



**Forming healthy lifestyle habits can be daunting.** To make it easier, experts in the art of change suggest these 4 proven strategies:

1. **Focus on ONE goal at a time.** If you take on multiple goals, such as eating better, exercising daily and reducing your household debt all at once, you may get overloaded and give up.
2. **Develop positive thinking.** This habit has the potential to help you form new habits more easily. Work to replace your negative thoughts with those that make you feel good about your goal and the rewards ahead.
3. **Make the goal achievable.** Example: Don't commit to running 5 miles a day if you haven't been exercising for years. Start by taking 10-minute walks instead. Have patience.
4. **Get help.** Take advantage of the experts – your health care provider, a personal trainer, a financial counselor, a tobacco quitline or a support group.

## Safety + Wellness

**Creating a safer living environment** protects your mental and physical well-being by reducing your risk of injury and harm.

**Two things impact your risk of getting hurt: your behavior and your health.** In this sense, personal safety and wellness are closely linked.



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{ *“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live.” – Jim Rohn* }

## Staying Active with Health Challenges

**Every day, people with chronic disorders overcome physical limitations to pursue sports and exercise.** Don't let your arthritis, heart or lung disease, back pain or other chronic conditions stop you from being active.

Regular exercise can improve your health and quality of life in so many ways, including:

- Helping you manage and even reverse chronic symptoms.
- Improving your energy, strength and balance.
- Helping you control pain and depression.

**In fact, exercise is highly recommended for people with chronic conditions** to help them restore or maintain health and independence. For example:

**Diabetes** – Along with weight loss, exercise helps insulin lower your blood sugar. Just being physically active every day may lead to reductions in insulin or medications.

**Heart disease** – With heart-pumping aerobic activities (e.g., brisk walking or swimming), you can lower blood pressure to safer levels and strengthen your cardiovascular system.

**Arthritis** – Exercise tailored to your affected joints increases range of motion and reduces stiffness. It also strengthens your muscles to help cushion pain and improve mobility.

To get started, your health care provider can advise you about safety precautions and exercise with your condition in mind. You may need to also consult a physical therapist or fitness professional about what exercise types and techniques are appropriate.

**Pace yourself.** Find out how fast to increase the frequency, duration and intensity of each type of exercise you will be doing.



**Tip:** Aquatic exercise is especially beneficial for people recovering from injuries and for those with arthritis, obesity and asthma. It improves your flexibility, muscles, heart and lungs.



# Empty Calories

*What you need to know.*

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

All foods and beverages contain nutrients – that’s the term for the carbohydrates, fat, protein, vitamins and minerals in everything you eat and drink. But not all foods contain health-promoting nutrients, so it’s important to choose your ingredients wisely.

The term **empty calories** describes foods that are high in calories from sugar and unhealthy fats, and low in nutrients, particularly vitamins and minerals. Examples include soft drinks, candy, chips, ice cream and baked goods, which add calories but little else to your overall diet. Eating a diet high in empty-calorie foods can increase the risk of weight gain, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Empty-calorie foods tend to be highly processed – here are some examples and healthier alternatives:



Instead of:	Try:
Sugar-sweetened beverages	Water or sparkling water with lemon or lime
Candy	Fruit
Ice Cream	Greek yogurt with fruit or a teaspoon of honey
Chips	Air-popped plain popcorn
Butter, lard or shortening	Healthful oils: olive, canola, flax, walnut
French fries	Baked or roasted potatoes
Fried chicken	Grilled or roasted skinless chicken
Thick-crust pizza with double cheese and pepperoni	Thin-crust pizza with single cheese and lots of vegetables

>> **Learn more about eating nutritiously** at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov).



## Help for Head Injuries

**Head injuries are among the most common and dangerous injuries.** They can cause serious brain damage, which contributes to about 30% of all injury deaths in the U.S. The severity of a blow or jolt to the head may range from a mild concussion with or without brief unconsciousness to severe injury with an extended period of unconsciousness or memory loss, or death.

**The CDC reports that falls are the leading cause of head injury.** Other common causes of brain injury: being hit by an object (particularly during sports or recreation), motor vehicle crashes and assaults.

**Call 9-1-1 if you're concerned.** Worrisome symptoms include: shallow breathing, unconsciousness, nausea and vomiting, significant confusion or memory loss, severe head or face bleeding and vision changes.

### Heads up:

- Never drive or ride without your seat belt or while under the influence of medication or other substances that can make you drowsy or otherwise impaired.
- Keep your seat belt fastened while flying.
- Wear safety helmets while biking, skating, skiing, snowboarding and during contact sports.
- Make living areas safe from tripping hazards and falling.
- Use nonslip mats and install handrails on both sides of stairways.

## Safety + Wellness

>> *Continued from other side.*

For example, if you're sleep deprived, you may need to avoid driving or operating machinery, or you risk injury; that's preventive behavior. Or, if you're fit, you have less risk of strains or injuries during physical activities; that's prevention through good health.

**First step: Stay aware.** Your personal safety can be compromised anytime in any environment – whether you're at home, at work, exercising or shopping, you face potential dangers every day.

**To improve your safety awareness:** Identify specific safety objectives to focus on in your everyday routine – such as avoiding falls by removing tripping hazards or wearing proper safety gear, such as a helmet for sports. Also, study personal safety to learn precautions and stay alert for mishaps.

*The more you think safety, the healthier your environment will be, wherever you are.*

### Q: Do I need supplements?

### Expert Advice

**A:** Ideally, it's best to get your vitamins and minerals from food. Study after study has shown that food is the richest, most effective and safest source of essential nutrients. But some people regularly fall short of good nutrition.

Talk to your health care provider about whether you need to supplement your diet with specific vitamins or minerals. Groups of people at higher risk for deficiency include:

*Heavy drinkers* – Vitamin A, vitamin B complex\*, vitamin D and vitamin E.

*Medication users* – Birth control pills may deplete vitamin B<sub>6</sub>. Acid blockers and the diabetic drug metformin may lower absorption of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and folate. Diuretics lead to loss of potassium, magnesium and zinc.

*Poor eaters* – Vitamin A, vitamin B complex and vitamin C, calcium, iron and others.

*Seniors* – Vitamins B<sub>12</sub> and D.

*Women* – Folate, calcium and iron; a prenatal multivitamin is usually advised before and during pregnancy.

*Vegetarians* – Vitamins B<sub>12</sub> and D, calcium and iron.

\* Eight vitamins make up the vitamin B complex (includes niacin, riboflavin and thiamin).

– Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAP



Smart Moves toolkit is at [www.personalbest.com/extras/Dec14tools](http://www.personalbest.com/extras/Dec14tools).

Next month: **Stand Up for Your Health**