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The FitEngine 6-Week Nutritional Makeover – Week 3

You are at the halfway point in your six week transition to a healthy, balanced diet that will help you lose or maintain your weight, give you plenty of energy for your work and your workouts and keep your metabolism running efficiently.

In the first two weeks, you've:

- Started taking the recommended supplements twice daily.
- Started eating breakfast.
- Started eating nutritious meals and mini-meals every two to three hours.
- Booted the processed and junk foods and replaced them with healthier whole foods.

At this point, you should be seeing significantly less puffiness and bloating, a healthy amount of weight loss due to stored fat loss and a more efficient digestive system and you should also see a marked improvement in your energy and mental focus throughout the day.

This week's step is all about increasing your intake of important phytochemicals and antioxidants. We're all overworked, overstressed and exposed to a great deal of environmental pollution, especially living in the city. Antioxidants fight free radicals in the body, boost our immune systems to help ward off illness and even help to make our skin more youthful and our hair healthier and shinier.

The easiest and most efficient way to get a wide range of the different antioxidants is by eating a variety of produce in a variety of colors.



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This Week's Step: Eat in Technicolor

You may have heard the phrase, “eating the rainbow.” With all of the new research into important phytochemicals (plant-based compounds) and antioxidants, nutritionists are urging us to eat fresh fruits and vegetables in a wide variety of colors. Essentially, the deeper the color of a given fruit or vegetable, the greater its antioxidant content. But different colors give us different antioxidants and each one serves a different purpose.

Here’s a breakdown of the different colors of your nutritional rainbow, including the best sources and the important nutrients for each one.

The Red Foods:

Red fruits and vegetables are typically very high in vitamin A (beta carotene) and

Vitamin C. Typically, red fruits and vegetables are also high in manganese and fiber. Some of your best sources are watermelon, tomatoes and red grapefruit, which also contain high amounts of lycopene, which some studies show are good for fighting some types of cancer. Look for deep reds, such as beets, rhubarb, Swiss chard, raspberries and red bell peppers.

The Orange Foods:

Orange foods supply many of the same micro-nutrients as the red foods, but also have an excellent dose of vitamins C, A, B6 and potassium. Orange bell peppers, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, pumpkin, carrots and oranges are great sources. Sweet potatoes, carrots and winter squash also pack a ton of fiber.

The Yellow Foods:

Yellow fruits and veggies deliver an excellent dose of potassium and fiber as well as manganese, Vitamin A, and magnesium. These are all essential to a healthy immune system and Vitamin A is very important to eye health as well. Your best sources are bananas, spaghetti squash, summer squash, and yellow bell peppers.

The Green Foods:

Dark leafy greens are packed with nutrients, with most of them rich in iron, folate and luteins. One of the best dark leafy greens is spinach because of its high level of luteins, which are extremely important for eye health. It's also high in folate, which fuels cell reproduction. Broccoli, kale, collards and asparagus are also excellent sources.

The Blue Foods:

Blueberries are the richest source of antioxidants available and are considered one of the true "super foods". Most blue foods are rich in lycopene and Vitamin C.

Purple Foods:

Foods like eggplant, red onions, blackberries, Concord grapes and plums give you healthy doses of anthocyanins, antioxidants that protect your blood vessels and maintain healthy skin. Choices like radicchio, purple cabbage and purple potatoes also contain flavonoids and a good shot of Vitamin A.

Your goal this week is to do your grocery shopping with the rainbow in mind. Choose at least two foods from each color of the rainbow and eat at least one food from each color every day.

Make it fun by trying fruits and vegetables you've never eaten or preparing them in new ways. Your taste buds will appreciate the novelty and you may find some new favorites to help you get more variety in your diet.

See you next week!