

HEALTHY *directions*

SPRING INTO A NEW YOU

We've all made New Year's resolutions to get into shape this time of year, but why not really make a healthier lifestyle a goal this year? It is a resolution that if kept, will lead to better overall health and a better quality of living. It's probably easier than you think and with a few simple lifestyle modifications, you'll be on your way to a healthier new you!

MOVE

MOVE MORE

The most basic thing you can do to improve your health is to literally move more. Do simple things like park your car further away from the store, even if there is a spot up front. Are any of the stores you frequent within a reasonable walking distance? If the weather is bad, consider doing laps around the mall. The controlled climate will keep you moving through the unpredictable winter and spring months. When is the last time you walked through the neighborhood? This is a great opportunity to increase your fitness level by gradually building up to longer and more challenging walks. Before too long, you'll be walking faster and longer, maybe even challenging yourself with a few hills here and there. See if you can find a friend or family member to join you. Most people find they can stay motivated if they have a fitness "buddy" to help keep them accountable. The first thing you need to do, as a fitness beginner, is to start moving. These walks will get you to start burning calories each day, and will also begin to build your cardiovascular endurance.

STRETCH

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The more you start moving, the more you will need to prepare your body by adding stretching exercises to your daily routine. Stretch before and after your walks. Start by reaching down to touch your toes and holding it for 30 seconds. You will feel tightness on the backs of your legs, in your hamstrings. Now place your palm against a wall at chest level and turn your body away from it. As you hold this for 30 seconds you will feel a stretch in your chest. Most inactive people have tight hamstring and chest muscles due to prolonged sitting, so it should be your priority to stretch these muscles out.

YOU ARE

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

No matter how much you exercise, if you practice poor eating habits in the form of high calorie, high fat foods, you are doing yourself a disservice. Try to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your diet and less fried and fast foods. Your goal should be 5 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables every day. Consider eating 4-5 small meals a day, rather than 2 large ones. This will keep your metabolism high all day, and turn you into a calorie-burning machine.

CONGRATULATIONS

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If you're able to incorporate some of the easy fitness tips above you will be on your way to a healthy lifestyle before you know it. Hopefully you will find the benefits so rewarding that living healthier becomes second nature.