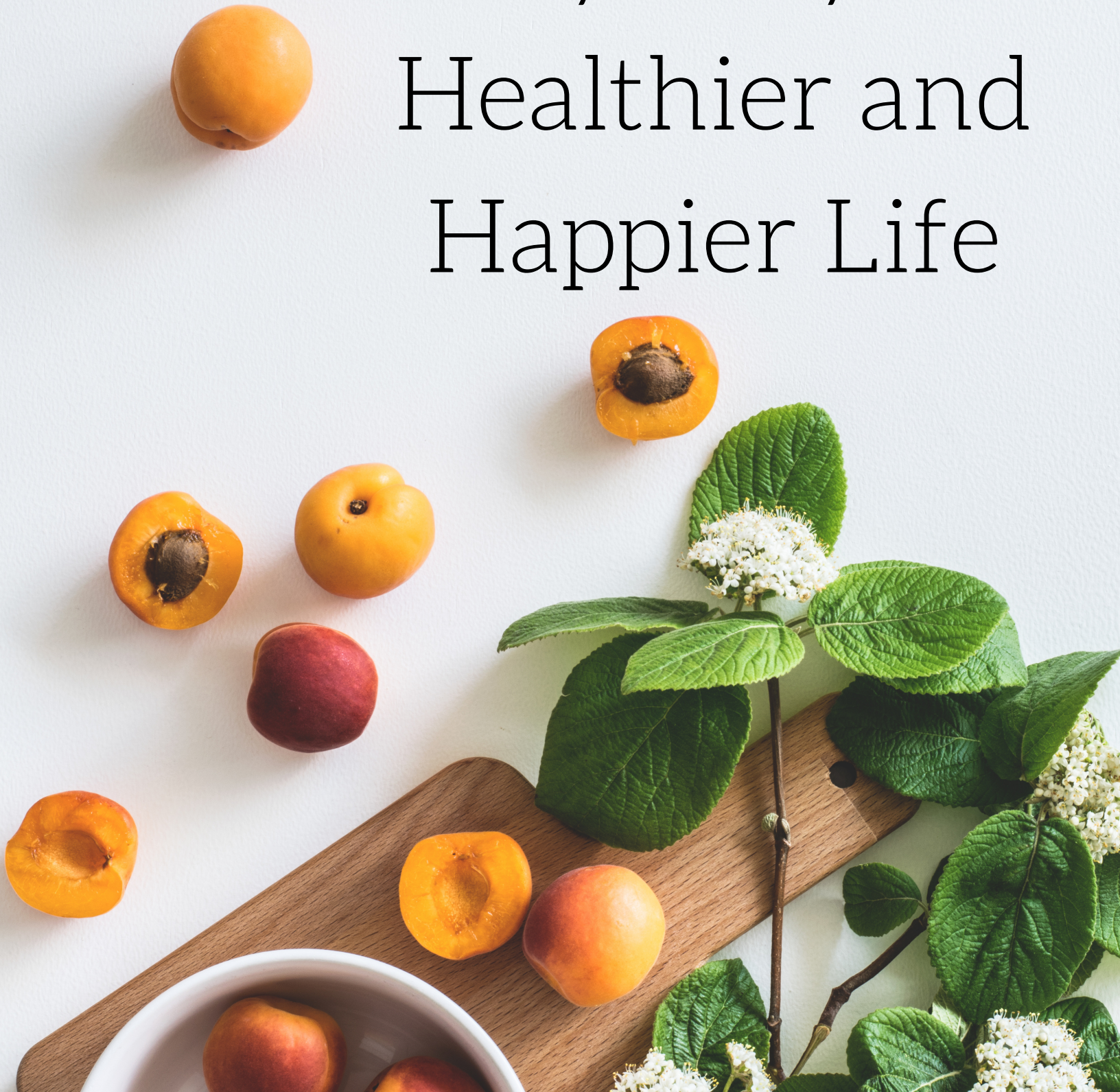


3 Easy Ways to a Healthier and Happier Life



STRESS
REDUCTION

NUTRITION
CHOICES

Written by: Dr. Laurel Matias for Happy Life Consulting and Wellness, LLC



“
You can't always
control what goes
on outside, but
you can always
control what goes
on inside

-Wayne Dyer

”



Reduce Your Stress

-Breathing

This is so simple. The reason breathing is so important is because it stimulates the vagus nerve which is the primary controller of our parasympathetic system which is the calming center. I think the easiest technique is 4-4-4 rule.

Deep inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds and then exhale for 4 seconds.

-Exercise

Who doesn't want to punch that stress away?!? Exercise not only makes you feel good because you are doing something healthy, it also releases endorphins (happy chemicals) and distracts you from things that may be stressing you out in the first place.

-Nature

First, if it is a sunny day Vitamin D is essential and is related to many health benefits so soak it up and remember not to over do it. Garden, take a hike, have a picnic, just lay and watch the clouds. Studies have shown that activities outside instead of inside can reduce cortisol levels in the body and therefore reduce stress.

-Sleep

It can be hard I know, but sleeping is essential for your mind and body to restore itself from the day. Many people suffer from insomnia. Try these practices to help you sleep better.

No electronics one hour prior to bed, darken the room (no blue light), cool the air by setting your thermostat 68 degrees or below and try to block out any noise or distractions.

-Turn it Off

Literally, just relax. Do nothing! We are always on the go.

Take at least 20 minutes of your day for yourself. Try to take the time and de-stress and not think of more things to do or worry about. Meditate, listen to some of your favorite music, take a bath, paint your nails, just make sure it is about you!

Better Food Choices

Eat Real Foods

Avoid any and all processed food. They contain artificial additives, are refined and packed with empty calories. Eat lots of fresh organic fruits and vegetables and whole grains. Avoid sugars and limit your dairy. Eating whole foods helps provide key nutrients, powerful antioxidants and contain fiber to help in healthy digestion.

Colors

Every meal you eat should look like a rainbow. I say eat at least 8 colors a day minimum. We are so hooked on the Standard American Diet that we are use to seeing a lot of browns and yellows. Take advantage of the wonderful foods mother nature has to offer!

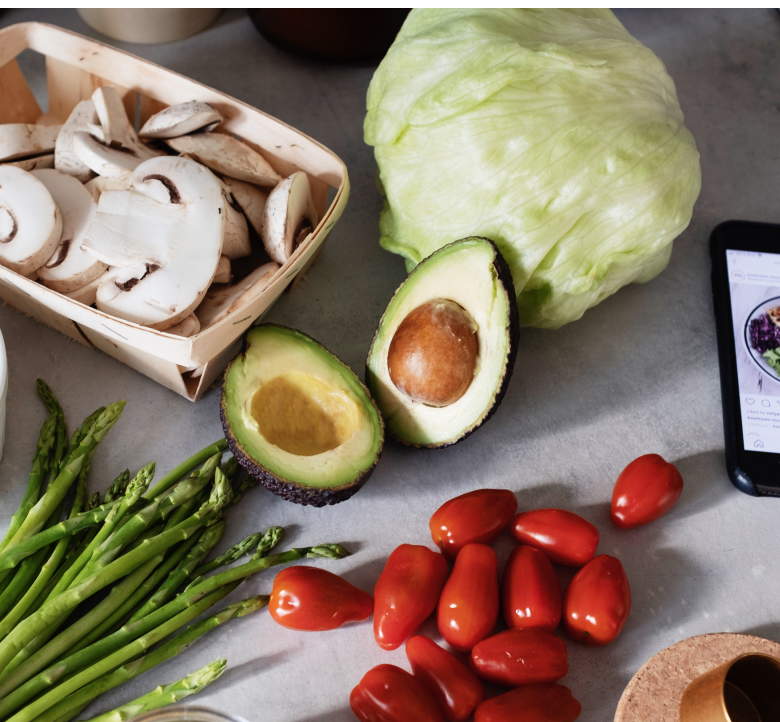
Meatless Monday

If you already aren't practicing a plant based diet, I suggest eliminating meat 1 day a week or more. It can not only make an impact on your health, but the planet as well. There are tons of plant based proteins from beans to tofu, nuts and nut butters. There are even making some pastas now that are packed with protien like chickpea and soybean.

Healthy Fats

It has been a misconception for years that low-fat is healthy. This is not the case.

There are good healthy fats that contain essential fatty acids like Omega-3 and DHA that your body needs. Think natural when it comes to fats like olive oil, avocado, coconut oil, fish, nuts, seeds and even soy.





Be good to your Belly

-Fiber

The recommended daily amount of fiber is 25-35 grams per day. If you do not eat a lot of fiber start slow and build yourself up. There are insoluble fibers and soluble fibers. These both help aid and regulate digestion because your body cannot digest them, yet they help food move through your GI tract.

-Pre and Probiotics

Your gut needs bacteria and that bacteria needs food. Our digestive tract is its own ecosystem and holds the key to 70% of our immunity. It also regulates many other functions and signaling pathways to the rest of your body.

-Fermented Food

Our ancestors used to use this process to help preserve food, but little did they know the extreme health benefits that would come to follow. These types of food contain live micro-organisms and most contain a diverse blend that are crucial to a healthy gut system. Eat them daily and even make your own! Some examples are Sauerkraut, Kefir, Kombucha, Kimchi, Miso and some pickled vegetables but make sure you read the labels.

-Drink More Water

Your body needs water and it also helps you feel full. You should drink 64 oz a day. That is equivalent to 8 oz hourly for 8 hours. If you drink a large glass before a meal it will help to reduce the amount you eat. Try adding fruit (watermelon, lemon) or herbs (mint, basil)

-Rest and Digest

With everyone on the go and short lunch breaks I know it is hard sometimes to sit and eat. Doing this has its benefits. Your body actually conserves its energy and concentrates on the GI tract so your systems can properly digest your food.

“
*All disease
begins in the
Gut*
-Hippocrates
”

