

10 Weeks to a Healthier Lifestyle

Week 1

Replace one sugary drink with an 8-ounce glass of water. Water will help you feel more energetic and wash the toxins out of your body. Eventually you should shoot for at least 8, 8 oz. glasses of water per day.

Week 2

Walk for 10 minutes and add one minute to your walk each day until you get to 30 minutes. You're starting this at week 2, but it will take longer than one week to get to 30 minutes. 30 minutes of exercise 3 times per week is the minimum amount of exercise you should be getting. You are working your way gradually to this milestone.

Week 3

Add one serving of raw, frozen or canned vegetables to your daily food. Eliminate one sugary or salty snack. Americans do not get enough fresh veggies in their diet. They are packed with nutrients and fiber as well as water.

Week 4

Add one serving of fresh fruit to your daily diet. Eliminate one sugary or salty snack. Cutting back on sugar and salt in your diet will allow you to enjoy all the rich flavors clean, healthy food have to offer.

Week 5

Plank for 15 seconds three times this week. Strengthening your core will help reduce or eliminate low back pain.

Week 6

Replace another sugary drink with another 8-ounce glass of water. The goal here is to drink at least eight, 8 oz glasses. We're adding them gradually and cutting back the sugary drinks. Did you know women should only have about 25 grams of added sugar per day?

Week 7

Time for a treat! Replace your usual weekend dinner outing with an activity outing. Hiking, biking, mall walking, swimming, golfing, a cool fitness class you would like to try. Take your favorite friend who is up for trying something new.

Week 8

Switch your "white" carbs to whole grain carbs. For example, swap out your white rice for brown rice and your white bread to 100% whole grain. Whole grain foods take more energy to digest, they also contain more nutrients and fiber.

Week 9

Work very hard at getting between 7 and 8 hours of sleep each night this week. Lack of sleep allows the release of the stress hormone Cortisol in your body. Cortisol makes your body resistant to weight loss.

Week 10

Find a bodyweight workout that meets your fitness level and do it three times this week. You can do this in place of the planking. Or if you're feeling spunky, add it to the planking. Resistance exercise adds muscle mass to your body. Muscle tissue requires more energy even at rest, which means you will need more calories to function. You'll be able to eat more food! Make it the healthy stuff.

Congratulations! If you have followed this ten-week plan, you are now doing cardio and resistance exercise, drinking the recommended amount of water for your health, getting more sleep and eating a healthier diet. Keep it going by thinking up new challenges for the next 10 weeks.