

New Year, New You!

A simpler approach to diet and exercise for the new year (and all year)

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Now that you are finished with all the holiday shopping and all the holiday cheer, you are now feeling guilty about all the holiday treats you had while dining at parties and social gatherings. And now you are feeling tired and fat. You decide that this year's New Year Resolution is to start onto a diet program to help you regain your pre-holiday svelte figure (or just lose that extra weight you hoped would disappear last year). Best approach is actually not to go on a so called 'low calorie diet', but on a lifestyle modification plan.

In reality, most of us gain weight and lose weight throughout the year, some easier than others (in both directions). The women hate the men because they can lose 5 pounds in less than a week. We just look at food and the weight comes creeping on. Not to worry, you don't have to do anything drastic. You will want to add exercise into the plan and also be more mindful of what you are doing – but do not do it all at once. The likelihood of you sticking to a plan that is all or nothing right from day one is to plan to be miserable – then you will just fall of the plan eventually because it is too strict or too restrictive.

The best way to any long term plan – I mean, you do want to be able to eat and still weigh less, right? it does not happen overnight. You did n to gain weight overnight. You just happened to wake up one day and realize that your clothes do not fit. But you gradually changed your habits over the years to omit exercise and to replace that breakfast in the morning with only coffee and cream and 3 packs of Splenda or skip meals in general. You changed your habits gradually. And the best way to reverse the process is to do the same thing – incorporate one healthy nutrition habit at a time. Once that new change is actually a habit (can take at least 3 weeks to make that habit into routine), then you are ready to change the next thing.

For this New Year, start with eating breakfast within 1 hour of getting up. Then make sure that the breakfast has enough fiber (8+ g), whole grains, protein and very little sugar to keep it balanced. Or you may find yourself hungrier than you can remember within 2 hours. After you have mastered that, then practice balancing your meals so you get about 20% protein, 50% carbs (1/3 from starches and grains, the rest from vegetables and fruits) and 20% fat. If you manage that

change, then you will be able to keep your energy levels up and your blood sugar levels moderately stable. Once you master the balancing act, then you work on eating smaller meals (300-400 calories) every 3-4 hours. This will help speed up your metabolism over time. Then you eliminate 'enriched' flour products and use whole grains products only. Then you switch from Peter Pan to natural peanut butter to avoid those dreaded hydrogenated fats. And if you have trouble with all this, then you may need to hire a nutrition coach to help you take the guess work of what the overall plan is. They should also help you understand why you are making the changes so you can stick to the plan better. That may also help keep you committed and accountable.

Of course, you will have to add the exercise in somewhere as well. Start with 3 times per week for 30 minutes. Then increase it every week by one more day or 10 more minutes until you reach 6 days per week of exercise of at least 30 minutes per session. You can also add a mini goal to try one new machine each week so you don't get bored with the treadmill or spinning class all the time. Keep it interesting by trying something new until you find the right combination that you like. Swim one day, run the next, cycle, walk hills on the treadmill, tennis on weekends, or whatever seems different. Classes or on your own, variety is the key to sticking to an exercise program (just like nutrition)

Taking it one step at a time will allow you to make the changes permanent and not be overwhelmed by the thought of doing it all at once. Start small and work your way to better health and more energy, one nutrition change at a time. Then you can really enjoy the New Year and the new you...permanently!



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