

Half Mile Fitness

Winning The Fight From Fast Food

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Introduction

My sole intention is to share information that I have learned myself and applied over many years. The goal in mind is to help bridge the gap for those who are struggling to maintain a healthy eating regimen while maintaining a busy lifestyle.

I trust that you will find this information useful.

This eBook is dedicated to the young in age AND the young at heart who wishes to pursue total health for both mind and body.

We at Halfmile Fitness welcome your comments and questions.
Please visit our website at www.halfmilefitness.com

Kindest regards,

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Chapter 1

Fast Food Facts

Within our busy lifestyles, one of the most dangerous habits we develop is a dependence on fast food. In today's society, these foods have become a quick replacement for eating a home-cooked meal.

As a result, we are facing more health conditions than ever before. Heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes rank at the top among the most common ones. Sadly, these conditions are not only affecting older adults, [more younger adults are found to be at risk](#).

While fast food certainly isn't the only factor to consider, it is definitely a major contributor to health problems. It's important to take inventory of our lifestyle and make sure we are doing all we can to live the best life possible.



Chapter 2

Fast Food - Pros

For many people, eating fast food is as habit forming as getting out of bed and brushing their teeth. There are many families that eat most of their meals from a fast food restaurant. What is it about this lifestyle that is so appealing? I will share some pros with you:

- 1.** Today our schedules are more hectic than ever. It's not uncommon for a typical family of four to have activities to attend every night of the week. After coming home from work or school, we may only have a few minutes to spend before heading out again.
- 2.** When we need something quick, it's easy to just hop in the car and grab a quick bite to eat on the way to our next stop.
- 3.** The cost of fast food is also appealing for many people. Buying fresh nutritious ingredients for meals can often break the family budget. Fast food companies have appealed to the thrifty family by offering dollar menu items that are less expensive than most home cooked meals.
- 4.** Even if we don't have a large family or daily activities to attend, we may find that after a long day, we're just too tired to cook a meal. Sometimes we are more influenced by the temptation to grab a quick bite on the way home.
- 5.** The bottom line is that fast food just tastes good!

Chapter 3

Fast Food - Cons

Fast food may seem like a benefit to the busy family trying to save money. However, it's really not as beneficial as we may think. Eating fast food has consequences that greatly outweigh its pros to our lifestyle.

Here are a few problems with fast food:

1. The average fast food meal can have as many or more calories than we need for an entire day.
2. Fast food meals tend to be high in saturated fat – that's the type of fat that causes high blood pressure and heart disease.
3. Food from fast food restaurants tends to have high amounts of preservatives.
4. Many fast food restaurants serve meat with fillers known as “pink slime” that are treated with harsh chemicals.
5. While many restaurants offer healthier options, those choices are usually more expensive.
6. Fast food meals, for the most part, do not contain the necessary vitamins and minerals for good health.
7. Fast food does not contain much fiber which helps to keep our digestion regular and lower cholesterol.

8. The cost of treating medical conditions caused by an unhealthy diet are much greater than any money saved on a value meal.

For the first time in history, children are having problems that were once plagued only by adults, such as type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol. It's important to find a way to incorporate healthier foods that will fit into our lifestyle.

Chapter 4

Healthy Food Options

There are several things we can do to keep up with being busy without compromising on good nutrition. A few simple tips can help us to get the most out of our time and budget:

1. Plan ahead. When we plan ahead, we can make sure to have ingredients on hand for making healthy meals. Making up a meal calendar that rotates on a weekly or monthly basis can help us to stay organized.

2. Keep quick and convenient foods on hand. When we're on the go a lot, we need to have foods that can be prepared quickly. Stocking up on healthy foods such as yogurt, nuts, fruits, and veggies are delicious alternatives to snack on in between meals.

3. Take advantage of slow cookers. If you're busy, there's nothing easier than throwing a few ingredients into a slow cooker and letting it do the cooking for you. You'll come home to a fully cooked meal ready to eat.

4. Stock up on sale items. When trying to stay on a budget, it's important that we take advantage of sales. When our favorite healthy foods go on sale, stock up. It helps to have a freezer to store meats, fruits, and vegetables for later use.

5. Prepare meals ahead of time. Some people like to prep once for the rest of the week. You can make all of your meals on a weekend day or a day that is less hectic for you. Then throughout the week all you have to do is heat up your food.

6. Brown bag it. Many people do well with eating at home for breakfast and dinner but falter when it comes to lunch. Make sure to pack a lunch so that you will not feel pressured to grab a quick bite at a fast food restaurant. Packing lunch the night before can keep you from having to rush around in the morning.

By planning ahead and making the decision ahead of time not to rely on fast foods everyday, we can have healthy meals and adapt them to our lifestyle.



Chapter 5

Plan For The Unexpected

Surprises happen from time to time. If you find that you are stuck in a situation where you aren't prepared to eat a healthy meal from home, you can still stay on track. Most health experts would agree that eating an occasional fast food meal in moderation is not going to negatively impact our health.

Opt for healthy choice options if you do find your vehicle in a fast food drive thru. Most restaurants do offer healthy choice menus.

For example:

- Choose grilled items from the menu.
- Opt for a side salad instead of fries with your meal.
- Avoid the urge to “super-size” your meal.
- Choose water or tea with your meal instead of soda.
- Try eating a kids’ meal to get a smaller portion of food.
- Add a fruit cup or apples to your meal.
- Choose sandwiches that have are made of lean meats and vegetables.
- Check the nutrition facts at the restaurant before ordering – some foods are high in hidden fats and calories.

If you find yourself busy and unprepared, try a quick trip to the grocery store. Purchasing a rotisserie chicken and a bagged salad provides a quick meal that will leave you feeling satisfied. There are other deli items that are healthier alternatives to fast food that are convenient to purchase and take home. Ordering a pizza can also be a healthy alternative by sticking with a thinner crust, cheese, and veggies. Consider adding a side salad with your pizza.

Chapter 6

Be Patient

If you find yourself making a commitment and then sliding back, don't be extra hard on yourself. It takes time when you are developing a new habit. We're all human and are bound to have a few slip-ups along the way.

The important thing is "*do not give up.*" Eventually you will start to implement a lifestyle that's geared to healthier choices. There will no longer be a need for a daily breakfast, lunch, or dinner through the drive through window.

Talking with other busy families with similar lifestyles can be of help by getting tips and by swapping recipes and ideas. Having social support can also help you to stay committed in the long run.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

By switching to healthier food choices, you will be choosing a lifestyle that's free from many health conditions that has been associated with an unhealthy diet. Eating fast food *on occasions* will not harm you health-wise. Using moderation is more effective than self deprivation in winning the fast food fight.

(Always consult with a physician before beginning a new diet program.)

Adapting healthy eating habits within a busy lifestyle can indeed be a challenge, but committing to them will help you to succeed!

Credits

"Classic Hamburger Sandwich And Fries: Image courtesy of [KEKO64] /FreeDigitalPhotos.net"/

"Fast Food: Image courtesy of [Iamnee] /FreeDigitalPhotos.net"/

"Grilled SalmonSteak: Image courtesy of [tiverylucky]/FreeDigitalPhotos.net"/