



No resolution guilt trips here: Realistic routines you can build

Making resolutions at the start of the year has been around since the ancient Babylonians (4,000 years ago!).¹ The ancient Romans and medieval knights continued the tradition thousands of years later, so someone must have kept their resolve.

But why is it so hard for us to do things like eat healthier, keep up a fitness practice or find a way to put *all* the laundry away?

There are many reasons why this challenges us. The goal is too big. We don't consider the why behind making the resolution. We may not be ready for change. There are as many excuses as there are people making resolutions. Whether you like to set goals or not, there are ways to change your habits that won't leave you frustrated.

Start with baby steps

Keep your desired change manageable. When you think about what you want to accomplish, determine what the first steps could be. Make that your initial goal. There are many prompts out there to help you get it done. If you need help breaking down your goals into bite-sized pieces, consider:

The two-minute rule

Clear away small tasks and create momentum for the larger ones. Anything that takes two minutes or less should be completed right away.³

The five-second rule

Interrupt hesitation. Give yourself a 5-4-3-2-1 count-down as soon as you get the spark to do something.⁴



80%
of people abandon
New Year's resolutions
in the first months²

Floor goals

These baseline goals are small wins that add up, allowing you to reach for bigger push goals.

Using the SMART goal system

Set goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

Try these realistic routines to get you where you want to be



Be more mindful

Start a journal. Start or end each day by putting a few words on the page. How you feel. What you've accomplished. Who you connected with. Keep it simple.



Devote time to self-care

Do one thing each week that is just for you. Take a hot bath. Read a book. Grab a coffee and sit with your thoughts.



Move more

Take the long way around when walking somewhere. Walk up or down the stairs instead of taking the elevator. Park farther away from the door. The simple addition of steps will add up.



Cut back on alcohol consumption

Meet your friends at a bar known for its "mocktails." There are more flavourful options available now than ever.



Eat more healthy

Replace one serving of red meat with fish, chicken or tofu each week. Add more protein to your breakfast. Try a new salad for lunch. Find a healthy recipe to try for dinner.



Get to a healthy weight

If this is an area you're concerned with, talk to your doctor about options that are right for you. Maybe it's a referral for a dietitian or an exercise coach.

¹<https://customshousemuseum.org/news/resolutions-where-they-came-from-and-why-we-make-them/>

²<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/202412/why-new-years-resolutions-set-you-up-to-fail>

³<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-superhuman-mind/202409/7-procrastination-hacks-that-actually-work>

⁴<https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/mel-robbsins-this-5-second-rule-will-help-you-get-anything-done.html>



Body awareness: Maintaining balance for fewer injuries

When our bodies are performing at optimal levels, everything works. Moving is not a challenge—we just go. But as we age, we may notice slight adjustments we have to make to move as effortlessly as we once did.

You may not realize this, but if you're older than 30, changes could be happening to you that affect your balance. It happens gradually as your inner ear structures, muscle strength, brain processing speed and body awareness naturally decline.¹

It's not all bad news. By simply being aware of these challenges, which happen to all of us, you can focus on ramping up the activities that can keep your balance on an even keel. See the next page for steps you can take today.



Falls cause
89%
of injury-related
hospitalizations in
adults 65 and older²



Start off on the right foot

Shoes and socks that fit properly will set you up for success, whether going for a long walk or just making your way through the day. When choosing shoes, consider:³

- A snug fit to provide a solid base
- Good heel support to prevent heel slippage
- Moderate cushioning for comfort
- Low heel height for stability

Skip shoes with flexible soles, like slippers or sandals. These can cause unsteadiness.



Health conditions matter

There is a long list of things that could make you dizzy or affect your balance. If you are experiencing these symptoms, talk to your healthcare provider. Chronic conditions and certain medications could be the cause. There are other reasons you may feel off-kilter:^{1,4}

- Vision changes like depth perception and light sensitivity.
- Changes in blood pressure, especially when standing up quickly (postural hypotension).
- Decreased mobility and strength. Muscles and joints play a major role in providing stability and support.



Bolster your balance

These are simple steps you can add to improve your balance:

- Stand on one foot when you're brushing your teeth or chatting with a neighbour. Don't be afraid to use a table, counter or sturdy surface if you need support.
- Stand up from a seated position without using your hands.
- Walk in a line, heel-to-toe, for a short distance.⁴
- Consider practicing yoga or tai chi. They strengthen muscles and challenge your active moving and static balance skills.⁵

Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your healthcare provider to make sure it's safe.

¹<https://www.aginganddisease.org/EN/10.14336/AD.2024.0124-1>

²<https://health-infobase.canada.ca/falls-in-older-adults/>

³<https://www.apma.org/patients-and-the-public/tips-for-healthy-feet/balance-boosting-footwear-tips-for-older-people/>

⁴<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/fall-prevention-strategies-to-help-keep-you-from-falling-down>

⁵<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/easy-ways-to-improve-your-balance>

Nutrient-dense: Which fruits and vegetables give you the most benefits

Choosing to eat healthy should be as simple as making good choices. Your daily intake should include lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains and as few processed foods as you can manage. But in practice, it is often complicated.



Interestingly, within each of these categories, there are good options and there are some that are even healthier. If you're trying to make the best choices, it makes sense to eat what gives you the most nutrients in each bite.

Your best option? Leafy greens. They are the most nutrient-dense vegetables.¹ Yes, those veggies that are considered "garnishes" are full-on powerhouses. They're low in calories and packed with fibre and vitamins A, C and K.

Powerhouse fruits and vegetables¹



Blackberry



Strawberry



Kiwi



Grapefruit



Orange



Cabbage



Swiss chard



Broccoli



**Brussels
sprouts**



Kale

While these are near the top of the list nutritionally, almost every vegetable or fruit offers vitamins, minerals and fibre. So, there are no bad choices, just better choices.

Read on to see how you can start your day with nutrient-dense and delicious breakfast grain bowl options.

Breakfast grain bowls

Makes: 2 servings | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 30-35 mins

Your breakfast bowl starts with grains. You can use dinner leftovers like rice, quinoa or couscous. Or cook your own mixture of whole grains like farro, bulgur, buckwheat, millet or sorghum. Add your favourite topper from the following options—sweet, savoury or a combination of the two.²

Ingredients

- ¾ cup whole grains (steel-cut oats, millet, bulgur, etc.)
- 1 cup water
- ½ Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2.5 cm fresh ginger, sliced into rounds or 1/8 tsp ginger powder
- ½ cup orange juice



Preparation

Rinse grains in cold water. Heat oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add grains and ginger. Toast grains, tossing frequently for 3 minutes. Add water and orange juice, bring to a boil, then cover and reduce to a simmer. Cook until liquid is absorbed (about 20-25 minutes). Remove from heat. Remove and discard ginger rounds if used. Divide into two bowls.

Nutrition

Per serving



Calories: 309 | total fat: 6 g | saturated fat: 1 g | sodium: 3 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 53 g | fibre: 6 g | sugars: 6 g | protein: 9 g | potassium: 230 mg

Maple sausage, egg and spinach topper

Makes: 1 serving | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 1-5 mins

Ingredients

- 1½ cups raw spinach
- 1 egg, soft-boiled, hard-boiled or poached
- 1 serving, cooked chicken breakfast sausage, sliced
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tsp tamari sauce

Preparation

Put 1 cup of grain mixture in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat for 1 minute. Layer spinach, breakfast sausage and egg. Drizzle maple syrup and tamari. Season to taste.

Nutrition

Per serving for topping only



Calories: 236 | total fat: 9 g | saturated fat: 3 g | sodium: 448 mg | cholesterol: 237 mg
total carbs: 16 g | fibre: 1 g | sugars: 13 g | protein: 14 g | potassium: 316 mg

Rise and shine citrus topper

Makes: 1 serving | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 1-5 mins



Ingredients

- ½ grapefruit, sectioned with rind removed
- ½ blood orange, sectioned with rind removed
- ½ cup mandarin sections
- ½ cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp toasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)

Preparation

Put 1 cup of grain mixture in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat for 1 minute. Layer Greek yogurt, then citrus fruits. Drizzle honey on top and sprinkle with pepitas.

Nutrition

Per serving for topping only



Calories: 225 | total fat: 2 g | saturated fat: 2 g | sodium: 40 mg | cholesterol: 10 mg
total carbs: 40 g | fibre: 5 g | sugars: 26 g | protein: 12 g | potassium: 592 mg

Beautiful berry banana topper

Makes: 1 serving | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 1-5 mins



Ingredients

- 1 cup mixed berries (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- ½ banana, sliced
- 1 tsp lemon juice, plus zest
- 1 tsp toasted, shredded coconut

Preparation

Put 1 cup of grain mixture in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat for 1 minute. Layer cottage cheese, berries and banana. Drizzle with lemon juice and dress with a little lemon zest. Top with shredded coconut.

Nutrition

Per serving for topping only



Calories: 238 | total fat: 4 g | saturated fat: 1 g | sodium: 365 mg | cholesterol: 13 mg
total carbs: 39 g | fibre: 7 g | sugars: 23 g | protein: 13 g | potassium: 397 mg

BLT greens galore topper

Makes: 1 serving | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 1-5 mins



Ingredients

- 1 cup mixed salad greens
- ¼ avocado, sliced
- 8 grape tomatoes, halved
- 2 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ¼ cup shredded cheese (your choice)
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinaigrette or vinegar

Preparation

Put 1 cup of grain mixture in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat for 1 minute. Layer salad greens, tomato halves, bacon and cheese. Drizzle vinegar/vinaigrette and season to taste.

Nutrition

Per serving for topping only



Calories: 336 | total fat: 25 g | saturated fat: 12 g | sodium: 646 mg | cholesterol: 40 mg
total carbs: 9 g | fibre: 4 g | sugars: 1 g | protein: 16 g | potassium: 637 mg

Avocado toast topper

Makes: 1 serving | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 1-5 mins



Ingredients

- ½ avocado, sliced
- 1 Tbsp chia seeds
- 8 grape tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup watercress, arugula or a bitter green
- 1 egg, soft-boiled, hard-boiled or poached
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice

Preparation

Put 1 cup of grain mixture in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat for 1 minute.

Layer avocado slices, tomato halves and greens. Sprinkle with chia seeds. Squeeze lemon wedge on top.

Add egg and season with salt.

Nutrition

Per serving for topping only



Calories: 270 | total fat: 18 g | saturated fat: 4 g | sodium: 81 mg | cholesterol: 187 mg
total carbs: 17 g | fibre: 9 g | sugars: 2 g | protein: 10 g | potassium: 695 mg

¹<https://www.health.harvard.edu/nutrition/creating-balanced-healthy-meals-from-low-calorie-nutrient-dense-foods>

²Inspired by <https://www.runningtothekitchen.com/berry-breakfast-grain-salad/>



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