With summer vacations and warm weather fun behind us, our thoughts turn to fall. We say goodbye to the more relaxed days of summer and move full speed ahead into back-to-school or back-to-work activities that make this such a busy time of year. As you move into your fall schedule, it’s an important time to renew your focus on being healthy. A few simple lifestyle changes can make a big difference.

**Personalize Your Plan:**
When calendars fill up, healthy eating seems like a bigger challenge than ever. That’s why it’s important to create a personal plan that fits your busy life. Create a healthy eating plan and try to stick to it. You don’t have to plan every meal, but set some simple goals.

- Choose lower calorie, lower fat foods
- Drink more water and less sweetened beverages
- Don’t skip meals
- Eat lower sodium foods
- Eat more whole grains, fruits and vegetables

Customize your plan to fit your life. Adjust your goals for your busy schedule and keep them top of mind every day.

**Establish a Fall Routine:**
Find an exercise routine that works for your fall schedule. Build exercise into your busy day so that you don’t slip into bad habits as your schedule gets over booked. Look for every opportunity to get active. A brisk lunchtime walk or taking the stairs instead of the elevator are great ways to get started. Just find a routine that works for you and try to stick to it.

**Shop the Season:**
Take advantage of the fresh fall harvest. Cranberries, apples, pears, butternut squash and pumpkins are all in season. Make sure you look for the fresh and healthy fall flavors offered by so many farmers markets, supermarkets, restaurants and cafés.

Make a plan that fits your busy life and enjoy the flavors of fall.

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**An-Apple (Or 2) A-Day**

Fall is the time of year when the old adage “an-apple-a-day” is a pleasure to follow. Crisp, sweet, juicy apples are everywhere. McIntosh, Rome, Granny Smith, Gala, Jonagold, Cortland – everyone has their favorite. As part of your fall healthy eating plan you may want to have “two-a-day”, instead of just one.

Apples are a good source of fiber, vitamin C and other antioxidants. They’re low calorie, low fat and low sodium. They’re the perfect healthy way to enjoy the flavors of fall.

From appetizers, to entrees, to desserts, apples fit with any dish. Combine apples with pecans or walnuts to add fresh fall flavor and crunch to salads. Add apples to seasonal pork, chicken or turkey dishes. Try apples sliced, chopped, baked or simmered. Any way you like them fresh fall apples are one of the best parts of the season.

**Apple Nutrition**
The nutrients from apples and other fruits and vegetables have been proven to make a difference in your health.

- Fiber can help reduce cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart disease;
- Vitamin C can help strengthen your immune system;
- Some studies suggest people who eat a diet rich in flavanoids (a type of antioxidant found in apples and other fruits and vegetables) may have a lower risk of heart disease.

Experts recommend at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a healthy, balanced diet.
When we’re busy it’s easy to lose sight of healthy eating; We eat on the run and grab whatever is convenient. During the hectic fall season, many of us need to double our efforts to make healthy choices – especially when we eat out. Try any of the following tips to help you choose healthy away from home.

**Customize Your Order**
Don’t hesitate to customize your order for health. Ask for:
- Half portions or smaller portions
- Salad dressings or sauces on the side
- Lower-sodium choices
- Salsa for your baked potato instead of butter
- Veggie toppings on your pizza instead of meats
- Mustard or low fat mayo on sandwiches

**Make Smart Menu Choices**
Take the time to read the menu or the descriptions of the seasonal specials. Paying attention to the ingredients and the way foods are prepared can help you make healthier choices.
- Cream or creamy usually means higher fat ingredients. Go for tomato based marinara sauces instead of creamy Alfredo sauces. Choose broth based soups like Manhattan Clam Chowder over the creamy New England variety.
- Deep-fried is an obvious tip-off to higher fat and calories. If you like fried foods make them an occasional treat and check to make sure that they are prepared in zero trans fat oil.
- Baked, steamed, sautéed or stir-fried can sometimes guide you to lower fat and calories. But you still need to be careful and make sure that your steamed vegetables are not topped with lots of butter or your baked potato is not drowned out by sour cream.

**Choose Healthy Destinations**
Pick restaurants, cafes or cafeterias that feature a variety of lower fat, lower calorie options. By choosing healthy, even before you order, it will be easier for you to meet your health and wellness goals during the busy fall season.

Since everyone’s health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.

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**Apple Yogurt Trifle**
Serves 4

**Ingredients:**
- 1 Granny Smith Apple, cored and finely chopped
- 2, 8 ounce containers low fat cherry yogurt
- 10 tbsp Grape-Nuts cereal

**Preparation:**
Evenly divide the chopped apple pieces among four parfait dishes or tall glasses. Divide yogurt from one 8 ounce container among four parfait dishes. Add 2 tbsp Grape Nuts to each trifle, then top with layers of remaining yogurt, chopped apple and sprinkle of Grape-Nuts on top. Refrigerate at least 15-20 min. before serving to allow cereal to soften slightly.

**Nutritional Information per serving**
- Calories: 210
- Protein: 7g
- Cholesterol: 5mg
- Sodium: 186mg
- Carbohydrates: 44g
- Total Fat: 1g

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**Afternoon Apple Snacks**
Serves 6

**Ingredients:**
- 2 Red Delicious apples
- ½ cup chunky peanut butter
- 2 tbsp honey
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 6 whole graham crackers

**Preparation:**
Core apples and cut each in half; cut into 12 wedges. Dip wedges in lemon juice to prevent browning and place in a single layer on microwave-safe plate or baking dish. Cover loosely with waxed paper and microwave on High for 3 to 4 minutes or until apples are tender and hold their shape. Drain apples on paper towels. In a small bowl, combine peanut butter, honey, and cinnamon. Snap graham crackers in half to make 12 square crackers. Spread a layer of peanut butter mixture on each of six square crackers. Top each with 2 apple wedges. Top with remaining graham cracker squares.

**Nutritional Information per serving**
- Calories: 221
- Protein: 7g
- Cholesterol: 0mg
- Sodium: 131mg
- Carbohydrates: 25g
- Total Fat: 12g

Recipes courtesy of Washington Apple Commission.