

SPRING into a healthier lifestyle.

10 simple but impactful
strategies that *outlive*
New Year's resolutions




*Your Guide
Presented By*



**NUTRITION
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INSTITUTE**

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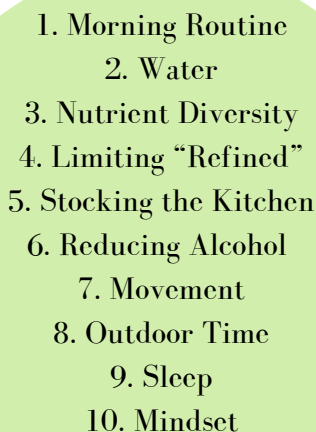



New Year's resolutions. I'm sure we've all made them at some point. They most commonly revolve around "being healthier." It's the reason why gyms and diet programs see such a huge boost in memberships in January. Commitment and motivation are high the first week or two, but then we all know what happens... those drastic changes are simply unsustainable.

Whether you've already given up on your resolutions, or maybe just didn't bother with them at all, this guide is for you. It's a "slow and steady" type approach to making small lifestyle changes that are sustainable and compound with time. I encourage you to start with one or two, and then layer in the rest over the next few months.

Remember, this isn't your typical diet or workout plan where you have to start over if you miss the mark one day. Give yourself some grace. As long as there is a new day, there is a new opportunity to jump back in. You have the rest of your life to continue building on these principles and discover what works best for you. This is meant to be a launching pad to help you shift your mindset and start forming new habits for a healthier lifestyle that actually lasts.

Ready? Let's take a look at the topics we'll be covering -

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1. Morning Routine
 2. Water
 3. Nutrient Diversity
 4. Limiting "Refined"
 5. Stocking the Kitchen
 6. Reducing Alcohol
 7. Movement
 8. Outdoor Time
 9. Sleep
 10. Mindset
- 

Morning Routine

Strategy #1: Set a morning routine.

At some point, you've most likely heard that a strong morning routine is one of the keys to success. This habit is highly regarded with good reason. It helps energize, motivate, and mentally prepare you for the day ahead. Hitting snooze too many times to then frantically rush into work promotes feelings of angst and frustration. The first hour or two of the day is then spent combatting this flustered, groggy state. How different would your mindset be if your morning was instead filled with peace and positivity?

If you are not naturally a morning person, this seems rather impossible. The key to making a morning routine stick? Make it fun! Whether it's five minutes or an hour, do something you love every morning. Excitement is the best motivator to get out of bed.

Reminder: This is a hard new habit to form, so start small and give yourself time to adjust. Just make sure it's something exciting that will make you want to get up!

Natural energy boosts to incorporate:

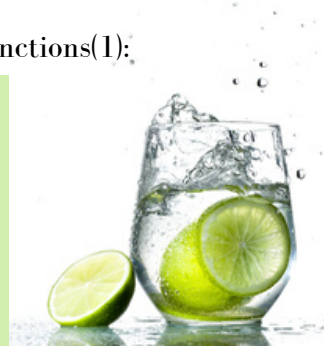
1. Always wake up at first alarm.
2. Drink a glass of water first thing before coffee or tea.
3. Include some gentle movement such as walking, yoga, or stretching.
4. Get some sunshine!

Water

Strategy #2: Drink a tall glass of water upon waking and before snacking.

Quick overview: A few of water's most important functions(1):

- Carries nutrients and oxygen to cells
- Flushes out harmful bacteria from bladder
- Aids in digestion
- Regulates and stabilizes blood pressure
- Regulates internal temperature
- Maintains electrolyte balance



Maintaining proper hydration is a given for optimizing health. So for this strategy, let's look at a few *key times* to drink that extra glass of water:

#1 : First thing in the morning

Water should be the first thing you consume when you wake up in the morning. It helps combat sluggishness by providing a boost of alertness we crave from coffee.

#2 : During an energy slump

Before reaching for an afternoon coffee or snack when that 2pm-3pm energy slump hits, try drinking a glass of water first. You may be surprised the boost of energy that simple act provides.

#3 : Before snacking

Hunger and thirst signals often get mixed up. An urge to snack is potentially the body misinterpreting a thirst signal for hunger. This is a vicious cycle, as digestion utilizes water and therefore increases thirst. If the misinterpretation continues, this promotes more snacking. Simple solution? When you get the urge to snack throughout the day, drink a glass of water first and then wait about 10 minutes. This will determine if the hunger signal was accurate.

Nutrient Diversity

Strategy #3: Eat at least three different colors with every meal.

As much as we may wish, there is no one vegetable or fruit that contains all the nutrients we need to live and thrive. We were meant to eat a diverse diet, which can be seen in the incredible colors found in nature. Color gives insight into the vitamin/mineral content, and the vibrancy reflects the nutrient density. Here are a few examples(2):

Green

Contains: Chlorophyll

Benefits:

- Anti-aging
- Acne treatment
- Blood building
- Natural deodorant
- Wound healing
- Potentially protective against cancer

Red

Contains: Lycopene

Benefits:

- Antioxidant
- Heart health
- Cardiovascular health
- Potential cancer cell inhibitor (prostate and breast cancers)



Orange

Contains: Beta Carotene

Benefits:

- Antioxidant
- Precursor to Vit A
 - o Eye sight
 - o Immune function
 - o Bone health
 - o Improves Acne

Blue + Violet

Contains: Anthocyanins

Benefits:

- Antioxidant
- Heart health
- Immune function
- Potentially protective against cancer
- Cognitive function
- Exercise and recovery
- Eye health

How do we ensure we are getting enough nutrient diversity? When we look at the color and vibrancy of real food found in nature the answer is simple. Eat the rainbow! An easy way to incorporate this is to break down produce by color when grocery shopping. Keep at least three different colors in your fridge. This three-color rule is a baseline that will optimize nutrient diversity. Start there and keep adding.



Limiting "Refined"

Strategy #4: Limit consumption of refined grains, sugars, and oil.

Refined grains, sugars, and oils are most commonly found in processed foods. They increase inflammation in the body, which can lead to a whole host of other health issues(3). Limiting these “refined” items is key for optimizing health. Let’s take a look at examples of each and suggested replacements -

Grains

Refined:

- White flour
- Wheat flour
- Breads and crackers
- Baked goods
- Pastas
- Cereals

Replacements*:

- Sprouted grain breads, pastas, and crackers
- Alternative flours - coconut, almond, cassava

*Look for replacements with simple ingredients and minimal to no added sugars



Sugars

Additives to avoid:

- Ends in “ose”
- White sugar
- Brown sugar
- Powdered sugar
- Corn syrup
- HFCS

Replacements*:

- Coconut palm sugar
- Monk fruit
- Raw cane sugar
- Raw honey
- Pure maple syrup

Oils

Refined:

- Canola
- Safflower
- Sunflower
- Palm
- Cottonseed
- Soybean
- Corn
- Sesame
- Peanut
- Rice bran
- Linseed

Replacements*:

- Grass-fed butter/ghee
- Extra virgin olive oil*
- Avocado oil
- Cold-pressed and unrefined coconut oil
- Cold-pressed and unrefined red palm oil

*EVOO ideally as dressing only, not for cooking



*Still minimize all sugar consumption

Strategy #5: Keep the kitchen stocked with quick, healthy meals.

Time is often in limited supply. It's easy to cook healthy, nutrient-dense meals when we have the time to do so, but what do you grab when time is not on your side? This strategy focuses on proactive planning. Designate your go-to quick, nutrient-dense meals and then keep that kitchen stocked. Here are a few options to try-

1. Double, maybe triple your meal and refrigerate/freeze the rest.

Take a look at your schedule to see what days your time is limited. Once you know that you can plan accordingly, I recommend storing it by serving in either the fridge or freezer. That way when the time comes you are only heating up the amount you need. This option allows you to have a home-cooked meal within minutes.

2. Keep the freezer stocked with high-quality, pre-made meals.

In times when prep just didn't happen, there are a few great options in the freezer section of your grocery store. I recommend looking for paleo labeled meals as they will typically be the most nutrient-dense with minimal to no additives.

3. Stock your pantry with high quality, pre-made meals.

Look for ingredients you can pronounce and minimal to no additives. My favorites brand is Kettle and Fire. If you are wanting a quick and easy protein source, you can also stock up on BPA-free lined, organic, no salted added wild-caught fish or pasture-raised chicken in water.

4. Keep cut up veggies ready to go in the fridge.

Cutting ahead of time will make it more convenient to snack on veggies!



Reducing Alcohol

Strategy #6: Limit alcohol consumption to 1-2 drinks per week.

While there are some health benefits to a high-quality red wine, the key is moderation. Overconsumption is harmful to the liver, negatively impacts sleep, lowers immune function, and wreaks havoc on blood sugar regulation. As a result, it is considered a risk factor for many chronic diseases(4). Begin to slowly reduce consumption by setting a limit of 1-2 drinks per week. This strategy is much more manageable over the long-term than cutting alcohol all together. In time, you can continue to decrease the limit if you wish.



As warm weather approaches, there are many fun "mocktails" you can make using infused water. This allows you to still have a fruity, refreshing drink without the added sugars and alcohol. Simply put your favorite fruits or vegetables in a jar of water and let it sit. The longer you wait, the more flavor the water retains. Craving a little something extra? Use mineral water instead! The carbonation provides a similar effervescence to alcohol.

MY FAVORITE
mocktail

Topo Chico with a fresh squeeze of lime!
...and lots of lime wedges in the glass.

Strategy #7: Incorporate at least 30min of gentle movement daily.

The typical American lifestyle includes a lot of sitting - sitting in the car, sitting at work, sitting in front of the TV. Frequent gentle movement is crucial for counteracting the harmful effects of a sedentary lifestyle. Gentle movement includes activities like walking, yoga, and stretching.

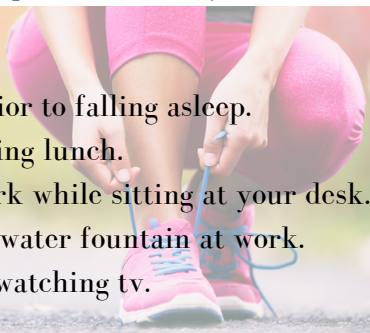
Gentle movement aids in digestion and detoxification. It increases blood flow without adding to the toxic burden. In particular, the lymphatic system relies on movement to help flush toxins out of the body. Here's a quick overview of what the lymphatic system does(5):

- Maintains proper fluid level in our blood vessels
- Works with immune system to protect the body from outside pathogens
- The spleen (a lymphatic system organ) filters and cleanses the blood of bacteria, viruses, and debris

Movement is crucial. What's one of the best movements we can do? Twisting! Gentle twists are wonderful for supplying your organs with fresh blood. Twists also work as a way to manually activate the digestive system and bowels. Whether you are an avid gym goer or a weekend warrior, incorporating more gentle movement will help flush out lactic acid build up. This means less soreness, quicker recovery.

Easy Ways to Incorporate:

- Supine twists upon waking and prior to falling asleep.
- Walk before or after work, or during lunch.
- Seated chair twists and breath work while sitting at your desk.
- Walk to the furthest bathroom or water fountain at work.
- Gentle yoga flow or stretch while watching tv.



Outdoor Time

Strategy #8: Get outside for at least 30 minutes every day.

It's no secret that getting outside and spending time in nature has a positive impact on our overall health and wellbeing. This experience can't be fully mimicked by a window either. While visual is important, other senses, such as touch and smell, are also vital for reducing stress and anxiety, and improving mood(6). In addition, the extra sun exposure is great for boosting vitamin D production. Our bodies crave sunshine.

The easiest way to incorporate this is to **combine it with your movement strategy**. Go for a walk or do yoga outside. Now that the weather is beginning to warm up, it's the perfect time to set this habit!

Just like forming any other habit, consistency is key! Start by building 30 minutes into your schedule each day to get outside. This priority often gets pushed to the back burner, so I recommend setting a reoccurring reminder in your phone.

Strategy #9: Set a bedtime routine.



It's time to get a hold of that elusive sleep! Poor sleep impacts way more than energy levels. Chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to a variety of health conditions, such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, metabolic disorders, immune dysfunction, neurodegenerative diseases, and mood disorders(7).

Getting more sleep, however, can be easier said than done. This is where a bedtime routine is crucial. It prepares you mentally and physically for sleep. You may not instantly start sleeping better but give it some time. Remember, consistency is key. Here are a few strategies to implement:

- *Set a bedtime between 9pm-11pm.*

This is when your body's melatonin levels are naturally highest.

- *Shut down all screens at least 30min prior to bed.*

The blue light emitted from devices activates the brain.

- *Place your phone on airplane mode while you sleep.*

If your phone is needed in your bedroom to set an alarm, airplane mode will reduce EMF radiation exposure.

- *Incorporate some gentle stretching and twists before bed.*

This will help improve detoxification while you sleep.

- *Stop eating at least 1 hour prior to bed, preferably 2 hours.*

Your body can then focus on detoxifying and healing while it sleeps rather than digesting.

Strategy #10: Shift your mindset to "limit, not exclude."

Food is neither inherently good or bad. Why? It doesn't have a soul. Rather, we should be identifying food as either nutritionally beneficial or not. This may sound silly, but the psychological effects of the way we label food is astounding. When we demonize "bad" food as if it has a soul, we give it power over us to produce feelings of guilt and shame. These negative feelings put our body under stress and can create more harm than eating the actual food does. *Barring any allergies or sensitivities*, our bodies are able to handle an imperfect diet when we otherwise provide it with the nutrients it needs to do so. It's about the balance overall, not the singular meal. Therefore, a healthier perspective would be the mindset of **"limit, not exclude."**

Change the narrative in your head. Rather than "bad" or "forbidden," it is "lacking nutritional value". Instead of "can't eat something" it is "I choose not to."

When thinking about what to eat, ask yourself these types of questions:

- Is this truly what my body wants right now?
- Will eating this provide me with the energy I need?
- How will I feel after I finish eating?
- Does this include nutrients that will optimize my health?

You may be surprised how asking yourself these types of questions will change what you choose. With time you will begin to undermine the power that food has over you and put the authority back in your hands.

While for this purpose I narrowed in on guilt and shame from food, this goes for all negative self-talk. It's an unnecessary stressor on the body. Changing the narrative in our head from negativity to positivity is one of the most important aspects of living a healthier lifestyle.



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