Good Eats On The Go

How to Eat Healthy Fare When You’re in a Hurry

Summer is right around the corner, and so too are vacations, barbeques, and various other gatherings. As your schedule fills up it’s quite easy to fill up on the calories and fat. To be sure, we’re all busy, and sometimes it can lead to poor food choices when we’re on the go. Fortunately, there are easy ways you can keep the calories down without sacrificing taste or nutrition:

**Designate one day as your cooking day and make extra food to save time (and calories) later.** ➔ Try setting aside a few hours to prep and cook healthy food you can eat later in the week. For example, try cooking a big batch of oatmeal or steel cut oats and place the portions in individual containers—now you have a quick and easy breakfast to grab in the morning.

**Invest in some reusable glass or clear plastic containers and place sliced veggies and snacks front-and-center in your fridge.** ➔ Slice up your fave fruits and veggies so they’re quickly available for a grab-n-go snack. Instead of placing them in the lower shelves, put them in the front of your fridge, so they’re your first option.

**Leverage the convenience and nutritional power of smoothies.** ➔ Smoothies are a fantastic way to get in veggies you normally may not incorporate into a meal—so think spinach, kale, carrots, beets, etc. Toss your fruits and veggies into a blender with a little ice or plain yogurt and you’ll have a drink that can be used for a meal (smoothies are a great option at breakfast) or a snack.

**Snack simple.** ➔ Traditional, packaged snack foods are often loaded with empty calories, bad fats, sugar, sodium, and refined flours, and are usually loaded with numerous ingredients that are hard to pronounce. So, stick with simple snacks that have one to two ingredients. Try plain Greek yogurt and a few nuts, or a tablespoon of peanut butter and an apple, or chopped vegetables and a quarter-cup of hummus.

**Apps to Help You Satisfy Your Appetite (and still stay healthy)**

Fast Food Calories helps you make an informed decision before grabbing the nearest burger. It’s a simple-to-use nutrition guide featuring full menus and nutritional information for over 100 popular restaurants.

Wondering if that packaged snack is as healthy as its packaging promotes? Food Additives provides descriptions of hundreds of additives and also lets you know potential side effects, maximum daily intake, and dietary restrictions.

**Quick, Healthy Picks**

› A handful of nuts or seeds—any variety

› Cut fresh veggies (carrots, celery, bell peppers, broccoli, cauliflower)—dip in hummus/bean dips, guacamole, salsa, or olive oil and vinegar

› Whole grain crackers with cheese, peanut butter, hummus, salsa, guacamole, sardines or smoked salmon

› Low-fat plain yogurt (sweeten with fresh fruit or a little maple syrup)

› Part-skim mozzarella or other reduced fat (2% milk) cheeses (try convenient cheese sticks)

› Dried 100% whole grain cereals
This delicious and healthy recipe is fantastic for Cinco de Mayo, or any other fiesta you have planned for this spring and summer! The fresh ingredients make a great side dish or use them for a tasty topping or filling in tacos, burritos, and quesadillas.

INGREDIENTS:

1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 small onion, cut in half from pole to pole and sliced
1 red bell pepper, cut into strips
2 tsp cumin
Pinch of cayenne pepper, more or less depending on your desire for spiciness
3 cloves garlic, minced
4 ears of fresh corn, cut off the cob (or 1 15 oz can corn)
½ cup chopped cilantro
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

Heat extra virgin olive oil in medium skillet over high heat. Add onion and pepper and sauté stirring frequently until soft, (about eight minutes) reducing heat if onion begins to burn. Add garlic, cumin, and cayenne and sauté for three more minutes. Add corn and cook for three more minutes. Stir in cilantro, salt, and pepper.

Serves 4

Superstar Food Of The Month: Red Bell Peppers

This sweet and refreshing vegetable is definitely the cream of the bell pepper crop. In fact, red bell peppers are one of the most nutrient-dense of all vegetables with a single ½ cup serving providing 140% of your daily dose of vitamin C (that’s more than oranges!), one half of your daily vitamin A, and 10 other important vitamins and minerals. This gem of a vegetable is also prized for its cancer-fighting lycopene and its vision-protective lutein phytochemicals.
Taking smaller bites is perhaps the simplest strategy of all to help you eat less. The reason this tip works is elementary: The longer it takes you to consume a meal or a snack, the better your appetite suppression. Your mouth is loaded with sensory receptors that are hardwired directly to your brain’s appetite control center. The more those receptors directly engage with the specific tastes and textures in a food, the stronger and more abundant the “fullness” signals your mouth relays to your brain. In other words, when you scarf a meal down in mere minutes, your mouth doesn’t have the time it needs to relay feelings of fullness to your brain.

In addition to providing a greater feeling of fullness through sensory signals, taking smaller bites also prolongs the time it will take you to finish eating. It takes a full 20 minutes for appetite-suppressive hormones to be released after food enters your stomach. By taking your time and eating slowly, you give those hormones the time they need to reach and quiet the brain’s hunger sensor, which will help you stop eating when you’re actually full!

If you’re not accustomed to taking small bites, it can take a little bit of time to get the hang of it. These tips will help.

› Make a conscious, concerted effort to take smaller bites of food—look at your fork, is it overflowing with food? If so, take some off.

› Downsize to smaller eating utensils. The smaller your fork or spoon, the more apt you are to reduce your bite size.

› Eat more high fiber, unprocessed foods like whole fruits and vegetables. Their physical structure naturally encourages smaller bites and slower chewing.

› Use flavor enhancers like onions, garlic, cinnamon, rosemary, curry and other herbs and spices liberally in your meals and dishes. The more powerful a food’s flavor, the smaller bites we tend to take.

Science You Can Sink Your Teeth Into

Even a step as simple as taking smaller bites of food has science on its side. In the Netherlands, researchers fed 22 healthy subjects a portion of chocolate custard during two separate experiments. In the first experiment, the bite sizes of the participants were limited to five grams. Then, for the second experiment, the subjects were allowed to take bites as large as 15 grams.

During both experiments, the study subjects were told to eat as much custard as they desired. Not surprisingly, the subjects ate on average 28 percent less custard when they consumed it in smaller bites.
1 Recognize when you’re catastrophizing everyday events and get back to reality. Are you picturing yourself homeless because you missed a payment on your credit card? Thinking that you may lose your job because you’re 15 minutes late? Catastrophizing is focusing on the worst imagined outcome, even if it’s irrational.

2 Engage in a healthy distraction when you ruminate. Rumination is when you constantly focus on feelings of anger and frustration, and it’s linked to a greater risk of becoming or staying depressed. If you catch yourself ruminating, try to distract yourself with exercise, deep breathing or watching a funny video.

3 Stop predicting the future. Try to stay in the present. It’s much more manageable and you’re less likely to blow things out of proportion.

4 Be social at least once a day, every day even if you don’t feel like it. A hallmark of depression is isolation—being around other people will lift your spirits and make you feel less depressed.

5 Set small goals every day. Having something to shoot for gives you meaning and purpose. Aim for a short walk, eating well, or talking to a loved one.

6 Confide in trusted friends and family members. If you’re feeling down, don’t hide it. Share what you’re going through with the people you love and trust—they’re the ones who will give you honest feedback and the support you need.

7 Consider joining a support group. At first glance, support groups may sound hokey, but they’ve been around for ages for a reason—they work. Being around people who are dealing with the same emotions and experiences as you can go a long way.

8 Ask if you would judge others as harshly as you do yourself. A depressed person often holds themselves to impossibly high standards and beats themselves up when they fail to meet them. You probably wouldn’t judge your best friend this way, so why do it to yourself?
Jot down when you feel blue or negative. Include the reason(s) why, and then review your “diary” when you’re in a good mood. You can identify patterns and you can also determine if perhaps you’re overreacting.

Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep. Depressed people usually get too little or too much sleep. If you’re consistently getting more or less of the recommendation see your doc.

Aim for at least 15 minutes of sunlight a day to boost your mood. Studies have shown that people with seasonal affective disorder feel better after exposure to bright light. Try to get outdoors every day—take a short walk outdoors, have your morning coffee outside, etc.

Care for a pet or volunteer. Caring for a pet or volunteering can help you think outside of yourself and give you a sense of being needed—powerful prevention and treatment for depression.

Develop a wellness toolbox. Everything becomes easier to manage when you have the right tools. Create a healthy “toolbox” you can use when you’re feeling down. Go outside and enjoy nature, have lunch with a friend, take a relaxing bath, listen to music, etc.

Exercise! It’s a powerful tool against depression. In fact, studies show that regular exercise can be as effective as antidepressant medication at increasing energy levels and decreasing feelings of fatigue. Aim for 30 minutes a day.

Get in a routine. If you’re feeling depressed, one day may melt into the next without much structure. Set a realistic schedule like getting up at the same time every day and having your meals at a specific time.

Talk with your doc if you have felt blue for more than a few weeks. Or if you have thoughts or feelings that truly disturb you. The earlier you can start treating depression the better.

Remember to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.
To Your Digestive Health

5 Tips to Keep Your “Pipes” in Tip-Top Shape

Gaining great digestive health is in your hands (and mouth!) because it’s directly linked to the foods you eat and your lifestyle. Taking charge of your digestive health can not only make your daily life a little easier (i.e., preventing embarrassing emergency trips to the bathroom or constipation) but it can also improve your overall health and well-being.

1. Limit high-fat and fried foods.
   They’re hard to digest, slow the process down and tax your digestive system. Fatty meats can be especially hard to digest, so opt for lean cuts of meat like chicken and turkey.

2. Eat foods that contain probiotics.
   Probiotics are the healthy bacteria naturally present in your digestive tract, and they can also be found in specific foods. This bacteria helps keep your intestines healthy and assists in digesting food. Good sources of probiotics include low-fat yogurt and kefir (a milk-like drink that can be found in the dairy section).

3. Chew slowly.
   It takes some time for your mouth to send your brain the signals it needs to tell you you’re full. Scarf a meal down, and you’ll likely eat more than you need, which will mean more food for your body to digest. In other words, you’ll be forcing your digestive system to work harder than it should.

4. Drink up.
   Water, that is. Your digestive system requires water to function properly. Without enough, the digestive system slows down significantly and you’ll find it harder to pass a stool. Try to sip water throughout the day and make it your beverage of choice at meals.

5. Put a focus on fiber.
   Fiber-rich foods are essential to healthy digestion. Fiber helps stool move through your digestive tract. A fiber-rich diet can also help prevent colon cancer as it keeps your colon clean and healthy. Fill up your plate with foods like whole grains, veggies, beans and nuts.

Adults should aim for 20-35 grams of fiber daily. Here’s an idea of what you can incorporate into your meals to hit that goal:

**BREAKFAST:** A bowl of bran flakes or whole grain cereal

**SNACK:** A handful of nuts and an apple (with the skin on)

**LUNCH OR DINNER:** A serving of lentils or beans and one cup of broccoli
Increase Your Energy and Decrease Your Waistline Without Leaving Your Cubicle!

Researchers warn that Americans are sitting too much. They’ve found that sitting for longer than three to four hours a day shuts down the production of a key fat-burning enzyme called lipoprotein lipase. And a decreased level of this enzyme can put you at an increased risk of heart disease.

The solution? Get up! Even if it’s for just a few minutes every hour or so, standing, stretching and moving can help combat the effects of our sedentary lifestyles. By performing a series of simple moves for a few minutes a day you can lose weight, increase your strength and even shake out those mental cobwebs, all without leaving your desk. Forget the gym. Everything you need is right in front of you.

Take note of these tips—they’ll help prevent the knots and tension that can come along with these common positions.

**AT YOUR DESK:** Your knees should be even with your hips (use a foot stool or adjust your chair if necessary) and your monitor should be at eye level (you shouldn’t be raising or lowering your chin).

**IN YOUR CAR:** Place all of your weight on your right foot while raising your left knee up. Hold this position, raise your hands up. Hold, inhale and exhale.

If you feel silly doing this in the middle of the office, get a few co-workers to join you. Not only will you improve your balance, you’ll add a little levity to the day.

**IN YOUR BED:** Most experts agree that sleeping on your back or side is the best position to support the spine and the neck, leading to a more restful night’s sleep. Make an effort to sleep this way if you sleep on your stomach—after a few weeks you’ll get used to it.

**WATER BOTTLE SQUATS**

All you’ll need is a non-slip surface to stand on and a full, 16 ounce plastic water bottle.

**Step 1:** Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart and toes pointed out slightly. With both arms extended and hands positioned below your waist, hold the top of a full 16 ounce plastic water bottle with both hands, placed in between your thighs.

**Step 2:** Begin the exercise by bending from the knees, lowering down into a squat position, while keeping your hands and arms (and water bottle) in between your thighs. Touch the ground with the bottom of the water bottle while keeping your torso upright and chest up.

Repeat steps 1 and 2, 10 times or as many as you can safely complete.

If you do this exercise once an hour for 10 repetitions during your workday, you’d do 80 squats a day. Not only will this simple move tone and strengthen your body but it will help you burn calories, too—all within your workday!

**BALANCE ON ONE LEG**

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**MOVE 1**

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**MOVE 2**

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**Want More Moves?**

Visit [www.wintodaywellness.com](http://www.wintodaywellness.com) for more ideas, tips and strategies that can help you incorporate more easy movements into your workday!

**About Sean Foy MA**

Sean Foy is an internationally renowned authority on fitness, weight management and healthy living, and New York Times best-selling co-author of The Daniel Plan, The Burst Workout and WELCOA’s Fitness That Works and Walking 4 Wellness. As an author, exercise physiologist, behavioral coach and speaker, Sean has earned the reputation as “America’s Fast Fitness Expert.” For more, visit [www.wintodaywellness.com](http://www.wintodaywellness.com)

If you have severe back or knee problems, you should modify this move.

**THIS MONTH’S MOVE FROM SEAN FOY**

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

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**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**
Depression: Learn the Signs, Seek Treatment

Those affected by depression do not all experience the same symptoms. In fact, symptoms and severity can vary. There are, however, some common signs. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, symptoms of depression may include the following:

- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment
- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

If you or a loved one experience these symptoms and they are not going away, contact your doctor right away—early treatment is key to successfully combating depression.