

A person wearing blue jeans is holding a black wire basket filled with fresh produce. The basket contains several ears of corn, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, lemons, and leafy greens. The background is a plain, light blue color.

The Healthy Plant-Based Guide

7 steps to help you transition to a thriving, active plant-based lifestyle

Who are we?

Hi, We are Zuzana & Nikki, health coaches, personal trainers, authors of the Vegan Weight Loss Manifest and founders of ActiveVegetarian.com currently residing in Vancouver, BC.

Both of us have been following a plant-based lifestyle for over two decades, and during this time we have encountered many amazing benefits of living this way. Our mission is to inspire others by sharing our real life experiences through high-quality content and to provide like-minded individuals with the transformative tools to live a healthy, active and more conscious life.

The fact that you are reading this, suggests that you may be searching for a change.

So let us help you. Together we can make this change a healthy, positive and sustainable one.

Much Love,

Zuzana & Nikki





Step #1
eat your greens



eat your greens

Yes it's true, vegetables are good for you! Especially the green kind. Fresh spinach, kale, lettuce, herbs, cucumber, broccoli... This food group is absolutely abundant in nourishment. Including more fresh vegetables into your daily diet is one of the simplest choices you can make to lose weight naturally and improve your overall health.

It might sound really simple but here is the secret... Calorie Density. Veggies are lowest on that scale, having only 60-200 calories per pound! Raw vegetables are full of water and fiber, which have essentially no calories but offer a lot of bulk. This means they fill you up quickly while providing only a few calories. One of the beautiful benefits of eating plan-based is that this is an abundant lifestyle, not a restrictive one. And being satiated and full while still dropping unhealthy pounds becomes very easy if you just shift the amount of calories you consume but don't take away the amount of food itself.

Another benefit of eating variety of fresh vegetables each day is the nutrients you receive. They contain incredible amount of micronutrients, especially minerals, which nourish your body on a deep cellular level and naturally fight off cravings for unhealthy food. On top of that they are filled with antioxidants and other important phytonutrients, all responsible for vibrant health and

vitality! All of these nutrients can prevent most chronic diseases, heal your body's ailments, and keep you looking young and fit.

how to include more greens into your diet

Our personal favorite way to eat them is by making epic salads for lunch and dinner. However, you can simply up the amount of vegetables you consume by adding them into the meals you're already eating – sandwiches, soups, stews, smoothies...

The emphasis should be on green leafy vegetables, however make sure to also include peppers, carrots, broccoli, or zucchini – as they are all incredibly beneficial. Just choose the ones you like the most and aim to fill at least half of your plate with them during lunch and dinner!

assignment

Incorporate fresh vegetables into your meals at least 3x daily. For example, start your day with fresh green juice or smoothie made with fresh or frozen fruit and add a big handful of spinach or kale (you won't even know it's there, we promise). For lunch have a big salad consisting of raw spinach or romaine lettuce, tomatoes, herbs, nuts or seeds and a generous amount of healthy homemade dressing. Dinner can be a veggie loaded stir fry with kale, peppers, bean sprouts, etc.

Be creative and let the supporting resources guide you and inspire you to adopt this healthy weight loss promoting habit.



support

Breakfast Recipes

[Toxin Cleansing Juice](#)

[Good Morning Smoothie](#)

[Cheezy Tempeh Stuffed Avocados](#)

Lunch Recipes

[Basic Green Salad](#)

[West Coast Kale Salad](#)

[Vegan Muscle Building Quinoa Sushi Sandwich](#)

Dinner Recipes

[Tahini Kale Protein Bowl](#)

[Vegan Thai Curry In a Hurry](#)

[Raw Vegan Pad Thai](#)

Snack Recipes

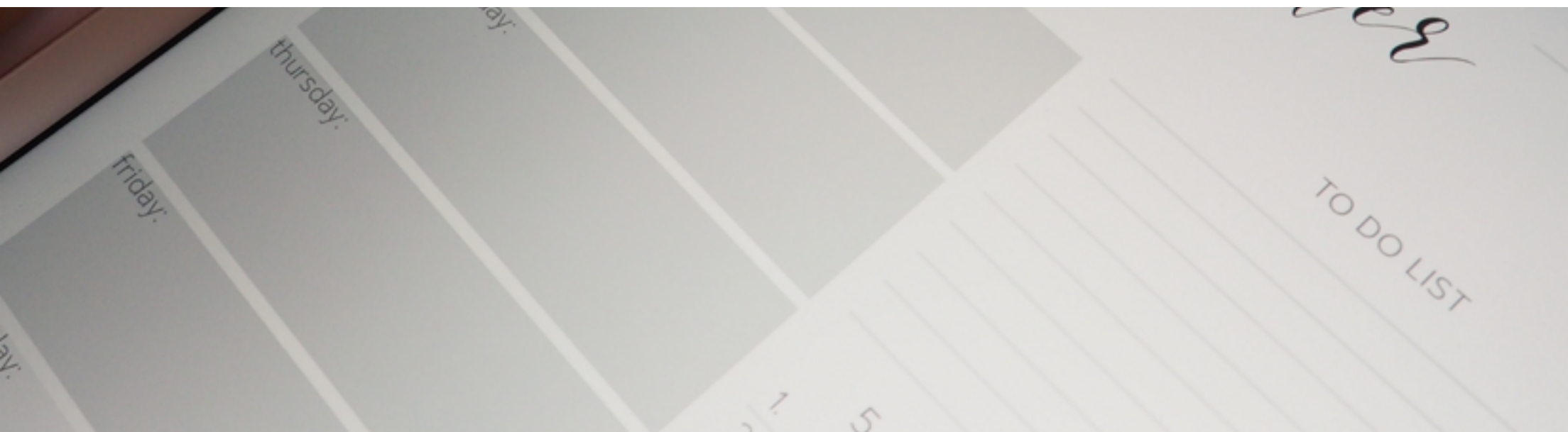
[Hulk Smoothie Bowl](#)

[Sweet Popeye Truffles](#)

[Cashew Spinach Dip](#) with Carrots/Celery



Step #2
follow a meal plan



follow a meal plan

Let's face it. Life gets busy and preparing all your meals at home can be tough.

Meal planning takes work. But those who have mastered it, know it is the key to not only losing extra weight, but also saving money, eating healthier and feeling their best.

To help you get started, we will break it down into 6 EASY STEPS TO HELP GUIDE YOU on creating your own healthy plant-based meal plan you can actually stick to.

6 easy steps to guide you

#1 - stock up

Make sure you have enough food for the entire week. And get rid of all that junk food!

It is important that you eat plenty of whole foods (fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, nuts, seeds). When a food is processed and refined (for example white pasta, white bread, white flour) than the important nutrients are stripped away and you end up eating low quality food, packed with unhealthy calories. Just by looking at a whole grain, a nut, or a whole fruit, you can notice that they

contain a full package of important nutrients – including water, fibre, vitamins, minerals, and essential enzymes your body needs in order to digest the food and thrive.

#2 - first meal of the day

[Good morning Smoothie!](#)

Make sure your first meal of the day is a large (32-64 oz) juice or smoothie and a large glass of lemon water... that means water with added juice of 1/2 fresh lemon. It is cleansing, refreshing, energizing and naturally promotes weight loss!

#3 - your second meal of the day

For lunch, we suggest a large salad, or a tasty acai bowl for easier digestion. When you opt for fresh whole foods, you meet your nutritional requirements pretty easily without paying much attention to all the single components and calories. Again, this is important for nourishment on a cellular level and keeping your cravings at bay. The synergy of the different compounds found in whole food is exactly what your body is looking for in order to function at it's best.

#4 - your third meal of the day

At the beginning, dinner can be the toughest meal of the day. Many of us come home from a long day with the thought of wanting something quick and satisfying or are used to rewarding themselves from a hard day at work with unhealthy food. This is a hard habit to break! More often than not, we use fast processed foods as a crutch, and we somehow think that is “rewarding ourselves” for a hard day. Start to think of **good food** as a reward, and that you are rewarding yourself by taking care of your body. Train yourself to remember that nourishing your body with say, [Vegan Thai Curry In a Hurry](#) or [10 Minute Buddha Bowl with Creamy Cashew Sauce](#) is amazingly enjoyable and will do your body good!

#5 - snack on fruit

For your snacks, we recommend eating fruit!

Fruit is FAST FOOD, and it is easy to bring ANYWHERE and easy to prepare. Fruit should always be taken on an empty stomach. Since fruits leave the stomach within 20-40 minutes without requiring any stomach action, it is better not to eat them with other foods, which otherwise leads to fermentation, bloating, and even diarrhea. The best times for eating fruit are mid-morning and mid-afternoon (or for breakfast with nothing else).

#6 - have a plan

Now that you are aware of all of the amazing benefits a diet full of whole and fresh foods can have on your overall health and weight loss, we’d like to give you an idea of what to eat each day on a whole food plant-based diet by sharing an easy to follow **7-day meal plan**. Depending on your preference, the different recipes are interchangeable – also, your hunger levels can vary and need to be taken into account. The snack meal can be eaten anytime when you feel like it or you can, of course, omit it if you’re not hungry at all. Listen to your body and honor your appetite.

assignment

For the next seven days commit yourself to eating like we suggested and allow the benefits to amaze you.

support

Note: The following meal plan has roughly 2,000 calories and is meant for one person. Please adjust recipes and portion sizes according to your needs.

[**DOWNLOAD NOW**](#)





Step #3
hydration



hydration

"our body consists of 65% to 70% water."

Water is by far the #1 nutrient in our diet and absolutely essential for our survival and drinking enough water every day is directly responsible for optimal health and successful weight loss.

Got it?... It's pretty simple, right?

Yet despite this obvious fact that drinking enough water is important for us, dehydration remains one of the most common and often overlooked issues responsible for poor health in our modern society. Alcohol, coffee, tea, and soft drinks have become the primary choice for satisfying thirst, and the concern is that the main effect of these beverages, is to remove water – the most important substance in the body – from the blood, cells, and organs.

Mild dehydration can occur quickly and cause fatigue and a loss of focus. If it gets more severe, it can cause things like cramping, headaches and eventually constipation. Staying hydrated is particularly important for anyone who is trying to achieve a healthy weight loss, as it improves the digestive system and therefore allows your body to burn stored fats in a more efficient way. Drinking water is basically a great way to flush your system of toxins

(aka collected junk). It also helps reduce fluid retention and decreases the appetite. In fact, people **often mistake thirst for hunger**, so if you feel like a snack, try first drinking a glass of water. Very often, this satisfies the craving and stops you from unnecessary snacking on the food you may not even need.

how much water is enough?

The standard consensus among health professionals are six to eight – 8-oz glasses a day are needed for proper hydration. Eating a plant-based diet and including more fruits and vegetables every day is another way to offset your water shortage. **Raw fruits and vegetables have a high volume of water in them**, so your body is getting a good part of the hydration it needs from these beautiful foods alone. An apple is 84 percent water, an orange is 87 percent, and a tomato contains 97 percent water!

listen to your body

You don't have to obsess about the exact amount of water you should drink if you listen to your body and observe how you feel, if you pay attention, it will tell you what it needs. **A visual sign of dehydration to watch out for is the color of your urine.** It should be clear or at most

a light yellow. If you have not just taken vitamins that contain riboflavin (or nutritional yeast), and your urine is a bright to dark yellow, you very well may be dehydrated.

A sensible and easy way to meet your water needs is to just keep water around you and instead of trying to count glasses, take regular drinks all through the day when you feel thirsty. If you stay away from the caffeinated and sugary drinks and the high sodium processed foods, all of which dehydrate you, you will find it easy to meet your water needs.

can you drink too much water?

Sure, there can be dangers in drinking too much water. Too much water in a short period of time will dilute your sodium and other electrolytes to a point where your normal body functions are affected. This would require a lot of water and is not normally a concern, except maybe after losing salts while doing a long, intensive exercise, like running.

assignment

DRINK LOTS OF WATER at least 1-2 liters per day and continue eating a whole food plant-based diet.

Raw fruits and vegetables are high in water content but low in calories, which means you can eat as much as you care for and still lose weight, have tons of energy and feel great! Here are our top ten Whole Plant-Based Foods that will help you feel better, live better and lose weight. We encourage you to eat the following in plentiful amounts...

support

WATERMELON

(Or Any Melon For That Matter!)

BANANAS

(Bananas Contain About 75% Water!)

BERRIES

(Packed Full Of Anti-Oxidants That Children Love Too!)

ZUCCHINI

(Low In Sugar And High In Water Content!)

CUCUMBERS

(Full Of Pectin Great For Skin!)

GRAPEFRUIT

(Cellulite Fighter!)

PINEAPPLE

(Great To Battle Inflammation)

MANGOS

(So Good!)

TOMATOES

(Packed With Vitamins!)

LEAFY GREENS

(Amazing Source Of Protein!)



Step #4
everybody move your body



"Exercise is a key component of a healthy lifestyle and the truth is that you cannot enjoy optimal health and well-being if you are sedentary."

your body was made to move

Let us begin with a biology bit:

Our body has more than 200 bones and more than 600 skeletal muscles that allow us to move and perform various tasks. In order for the body to keep functioning in an optimal way, it needs movement.

What will happen to a car if it's not being driven? It will start to deteriorate, no doubt about it. Your body is very much the same. Those muscles and bones will start to crumble if they don't get the right form of movement. That old saying "move it or lose it" is a perfect way to put it.

Today, many of us live in a world where most things surrounding us tend to be managed by the touch of a button.

This ever increasing ability to rely on technology is

perhaps making things faster and more convenient, but it comes with an unfortunate side effect on our bodies. Just think about how much time we spend sitting down. When we drive, we sit. When we work at an office, we sit. When we watch TV, read, eat, meet someone for a coffee . . . well, you get the picture. While a brief period of sitting here and there is natural, long periods of sitting day in and day out can contribute to weight gain as well as seriously impact your overall health and shorten your life.

daily exercise

Easier said than done, but you gotta fit it in! We recommend at least 30 minutes a day to get your blood circulating. You can go for a walk, ride a bike, swim, ... just get moving. You will start to feel better, healthier and stronger. We personally include a variety of exercise (strength, running, walking, mobility, hiking, cycling,) for a minimum of 60 minutes each day. It keeps us in a great shape, healthy and moving forward with energy and excitement for life.

assignment

Include at least 30 minutes of regular daily movement. If you are new to exercise or you have fallen into a sedentary lifestyle and haven't regularly moved your body for a while now, we suggest that you start walking. Day by day, week by week you will gain your stamina back, the extra bodyweight will start to come off and soon you will be amazed by what your body can do for you!

support

No matter where you're starting, the more you move, the better your body will function. The benefits of regular movement will soon be very obvious in your day to day life. You will find it easier to:

- climb stairs or hills
- carry groceries
- stand up from sitting down, or get up from the floor
- pick up heavier boxes

Keep up with your children, or walk an excitable dog. The more you can do confidently and capably, the fitter you will be. Even better, that means you will be motivated to move more. That leads to more fitness. And this beautiful wholesome cycle continues.





Step #5
sleep well



"Sleep is an amazingly powerful, but commonly overlooked element of a healthy weight loss plan."

Nighttime rest is a precious time that allows our bodies to heal and rejuvenate. Without enough sleep, you will not only have a hard time reaching your ideal body weight but also soon your overall health will start to suffer.

why proper sleep is important for you

By some estimates, Americans average about six hours of sleep per night. That may be enough for some, but not for the majority of people, especially for those concerned about their weight. According to a study from Columbia University, presented at the annual scientific meeting of the North American Association for the Study of Obesity, you will need to get more sleep than six hours if you want to stay healthy and fit. Researchers used almost 10 years of data collected on nearly 18,000 subjects who took part in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The study gathered information on general dietary and health habits. After accounting for other factors that are known to contribute to obesity, the Columbia team reported these estimates:

- Less than four hours of sleep per night increases obesity risk by 73 percent, compared to subjects who slept seven to nine hours each night.
- An average of five hours of sleep per night increases obesity risk by 50 percent.
- An average of six hours of sleep per night increases obesity risk by 23 percent.

The researchers believe the link between sleep deprivation and obesity is altered body chemistry. According to the research, a lack of sleep increases ghrelin, a hormone that sends a hunger signal to the brain. The usual foods of choice are ready-to-eat carbohydrate snacks. At the same time, the level of a protein called leptin drops. Leptin helps suppress appetite, so when the level is low, appetite increases. This causes you to look for something to eat. Combine too much ghrelin and too little leptin, and you've set the stage for the ingestion of extra food that your body neither needs nor can digest properly. The inevitable result is intestinal congestion and weight gain.

what you can do

Sleep deprivation is not only detrimental to your weight loss goals; it is also connected with a host of other ill effects including diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart

disease. While everyone is different, the National Sleep Foundation recommends that you get between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night.

While there are some days in life that stress and lack of sleep are unavoidable, you should try to stick to a routine that allows you to wind down at the end of your day and allow your brain and body to get a good night's rest.

assignment

Create A Bedtime Ritual

If you have trouble falling asleep due to reasons beyond time constraints, try your best over the next seven days to develop the following three habits:

get to bed by 10pm

Most of us focus on how many hours of sleep we get. However, those approaches that understand nature's intelligence suggest that it's not just the quantity of sleep—but what's even more important is the quality.

The deepest and most regenerative sleep occurs between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.

Your adrenals function best to recharge your body during these hours and this is also when your body is geared up for its peak internal cleansing and rejuvenation cycle. You will be waking lighter, fresher, more energetic and positive.

switch off the electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed

Whether it's a TV, computer or phone, **unplug from all devices.**

No more stimulating your brain this late at night. Checking your emails and browsing social media can be addictive and often keeps us up longer. Also the light from all these devices will interfere with a restful sleep.

read something light or listen to music

It's nice to let your mind wander through pages of an enjoyable book in the evening. Or you might prefer listening to some mellow music as a way to relax the body and mind before bed.

support 

[Bedtime Playlist](#)



our recommended readings

[The Alchemist](#)

[The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari](#)

[Steve Jobs](#)

[Food Rules](#)

[Autobiography Of A Yogi](#)

the bottom line

Along with nourishing the body with whole plant-based foods and exercising, getting quality sleep is an important part of weight loss and vibrant health. Poor sleep dramatically alters the way the body responds to food. For starters, your appetite increases and you are less likely to resist temptations and control portions.

To make matters worse, it can become a vicious cycle. The less you sleep, the more weight you gain, and the

more weight you gain, the harder it is to sleep.

On the flip side, establishing healthy sleep habits can help your body maintain a healthy weight.

Aim to be in bed and asleep by 10 pm because the greatest physiological repair work happens between 10 pm and 2 am.

Start one healthy habit at a time until each new habit becomes part of your everyday life.

Keep in mind that any new practice will feel foreign, hard or perhaps a little uncomfortable for a little while. Be patient and use your persistence. Soon enough you will start to notice positive changes in your health, your mood, your weight and even your love life.





Step #6

mindfulness



Many of us have something that we'd like to change in our lives, but it can be pretty difficult to overcome bad habits, addictions or strong urges. Our main addictions in this society are food, drugs, alcohol, gambling, pornography and people pleasing – most people are infected with at least one, some people have them all.

So how can we deal with these urges that are holding us back from living a healthy, fulfilling life? It's tough, but it can be accomplished.

mindfulness

Being mindful includes the ability to control our reactions to ongoing, and often stressful, life events. Most would agree that we spend far too much time worrying about what has already happened in the past or what we fear may happen in the future. While this response is an automatic reaction based on the subconscious, accumulation of these limiting beliefs leads to stress and many don't realize the huge impact that stress has on our health and even on our weight.

effect of stress

There are several ways in which stress can contribute to weight gain. One has to do with cortisol, also known as

the stress hormone. When we're under stress, the fight or flight response is triggered in our bodies, leading to the release of various hormones, including cortisol. When we have more cortisol in our system, we may crave unhealthy foods like snacks containing high sugar and fat content, and obviously, this can negatively affect weight and overall wellbeing.

Food then becomes our "drug of choice", our way of coping with stress and difficulties. If we get into an argument with our spouse, have a bad day at work, experience financial pressure or are presented with a project deadline ... we reach for food to make us feel better. Over a time, we develop a habit of using foods as a coping mechanism. How many times have you found yourself foraging in the kitchen for a quick fix, or mindlessly munching on junk food when you're stressed, but not really hungry?

mindful practices

Simply just removing the "addiction" is not the answer. Life can be challenging sometimes and we will still have some stress to cope with. Instead, we need to put something healthier in its place to deal with those stressful times when they come.

So when we try to quit an addiction, and stress comes up, we need a new healthier coping mechanism. And when the urge comes up, we need to do the new coping mechanism instead of the old habit.

assignment

We encourage you to become aware of your patterns associated with overeating and eating junk food. Anytime you experience feelings and emotions that trigger you to reach for food chose one of the following practices instead:

- Meditation
- Going for a walk in nature
- Some other type of exercise or sport you enjoy
- Practicing yoga
- Deep breathing
- Conversation with a friend
- Taking a bath
- Going for a massage
- Having tea
- Writing in a Journal

Pick one, and apply it whenever you feel like engaging in your unhealthy habit. Soon you'll develop a healthier way to cope.

why it works

If you put another coping mechanism in place, you'll have less need for the "addiction", and the urges will dissipate over time.

note

The above strategies could be applied to any other unhealthy behavior you wish to change.

support

Meditation can be an effective tool to help you lose weight. It aligns the conscious and unconscious mind to agree on changes you want to apply which makes it easier for you to control the cravings for unhealthy food and changing unhealthy eating habits.

Commit to change by devoting just one minute a day and try the following meditation practice:

[One Minute Guided Meditation](#)





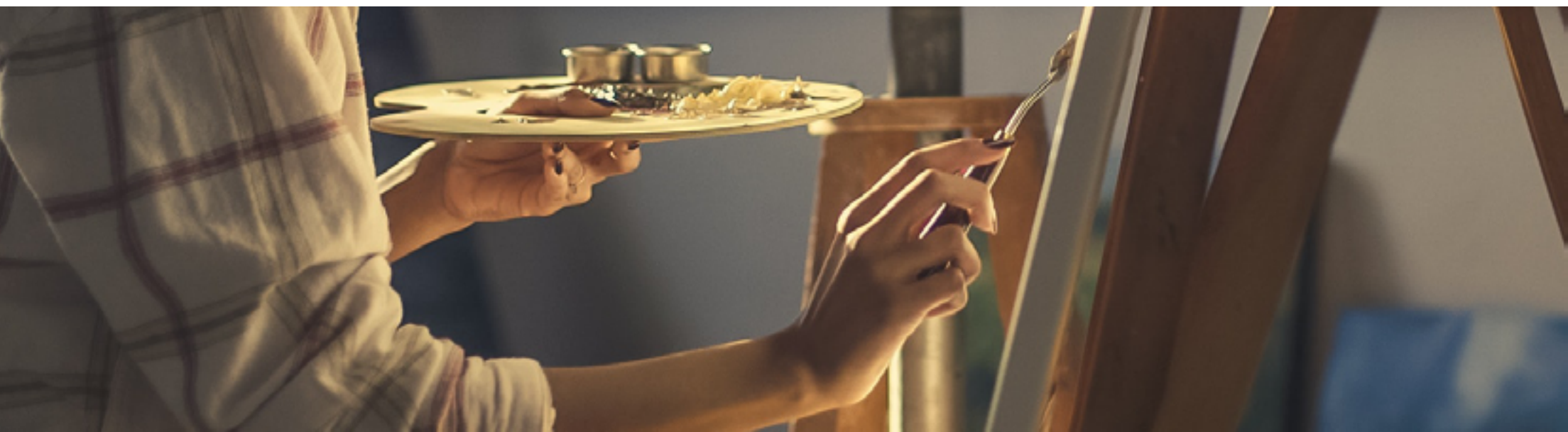
There is a possibility for you to fully enjoy the food rather than being left unsatisfied when you're done eating. You can embrace and enjoy social occasions without overeating, or be eating unhealthy foods. You have the power to heal your relationship with food and free yourself from the damaging cycle of yo-yo dieting.

This guide will not deliver results overnight. Instead, it's a lifestyle change, and that is why we are including not just what and how much to eat, but methods that will help with lasting habit changes. So be kind, and be patient with yourself. It's a journey - enjoy it!



Step #7

self-love



self-love

We are so proud of you for making it here and hope that while reading these words, you are feeling healthy, good about yourself and happy with how far you have come so far.

This step is about self-love and kindness. Being kind in everyday life is in our experience one of the best things you can do for yourself and the world enlarge. Even research shows that a healthy dose of self-love and kindness actually helps us form habits that support weight loss and good health. On the other hand, those who channel their inner drill sergeant to eat their vegetables and get to the gym, have much less chance of reaching and maintaining their health & fitness goals.

"kindness is not just about how you treat others; it's rooted in how you treat yourself." – londro rinzler

Many of us tend to think that we have to be perfect in order to deserve kindness and receive love. That is, in order to be kind to ourselves, we must meet certain conditions. We must not make mistakes. We must only eat healthy foods, and exercise five times a week. No exceptions. We must check off everything on our to-do list. We must be a great partner, parent, daughter or son, friend, brothers or sister. We cannot fail. Under any

circumstances. And if we don't meet these conditions, then in our eyes we are not good enough.

Dear friend, please understand one thing ...

We are all human and there is no such thing as a failure. And **YOU are enough**. Perfection is often just an illusion based on your own perception. In other words, Stop wasting unnecessary energy on self-criticism. It's time for you to start to recognize your own greatness!

assignment

"I screwed up"

"I'm so fat"

"I can't believe I just did that!"

Sound familiar? Underneath virtually all of our suffering lies a lack of self-compassion and self-care. You really have to love yourself to get the life you dream of. Here are 5 steps that will teach you about self-love and how to be kind to yourself.

Read them, apply them and open yourself to LOVE & LIFE.

#1 - take responsibility

If you fall off the wagon, take responsibility. Blaming others will only keep you from going forward. So, if you've tripped along the way, that's okay. Let it go. Let it roll off your shoulders, pick yourself up, acknowledge that something didn't go quite as planned, and move on to Step 2...

#2 - lift yourself up

When you fail to follow through on something, make a mistake, or do something wrong, you have two choices. You can tear yourself down, or you can lift yourself up. Those who are ready to make a real change will choose the latter. Start by telling yourself that "it's going to be OK". Give yourself a little pep talk while reminding yourself of your past successes.

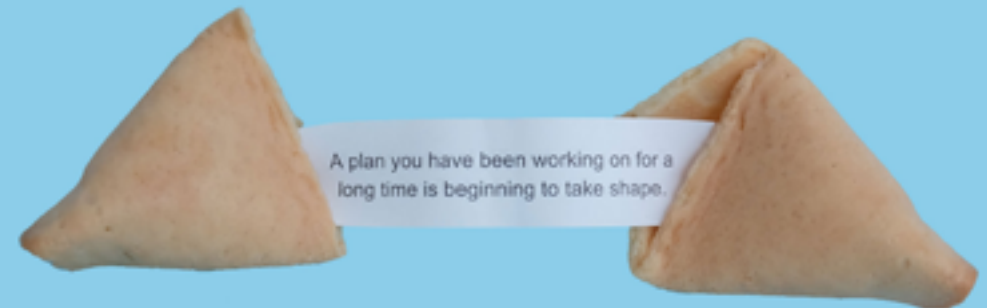
#3 - give yourself positive reinforcement

Surround yourself with sticky notes of inspiration, quotes, and things that keep you motivated and remind you of your journey and positivity. Read success stories, make friends with like-minded people, become part of

a supportive community. When you constantly take in positive energy from your surroundings, it will soon be visible to your outer world.

#4 - take action

Take one small step forward every day that will get you closer to your goal(s) and avoid as much of the stuff that holds you back from living the life you want. If your day feels difficult and motivation is low we encourage you to dig deep and make the right choice by taking one small step towards reaching your goals. This is a powerful way to invite new hope and inspiration into your everyday life. Start your day with a green smoothie, stretch your body, make a healthy lunch, go for a nice long walk. Have a clear vision of your future, and take action every day to move towards it. You deserve it.





#5 - invest in yourself

Soak up knowledge. Spend 15-30 minutes in the morning or evening with reading, listening to or watching material that uplifts you, that helps you to understand yourself and the world or that helps you to live a better life. Then remember to take one small action on what you have learned.

#6 - stop expecting perfection

The key to our success is progress, not perfection. It's really unhealthy and debilitating to set expectations for ourselves to be perfect and then beat ourselves up (mercilessly!) for falling short. Instead, learn to be patient with yourself the way we would be with a child or our best friend. Your life isn't and won't be perfect. It will actually be quite messy. And that is okay. Embrace who are you. Enjoy where you are. Start celebrating progress. We promise you'll find more happiness if you do.

If you enjoyed this guide...

You're going to love this!

The previous 7 steps are only a small part of the lifechanging journey to optimal health. Whether you're taking your first steps on this path to wellness or recommitting yourself to success we are here to offer our guidance. Our weekly online coaching program enables you to set your own pace and stay the course--without relying on willpower. Drawing on our personal experience and the latest research, we will guide you on how to:

- Smoothly transition to a healthy plant-based lifestyle
- Properly nourish your body
- Break old food addictions and establish new habits
- Increase energy and mental clarity
- Find and sustain your motivation
- Achieve a healthy, lean body
- Increase muscle tone
- Diminish visible signs of aging
- Improve sleep quality
- Strengthen immune system to stay healthy for life

Just click the link below to find out more:

[Learn All The Steps to Living a Healthy, Active, Plant-Based Life](#)





av
nourish - move - evolve