

Leyla Weighs In: Set yourself up for success!



When it comes to good health practices, we all have the best intentions, right? We *try* to avoid making excuses to skip exercise, *think* twice before reaching for another helping of dinner—or a second (or third!) glass of wine, and *try* not to cruise the internet, social media or watch TV into the wee hours of the night.

We *think* and we *try* but we don't always *do*. Part of the struggle is how we've set up our environment to encourage—or discourage—our choices. Taking a closer look at our surroundings offers important clues on how our immediate environment encourages certain behaviors.

A good place to start is to take a look at your tableware. Do your dinner plates resemble bistro platters or chargers rather than reasonably sized dishes? You may be encouraged to eat more. Believe it or not, your *perception* of hunger could be reduced by simply changing your tableware to smaller size dishes. Then you can enjoy that second helping because, overall, your portions are smaller.

Have a TV in your bedroom? That can fuel the habit of watching late into the night. Not to mention that smart phone or tablet you keep on the night table. All the blue light from those devices will delay production of melatonin—inhibiting sleep. Banish them from the bedroom and let yourself decompress and sleep in total darkness. Your

immune system—and *your waistline*—will thank you!

Designate an area of your home for exercise. Whether it's to set up a whole-body gym or just enough room for a yoga mat, make it an inviting place to encourage exercise. Belong to a gym? Make sure it's the one closest to your home (or workplace) so it's easy to get to.

Just can't resist the aromas wafting out of that bakery or pizzeria on your way home from work? Take a different route. Avoiding the cues that lure you is a good strategy for staying on the straight and narrow.

Changing your environment is part of setting yourself up for success.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN