

ON TRACK WITH BARIX

Support to Keep You On Track With a Healthful Lifestyle



Spring Cleaning

Quick check your lifestyle to stay healthy and organized

Spring is a great time to do a quick check on your habits and clean up those that need it. Keeping a lifestyle that supports a healthy weight is work. It takes discipline. But it is so worth it when you slip on your favorite pair of jeans or bound up a flight of steps with ease. Just like when you spring clean your house, spring cleaning your habits makes you feel fresh and organized.

Let's jump right in with the big ones: sleep habits, stress management, and time management. Not what you expected for the top three habits for supporting a healthy weight? These three factors are foundational for all of the other habits—once they are optimized, other healthy habits can be put into place.

Sleep

As an adult you need 7-9 hours of solid, uninterrupted sleep every night. Sleep provides some pretty amazing benefits, including lower stress, improved mood, improved coordination and athletic performance, better attention and memory, and better weight control. In contrast, missing out on good sleep increases your risk for accidents, calorie intake and carb cravings. You're also more likely to skip your workout.

To get all of your zzzzz's:

- Set up a consistent bedtime and wake up time and stick with it—yes, even on the weekend.

- Create a relaxing bedtime routine—it works for kids, why wouldn't it work for adults too?
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, cool, and free from electronics.
- Get regular exercise—it's good to fall into bed physically exhausted.

Stress Management

Chronic stress sets you up for weight gain: here's how it works. You encounter a stressful situation and your body responds by activating a series of hormones to fight the stressor. These hormones include adrenalin, which gives you instant energy, and cortisol. Cortisol's job is to replenish your body after the stress has passed, and can cause your appetite to increase. This system works fine when the stress promotes physical exertion, because calories are burned. But when the stress is from non-physical situations, like trying to balance the checkbook or deal with an angry customer, cortisol wants to replenish nutritional stores that were not used. To further complicate the matter, insulin levels also increase, creating the perfect conditions for your body to store fat.

So, stress makes your body think you used energy when you didn't. And it's now telling you it is hungry when it really doesn't need the food. If you give in to the hunger, your body will store the calories as fat. The stressful situation hasn't changed—only your waistline has.

We often think of negative situations causing stress, but change of any kind, positive or negative, can cause stress. It's not the change itself that causes you to feel stressed, but your perception of the change. The good news is that you can actually change your stress level by changing your outlook.

Tips for reducing stress

- Plan ahead and get organized. Disorganization is a breeding ground for stress.
- Work to understand the situation. This will decrease the fear of the unknown, and better provide you with options to control, change or adjust to the situation.
- Set and accept limits. Say no to activities that you do not have time for. Say yes to achievable goals. You'll feel confidence in your ability and a sense of success when the goals are met.
- Find regular escapes from the pressures of life with a hobby or activities that you enjoy.
- Check your attitude. Replace those negative thoughts with powerful, positive thinking. Our outlook on life can affect our physical and emotional health.



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- Get regular exercise. Exercise is unequalled for releasing the tension of stress from our bodies.
- Don't shortchange yourself on sleep. Stress hormones can rise when you become sleep deprived.
- Avoid caffeine, sugar and junk food.
- Talk it out. Expressing your anxieties or fears to a friend, therapist, or family member can be incredibly helpful.
- Stress isn't the event or situation; it's the reaction to that event or situation. Learn to react in ways that minimize the stress threat.
- Learn a relaxation method and take regular relaxation breaks throughout the day. See below.

Time Management

Just where does your time go? Each day we have a lot of activities vying for our attention: sleep, work, transportation, exercise, meal prep / clean-up, kid's activities, and relaxation / socialization. Becoming aware of how you spend your time each day is essential to managing it and making sure you're spending time on the things that really matter to you. The exercise of recording your activities for a few days may expose some interesting information.

Is your time spent on activities that are highly valuable to you or provide you with the greatest returns? If not, it may be time to re-evaluate. Say no to activities that aren't important/interesting/rewarding. Learn to work smarter, not harder. Take time to plan, set goals, and prioritize activities.

Healthy habits take an investment of time and effort. Cleaning up your schedule will allow you to have the time you need to lead a healthy life.

After you get the basics (sleep, stress, and time) down, take a good look at your eating and exercise habits to make sure that healthy choices are the norm. Food and activity logs are a great way to do this. So many times we

eat without thinking about what we are eating. We don't realize what we actually put into our mouths. And we have the best intentions for exercising 3 days a week, but do we actually get 3 workouts in? Writing it down for a few days makes you very aware of the reality of your eating and exercising habits.

Here's a quick list of basic eating and exercise habits that help to support a healthy weight after weight loss surgery. It is always good to periodically review these and make sure that old habits don't start to creep back in and sabotage your efforts.



Be active:

A great way to insure that you are getting enough exercise is to wear a pedometer, track your steps and be sure that you are getting at least 10,000 steps in DAILY.

Make healthy food choices:

- Meet your protein goal by eating six small meals that are high in protein.
- Slow down and chew well—take 20 minutes or longer to eat a meal.
- Avoid added sugars—2 grams or more.
- Limit foods with a high fat content.
- Do not drink with your food.
- Keep portions to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of food at a time.
- Watch calories from "sugar-free" foods.
- Beverages should be calorie-free with the exception of up to 24 oz of low-fat milk a day and/or 6 oz of juice.

And while you're spring cleaning, take a peek in your kitchen and get rid of any foods that shouldn't be there. Then, go and stock up on some fresh, unprocessed foods to celebrate spring and your new resolve.

Cobb Salad

- 6 cups romaine heart lettuce, chopped
- 1 ripe avocado, diced
- 1# chicken breast, boneless, skinless, cooked, cubed
- 2 vine-ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and sliced

Place lettuce on a salad plate and top with remaining ingredients. Top with favorite light salad dressing. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 211 calories, 28 grams protein, 9 grams fat, 6 grams carbohydrate, 96 mg sodium.

If you get off track, you can always start fresh.



In the News

The Science behind Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and aware in the moment. It has become a popular practice with some real benefits. Studies indicate that it can help relieve chronic pain; reduce depression and anxiety; improve attention and eating and sleeping habits; help with weight management and recovery from substance abuse; and improve coping with chronic diseases.

Less stress response to stressful situations – individuals with more mindfulness skills have a lower stress response to emotional stimuli. It seems that this is due to the way in which the emotional centers in the brain are activated.

Once the skill of mindfulness is learned, it can be applied to any situation: interacting with a challenging co-worker, eating a meal, responding to a rebelling teenage son or daughter, working, and cleaning the house. Mindfulness allows you to pause and become aware before you react. It can help you to pause at a buffet and consider the types and amounts of foods you put on your plate, rather than just reacting to the display of appetizing foods. Even further, it allows you to focus on your eating so that you take small bites, chew well and stop when you feel comfortable—enjoying the tastes and textures in a way that you cannot while on auto-pilot or multi-tasking.

If you'd like to learn more about mindfulness, look for a course through your local community education, wellness center or health center.

Quinoa Bites

- 2 cups of cooked quinoa, cooled
- 1/2 cup natural peanut butter
- 1 large banana, peeled
- 2 pitted dates
- 1 tbsp cocoa, unsweetened powder
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 2 tbsp stevia

In a food processor or blender, add peanut butter, banana, dates, cocoa powder and stevia. Mix until smooth. In a medium bowl add the cooked quinoa and peanut butter mixture together. Add chia seeds and mix.

Roll into small balls and place on a tray with wax paper. Place in freezer. Once frozen, store in a re-closable plastic bag. Remove from the freezer and eat before completely thawed. Makes 12 servings

Nutrition information per serving: 124 calories, 5 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 13 grams carbohydrate, 5 mg sodium.

It Worked for Me

Submitted by Lisa J.

I added some new music to my iPod in anticipation of outdoor spring walks. I find that when I listen to upbeat music, I pick up my pace and walk a lot further than when I walk in silence. I have spring fever and can't wait for some long walks. Now that I have new songs loaded, I'm ready!



Reward Yourself

This month, you could earn a **SPECIAL GIFT** for your "It Worked For Me" tips or recipes! Just submit as many recipes and "It Worked For Me" tips as you like. The most original and creative will be awarded a special gift from our online store. Include your name and contact info with your entry – make sure your recipes follow Barix nutritional guidelines.

Tips must be submitted by April 30, 2014. Please send comments, ideas, recipes and "It Worked For Me" tips to Deb Hart, RD, LD at dhart@foresthealth.com.