



HEALTHIER *In 30 Days*

A Beginners Guide
to Healthy Habits

HEATHER BEHREND'S

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I want to hear from you! Please reach out and tell me what you think!
Contact information is above.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

As both a group exercise instructor and a mommy blogger, one of the questions I get asked the very most is “how can I help my family get healthier?”

And thus the idea for this book was born!

My intention with this book is to inform and encourage changes toward an overall healthier lifestyle.

This book is designed for the person or family just starting on their journey toward a healthier lifestyle. It's also designed for those who have been working on it or who feel confused by all the different messages there are regarding a healthy lifestyle.

While there are tips in this book that could help people who have dedicated themselves toward a very healthy lifestyle, this material is not designed for that purpose.

There is a lot of information and many resources in this book!

It is not meant to be overwhelming. However, if you sit down and try to read this entire book in one sitting, it is likely to feel that way!

To that end, while it is written in a tip-a-day style, I encourage you to work on these tips at whatever speed works for you. One tip a week...one tip a month...5 goals per month...do it at a pace that helps you be the most successful. Only you know what that pace is.

The important thing to know is that EVERY SINGLE STEP you take towards living a healthier lifestyle is wonderful progress!

We are on a journey, not a destination, and no one expects perfection. In all honesty, I'm also not perfect at these tips, and I wrote the book! Take the tip for Day 23, for example – super tough for me!

If you slip and have a cheat meal or even a cheat day...no big deal! What's in this book isn't a fad diet or even a diet plan at all. This book contains tips for a healthier lifestyle.

If you have a cheat meal or a cheat day, just get back on track the next meal or the next day. The problem isn't having a cheat meal or a cheat day... **the problem comes when every meal is a cheat meal!**

The reality is that most of us don't do well when we feel restricted. We want to break free of that feeling, and who can blame us?!

That's why this book isn't meant to be a diet – it's not meant to be restrictive at all. It's meant to be informative and helpful. Thus, these tips are meant to be lifestyle-focused.

As you go through this book, you will find many helpful resources to use in whatever way is helpful to you. After every 3rd tip, I will also include a space for you to jot down things that you want remember, work on, or be able to find quickly. Use a few of these resources or use them all – it's up to you!

I have also created this eBook as a fillable PDF, so you can feel free to print out and highlight or write in it, or you can do the same on your computer with your PDF editor.

Reach out to me at any time...I'm here to help!

Heather

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Want to recommend this book to a friend or family member? Give them my friends and family discount code so they can save 20%! Discover the healthy lifestyle you crave for even less with code H30DFF

AFFILIATE DISCLOSURE

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Rest assured that I only recommend resources I use, like, and highly recommend!

ABOUT ME

I am a wife and a mom to three amazing and energetic boys!

I studied Linguistics at the University of North Carolina with the intention of becoming a Speech Pathologist. After college, I moved to Colorado to join the AmeriCorps program and then began working with aggressive Autistic adults.

I later got married and became a stay at home mom after my first son was born. Two more babies quickly followed, along with a couple of moves.

Along the way, I trained to become an exercise instructor, combining my love of exercise and activity with a push to step out of my natural shyness.

I got the idea to start blogging as a way to connect with other moms, share what I've learned over the course of 10 years as a mom, and help other parents.

Blogging has been an amazing outlet for me and a way for me to help others while being a stay-at-home-mom.

Over the last 10+ years, our family has faced several health challenges. As a result, I have accumulated a quite few of healthy living tips. Blend that knowledge with my training as a group exercise instructor, a natural interest in simple, healthy living, and strong reader feedback to help families live healthier in simple ways...and voila!

Thank you so much for your support!

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Goal Progress Chart



Name of Goal:	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Date: _____ Weight: _____ Goal Met? _____ New Goal? _____	Date: _____ Weight: _____ Goal Met? _____ New Goal? _____	Date: _____ Weight: _____ Goal Met? _____ New Goal? _____	Date: _____ Weight: _____ Goal Met? _____ New Goal? _____	Date: _____ Weight: _____ Goal Met? _____ New Goal? _____	Date: _____ Weight: _____ Goal Met? _____ New Goal? _____	Date: _____ Weight: _____ Goal Met? _____ New Goal? _____
Glasses of Water:	000000 00	000000 00	000000 00	000000 00	000000 00	000000 00	000000 00
Servings of Veggies:	000000	000000	000000	000000	000000	000000	000000
Servings of Fruits:	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
Meal Plan done?							
Exercise:							
How Long?							
New Goal:							
New Goal:							
New Goal:							

Day 1: Eat Breakfast Within 30 Minutes of Waking Up

Eat breakfast within 30 minutes of getting up in the morning to fuel your mind, body and spirit in a healthy way. [By eating within 30 minutes, you jump start your metabolism](#) for the day, which has slowed down over the course of the night.

A well-balanced breakfast of lean proteins, healthy fats and complex carbohydrates boosts metabolism, provides energy and helps you avoid binging all day. Starting the day off with the right kinds of foods will set the tone for a healthy, productive day.

"I'm not hungry!" is not an adequate excuse. Not feeling hungry in the morning means you have a slow metabolism, which only [leads to storing more fat](#). When you do get around to eating, your body isn't burning those calories.

[Sumo wrestlers are a great example](#) of this. They don't eat until lunchtime so they're able to store calories and gain weight. Is it a coincidence that more and more Americans are starting to resemble Sumo wrestlers? I think not.

What are some examples of great breakfast choices?

- Whole grain cereal (with 5 grams or less of sugars) and skim milk or unsweetened almond or rice milk
- Overnight or refrigerator oatmeal
- [Ultimate Crustless Quiche](#) made in advance and heated up
- Scrambled egg (or just egg whites) and whole wheat toast
- Oatmeal with bananas or berries and walnuts
- Wheat toast & all natural peanut butter (or almond butter) drizzled with honey
- Greek yogurt with fresh berries & homemade granola
- Frittata made in advance and heated up each morning

Day 2: Choose Your Morning Cereal Wisely

Breakfast cereals are an easy, convenient choice for a quick breakfast.

Many cereals make claims of extra fiber, protein, vitamins and nutrients. Are they really as healthy as they claim to be?

Let's talk briefly about [how breakfast cereals are made](#). These cereals are made from processed grains that are mixed with ingredients such as sugar, chocolate, and water, among others. They are also fortified with vitamins and nutrients to make them healthier.

Once the ingredients are mixed together, a process called [extrusion](#) is used. This process uses high temperature heat (thereby killing many natural health benefits left after initial processing) to shape the cereal.

Next, the cereal is dried and any final shaping (stars, balls, etc.) is completed.

In addition to the high level of processing involved in breakfast cereals, other (unwanted) things are hidden, like extra sugars, sodium and artificial ingredients. A big part of the weight gain many Americans face comes from added sugar in processed foods. Breakfast cereals are a **huge** source of added sugars.

[Starting the day with a high-processed-sugar breakfast](#) cereal causes a blood sugar spike. Then, a few hours later, your blood sugar will likely crash, causing cravings for more high-carb snacks or meals. And the vicious cycle continues, creating overeating central.

If you do want to eat breakfast cereal in the morning, follow these guidelines:

- Read the ingredients list! If that list contains ingredients that you can't pronounce, skip that cereal. Also, keep your eye out for added sugar (it can be listed multiple times by different names)
- Choose a cereal that has less than 5 grams of sugar per serving
- Look for cereals with more than 3 grams of fiber (in addition to its many health benefits, eating lots of fiber helps you feel full longer)
- Pay attention to portions

Need a few ideas of healthy breakfast cereals? [Check out these options!](#)

Day 3: Drink A LOT of Water Throughout the Day

Water is a huge part of our bodies. [Our bodies are literally made up of about 2/3 water](#), and water consumption affects every aspect of our bodies. This might explain why we feel so much better when we drink enough water.

However, many Americans (myself included at times!) don't drink nearly enough water.

Here are some brief examples of the impact water has on our lives:

- **Water aids digestion** by helping to dissolve fats and soluble fiber. Drinking enough water [prevents constipation](#) and also reduces the burden on the kidneys and liver by helping to flush waste products.
- **Research has found that the greater the fluid intake, the lower the incidence of [bladder cancer](#)**, with more significant results when the fluid is water. Staying hydrated may also reduce the risk of colon cancer and [breast cancer](#)
- **Drinking water makes us feel so refreshed that it actually improves our state of mind.** Even mild dehydration has been shown to negatively impact moods.
- **Drinking water may help naturally prevent headaches.** Going without water for too long causes headaches for some people and has been identified as a migraine trigger. The good news is that by drinking enough water, you may be able to [skip taking pills](#) and relieve your headache naturally.
- **Water protects our joints and cartilage.** Our cartilage is comprised of about 85% water. Drinking enough water keeps the cartilage around our joints hydrated and supple, ensuring that our [joints stay lubricated](#). It also protects our spinal cord and tissues, keeping us healthy from the inside out.
- **Water is good for your skin.** Drinking enough water helps keep your skin [plump and elastic](#). The resulting benefits? Fewer visible wrinkles, less likelihood of cracked skin, and fewer breakouts due to lower concentration of oil in the skin.

Start the day by drinking 8 ounces of water. Anytime you feel hungry, drink another cup of water. Try to drink 7-8 glasses of water throughout the day.

Pro tip: Use a large portable water bottle each day. We have found we're more likely to remember to drink water throughout the day when using these.

How many glasses of water do you typically drink in a day? If you aren't sure, [grab our food and water tracker](#) and track it for a week to see!

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 4: Eat Every 2-3 Hours

In the last few years, it's been big news in the health world to eat 4-6 small meals through the day rather than 2-3 large meals.

Research shows that more frequent eating is better for our waistlines because we end up [eating fewer calories](#) throughout the day. Recently, I have learned that may not be the only benefit of eating more often.

Eating frequent, small meals helps to improve our energy and concentration levels, maintain muscle mass, and [maintain our blood sugar levels](#). By eating smaller amounts more often, you keep your energy levels higher all day long and help avoid those afternoon energy slumps.

Help level and maintain your mood by fueling your body, mind and spirit all throughout the day.

Biggest takeaway: don't allow yourself to get to starvation mode. This leads to overeating, poor food choices, blood sugar crashes, and low energy.

Grab our FREE [food and water tracker](#) to make it easy to help you stay on track with getting enough veggies, fruits, and water!

If apps work better for you, check out **My Fitness Pal** – it's a wonderful, comprehensive app that allows you to track water consumption, keep track of your food intake and exercise, and even allows you to set goals for weight loss and more. It's amazing!

Day 5: Keep Non-Perishable Healthy Snacks in Your Car

Just like it's good to have snacks within reach for your kids, you need them too! We all have days when we are extra hungry or when we ran out the door without breakfast.

Having mindful, healthy snacks ready to eat in the car will help keep you from doing drive thru window runs (not healthy food) or eating your kids' snacks.

Keep these snacks portioned and tucked away in your car to keep you from grabbing junk food just because it's fast.

Some great healthy snack ideas include:

- Wheat Crackers (Triscuits or other real food crackers)
- Almonds (or other nuts or seeds)
- Trail Mix
- Peanut Butter or Almond Butter
- Dried fruit (apple rings, banana chips, etc.)
- Kale Chips
- Pretzels
- Popcorn

Here's a freebie for you! Download our printable of [30 healthy snack ideas](#) to help you out when you need inspiration!

Day 6: Switch from Potato Chips to Other Alternatives

Potato chips as well as their so-called "healthy" baked chips are [filled with trans fats, sodium and artificial ingredients \(including MSG\)](#).

Because potato chips are high in fat, they are high in calories and [low in nutritional value](#). This means that when you eat potato chips, they tend to displace other foods in your diet that are more nutritional.

My recommendation: eat them in moderation. Or better yet, ditch the chips for healthier alternatives.

If you're like me and enjoy having something to a little salty to crunch on from time-to-time, try grabbing some wheat crackers or pretzels.

This transition may sound difficult to you. If you find yourself in this position, consider taking it slowly. Try taking it one type of chip or one brand at a time.

Then, each time your bag of chips runs out (or every other time, if you need to go slower), instead of buying more, buy a healthier alternative instead.

Remember, we aren't going for perfection here! I believe it is important to keep in mind that this is a journey, and every step we take on this journey (no matter how small) leads to a healthier lifestyle.

Great alternatives to consider:

- Homemade air-popped popcorn
- Pretzels
- Baked veggie chips
- Apple or banana (without added sugar) chips
- Make your own sweet potato skins or kale chips
- Rice cakes

Keep in mind, that no matter how slowly you make this transition, each step forward is a step toward better health. It's not about cutting out all chips in one fell swoop. It's about making changes over time that will last and be beneficial.

Notes:

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 7: Food Labels 101

In order to be really healthy, it is important to learn the art of reading nutrition labels.

I'm not talking about the label on the front of the package. Those can say a wide variety of things that imply one thing and actually mean something very different.

No, I'm talking about the [nutrition label on the back](#) or side of the packaging. This label breaks down the essentials:

1. every ingredient included in the product is listed here
2. nutrition facts for the product: calories, fat, sodium, protein, fiber, vitamins and much more
3. % of daily value for all the vitamins and nutrients contained within the product

Here is a nutrition label sample that helps break down how to read it. For more information, check out the “resources” page at the end of this book.

Sample label for
Macaroni & Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g) Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

① **Start Here** →

② **Check Calories**

③ **Limit these Nutrients**

④ **Get Enough of these Nutrients**

⑤ **Footnote**

⑥ **Quick Guide to % DV**

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

Supermarkets don't want you to know all the hidden junk that keeps you addicted to shopping at their stores, but you have a right to know. And reading the front of the box doesn't do the trick because the wording doesn't always mean what you think it does. One major example of this is the [use of the word "natural"](#) on product packaging.

Don't trust the front of the box. Trust the nutrition label, and know how to read it.

A few nutrition tips:

- A healthy food label normally has 5 ingredients or less
- Read the ingredients list carefully. If a 5th grader can't pronounce an ingredient, you may not want to eat it
- The first ingredient listed is the most abundant ingredient; the second ingredient listed is the next most abundant ingredient and so on until you get to the last ingredient.
- 1 gram of fat = 9 calories
- 1 gram of carbohydrates = 4 calories
- 1 gram of protein = 4 calories
- Check sugar content. According to [The American Heart Association](#), we should limit our consumption of processed sugar to no more than 25 grams per day
- Check for added salt and how much sodium is in the item.
- Watch out for low-fat and fat-free products, they often have added sugar, sodium and artificial ingredients – check the labels!

I recently found an app for my smartphone called "**Fooducate**", which allows me to scan food items with it and help me make healthier food choices.

Give it a try and take it with you next time you shop. It's helpful!

Day 8: Eat More Vegetables and Fruits

I know, I know...you've probably heard this one a million times.

However, the best way to stay healthy is to fuel your body with healthy choices—and when it comes to healthy choices, fruits and veggies are the MacDaddy.

First of all (and I believe most important), fruits and veggies grow naturally and are more natural, thus a better choice than foods manufactured and mass-produced in factories.

Next, eating plenty of fruits and veggies helps to keep your weight down because you're filling up on foods that contain lots of vitamins, minerals, fiber and more without also containing a lot of calories.

Finally, research also suggests that eating [5-10 servings](#) of fruits and veggies each day can help reduce risk of cancer, because those foods contain phytonutrients (cancer fighting chemicals).

With a serving size equaling $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, that means that you should aim to eat a total of [2 1/2 cups to 5 cups of fruit and vegetables](#) each day.

Examples of servings include:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ a medium apple
- 1 orange
- 4-5 brussels sprouts
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked green beans
- 1 cup leafy greens (ex: spinach)
- 1 banana
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup berries or grapes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked squash

The takeaway: aim to eat more fruits and veggies (grown **on** plants) and less food manufactured **in** plants.

Day 9: Choose Lean Proteins

Choose lean proteins to keep those unwanted pounds off and maintain good heart health.

Here are some examples of good lean proteins:

Seafood: an excellent choice as lean protein because seafood is usually low in fat. One of the exceptions, salmon, has more fat, but it's a heart-healthy kind (Omega-3 fatty acids).

Dairy: Milk, cheese and yogurt are good sources of protein as well as good sources of calcium, which is important for strong bones. Choose milk and yogurt that are low-fat (but watch out for going skim because sugar is often added to replace the fat to make it taste better). Greek yogurt is an excellent source of dairy that is high in protein.

Eggs: eggs are a very affordable source of protein! We highly recommend going organic, or at least eggs from cage free, humanely treated chickens.

Poultry: white meat is very lean and healthy. Dark meat contains more fat but also more vitamins and minerals. Avoid the skin (remove before cooking), as it's full of saturated fat.

Beans: loaded with protein and fiber, beans are inexpensive and keep you full for hours.

Pork Tenderloin: Believe it or not, ounce for ounce, this cut of meat has the [same or fewer calories than chicken](#). Also, lean pork has amazing amounts of [essential vitamins and minerals](#), with just 3 ounces giving you about a 1/3 of your daily requirements of thiamin, niacin, selenium and vitamin B6!

Soy: Soy is low in fat while being high in protein, fiber, and polysaturated fats, helping to reduce cholesterol and improve heart health.

Notes:

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 10: Skip Frozen Meals...

...eat prepared leftovers instead.

The invention of the TV dinner unleashed a huge increase in [obesity](#), digestive illnesses, Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease and many other diseases.

Is this surprising considering these meals are filled with artificial flavors, colors and chemicals to extend their shelf life?

The so-called "healthy" versions of these aren't much better.

Here are a [few ingredients](#) that can often be found in frozen dinners:

- **Polysorbate 80** (aka [Tween 80](#)) - this is an emulsifier to keep oils from separating when you heat up the frozen dinner so it doesn't become a greasy mess.
- **Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT)** – this is a preservative used to keep the oil for frying chicken from going rancid.
- **Propylene Glycol** – this cousin to antifreeze (yes, you read that right) is used to keep the oils and fats for frying from gunking up.

While these chemicals, and more, are [“generally recognized as safe”](#) by the FDA, I like to follow the rule that if my 5th grader can't read the ingredients, then we avoid that food.

Instead of buying premade frozen meals and subjecting your body to these unneeded chemicals, try preparing extra portions and storing leftovers in containers.

A few easy ideas that work well as leftovers include:

- Ground turkey
- Grilled or Roasted Chicken
- Brown rice
- Sweet potatoes
- Vegetables
- Taco fixin's
- Casseroles
- Pasta (as long as it isn't alfredo sauce)

Day 11: Menu Plan Once a Week (or once a month)

Schedule time each week (or month) to plan healthy meals.

Keep your recipes, grocery list and coupons in the same place to make planning and budgeting easier.

If you're in a food rut, create a weekly menu to add variety. Choose a certain cuisine for each night. For example, Monday can be Italian, Tuesday is Indian, Wednesday is Mexican, and so on.

Another option is to create a theme for each night: Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, Slow Cooker Wednesday, and so on.

Pick a different cookbook for each night, letting your kids help you decide which recipes from each cookbook they want to try.

Planning meals by color or the alphabet are also fun ways to keep your family mealtimes from becoming mundane.

To help you along in this process, download our [FREE menu planning package!](#) This package has 20+ pages, including calendars, to help you get organized and tackle meal planning quickly.

Day 12: Set Goals You Can Achieve

I love setting goals. I am constantly working to learn new things: new health information, new household tricks, new parenting tips and more.

Setting goals helps me to know what I am working toward rather than just flailing about day after day. Goals keep me focused – which is super helpful for me!

However, setting goals works best when it's an exercise in being specific. Think about it, setting a goal of “losing weight” doesn't hold much water. You could lose 2 pounds (and technically meet your goal) but still not feel like you have succeeded in meeting your goal.

When I read about the SMART system for setting goals, I had a major “aha” moment. The SMART system is a system focused on making specific goals. With this system, goals need to be:

Specific –the more specific, the greater the chance for success

Measurable – think concrete evidence (ex: lose 1 pound a week)

Attainable – think seriously about the work involved vs payoff...is it realistic?

Relevant – why do you want to reach this goal – is it something you really want?

Timeframe – choose a timeframe for accountability but keep it realistic and flexible

For example, think about the goal: *Aim to eat more vegetables and fewer high-calorie foods*. This goal is vague and doesn't give any clear direction for achieving this goal.

If you simply change it to “*Eat five servings of veggies and no desserts for one week to feel better*”, that is a realistic SMART goal because it gives you something concrete to work towards.

Let's practice! What is one SMART goal you want to work on (write it on the lines provided below)?

Notes:

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 13: Move All Day Long!

The human body was meant to be active! It doesn't matter what you do – just keep moving as much as you can throughout the day.

Not only does [physical activity have health benefits](#) (lowers risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, certain cancers, and more), it also makes you feel better!

Fun Bonus: If you follow Tip 3 and drink 7+ glasses of water a day, you'll at least walk to the bathroom a lot during the day!

Physical activity helps lower stress, keep weight in check, boost mood and improve sleep.

In this age where we do so much sitting (driving, sitting at a desk, watching TV, etc), how can you stay active and healthy?

Work to incorporate 30-60 minutes of physical activity into your day. [Here are some fun, easy ways to get in your activity together as a family!](#)

Here are some more ideas (do these by yourself, with a friend, or as a family):

- Walk (take the dog with you!)
- Run
- Swim
- Dance
- Ride a bike
- Play a sport – basketball, tennis, etc.
- Take the stairs
- Hiking
- Water aerobics
- Stretch
- Yoga
- Gardening
- Weight Lifting
- Group Exercise Class (I highly recommend and personally teach Turbo Kick and Piyo!)
- Park far away

- Cleaning (scrubbing, sweeping, vacuuming)

Shoot to get at least [2.5 hours of moderate exercise](#) per week.

Exercise doesn't need to be the torture sessions you see on TV with celebrity trainers. It just needs you to make it a priority to get it in your daily routine.

Day 14: Shop with a List

I have 2 Cardinal rules regarding shopping:

- Don't shop (especially for food) when I'm hungry
- Don't shop without a list

Look out! Shopping when I'm hungry and without a list always equals disaster. That's when I spend too much money, buy things we don't need, forget the items we do need, and buy things that aren't healthy because they "look good".

A little organization can go a long way toward helping you take a list every time you go to the store.

Here are a few simple tips to help:

- Make a weekly meal plan (also a daily meal plan, if needed)
- Make a list of what you need while you are meal planning, then stick that list into your purse or inside your wallet right away (or write it as a note in your phone).

When shopping:

- Stay out of the inner aisles of the grocery store – stick to the outside edges, where the real food is.
- If you eat the peel, buy organic
- When buying meat, buy grass fed and hormone free options (organic, if possible).
- Keep in mind that just because a product says "organic" doesn't mean it is always healthier. Think about a toaster pastry – organic or not, it's still processed and contains artificial ingredients that we don't need.

Be sure to grab our [Menu Planning Package](#) which includes a grocery list you can use!

BONUS Parent tip: having a list when you take the kiddos to the store with you helps in two ways:

- It helps keep you from getting distracted and forgetting items (when your child starts throwing a fit or you run into someone you know).

- It was a lifesaver for me when the kids would start begging for items I didn't want in the house. I would pull out my list and tell them that the item they wanted wasn't on the list that day so we couldn't buy it. It worked really well!

Day 15: Portion Control

Way to go! You have come a long way in a short period of time. Take a moment and look back at the changes you have made so far. Great job!

Every. Single. Step you take leads to healthier lifestyle choices for you and your family.

Change can be hard, but you are rocking this! Woohoo!

Even though you have made some great changes and are eating healthier now, not watching your portions may keep you from reaching your goals.

By not watching portion sizes, you are likely eating more calories, sodium, sugar and fat than you realize. This certainly can cause you to not lose that last few pounds, or even cause you to gain a few when you are being so healthy in so many ways.

And the trickiest part about portion control? When you purchase processed foods, you have to check the serving size. A snack-size bag of chips or a can of soda may be multiple servings. Yet, we often eat or drink the entire thing, thinking that entire the package is only one serving.

This is where your nutrition label ninja reading skills come into play!

And this is also the time you have the opportunity to get real with your portions.

A short person doesn't need as much as a tall one. Females often require fewer calories than males. People who exercise regularly or vigorously require more sustenance than those who do not exercise.

No idea how many calories you need in a day? Check out this [Calorie Calculator](#) to help you figure it out. This tool is incredible and allows you to find out your daily caloric needs based on age, weight, and activity level. It also allows you to see what your nutritional needs (proteins, fats, carbs) are based on your daily caloric needs. And it does so much more! Play around with it – I think you will find it very educational as a baseline tool.

Keep in mind that every person's body chemistry and makeup are different, so if you need more individualized help, please consult a professional nutritionist.

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 16: Snack on Nuts – the Healthy Way

Not all nuts are created equal! Those delicious roasted and glazed nuts...loaded with sugar and salt.

Choose nuts with healthy fats which will help you lose weight too!

Peanuts have gotten a bad reputation over the past few years, with people preferring to eat almonds instead. When I was doing my own research for my family, it surprised me to learn that [almonds and peanuts are actually very similar](#) in their nutrition stats.

The breakdown: peanuts are slightly lower in calories and almonds are slightly lower in saturated fat.

However, because all nuts leave you feeling more full, you will likely eat less calories overall if you snack on just a few nuts.

Keep in mind, though, that just like with most things, moderation is better. I recommend these tips for snacking on nuts:

- Portion control – eat about an [ounce of nuts per day](#) (roughly the amount of nuts it takes to fill the palm of your hand)
- If you are on the go, pre-measure your nuts and put them in a container so that you don't get carried away while eating from a larger bag.
- [All nuts contain health benefits](#) (including heart health benefits), so try switching it up! Almonds, walnuts, peanuts, pistachios, macadamia nuts...yum!
- Try [making your own trail mix](#), combining nuts with dried fruit for an extra powerful snack.
- Include nuts in your [homemade granola](#) for an extra boost of protein and fiber.

Day 17: Swap Out Your Beverage

Think about all the drinks out in the market...coffee drinks of all varieties, sodas and diet sodas, energy drinks, juices and even flavored waters.

Consuming these every day can add up to lots of empty calories. Think about a can of soda. One can contains roughly 150 calories. That's not a giant-sized fountain drink, either. I'm talking about 12 oz. If you drink 2 of those in a day, that's 300 calories that could be healthy fuel for your body instead.

Consider drinking fewer of your calories. Whether you are trying to lose weight or simply live a healthier life, drinking fewer calories can go a long way toward helping you meet that goal.

I'll cop to drinking sodas occasionally. I used to do it more often, but now I generally have 2-3 a week. I am guilty of drinking both diet soda (more often) and regular as well as enjoying some good old fashioned Southern sweet iced tea. The rest of the time? I drink water.

Taking into account how much of our bodies are comprised of water (55-60%, depending on whether you are a man or woman), think about replacing more and more other drinks in your diet with water.

Sound tough to do? Take it slowly – cut down from a case a week to 10 cans a week. Then 8 a week. Continue from there.

Don't like the taste of water? Try these ideas as you work more water into your diet.

- Add berries or other fruit for a bit of flavor
- Add lemon or lime (BONUS: lemon in your water helps [detoxify your body](#), rehydrate your body, elevate your mood, rejuvenate your skin, and more!)
- Add mint or basil leaves

Remember - it's not about having the perfect diet or even about making these changes perfectly. It's about the journey and the effort to make healthy changes, no matter how small.

Day 18: Switch Your Bedtime Snack (if you eat one)

Some people believe that you shouldn't eat before going to bed. The idea behind this belief is that your metabolism slows down when you sleep, so the extra calories that you are eating in the snack are not getting used up by the body, causing weight gain.

At the same time, many health experts say that it doesn't matter when you eat your calories, and that eating a bedtime snack can actually [improve your sleep and help aid weight loss](#).

These opposing views certainly make for a controversial topic.

While there is no physiological reason that eating before bed causes weight gain, [several studies](#), however, have shown a possible link.

The **Pros** of eating a bedtime snack:

- may help [curb nighttime eating](#) and aid in weight loss
- may help you sleep better
- may stabilize your blood sugar

The **Cons** of eating a bedtime snack:

- may lead to [unhealthy habits](#) – simply because extra calories are being consumed
- is bad for people who have reflux

Bottom Line: eating a snack before bed is fine for many people. Try to avoid desserts and sugary foods. Instead, have a snack made up of protein with a healthy carb (fruit or whole grain).

Here are some ideas:

- Greek yogurt with crushed walnuts
- Low-fat cottage cheese with berries
- Apple slices with natural peanut butter
- Air-popped popcorn
- Organic Brown Rice cakes with peanut butter

Notes:

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 19: Eat More Whole Grains

Examples include oats, brown rice, rye, and whole-wheat pasta.

Before we start talking about the importance of whole grains, let's distinguish between whole grains and refined grains:

Whole grains contain all parts of the original kernel: [the bran, germ and endosperm](#).

Bran: the hard, outer shell – contains fiber, minerals and antioxidants

Endosperm: the middle layer of the grain – contains mostly carbs

Germ: inner layer of the grain – contains protein, vitamins, and minerals

Refined grains are the grains where the bran and the germ have been stripped away, removing many of the nutritional and health benefits of grains.

Whole grains provide many [health benefits](#) including reduced risk of stroke, heart disease, obesity, and Type 2 Diabetes. They also reduce inflammation and support healthy digestion.

Keep in mind that you can't trust box labels (the front of the packaging)! Be sure to read the ingredients list and look for the words **whole grain** or **whole wheat**. Avoid products that list *refined wheat* in the ingredients.

There are many types of whole grains. Be sure to look for:

Oatmeal	Whole rye
Popcorn	Millet
Quinoa	Brown rice
Wild rice	Wheat berry
Bulgur	Buckwheat
Freekeh	Barley
Sorghum	

Replacing your refined grains with whole grains is an [important change](#) you can make that will have amazing benefits for your health!

Day 20: Eat the Rainbow

This one is straight from my grandmother, and it absolutely still holds water.

Have you ever made a meal or sat down to eat a meal and noticed that everything on your plate was a similar color? I have, and it was all yellow – not healthy green or vibrant red, but yellow and orange (think corn, pasta, carrots, etc.).

The thing is, each food color group contains different active antioxidants. Antioxidants help prevent damage to the body from free radicals. Scientists believe that [free radicals](#) (and the damage they cause in the body) are a significant contributor to cancer, macular degeneration, Alzheimer's Disease, and other conditions.

Mixing up the colors that you eat each day helps to keep your diet well-rounded with a variety of antioxidants to keep you healthy. This variety of antioxidants helps to keep your body in tip top health.

Reds and Pinks: these fruits and veggies contain [lycopene, beta-carotene, and Vitamin C](#).

Yellows and Oranges: these fruits and vegetables are full of beta-carotene and Vitamin C.

Greens: these fruits and veggies contain the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin as well as folate, calcium, potassium, fiber, vitamin E, and vitamin C.

Blues and Purples: these fruits and veggies contain vitamin C and the flavonoid anthocyanin (a type of antioxidant), as well as ellagic acid (another type of antioxidant) and polyphenols.

Whites (veggies and fruits, NOT flour, rice or sugar) contain a flavonoid called quercetin, which is a powerful natural anti-inflammatory and antihistamine.

As a general rule, the darker the color food, the more antioxidants it contains.

Try making it a fun family challenge to eat as many different colors as you can each day!

Day 21: Buy (and Eat) More Frozen Fruits and Veggies

The goal is to eat at least 7 servings of fruits and veggies **every day**.

Eating fresh produce is great – I'm a big fan! However, as more and more people are thinking about eating healthier and more natural foods, think about eating frozen veggies and fruits.

I grew up with the belief (and have heard many people confirm they also share this belief) that frozen vegetables were less healthy than fresh produce. It's not true!

A study published in the [Journal of Food Composition and Analysis](#) in 2017 compared the nutritional values of 3 groups of produce (same foods in each of the 3 groups): frozen, fresh (on day of purchase) and fresh (after being stored in a home refrigerator for 5 days).

The study results revealed that the nutritional values of many frozen fruits and vegetables are generally equal to those of their fresh counterparts. In fact, a few nutrients (namely, Vitamin A, Vitamin C and folates) were higher in the frozen foods than their fresh equivalents, especially the fresh fruits and vegetables that had been stored for about 5 days.

Overall, the study findings suggest that the common perception that fresh produce is nutritionally superior to frozen produce is not supported.

With that in mind, I keep a few bags of various fruits and vegetables in our freezer.

I know from experience in our family that if we keep frozen fruits and veggies on hand (we invested in a standing deep freeze about 7 years ago and it's been a lifesaver), we tend to get those servings in.

That way, if I'm running low on fresh veggies or am short on time, I can pull out some frozen veggies and steam or heat them quickly in time for dinner!

Notes:

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 22: Change Your Cooking Oil

Have you taken a look at the cooking oil section at the grocery store lately? The number of options there can feel overwhelming: coconut oil, olive oil, canola oil, grapeseed oil, vegetable oil, and the list goes on.

It doesn't help that all over the media and the internet it seems like there is frequently a different recommendation regarding which option is the healthiest. The important information to consider is that it comes down to the types of fat in these cooking oils: trans, saturated or unsaturated (which include monosaturated and polysaturated fats).

Dietary fat has a bad reputation as being the cause of heart attacks and heart disease. The truth is that people need a [certain amount of fat](#) in their diets as a source of energy and to help process and absorb certain minerals and vitamins.

However, even though the body does need fat, there are fats that are good for you and fats that are bad for you. Let's break it down.

“Bad for you” fats

These fats are called **trans fats**. **Trans fats are human-engineered**. As in, not natural!

They are created through a process called hydrogenation, which is used to turn healthy fats into solids at room temperature and prevent them from becoming rancid.

Eating trans fats has been shown to [increase levels of bad cholesterol](#) in the blood as well as causing inflammation, which leads to many chronic conditions such as heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

“Middle of the road” fats

This category of fats is called **saturated fats**.

These fats occur naturally and are solid at room temperature; butter, cheese, cooled bacon grease, and coconut oil are examples. Saturated fats can [increase your total cholesterol levels](#), causing the bad cholesterol to increase and creating blockages in your arteries.

“Good for you” fats

Nonsaturated fats that come from vegetables, nuts, seeds and fish are good for heart health. They are liquid at room temperature and are in one of two categories: **polysaturated or monosaturated**.

Good sources of monounsaturated fats:

- olive oil
- peanut oil
- canola oil
- avocados
- most nuts
- safflower oil
- sunflower oil

Polyunsaturated fats are essential fats, meaning that they are required for normal body functions. These fats help build cell membranes and are needed for blood clotting, muscle movement, and inflammation. However, your body can't make them, so you need to get them from food sources.

Omega-3 fatty acids and Omega-6 fatty acids are two examples of good-for-you polysaturated fats.

Good sources of polysaturated fats:

- Corn oil
- sunflower oil
- safflower oil

Good Sources of Omega-3 fatty acids:

- Salmon
- Mackerel
- Sardines
- Flaxseeds
- Walnuts

Canola oil
Non-hydrogenated soybean oil

Good sources of Omega-6 fatty acids:

Soybean oil
Safflower oil
Sunflower oil
Corn oil
Walnut oil

What's the best option for anyone who is heart health-minded?

Avoid cooking with solid fats. Use healthier versions, liquid oils, such as olive, canola, sesame, or sunflower oil.

**Sit down and think about a different cooking oil you would like to try.
Write it below so you remember:**

Day 23: Eat Only When You're Hungry

So many people eat when they are bored, stressed, tired, upset, excited or even to avoid feeling hungry (I'm completely guilty of this one).

Unfortunately, eating for these reasons creates a slippery slope and a really bad cycle of eating when your body doesn't need food.

Try to only eat when you truly feel hungry and your body needs fuel. Most people eat on some variation of a schedule (lunch at noon, snack at 4pm, dinner at 6pm kind of a thing).

That schedule is likely a learned behavior, meaning....it can be changed!

Instead of eating for any reason other than being hungry, create other habits. I have found that taking some sort of action helps me the most. Here are some examples:

- **Journaling helps process emotions.** If you're feeling emotions, try journaling about what's going on (good or bad).
- **Take a walk (take the dog or a family member!)**
- **Play a game**
- **Read a book**
- **Call a friend**
- **Chew sugarless gum** (this one really helps me when I have the munchies because it gives me that oral fix)
- **Drink water** – often when we feel hungry, our body actually needs water. Water can also be a temporary appetite suppressant. If you think you're hungry, try chugging a glass of water and wait a few minutes. You may find that does the trick (without adding unnecessary calories!).
- **Clean/Organize** – keeping yourself busy by cleaning out a drawer, organizing a closet, sweeping the floor, etc. keeps you from eating AND helps you be productive! Win/win! Also, if your desire to eat is emotional in nature, cleaning/organizing can help you feel better.
- **Paint your nails**
- **Brush your teeth**

Day 24: Eat at the Kitchen Table

I have a bad habit of eating while I'm sitting in my favorite recliner, watching TV. I'm talking mindless evening eating (not eating meals).

What I have found is that when I sit on the couch or in the recliner instead of sitting at the dinner table, I tend to eat less healthy food (and way more of it). That's because I'm not really paying attention to what I'm eating. I'm simply chowing down on junk food while my attention is on the TV.

Another bad habit people can fall prey to is to eat in the car. Grabbing whatever you can as you fly out the door (usually not exactly healthy food unless you are **really** planning ahead) and mindlessly eating it while you are rushing around isn't healthy either.

Instead, develop more intentionality around eating. Try sitting down at the dinner table when you eat (meals or snacks). If you sit down and eat at the dinner table, you are more likely to make healthier choices and practice portion control, thus avoiding overeating.

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 25: Research Your Restaurants Before Dining Out

Not all restaurants are created equal.

It's no secret that fast-food dining is terrible for you. But where can you go to get a break from cooking and still make a healthy choice?

Enter the healthy restaurant!

Many fast-casual restaurants have been coming into the market for exactly this reason. With an increase in consumers wanting healthier choices, many entrepreneurs have been stepping up to meet that demand.

Take some time to research the restaurants you want to try. Look at their menu, their ingredients, and their nutritional values. The internet is wonderful for this purpose, and many restaurants now have this info on their sites. You can also learn if they responsibly source their ingredients (information they are usually more than happy to provide).

You can also check [here](#) and [here](#) for some ideas to get started (I love Jason's!). Be sure to check out local options too, not just chain restaurants.

Also, study the restaurant menu online and decide what you'll order before you leave your home. Don't wing it because chances are good that you'll be hungry by the time you sit to order. Nothing good ever comes from ordering (or shopping) when you get too hungry!

Tips to help you when you eat out:

- Be prepared to request changes to your order. Ask nicely, and you shall receive.
- Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets. Think about it – how can they offer you so much food for that low(ish) price?
- Split desserts – sometimes it only takes a few bites to satisfy that craving
- Portion Control! If you happen to know a certain restaurant serves large portions, request they pack up half of it before they place your food on

the table. That way you'll be much more likely to eat a reasonable portion rather than gorging yourself.

Day 26: Get Your Kids in the Kitchen!

There are so many benefits to having the kids help you in the kitchen. Yes, it IS more work, but the payoffs are big and important. And more often than not, it can be a ton of fun.

Letting the kids help with meal planning, prep and clean up:

- Teaches them about where food comes from, what it looks like, and how to make it into what the family eats (if you're cooking, baking, etc.)
- Teaches them skills to take care of themselves and be self-sufficient
- Gives them a sense of their own abilities
- Helps them feel they are a contributing member of the family
- Teaches them about the work that it takes to run a family
- Can be the kick start to many interesting conversations and wonderful learning opportunities (for both kids and parents!)
- Time and time again, I have read (and experienced) how kids are much more excited about eating (and trying) healthy foods when they are involved in the process. Do it together – let them pick a new fruit or vegetable to try and figure out together how to prepare it.

To keep them safe in the kitchen while helping:

- Give them age-appropriate tasks – ex: stirring, measuring, etc.
- Teach them about safety – such as: the stove is hot; knives are sharp
- Supervise!

Day 27: Cook at Home

For the past 40 years or so, people have been eating away from home more, which is contributing to a decrease in nutrient consumption and an increase in health problems.

I am a firm believer that anything cooked at home will be healthier than a comparable item purchased at a restaurant (or mass prepared at the grocery store).

When you cook at home, you have more control over ingredients and portion sizes, so aim to cook at home more often than eating out. You'll most likely consume less sodium, less sugar, less fat, and far fewer calories.

In addition, a study by [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#), shows that cooking at home has also been linked to more consumption of fruits, veggies, and whole grains. I believe this is because you have more control when you're in charge of what's on the menu.

Another huge benefit to cooking at home is the savings your wallet will enjoy. Buying groceries and cooking at home is far less expensive than eating the same meal at a restaurant.

Cooking isn't a specialty that only trained chefs can do. What's great about cooking is that you can get creative, explore, and experiment with it!

Here are some helpful kitchen tools that make providing a healthy meal easier in the midst of busy life:

- **A crock pot** – this is a lifesaver! Put the ingredients in before you go to work, then come home to dinner already cooked and still hot!
 - Check out these family-favorite recipes:
 - [Slow cooker baked potatoes](#) go well with [Tangy BBQ Chicken](#)!
 - [Turkey Rice Soup](#) is just the thing for a cold day!
 - [Sloppy Joes](#) are a family favorite and delicious in the crock pot!
 - [Peach Crisp](#) is the perfect dessert to make in the slow cooker!
 - Need an easy side dish or way to add veggies to spaghetti? Try making [spaghetti squash in the slow cooker](#)!
- **A food processor** saves countless prep time but doing the chopping for you in seconds.

- Hearty and incredible, this [baked oatmeal](#) takes only a few minutes to put together thanks to the chopping power of my food processor!
- These [zucchini muffins](#) hardly stand a chance at sticking around, and you'll love making them because the food processor does the heavy lifting.
- **A pressure cooker** saves time by cooking food faster – perfect for those days you are in a bit of a rush
 - Our [Wild Rice recipe](#) is the perfect example!

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

Day 28: Try a Meatless Meal Each Week

Meatless meals are centered around lentils, beans, vegetables, whole grains (and possibly dairy). Basing meals on plant-based proteins is nutrient-rich and budget-friendly.

Even if you are not a vegetarian, reducing your meat intake can be healthy for your wallet, your waistline, and your health.

5 Benefits to eating more meatless meals:

You may lose weight

In 2013, the [*Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*](#) published the findings of a 5 year study based on the dietary data from over 70,000 participants in 5 different groups: meat eater, semi-meat eaters (eat meat occasionally), pesco-vegetarians (vegetarians who eat fish), lacto-ovo vegetarians (vegetarians who eat dairy), and vegans (vegetarians who don't eat any animal products).

The study found an association between eating patterns and weight. Its findings showed that people in each of the 5 groups ate about the same number of calories (around 2,000), except for the semi-vegetarians, who ate around 1,700 calories per day. It also found that vegans had the lowest average [BMI](#) as well as the fewest number of vegans who were obese (having a BMI of 30 or greater). At the same time, the meat-eating group had the highest average BMI and the greatest number of people who were obese.

Even though caloric intake was similar across the board, there was a significant difference in the types of nutrients being consumed. The study found that the meat eaters consumed the least amount of plant proteins, fiber and magnesium while also consuming the greatest amounts of heart disease-linked fatty acids.

The takeaway: consuming saturated fats (meat and dairy being the primary source) raises the likelihood of having a higher BMI due to the difference in nutrients being consumed.

You may reduce your risk of cancer

Loma Linda University conducted a 10-year study of nearly 70,000 Seventh Day Adventists to find out the effects of a vegan diet on the body. Their findings show an association between eating less meat and a [reduced risk for cancer](#), especially, colorectal cancer, gastrointestinal cancer, and breast cancer.

You may lower your blood pressure

Eating plant-based meals naturally increases your fiber, vitamins and mineral intake, while [reducing risk of heart disease](#).

The same study from Loma Linda University also found that the closer to vegetarian you are, the lower your risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

The takeaway: consuming saturated fats (primary source is meat and dairy) raises your cholesterol levels, and high cholesterol levels increase your risk of heart disease. When you ditch meat (even occasionally), that automatically lowers the amount of saturated fat in your diet, which also reduces your risk for heart disease.

You will save money on your grocery bill

Vegetables (as well as beans and grains) are less expensive than the least expensive cuts of meat, pound for pound. So even though you would be increasing how much you spend on produce and legumes, you would be spending less overall.

A study published in the [Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition](#) in 2015 compared the cost of eating government-recommended (includes meat) weekly meal plans to the cost of eating plant-based meal plans. It found that the government-recommended diet cost approximately \$14 more dollars per week than the comparable plant-based diet did, adding up to an extra \$700+ a year for food.

You might be happier

Fruits and veggies are natural mood boosters, so adding more of them to your diet may help boost your levels of happiness. According to a study of the eating habits of 80,000 people by the [University of Warwick](#), mental wellbeing

appears to increase with an increase in the number of fruit and vegetable servings consumed.

The magic number seemed to be 7 servings of fruit and veggies a day.

If you are a meat-eater or semi-vegetarian (like me), consider starting by adding a meatless day to your meal planning each week. You may find that you save a little money, feel better, and fit into your clothes a little easier.

Day 29: I Just Ate But I Still Want More!

Mindless eating and poor food choices are much more likely to happen when we are feeling lonely, bored, stressed, sad, and even happy.

This is when having a hobby comes in very handy. For me, it's needlework. If I'm busy doing a cross stitch project or crocheting something, I'm not using my hands to put food into my mouth.

Think about activities that will keep your mind and/or your hands occupied.

The other benefit of having a hobby? It's relaxing and stress-relieving!

Some ideas for keeping your mind and/or hands occupied:

Do your nails

Take a walk

Research a topic of interest

[Go for a bike ride](#)

Read a good book

Hit the gym

Shopping

Needlework project

Sewing/quilting

Stretch

Manicure/Pedicure

Fold Laundry

Have a dance party

Play an individual mental game: poker, Sudoku, Mahjonn, etc.

Play a family game: Uno, Monopoly, chess, etc

Shower

Brush your teeth

Help children with their homework

Give your dog a bath

[Get out with the family](#)

The list could go on and on!

Day 30: Take Your Time Eating and Chew Slowly

Interesting Fact: it takes approximately [20 minutes](#) from the time you start eating for the brain to tell the body that you are full.

A study has linked slower eating with [reduced caloric intake](#).

Previous studies have shown that eating more slowly and chewing food more completely leads to [decreased food intake](#), better digestion and absorption of nutrients, better appetite regulation, and increased feelings of satisfaction.

Based on these findings, by simply slowing down how quickly you eat, you can lose weight, feel more full in between meals, and experience [better digestion](#) (especially for people who suffer from irritable bowel syndrome).

Thoughts

Use this space to create lists, charts, plans, make notes, etc

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is A LOT of information in the media, online, and in print about diets and eating healthy and lifestyles.

Consider the example of [eating eggs](#). They were considered great to eat and very healthy – a wonderful source of protein. Then it was all over the media that eggs would increase your cholesterol and were terrible for health. Then it became eat egg whites only. Now I think it's back to eggs are healthy.

Consider, also, how a different diet becomes popular every few years. It was the Eating for your Blood type, then the Atkins Diet, then the South Beach Diet, then the Paleo Diet, followed by the Keto Diet (with possibly a few other popular diets in there that I didn't mention).

Hearing something different every time you turn around (or at least it feels that way) can be enough to make your head spin. Which advice is correct?

The reality is that in some instances pieces of what seems to be conflicting information can all be true and even proven by studies. In other instances, advice changes as our knowledge changes and increases.

I think one important take away is that it's important to research things before we jump on board the latest trend.

I think, also, that we need to listen to our bodies and make decisions based on how we feel. If we eat dairy and then feel terrible, maybe that means that dairy doesn't work for us – even if it's been shown to be healthy for people.

As you have read this book and worked toward implementing the tips discussed in these pages, my hope is that you found the tips that help you feel better and work with your lifestyle. It is possible that not every tip will work for you, and that's ok!

Remember, each tiny step you take toward living a healthier lifestyle is worth the effort and will pay dividends in the long run! Don't worry about doing this journey perfectly – simply undertake the journey the best way that you can and get back on track anytime you slip.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For More Information:

[Health Castle](#)

[How to Understand and Use Nutrition Labels](#)

[Get the Low Down on Sugar](#)

Check out **Ultimate Bundles!** These bundles are collections of resources focused around one major topic area. They are amazing resources from incredible bloggers all around the internet. [Essential Oils Bundles](#), [Homemaking Bundles](#), [Parenting Bundles](#) and more! Interested in becoming an affiliate? [Go here!](#)

Useful Apps:

MyFitnessPal - tracks calories, exercise, and water intake

Fooducate - helps find healthy food alternatives at the grocery store

Wondering about whether taking supplements are worth it?

Consider using [Juice Plus](#) before buying synthetic vitamins or supplements.

Saving Money on Grocery Shopping:

- Scan your receipt and save with [Ibotta](#) (plus, a \$10 bonus for signing up and redeeming your first offer – money payable through PayPal!). I can't say enough good things about [Ibotta](#)! I love [Ibotta](#) because:
 - you can save from your favorite stores and save on fresh foods, staples, wine and other drinks, laundry detergent, household items, and **so much more!**
 - You can use this app online and in stores, and it includes more than just groceries! Use it on pet supplies, at fabric stores, crafting stores, even hotels.com, Jet.com, and Amazon!
 - It's easy to use: simply pick the offers you want from a list of available offers, scan your grocery receipt and claim your money!
 - You can work with multiple people as a team to earn bonus offers (extra money earned for redeeming a certain number of offers in a month, for example). Would you please [join my team](#) so we can work together to earn those rewards?
 - Payouts range from \$0.25 to as much as \$5 or \$7 for each item you redeem, so payouts can be pretty good. Combined with bonuses,

you can earn tens to hundreds of dollars back a month, depending on your shopping habits and how you use the app.

- **Checkout 51** is another grocery money-saving app. It works similarly to Ibotta, in that you pick out the offers you can use before you scan your receipt. Then you scan your receipt and receive credit for the money. Once you reach a certain threshold, you can cash out all money earned. The payouts are similar to Ibotta's, and the selection for groceries and household goods is similar. However, I haven't found an ability to use it online or in such a vast variety of merchants. It is nice to use in conjunction with Ibotta.
- **Fetch Rewards** is another scan and save app for your phone. The payouts that Fetch offers are smaller than with Ibotta or Checkout 51. However, you have less work to do because you don't have to prepick offers to redeem. Simply scan your receipt, answer any questions that might come up regarding the items you purchased (just verifying purchases), and claim your rewards. It works nicely in tandem with Ibotta and Checkout 51.
- **For more grocery saving tips: check out our series of posts with 6 tips each, filled with more ideas on how to save big on groceries.**
 1. [Part 1](#)
 2. [Part 2](#)
 3. [Part 3](#)

Additional Free Downloads:

[Meal Planning Package free download](#)

[5 Easy Weeknight Meals Recipes](#)

For More Recipes, family life-related information and tips, saving money tips and more, visit [Made In A Pinch!](#)

Please reach out to me at any time with comments, questions, and feedback!

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