

# Living a Balanced Life

As you know, weight loss is an ongoing challenge that doesn't stop once you achieve your target goal weight. You will be exposed to numerous cues and situations where unhealthy eating may appeal to that given situation. The key to getting through these situations is maintaining a balanced life and remembering that food is not a comfort or a hideaway; food is a physiological need for survival.

**School.** School will present many challenges as you grow and transition from junior high to high school to going off to college. You are getting older and more independent, thus becoming more in control of your food intake. You are solely responsible for the choices you make in the cafeteria at lunch. You have the choice of pepperoni pizza, cheeseburgers and French fries. You also have the option of turkey sandwiches, salads and fruit. Which option do you choose? You will be forced to make decisions like this numerous times as you grow into a young adult. You have the responsibility to choose healthy options such as the turkey sandwich or a salad.

**Relationships.** As you get older, you will encounter many relationships with family, friends and significant others. Friends may come and go, you may bicker with your siblings more and boyfriends & girlfriends will come and go. This is a hard time in many teenagers' lives as they change and watch others change around them. Break-ups, gossip & sibling rivalry will be introduced and you need to make choices on how to deal with these situations without turning to food to cope. Remember, food is not a hideaway or comfort; it is a physiological need. Find alternate ways to deal with your relationship changes, whether it's talking to friends about a breakup, taking a walk to clear your head from an argument with your parents or writing in a journal to express your thoughts about a fight with a good friend. These are all ways to shift the focus from food to your own individualized coping mechanisms.

**Work.** As you grow up and begin some part-time jobs, it is important to not lose sight of a healthy lifestyle. Be sure you are getting adequate amounts of sleep at night. Eat well-balanced meals. This may present challenges because you are now busy with school, work and any extracurricular activities you participate in. Planning is now more important than ever. Help mom or dad cook dinner on the weekends so that you have leftovers to eat during the week when time is limited. Pack a sandwich and some fruit the night before you have to work and go to school.

These situations can present some tough challenges when trying to maintain your weight. As you grow and become independent, remember you are taking on more responsibility to make good choices

While it's important to plan ahead and make good choices with food & nutrition, it's just as vital to incorporate those good decisions into other aspects of your life, such as exercise and sleep.



**Exercise.** Be sure you are getting physical activity daily. Whether you're taking a 15 minute stroll around the block or riding your bike for 30 minutes, incorporate exercise into your daily routine. This will expend calories and keep your metabolism in full swing.

**Sleep.** Sleep is a mandatory process for you to function. 8 hours of sleep a night is ideal, so try to get to bed at a decent hour since you are probably an early riser for school. Adequate sleep can help you feel energized which will help get you moving & exercising instead of

