

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

# HOLIDAY Challenge

## WEEK 6

### 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.

## The finish line is in sight!

There are only two weeks left in the Holiday Challenge and the calendar year. That means the “*holidayze*” is approaching — the time between Christmas and New Year’s Day when you aren’t sure what day of the week it is. Now is the time to start putting everything you have learned into practice. Make good decisions, not perfect ones, and don’t forget we are cheering you on!

### WEEK #6 CHALLENGE:

## Take Back Your Time

Do you ever feel like there isn’t enough time in the day to get everything done? When life gets busier, as it typically does around the holidays, it can be difficult to juggle all of our responsibilities and keep up with our to-do lists. While we can’t create more time in the day, we can change the way we create our to-do lists and use the time we have more effectively. Try to implement a few of these strategies as you make your to-do lists this week.

### Tips for your To-Do list:

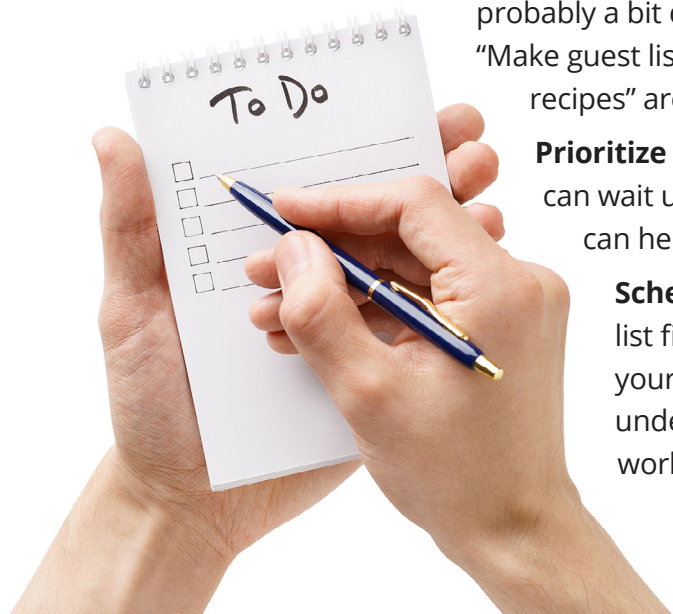
**Decide where you want to keep your to-do list.** You may prefer pen and paper or you may prefer using an app on your phone. Find what is most effective for keeping yourself on track.

**Pause before you write a task down.** Will the task take less than 2-3 minutes to complete? If so, go ahead and knock it out.

**Divide large tasks into smaller steps.** Everything on your to-do list should be actionable. For example, “Host holiday party” is vague and probably a bit daunting. Adding subtasks like “Set party date and time,” “Make guest list,” “Send text invites,” and “Choose appetizer & entree recipes” are smaller and more actionable tasks.

**Prioritize your To-Do list.** What tasks need to happen today? What can wait until tomorrow or the weekend? Setting your priorities can help you better focus your time and energy.

**Schedule your tasks.** It’s important to see where your to-do list fits into your schedule. Blocking time for a to-do item sets your intention to complete it. Scheduling tasks also helps you understand what is realistic for you to accomplish around work or other events.



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## Daily Tip: Tiny Habits

If you set a wellness goal for the holiday season, we hope you're making positive progress and sticking to your intentions. Whether this describes you or you need an extra push to keep progressing, tiny habits can be a very helpful tool. Take your goal and make it as small as possible—this is a tiny habit. Your tiny habit should be so easy and simple that you can do it. Fit your tiny habit into your routine and celebrate each time you complete it (1).

Let's say your wellness goal is to meditate for 10 minutes every day. Your tiny habit may be to close your eyes and take 5 deep breaths. Next, find out where your tiny habit fits into your routine. Maybe you meditate after you eat lunch, before returning to work for the rest of the day. After you eat, close your eyes and take 5 deep breaths. If you have more time, you meditate for a few minutes or 10 minutes, but you only have to close your eyes and take 5 deep breaths. Then, take a moment to celebrate by acknowledging your accomplishment. This can create positive emotions that reinforce your tiny habit.

### To recap:

1. Shrink your goal into a tiny habit.
2. Fit your tiny habit into your routine.
3. Celebrate your tiny habit success.

1. Godoy M & Douglis S. Instead of New Year's resolutions, start and stick with 'Tiny Habits'. NPR. Updated December 28, 2021. Accessed March 15, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2020/02/25/809256398/tiny-habits-are-the-key-to-behavioral-change>

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## Daily Challenge

Start making more progress today with a tiny habit!

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## Daily Tip: 'Tis the Season to Put the Screens Down

Do you ever catch yourself scrolling online or sitting in front of the TV for far too long? With all the technology we have access to, it is easy to spend a lot of time in front of screens day to day. Some screen time is unavoidable and required for work and communication. Other screen time, like social media scrolling and Netflix streaming, is typically unnecessary. Take back your time by reducing your screen time! Making small changes could give you more time and energy for your health and wellness goals, hobbies, and your friends and family.

Think about what you could do with an extra 30 minutes to an hour each day! Read this [blog](#) to analyze your current habits and get strategies to reduce your screen time.

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### **Daily Challenge**

Instead of scrolling on your phone,  
take a 15-minute brisk walk during your lunch break.

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### Daily Tip: Vitamin Nature

As the days get colder and darker it can be difficult to find the motivation to exercise outdoors—or at all. Many of us experience a mood shift and report feeling more sluggish or may tend to oversleep during the winter months. The decrease in sunlight may disrupt your body’s internal clock and lead to feelings of low mood or even depression. Remember that engaging in regular physical activity can improve your energy and mood.

There is also a growing body of research that suggests nature has enormous emotional and cognitive benefits that include improved attention, lower stress, better mood, reduced risk of psychiatric disorders, and even upticks in empathy and cooperation (1). Although it is too soon to make specific guidance, one study found that spending 120 minutes a week in nature was an important threshold associated with good health and well-being (2). ***Nature might just be the ultimate multivitamin!***

Enjoying the outdoors does not mean you have to be “outdoorsy.” How you participate may look different from what is seen in the mainstream. Plus, not everyone has the time, money, or physical mobility to access remote wilderness. Enjoying nature for you might look like walking in a local park or taking a moment to appreciate the birds or other animals in your yard or neighborhood. There is no one way to enjoy nature—figure out what works for you and get outside! The good news is that both green and blue (aquatic) spaces produce well-being benefits. More remote and biodiverse areas may foster a greater connection to nature, but even urban parks and trees can lead to positive outcomes (1).

1. White MP, Alcock I, Grellier J, et al. Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing. *Sci Rep.* 2019;9(1):1-11. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-44097-3>. Accessed Sep 11, 2022. doi: 10.1038/s41598-019-44097-3.

2. Nurtured by nature. <https://www.apa.org> Web site. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>. Accessed Sep 11, 2022.



### **Daily Tip: Self-Care Isn't Selfish**

During this busy time of the year, we are often running in a million different directions. With so many things demanding your time and attention, it can be overwhelming. This is why it is essential to take a step back and make time for yourself. Prioritizing your needs is often easier said than done but you can't fully show up for the people in your life until you know how to show up for yourself. Taking care of your basic physical and emotional needs is also going to keep you from getting burned out.

During the remainder of this week, conduct a self-care audit. Not sure how to do that, use this **blog** to help. Our most valuable resources are our time, money, and energy. Knowing what you value and need will give you a starting point for setting boundaries that allow you to show up for yourself and others.

If you don't feel like you are doing self-care well, we invite you to give yourself a break from being human. Take a deep breath and acknowledge that you're still standing. You will get back to self-care soon, and it may look different than it used to. Practicing kindness to yourself is already a form of self-care. Keep taking care of yourself to the best of your current ability.

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### **Daily Challenge**

Spend 5-10 minutes doing one thing that fills your cup because you can't pour from an empty cup.