

Sticking to those resolutions At least the Nutrition and exercise ones
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After getting through the holidays many of us need a little help refocusing our eating and exercise plans that went by the way side as soon as that homemade fudge made its way into the house. The key to weight loss is not deprivation it is balance. Severely restricting calories or going on a fad diet and cutting out entire food groups will only slow weight loss, and make maintaining an exercise program more difficult.

Here is a bit of the basics on fuel for exercise and general health.

GRAINS/ STARCHES/ CARBOHYDRATES: (5-9 females/ 8-11 males) These items should be the base of your meals. When you are physically active your body needs carbohydrates to fuel your muscles and brain. Of course there are better options than others. The majority of your grains should be whole; the first ingredient for example in “whole wheat” bread should be whole-wheat flour. Include brown rice, and whole-wheat pasta, and corn tortillas into daily meals, or when baking, whole-wheat flour can be exchanged for all-purpose. The benefit is higher fiber, which maintains regularity and health of your bowels, and has been shown to decrease ones risk of heart disease certain cancers and diabetes.

PROTEIN: (1-1.2g Protein/ Kg (2.2 lbs/kg) depending on activity level or ~7grams/oz) Many runners focus so much on Carbohydrates that they forget about Protein. Protein is the building blocks of our body; muscles cannot properly repair themselves without a sufficient supply of protein. Try lean sources of protein like fish and chicken, soy, and eggs, which contrary to popular belief are good for you, USDA recommends no more than 5 eggs a week, if you eat more use egg whites or an egg substitute. Beef and Pork are also excellent sources of protein that sometimes get a bad wrap. Cutting off any visible fat before cooking, or buying leaner cuts of meat such as loin, or flank will help you avoid the saturated fat and supply you with excellent sources of Protein.

FRUITS VEGETABLES: (5-9 servings a day) Fruits and veggies are full of fiber and water without a ton of calories so they are great additions to meals, or as snacks. They help fill you up without adding many calories. Fruits naturally contain carbohydrates, which is an important fuel source for physical activity. Choosing a variety of many different colored fruits and vegetables will provide your body with vitamins and minerals from Beta Carotene, and folate, to Vitamin C, and flavanoids just to name a few perks.

DAIRY: Milk is an excellent balance of Protein and Carbohydrates perfect for a post run refueling and repair. However the fat in milk and dairy products is saturated so choosing low to nonfat products is best. Calcium is a cofactor in fat metabolism and maintains bone strength so shooting for at least 3 serving of dairy a day through out the day can help in that weight loss effort and maintain general well being. However look out for all the added sugar in yogurts and flavored milks, there are many varieties and some are better choices than others, be sure to compare before you buy.

- Can't tolerate milk, that's ok, fortified Soy and Rice milk can offer the same benefits, but again watch out for excess amounts of added sugar.

“Diet” is a four-letter word in the Nutrition world. Changes that are made should be able to be maintained through out your life to aim for health and balance.