after work but before dinner. This leads to the same problem of fatigue, but also might increase your dinner appetite by further lowering your blood sugar prior to dinner. If you are worried about the extra calories from adding these snacks, you might consider borrowing calories from other times of the day. Eat less at a meal or plan your snacks to be closer to your workout.
2. Only the Good Days Count. One habit of diet journalers is that their perceived “average” intake often does not represent their heaviest eating days because “bad” days are the least likely to be journaled. I see journalers routinely skipping weekends, days with parties, holidays and vacations. Overeating on these occasions can significantly contribute to your pace of weight loss, stall it completely, or even cause weight gain. Skipping the worst days also misses an opportunity to improve your eating habits in these tough circumstances. You might consider skipping your reliably good days and spending more effort on journaling on your “bad” days. It won’t cost you any extra time, but will have a much bigger impact on your weight.
3. Be Gilligan Not the Skipper. Ahh.. the breakfast skipper. A stubborn lot because they can’t see how adding a meal will actually help with weight loss. It seems counterintuitive. The breakfast skipper is not hungry at breakfast and sees this as an opportunity to eat less. Unfortunately this is a trap. Skipping breakfast is associated with greater intake later in the day. Evenly distribute your calories across the day and never go 3-4 waking hours without having something to eat.
4. Liquid calories. If you are drinking any calories, such as juice, sweetened tea, or soda, a great way to cut your total calories down is to switch these out for water. I’m getting less enthused about diet sodas given the recent studies showing they may be increasing our appetites. Try to get used to water, slowly but surely. Some people are good with the “no liquid calories” rule UNTIL... it comes to booze! For alcohol, find a drink of choice that is low in calories. There are several beers available that are very low in calories, and some hard liquors, if used in small portions and mixed with soda, can make lower calorie drinks. Wine is generally better than mixed drinks with sweetened mixes, tonic, or juice. Alcohol calories definitely count and can easily add up to as much or more than a meal itself.

5. Autopilot Exercise. Doing the same workout over and over and over again will actually produce fewer and fewer results over time. Your body gets used to the workout and then becomes more efficient at doing it, meaning you'll burn fewer calories. Increasing the intensity of your workout or changing the activity are ways to avoid lengthening the time of your workout. For example, try to shave 5 minutes off of your 3 mile walk time. Alternatively, instead of walking every day, swim or do the elliptical trainer one day. Again, this costs you no extra time but can add to your calorie expenditure.
6. Trying to live with the Devil. I cannot emphasize this enough. You should not be living with any foods that tempt you to overeat. Identify all foods in the home that you have found yourself overindulging and cross them off the grocery list. It is ok to have these foods outside of the house occasionally, but not to **live with** these foods. They are obnoxious roommates!
7. I'm Famished. Weight control requires very good appetite control. Appetite control means never getting over-hungry or over-full. Being extremely hungry makes controlling your intake very difficult. If you feel like you can go long periods of time without feeling hungry, consider that you might not be sensing your internal hunger signals. Some people do not sense hunger signals as soon as others. For these people it takes extreme hunger to notice hunger at all. If this is you, put your eating on a schedule because your hunger signals may be allowing you to get over-hungry, making you vulnerable to overeating.
8. TV: Friend or Foe? Instead of feeling guilty about TV time, make it activity time. Watch TV while using exercise equipment, doing floor exercises, using dumbbells, doing yoga stretches, anything active. Don't let 30 minutes of TV go by without doing something active, even if just a stretch routine. Another option is to alternate TV shows with active video games. Fun active games include Wii Fit, Dance Dance Revolution, Just Dance, or Wii Sports. You can do these by yourself or with family members. For you competitive types, a sneaky way to beat your family members at games is by squeezing in some practice time when nobody is home! What?! Of course I have never done that! So silly!
9. Call Aunt Sally. Just like the TV, the phone presents a great opportunity to multi-task in some exercise. Have you been avoiding that call to Aunt Sally? You know the one where she talks about her cats and how the next door neighbors have the nerve to park right in front of her house!? AGHH! Or do you have a friend you've been meaning to catch up with? Walk and talk! Get a head phone set that has a microphone so that you don't need to hold the phone to your ear while you walk. Then, take the phone outside and make your calls while walking. You don't have to power walk yourself out of breath through the conversation, just keep your feet moving. Plan to do telephone catch up with walking at least once a week. You'll feel great you got caught up on your calls and squeezed in some physical activity along the way. And of course, Aunt Sally will thank you...



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Remember to check our website, www.stepaheadprogram.com
for information and online tools!





How to Get Over Your Sugar Addiction

By Sherry Pagoto, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Preventive and Behavioral Medicine, UMass Medical School

Reproduced by permission from fudiet.com, July 20, 2011

I'm a lifelong sweet tooth (AKA sugar addict). I can't finish a meal without something sweet to top it off. My stomach even has this neat "reserve tank" purely for sweets. Cool, eh? I could be completely full after a meal yet have plenty of room for an 800 calorie dessert. My palate isn't discriminating either, it loves real sugar and fake sugar, you name it, anything sweet will do. The gravity of my addiction came last year when I ordered my medium coffee at Dunkin Donuts with five Splenda. The lady behind me yelled loud enough for all 10 people in line to hear, "FIVE SPLENDAS!? WHO PUTS THAT MUCH IN?!" The sad part is if I was using real sugar, it would have been more like...umm... 8 or 9. (Half the audience is shaking their heads right now—the other half *totally gets me.*)

The good news is that I'm in recovery. Like any addiction, sugar addiction can be overcome. Unlike a drug addiction, you don't have to give sugar up entirely (whew!). The amount of sugar we crave has been conditioned by the food industry, our early family experiences, and our current food choices. In terms of the food industry, larger quantities of sugar have been added to products over the years. Even if your diet has not changed in 20 years, you are undoubtedly eating MORE sugar, which means you are probably preferring things sweeter without even realizing it. The food companies know this, they figure if they can get you "hooked" on their product by adding tons of sugar (more than the competitor) you will be a loyal customer. Tony the Tiger, my friend, is a drug lord (gasps). Your early family experiences matter too. Think of the foods available to you as a child. Like a lot of families back in the day, we ate dessert after dinner pretty regularly, maybe that is why I crave it so much now. Your current eating habits are heavily influenced by those experiences... and of course, Tony.

Just as our palates have been conditioned to crave sugar, they can be conditioned to crave it less. The process is pretty straightforward. If you repeatedly eat a food, your preference and craving will increase even if you didn't like that food in the first place. This is how we have gotten into trouble with sugar—we have created *too much* of an appetite for it. To like a food *less*, we have to work this process in reverse. The key is to train your palette to prefer less sweet. **Notice I said "sweet" and not "sugar." Noncaloric sweeteners are sweet too, sometimes even sweeter than sugar. Your tongue, and possibly your brain, do not know the difference. Using these instead of sugar will NOT reduce your sugar addiction, it will only feed it. Damn you Splenda, I thought you were my FRIEND!**

Think of the parts of your diet that include sweet things. Beverages? Snacks? Desserts? Here are a few ways you can begin to condition your palette to prefer LESS sweet.

1. The Coffee Experiment. If, like me, you put loads of sugar in your coffee (or tea) everyday, you can use this as an opportunity to begin to train your palate to prefer LESS. How many packets or teaspoons of sugar/sweetener do you use? Subtract one. The coffee won't taste quite as sweet but continue to drink it this way for 2-3 weeks, or until you get used to it. Once you are comfortably used to this level of sweetness, cut back by one more, and just keep repeating the process until you have at least halved the sweetener. The key here is to not cut more until you are very comfortable with the current level of sweetness. I am happy to report that I'm down to 2 packets. Taking a sip from coffee with 5 packets now seems way too sweet for me. It took me a while but I got there. Some people prefer to go cold turkey and get rid of all of the sweetener at once. If you can do this—great, but for many people it will be unpleasant which will drive them back to the previous amount. I suggest the gradual approach but the extreme approach will also work only if you can stick to it.



2. Liquify your Sodas. By always drinking beverages that taste sweet, we end up finding water and other unsweetened beverages less satisfying. If you drink 5 sodas per day (diet or real sugar) replace one with water or nonsweetened seltzer (no artificial sweetener). In 2 weeks, replace another soda with water or nonsweet seltzer. Keep doing this until you have completely shifted. If you drink non-carbonated beverages like juice, Crystal Light, or lemonade, I suggest diluting by adding more water than you typically would. Gradually increase the water to drink mix ratio to wean yourself off of the sweet.

3. Snack Swap. The same concept applies for sweet snacks. Figure out how many grams of sugar are in your typical snack (yogurt, granola bar, etc). Find similar options that have fewer grams of sugar. For example, a Kashi granola bar has less sugar than Quaker. Again, beware of artificial sweeteners in lower sugar versions (e.g., yogurt). These may actually taste even SWEETER than real sugar versions even though they have fewer grams of sugar. This will INCREASE your desire for sweet not reduce it. You might also begin to include some snacks that are not sweet at all (almonds, cheese, hummus) so that you can untrain yourself from expecting sweet at snack times.

4. Happy Hour. Oh how I love a fruity cocktail on a hot day! The cocktail is another area of our consumption that has trained us to prefer sweet, especially because we often want to mask the strong taste of liquor. Avoid cocktail mixes (e.g., sour mix, margarita mix, etc) and instead use fresh fruit (squeezed or muddled) to mix in with no added sugar. You will get the natural fruit flavor but with less intense sweetness. By being less sweet, you will drink more slowly and probably drink less.

5. Don't Have Your Cake And Eat it Too...Much. Ahhh..desserts. I suspect many of you relate to the need to have something sweet after a meal. Reduce the number of days that you have something sweet after a meal so that your body stops expecting it so much. For example, if you are used to a sweet after dinner 5 days a week, then reduce to 4, then 3, and over time just do it on special occasions. Choose lower sugar desserts too. Also, it is important to undo the habit of ordering desserts in a restaurant every time you go. Do this only on occasion. Restaurant desserts are packed with sugar and calories.

6. Who Put Sugar in my Bread? There is a scene in the movie, The Breakfast Club where Ally Sheedy takes the lunchmeat out of her sandwich and then empties pixie sticks onto the bread after sprinkling it with Cap N Crunch. Even a sugar addict like me feels like this is going too far! Sugar in a sandwich?! Blech! For some reason bread companies have attached themselves to this idea because they empty pixie sticks into their bread dough. Many breads are made with an astonishing amount of high fructose corn syrup or other forms of sugar. In the nutrition information, look at the grams of sugar across various brands of bread and select one that is low. Check the sugar content of other foods that aren't really supposed to be sweet. Choose brands that do NOT add sugar or artificial sweeteners.

As you can see, the deconditioning process is the same regardless of the food category. The idea is to slowly and methodically reduce the amount of sugar or sweetener in the foods that you eat. As you reduce, you will notice your palette changing. If you worry that you will end up doomed to a bland diet, don't! Remember, you are doing this slowly which means that you will gradually come to **prefer** less sugar. Kellogg's may have created your sweet tooth, but you can be the one to undo it.

Be strong at the core!

adapted from www.mayoclinic.com

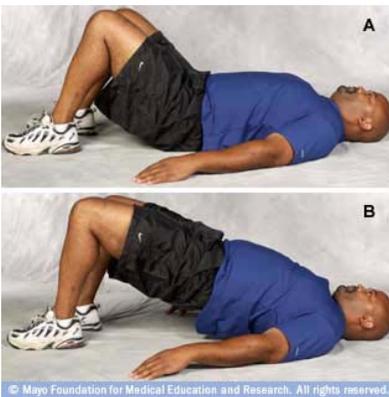
The core muscles include those in the lower back, hips and abdomen and around the pelvis. Strong core muscles can improve posture, prevent back pain and prevent muscle injury, and make it easier to do many every day activities and sports. If you have back problems, osteoporosis or other health concerns, talk to your doctor before starting core strength exercises.

Do core-strength exercises on a carpeted floor or mat. Breathe freely and deeply during each exercise. Repeat each exercise five times. As your core strength improves, build up to 10 to 15 repetitions. These exercises and some more challenging adaptations can be found at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/core-strength/SM00047>.



Abdominal crunch

1. Lie on your back and place your feet on a wall so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
2. Raise your head and shoulders off the floor. To avoid straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest rather than locking them behind your head. Hold for three deep breaths.
3. Return to the start position and repeat.



Bridge

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent (A). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
2. Raise your hips off the floor until your hips are aligned with your knees and shoulders (B). Hold for three deep breaths.
3. Return to the start position and repeat.



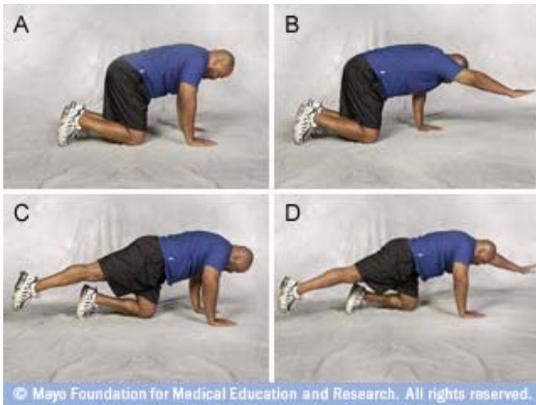
Single-leg abdominal press

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent (A). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
2. Raise your right leg off the floor so that your knee and hip are bent at 90-degree angles. Rest your right hand on top of your right knee (B).
3. Push your hand against your knee while using your abdominal muscles to pull your knee toward your hand. Keep your arm straight. Hold for three deep breaths.
4. Return to the start position and repeat using your left hand and left knee.



Segmental rotation

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your back in a neutral position. Tighten your abdominal muscles. Keeping your shoulders on the floor, let your knees fall slowly to the left (A). Go only as far as is comfortable. You should feel a stretch, but not pain. Hold for three deep breaths.
2. Return to the start position. Repeat the exercise to the right (B).



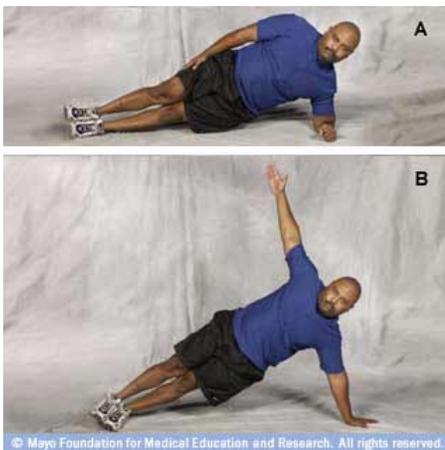
Quadruped

1. Start on your hands and knees. Place your hands directly below your shoulders, and align your head and neck with your back (A). Tighten your abdominal muscles.
2. Raise your right arm off the floor and reach ahead (B). Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right arm and repeat with your left arm.
3. Raise your right leg off the floor (C). Tighten your trunk muscles for balance. Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right leg and repeat with your left leg (D).



Modified plank

1. Lie on your stomach. Raise yourself up so that you're resting on your forearms and your knees. Align your head and neck with your back, and place your shoulders directly above your elbows. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
2. Create resistance by pressing your elbows and your knees toward one another. Neither should move from their positions on the floor. Hold for three deep breaths.
3. Return to the start position and repeat.



Side plank

1. Lie on your left side, raising yourself onto your left forearm (A). Place your left shoulder directly above your left elbow, keeping your shoulders, hips and knees in alignment. Rest your right arm along the side of your body.
2. Tighten your abdominal muscles. Hold for three deep breaths. Repeat on your right side.
3. For added challenge, balance on your left hand. Raise your hips off the floor and extend your right hand toward the ceiling (B). Hold for three deep breaths. Repeat on your right side.



Superman

1. Lie on your stomach with a rolled towel or a small pillow under your hips to support your back. You might also use a folded towel to support your head. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
2. Raise your right arm off the floor (A). Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right arm and repeat with your left arm.
3. Raise your right leg off the floor (B). Hold for three deep breaths. Lower your right leg and repeat with your left leg.
4. In some versions of Superman, you raise the opposite arm and leg at the same time.



Choosing a Weight Loss Program

Only a fraction of attempts to lose weight are successful. Diets, weight loss programs and other forms of support such as nutritional or medical counseling can help if you haven't met your weight loss goals on your own. Here are some things to think about when choosing a weight loss program or diet.

Research findings related to weight loss to consider in choosing a program:

- A. People who have successfully lost weight and maintained their weight loss for a year or more are likely to keep food records, exercise several times a week or daily, and weigh themselves regularly.
- B. Participating in commercial weight loss programs that provide regular weighing, advice about diet and physical activity, motivation, and group support (such as Weight Watchers) is more effective for weight loss than standard medical care (consisting of weight loss advice from a primary care professional following established guidelines for obesity treatment.)
- C. If participants feel that the dietary rules they have to follow are too complex, they are more likely to drop out of a weight loss program.
- D. A low-fat diet with some meals replaced by prepared diet meals was found to be associated with significant weight loss, compared with other lifestyle interventions.
- E. Low-carbohydrate diets and low-fat, low-calorie diets both appear to be successful for weight loss in the short term, and both are nutritionally adequate. There may be an association between a person's genetic profile and success on one or the other regimen.
- F. In general, nutritionists recommend slow weight loss over time (1 to 2 pounds per week).
- G. A weight loss of 7 to 10% of body weight can have a significant effect on health.

How well does the diet follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?

The guidelines summarized below from the US Department of Agriculture are based on expert review of research findings and are updated every five years.

- make half your plate vegetables and fruits
- make half your grains whole grains
- switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) dairy products
- choose lower sodium foods such as breads, soups, and frozen meals
- drink water instead of sugar-sweetened drinks
- balance calories (enjoy your food but eat less, avoid over-size portions)
- see complete guidelines at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>

How well does the program fit with the 2008 US Physical Activity guidelines?

The US Department of Health and Human Services released the guidelines summarized below, based on extensive expert review of research findings about physical activity and health.

- 150 minutes or more per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity
- muscle-strengthening activity for all major muscle groups 2 or more days per week
- see complete guidelines at <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/default.aspx>



Here are some other things to consider when you look at weight loss programs:

1. What you eat:

- How much of a change from your typical diet does the program require?
- Are any food groups excluded?
- How suitable is the program for special needs and preferences such as vegetarian or vegan, kosher, halal, gluten-free, etc?
- Do you prepare all the meals or purchase meal replacements for some meals?
- Is the plan flexible for eating out, special occasions, etc?
- Is the food that you eat and the amount that you eat likely to be satisfying to you or will you usually be hungry?

2. What is involved in following the diet:

- Are there special meals to purchase?
- Do you count calories or make other calculations?
- Do you keep records?
- What is the time commitment on a daily and weekly basis?

3. What support is available:

- Are there meetings, online or phone support available?

4. What is the role of exercise:

- Is exercise recommended to achieve weight loss?
- Is the recommended balance between food intake and exercise a good one for you?

5. What is the cost:

- Do you purchase a membership and/or pay fees to attend meetings?
- Do you pay for online services or access to certain content or tools?
- Do you need to purchase books, videos or equipment?
- Do you purchase premade meals as a part of the program?
- If you are preparing meals, are the foods on the program expensive?

6. How successful are people using the program:

- What is the rate of weight loss?
- Are there published randomized controlled trials reporting short-term and long-term weight loss and drop-out rates?



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Remember to check our website, www.stepaheadprogram.com
for information and online tools!



Not-So-Extreme Recipe Makeovers

You can stick to healthier eating patterns and still enjoy most of your old favorite recipes! Many recipes can be made healthier without much change in the taste or texture.

Make notes about the changes you try, so you can refer to them the next time you make that recipe. You may have to make the recipe a few times before you get the results you want. Have fun experimenting!

1. Use less fat.

- For **baked goods**, replace half the butter or oil with unsweetened applesauce, mashed banana or prune puree.
- Make a **pie** with only a top crust, or use a graham cracker crust.
- **When frying**, use nonstick spray or only a very small amount of oil. Add a little broth, vegetable juice, wine or water if needed, before you heat the pan.
- Replace regular **mayonnaise** with light mayonnaise or half light mayonnaise and half fat-free sour cream.
- Use **cheese** as you would use a spice or a garnish, not as a main ingredient. In quiches or similar recipes, put cheese on the top only.
- Choose a lean cut of **meat**: look for cuts from the loin or round, and avoid prime grade meats, which have higher fat content. Trim visible fat.
- **Chicken skin** should not be eaten but it can be left on through cooking to give additional flavor or protect meat from drying out.

2. Use less sugar.

- **Reduce** the amount of sugar in baking recipes (cakes, cookies, muffins, pies) by one-third to one-half.
- Spices, vanilla extract, citrus zest or other flavorings give a sweet **flavor without calories**.
- Remember that white sugar, brown sugar, corn syrup, maple syrup and honey all have significant numbers of calories and no nutritive value.

3. Make a healthy replacement.

- **Grains**: Use whole grain breads and pastas in place of white breads and pastas. In baking, use half white flour and half whole wheat flour until you are used to the taste and texture of whole wheat. Use brown rice or other whole grains instead of white rice.
- **Butter or margarine**: Cook with cooking spray, olive oil or canola oil. For baking and table use, use a trans fat free spread such as Promise Buttery Spread or Smart Balance.
- **Eggs**: Replace half to three-fourths of the whole eggs called for in a recipe with 2 egg whites or ¼ cup egg substitute, for each egg. This works for baked goods and for omelets, frittatas and quiches too.
- **Dairy foods**:
 - For 2% or whole milk, use nonfat or 1% milk.
 - For cream or half-and-half, use fat-free half-and-half, evaporated skim milk or low-fat milk.
 - For sour cream, use low-fat sour cream or nonfat yogurt (or buttermilk for baking).
 - For regular cheese, use reduced fat cheese.
 - For cream cheese, use light cream cheese or cottage cheese smoothed in the blender with a little skim milk.

4. Use a healthy cooking method.

- Broil, grill, bake, roast, steam, microwave, poach or boil foods instead of frying.
- Use nonstick pans or spray pans with nonstick cooking spray.

5. Reduce the portion size of higher fat and higher calorie foods. Smaller portions have less fat and fewer calories!

- Meat should take up about one-fourth of your plate, whole grains another fourth, and fruits and vegetables one-half of the plate.
- Bake smaller cookies and muffins.
- Cut cakes, pies and brownies into smaller pieces.
- Serve on smaller plates, which will make the smaller portions look bigger.

6. Reduce sodium.

- You can eliminate the salt in most recipes without significantly altering the flavor. For baked goods you may want to use just a pinch of salt.
- Choose reduced-sodium canned vegetables. Frozen vegetables often have less sodium than canned. Canned vegetables such as beans can be rinsed to reduce the sodium if there are not low-sodium varieties available.
- Use reduced-sodium prepared broths.
- Ketchup, mustard, soy sauce (even reduced sodium varieties) are all high in sodium. Use sparingly.
- Use unsalted nuts.

7. Choose recipes with appropriate calorie count, fat and sodium content, or modify recipes as needed.

The guidelines below are used by Eating Well, a bimonthly magazine and website (www.eatingwell.com) that are excellent sources of healthy recipes. You also could use these guidelines to select prepared meals or restaurant items when nutrition information is available.

Category	Calories	Saturated Fat	Sodium
Entrees	≤ 500	≤ 5 g	≤ 500 mg
Side dishes, muffins, breads	≤ 250	≤ 3 g	≤ 360 mg
Desserts	≤ 350	≤ 3 g	≤ 360 mg
Per-unit items (e.g., cookies, appetizers)	≤ 120	≤ 2 g	≤ 360 mg
Sauces and dressings (per tablespoon)	≤ 100	≤ 1 g	≤ 140 mg
Combination Meals (meal that includes a serving of meat/poultry/fish plus a side starch)	≤ 600	≤ 7 g	≤ 750mg
Complete Meals (meal that includes a serving of meat/poultry/fish plus a side starch and a vegetable)	≤ 750	≤ 7 g	≤ 750 mg

Wondering about the nutrition information for the recipes you use? Try the online recipe calculator at <http://www.sparkrecipes.com>.

From www.mayoclinic.com, www.cooking.com, medicinenet.com, brighamandwomens.org, www.eatingwell.com, www.webmd.com





Exercise: Are you just going through the motions?

From www.fudiet.com by Dr. Sherry Pagoto

This article will help you realize the most benefit out of the time and effort you spend on exercise, and the strategies can also help if you have trouble sticking with an exercise routine.

For many people trying to lose weight, exercise is a slog. You have the routine. You drag yourself through it. You feel pretty good once it's over, but then have to build up the drive to get back to it the next day. You pick an activity that you don't completely hate... be it walking, the gym, biking, or a class, and then stick with that routine with very little variation. You slog your way through the monotony because you feel like you *have* to. If you didn't have to do it you would quit tomorrow. If this describes you, your exercise regimen may be one of *going through the motions*. Going through the motions is an autopilot setting we put ourselves on when we are just trying to get through something that brings us very little joy. We all do it at some point in life, but sheesh... it's a pretty lousy way to spend time.

As with anything in life, just going through the motions rarely leads to great accomplishments. And, nobody has ever fallen in love by going through the motions either. Going through the motions prevents you from feeling engaged, empowered, or feeling anything at all. It is absent of goals. It is absent of heart. It is absent of meaning.

I dare you to take your relationship with your *physical self* much further by turning your exercise regimen into a meaningful journey. A love affair with your body. The biggest project you ever launched. Here's how.

1. Don't Exercise. TRAIN. One way to snap out of going through the motions is to give your exercise meaning and purpose. Convert your exercise to "training." Training is a goal-oriented way of exercising. Your workouts are laid out before you on a schedule of increasing duration and intensity, typically with a future event of some kind in mind. If you are just starting off, consider a Couch to 5K plan (see http://www.coolrunning.com/engine/2/2_3/181.shtml). If you have already accomplished that, try a 10K plan (access this 10K plan mobile app at <http://www.felttip.com/run10k/>). You can Google training plans for any activity, including walking, running, biking, or swimming. If you are new to it, look for beginner plans. Even if you don't have an event planned, training schedules are a great way to structure your exercise and achieve increased endurance, conditioning and strength. Training also has built in milestones that once accomplished will give your workouts purpose and a sense of accomplishment.

2. Challenge yourself: Regularly. Every year I challenge you to plan a physical accomplishment you think you aren't capable of doing. To really discover your physical capabilities, give yourself the opportunity to wow yourself. I guarantee you can do far more than you can imagine right now. You might consider hiking a mountain trail. A race event. A long bike ride. Anything. If you haven't selected anything yet this year, consider selecting an activity for this summer. This gives you 2-3 months to get working on it. *The feeling of accomplishing something you didn't think possible is one of the greatest highs in life.*

3. Cross train. We have a tendency to get comfortable with our go-to exercise but any single exercise only allows us to condition some muscles and will neglect others. Cross-training is important to get a more comprehensive workout and also break up the monotony of your routine. I recently had an injury that forced me to take up biking, an exercise I have never much embraced. I was shocked that by being forced to do it for 6 weeks, I built up a liking for it. I



even plan to keep biking in my post-injury routine. If you told me before I was going to look forward to biking, I would never have believed you! Just by doing something over and over again can cause you to like it more, so don't worry if you don't like a new activity now. A new activity will allow you to work new muscles and also burn more calories. Our bodies get used to the same old workout and over time burn fewer and fewer calories doing it over and over again. Work in at least 2 different types of exercises each week (e.g., at least 1 day of a second exercise) to properly cross train.

4. Set goals. Constantly. Goals are a great way to have a purpose. Why are you exercising? What are you striving for? I realize most people have a weight loss goal but I find very few people have an exercise goal. Consider your current exercise regimen and each month set a new goal for yourself in terms of mileage, duration, and/or frequency. Beware of the "one goal wonder," which is the act of setting a single goal and none other. I had a patient who had a lofty goal in mind to run a race with his daughter. He had set the goal in spring and the race was to be in autumn. With no goal following the race, guess what happened? He stopped exercising. The week you accomplish your goal, set a new one. Avoid ever having a time when you do NOT have an exercise goal in mind (even if you are in weight maintenance). Your goals don't have to be huge, just a little more than what you are doing now. *By always improving yourself, stagnation is impossible.*

5. Measure. If you are constantly growing your exercise regimen, you will find great pleasure in measuring the results and seeing just how awesome you are becoming. Possible things to measure include percent body fat, percent lean body mass, as well as the circumference of your waist, hips, thighs, and biceps. Check out this link at (http://exercise.about.com/od/weightloss/a/weightlosstrack_2.htm) for instructions on measuring different body parts and ways to keep track over time.

6. Get a coach/trainer. If some of these ideas intimidate or overwhelm you, consider hiring a coach or a trainer. If you are hesitant to spend much money, you can get quite a bit out of even 2-3 sessions. The coach or trainer can help you set goals and devise a training plan. If you have a medical condition and can get exercise physiology or physical therapy visits covered by your health insurance, I highly recommend asking your physical therapist or exercise physiologist for help with a training plan.

You will know when you have truly achieved a healthy lifestyle when the pieces of it (healthy eating AND exercise), are things that you just can't imagine living without. If you are slogging your way through exercise, it is time to get engaged and give it purpose, direction, and meaning. As with anything in life, never settle for going through the motions when you have the ability to make it so much more.



Secrets of Keeping Off the Weight You Lose

from Tufts Health and Nutrition Newsletter, January 2012

New research on 3,000 long-term participants in the National Weight Control Registry gives insight into successful maintenance of weight loss. The dieters originally weighed an average of 224 pounds before they used these weight maintenance strategies:

- Eating breakfast regularly.
- Walking about an hour a day, or burning an equivalent amount of calories by engaging in other activities.
- Weighing yourself at least weekly.
- Tracking food intake.
- Counting calories and fat grams or using commercial weight-loss software to track intake.
- Limiting eating out to an average of three times a week including all meals, while consuming fast food less than once a week.
- Limiting food variety, mostly eating similar foods from week to week, and not splurging much on holidays and special occasions.
- Watching fewer than 10 hours a week of TV.

The successful dieters averaged about 1,800 calories a day, with less than 30% of those calories from fats.

National Weight Control Registry, 196 Richmond St., Providence, RI 02903, (800) 606-NWCR (6927), tmnwcr@lifespan.org, www.nwcr.ws.

If you regain the weight...

from "I Gained it All Back", www.fudiet.com by Dr. Sherry Pagoto

Try the 3 P's for starters....**Perspective**, **Post-Mortem**, and a **Plan**.

Perspective

1. Try your very hardest to *limit* your feelings of frustration, shame, and guilt. I'm not saying "don't have these feelings!" I'm saying have them for a short time, and then open a window and let them go. Yes, it is frustrating, BUT long-term habits are hard to create. Lapses are to be expected. Smokers try to quit an average of 7 or more times before they quit for good.
2. Recognize that regaining is PART of the process, and eventually will get smaller and smaller. You must keep pushing forward.
3. Think about all behaviors you changed during your weight loss effort. Even if you regained the weight, it is unlikely that your lifestyle has completely reverted to what it once was. You *have* made progress. Acknowledge the progress in your diet and physical activity that you have made and sustained.
4. Brush yourself off. Take a deep breath. It's going to be ok.



Post-Mortem

Ok, Dr. Phil, we're ready for our autopsy. Put on your rubber gloves, this might get messy. What happened? Answer these questions:

1. What happened in objective terms? ("I am lazy and I have no will power" is not objective). Give the who, what, where, when, and how. Leave out the judgments and adjectives, stick to the facts. Judgments lead to negative feelings, and negative feelings are lousy motivators.
2. Which of your lifestyle changes started to slip away? And over what period of time?
3. What life events coincided with the changes? How did they affect you?
4. Why was it difficult, what were the challenges to keeping up your diet and exercise?
5. How did you handle the challenges? What did you do well? What did you wish you did better?

Plan

What is the plan? A good post-mortem (no judgments!) really lends to a plan. A good plan will involve:

1. **Re-engaging your supports.** Who was helpful to you before? How can you get support from those people again? Never had very supportive people? Might be time to find a buddy.
2. **Avoid judgmental people.** It is hard enough not to judge yourself, being around judgmental people only makes matters worse. While you have the window open, throw these people out of it.
3. **Start Somewhere, Anywhere, Just Start.** What is the *first thing* you can do to get back on track? To get started, pick something that you feel is relatively easy to do, and build it up from there.
4. **Dig up old diet diaries** to reacquaint yourself with how you used to eat when you were in the zone.
5. **Start keeping a diet diary** as soon as possible. This is a great way to reign yourself in. You may not be as far off as you think.
6. **Know Your Weaknesses.** They will find you! Jot down your top 3 challenges and keep that list somewhere you can see it. The only way to get a different outcome is to not be overcome by the same challenges.
7. **Move Forward. Always.** The key is to always keep moving. Don't stop. Keep pushing forward, you will get there.

There is no time like **right now** to dust off that treadmill and get back on track....