

# STARTING HEALTHY HABITS

Every day is an opportunity to move towards a healthy lifestyle. You can start with easy healthy habits today that will help you feel better and may prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Regular things you do without much effort, such as brushing your teeth and getting ready for work, are formed by repetitive behavior. Whether you want to eat more fruits and vegetables, exercise more, or get a restful night's sleep, you can practice these tips to create and maintain healthy habits.

## 3 TIPS TO START A HEALTHY HABIT

### 1. Start small and be specific

Begin with reasonable actions that are clearly defined. For example, instead of starting with a broad goal like “exercise everyday” specify the action to “take a 10 min walk after work.” Small and specific goals will help you to succeed and give you the confidence to add more healthy habits to your daily routine.

### 2. Be Patient

Building a new habit takes time. If you fall short or miss some days, don't get discouraged. It is part of the process of creating a new habit. Just make sure to come back and continue with your specific goals and actions.

### 3. Track Your Progress and Celebrate

Keeping track of your progress will help you with motivation and stay on track. Use a journal, app, or a calendar to record your activities. And celebrating small wins, like completing a week of your new habit, can provide positive reinforcement and encourage continued commitment to your goals.

## HEALTHY HABITS INSPIRATION IDEAS

- ◆ Eat more fruits and vegetables
- ◆ Drink more water
- ◆ Cook more meals at home
- ◆ Take an exercise break
- ◆ Move your body for 30 minutes every day
- ◆ Get 7-9 hours of sleep per night
- ◆ Limit screen time

Starting a new healthy habit doesn't have to be overwhelming. Experts say the best way to form a new habit is to tie it to an existing one. So next time you finish eating your lunch right after, take an exercise break, even if it is a five-minute walk. The “habit stacking” strategy makes it easier to add a new behavior to your daily routine.

For more information about healthy eating and exercise habits, visit <https://www.nutrition.gov/>.

Originally posted June 2025, written by Ana Nunez Zepeda, MPH, NDTR.

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