

Create Your Own  
**21-DAY  
BETTER HEALTH  
PLAN**

*by Sue Ward MS*



# Top Reasons for a "Better Health" Plan

1. You feel great and want to optimize your health
2. You feel like you are "in a rut" (something is "off")
3. You have had a recent illness or period of over-indulgence
4. You want to jumpstart some new healthy habits

## Create Your Own Plan!

You can create your own plan. Why? Because whether you want to admit it or not, you **already know** a few things you can do to make a difference in how you look and feel. So let's start there. First, write down three things you think will have the biggest impact. This can be a big thing (like no gluten) or a little thing (like drinking a glass of water upon waking). Sometimes small changes can make a big difference.



# Now Customize Your Plan

- **Decide on a duration.** I have suggested 21 days since this is enough time to feel changes, but you can choose a duration between 7 days and one month. You can always evaluate it every 7 days and change some things around. This first step is simply to see what works best for you.
- **Decide on a start date.** Think about what is going on in your life and commit to a time period where you won't have any distractions or temptations. This should align with the duration you chose.
- **Ditch last minute cheats.** We are always tempted to indulge before a focused change in food habits. However, this is not a highly-restrictive plan and you will be customizing it, so you don't have to feel like you will be deprived during this time.
- **Develop your plan.** Follow along as I show you how to develop your own plan, step by step.



# Your Plan: Step by Step

## STEP 1 - Food Rules

Create **one to three** food rules (depending on what it is, one may be enough). Think about the changes that would have the greatest impact on your health. You could choose to AVOID completely certain foods or simply LIMIT or set a boundary. This has to do with the food you eat. Here are some *ideas*:

- Limit coffee to twice per week.
- Reduce gluten grains (or dairy products, or something else) to one serving per week.
- AVOID added sugar (or limit to 25 grams per day - you may need to read labels for this one).
- AVOID fast food completely (or something else such as alcohol or soda).
- Eat one salad a day to increase vegetables.
- AVOID chips, crackers and after dinner snacks.
- Have soup (or a smoothie) for dinner three nights a week.

**Limit** a food if you know that it will help you not feel deprived, but if the food is a trigger (for overeating) or makes you feel lousy, **avoid** it completely.

What do you know you need to change with your food intake?



# Your Plan: Step by Step

## STEP 2 - Food Lifestyle Rules

Create **one or two** food lifestyle rules. This has more to do with how you eat, timing of meals, or other food lifestyle behavior. Here are some *ideas*:

- Practice intermittent fasting 3 days a week (for example, you eat food during an 8-hour window and allow for a 16 hour fast period).
- Do not eat after dinner and allow three hours between dinner and bedtime.
- Always eat breakfast containing adequate protein.
- Practice mindful eating (eat at a table, no TV, nice place setting, chew well, eat slowly)
- Drink a glass of water upon rising every day, before you get out of bed.
- When feeling stressed, do three minutes of deep breathing rather than reaching for some comfort food.

What food-related lifestyle habit needs to be changed?



# Your Plan: Step by Step

## STEP 3 - Exercise and Movement

Regular physical activity is important. Our bodies are meant to move. Choose **one or two** types of physical activity and decide on frequency and duration. It does not have to be formal exercise in a gym. Just commit to moving your body. Here are some ideas:

- Walk 10 minutes after one meal, each day
- Turn on great music and dance for 15 minutes once a week
- Go to a fitness class twice a week
- Ride a bicycle to work two times a week
- Take stairs instead of elevator when going less than four floors
- Walk the dog daily for 15 minutes
- Wake up 15 minutes earlier and do an exercise video 3 days a week

*What can you do to move more?*



# Your Plan Might Look Like This

This is just a **SAMPLE** (21 days)

## **FOOD RULES:**

- Avoid gluten grains 100%
- Limit cheese to 3 servings per week
- Avoid alcohol for 21 days

## **FOOD LIFESTYLE RULES:**

- Eat nothing after dinner (eat by 6 pm) every day
- Start the day with warm lemon water (instead of coffee)

## **EXERCISE:**

- Walk 15 minutes daily
- Fun Friday - Dance to 80s music for 30 minutes

Can you do this for 21 days? Of course you can. This will give you some insight about the things you already know you could change to feel better fast. Remember, your plan can be simpler and include only one thing in each category for just 7 days.

*You have the power!*



# My 21-Day Plan

**Print this page and hang on the refrigerator or somewhere where you will see it several times a day.**

## FOOD RULES:

## FOOD LIFESTYLE RULES:

## EXERCISE:

Please report your results to me at  
[sue@sue-ward.com](mailto:sue@sue-ward.com)

*Let's Celebrate Your Success!*



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