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FOODS IN FRONT

A Monthly Newsletter by the CMH Dietitians

Staying motivated when it's not fun



Have you ever said, "I don't care what it takes - I'm starting today!" Whether it's with working out in the gym, making homemade meals, cutting out desserts, whatever it is, we've all been there. And then, one month later, you've fallen off the wagon and it feels impossible to restart.

.Change is hard - there's no way around it. We have "normal" habits and lifestyles because they are comfortable to us from years and years of repetition. And at the end of the day, moving out of a comfort zone IS going to cause discomfort.

So now what? How do you keep up that motivation you felt on day one?

Try these strategies to keep moving forward, no matter the pace:

1. Create external motivators and rewards at the beginning to keep you going.

- Sign up for a 5k, plan a hiking trip for six months from now, or set a goal for what you want to lift in the gym. Give yourself a "deadline" to *train for* to remind yourself that you've got to follow through - you're invested!
- If you hit all your goals for the month, whether it be with workouts, meals at home, sleep, or something else, celebrate with a fun activity or self-care routine - get a massage, go mini-golfing, or buy new a new workout outfit to feel good as you keep on working.

2. When you need to, pivot the “how” to keep momentum going at all costs.

- Have you ever heard the theory “an object at rest stays at rest?” Keeping going in *some* capacity will be easier on you than stopping and starting again. The biggest barrier will always be from doing **nothing** to doing **something**. Once you’re doing something, you can change *types* of “something,” *duration* of “something,” *frequency* of “something,” without having to climb that first hill again.
- Switch up your workouts - if the gym isn’t realistic, find at-home pilates or HIIT workouts on youtube, practice walking/jogging intervals, or find a rec league for a sport you like.
- Switch up meals - try making one new recipe each week or brainstorm “makeover” recipes for a meal you like at your favorite restaurant.

3. Find the positives, keep the “why” in mind, and reframe what you are doing.

- Motivation will always ebb and flow. As you get started, write down your goals on a post-it and post it everywhere you are - on your mirror in the bathroom, on the wall/desk next to your computer at work, etc. What can you do today to help with that goal?
- Reframe from “chore” to “non chore,” to remember that these behaviors are good for you. After a long day of sitting at work, think of your workout as recess, a time where you GET to do something physical and shake off the dust from a long day. Or, instead of focusing on a heart-healthy meal being less “fun” than fried foods, joke and say “my arteries are going to LOOOVE me after this!”

4. Finally, keep a voice of reason ready to go, and, when you need it, give yourself some tough love.

- The easiest outcome in these situations is to just go back to the way life was before. So, remind yourself that you’re an adult, you know how life works, and you ARE capable of doing things that are challenging.
- Weigh the input against the outcome and look at your actions logistically versus emotionally. If you want something to change in your outcome, the truth of it is that you HAVE to change something that you are putting in. And, if you *don’t* want to change the input, make sure you’re at peace with the outcome staying how it is.
- If you make a plan for yourself, stick to it by remembering, “sometimes what I want and what I need are different.” We can choose to do things that are good for us even if we don’t necessarily want to - it might not be as fun as relaxing with Netflix or grabbing some quick and easy takeout, but sometimes, to make that change, we gotta do what we gotta do.

Takeout at home: recipes

Egg roll in a bowl

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup gyoza sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp Chinese 5-spice powder
- 1-2 tsp olive oil
- 1 green onions, sliced
- 1 pound lean ground chicken
- 2 12-oz bags coleslaw mix

Directions:

1. Whisk 5-spice powder in gyoza sauce and set aside for later.
2. Heat a large skillet on medium heat. When hot, add the oil and swirl to coat the bottom. Add garlic and the white parts of the green onion, and sauté for 2-3 minutes.
3. Add ground chicken to skillet and use a spatula or large wooden spoon to break into small crumbles. Let cook for 5-6 minutes until chicken is cooked through.
4. Increase heat to medium-high and add coleslaw and sauce mix. Cook for 5-7 minutes until slaw is cooked to your liking.
5. Add the dark green part of the green onion, mix in well, and remove from heat.
6. Serve in bowls and enjoy!

Adapted from: <https://therealfooddietitians.com/easy-egg-roll-in-a-bowl/>

Protein-packed chicken fried rice

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 12 oz chicken breast
- 2 cups rice, cooked and cooled
- 2 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1 small white onion, diced
- 1 12-oz bag frozen peas and carrots
- 2-3 Tbsp soy sauce (to taste)
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 Tbsp chopped green onions

Directions:

1. Heat 1 Tbsp olive oil and 1 Tbsp soy sauce on medium heat in a large skillet. Add chicken breast and cook until cooked through and lightly browned. Remove from pan and set aside. Once slightly cooled, cut into small cubes.
2. Pour sesame oil into skillet and heat on medium-high. Add onion, peas, and carrots, and stir-fry until tender.
3. Using a spatula, push onion, peas, and carrots to one side of the skillet, and add the lightly beaten eggs to the other side. Scramble eggs as they cook.
4. Add rice and cooked chicken cubes to skillet, and mix all components together. Add soy sauce to taste and continue to stir-fry until all food components are hot and fully combined.
5. Serve into bowls, add green onions, and enjoy.

Adapted from: <https://therecipecritic.com/chicken-fried-rice/>
