



## BODY BY DAN

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The New Year is rolling in, and chances are, you've made a few New Year's resolutions aimed at feeling better about yourself. I have come up with some simple suggestions to aid you on your path to a new you. So here it is-

### 9 ways to look and feel better in 2009.

**Breakfast** – Breakfast has been shown to be the most important meal of the day because it can stimulate your body with the proper energy it needs, while at the same time reduce cravings for late-night bingeing. Breakfast for most people, should be their biggest meal of the day. Note here that I am not encouraging consumption of pancakes, syrup, and bacon – but there are a lot of tasty and nutritious breakfast options available. One simple breakfast is a few eggs/egg whites cooked any way you want, a bowl of good oatmeal and one serving of any fruit you like. My recommendation for oatmeal is Red Mill's grain oatmeal (I prefer the 5-grain). It can be found in the organic section of most supermarkets. The 5-grain tends to give me long lasting energy throughout the day, but the 10-grain may work better for you.

**Water** – Stay hydrated. Make sure to drink water at every meal, and between every meal. This year, try to make sure you sip on water throughout the day. Eight glasses a day is not enough in my opinion—water helps with just about every process in the body. Not only does it help get rid of fat and build muscle, but it aids in detoxing the body. I'd shoot for about a glass every hour or two.

**Watch liquid calories** – Want to lose weight? Cut out juices and sodas. I'm not a fan of artificial sweeteners and I tend to believe that 98% of them are bad for your body,

but diet soda is still a better choice than regular soda. Juice contains A LOT of sugar, and I honestly don't recommend juice unless you juice it yourself. Sodas really have no purpose in your body, with the exception of making you fat, so I'd cross soda off my shopping list right away. In general, I would try to avoid liquid calories. Try to only drink water and tea.

**Good Fats** – If you are trying to lose weight, you're smart to avoid fats because they tend to be very calorie dense. However, fats do play some crucial roles in our body and I recommend getting your fat calories each day from avocados, olive oil, canola oil, almonds, and walnuts. There are more good fats that I could add to the list, but make sure to avoid any fats that are high in saturated fat, or contain partially-hydrogenated or hydrogenated oils. Also—in case you've somehow been out-of-the-know for the past five years—make sure you avoid trans-fats at all costs.

**Read and Understand Nutrition Labels** – I honestly think the ingredient list is more important than the nutrition label itself. However, when you pick something up, look at its nutrition label first—if it's low in sugars, sodium, and saturated fat, then you've got a pretty good product. Avoid anything with trans-fats and, for sake of ease, pay most attention to the "percentage of daily value" column to understand how much of each nutrient is in each serving. With that being said, take note what the serving size is for each food you buy. The box is generally NOT a serving size. You may be surprised at how small a serving size is for some products—there may be a whopping 200 calories in five crackers. Also, read the ingredient list of the product and recognize a few general rules: If high fructose corn syrup is one of the first three ingredients listed—don't eat it. If the ingredient list is the length of a short story and contains a slew of chemical names you can't pronounce—don't buy it.

**Don't Buy It** – The key to keeping a good diet is to not buy crap. If you don't have crap in your house, then you won't eat crap. Keep your shopping list clean! This way, even if you have a food craving, you won't be able to jump into the Boston cream pie box and go to town. You may find your self snacking on a few almonds instead.

**Exercise** – It's best to have a balanced exercise program of weight training, aerobics, and stretching—but any of the three are helpful. Walking is the simplest and generally easiest way of getting exercise. Start walking at least ten minutes a day, five times a week, and try to work up to an hour a day. The walking does not all have to be at once—you can do thirty minutes in the morning and thirty minutes at night, or whatever is easiest for you.

**Digestion** – You should really be eating a lot of vegetables for your overall health, but eating vegetables as close to their raw state as possible is most beneficial because it fuels your digestive tract with enzymes that will help you absorb nutrients from the food you intake. This will help you get more bang for your buck from each calorie you consume (in a good way). Also, I recommend taking some form of probiotic for your intestinal health to help ward off pathogens and infections. Probiotics will also help you absorb more nutrients from your food. I would talk to your healthcare provider or nutritionist to research the best probiotic product for your needs.

**Laugh** – Laughing has been shown to help relieve pain, boost mood and relieve stress. All of these things combined helps rid your body of stress hormones like cortisol which, when present, accumulate fatty deposits and degrade muscle in your body. Don't get so caught up with life that you forget to have fun. Laugh a little!

Happy New Year!