



AHW Lesson 1 (Weeks 1&2)

The Basics

The key to almost any success is setting a goal and following it. Start this health and fitness challenge by asking yourself what you aim to achieve. Then set smaller goals along the way to help you accomplish your ultimate target. Create SMART goals for success:

- S = Specific – be explicit about what you will do, when and where
- M = Measurable – have a way to measure your success, such as how often or how much physical activity you will do
- A = Attainable – make it something you really can achieve
- R = Realistic – make your goal practical based on your resources and willingness
- T = Timely – set start and finish times/dates to keep you on task and inspired.

Here is an example: Starting today, I will walk my dog after dinner for 30 minutes, and will do it 5 times in the next week. The following week I will increase my walking pace.

Along with setting goals, two other key components to improving health include nutrition and physical activity. Constant new and different information on these topics can make it difficult and confusing, so relying on fundamentals is key.

Nutrition

Nutrients are divided into two categories: macronutrients and micronutrients. Macronutrients are nutrients our body needs in large amounts and those that provide energy (calories). Micronutrients are needed in much smaller amounts but are vital for development, disease prevention and well-being.

MACRONUTRIENTS

Carbohydrates provide fuel for our brain and our bodies. Main food sources are from grains, dairy and fruit.

Protein provides tissue structure for organs, muscle, hair, skin, nails, bones, tendons, ligaments and blood plasma. It is part of cell membranes; involved in our metabolism, transport, and hormone systems; makes up enzymes; and helps maintain our body's acid base balance. Main sources come from various types of meat, eggs, nuts and legumes.

Fat gets a bad rap but is necessary for transporting fat soluble vitamins, protects vital organs, insulates the body and is an energy reserve. The majority of fat in food is found in oils, nuts, seeds, meat, fish and dairy.

MICRONUTRIENTS

Vitamin A, C, D, E, K, the B vitamins, and folic acid along with minerals **calcium, potassium, sodium, iron, and zinc, and water** are categorized as micronutrients. These critical nutrients have a wide range of duties such as building and maintaining our tissues, nervous system, bones and teeth to being involved in the production of blood, enzymes, hormones, and helping our cells release energy from food.



Eat for Health: Fruits and vegetables (especially bright colored ones), whole grains, lean sources of protein and low-fat dairy products are the five food groups that are the building blocks of a healthy diet. Each group provides unique nutrients needed for optimal health, so it is important to include each one in our daily diet.

Get the most for your calories: Choose nutrient dense foods. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein foods all provide a lot of “bang for your buck” in terms of nutrients compared to calories. For example, 1 cup of skim milk instead of 1 cup of pop provides over 150 times the amount of potassium, almost 44 times the amount of calcium, 8 times the protein, half the carbohydrates, and saves about 20 calories.

Beware of portion distortion: Portion sizes have grown to the point we are often served enough food for two or three people, purchase items packaged in a *single portion* that contain *multiple* servings, and have a skewed perception of what a “normal” portion really is. Read the Nutrition Facts Label on food packages that shows the number of servings and serving size. Learn what a recommended serving size is and practice ways to follow it - split an entrée; ask for a “to go” container when your food is served and take half home for later; focus on what and how much you are eating instead of being distracted by TV, driving, etc.

Focus on fruits and vegetables: Fruits and vegetables have an abundance of nutrients important for our health – fiber, vitamins A & C, potassium, and folate to name a few. They are packed with nutrients, low in calories, linked to decreasing risk of cancer, heart disease and stroke, and lowering blood pressure. Plus they are convenient to eat and come in a variety of forms – raw, cooked, and dried – so you can choose what you like best.

Eat breakfast: Start the day with a healthy breakfast to prevent getting overly hungry and overeating or splurging on things like candy bars, soda and unhealthy snacks. Breakfast can help with weight control and jump start metabolism. It improves concentration and performance at school or work, gives us more strength and endurance for physical activity, and can improve mood. Breakfast doesn't have to be complicated but should include at least three different food groups. Examples: small whole wheat bagel with peanut butter and a banana; high fiber cereal with dried fruit and skim milk; cheese stick, slice of lean ham and 100% orange juice.

Physical Activity

Physical activity is almost magical. It helps us maintain and lose weight; reduces risk of heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis; strengthens bones and muscles; improves balance and sleep; boosts self-esteem and mood, just to name a few. Incorporating the different components of flexibility, aerobic & strength training along with a variety of intensity levels has big benefits.

Include regular stretching: Stretching keeps muscles flexible, strong and healthy which increases the joints' range of motion. Stretching the major muscle groups also helps increase blood flow which can help prevent soreness after exercise and improves balance and mobility.

Do moderate and/or vigorous aerobic exercise: At least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity per week is recommended for healthy adults. Even 10 minute increments of moderate to vigorous activity at a time can be effective for reducing health risks and keeping the pounds off.

How do you know if you are exercising in the “moderate” or “vigorous” range of intensity? The heart rate method is a good guide. Moderate exercise intensity is 50 to 70% of maximum heart rate and vigorous exercise intensity is 70 to 85%.

1. Calculate maximum heart rate by subtracting age from 220
2. Calculate resting heart rate by counting your heart beats for 15 seconds while at rest, such as first thing in the morning. Multiply that number by 4.
3. Subtract resting heart rate (step 2) from maximum heart rate (step 1).
4. Multiply the resulting number by .50 and .70 for moderate intensity heart rates and by .70 and .85 for vigorous intensity. Add your resting heart rate (step 2) to these results. This is the range to reach to increase cardiovascular health.

To continue to improve fitness, the body needs to be “pushed”. Increase intensity, speed or duration of the activity or exercise.

Strength Training: Muscular strength is needed to do daily activities like lifting groceries out of your car, carrying children, picking yourself up when you fall, mowing the lawn, taking a walk or a bike ride. The list goes on and on. Being strong helps us feel better and can also help us look better. Increasing muscle helps burn more calories and aids in weight loss or maintenance. Strength training should be done at least twice a week. It can include the use of weights, resistance bands or your own body weight (ex - push-ups, lunges).

Be sure to take time to include some thought and planning for incorporating both nutrition and physical activity components along the way. They are key!

Additional Resources:

<http://www.liveeatplay.colostate.edu>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org>

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

www.choosemyplate.gov

<http://mynutrition.wsu.edu/nutrition-basics>

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/portion-distortion.htm

www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/GettingHealthy_UCM_001078_SubHomePage.jsp





AHW Lesson 1 Activities

The Basics

“Applying the Lesson”

Choose one of the following activities to apply what you learned about your health and your healthy goal setting. Write a short paragraph (3 to 5 sentences) to describe what you did and learned from the activity selected. Report your Applying the Lesson results by Online form, email, fax or hard copy to your county Extension Office.

Option 1: Goals are very effective tools in helping us accomplish what we want. However, goals such as “lose weight”, “eat better”, “exercise more” are too vague and unspecific to be very useful in measuring, guiding and supporting our success. Use the S.M.A.R.T criteria to create an effective goal for a nutrition/food category and one for an exercise/fitness category. Have these be short-term goals you aim to achieve within the next week or two.

Option 2:

Calculate your resting heart rate, maximum heart rate, and target heart rate range for moderate to vigorous intensity using the calculating instructions in the lesson. Report on how you used and tracked these over the next week.

Option 3: Track your food and beverage intake for 4 days. What did you discover about foods you eat and beverages you drink? What, if any, improvements related to the areas of advice in the lesson (Eat for health, Get the most for your calories, etc.) would you like to work on?