

light on calories,  
big on flavor

THE  
**skinnytaste**  
COOKBOOK

**GINA  
HOMOLKA**  
with Heather K. Jones, R.D.



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~~To all of my *Skinnytaste* fans, this book is dedicated to you. Without your loyalty and support, this book would never have been possible.~~

To my favorite taste-testers—my husband, Tommy, and my two girls, Karina and Madison—thanks for trying all my cooking experiments (the good and the bad!) and for your love throughout this amazing journey.

And to my mom and dad: you shared your love of cooking and taught us the joys of being in the kitchen. I am eternally grateful.





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# INTRODUCTION

Struggling to shed some pounds while still eating healthfully and feeding your family meals that they will love? Considering that nearly 130 million American adults are overweight or obese, and families are looking for meals they can all enjoy together, the answer for most is yes. The problem is that too many people get sucked into the “diet” trap, buying processed, so-called “weight loss” food that is nothing more than junk (some of it isn’t even *food*) loaded with artificial ingredients that can actually make you sick. Well, I’d like to offer a better suggestion: Head to the kitchen and get cooking!

Okay, I know what you’re thinking. You’re running through a list of reasons you just can’t do it. Maybe you don’t have time, or it’s too expensive, or it takes too much effort. Perhaps you have no idea what you’re doing in the kitchen or you believe healthy food tastes bland. I’m sure you have a ton of reasons—and I’ve heard most of them.

I’m going to bust all the excuses that keep you out of your kitchen, and show you that cooking—even cooking healthy, nutritious food—is quick, easy, and, dare I say it, painless. It’s not nearly as pricey as buying processed, packaged junk food, or, down the line, treating the diseases caused by obesity, including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Cooking at home is both delicious and satisfying—and it can encourage healthy habits in your family, too.

Still skeptical? Doubt I can change your mind about healthy cooking? If you don’t believe me, just take it from the millions of readers of my recipe and healthy-eating blog, [Skinnytaste.com](http://Skinnytaste.com). Since 2008, I’ve been converting the most reluctant eaters, and I’m hoping you’ll be next on my list! I’m thrilled (and so humbled) by the incredible number of Skinnytaste success stories—people who have turned to my site for inspiration, advice, and help in creating delicious meals that enable them to lose weight and keep it off. Speaking of success stories, I consider myself one, too.

## THE ORIGINAL SKINNYTASTE SUCCESS STORY

I was one of those skinny teens who could eat whatever I wanted and never gain a pound (I actually used to try to *put on* weight). But like all good things, it didn’t last. Once I was in my twenties, those days of eating whatever I wanted without worrying about weight gain soon came to an end, as pregnancy, children, a slower metabolism, and a love for eating out led to weight gain. Like many, I turned to lots of fad diets, which inevitably didn’t stick. My turning point was trying Weight Watchers, which is really more of a lifestyle than a diet. The program gave me the tools to learn how to eat right, which helped me form a healthy relationship with food.

But still I found myself faced with a huge hurdle: I couldn’t find any healthy and tasty recipes that supported my lifestyle. Sure, there were plenty of so-called “diet” recipes out there, but many of them used processed foods or they tasted, well, diet-y. I realized that Weight Watchers—or any other diet plan, for that matter—wouldn’t work for me unless I found a way to love the food I was eating.

I’ve always loved to cook, and I love a challenge, so I set my mind to figuring out how to make some of my favorite meals lighter. I was thrilled when I discovered that many of my favorite dishes could

easily be tweaked to lower the fat and calorie content. But here's the thing: It wasn't enough that the dishes tasted good and were good for me—they also had to appeal to my family. After all, having to make a meal for myself and then a separate meal for the rest of the family was not an option. Really, who has the time for that?




Happily, my kitchen experiments worked. I uncovered the secret formula to kitchen and waistline success: If you skinny-fy (that is, put a healthy spin on) dishes you already love, you'll feel satisfied as you slim down—no sacrificing or deprivation necessary. And a big bonus, my family loved the meals I prepared.

Needing a place to house all of my skinny creations, I started [Skinnytaste.com](http://Skinnytaste.com) purely for fun. As a graphic designer, my blog allowed me to marry several of my passions: creating fabulous skinny meals, design, and photography. As my blog grew more popular, the feedback started pouring in. It was incredibly gratifying to read weight-loss stories from Skinnytaste fans and receive heartfelt letters from people who were slimming down cooking my recipes (and loving them!). I was touched by their praise and this motivated me to keep my pots in action! [Skinnytaste.com](http://Skinnytaste.com) is now my full-time job—one that I love. (Can someone please pinch me?)

## SO, WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

Now that you know a little about me, let's talk about you. What is keeping you from whipping up healthy, homemade meals? If you're not sure, take a quick look at some of the following reasons people struggle to embrace cooking. Do any sound familiar? This book is going to help you get beyond those excuses.

### you don't have the time


I hear you—really, I do. For those who just can't seem to find the time, I've created loads of recipes that you can pull together in 30 minutes or less—those recipes are all labeled with a  symbol for quick. I've also cooked up a bunch of slow-cooker meals, so you can throw everything together in the morning and then forget about it until it's time to eat that night. Those recipes are all marked with the  symbol. In addition, you'll find recipes you can double up on and freeze for future use; look for the  for freezer-friendly.

### it's too much work

The little effort I put into prepping and cooking my meals is nothing compared with the rewards. Nothing makes me happier than having my family and friends sitting around my dinner table, laughing, eating, and enjoying my food. I want you to get to a point where you're comfortable enough in the kitchen that cooking becomes not only easy but also enjoyable. You can get there, and I'm here to help.

## Recipe Key

Look for these helpful icons throughout the book:

 – Vegetarian

**GF** – Gluten-Free

**Q** – Quick (ready in 30 minutes or less)

**FF** – Freezer-Friendly

**SC** – Slow Cooker

## it costs too much

At first glance, the meal deal at your local fast-food joint seems to be the better buy. But fresh ingredients go beyond one meal—you can stretch them out over the course of several days or more in a variety of meals. Another problem: Many people buy fresh ingredients, only to throw them out because they go bad too fast. If that happens to you, I can see why you think it's more expensive to eat healthfully. I'll show you how to buy the right things and plan ahead so you use it all without wasting.

## you don't know the difference between broiling and braising

Not a kitchen pro? Don't sweat it. You'll find a number of simple dishes with easy-to-follow, step-by-step directions for cooks of all levels. And don't be afraid to make mistakes—they provide some of the best lessons.

## healthy food sounds about as appetizing as eating paper

I don't know about you, but crispy [Buttermilk Oven "Fried" Chicken](#), creamy [Too-Good-to-Be-True Baked Potato Soup](#) topped with bacon, and cheesy [Kiss My \(Shrimp and\) Grits](#) don't sound like diet food at all. Lucky for you, I'm completely obsessed with figuring out ways to make the dishes I just can't live without skinnier and healthier, and yet unbelievably tasty. I also stay away from artificial ingredients and fake sweeteners and, instead, use what the earth has provided: Quality ingredients, fresh herbs, spices, and seasonal produce that will tantalize your taste buds.

## my family won't eat healthy stuff

Can't get anything green past your two-year-old? Have a meat-and-potatoes husband who won't even entertain the idea of chicken, or, gasp, fish? Or maybe your family eats pretty healthfully but doesn't need to lose any weight? There is something for everyone in this book, from picky kids to those with upscale palates. And I haven't forgotten those with food allergies or eating limitations. Gluten-free recipes are marked **GF**; I've also given suggestions on how to adapt various recipes. Vegetarian options are marked with a **V**.

But it's not all about the recipes. This book is filled with easy-to-understand advice that simplifies healthy eating and cooking. And as a special bonus, I've partnered with registered dietitian Heather K. Jones to provide healthy food facts and useful nutritional information, so you can feel good about enjoying the recipes you love.

So step into my kitchen and cook yourself skinny with me!

## Salt Solution

All salt is not created equal. Different brands (such as Morton's or Diamond Crystal) and different types (such as table or kosher) vary not only in sodium content but also in taste. To avoid under- or (even worse) oversalting a recipe from this book, stick with my preferred salt, Diamond Crystal Kosher. Or just go easy with the shaker and adjust as need be.



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# THE SKINNY BASICS

## create a good-for-you kitchen and lifestyle

Be honest with yourself: Aren't you over all the excuses? What have they done for you, besides keep you from achieving your goals and creating a better life for yourself? By picking up this book, you've already taken the first step to end the excuses. Congratulations! You are now officially on the path toward your goals and a healthier life.

I can assure you that every single recipe in this book will help you on your road to a leaner lifestyle. How do I know this? I've tested and retested every recipe for accuracy in the Skinnytaste test kitchen, which has a staff of just two, my aunt and me. My aunt is a baker, so she's accustomed to following a recipe precisely as written. She catches any blunders and she doesn't overlook small details, so we make the perfect team. (Plus, she lives only minutes away from me.) As you can imagine, testing recipes for this book while also creating new recipes for my blog every day left me with A LOT of extra food at the end of the day. Each afternoon, my aunt and I had a Skinnytaste lunch together, and I would send her home with more food to eat for dinner each night. All this food, and yet there was not a single pound gained. In fact, as the months passed, my aunt dropped 37 pounds and went from a size 12 to a size 4. At first, she thought there might be something wrong, so she went to her doctor to get a full checkup. The good news: Her doctor said she was in the best shape of her life, her cholesterol was great, and she had more energy than ever. Her doctor asked her secret, and she happily told him to visit [Skinnytaste.com](http://Skinnytaste.com). I can't even tell you how great it makes me feel that she is another Skinnytaste success story!

The pages that follow will hopefully make you one, too. I will show you that cooking—even cooking healthy, nutritious food—is quick, easy, and even FUN. It's time to get back into the kitchen, where you can start improving and refining your healthy cooking skills while you simultaneously make your way back into your skinny jeans. And guess what? It's not as hard as you think. Here's how to whittle your waist without skimping on taste, Skinnytaste style.

## PLAN AHEAD AND EAT HEALTHY ALL WEEK

Whipping up a week's worth of light, filling, and family-friendly meals is as easy as one, two, three:

- 1 Plan your menu for the week.**
- 2 Make a shopping list.**
- 3 Head to the grocery store to shop for all the ingredients you need.** You can choose one or two freezer-friendly recipes to make on your day off; these will serve as more than one meal so you can have leftovers for lunch or dinner later in the month.

## TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR KITCHEN

The bottom line: When *you're* in charge of the cooking, you can control what you eat and what you put into your food. The benefits of home cooking are too many to list, but one that's worth repeating is the fact that making your own meals and snacks is the easiest way to control the types of ingredients and the amount of calories you consume.

Don't be intimidated! You don't have to put together elaborate four-course meals, you don't have to spend hours in front of the stove, and you don't have to use recipes that feature ingredients you can't even pronounce. Just get in the kitchen and start cooking. No matter what your comfort level, these recipes will work for you. And if you make a mistake, it's okay! That's the best way to learn. Cut yourself some slack and enjoy the process (and the results)!

## DUMP THE JUNK

The road to Skinny isn't paved with processed food. And yet, supermarket shelves are jam-packed with them. What's the draw? They may help save a little time and effort, but try to read the label—there will be a long list of ingredients you've never even heard of or can't pronounce. Even the so-called "healthy" foods can be loaded with sodium, calories, sugar, and fat. If that's what's in your fridge, freezer, or pantry, the road to Skinny will be a bumpy one.

Having a properly stocked kitchen, on the other hand, can help set you up for weight loss success. (See "[A Skinny Kitchen Makeover](#)".) Whenever a snack attack strikes, you'll be fully prepared with healthy snacks.

## FALL IN LOVE WITH REAL FOOD

My eating philosophy is built on utilizing in-season, whole foods—those that are in their unprocessed and natural state. Whole foods are healthier and there's no doubt they taste better. Not only that, when you cook with whole foods, you know exactly what you're putting into your body. Head to your local farmers' market, check out the organic and produce sections of your neighborhood supermarket, or visit a health food store to stock up on the freshest, tastiest, most nutritious ingredients. Another option, if it's available in your area: a CSA (community supported agriculture). When you join one, you'll get a weekly box of fresh produce and other foods delivered from a local farm. It's a win-win: You'll be supporting local farmers and you'll get the opportunity to experiment with new foods. It's time to reconnect with real food.

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

If you're intimidated by healthy eating, you're not alone. But there's no need to stress, because I like to keep things simple. I base my meals largely on nutrient-packed, energy-boosting vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, and healthy fats. You'll eat fish and only modest amounts (if you choose to) of lean meat and dairy products. You'll also cut back on salt, refined sugars, white flour, and partially hydrogenated oils. That's it!

# FORGET THE FADS

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Here's a Skinny secret: Typical diets don't work. I've tried several diets that either required me to eat the same bland, tasteless food every day or that required me to cut out carbs completely. Sure, those diets may help you lose weight in the short-term, but they very rarely keep the pounds away for good. In fact, more often than not, they lead to dangerous yo-yo dieting, which could permanently damage your relationship with food. To really shrink your waistline—and keep it that way—you must alter your eating habits and lifestyle in a way that's easy to stick with in the long run.

## SERVE UP PERFECT PORTIONS

If you stick to the recipes in this book, your portions will automatically be controlled. Of course, that's not the case if you're making a different recipe or you're dining out.

A good guideline that always helps me at home: Picture a plate divided in half. Fill one half with salad and veggies, one fourth with whole grains, and the last fourth with lean protein. You can mix up your food options at each meal to maximize your nutrient intake and shake things up for your taste buds. Another trick to use at home is to eat on smaller plates; studies show you'll eat less but you will still feel full.

When you eat out, try to use a few tricks to keep portion sizes under control. For instance, pass on the bread basket (it's too easy to lose track of slices), order an appetizer as your full meal, split an entrée with a dining companion, or take half the meal home for lunch the next day.

### Make Your Calories Count

While all food contains calories, some are better than others at helping your body look and feel its best. In other words, the quality of your calories counts as much as the quantity. These “high-quality calories” come from healthy fats, lean protein, and high-fiber carbohydrates.

While exact calorie needs depend upon a variety of factors (height, weight, activity levels, etc.), an intake of around 1,500 to 1,600 calories per day will lead to a healthy weight loss of about two pounds per week for most women. (For extra help keeping track, use a free calorie counter app, such as [myfitnesspal.com](https://myfitnesspal.com).)

An ideal meal combines at least two of these three groups to help you feel full, maintain normal blood sugar levels, stop you from overeating, and promote a healthy glow from the inside out. Create your own meals and snacks by picking foods from at least two of these three categories:

#### healthy fats

**Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats help improve blood cholesterol levels, which reduces your risk of heart disease. Plus, they're filling, so they contribute to weight control.**

**TRY:** olives, avocados, hummus, peanut butter, hazelnuts, almonds, cashews, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and olive oil

## lean protein

Lean protein is super-satisfying and low in saturated fat, which is a huge help for weight loss and heart health. Protein also provides building material for muscles, and muscles are your friends. In addition to making your body look sexy and sculpted, they burn calories *all the time*, even when you're asleep.

**TRY:** eggs, beans, tofu, edamame, turkey, roast beef, pork tenderloin, 0% Greek yogurt, low-fat milk, nuts and nut butters, seeds, and fish

## high-fiber carbohydrates

Fiber is a type of indigestible carbohydrate that slows carbohydrate digestion, blunting the rise in blood sugar and keeping hunger at bay. It's also linked to reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes.

**TRY:** oatmeal, nuts and seeds, fruit, beans, peas, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, whole grains (like brown rice, quinoa, and popcorn), and vegetables



## **PASS ON PERFECTION**

Theodore Roosevelt said it best: “Comparison is the thief of joy.” This is my favorite quote, and it can apply to so many facets of life. In this case, I mean the idea of that perfect body. We all come in different shapes and sizes, so try to be the best version of yourself and stop comparing yourself to those perfect magazine models. By the way, I worked for years in photo retouching, where we’d spend hours retouching the models to get that “perfect” look. You would be surprised if you saw the before and after photos. Even the prettiest of models and celebrities have flaws just like you and me.

## **GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK**

Food is my life. I test recipes, write about food, attend food blog conferences, and go on lots of awesome food trips hosted by large brands where I get fed some pretty darn good food. If you think I’m



passing up any of these delightful dishes because I'm watching my weight, you're wrong. I make good choices all week so I can still enjoy a great meal out here and there. Going out to dinner with my husband or enjoying a night out with the girls is one of my favorite things to do. I learn about new flavors and foods, and I get inspiration from those meals. But I still maintain my healthy weight because of one important factor that is a part of my life.

So shed that all-or-nothing attitude. Perfection does not equal success when it comes to losing weight or becoming comfortable in the kitchen. Allow yourself some wiggle room and be patient. Remember, you didn't put on the extra weight overnight.

Also keep in mind that no food is considered off-limits or "bad" when eating the Skinnytaste way. The more you deprive yourself of certain foods, the more you're going to crave them. Enjoy your favorite foods in moderation from time to time, be it a planned indulgence once in a while or a spontaneous bite of a favorite dessert. This is a realistic way of eating that you can keep up for the rest of your life.

## **EXERCISE, STRESS LESS, AND GET PLENTY OF SLEEP**

As irresistible as my healthy recipes are, eating a nutritious diet alone is not enough to get your best body—you have to consider the big picture. It involves all the components of a healthy life: a healthy balance of exercise, plenty of sleep, stress relief, and fun.

Exercise is an important part of life, as staying fit and being active on a regular basis will not only help you lose weight and decrease your risk for a variety of diseases, but it will also boost your energy levels and improve your mood. It is also a great way to relieve stress. High levels of stress can wreak havoc on your body, so it's also important to manage your stress levels. Unwind by doing some yoga, treating yourself to a massage or other spa treatment, playing with your kids, or even just listening to music. And don't forget sleep! I function best after seven to nine hours a night, though everyone is different. When I'm well rested, I'm alert and ready to take on the new day. Figure out the amount of sleep you need to function at your best, and then make sure you get that amount each night.

### **Don't Forget to Hydrate**

Even mild dehydration can bring on fatigue and snack attacks. Aim for a daily goal of at least eight 8-ounce glasses of fluid, with most of that coming from water. Be wary of calorie-dense high-sugar teas, energy drinks, and juice. It takes just a few minutes to drink a few hundred calories, and you'll still feel hungry when you're done because your body doesn't feel as full from drinking liquid as it does from eating food.

Lastly, don't forget about the fun factor. You're creating this amazing, healthy Skinny life for yourself—make sure you take full advantage of it. Take some time to think about what you enjoy, and then make a point to do one or more of those things each day.



# A SKINNY KITCHEN MAKEOVER

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Ready to get on the path to a healthier, leaner new you? Your first step is to give your fridge, freezer, and pantry a healthy makeover. Some of you might think you already have this all figured out, but I'm sure if I sneaked a peek at your pantry, I'd find at least a few hidden obstacles just waiting to trip you up. Use the strategies below to set up your kitchen for healthy eating success.

## THE FRIDGE

### keep it real

Your focus should be on health before weight. To accomplish this goal, stock your fridge with real ingredients—that means whole, unprocessed foods and no substituting eggs with liquid egg replacements or real bacon with turkey bacon. A little real and flavorful food goes a long way, so I keep it in moderation.

### be choosy with cheese

Cheese is a stellar source of calcium and protein. For certain varieties—like mozzarella, Swiss, or cheddar—I don't mind opting for reduced-fat. But for stronger flavored cheeses, such as sharp cheddar, Gorgonzola, and Romano, I stick with the real thing because I can use smaller quantities to get the same flavor hit. And I always have naturally lower-in-fat cheeses, such as Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano-Reggiano, in my fridge to boost the flavor in a variety of dishes.

### toss light butters and vegetable spreads

You're better off going for a dab of real or whipped butter instead of those highly processed spreads. I usually cook with healthy oils, but once in a while, butter is necessary. Cookies, crusts, and scones, for instance, often require butter; and for those occasions, I go for the real thing and simply use smaller amounts.

### replace artificially sweetened yogurt

Stock up instead on plain, nonfat, or low-fat yogurt or Greek yogurt. You'd be surprised by how many low-calorie yogurts use artificial sweeteners to keep the calories down. Plain Greek yogurt doesn't have any added sweeteners and it's higher in protein. Sweeten it yourself with fresh fruit or a drizzle of honey.

### give up nondairy creamers

Instead, use real dairy milk or soy- or nut-based milks. You might think you're saving calories by using creamer in your coffee, but do you really need it? Most nondairy fat-free creamers are made with partially hydrogenated oils and a whole list of artificial ingredients. Stick to the real thing. If I want to flavor my coffee, I sprinkle in some ground cinnamon, cocoa powder, pumpkin spice, or vanilla extract.

### dispose of store-bought salad dressings

Toss those bottled salad dressings (yes, even the low-fat ones) and make your own from scratch. It's easy, tastes better, will save you money, and will put you in control over what you add to your recipe.

(See [Fabulous Main-Dish Salads](#) for dressing recipes.)


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## **toss the soda**

Don't drink your calories away! You can save hundreds of calories by simply swapping out soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages for water, seltzer, or sparkling water. Need a little flavor? Toss in some fruit, such as watermelon slices, berries, or lemon, lime, or orange wedges; or add some slices of cucumbers or fresh mint.

## **THE FREEZER**

### **forgo frozen entrées**

How about real home cooking instead of all those preservatives? Sure, it takes some extra time to prepare, but the health benefits are worth the effort—look for all my recipes with the  tag and make your own healthier, freezer-friendly meals!

### **stock up on frozen fruits and vegetables**

The problem with canned vegetables is that they tend to lose a lot of nutrients during the preservation process (notable exceptions include tomatoes and pumpkin). Frozen vegetables, on the other hand, may be even more healthful than some of the fresh produce sold in supermarkets because they are flash-frozen when they're at their peak. Choose packages marked with a USDA "U.S. Fancy" shield, which designates produce of the best size, shape, and color. Vegetables of this standard also tend to be more nutrient-rich than the lower grades "U.S. No. 1" or "U.S. No. 2."

### **opt for better ice cream alternatives**

Don't break the calorie bank on full-fat ice creams. Instead, opt for nonfat frozen yogurt or sorbet. I love Stonyfield Organic Nonfat Frozen Yogurt. Or you can make your own healthier frozen treats: Try freezing ripe bananas to make a quick and healthy one-ingredient frozen treat in your food processor, or make your own popsicles with fresh fruit purees, or create a granita ([see recipe](#)).

## **THE PANTRY**

### **replace white with whole grains**

This one simple swap—replacing refined white bread, pasta, and rice with whole grains—will increase the amount of fiber and antioxidants you get each day. Plus, whole grains take longer to digest so they keep you feeling fuller, longer. Experiment with different varieties of rice and pastas or try some new grains, such as quinoa, farro, barley, bulgur, wheatberries, spelt, and more.

### **opt for healthy oils**

Say hello to a variety of heart-healthy oils: Canola, olive, and peanut oils are all high in monounsaturated fats, while sunflower, soybean, and sesame oils are high in healthy polyunsaturated fats.

## stock up on whole-grain cereals

Skip the sugary cereals and instead load up on a variety of fiber-rich whole-grain cereals. Go for oats and granola, or try using quinoa in place of your porridge.

## buy beans and legumes

Dried or canned beans and legumes are not only economical, they're also a perfect pantry staple because they keep for a while and can be used in a variety of dishes. They're a smart buy for health: They're high in fiber and protein as well as B vitamins and iron.

## sweeten smartly

Less refined sweeteners, like raw sugar, raw honey, and pure maple syrup, contain more antioxidants and give your blood sugar a gentler rise. Still, you'll want to sweeten smartly because these more natural sweeteners are high in calories, so use them sparingly.

## be prepared for a snack attack

Toss all those salty fried snacks and instead opt for raw or dry-roasted nuts, like almonds, peanuts, cashews, and walnuts. A handful of nuts is a fiber-rich snack that's high in healthy fats. Combine them with dried fruit and whole-grain cereal to make your own trail mix. You can also stock up on nut butters, baked tortilla chips, whole-grain crackers, air-popped popcorn, dark chocolate, and fresh fruit (on the counter or in the fridge) so you always have healthier snack alternatives on hand.

Bottom line: Having a properly stocked kitchen can help set you up for success. In fact, when your pantry, fridge, and freezer are loaded with the right ingredients and products, healthy eating becomes a breeze.

## Stay Motivated

Everyone gets in a slump once in a while, and sometimes it's hard to find your way out. But don't throw in the towel! Instead, find a way to get back in control. Here are some tricks that work for me:

- **SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE YOU.** I like to be around fit people because they inspire me to work out more. Finding a workout buddy can also help give you that push to keep you on track.
- **PENCIL YOURSELF IN.** We are all busy, and finding time for exercise can be hard. I schedule my workouts in my calendar, as I would a business meeting or doctor's appointment.
- **GO PUBLIC.** Committing yourself publicly, whether it's to friends in person or on social media or even via a blog, can help you stay on track. We don't like to let others down, so this public proclamation can keep us from breaking our commitment to ourselves.
- **THINK SMALL.** Sure, you may want to lose 20, 30, or 40 pounds, or maybe even more. But think of it this way: Every pound lost brings you a pound closer to your goal. So

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celebrate every small accomplishment, whether it's simply hitting the gym instead of the snooze button or passing on seconds of your favorite dessert.

- **MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT OFTEN.** Jot down a list of all the reasons you want to eat healthfully, get in better shape, and lose weight. Maybe it's for your family or an upcoming vacation; maybe you're sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. Keep the list handy and refer to it whenever your motivation starts to flag.

- [download A New Leaf: The End of Cannabis Prohibition](#)
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