

TOPHEALTH®

We Care About Your Health

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

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Dining Out Guilt-Free



Restaurant dining can mean a good time — and an abundance of fat, salt and calories. Next time you go out, take charge and have a healthier experience with these strategies:

☑ **Plan ahead.** Preview the menu online, and choose another restaurant if you're not satisfied with the

selections. Have a small snack before leaving home so you don't overindulge at the main meal.

☑ **Ditch the buffet.** Steer clear of all-you-can-eat situations. Enough said.

☑ **Ban "bad" carbs.** Decline the usual basket of bread or rolls before it reaches the table. If you can't wait for the entree, start with a light soup.

☑ **Cut the calories.** Ask for dressings, sauces, butter and sour cream on the side so you can control the amount you use. Order a half portion, or split the dish when it arrives and pack up half to take home (or share with a dining companion).

☑ **Switch it up.** Have a baked potato instead of fries, for example. Substitutions sometimes cost an extra dollar or two, but you'll save a lot more on medical bills by making healthier choices.

☑ **Know your rights.** Ask to have entrees baked or steamed rather than fried, and creamy sauces replaced by wine- or broth-based versions.

☑ **Drink responsibly.** Those extra cocktails not only add a lot of empty calories, but also may affect your judgment about how much to order and consume.

For specific tips by cuisine, take a look at the Nutrition Center (under Getting Healthy) at www.heart.org.

Know Your Numbers: The A1C Test

The A1C test, in combination with standard glucose testing, has helped people with diabetes monitor and control their disease. It is now being explored as an additional way to identify people at risk for diabetes. Criteria are being developed to improve the test's accuracy among different populations — making the A1C a powerful tool in the fight against the diabetes epidemic.



Smart Moves: Functional Fitness



Have you ever injured yourself doing everyday activities, even though you work out? Although traditional exercise routines are good for you, they tend to work muscles in isolation, while real-life activities require multiple muscles to work together. Functional fitness programs train and develop muscles to make it easier and safer to perform routine tasks, improve quality of life and prevent injury.

Functional exercises tend to be multijoint, multimuscle actions, often combining upper and lower body movements. The whole body is trained as an integrated unit instead of as separate parts. Some examples include multidirectional lunges (which can help you be able to do tasks like vacuuming and yard work) or a squat and bicep curl (similar to lifting a laundry basket or child).

Programs can be custom designed for any job or lifestyle. A series of simple functional exercises can improve strength, agility/balance, stamina and flexibility in just a few weeks. For athletes, these programs may target vulnerable muscles and joints, making injuries less likely. Seniors can live more independent lives if they can carry groceries or get up from a chair. The military and other organizations use such programs to ensure top performance in the field.

Find a certified personal trainer (e.g., ACE, ACSM, NSCA) or physical therapist who can help you design a program.



As always, check with your doctor before starting any new exercise routine.

Smart moves for your personal wellness program are at www.personalbest.com/extras/aug11tools.

Tracking Weight Progress Beyond the Scale

The bathroom scale is a good measure of weight loss — but if you replace fat with lean muscle through exercise, you may be frustrated to find that your weight has changed very little. **Other ways to measure progress:**

- ➔ **CHECK** for a looser fit in clothes that were previously snug.
- ➔ **MEASURE** for shrinkage of waist, hips and neck.
- ➔ **NOTE** improvements in energy, strength, ability to do chores, and feelings of well-being or confidence.

Stress on the Road ... Flip the page for tips on how to remain calm and stay out of harm's way. ➔

*"You can't wait for inspiration.
You have to go at it with a club." ~ Jack London*



Stress on the Road

Sooner or later you may encounter a driver who behaves dangerously by speeding, tailgating, making abrupt or frequent lane changes, or cutting off other cars. You can't control other drivers, but you can remain calm and stay out of harm's way.

When it's the other guy ...

- ⇒ Be attentive and courteous — obey all traffic rules even if the other person doesn't.
- ⇒ If you are challenged, get out of the way. Stay behind the agitated motorist if possible.
- ⇒ If you're being followed, go to a well-lit public place and call the police.
- ⇒ Don't pull over or get out of your car if you feel threatened.

When it's you ...

Stress from heavy traffic or personal problems can shorten anyone's fuse. To keep your cool:

- ⇒ Maintain your car, keep sunglasses and snacks handy, adjust your seat position and temperature, or listen to calming music.
- ⇒ Don't drive when upset, angry or overtired.
- ⇒ Plan your route, monitor traffic reports and allow plenty of time for travel.
- ⇒ Don't take it personally — not all rude behavior is intentional.
- ⇒ If your temper rises, breathe deeply, take a break or focus on something pleasant. Consider the possible consequences of rash actions.
- ⇒ Take a test at www.aaafoundation.org (type in "quiz") for more helpful suggestions.

NEXT MONTH: CUT YOUR RISK

Insight For Sore Eyes

With the steady increase in computer usage, eyestrain is becoming very common, occurring in about 70 percent of people who perform extended visual tasks. If you're one of them, here's what you need to know:

What causes eyestrain? Eyestrain is not a disease, but rather a symptom. It occurs when eyes get tired from intense use, such as when you drive for long periods, read, use the computer, play video games, try to see in the dark, or are exposed to extreme brightness or glare.

What are the symptoms? Headaches, sore or dry eyes, blurred or double vision, stiff neck, light sensitivity and difficulty focusing on images are all common.

Is eyestrain serious? While eyestrain doesn't typically cause lasting eye damage, it can lead to physical fatigue, reduced concentration or productivity, and an increase in work errors. Sometimes it indicates an underlying eye condition that requires evaluation.

How do you prevent it? Try these steps: Rest your eyes by taking a break or looking out a window; adjust lighting to reduce glare; blink more frequently; increase the resolution, brightness, font size or contrast of your computer screen; use over-the-counter tear substitutes for dryness; and change the distance between your eyes and the computer screen or reading material. If these changes don't help, see an ophthalmologist.

Sweet relief: Massaging the temples in a circular motion for a minute or two can relieve symptoms.



LONGEVITY CORNER

Staying Active Makes a Difference. A recent study showed that young adults (especially women) who were more active over a 20-year period gained less weight. We know that exercise burns calories, revs up metabolism and sometimes suppresses appetite. This study suggests that long-term habits make a difference — staying active consistently can help you maintain your weight.

— Zorba Paster, MD

Wing It Without the Meat

Buffalo chicken wings are a popular appetizer, but a vegetarian version can be just as tasty with a lot less fat. Buy 1 pound of seitan (wheat gluten), tear into strips, dust with paprika and onion powder, and then saute until lightly browned. Mix ¼ cup of hot sauce with lime juice, salt, pepper and maple syrup to taste. Combine this mixture with the seitan and simmer for several minutes.

