

January/February 2020

# The art of growing young<sup>®</sup>

Get into a Groove:  
The Importance  
of Routine

Feature Article



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Setting Fitness Goals

Embracing Abundance

Intuitive Eating

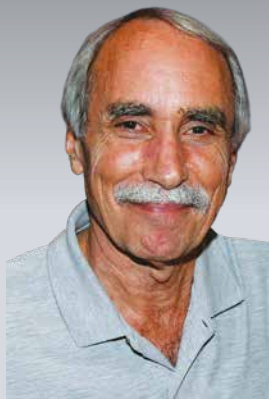




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# No Regrets

The new year is almost magical in the way it presents opportunities for starting over. No matter what happened last year, on January 1, we have a chance to start fresh. No regrets—this part is key in my opinion.

Regretting missed opportunities from last year is a sure-fire way to self-sabotage our new goals and resolutions. When we focus on negative experiences and memories, we can't focus on new, positive ones. This can become an unhealthy cycle that makes it nearly impossible to accomplish our new goals.

For this reason, I hope all of us enter the new year with no regrets. I hope we all let go of the past and look to the future with minds focused on all the positive things, people, circumstances, achievements and goals in our lives in 2020.

Having no regrets doesn't mean artificially pretending nothing bad happened in 2019. Everyone experienced something sad or negative last year—that's a natural part of life. It's also natural that we will be reminded of these experiences from time to time. Instead, no regrets means that rather than dwelling on the negative, we acknowledge these things happened, forgive ourselves

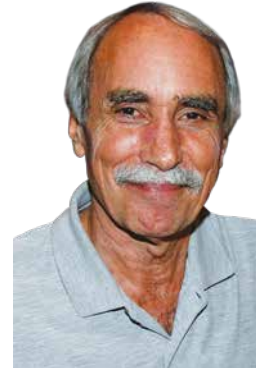
(if needed) and then shift our focus to all the new possibilities that await in the future.

Starting the new year with no regrets gives us the best opportunity to have a successful new year no matter what our goals are, because when we focus our energies on the positive and amazing possibilities, we are far more likely to reach our goals. This happens because staying focused on the positive helps attract more positive people and experiences into our lives, and that snowballs into an unstoppable force.

As I said, this is a magical time of the year. Let's all take advantage of it by letting go of the past and looking to the future with no regrets!



**Dwight L. McKee**  
Scientific Director





# Nutritional News



## An avocado a day helps keep the cardiologist away

Eating one avocado a day can help lower bad cholesterol and lead to several important heart health benefits. This is according to new research from Penn State that showed avocados helped reduce LDL particles in the blood that had been oxidized. In much the same way oxygen damages food (think of a cut apple turning brown), oxidation is bad for the human body.<sup>1</sup>

## Probiotics for all

A new study looking at the effects of probiotics across populations found that if more people took probiotics, it could result in reduced healthcare costs and a “spirit of proactivity for healthcare providers.” The study showed that when more people take probiotics, enough immune systems are affected such that the cumulative effect across populations is massive.<sup>6</sup>

## New benefits from red wine

The French paradox (the French have a relatively low incidence of heart disease despite their relatively high intake of fats) has long been attributed to the country’s love of red wine. A new study shows another benefit of drinking a glass of wine with meals: increased gut microbiota diversity. The study looked at the effects of beer, cider, red wine, white wine and spirits on the gut. It found only red wine drinkers experienced a boost to gut health, which impacts the immune system, body weight and cholesterol levels.<sup>4</sup>



## Protect your brain with exercise

A recent German study showed young healthy adults can protect the white matter in their brains with exercise. White matter is known to improve the speed and quality of nerve connections in the brain. The researchers believe increasing fitness levels may lead to improved cognitive ability, including memory skills and problem solving.<sup>3</sup>

## Weight and mood

According to the latest research, carrying ten kilograms of extra body fat increases the risk of developing depression by 17 percent—the more fat a person has on their body, the higher the risk becomes. It doesn’t matter where the fat is carried. This study from Aarhus University and Aarhus University Hospital show how the brain, body and our perceptions of ourselves are all deeply connected.<sup>5</sup>



## Fish oil still going strong

There have been many studies in the past highlighting the protective benefits of fish oil. A new meta-analysis of 120,000 adults in thirteen randomized trials from all over the world reestablished fish oil as a critical supplement for cardiovascular health. The association between fish oil intake and heart health was most evident at higher doses of omega-3 fish oil supplementation, meaning the more fish and fish oil people consume, the more protective benefits they will receive.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Bohn, Katie. “One Avocado a Day Helps Lower ‘Bad’ Cholesterol for Heart Healthy Benefits.” Penn State University. Accessed November 3, 2019. <https://news.psu.edu/story/592523/2019/10/28/research/one-avocado-day-helps-lower-bad-cholesterol-heart-healthy-benefits>.

<sup>2</sup> Hu, Yang, Frank B. Hu, and Joann E. Manson. “Marine Omega-3 Supplementation and Cardiovascular Disease: An Updated Meta-Analysis of 13 Randomized Controlled Trials Involving 127 477 Participants.” *Journal of the American Heart Association* 8, no. 19 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1161/jaha.119.013543>.

<sup>3</sup> Opel, Nils, Stella Martin, Susanne Meinert, Ronny Redlich, Verena Enneking, Maike Richter, Janik Goltermann, Andreas Johnen, Udo Dannlowski, and Jonathan Repple. “White Matter Microstructure Mediates the Association between Physical Fitness and Cognition in Healthy, Young Adults.” *Scientific Reports* 9, no. 1 (September 2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-49301-y>.

<sup>4</sup> Roy, Caroline I. Le, Philippa M. Wells, Jiyeon Si, Jeroen Raes, Jordana T. Bell, and Tim D. Spector. “Red Wine Consumption Associated With Increased Gut Microbiota  $\alpha$ -Diversity in 3 Independent Cohorts.” *Gastroenterology*, 2019.

<https://doi.org/10.1053/j.gastro.2019.08.024>.

<sup>5</sup> Jespersgård, Nanna. “Excess Body Fat Increases the Risk of Depression.” Aarhus University. Accessed November 3, 2019. <https://health.au.dk/en/#news-16008>.

<sup>6</sup> Lenoir-Wijnkoop, Irene, Dan Merenstein, Daria Korchagina, Christa Broholm, and Mary Ellen Sanders. “Probiotics Reduce Health Care Cost and Societal Impact of Flu-Like Respiratory Tract Infections in the USA: An Economic Modeling Study.” *Frontiers*. *Frontiers*, July 31, 2019. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2019.00980/full>.

# Setting Fitness Goals

Setting a fitness goal for the new year is a common resolution for improved physical health. But setting the fitness goal with intention is more important. An intentional fitness goal can be one that follows the goals criteria spelled out in the acronym SMART.

The acronym SMART means setting goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound.

The larger issue is fitness, but a specific goal would be starting a cardiovascular routine two times a week or increasing your exercise duration each workout.



Instead of a fitness goal that is ambiguous, such as “I need to be in better shape,” reframe the goal to be more specific, such as “I will take the stairs up to my office every day,” or “I will focus on my strength and flexibility training through yoga.”

A measurable goal is one that is so specific that you can essentially count it. If you normally go on a walk three times a week, a measurable goal is adding an additional day to make it four.

For fitness goals, one that is measurable has a quantitative (usually addition!) element to it. At the end of the week (or day or month, etc.) you can look back and determine whether you truly achieved it.

If you set your fitness goal to take the stairs up to your office every day when you arrive at work, you’ll know whether you did that—it’s measurable.

When setting a SMART fitness goal, you’ll have to reflect on whether what you set out to do is attainable—whether it’s something you can successfully (in other words, relatively easily) achieve. This isn’t to say that you can’t set a challenging goal. But when it comes to cognitive behavior, if we don’t think we can achieve something, often we won’t even try. If you’ve never run more than three miles, then maybe running a marathon is not a goal you can attain easily or enjoyably.

This is where the “realistic” component comes into play. Could you run a marathon if long-distance running has never been your thing? Possibly. But is it realistic that you’ll either achieve that goal, or really even want to achieve it? Maybe not.

Whether or not you want to do the given fitness goal, ask if your goal is truly attainable and realistic for your needs and your lifestyle. Some version of SMART goals incorporate “relevant” into the “R” in SMART. Perhaps the most essential element of achieving a goal is setting one that is important to you and your lifestyle, as well as being realistically attainable.



Small steps that you’ll realistically attain are more beneficial than an outlandish goal that sounds exciting but may be neglected. Perhaps you never go to the gym. An attainable and realistic option would be to sign up for a month and plan to go twice a week. Or maybe you only do cardio exercises and want to incorporate weight lifting—aim for ten minutes of strength and weight training a day for three months before you decide to go out and buy a large weight set. Remember that you can always start off with a smaller goal and change it to be more challenging later.





The “T” in SMART refers to a time frame during which you hope to attain the goal. It can relate to frequency, duration and/or a due date of sorts. When your fitness goal is time-bound, there is less of a chance of putting it off for tomorrow. It helps you measure (the “M” in SMART) your progress. If you are focusing on frequency as your time frame, an example would be, “I will take a morning walk three times a week.” Duration refers to how long an activity lasts, such as, “I will walk for thirty minutes.”



Very specific goals will incorporate both frequency and duration. Furthermore, a due date could serve as a reflection of the previous two time frame angles, or it could serve as a larger goal.

“I will walk a six-mile loop in the forest near my home this spring.” The SMART goal element of time is a way to reflect, evaluate and be accountable.

When we use the SMART goal framework in our fitness routine, we are setting ourselves up for success and progress!



# Mindful Cooking







When we think of mindfulness, often we think of these curated and serene scenes. There we are on a mountaintop with the sun a certain golden shade. We smell lavender and eucalyptus in the fresh air. We are seated with our legs crossed and our hands are placed on our knees. But has that ever really happened? The beauty of mindfulness is that it doesn't require these perfect spaces. We can be mindful on the bus to work or as we shower in the morning.

A common exercise in mindfulness workshops is the raisin practice. The instructor will hand everyone a raisin and have participants eat it. The group will then discuss various questions: What did it taste like? What did it feel like in your mouth? How did it change from when you put it in your mouth to after you started chewing it to when you swallowed it? What did it smell like?



People may giggle, or shake their heads as they realize they didn't even notice any of those sensations. Then the instructor will work with the group on eating another raisin and help guide the participants to noticing everything with the raisin—using all senses.

We've heard of mindful eating—and the raisin exercise is a ubiquitous practice—but what about mindful cooking? Do we rush through the cooking process in order to achieve the end result? Or can we create space for mindfulness in this everyday task?

Cooking with mindfulness can help contribute to a healthier eating practice. It allows a space for you to consider the ingredients that are going to eventually be in your body. But how do you do it? You cannot exactly practice transcendental meditation when you are wielding a sharp knife. Mindful cooking is like any other mindful practice in everyday life. It means being present to the moment, expressing gratitude, acting with intention and being aware of yourself in the mix (your senses, your feelings, your body sensations).

Prepare your mind. This is especially important for home cooks who come home from work and want to get dinner on the table as quickly as possible. Instead of rushing, take a moment to focus on the transition from work (or the day's activities) to the kitchen space. Take a moment to feel your feet on the ground in your kitchen. Notice the feel of the wood or tile under you. Touch the counter or notice the smell of your kitchen prior to cooking.

Set an intention for the meal preparation. Doing this helps you mindfully transition to this time. Cooking is one of the most basic acts that we can do to show care and love for others (and ourselves!). Your intention could be as simple as "peace" as you prepare for dinner together as a family (or by yourself). It could be a verb mantra such as "listen" as you get ready to spend intentional time with your loved ones. Or it can be about the actual eating process, like "taste" or "slow down." Choose what feels most important to you as you transition from the work of the day to the work of the home.

Express gratitude to your kitchen space. It can be tempting to think about how you should have deep cleaned the kitchen last weekend or that you wish you had more counter space. Instead, focus on what you have and lean into that thankfulness. Prepare your workspace. Get set up prior to cooking. Do a quick wipe down of the counter. Make sure the dishes are cleaned and put away. Read the recipe. Take out the pots, knife, cutting board, mixing bowl and even the leftover storage containers. Bring all your ingredients out.

Be present and grateful. Didn't you just do this? Do it again! And again! Make it part of your rhythm. As you reach for an ingredient, imagine the earth that grew it and the farmers who picked it. When you stir the soup with your large wooden spoon, think of the gratitude you feel to the tree that bore that wood. Your kids are yelling from the living room? Or your spouse is reviewing some domestic tasks that need to be done? Attend to that, if necessary, and then bring yourself back to this moment.

Relax and breathe. Notice your shoulders when you are chopping the vegetables. Are they hunching up toward your ears? Breathe in and let them melt downward. Are you holding your breath or breathing shallowly? That's okay. Don't scold yourself. Just take a deep breath. Use your sense of smell to help remind yourself to breathe deeply.





Embrace repetitive actions. Professionals, or even avid swimmers, talk about the lull of the repetition in lap swimming. The hum of their arms circling around them.

The swish and swash of their face submerging in the water and then moving to the side to surface for air. Runners speak of the rhythm of the sound of their feet hitting the ground or the feel of their breath as they inhale and exhale during a slower jog. Cooking can be similar as you slowly chop the vegetables or stir the sauce on the stove.

Similar to runners and swimmers, bread bakers love the rhythm and repetitive movement of kneading, slapping and massaging the dough. Many people enjoy washing dishes by hand because the redundancy of the action helps them slow down while having some alone time (everyone else will leave the kitchen during cleaning time if you want them to).



Express your creativity. Sometimes it may feel like just getting a meal on the table before bedtime is a feat. Expressing creativity in cooking doesn't have to be a Michelin-starred affair.

Even if you are cooking a simple pasta with olive oil, parmesan and black pepper, prepare it with playfulness.

Cook with your senses. Notice the smell of the salt as you open it to measure it into the food. Notice how that salty scent changes when you are stirring the food.

Taste the food and notice the change. Feel the warmth of the oven next to your body or the blow of your kitchen fan on your face. How do the carrots feel with their rougher skins, and how does that change after you scrub or peel them? Listen to the sizzle of the oil when you add an ingredient to it. Then the sound of the next sizzle with the next ingredient. Are there differences?

Sit and watch. They say a watched pot never boils, so maybe test the theory! While other domestic tasks may coax you away from this activity, once in a while give it a try. For example, if you are baking a casserole, after you've put it in the oven, relax in a chair and wait. Or perhaps plop down on the floor and peer through the oven window to watch what it does. We've all seen the time-lapse videos of a loaf of bread or a cake rising as it bakes in the oven. Lean into the playfulness of slowly watching this in real time. Plate your dish playfully. When it is time to serve the food, you don't have to put it on with any sort of expertise. But maybe take the olive oil and do a drip-drip-drop of it on top of each dish. Or grab some chopped parsley and sprinkle it on top, pretending that it is falling leaves from a tree. Little actions like these may feel silly or unnatural, but they help us get into the moment. Savor that silliness.



# Embracing Abundance

Is enough ever enough? We live in a time of growth being equated with success. Prosperity always seems to carry the caveat of “more.” But when do we recognize that a good life is not about believing the myth of more, more, more? It may be a bit harder than we think.

We may have evolved to fear scarcity. After all, evolutionary psychologists believe our brains were developed in the Stone Age. During that time and for millennia after that, food, water and even shelter were not guaranteed.

Human beings, and animals in general, for hundreds of thousands of years have lived in survival mode. Not until the past century (at least for the developed world) have some of us experienced abundance on the levels we do today.

We have evolved and times have changed. Humans have wielded resources—both tangible and intellectual—to create societies that can sustain life beyond the basic fight for survival. Much of the world’s poverty is not due to natural scarcity, but rather to human-created scarcity (the mismanagement of resources and unequal distribution).

But we human beings are animals of reason and rationale. We do not have to be stuck in what our instincts alone tell us. We can move beyond and embrace abundance. We can say that “enoughism” is our reality. We do indeed have enough. It may not always be ideal. It may not be as beautiful and efficient as we would prefer. But it is enough.

Modern society is full of messages that tell us that “more is actually more.” Marketing campaigns are specifically targeted to address this survival psychology. The thought is “if I have x, y and z then I can be secure—then I can be happy.” Enoughism says that we can move beyond the consumption and materialism that the developed world has created.



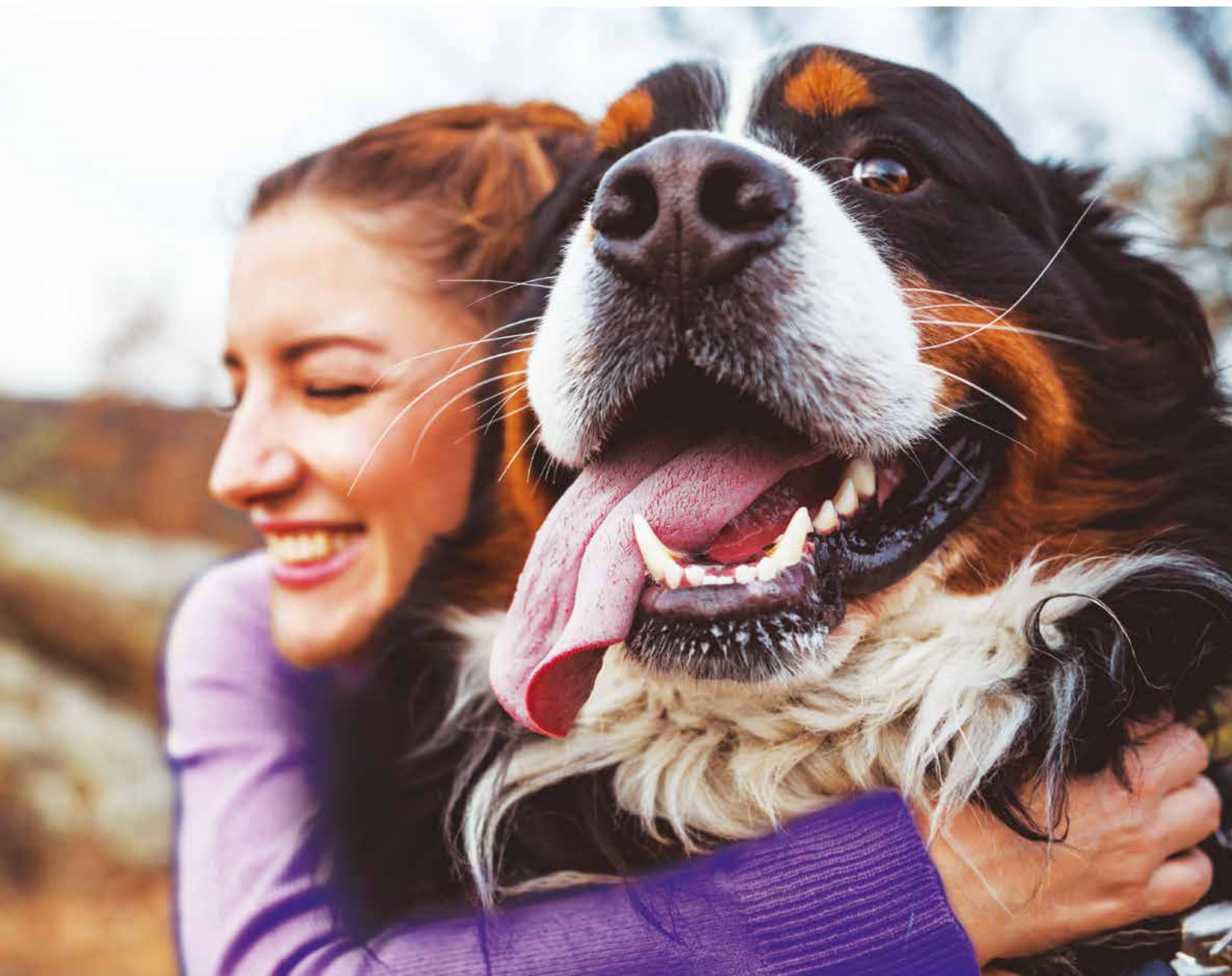
Minimalism is a hot topic in everything from home design to capsule wardrobes. People who are tired of the consumptive materialism of modern life are approaching their “stuff” with more scrutiny.

Some ideas include the “100-thing challenge,” in which people pare down their households to only 100 items! Other people take a more specific approach and create capsule wardrobes, in which their closets are whittled down to items that all match each other and are comprised of fewer and only basic clothing items.



Popular television programs feature people desiring a simpler lifestyle, which usually begins with them getting rid of a lot of their stuff. Other programs highlight people who downsize their households. Social media has sparked challenges in which participants do not buy anything other than the basic needs of food, utilities and transit for an entire year.

Aside from these challenges that invite us to dive right into enoughism, there are everyday practices that help foster the concept. Start where you are and be grateful. Gratitude is the most important step to feeling abundance in your life.



Change the story in your mind from “I need” to “I have.” Make mealtime mantras in which you reflect (silently with yourself or with others who share your meal) on that which you feel is good enough in your life.

Stop comparing your life to other’s lives or living up to ideals that aren’t realistic or healthy. Be open to new opportunities and embrace challenging moments when you feel scarcity.

There is always someone up the river and down the river. Things could always be better—and enoughism shouldn’t advocate for complacency. The challenge is how to live a life of deep abundance while also striving to improve.







# Intuitive Eating

Our relationship with food is a complex one—part natural, biological and evolved; part nurtured, taught and socialized. Aggressive food-marketing campaigns tempt us to eat and eat and eat. Emotions and stress of modern life trigger us to eat even when we aren't truly hungry. Our families of origin or our cultural experiences have ideas of what food means in terms of quality and quantity.

Many of us have no idea what eating from hunger to satiation even feels like. And to further complicate things, what does eating what we crave look like, if what we crave isn't healthy?

Trendy diets and lifestyle changes that exclude foods or concepts of when to eat and when to remain hungry, change faster than the seasons. Intuitive dieting is the total opposite of this. The idea is that you listen to what your body is telling you about what it needs to be fed, as opposed to enforcing limits and guidelines on your consumption. Intuitive eating promotes the idea that our bodies know the way. We just have to be in tune with them, listen and follow that way.

It's about trust—trust in ourselves and the dynamic between our bellies and our minds. It's about getting in tune with your body and learning to trust it again.

Yes, this means cake, wine and burgers can be consumed from time to time, but intuitive eating is as much about knowing when your stomach is satisfied as it is about feeding your hunger.

If you've ever seen a newborn or infant drink milk from the breast or a slow-flow bottle nipple, you will see an example of perhaps the truest form of intuitive eating. The baby will drink when she or he is hungry, initially eating with vigor but eventually slowing down and taking pauses. Babies focus on the eating and the experience of eating—the sensations of being in their caregiver's arms, the smell of the milk. And they usually come off the breast or bottle nipple when they are satiated. With the breast or a bottle nipple that has a similar flow speed, most babies will not overeat.

Intuitive eating is the antithesis of dieting, calorie counting, food obsession and body shaming. The idea was first written about on a mainstream level about twenty years ago by Evelyn Tribole and Elise Resch. They wrote a book that among other things highlighted some basic principles in intuitive eating.<sup>1</sup>

The primary idea is to reject the merry-go-round of dieting mentality, accept your body and tune in to its true needs. Research has shown us that dieting doesn't last long. On the occasion that a dieter does lose weight, the weight usually does not stay off.<sup>2</sup> But we all continue to fall into the trap of diets that limit calories, carbohydrates, fat and sugar, and require times when you can, can't or shouldn't (guilt!) eat.

Another concept in intuitive eating is to rid yourself of guilt related to food and eat what you want. Make peace with food. Food has the ability to do so much more than just fuel us. It can bring us to satisfying heights of pleasure and experience. Or it can plague our conscience for days as we lament the decisions we make about what we put in our mouths and bellies. This tangling dance of good and bad is not only unhealthy, but unhelpful.

A guiding principle is to start eating according to what your body is telling you. This means you have to create mindfulness around hunger, cravings and satiation. We often eat mindlessly. We look at that cookie on the breakroom table at work and shame ourselves for eating it as we shove it into our mouths. Within seconds it's gone! But what did it even taste like? What was the texture? Did we even appreciate it, much less experience it? Intuitive eating heralds the pleasure factor of food and invites us to lean into that.

It also invites us to pay attention to how we feel after eating certain foods, and to use that feedback to adjust our diet accordingly. When people have been eating a highly processed and/or fast-food diet, their senses of taste and smell are often dulled, and they don't notice any relationship between what they eat and how they feel, which, often, is "not very good." So the first step is to learn about and gradually switch to a diet of whole, preferably organically produced, foods. Most people, after a while, regain the ability to notice what smells and tastes of "real" food they are particularly attracted to, and subtle changes in how they feel after eating specific foods or groupings of foods. Once you gain this ability, you're on your way with intuitive eating.

Cooking is becoming a lost art within some parts of cultures in technologically advanced nations. Think of cooking as a survival skill, because it is.

But it also takes a lot of emotional work to get into a good groove with intuitive eating. Just as with any mindfulness practice, or even healthy lifestyle, we have to reset our mental compass, sometimes several times a day—or even several times a meal! But proponents insist it changes our relationship with food and therefore can have physical, as well as psychological, benefits!

<sup>1</sup> Tribole, Evelyn, and Elise Resch. *Intuitive Eating: a Recovery Book for the Chronic Dieter: Rediscover the Pleasures of Eating and Rebuild Your Body Image*. St. Martin's Paperbacks, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Lowe, Michael R., et al. "Dieting and Restrained Eating as Prospective Predictors of Weight Gain." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 4, June 2013, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00577.



# Get into a Groove:

## The Importance of Routine

Spontaneity and surprise provide so much excitement in life. That is why vacations and sabbaticals are so important. The change refreshes us and breathes new life and inspiration into our bodies and minds. Holidays and even seasons foster a change of pace that feels special—something to look forward to and a way for us to see time passing and progressing.





Many of us have just come out of the holiday season, when we were doing so many things that are reserved for that special time of year. We may be eating out at parties and festivals more. Or perhaps we are too busy to regularly stick to our exercise practice. Maybe we have been so social that it is cutting into our nightly sleep. We are out of our routine.

The new year is a time to reflect on the previous year and plan for the upcoming year. And a large part of that is getting back into the groove of our daily life. It is a time of resetting our rhythm.

The word “routine” kind of gets a bad rap. It brings up images of strict schedules or mundanity. But really a routine is an important way to create healthy habits and maintain peace. Routine helps humans feel safe and secure. When things are more predictable, we are more present and mindful.

**Stress and anxiety.** Young children crave a routine because it helps them make sense of a world they are still figuring out. That routine—that rhythm that provides security and a sense of safety—later allows them space to imagine, explore and participate in unstructured play. That is because when they know what to expect for much of their lives, they can feel safe exploring within the confines of limits. Adults are not dissimilar. Think of a person or situation in your life or your past who is or was inconsistent. Perhaps it was a family member who was kind one moment, but then became aloof or suddenly angry with no apparent cause. Or maybe it was a job at an unstable company where there were layoffs happening without any sense of when or why. These unknowns create extreme stress because they are outside our expectations.

With routines, we know what is coming. We know what we are doing. This provides a sense of peace.

**Meaningfulness.** Routine gives life meaning. In fact, researchers have found that people who engage in routines have a higher sense of purpose in life.<sup>1</sup>

**Proficient and efficient.** The old adage that practice makes perfect can be applied to life. Routines and rhythms make us more efficient at what we do. A small example is making coffee in the morning. You may measure out your water and then pour it into the coffee maker. Maybe you then grab your scale and weigh out your coffee beans. You’ll grab your coffee grinder and pour the beans in and grind the coffee. And so on and so forth. When you do this morning (or night-before) routine enough, you find little ways that make it a smoother process. Maybe you measure out your water while the coffee beans are grinding.



Or perhaps you store your kitchen scale next to your coffee grinder and coffee beans so that you can collect all your items at once. The point is that we find ways to make repeated actions work better.

**Structure and flow.** When we know what to expect, we can plan (and worry or fret or stress) less. With routine, we know what is next. We can know what to expect, and that provides a calming flow to our lives.

**Momentum.** While routine and rhythm can be “the same old, same old,” it also can build momentum. Routines start to become easy. Not all of life has to be challenging, but when things get easy enough, we can become motivated to expand. The idea is that when we become skilled and proficient at something, psychologically we feel a sense of achievement and agency. When we feel we are good at something, we can humbly branch out into exploring new ways or novel information.

**Priority.** When we establish a routine, we give priority to things that really are important to us. We build a rhythm around our values and self-care. We create space for the things that matter most.

<sup>1</sup> Heintzelman, Samantha J., and Laura A. King. “Routines and Meaning in Life.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, vol. 45, no. 5, Sept. 2018, pp. 688–699., doi:10.1177/0146167218795133.







**Healthy habits.** Building and creating a routine is a key component of healthy living. When we do something day in and day out, we are forming habits that become an integral part of how we live and who we are. Repetition helps us become better at things. For example, when we prepare dinner, we can add the routine of making a large green salad. Every night, we can rely on the habit of that addition to dinner. If we create a routine of waking up in the morning and stretching and breathing for five minutes, then it becomes a healthy habit that is part of the structure of our day. What are some examples of healthy routines? Two good places to focus are at the very beginning and the very end of your day. These bookends based on routine and rhythm can help bring us calm and focus.

**Media-free mornings.** A nurturing morning routine is probably one of the most important habits to cultivate. Basic practices should include avoiding your screens—smartphones, TV, laptops, tablets. At the very least, avoid social media and the news for your first fifteen to twenty minutes every day. If you have a job that is not based on social media or online communications, consider making it a routine to avoid your online devices for a full two hours!

Screen-free after 7 p.m. End your day with limited blue light and lower stimulation. Taking the time to make slowing down part of your nightly routine will pay off in better sleep (and therefore, better health). Even more, it helps you be mindful and present to your family, your home and yourself.

**Focus on yourself.** Another morning routine basic practice is creating space for you alone. Perhaps this means going to bed fifteen minutes earlier so you can wake up that amount sooner before the kids or your spouse.

*Take time to do something just for yourself. It could be as simple as sitting with your cup of tea and actually relishing the warmth and taste.*

**Clean yourself.** At night, practice one somewhat indulgent self-care activity, such as putting on a facial mask or taking a bath. Other simple tasks include reading a daily devotional or writing in a personal journal.

**Morning movement.** Morning is an opportune time to make movement a part of your routine. Perhaps it's going on a run around the neighborhood before the cars start zooming by and people start hustling to work. Or maybe it involves doing some sun salutations toward an east-facing window (or better yet, outside facing the sun, if it's not too cold). If you are an extrovert and want to be more energized in the morning, put on some music and dance when you wake up.

**Nightly stretching.** Prior to sleep, lie in the yoga pose savasana (corpse pose) for five minutes (or more!) in order to stretch out your back and upper shoulders while helping to calm your nervous system. Take time to slow your breath. Attempt to empty your mind.

**Lean into routine!** It doesn't have to be complicated or too different from what you're already doing. Recognize that the routine of daily life is something to be deeply thankful for. The mundanity of daily life is often a space where we can thrive and be grateful.







# Fiber

So many of the fun food trends include superfoods that hail from exotic locales, are challenging to pronounce and—let’s be honest—come and go. We stir MCT oil into our coffee and sprinkle chia seeds on top of our morning cereal. You might make a matcha and turmeric latte on a slow Saturday morning. But a superfood you most likely aren’t getting enough of? Fiber.

There’s really nothing new about fiber. It is the steady pillar of good health that it always has been. We know we should eat it. But most of us—in fact, about 97 percent of us—are not getting the daily recommended amount.<sup>1</sup>



Fiber is a carbohydrate that our body cannot really digest and is most abundant in vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

It’s essentially the roughage from plant foods. Historically, fiber has been categorized into soluble and insoluble dietary fiber. In the health and nutritional world, soluble fiber has traditionally included beta-glucans and pectins. Insoluble fiber has included foods that contain cellulose. Modern nutrition is saying those categories aren’t as relevant nowadays, but it is still common to see fiber described in such terms.

Fiber is important precisely because it cannot be digested by our human digestive enzymes—instead it gets digested by the trillions of bacteria that inhabit our intestine, which scientists increasingly realize play an enormous role in human health.

It also helps us digest other food because its bulk keeps the bowels moving along. It helps add bulk to our stool while also preventing constipation. Fiber helps detoxify the gastrointestinal system by helping waste through the bowels and out of the body. It is hypothesized that this detoxifying action can decrease the risk of colon cancer. Certain types of fiber actually bind environmental and/or metabolic toxins and carry them out of the body.

There is much talk about the gut biome and the benefits of good gut bacteria. Some sources of fiber, such as oats, are believed to serve as prebiotics (as opposed to probiotics). Many types of fiber serve as something for healthy bacteria to feed on. Different types of fibers feed differing parts of the spectrum of our microbiome, so it’s important to eat many different types of fiber from many different plant sources.

Fiber is also heralded for its cardiovascular protective qualities, particularly when it comes to cholesterol. Additionally, people living with or at risk for diabetes should consume a high-fiber diet, as it helps lower blood glucose levels.

Foods high in dietary fiber are plant-based. Stick with whole grains, vegetables and fruits. Broccoli, greens, pears, berries and whole oats have significant amounts of fiber. Lentils, peas, beans and other legumes also contain a lot of it.

Aim for at least 30 grams of fiber a day. Children should also consume plenty of fiber, based on their age. Young children should have an intake of 15 grams a day and school-age children should consume 20 grams a day. Teenagers should take in 25 grams a day. In many technologically undeveloped countries where people eat substantially the way their ancestors have eaten for thousands of years, it’s not uncommon to see fiber intakes of over 100 grams a day!

Consider ways of boosting your fiber intake, particularly early in the day. For breakfast, add a serving of fruit such as sliced peaches or fresh berries to your cereal. If you’re not lectin sensitive, be sure to choose truly whole grain bread (labels can be deceiving, so learn how to read the ingredient list). Focus on making half your lunch vegetables, and end with a good “digestif” such as a pear.



Eat celery, carrots or sliced up broccoli stems as a between-meal snack.

Stock your freezer with frozen vegetables so that you always have some on hand to toss into a soup, omelet or quick sauté. Leave skins on potatoes, rutabaga, turnips and yams—the skins have most of the fiber in these vegetables. Add red lentils to pasta sauce for a boost of fiber and to add some thickness to the sauce. Make it a habit to include a large, leafy salad with every dinner.

<sup>1</sup> Clemens, Roger, et al. “Filling America’s Fiber Intake Gap: Summary of a Roundtable to Probe Realistic Solutions with a Focus on Grain-Based Foods.” *The Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 142, no. 7, July 2012, doi:10.3945/jn.112.160176.

# Dealing with Our Children's Anxieties

At some point, every parent has to help their child deal with anxiety. Whether it comes from exam stress, social media, cyber bullying, a new school, a friend moving away or any other source, anxiety is something every child has to deal with from time to time.

Here are some tips and tricks parents can use to help their children beat anxieties at any age:

## Recognize the Signs

Children of different ages express anxiety in different ways. Young children may become irritable, tearful or clingy. Or they may start wetting the bed. Older children may struggle to face simple, everyday challenges, find it hard to concentrate, develop sleeping problems or become prone to angry outbursts.<sup>1</sup>

## Don't Remove It, Manage It

No parent wants to see their child unhappy, but proactively trying to remove all stressors won't help a child later in life. The best way to help a child overcome anxiety is to give him or her the skills needed to manage it in a healthy manner.

When we help children learn to tolerate and overcome anxieties on their own, we are teaching them critical life skills that help for years and years.

## Let Go

Similar to wanting to remove the source of anxiety, it's natural for parents to become overprotective when they see their child struggle. Do your best to not become anxious yourself (if you do, model healthy coping mechanisms), and try not to be overprotective.

Resist the urge to do things for your child. Instead, talk to your child about ways to avoid anxiety-provoking situations and encourage him to find healthy ways to manage the sources of anxiety.

## Be Realistic

"Just try it. You'll love it." It's tempting to use this logic on a child, but that's not a realistic promise. While parents do tend to know their children best, assuring them they will like something can backfire and cause trust issues later. Instead, express your confidence in their abilities. Let your child know you trust her and no matter what, things will ultimately be okay. This will help give her confidence that is realistic.

## Respect Feelings

Downplaying your child's fears won't do him any favors, but it also doesn't help to empower him. Honest and empathetic conversations are key to helping everyone understand where anxiety is coming from and what can be done to help. Phrases such as "I know you are scared and that's okay," and "I'm here with you while we get through this," will go a long way in helping your child feel validated without letting his fears run wild.

## Model Healthy Methods

Our children are always watching and listening. As kids get older, modeling good behavior becomes even more important. For example, if your child has grown up watching you deal with anxiety by drinking excessively, he will be much more likely to adopt the same unhealthy behavior.



However, if he has seen you use healthy coping methods such as talking to friends, focusing on positive aspects and working through problems constructively, he will adopt these healthy ways of dealing with anxiety.

<sup>1</sup> Staff. "Anxiety in Children." NHS Choices. NHS. Accessed November 3, 2019. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/anxiety-in-children/>.





### **Don't Ask Leading Questions**

Instead of asking if your daughter is scared to start at a new school, ask her how she feels about starting at a new school. The former is a leading question that can plant negative thoughts in your child's mind that she didn't already have.

### **Seek Help**

Anxiety is natural and normal. If your child is having trouble coping with anxiety, the chances are good that you will be able to help her overcome the issue.

However, if your child's anxiety is severe and persistent, and interferes with her everyday life, it may be a good idea to seek help. Start by scheduling a visit to her doctor and go from there.

Be sure that your child's nutrition is optimal, as deficiencies of certain amino acids, or imbalances, such as too many inflammatory fatty acids and not enough anti-inflammatory amino acids in the diet and hence in the body, can predispose their developing brain to be more easily triggered into anxiety states.

# Benefits of Multigeneration Houses

Two factors are driving an innovative new way of living. The number of adults over 65 is set to double, and childcare costs are rising every year. Germany has found the perfect solution: Mehrgenerationenhäuser.

Literally translating to “multigeneration house,” these homes combine the very best of kindergartens, social centers for the elderly and meeting places for young families to visit for advice over a cup of coffee.

Special sitting rooms are reserved for people over 60 years old to relax in, but many people find the door to the special kids’ area is rarely closed for very long.<sup>1</sup>

Germany first started multigenerational houses in 2003, and the trend is expanding and spreading to other countries, for good reasons—both social and financial.

It shouldn’t be surprising that so many people benefit from multigenerational living. The modern, separate way of life is relatively new for human beings who evolved from tribes to villages to homes with several generations living under one roof.

When multigenerational living means children, parents and grandparents all living under one roof, there are extra benefits for everyone. The ability to distribute chores helps everyone save time and energy. It also helps ensure everyone does their part so that children see the importance of pitching in and grandparents have a sense of fulfillment.

Working parents can save time by relying on grandparents for childcare. Children get the benefit of living with more role models who will also teach them how to respect and connect with their elders—something some people argue is disappearing in modern society, where youngsters are often disconnected from older generations.

For their part, grandparents feel more engaged and useful when they can provide help to their children and grandchildren. This can be in the form of helping grandchildren with homework, preparing meals while parents work, babysitting, pitching in with bills and myriad other ways.

For the elderly, perhaps the most important aspect of multigenerational living is preventing loneliness. This common problem in today’s society can weigh heavily on seniors who feel disconnected from the rest of their family and community. Through daily activities with family members in a multigeneration home, grandparents experience a better quality of life.

There are separate perks when the generations come together in places outside the home. Young parents are sometimes more comfortable seeking advice from seniors they are not related to when issues involve money and family.

And seniors who live far from their families are still able to connect with younger generations, giving back and feeling fulfilled by mentoring parents and playing with children.

In home or out, the ability to watch over and mentor adults and children brings genuine joy and purpose into people’s lives. Helping other people just plain feels good.

It doesn’t take many conversations before both parties notice how good it feels. The mentees’ successes also become the mentors’ successes, which will boost everyone’s self-esteem and happiness.

Of course, in both setups there are challenges. Learning to respect parenting styles and everyone’s boundaries can take time. But for the vast majority of people at every age, multigenerational living has far more benefits than challenges.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Oltermann, Philip. “Germany’s ‘Multigeneration Houses’ Could Solve Two Problems for Britain.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, May 2, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/02/germany-multigeneration-house-solve-problems-britain>.

<sup>2</sup> Goyer, Amy. “Multigenerational Living Is Rising, and May Be to Everyone’s Benefit.” American Society on Aging. Accessed November 3, 2019. <https://www.asaging.org/blog/multigenerational-living-rising-and-may-be-everyones-benefit>.







# Why We Should Stop Saying “Man Up”

Many of us are guilty of using the phrases “man up,” “suck it up,” “get over it” or something similar when a male friend or family member has expressed a problem. For years, society deemed these phrases okay. But they were never actually okay to use.

“Man up” is the most problematic of the dismissive phrases because the outdated and gender-specific phrase is disrespectful and avoids the real issue. On the surface, it seems like a harmless way to tell a man to step up to his responsibilities, to be strong or to show less emotion (what’s wrong with showing emotions?), but the phrase is actually saying that person can be more or less of a man based on his ability to hide his emotions.

Many men don’t talk about their health, to the point that it becomes damaging to their mental and physical health. For a man who is already struggling with an issue, being told to “man up” can be debilitating.

We don’t need to tell the men in our lives to “man up.” Instead, we should tell them to “open up.” Men need to feel that their feelings are valued.

Men who are able to open up and develop close relationships with other positive-minded men tend to enjoy better emotional and physical health than do men who don’t seek out and nurture friendships.

There are many reasons a man needs a group of trusted, positive-minded friends who won’t say “man up” when negative feelings set in. Finding and nurturing positive support networks throughout life can make all the difference when an emotional crisis occurs.

Feeling safe with friends allows men to share how they feel, which can help alleviate a lot of stress. For men stuck in “traditional” roles where they don’t feel safe opening up, taking that first step can be daunting, but it’s worth it.

When men (and women) offer each other emotional support and feel trusted and validated when sharing emotions, everyone benefits from the bonding process and support. When friends can trust and respect each other’s emotions, needs and beliefs, other important relationship traits will come naturally—honesty, fairness, support, forgiveness, etc.

When everyone abandons the old views of masculinity, men are allowed to create countless relationships with people from all areas of life—work, neighborhood friends, gym partners, church, school, family. It’s important that friendships include people of different ages, races, sexes and locations, because different friends fulfill different needs.

Every unique and affirming friend helps to make a man’s life a little better by giving him something specific he needs in life.

Some will provide much-needed emotional support, others help with fitness motivation, still others will support problems at work—and many friends will fulfill multiple roles.







Positive friendships with people who don't believe in the outdated "man up" philosophy help foster personal growth.

And both people benefit!  
Both friends feel happy and experience less stress in the company of each other.

Best of all, cultivating positive friendships and avoiding hurtful phrases helps attract even more positive things, people, experiences and circumstances into a man's life.



# Menopause and Diet

The guiding principles of diet in all stages of life are grounded in the consumption of a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, plenty of fresh water, fiber, and protein, while limiting processed, fast and convenience foods. But each stage of life comes with certain extra nutritional needs to support changes within the body. Menopause is no different.

As a woman approaches menopause, the proper dietary support can help reduce and sometimes prevent uncomfortable menopause symptoms.

The diets of many women are too low in iron and calcium. To get enough iron, women entering menopause should consume at least three servings of iron-rich foods every day.



These include lean, organically produced red meat, poultry, eggs, leafy green vegetables, nuts and wild-caught fish.

For calcium, which is absorbed less and secreted through urine more during menopause,<sup>1</sup> women should eat or drink three or four servings of dairy and calcium-rich foods per day. Dairy products such as milk, yogurt and kefir are great sources. Even better calcium sources are broccoli, legumes, dark leafy greens, and fish with bones, such as sardines and canned salmon.<sup>2</sup>

Fiber is an important component of the diet for two primary reasons. First, cholesterol can rise sharply at the beginning of menopause, which can increase the risk of developing heart disease.

Fiber-rich foods help control cholesterol because when fiber is ingested, it is not absorbed by the body AND it binds with fats, meaning they are also unable to be absorbed.<sup>3</sup>

Second, fiber-rich foods tend to promote feelings of fullness, which helps women avoid snacking on unhealthy foods and, therefore, helps them avoid menopausal weight gain. Fiber can be found in whole grains like brown rice and oatmeal, as well as in all vegetables and fruits.



Women of all ages need to drink plenty of water. During menopause, this can be especially important for comfort and vaginal dryness. As a general rule, drink at least eight glasses of water every day.



Just as important as what a woman should eat is what a woman should avoid eating. Cutting down on portion sizes and eating fewer foods that are excessively high in fat, sugar and calories is important. Metabolisms tend to slow down around this age, which means the body doesn't burn calories as fast as it used to.

<sup>1</sup> Heaney, Robert P., Robert R. Recker, and Paul D. Saville Omaha. "Menopausal Changes in Calcium Balance Performance." *Nutrition Reviews* 41, no. 3 (2009): 86–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-4887.1983.tb07709.x>.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, Traci C. "Menopause Diet/Foods: What to Eat & What to Avoid." *WebMD*. WebMD, August 4, 2018. <https://www.webmd.com/menopause/guide/staying-healthy-through-good-nutrition#1>.

<sup>3</sup> "The Menopause Diet." *wallerwellness.com*. Accessed November 3, 2019. <https://www.wallerwellness.com/health-aging/the-menopause-diet>.





Sugar and salt should be moderated as well. Too much salt can increase blood pressure. As high blood pressure and high cholesterol go hand in hand, it is vital for women to watch sodium intake to protect cardiovascular health. This also means avoiding smoked, salt-cured and charbroiled foods that are high in nitrate. Refined sugars induce release of insulin, which leads to weight gain, loss of insulin sensitivity, metabolic syndrome and ultimately type 2 diabetes.



One important thing for protecting bones during menopause that doesn't come from diet is vitamin D.

Spending twenty minutes a day in the sun during peak hours from spring to fall, with no sunscreen, is far and away the best way to ensure the body makes enough of the sunshine vitamin to help with menopause.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Suszynski, Marie, and Rosalyn Carson-DeWitt. "Menopause: The Optimal Menopause Diet." EverydayHealth.com. Accessed November 3, 2019. <https://www.everydayhealth.com/hs/guide-to-managing-menopause/the-optimal-menopause-diet/>.

# Ask the Expert

## How can I get better at controlling my portion sizes?

First, let's look at the difference between serving size and portion size. A serving size is the recommended amount of a particular food. It is also the amount that nutritional information is based on when reading food labels. A portion size is the amount we choose to eat.

Therefore, a portion size could contain more than one serving size, which means many of us often consume far more calories than we realize.

Now, on to controlling portion sizes. There are many strategies that you can adopt. To start with, when eating out, ask that half your meal be put into a to-go container before it is served. Your waiter will be happy to do this for you, and it will remove the temptation of eating more than you need. It also pays to be aware of your meal companions. A recent review suggests that we eat more when we're with friends and family. We are more



likely to moderate the way we eat when we're with people we don't know. Being mindful of our own portion sizes, as well as of the portions of those around us, can help.<sup>2</sup> Some people find success in controlling portion sizes by keeping a food journal of everything they eat or using a meal-tracking app. Yet another strategy is to be careful to choose foods that are high in fiber and protein; both help contribute to feelings of fullness and long-lasting satiation.

## Is diet soda better for me than regular soda?

The diet industry is a massive market driven by billions of dollars in revenue around the world. While many products marketed as diet can be a healthy alternative to other foods, not all "diet" products are equal. Diet sodas are a prime example. For example, a recent study following 451,743 people from 10 countries in Europe found regularly drinking soft drinks was associated with a greater risk of all causes of death, regardless of whether the soda was labeled diet or not.<sup>1</sup> This isn't the only study to show a correlation. Processed foods that are filled with artificial ingredients will never be the magic bullet to better health, no matter what the label says. When it comes to thirst, the very best option is and always will be water. Hundreds of thousands of years ago, our ancestors exclusively drank water—it's all our bodies need to stay hydrated. For some people who have gotten used to drinking soda, sports drinks and energy drinks, it may be hard to transition to a water-only diet. If you find this to be the case for you, try adding a few teaspoons of lemon or lime juice to your water bottle to ease the transition with a citrus flavor.

## Does exercise do anything besides help me lose weight?

Yes! Exercise has many positive effects—on mood, memory, heart health, the immune system, sleep and more. Regular exercise may help improve thinking in sedentary seniors with cognitive decline<sup>3</sup>; it can boost mood (especially for people with bipolar disorder),<sup>4</sup> improve sleep at night, protect the immune system,<sup>5</sup> protect the cardiovascular system,<sup>6</sup> help us control appetite and so much more. Physical activity is good for much more than just weight control. It has innumerable benefits to your mind and body.



<sup>1</sup> Mulee A, Romaguera D, Pearson-Stuttard J, et al. Association Between Soft Drink Consumption and Mortality in 10 European Countries. *JAMA Intern Med.* Published online September 3, 2019. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2019.2478

<sup>2</sup> Ruddock, Helen K, Jeffrey M Brunstrom, Lenny R Vartanian, and Suzanne Higgs. "A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Social Facilitation of Eating." *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 110, no. 4 (2019): 842–61. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/nqz155>.

<sup>3</sup> Rapaport, Lisa. "Exercise May Improve Thinking in Sedentary Seniors with Cognitive Decline." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, December 19, 2018. [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-cognition-exercise/exercise-may-improve-thinking-in-sedentary-seniors-with-cognitive-decline-idUSKCN1O12PN?utm\\_source=reddit.com](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-cognition-exercise/exercise-may-improve-thinking-in-sedentary-seniors-with-cognitive-decline-idUSKCN1O12PN?utm_source=reddit.com).

<sup>4</sup> Aspril, Joshua. "Increased Motor Activity Linked to Improved Mood." Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, December 12, 2018. <https://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2018/increased-motor-activity-linked-to-improved-mood.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Walsh, Fergus. "How Exercise in Old Age Prevents the Immune System from Declining." BBC News. BBC, March 8, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-43308729>.

<sup>6</sup> "Weightlifting Is Good for Your Heart and It Doesn't Take Much." RSS. Accessed November 3, 2019. <https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2018/11/13/resistancecvcd>.