



The Pilates Connection Weight Loss Challenge

NEWSLETTER

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THIS WEEK'S TOPIC...

NEW HABITS, NEW YOU

-by Catherine Winters, Prevention Magazine, March 2010

Remember those healthy resolutions you made earlier this year? If you need a little extra motivation to stick to them, try this: According to recent research, adults who ate more fruits and veggies, exercised a few hours a week, and watched their weight significantly slashed their risk of cardiovascular disease (and of any disease-related death) in just 4 years.

It's never too late to clean up your act. Adopt the same behaviors, and your health will improve as dramatically; keep at it, and the benefits multiply. Here are three habits to start, and how quickly you'll see the results of your efforts.

Eat More Fruits and Veggies

Improves health...in 14 days. Produce is loaded with nutrients that may lower blood pressure, including potassium, magnesium, calcium, and antioxidants – that's why fruits and vegetables are the cornerstone of the DASH (Dietary Approached to Stop Hypertension) study. Researchers found that upping produce intake and switching to low-fat dairy products lowered systolic (the upper number in blood pressure readings) and diastolic (the lower number) by 3 points in 2 weeks – almost as much as medication can achieve. Reducing sodium intake as well – to just 1,500 mg per day, or about 2/3 teaspoon – can shave another 5 and 3 points, respectively. Hypertension forces the heart to work harder to circulate blood, says Daniel Jones, MD a hypertension specialist and chancellor of the University of Mississippi. Over time, that causes damage to blood vessels and arteries, which may lead to kidney or heart disease. In fact, a published meta-analysis found that individuals who ate more than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day had roughly a 20% lower risk of coronary heart disease, compared with people who ate less than 3 servings per day. According to the Nurses' Health Study, following a diet that lowers blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight, and exercising regularly may help prevent 53% of new cases of hypertension in women at risk.

Get Started! To up your intake of fresh product to 5 or more servings per day, try these simple strategies: **Keep your favorite fruits visible**, such as in a bowl on the kitchen counter – if you see them regularly, you'll be more likely to eat them. (One serving of fruit equates to one medium apple or banana or ½ cup of canned fruit.) Also, **make sure half of your plate is filled with a vegetable at every meal.** (One serving equals 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables or ½ cup of another vegetable, such as baby carrots or corn.)

For more information on the DASH diet – which also recommends six servings of whole grains; three to six of lean meat, poultry, and fish; and two of fats and oils, for 1,600 calories a day.

Exercise 60 Minutes Every Week

Improves Health – In 90 Days. Older women who walked at a moderate pace for 20 minutes 3 times a week for 3 months improved their aerobic fitness by 12%, according to research conducted by Wayne Westcott, PhD, Director of fitness research at Quincy College. Participants also lowered their resting heart rate from 75 beats per minute to 68. Most people have resting heart rates between 60 and 80 BPM – the closer to 60, the healthier your heart.

You can achieve additional health benefits with a more taxing regimen; Australian scientists found that adults who did at least three 60-minute sessions of intensive activities (such as resistance training or Spinning) every week for about a month saw a 16% improvement in aerobic fitness, which signifies better heart health and muscle endurance. They also lowered their cholesterol and blood glucose levels as well as weight, body mass index, and waist circumference and reported feeling more energetic, say Lynda Norton, PhD, lead author and research associate at Flinders University in South Australia.

Also researchers at Washington University School of Medicine found that 1 hour of vigorous walking or cycling 5 days a week can reverse age-related deterioration of your heart's function after 7 months.

Get Started! “The best exercise is the one you’ll do,” says Steven Blair, PED, a professor of exercise science at the University of South Carolina. **Choose any activity you enjoy – be it walking, cycling, or dancing – and aim for a minimum of 20 to 25 minutes a day.** Break it down, if you have to, into two 10-minute sessions. Slowly increase the frequency, duration, and intensity in small increments. If you miss a day, pick up again the next day, but still try to meet the weekly total. And if you want to track the benefits of your program to your resting heart rate, lay a finger on your wrists to find your pulse, count the number of beats in 15 seconds, and then multiply it by 4 to get your resting rate per minute.

Cut Saturated Fat

Improves Health – in 90-180 Days. It helps lower cholesterol, which not only reduces your risk of heart disease and stroke but also keeps your brain healthy. A recent 40-year study of nearly 10,000 people found that having high cholesterol increases your risk for Alzheimer's disease by 57%; borderline high levels raise vascular dementia risk by 50%.

“Saturated fat helps produce unhealthy LDL cholesterol,” says Vincent Bufalino, MD, a Chicago-based cardiologist and spokes person for the American Heart Association. Too much LDL in your system, and it begins to build up in the arteries that transport blood to your heart and brain. Over time, LDL cholesterol turns into plaque that hardens, narrowing arteries and making them less pliable.

Get Started! The more saturated fat you cut – regardless of age – the more your LDL drops, according to a study published in an American Heart Association journal. **Limit saturated fat to 7% of your daily calories** (about 112 calories for a 1,600-calorie day or 10 to 11 g. of saturated fat) and you can lower LDL by about 10%. Some guidelines to help cut saturated fat and lower cholesterol: Eat red meat no more than twice a week, switch to fat-free milk, and increase your fiber intake to 20 to 25 g. daily (which can lower LDL up to another 10%), says Bufalino. If you make these tweaks to your diet, your cholesterol should begin to improve in 3 to 6 months.

Weight Loss Challenge Winner of the Week:

Last week's winner was Karen Novak. She lost .94%! Way to go Karen...enjoy your two free classes.

RECIPES

Healthified Asparagus-Zucchini Egg Bake

Nonstick cooking spray

- 12 ounces fresh asparagus or 1 9-ounce package Green Giant® frozen asparagus cuts
- 1 small yellow sweet pepper, cut into 1/4-inch-wide strips
- 1/2 of a small zucchini, halved lengthwise and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices (about 1/2 cup)
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped bottled roasted red sweet peppers, drained
- 1/2 cup shredded reduced-fat mozzarella cheese (2 ounces)
- 2 cups refrigerated or frozen egg product, thawed
- 1/2 cup fat-free milk
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried dillweed
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons Gold Medal® all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons finely shredded Parmesan cheese
- Fresh dill sprigs (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly coat a 2-quart rectangular baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
2. If using fresh asparagus, snap off and discard woody bases. If desired, scrape off scales. Cut into 1-inch-long pieces.
3. In a large saucepan, bring about 1 inch water to boiling. Add asparagus, yellow sweet pepper strips, zucchini, and onion. Return just to boiling; reduce heat slightly. Cover and boil about 5 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain well. Stir in roasted red sweet peppers. Spread asparagus-pepper mixture evenly in baking dish. Sprinkle with half of the mozzarella cheese.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together egg product, milk, snipped or dried dill, salt, and black pepper until well mixed. Whisk in flour, making sure it is completely combined. Pour egg mixture over vegetables in baking dish. Bake, uncovered, about 35 minutes or until slightly puffed and top shakes set. Sprinkle with remaining mozzarella cheese and the Parmesan cheese. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. If desired, garnish individual servings with dill sprigs.

Servings 8. Calories 80. .5 Starch, 1 oz. protein

Healthified Quick Cinnamon Rolls

Happy Easter and Passover. Enjoy this with eggs.

- 1 package (8 oz) Pillsbury® refrigerated crescent rolls
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar

1/4 teaspoon vanilla
1 to 2 teaspoons orange juice or milk

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease an 8- or 9-inch round baking pan; set aside. Unroll dough (do not separate); press perforations to seal. Brush dough with melted butter. In a small bowl, stir together the granulated sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over dough. Starting from a long side, roll up dough. Using a sharp knife, slice dough into eight pieces. Arrange rolls, cut sides up, in prepared pan, flattening each slightly.
2. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until golden. Cool rolls slightly in pan on a wire rack. Remove rolls from pan. In a small bowl, stir together powdered sugar, vanilla, and enough orange juice or milk to make an icing of drizzling consistency. Drizzle icing over warm rolls. Serve warm.

Servings 8. Calories 170. 1.5 Starches, 1 Fat.

Recipes from eatbetteramerica.com.

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