

# Leyla Weighs In: It's 2022—Make it a year for change

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | January 8, 2022



Experts say we don't break a habit. We simply replace it with a new one, a new behavior.

*How* we eat is actually a behavior. For example, if you're always the first one to finish your meal at the family table, you are likely eating too fast. Make it a new habit to eat more slowly. Remind yourself to put your utensils down between bites. Notice the flavors and textures—be present. It's better for digestion and you'll be able to recognize when you're full and satisfied. You may be surprised (and delighted!) to find out you're no longer a member of the Clean Plate Club.

You can change the behavior of making a not-so-healthy choice at breakfast like sugary cereal, muffin or a donut, to a healthier option like poached eggs, a vegetable omelet, or some sardines or leftover salmon with some cucumber, watercress, tomato, and dill. Don't feel like preparing breakfast? Take half a Haas avocado (or a whole one if you're really hungry), sprinkle a little salt and squeeze some fresh lime juice on it and eat it with a spoon. Yum!

Another new habit worth implementing is to start packing your lunch. Typically, these should be leftovers from dinner the night before. Don't like leftovers? Make chicken salad from your leftover roast chicken and stuff half an avocado with it, or put it over a bed of spinach, arugula, or baby greens. You can put together tomorrow's lunch as you're cleaning up the dinner dishes. Then pack an ounce of mixed nuts and seeds and a piece of seasonal fruit for dessert or a between-meal snack.

If you're on the sofa watching TV after work, make it a new habit to exercise while watching your favorite show. Set up your treadmill or elliptical in front of the TV, or do squats, lunges, pushups, and free weights if you don't have room for such large equipment.

*Decide that you won't watch your favorite show unless you are exercising.*

Enjoy your post-exercise quietude with a beautiful dinner like rack of lamb

with sautéed spinach or asparagus, or salmon or chicken with a salad made up of greens like watercress, various herbs, and romaine, adding in some chopped peppers, radish, celery, onion, cucumber, and tomato, dressed with fruity olive oil and vinegar or fresh lemon juice. By the way, fresh lime juice is a wonderful substitute for lemon juice in a salad.

Strive to make these changes with optimism and a full and open heart, operating from a place of abundance and gratitude. Let it spill over into your daily life and carry it through all year long.

To your health, and a Joyful New Year!

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