

Build A Better You in 2013

Diet & Fitness Over



By Stephanie Miller

We all reach a certain point – perhaps it's turning 40 or 50, when we realize our usual strategies for weight management aren't working anymore.

Challenges that come with getting a little older do not mean that we should give

up on being fit and looking great.

There is lots of evidence among Texas women that we can look great at any age if we make the right adjustments.

"It is very realistic to think that your fitness and health can endure," says Meridan Zerner, RD, LD, a registered dietician with the Cooper Clinic in Dallas. "It takes a commitment to put yourself first and chisel out 30 minutes a day for exercise."

Meridan shared her plan for fitness in the New Year that incorporates getting moving, eating smart, and making time for downtime and a cup of tea, which can play a key role in managing calories.

"A warm beverage likes tea helps give us a feeling of fullness," she said. It can also help reduce abdominal fat, and green tea may help burn an extra 50 calories a day as well as help with hydration. She recommends two cups a day as part of a nutrition plan that includes increasing



Meridan Zerner, Cooper Clinic

lean protein, fresh vegetables and fruit, choosing carbohydrates wisely, and eating small meals every three hours (as opposed to three larger meals a day) to maintain energy.

Doing More with Less

Once we enter our 50s, we need 1/3 fewer calories to maintain our weight, Meridan notes, but we need the same amount of protein.

"So it becomes this challenge of doing more with less, and trying to pack more quality into fewer calories," Meridan says. "We also have less wiggle room - those bites of brownies or that extra glass of wine we used to be able to get away with." This is because our metabolism, or the rate at which our bodies burn calories, slows down as we age. We need to carefully choose what we eat, and increase our exercise.

To compensate for the changes in metabolism, Meridan offers this plan.

- Don't skip breakfast. It wakes up our metabolism - incorporate some lean protein such as eggs or egg whites. This is the time to have smart - carbohydrates such as oatmeal or whole grains.

- Instead of three big meals, have several small meals to keep your energy up and reduce hunger and cravings.

- Choose lean protein throughout the day.

- Snack on fresh fruits and vegetables - they keep us feeling full and supply nutrients, antioxidants and fiber.

- Drink lots of water (and have some tea) to stay hydrated.

- Add extra fiber to help keep you feeling full.



Tea, fresh fruit, and granola bars are healthy options for snacks and energy.

Get Moving



"The best line of defense is the 50 percent fitness and 50 percent diet," Meridan notes. She recommends five days a week of exercise, increasing your gym workout to 30 minutes or more, and incorporating resistance training, such as lifting weights.

"An extra ten minutes of exercise can burn 100 calories, which can mean 10 pounds lost (or not gained) in a year," she points out.

Carol Ordemann, a North Texas Pilates instructor and Aerobic Fitness Association of America-certified fitness trainer, is living proof that smart eating choices and exercise can keep us looking fabulous.

Carol bikes, runs, plays tennis, teaches Pilates, and trains other women in fitness. Rule 1, she says is "doing as much as you can to stay active."

"It's calories in versus calories out," Carol explains. "There is no secret. If you consume more in a week than you burn off, you are only going to gain weight. You have to move."

Getting moving can be fun, especially if you do it with a friend and choose exercise that suits you. And you will be rewarded with heart health, fitness, more energy, and confidence.

"Find any exercise that you enjoy and will want to continue," says Carol. If

you are just starting to exercise, Carol recommends that you first see a doctor for a physical. Then start small, for instance with a daily walk.

If you are ready for the gym, it is beneficial to consult with a trainer to determine a good initial goal, which could be 20 -30 minutes at the gym, two to three times a week. A good starting formula might involve 10 minutes each on the treadmill, elliptical and stationery bike (a good cross-training guideline).

"There should be a combination of cardio, toning, weight training and nutrition, as it is all a progression," says Carol. "Try to incorporate core classes such as Pilates and yoga, or step up the gym workout to the next level: interval training, in which you increase the intensity for short spurts to raise your heart rate and increase calorie burn."

"As women, we have so many demands on our time. Unless you make an appointment for yourself, it is easy to blow it off," Carol points out. "If you



Carol Ordemann, AFAA fitness-certified trainer

are time limited, increase the intensity to make the most of the available time."

"After 40, as our metabolism slows down, we may need a lifestyle adjustment including regular exercise and smarter food choices, instead of a diet," she says. "I do not believe in deprivation."

So go ahead and reward yourself occasionally with a small piece of chocolate or a cookie, and then return to the routine of sensible choices.

Make a habit of staying active and eating right.

"If you have been on vacation and splurged, it's important to get right back into the routine of fitness and healthy eating choices when the vacation is over," Carol says.

She recommends keeping an eye on portion size, which has been distorted by the fast food trend toward supersizing. Think about what is reasonable and keep healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, peanut butter, nuts, and protein bars, readily accessible at home and in your purse or gym bag when you are on the go.

She also suggests visualizing a 1 - 10 measuring stick of hunger, where 1 is famished and 10 is too full. Midway up the measuring stick is where you truly feel hungry (as opposed to "I could eat.") Truly hungry is when we should eat, and we should stop before we get full.



Watch Your Stress Level and Get Enough Rest



50s, and the stresses of caring for children and sometimes parents can make it hard for women to get enough rest and keep our stress level under wraps. If we don't get enough rest, it is hard to lose body fat, says Meridan.



Mom was right - you need your rest. Hormonal changes in our 40s and

Have you noticed that when we are tired, we tend to eat more?

To set the stage for a good night's rest, Meridan suggests keeping the bedroom cool and dark, minimizing computer and TV time, and avoiding caffeine before bed.

"The mind and body are truly integrated," Meridan says. "Stress can take a toll on your body and increase fat around the waistline. So sit back with a novel and a cup of tea, go for a walk or schedule a massage to help manage your stress."

Ready to get started on a healthier plan for 2013?

Learn more about the Cooper Clinic at www.cooperclinic.com or 972-560-2667. Reach Carol Ordemann at carolo1@tx.rr.com or 214-514-0778.