

Define Yourself

health coaching



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Check out defineyourself-coaching.com for past newsletters, inspiring podcasts, and more about the components of your health.

I welcome your thoughts & ideas.

Simple Tips

Use www.fitday.com to monitor your food intake, or use Cyberkitchen at shapeup.org for weight loss, maintenance, or gain.

Use a pedometer to count your daily steps.

Use the stairs, park away from the entrance, walk your dog.

Dance like no one is watching.

Step It Up America

In 1996, the Surgeon General issued an important report on physical activity and warned that American adults were just not active enough. The study also declared that adults who did a minimum of 10,000 steps a day were able to manage their weight and be healthier.

How do you reach 10,000 steps a day? First begin by seeking the advise of your physician prior to starting or changing your exercise routine.

Next, wear an inexpensive pedometer for a week, in the morning upon rising clip it on your waistband, over your hip bone, then log your steps at bedtime. You'll find you walk anywhere from 900 to 3000 steps, or about 1/2 to 1 1/2 miles a day. If you presently do cardiovascular exercise, per recommended American College of Sports Medicine guidelines, of at least 30 minutes, five days a week, you'll find your steps closer to 5000. Generally 2000 steps is about one mile and burns about 100 calories.

To reach 10,000 steps you'll have to put in an additional 4 miles a day, approximately an hour walk, or a 40 minute run. A reasonable goal increase is 500 steps a day for a week, until you can easily average 10,000 per day.

Track your daily steps and/or mileage; and keep notes on how you feel, how your body is improving, or other changes you are making to improve your health. These will help with motivation. If at any point you feel that you are progressing too rapidly, slow down a bit and try smaller increases. You can start with as little as ten minutes per day and then gradually increase your walking routine.

Understand that transformation takes time and that lessons practiced over time make for more sustainable lifestyle habits.

Distinction:

Soluble fiber – dissolves in water and it is found in lentils, barley, beans, oats and various fruits and veggies. It can slow digestion so you feel full longer, lower your BP and sugar levels.

Insoluble fiber – does not dissolve in water and is found in dark leafy greens, nuts, seeds, bran, and whole grain products. This can help you to eliminate harmful substances.

Tools:

Body Mass Index

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both adult men and women.
<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>

Waist to Hip Ratio

Use a tape measure to size up the smallest part of your waist and the largest part of your hips. Divide the hip number into the waist number and voila a measure of your health appears. Men that have less than or equal to .90 are considered at lower risk for hyperlipidemia, for women it is .80 or less.

A Votre Santé

We all wish good health and happiness to our friends and family with the New Year, but how about actually helping to inspire their well-being.

Studies show that the spread of obesity in social networks appears to be a factor in the obesity epidemic. When we surround ourselves with fat people, than being fat is the norm, and our behaviors, habits, and perceptions, shift to fit this new environment. Social influences also suggest that it may be possible to harness this same force to slow the spread of obesity. If we practice healthier habits in 2009 than our co-workers and friends have a greater tendency to health. Spread health, habit by habit.

Use this phenomena to grow a healthier environment at the workplace, at home, or with your friends. While it may be challenging to initiate a new healthy behavior, surrounded by old influences, it gets easier with every performance. You may just find that many of your peers are interested in change too.

Retrain your brain and create new ways of being without making any suggestions for others. Sometimes being who you truly are, or want to be, inspires others to be their better self. This holiday feasting, surrounded by my family, I passed on the paté de fois gras. I was astonished, that when my aunt questioned me about this, I was not blasted with everyone else's opinions. I also make no comment about their consumption. I answered her question neutrally charged. Later, I observed my brother in law, who this past year lost 20 pounds, and loves sweets, take only one piece of dessert, and say "no thank you " to the second, without any social repercussions.

Establish some new social norms in 2009, for your health and the health of your friends. Be the change you want to see. Provide peer support, and get some for yourself. People are connected, and so their health is connected as well.