

5 Healthy Habits for a New Year

If you're like me, you ushered 2015 in with lots of sugar, a few extra pounds and promises to adopt some healthier habits. I'll admit, these healthy habits are dragging me kicking and screaming. I found it so much easier to pop tasty treats in my mouth without worrying about calories or exercise.

Unfortunately, God didn't make me with a metabolism that lets me snack my way through the day or avoid exercise, so here are 5 ways I am making 2015 a healthier year.

1. Devotion

Our biggest battle is often in our mind. Starting our the day in God's Word, prayer, worship and meditation on verses that address the areas we are seeking to adjust will help to reform faulty thought patterns. The truth of the matter is: We can live physically healthy lives, but if our mind and spirit are not healthy, our bodies will still suffer in the long-run. Proverbs talks about this when it says that bitterness dries up the bones (depletes them of calcium).

2. Water

Lets take a moment to reflect on the last time we drank a tall, cool glass of water. Some of us are really having to think. Water is essential to our health. It helps our kidneys function better to flush out toxins from our blood stream, and it helps keep us hydrated so our skin looks younger and healthier. One added side benefit is that it also helps to keep hunger signals at bay. Many times when we think we're hungry we're only really thirsty. You should drink 8-10 8-oz. glasses of water a day. However, if you consume caffeinated beverages, you'll need to drink an extra glass of water for each beverage you drink, because caffeine is a diuretic.

3. Vitamins

Sadly, we do not get the necessary vitamins and minerals our body needs from the foods we eat. Even produce that is picked early lacks the essential nutrients it would otherwise give. All of the processing our foods go through before they reach our digestive systems have depleted them of most nutrients, and the vitamins they enrich them with are not very useful.

Taking daily vitamins helps keep our bodies strong and energy levels high. When choosing a vitamin, the best ones are whole food vitamins, capsules, chewables or alka-seltzer tablets. These types do not have heavy binders that prevent them from being fully digested.

4. Exercise

In the spirit of full disclosure, this is by far the hardest discipline for me. I do not enjoy exercise—I never have. I lead a fairly sedentary lifestyle. But more and more studies are showing the elevated health risks of a sedentary lifestyle, so I am working hard to carve out time in my busy schedule for at least 15 minutes a day of exercise.

It will be easier in the spring because I like to walk in the mornings—the only form of exercise I actually enjoy. We have a nice, steep hill where I live and I enjoy walking and praying. I can't wait for the sun to rise earlier so I can get back to prayer-walking.

5. Fruits and Vegetables

I don't know why it is easier to make an unhealthy meal than it is to grab an apple. I can't explain it. I'd rather make my famous french bread, Gouda cheese and green olive grilled sandwich than just grab something from the fruit bowl (which, by the way, is a full 99% of the time). I'm working at making healthier habits, because the benefits of choosing a fruit or vegetable over a calorie-, carb- and fat-laden meal are

obvious.

By the way, did you know that frozen vegetables are sometimes healthier than fresh? Its true. Frozen produce is picked ripe, blanched and flash-frozen to preserve the nutrients. So when you see produce in the produce section that is out of season, you may be better off running to the frozen food isle.

What healthy choices are you making in 2015?

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live in the country with their 2 active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.