



The Pilates Connection Weight Loss Challenge

NEWSLETTER

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THIS WEEK'S TOPIC...

25 WAYS TO GET BACK ON TRACK TODAY

Don't Give Up on Your Goals!

-Nicole Nichols, Fitness Instructor & Health Educator, Sparkpeople.com

Not long ago, you were energetic and determined to start your healthy lifestyle. Starting with enthusiasm and hope, you watched your food intake diligently, exercised like it was going out of style, and even avoided the temptation that seemed to lurk around every corner. You were confident that you were going to reach your goals once and for all!

Then certain tragedy struck! You ate an extra piece of birthday cake. Realizing you had "blown" your diet, you ate another and another and couldn't get it together the next day either. Or worse, you missed one workout, and that turned into a whole week away from the gym. After that, your momentum to start over again was gone, and your gym bag hasn't left the closet since.

Every time you misstep on your healthy journey, you have two choices: to keep walking backwards, which will surely take you even further away from your goals; or to accept your lack of perfection as normal and forgivable, and take not one, but two positive steps down the path that brings you closer to the future you want.

If you're reading this, you might have been walking backwards for a while. But instead of waiting for the next day, week, month or even year to overhaul your habits, start TODAY. And start small. You can't go from the recliner to running or from burgers to Brussels sprouts in an afternoon. But you can do one, two or even a handful of small things that will help you regain your momentum for healthy living.

When you feel like getting back on track is overwhelming, try one (or more) of these small steps each day.

1. Try a short workout. Even five minutes is better than nothing. For ideas browse our [video library](#) or [workout generator](#).

2. Try a new recipe. Cooking healthy foods can be fun and it never has to be bland.
3. Eat a healthy breakfast. Your morning meal sets the stage for the rest of your day, so start it off right! [Get lots of breakfast ideas here](#).
4. Drink your water. Try to aim for 8 cups each day and you'll feel the difference!
5. Look at [Motivational SparkPages](#). Seeing how others overcome similar struggles and obstacles can be a great source of motivation.
6. [Track your food today](#). No matter how it adds up, you'll learn from it.
7. Update your SparkPage. It's a visual way to track your ups and downs, but also your progress.
8. Share your goals. Whether you post them on the [Message Boards](#) or share them with a friend, you'll be more accountable.
9. [Exercise for 10 minutes](#). Jump rope, march in place, or do some crunches. Small amounts do add up to something big!
10. Find a buddy. Get support from friends, whether you need someone to listen or a mentor to give you ideas and encouragement.
11. Take a walk. Don't worry about how long or far you go—just get out there!
12. Create [a motivational collage](#). Include pictures of your goal and reasons why you want to get there.
13. Go shopping for some healthy foods. [Use this shopping list for ideas](#).
14. Check the nutrition facts [before you go out to eat](#). That way, you can make an informed choice.
15. Ride your bike. Even a leisurely ride has benefits for your body and mind.
16. Work in the yard. Gardening and yard work is a great way to add activity to your day.
17. Take the stairs. Even if this is the only thing you do all day, you'll feel stronger for it.
18. [Rack up those SparkPoints!](#) You earn them for every healthy task you do on the site—talk about motivating! Aim for a certain milestone, such as 100 points, and then [reward yourself with a SparkGoodie!](#)
19. Listen to an inspirational song. Better yet, make a playlist of them so you can turn to it whenever you need a boost.

20. Re-start your program. Sometimes it's easier to get back on track when you have a clean slate.

21. [Measure your portions](#). It's a simple way to learn how much you're eating.

22. Eat a piece of fruit. Even if 5-9 servings of fruit and vegetables sounds impossible to you, one is doable.

23. [Slow down during meals](#). You'll be less likely to overeat and more likely to enjoy your meal.

24. Play! What kids call "play," we often call "exercise." Play a sport, a game, or use the playground equipment to bring the fun back into fitness.

25. Learn something new. Sometimes simply [taking a quiz](#) or [reading an article](#) about nutrition, fitness, or health can change your mindset and get you back on track.

In tennis, losing one point isn't the end of the world. It happens to the best of them. In fact, if you can consistently win a few more points than you lose, you may end up in the hall of fame. With healthy eating and exercising, as long as you're consistently out-stepping your steps back, you're ahead of the game. If you expect perfection (and many of us do), you're setting yourself up for disappointment and guilt.

You CAN get back on track today. Even if you're moving slowly, you'll be moving in the right direction!

This is a great article from Spark People. Please take a few minutes to read it even if you are not following any of their on-line programs.

Remember to be kind to yourselves and keep on plugging away. It's better to take one step back, regroup, and take two steps forward than to stay behind. That is what life is all about. Set small goals for the season and stick to them.

Remember to take care of what means the most to you. Take time to breathe and enjoy the season of family and friends. Make the most of every day and have a great week!

MAKE SOMEDAY TODAY!

RECIPE

CHICKEN & SPINACH SOUP WITH FRESH PESTO

- 2 teaspoons plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided
 - 1/2 cup carrot or diced red bell pepper
 - 1 large boneless, skinless chicken breast (about 8 ounces), cut into quarters
 - 1 large clove garlic, minced
 - 5 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons dried marjoram
 - 6 ounces baby spinach, coarsely chopped
 - 1 15-ounce can cannellini beans or great northern beans, rinsed
 - 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
 - 1/3 cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves
 - Freshly ground pepper to taste
 - 3/4 cup plain or herbed multigrain croutons for garnish (optional)
1. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add carrot (or bell pepper) and chicken; cook, turning the chicken and stirring frequently, until the chicken begins to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute more. Stir in broth and marjoram; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is cooked through, about 5 minutes.
 2. With a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken pieces to a clean cutting board to cool. Add spinach and beans to the pot and bring to a gentle boil. Cook for 5 minutes to blend the flavors.
 3. Combine the remaining 1 tablespoon oil, Parmesan and basil in a food processor (a mini processor works well). Process until a coarse paste forms, adding a little water and scraping down the sides as necessary.
 4. Cut the chicken into bite-size pieces. Stir the chicken and pesto into the pot. Season with pepper. Heat until hot. Garnish with croutons, if desired.

Nutritional Information

5 Servings: Per Serving - Calories 204; Total Fat 8g, Cholesterol 29 mg; Sodium 691 mg; Total Carbohydrate 16 g; Protein 18g, Fiber 6 g. **Exchanges:** 1 Starch, 1 Vegetable, 2 Lean Meat, 1 Fat

Recipe from eatingwell.com

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