


to go for my run today?—hurray! You now exercise consistently enough to plan it the moment you wake up. This is a good thing because it proves you established a new habit. The groan is ok. Reluctance is natural because exercise takes effort and maybe you don't love it yet—but you will. Reluctance does not need to keep you from becoming a consistently active person. Only when you push exercise out of your schedule until there is simply no time left in the day, will reluctance make you fail.

Installing new habits applies to food as well as exercise. The next time you pull through the fast food drive-thru and opt for the salad, congratulate yourself on reinforcing your new habit. It takes time and consistency to transition a diet from unbalanced to balanced because our menu choices are largely habit-driven. Fresh salads, whole grains, legumes, fruits, and lean meats taste better after a few weeks of choosing them. Drinking water instead of coffee or soda is a habit. Choosing a turkey sandwich on whole grain bread instead of a burger is as much a habit as is anything else we do.


Eating out at restaurants can derail even the most dedicated. Carefully own your menu choices. When I go to a steakhouse, I don't order a steak unless that is what my body really needs (which only happens during the coldest months of winter and after strenuous physical activity). Most of the time, I order salad, chicken, or fish. Whatever menu item suits my needs becomes my meal. Just as a cool glass of water tastes best when I am thirsty, the supercharged fuel of grilled Portobello mushrooms, zucchini, eggplant, and onions with barbecue sauce, when my body needs it, tastes better than a steak with fries.

I find it is easier to fuel my body correctly when I eat the majority of my meals at home. Eating from home gives me control over portion size and the amount of fat, sugar, and processing in my food. Despite my experience as a chef, at home I enjoy simply-prepared food based on the things my body needs. It is not unusual for me to serve roasted fish, steamed broccoli, and brown rice with a drizzle of soy sauce. Food doesn't need a fancy name or complicated composition to taste wonderful. Food in its purest form fulfills my nutritional needs and tastes good. Homemade granola with skim milk starts my day with serious high-protein fuel. I usually want a salad or sandwich with lean protein for lunch. Yes, I put mayonnaise on my sandwich and loads of creamy dressing on my salads. I enjoy a drizzle of olive oil on my pasta and a pat of butter on my fish. I am not on a diet. I do opt to live healthy, with a healthy

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Nay-Sayers. Be cautious of placing too much emphasis on negative influences. People often claim they can't lose weight because of negativity from family members or spouses. Occasionally loved ones will be resistant to our changes. They may be comfortable with the way things are. Change may shake them up a little bit. Regardless, don't pay heed to the critics in your life or put too much investment behind their opinions. They will adapt because you are going to change whether they like it or not. Think about it this way: you are inevitably going to change in a multitude of ways over the course of your life, (gray hair, mellower attitude, new music preferences, etc.), so a healthier lifestyle is just one new aspect to you. Don't put a lot of emphasis on the attitudes of those around you. In truth, their power is only what you give them.

amount of fats. Sure there are the occasional treats and splurges. I enjoy a good onion ring or a brownie as much as the next person. However, it is not our occasional treats that define our bodies—it is our regular food choices that determine how we look and feel.

Hazards

During this process of creating new habits there are plenty of obstacles to derail us. Becoming aware of these hazards makes it easier to sidestep them. Here are a few you might have encountered—I know I did:

- ✦ Mapping a course in the wrong direction
- ✦ Pay offs reinforcing the unwanted habit instead of the desired goal
- ✦ A negative self-paradigm (low self-esteem)
- ✦ Negative self-talk
- ✦ Poorly managing my time to prevent exercise and healthy eating
- ✦ Impatience with my exercise program—not waiting for my body to learn to use fat for fuel
- ✦ Listening to nay-sayers
- ✦ Habitual Investment (page 59)