

Maintain Your Motivation All Year Long



Do you hear the word "exercise" and immediately want to run for the hills? (No pun intended.) Our tips for staying motivated will help make 2015 the year you achieve and maintain your health and wellness goals.

Start Small

Your goal to better health could start with a quick and simple goal, such as a short walk three to five times per week. And you don't have to be an athlete or exercise for hours on end each day to get healthier. Gretchen Williams, author of *The First 20 Minutes* notes: "The first 20 minutes of moving around, if someone has been really sedentary, provides most of the health benefits. You get prolonged life, reduced disease risk—all of those things come in the first 20 minutes of being active."

Read the Writing On the Wall

What you need to get you up off the couch is a reason that's important to you. It could be a number on the scale that surprises you or your doctor's recommendation that you need to move more to stay healthy.

Exercise guide Paige Waehner of about.com believes exercise journals are essential for any fitness goal, regardless of whether the goal is to lose weight, gain muscle or win a race. In fact, one of the biggest barriers to fitness success is an irregular fitness schedule. An exercise journal will help you work in your workouts.

Feel the Love

If you haven't been exercising regularly, you'll be surprised at how great it makes you feel. Researchers from Penn State University found that more physically active people reported greater general feelings of excitement and enthusiasm, compared with less physically active people. The reason? All types of moderate physical activity release brain chemicals (endorphins and serotonin) that make you feel more positive and help you to relax.

Bounce Back From Setbacks

You've set a reasonable fitness goal. You've prepared for potential problems. Yet somehow you still didn't make it to the gym today as you had planned. Don't let that be your downfall. If things get really hectic or you're not feeling well, take a day or two off. Don't be guilt-ridden if you need a break, but get started back on your exercise routine as a soon as possible.

"Change is hard!" says certified health behavior coach Shelly Hoefs, fitness supervisor at the Mutch Women's Center for Health Enrichment in Sioux Falls, S.D. "When we try to start exercising, we think of all the excuses for not doing it and all the things that have gotten in the way before. Getting fit starts to seem overwhelming, and that makes it feel stressful. Before long, we don't want to do it anymore.

"Start thinking of yourself as someone who exercises," says Hoefs. "Eventually, that will become your identity." Getting physically active is **for life!**

(Sources: WebMD, Mayo Clinic, Gretchen Reynolds—*The First 20 Minutes*)

It's All About Portion Control

When eating at many restaurants, it's hard to miss that portion sizes have gotten larger in the last few years. The trend has also spilled over into the grocery store and vending machines, where a bagel has become a BAGEL and an "individual" bag of chips can easily feed more than one. Research shows that people unintentionally consume more calories when faced with larger portions. This can mean significant excess calorie intake, especially when eating high-calorie foods. Here are some tips to help you avoid some common portion-size pitfalls:

Portion control when eating out: Many restaurants serve more food than one person needs at one meal. Take control of the amount of food that ends up on your plate by splitting an entrée with a friend. Or, ask the server for a to-go box and wrap up half your meal as soon as it's brought to the table.

Portion control when eating in: To minimize the temptation of second and third helpings when eating at home, serve the food on individual plates instead of putting the serving dishes on the table. Keeping the excess food out of reach may discourage overeating.

Portion control in front of the TV: When eating or snacking in front of the TV, put the amount that you plan to eat into a bowl or container instead of eating straight from the package. It's easy to overeat when your attention is focused on something else.

Go ahead, spoil your dinner: We learned as children not to snack before a meal for fear of "spoiling our dinner." Well, it's time to forget that old rule. If you feel hungry between meals, eat a healthy snack, like a piece of fruit or a small salad to avoid overeating during your next meal.

(Sources: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, WebMD)

Recipe: Salmon Cakes



Ingredients

1/2 pound wild Alaskan salmon filet, fresh or frozen (if frozen thaw overnight in the refrigerator)

olive oil cooking spray

1 tbsp olive oil

freshly ground black pepper, to taste

3/4 cup small-diced red onion (1 small onion)

1 1/2 cups small-diced celery (4 stalks)

1/2 cup small-diced red bell pepper (1 small pepper)

1/2 cup small-diced yellow bell pepper (1 small pepper)

1/4 cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley

1/4 teaspoon hot sauce

1 1/2 tsp Old Bay seasoning

1 cup seasoned bread crumbs

3 tbsp light mayonnaise

3 tbsp fat free Greek yogurt

1 tsp Dijon mustard

1 large egg, lightly beaten

3 large egg whites, lightly beaten

Directions

1. Heat a large pan over medium-high heat; when hot lightly spray with oil and add the salmon. Cook until browned on one side, about 4 to 5 minutes then turn and cook an additional 4 to 5 minutes or until salmon easily flakes. Set aside on a dish to cool.
2. Add the olive oil to the pan, then add the the onion, celery, red and yellow bell peppers, parsley, hot sauce, Old Bay seasoning, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper in a large pan over medium-low heat and cook until the vegetables are soft, approximately 18 to 20 minutes. Set aside to cool.
3. Flake the salmon into a large bowl. Add the bread crumbs, mayonnaise, yogurt, mustard, and eggs. Add the vegetable mixture and mix well. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes; this will make them easier to shape and become less sticky.
4. Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray a non-stick baking sheet with cooking spray. Shape the batter into 15 (scant 1/4 cup each) cakes and place on prepared baking sheet. Bake about 10 to 12 minutes on each side, or until golden brown.

Servings: 15 • Size: 1 cake • Calories: 87 • Fat: 3 g • Protein: 7 g • Carb: 8 g • Fiber: 1 g • Sugar: 1 g Sodium: 127 mg • Cholesterol: 23 mg

Helpful Tips

So how do you go about getting your portions under control?

The first step should be to invest in a set of measuring cups and spoons, along with an inexpensive scale. You may be shocked to find out how much you are actually eating.

Don't worry that you'll have to carry a scale and measuring cups everywhere you go. Once you weigh and measure your food a few times, you'll have a better idea of what a normal portion looks like.

Another trick is to use everyday objects to visually estimate portion sizes. According to the American Dietetic Association:

- ▶ Three ounces of meat is equal to a deck of cards.
- ▶ One cup of pasta is about the size of a tennis ball.
- ▶ 1 1/2 ounces of cheese is the size of three dominoes.
- ▶ Two tablespoons of peanut butter is equivalent to a ping-pong ball.