

# Health and Wellness News

January 2020



The beginning of a new year is when many of us make resolutions or set new goals. Yet, statistics show that most people abandon their resolutions within the first few weeks of the year. And, while goals are useful in providing a sense of direction, the process or system we use to achieve them is more important.

This is where habits come in. For example, you can set a goal to reach your ideal weight, but the focus should be on your eating and exercise habits. Once you get to your desired weight, you still need to maintain those habits in order to stay there. So, focusing more on creating a system or process for maintaining habits is what matters most.

## HERE ARE FIVE STEPS FOR CHANGING AND STICKING TO HABITS:

**AWARENESS:** Start by tracking your current habits so you know where you are now. Track using a log, such as a food diary or tobacco log. With whatever habit you're tracking, it's important to also identify your triggers to better understand the environmental or emotional cues that are driving your behavior. Every habit has at least one trigger, which is simply an event that precedes the habit or that results in an urge to do something.

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** If you're trying to break a negative habit, create a positive habit to replace the negative one for each trigger. For example, if sitting down to watch TV triggers a craving for chips, substitute them with a healthy snack like carrots and hummus. If you're trying to establish a positive habit, create a trigger that will happen every day. For example, schedule time for a walk on your phone and set an alert.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Tell someone else about your commitment and get support. Many of us struggle with being accountable to ourselves, but checking in with others can help you stay on track. In fact, you have the option of scheduling coaching sessions, which are designed to provide you with support and accountability. Take advantage of that benefit!

**REWARD YOURSELF:** Assign points for following through on your habits and redeem them for things you want. For example, you can give yourself 1 point for every 15 minutes of exercise and reward yourself with a massage once you reach 30 points. The Wellness-Connect portal also allows you to track many of your habits and earn points toward certain incentives. Are you taking advantage of that benefit?

**EXPECT SETBACKS:** It would be unrealistic to expect to stick to your habits 100% of the time. It's normal for changes like a big project or stressful event to derail you. If you slip, get back on track as soon as you can. Instead of giving up, recommit to your goal. Change is not easy so be kind and patient with yourself.



# WHY DIETS DON'T WORK

Are you considering going on a weight loss diet? There is no shortage of information out there about fad diets that guarantee to give you results. If you've tried dieting before, you've likely experienced how difficult it can be to get and sustain long-term results.

Here are three reasons why diets don't work and what to do instead:

**1. Weight loss through dieting is often temporary.** Diets are either about restricting calories or eliminating certain groups of foods. This can result in feelings of deprivation and habits that are hard to sustain. Instead shift your focus to eating healthy, whole foods. Start by adding in more veggies.

**2. Dieting disrupts your hunger and satiety hormones.** Your body is designed for survival so when you restrict what you eat, your body thinks you're in danger of starvation. This can cause your metabolism to slow down. Instead of reducing the quantity, focus on improving the quality by eating more nutrient-dense foods.

**3. Dieting can damage your relationship with food.** It can create a tug-of-war between your desire to lose weight and your desire to eat. Wanting to live up to an ideal standard of beauty can also be damaging to your self-esteem and body image. Instead practice eating mindfully by eating slowly, chewing thoroughly, and savoring every bite in order to feel full and satisfied. It may sound contradictory, but loving and accepting yourself where you are now will help you appreciate your body, which is a healthier way to reach your goal.



## 3 TIPS FOR STICKING TO YOUR NEW YEAR'S FITNESS GOALS

### JANUARY EXERCISE TIPS

Are you one of the many people who makes a New Year's resolution to start exercising and quickly abandons it? Or have you given up on trying altogether?

There is a better way. Instead of throwing in the towel, try these 3 simple steps to help you achieve your fitness goals, whether you start in the New Year or any other time.

**1. CREATE A SPECIFIC PLAN.** Take a look at your schedule and lifestyle, then ask yourself when you can best fit exercise into your day. Start by identifying days and times that are convenient and that you can easily stick to. Next, decide what type of exercise you'll do. Make it something you enjoy and vary your chosen activities so that you are getting both cardio and strength training.



**2. BE REALISTIC.** Decide how much time you'll spend. It's okay to start with just 10-15 minutes and build from there. You're more likely to do it if it doesn't feel overwhelming. Start with just 2-3 days then increase it. It's better to develop a solid foundation and continue building than to start with an overly ambitious plan and give up.

**3. RECRUIT AN EXERCISE BUDDY.** Having someone to work out with increases both the enjoyment and the accountability. This should be fairly easy this time of year since so many people are working toward a fitness goal. Find a walking buddy

at work or recruit a friend to join you for a yoga or other fitness class. Having a partner reduces the likelihood that you'll skip it on those occasions that you don't feel like doing it.

# Recipe of the Month

## SWEET POTATO COCONUT CURRY SOUP

### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):

- \* 1 medium white onion, diced
- \* 1/2 Tbsp coconut oil
- \* 4 cloves garlic, minced
- \* 1 large sweet potato, cubed
- \* 2 1/2 Tbsp curry powder, divided
- \* 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper, divided
- \* 1 tsp sea salt, divided
- \* 1/2 tsp black pepper
- \* 3 cups coconut milk
- \* 1 15 oz. can of chickpeas
- \* 3 Tbsp olive oil
- \* 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- \* 1/2 tsp ginger powder



### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Add coconut oil to a large pot and sauté onions and garlic in coconut oil for a few minutes.
3. Add 1/2 tsp each of salt and black pepper, 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper, sweet potatoes, and 2 Tbsp curry powder.
4. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.
5. Add coconut milk, bring to a simmer, reduce heat to low, then cover and cook for 25 minutes.
6. While the soup is cooking, prep chickpeas by tossing them in olive oil and remaining spices (1/2 tsp curry powder, 1/4 tsp sea salt, 1/2 tsp garlic powder, 1/2 tsp ginger powder, 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper).
7. Spread them evenly on a baking sheet and bake for 25-30 minutes until crispy on outside.
8. Once soup is cooked, puree using a blender or food processor.
9. Return soup to pot. Add baked chickpeas when serving.



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