

Nutrition and its Applications

By

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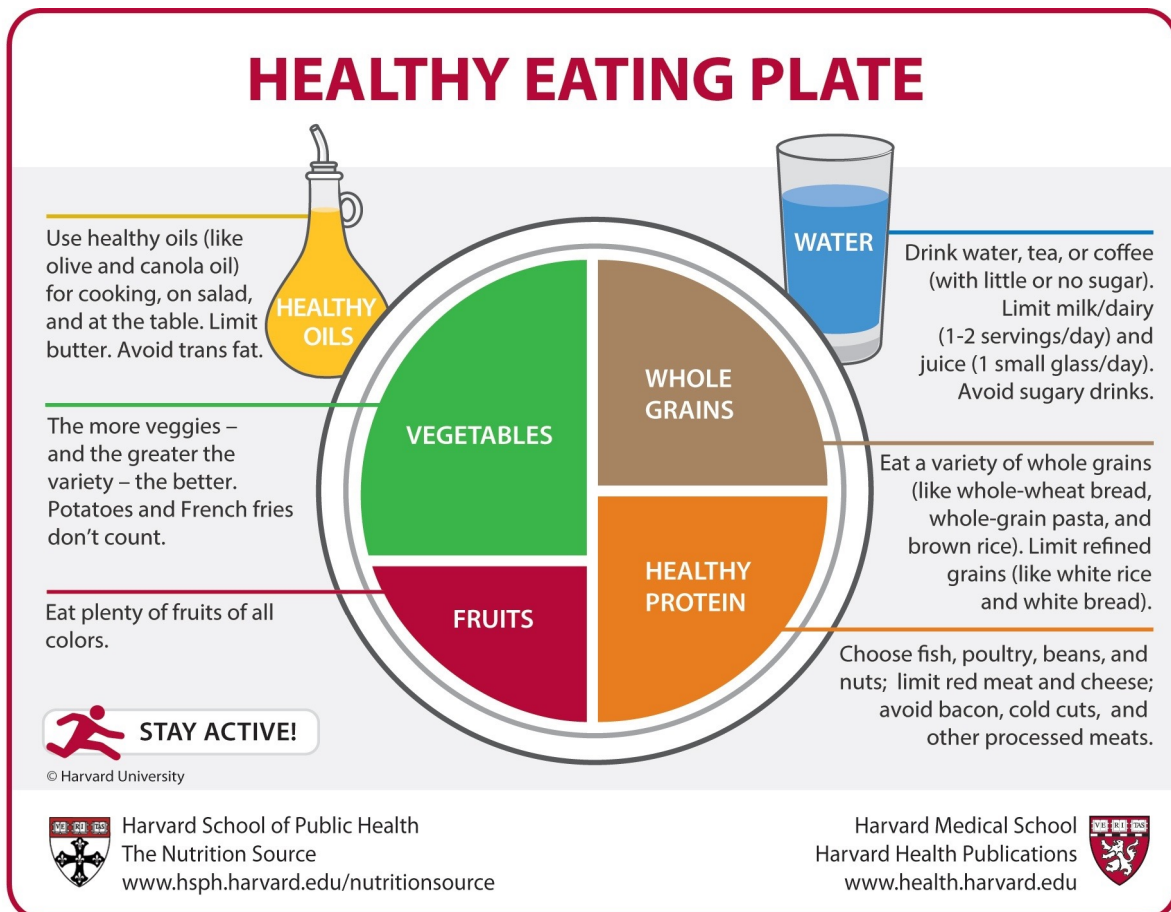
Nutrition and exercise should be addressed together. Focusing on one, while excluding the other is like setting yourself up to fail in accomplishing your goals. If your goal is fat loss or weight gain in a form of lean mass, I believe there is a lot of misinformation about nutrition and this is the reason why I am writing this article.

First, before trying to eat better or healthier, you should examine your present diet in order to make any changes (By the way, the term diet means the eating pattern of an individual, not a restrictive weight loss plan).

There are three ways to efficiently gather information about your dietary intake.

1. Diet recall is when you report what you have eaten in the last 24 hours.
2. Diet history is a questionnaire in which you answer questions about your usual eating habits, likes and dislikes, eating schedule, medical history, weight history, etc.
3. Diet record is a log filled out for three days, in which you document everything you consume (food, beverages, and supplements).

Once you have this information, you can then evaluate your diet by comparing it to the recommendations given by the USDA MyPlate. The figure below is a reminder for healthy eating. The 'My' in "MyPlate" means the importance of personalizing the recommendations to your lifestyle and goals, while the plate symbol provides a visual representations of how your diet should be looking like in a daily basis.



The MyPlate website (www.choosemyplate.org) is an excellent starting point that people can use to create customized meal plans, analyze their diets, and track their physical activity. As a personal trainer, I highly recommend it because it identifies three dietary goals that I think it's crucial to a healthy living:

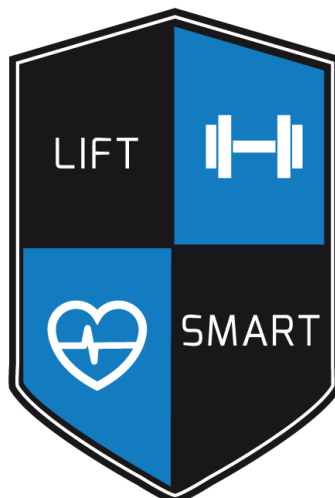
1. Balance your calories: enjoy your food, but eat less and avoid oversized portions.
2. Foods to increase: Make half your plate fruits and vegetables; make at least half of your grains whole grains; switch to fat-free or low fat (1%) milk, but limit it.
3. Foods to reduce: compare the sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and choose the foods with lower numbers; drink water instead of sugary drinks.

In addition, MyPlate states, "Empty calories are calories from solid fats or added sugars that have no nutrients". The USDA provides the following examples of foods and beverages that provide the largest number of empty calories for Americans:

- Cakes, cookies, pastries, and donuts (contains both solid and added sugars)
- Sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks, and fruit drinks (contains added sugars)
- Cheese (contains solid fat)
- Pizza (contains solid fat)
- Ice cream (contains both solid fat and added sugars)
- Sausages, hot dogs, bacon, ribs, butter, beef fat (contains solid fat)

Applications:

1. Eat more veggies and fruits
2. Eat healthy fats like avocado, olive oils, fish oil and avoid trans fat
3. Eat high quality proteins like fish, chicken, beans, nuts, eggs, and avoid processed meats
4. Drink more water throughout the day and substitute sugary drinks for water
5. Eat a variety of whole grains like brown rice and whole wheat bread, while avoiding grains like white bread and white rice



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