



Weekly Tip:

Your body can become physically addicted to fats, sodium and simple carbs like sugars, that is why you crave them when starting a new lifestyle. It is also why children go through such behavioural changes when we take these items away and try to force-feed them healthy alternatives. If you are a person or a family that has become addicted to fast or convenience foods you may have a physical addiction to these elements and not even be aware! Now don't go getting all discouraged or elated because now you have an 'excuse' to continue your destructive behaviour, these dependencies can be changed. Depending on your level of dependency you may be able to quit these things 'cold turkey' or you may need to make gradual changes incorporating bridge foods. However you do it, getting rid of the crap in your diet is always a good thing!

Planning for Success

Whether you are looking to make a lifestyle change or already have and want to keep eating healthy and have it fit your budget and lifestyle, you need to plan for success. One of the biggest obstacles that we have as a society that sabotages our attempts at a healthy lifestyle is our lifestyles themselves. We have such fast-paced lives that we have become dependent upon fast and convenience foods. Time and time again I hear the excuses that eating healthy is either 'too expensive' or 'takes too long'. And both comments are just that—excuses for behaviors that we know we shouldn't engage in. If you want to eat healthy, you have to take the time to plan and prepare—but it can be done within your budget and within your time frame I promise!

Step #1 is in purging your kitchen. Yes I am serious! You will never be able to eat healthy as long as you have quick and easy access to the unhealthy choices you have become addicted to. Unopened packages can be donated, open ones tossed. I promise it will be worth it in the end! A fresh start for a fresh and healthy life!

Step 2—look at your schedule and decide which day of the week works best for you to shop and prepare for the week.. Sundays may be best for most, depending on your work and family schedules—your day could be Tuesday—whatever it is, you need to schedule time for planning and preparation! Step 3—make a realistic family budget for food on a monthly basis and divide it into weeks so you know exactly how much you have to spend. Ideally, you will want at least \$100 a month per person you are feeding. Yes I am serious—that is how much I budget for my family and we eat very well. This grocery budget is for ALL food but doesn't include other items like toilet paper, cleaning products etc.—those should be budgeted separately. If you have more or less, you will need to adapt.

Step 4— Now you know what you have and know how much you have to spend each week, you need to sit down and plan. Make a weekly meal plan including snacks and meals for everyone. Here is a hint from my restaurant days—plan on using leftovers for the next day meals. For example spaghetti sauce makes great chili, or sloppy joes!

Remember that when you are working with a limited budget and/or time—you need to buy in bulk and plan to prepare—that is why you have a day or even a few hours a week set aside. Step 5—Grocery shop. With your list AND CASH in hand (no debit or credit cards) - you need to spend only what you have budgeted for—head off to the store to buy what you need for the week. Remember to keep \$10 or \$20 on hand to restock milk and bread through the week. Step 6—prepare your food in advance. Wash and cut fresh veggies for snacks—leaving them handy in the fridge. Chop veggies that you will need for sauces etc. - or even make the sauce! Whatever you can do in advance to make your weekly plan work—do it! Items can be frozen or refrigerated for when you need them. Anyone who is committed to feeding themselves and their family's in a healthy and budget-friendly way will take the time to make it work. No need and no room for fast food or restaurants—those come from your entertainment budget if you are fortunate to have one. You can do this—you deserve it!

Recipe Corner

Delicious and nutritious snack and meal ideas that are perfect for the whole family!
Straight from Michelle's kitchen!



Michelle's Dark and Chewy Granola Bars

These yummy treats freeze well and can accommodate almost any ingredient that your family chooses as long as the ratios stay the same. You can make them different every single time and always have some healthy treats on hand for company and lunch box snacks!

Combine the following ingredients by hand or in a stand mixer: 1/2 cup honey, 1/4 cup brown sugar, 1/2 cup dark molasses, 4 cups rolled oats, 1/2 cup whole grain flour, 1/2 cup wheat bran flakes, 1 tsp. baking soda.

Add a total of 2 cups nuts or dried fruits - think raisins, sunflower seeds, cranberries, almonds, figs and dates - chop well and mix in. If mixture is too thick to spread, add a bit of water or honey to taste. Spread in a sprayed 9x13 pan and bake for 20 minutes at 350 degrees F and then let cool, before cutting into squares.

This is a great way to get your kids to help make their own lunches and healthy food choices—let them pick the ingredients but skip the chocolate!

How fit are you—really?

Did you know that there is more to being physically fit than just being able to walk or run? There are so many different types of fitness training that often it is hard to determine what is the best choice for you.

What I recommend is a fitness program (whether you work out at home, at a gym, with a friend or take a class) that incorporates all aspects of physical fitness. To work on your total-body fitness you need to look at cardio programs but also on strength training, coordination and flexibility as well. I often see people come to class who run marathons and assume they are ready to take on the world and when it comes to cardiac endurance most of them can but often they struggle with upper body or core strength training or can barely touch their toes. The same is said for many body-building types of clients. Sure they can bench press twice their body weight—but can they run?

Now don't get me wrong—if you are active and participating regularly in an activity that works for you, I am thrilled—you are doing more than most and don't stop! What I would recommend is actually adding to your current program.

If you love to run—great, make sure you finish each workout with some Yoga or other flexibility training that gradually gets harder and pushes you farther. Perhaps some upper body and core training on the days you don't run—push ups and ab crunches can be done in front of the TV and are never a bad thing to do—the basics became the basics for a reason—they work!

If you are just starting out and trying to get in shape—don't be discouraged, working on your total body fitness doesn't have to be complicated or confusing. A great workout will incorporate all facets into one routine you can do 3—5 days a week in under an hour. This is the basis for almost all of the popular bootcamp classes you see

If you give yourself 1-hour 5 days a week you will be in great shape and think—that is only 5 hours a week to become the person you know you want to be, living the life you have always wanted to live! Your hour should consist of 10 minutes of a warm-up, 15 minutes of steady cardio training that gets you working to where you can sing the ABCs to the letter D before taking a breath! I prefer cardio components that work on coordination at the same time and are designed to burn fat—like high intensity intervals. 10 minutes cool down. 15 minutes of muscle training and 10 minutes of flexibility. If you are training for a specific goal or activity of course this won't necessarily work for you but for the average person trying to improve their total-body health and get in shape—these types of programs are perfectly balanced! Remember that the key is consistency—your results will depend upon your effort!