

MARK'S CORNER



10 Nutrition Tips for Fitness Enthusiasts

Ever feel like you're not in control of your diet? Maybe you don't know what healthy foods to eat, what to pair with what, or maybe you just have a hard time with self-control. Either way, we've all been there! Most people, in some way, have struggled with their relationship with food and especially when it comes to fitness and working out; when to eat; what's the best foods to eat when training and how much?



Eat Breakfast

We know what you're thinking, "Wow, this is the first tip? I already know that..." But, are you starting your morning off with a healthy breakfast? While sugary cereal or biscuits from McDonald's in the morning may "act" as breakfast, your body's first meal of the day needs a powerful and healthy kickstart. It's important that your breakfast includes lean protein, whole grains, and a combination of both fruits and vegetables!



Wait a Few Minutes to Eat When You're Hungry

Another simple tactic to build tolerance for being uncomfortable is to allow yourself to feel hunger pangs without grabbing a snack. Tolerating an extra five-to-10 minutes of hunger builds patience. You can accept that it's okay to wait to be hungry, you know you're going to eat. This ups your tolerance for being uncomfortable. If you're able to do that, you'll be able to tolerate more difficult challenges.



Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Veggies

Adding some natural color to your diet can only aid in positive benefits. Of course, except in situations where you may be allergic. If that's the case, stay clear of the lemons! But in other cases, fruits and vegetables add an abundance of color to your diet and include things like fiber, vitamins and minerals, and even flavor. Start incorporating 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of veggies in your diet, daily.



There's a Difference Between a Snack and a Treat

Remember what we said earlier? "Food is a means to nourish your body" and that's no different with snacks. A snack is meant to help your body sustain hunger and energy from one meal to the next. They can be eaten throughout the day between meals, whereas treats should be viewed as more of a reward. While it might be easier to grab a few powdered donuts because well...they're right in front of you, choosing a healthy snack is crucial to keeping you full and nourished longer.



Watch Your Portion Sizes

It's time to get out those measuring cups (you can even use your hands!) and see how close your portion sizes are to the recommended serving sizes listed on the Nutrition Facts label. Have you been going a little over?... That's okay! It's never too late to start correcting unhealthy eating habits. Start measuring your food to get an idea of what a healthy portion should look like.

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Eat Seafood 2 Times a Week

Seafood is a great source of healthy Omega-3 fatty acids and has huge impacts on your cardiovascular health, according to the American Heart Association. Eating one serving (3 ½ ounces or ¾ cup) of non-fried fish at least twice a week can help prevent heart disease, stroke, heart failure, and several other life-threatening heart illnesses. It's important to choose a fish, or shellfish, that's high in Omega-3s and low in mercury – like salmon, trout, oysters, or sardines.



Drink Water and then Drink Some More

Hydration plays a massive role in your body and skin. Drinks with added sugars, like sodas or fruit juices, just contribute to wasted calories and little to no nutritional value. In fact, some sugary beverages can do more harm than they can good. The key to knowing if you're drinking enough water throughout the day is to make sure your urine is light in color to clear. Don't know how much water to drink? Try the 8x8 rule (8 glasses x 8 ounces of water a day = a minimum of 64 ounces a day).



Get Physically Active

Getting enough physical activity has numerous health benefits your body needs. If you're not one to exercise, just start with 10 minutes each day! Eventually, you can build up your stamina to reach 2 hours and 30 minutes each week, which is recommended by the American Heart Association. Maybe try going for a walk around the neighborhood after dinner, playing a game of catch in the yard, or dusting off that bike of yours and going for a short ride.



Practice Mindful Eating

Listening to your body when you are hungry is super important. It's also important to stop eating when your body is full. Maybe you're guilty of sometimes eating when you're bored, sad, or stressed – but these are unhealthy eating patterns and can lead to serious health issues, as well as an unhealthy relationship with food. Practice mindful eating by sitting down to eat your food instead of eating in a rush. Turn off the TV, put down the phone and electronics, and just focus on the food that is in front of you.



Consult with a Fitness Professional or Dietician

The food and beverages you consume every day and over your lifetime matters! In fact, about half of all American adults have one or more chronic diseases related to having a poor diet. Creating healthy eating patterns is key to maintaining optimal health and lowering your risk of disease, but don't overwhelm yourself with too many goals at once. We all have to start somewhere and taking just one step every day will get you closer to your goal.