

The TOPS Reminder

A newsletter for Western Massachusetts Counties

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Workshops

Resume workshop was held on January 3rd at the Greenfields 0395 Meeting hall. Thank you for hosting. It was a great success I had 9 chapters attend and 1 chapter gave me theirs' before the workshop. We started a little after 9:30 and were done by 11:30. I appreciate you giving part of your Saturday up for TOPS.

KOPS Honor Society

I'm excited to say we are finally having a meeting to start your KOPS Honor Society. This meeting we will make decisions on what type of meeting is preferred, eating out or not. The board will be elected that day.

February 28th at 9AM at the Shriners' Hospital 516 Carew Street Springfield. Cost a donation to pay for the hall.

Bring \$15 for yearly dues in case you decide to join.

Some of my favorite quotes on why it's best to be yourself ...

Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. –Dr. Seuss

I should love to satisfy all, if I possibly can; but in trying to satisfy all, I may be able to satisfy none ...

the best course is to satisfy one's own conscious and leave the world to form its own judgment, favorable or otherwise. –Mahatma Gandhi

The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are. – Joseph Campbell

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. –Eleanor Roosevelt

2015 Area Captain Program

“Making Your Plate Great” with the food exchange program



Shown actual size: 1½" x 1¼" x ½"

I'm ordering another 25 since my first order went. If you want any please let me know so I can have them when I visit your chapter. I have 2 leaders that bought them for weekly prizes. The cost is \$3.00.

SRD PACKETS

Lee Allen sent out the SRD packets on Friday January 9th. If you did not receive your packet as a leader or if any member is interested, you can visit www.matops.com.

Dave put them up on Thursday night. Please let me know if you don't receive any information from Lee, she is using addresses given to her by Rosie so I want to make sure each chapter is receiving everything they are due
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Turning a New Year's Resolution Into Action With the Facts

DESPITE the best intentions for the new year, the reality is that by next month, gym memberships will lapse, chocolate will replace carrots and Candy Crush will edge out Moby Dick.

It's not (only) that we're undisciplined slugs. It's that much of what we know — or think we know — about habits is wrong. Here's a primer that might help keep you off the couch and on the treadmill.

MYTH 1 We fail to change our habits — or start good new ones — because we lack willpower.

Not really, said Wendy Wood, a professor of psychology and business at the University of Southern California. Willpower, she said, is more about looking at

those yummy chocolate chip cookies and refusing them. A good habit ensures you're rarely around those chocolate chip cookies in the first place.

To create or change a habit, you have to think much more about altering your environment and patterns of living than work on steeling your mind, Professor Wood said, because "behavior is very much a product of environment."

Habits — at least good ones — exist so we don't have to resist temptation all the time. Imagine if every morning you had a debate with yourself about eating cake or cereal for breakfast. Instead, most of us form the habit of eating something relatively healthy for breakfast, which bypasses the lure of the cake altogether.

That's why it's sometimes easiest to start or break a habit during a major transition. This may sound counterintuitive, but a new house, job or relationship breaks old patterns, said Gretchen Rubin, author of the forthcoming book, "Better Than Before: Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday Lives."

"People say wait a few days to get settled, but don't," she said. "Start right away."

MYTH 2 We fall back on bad habits when stressed. In fact, good habits persist even in times of high anxiety, Professor Wood said. [A study](#) of which Professor Wood was one of the co-authors found that students who already had unhealthy diets would eat junk food when stressed, but those who already had the habit of eating well — or of reading a newspaper or of going to the gym — were just as likely to do that.

MYTH 3 It takes about 21 days to break or make a habit.

That number seems to have cropped up in the 1960s and somehow became "fact" with no real proof. But in 2009, [researchers in Britain](#) decided to take a deeper look by studying how long it took participants to learn new habits, such as eating fruit daily or going jogging. The average was 66 days.

But individuals' times varied greatly, from 18 days to 245 days, depending on temperament and, of course, the task involved. It will most likely take far less time to get into the habit of eating an apple every afternoon than of practicing the piano for an hour a day.

MYTH 4 You need positive thinking to break or make a habit.

“We find positive fantasy is not helpful and may even be hurtful when trying to reach a desired future or fulfill a wish,” said Gabriele Oettingen, a professor of psychology at New York University and the University of Hamburg.

Over years of research, she discovered that people need to pair optimistic daydreams about the future with identifying and imagining the obstacles that prevent them from reaching that goal — something she calls mental contrasting.

Say you want to stop being a procrastinator. The first step is easy. Imagine how it will feel if your work is completed with plenty of time to spare, if you can sleep instead of pulling an all-nighter, said Professor Oettingen, author of “[Rethinking Positive Thinking](#).”

But don’t just resolve to stop procrastinating. The second step is to identify what holds you back from changing yourself. Is it fear that you won’t succeed? Is it the adrenaline rush of frantically working at the last minute? Is it because

of negative feelings toward a boss or teacher?

The mental contrasting needs to be in the right order. It’s important to “experience our dreams, then switch gears and mentally face reality,” Professor Oettingen said.

Doing it the opposite way — imagining the obstacles and then fantasizing about changing habits — doesn’t seem to work as well, [research](#) shows.

MYTH 5 Doing things by rote, or habit, isn’t good in most cases. It’s better to be mindful of everything we do.

Research shows that most people repeat about 40 percent of their activities almost every day.

“We only have so much room in our brain,” said Ian Newby-Clark, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Guelph in Canada. “It would be incredibly taxing if we had to mindfully plan every step of our day.” Habits free us up so we can think about other things.

And while some habits are objectively bad — smoking, say, or being consistently late — most are subjective. “Habits are only good or bad to the extent they’re consistent or inconsistent with your

goals,” Professor Wood of U.S.C. said. It’s a bad habit when “it starts interfering with other goals you have.”

For example, many people said their resolution this year was to cut down the time they spend online.

But why? Because it’s an inherently bad thing to do? Or is it an obstacle to spending more time reading books or riding a bike or learning to knit?

After thinking about it, you may choose to spend less time on your computer or phone. Or you might decide it’s not so terrible in limited doses and shed the habit of feeling guilty about it.

MYTH 6 Everything in moderation.

“There’s a real difference among people about how easily they adapt to habits,” Ms. Rubin said. Some see habits as liberating; some see them as a trap. Some prefer to make a huge change all at once; others proceed step by step.

“I’m in the small minority that loves habits,” Ms. Rubin said, adding that she tends to find it easier to abstain from certain things altogether. For example, she eats no [carbohydrates](#).

“People said I was doomed to failure, but it’s not true,” she said. But, she noted, “it’s a mistake to think the abstainer is more disciplined. For me it’s easier to be an abstainer than have to deliberate each time whether I can eat something or not. Others would go nuts if they abstain.”

That’s why you shouldn’t listen to people who tell you you’re doing it wrong if it works for you, she said.

Also, people shouldn’t fear that their habit will dissolve if they don’t practice it daily.

“If you lapse once or twice, you’re not ruined,” Professor Wood said. “That’s a misconception.”

And that leads to ...

MYTH 7 Shame and guilt keep you on track.

No. People need to be kinder to themselves, showing self-compassion if they lapse, Ms. Rubin said. But it’s a fine balance between treating yourself kindly and making endless rationalizations and excuses.

“I might mindfully make an exception,” she said, such as choosing to eat a traditional Christmas cake every year. “But I’m not

making excuses in the moment: I’ll hurt the hostesses’ feelings. You only live once. It’s the holidays.”

One last piece of advice: If you want to be in better shape, get a dog. Professor Wood said studies show dog owners have lower body mass indexes. But here’s the catch: That’s only true if you walk the animal.

I found this very interesting and think it could be turned into a wonderful discussion at your chapter, This article was found in the New York Times under **Your Money.**

Dave and I make New Year resolutions .Before it was I was going to lose 50 pounds or go to the gym 3 times a week. This year we decided that “life happens” and why expect more from then I would from others. My New Years’ resolution for 2015 is to go in the right direction in my weight loss no matter how slow and to attend my speech and other appointments unless it’s unsafe for me to drive. **You** can call me on this when you see me during the year.

Foods for 2015: **Almonds**

Some of the best snacks you can enjoy (in moderation) are nuts, and almonds in particular. The benefits are plentiful - almonds contain:

1. Monounsaturated fats that may help reduce the risk of heart disease
2. Protein to provide sustained energy
3. Calcium for strong and healthy bones
4. Magnesium, which promotes normal blood pressure and healthy metabolism

Dr. Weil recommends unsalted or low-salt almonds that are raw or dry-roasted as a staple in your pantry. Toss almonds in a salad, a low to no added sugar granola or yogurt; chop finely to use in a marinade or as a coat for tofu "burgers"; consider using almond flour as a replacement for flour in baking; or simply enjoy them on their own! You can also try almond butter, a healthy alternative to traditional peanut butter - spread it on a sandwich or use as a dip with carrot and celery sticks.

When Eating Out, Make Better Choices

How often do you eat out? Once a day? Once a week? Rarely? Almost every meal? People who eat out more often, particularly at fast food restaurants, are more likely to be overweight or obese. However, you can still manage your body weight when eating out by making better choices.

To eat out without blowing your calorie budget, there are three things to think about:

1. **WHAT** you are eating and drinking,
 2. **HOW MUCH** you are eating and drinking, and
 3. **HOW** your meal is prepared.
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Get Started making better choices when eating out:

- **What** are you eating and drinking?
 - Check posted calorie amounts, and choose lower calorie menu options. Many

restaurants post calories on menus, in pamphlets, or on their websites.

Compare food and beverage options and think about how they fit within your [daily calorie limit](#). For example, if your daily calorie limit is 1600 calories, think twice before ordering a meal with 1300 calories. Also, don't forget about the calories from drinks, dressings, dips, appetizers, and desserts. They all count!

- Choose dishes that include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods. Focusing on smart food choices from each of the 5 food groups can help you stay on track at restaurants.
- Think about what you drink. Ask for water or

order fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or other drinks without added sugars. If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, select options with fewer calories. For example, a frozen pina colada or margarita can have over 400 calories! You can check the calorie content of other beverages by going to [Food-A-Pedia](#).

- Watch out for desserts. Some restaurants are serving small portions of desserts, which can help decrease calorie intake. However, as a good rule, eat dessert less often.
- **How much** are you eating and drinking?
 - Avoid oversized portions. A major challenge for many people when they eat out is being

served large portions. Most people eat and drink more when served larger portions. To overcome this challenge, choose a smaller size option, share your meal, or take home half of your meal. For example, hamburgers can range from as few as 250 calories to 800 calories or more. Choose a smaller option with fewer calories.

- To help you eat less when eating out, order from the menu instead of heading for the all-you-can-eat buffet. Many people overeat at buffets. Getting a plate of food, instead of unlimited access to food, may help you eat less. Don't forget that you don't have to clean your plate!

- **How** is your meal prepared?

- Order steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes instead of those that are fried or sautéed. Avoid choosing foods with the following words: creamy, breaded, battered, or buttered. These words indicate that the food is higher in calories.
- Ask for dressings, sauces, and syrups "on the side" so you can add only as much as you want. These sides are often high in calories – so don't eat much of them.

Stumbling Blocks:

Concerned about **making better choices when eating out**? Here are some common "stumbling blocks" and ideas to help you overcome these barriers:

<i>"I feel that I have to eat everything on my plate since it is there in front of me or else I feel like I'm</i>	To control how much you eat, ask for a take home box with your order, and box half of the food up as soon as it arrives. This way you
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<i>wasting food."</i>	know that you will have saved on calories and also have a delicious lunch for the following day.
<i>"I like to have a cocktail with dinner."</i>	Moderate alcohol consumption can be a part of a healthy diet. Limit alcohol to no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men. Don't forget that some drinks provide a lot of calories. Many alcoholic beverages range from 100 to 400 calories each.
<i>"I have heard that salads can be worse for you than a big meal!"</i>	Salads can be high in calories if they have toppings like fried chicken, loads of cheese, and creamy dressing. To start a meal, choose a salad that is all vegetables, and ask for dressing on the side. For a main dish salad, choose one with topped with grilled or baked chicken, seafood, or lean beef.

<p><i>"It's a tradition now to get dessert after our meals when we eat out."</i></p>	<p>Ask your friends or family to support your efforts to eat less by understanding that you won't be ordering dessert. While they eat dessert, have a cup of tea or coffee. Have one bite of someone's dessert if they offer to share. If fruit is available as a dessert option, order it without the</p>
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Remember

With baby steps you can climb any mountain to your goal!



Terri

When eating out don't be afraid to ask for what you want or need. If you have an allergy quite a few of the restaurants have a binder to help you make a healthy choice, Ruby Tuesday's has a detailed list of gluten free foods, low salt and low calorie to name a few.

How to Manage Holiday Stress



It's officially the most wonderful time of the year, right? The holiday season always makes me feel so happy, nostalgic, and joyful. That is, until I let the outside pressures of the holiday creep in, inducing stress and unease. Holidays have become bigger than life; more expectations, more highs and lows, and more pressure to be perfect. When we let this happen, the real meaning of love, joy, and peace tend to go out the window. Luckily, I'm here to help! I want to enjoy this magical time just as much as you, so I've put together some tips on keeping your holiday season (whatever that looks like for you) stress-free, happy, and calm. If you're feeling the heat from holiday stress, check out these tips below.

1. Center yourself so your presence is a present of peace. If you want your holidays to be less stressed, you have to start with yourself. A great way to find calm and centeredness no matter what is going on is to spend a few minutes everyday in silence and meditation. Your energy of ease will spread to those around you. Be the change!
2. Get organized. There tends to be a lot going on at this time of year. Holiday parties, gift exchanges, family get togethers, it can be challenging to keep it all in order. Give yourself a break by taking some time to get organized with all you have going on.
3. Set your priorities straight! Stemming off of tip #2 above, there is a ton going on at this time. You DON'T have to do it all. There you go, I gave you permission to say no. We often feel pressured to go to every party and event and please everyone. This mentality will only add more stress! Get clear on what you truly want to do and what you want to be apart of, and release the rest.

4. Let go of perfection. Things don't have to be perfect to be enjoyable. Some of the most fun, memorable holiday experiences I've had come from spur of the moment "mistakes" or unplanned events. Don't run yourself ragged trying to create the perfect holiday situation. Make plans, set intentions, but release control of minor details.

Remember the reason of the season. Be loving! Love is why we are here, isn't it? If you feel yourself getting caught up in the hustle and bustle, take a few seconds, come back to your breath, and get back in tune with that loving attitude. Try making someone else's day by being extra kind and compassionate. Give back to those who may need some help this year, and treat everyone with so much love.

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