

Overcoming Obstacles

Outsmart the issues that are keeping you from reaching your goals.

By: EatingWell Editors

What's stopping you from getting to your goal

of a healthier life? Here's how to handle some common excuses:

“I don't have time to eat healthfully.” Today, there are more healthy choices than ever available at supermarkets and takeout counters—but perhaps you doubt that it's much easier to eat better (and spend less money) if you cook most of your meals at home. It doesn't have to be time-consuming or difficult; with planning ahead—say, picking out a few 20-minute recipes or roasting a chicken and chopping vegetables on weekends—your weekday meals can be a simple matter of assembly.

“I don't have time to exercise.” Try getting up a half-hour earlier to make time for a morning walk or catching up with a friend while you help her weed the garden, instead of over lunch. Just about anything that gets you moving counts, whether it's raking leaves or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend getting at least two-and-a-half hours a week of moderate physical (think: walking briskly)—more if you're trying to lose weight. Start modestly if you need to: try just 10 minutes a day, and work up to more time each week. Finding activities you can do in your home, such as fitness videos or investing in a home-exercise machine, might also do the trick.

Make sure to speak with your doctor before starting any exercise program.

“Problem? I don't have a problem.” Some denial about the effect of lifestyle changes on your overall health is natural, especially if your unhealthy habits seem normal because they are similar to those of everyone around you. The key to managing denial is to recognize it. Saying things like “I'll do it tomorrow” or “One bite won't hurt” are red flags. Practice catching yourself when you say these things. Ask your family and friends to help.

“Why me? It's not fair!” A little anger about having to deal with a health issue like high blood pressure can be helpful if it makes you want to fight back by taking care of yourself. But being so angry that you refuse to deal with it can lead to complications down the road—and more negative feelings. If you think anger is getting in your way, find out what you're really mad about and why. Try keeping an “anger diary”: before you go to bed, grab your journal and jot down the things that made you angry. After a while, you'll probably notice patterns that can help you understand what makes you upset and you can start thinking about changes you might make. Talk with your health care specialist about ways to help you deal with your angry feelings.



Photo Credit: Blaine Moats

Photo is of a model not an actual patient.