

Keeping your health and well-being in the know

MyHealthTALK

January 2011
Courtesy of Asset Health



Achieve a healthy weight

GOAL SETTING: START small

While many of us set personal goals in order to achieve a healthier lifestyle, we don't always know the best way to attain the goal. We tend to focus on the long term result but not the steps we need to take to get there. Start small and focus on the steps that you need to take each day. These things will then become part of your daily routine. Here are some ideas to help you get started in the New Year:

MOVE - You don't have to exercise outside during the winter. Pop in an exercise video and do some stretching, yoga, or aerobics for 30 minutes. Walk or run on a home treadmill or run up and down your stairs several times.

SCHEDULE - Set aside a specific time to exercise and schedule it into your calendar. Some of us are morning people and some prefer early evening.

COMMIT - Be specific about your commitment. "I will walk on the treadmill 4 mornings a week for 30 minutes for 30 days."

TRACK PROGRESS - Log your progress in a journal or online tracking system. It's motivating to visually see your progress.

Maintaining a healthy weight is an important step to protecting your health. Unfortunately, obesity continues to be a serious problem for many individuals. At present, obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death, second only to smoking. There are, however, many simple ways to take control over your weight and guarantee your health for the future.

Your Healthy Weight Range

The first step in maintaining a healthy weight is finding your healthy weight range or Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI not only determines your body mass, but it also shows you your risk of disease as it increases.

- BMI <19: Underweight
- BMI 19-24: Normal
- BMI 25-30: **Overweight**
- BMI >30: **Obese**

Calculate your BMI at
<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>

Make a Plan

The next step is determining how to go about achieving or maintaining that weight. While it may seem like a big task, achieving a healthy weight isn't hopeless, especially if you follow these two critical components to any weight loss plan: diet modification and exercise. You are more likely to succeed, when you take small steps you can accomplish, rather than making many large lifestyle changes all at once.

Exercise

Burning calories through regular exercise, including aerobic and anaerobic exercises (like jogging and weight lifting) are critical to getting rid of stored fat and achieving a healthy weight and body composition. According to recent studies, 25 percent of Americans are not physically active on a regular basis.

Modify Your Diet

Nutritionists recommend that you pay close attention to your portion size when choosing what you eat. They recommend eating 4-6 small meals a day to control your portions. A serving of meat, for instance, should be no more than 3 ounces, or roughly the size of a deck of cards. Or a serving of pasta is about the size of your fist. Additionally, plan meals that have foods with moderate levels of fats and are low in saturated or trans-fats.

Below are Action Steps on how to eat a balanced diet with portion control:

1. Eat 4 to 6 small meals a day instead of 2 to 3 large ones.
2. Include a fruit or vegetable in each meal.
3. Eat foods high in complex carbohydrates, such as whole wheat breads.
4. Avoid foods with saturated fat (meat products, butter) and trans-fats (fried foods, snack foods).
5. Minimize refined sugars in your diet. Have fruit for dessert instead.

Get the tastiest veggies!

'Tis the season for Carrots, Brussels sprouts and Swiss chard! In order to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables, it's good to know when they are available fresh. Below is a seasonal chart which will help you in purchasing high quality and reasonably priced produce. This chart could be slightly different depending on what part of the country you are in, because what is in season depends mainly on region and store availability.



Seasonal Chart for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (shaded area indicates peak season)

*Many of the listed fruits and vegetables are available year round, but their cost will be higher and quality may be less in off-season.

Fruits/ Vegetables	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Tips
Apples													Choose firm apples with no soft spots.
Avocado													Ripe fruit will be slightly firm, but yield to gentle pressure.
Banana													Select bananas that are firm; with no bruises.
Bell Pepper													Choose peppers with firm skin, with no wrinkles.
Broccoli													Select bunches that are dark green.
Cantaloupe													Select melons that are slightly golden with a light fragrant smell.
Carrots													Pick carrots that are deep orange in color. Avoid carrots that are cracked or wilted.
Corn													Husks should be green, tight, and fresh looking. The ear should have tightly packed rows of plump kernels.
Cucumber													Choose firm cucumbers with rich green color and no soft spots.
Eggplant													Pick symmetrical eggplant; avoid oversized eggplants with may be tough and bitter.
Grapes													Look for firm, plump, well-colored clusters.
Lettuce													Choose fresh, crisp leaves with no wilting.
Mushrooms													Mushrooms should be firm, moisture-free (not dry), and blemish-free.
Onion													Onions should feel dry and solid with no soft spots or sprouts.
Orange													Pick oranges that are firm, heavy for their size and have bright colorful skins.
Peach													Choose peaches that are soft to the touch with a fragrant smell.
Pear													Ripe pears will yield slightly to gently pressure a fragrant smell.
Strawberries													Strawberries should be dry, firm and well shaped and be a bright shade of red.
Summer Squash													Look for squash that are firm with bright, glossy exteriors.
Sweet Potato													Choose firm, dark, smooth sweet potatoes.
Tomato													Select plump tomatoes with smooth skins.