

Personal Power Tips for Adults!

Putting Power in Your Food and Physical Activity Choices

Before you start working with teens, put power in your own choices. Think about your body: how to fuel it and move it for a fun and healthy life. Then make healthful choices that fit your lifestyle, so you can do the things you want to do. You don't even need to give up foods or activities you like. Just follow these five moves for healthful eating and active living.

Five Moves for Healthful Eating and Active Living

Your body is a complex piece of machinery, but running it in peak condition does not require a complicated and time-consuming maintenance routine. These five easy steps—each with three action ideas—can help you develop healthier eating and active living habits.

1 BE REALISTIC

Make small changes over time in food choices and levels of physical activity. Small steps work better than giant leaps.

Add more fiber-rich beans and peas to your meals. Canned chickpeas are a delicious addition to a salad. Canned lentil or split pea soup is very satisfying for a fast lunch. And rice and beans make a great lunch or supper dish!

Are you a serious chocoholic? Think about this idea. Once or twice a week, trade in your favorite chocolate snack for chocolate pudding or cocoa made with low-fat milk to help build up your bones.

For delicious lower fat tacos, chili, or spaghetti sauce, place 1 pound of cooked ground beef in a strainer. Drain well, and continue with the recipe.

2 BE ADVENTUROUS

Expand your tastes to enjoy different kinds of foods. Plan a meal based on the food groups.

Have fun including at least one food from each of the major food groups.

Rent an adventure flick tonight. Take a taste adventure, too! Trade in your usual munchies for bright and crunchy pepper strips, jicama slices, frozen grapes, and baked bagel chips.

Take the family on a supermarket safari. Pick a food group, and let each person hunt down one food from that food group that he or she has never tried before.

3 BE FLEXIBLE

Balance food intake and physical activity over several days. No need to worry about just one meal or one day.

Eat a lighter breakfast and lunch to plan for "pizza with the works" for dinner.

Split an order of fries or a rich dessert with a friend.

Did you munch through a whole box of hot, buttered popcorn at the movies? Do not feel guilty! Next time you go out for fun, make plans to do something active, such as dancing or taking a walk through the park—along with a stop for frozen yogurt later.

4 BE SENSIBLE

Enjoy all foods, just don't overdo it. (To learn more about the amount you need from each of the major food groups, look at the MyPyramid Amounts of Foods—for YOU charts for women and men).

Put your snack on a plate, and skip the urge to eat straight from the bag. You will then be aware of how much you are eating. Use the food label to see how many calories and nutrients are in just one Serving Size.

Take a break from fried chicken, and trim fat and calories, too. You will like how great it tastes roasted, baked, broiled, or grilled instead.

Enjoy fruit in its most natural form; go easy on fruit juice. Choose whole fruits and vegetables; they are delicious and provide fiber, too.

5 BE ACTIVE

Walk the dog, and don't just watch the dog walk. Adults should start with a daily goal of at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity. Do not fret if time is tight—you can total up your 30 minutes in 10-minute chunks throughout the day.

Pump up your energy level. Take a brisk 10-minute walk in the morning, at lunch, and after dinner.

Try using a pedometer and increase your personal goal by a specific number of steps each week.

Be inefficient. Go up and down the stairs with each load of laundry, get up to change the TV channel; choose the furthest parking spot—not the closest.

Clean the house to a sparkling sheen! Vacuum, scrub, and sweep with vigor.

A Look at Your Food and Physical Activity Choices

Set your personal goals. Think about your own goals, and then jot them down.

Goal-Setting Steps

1. Set a realistic goal—one that is right for you, not someone else.
2. Make a plan to match your needs; plan for small, step-by-step changes.
3. Prepare for challenges. Allow time for change to happen.
4. Ask for help. Support others as they try to achieve their goals. Share your goal and plans with your family, and ask for their help.
5. Give yourself a break if you stray from your plan now and then.
6. Pat yourself on the back to celebrate your success!

Make your plan for healthful eating and active living.

For best results, plan to reach your goals in a slow, steady way. Choose one or two tips to follow for a week or two, and then choose another tip. Review your progress every month. You will see that small steps work better than giant leaps. Again, it is the same guidance you will pass on to teens.

Be a role model.

Teens learn how to act or what to expect by observing others: parents, program leaders, and teachers, as well as peers, celebrities, and other "heroes." They learn habits, mannerisms, attitudes, and beliefs. Intentional or not, modeling is a powerful learning tool for making healthful choices about food and active living.

Role models can have a positive or negative effect. For example, kids seeing you drink low-fat or fat-free milk reinforces the good health message. Watching you may have as much impact (probably even more) as telling them about calcium-rich drinks. In contrast, when you are physically inactive you are setting the poor example for inactive living. Teens notice when adults do not practice what they preach.

Write the actions you will take for each basic step.

Be Realistic

1. _____
2. _____

Be Adventurous

1. _____
2. _____

Be Flexible

1. _____
2. _____

Be Sensible

1. _____
2. _____

Be Active

1. _____
2. _____