

TIPS FOR
BETTER
HEALTH

LIFE IN BALANCE

HOW DO I FIGURE OUT what's *actually* healthy?

1 "Lose weight immediately with this little pill!"

If it sounds too good to be true, *it probably is*. Watch claims from any product, diet, or ANYthing that says you can lose weight and be healthy without putting in the work. If you take something that does help you lose weight, at most you will be losing water weight and will quickly gain it back; you will *not* be losing body fat.

2 What's "natural" really **may not always be better**.

People tend to think that natural alternatives are automatically better than drugs for illnesses and problems we may have and may just take things without doing their research. Sometimes a vitamin or herb may in fact be better, but other times, it may not be. Since vitamins and herbs are not regulated, they may also contain fillers or harmful ingredients that we don't fully understand or are unaware of. At the very least, do thorough research and buy supplements from reputable brands. Also be careful when taking supplements at the same time as medications (or if you are taking a bunch of supplements at once). These can have bad interactions with each other or you may actually be getting **too much** of one vitamin or mineral.

3 Marketing on food packaging really can be deceptive. So can fancy pseudo-medical terms that really mean nothing (*you just gotta know what to look for*).

Here's just one example: "Low fat" or "fat free" foods may have a lesser amount of fat, but they often compensate for this with an increased amount of sodium, sugar, or whatever else. Low fat or fat free does **not** mean healthier! In fact, often times it's worse!

4 Be wary of the many fitness and dietary trends you'll hear everywhere.

For example, many fitness professionals recommend a very high amount of protein in your diet if you are exercising. While increasing your protein intake to a certain degree will be helpful with exercise, your body doesn't need excessive amounts, and it can actually be hard on your system. Protein residues from the metabolism of protein can irritate the immune system. What's more important is making sure you are getting enough carbs and healthy fats in your diet in addition to the protein. If you eat too much protein but not enough carbs after exercising, your body will use the protein for energy needed in place of the carbs, and not as many of the amino acids from protein will be used for actual muscle repair and development.

5 Don't only pay attention to calories! What's **most** important is how processed the product is and its fat, carb, sodium, and sugar breakdown.

6 Make it a point to pay attention to nutrition labels, and look up ingredients you don't understand! It will pay off in the long run!

UNDERSTANDING MACRONUTRIENTS

Before I go into any of these, let me mention this: There are a TON of differing opinions and statements out there about what the best balance of carbs, fat, and protein in the diet are. My personal stance is that everyone's body varies and may react differently to different amounts of each in the diet. If you are a generally healthy individual, I recommend trying out different daily percentages of each in the diet and seeing how you feel, while abiding by a **few basic rules**:

1) Always get enough healthy fats, complex carbs, and protein on a daily basis. Don't go extremely low and deprive your body of any of these, and don't go extremely high (I'll give good ballpark ranges below). Aim for a good balance. Your body NEEDS all three!

2) Stay away from as many refined carbs as possible. Consume mostly low-glycemic, complex carbohydrates.

3) Stay away from saturated and trans fats! (and learn how to recognize them on a nutrition label).

CARBS

Carbs are broken down into sugars in the intestine. Your liver will convert sugar units such as fructose or galactose into glucose, which is then used for your organs, tissues, muscles, and fuel for your brain (glucose is its primary energy source).

GLYCOGEN

If your body doesn't need glucose at any given time, it will be stored as fat. Your current carb storage (called glycogen) will be used as energy when needed. Your body has a limited capacity for glycogen (around 2000 calories).

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH CARBS?

Carbs are especially important if you exercise often (which you should!). If you don't get enough carbs in the diet, your glycogen stores will be depleted, and your body will use protein to supply the energy. The problem with this is that your body needs this protein for a wide range of purposes -- for example transporting nutrients, repairing muscle tissue, making enzymes, and more. So it's best to reserve this protein for optimal body function and repair, not to be used as your primary source of energy instead of carbs.

WHAT SHOULD MY DAILY CARB INTAKE BE?

The USDA recommends 45-65% of your total daily calorie intake be from carbs. For weight maintenance, I personally have found 120g-150g/day from healthy carb sources to work great for me. For weight loss, I generally go below 120g and not fewer than 90g/day, but this varies slightly on a day-to-day basis. Again, this may not be for everybody. Experiment with what you find works for you and makes you feel good (not sluggish!).

UNDERSTANDING MACRONUTRIENTS

CARBS *(continued)*

SIMPLE CARBS Small molecules of sugar, absorbed by the body quickly and are the fastest source of energy.

COMPLEX CARBS Composed of long strings of simple carbs, so need to be broken down in the body before they can be absorbed. Increase blood sugar levels more slowly

REFINED CARBS Highly processed; vitamins and minerals have been stripped away.

A diet high in simple or refined carbohydrates tends to increase the risk of obesity and diabetes.

NOT ALL CARBS ARE CREATED EQUAL: INTRODUCING THE GLYCEMIC INDEX

The glycemic index of a carbohydrate refers to how quickly that particular type of carbohydrate will increase your blood sugar levels. It ranges from 1 (the slowest) to 100 (the fastest). This can get tricky though, because it also can be affected by what other foods you are consuming at the same time.

WHY FOODS LOWER ON THE GLYCEMIC INDEX SCALE CAN BE BETTER

Carbs that increase your blood sugar level quickly also increase insulin quickly. Increased insulin may then lead to low blood sugar which can easily lead to eating excess calories and then gaining weight.

PROTEIN

PROTEINS ARE AMINO ACIDS STRUNG TOGETHER

Proteins are complex and are a slow, long-lasting form of energy compared to carbs. If more protein is consumed than the body needs, it will be stored as fat.

HOW MUCH DAILY PROTEIN DO I NEED?

If you're sedentary: (about 0.4g per pound of body weight)

Strength Athletes (ex: body building): (0.5-0.8g per pound of body weight)

Endurance Athletes (ex: marathon runners): (0.5-0.6g per pound of body weight)

WHY DO SOME FITNESS PROFESSIONALS RECOMMEND CRAZY AMOUNTS OF PROTEIN?

This is what I view as a "gym science fad." Your body does not need that much protein, and it can actually be hard on your body to consume large amounts and lead to an increased likelihood of kidney stones. Read more about this on the next page.

UNDERSTANDING MACRONUTRIENTS

PROTEIN *(continued)*

HOW IS PROTEIN DIFFERENT THAN THE OTHER MACRONUTRIENTS?

Protein contains about 16% nitrogen. Protein metabolism will produce nitrogen-containing compounds such as urea, which is excreted in the urine. High amounts of protein in the diet can cause an excess of hydrogen ions, or excess acid (think amino ACIDS) that will then need to be urinated out. Research suggests that the increase of this acid can increase likelihood of kidney stones.

Additionally, the removal of this nitrogen waste product from your blood by your body can stress your kidneys and cause you to be dehydrated.

FATS

WHAT DO OUR BODIES NEED FAT FOR?

Fats are used to synthesize hormones, cell membrane structure and function, regulation and excretion of nutrients within cells, cell signals and more.

Fats are a highly efficient energy source but also the slowest source of energy. Since they are such an efficient energy source, the body stores any excess as fat which is deposited in the abdomen, under the skin, or of course can be stored in blood vessels and organs.

MONOUNSATURATED (HEALTHY FATS) Usually liquid at room temperature. They become rancid quickly at room temperature. Examples: olive oil, avocados.

POLYUNSATURATED (HEALTHY FATS) Not made by the body naturally, must get through diet. Used for blood clotting, muscle movement and inflammation. Examples: fish such as tuna and salmon.

SATURATED (NOT HEALTHY FATS) Solid at room temperature. Found often in hydrogenated vegetable oils, red meats, whole milk, etc. Can drive up cholesterol if consumed frequently and take a part in blocking arteries in the heart.

TRANS FATS (NOT HEALTHY FATS) No good. These are man-made and formed by adding hydrogen to mono or polyunsaturated fats. If you see "partially hydrogenated oil" on the nutrition label, that is a trans fat! Consumption of trans fats can contribute to heart disease.

HOW MUCH FAT DO I NEED IN MY DIET?

According to the Dietary Guidelines for American 2005, these are the recommendations:

Children aged 2 to 3 - total fat limited to 30%-35% of total calorie intake

Children aged 4 to 18 - total fat limited to 25%-35% of total calorie intake

Adults aged 19 and older - total fat limited to 20%-35% of total calorie intake

HOW TO ENHANCE Your Body's *Natural* Detox Process

1 You **don't** need to detoxify yourself to lose weight.

Many people think doing regular detoxes (and I don't mean a detoxifying diet, but detox "cleanses" such as all-liquid diet) will boost their weight loss. While cleanses where you are essentially fasting for a day or two at a time can be helpful and give the digestive system a rest, our bodies actually do a wonderful job of detoxing on their own. Just be sure you are eating plenty healthy sources of fiber, eat healthy, and exercise regularly.

Many cleanses are actually just forcing diarrhea, which again is actually making you lose water weight, not body fat, and the results won't last!

2 You've heard it before...drink plenty of purified water! Add lemon to promote digestion.

3 Exercise for at least 30 minutes, 5 days per week. This will also help circulate blood and sweat out any toxins.

4 Make time in the day for 30 minutes to unwind, listen to relaxing music on YouTube or wherever else, and/or meditate.

I KNOW how hard this one can be to make time for. But as time has passed by and we continue to ride the rollercoaster of life, I've realized more and more how necessary this is. Giving yourself a chance to collect your thoughts and think about what's important to you, is really important – for your mind and your body. Plus, most of us are so caught up in our daily activities that we begin to lose time to really think beyond the surface about things anymore.

5 Avoid refined foods! Kick the white sugar, white bread, white rice, etc. to the curb!

You don't need 'em, anyway...there are delicious healthy replacements out there! I promise eating healthy can be just as exciting as eating the junk food we all crave at times!

6 Work to cut down your caffeine and alcohol intake, if not eliminate THEM altogether.

I never thought I could do this one – coffee is and was one of my true loves. But after a number of issues I was experiencing (heart palpitations, anxiety, dehydration, bladder irritation) that could be worsened from caffeine, I was finally convinced to cut down to one cup per day and I've stuck with it ever since. Yes there are both pros and cons of daily coffee intake, but it's best not to overdo it in an addictive manner. Especially if you have health issues or symptoms like I had that are made worse by it.

TIPS FOR *WEIGHT LOSS*

1 Create a calorie deficit...while making sure to eat enough, too!

CALORIE BALANCE RULES ALL (calories in vs. calories out) when it comes to weight loss. Small portion size increases that seem insignificant at the time can add up to added weight gain every year. But EQUALLY IMPORTANT is making sure you are eating enough to keep your metabolic rate up so you can more efficiently burn off what you eat, and stay healthy, too!

2 Calculate your resting metabolic rate!

This will give you a ballpark idea about how many calories your body burns without doing ANY exercise in a day. It will be higher if you are more muscular. But this number will give you an idea of how many calories you need to burn off in addition to exercise to create a calorie deficit.

3 Check out this site to calculate your BMR (basal/resting metabolic rate): **BMR CALCULATOR**

4 Work those muscles!

We lose about 3% of our muscle mass per decade. This is known as **sarcopenia**. Lean muscle mass is what accounts for a higher resting metabolic rate (the amount of calories you'll burn at rest). So keep those muscles workin'!

5 Be consistent

Consistency is the most important thing with eating healthy and losing weight. Your body will remember what you do **most of the time** - do not sweat it if you don't eat perfectly all the time or if you miss workouts here and there, because that truly is not what it is about.

6 Vary your diet and exercise regime

If you find yourself hitting a plateau, it may be that you may need to vary your nutrition and exercise regimes more. Add in more strength training if you don't have much, or challenge your body in ways you haven't yet. With nutrition, try adding in different types of food for a while. Try "cheat" days once per week where you eat whatever you want (within reason!). Try lowering carb intake a bit, especially refined carbs (if you are able and haven't tried this already). Make sure even if you do exercise, that you aren't using that as an excuse to eat whatever you want afterwards (or eat too much food).

7 The best calorie-burning activity is an activity that you truly enjoy!

Doing an activity you enjoy is what will be the easiest for you to stick to. I'll tell you some of my personal favorites: insanity or other HIIT classes (I really like group classes in general. The instructors and others in the class help to motivate you and make it fun! Plus after you go for a while, you get a sense of community by being around them). Some others I love are dancing (like zumba), and hiking.

8 Don't focus on drastic changes overnight. **The key is small changes, slowly!**

I never thought I would be able to give up my gum and flavored coffee creamer addiction. You know, that creamer with all the preservatives in it (but has no carbs)? That was one of my guilty pleasures. Eventually, after a lot of my own research and knowledge I built up, I finally replaced those flavored creamers with simple, straightforward half-and-half.

MY HEALTH ACTIVITIES

- 1 What not-so-healthy food item(s) that you eat often could you work on finding a healthy replacement for? Think about or find just one or two, then try replacing it!

Suggestion: Quinoa chips (they're delicious!) instead of regular salty potato chips or tortilla chips.

- 2 Think of a new exercise activity you can introduce into your weekly exercise regime. Drop into a class to see how you like it!

Suggestions: Dancing classes, hikes, aerial arts, daily walks, at home exercise programs on the Roku, grabbing some weights to do at home regularly

- 3 Sign up on MyFitnessPal (or a similar site, I suggest this one as it makes it so easy to find the foods you eat regularly from their huge database) and track what you eat for a week.

Note: You don't have to do this forever, but sticking to it for a week can give you great insight into how many carbs, grams of sugar, fat, and calories you are consuming on average.

- 4 Take note of at least one food item you eat regularly but don't know what its nutrition facts are, and look it up on Google!

- 5 Google "Smoothie Bowls" or search for them on Pinterest and get inspired by the beauty of food (and/or try making one yourself!)

- 6 Most of us are busy and may not have a whole lot of time for cooking, but try cooking something brand new and healthy (look up quick recipes if needed!) once per week. Try to make the cooking process a relaxing one and get creative in the kitchen. Add new things to the recipe (or make substitutions) and giving your food an excellent presentation, even if you're just cooking for yourself. This will help strengthen your relationship with healthy food and allow you to have fun with it!

- 7 Work on baby steps and creating daily or weekly habits for yourself. For example, if this means waking up 10 minutes early to make time for walking around the neighborhood in the morning, this is extra exercise that will help you wake up and most importantly get you used to having that daily habit of exercise in your life.

- 8 Take some time to think about what your biggest obstacles are in regards to committing to an exercise regime or eating healthier. Also think hard about what ideas you might have surrounding your body image, or what things in your life might be influencing your perceptions of how to eat, how to exercise, and yourself in general. Think about what you might be able to do to overcome any obstacles you have.

Email me at liz@anewhealthjourney.com and I'll give you suggestions.

GREAT BOOKS

Natural Health, Natural Medicine, The Complete Guide to Wellness and Self-Care for Optimum Health by Dr. Andrew Weil

The Great Courses: Nutrition Made Clear narrated by Professor Roberta H. Anding M.S.

Power Foods For the Brain by Neal Barnard

Understanding Carbohydrates - Iowa State University

GREAT QUOTES

“Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.”
– William Feather

“Your journey has molded you for your greater good, and it was exactly what it needed to be. Don’t think that you’ve lost time. There is no short-cutting to life. It took each and every situation you have encountered to bring you to the now. And now is right on time.”
– Asha Tyson

“Don’t be afraid to fail. Don’t waste energy trying to cover up failure. Learn from your failures and go on to the next challenge. It’s OK to fail. If you’re not failing, you’re not growing.” – H. Stanley Judd

“Our metabolism is a fire, and when you put more wood on it, it burns hotter. If you deprive it of wood, it dies out. Continually supplying your metabolism with fuel by eating four to six small meals a day means it’s always burning hot, incinerating fat and burning calories.” – Simone De La Rue

“If you want something you’ve never had, you must be willing to do something you’ve never done.” – Thomas Jefferson

DISCLAIMER

The recommendations in this document or on the anewhealthjourney.com (or <http://balancing.life>) website are meant to be guidance and not as a prescription for exercise or diet, or as a substitute for medical advice from your physician. Please consult your physician with any health concerns.