

Making Healthy Habits

How, what, and when we eat become habits over time that are hard to change. It can be a slow process, but healthy choices can become a habit, too! Here are a few tips:

Gather intel. Keep track of what you eat and how you feel. Learn how specific foods impact you physically and mentally. This can inform your meal plans moving forward.
Example: Try a food journal or mood-tracking app to see long-term impacts (see example below right).

Start small. Try just one or two small changes at first. Too many changes all at once can derail you before you even get started. Keep at it for a period of time and move to the next change when it becomes routine.
Example: Commit to a side of vegetables with dinner daily.

Make it easy. Healthy choices are easier to make when they're readily available and easy to implement. Keep them in a convenient place to catch your attention.
Example: Have pre-cut veggies (celery, carrots, etc.) in easy view to grab when you're looking for a quick snack.

Keep it simple. Think of it in terms of categories, like "fruits," "vegetables," "grains," etc. Try to get one or two from each category every day.
Example: Have a piece of fruit with breakfast; a side of veggies with lunch; a grain side dish with dinner.

Make it enjoyable. It's easier to put a habit into regular practice if you like what you're doing! Notice flavors that appeal to you. Experiment with different cuisines or preparation methods.
Example: Search online for new, interesting recipes using ingredients you know you enjoy. Try a new one each week.

Enlist support. Get family members or friends "on board" with your goal. Hold each other accountable.

Example: Include children on meal preparation with lots of healthy ingredients so they become invested in the process.

Track your progress. A simple "yes" or "no" checklist works nicely. Completing your daily goal, even on something small, gives you a "win" and keeps you motivated.

Example: Use a mobile app to help track of your successes and see patterns when you struggle (see ideas below).

Be patient. Habits don't form overnight! Slip ups will happen, especially at first. Don't let them derail your entire goal. Just re-commit when you are able.

Example: A busy week or disruption may throw you off track, but you can start again when your routines resume.

Technology tools

Daylio: daylio.net

Make it easy to track your mood and daily activities with this mobile app.

Habitica: habitica.com

"Gamify" your goals with this mobile app. Track your habits/goals and earn rewards.

Moodfit: www.getmoodfit.com

This mobile app helps you track your mood, nutrition, and more. Also includes techniques to lighten a low mood.

StickK: www.stickk.com

Put your money where your mouth is! This mobile app holds you accountable through a financial "Commitment Contract."