

Staying Healthy on a Budget

You *can* enjoy a healthy lifestyle with a manageable amount of expense. Here are some ways to take care of your health without breaking the bank.

A Healthy Food Budget

- Make your own meals, from scratch, using whole foods. Buying prepared foods is more expensive than purchasing the individual ingredients and preparing the meals yourself. Eating refined foods means higher health care costs, due to the negative health effects.
- Focus on simple, whole foods. They are easier and less expensive than elaborate foods with fancy ingredients.
- Breakfast porridge is satisfying and easy to make. Enrich with toasted nuts, butter, and fresh, seasonal fruit.
- Sandwiches on whole grain bread are great for lunch. Fill with egg salad, peanut butter and apple slices, curried chicken salad, or leftover meat loaf. Whole, seasonal fruit rounds out the meal.
- Soup made with legumes and vegetables is filling and nourishing for dinner. Add ground meat or poultry, potatoes, and/or brown rice for a heartier meal.
- Buy whole grains, legumes, and pasta in bulk and store in reusable containers. Grains can be stored in the freezer, to prolong their freshness.
- Grow your own vegetables and possibly some fruits, in your yard, patio containers, or a community garden space.
- Buy foods that are locally-grown, which do not have the cost of long-haul or air transportation built into their prices.
- Prepare food in quantity and use leftovers for lunch or the next evening's meal. Add variety by changing the condiments or accompanying side dish.
- Form a food-buying club with friends and neighbors.
- Pack your lunch to work or school. Sandwiches travel well in a rigid plastic container and soups can be carried in a small, portable thermos. Sturdy fruits and vegetables, such as apples and carrots, travel well, as do nuts, hard cheeses, and dried fruit.
- Minimize food waste by buying only what will stay fresh until you use it.

Affordable Ways to Keep Fit

- Save on the expensive gym membership and exercise at home or outdoors.
- Stability balls, resistance bands, and yoga DVDs are affordable and provide structure for a fitness routine.
- Walk or hike on your own or with a dog, family members, or friends.
- Walk or ride a bicycle to do errands.
- Catch the bus to school or work. Walk to and from the bus stop.
- Purchase an inexpensive exercise bike.
- Clear sidewalks and driveways with a broom rather than a leaf-blower.
- Use a push mower and a rake to maintain your yard.
- Take a fitness class through a community college or city recreation venue.
- Play tennis, rollerblade, or swim at a public recreation site.

Stress Management for Less

- Relax and reduce stress with books, movies, and CDs borrowed from the public library.
- Enjoy a picnic at a neighborhood park, rather than eating an expensive restaurant meal.
- Go camping, rent a yurt, or house swap, for an affordable get-away.
- Vacation closer to home. Be a tourist in your own locale.
- Trade massages with someone. A simple foot massage is an easy place to start.
- Entertain potluck-style, so that everyone chips in with the costs.
- Browse in second-hand stores, rather than buying new.
- Do yoga at home, with your own DVDs or ones borrowed from the library.

