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The FitEngine 6-Week Nutritional Makeover – Week 2

In your first week of the FitEngine 6-Week Nutritional Makeover, you took the following three steps:

- Started eating a small or regular meal at least every two to three hours.
- Started eating breakfast as early as possible each morning.
- Started taking Vitamin C, Vitamin B-complex and Omega-3 supplements twice daily.

By now, you should be seeing these results:

- Less hunger and fewer unhealthy cravings.
- Less reliance on caffeine or sugar to boost energy.
- Less mental foginess and lack of concentration.

During Week 2, you're going to continue doing these things. Each week, you continue the steps you've already taken and enhance them or add to them in successive weeks.

Although you had three steps to get you started, there are fewer steps this week and in the following weeks. The first three are the foundation. Now, we start building a new nutritional lifestyle onto that foundation.



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Week 2 Step: Exchange the Processed Foods for Healthy Foods

We've all heard the news about how unhealthy processed foods are for our bodies. Getting most of them out of our diets is essential to overall health, especially to avoid heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity and many other nutrition-related diseases and disorders. It's also an integral part of reaching a healthy weight and staying there.

To keep things simple, here's what's wrong with processed foods:

- Most contain far too much sugar and sodium.
- Processed baked goods, cereals and other grain foods rarely contain whole grains. They're made with bleached, over-processed white flours that add nothing to your diet but calories.
- Many processed foods are made with hydrogenated oils, also known as trans-fats, which are horrible for your heart and can't be used by the body for anything other than storing fat. They clog your arteries, slow your digestive system and contain no nutrients.
- Processed sweets and even juices and other "healthy" foods often contain some form of high-fructose corn syrup, which we now know is terrible for our health.
- Most processed foods contain additives and preservatives that are harmful to our health.
- Most processed foods contain far too many calories for healthy weight maintenance.

So what, specifically, are you to do for this week's step? Throughout the week, you're going to start removing processed foods from your diet. If you can ditch them on day one and never go back, that's great. If you need to wean yourself meal by meal throughout the week, that's okay, too. The goal is to stop eating them by the end of the week.

Don't panic; you're not going to have to go without your favorite potato chip or that naughty little Hostess pastry forever. Later on in your makeover, we'll show you how to have your treats without blowing your diet or going back to unhealthy eating.

For now, here are the foods you need to get rid of and some ideas on what you can eat instead:

- ❖ No fatty, salty snack foods such as potato chips, corn chips, tortilla chips, etc.
Instead: Try unbuttered popcorn or roasted unsalted or lightly salted nuts such as walnuts and almonds.
- ❖ No processed meats such as bacon, hot dogs, pastrami, corned beef, bologna or sausage.
Instead: Have homemade sliced meats on your sandwich or salad, such as turkey breast or lean roast beef.
- ❖ No deep-fried foods like French fries, fried chicken or fried seafood.
Instead: try oven-baked fries and have your chicken and seafood broiled, baked, poached, stir-fried (in canola or olive oil, not peanut or sesame oil) or grilled.
- ❖ No white bread, sub rolls, yeast rolls, white tortillas or other highly-processed breads.
Instead: Choose whole grain breads, rolls and tortillas. Try using wraps or lettuce leaves on your sandwich instead of bread.
- ❖ No processed sweet treats such as packaged cakes, cookies or candy bars.
Instead: have a square of dark (at least 70% cacao) chocolate instead of a candy bar or cookie. Have sorbet instead of ice cream and fresh or dried fruit instead of cakes and cookies.

To keep things uncomplicated, stay away from fast food joints and the corner deli. Take your lunch and some healthy snacks to work with you. Eat at home before you go out with friends. Get the unhealthy stuff out of the house and fill it with good choices to remove temptation and give you plenty of things that you *can* eat.

Believe it or not, after a couple of weeks, most people lose their taste for these processed and “junk” foods. You start to prefer fresh fruits over candy bars and artisanal whole grain breads over the sliced white variety. Stick to your step and stick to your guns. Before you know it, your taste buds will adjust. You’ll also start feeling lighter, less fatigued and more satisfied.

If you’re trying to lose weight, the news is even better. Since you’ll be cutting out foods that are typically very high in calories, you will start to see some significant weight loss just by getting rid of the junk and processed foods. In fact, most people would have to work pretty hard to eat the same number of calories in healthy foods. What this means is that you can eat more food (in volume) and still lose weight.

In Week One, you were instructed to start eating breakfast and to start eating several small or mini-meals throughout the day. We're going to build on that this week with a few ideas for quick breakfasts that are packed with nutrition and some tips on making your mini-meals really count nutritionally.

Let's start with some recipes for some very quick-to-fix breakfasts that will power you up for the day:

Sunshine Smoothie

This smoothie tastes a bit like a Creamsicle, but it packs a nutritional punch.

- ½ cup orange, mango or peach Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 scoop vanilla-flavored whey protein powder
- 1 teaspoon psyllium husk
- 1 teaspoon flax seed
- ½ cup ice cubes

Blend all ingredients except for the ice until well-mixed. Add ice and blend on high until smooth and thick.

TIP: IF YOU HAVE A FAVORITE SMOOTHIE SHOP, TAKE THIS RECIPE TO THEM AND ASK IF THEY'LL PREPARE IT FOR YOU. MANY OF THE HEALTHIER SMOOTHIE PLACES WILL EVEN HAVE THE PSYLLIUM HUSK AND FLAX SEED AVAILABLE. IF NOT, ASK IF YOU CAN BRING YOUR OWN.

Farmer's Market Scramble

This breakfast is addictively good. To really speed things up, saute three or four batches of the veggies ahead of time. They'll keep well for up to four days in a plastic container. Then you can just add them to your skillet until reheated and continue with the rest of the recipe. To make this breakfast portable, wrap burrito-style in a sun-dried tomato or spinach wrap.

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- ¼ red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- ½ cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons chopped sweet onion
- ½ cup fresh baby spinach leaves
- ¼ cup goat cheese in bite-sized pieces (or shredded mozzarella)

- *3 large eggs, beaten*
- *½ teaspoon salt*
- *¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper*

Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add chopped onion, bell pepper and garlic and saute for about five minutes or until onion is translucent.

Add the mushrooms and spinach and saute for another 3 to 4 minutes. Drain the water from the spinach and mushrooms, return pan to heat and add the eggs. Stir often while cooking and just as the eggs start to set, add the cheese. Stir just until eggs are done, then season with salt and pepper and serve. This makes two servings for most people and one heaping serving for big morning appetites.

TIP: IF YOU REALLY DON'T WANT OR CAN'T TAKE THE TIME TO COOK THIS MEAL, JUST STOP FOR A VEGETABLE OMELET ON YOUR WAY TO WORK. MOST PLACES WILL COOK YOUR OMELET IN OLIVE OIL IF YOU ASK.

Making the Most of Your Mini-Meals

Last week, we explained why you need to eat several times a day and that you need to make your mini-meals count by combining protein, high fiber carbs and healthy fats into each meal as much as possible. This week, we'd like to suggest some of the healthiest, most nutrient-dense choices in each of these groups. These foods are also easy to take to work or the gym. This will make it very simple for you to choose one from each group (or at least two out of three) to put together a meal with real staying power and a good energy boost.

Lean Proteins

- One or two slices of homemade turkey or chicken breast
- 1 cup of Greek yogurt, any flavor (Greek yogurt has twice the protein of regular yogurt and more healthy bacteria)
- 8 large steamed or boiled shrimp
- Boiled egg
- ½ cup low-fat or non-fat cottage cheese

High Fiber Carbs

- One slice of whole grain wheat bread or toast
- 1 baked sweet potato (try with olive oil, salt & pepper or olive oil and a touch of cinnamon)
- 1 whole apple, with peel
- 1 cup of watermelon chunks
- 1 cup of whole grain oats

Healthy Fats

- ¼ cup of black walnuts
- ½ Hass avocado
- 1 teaspoon of almond butter
- Olive oil for dressing or vinaigrette

Try combining a few of these foods in different ways and once you get the hang of things, you'll be coming up with plenty of your own healthy combinations.

To recap, these are the steps you're taking for Week Two:

- **Continuing to eat breakfast as early as possible every day.**
- **Continuing to eat several small meals a day, no more than two or three hours apart.**
- **Continuing to take your supplements twice daily.**
- **Replacing the processed foods in your diet with healthful alternatives.**

See you next week!