



THE NEW YEAR is finally here. Of course the holiday season brings with it lots of celebration and happiness with end of year festivities and Christmas parties; however, some of us may indulge a little too much.

Over-indulgence can frequently be a problem during this time. After all, Christmas and the New Year only happen once a year and you deserve a personal reward.

Yes, you have worked hard all year and accomplished some important things. So, there is nothing wrong with celebrating.

But frequently guilt sets in the next day. In order to get back to your fitness levels and recuperate from holiday excesses, here are some simple



FIT AND FINE

Here are some health tips for a fresh beginning

guidelines that will put you on the path to a healthy new year.

These are New Year resolutions that you'll want to keep and are also sustainable compared to the fad diets which usually don't work.

• Fill the plate with colourful vegetables

Veggies are a must have on your plate. There are many more vegetables to try than just the regular lettuce and tomatoes. Bright-coloured and dark green leafy vegetables are especially loaded with vitamins and antioxidants. They are also high in fiber, which makes them very filling. In addition, they are low in calories – good to help trim the waistline. When you fill up your stomach with veggies, you are less likely to feel the urge to binge on other high-fat or processed foods.

• Snack on fruits - fresh or dried

Whenever you feel like snacking, grab a fruit instead of chips or cookies. Like vegetables, fruits are high in antioxidants and fiber and low in calories. To make it fun, use yogurt or hummus as a dip. This way you'll get some calcium as well as protein – which helps one to feel full longer. And don't forget about dried fruits. Mixing them with whole-wheat breakfast cereal and nuts makes a nutritious snack.

• Look for alternatives to processed meat

Instead of always packing sodium-loaded processed meat sandwiches, try using leftover high-quality protein from the night before. How does a grilled fish burger, teri-

yaki chicken breast sandwich sound to you? These protein alternatives are usually nitrate-free and more heart health friendly.

• Choose whole grains

It is recommended to eat at least 3 servings of whole grains every day. Not only are they high in fiber, whole grains also contain an array of antioxidants not found in fruits and vegetables. The easiest way to increase whole grain intake is to replace some of your refined-grain products. For instance, use whole-grain bread instead of white bread when making lunch sandwiches. Substitute half the white flour with whole wheat flour in your regular recipes for cookies, muffins, and pancakes. Toss brown rice, wild rice, or barley in your vegetable soup. Or snack on popcorn instead of chips on family movie nights. (Yes, popcorn is a whole grain!) Don't forget, you don't need to completely wipe out all refined grains. You can always try serving half whole wheat/half refined as a starting point.

• Reduce the intake of Highly Processed Foods (HPFs)

HPFs are the true culprits where obesity is concerned, not carb, gluten, or meat. Frozen fish sticks have almost 12 times more fat than natural fish fillets; chicken nuggets have four times more fat than chicken tenders.

You can easily chow down on a bag of chips or a chocolate candy bar with 300 calories; 300 calories is what's in a lunch size 6-inch sandwich! So, steer clear of HPFs and start eating wholesome, natural foods instead. *Tips courtesy Dr. Atul Aundekar, Chief Medical Director, iCARE Clinics*

Black tea good for heart

QUERCETIN, A FLAVONOID abundant in black tea, has shown promise in protecting blood vessels against oxidative damage and lowering cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk, said researchers who based their studies on mice.

Flavonoids are common plant pigment compounds that act as antioxidants, enhance the effects of vitamin C, and protect connective tissue around capillaries (blood vessels).

Natalie Ward, research fellow from the University of Western Australia (UWA)

School of Medicine, and pharmacology professorial fellow Kevin Croft said although their preliminary study is based on cells and isolated mouse vessels, "our findings have suggested that quercetin is able to protect vessels against oxidant-induced damage."

The supervisors say there is evidence to suggest that other dietary flavonoids may reduce blood pressure as well as bring down the development of atherosclerosis (plaque build-up in arteries), the journal *Biochemical Pharmacology* reports.



"Future studies looking at the effect of flavonoids on CVD should consider using combinations of flavonoids, as well as dietary sources

of flavonoids, rather than supplementation with pure flavonoids," said Ward and Croft, according to an UWA statement. *IANS*

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

The Power of NLP

YEARS AGO I had heard about NLP from some friends living in Hong Kong. I had no idea what it was or what it meant, but I knew it changed lives for the better. My friend Rita quit her job and started her own business, Paul got over his phobia for spiders, Suresh started exceeding his sales targets and Najla was able to get rid of her addiction to diet coke. NLP turned their lives around for the better. Yet it did not involve popping pills or visiting a psychotherapist for multiple sessions. These wonderful transformations were achieved in a few days of training/coaching. This got me interested to dig deeper and know more about this technique that was gaining worldwide popularity.

The term neuro linguistic programming (NLP) can be broken down into three distinct words: neuro, linguistic and programming. Neuro refers to the brain and the neural network that feeds into the brain. Neurons or nerve cells are the working units used by the nervous system to send, receive, and store signals that add up to information. Linguistics refers to the content, both verbal and non-verbal, that moves across and through these pathways. Programming is the way the content or signal is manipulated to convert it into useful information. The brain may direct the signal, sequence it, change it based on our prior experience, or connect it to some other experience we have stored in our brain to convert it into thinking patterns and behaviours that are the essence of our experience of life. The basic premise of NLP is that the words we use reflect an inner, subconscious perception of our problems or view of life. If these words and perceptions are inaccurate, they will create an underlying problem as long as we continue to use and to think them. Our attitudes are, in a sense, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Neuro linguistic programming was developed in the early 1970s by John Grinder (whose background was in linguistics) and Richard Bandler (whose background was in mathematics and gestalt therapy) for the purpose of making explicit models of human excellence. Today NLP is extensively used in the corporate world and by people who want to improve the quality of their life. A variety of courses are available here in the UAE and in other parts of the world. When I wanted to learn NLP, I was fortunate enough to find Lynda Chachaty and Sue Sharp in Sydney, who turned my life around by coaching me on various aspects of NLP. Every session with them gave me clarity of thought and helped me stay on the right path. Since then, I have used NLP while conducting workshops, practicing meditation, dealing with emotional trauma or taking someone into a deep trance during hypnosis. And believe me when I say this, it has worked every single time. That's the power of NLP!

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