

WHERE DO I BEGIN...STARTING YOUR HEALTH JOURNEY:

Congratulations! You have decided to take better care of yourself! Being healthy isn't always easy, but it is possible! Use the list below to help you get started:

1. Pray and ask God for His help.

Phil 4:13 says we can do ALL things through CHRIST who strengthen us. Our bodies are God's temple, and He can and will help us improve our health so we can worship and serve him better! **JUST ASK HIM!**

2. Find your WHY.

Your "WHY" is the CORE reason you want to get healthier. It should be a motivating factor that will help keep you going. Maybe you don't want to die of a disease like another family member. Maybe you want to see your children/grandchildren graduate. Maybe you just want to grow old with your spouse. Whatever your reason...keep it close to your heart and PRAY about it.

3. Set at least one health/wellness goal.

What would you like to achieve? Weight loss? More endurance? Become stronger? Lower your blood pressure or A1C? Run a mile without stopping? Start with smaller, shorter goals and work your way up. You may not be able to run a mile the first week, but you can certainly with a short walk!

4. Examine your eating habits:

Pay attention to what you are eating and when you are eating. We truly are what we eat...at least our waistlines are! Start to slowly eliminate processed foods and replace them with more fruits and vegetables.

Give yourself a cut off time for eating. For example, you won't eat anything after 8 pm...just drink water. This will help cut back on those "grazing" calories that we don't even realize we are eating.

5. Slowly increase your activity.

Do an honest assessment of where you are fitness-wise...beginner, intermediate, advance. If you have never worked out or haven't worked out in a long time, start SLOW. If you start too fast, you can get injured and discouraged. Start with walking 15 minutes a day and add a minute of 2 every couple of days. You will be surprised how fast your body will respond!

If you have been working out for a while, but aren't see any changes, challenge yourself with new exercises or activities.

Wellness Tracker: Explained

Use your wellness tracker a “guide” to what you should be doing every day or at least the goals you can set. Each item has a specific benefit. The goal of each healthy behavior is below:

Daily Devotion/Prayer: 25 points

For believers, our relationship with God is critical and is the foundation of who we are. Staying close to him will help us be strong and give us more peace.

Weigh-in 100 points and an additional 50 points if you lose weight.

Contrary to what they say, ignorance is NOT bliss! You need to weigh yourself regularly to know where you, if what you are doing is working, and if changes are needed, especially is weight loss is one of your goals. You can also take measurements of your bust, waist, hips, thighs, and arms.

Exercise: 25 points

Health experts recommend exercising a **minimum of 30 minutes/day or at least 150 minutes/week**. When we exercise, we are more energized, we sleep better, even our cognitive function improves. Exercise also helps with bad moods, as the endorphins help keep us feeling happier.

Sleep: 25 points

We need a **minimum of 7 hours** of sleep each night for our body to reset, repair, and regenerate. When we don't get enough sleep, our bodies can't perform the necessary functions to keep us healthy.

Food Diary/App: 15 points

Statistically, you will lose twice as much weight if you document what you eat daily. Most of us have no idea how many calories we are eating a day and processed foods have LOTS of hidden calories. This will help you learn which food are healthier and you can set a daily calorie limit if you choose to.

Try focusing on “**God's diet,**” in other words, if he created it, we could eat it! That means you are eating **UNprocessed** or minimally processed foods, which are BEST foods for us. Shop perimeters of the grocery store (dairy, veggie/fruit, meat) and stay out of those isles all those packaged and processed foods. Most of us are addicted to sugar and don't realize it. Try cutting back on sugar/sweets to help stabilize your blood sugars and help manage your craving.

Water: 25 points

Drink a **minimum of 8 cups/day**. Water has numerous health benefits and can help us lose weight.

Blood pressure: 15 points

If you take blood pressure medication(s), you should take you blood pressure at least once per day. When you first wake up is best. If you have borderline high blood pressure, take it at least once per week. If you do not take medication and have not been diagnosed with high blood pressure, it's good to check it at least once per month.

Stress: 25 points:

The goal is to have a stress 4 or less each day. Stress contributes to numerous health problems...physical and mental. Managing stress is key to our wellness. Praying, meditation, exercising, reading, etc. can help us manage stress.

Group activities: 25 points

Statistically, we are more likely to reach our health goals when we have the support of others, or someone is working with us. The pandemic almost ruined “community” but it is still very important to be social and surround ourselves with positive individuals who will encourage us every step of the way. L2W offers us a variety of opportunities to be with a wellness community. We just must participate!