

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!

HOLIDAY Challenge

WEEK 4

Holiday Challenge Guidelines

The overall goal is for participants to *maintain* their current weight for the last 7 weeks of the year. As a participant, you will:

- Weigh yourself each week.
- Track what you eat and drink.
- Track your activity.
- Make a plan.



You are halfway there!

Take a minute to check in with yourself. How are things going? What tools and tips are working for you? As you work toward your goals, you may experience plateaus or setbacks. Remember to make good decisions, not perfect ones.

WEEK #4 CHALLENGE:

Focus on Good Sleep

Sleep is essential for overall wellness. It plays an overlooked — and too often negotiable — role in maintaining physical and mental health. Our bodies have primary drives including the need for food, water, and sleep. Our drive to sleep supersedes our drive to eat. This means that your body will eventually force you to fall asleep, but not to eat. Have you ever fallen asleep at an inopportune time? That is your body's drive to sleep taking over.

During the holidays, the whole family's routine can change and that can throw off your sleep schedule whether you are at home or away. This week we challenge you to focus on being your most rested self.

During sleep, the body engages in many complex functions associated with memory, learning ability, brain development and cleaning, appetite, immune function, and aging. A consistent lack of sleep negatively impacts almost every part of your body. Poor sleep impacts our ability to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Sleep deprivation raises the hormone ghrelin which makes us hungry and decreases the hormone leptin which makes us feel full. This will make you hungry and less satiated, increasing your risk of overeating. Chronic sleep deprivation is linked to weight gain and impaired blood sugar control—both increase your risk of type 2 diabetes.

Adults 18 to 64 need 7 to 9 hours of sleep and those over 65 need 7 to 8 hours. If you are reading this email, we assume you fall into the 7 to 9-hour range. Your sleep needs will change over your lifespan, but they also vary from person to person. Keep this in mind when setting your personal sleep goal based on the guidelines.

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Daily Tip: Let's Talk About Sleep Hygiene

Most people have heard the term sleep hygiene. It is the act of controlling your sleep behaviors and environments to optimize your sleep. It is also the starting point for fixing all sleep problems. Sleep hygiene alone may not resolve your sleep problem but your problem most likely won't get resolved if you don't start here.

- **Light.** Get rid of light—make your bedroom dark. Do you wake up at night with random bright lights from electronics? If you can't eliminate the light, buy a soft contoured eye mask. Ideally, you want to keep all screens out of your bedroom.
- **Noise.** Make sure your bedroom is quiet. Are you guilty of leaving the TV on all night because the noise relaxes you? Well, we have bad news. You may fall asleep, but your brain will still sort the words it hears. Silence unwanted noise with earplugs or use a fan to create white noise.
- **Temperature.** The ideal sleep temperature is between 60 and 67 degrees. Keep your bedroom at a comfortable sleeping temperature that works for you. Temperature settings can be challenging if you share your bed with others without the same preferences.
- **Love your bed.** This won't magically make your sleep better, but your bed should be comfortable. Everybody has different comfort levels, but you should love your bed. Make your bed and bedding as comfortable as you can afford.
- **Bedfellows.** This can be a controversial topic but if your bed partner—human or animal—is impeding your ability to sleep something needs to be done. If your pet sleeps with you and you don't have sleep problems, great. If not, the pet needs to move. This is less easy to do with a spouse or partner and if the concern is not communicated effectively feelings may get hurt. Everyone deserves to sleep well and sleeping apart does not have to reflect a lack of commitment in a relationship (1).

1. Winter WC. The sleep solution: Why your sleep is broken and how to fix it. 1st ed. Berkley; 2017.

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Daily Tip: Bedtime Routines Aren't Just for Kids

It is common knowledge that kids benefit from a set sleep schedule, but adults need regular sleep-wake schedules too. Adopting bedtime behaviors that promote healthy sleep will train your mind and body to recognize it's time to prepare for sleep. Engaging in these activities regularly can create a relaxing and calming atmosphere. This can reduce stress and anxiety levels and make it easier to fall asleep. If you don't have a *healthy* bedtime routine already, it is not recommended to try all these steps at once. Pick one or two that feel attainable and start there.

Daytime Tips

- **Light.** Spend time in bright light during the day, natural light, or equivalent brightness.
- **Exercise.** Exercise regularly, preferably in the morning, for a deeper sleep.
- **Mealtimes.** Eat your meals at consistent times every day.

Evening Tips

- **Avoid.** Avoid heavy meals, nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime. Our bodies need time (2-3 hours) to digest foods before lying down in bed. Nicotine and caffeine are stimulants, and alcohol disrupts natural sleep patterns. All of these contribute to less restful sleep.
- **Wind-down.** Use a consistent routine with a relaxing wind-down to get the sleep you need each night.
- **Environment.** This is where sleep hygiene comes into play. Put your devices away an hour before bed and sleep in a quiet, cool, and dark environment.



Daily Tip: What About Napping?

Napping is okay if it doesn't interfere with nighttime sleep. The issue with napping for more than 20-30 minutes is that your brain has more of a chance to fall into a deep sleep which may interfere with nighttime sleep. When you wake up from deep sleep versus light sleep you are more likely to feel groggy or disoriented (1).

- Naps should last 20-30 minutes.
- Naps should be taken in a dark, quiet environment.
- Nap before 3 pm—an early nap adds to the previous night of sleep but a late nap subtracts from the upcoming night of sleep.
- For an extra wakefulness boost post-nap, get some sunlight and exercise.

Ultimately, the most appropriate approach to napping will vary from person to person and depend on individual sleep needs and patterns. By being mindful of the potential impact of napping on nighttime sleep, individuals can make informed decisions about when and how to nap. This will enable optimal sleep and wellness.

1. Winter WC. The sleep solution: Why your sleep is broken and how to fix it. 1st ed. Berkley; 2017.

Bonus Tip

Revenge bedtime procrastination is a trendy sleep topic that refers to staying up past your bedtime typically involving scrolling on social media or watching an extra episode of your latest show. When your days are packed, it can be challenging to find some "me time" to unwind and you may feel like the only time to yourself is right before bed. Creating personal downtime that does not affect your sleep is vital to your health.



Daily Tip: Reframing Sleep Difficulty

Everyone has trouble sleeping at some point in their life. Part of being human is dealing with worry and stress, and this can occasionally lead to poor sleep. We know that poor sleep hygiene—things like heavy meals, nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime—contributes to less restful sleep. Keep this in mind on sleepless nights.

There are three distinct sleep stages—light, deep sleep, and dream or REM sleep. Light sleep is the doorway to deep sleep and dream sleep. Individuals usually sleep about half the night in light sleep, a quarter in deep sleep, and the remaining quarter in dream sleep. Sleep stages ebb and flow in a predictable pattern during healthy sleep. You spend about half the night in some form of light sleep, but this sleep is not very restorative. If you are spending a disproportionate amount of time at this stage, this may make you feel like you aren't sleeping at all (1).

Remember that our bodies have a primary drive for sleep and that sleep is inevitable. Your body may choose to sleep at unsafe or dangerous times, for example, while driving. Your perception of sleep quality may not reflect your sleep reality 1. Read this **blog** for more tips to help you reframe occasional sleep difficulty.

1. Winter WC. The sleep solution: Why your sleep is broken and how to fix it. 1st ed. Berkley; 2017.

Bonus Tip

If you are traveling, it can be helpful to have some sleep accessories to make sure you get a good night's sleep in an unfamiliar setting. An eye mask and earplugs can be a game changer when sleeping somewhere that isn't your own bed.