



## Deborah Blackwell's Quest for Perfect Health

Take a journey with this writer, wife, and mom of five who seeks ways to feel good and live a healthy life.

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### Eating Better and Living Better Starts From True and Honest Intentions

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By Joanne Wu, MD



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#### 1.) Practice gratitude

Be thankful for the food in front of you, where it came from and who prepared it for for the lives you have touched and touched yours. Be grateful for the people you sit meals with. If you are not shy, spend time to thank them aloud. You will be amazed you will see and how much better the food will taste!

#### 2.) Be present

Don't distract yourself. Turn off your electronic devices. Look at your food and the around your table. Enjoy their presence as much as they want to enjoy yours. Distraction is the easiest way to overeating.

#### 3.) Exercise compassion

Kindness to others always comes more naturally, but this tip applies to leaving more time for you - "Me" time. In the season of buying gifts and resolutions, don't forget to be nice to yourself, so you have more energy to give to others. You can't give what you don't have. "Me" time helps you restore, rejuvenate, and renew.

#### 4.) Eat your breakfast

Meal skipping is not advised, especially breakfast. Most people realize by now that skipping a meal is bad, because of the glycemic control of the body. Sure, we can survive many weeks without food, but not at the risk of catabolism, the breakdown of your own tissues. You will become weaker if you simply starve. A body is like a fire, it needs to be fed kindling or small wood pieces throughout the day in order for the fire to burn efficiently and that no wood leftover at the end of a clean burn. During the holidays, this is really important because many people think if they can "save" their calories for the end of the day, then they can binge. While it is ok to cut back on the portions of the meals before, it can work against you when you go into your holiday meals or cocktail parties eager to stuff whatever it is in front of your face.

**5.) Take a pause**

Going from work, then to the grocery store to stock up the fridge, or even singing a lullaby to your kids can be a lot without too much time to even breathe. Breathing slows down our heart rates, but it also helps us slow down and think about what we are doing, what we are eating, and reflect on where we are going. It is in stillness that we can truly enjoy our joy. If we have more joy, our food taste better and we are more satisfied at the end of the day.

**6.) Fitness anywhere**

Trying to get to a gym to workout can be challenging. Get up from your desk several times a day to grab some water, walk the stairs, and park further away from your destination. Do some deep breathing with simple back and neck healthy stretches for a five min break. Go for a brisk walk around your neighbourhood with your loved one after dinner and enjoy some warm spiced tea hand to promote circulation, anti-inflammation, and natural endorphins. Fitness is not a gym workout. It is a lifestyle, a habit, and a way of life. Balance your intake by keeping on the move!

**7.) Learn forgiveness**

Holding on to negative energy can lead to emotional eating. Take time to start this New Year by letting go and forgive. Whether it is a friend who has wronged you, or you being mad at yourself for eating too much pie, the negative energy can brew and stagnate. This stasis can lead to less energy overall, cycling to a weaker metabolism and a desire to eat more to sustain your body.

**8.) Balance your plate**

Choose your plate wisely. Join First Lady Obama and the Department of Agriculture's campaign to bring awareness to the need to battle obesity in America by making nutrition fun and practical. Learn how to fill your plate with a balanced mixture of fruits, grains, vegetable and protein. And don't forget your liquid fuel – water. You don't need a measuring cup with you to get a visual sense of balance. So next time when you sit at your table, take a look at your plate. We are what we eat.

**9.) De-Clutter Your Life**

Think about what your need, instead of what you want. We accumulate many material things over the years and that excess can lead to a blurred sense of our essentials. Spend some time to clean out your closets once a season, donate and recycle what you can. Clean up your to-do lists by making smaller, more realistic, plans of intentional actions. Lift the weight off your shoulders, literally. By trimming down your possessions and your endless list of tasks, you will diminish your stress and slim down for the long haul.

**10.) Try New Foods**

We gravitate to routine often because it's easy, reliable, and often taste good. Consider joining an online coupon site to get great deals on restaurants and new foods out to market. Try shop more inexpensive, local and seasonal. Don't have a recipe, feel free to check out online sites such as foodnetwork.com for fresh ideas. By allowing your taste buds to explore new flavours, and your body to enjoy a range of nutrients and wholesome vitamins with a variety of textures, you are able to flush out toxins in your colon naturally and improve your digestion. You will depend less on non-FDA regulated, costly supplements. Don't get yourself into a rut. Healthy starts with a sense of adventure and a thirst for change.

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Joanne Wu MD is a board certified physician in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Integrative and Holistic Medicine. She is also an experienced registered yoga teacher (E-RYT) via Yoga Alliance and is a peer reviewer for the International Journal for Yoga Therapy. She is certified in a variety of fitness exercises as a personal trainer and teacher, and has a broad range of training including acupuncture, reiki, integrative nutrition, and active release techniques (ART.)

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