



Finding the Right Balance

We already know the keys to keeping off excess weight are diet and exercise. The secret to success is finding something that works for you and sticking with it. There are countless fad diets and trendy workout programs to choose from. But if you don't enjoy them, you won't keep up with them for the long term.

Maintaining a healthy weight brings many health benefits. People who are overweight or obese face a greater risk of many health conditions, including:

- High blood pressure.
- Type 2 diabetes.
- Coronary heart disease.
- Stroke.
- Gallbladder disease.
- Osteoarthritis.
- Sleep apnea.
- Many types of cancer.

Eating healthy

A healthy diet can lower your risk for many health problems. It can help keep your skin, teeth, eyes and muscles healthy. It can improve your immunity and strengthen your bones.

Eating better doesn't have to be complicated. Small changes can make a big difference. For instance, you could focus on lowering your sodium intake by cutting out processed and prepackaged foods. Buy products labeled "low sodium." If you're eating out, get sauce or dressing on the side. Add flavor with lemon juice, no-salt spice blends or fresh herbs.

Try to increase your fiber intake. Fiber makes you feel fuller longer, helps control your blood sugar and lowers your cholesterol levels. Try whole-grain oatmeal for breakfast and swap out your potato chips for a healthy snack of raw vegetables. Eat steamed vegetables and add beans or peas to your salad.

Anti-inflammatory diet

Our bodies are always on alert for invading microbes that can harm our health. Possible problems trigger inflammation, which is our immune system's natural defense process. Inflammation usually clears up after the threat is gone, but sometimes it remains and causes problems. Studies have found links between long-term inflammation and conditions such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, depression and Alzheimer's disease.

Diet can play a major role in reducing inflammation. Try eating more anti-inflammatory foods, such as fruits, nuts, leafy greens, tomatoes, olive oil and fatty fish. These include salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines. Avoid processed meats, red meat, refined carbohydrates, fried foods, lard and soda. Eating more whole foods and fewer processed foods can make a major difference in your physical and mental health.

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Getting enough exercise

Exercise can have a powerful impact on our health. People who are active generally live longer and face a lowered risk of many chronic health problems. Experts recommend adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week combined with a muscle-strengthening activity at least two days a week. Again, the trick is to keep it simple and choose an activity you'll enjoy. If you don't like your exercise program, you'll be less likely to stick with it.

Walking is an activity that's well suited to people of all fitness levels and requires little to no equipment. Remember these tips for a successful walking workout:

- Invest in good shoes with proper arch support and wear comfortable clothes.
- If you're walking in the dark, wear bright colors or reflective tape for visibility.
- If you're out during the day, wear sunblock and a hat or sunglasses.
- Make your walk more fun by inviting a friend or listening to music or a podcast.
- Using an activity tracker on your smartphone can give you added motivation to meet your goals.
- Remember to warm up and stretch before you exercise. Afterward, cool down and stretch again.

Moderate physical activity is safe for most people. But if you have a chronic health condition or any questions or concerns, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

My Health NovelSM Weight Management

If you are trying to lose weight, our [My Health Novel Weight Management program](#) can help. The program includes an evidence-based weight loss program, small group sessions and a lifestyle coach to help people set goals and stay on track.

