

Staying
Motivated:
Making Healthy
Food Choices



Staying Motivated

Making healthy food choices


If you're trying to stay motivated, especially when it comes to healthy eating, there are some steps you can take to get you there. This resource can help you draft your "why", navigate obstacles and plan ahead so that you can stay focused and enthusiastic about your goals.

Define your why

What is your **#whypower**? Why do you want to adopt healthier food choices?

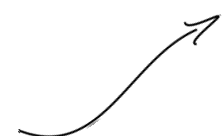
Define it in 1 or 2 sentences in this box:

Cut me out!



Keep me somewhere visible:

- On your bathroom mirror
- On your fridge
- On the side of your computer



Examples of common why's

Circle one or two that resonate with you and then customize it, or come up with your own:

- Healthy eating makes me feel more energized
- My digestive health is important to me
- I want to be a good role model for my family by choosing to take care of my health through food
- I feel more confident when my complexion is clear and hydrated, which nutritious foods have helped me achieve in the past
- I have fewer headaches when I eat less sugar and processed foods
- I feel in control when I make meals from scratch and can decide what to put in them
- A healthy weight reduces my chances of other health conditions, such as _____
- Making beautifully presented meals feeds my creativity
- Making informed decisions when it comes to food and the environment (or animals) makes me feel like I'm playing a part
- I am better able to focus and concentrate when I am well nourished
- My body is able to heal faster when I eat nutritious foods
- I sleep better when my body has been properly nourished and hydrated
- I want to fuel my body for the type of physical activity I do



Important tips

- Try to frame your why as **POSITIVE** statements (i.e. "I want to have more energy") in place of negative statements (i.e. "I want to be less tired").
- **WRITE IT DOWN!** Simply thinking you know your #whypower is not enough. We need to visualize it, and see it repeatedly.
- If possible, incorporate a reason that is **BIGGER than you** into your #whypower. For example, being healthy for the sake of a family member, or the environment. This can be a big motivator.

"If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere." ~Frank A. Clark

Define your obstacles

What obstacles have gotten in the way of you maintaining a healthy way of eating in the **past**?

What obstacles can you foresee being problematic in the **future**?

Write down your top three obstacles below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples of common obstacles

Circle the ones that resonate with you and then customize it, or come up with your own:

- I feel too tired after work to make meals
- Fast-food or restaurant meals are more convenient
- I don't have enough money
- I'm so busy, I don't have enough time in the morning to make breakfast (or in the evening to make dinner)
- This whole "healthy eating" thing overwhelms me, and I just don't know where to begin
- I don't have any meal ideas in my arsenal, so when dinner rolls around I feel lost
- I calorie restrict, and then end up over-eating later and feeling guilty about it. It's a vicious cycle
- I cut out a food group, but then crave it and end up over-eating it later, then feeling guilty about it. It's a vicious cycle
- I have a friend/family member/partner who is a bad influence on the way I eat
- I follow social media channels (YouTube/Instagram) that take diets to the extreme, and I notice it influences me negatively
- There's a lot of negative self-talk in my head, and sometimes I eat poorly as a way to self-sabotage
- I'm an emotional eater
- I don't have easy access to healthy foods in my neighbourhood
- My mindset is the obstacle: I think the occasional "treats" are unhealthy, and I need to shift my mindset to being more balanced
- Temptations in the house make it hard to resist
- Wholesome foods taste too "healthy" and seem bland or boring to me



- I make healthy food decisions all day, but just before/after dinner I overeat and feel like I've ruined it all
- I treat food as a "reward"
- I give myself cheat days, and this makes me think of foods as "good" or "bad"
- I keep going on fasts or cleanses and this make me think of foods as "good" or "bad"
- Sometimes I'm starving, and I just cave in
- There are too many picky eaters in my family
- I have to eat out often for the kind of work I do (conference meals, etc.)
- I don't have the energy to go shopping

Now star **ONE** obstacle to focus on first.

Tackle each obstacle one at a time and go at your own pace.

Draft your solutions

Let's come up with three solutions for your selected obstacle:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now you have **three actionable steps** you can take to ensure this obstacle doesn't pose a problem.

Example

If your obstacle is that you **don't have enough money**, some solutions could be:

1. Find a grocery store in my neighbourhood with a **\$1 bin** with ready-to-use fruits and veggies that I freeze if not using right away.
2. Buy in **bulk** when possible and/or buy in bulk with a friend/neighbour and split the cost
3. Use **affordable plant-based protein** sources, such as canned beans, dried lentils (take just 15 min to cook!) or frozen peas

Example

If your obstacle is that you **don't have enough time**, some solutions could be:

1. **Meal prep** for one hour a week, to chop veggies, cook grains, and make staples that allow me to whip together meals more quickly
2. When I do make meals, make a double portion if it's something I can **freeze** for later: soups, burger patties, sauces,
3. Look up 15-minute dinner **recipes online**, and have them pre-printed and ready to go for the next few meals.

Important tips

1. If you forget to keep with the solutions, dust yourself off and try again!



2. Revisit the solutions if you think you've made them too complicated, or too difficult to achieve. Small steps = long-lasting changes.
3. Tackle other obstacles and brainstorm solutions only when you feel confident with the current one. Try to not bite off more than you can chew.

"What gets measured, gets managed" ~ Peter F. Drucker

Track Your Progress

We now know our motivation (our **WHY**) » we know what **OBSTACLES** get in the way of achieving that » and we've brainstormed **SOLUTIONS**.

Next, we want to develop a tool that helps us **TRACK** our progress.

We feel more motivated anytime we feel like we are moving closer towards our why.

On the next page you'll find an **EXAMPLE** document on how you can track your progress.

Depending on your goal, this document may not suffice; create whatever tracker you know will help you visually see your progress (see next page).

Become Accountable

Can you team up with someone who will keep you accountable? Someone who you trust, someone who offers fresh perspectives, and someone who you can share your progress with? I always say...

"Teamwork makes the dreamwork!"

Another way to become accountable is to seek help from a registered dietitian if you need additional support around your nutrition goals.



Habit Tracker

Date range: _____

Example:

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Ate a homemade dinner in the evening	x	x		x		x	x
Prepped parts of breakfast the night before		x	x	x			
Got 2 servings of dairy alternatives		x					

Notes

One area where I saw **improvement** this week: I was eating at home more often compared to last week; I think the Sunday meal prep helped!

One thing I **can** improve for next week is: I have fewer servings of dairy alternatives than I thought; will add a serving of plant-yogurt to breakfast next week.

Things to consider:

■ Is it realistic?

Can you see yourself keeping with this habit regularly in the long term? If not, consider making it simpler.

■ Reconsider tracking calories or weight

Try to focus on establishing new habits, as opposed to tracking calories or weight - these practices can often lead to unhealthy relationships with food.

■ Think progress, not perfection.

This habit tracker isn't about checking off each day. It's simply to bring awareness to our progress.



Habit Tracker

Date range: _____

My why: _____

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Notes

One area where I saw **improvement** this week: _____

One thing **I can** improve for next week is: _____

Other notes: _____