

University of Missouri Extension

GH6655, Reviewed June 2009

Challenges and Choices: Fit for Life

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Do you want to feel great? Chances are, you do. So how do you get there? Healthy habits can bridge the way to feeling great. Read on to find out what you can do for better health.

Eat more fruits and vegetables

Want one easy way to lower your risk of cancer, heart disease and high blood pressure? Eat more fruits and vegetables. They are low-calorie, low-fat, and packed with fiber and nutrients.

More good news: fruits and vegetables often require little or no preparation. This makes them the perfect food for your busy lifestyle.

For good health, eat at least five servings a day

One serving equals:

- One piece of fruit
- 3/4 cup juice
- 1/2 cup cooked, chopped or canned fruit or vegetable
- 1 cup salad greens

Here are some fun, simple ways to eat fruits and vegetables with your meals and snacks.

Breakfast

- Top your cereal with fruit. Try bananas, strawberries, blueberries and peaches.
- Add fruit to plain, low-fat yogurt.
- Drink a glass of cool fruit juice with breakfast.
- Whip up a fruit smoothie — blend 1 sliced banana, 8 ounces low-fat yogurt (plain or flavored), 1 cup orange or apple juice and a few ice cubes.
- Top your pancakes or waffles with berries or sliced peaches.
- Slice an apple, sprinkle it with cinnamon, and pop it in the microwave until tender.
- Cut up melon to go with your breakfast.
- Cook some dried fruit in water or fruit juice to warm your morning.

Brown-bag lunch

- Add vegetables to sandwiches. Tomatoes, sprouts, lettuce and cucumbers add color and crunch.
- Pack some fresh fruit. Try apples, oranges, bananas, peaches, pears and grapes.
- Enjoy cut up vegetables plain or dipped into low-fat salad dressing.
- Heat up a bowl of vegetable soup.
- Drink your favorite fruit or vegetable juice with your meal.

Lunch or dinner

- Look for pre-cut vegetables at your local supermarket including lettuce, spinach, cabbage, celery, broccoli, cauliflower and shredded or baby carrots. Enjoy vegetables plain or dip into low-fat salad dressing.
- Choose pre-cut fruits at your local supermarket including melons and pineapple. Enjoy fruit plain or dip into low-fat, fruit-flavored yogurt.
- Add fruit to your green salad. Try grapefruit, oranges, apples, berries and grapes.
- Make a fruit salad with your favorite canned fruit. Add cut up apple, sliced banana and frozen berries.
- Mix an easy fruit cup with canned peaches, pineapple and pears.
- Finish off your meal with dried fruit, such as apricots, peaches, pears, raisins, dates, figs and prunes.
- Use the microwave to bake potatoes and sweet potatoes in a hurry, or to heat vegetables quickly.
- Serve colorful steamed vegetables over a baked potato. Top with a little reduced-fat cheese.
- Spice up your pasta, rice or potato salads. Add crunchy, raw vegetables like red or green bell peppers, broccoli and carrots.
- Add your favorite vegetables to soup, entrees and pasta.
- Top your pizza with vegetables. Try onions, peppers, mushrooms and tomatoes.
- Add leftover meat or sliced, boiled potatoes to your green salads.
- Mix up a great salad with leftover vegetables and low-fat Italian dressing.
- Grill vegetable kabobs made with onions, peppers, squash, eggplant, tomatoes and mushrooms.
- Try the salad bar. Choose plain, fresh fruits and vegetables in a variety of colors.

Snacks

- Grab 100-percent fruit juice to drink instead of coffee or soda.
- Munch on baby carrots, snap peas or cherry tomatoes. Eat them plain or dip into low-fat salad dressing.
- Satisfy a sweet tooth with dried fruit, such as apricots, peaches, pears, dates, figs, prunes and raisins.
- Have a snack pack of canned fruit.
- Freeze fruit for a cool summer snack. Try grapes, peeled bananas and berries.
- Make frozen fruit juice bars — with 100-percent fruit juice.
- Cool your fruit juice with ice cubes made from grapefruit juice.
- Add your favorite fruit to low- or non-fat yogurt.
- Drink a glass of tomato or vegetable juice.

On the go

- Grab an apple, banana, grapes, a box of raisins or a single-serving juice box on your way out the door.
- When you stop at fast-food restaurants, order a baked potato.
- Drink 100-percent pure fruit juice, usually available from convenience stores, delis and fast-food restaurants.
- Stop at a supermarket, and stock up on fresh fruits and vegetables at the salad bar.
- Get a great deal at the roadside fruit and vegetable stand — high quality for low prices.

Dessert

- Add chopped fruit to muffins, cakes and cookies.
- Top frozen low-fat or non-fat yogurt, sherbet or ice milk with your favorite fruits.
- Bring a piece of angel food cake to life by topping it off with berries.
- Make a healthy banana split. Slice a banana lengthwise, and top with frozen, low- or non-fat yogurt, and top with strawberries or pineapple.

Hundreds of studies have shown fruits and vegetables lower the risk of some diseases and keep us healthy. You may start eating more fruits and vegetables for your health and keep eating them because they taste so good.

Shopping tips

- Buy fruits and vegetables in several forms: fresh, frozen, canned and dried. This makes it much easier to eat five a day.
- Try the local Farmer's Market for good quality at low prices.
- At the supermarket, choose:
 - Frozen fruits without added sugar.
 - Canned fruits packed in their own natural juices, or light syrup
 - Fruit juices that are 100-percent fruit juice (fruit drinks are mostly sugar water, with a little fruit juice)
 - Frozen fruit juice concentrate — it is usually the least expensive form of juice
 - Frozen berries — if fresh berries are not in season, frozen berries are the best buy
 - Plain frozen vegetables; added sauces are often high in fat and sodium
 - Low-sodium or no-salt-added canned vegetables
 - Canned fruits and vegetables on sale

Eat more fiber

What gives fruits and vegetables their crunch? What makes grains, beans and legumes chewy? The answer to both questions is fiber. Fiber is the part of plant foods that our bodies cannot digest. You may wonder then, why do we need it?

We have known for a long time that fiber aids in moving waste out of the body regularly. New research says fiber may also help prevent obesity and diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, diverticular disease and some cancers.

There are two kinds of fiber that help fight these diseases, insoluble and soluble. Insoluble fiber holds onto water in the intestinal tract.

This increases bulk, softens the stool and aids in passing waste out of the body. Soluble fiber can help lower blood cholesterol and control blood sugar levels.

Eating a combination of both insoluble and soluble fiber is best. Insoluble fiber is found in foods such as whole grains, wheat bran and some vegetables. Soluble fiber is found in foods such as beans, oats, barley and some fruits and vegetables.

How much is enough? The National Cancer Institute recommends 25 grams to 35 grams of fiber per day. Most Americans get much less.

A word of caution: Talk with your doctor before making any major change in your diet. Slowly add fiber to your diet, but don't eat more than 50 grams a day. Too much fiber can cause gas, diarrhea and discomfort. It may also prevent some minerals from being used by the body.

Read on for tips on how to get more fiber into your meals and snacks.

Breakfast

- Start your day with whole grain bread, cereal or muffins.
- Top your cereal with fruit, dates or raisins.
- Eat a piece of fresh fruit.
- Try stewed or dried fruit.

Lunch or dinner

- Fix a sandwich on whole-grain bread.

Add vegetables to your sandwich. Try lettuce, sprouts, cucumbers and mushrooms.

- Add peas or corn to your green salad.
- Have a baked potato — and eat the peel, too.
- Mix carrots, pineapple and raisins for a high-fiber salad.
- Sprinkle your salad with seeds. Try sunflower, sesame or pumpkin.
- Warm up with hearty bean soup.
- Make your pasta dishes more interesting with vegetables. Try broccoli, carrots and tomatoes.
- Add barley or brown rice to your vegetable soup.
- Add whole-grain breads and rice to your meal.
- Sprinkle whole-grain cereals on salads, baked potatoes and casseroles — anywhere you want crunch.

Snacks

- Munch on low-fat popcorn.
- Spread peanut butter on a celery stick.
- Toast whole grain bread.
- Make your own high-fiber dip with mashed beans and tomato salsa.
- Use fresh vegetables, whole grain crackers, or baked tortilla chips as dippers.
- Eat a banana, peach, pear or apple.

Recipe adjustments

You can add high-fiber ingredients to your favorite recipes, and you will hardly know the difference. These ideas are only guidelines. Try them, and see what works best for you.

- Use whole-wheat flour to replace one-fourth to one-half of the all-purpose flour called for in a recipe.

Example

A recipe calls for 2 cups of all-purpose flour.

Adjustment: Use 1/2 cup whole-wheat flour and 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour. Or use 1 cup whole-wheat flour and 1 cup all-purpose flour.

- Grind oat bran or oatmeal as fine as flour in a food processor or blender. Use to replace up to one-fourth of the all-purpose flour called for in a recipe.

Example

A recipe calls for 4 cups of all-purpose flour.

Adjustment: Use 1 cup oat flour (made from ground oat bran or oatmeal) and 3 cups all-purpose flour.

- Grind bran cereal in a food processor or blender. Use to replace up to one-fourth of the all-purpose flour called for in a recipe.

Example

A recipe calls for 1 cup of all-purpose flour.

Adjustment: Use 1/4 cup bran cereal flour and 3/4 cup all-purpose flour.

Questions and answers

Does processing food change how much fiber is in food?

Yes. Unprocessed plant foods are the best source of fiber. A fresh apple has 3.0 grams of fiber. Apple juice has no fiber.

More examples are shown in the "Compare the difference" chart below.

What is meant by whole grain?

Whole grain means the grain has not been processed as much. This is important because processing often removes the outer layer of the grain (called the bran) that contains fiber. For example, whole wheat flour contains fiber from the bran, while white flour contains very little fiber.

Meat can be tough and chewy. Does it have fiber in it?

No. Fiber is found only in plant foods including fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds.

I have heard fiber helps people lose weight — is this true?

Fiber itself does not cause us to lose weight. However, because eating foods with fiber makes us feel more full, we eat less.

I want to choose high-fiber breads and cereals. What should I look for on food labels?

For breads, look for whole grains. For example, whole-wheat flour, not just wheat flour. Look at the Nutrition Facts panel for grams of dietary fiber per serving. Choose cooked and ready-to-eat cereals with at least 2 grams of fiber per serving. The less fat and sugar, the better.

Eating fiber can be simple. To start, try a few ideas that sound good to you, and work up to the recommended amount. You'll be doing yourself a favor.

Eat less fat

You have probably heard dozens of times that eating less fat is good for you, but have you made the switch? While we were growing up, many of us ate high-fat favorites such as cheeseburgers, french fries and milkshakes.

Now we know that high-fat diets are linked to heart disease and some types of cancer. Does this mean we have to stop eating high-fat foods altogether? No! We have several choices.

- Eat a similar food with less fat.
- Choose high-fat foods less often, and eat smaller servings.
- Make low-fat choices for the rest of the day when you do splurge.

Compare the difference

Less processed foods	More processed foods
Whole-wheat bread, 1 slice 2 grams fiber	White bread, 1 slice 0.6 grams fiber
Brown rice, 1/2 cup, cooked 2.4 grams fiber	White rice, 1/2 cup, cooked 1 gram fiber
Fresh orange, 1 medium 2 grams fiber	Orange juice, 1/2 cup 0 grams fiber
How much fiber are you eating every day?	
Food	Grams of fiber

All dairy products	0
All meat, fish, and poultry	0
Fruit	
Apple, 1 medium, with peel	3.0
Banana, 1 medium	2.5
Peach, 1 medium, with skin	2.0
Pear, 1 medium, with skin	4.5
Strawberries, 1 cup	3.5
Vegetables	
Broccoli, 1/2 cup, cooked	2.0
Carrot, 1 medium	2.3
Spinach, 1/2 cup, cooked	2.0
Corn, 1/2 cup, canned	3.0
Peas, frozen, 1/2 cup	3.0
Potato, baked, with skin, 1 medium	3.6
Sweet potato, baked, with skin, 1 medium	3.4
Grains	
Bran flakes, 3/4 cup	5.3
Oatmeal, cooked, 3/4 cup	1.6
Beans and legumes	
Kidney Beans, 1/2 cup, cooked	7.3
Red Beans, 1/2 cup, cooked	6.0
Lentils, 1/2 cup, cooked	3.7
Peanuts, 1/4 cup, roasted	3.0

All fiber values listed are approximate.

Eat similar foods with less fat

Example

If your favorites include high-fat cheeseburgers, french fries and milkshakes, and you still want to eat them, here's how you can lower the fat.

- Choose 85-percent lean ground beef for the burger. At fast food restaurants, order the smaller burger instead of the super or deluxe sizes.
- Use a small amount of reduced-fat cheese instead of regular cheese.
- Skip the mayonnaise or use a non-fat mayonnaise dressing.
- Have a baked potato instead of french fries. Use non-fat butter-flavored granules instead of real butter.
- Try ice milk and skim milk for your shake instead of ice cream and whole milk.

Shopping tips

Read labels

They can tell you how much fat is in foods before you buy them. Look for:

1. Ingredient statement

- Ingredients are listed in order by weight. The first ingredient listed is present in the greatest amount, and the last ingredient listed is present in the least amount.

2. Nutrition facts

- How many calories are in a serving?
- How many calories are from fat?
- To get the percent calories from fat: Divide fat calories by total calories in a serving, and multiply by 100.

Example

Suppose you want to buy American Cheese:

1 serving has 78 calories

56 calories are from fat

56 divided by 78 x 100 = 72 percent calories from fat

Fruits and vegetables

Buy plenty. Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat. Check labels for added sauces that may be high in fat.

Pasta, rice, bread, crackers and cereal

Look for plain pasta and rice. Stay away from convenience foods with lots of added fat. Choose low-fat breads such as sandwich bread, sourdough bread, English muffins and bagels. Crackers are often high in fat. Choose plain, saltine crackers or reduced-fat crackers. Buy cereals with 2 grams of fat or less per serving. Stay away from donuts, sweet rolls, biscuits and croissants — they are loaded with fat.

Dairy products

Buy skim milk, low-fat buttermilk, reduced-fat cheese, low- or non-fat yogurt, sour half-and-half, or fat-free sour cream.

Meat, fish and poultry

- Red meat — Buy lean cuts such as round steak or roasts, flank steak, sirloin, tenderloin, and loin pork chops. Trim the fat. Buy 85-percent lean ground beef.
- Fish — Buy frozen fish without breading and canned fish packed in water, not oil.
- Poultry — Buy chicken, turkey and game hens. Look for skinless parts, or take off the skin before cooking. Try ground turkey in place of ground beef.
- Prepared poultry — Buy roasted poultry instead of fried.

Vegetable oils, cooking fats

Buy in small amounts. Try vegetable oil cooking spray so that you can add as little fat as possible when you cook.

Condiments

Buy low- or non-fat salad dressings.

Cooking at home

- Bake, grill, broil, roast or pan broil meats and seafood. Throw away drippings with fat.
- Remove skin from poultry before cooking.
- Drain ground meat, and rinse with hot water after browning.
- Eat smaller servings of meat. Use rice or pasta with a small amount of meat mixed in as your main dish.

- White sauces, custards and puddings: Use low-fat or non-fat dairy products.
- Sauces and gravies: Thicken without adding fat. Mix corn starch or flour with a small amount of cold liquid. Stir it slowly into the hot liquid that you want thickened. Cook and stir until thick.
- Sauté in a small amount of oil — one teaspoon is often enough. Or, use vegetable oil cooking spray.
- Buy a non-stick skillet.
- Try marinades that are not high in oil, such as wine or lemon juice seasoned with spices.
- Spice up vegetables and other foods with herbs and spices, lemon juice, or non-fat, butter-flavored granules, not fat.
- Cook soups, chili and spaghetti sauces one day before eating. Refrigerate, and skim off solid fat.

Baking at home

- Lower fat by 1/4 to 1/3 in baked products. Replace it with pureed fruit such as applesauce or prunes.
- Use two egg whites in place of one whole egg. The fat is all in the yolk.
- Use skim or one-percent milk instead of whole milk.

Example

A recipe calls for 1 cup of oil. Instead, use 2/3 cup oil, and 1/3 cup applesauce.

Casseroles that call for cream soups

Use low-fat soups or this low-fat casserole sauce mix:

Casserole sauce mix

Yield: equal to 9 cans condensed soup

2 cups nonfat dry milk powder

3/4 cup cornstarch

1/4 cup instant chicken or beef bouillon granules (may use low sodium)

2 tablespoons onion flakes

1/2 teaspoon dried crushed thyme

1/2 teaspoon dried crushed basil

1/4 teaspoon pepper

Other seasonings as desired

Blend all ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Store in an airtight container. To use in place of one can condensed soup in recipes:

- In a saucepan, stir together 1/3 cup dry mix and 1-1/4 cups water.
- Cook over low heat, and stir until thickened.

Recipe from Iowa State Extension

Try these low-fat recipe ideas

- Make a low-fat burrito. Wrap black beans and salsa, topped with a little reduced-fat cheese, in a flour tortilla. Heat, and top with non-fat yogurt.
- Try a fruit cobbler with low-fat crumb topping, instead of pie with a high-fat crust.
- Make chocolate milk or hot chocolate with skim milk and chocolate syrup. Make sure the chocolate syrup you add is low in fat.
- Mix up a low-fat salad dressing. If the recipe calls for sour cream, use non-fat yogurt. If the recipe calls for mayonnaise, use reduced or non-fat mayonnaise dressing instead.
- Oven-fry your chicken. Dip skinless chicken pieces into skim milk or low-fat buttermilk, and roll in seasoned bread crumbs or cornflake crumbs. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour on cookware sprayed lightly with vegetable oil cooking spray.

Healthy choices

This chart shows how many grams of fat are in some foods. Make the lower-fat choices! (All fat values listed are approximate.)

Choose this		Instead of this	
Food	Grams of fat	Food	Grams of fat
Bagel, 1	1.5	Donut, 1 raised	11.2
Skim milk, 1 cup	0.0	Whole milk, 1 cup	8.0
Vanilla ice milk, 1/2 cup	2.8	Vanilla ice cream, 1/2 cup	7.2
Non-fat, plain yogurt, 2 tablespoons	0.0	Sour cream, 2 tablespoons	6.0
Cheddar cheese, reduced fat, 1/4 cup shredded	6.0	Cheddar cheese, regular, 1/4 cup shredded	7.5
Evaporated skim milk, 2 tablespoons	0.0	Whipping cream, 2 tablespoons	5.0
Ground beef, extra lean, 2-oz. patty, cooked	9.3	Ground beef, regular 2-oz. patty, cooked	11.7
Chicken, roasted, light meat, no skin, 2 ounces	2.6	Chicken, roasted, light meat, with skin, 2 ounces	6.2

Eating less fat may be hard at first, but your taste buds will learn to like it. Your waistline will thank you.

Eating out wisely

- Read the menu for key words.
- Look for menu items with these words in the description: steamed, in its own juice, garden fresh, broiled, roasted, poached and dry broiled (in lemon juice or wine).
- Avoid menu items with these words in the description: buttered, butter sauce, creamy, cream sauce, cheese sauce, gravy, hollandaise, marinated in oil, sautéed, fried, breaded and fried, au gratin, escaloped and casserole.
- Choose lean meat, and remove any fat.
- Remove skin from poultry.
- Limit breaded or fried items — order only once in a while.
- Order vegetables without added fat.
- Try broth-based soups instead of cream soups.
- Use only small amounts of butter and cheese spreads. Spread thinly if at all.
- Watch what you put on your salad. Use low-fat or non-fat dressings. Stay away from the creamy pasta salads and other high-fat items on salad bars.
- Ask questions to find out more about what is in food and how it is cooked.
- Ask for condiments such as butter, margarine, sour cream, salad dressing and mayonnaise to be served on the side.
- Ask for skim or one-percent milk.
- Ask for low-fat items, even if you do not see them listed on the menu.
- Think about ordering a la carte — maybe you don't want everything that comes with the meal.
- Ask if you can order half a serving.
- Split an entree with a friend.
- Order a couple of appetizers instead of a large meal.
- Choose low-fat items that are on the menu when you eat at fast food restaurants.
- Stop eating when you are full. Ask for a take-home bag.
- Wait until you finish your meal before you order dessert. If you still want it, order a light one, such as sorbet or fresh fruit.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only a small amount. It can increase your appetite and adds calories.

Questions and answers

Which has more calories, a teaspoon of sugar or a teaspoon of fat?

A teaspoon of fat, by far.
1 teaspoon sugar = 16 Calories
1 teaspoon fat = 36 Calories

What is an acceptable level of fat in my diet?

The American Heart Association and other health professionals recommend that we limit fat in our diets to no more than 30 percent of total calories.

Example

You eat 2,000 calories a day.

To figure 30 percent of 2,000: $2,000 \times 0.30 = 600$ calories from fat

To figure how many grams of fat you can eat, divide calories-from-fat by 9 (there are 9 calories in a gram of fat).

$600 \text{ divided by } 9 = 67$ grams of fat

Are all fats the same, or are some fats better for me than others?

All fats have the same number of calories. Limit all fat in your diet. However, research has shown that we may benefit from having more polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat in our diet than saturated fat. Which is which? Here are some examples.

- Polyunsaturated fats: Corn, sunflower, safflower, soybean, sesame seed and cottonseed oils.
- Monounsaturated fats: Olive, peanut and canola oils.
- Saturated fats: Fats that are solid at room temperature. Butter, lard, solid vegetable shortening, and tropical oils such as palm, palm kernel and coconut oils. Fast foods and packaged baked goods are often high in saturated fat.

So get moving

Imagine a group of small children doing nothing but sitting still. It's difficult, isn't it? Our adult bodies are designed to be active too. Yet as we get older, we often become less active. Many of us have sit-down jobs or watch a little too much TV in our spare time.

Physical activity is important at all ages. It makes us look and feel great and can add years to our lives.

Look at the ways that exercise can make your life better. It can help you: lower blood pressure, lower blood cholesterol, stop smoking, lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, and keep bones strong.

If the word exercise makes you think of aches and pains or expensive exercise equipment, think again. Physical activity can be fun and can easily fit into your busy lifestyle.

Getting started

Make a list of activities that you enjoy. You may like team sports, bicycling with a group, or walking by yourself.

Think about comfort. Find some walking shoes that support your feet and feel good. Wear loose-fitting clothing — layers are ideal because you can peel them off as your body warms up.

Talk to your doctor before you start shaping up. It is especially important if you:

- Are over 40
- Have not been physically active for a long time
- Are overweight
- Have heart disease or heart trouble of any kind, have had a heart attack, or there is a family history of heart attack

before age 55

- Have had a stroke
- Have high blood cholesterol
- Have pain or pressure in the chest, neck, shoulder or arm during or right after exercise
- Have fainting or dizzy spells
- Become short of breath after light activity
- Have high blood pressure or do not know what your blood pressure is
- Have a medical condition such as diabetes, arthritis, back problems, kidney or liver disease, orthopedic or musculoskeletal problems, osteoporosis, metabolic problems, or any condition that would make exercise difficult

Stick with it

Make exercise a regular part of your routine. Here are some tips for sticking with it from people just like you:

- I thought finding the time was hard for me. Then I looked at how I spent my free time, and decided to watch less TV.
- Exercise is part of my daily routine now. I plan other activities around my exercise time.
- Regular exercise helps me sleep at night.
- I work out with a friend who is faithful about exercising, and it helps keep me going.
- I walk because it makes me feel good.

What kind of physical activities suit you best?

We all benefit from different kinds of exercise. Aerobic, non-aerobic and weight-bearing activities are all important. Aerobic activities make the heart pump faster, which helps keep it healthy. Examples of aerobic activities are brisk walking, jogging, swimming, bicycling, cross-country skiing and dancing.

Non-aerobic activities improve strength, flexibility, and muscle tone. Examples include bending and stretching exercises and weight-lifting.

Weight-bearing exercise is good for your bones. Strong bones help prevent osteoporosis, a disease that often leads to broken bones. Examples of weight-bearing activities are walking, jogging, dancing, and strength training or weight-lifting.

How much is enough?

Experts say adults need 30 minutes or more of moderate exercise every day or at least most days. Ten minutes, three times a day is fine. Build from there. For better health and fitness, do 20 minutes of aerobic activity three times per week. Make sure you are not over-doing during aerobic activity. You should still be able to carry on a conversation without being out of breath.

Most importantly: **JUST DO SOMETHING!**

- Walk to the neighborhood store instead of driving.
- Park in the far corner of the lot.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Take several short walks daily. A 15-minute walk in the morning plus 5 minutes after lunch and 10 minutes after dinner adds up to 30 minutes a day.
- Enjoy some activity with your kids — baseball, bicycling, hiking!
- Aerobic activity three to five times a week can help make your heart strong, lower blood pressure, lower body fat and make you feel more energetic.

You can get into shape and stay fit without pain. No pain, no gain, makes no sense. Listen to your body. If you feel pain, nausea, extreme breathlessness or pain in the chest during physical activity, stop.

The best thing you can do for your health is to get moving.

For more information on fitness and health, call or write the following:

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 701 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 250, Washington D.C. 20004, 202-272-3421

American Running and Fitness Association 800-776-ARFA

Think your way to a healthy lifestyle

Picture yourself waking up one day and being satisfied with your body. You look and feel great. You like yourself just the way you are. If this is hard to imagine, you are not alone. Many of us want to improve our eating and exercise habits. We may wish we felt better about ourselves. The good news is thinking positively can open the door to a healthy lifestyle. Feeling good about ourselves is the first step. Lots of people have done it, and so can you.

Body image

Everywhere we look we get the message that thin bodies are best, especially for women. It's no wonder we end up worrying about our weight and dieting. Yet dieting can cause ups and downs in weight that are not good for us. And being thin does not mean we're healthy.

Healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes. Mother Nature gave us our height, bone size and basic body shape. Tell yourself that your body is OK. Think about your best features. When you get a compliment, accept it by saying, "Thank you!" Be proud of your body, and enjoy what it does for you.

If you need to gain or lose weight for health reasons, use common sense. Eat smart, stay active and let the change happen over time as a result of your good habits.

Make it a habit to think positively about your body. Here are some tips for accepting yourself and staying with a healthy lifestyle.

Positive thinking tips

- Appreciate yourself!
- Believe you can. Lots of people have made the switch to a healthy lifestyle. You can too.
- Do it for yourself. Choose a healthy lifestyle — You deserve it!
- Be realistic. If you need to make changes, take them one step at a time. Don't expect results overnight.
- Don't be hard on yourself. Everybody gets off-track once in a while. It doesn't mean that you have failed. You can get back on track.
- Find support. Spend time with people who believe in themselves and you. If you think a professional counselor or support group would help, they are available. Check with your doctor, local hospital or the Community Services pages of your telephone book.
- Do something nice for yourself now, not later. Treat yourself to something really good for you. It may help you stay on the path to health.

Fit for life

If you want to be fit for life, choose healthy habits. Eat smart. Cut fat by eating more fruits, vegetables and fiber. Get moving. Your body will love you for it. Think positively. It will help you get fit and stay fit for life.

Related MU Extension publications

- GH6651, Stress Management and the Challenge of Balance
<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/GH6651>
- GH6652, Challenges and Choices: Emotional Well-Being — Women's Self-Esteem
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