



IT'S A NEW YEAR! HEALTHY EATING FOR A NEW YOU

After living it up over the festive season, you may feel like your mealtimes need an overhaul. Here's how to make your healthy eating resolutions last.

Each year, we solemnly swear that we'll ditch our bad eating habits. We stuff our fridges with a rainbow of fruit and veg, delete the take-out delivery apps, and promise ourselves that *this year* will be The Year. Alas, by February, our bins are again overflowing with wilted lettuce and soggy take-out boxes. But it doesn't have to be like this. By cultivating small and consistent, healthy eating habits, you can set yourself on course for a happier, more successful life.

EYES ON THE PRIZE



Set your focus beyond weight loss or resolutions and see it as an investment in your overall health and happiness. A healthy diet reduces lifestyle disease risk, improves energy, focus and mood, and contributes to a longer, healthier life, thus giving you more time with the ones you love. It supports you mentally, giving you more zest to pursue dreams and goals, and even makes good financial sense.

BREAK IT DOWN

Turn your goals into bite-sized pieces. Say you've decided to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables daily. Overwhelming? Break it down. For example, have a banana at breakfast, an apple as a snack, a salad at lunch and two different veggies at dinnertime. Each one you tick off is another step in the right direction.

The same holds true for weight-loss goals. Around 250g of weight loss per week is healthy (depending on starting and goal weights). Even 250g per week will add up to 12kg over a year!



TAKE BABY STEPS



Fired up and ready to go RIGHT NOW? Hang on! It's better to start small and work your way up. For example, if you're not a fan of veggies, deciding to devour a bucket of broccoli a day is never going to last (and your tummy may go on strike). Instead, gradually replace something small, like swapping a scoop of mashed potato for a floret of broccoli. A tiny change like this isn't enough to put you off, but these incremental improvements add up.

Want to know just how big a difference small swaps can make? Switching to semi-skimmed milk instead of full cream milk with your cereal can save around 8 000 calories a year. That's equal to 1kg of fat!

Other food swaps to help you eat healthier:

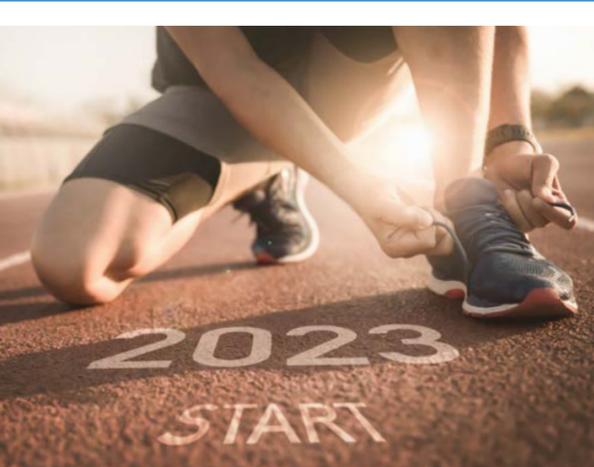
- Swap fruit yoghurt for plain natural yoghurt with fresh fruit.
- Switch from white rice to brown or wild rice.
- Choose wholewheat bread instead of white bread.

MAKE IT A HABIT

By making slight changes consistently, you make them part of your lifestyle – and that's where the magic happens. So, keep going and focus on why you're making these changes: to improve your life and that of your loved ones.



STAY ON THE RIGHT TRACK



Fortunately, there are resources available to guide you on your journey:

MyFitnessPal helps you eat more mindfully by tracking your meals and eating habits, and helping you reach your goals.

The **Hello Doctor** blog is written by South African doctors and specialists, and covers a range of topics on wellness, diet and nutrition.

Making these changes, no matter how small, can seem overwhelming but by taking one step at a time, you'll be at your destination before you know it.

PLEASE NOTE!

This article is for your general information and is not a substitute for medical advice. You should contact your doctor or other healthcare provider with any questions about your health, treatment or care. Before making any major lifestyle changes, consult your doctor or dietician, particularly if you have diabetes, cardiovascular disease, inflammatory bowel disorder and food allergies, are on any medication, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Remember that you can contact your employee wellness programme for wellness and nutritional advice.

References

Full of wholesome
Healthy Food Guide
Heart Matters

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Let us stay mindful of caring for one another and ourselves