

Ideas to help you achieve a healthy weight



Did you promise yourself you would lose a few unnecessary pounds at the beginning of the year? How is that working out for you?

Just because you may have lost your motivation at the end of January to pursue your healthy weight, you can always pick up your plan. **Here are a few ideas to help get you started:**

1) Set short and long-term goals

You may want to set a long term goal

and choose to break it into smaller short term goals. An example of this may be to lose twenty pounds over a six-month period, but to lose four pounds on average each month. Short term goals can help you stay motivated. You also need to make sure you are setting a goal that is measurable. Try not to set a goal that is simply to lose weight. There would be no way to track your progress and could make it harder to stick with over time.

2) Write daily reminders

Using daily reminders can help you maximize your chances of sticking with your goals. You can post sticky notes around your home, at work and in your car to help remind you of what you are going to do to achieve your goals. Or, set a reminder in your car to go to the gym or an alarm on your phone to buy healthy food.

3) Keep a daily journal

There are numerous benefits to journaling. You can write reflections about how you feel and what you are thinking. In addition, you can journal about what you are eating each day and how much you are exercising.

4) Try new foods

Most people know that to achieve a healthy weight, you need to eat healthy. Why not try new foods? Look up new and healthy recipes to try. You may find substitutes for unhealthy foods and this can help you change your diet.

5) Reward yourself for small achievements

Each month or each week you should track your progress and reward yourself for meeting your goals. You can reward yourself in many different ways. Find what is important to you and get yourself that item or experience. Rewards for accomplishing your goals can help turn a goal into a lifestyle.

Inside this edition

- Ways to avoid bloating
- Fitness decline explained
- Tips to beat arthritis fatigue
- Vitamin B12 – Do you need it?
- Helpful hints to better eating

- What is halitosis?
- How to protect seniors from the heat
- Ways chemicals get into our bodies
- Build up your self confidence
- Energy Zone – Summer super foods



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Bloating: What is it and how to avoid it

Bloating is a feeling of fullness or tightness in the abdomen, often accompanied by gas, pain or discomfort. It can occur after eating, drinking, swallowing air, or due to certain medical conditions. Bloating is not the same as weight gain, although it can make you feel heavier or larger. Bloating is usually temporary and can be relieved by passing gas or having a bowel movement.

There are many possible causes of bloating, some of which are more serious than others. Some common causes include:

- Overeating or eating too fast.
- Consuming foods or drinks that are high in fat, sugar, salt, or carbonation.
- Having food intolerances or allergies, such as lactose intolerance or celiac disease.
- Having irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), or other digestive disorders.
- Having hormonal changes, such as during menstruation, pregnancy, or menopause.
- Taking certain medications, such as antibiotics, steroids, or painkillers.
- Having stress, anxiety, or depression.

If unbuttoning your pants doesn't help and you're looking for speedy relief, there are many ways to beat bloat quickly. You can try going for a light walk after eating, taking peppermint capsules, drinking herbal teas, or massaging your belly.

Bloating can be prevented or reduced by making some lifestyle changes, such as:

- Eating smaller, more frequent meals and chewing slowly.
- Avoiding foods or drinks that trigger bloating, such as dairy, gluten, beans, cabbage, or soda.
- Drinking plenty of water and limiting alcohol and caffeine intake.
- Exercising regularly and avoiding sedentary habits.
- Managing stress and practicing relaxation techniques.
- Taking probiotics or digestive enzymes to improve gut health.
- Consulting a doctor if bloating persists or is accompanied by other symptoms, such as fever, blood in stool, or weight loss.



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Strategies to avoid fitness decline

If you think aging has taken a toll on your fitness level, you're not alone. Many older adults complain about low energy, aches and pains, and reduced endurance and motivation to exercise. But while the symptoms may be real, they don't have to be permanent. In fact, the senior stage is an ideal time to get in the best shape of your life. There's more flexibility in the schedule, plenty of outlets for exercise, and countless reasons to make physical fitness a top priority.

Here are several strategies to help you:

Talk with an expert in senior fitness

Let's face it, fitness takes work at any age. It also takes knowing how to exercise properly for your unique body type and condition. The best way to do that is to consult an expert. You might talk with a fitness specialist who has training in senior health. Local senior centres, health clubs, and community recreation facilities typically have professionals on staff who can help with your fitness needs. Be sure to seek your doctor's counsel too, especially if you have any pre-existing health concerns.

Get in the groove of regular exercise

While exercising every day may not be feasible, think twice about taking an extended break. That's because any period of inactivity can cause a rapid decline in fitness. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, regular exercise is one of the most important things older adults can do for their health since exercise prevents and delays age-related health problems. Aim for 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity, along with at least two days of exercises that strengthen muscles and balance-improving activities. Put exercise into your schedule and set your mind to staying dedicated.

Follow a fitness-friendly diet

Eating a well-balanced diet that includes important vitamins and minerals for aging adults is essential to keep your body from declining. But what you eat can also affect how well you exercise. A study published by the University of Florida found that certain foods when combined with exercise have a positive impact on fitness levels. Specifically, foods containing the compounds resveratrol and epicatechin improve muscle function and walking speed. While resveratrol is abundant in red wine, healthier sources include red grapes, berries, peanuts, and pistachios. For a powerful punch of epicatechin, look to cocoa, apples, and green tea.



Vitamin B12 - Do you need it and in what form?

The right amount of nutrients can help your body function at optimal levels, to resist disease and to provide normal energy levels. Ordinarily, people receive vitamins and minerals from the foods they eat, but dieting, eating processed foods and fasting can deplete these nutrients, which can lead to unpleasant effects. Vitamin B12 is an important nutrient for keeping cells healthy and for providing good nerve function. A deficiency of vitamin B12 can produce fatigue and other issues that may require treatment.

Vitamin B12, known as cobalamin, is a nutrient the human body cannot produce on its own. It must be taken in this nutrient through the foods people eat or through supplementation. Vitamin B12 is naturally found in meat, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy products. You can also get your vitamin B12 in fortified cereals. Vitamin B12 is critical for DNA synthesis and for the metabolizing of amino acids and fatty acids. This vitamin is important for memory, mood, energy and heart health.

Getting your daily requirement of vitamin B12 should be relatively easy if you eat a balanced diet. Those who follow a vegan diet may have some difficulty getting enough B12 and may need supplementation. Aging can cause a decline in vitamin B12 absorption in the body and may require B12 supplementation. Individuals with gastrointestinal disorders may have difficulty absorbing vitamin B12 and require supplementation. If you have had surgery on your gastrointestinal system, you may develop a vitamin B12 deficiency. Metformin,

oral birth control pills and other medications can cause low levels of B12.

- If your vitamin B12 levels are too low, you may feel very tired or may feel weak. You may have nausea and vomiting. Diarrhea can sometimes occur. You may not feel as hungry as usual, and you may lose weight. Your skin may take on a yellowish cast. Your mouth tissues and tongue may be sore. You may develop nerve problems, with numbness and tingling. Your doctor can order a blood test to determine if your symptoms are due to low levels of vitamin B12.

- If your doctor finds that you have low levels of vitamin B12, they may recommend supplementation. Vitamin B12 can be supplemented through oral pills, through intramuscular injection or through IV infusion. What type is best for you depends on absorption. Taking vitamin B12 orally is not the most efficient way to receive the nutrient because it must go through the gastrointestinal system, which may not provide the components the vitamin needs for optimal absorption. Intramuscular injection does not have this problem, but repeated shots can be painful for some individuals. IV infusion of vitamin B12 gives an immediate boost, but may require more frequent administration. Discuss with your health care professional.

Vitamin B12 deficiency is fairly common and can be caused by a variety of factors. Your doctor can determine if you need supplementation of vitamin B12 and the best form of administration for your needs.

Tips to beat arthritis fatigue this summer

(NC) We only get a few months of warm weather in Canada. So, as temperatures rise, you may want to get outside and enjoy every moment. But when you have a chronic condition such as arthritis, extreme fatigue – the feeling of needing to rest even before you start an activity – can quickly cast a shadow on a bright summer day.

Here are a few tips to overcome arthritis fatigue so you can make the most of the summer.

Feed your energy

Skipping a meal is common when experiencing pain or fatigue. But this only worsens the issue by causing hormone fluctuations, which increase stress and exhaustion. To help you stay energized and nourished, prep meals when you have energy, and keep fruits, vegetables and ready-to-eat meals on hand to prevent spikes and crashes in blood sugar.

Bust a move

It's normal to feel unmotivated to exercise when our energy is low, but when you boost cardiovascular activity, your organs receive oxygen and nutrients, triggering endorphins, which will help raise your energy levels and reduce fatigue. If you struggle with arthritis, stick to moderate, low-impact exercises, such as walking, swimming or cycling.

Get enough sleep

Catching enough Zs is vital in preventing arthritis-related fatigue. If pain due to arthritis flare-ups is coming between you and a good night's rest, try taking a hot bath, using a heating pad, doing a gentle yoga sequence or following a guided meditation to relax into sleep and soothe your muscles and joints.

Stay hydrated

Many people overestimate how much water they drink and wait until they are thirsty. Keeping a reusable water bottle handy, tracking your daily water intake and setting a hydration goal can make you more aware of your water consumption and prevent fatigue and dehydration, which can be especially dangerous during the summer months.

Take care of your mental health

Our thoughts and emotions impact our physical health and vice versa, so it's no wonder that people with arthritis are twice as likely to report mood disorders like anxiety and depression. Engaging in activities that support your mental well-being can reduce fatigue and boost overall health.

Find more wellness tips from Arthritis Society Canada at arthritis.ca/living-well.



What is halitosis and how is it different from bad breath

Halitosis is a medical term for chronic bad breath that persists even after brushing your teeth or using mouthwash. It can be caused by various factors, such as gum disease, dry mouth, sinus infections, diabetes, or certain foods and medications. Bad breath, on the other hand, is a temporary condition that usually goes away after cleaning your mouth or eating something fresh. It can be caused by eating foods with strong odours, such as garlic, onion, cheese, or coffee, or by smoking, drinking alcohol, or having poor oral hygiene.

Halitosis can affect your physical and mental health, as well as your social and professional life. Some of the symptoms and consequences of halitosis are:

- A foul or unpleasant smell from your mouth that others can notice.
- A bitter or metallic taste in your mouth.
- A dry or sticky feeling in your mouth.
- Difficulty swallowing or speaking.
- Reduced sense of smell or taste.
- Low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, or isolation.
- Difficulty forming or maintaining relationships.
- Rejection or criticism from others.
- Loss of opportunities or career advancement.

The best way to prevent or treat halitosis is to visit your dentist regularly and follow their advice. They can diagnose the cause of your halitosis and recommend the appropriate treatment, such as scaling, root planing, antibiotics, or surgery. They can also advise you on how to improve your oral hygiene and lifestyle habits.

Some of the tips to keep your breath fresh are:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.
- Use a tongue scraper or brush your tongue gently to remove bacteria and food debris.
- Rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash after eating or drinking.
- Drink plenty of water to keep your mouth moist and prevent dry mouth.
- Avoid foods and drinks that can cause bad breath, such as garlic, onion, cheese, coffee, alcohol, or tobacco.
- Eat foods that can freshen your breath, such as fruits, vegetables, yogurt, mint, or parsley.
- Chew sugar-free gum or lozenges to stimulate saliva production and mask odours.
- Replace your toothbrush every three months and clean your dentures or braces regularly.

Helpful hints to better eating

If you're ready to embrace a healthier lifestyle but aren't really interested in hitting the gym right away, don't worry. There are things you can do to achieve your goal. **The following tips will get you on the right track:**

Reduce sugar intake

Sugar is known to be inflammatory, and the standard diet is high in the sweet stuff. If you have a sweet tooth, this might seem difficult. Start small instead of attempting to go cold turkey. Instead of enjoying three cookies at dessert, have two. If you typically treat yourself to a specialty coffee each morning before work, choose just two or three days to enjoy one. By reducing your sugar intake, you will see and feel the difference in your energy in a matter of days or weeks thanks to a reduction in inflammation and calories.

Cook at home

If you tend to eat a lot of fast food, you are not only consuming more calories than you want to, but also more sugar and salt. Don't eliminate salt altogether as it is an important electrolyte that works with magnesium and potassium. Together they keep the fluids in your body balanced and affect the way nerves work. Cooking at home allows you to control what goes into your meals and snacks. You can eat more fruits and vegetables, which will provide you with a plethora of nutrients. If you're on the road a lot, cook enough for a few days, so you can pack them up to take with you. If you are prepared with healthy meals and snacks, you'll be less likely to stop for fast food.

Reduce portion size

It's important to learn the true serving sizes of food groups so that you don't consume too much in one sitting. You have likely become accustomed to eating a certain way, so this can be difficult to get used to. Avoid going back for seconds until you've given your brain time to register your first plate of food. This takes about twenty minutes. In the meantime, enjoy a glass of water. You may find you're not hungry for that second serving once the twenty minutes have passed. If you are still hungry, go ahead and have a second, slightly smaller, portion.

Walk more

Walking is a great way to burn some calories and get your body used to moving more. If you've led a sedentary lifestyle until now, this may seem like exercise, but your body will thank you. Start by taking short walks, for example, getting up for five minutes every hour or two to walk during your work day. A couple of times a week, take a slightly longer walk during your lunch break.

Increase fibre intake

Consume more fibre by enjoying foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, and nuts. Without enough fibre, you may become constipated and look and feel bloated. Increase fibre little by little as consuming too much can result in similar digestive issues including bloating and constipation. Make sure to stay well hydrated with water as you increase fibre.



How to protect seniors from extreme heat

(NC) Canada is experiencing more frequent and prolonged heat waves, when high temperatures – often combined with humidity – occur for extended periods of time. Extreme heat can impact everyone's health, and seniors are at greater risk. Here are some tips for seniors and their caregivers to stay safe when the next heat wave arrives.

Do regular wellness checks

Before a heat event, schedule regular calls with the seniors in your life to make sure they're alright. Monitoring weather forecasts can help you know when to expect hotter temperatures. Having a set time every day can make it easier to remember to call.

Consult with a health-care provider if they take medication

Some medications can interfere with the body's ability to deal with heat. If older adults are taking medication or have a health condition, ask their health-care provider if it increases their risk for heat illnesses or if heat worsens the side effects of the medication. Follow their medical advice.

Maintain their access to air conditioning

Many heat deaths occur indoors. If they have an air conditioner, it should be serviced annually by a professional to make sure it's operating properly. Throughout the season, regularly inspect the unit's filter and clean or replace it as necessary.

If they don't have an air conditioner, find nearby locations where they can cool off during the hottest periods of the day (usually 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.), such as an air-conditioned mall, library or community centre.

Help them keep their cool

There are many other things you can do

to help the seniors in your life keep cool during the hottest days of the year. These include:

- Close the windows and curtains or blinds during the day
- Open the windows at night if there is a cooling breeze
- Use a microwave instead of an oven to prepare meals
- Encourage a cool bath or shower to draw heat from their body
- Remind them to stay hydrated throughout the day

Whenever possible, seniors should wear loose-fitting, breathable clothing and have a wide-brimmed hat or umbrella to shade their head when going outdoors.

Warning signs

Finally, show them how to identify the warning signs of a heat illness. These can include rapid breathing or heartbeat, flushed skin, nausea, headache, dizziness or fainting, nausea or vomiting, and extreme thirst. If they're experiencing any of these symptoms, they should move to a cool space, drink water and watch for the symptoms to subside.

More extreme symptoms, such as a high body temperature, no longer sweating, disorientation or unconsciousness can indicate heatstroke, which requires immediate medical attention.

Call 911 immediately and try to cool the person down while help is on the way by fanning them as much as possible, moving them to a cool place if you can and applying cold water to large areas of their skin or clothing.

Learn more on how seniors can cope with the heat at canada.ca/health.

How chemicals and pollutants get into our bodies

(NC) We do many things to take care of ourselves and those around us, like staying active, eating healthy and keeping our homes safe. Yet we are regularly exposed to chemicals and pollutants in air, food, water and in the products we use in our homes. Most of these chemicals are harmless, but others can pose a health risk if we don't learn how to protect ourselves.

Here's what you need to know about how we are exposed to the chemicals around us:

Ingesting

Ingesting just means eating or drinking. Many chemicals can be found in both our food and water sources. As we eat and drink, we might swallow chemicals that can harm us. Children are also at risk of putting things in their mouths that aren't food or drink, including flakes of lead paint, colourful detergent pods and household cleaning supplies.

Inhaling

Inhalation is breathing in. The chemicals and pollutants we breathe in end up in our lungs and can end up in our blood. This can include anything from second-hand smoke or paint fumes, to odourless, tasteless chemicals like radon or carbon monoxide.

Absorption

Finally, chemicals and other pollutants can enter the body through absorption. That's when something comes in contact with your skin or eyes. These organs can be more sensitive to pollutants and may react more quickly than the rest of our bodies.

Risk factors

The impact a chemical or pollutant has on your health depends on many factors, including the type of substance you were exposed to, how long you were exposed and your age and general health. Some exposures may have an immediate impact, such as nausea and vomiting or a chemical burn on the skin. Others may have longer-term impacts such as cancer or organ damage.

Some groups of people are more likely to face serious harm including the very young or very old, and those who are pregnant or have certain pre-existing medical conditions.

If you suspect someone's ingested a toxic substance, seek medical attention or call Canada's new toll-free number immediately for advice: 1-844-POISON-X (1-844-764-7669). In Quebec, call 1-800-463-5060. Any information you have about the product and exposure time can help determine the best treatment.

Learn more about the pollutants in our daily lives and how to avoid them at canada.ca/healthy-home.

Build up your self confidence

Feeling a little down on yourself? Said “sorry” one too many times today? Canadians may like to apologize a lot but when it starts to eat away at your self-confidence, it's time to stop saying sorry and pick yourself up. Here are a few ways to do just that:

1. Cut the negative self-talk

No-one ever got better at anything by beating themselves up. Talk to yourself kindly, and encouragingly, rather than yelling at yourself in the mirror for making mistakes. A positive mindset will help you learn more easily, which will boost confidence.

2. Boost your knowledge

The more you know, the more you grow. Sounds cliché, but it's a fact. Read up on the latest research to enhance your knowledge. Knowing how and why certain practices and processes work can boost confidence in your ability to do them.

3. Build on your strengths

Studies have shown that a good way to boost confidence is to focus on your strengths rather than your weaknesses. Accept what you already do well, and make an effort to refine your better qualities. It's a great confidence boost to do something excellently rather than

adequately. And remember, you have strengths. Don't let yourself forget that. For example, if you show up for work and meetings on time, and you are never late, that is a definite strength.

4. Pick up new skills

There is always room for improvement, and learning new skills will not only enhance proficiency at your job, but will also boost confidence. Watch what other people do successfully, and copy how they do it. Attend seminars designed to help you hone your skills and become a better worker. Pick useful skills such as time management, customer service, and productivity, or learn something new that will help specifically with your job.

5. Ask questions

Never be afraid to ask questions when you don't know something. Doing a task incorrectly because you don't fully understand it is not a good way to boost confidence. If you're ever unsure of how something should be done, ask someone else what you need to do. Additionally, don't go about a project without fully understanding it. To ask for clarification of what precisely is required is not a sign of weakness or low self esteem. It's a sign you want to do things right - and that's a strength.

Ways to lower your blood pressure

High blood pressure, or hypertension, affects more than one in five adults in Canada. It's the most common reason to visit a doctor, resulting in over 21 million physician visits a year in Canada, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Hypertension is also the number one reason for taking medication.

If detected, high blood pressure can be controlled with some of the following lifestyle changes, medication, or both:

1. Consume less salt. High amounts of sodium are found in many types of convenience and snack foods, and smoked, salted, cured or canned meats and fish. Eat less of these foods and use less salt in cooking or at the table, says the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, which recommends eating less than 1 tsp. of salt a day in total.

2. Eat healthy foods. A diet low in salt and saturated fats can make a big difference. Eat more vegetables and fruits, low-fat dairy products, lean meats, fish, beans, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

3. Be physically active each day. Regular walks or any other physical activity you enjoy can have a positive impact on blood pressure and stress.

4. Maintain a healthy body weight. Losing only five pounds, if you're overweight, can help lower your blood pressure, says Mayo Clinic

5. Drink moderately. Limit alcohol intake to 1 to 2 standard drinks a day or less, such as a regular-sized glass of wine or beer, says PHAC. Drinking more than that can raise blood pressure and reduce the effectiveness of blood pressure medications.

6. Manage stress. Practice stress-reduction techniques such as muscle relaxation, deep breathing, meditation or tai chi.

7. Take medication as prescribed. Making lifestyle changes at the same time can reduce the dosage or number of medications needed to control blood pressure in some cases.

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Here are two great summer time super foods to enjoy:

Peppers

Peppers are among the most versatile summer vegetables. They range from sweet to hot and come in every colour of the rainbow. Each type of pepper has a different set of phytonutrients depending on its colour. Phytonutrients are plant chemicals that help prevent disease. They may also help protect against heart disease and cancer. Add bell peppers to a raw veggie tray alongside low-fat dip or toss them on the grill for fajitas. Hot peppers can add spice to salsas and sauces.

Figs

These mildly sweet and floral gems are a special treat in late summer. And they're a treat for your health, too. Figs are a good source of calcium, potassium and magnesium. These minerals work together to maintain

Summer Super Foods!



bone density. They're also natural laxatives. They contain prebiotics that promote good gut health. Prebiotics help feed the healthy bacteria that live in your body. Add figs to a summertime party tray.