

# How can I encourage someone to live a healthier lifestyle?



**Q:** How do you advise a 70-year-old to start a healthier life when they have horrible eating habits and don't move around much?

**A:** The simple answer? You don't advise them to do anything. Unless of course, *they're looking for advice* on living a healthier life. Seeking advice is an indication they're contemplating change.

Oftentimes, unless someone has been hit with an illness or chronic disease due to a lifetime of poor diet and lifestyle—and of course this could happen to anyone at any age depending on family history and genetics, to some extent—most folks find no overarching reason to make any changes. So far so good, right?

And hey, who wouldn't want to continue satisfying their cravings for sweets and junk food and avoid overexertion (read: exercise)? It's human nature to seek pleasure and comfort, and exert as little energy as possible.

But those who know better understand that when we've reached middle age and beyond, it's time to take stock of our eating and lifestyle habits and determine whether we

feel they need improving. Indeed, not doing so feels like we're tempting the Fates.

For someone who knows they need to change their eating behaviors and move around more, it helps to take baby steps. This strategy helps keep overwhelm and resentment at bay. For most people, it's easy enough. But first, I think it's important to reframe the experience so it doesn't feel like deprivation. After all, it's perceived deprivation that's the biggest obstacle to change—especially when it comes to food.

This starts with embracing self-care and self-nurture. Why? Because self-care feels so good! It's hard to feel deprived when we feel so good as a result of the changes we've made. A qualified nutritionist can help navigate the process of these critical changes to help you reach your health goals.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN