

7 Small Steps to a Healthy You

Making just one small lifestyle change a day, even one a week, can help you reach your weight-loss goals. Here are seven strategies to work on ... starting today!

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You look in the mirror one day and everything is wrong. Your hair, your teeth, your skin, your shape. Especially your shape.

So you write a long list, and you make a pact with yourself that tomorrow you'll start a new whiz-bang weight-loss and life-changing plan. According to your calculations, you will be trim, taut and irresistible in three months.

Three weeks down the road, things are worse. What went wrong? Basically, you fell victim to the "END" (Everything Now Dilemma).

With END you have so much on your mind at once that you get confused, you forget a thing or two, you get rattled and then you give up. When you take one thing at a time, your chances for success get much better. Here's a seven-step plan that will help you to take it day by day.

This is as simple as the days of the week because that's how it works: seven days, seven steps. Each day you add one thing, so that by the end of the week you are juggling seven balls without dropping one. Here's how:

Monday

Back to work or school. Resolve that all you will do differently today will be to make sure to eat two or more pieces of fresh fruit. Any time, any way.

Tuesday

Today you will set some goals. Plan where you would like to be by the end of the month, then the end of the year —

both in your private and personal lives. Write these goals in your diary or stick them where you'll see them.

Wednesday

Water day. Eat that fruit, keep your goals in mind and drink six or more glasses of water. Add variety with a squeeze of lemon or lime juice. Or sip on herbal tea if you prefer.

Thursday

Add in some exercise. Go for a 20- to 30-minute walk. Walk in the park, around your neighborhood or head for the mall and do some fast-paced window shopping...but don't forget the fruit, the water and to review your goals.

Friday

Fruit, walk, water, goals ... it's getting easier. So this is the day you give your diet a spring cleaning. Eliminate foods that are not helping you stay trim and healthy. You know what they are.

Saturday

Play day. Well done! You're still drinking plenty of water, including fresh fruit in your diet, exercising, eating well and generally staying on track with your life. Spoil yourself with a special treat. Go on, you deserve it. Have some frozen yogurt for dessert, take in that new movie, or plan a weekend away.

Sunday

Traditionally a day of rest. And you can rest, too, since relaxation is key to maintaining control over your new healthy regimen. Take time to lie in a hammock and gaze at the clouds. Put on a facial mask, take a long, luxurious bubble bath, read a book or play with your pet.

Now that wasn't so hard, was it? By the end of just one week you are happier, brighter, healthier and ready to keep going — because you know it takes just three weeks to create a habit. Except **YOU** will have created seven by then.