

FIT New Member Booklet

What you need to compete:

1. Access to a Paypal account
2. A working digital scale for initial/final weigh-ins
3. Your own Facebook account if you wish to join the accountability group online (*no husband/wife joint accounts, please*)
4. Computer or smartphone access to turn in initial/final results via website
5. Computer or smartphone to upload a scale picture and full-length picture to website OR someone to upload it for you

Cost:

Weight Loss Challenge: \$25
(\$20 for prize pot/\$5 admin fee)

Maintenance Challenge: \$25
(\$20 for prize pot/\$5 admin fee)

2-4-6-8 Challenge: \$24
(\$20 for prize pot/\$4 admin fee)

*Challenge fees cover PayPal fees, website costs,
and admin payments.*

Choose to compete in **one** competition OR **two or more** at the same time. (You must pay for each challenge in which you compete, and you are eligible for prize money in each competition that you enter.)

Fees are non-refundable.

You may NOT switch to a different challenge once you complete the sign-up process.

Initial Weigh-In for ALL Challenges:

1. Weigh any morning of the flexible weigh-in days on a flat, hard surface and then **follow the directions on the website** to upload the picture of scale weight to the website. Don't forget the secret word card. This time-stamps your photo.
2. Upload a full-length "before" picture (WHILE STANDING ON SCALE with no bulky clothing) to the website.

Once you submit both photos successfully, you will receive a confirmation email. You're all set to compete!

*Optional weigh-ins are on **Sundays**,
and every new week begins on **Monday**.*

Ways to Win:

Weight Loss Challenge

- There will be AT LEAST 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in these categories:
 - Most pounds lost 18-39/40-up age groups
 - Highest weight loss percentage 18-39/40-up age groups
- Prize money and how many winners are determined by number of competitors and will be announced the first week of the challenge.
- You may only win prize money in *one* place of *one* category.
- You must submit an "after" picture (in the same clothes/or very similar clothes that you wore in your "before" picture) before claiming prize money.
- You must weigh in the first and final week to qualify for prize money.
- A confirmation email is automatically sent when the weigh-in form is successfully received. Competitors should keep record of this confirmation email. PLEASE CHECK SPAM/JUNK MAIL INBOXES and contact FIT if immediate confirmation is not received.

Maintenance Challenge

- Those who *LOSE ANY WEIGHT* whatsoever or *MAINTAIN THEIR WEIGHT* by the final weigh-in will all split the prize money.
- You must submit an “after” picture (in the same clothes/or very similar clothes that you wore in your “before” picture) before claiming prize money.
- You must weigh in the first and final week to qualify for prize money.
- A confirmation email is automatically sent when the weigh-in form is successfully received. Competitors should keep record of this confirmation email. PLEASE CHECK SPAM/JUNK MAIL INBOXES and contact FIT if immediate confirmation is not received.

2-4-6-8 Challenge

- Pay \$24 to attempt to lose 6% of your body weight in 8 weeks. Competitors who do so split the pot at the end of the challenge.
- You must submit an “after” picture (in the same clothes/or very similar clothes that you wore in your “before” picture) before claiming prize money.
- You must weigh in the first and final week to qualify for prize money.
- A confirmation email is automatically sent when the weigh-in form is successfully received. Competitors should keep record of this confirmation email. PLEASE CHECK SPAM/JUNK MAIL INBOXES and contact FIT if immediate confirmation is not received.

Helpful Information

OPTIONAL (not required!) Points Checklist

Many ladies have found great success in weight loss by incorporating these common-sense actions into their daily routine. Tracking points IS NOT REQUIRED.

1. **64 oz water** - 5 points each day (35 possible weekly points)
2. **Stop eating by 9 PM** - 5 points each day (35 possible weekly points)
3. **At least 1/2 cup of fresh or frozen fruit (not from a can)** - 5 points each day (35 possible weekly points)
4. **At least 3 cups of fresh or frozen vegetables a day (not from a can and may include raw/cooked vegetables OR leafy greens)** - 5 points each day (35

possible weekly points)

5. **Food journal** - 5 points each day (35 possible weekly points)

6. **No Sugary Treats** - 5 points each day (*only 6 days a week* for 30 possible weekly points)

7. **30 minutes exercise** - 5 points each day (*only 5 days a week* for 25 possible weekly points)

FIT Perks:

- The chance to win prize money while losing weight in an exciting competition
- Access to the FIT Facebook forum, connecting with others to voice your victories, defeats, struggles, and accomplishments
- An online resources section loaded with tips on how to lose weight and get healthy
- Daily health/fitness tips via FIT Facebook group that you can immediately put into action
- Delicious, filling recipes compiled from members who have already made them successfully

Accountability/Participation Review

If a competitor is suspected of **cheating with her numbers** or by using **weight loss products**, the administrators will systematically review her account to deem whether or not there has been dishonesty. There is a zero-tolerance policy for cheating. Those suspected of and proven to be cheating by using diet products, altering their numbers, or anything the administration would deem dishonest will be removed from the group, forfeit eligibility for prize money, and will not be permitted to participate in future challenges. Refunds will not be issued.

Private Facebook Group Information

- No husband and wife “joint” Facebook accounts are allowed on the private FIT group. The online Facebook group is for LADIES ONLY. (If this is an issue, some ladies choose to set up an account solely for the purpose of being on the FIT forum.) There is, however, a public FIT Facebook page that anyone may “like” that is loaded with helpful and encouraging posts. Request a link to the public FIT page via the contact form at 8weekfit.com.
- Keep FIT Facebook posts *health and fitness related ONLY*. (Please save unrelated topics for your personal Facebook page.)
- Although discussion and bantering on the forum is encouraged, any posts or comments with *cursing or rude or personal attacks toward another member* will be removed.
- Do not message the administrators concerning “inappropriate” comments from a fellow FIT member. If you are offended by something, just keep on scrolling!
- Do not ask the administrators to make exceptions to any rule for you. To do this would be unfair to other competitors.
- **If any member attempts to contact another member to sell weight loss products or even products made by a company that sells weight loss products, the offending member will be immediately removed and banned from the forum.**
- Members should not add other members to any other Facebook groups attempting to promote weight loss companies and/or products. The Facebook FIT forum is a CLOSED group, so please respect the privacy of ladies attempting to get healthy without weight loss products.
- Members should not post selling or promoting ANY type of product. These posts will be immediately removed.

Sugary Treats

At the beginning of every challenge, the Facebook newsfeed is flooded with frantic questions about whether or not a food is “approved.” THE ONLY THING YOU CAN’T HAVE IN OUR COMPETITION IS A WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCT! Everything else is fair game. We DO have suggestions for FIT-friendly healthy foods along with junk to avoid.

Americans are ADDICTED to sugar. It’s in almost everything. Many who have had success with our program follow the optional points system, limiting sugary treats to ONE day a week (their choice of which day). What is defined as a sugary treat? We encourage ladies to stay away from boxed treats on a daily basis such as cookies, ice cream, snack cakes, etc., which can often be a main culprit in weight gain. Even worse are LOW-FAT packaged snacks (which replace the fat with SUGAR) and SUGAR-FREE packaged snacks (which replace the sugar with ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS). The more strict you are with how you define a sugary treat, the more successful you could be in the challenge. Use common sense and ask yourself if this will bring you closer to your goal or take you farther away.

What do I need to know about avoiding “sugary treats?”

If you choose to track points, pick a treat day of your choice to eat sugary sweets - with the other six days for FIT-friendly foods only.

Here is a helpful list:

<p>Sugary Treats (for weekly <i>TREAT DAY</i>) <i>This is a running list of what FIT considers to be “treat day” treats. If it is sugary but doesn’t happen to be listed, still save it for your chosen treat day.</i></p>	<p>FIT-Friendly Foods (for <i>ANY</i> day of the week) <i>This is a list of sometimes confusing foods. You are not limited to these, but this is to give you an idea of what is not considered a sugary treat.</i></p>
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<p>All Artificial Sweeteners (Agave, Equal, Pure Via, Splenda, Sweet N Low, Sugar in the Raw, Truvia, Zing, etc.)</p> <p>All Soda <i>AND</i> Diet Soda</p> <p>All Store-bought Coffee Creamer (vanilla, etc.)</p> <p>Any Packaged Dessert Item Labeled “Fat-free” or “Sugar-free”</p> <p>Brownies</p> <p>Cakes</p> <p>Candy and Candy Bars</p> <p>Canned Fruit with Additives</p> <p>Caramel Corn</p> <p>Chocolate/Dark Chocolate</p> <p>Chocolate Chips/Carob Chips</p> <p>Coffee Flavor Shots</p> <p>Cookies</p> <p>Danishes and Donuts</p> <p>Dried Fruit with Additives</p> <p>Flavored Almond Milk, Cow’s Milk, etc.</p> <p>Flavored Bagels (blueberry, etc.)</p> <p>Flavored Breads (cinnamon swirl, etc.)</p> <p>Flavored Cream Cheese (strawberry, etc.)</p> <p>Flavored Yogurt (vanilla, etc.)</p> <p>Fruit Cups</p> <p>Fruit Snacks/Gummies</p> <p>Ice Cream</p> <p>Jams and Jellies</p> <p><i>*Most*</i> Granola Bars and Protein Bars (check ingredients for sugary names)</p> <p>Nutella</p> <p>Snack Cakes</p> <p>Sweetened Fruit Juices (will be <i>*most*</i> store-bought juices; includes those with “from concentrate” on label)</p> <p>Sweetened Cocoa</p> <p>Sweetened Peanut Butter (check label for sugary additives)</p> <p>Sugary Cereals (any <i>NOT</i> on FIT-Friendly Cereals List)</p>	<p>Air-popped or Microwave Popcorn</p> <p>All FIT-Friendly Cereals (see separate list below)</p> <p>All FIT-Friendly Sweeteners: Blackstrap Molasses, Coconut Sugar, Date Sugar, Pure Honey, Pure Maple Syrup, Sorghum, Stevia Leaves, Sucanat</p> <p>All Fresh and Frozen Fruit (without sweeteners added)</p> <p>All Fresh or Frozen vegetables</p> <p>Any recipe, including desserts, from the FIT Recipe File</p> <p>Chips, Fries, Pizza, etc. (and other types of non-sugary “junk food” - these are NOT suggested and will NOT help with weight loss but aren’t considered sugary treats)</p> <p>Condiments Containing Sugar: BBQ Sauce, Ketchup, Other Sauces, etc.</p> <p>Dried Fruit <i>Without</i> Sugary Additives</p> <p>Gum and Mints (for breath)</p> <p>Half and Half and Heavy Cream (for coffee)</p> <p>Kefir and Kombucha</p> <p>Plain Almond Milk, Cow’s Milk, Coconut Milk, etc.</p> <p>Plain Bagels, English Muffins, etc.</p> <p>Plain Bread (white, wheat, sourdough, etc.)</p> <p>Plain Cream Cheese</p> <p>Plain Biscuits, Pancakes, and Waffles</p> <p><i>*Some*</i> Larabars, Mariani Bars, and Kind Bars (check labels for sugary names)</p> <p>Unsweetened Cocoa</p> <p>Unsweetened Fruit Juices (should NOT say “from concentrate” on label and should have no sugary names listed in ingredients)</p> <p>Unsweetened Peanut Butter (will only say “peanuts and salt” on label)</p> <p>Unsweetened Vanilla Almond Milk</p> <p>Unsweetened Yogurt (full-fat is the best choice)</p>
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FIT-Friendly Cereals for Daily Eating

These all have 3 grams of sugar per serving or less and would be considered healthier choices if one is eating cereal.

<p><i>(All “original” cereal versions only)</i></p> <p>All Bran Cheerios Corn Chex Corn Flakes Crispix Ezekiel 4:9 Almond Ezekiel 4:9 Golden Flax Ezekiel 4:9 Grain Puffs</p>	<p>Fiber One Kashi 7 Whole Grain Puffs Kix Puffed Rice Puffed Wheat Rice Chex Rice Krispies Shredded Wheat Toasted Oats</p>
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FIT FAQ Page

Can I drink meal replacement shakes, take diet pills, use weight loss drops, take appetite suppressants, use body “wraps,” have *surgery known to produce weight loss, take weight loss shots, or anything of that nature in the competition?

Absolutely not. All of these weight loss accelerator-type products are NOT ALLOWED in our challenge. Understandably, this would give someone a short-term advantage in an 8-week competition. If a participant is found to have used ANY WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCT to win the competition, their winnings will be forfeited, and they will be removed and banned from the group.

The goal of FIT is to teach ladies how to eat REAL food, providing them with long-term, sustainable weight loss and health.

*If you had weight loss surgery five years ago or longer, you may compete.

What about juicing or using a “fat flush.” Isn’t that healthy?

Although juicing has its place, our challenge is instead about educating ourselves to EAT the right things. Juicing may be substituted for up to one meal per day. Participants may not use juicing to give themselves an unfair advantage by juicing exclusively. In addition, a “fat flush” may not be used as a meal replacement. Competitors taking the challenge will not be permitted to do any fasting.

Does FIT follow a certain diet?

We don't follow a "diet" in terms of what this word has come to mean in the case of diet fads such as the HCG diet, cleanses, the Atkins diet, Jenny Craig, counting calories, Weight Watchers, or anything else that would be considered a diet trend.

The primary dictionary definition of the word "diet" is as follows: *the kinds of food that a person, animal, or community habitually eats*. Our goal is to get the meaning of the word "diet" back to its original meaning. We want you to learn that you can EAT and not restrict yourself with ridiculous caloric deficits. Our passion is teaching ladies about the QUALITY of the calories we consume and not just the QUANTITY.

Even though our name will never be associated with a particular "diet," our hope is that your food DIET will consist of whole, clean foods that God created us to eat.

Do I need to own a scale?

It is very important that you invest in a good DIGITAL scale. Digital scales are much more accurate than analog scales. Pictures submitted using an analog scale will be rejected. (A decent digital scale can be found for around \$20 at Walmart.)

I live overseas. May I turn in my weight in kilograms?

Yes! Be sure to use the kg calculator on the website when turning in numbers. If beginning a challenge in kg, you must also end it in kg (this applies to beginning and ending in pounds as well).

Can I change which challenge I want to take once I already sign up for one?

To avoid confusion, you may not "switch" which challenge you sign up for, but you may always ADD additional challenges. Choose wisely!

How are winners of the competition determined?

After the deadline ends to turn in results via the website, all timestamped data is exported, and the head admin tallies the results.

If a weight loss competitor “wins” in the same place for pounds and percentage, a random number generator is used to determine in which category she receives the prize money. The next person on the other side wins the other place. This continues until all prize winners are determined. This policy allows for there to be many more prize winners.

Where is a good place to track my food and exercise?

We are not advocates for merely “counting calories” - all calories are NOT created equal! But it is still important to be accountable for what you are putting in your body. Many FIT members use the MyFitnessPal app. There is a section under the resources tab dedicated to helping you navigate through the app. Whether you use this app or just write down what you eat on a piece of paper, the important thing is to be aware of your nutrition and exercise choices. With the MFP app, you can be “friends” with fellow FIT members who can encourage you as you log food, exercise, and weight loss.

How do I search for a specific subject on the FIT Facebook forum?

The search feature is a valuable tool! There are hundreds of discussions on healthy eating and exercise archived since 2013. From the desktop version of the forum, click on the space that says “search this group” under the FIT banner at the top right and type in key words.

What are some good apps to use if I choose to add a side by side pic for before/after pictures?

Framatic, Photo Collage, Photo Grid, Picsart, and PicJointer are some free apps.

If I take more than one challenge, do I need to turn in more than one set of pictures?

NO. No matter how many challenges you join, you only need to submit

ONE set of scale/full-length pictures.

I keep seeing the term “NSV.” What does that stand for?

“NSV” means non-scale victory! When the scale isn’t budging, FIT Facebook forum members enjoy posting encouraging updates about their clothes fitting better, exercise achievements, etc.

What does “bumping” a post mean?

“Bumping” a post means that commenting on it brings it back to the top of the forum feed. Administrators rely on “bumping” important posts back to the top as to not get lost in the feed.

I’m pregnant right now. Can I compete in the challenge?

Pregnant ladies may not compete in a challenge. In addition, a new mom may only join and be eligible for prize money if she is at least **SIX WEEKS** postpartum when the challenge begins. *(If a competitor finds out DURING the competition that she is pregnant, she may continue to compete for the duration of the current challenge and may not be refunded due to the announcement of the prize pot already having been made.)*

What if I have unavoidable surgery during the challenge which unintentionally causes weight loss?

Because this could give you an unfair advantage (even unintentionally), there is a possibility you may no longer be able to compete for the big money. This is on a case-by-case basis.

If I decide to track points but don’t like fruit, are there any alternatives?

The following foods are *technically* fruit and may be counted as fruit OR vegetables for the challenge: avocado, beans, peapods, cucumbers, peppers, squash, and tomatoes.

What are some resources that will help me as I begin my fitness journey?

Books

Against All Grain by Danielle Walker

Eat to Live by Joel Fuhrman (anything by Joel Fuhrman)

Food Rules by Michael Pollan (anything by Michael Pollan)

Grain Brain by Dr. David Perlmutter

I Quit Sugar by Sarah Wilson

Made to Crave by Lysa TerKeurst

Master Your Metabolism by Jillian Michaels

Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon

Wheat Belly by William Davis

Documentaries

Fat, Sick, and Nearly Dead

Food, Inc.

Food Matters

Forks Over Knives

Hungry for Change

Supersize Me

That Sugar Film

The Future of Food

(Many of these films are available to view for free online.)

Facebook Pages

100 Days of Real Food

My Whole Food Life

Spoonful of Health

Food Babe

Healthy Home Economist

Food, Inc.

The Coconut Mama

Michael Pollan's Facebook page

Raw Recipes, Foods, & Workouts At Home For Women

Faithfully Fit Forward

Skinnytaste.com
DailyBurn
Young and Raw
Weston A. Price Foundation

Websites

<http://dontwastethecrumbs.com/>
<http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/guide.php?key=41000338>
<http://www.westonaprice.org/>
<http://realfoodrn.com/>
<http://www.realmilk.com/>
<http://www.naturalhealthmag.com/health/herbs-heal>
<http://glutenfreeonashoestring.com/>
<http://www.realpharmacy.com/>
<http://www.healthyfoodhouse.com/>
<http://www.livingthenourishedlife.com/>
<http://elanaspantry.com/>
<http://draxe.com/start-here/>
<http://www.culturedfoodlife.com/>
<http://www.mercola.com/>
<http://eatlocalgrown.com/>
<http://www.non-gmoreport.com/>
<https://www.myfitnesspal.com/>
<http://www.diynatural.com/>
<http://nourishedkitchen.com/>
<http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>

Grocery List Ideas

Our members shared what they would consider to be staple food items for the challenge. As you can see, you will not starve! Please don't be overwhelmed, and please don't break the bank the very first week. Just start out small and try incorporating one new thing every week.

- Favorite vegetables for salads and sides (only fresh or frozen -- not canned) - sweet potatoes, baby carrots, cucumbers, sweet peppers, mushrooms, sugar snap peas, etc.
- Bags of spinach for “green smoothies” (see “green smoothie” file for ideas)
- Romaine or your favorite greens for salads

- Fruit (a lot of varieties including frozen w/out additives or sugar)
- Lemons
- Nuts such as raw almonds
- Real butter or coconut oil for cooking (see “coconut oil” file for ideas and benefits)
- *Sprouted grain breads or sourdough bread, which is easier for our bodies to digest. (There are several brands and can be found in many grocery stores and most health food stores.)*
- Old fashioned oats
- Dried beans, all kinds
- Plain popcorn for air-popping
- Your favorite salad dressing (or ingredients to make your own) **AVOID** buying “low-fat” and “sugar-free” dressings. Choose full-fat dressings, as these have the fewest processed ingredients.
- Chicken breasts and/or rotisserie chicken
- Tuna
- Fish (*Look for “wild caught” and avoid “farm-raised” if possible.*)
- Hummus
- Quinoa (*a protein that is a great substitute for white rice - can be prepared in rice cooker just like rice*)
- Varieties of “Larabars” (*Please check labels to ensure they are not varieties with sugar added.*) OR dates and nuts to make your own (*see “Nut and Date Bars” file for ideas*) *The following Larabars are FIT-friendly: Apple Pie, Banana Bread, Cappuccino, Carrot Cake, Cashew Cookie, Cherry Pie, Chocolate Coconut Chew, Coconut Cream Pie, Gingerbread, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Peanut Butter Cookie, Pecan Pie, and Snickerdoodle.*
- Almond butter or unsweetened peanut butter

- Eggs (*Eat the WHOLE egg and not just the white! If you can get your hands on farm fresh eggs, you won't regret it.*)
- Dates, figs, or prunes
- Full-fat plain yogurt or cottage cheese (*Avoid "low-fat" options because sugar is added to enhance flavor.*)
- Unsweetened almond or coconut milk or raw milk (for smoothies)
- Cocoa powder
- The FIT-friendly sugar substitutes of your choosing: blackstrap molasses, sorghum, pure honey, maple syrup, stevia leaves, coconut sugar (with no additives), date sugar, or sucanat.
- Bragg apple cider vinegar (*see ACV file for ideas*)

Ideas for Sugary Treat Substitutes:

- Ezekiel bread with honey
- Plain yogurt with frozen fruit
- Green smoothies with fruit
- Dates dipped in almond butter
- Figs
- Larabars
- Chocolate smoothies -
 1 cup unsweetened coconut milk or whatever milk you use
 Ice (optional)
 1-2 tsp unsweetened cocoa powder
 1 ripe frozen banana
 Blend together and sprinkle unsweetened coconut flakes on top
- Add blueberries to Greek yogurt that has been sweetened with maple syrup, then freeze and break apart into chips
- Air-popped popcorn drizzled with honey, cinnamon, and sea salt
- Apple slices dipped in almond butter/maple syrup mixture
- Fresh pineapple in the broiler drizzled with honey
- Freeze pineapple chunks and then blend in food processor with can of chilled coconut cream to make pineapple whip

FIT Meal Plan Ideas

- The following meals are suggestions for those who may need some extra help in where to start on their weight loss journey.
- To defray costs, do NOT make these meals in order! Pick your favorites, eat those along with leftovers on a particular week, and try different meals the next week.
- An *asterisk* indicates that there is a recipe for that item at the end of the page. Recipes are in alphabetical order for easy reference. Enjoy these FIT meals and snacks!

Week 1

Monday

Breakfast: 2-egg omelette with chopped vegetables, “green” smoothie (See green smoothie file for instructions and ideas)

Snack #1: 1 slice cinnamon raisin Ezekiel bread or other sprouted grain bread (*Sprouted grains are much easier for our bodies to digest. These breads can be found at many grocery stores and at most health food stores.*) with 1 tsp. almond butter

Lunch: 3 ounces sliced turkey breast in a whole-wheat tortilla with mixed greens, tomato, and 2 or 3 slices of avocado; mixed green salad with your dressing of choice

Snack #2: 1 cup berries mixed with 2 tablespoons plain yogurt (add raw honey or maple syrup if you like)

Dinner: Asian chicken salad: mixed greens, red onions, and tomato wedges; add cooked chicken breast, sliced; 1/2 cup mandarin orange sections; and 1 ounce cashews tossed with 1 tablespoon olive oil and vinegar

Snack #3: 1 piece fruit, 1 cup cottage cheese sweetened with raw honey

Tuesday

Breakfast: homemade *granola with milk and berries

Snack #1: plain yogurt mixed with dried fruit and honey

Lunch: *chicken guacamole with celery sticks

Snack #2: slices of cheddar cheese and turkey breast

Dinner: cooked brown rice (or quinoa or couscous), seasoned grilled shrimp, mixed green salad with dressing of choice

Snack #3: *FIT Frosty

Wednesday

Breakfast: 1 cup oatmeal with 2 tablespoons mixed dried or fresh fruit and nuts and 1 teaspoon cinnamon (add pure maple syrup if you like)

Snack #1: Homemade or store-bought Larabar (see file on forum dedicated to homemade date and nut bars for ideas and variations)

Lunch: Tuna salad: 3 ounces grilled or canned tuna, 5 small red potatoes, 1/2 cup string beans, and 5 to 8 olives on a bed of salad greens tossed with 2 teaspoons olive oil and 1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar

Snack #2: 1 slice cinnamon raisin Ezekiel bread with 1 teaspoon almond butter, 1 piece fruit

Dinner: homemade hamburger with lettuce, tomato, and red onion on slice of sprouted grain bread or on lettuce wrap; sweet potato fries

Snack #3: 1 cup air-popped popcorn with sea salt and cinnamon, drizzled with raw honey

Thursday

Breakfast: 2-egg scrambler with mushrooms and spinach

Snack #1: fresh fruit kabob

Lunch: tossed salad: mixed salad greens, cucumber, red bell pepper, red onion, diced carrots, tomato, 1/2 cup chickpeas, 1/2 cup string beans, and 1 ounce grated hard cheese tossed with 2 teaspoons olive oil and 1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar

Snack #2: hard-boiled eggs

Dinner: spaghetti marinara: 1 cup cooked whole-grain pasta (or spaghetti squash) topped with 1/2 cup marinara sauce and 1 tablespoon grated Romano cheese, side salad with olive oil and vinegar

Snack #3: 2 kiwifruits

Friday:

Breakfast: *pecan maple breakfast cookies with a banana

Snack #1: apple with unsweetened peanut butter

Lunch: 2 ounces whole-wheat pita, 2 ounces chicken or turkey breast, 1 tablespoon hummus with chopped mixed greens

Snack #2: *kale chips

Dinner: *zucchini boats

Snack #3: *skinny chunky monkey cookies

Saturday:

Breakfast: *whole wheat banana pancakes with pure maple syrup

Snack #1: 1/2 whole-wheat pita with 1 tablespoon hummus

Lunch: 1 cup chicken noodle soup, whole-wheat crackers, mixed green salad with 1 tablespoon grated hard cheese and sliced olives tossed with dressing of choice

Snack #2: 1 1/2 cups watermelon chunks

Dinner: broiled lean steak, 1/2 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup steamed broccoli with grated Parmesan cheese

Snack #3: celery topped with peanut butter or cream cheese and raisins (ants on a log)

Sunday:

Breakfast: “green smoothie” (see Smoothie file on forum for ideas and variations) and an egg fried in coconut oil

Snack #1: red bell pepper strips dipped in hummus

Lunch: medium baked potato topped with sautéed mixed vegetables (e.g., mushrooms, onions, broccoli)

Snack #2: 12 almonds or cashews

Dinner: whole roasted chicken with baked sweet potatoes and side salad

Snack #3: *Banana Ice Cream

Week 2

Monday:

Breakfast: *frittata

Snack #1: 1 teaspoon natural peanut butter, raw vegetables (as much as you want)

Lunch: *lunch wrap

Snack #2: 1 ounce almonds, 1 1/2 cups berries

Dinner: veggie and chicken stir fry with rice noodles

Snack #3: *peanut butter cookies

Tuesday:

Breakfast: *flaxseed pancakes with maple syrup and berries

Snack #1: 1/2 cup grapes and one slice of cheese

Lunch: *lime chicken avocado salad

Snack #2: 3 slices deli turkey, 1 large orange

Dinner: grilled vegetable kabobs over brown rice or quinoa with grilled chicken

Snack #3: slices of cantaloupe

Wednesday:

Breakfast: 1/2 cup rolled oats with chopped apples, raisins, pure maple syrup, and cinnamon

Snack #1: 1 cup fresh pineapple broiled in the oven

Lunch: *sweet potato hash

Snack #2: slices of cheese, raw vegetables (as much as you want)

Dinner: chicken fajitas in lettuce wraps

Snack #3: *oatmeal cookies

Thursday:

Breakfast: 1 slice sprouted grain bread with 1 teaspoon peanut butter, 1 cup berries

Snack #1: blueberries and ½ cup plain yogurt with honey

Lunch: *quinoa lunch

Snack #2: 3 slices lean deli roast beef, 1 large orange

Dinner: roasted chicken with sweet potato fries and side salad

Snack #3: *banana ice cream

Friday:

Breakfast: blueberry smoothie (blueberries, rolled oats, unsweetened almond milk, banana, cinnamon)

Snack #1: 1 ounce almonds, cantaloupe chunks

Lunch: *stuffed pepper wedges

Snack #2: banana with unsweetened peanut butter

Dinner: breakfast for dinner (scrambled eggs and nitrate-free bacon); 1 toasted slice of cinnamon raisin

Ezekiel bread with 1 teaspoon almond butter

Snack #3: *orange creamsicle

Saturday:

Breakfast: *overnight oats

Snack #1: olives with cherry tomatoes

Lunch: *tomato avocado burgers

Snack #2: 1 teaspoon peanut butter, 1 or 2 slices whole-grain bread

Dinner: *tortilla pizzas

Snack #3: 1 cup *chocolate pudding

Sunday:

Breakfast: 1 piece sourdough bread, ½ cup strawberries over cottage cheese

Snack #1: 4 dates dipped in almond butter

Lunch: *Mediterranean herb-crusted fish

Snack #2: 2 slices lean deli roast beef, 1 slice cheese

Dinner: *alfredo chicken flatbread

Snack #3: ½ cup *honey cinnamon almonds

Week 3

Monday:

Breakfast: *omelette cups

Snack #1: cottage cheese with red onion and green olives on a bed of fresh greens

Lunch: *egg drop soup

Snack #2: ham and cheese roll-ups

Dinner: grilled fish with veggies and brown rice (or quinoa or couscous)

Snack #3: sweet potato with butter and sea salt

Tuesday:

Breakfast: overnight steelcut oats (make in crockpot the night before and add honey, cinnamon, butter, vanilla, and diced apple)

Snack #1: sliced cucumbers sprinkled with vinegar and seasonings

Lunch: *quinoa with kale

Snack #2: cubed colby jack cheese

Dinner: veggie chili (add zucchini, kale, and more beans to the bean chili and maybe another can of tomatoes)

Snack #3: strawberry shortcake shake (frozen banana, unsweetened almond milk, cottage cheese, frozen strawberries; optional: ice, honey, lime juice, chia seeds)

Wednesday:

Breakfast: English muffin with avocado, egg, and cheese

Snack #1: sliced apple with cottage cheese sprinkled with cinnamon

Lunch: chicken wrap (cook chicken at beginning of week and cut in strips to easily grab during the week) stuffed with fresh veggies and drizzled with favorite dressing

Snack #2: hard-boiled eggs with smoked paprika and sea salt

Dinner: smothered chicken (chicken breast with grilled peppers, mushrooms, and onions smothered in mozzarella)

Snack #3: homemade tuna salad

Thursday:

Breakfast: full-fat Greek yogurt, granola, and fruit parfait (sweeten yogurt with FIT-friendly sweetener of choice)

Snack #1: sprouted grain toast with natural peanut butter and honey

Lunch: homemade carrot raisin salad

Snack #2: sugar snap peas

Dinner: waffle iron night (mix nitrate-free bacon in the batter and serve with pure maple syrup)

Snack #3: frozen fruit popsicle (homemade by pureeing fruit and adding to popsicle molds)

Friday:

Breakfast: sausage sweet potato hash

Snack #1: sweet mini peppers

Lunch: salad in a jar (make-ahead for entire week)

Snack #2: veggies with dip of choice

Dinner: taco bar with all the fixins (sour cream, cheese, tomatoes, guacamole)

Snack #3: unsweetened apple sauce

Saturday:

Breakfast: nitrate-free bacon and scrambled eggs

Snack #1: ½ avocado drizzled with sriracha

Lunch: chicken tortilla soup (use leftover taco chicken in a stockpot with a can of tomatoes, chicken stock, and rice)

Snack #2: frozen grapes

Dinner: baked potato bar/top with chili

Snack #3: baked or dehydrated apple chips

Sunday:

Breakfast: breakfast burrito stuffed with sausage and eggs scrambled with veggies

Snack #1: cutie orange slices

Lunch: homemade pizzas (use various veggie and meat toppings on tortillas or homemade dough)

Snack #2: carrots dipped in hummus

Dinner: “Chipotle” style burrito bowls

Snack #3: 1/2 cup honey, 2/3 cup peanut butter, and 1 tablespoon coconut oil melted together and poured over air-popped popcorn

Recipes

Alfredo Chicken Flatbread

2 flatbreads
6 oz. chicken breast (cut in bite size pieces)
1 TBSP butter (salted)
2 TBSP cream cheese
1/2 c. milk
1/2 c. parmesan cheese
spinach leaves
parsley, chopped
1 c. mozzarella cheese

1. In a saucepan, melt butter with a garlic clove. Once butter is melted, add cream cheese and slowly add milk. Continue stirring for 4-5 minutes. Add parmesan cheese. (If the alfredo sauce is thin, add flour to thicken.)
2. Cook chicken in olive oil in a skillet. Season with salt, pepper, and a little bit of lemon juice.
3. Add alfredo sauce to chicken.
4. Assemble the flatbread pizza! Put fresh spinach leaves on the bread. Add chicken/alfredo sauce next. Top with mozzarella cheese and parmesan. (Optional: add green onions and chopped parsley on top.)

Bake for 15-20 minutes at 350 degrees.

This makes 4 servings at 277 calories per half of flatbread.

Banana Ice cream

Place frozen banana in blender (must be frozen to work) and blend until creamy like yogurt. Add strawberries (or any fruit) for variation. Add a T. of unsweetened cocoa powder and unsweetened peanut butter or almond butter for a chocolaty taste.

Chicken Guacamole

Mix Together:

1 ripe avocado
1/2 tomato, diced
1/2 of lime juice
1/2 tsp. sea salt
red hot peppers if you like hot
2 T. cilantro, chopped
Add onions, garlic, basil, rosemary, and other spices (optional)
Add diced chicken

Chocolate "Pudding"

Blend together 2 bananas, 1 avocado, 1 tsp of cocoa - you can add more, if it is a little too thick, add a little almond or coconut milk. And if it doesn't seem sweet enough, add some honey or coconut sugar.

Egg Drop Soup

(Amounts are up to you) Sauté mushrooms and onions and season with salt and pepper. Add chicken broth. While this comes to a boil, beat several eggs. When broth boils, slowly drizzle in eggs. Soup is done when the eggs are cooked.

Flax Seed Pancakes

Mix two bananas, four eggs, and a couple of tablespoons each of wheat germ and flax seed together. Pour in pan after heating on medium heat with coconut oil.

FIT Frosty

1 frozen banana
1/2 c. of unsweetened almond, coconut, or regular milk
1 heaping T. of unsweetened cocoa
2 T. of natural peanut butter or almond butter (optional)
Dash of cinnamon
Splash of vanilla
Blend all together in blender until creamy

Frittata

Sauté diced sun-dried tomatoes, onion, and a lot of spinach. Cook till the spinach is totally cooked down. Remove from the pan.

Whisk together one egg and two egg whites. Then add veggies and mozzarella. Put the mixture back in the pan (you may have to add a little more butter) on low heat. Cook until set. You can flip it over to finish the other side, or finish it in a broiling oven till set.

Granola Bars/Cereal (the perfect substitute for all those boxed cereals)

SERVES: MAKES 3 LBs

INGREDIENTS

- 3½ cups rolled oats (if you want bars, use steel cut oats so it will stick together better)
- 1 cup raw sliced almonds
- 1 cup raw cashew pieces (or walnuts or pecans)
- 1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- ½ cup raw sunflower seeds
- ½ cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1½ teaspoons ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon grated or ground nutmeg
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ cup honey
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Also need - parchment paper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Cover a rectangular baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Mix the dry oats, almonds, cashews, coconut, seeds and spices together in a large mixing bowl.
3. Heat the butter and honey together in a small saucepan over low heat. Once the butter melts stir in the vanilla and salt.
4. Pour the hot liquids over the dry ingredients and stir together with a rubber spatula until evenly coated.
5. Spread mixture onto prepared pan in one even layer. Bake for 75 minutes.
6. The granola will become crisp as it cools at which point you can break into pieces (if making bars) or break it up into small chunks by pounding it in a zip lock bag (if making cereal). Store in air tight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Honey Cinnamon Almonds

2 cups almonds, whole with skins on
1/4 cup coconut sugar, 1 tsp cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons water
2 teaspoons almond oil or 2 teaspoons vegetable oil

Spread the almonds in a single layer in a shallow ungreased baking pan and place in cold oven. Bake at 350° F, stirring occasionally, until the internal color of the nut is tan to light brown, 12 to 15 minutes. (The nuts will continue to roast a little more after they are removed from the oven.) Set the roasted almonds aside.

Thoroughly mix the coconut sugar, cinnamon, and salt, and set aside.

Stir together the honey, water, and oil in a medium-size saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Stir in the roasted almonds and continue to cook and stir until all of the liquid has been absorbed by the nuts, about 5 minutes.

Kale Chips

Remove ribs from kale and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces. Lay on a baking sheet and toss with olive oil and salt. Bake until crisp at 350, turning the leaves halfway through, about 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

Lime Chicken-Avocado Salad

1/2 c. freshly squeezed lime juice
1/4 c. olive oil
2 T. honey
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 rotisserie chicken
1 ripe avocado, sliced
1 c. grape tomatoes, quartered
1/2 c. peeled, seeded, and chopped cucumber
1/4 c. chopped fresh basil

1. Cube chicken.
2. In a small bowl, mix lime juice, olive oil, honey, salt, and cayenne pepper.
3. Combine chicken, avocado, tomatoes, cucumber, and basil with half of the mixture.
4. Spoon some of the mixture over a bed of lettuce. Use the remaining juice mixture as a salad dressing if desired.

Lunch Wrap

Ezekiel sprouted grain tortilla (or other sprouted grain tortilla)
Hummus
Spinach
Cucumber
Bean sprouts
Cilantro
Feta cheese
Tomatoes
Bragg liquid aminos
Toasted sesame oil

Mix all ingredients and wrap in tortilla.

Mediterranean Herb Crusted Fish

Prep Time: 10 min.; Cook Time: 15 min. Yield: 8 servings

Seasoning Blend:

- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 tsp. marjoram leaves
- 3/4 tsp. ground (dry) mustard
- 3/4 tsp. basil leaves
- 3/4 tsp. oregano leaves
- 1/2 tsp. coarse ground black pepper

8 fish fillets (about 2 lbs.) *Use wild caught fish and not farm-raised, if at all possible.

- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 4 T. melted butter or olive oil (or a little of each)
- 1 1/2 c. chopped fresh spinach leaves
- 3/4 c. panko bread crumbs
- 3 Tbsp. shredded parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Place fish on parchment paper lined shallow baking pan. Sprinkle with salt. Mix butter/oil and all the spices in a medium bowl. Brush fish with 1 T. of the seasoned butter.
2. Stir spinach, panko, and parmesan into remaining seasoning mixture. Divide mixture evenly over fillets, pressing lightly so mixture adheres to top of fish.
3. Bake in preheated 400 oven for 15 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork.

Oatmeal Cookies

Mix together 3 mashed bananas (ripe), 1/3 cup applesauce, 2 cups oats, 1/4 cup almond milk (or milk of choice), 1/2 cup raisins, 1 tsp. vanilla, and 1 tsp. cinnamon. Drop by spoonfuls on baking sheet. Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes.

Omelette Cups

Spray a muffin tin, use muffin liners, or line tins with bacon or prosciutto. Crack an egg in each tin and stir, adding veggies and cheese. Bake at 350 degrees until eggs are cooked.

Orange Creamsicles

- 1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 T raw honey or maple syrup (or to taste)
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Combine and pour into popsicle molds.

Overnight Oats

Use 8 oz. twist top containers

In each container:

- 1/4 cup plain yogurt
- 1/8 cup oats
- 1 tsp. maple syrup
- 1 tsp. flax seeds

1 tsp. chia seeds

1 T. whole milk

Mix all together and then fill to the top with fruit and nuts of choice.

Refrigerate overnight, stir, and enjoy in the morning. (You may wish to use a little more milk and substitute coconut sugar for maple syrup.)

Peanut Butter Cookies

1 cup raw, or dry-roasted, whole almonds (or almond meal)

1 cup pitted medjool dates

½ cup natural peanut butter (or other nut butter)

1½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Instructions

1. If you're using whole almonds, process them until they resemble a coarse meal.
2. Add the dates, peanut butter and vanilla; if you're using already-prepared almond meal, just toss all the ingredients into the food processor together. If the nut butter isn't salted, you may add a few pinches of salt.
3. Process the ingredients until the mixture starts to form a dough, about 2 minutes. If it doesn't seem to come together, add another tablespoon or two of peanut butter and process again.
4. Form the dough into walnut-sized balls and place on a sheet of parchment paper. Press each ball gently with a fork to make the classic peanut butter cookie criss-cross pattern.
5. Store in the refrigerator.

Pecan Maple Breakfast Cookies

- 1 cup whole-wheat flour
- ¾ cup rolled oats
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup applesauce
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened but not melted
- 1 egg
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup chopped pecans

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and grease a cookie sheet.
2. Whisk together the flour, oats, baking soda, and salt.
3. In a separate bowl using an electric mixer beat the applesauce, maple syrup, butter, egg, and vanilla.
4. While beating the mixture on a low speed add the dry ingredients until well blended.
5. Fold in the nuts with a spatula.
6. Drop onto prepared cookie sheet with a spoon. Bake for 8 - 9 minutes or until they start to brown.

Quinoa with Kale

Cook quinoa according to directions. Near the end of cooking time, stir in a couple of cups of frozen kale and a clove or two of minced garlic. When the liquid is absorbed, season with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Serve topped with crumbled feta cheese.

Quinoa Lunch

Cook quinoa according to directions. Add about a tablespoon of toasted sesame oil, 1 to 2 teaspoons of liquid aminos. Crumble a sheet or two of Nori and combine. Eat it on its own or add it to salads. It's a great source of protein and satisfies salty carb cravings.

Skinny Chunky Monkey Cookies Recipe:

(Makes 30 cookies)

3 ripe bananas

2 cups old-fashioned oats

1/4 cup creamy peanut butter

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Mash bananas in a large bowl, then stir in remaining ingredients. Let batter stand for approximately 20 minutes, then drop by teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes.

Freezing Directions:

Cool completely, then place cookies in a freezer bag. Seal, label, and freeze.

Spinach and Strawberry Salad

1 bag fresh, washed spinach leaves

½ pint fresh, washed, sliced strawberries

1 red onion, diced

½ c pine nuts

¼ c olive oil

2 T. balsamic vinegar

1 T. honey

1 T. Dijon mustard

½ c. feta cheese

Salt and Pepper to taste.

1. In a salad bowl, add spinach, sliced strawberries, onions, and pine nuts.
2. In a small bowl, whisk oil, vinegar, honey, mustard, salt and pepper.
3. Pour over salad. Toss.
4. Garnish with feta cheese.

Stuffed Pepper Wedges

Slice 4 sweet bell peppers (combination of any colors) into 8 wedges each. Spread on baking sheet. In bowl, combine one container of chive cream cheese, and 4 T. chopped black olives. Spread approx. one tsp. of cheese mixture into each pepper wedge. Sprinkle wedges with approx. 2/3 c. shredded cheese. Broil 5-8 minutes, or until cheese is melted and edges are just beginning to char.

Sweet Potato Hash

Turn oven on 400 degrees, Dice sweet potatoes and put in a small bowl, then add coconut oil and 1 tsp of cinnamon and mix until it is all covered. Put sweet potatoes in a baking pan, put in the oven for 30 min or so, check on it every 10 min, and stir it. When done, always add more cinnamon. Also add crushed almonds and coconut flakes if desired.

Tomato Avocado Burgers

4 large tomatoes

1 lb ground beef
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
½ + ¼ teaspoons fine grain sea salt
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 ripe avocado, divided
2 tablespoons Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon mayo
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
handful alfalfa sprouts

Directions

Cut the tomatoes in half horizontally. With the handle-end of a spoon or a fork, scoop out the seeds and seeds membrane. Set aside.

Place half of the avocado in a bowl and mash with a fork until almost smooth. Add yogurt, mayo, lime juice and cumin and stir to combine. Dice remaining half of the avocado and add it alongside ¼ teaspoon salt. Stir gently to combine. Set aside.

In a bowl season ground beef with ½ teaspoon of salt, black pepper and chili powder and mix well. Divide into equal 4 portions and gently shape each portion into ½-inch thick patty.

Preheat grill (or grill pan) to medium-high heat. Grill patties 3 minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness.

In the meantime, lightly grease with olive oil a medium non-stick pan/skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Cook halved tomatoes face down for 2 to 3 minutes, until they begin to brown. Flip and cook for 20 seconds on the other side so that they get a bit of color.

To assemble burgers, place a large pinch of sprouts on the bottom part of each tomato, top with a beef patty, about 2 tablespoons of avocado sauce and finish with the other half of each tomato.

Tortilla Pizzas

You can put anything you have on hand: whole wheat tortilla, olive oil, garlic salt, pepper, lots of spinach, a little fresh mozzarella, crushed red pepper, shredded chicken, fresh basil, and caramelized onions. Broil on low until cheese is melted.

Whole Wheat Banana Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups whole-wheat flour (King Arthur's organic white whole-wheat flour is good)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 ¾ cups milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted + butter for frying
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 100% pure maple syrup for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
2. Make a well (hole) in the center of the flour mixture and pour in the honey, eggs, milk, and 2 tablespoons of melted butter. Whisk together thoroughly, but do not overmix.
3. Gently fold the mashed bananas into the batter with a spatula.

4. Heat a griddle or sauté pan over medium-high heat. Swirl enough butter around the pan until it is well coated. Add pancake batter using a soup ladle.
5. When the pancakes have begun brown on the bottom, flip them over to cook the other side.
6. Serve with warm maple syrup and a side of fruit. And don't forget to freeze the leftovers for another day!

Zucchini Boats with Ricotta-Basil Mousse

6 small zucchini

1 c. loosely packed fresh basil leaves, finely chopped

1 c. ricotta cheese

1 c. loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped

¼ c. grated fresh parmigiana cheese

2 T. hot water

1 T. lemon juice

¼ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. pepper

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

2. Wash and cut each zucchini in half length-wise; scoop out pulp (with a melon-baller), leaving ¼” thick shell. Arrange zucchini in a 13x9 greased baking dish.

3. Mix all remaining ingredients together, divide evenly among zucchini shells and stuff.

4. Bake for 20 minutes or until zucchini is tender.

**You may substitute the ricotta mixture for any veggies you have on-hand and top with mozzarella.

Herbal Teas

Herbal teas are another great way to get water in during winter when it's cold, and even room temperature water doesn't sound good. Herbal teas are simply the infusion of fruit, veggies (leaves and roots), and spices in hot water.

NOTE: Any caffeinated tea is not an herbal tea and will NOT count toward your daily water intake. The following teas will NOT count toward your 64 oz. of water: black tea (and any flavored black teas), green tea (and any flavored green teas), white tea (and any flavored white teas), Oolong, Chai, Earl Grey, Darjeeling, Yerba Mate, etc. and the decaffeinated versions of these teas will NOT count either as they have to undergo an artificial process to decaffeinate them. Herbal teas will also not count toward water intake if they include any artificial colors, artificial flavors, or any infused sweeteners (including dehydrated fruit juices), so check the ingredients. With herbal teas, loose leaf is the BETTER option, and organic is BEST.

Here are some great options for herbal tea:

Ginger, Cinnamon, and Honey: Great for stomach issues, energizing, inflammation, cardiovascular issues, and arthritis.

Chamomile: Great for an upset stomach, anxiety, PMS cramps, sleep issues, migraines, and stomach ulcers. Use with caution if you have ragweed allergies.

Peppermint: Great for stress relief, sinus relief, skin issues, nausea, muscle aches, and stomach problems including IBS. (DISCLAIMER: Peppermint MAY cause a dip in milk supply if nursing.)

Dandelion tea: Great for a digestive aid, inflammation, immune function, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Nourishing to the kidneys, liver, and gallbladder. Liver function is enhanced when combined with Milk Thistle.

Red Raspberry Leaf: This includes tannins that give it a flavor profile similar to a less bitter black tea. Very nourishing to the lady bits and is known for improving fertility and supporting pregnancy. In men it's helpful for detoxifying artificial estrogens from the environment.

Rooibos: Enjoyable flavor profile, especially if paired with honey. Known for its antioxidant properties and helping with skin concerns.

Lemon Balm: Great for mood lifting, concentration, reducing nightmares, nerve pain, and may help with regulating thyroid.

Lavender: Great for soothing mind and body, lifting moods, upset stomach, reducing fevers, and reducing cough.

Echinacea: Assists with the common cold and enhances the immune system.

Nettle: Great for anemia, high blood pressure, rheumatism, arthritis, colds and congestion, kidney issues, UTIs, and allergies.

DISCLAIMER: If you choose to ingest high amounts of herbal teas, check first to make sure that they don't interact with any medications you are currently on.

The Winners' Corner

Below you will find advice from past winners on how to succeed in our program.
Enjoy!

Rhonda -

This really helped me when I first started! These are different names of sugar. <http://www.fitsugar.com/Other-Names-Sugar-Appear-Labels-810571> If your goal is getting "healthier" I highly recommend cutting it out as much as possible. Look for coconut sugar, use honey or unsweetened applesauce and bananas when you can. After a few weeks you will find fruit is very sweet to you, and the sugar is less and less desirable. The whole process is to get our bodies to where we can have it but

not be addicted to it. And no “sugar free” stuff because those will ALL have artificial sweeteners!

As far as liquid...many people have trouble with that part. Not necessarily the drinking 8 cups of water a day (8 ounces each) but the NOT drinking cokes/sweet tea/diet drinks etc. A lot of women forego the points because they HAVE to have sugar in their coffee every day, etc. IF you do this I highly recommend keeping it to that one thing only. Many women have learned that milk/honey works just as good as the sugar once they are used to it.

Exercise... Any exercise MFP recognizes is acceptable. You can break it up over the day but of course 10 minutes at a time or more will get you better results!

At least one meal a day I try to have salad. I try to incorporate our regular foods into my meals so that I'm not double cooking. So, if my family has fajitas I have a fajita salad instead. If they have beans and rice I have a bowl of beans, a side salad and sweet potato. If they have steak I have grilled chicken or fish. If they have homemade pizza I make zucchini pizza. I'm not big on dressings! I eat the salsa from HEB that is in the produce section on a lot of my salads. When I don't have that I use a serving size of olive garden dressing and yes, I MEASURE IT! Don't ruin your healthy eating with dressing.

The main thing is trying to teach people they can live without processed food. Many people just have no idea where to start. Not everyone cares about the chemicals and preservatives. You'll find the challenge members all over the spectrum! I'm turning into "chemical free" for the most part, so I'll always recommend REAL, WHOLE foods, but as long as it's not a sugar food (cookies, cakes, candy, coke, etc.) it's FIT-friendly. Also, I haven't had bread (sliced) since September. I eat a few fresh wheat tortillas from HEB bakery a month, and I do grilled chicken wraps from McDonald's/Sonic about once a week on Sundays (my treat day). My splurges are mostly carbs and maybe a dessert at lunch. I go for a treat MEAL more than treat day! I also want to recommend eating a small amount of nuts, whole milk, or real (unsalted) butter every day!!! We NEED good fats, but we've been taught they are bad! The only BAD was that we were eating too much.

Another tip is to use the desktop site to log on to MFP through the web. I look on the forums a lot and have found a lot of inspiration/motivation and food tips. Don't just go through the app because there is a lot of good stuff on the site. The SUCCESS STORIES are awesome. I read a couple every day to keep me motivated. Before/after pics really help me. Hope this helps get you started.

Diane -

The points are set up for everyone to be successful. I think doing your best in each of the point requirements is the key to success. Use MFP. Choose exercises that will not just meet the points requirement of 30 minutes, but that will really give you a good

workout. Don't eat after 9 (this was a huge help for me because I think I must have done that a lot before the challenge and even did it on day 2 of the challenge without thinking...I was crushed!). Eat your vegetables early in the day. They fill you up. Don't go overboard on your treat day. Enjoy it, but don't eat the whole pan. Something else that really helps me is to realize that it's never going to be easy. Having self-control is hard (as least for me). You have to make exercise a priority because I know it's hard to find the time. Really sticking with the guidelines helped me form new habits, and I am really, really thankful!

Sandra -

There were several that had higher losses than I did, but this was the most I had lost in any challenge. Last challenge I decided... NO cheat day! Also I had been reading about gluten and decided that might be a problem so only allowed myself a small amount of gluten 4 times the whole challenge. Also been watching the documentaries that are listed in our guidelines and did some research on animal products... YEP... Meat and dairy! YIKES. That was harder to deal with than the sugar. I cut my animal products in at least half! What AM I eating? Pretty much veggies, fruit, nuts and good grains, and beans. I know it seems drastic... A quote from one of the documentaries really hit me: "You say that is drastic... What is more drastic than DYING?" Now I will be very honest. I am SO not done yet on his journey. My head wants to be like this forever, but I still really have my challenges. But, this is what my goal is and by the way... I have been feeling TONS better!!! I still don't have the energy I want, but after eating poorly most of my life I can't expect that to change in a few months.

Courtney -

My biggest tip would be follow the points system. The closer you follow it, the better results you will have. Second tip, find a way to make exercise fun. Don't get bogged down with the same routine. Find something you enjoy, and you won't even feel like it's a 'workout'. Switch it up! Bike one day, then take up a sport. Find a class and take up something you've never done before. It can be fun! Third, listen to your body. When you need to rest, rest. When you need to eat, eat. Lastly, take advantage of your accountability partners. I met some awesome ladies and great encouragers!

If you've read this far, you are SERIOUS about taking control of your health. Welcome to the FIT journey!