

# HEALTHY HABITS CHALLENGE

*10 Weekly Habits Towards Better Health*



BY SARA SUTHERLAND

*For my Husband and Kids for all of their Loving Support*

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# Introduction

Welcome to your Healthy Habits Challenge! I look forward to connecting with you over the next 10 weeks through 10 small habits each week to incorporate into your daily routine for better health! Focusing on the process of becoming healthy is beneficial from the inside out.

Through my years of training clients and my own personal health journey, I have learned a lot about routines that have helped me completely change my daily habits. It is sometimes the smallest changes that can make the biggest difference, everything does not need to be perfect starting Day 1! Changing your lifestyle takes time, after all, you have spent a lifetime establishing your current habits. Be patient and kind to yourself as you work to break habits and form new ones.

You will receive a weekly email with the habit for that week to help keep you on track and also to serve as a proactive reminder to stay committed to trying this for 10 weeks! Each habit will build on the next. Therefore, once a habit is introduced, you keep doing that for the remainder of the challenge. Commit to it, stay consistent and get ready to change your health!

Some habits might be challenging. Some may be ones that you already do. Embrace the new challenges and be excited for a week that is maybe something you already do, that will be an easier week! Before starting this program, please talk with your medical provider if you have any pre-existing medical conditions or are on medications to know exactly how it could impact starting a new routine.

Give the process a committed effort and pay close attention to how you FEEL! Thank you for trusting in me as your coach to guide you through small changes every seven days to enhance and improve your overall health!

Thank you for downloading my eBook!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. S.', written in a cursive style.

## Getting Started

- Keep eBook handy for reference.
- When you are ready to begin your challenge, sign up for the weekly emails that will include the details for each new habit and text from the eBook with links directly to references.
- Take a photos and share on social media all of the cool and fun new activities you are trying! Be sure to tag #healthyhabitschallenge
- Take a photo! It can be head shot or full body. Capture your face and how excited you are to begin this journey!

## Habit 1

# Fish Oil, Probiotic and Multivitamin

Welcome to Week 1! Your first habit is one that has a lot of health benefits with minimal effort: Although you want to get as many of your vitamins and nutrients from whole foods as possible, sometimes supplementation can help fill voids. There are thousands of each on the market to choose from. My favorites listed below with the guidelines of what to look for in a product if you would like to continue using what you already have or choose another one!

## Fish Oil

**\*\*DO NOT TAKE if you are on a blood thinning medication!\*\***

### *Why?*

Omega-3 fatty acids include DHA and EPA (Docosahexaenoic acid and eicosapentaenoic acid). We cannot make these fatty acids in our body, so we have to get the from our nutrition.

### *Benefits*

Cardiovascular function, immune health, nervous system functions and brain development. Additionally, omega-3s promote cell health and metabolic health.

### *Recommendation*

Daily intake of 3-9g of fat. Read the label to see the amount to take to get to this serving size. Capsules can be somewhat difficult because most of them on the market are 1g per pill. Consider a brand that comes in the liquid form. Personal favorite is Wileys Finest - Wild Alaskan Fish Oil - Peak Omega 3, Lemon Flavor - 8.45 Ounce Liquid available in many health stores or online at retailers such as Amazon.

## Probiotics

**\*\*DO NOT TAKE if you have a compromised immune system due to hospitalization, radiation or chemotherapy, or prescription.\*\***

### *Why?*

Beneficial bacteria in our digestive tract to help digest food and absorb the nutrients that we need from our food. If you have ever taken antibiotics, drank alcohol, been stressed or eaten sugar, you have killed off some or even all of the friendly bacteria in your gut and it has been replaced with the unfriendly kind. Probiotics can help replenish the good bacteria in your gut!

## *Benefits*

Help with digestion, nutrient absorption, gastrointestinal function, working to eliminate abdominal pain, bloating and many other inflammatory ailments.

## *Recommendation*

Daily serving of 10-15 Billion Units minimum of Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium. Ultimate Flora has a lot of really great options that are male, female and age based. Choose one that is best for you and many of them require refrigeration after opening so be sure to read the label!

## Multivitamin

### *Why?*

Vitamin deficiencies can create health conditions and even make chronic issues worse. Appropriate intake of needed vitamins and minerals from whole foods is the optimal situation, although it is likely that there is still a need for supplementation. Centrum or one that you already may have in your cabinet is a great start! From there, you can start to look for ones that are sourced from whole foods. Garden of Life Vitamin Code is a great option for a capsulated raw multivitamin!

### *Benefits*

When you are not getting all of your vitamins and minerals from food, multivitamins can help you make sure you are getting everything that you need to achieve optimal health!

### *Recommendation*

Daily as per the label. Some are 1 pill a day, some are up to 4 or more.

“I have always taken a multivitamin daily, but adding the probiotic and fish oil have definitely helped boost my energy level and helped with regularity.” ~Barb

## Habit 2

# Water

Some love it, some loathe it. Regardless on what side of the spectrum your personal preferences are, water has a lot of healthy benefits. And many adults are chronically under hydrated. Good news is there is a fix for this and it is your new habit starting this week!

### *Why?*

45-60% of your body weight is good old H<sub>2</sub>O! It has several functions around your body to help transport nutrients for cell regeneration and removal of waste products, dissolve molecules, cleanse through filtering your organs, aid in chemical reactions, lubricate our digestive tract, and pad our joints to name a few!

### *Benefits*

It is an important regulator of your body temperature and can help make sure you do not experience signs of dehydration such as fatigue, headaches, thirst, dry skin, muscle cramping and nausea just to name a few. It also can help reduce overall calorie intake throughout the day by making you feel fuller earlier when even just a few ounces are consumed before a meal.

### *Recommendation*

3 to 4 Liters (3/4 to 1 gallon) of water every day. You may notice that you need more if you are in a hot climate or had an intense workout, and maybe slightly less if you have a really sedentary day. This also includes drinking coffee and tea, or even consuming soup for a meal, however drinking as much from just plain water is preferred! This amount of water may or may not be more than what you are used to consuming, but get there! And yes, it may mean more trips to the restroom but that will come in handy for Habit #3.

“After drinking 96-128 oz of water a day, I did not crave my daily soda.” ~Lila

## Habit 3

# Activity

Regular and consistent daily activity is an important piece to improving overall health. This does not mean dedicated gym time, although we do get to that in future habits! For now, the focus is just to become more active during the day. Take the stairs, park your car in the spot that is farthest away from the building, walk down a few extra aisle the next time you are at the store and the additional physical activity will add up in very positive ways!

### *Why?*

Non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT) is the burning of calories doing every day activities such as walking, laundry, laughing, sleeping, etc. Finding ways to increase NEAT is just the start when looking at improving your overall health. Pedometers are a great start with steps tracking as one method of monitoring some of your non-exercise activity.

### *Benefits*

More activity can have positive effects on controlling appetite as well as burning more calories throughout the day!

### *Recommendation*

Target 10,000 steps every day. Some days you will get there, and some you may not, however try your best to achieve this goal! Even if it means going out for a walk around the block at night before bed. If you already consistently take these steps every day, target taking an extra 2,000 over what you currently do.



## Habit 4

# Sleep

Many adults sleep less than the recommended nightly snooze times. This habit may require some rearranging of your daily schedule and routine to find adequate time for a good nights sleep, but it will be worth it! Proper rest and recovery is key to improving overall health.

### *Why?*

Stress and other work/life demands challenge our natural wake/sleep cycles. Having adequate nightly sleep not only helps to regulate our bodies, but it also provides us with recovery that we need to be ready for the next day.

### *Benefits*

We have 5 sleep stages that occur every 90 minutes. Being able to complete several of these cycles in their entirety helps with physical and mental restoration. The appropriate amount of sleep also positively effects our hormone cycles including our appetite hormones, stress hormones and insulin resistance.

### *Recommendation*

7-9 hours of sleep every night. Start a sleep diary. Note the time at which you officially lay down and have all lights off (not just when you crawl into bed). Then also track your wake time. 33% of the population gets less than 6.5 hours, so it is important to journal exact times to ensure you are sleeping for as long as you think you are!

## Habit 5

# Five Daily Meals

With all of your first 4 habits in place, now it is time to start working on proper nutrition! Your body requires proper fuel to fire on all cylinders and operate as the machine that it was built to be! In order to do this, it has to become certain that it will receive the food it needs to survive so it does not slow metabolic processes down to match the incoming fuel supply. This week you will focus on choosing nutrient dense food and strive towards consistent timing for your meals.

### *Why?*

Finding a routine around eating is helpful when making changes in the choices we make. Many times when you get to the point that you are absolutely starving, you will eat anything and everything around you. When starting on a new journey around different choices, eating every 2-3 hours will make sure you stay ahead of your hunger to be proactive with your choices and not let it get emotional.

### *Benefits*

Food can be a mental struggle, so focusing on the process will help build your willpower to overcome any associated emotions. Your body also needs its fuel to function! If your body falls below a 300 calorie deficit at any MOMENT during the day, it will automatically start to slow your metabolism down so it ensures that it will have what it needs to survive. Fueling your body consistently throughout the day will give it confidence around getting its next energy source and it will be more willing to allow you to change its composition.

### *Recommendation*

Five meals, every day, approximately 2-3 hours a part. Choose 1 serving of a protein, carbohydrate and fat for each. Meal 1 should be within 30 minutes of waking, then spaced out somewhat evenly throughout the day, even if that means eating right before bed! NO SKIPPING MEALS! It is likely that you may not feel hungry by meal time, but still eat! Your body needs it. Use fruits and vegetables as fillers. A future habit will focus on incorporating more of these into your routine. Select items from the list below. DO NOT select foods you are allergic to or intolerant of.

**Looking for detailed information on exactly how much of what to eat?  
Visit [thehealthyhabitschallenge.com](http://thehealthyhabitschallenge.com) and select “Shop”**

# HEALTHY HABITS CHALLENGE FOOD LIST

MEAT EATERS		
PROTEIN	CARBOHYDRATES	FATS
Lean red meat (preferably organic and pasture-raised; includes wild game)	Brown Rice	Raw, unsalted nuts (Pecans, Walnuts, Cashews, almonds, brazil nuts, macadamia)
Wild-caught salmon	Quinoa	Avocados
Omega-3 eggs (cage free preferred)	Whole oats (large flake)	Extra-virgin, cold-pressed olive oil
Low fat, plain greek yogurt	Beans & lentils	Fish oil (salmon, anchovy, menhaden or krill)
Cottage cheese	Sweet Potato	Algae Oil
Protein supplements (Whey, milk or plant protein)	Corn	Flax seeds (ground)
Chicken Breast	Carrots	
Lean Turkey	Unsalted Brown Rice cakes	
White fish	Ezekial Bread	
Tofu		

PLANT BASED EATERS		
PROTEIN	CARBOHYDRATES	FATS
Protein supplements (Rice, hemp, pea, etc.)	Brown Rice	Raw, unsalted nuts (Pecans, Walnuts, Cashews, almonds, brazil nuts, macadamia)
Beans & Lentils	Whole oats (large flake)	Avocados
Quinoa	Sweet Potato	Extra-virgin, cold-pressed olive oil
Edamame	Corn	Fish oil (salmon, anchovy, menhaden or krill)
Tempeh	Carrots	Algae Oil
Tofu	Unsalted Brown Rice cakes	Flax seeds (ground)
Pumpkin Seeds	Ezekial Bread	
Spinach	Peas	
Tahini	Brown Rice	
Nutritional Yeast		
Hemp Seeds		
*Omega-3 eggs (cage free preferred)		
*Low fat, plain greek yogurt		
*Cottage cheese		
*Omit these options if Vegan		

## Habit 6

# Strength Training

Welcome to my FAVORITE habit! If you are new to strength training, I am SO excited for you to start! If you are experienced, the frequency and style of training may be different from what you are used to so cannot wait for you to give it a try!

### *Why?*

Why not?! Our bodies react to the amount of force that we apply to it. Muscles are key to overall daily functions... standing, walking, running, picking up items off the floor, lifting items onto a shelf, gardening, vacuuming, etc. You name it! Every activity that you do throughout the day, well, maybe except for sitting, requires muscle function. As we age, it becomes even more important that we continually challenge our body through strength training so that force is applied to force our bodies to adapt. For all of the internal and quality of life benefits, it also directly changes the shape of our body that we see on the outside as well.

### *Benefits*

Adding to the amount of muscle mass will change the shape of your body and over time it can also contribute to increasing your metabolism. Meaning you burn more calories just by living! Pretty cool huh? Regular and consistent strength training also contributes to improving our bone density. Say what?! Yes, according to Wolff's Law, "bone in a healthy person or animal will adapt to the loads under which it is placed." Therefore it is even more important that while we are capable and healthy to protect ourselves from age! Even if you may have health issues, and struggle with some chronic illness, strength training may still benefit you as well so consult with your health care provider for recommendation on beginning a new workout routine.

### *Recommendation*

THREE days of FULL body strength training every week, with at least 1 rest day in between. Sessions should be approximately 60 minutes in length training every muscle in the body each time. Within 30 minutes of ending a training session, consume 1 serving of a protein supplement powder (approximately 25g protein) mixed with either water, almond or coconut milk. And also eat 1 medium sized banana OR 2 unsalted **brown** rice cakes (approx. 28g carbohydrates). Wearing a heart rate monitor is a great way to watch effort through your heart rate and then also can help to time your breaks.

**Looking for sample workouts and detailed information on for gaining strength to achieve goals? Visit [thehealthyhabitschallenge.com](http://thehealthyhabitschallenge.com) and select "Shop"**

## Habit 7

# Vegetables

Mama always said to eat your vegetables! She was right... you should! And starting this week... you WILL! Make a dedicated effort to incorporate more veggies into your meals. Get adventurous and try new ones, get creative to try new ways of preparing them.

### *Why?*

Many of us do not eat enough servings of vegetables every day. Or there is a short list of 5 that we always have as our go-to and the rest of them are just left out. A concentrated effort to include these more into your every day routine is not only fun and educating, but it will open the doors to new flavors too! It is also fun to try new cooking methods to see that you might hate brussel sprouts if they are boiled, but absolutely love them if roasted.

### *Benefits*

Vegetables are excellent way to get your vitamins and nutrients from a whole foods source. Rich in fiber and antioxidants to help keep you regular and work as anti-inflammatory among other benefits. They have also been associated with reducing risk for many chronic diseases, including cancers. They also contain water which helps maintain proper levels of hydration.

### *Recommendation*

The more colorful, the better! Aim for including a vegetable at each meal. Try a new one every day! Spend time in the fresh produce section of the grocery store and see what you can find and try. Fresh produce delivery services are also a great and convenient way to try new items. Best of all they just show up at your door! Companies like Door to Door Organics, Fresh Direct or Farmbox Direct are just a few out there to look at! Find a local farmer's market or Bountiful Baskets. There are so many options for locally grown produce to peruse and take home to try.

## Habit 8

# Cardiovascular Training

Oh car-dee-O! My nemesis, but an important piece to the puzzle. Training for cardiovascular benefits does not have to entail becoming a marathon runner. Even speed walking up hills can really get your heart rate soaring! Try group exercise classes, or at home videos, or get outside and enjoy the scenery! Mix it up and see what you can push yourself to accomplish!

### *Why?*

Increasing cardiovascular endurance is important for everyone to work on. Regular exercise decreases the risk for heart disease, helps to maintain a healthy body composition and also just makes you feel good with the release of all of those endorphins.

### *Benefits*

During cardiovascular activities, you breathe faster and deeper which allows you to intake more oxygen. Your blood vessels widen and help to deliver more oxygen to your muscles and also carry away waste such as carbon dioxide. Regardless of your age and current activity level, there are many ways that you can get moving...even a 10 minute walk has a lot of positive benefits.

### *Recommendation*

Where you begin will vary on your current activity level. It is estimated that 5 hours of moderate physical activity each week is a good goal. Strength training sessions count as long as your heart rate gets high, so you may only have a few hours left for additional cardiovascular activities. Vary your sessions between low-intensity steady state and higher intensity intervals. Maybe one day you go out on a moderate speed walk for 30-45 minutes. The next day you decide to go for a hike on the local trail that has hills and jog up the hills and walk down. This can also include a mini circuit of jumping jacks, burpees, jumping rope, frog hops for a minute each and then minute rest in between.

**Looking for sample workouts and tips on how to make cardio fun and exciting? Visit [thehealthyhabitschallenge.com](http://thehealthyhabitschallenge.com) and select “Shop”**

## Habit 9

# Alcohol

It is not just about the “empty calories.” Alcohol is a foreign substance that your body identifies as a waste. It requires immediate attention to dispose of and get rid of immediately. It takes your body that is operating as a well oiled machine, causes it to come to a screeching halt, shift gears, and put focus on getting it out of your system.

### *Why?*

Alcohol also causes swings in blood sugar, which then impacts cortisol levels (stress hormone) and increases inflammation! Especially if you are looking to change your body composition and reduce your fat mass, alcohol takes your body out of fat burning mode to focus on getting the alcohol out and then it takes time for your body to shift back into what you are wanting it to do! It may also be used as a substitute for food, which can lead to malnutrition as well. On the flip side, consuming alcohol may also cause you to overeat or make poor food choices.

### *Benefits*

Not only is there the chemical affects that alcohol has on your body, there is also the aspect of inhibitions with food choices and likeliness of increasing food intake. Eliminating alcohol will keep your body focused on the goals you have for your health. It will also keep related headaches and hangovers away! You will also recover faster and more efficiently from your workouts as well when alcohol is void from your routine. Focus on your goals of being healthier from the inside out and your body will thank you for the 2 weeks off of having to rid your system from this toxin.

### *Recommendation*

Cut it out. Completely! Just for the last 2 weeks. I intentionally saved this for the 2nd to last habit, because for some, if this would have been at the beginning, you may have written off the entire process! You are SO close to getting through all habits, I KNOW you can go for just 2 weeks without alcohol to see how you feel! This means ZERO drinks for 14 days minimum and before you choose to pick the glass back up, pay attention to how you feel without it versus when you do drink it and determine if that drink is more important than you accomplishing your goals.

## Habit 10

# Relaxation

You have made it! Week 10 has arrived and it is time for focus on relaxation! With all of your new healthy habits in place, adding dedicated time to make sure you de-stress on a daily basis is an important key to help keep focus and control.

### *Why?*

Chronic stress impacts your body a couple of ways. For emotional eaters, it may mean you seek comfort in food and add a lot of unwanted calories to your day. It also has effects on your hormones through increased levels of cortisol (sound familiar from Habit 9?) High levels of cortisol interfere with the balance of other hormones in your body such as leptin and insulin, which are important components of your body's ability to regulate your weight. Insulin resistance is very commonly associated with obesity particularly when high amounts of abdominal fat are present.

### *Benefits*

Finding a daily anti-stress routine is important to recover and bring you mind and body back into a neutral place. Sometimes when you need to stop and relax the most are the moments during the day when you do not think you have time to do it. Notice the situations when you experience them and try to name the trigger that makes you feel stressed. Stress takes crazy tolls on your body, and life is too short to be stressed out all of the time!

### *Recommendation*

Try a new activity such as yoga, schedule a massage, mediation, sit in a sauna, read, find a new calming song, or even just take a bath! It can be 5 minutes or 90 minutes. You can select something and repeat it every day, or you can try something new every day. Just make sure you have a dedicated effort each day to de-stress!



Appendix

# Healthy Habits Checklist

	Habit	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 1	Vitamins							
Week 2	Vitamins							
	Water							
Week 3	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
Week 4	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
	Sleep							
Week 5	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
	Sleep							
	Meals							
Week 6	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
	Sleep							
	Meals							
	Strength							
Week 7	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
	Sleep							
	Meals							
	Strength							
	Veggies							

	Habit	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 8	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
	Sleep							
	Meals							
	Strength							
	Veggies							
	Cardio							
Week 9	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
	Sleep							
	Meals							
	Strength							
	Veggies							
	Cardio							
Week 10	Alcohol							
	Vitamins							
	Water							
	Activity							
	Sleep							
	Meals							
	Strength							
	Veggies							
	Cardio							
	Alcohol							
Relax!								

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