



February is American Heart Month.

## Life's Simple 7 for Your Heart

The American Heart Association's Life's Simple 7 steps to heart protection can boost energy and stamina and have you feeling better in no time:

### 1. Manage blood pressure.

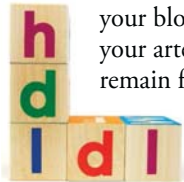
Healthy blood pressure is vital to preventing or managing cardiovascular disease (CVD).



1.

### 2. Control cholesterol.

Routine checking and improving your blood cholesterol levels give your arteries their best chance to remain free of blockages.



### 3. Reduce blood sugar.

High blood sugar can lead to type 2 diabetes and damage your heart, kidneys and nerves.



3.

**4. Lose weight.** Shedding extra pounds reduces the burden on your heart, blood vessels and your joints. Losing even 1% of your body weight improves your health.



4.

### 5. Exercise.

Getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity weekly (in segments as short as 10 minutes), such as brisk walking, helps protect your heart.



**6. Eat well.** A diet rich in fresh produce, whole grains and healthy protein (e.g., fish, lean meats, beans) helps fight arterial disease and unwanted weight gain.



**7. Stop smoking.** If you smoke, you have a much-higher risk for CVD.



National Eating Disorders Awareness Week is February 21-27.

## Eating Disorders

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Sometimes worrying about weight can lead to an eating disorder – a mental illness indicated by extreme obsession with food, eating and body size. **There are 3 main categories of eating disorders:**



- **Anorexia nervosa** involves restricting food intake and starving oneself. Individuals may deny feelings of hunger and exercise excessively. They mistakenly believe their bodies are much bigger than they are in reality, and they fear gaining weight.
- **Bulimia nervosa** includes **binging** by eating lots of food and then **purging** by vomiting or taking laxatives. It can be hard to tell if someone is bulimic because they may not lose weight and may hide their purging.
- **Binge eating disorder** involves eating lots of food (binging) without purging to get rid of the food. People with binge eating disorder may overeat to comfort themselves emotionally. They often can't control what or how much they eat, and feel distressed, disgusted, guilty or depressed after eating.



**The good news:** People can recover from eating disorders with professional help.

*“Don't count the days. Make the days count.” – Muhammad Ali*

## QuikRisk™ Assessment: Smartphones

By Eric Endlich, PhD

**Do you use your smartphone too much?** Assess your relationship with your phone by checking the statements that apply to you:

- Do you keep your phone in or near your bed while sleeping?
- Do you check your phone at times that others might consider inappropriate (e.g., theater, church, funerals)?
- Do you ignore people you are with in favor of your phone?
- Has your work, relationship(s), sleep or parenting been negatively impacted by your phone use?
- Do you prefer using your phone to spending time with your partner or spouse?
- Do you feel depressed or anxious when you can't use your phone and feel better when you can?
- Do your friends or family complain about how much time you spend on your phone?
- Do you get angry or annoyed when someone interrupts you when you're on your phone?
- Have you tried and failed to reduce your phone usage?

**The more boxes you check**, the more you should pay attention to how your smartphone could be controlling you instead of the other way around. Loss of control is a hallmark of addiction – facing it is a start.



## Take Your Lunch to Work

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**If the food court and cafeteria rule your lunchtime decisions, consider this:** You could be saving money and making healthier choices if you bring lunch from home.



**Packing lunches doesn't need to be time-consuming or difficult if you use these tips:**

**>> Grab 'n' go:** Pair healthy items to build a nutritious midday meal. Items such as Greek yogurt, fruit and sliced low-fat cheese are popular. Try to mix and match tuna, whole-grain bread, oatmeal packets, single-serve hummus, almonds, trail mix, fruit, seed and nut bars as well as an array of prepared vegetables. Buy prewashed carrot sticks, grape tomatoes and mini cucumbers for easy assembly.



**>> Leftovers:** At dinner, cook a bit more than you usually do. After dinner, put leftovers in a reusable container and store it in the fridge. If you're packing salad, leave the dressing on the side.

**>> Any of these simple lunch options** are healthier and less expensive than fast food or a sit-down restaurant meal. And if time is short, start with once a week and work your way up.

## Live Stronger

**Here are a few simple strength-training exercises you can do for the rest of your life.** Always check with your health care provider before beginning any exercise program.

### 1. Plank



**Targets:** Abdominals, scapular stabilizers, back extensors.

**Equipment:** None.

**Starting position:** Begin on the ground on hands and knees with hands a little more than shoulder-width apart and slightly in front of your shoulders.

**Movement:** Extend 1 leg at a time, balancing on balls of feet as in the up part of a push-up. Contract abdominals so that back is parallel to the floor. Important: Keep head and neck in line with spine.

**How many:** To start, hold for 15 seconds, building up to 60 seconds. Repeat once.

### 2. Body Weight Squat



**Targets:** Buttocks, hamstrings, quadriceps, legs.

**Equipment:** None.

**Starting position:** Stand with feet a little wider than shoulder-width apart, and arms hanging at sides. Keep torso erect and body weight over heels.

**Movement:** Set feet shoulder-width apart, toes slightly turned out. Pull in lower abdominals, keeping eyes forward and hands at sides with palms facing inward. Push buttocks back. Lower hips and body toward floor, while slowly bending at knees and dropping hips with heels flat on floor. Important: Don't arch back. Keep head aligned with spine and look forward. Pause for a moment. Then push back up with legs to starting position.

**How many:** Two sets of 10 repetitions.



Smart Moves toolkit is at [www.personalbest.com/extras/16V2tools](http://www.personalbest.com/extras/16V2tools).

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