

## Fresh Health Daily



Everyone's heard warnings about the Freshman 15, when college students pack on 10 to 15 pounds during their first year at school. **Franci Cohen, personal trainer, certified nutritionist, and exercise physiologist in New York City, shares with us how to avoid this weight-gain dilemma by setting new goals and switching up diet and exercise routines.** "Whether you're going back to school or back to the office, the decrease in everyday activity can leave you feeling sluggish and increase your cravings for comfort foods," says Cohen.

Make a diet and exercise plan and set an end date. Whether you're preparing for a school reunion or want to stay trim until Thanksgiving, give yourself an end date so you can focus on

the prize. "In fact, scientific research has actually proven that people who pre-plan a weight loss program and write down their goals succeed 90 percent of the time, as opposed to non-planners who succeed less than 10 percent of the time," says Cohen.

Set and record new goals. Have you always wanted to participate in a color run or any other fitness challenge? Now is your time to focus on setting goals and following through. "When your brain visually sees a concrete goal on a piece of paper, it remains prominent in the brain, allowing the brain to analyze it as important, and forces you to form an emotional attachment to it," says Cohen.

Your goals don't have to be competition-oriented; they can be as simple as 'flatten my tummy,' or 'don't give in to late night junk food cravings.' Whatever they are, make sure to write them down in a journal, on your fridge, or anywhere else you will be able to see it every day. Visualization is the key to success.

Try a new diet plan. The summer was full of ice-cream and barbecues, so now you need to take back control of your diet. Take Cohen's advice and you will be out of harm's way.

Go green. Add more green veggies into your daily meals. Try putting them in a smoothie or adding them as a side dish to any protein.

Drink more smoothies. In just one blended drink you can have almost all of your fruits and veggies for one day.

Stop buying processed foods. We know the easiest thing for college students to eat is pre-packaged meals. If your meal has to be heated up in the microwave, it's not the best choice. Cohen recommends keeping healthy items including hard-boiled eggs, low-fat cottage cheese, fresh fruit and pre-cut veggies, gluten-free hummus, and vacuum sealed low-sodium turkey breast slices in a mini fridge for healthy snacking all day long

No time to cook? No problem. Ordering take-out sometimes seems like the easiest way to accommodate a hectic schedule or short study break. If the mini-fridge is looking empty, go for healthy choices at your usual take-out spot.

At the cafeteria: Avoid the pizza/pasta station. It may smell delicious, but the heavy ingredients will slow you down and leave you feeling sluggish. Go for a salad or sandwich with a lean protein and lots of veggies for an energy boost.

At your favorite pizza place: If you're craving the crunchy crust and gooey cheese, opt for a whole-wheat thin crust with veggie toppings.

Chinese take-out: Instead of sesame chicken — which is breaded, fried, and covered in a sugary sauce that is usually high in MSG — try steamed chicken and broccoli with brown rice, and use a few duck sauce packets to lightly flavor your food.

Change up your exercise routine. You may have been taking advantage of the warm weather by running outdoors, but constantly doing the same workout will stunt your metabolism and you won't see the same results. "As you perform the same exercises day after day, your body becomes much more efficient at performing them, thereby expending fewer calories during each work out," explains Cohen. By mixing it up and cross-training, your body never knows what to expect, and has to always keep your metabolism revved up and raring to go so that it can accommodate and succeed through even the most rigorous fitness challenges.