



If the new year has inspired you to make healthy changes, give yourself a pat on the back—and get your backup plan ready. When your day takes an unexpected turn, having a plan B can prevent you from sliding into seductive all-or-nothing thinking. (“I didn’t make it to the gym today... time for pizza and Netflix!”) Using the examples below for inspiration, come up with backup plans for all of your new, good-health habits. Write down your plans (both A and B) in your notebook or smartphone. And remember that some exercise—or nutritious food, or relaxation—is a whole lot better than none! As Cleveland Clinic medical director Roxanne B. Sukol, MD, likes to say, **“Perfection is the enemy of progress.”** *By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors*

WHEN MAKING POSITIVE CHANGES, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A BACKUP PLAN:

1

Plan A: Make a whole-foods dinner from scratch every Monday night.

Complication: You had no time to go to the grocery store.

Plan B: Keep salad greens, carrots or frozen veggies on hand so that you’ll always have a vegetable at the table.

2

Plan A: Walk outdoors for a half hour on your lunch break every weekday.

Complication: You’re stuck inside due to crummy weather.

Plan B: Climb the stairs, walk laps around the office, and/or do jumping jacks.

3

Plan A: Meditate for 20 minutes every morning.

Complication: The dog had an accident, which took time to clean up.

Plan B: Close your eyes and breathe deeply for two to five minutes sometime later in your day.



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Start the New Year

with an attitude of gratitude to feel happier and healthier. It seems like common sense that when you count your blessings you're happier. But it turns out that focusing on the many gifts in your life can make you healthier, too. Here's one way to focus on the positive: Write a thank-you note to someone in your life who has done something kind or helpful for you. Then drop it in the mail. The very act of expressing gratitude is so powerful it can help reduce feelings of depression for as long as a month! For even more pronounced and ongoing benefits, keep a journal devoted to the things for which you're thankful. The payoff? An increased sense of vitality. In one study, people wrote down one thing they were grateful for every day for three weeks. The boost in happiness lasted a full six months.

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Keep a journal devoted to the things for which you're thankful.



Credit Card Debt

and the stress that goes with it can be bad for your health. To reduce both, tackle your smallest balances first. Make this the year to get your finances in order. Large amounts of credit card debt—and the stress that goes with it—can be bad for your health. To wipe out some of both, think small. Research shows that people with large amounts of debt are more likely to pay it all off if they go after the accounts with the smallest balances first—even though they may pay more interest in the long run. Feeling successful at the beginning, by paying off smaller debts first, helps you stay motivated. Being able to cross an account balance off your list will help you keep going. Don't hesitate to pay down your largest balances first, of course, if that works better for you. But if your list is long and overwhelming, paying off smaller sums first may be a better motivator and stress reducer.

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors



Healthy Recipe

CHICKEN PAILLARD WITH BALSAMIC ONIONS AND KALE

You've never tasted chicken paillard like this! The traditional butter, flour and lemon are replaced with irresistibly good balsamic onions and kale, making this dish one of the healthiest dinners (good for your heart, bones, and skin, plus kale is a cancer-fighter) you can put on your table.

Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients:

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, smashed
- 1 red onion, sliced into thin rings
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 bunch kale, stems discarded and leaves torn
- ¼ cup water
- ⅛ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat leaf parsley

Instructions:

Lay each chicken breast flat on a cutting board. With the blade of your knife oriented parallel to the cutting board, slice each breast in half so you have four thin pieces. Cover each with plastic wrap and pound to an even ¼-inch thickness. Season with ⅛ teaspoon salt, ⅛ teaspoon black pepper, and the paprika.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and allow to flavor the oil for 30 seconds. Add the chicken and cook until cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer to plates.

Add the onion and balsamic vinegar, and stir well. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Stir in the kale, water, red pepper, and remaining salt and black pepper. Cover and cook until the kale is tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Serve with the chicken and sprinkle with parsley.

Nutrition Info Per Serving:

(4 servings) 234 calories, 9 g total fat, 1.4 g saturated fat, 23 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate, 3.6 g dietary fiber, 2.8 g sugar, 49 mg cholesterol, 243 mg sodium.

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