

MAKING THE REAL FOOD HABIT STICK

Congrats on your last week of the Real Food Challenge! Just because this is your last week of the Real Food Challenge, it doesn't mean you should stop eating more real food. Consuming more real food and less fake food is a wonderful habit to develop. But just like any habit, it will take some time and practice to make it stick. If you've been loving how the Real Food Challenge has been making you feel, try out some of these tricks and tips for making the real food habit stick for the long run.

Set realistic goals. If you want to stick with the same rules from this challenge and replace one fake food with one real food every day, that's great! If you want to challenge yourself even further and start making real food the focus of your diet, that's even better! Whatever you decide to do, be sure that your real food goal is realistic for your health and lifestyle.

Make it convenient. Habits are easier to stick with when you plan ahead. If your goal is to eat lunches and dinners that contain no processed foods, meal prepping is an excellent way to ensure that you have healthy meals prepared and ready to go. Be sure to also keep your fridge, pantry, and desk stocked with real foods to make healthy choices readily available and convenient.

Track it. Writing things down is one of the best ways to make habits stick. Consider starting a food journal to track what you eat throughout the day and keep up with your goals. If writing isn't your thing, there are many habit-tracking apps you can download on your phone! Check out Streaks or Productive - Habit Tracker for iPhone and Habit Tracker for Android.

Remind yourself why. It's much easier to maintain healthy habits when you remind yourself of all the good you're doing for your body. Be sure to know the benefits of eating more real food and cutting back on fake food. Try setting daily reminders on your phone or posting notes on your fridge to remind you of why you're practicing your real food habit.

Learn some new recipes. Sometimes it can be a bit difficult to follow through with dietary changes if you're not excited about the food you're eating. One of the best parts about a diet rich in real foods is the amount of healthy and delicious meals that can be prepared. Take some time to research and find some new real food recipes that you are excited to prepare and eat.

Get a buddy. Adopting a new healthy habit is easier when you have a buddy to help you along the way! If you have a partner, friend, or co-worker who is interested in eating more real food, ask them to join you in your real food habit. Having a buddy will help keep you motivated and keep yourself accountable for following through with your goals.

Sip sensibly. To keep your real food habit strong, you can't forget about what you drink! Sugar-sweetened beverages like soda, juice, or energy drinks, are considered fake foods and are strongly linked to obesity. These drinks can cause sugar cravings that could potentially make you crave sugary or fatty fake foods.

Forgive yourself. Cutting out processed food completely doesn't work for everyone. Which is why you should never feel angry with yourself if you choose to indulge in a cupcake or slip up on your goals. Feelings of guilt or putting too much pressure on yourself can make you want to give up on your real food goals entirely.

Celebrate success. Never forget to celebrate your success! Reward yourself after a month of following through with your real food goals. Indulge in a spa day, get a massage, or buy yourself a new outfit to reward yourself for your hard work. Having a reward to look forward to will help keep you motivated.