



Texas DPS Fitness Wellness Unit

Wellness Tips
February 2019

February 1, 2019

Meal Prep

Whether working on weight loss, trying to make gains in the gym, or just wanting to feel better and have more energy, food choices are of utmost importance. Often stated, you cannot out run your mouth, or in other terms, you cannot out exercise a bad diet. However, we are living in a world where the majority of food options that are quick and easy are not very nutritious. It can be hard to eat healthy on the go unless prepared to do so. This is where meal prepping comes in handy.

There are significant benefits to meal prepping. Always being prepared and having something healthy to eat is one of the biggest benefits of meal prepping. Life can get crazy sometimes and not having to worry about what to cook can make things easier. Being able to reheat a meal quickly, often in less than 2 minutes, is faster than getting in the car and going to get fast food or waiting for delivery. Moreover, meal prepping saves money. Restaurants tend to get pricy, and having groceries go bad before using them in a meal is a waste of money.

Meal prepping has a variety of options, with success boiling down to what works best for you. A few meal-prepping tips include:

Plan a weekly menu: Use your favorite recipes to get started. Then take some time and search for some new recipes. Make sure you add in breakfast, lunch and dinner. Dinners may even be able to be a lunch option, or for more than just one meal.

Spice it up! Recipes do not have to be elaborate, nor do they have to be boring. Add herbs, spices or even a sauce to make the food even tastier. Chicken and steamed broccoli can get dull after a while.

Mix it up: Even if you do not like eating the same food every day, you can still meal prep. An example is; make a big batch of chicken or beans, and use in two different recipes. This allows two different options with just one preparation.

Split it up: Meal prepping does not have to take one whole day. You can split it up and plan a second day in the week to prep again. This allows you to reduce the amount of time you spend all at once in the kitchen and you can change the food a little mid-week.

Coming in February, a webinar on meal prepping. Stay tuned!





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February 8, 2019

The Payoff of Fitness & How to Reap the Rewards

Knowledge that there is a true monetary payoff for fitness is powerful, not to mention the commonly touted benefits such as energy, weight control, functionality, and reduction of disease potential. Data from the American Heart Association in 2012 found physically fit, middle-aged adults have significantly lower healthcare costs as they age when compared to less fit individuals. The comparison of the lowest fit category to the highest fit category in midlife showed almost \$2,000 less in healthcare expenses per year for males and females after age 65.

The aforementioned is consistent with an American Cancer Society study from 2012 displaying a connection of midlife fitness and health later in life. In this study of over 18,000 individuals, those who were fitter in midlife were more likely to age without significant burden of chronic diseases later in life. Those with high levels of fitness at midlife had just over half the number of chronic conditions as those in the lowest fitness category.

Yet, benefits of a healthy diet and exercise also have a significant impact for younger adults ages 24 to 49 by reducing the risk of obesity-related cancers. A study released this week by the American Cancer Society showed that six obesity-related cancers are showing a startling increase among younger adults. The obesity-related cancers that typically seen later in life when individuals are in their 60s and 70s include colorectal, endometrial, gallbladder, kidney, pancreatic and multiple myeloma, a cancer of the bone marrow.

To reap the aforementioned benefits, it is important to take action now, regardless of age, to increase fitness and eat healthy. Adding in even a few minutes per day can make a big difference and it all adds up over time. To get started, you might consider:

- Setting an alarm or using a smart watch to remind you to move each hour
- Tracking the amount of water consumed per day
- Park further away when possible
- Focus on reducing daily sugar intake
- A Bodyweight circuit by performing 45 seconds of each of the following and cycling through 2-4 rounds:
 - Walking in place or jog in place
 - In-place lunges or step-ups
 - Push-ups or chest taps in a push-up position
 - Jumping jacks or side steps
 - Bodyweight squats or squat jumps
 - Back extensions laying on stomach
 - Ab crunches

Bottom line: There are significant benefits from fitness, even quantifiable monetary benefits, and the earlier you begin your health and fitness journey, the more you can reap the benefits.





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February 15, 2019

How to fit a workout into your busy day?

When we get busy, often it seems the first thing to go is our fitness, nutrition and/or sleep. All of which are all vital to health and wellness. Finding an hour to go to the gym can seem impossible. Yet, research shows you do not have to go to the gym for an hour. Activity throughout the day can help improve fitness without spending time in the gym. This may change up your routine and daily attire, but it is highly recommended.

The human body needs movement. To facilitate this, it can help to have a mindset change from “I need to get an hour long workout in” to “I need to move more throughout the day”. The perception of this is a bit easier to digest and gives a viewpoint of not taking up as much time. The goal is to move for at least 10 minutes, four to five times a day equating to 40-50 minutes of activity.

Movement can add up from a longer trip to the restroom where you take an extra lap around the building, or standing and doing some stretching or even squats at your desk. Exercise bands are a great readily available tool that you can keep at your desk to do a few biceps curls, shoulder extensions or any number of exercises on a break.

Movement provides a great mental break as exercise can almost seem like “miracle grow” for your brain. Most of the time you come back refreshed and more focused on the task, as long as you use an appropriate intensity that feels comfortable.

February 22, 2019

Barriers to Wellness

What are some of your barriers to living a healthy lifestyle? Go ahead and write down your top three barriers, and explain why they are a barrier. Do it. Now, we will go over some of the most common barriers to living a healthy lifestyle and ways to overcome them.

Time: Time is usually number one on majority of lists. We are so busy with work, kids, and family that our health gets pushed to the backburner. There is no time to go to the gym, no time to prepare food, and no time to sleep. Here are a few tips on helping to conserve time.

Read last week’s wellness tip on fitting in more movement throughout the day.

Meals don’t have to take forever to cook, you can whip something tasty up in about 30 minutes.

See our 30 Minute Meals handout on our website.

Start inching your bedtime up by 15 minutes per night aiming for 7-9 hours of sleep. Make sleep a priority.

Money: How much do fresh vegetables cost? Canned vegetables? Frozen? You can find all for around a dollar in many instances. This is not a lot of money. The cost comes when you start to look at organic items, meat being one of them. A simple meal of vegetables and lean protein is very cost effective and usually can feed a family. Again, see our 30 Minute Meals handout on our website for more ideas.

Convenience: Is it really more convenient to get up from your desk, get in your car, travel to Whataburger, pay and get back to your desk? Or would it be easier to just pull out your meal you prepped on the weekend that takes less than 2 minutes to heat up? Yes, it is quite easy to pull through a drive through, but taking about an hour on the weekend to prep some lunches and dinners for the week can actually save you a lot of time. It is all about being prepared.

First, address your own personal barriers to a healthy lifestyle. Really try to determine why it is a barrier for you, and examine all different options. What has to be determined is if you have the desire to make these changes. Without the desire to make the change, the change will usually not happen. We are faced with fast food at every corner, movies instead of exercise and TV shows that keep us up way past our bed time every day. Changing some of the habits, and being faced with these decisions are part of our everyday life. The desire has to be there to want to change. Next, step is to commit to the change. Without commitment, the plan will certainly fail. Lastly, it takes effort. Yes, it is more effort to make a dinner every night rather than picking up takeout. Yes, it takes more effort to go to the gym then just sitting on the couch. The payoff comes when you feel your best, energized for the entire day, able to keep up with your kids and enjoy life. Stop telling yourself “I can’t” because you never will, start believing that you can.

