

## *Ten Tips for Healthy Eating On the Run?*

Lack of time is a major reason why many people forego healthy eating. Fast food is readily available and it's just too tempting, and it's cheap and filling. While eating fast food is never as healthy as a well-planned, balanced diet, if you must eat fast food, you can easily take steps to improve the quality of your nutrition when on the run.

1. Watch portion sizes. Your craving will likely be satisfied after you have finished a small order of fries, and you'll save over 100 calories when compared with the super-sized order. The same holds true for sandwiches. Order the regular version or even a kid's meal for yourself.
2. Seek out deli-style fast food chains where you can order a sub or sandwich on whole wheat bread or a wrap, a lower-fat and lower-calorie option than fried food.
3. Many fast food chains now offer healthy sides in place of the ubiquitous French fries. Take the healthy option. Or, if you can't bear to give up the grease and salt, get the healthy side order too.
4. Always order a side salad when eating at traditional fast-food outlets. You will be less likely to fill up on only the unhealthy items, and the salad will provide some fiber and vitamins to balance an otherwise unhealthy meal.
5. Remember that chicken isn't always a healthy choice. Many fast food chains offer fried breaded chicken sandwiches on white bread that are actually richer in fat and calories than a burger. Grilled chicken is a better option.
6. Make it a habit to eat a piece of fruit, a bowl of cereal, or some lowfat yogurt before you set out to run errands. Regular eating can help you feel full and avoid temptation.
7. Stock your car with bottled water and healthy snacks. Have a small snack before the cravings hit, and you're less likely to pull into that drive-through fast food outlet.
8. Consider a supermarket for your fast food break. You can pick up precut and washed fresh fruit or vegetables, yogurt, or lowfat cheese. Many supermarkets also offer sushi or other healthy prepared items.
9. Hold the mayo. A tablespoon of regular mayonnaise has almost 100 calories!
10. Don't add a sugary, calorie-rich drink to an already unhealthy meal. Water is available everywhere and is good for you. Drinking a large glass of water with your meal will help you feel fuller earlier.

## *Thirteen Ways to Stay Fit When There's No Time to Exercise?*

While looking at an article by a leading fitness guru, I was struck by her emphasis on making exercise a priority and finding a way to fit in your gym time at any cost. Although she's right in principle, I couldn't help thinking that this woman cannot possibly be a working mom with small children!

Those of us who are balancing multiple roles – as parent, worker, spouse, school volunteer, household manager, and responsible citizen -- often find that 24 hours per day simply aren't enough. Fitness gets put on the back burner.

Even if you're lucky enough to be able to set aside time to work out, things like school holidays, childhood illnesses, and teacher conferences have a way of eating up these extra hours along with our best intentions.

You may not have time to go to the gym, but you can still be physically active and boost your metabolism by using a bit of creativity in planning your day. During a recent week when my kids were side-lined by a nasty cold, I started thinking about ways to be physically active when going to the gym was out of the question. I also asked some trainers for their advice. We came up with the following ways to fit exercise into a packed-full day:

1. If you've got a young sports enthusiast in the family, play along. Shooting baskets and kicking a soccer ball around the yard are great ways to get your heart pumping. Thirty minutes of cardio training are recommended, but even five to ten minutes will elevate your energy and speed your metabolism.
2. Take the kids for a walk. If their pace is too slow, add some lunges, jumping jacks, or running in place every few minutes to make yourself work harder.
3. Pull young children in a wagon through the neighborhood. Or give them a ride in a jogging stroller.
4. Let little children ride bicycles or tricycles while you jog behind.
5. Get into some vigorous sweeping, mopping, or vacuuming. These types of housekeeping chores can burn a significant number of calories.
6. We've all heard the benefits of taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Everything you've heard is true.
7. Likewise, getting off the bus or subway a stop or two before your destination on a regular basis adds up to a lot of heart-healthy walking.

8. Do yoga or Pilates while you, or the kids, unwind in front of a movie. While watching TV, do push-ups or sit-ups during commercials. Even one per commercial during a two-hour movie can give you some good exercise.
9. In a sedentary job, take your breaks outdoors and have a brisk, short walk. You'll also improve your concentration and mood.
10. Dance or do aerobics at home. No one's watching, anyway. If you like, include the little ones and turn it into a game.
11. Practice stretching or light yoga moves while talking on the phone, listening to the news, or while dinner is cooking.
12. Find the high-energy items on your to-do list and tackle these when you need physical activity. Think about washing the car, digging the garden, mowing the lawn, or reorganizing a closet.
13. Get up 15 to 30 minutes earlier than the rest of the family and use this time for a run, a walk, or some stretching and yoga.

## *Three Minutes to Stress Relief?*

Effective stress control results in the enhancement of both mental and physical well-being. Exercise and practice of relaxation methods are the best ways to keep chronic stress in check, but it isn't realistic to take a jog or a meditation break every time you're faced with a stressful situation.

You can, however, practice techniques like controlled breathing exercises when you feel your stress levels soaring. The following exercise in breathing can be done for as little as three to five minutes at a time and is an effective way to halt escalating feelings of anger, tension, and frustration.

Controlled Breathing Exercise:

1. Sit upright in a comfortable position.
2. Focus on your present state and existence (this is often termed being "mindful"). Block out intrusive thoughts. You may close your eyes if you wish.
3. Pay attention to your breathing. Inhale slowly through the nose, taking several seconds.
4. Exhale through the mouth, trying to make the exhalation phase last twice as long as the inhalation.
5. Continue this mindful breathing for 3-5 minutes.

If you like, you can increase the practice to 15-20 minutes per day. With regular practice, you can train your body to relax in stressful situations using this exercise.

This exercise can also be effective in dealing with anxiety, panic attacks, stage fright, and fears (such as the fear of flying). Taking a restorative pause to focus on your breathing can also be a valuable anger management tool.

For more information on relaxation techniques, please read Dr. Stoppler's article:

## *Ten Tips to Avoid Insomnia and Get a Good Night's Sleep?*

Transient, or short-term, insomnia is inadequate or poor-quality sleep lasting anywhere from one night to a few weeks. Transient insomnia can be a single episode or recurring episodes of insomnia separated by periods of normal sleep.

The following suggestions are intended to help overcome transient insomnia and maximize the chance of getting a healthy night's sleep:

1. Make your bedroom an inviting place. Keep the room free of clutter and distractions. Be sure you have the right bed and mattress for your needs. The wrong mattress can lead to musculoskeletal problems and sleep disturbances.
2. Use the bed only for sleeping and sex. Avoid use of the bed for watching TV, eating, working, or any other activities. If you do wish to use the bed for a bit of nighttime reading, read only pleasure books in bed.
3. Therapists often use "reconditioning" as part of a treatment plan for insomnia. With this method, people are "reconditioned" to associate the bed with sleep. If you find yourself unable to sleep at all, get out of bed and move to another room, so that you only associate the bed with sleep and not with wakefulness.
4. Establish a regular sleep-wake cycle. Your body will learn to set its internal clock to your schedule and will eventually respond to internal cues to become sleepy at a given time and to awaken at a given time. A good way to begin this is by getting up at the same time every morning, even on weekends.
5. Don't nap. No matter how tempting it may be, an afternoon nap can make falling asleep at night even harder. "Extra" sleep on weekends can also throw off your sleep schedule and worsen midweek insomnia.
6. Limit your consumption of caffeine in the afternoon and evening. Remember that eating chocolates and drinking cocoa and colas also are sources of caffeine.
7. Watch your alcohol intake. Don't drink any alcoholic beverages in the few hours prior to going to bed. Excessive amounts of alcohol at any time in the day can also disrupt sleep patterns and lead to unsatisfying sleep. Cigarette smoking can also worsen insomnia.
8. Fit in some exercise during the day, but don't exercise strenuously right before bedtime.
9. Eat light meals in the evening. Eating heavily in the evening or eating just prior to going to bed can disrupt your sleep.
10. Establish a "winding down" period in the evenings just prior to bedtime. Try to free your mind of distracting or troublesome thoughts and engage in a relaxing, enjoyable activity like reading, listening to music, or watching a pleasant film.