

GETTING STARTED

So you've decided that it's about time that you start getting serious about losing weight and getting fit. You've tried on those pants that have been getting progressively snugger and now they're downright tight! You think about how you got where you are...long hours at work with no built-in exercise, a couple of kids, and a relationship gone bad. All these things can be recipes for disaster.

It takes a close look at your lifestyle to determine where you could stand to make some changes that would affect your overall health, weight and fitness. Most people feel trapped in their lifestyles. They work too many hours, are constantly on the road, there are way too many temptations, their family is unsupportive or perhaps they live alone and don't feel like they have anyone to be fit for. Because there are so many factors, it's a good idea to start by writing down what your day or week looks like. When do you get up? What's for breakfast? Do you eat lunch? What do you snack on? How late do you eat dinner? Have you built in any time for a workout? Do you get enough sleep?

Tackling those questions can be a daunting task, and unless you are very dedicated or have a qualified person to help you figure it all out, it may not happen. So what do you do?

Look at that list again. Is there one thing on that list that you know how to improve? Maybe you can start with a healthier breakfast, or going to bed at a more reasonable hour. Find something do-able on that list and make it happen! Once you've got that success under your belt, you may be ready for the next change. If possible choose something that happens earlier in your day. Starting each day with good habits is likely to snowball into good habits in the remainder of your day!

Here are some healthy ideas you can incorporate into your lifestyle:

- Cut down on soda or cut it out of your diet completely.
- Reduce the amount of processed foods you eat.
- Eat more fruits and veggies (be specific about when. If your plan is too vague it's unlikely you will do it)
- Create an exercise plan that has you moving at least 15-30 minutes 3-6 times per week.
- Get more sleep (or less or if the shoe fits)
- Take time to smile. Find something relaxing to do on a regular basis that makes you smile, whether it's reading a good book, praying, chatting with an old friend, taking a walk, a drive on a sunny and cold day...Make sure it's something that takes you away from the hustle and bustle.

Whatever you do, don't try to change everything in your life overnight. And avoid the high volume exercise, low calorie lifestyle that burns you out and leaves you overworked and undernourished. Enjoy the ride and the destination will become just a new beginning.