

# Getting Your Diet Right: Easy, Affordable Ways To Eat Well

When you hear the word diet, it's common to automatically start thinking about weight and weight loss. In this day and age, we devote a lot of time and money to diets, usually with the aim of dropping dress sizes. It's really important to be a healthy weight, but losing pounds shouldn't be your only goal when you're planning your weekly menu or doing your grocery shopping. Your body relies on food for valuable nutrients, and if you eat well, you're much more likely to enjoy good health. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to spend a fortune or track down exotic ingredients to be healthy. If you want to make improvements to your diet, here are some easy, affordable ways to eat well.



## Good and bad foods

As a nation, we're obsessed with good and bad foods, and this can lead to an unhealthy attitude to eating. The truth is

that there are some foods that are much more nutritious than others. But you don't have to abandon everything you enjoy to be healthy. It's a good idea to moderate your intake of saturated fat, salt and sugar, but that doesn't mean you can't ever enjoy a slice of pizza or a doughnut! Try and achieve a balance and make sure your diet delivers everything your body needs. If you're trying to get in shape, you may assume that you need to cut out foods like bread and pasta, but there's nothing wrong with eating these foods in moderation, especially if you opt for whole grain versions. Your body needs carbohydrates for fuel, so resist the temptation to try fad diets that eliminate entire food groups. If you want to be healthy, but you can't bear the thought of life without burgers, swap ground beef for grilled turkey breasts and brioche buns for wholegrain bread. Or, stick to a healthy eating plan for 6 days a week and allow yourself a treat day (I love my treat day).



## **Tailoring your diet**

We're all unique, and some of us have different preferences and requirements than others. There's no universal manual that suits every single person. If you have underlying health issues or you have specific goals you want to achieve through a diet and exercise program, it's beneficial to tailor your diet. If you have kidney disease, for example, you may be advised to follow a renal diet by your doctor, or if you have anemia, a diet high in iron may be recommended. Trying to

build muscle tissue? You may benefit from more protein in your diet. A nutritionist will be able to work with you to work out a suitable diet plan if you have a food intolerance.

If you're unsure about what you should be eating or you want to improve your diet, seek advice from your doctor or a dietitian. Exercising on a regular basis with a trainer might be helpful too. They will also be able to give you some tips.



## **Cooking at home**

Cooking at home is one of the best ways to save money on shopping and make your diet healthier. If you rely on take-out and pre-made meals, you never really know what you're eating. If you cook for yourself, you can take control of how your food is prepared and which ingredients you use. You can also decide how much food to serve. The portion sizes in restaurants are often far larger than you would have at home and this can lead to overeating. If you're not a maestro in the kitchen, start looking for basic recipes online or buy a couple of books that specialize in easy, quick recipes (this blog has some easy ideas). Plan a menu in advance, write down all the ingredients you need and try batch cooking if you're pushed for time. Try and experiment with different flavors and be more adventurous as you become more confident.



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## Healthy snacking

One of the main reasons we turn to treats and unhealthy meals is a lack of time. If you tend to snack on chips or cookies or you grab a burger and fries or pizza on your lunch break, start preparing lunches the night before and buying healthier snacks from the grocery store. Nuts, seeds, fruit and raw vegetables are excellent options. You can take sandwiches, wraps, homemade soup or salads to work with you. If you're organized, and you've got healthy food to hand, this will save you time and money.

There are hundreds of articles about healthy eating out there. Sometimes, it can seem like you need to overhaul your life and start eating foods you've never even heard of to get your diet right. The truth is that making very simple changes to your diet can achieve incredible results. You don't have to give up everything you love, but it is helpful to learn to prioritize your health and find a balance. Try and cook at

home whenever possible and tailor your diet to make sure you get everything you need.

**This post has been contributed**