

GETTING STARTED WITH A NEW WAY TO FUEL YOUR BODY

A guide for transitioning from processed and takeout foods to a more whole food and metabolically-friendly way of eating to give your body the energy it needs.

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WHY START HERE?

If your current eating habits involve a lot of takeout or packaged and processed foods, you're not alone. Many people begin their journey this way. This is not about eliminating everything overnight or seeking perfection. It's about building a better foundation, step by step, with real food that supports your energy, focus, mood, and ultimately your metabolism.

This 7-part guide will walk you through small, manageable steps to shift toward a whole-food and metabolically-friendly way of eating without all the overwhelm.

Step 1: Begin by Adding, Not Restricting

Instead of eliminating all the “bad” foods at once, begin by incorporating nourishing options. Cravings will naturally diminish as your body receives better nutrition and becomes more stable.

Select one new habit to concentrate on each week:

- Try a protein-rich breakfast such as eggs, Greek yogurt, or a smoothie with protein powder.
- Include at least one vegetable at lunch or dinner. Fresh, frozen, raw, or roasted - they all count!
- Add a healthy fat daily, such as avocado, olive oil, or a handful of nuts.
- Start your morning with a full 8-ounce glass of water.

You don't need to do all of this at once. Choose one option, make it easy, and then build from there.

Step 2: Keep Meals Simple

Whole food does not have to mean gourmet cooking. Use this basic formula when building your plate:

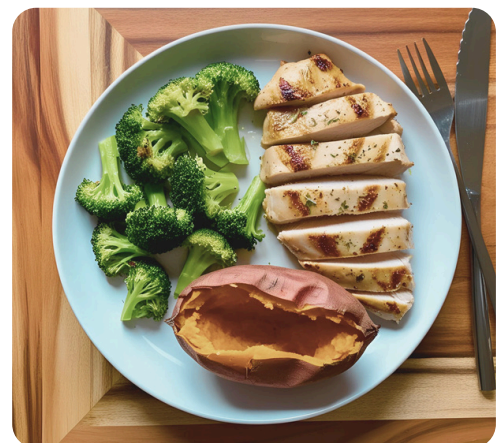
PROTEIN + FIBER-RICH VEGGIES + HEALTHY FAT

Consider adding a small portion of slow-digesting carbohydrates, such as berries, sweet potatoes, or brown rice, if necessary, especially at the beginning of your transition.

SAMPLE MEAL:

Grilled chicken, sautéed frozen broccoli in olive oil, and half a baked sweet potato.

This combination aids in balancing blood sugar, supporting your metabolism, and minimizing energy crashes.



Step 3: Hydration and Mineral Support

Proper hydration is a powerful yet often overlooked aspect of enhancing energy, digestion, and blood sugar regulation.

- Aim for half your body weight in ounces of water daily (e.g., 75 oz for a 150 lb person).
- Add a pinch of sea salt or a trace mineral supplement to your water, particularly in the morning or after sweating. Minerals such as sodium, magnesium, and potassium aid your cells in absorbing and utilizing water effectively.



Filtered water is ideal, but even simple upgrades, such as carrying a steel or glass reusable water bottle or beginning the day with warm lemon water, can make a difference.

Dehydration can sometimes feel like fatigue, hunger, or brain fog, so don't underestimate this step.

Step 4: Reduce Sugar Gently

You don't have to quit sugar cold turkey. Start by observing how often sugar appears in your day and how it affects your feelings and mood.

Try these small swaps:

- Switch from sugary drinks to sparkling water with lime, mint, or a splash of unsweetened juice.
- Consider allulose as an alternative sweetener. It has little to no impact on blood sugar and can satisfy your sweet tooth without causing a crash. Allulose is a natural, non-artificial sweetener that most people tolerate well. It can be used in baking or added to beverages. As an added bonus, some studies suggest it can reduce blood sugar spikes when consumed with carbohydrates.
- Choose unsweetened versions of yogurt, nut butters, or milk alternatives.
- Satisfy a craving with a few berries or a square of dark chocolate (85% or higher).

The goal isn't zero sugar; it's to cultivate a mindful relationship with sweet foods that feels intentional rather than automatic.

Step 5: Make Your Kitchen a Little More "Real Food Ready"

You don't need to be a meal prep pro. Even one home-prepared meal per day is a meaningful shift. Just having a few basic ingredients on hand can go a long way.

Suggestions:

- Stock your fridge with 1-2 ready-to-eat proteins (hard-boiled eggs, rotisserie chicken, or canned salmon).
- Keep frozen vegetables and pre-washed greens available. Choose a few favorite veggies to keep chopped and ready in your fridge at all times.
- Keep healthy fats readily available: olive oil, guacamole cups, nuts, or olives.
- Pick one meal (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) to plan or prep for the week.
- Create a short list of "5-minute meals" that you like and can throw together quickly.



Step 6: Tune In to Your Body

Begin noticing how you feel before and after meals, not in a judgmental way but with curiosity.

Ask yourself:

- How do I feel 30–60 minutes after eating this meal?
- Did this meal give me steady energy or make me crash?
- What times of day do I feel the most tempted by processed or takeout foods?
- What small shift made me feel better today?
- Monitoring how food impacts your body fosters confidence in nourishing yourself.

Step 7: Plan for Real Life

The goal isn't to avoid takeout or processed foods forever; it's to shift the balance. Aim to make most meals whole food-based while allowing yourself some flexibility.

Tips for navigating takeout:

- Choose meals that include protein, vegetables, and a healthy fat.
- Avoid sugary beverages and fried sides whenever possible.
- If possible, enhance a takeout meal with a home-cooked vegetable dish or salad.

Final Thoughts

Real food isn't about rules; it's about reconnecting with what your body genuinely needs. This is a practice, not a perfect plan.

You're not "starting over." You're building forward, one choice at a time.

Celebrate the small wins:

- Drinking more water.
- Preparing one extra meal at home.
- Selecting a more nutritious snack.

Those are significant steps toward sustainable metabolic health.



For individuals who are exploring metabolic psychiatry but aren't ready to commit to residential care, Accord now offers personalized coaching. This one-on-one support helps clients begin the process of change at home - offering education, structure, and guidance around lifestyle shifts.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW ACCORD'S METABOLIC COACHING CAN SERVE AS AN ENTRY POINT INTO METABOLIC MENTAL HEALTH CARE.

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