

The Wellness News

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Eating Healthy at Work

Do you find yourself running out on your lunch break with just enough time to grab a burger and fries? Do you often skip lunch because you lose track of time or don't want to spend a lot of money eating out? You're not alone. Most people who work full time don't prepare healthy lunches or snacks to eat during the work day, and wind up skipping lunch or grabbing a high-calorie meal from the nearest restaurant. Below are some simple steps to help you get on track with healthful eating while you're at work.

1. Eat Regularly

When you allow yourself to get extremely hungry, you are more likely to crave high-fat, high-sugar foods, binge eat, and feel irritable and less focused. Eating every 3-4 hours can keep you feeling energized during the day, and prevent you from overeating at meals. To keep your engines running all day long, try to incorporate healthy snacks as part of a well-balanced diet. All fresh fruits and vegetables are great choices for snacks. Be sure to keep snack portions small, ideally no larger than the size of your fist.

2. Stay Hydrated

Drinking at least 64 oz of water a day can help you concentrate and stay focused, prevent you from consuming high-calorie beverages, and even reduce the urge to snack out of boredom.

- Keep a bottle of water at your desk
- Have a drink of water every time you check the clock
- Drink water when you notice lack of focus or boredom

3. Pack a lunch.

A busy work day shouldn't keep you from eating lunch. There are many great lunch ideas that are quick and easy to prepare.

- Bring leftovers from last night's dinner
- Pack your lunch the night before if you know your mornings are hectic
- Keep pre-cut veggies and lettuce in the fridge at home for grab and go salads
 - Have 1-2 tablespoons of dressing on the side instead of pouring it on top
- Sandwiches are always an easy option
 - Mix and match the proteins, grains, vegetables and spreads below to add variety to your typical sandwich

Grains: whole wheat bread, tortilla and pita

Proteins: lean deli meats, shredded or whole chicken breast, falafel or garbanzo beans, eggs (hard boiled), tuna, cottage cheese, sliced cheese

Vegetables: lettuce, tomato, onion, bell peppers, cucumbers, mushrooms, alfalfa sprouts, pickles, olives, avocado, spinach, diced carrots, artichoke hearts

Spreads: mustard, light mayo, hot Sauce, pizza sauce, balsamic vinaigrette, red wine vinegar, hummus, tzatziki sauce, pesto, pico de gallo, light cream cheese, salsa

When eating out, don't be afraid to place special orders to make your meal more nutritious.

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More...

Make Healthy Restaurant Choices

- Choose whole grains, brown rice and vegetables when possible
- Look for foods that are: steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, roasted, stir fried or poached. If you're not sure how a certain dish is prepared, ask your server
- Request your meal to be prepared with vegetable oil instead of butter
- Skip the fries and get a side salad (with light dressing or dressing on the side)
- If portions are large, get a to-go box at the start of the meal and put ½ your food in the box before you start eating
- Avoid high-fat items and sides (cheese, sour cream, mayo, hamburgers, hot dogs, fried food, etc)

QUICK TIPS:

For meetings: request nutritious foods to munch on (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, trans-fat free dips) and sugar-free beverages such as water, tea, and coffee.

In the cafeteria: avoid fried, cheesy and creamy foods as well as pastries. Choose salads or other vegetable options. Select lean proteins like turkey, chicken, beans and fish. Build your plate so that ½ is covered in fruits and vegetables, ¼ contains lean protein and ¼ is made up of whole grains.

For treat days and birthdays: encourage coworkers to bring fruit with cottage cheese or yogurt and other healthy options that still taste sweet but are lower in calories and fat.

For group lunches: suggest that each person bring one item to add to a salad (spinach, tomatoes, chicken, carrots, beans, etc) for a shared lunch. When your coworkers want to eat at a restaurant, choose a place that you know offers vegetable and lean protein options.

Ingredients to keep at the office for healthful snacking

At your desk:

- Low fat granola w/ nuts and oats
- Whole wheat tortillas, pitas or English muffins
- Bananas, oranges, apples
- Instant oatmeal
- Raw, unsalted nuts
- Whole grain breakfast bars

In the fridge:

- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Low-fat yogurt
- Peanut butter (trans-fat free)
- Hard boiled eggs
- Mini-carrots
- Hummus
- Lean deli meats (turkey, chicken)



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005