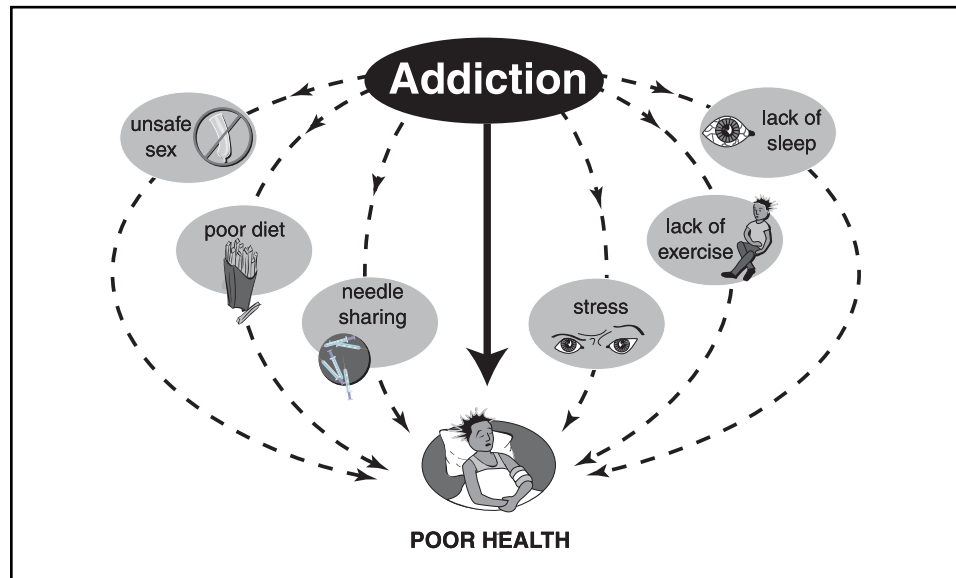


HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Skills to Be Learned

- Coping Skills
- Stress Management
- Nutritional Guidelines and Food Hygiene

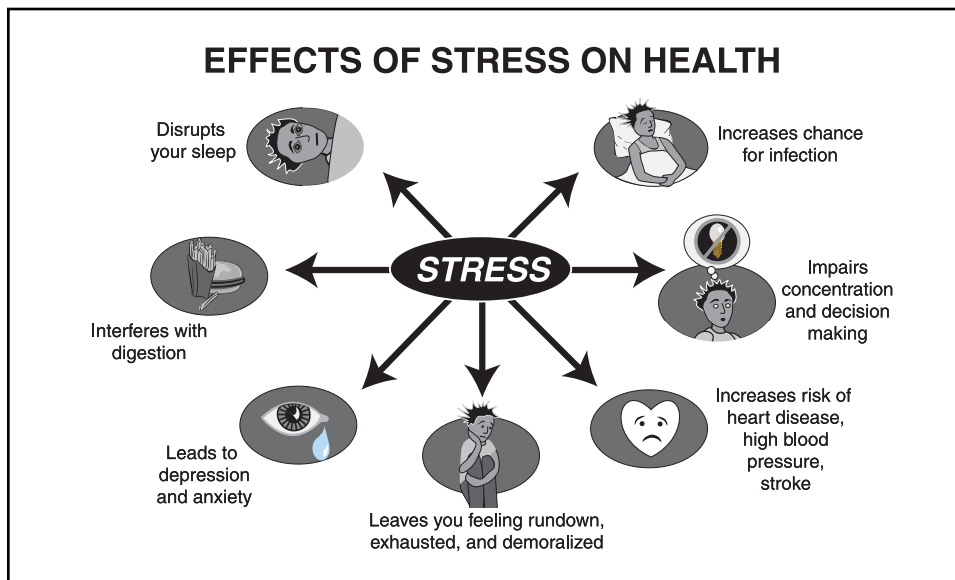
In this chapter we will be discussing ways to maintain and improve your health by making healthy lifestyle choices. A theme that will be repeated throughout HHRP is that if you are well-prepared, you can gain control over many aspects of your health and your life. In this chapter we will focus on making lifestyle changes. The most obvious lifestyle change you can make that will help you maintain or improve your health is of course being abstinent from drugs. Your decision to enter addiction treatment and to be drug-free is an **essential** first step in your decision to maintain and improve your health. However, it is not the only step you need to take.



Addiction has both direct and indirect effects on your health. Addiction will lead you down the road to poor health by a direct route—that is the direct negative effect of drugs on your body (we’ve covered this in previous chapters). However, addiction also leads to poor health by a more indirect route. Addiction leads to unhealthy lifestyle choices, which in turn lead to poor health. Some of these unhealthy lifestyle choices include risky behavior such as unsafe sex or needle sharing, poor diet, lack of exercise and sleep, and inability to cope adaptively with stress. In this chapter we are going to focus on helping you to make healthy lifestyle choices so that you can get on the road to recovery and improved health.

We’ll begin by talking about the effects of stress on your health because there is a strong link between stress, addiction, and health.

Stress can be thought of and defined in many different ways. For purposes of this chapter, let's think of stress as any change you must adjust to. We call the event or situation that stresses us the "stressor." We usually think of stressors as negative events, but stressors can also be positive events (such as a holiday, a wedding, a graduation, etc.). The important point to remember is that the stressor, in and of itself, is not what is harmful—it's how you cope with the stressor that matters.



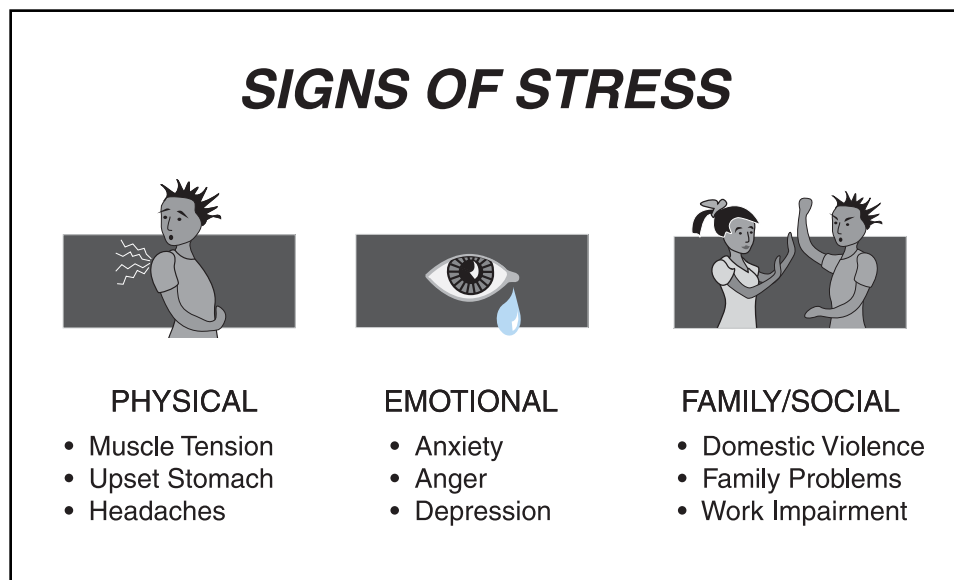
When you don't cope well with stress, it can have multiple effects on physical and mental health:

- Stress makes you more susceptible to infection. In another chapter we talked about the immune system and the role of Natural Killer cells in fighting infections, including HIV. Research studies have shown that the strength of these Natural Killer cells is linked to coping well with stress. So managing stress is particularly important for people who are infected with HIV.
- Stress increases the risk for heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and other illnesses. As we've discussed in previous chapters, drug use also puts you at risk for these illnesses, so you place yourself in double jeopardy if you don't cope well with stress.
- Stress interferes with digestion and sleep. As we'll discuss later, keeping up your strength by getting enough rest and eating well are extremely important in leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Stress leads to depression and anxiety. Depression and anxiety, in turn,

can be triggers for drug use, which can itself cause depression and anxiety, thus creating a dangerous cycle of self-medication.

- Stress interferes with concentration, logical thinking, and decision making. Staying healthy requires being able to make healthy choices. You won't make healthy choices if you can't think straight.
- Stress can leave you feeling rundown and exhausted, which can result in demoralization, and a reduction in your motivation to continue your journey of recovery.

How do you know when you're stressed?



As shown in the illustration, we have grouped the signs of stress into three categories. The first category shown is physical. Some physical signs of stress are muscle tension, upset stomach, headaches. Different people have different physical signs of stress. What physical symptoms do **you** experience when you are stressed?

The second category is emotional. Some emotional signs of stress are anxiety, anger, and depression. What emotional symptoms do you experience in response to stress?

The last category is family and social problems. This might include not being able to work well or having problems getting along with your family and friends, and may even include domestic violence. Some people take out their stress on family members. Or, as shown in the next illustration, some people may take it out on inanimate objects.



This illustration is humorous. Coping with stress by taking it out on other people is not. So let's get serious and talk about ways to cope with stress.

We've categorized coping strategies as behavioral (something you do physically), psychological (something you do mentally), and interpersonal (something you do with other people).

COPING WITH STRESS		
MALADAPTIVE COPING STRATEGIES		
BEHAVIORAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	INTERPERSONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drug use• Alcohol use• Emotional discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoidance• Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation• Drug-using friends• Unsafe sex• Share needles
ADAPTIVE COPING STRATEGIES		
BEHAVIORAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	INTERPERSONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercise• Relaxation• Massage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reappraisal• Logical analysis• Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-drug using friends• Religious/spiritual• Support groups

Let's begin with the maladaptive ones:

- Maladaptive behavioral strategies include drug and alcohol use or emotional discharge—that includes yelling, screaming, crying, punching a hole in the wall to get it out of your system.

- Maladaptive psychological strategies include avoiding thinking about whatever is stressing you (pretend it doesn't exist), or prematurely resigning yourself to the fact that you can't do anything about it so you might as well accept it.
- Maladaptive interpersonal strategies include isolating yourself from everyone, or seeking out the company of drug-using friends to get your mind off your troubles.

Resorting to any of these strategies can negatively affect your health. Indeed, the fact that you need to be in addiction treatment means that you used one or more of these maladaptive strategies. Studies have shown that individuals who are addicted to drugs use more of these maladaptive coping strategies also put you at high risk for contracting HIV because they are associated with reckless behavior. But do any of these strategies reduce stress? Do they work? Well, yes and no. They may indeed provide a quick temporary fix; people wouldn't use them if they didn't work. However, the key word is 'temporary.' You may feel okay for a little while, but then the stress will return and be even worse than before.

Adaptive strategies, on the other hand, don't always feel good right away, but they do reduce the effects of stress in the long run.

Adaptive coping strategies include:

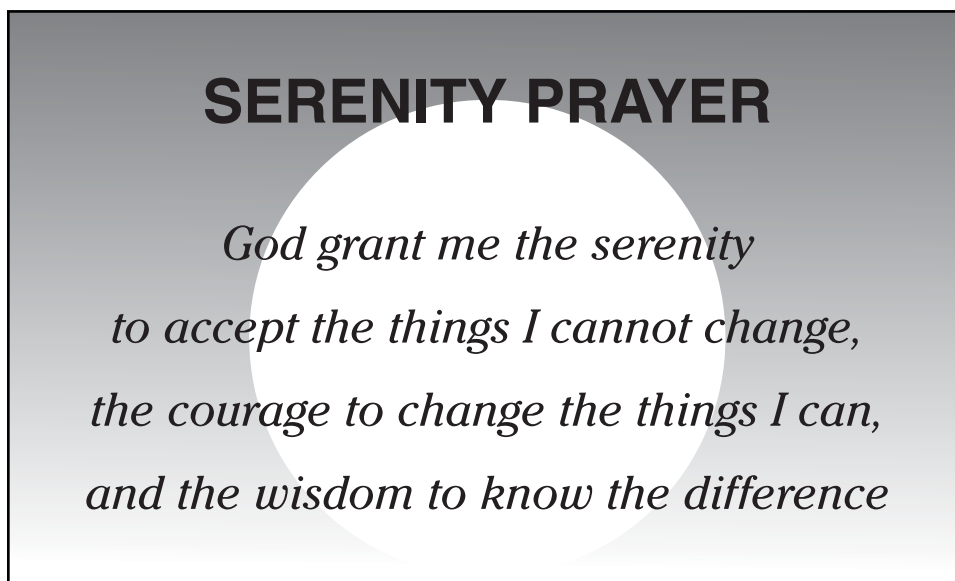
- Behavioral strategies, such as exercise, relaxation techniques, massage.
- Psychological strategies, such as positive reappraisal (an example of this would be to think of what is stressing you as positive, perhaps as an opportunity to make changes in your life), logical analysis (that means really analyzing the situation carefully), and problem solving (considering all your options, developing a plan of action, and following through).
- Interpersonal strategies, such as getting support from non-drug-using family and friends, getting support from your religious or spiritual faith, and getting support from people with similar problems.

There are no quick fixes on the road to recovery.

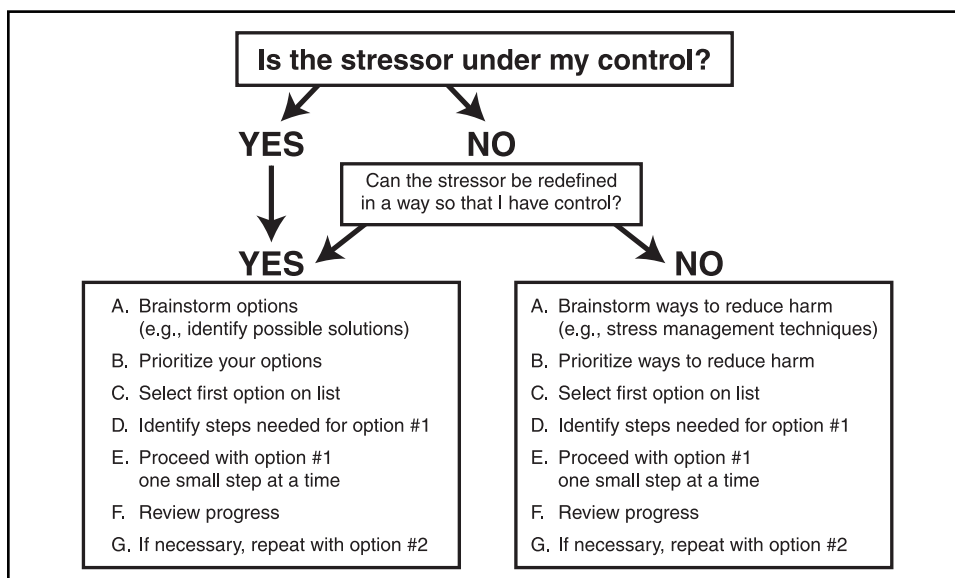
Addiction is characterized by impatience and a desire for quick fixes. One of the lifestyle changes you will therefore need to make to travel the road to recovery is learning to be patient and being willing to learn and practice more adaptive ways of coping with stress. Recovery does not mean a life

free of stress, far from it. In fact, when people first begin the journey they may find that their lives actually seem more stressful. This is because they have given up their old, maladaptive, coping strategies and have not yet replaced them. Remember, it takes time to develop new strategies for coping with stress that do not harm your health or the health of others.

If you look back at the last illustration, you'll notice that the behavioral strategies listed are ways to cope with the effects of the stress; they do not change the stressful situation. On the other hand, some of the psychological and interpersonal strategies may actually change the situation to make it less stressful. This is an important distinction to make. Remember the Serenity Prayer.



HHRP focuses on learning how to change those things that can be changed (those things that are in your power to change), and finding serenity in acceptance of those things that cannot be changed.



As you can see in this illustration, when faced with a stressful situation, the first thing you should ask yourself is "Is this problem or situation under my control?"

If you answer “yes—the stressor is under my control,” the first thing you need to do is to consider all your options. You might want to brainstorm options with a friend or family member, or some people may seek guidance and support through prayer. When you have considered your options, prioritize them—that means listing them in order such that the most feasible option is listed first. Then analyze your first option carefully and break it down into small manageable steps. Then tackle one small step at a time so that the task doesn’t get overwhelming. Make sure you review your progress as you go along. If the first option isn’t working, go to Option #2 and repeat the steps.

If you answer “no—the stressor is not under my control,” the first thing to do is consider whether you can redefine the stressor so that it is something you have control over. Some people refuse to be tested for HIV because they do not want to know if they are HIV-positive. They feel that it would be too stressful. So, let’s say the stressor is testing positive for HIV. That is certainly a major stressor and once you test positive, being infected is not under your control. However, if you redefine the stressor as a health challenge, there are many things that are under your control, and, in fact, you have more control than if you had not been tested. For example, you could carefully consider your treatment options and, as we discuss in another group, you could then make a specific plan of action with your health care provider as to how you are going to actively participate in your health care. Research has shown that how people cope with learning about being HIV-positive has an effect on their health. People who do not cope well get sicker faster and are more likely to continue to engage in behaviors that place others at risk for HIV infection and themselves at risk for re-infection with medication-resistant strains of the virus and for other infections that can hasten the progression of HIV disease. So, how you cope with stress in this situation is far from trivial. It can have an impact on your health and the health of others.

Can you think of other examples where the stressor can be redefined such that there is something you can do to change the stressful situation?

If the stressor cannot be redefined as something under your control, remember that even if you don't have control over the cause of the stress or the solution to it...

**You always have control over how you react to stress.
Your task in this case is to reduce the harm of stress to your health.**

We are now going to describe a variety of relaxation techniques that can help reduce the harm of stress to your health. This will be an extremely brief introduction to relaxation—rather like presenting you with a smorgasbord of techniques to sample. The purpose is to introduce you to them and when you find one or two you like, you can take time learning them. Remember, there are no quick fixes here. Mastering these techniques takes time and effort, but with practice you will get better and better at controlling your body's response to stress.

Practice Exercise: A Sampling of Stress Management Techniques

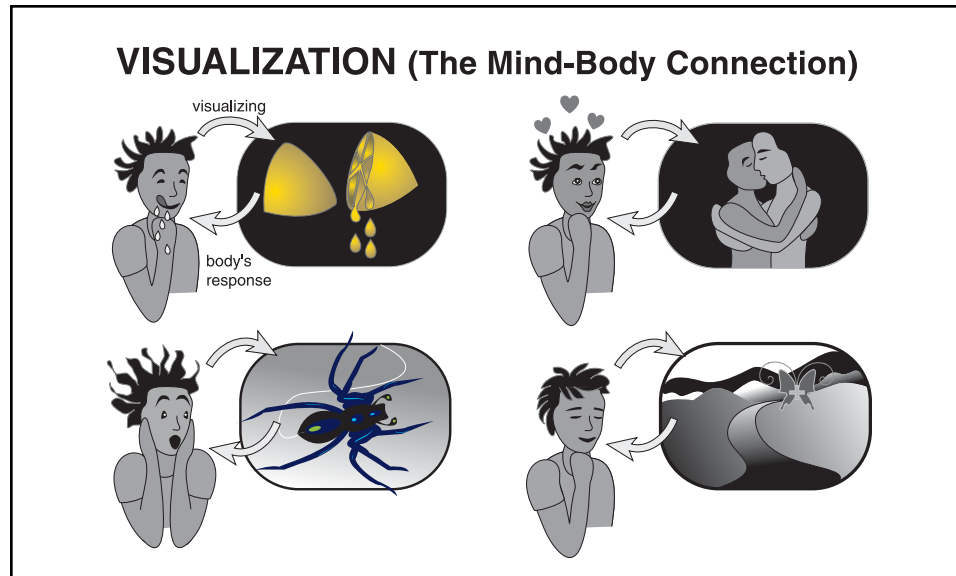
1. Introduction to visualization/guided imagery:

The first technique is called visualization or guided imagery. It's a technique that is used not only in medicine, but also in sports to prepare athletes for competition. The purpose of this first demonstration is to show you the connection between your mind and your body.

Get comfortable in your chair. Close your eyes and form a mental picture of a lemon. Imagine a **big, ripe, yellow, lemon**. See it clearly. Imagine what the surface of the lemon's skin looks like. Bright yellow with a rough, crinkled, texture. Now imagine that you are cutting that lemon in half with a knife. As you cut the lemon in half, a spray of lemon juice fills the air. See and smell the spray; it's a big, juicy, lemon and the spray fills the air around you. Now imagine that you are taking half of that lemon and sinking your teeth into it. Really sink your teeth into that juicy lemon, and feel the lemon juice filling your mouth with its sourness. Really experience the taste of that lemon... Do this now.

Is your mouth watering? If you answered yes, you just used your mind to influence your body. You just increased the flow of saliva in your mouth with your mind alone; there's no lemon here.

Let's consider a few more examples of the influences of mental imagery on the physical body:



As this illustration shows there are other examples of the mind–body connection other than the effect of imagining a lemon on the flow of saliva.

Sexual fantasy. If you become sexually aroused during a sexual fantasy, you have experienced an excellent demonstration of the power of your mind to influence the flow of blood in your body, because sexual arousal involves increase of blood flow to the genitals.

Memory of frightening event. Similarly, when you recall a frightening event or think of something that you fear greatly (perhaps a spider or snake), your heart will start to race or you might feel lightheaded or queasy. This is because your body is gearing itself up for a “fight or flight” response even though there is no current danger, only your image of danger.

Relaxing Imagery. Just as imagery of a frightening event can make your body tense, so too can imagery of a relaxing scene cause your body to physically relax. So you can counter the negative effects of stress on your body by doing relaxing imagery or visualizations. Some people find imagining being at the beach very relaxing; for others it may be imagining floating on a cloud. Whatever scene in your imagination represents total peace and serenity will create a relaxation response in your body. Let’s do that now.

Get comfortable in your chair. Uncross your legs, place your hands on your thighs, and close your eyes. Think of a special place that is particularly relaxing for you. You don't need to tell anyone what it is. Just form an image of it in your mind. It could be a beach, a forest, a meadow, or a favorite room or comfortable chair—anywhere you feel completely calm,

relaxed, and totally at peace. Imagine yourself present in that relaxing scene using all your senses; feel it, smell it, taste it, hear the sounds, see the colors; use your imagination to really feel yourself there in this relaxing place. Fully experience this relaxing place—this is your special place where you can go any time you wish to feel safe and secure and so relaxed. You have the power to give yourself a mini-vacation in this special place in your mind whenever you want. Do this now.

2. Introduction to progressive muscle relaxation:

Another relaxation technique is called progressive muscle relaxation (or PMR). In this technique, you physically tighten and then deeply relax various muscles in your body. It is based on the premise that one responds to stress automatically with muscle tension. The goal of PMR is to replace this response with the experience of relaxation. After learning PMR, your body will recognize muscle tightness as a signal to relax, thus reducing the negative impact of stress. You can get tapes of this technique which will take you systematically through the relaxation of various muscle groups in your body. If you practice for just 15 minutes twice a day, it only takes about 2 weeks to see the benefits. It can help you cope with stress and may reduce anxiety and insomnia. To give you just a sample of this technique, do a very brief PMR exercise now using just two muscle groups. You will be tightening and relaxing the muscles in your hands and shoulders. When you tighten your muscles, never go to the point of pain, and if you are susceptible to muscle cramps in certain muscles, modify the tightening of those muscles accordingly.

Sit comfortably in your chair; legs uncrossed, hands resting on your thighs.

Concentrate first on your left hand. Now make a tight fist with your left hand. Tight, tighter, very tight. Now relax your left hand. Just let go of all the tension. Feel the tension draining out of your left hand now. Very relaxed. Left hand feeling so very, very relaxed. Left hand completely relaxed on your thigh now.

Concentrate on your right hand now. Now make a tight fist with your right hand. Tight, tighter, very tight. Now relax your right hand. Just let go of all the tension. Feel the tension draining out of your right hand now. Very relaxed. Right hand feeling so very, very relaxed. Right hand completely relaxed on your thigh now.

Concentrate on your shoulders now. Shrug your shoulders so that your shoulders come up around your ears. Hold them there, tight, tight, very tight. Try to get your shoulders up to your ears. Now drop your shoulders

down again and feel the tension pour out of the muscles in your shoulders. Feel the muscles in your shoulders relax deeply. So relaxed. Shoulders so relaxed now, so very, very relaxed. Open your eyes now.

3. Introduction to deep breathing and correct breathing habits:

Deep breathing (from the diaphragm) is another technique that can help you manage stress. When you are stressed, your breathing tends to become very shallow (from your chest).

To reduce stress, begin by focusing on your breath. First place your hands on your diaphragm so that you can feel your diaphragm rise when you inhale and fall when you exhale. Keep your chest still. Now:

Count “1” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “2” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “3” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “4” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “5” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “6” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “7” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “8” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “9” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out
Count “10” on breath in...(hold the breath)...and think "relax" on breath out.

If you don't have time to do deep breathing, you always have time for a sigh. Everyone knows what a sigh is. It seems to be an automatic response that your body makes when it is feeling tired or stressed. You can use this response to your advantage in stressful situations. Just take a deep breath and as you exhale slowly say “Ahhhhhhh.” Imagine that all the tension is leaving your body with your sigh. Do this now.

Hands on your diaphragm and feel it expand as you breathe in, contract as you breathe out. Take a deep breath in. Now exhale very slowly, and as you do so, say ‘Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh’. Once more. Deep breath in...and out ‘Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.’

4. Positive affirmations/Autogenic Training:

The last technique involves listening to your inner voice. What we tell ourselves influences how we feel. Negative self-talk, such as “I'm no good, I need a fix, I can't cope with this” has a powerful effect on you. It influences your body's response to stress and it influences your behavioral response.

When you tell yourself you can't cope, your body believes you and acts accordingly, creating a cascade of chemical and physiological responses that heighten the discomfort and prolong the stress. You are also unlikely to try any coping strategies if you are telling yourself you cannot cope, thus further increasing your stress.

So, be very careful what you tell yourself.

Affirmations are positive self-statements. When you are stressed, if you tell yourself "I am calm" your body will respond accordingly. Warmth and heaviness are your body's natural responses to relaxation. A technique called "autogenic training" is based on the use of positive self-statements that increase feelings of warmth and heaviness in parts of the body. Autogenic Training has been used by NASA to train astronauts to control nausea caused by weightlessness in space, and is used for a number of health related problems, including controlling nausea from chemotherapy. It has also been used at Yale to help addicted individuals reduce craving for drugs. It is similar to PMR in that you systematically focus on various parts of your body; however, in autogenic training you do not move the muscles, instead you repeat specific statements, such as "my hands are warm and heavy." Let's try a very brief sample of autogenic training now.

Get comfortable. Uncross your legs. Place your hands on your thighs. Read each statement and then repeat it to yourself. Do not say it out loud. Just repeat the statement to yourself.

'My hands are warm' repeat to yourself 'my hands are warm'

'My hands are heavy' repeat to yourself 'my hands are heavy'

'My hands are warm and heavy' repeat to yourself 'my hands are warm and heavy'

'My shoulders are warm' repeat to yourself 'my shoulders are warm'

'My shoulders are heavy' repeat to yourself 'my shoulders are heavy'

'My shoulders are warm and heavy' repeat to yourself 'my shoulders are warm and heavy.'

Now open your eyes.

With daily practice, what actually happens in your body when you use this technique is that you cause physical changes to occur, such as an increase in blood flow to these muscles which allows the muscles to relax. You can purchase audiotapes of this relaxation strategy or you can simply close your eyes and repeat these statements as you focus on your body from head to toe.

Another way to use affirmations or positive self-statements is to write positive statements on cards and place them in conspicuous places that you can see several times during the day. For example, you could write on a card “I am calm,” or “I can handle this” and then place it on your bathroom mirror. Whenever you see the card, it will remind you to use your coping strategies to protect your health against stress.

These are just brief samples of four different relaxation techniques. There are many more and most are available commercially on audio and video tapes. We strongly encourage you to experiment with different techniques, to find one or two that are right for you. We end each chapter with a brief relaxation exercise because it is an integral part of the HHRP approach. However, it is up to you to incorporate it into your new healthy lifestyle.

Exercise

Stress management is one component of a healthy lifestyle; other components include exercising and getting adequate sleep. Should people in recovery exercise?

Definitely, in moderation, but not to the point of exhaustion.

Regular exercise can have beneficial effects on the immune system; it can also help reduce stress and depression, and can help reduce urges to use drugs. It is important, however, that you do not over-exert yourself. Exercise should be done regularly and in moderation. It is important to have a number of different exercises to choose from that you can do daily. If you aren't feeling well one day, you can choose gentle stretching exercises and on other days you can do something a little more strenuous. It's important to get into the exercise habit. Brisk walking is a wonderful exercise that can be done by almost everyone.

Sleep

Your decision to embark on this journey toward maintaining and improving your health means that you need to become very sensitive to your body; you will need to get to know your body and its needs, to listen to it, and to respond to it. For example, when your body tells you it is tired, you should rest.

Why is it important to get sufficient sleep?

When you are fatigued your resistance is lowered not only to infection, but also to drug use. Remember **H.A.L.T**—it stands for **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired**—each of these states can be triggers for drug use. Sometimes when people feel tired and run down they think using drugs or alcohol will help. It may seem like it is helping for a few moments, but in the long-run it makes it worse. Getting sufficient sleep is essential for living a healthy lifestyle. If you have difficulty getting the rest you need, it is important for your health that you address this problem.

At the end of this chapter you will find three worksheets that provide a menu of choices for stress management, exercise, and getting a good night's sleep. Additional information on these subjects is also available from your library, bookstore, and health care provider. You will notice that at the bottom of each worksheet there is a box, in which you can write down your choices of the relaxation, exercise, and sleep techniques that you are willing to commit to doing every day during the coming week. It's important to set aside a certain time each day for these activities. Making a commitment to yourself to begin incorporating these strategies into your daily life is an excellent way for you to begin making a commitment to a new and healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition

When drug users enter treatment they commonly have serious nutritional deficiencies due to drug use and to the lifestyle associated with drug use. Recovery is not only about remaining abstinent, it is also about recovering your health. In addition to managing stress, exercising, and getting sufficient rest, this includes eating well and getting essential vitamins and minerals in your diet. Can you name the different food groups? Fad diets come and go, but the message of the basic food pyramid is still true—To stay healthy, you need to eat a balanced diet. The FDA has provided dietary guidelines for all Americans. You will find these at the end of this chapter. Food safety is also very important. The key word is wash—wash everything (hands, utensils, cutting boards) often. Also, make sure foods are fresh. Check expiration dates, don't eat canned food if the cans have bulges or dents, and never thaw frozen food at room temperature. Eating a nutritious diet and taking care to store and prepare food safely is essential for living a healthy lifestyle. (At the end of this chapter, you will find daily and weekly menu planners and a grocery list.) Duplicate these pages and use them to help you plan and implement any changes you need to make in your diet. Remember, you don't have to spend a lot of money to eat well. Buy fresh fruit and vegetables in season, use coupons, and watch out for specials so that you can stock up on non-perishable items. And read the labels. Your

government provides you with a lot of information on those labels that can help protect your health. Read the FDA article at the end of this chapter on how to use food labeling to help you make informed choices. Remember, every healthy choice you make is one more step along your journey of recovery.

Review

Let's review what we've covered so far. We talked about lifestyle choices that can have an effect on your health. Your decision to be drug-free is an essential first step to a healthier lifestyle. Drug use affects your health both directly and indirectly. The drug itself has a direct and harmful effect on your body. Addiction also affects your health indirectly because it leads to an unhealthy lifestyle which includes risky behavior, such as unsafe sex or needle sharing, poor diet, lack of exercise and sleep, and an inability to cope well with stress, each of which leads to poor health. We talked about the signs of stress and the effect of stress on your health, which may include increased susceptibility to infection, heart disease, and poor decision making. We defined stress as any change you must adjust to. Stress is a normal part of life, and can be caused by positive as well as negative events. What's important to your health is how you cope with all the stresses of daily life. We talked about the importance of identifying those stressors you have control over and those you don't. If you have some control over the source of the stress you need to identify and prioritize your options. Then take your best option and break it down into small, manageable steps. Then, one step at a time, see if this option works for you. If it doesn't, try the next option on your list. If, on the other hand, you do not have control over the source of the stress, remember that your response to the stress is always under your control. To manage your body's response to the stress you can do relaxation exercises, such as visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, or positive affirmations. You may also be able to redefine the stressor, so that you do have some control. Finally, we talked about exercise, sleep, and nutrition. Exercise regularly, but never exercise to the point of exhaustion; get adequate rest; eat a nutritious diet, and store and prepare foods safely. We touched only briefly on a number of important healthy lifestyle choices that you can make to improve your health. You are strongly encouraged to get more detailed information from your health care provider, library, or bookstore.

Practice Exercise: Taking Steps to Manage Your Stress

Instructions:

1. Listed below are the steps to coping well with a stressful situation. The steps have been scrambled so that they are not in the correct order. Your

task is to put them in the correct order.

Scrambled steps:

- a. Prioritize your options.
- b. Select first option on list.
- c. Brainstorm options with friends or family.
- d. If necessary, repeat with option #2.
- e. Review progress.
- f. Identify steps needed for option #1.
- g. Proceed with option #1 one small step at a time.
- h. Redefine the answer as something you can control, such as:

-
2. Once you know the steps well enough to put them in the correct order, identify the situation in your life that you currently find the most stressful, and use these steps to reduce your stress.

Note: correct order of steps is 1(h), 2(c), 3(a), 4(b), 5(f), 6(g), 7(e), 8(d)

Quiz

1. **What is the essential *first* step to a healthier lifestyle?**
 - a. taking more vitamins
 - b. making the decision to be abstinent from street drugs
 - c. exercising regularly to the point of exhaustion
 - d. none of the above

2. **If you don't cope well with stress, it can:**
 - a. increase your susceptibility to infection
 - b. increase your risk for heart disease
 - c. interfere with good decision making
 - d. all of the above

3. **Even if the cause of what is stressing you is out of your control, you know that:**
 - a. you always have control over your response to the stress
 - b. you can protect your health by doing relaxation exercises
 - c. you may be able to redefine it as something you can control
 - d. all of the above

4. To prevent food borne illnesses:

- a. eat only raw meat, fish, and eggs
- b. eat canned food even if the cans have bulges or dents
- c. wash everything thoroughly—hands, utensils, cutting boards
- d. always thaw frozen food at room temperature

5. Which of the following statements is included in the FDA Dietary Guidelines?

- a. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- b. Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- c. Choose a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- d. all of the above

Practice Exercise: Stress Management/Relaxation

We recommend that you conclude each chapter by doing a 10-minute relaxation exercise. Use this time to practice one of the techniques that we describe in this chapter. Dim the lights, get comfortable in your chair, uncross your legs, and sit quietly with your eyes closed. Remember that learning to relax is a skill that takes practice, so if you feel restless at first, just remind yourself that this is a 10-minute gift of quiet time that you give to yourself. With practice, you can use meditation and relaxation in many areas of your life including helping you manage stress and maintain your health. So use this time now to practice becoming centered, relaxed, and focused on your new healthy lifestyle.

Stress Management

Relaxation techniques decrease the negative health consequences of stress.

Menu of relaxation techniques to try:

Visualization/guided imagery

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

Deep breathing

The Relaxing Sigh

Positive affirmations

Autogenic training

Meditation

Relaxation techniques are available commercially on audio and video tape, or you can create your own. Books are available at your library and book stores.

Relaxation takes practice. Devote at least 15 minutes twice daily to your relaxation technique. You should notice results within two weeks.

This week I commit to do the following stress management technique twice daily at _____ (time) and _____ (time) for at least 15 minutes:

_____ (technique)

I am calm and relaxed.

Exercise

Moderate exercise may strengthen your immune system, increase your energy level and self-esteem, and decrease stress and anxiety.

Menu of exercises to try (in moderation):

Gentle stretching

Brisk Walking

Swimming

Weight training

Yoga

Tai Chi

Cycling

Skipping rope

Dancing

Never exercise to the point of exhaustion.

Check with your health care provider before beginning any exercise program.

This week I commit to do the following exercise daily at _____ (time)
for at least 15 minutes: _____ (exercise)

Sleep

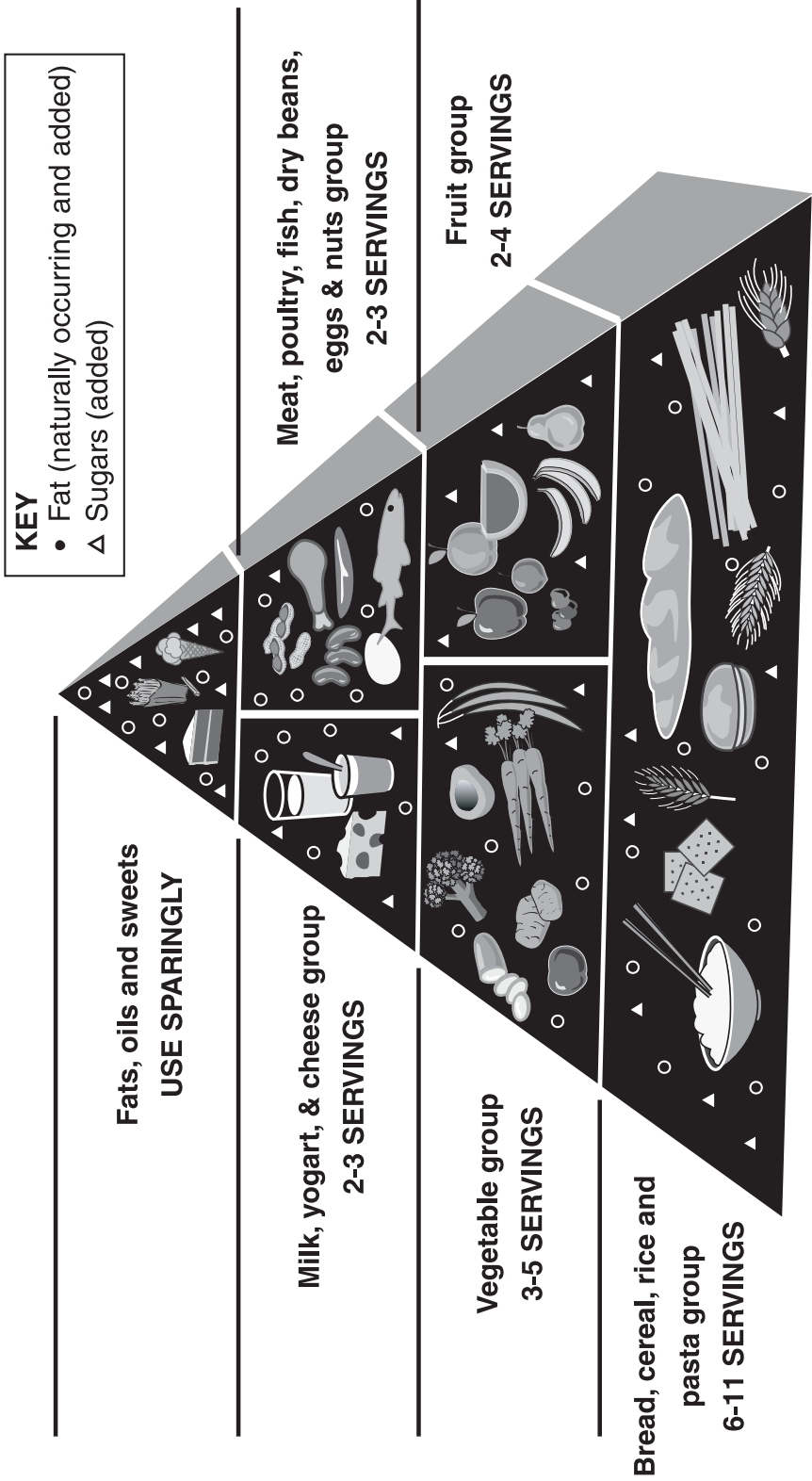
1. Establish a sleep schedule: Go to bed and get up at around the same time each day.
2. Get sufficient sleep. Healthy adults require eight to eight-and-a-half hours of sleep per night.
3. Use your bedroom only for sleeping or sleep-related activities.
4. Create a sleep-promoting environment. Your bedroom should be cool, quiet, and without any bright light shining in the windows.
5. Don't drink alcohol or caffeinated beverages within six hours of bedtime and don't smoke immediately before going to bed.
6. Have a glass of milk or light carbohydrate snack before bedtime.
7. Relax for at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
8. If you are not asleep within 30 minutes, get up and engage in a quiet activity until you feel sleepy.
9. Exercise regularly, but not right before bedtime.
10. If you take a nap during the day, do not sleep for more than 30 minutes, and don't nap after 3 p.m.

This week I commit to trying the following strategy in order to improve my sleep: _____

Consult your health care provider if your sleep problems persist.

FDA Food Pyramid

HHRP



Dietary Guidelines for Americans

HHRP

1) Aim at fitness:

- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.

2) Build a healthy base:

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains. This includes breads, cereals, rice, and pasta.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat. Don't thaw foods at room temperature, don't eat food from cans that have bulges or dents, don't eat raw meat, fish, and eggs, and above all, wash everything thoroughly. Before and between preparing different foods, wash your hands, utensils, and cutting boards, and wash fruits and vegetables before cutting or peeling.

3) Choose sensibly:

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation. Of course, for people struggling with addiction, use of any addictive substance is unwise.

The Food Pyramid–Food Label Connection

HHRP

What foods fit in a healthy diet? How can you compare the nutritional values of food? Can the new food label help you answer these questions?

It can, if you use the label information to follow the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans**.

Food Pyramid

The Food Guide Pyramid can help you put the Dietary Guidelines into action. The pyramid illustrates the research-based food guidance developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and supported by the Department of Health and Human Services. It is based on USDA's research on what foods Americans eat, what nutrients are in these foods, and how to make the best food choices to promote good health. It outlines what to eat each day, but it is not a rigid prescription. You can use it as a general guide in choosing a healthful diet that is right for you. The pyramid calls for eating a variety of foods to get the nutrients you need, and, at the same time, the right amount of calories to maintain a healthy weight. It also focuses on fat because most American diets are too high in fat, especially saturated fat.

You don't have to avoid foods that are high in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium completely. It's your average intake over a few days, not in a single food or even a single meal, that's important. If you eat a high-fat food or meal, balance your intake by choosing low-fat foods the rest of the day or the next day. The new food label can help you "budget" your intake of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium over several days.

The new food label also can help you identify good sources of fiber and vitamins and minerals.

Look to the Label

How does it do this? First, descriptors such as “free,” “low” or “reduced” on the front of the package can signal that a food is low in a certain dietary component, such as calories, fat, saturated fat, or sodium. Eating those foods can then help you moderate your intake of these and other nutrients.

Descriptors such as “good source” and “high” can help you identify foods that contain significant amounts of dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals. (See “**A Little 'Lite' Reading.**”)

Claims about the relationship between a nutrient or a food and the risk of a disease or health-related condition also may show up on the front of the package of FDA-regulated products. These are called health claims, and FDA has authorized seven of them. They can help you identify foods with certain nutritional qualities that are of interest to you.

However, you don't have to select only foods with descriptors or health claims on the label to follow the Dietary Guidelines. In moderation, all foods can fit into a healthy diet.

Second, look at the nutrition panel, now titled “Nutrition Facts.” With a few exceptions, the nutrition panel will list calories, calories from fat, and the amount of nutrients of greatest

Healthy Lifestyle Choices

public health concern contained per serving of the food. Similar information also will be available voluntarily for some raw foods.

On the nutrition panel, nutrient content will be expressed not only as an amount by weight but also as a percent of the Daily Value, or DV—a new label reference value.

These percentages can help you decide whether a food contributes a lot or a little of a particular nutrient. Lower percentages indicate the food contributes less of the nutrient, and higher percentages indicate that it contributes more of the nutrient.

Look to see whether the nutrients you would like to get more of (such as carbohydrate, dietary fiber, and vitamins and minerals) have high percentages and the nutrients you may need to limit (such as fat, cholesterol and sodium) have low percentages. The percent Daily Values, while based on a 2,000-calorie diet, will indicate in a relative way the nutritional contributions of a food to your diet regardless of your calorie intake.

Also, because serving sizes are now more uniform across product lines, comparing the nutritional content of foods is easier.

However, the amount of food you eat may be different from the stated serving size. For example, the serving size for ice cream is a half cup, so if you usually eat one cup of ice cream, you would have to double the number of calories and the percentages of the Daily Values listed to learn the nutrient content of the portion you eat.

Figuring Fat

While the food label provides a reliable general guide for most people, you may want to use the information on it to make more personal choices.

You may be concerned about fat, for example. The Dietary Guidelines suggest you eat a diet providing 30 percent or less of calories from fat and less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. Thus, the recommended upper limit on grams of fat and saturated fat in your diet depends on the calories you need (see chart on page 60). Percent DVs for fat and saturated fat are based on a 2,000-calorie diet, which is about right for moderately active women, teenage girls, and sedentary men.

Some people keep a running total of the amount of fat and saturated fat they eat in a day and compare this to their target level. If you eat about 2,000 calories a day, you can simply monitor the percent DV information from the foods you eat so that the total is close to or less than 100 percent over the day.

If you eat fewer than or more than 2,000 calories a day, you can keep a total of the actual amount of fat and saturated fat contained in the foods you eat. This information is listed immediately after the nutrient name (for example, “Total Fat 13 g”).

Daily values based on an intake of 2,500 calories a day are listed in a footnote, at least on the nutrition panels of larger packages. These values can be used as a target level for many men, teenage boys, and active women.

The chart on page 60 lists recommended upper limits of fat and saturated fat intakes for other calorie levels. Many older adults, children, and sedentary women need fewer than 2,000 calories a day and may want to select target levels based on 1,600 calories a day. Some active men and teen age boys and very active women may want to select target levels based on 2,800 calories per day.

Sugars and Others

The percent DV column also can be used to help you moderate your intake of sodium and cholesterol. The Daily Values for sodium and cholesterol are the same for everyone, regardless of total calories consumed, so you do not have to make adjustments based on your caloric needs.

Food labels also can be helpful if you're trying to moderate your sugar intake. The nutrition panel lists the amount of sugars in grams (4 grams is equivalent to 1 teaspoon) in a serving of the food.

Note that this amount includes sugars that are present naturally in the food (such as lactose in milk and fructose in fruit), as well as sugars added to the food during processing. If you're interested in finding out whether a sweetener has been added to a food, check the ingredient listing. Terms such as "sugar (sucrose)," "fructose," "maltose," "lactose," "honey," "syrup," "corn syrup," "high-fructose corn syrup," "molasses," and "fruit juice concentrate" are used to describe sweeteners added to foods.

If one of these terms appears first or second in the list of ingredients, or if several of them appear, the food is likely to be high in added sugars. A percent DV is not given for sugars because there is no target quantity of sugars to aim for each day.

Labeling of the alcohol content of beverages is regulated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Alcohol content (in percentage by volume) appears on the front panel of some alcoholic beverage labels. Alcohol content of foods and beverages is not required to be listed on the nutrition panel. However, some alcoholic beverages, such as light beers and wine coolers, provide information about the amount of calories, carbohydrate, protein, and fat they contain. You may find this information useful if you're counting calories because alcoholic beverages are generally rich in calories and poor in nutrients.

You'll find lots of information on food labels. So take the time to read them. The information can help you plan a healthful diet that meets the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines.

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Daily Meal Planner

Day of the week

Date

Breakfast

Steps to complete the meal

Lunch

Steps to complete the meal

Dinner

Steps to complete the meal

Weekly Meal Planner

for the week of _____

Sunday

Things to buy

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Monday

Things to buy

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Tuesday

Things to buy

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Wednesday

Things to buy

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Thursday

Things to buy

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Friday

Things to buy

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Saturday

Things to buy

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Additional items to buy:
