

FEBRUARY 2024

FOODS IN FRONT

A Monthly Newsletter from the CMH Dietitians



Maintain your new normal after New Years

With intention, you can make your new habits feel like second nature

When you're working to keep up a healthy lifestyle, a grand, ambitious goal is always very exciting. But the way you achieve it is by finding small, repetitive behaviors that you can do every day to move you step-by-step toward that goal. Those small actions add up to achieve the long-term goal you are looking for, but it takes time and consistency.

It's widely agreed that the most effective way to succeed in health goals is to find small, incremental goals that are doable, and keep doing them every single day. Small behaviors done over and over again become habits, which we then can engage in naturally, without having to exercise serious willpower for the rest of our lives to get them done. In short, it becomes a part of your "normal," your everyday life, just by practicing it every day.

You can always add to these small steps once they are established, to keep finding new challenges. But to start, find something simple you want to do every day, and ask yourself, "on a scale of 1 to 10, how confident am I that I can do this?" If your answer's a 10, it might be too easy for you. If it's a 1-4, it might be too much of a push at this moment. Look for that 6-8 range of confidence, to find habits you can confidently start tracking and *challenging* yourself to do every single day.

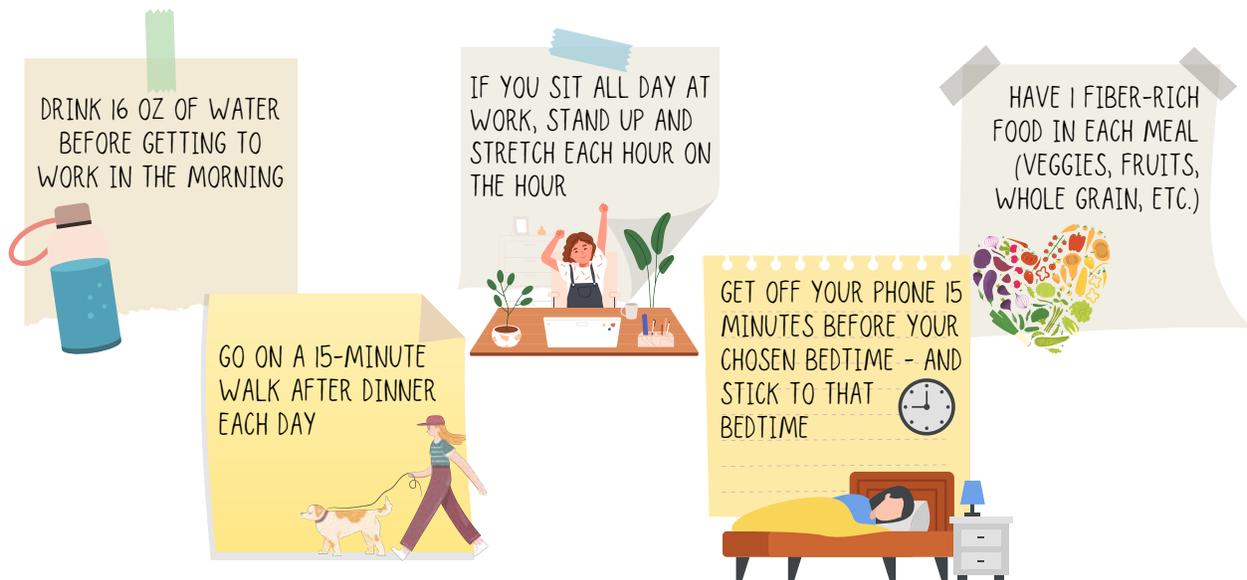
Read on to the next page for ideas of habit goals, strategies for tracking these behaviors, and some healthful recipes to get excited about the moves you're making.

How to choose daily habit goals

Think about a change you'd like to see in your life, and any barriers that could stand in your way. That can give you a starting point for habit ideas. For example, I want to drink 80oz of water per day, but I notice that I have tons of water left at the end of the day to chug because I just forget about it. I might set a habit goal of bringing a water bottle with me no matter where I go. OR I might set a time-dependent goal of "32 oz by lunchtime." It's all about changing the habits we have already built up in life that might be keeping us from our big goal.

It may not feel easy at first, and that's ok. If it already felt easy, it would already be a habit! Push yourself to take those small steps and they will add up over time.

- **A habit goal might look like:**



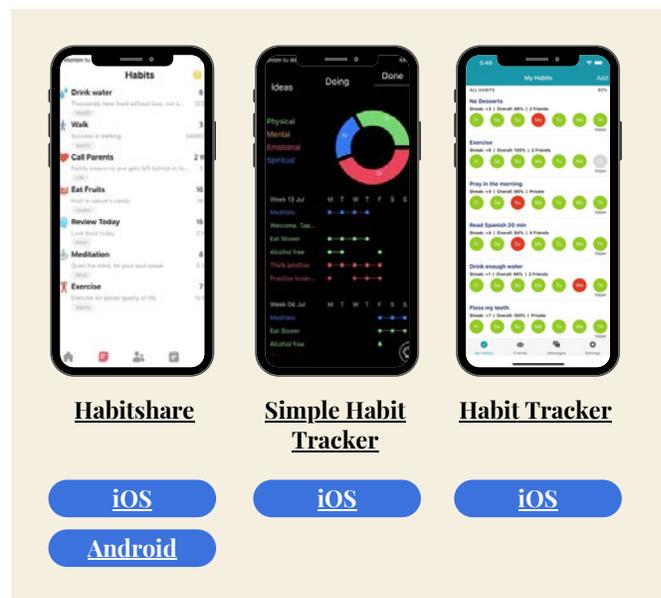
- **Keeping track:**

Without a system to keep yourself accountable, how do you know how much progress you've made?

Marking off dates on a calendar is helpful, but can get confusing if you start tracking more than 1 habit per day. Nowadays, the most popular solution is a habit-tracking app for your phone. Just mark off each day if you complete your habit, and leave it blank on the days you don't. This way, you can see your streaks, areas for improvement, and progress every step of the way!

Embrace tracking as a way to ease the burden off of your own memory, get reminders each day of your goals, and see how far you've come.

DOWNLOAD A FREE HABIT-TRACKING APP HERE:



February recipes

February is American Heart Month! Let's look for main dishes with lean meats, plenty of vegetables for the heart protective qualities of fiber, and a balance of food groups on the plate.

Winter seasonal salad

Makes 1 salad



Ingredients:

- 3 oz spring mix salad
- 3 oz cooked chicken breast, cubed
- 1 oz crumbled goat cheese
- 40 g canned chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 2 oz pear, cut into cubes
- 1 oz seedless grapes, cut in halves
- 1 oz grape tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 oz cucumbers, cut in slices
- 1 oz raw broccoli, cut into small florets
- 1 oz cashews
- 1 oz dressing of choice (balsamic or other vinaigrettes work well here)

Directions:

1. Add spring mix to a large shallow bowl.
2. Add chicken, goat cheese, chickpeas, pears, grapes, tomatoes, cucumbers, and broccoli to the bowl.
3. Add your salad dressing and use a large fork or spoon to mix/toss together.
4. Top with nuts and serve.

Stuffed peppers

Makes 4 peppers



Ingredients:

- 4 large bell peppers
- 1 Tbsp olive oil OR oil cooking spray such as Pam
- 1 lb lean ground turkey
- 1 can no-salt-added black beans, drained
- DASH fiesta lime seasoning blend
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 2 oz shredded Mexican blend cheese
- green onions, thinly sliced

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cut the tops off of bell peppers, and remove the seeds inside with a spoon or knife.
3. Heat a skillet on the stove, on medium heat. Add olive oil or cooking spray, add turkey, season generously with DASH seasoning, and cook until browned.
4. Mix turkey, black beans, cooked rice, and salsa together in a large bowl.
5. Fill each bell pepper with the turkey mixture. Cover the top of each pepper with shredded cheese, dividing equally.
6. Place peppers in an 8x8 baking dish, add ~1 inch of water to the bottom of the baking dish, and cover loosely with foil.
7. Bake in oven for 15 minutes.
8. Top with fresh green onions to preference, serve and enjoy.