

5 Ways to Add More Nutrition to Your Diet this National Nutrition Month

Category: Business

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Let's be honest, by this time of the year, many of us are starting to slack on our health-focused resolutions. However, September is National Nutrition Month, so it's the perfect time to re-focus on those nutrition goals we may have let fall away.

Feel a little overwhelmed by the idea of adding "nutrition" to your diet? You're not alone. We're here to help guide you with

five easy steps to make that goal more achievable.

1. Eat More Plants

You don't have to cut out animal products from your diet to be healthy, but the Dietary Guidelines recommend filling at least half your plate with fruits and vegetables and also working in whole grains and plant-based protein. Incorporating plant-based foods into meals is an easy way to add essential nutrients and vitamins to your diet! This includes eating walnuts, increasing your intake of omega-3 ALA (2.5g per 28g serving). Blend veggies and walnuts into sauces like this versatile Walnut Romesco Sauce, or swap half the meat in dishes like tacos and lasagna with beans or walnuts.

Walnut Romesco Sauce

Ingredients

1 cup well-drained roasted red peppers

1½ cup California walnuts

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

1 teaspoon paprika

1/2 to 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

3 cloves garlic

1 bunch fresh parsley

Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
2. Serve over grilled summer vegetables or grilled steak.



California Walnut Romesco Sauce

2. Drink More Water

Drinking at least eight glasses a day can help curb your cravings and help you from confusing thirst with hunger. Not to mention, staying hydrated is important, especially for those who are active.

3. Make Your Snacks Count

Don't count your snacks—make your snacks count. Make sure your snacks offer a combination of protein, fiber and good fats. A handful of walnuts, seasoned to your liking is a well-rounded snack that can hold you over until your next meal. This is a great way to meet a craving for sweet or savory with satisfying crunch. You can make a simple trail mix with other nutrient-rich ingredients to really stack your snacks!

Tropical Trail Mix

Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-sugar dried papaya chunks
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened dried goji berries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened shaved coconut
- 1 cup unsweetened dried pineapple, cut into chunks
- 1 cup unsweetened dried kiwi
- 2 cups California walnuts
- 1 cup toasted, salted pepitas
- 1 cup bittersweet cacao chips

Preparation

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark, dry spot to keep it fresh for about one month.



California Walnut Tropical Trail Mix

4. Make Mealtime an Occasion

Most people tend to move through life very quickly and don't stop to enjoy simple pleasures. Things like sitting down to eat a meal can be good for you both mentally and physically, as it encourages you to eat more slowly, allowing your body to process and digest food more appropriately. Physical benefits aside, this can also provide the mental benefit of taking a break and unplugging from your busy life, while enjoying a meal and time with loved ones.

5. Understand Nutrition Labels

While eating whole, unprocessed foods as often as possible is great, it's not always realistic with our busy lifestyles. Pay attention to the ingredient lists on packaged products, and

look out for things like saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars. To avoid being in the situation of not knowing what you're going to grab as an on-the-go alternative, plan ahead by meal prepping or packing your own snacks to fit in with your diet and nutrition goals. For simple grab-and-go snacks you can make in bulk, try this No-Bake Walnut Cocoa Cherry Bars.

No-Bake Walnut, Cocoa, Cherry Bars

Ingredients

1/2 cup old-fashioned oats

1 cup pitted Medjool dates

1/2 cup shelled California walnuts

1/2 cup unsweetened dried cherries

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

Preparation

1. In a large food processor bowl, combine oats, dates, walnuts, cherries, cocoa powder and salt. Process 1-2 minutes, or until mixture resembles a crumbly dough.

2. Turn mixture onto wax paper and shape evenly into a 1/2-inch-thick rectangle.

3. Chill at least 1 hour and cut into 9 bars. Bars do not need to be stored in the refrigerator.



No Bake California Walnut Cocoa Cherry Bars

There's not just one simple way to elevate your nutrition levels for National Nutrition Month, but there are a lot of steps you can take to work towards a more nutritious lifestyle. Setting a goal of what you want to achieve this month and prioritizing a nutritious diet through the previous suggestions are wonderful ways to start!

