

Losing Weight, Staying Fit, and Staying Healthy: The Family Connection



BODY BY DAN

It can be tough to lose weight and stay fit if everyone around you is indifferent or unsupportive. “Everyone” may include your friends, coworkers, family, or in the case of weight loss—Ronald McDonald. Say NO to greasy cheeseburgers and fries, from any fast food chain. Really though, the point here is to illustrate that any time you are on a nutrition or fitness regimen, there will be people in your way who may not only be unsupportive but they might tempt you to veer off course. It is very easy to run off course when you are trying to reprogram your body into eating healthy things and exercising. The lazy and sedentary life can be much more appealing. For this reason, it is very important to find at least one encourager to help you on your journey. Finding one can be as simple as asking your family members or friends for support. It’s definitely possible to accomplish fitness goals without any support from your loved ones, but it makes it a whole lot easier when they do support you.

Perhaps the most frequent complaint I get from people trying to lose weight is that their family is unsupportive. It can be very hard for a mother to stay on course, for example, if her husband or children constantly eat junk food around her and ask her if she wants some. The environment in which you live can make your goals more challenging, but more importantly, it can really be a great tool for helping you reach your goals faster and maintain them more easily. It takes some effort from all parties involved, but a little planning and support can go a long way.

Here are some tips to get your family involved and supportive of your fitness and health goals:

- Explain your goals to them, including why you want to achieve them.

- Ask for encouragement. They’ll forget, so don’t be afraid to ask again if you’re feeling especially unmotivated one day.

- Encourage *them* to get some goals of their own to partake in.

- With the above goal in mind, consider yourself an example to your own family members. After taking care of your health for a few weeks you’ll realize how much more energy, stamina, and



- vitality you have compared to the old sedentary lifestyle. If your family members begin to notice this change and see how you feel and act day in and day out, they’re going to want that type of feeling for themselves.

- Ask your spouse or kids to walk with you and consider it a blessing that you’re able to spend that time talking with them. They may not always want to do it. Don’t get discouraged. Plan some fun family activities like going for a hike or playing sports.

- Ask them to not bring as much junk food into the house (this goal may be unrealistic). Encourage your family to eat healthily and explain the benefits to them.

- Ask your family not to offer you any junk food or extra portions while you’re on your plan. If they do ask you, just kindly refuse and thank them for offering but also remind them of your goals.

- Put a poster or chart on the fridge—let your family know how you’re doing.

- If you’re a competitive family, make it a challenge between you and your spouse or kids.

- Treat your family to something, not necessarily related to food, when you reach a new goal. This way, they’ll be included in your joy and also be more encouraging of you reaching future goals.

For family members encouraging someone who IS trying to improve their health:

- Provide words of encouragement.

- Surprise them with an activity, gesture, or small gift. Maybe even a short note of encouragement.

- If the person is competitive, challenge them to meet higher goals than they set for themselves. But, if they don’t reach the higher goals make sure that you still let them know they did a great job and that their effort was good enough.

Now that you have some ideas of how to include family into your fitness program, it will help you to be more successful in reaching your goals and maintaining your progress. Good luck!