



Track Your Eating Habits

CHALLENGE

Keep a daily record of what you eat

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Track Your Eating Habits.”
2. Use a journal or mobile app to keep track of what you eat daily.
3. Keep a record of your completed challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Colorado resident Becky Brown tipped the scale at 250 pounds, she knew something had to change.

She was stuck in a loop of emotional eating that included fast food, processed meals, junk food, and soda. But she wasn't sure what to do.

At first, she tried a long list of fad diets, severely restricted calories, and did a lot of exercise. But it was classic yo-yo dieting. Lose weight, gain it back, and start over.

It wasn't working. Eventually, Becky decided to do things differently. She started using an elliptical machine. She did bodyweight exercises at home. She took her dog for walks more often. She started running.

And she started paying more attention to what she was eating. No restrictions. Just smarter food choices. Less junk food and more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and lots of water.

She dropped 30 pounds in the first year. Paying attention to her eating habits along with regular exercise helped her lose a total of 100 pounds, and keep it off.

“Now, those healthy habits I developed in my weight loss journey are just my normal,” says Becky. I eat what I love. I have the energy and stamina to do the things I enjoy. And I just feel good.”

Take the Food-for-Thought Quiz

How much do you really know about your eating habits?



Y N

1. I always drink at least 64 ounces of water per day.
2. I eat 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables per day.
3. I know how many calories I burn from physical activity each day.
need to take to make long-term progress.
4. I eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day.
5. I know how many calories I eat/drink each day.

How did you do? If you answered ‘No’ to any of these statements, you could benefit from keeping track of what you eat. When you know what you're eating, you can make adjustments in your diet that can help you lose or maintain weight, reduce your risk for chronic disease, and improve your health.

Ready to improve your health and your diet, maybe even lose weight? Take the month-long health challenge to Track Your Eating Habits.

The Surprisingly Simple Power of Food Tracking

Eat this, not that. Have more fruits and veggies. Drink more water. You've heard the advice before. But are you doing it? If you're not, keeping track of what you eat can help.

In a recent Duke University study, researchers followed a group of 105 overweight people for 6 months.¹ One group measured their weight every day. Another group tracked everything they ate. And a third group tracked both.

On average, everyone lost weight. But the group that tracked their weight AND food choices lost the most weight (about 7 pounds), and kept it off.

“We have very strong evidence that consistent tracking — particularly of diet, but also one's weight — is an essential element of successful weight loss,” says lead researcher Dr. Gery Bennett.

How to make healthier restaurant choices
<https://tinyurl.com/3phv9mxm>

The Surprisingly Simple Power of Food Tracking



Eat this, not that. Have more fruits and veggies. Drink more water. You've heard the advice before. But are you doing it? If you're not, keeping track of what you eat can help.

In a recent Duke University study, researchers followed a group of 105 overweight people for 6 months.¹ One group measured their weight every day. Another group tracked everything they ate. And a third group tracked both.

On average, everyone lost weight. But the group that tracked their weight AND food choices lost the most weight (about 7 pounds), and kept it off.

“We have very strong evidence that consistent tracking — particularly of diet, but also one's weight — is an essential element of successful weight loss,” says lead researcher Dr. Gery Bennett.

Food Tracking Habits: 5 Tips for Success

So how do you keep track of what you eat? Choose a format that works for you. Research shows mobile apps work well for most people.² But a paper journal or notebook works, too.

Here are five tips to help you track your food choices to improve your diet.

1. Track everything: No restrictions

- **Keep track** of all the food you eat and drink for meals and snacks.
- **Include time and date** with each entry to help you identify specific eating patterns.

- **Be honest.** Dessert, alcohol, second or third servings all count.

2. Know your daily-calorie data

Apps make this easy and track calories for you. Everyone's calories needs are different. Men usually need more calories than women. And everyone needs fewer calories as they age. Keep track of how many calories you're eating per day.

- **Find your daily calorie goal:** Use a calorie calculator like (My Plate: <https://tinyurl.com/rd4tn7ae>) to help you find your daily calorie goal.

3. Pay attention to what you're eating

- **Read food labels to find out.** Food labels include things like: ingredients, serving size, calories per serving, sodium, sugar, protein, fats, and carbohydrates. Before you buy or eat something, just ask yourself: Is this a healthy choice?
- **Restaurant calories.** Check the menu before you order. A typical fast-food meal (burger, fries, and soda) contains 1,000-plus calories. Chain restaurants are required to publish nutrition data about their menu. Smaller restaurants don't have to.

4. Evaluate your eating habits

Once you've kept at least a week of entries about your eating habits, take a closer look at what you've been doing. This helps you see what you're doing well, and where you can improve.

- **Total your daily calories**, and make some changes if you need to.
- **Follow a healthy eating plan.** Most of your food should come from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, and legumes. If you eat meat or dairy, go with fish, skinless poultry, and non-fat options. What you drink counts, too.
- **Share your results** with someone you trust. Or review your food choices with your doctor or nutritionist. It's a smart way to help you be more accountable.

5. Set a goal

Keep a food journal for at least a week. Track everything. Then set a goal to improve, lose weight or eat healthier.

Tools to track what you eat

- Paper: Daily Food and Activity Diary: <http://tinyurl.com/hcyldfo>
- Web-based: My Plate Meal Template: <https://tinyurl.com/2d2cjhvn>
- Mobile app: Lose It!: www.loseit.com

How to read food labels
<https://tinyurl.com/9x42pf5>

References

1. Patel, M., et al. (2019). Comparing self-monitoring strategies for weight loss in a smartphone app: Randomized controlled trial. *uHealth* 7:2. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3a3tfd3>
2. Mateo, G.F., et al. (2015). Mobile phone apps promote weight loss and increase physical activity: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 17(11): e253. From: <https://tinyurl.com/zuu5678c>



Track Your Eating Habits

CHALLENGE

Keep a daily record of what you eat

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Keep track of what you eat for 30 days with a mobile app, notebook or journal.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to set healthy SMART goals to improve your health.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

| MONTH: | | | | | | | HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | Weight & weekly summary |
| HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | |
| HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | |
| HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | |
| HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | |
| HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | |

_____ Number of days this month I tracked my eating habits
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____