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Summer 2022

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Halal Consumer

A Publication of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America

Magazine

32 *Let Go of the Yo-Yo*





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ISSN: 1532-351X

ABOUT HALAL CONSUMER

Halal Consumer is a publication of IFANCA (Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America). IFANCA is a non-profit Islamic organization with the mission to promote halal food and the institution of halal. IFANCA objectives include making halal foods conveniently available, introducing halal to food companies and institutions, creating awareness of halal among consumers, and providing halal solutions to consumer needs.

DESIGNED BY Annan Shehadi
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Editor's Note

Assalaamu alaikum,

We hope you are enjoying summer and all the activities it brings. This issue features articles that are perfect for reading by the pool, on the beach, or simply while sitting on your porch. No matter where you peruse this issue, we hope you discover something new.

One area of health and wellness that has gained traction in recent years is adaptogens, which some claim can mitigate diseases caused by stress. Check out the article on page 6 to read what science has to say about the subject.

More and more consumers are looking for ways to practice sustainability. There's even a new diet that focuses on climate-friendly foods, which you can read about in "Saving the Environment, One Bite at a Time." If you're thinking about making some sustainable changes for yourself, you may be interested in hybrid meat. For more details, see the article on page 10.

Because we use our eyes for so much, making sure they stay healthy is critical. Taking care of your eyes means protecting both the organs and your vision. Learn some tips for doing so in the article "Eyes: A Window to Our Health."

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine has become a massive market. With this growth has come the growth of online therapy, or "teletherapy." Get a glimpse of what teletherapy is like in the article "Can Therapy Be Virtual?"

Weight loss is a concern for many people around the world. Fad diets often promise a quick way to shed a few pounds, but these diets aren't sustainable. Find a more manageable solution to taking control of your weight in the article "Let Go of the Yo-Yo."

Check out the new IFANCA website if you haven't done so already! Otherwise, feel free to follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ifanca) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ifanca) or reach out to us at halalconsumer@ifanca.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alison DeGuide **editor**

From the Publisher's Desk

Assalaamu alaikum,

This year, IFANCA is celebrating its 40th anniversary. In 1980, two years before IFANCA was officially founded, a group of Islamic scholars, scientists, and industry executives met and decided to form a technical organization to help Muslim consumers in the United States find information about halal products. This organization would eventually become what we now know as IFANCA.

Our first newsletter on “Halal Food & Nutrition” was published in 1981. That same year, we also distributed our first halal/haram list and held our first seminar in Chicago. However, IFANCA was not officially registered until 1982, when we were incorporated as a non-profit in the State of Illinois. We spent the next forty years continuing to serve the Muslim community, creating books, newsletters, and more on many subjects related to halal.

We have grown significantly in the past few decades. Today, we certify over 200,000 products in more than 70 countries and more than 5,000 manufacturing sites. We have certified products by some of the world's largest food and beverage, nutritional supplement, and pharmaceutical companies, and we have solidified our mission of promoting halal through certification, education, and the creation of institutions.

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary and look to the future, we hope that halal will one day become mainstream globally, making it easier for halal consumers of all faiths and cultures to find products that align with their religious beliefs. For now, we will continue to do our part by certifying halal products and raising awareness of what halal means.

Perhaps one day, we will truly achieve the goal of **halal for all**.

Sincerely,

Muhammad Munir Chaudry **president**

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Adaptogens Take Center Stage

By Omolara Funmilayo

AS CONSUMERS TAKE A MORE HOLISTIC approach to health, they continue to show growing interest in natural remedies. Natural remedies like adaptogens have started to take center stage in the health and wellness industry as modern science catches up with ancient medicine.

[According to an article by Velislava Todorova et al. in the journal *Nutrients*](#), adaptogens are plant extracts or synthetic compounds that support our body's natural ability to deal with occasional stress and return the body to a state of balance (homeostasis). While they have been traditionally used to treat a wide range of conditions for many centuries, the concept of “adaptogens” was introduced in 1947 by Russian toxicologist Dr. Nikolai Vasilyevich Lazarev as a form of herbal medicine. The most common types of adaptogens include *Cordyceps*, reishi, lion's mane, shiitake, maitake, chaga, Siberian ginseng, *Rhodiola*, American ginseng, ashwagandha, licorice root, holy basil, *Schisandra*, goji berries, and turmeric root. They are said to have many health benefits and increase our resistance to stress by strengthening our ability to adapt and survive.

[According to an article by Alexander G. Panossian et al. in the journal *Medical Research Reviews*](#), adaptogens have the potential to help regulate the immune system in response to allergies and other conditions like anemia, asthma, ear infections, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and some digestive issues. They have also been found to impact moods, cognitive function, and memory. Panos-

sian et al. note, “[A]daptogens are most likely effective for the prevention and treatment of stress-induced and adult-onset disorders such as chronic fatigue, memory impairment, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure, chronic inflammation and autoimmune diseases, cold and flu, infections, skin diseases, liver diseases, and cancer.”

Studies also point to the healing properties of individual adaptogens. For instance, the antioxidant properties of curcumin, the biologically active component of turmeric, have been found to help prevent and treat many chronic diseases, [according to Min Chen et al. in a 2018 article for Neural Regeneration Research](#). Studies have also demonstrated the possible benefits of *Rhodiola rosea*. [In a 2009 article for Current Clinical Pharmacology](#), Alexander Panossian and Georg Wikman noted that there was strong scientific evidence that *Rhodiola rosea* SHR-5 extract “improved attention, cognitive function and mental performance in fatigue and in chronic fatigue syndrome.” *Cordyceps*, a fungus and well-known medicinal mushroom in traditional Chinese medicine, has also been studied for its uses. [A 2010 study by Steve Chen et al. published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine](#) showed that *Cordyceps sinensis* improved exercise performance and could potentially improve overall wellness in older adults. These studies represent only a small sample of the research that has been done on adaptogens, however, and more research is still being done.

The health-promoting effects of adaptogens have led to considerable increases in the market for them. The rise in consumer awareness in terms of health promotion, disease prevention, the recent pandemic, and general public health concerns all seem to be driving this increased demand. For consumers who want to try them, adaptogenic herbs like holy basil, ashwagandha, maca, reishi, and Siberian ginseng are available in powdered forms and can be used as seasonings in soups and stir-fries, toppings for oatmeal, or additions to yogurt or smoothies. Other adaptogens have been found in some healthy desserts, energy drinks, teas, and even energy bars. Some people find it easier to consume adaptogens as supplements. Adaptogens are typically available in capsules, extracts, tablets, and powder forms.

Adaptogens have been traditionally used to treat a variety of conditions. Although they have been around for hundreds of years in Eastern medicine, they are currently a buzzword in the natural health space. They are said to increase our resistance to stress by strengthening our ability to adapt and survive. They have also been demonstrated in a wide range of popular uses from skin rejuvenation, mood improvement, and overall health promotion, and they continue to be backed by growing scientific evidence. However, some adaptogens have been



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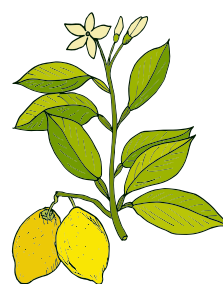
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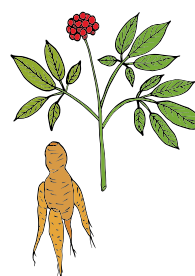
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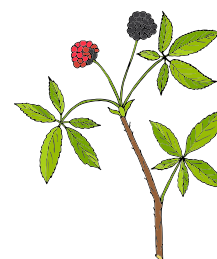
LEMON




HOLY BASIL



GINSENG



ELEUTHERO

found to react with medications, especially in people with certain medical conditions. Anyone with health concerns or on any medication, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and children should consult a healthcare provider before taking adaptogens. 

OMOLARA FUNMILAYO is the owner of nourishedsupermom.com. She is a certified holistic wellness coach and nutritionist. She supports busy parents by giving them the tools they need for transformation in health and wellness for themselves and their families.



HYSSOP



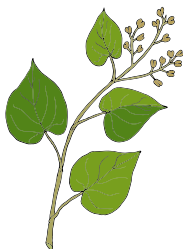
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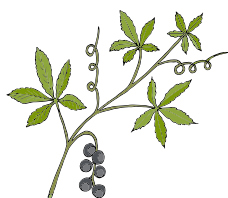
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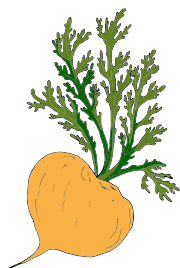
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"Meat" a New Sustainability Solution

By Taskeen Khan

HYBRID MEAT MAY SOUND LIKE A SCIENCE project gone wrong, but that is not the case. Hybrid meats are products made from a mix of animal- and non-animal-based meat and are a new way that people can go green in the kitchen. In order to understand how this new food is changing the market, let's delve into what it is, how it impacts the environment, and why consumers are choosing this new product.

When you combine animal-based meat and non-animal-based meat, you get hybrid meat. The animal meat can come from livestock or be lab grown. Lab-grown meat, also known as cell-based or cultured meat, is created when a small amount of tissue from a live animal is collected and put into conditions that allow it to proliferate into meat. While there are a few companies that use lab-grown meat in their hybrid products, it is not very common. The non-animal component can come from mushrooms, plants, seaweed, or any other non-animal source. Some examples of hybrid meats are burgers made out of beef and mushrooms, or ground beef that is a blend of beef and veggies.

But, why mix and match? Why not make ground beef out of just beef? One reason is that animal-based meat has a high carbon footprint, and using less of it is a way to be more sustainable. [The New York Times article "Your Questions about Food and Climate Change, Answered"](#)

reports that to produce enough beef for fifty grams of protein, on average 17.7 kilograms of carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere. Fifty grams of protein is about the same weight as ten #2 pencils, and 17.7 kg is about how much a four-year-old weighs. That is a lot of carbon dioxide for very little protein. In contrast, producing fifty grams of bean protein emits 0.4 kg of carbon dioxide. For reference, 0.4 kg is about the weight of four sticks of butter.

One of the reasons that the carbon footprint of animal-based meat is so high is that producing it is a two-step process. First, farmers need to grow the animal feed. The greenhouse gas emissions in this step come from all kinds of sources, such as the energy needed to fuel farm machinery and the fuel used to run the tractors that



Some examples of hybrid meats are burgers made out of beef and mushrooms, or ground beef that is a blend of beef and veggies.



harvest the crops. Second, farmers need to raise the animals, which again results in greenhouse gas emissions from processes such as heating animal pens. In contrast, for beans or any other plant-based product, only part one of this process happens. This is one of the reasons the overall carbon footprint of farming plants is lower than farming livestock.

Farming livestock also has a high water footprint. Farmers need water to grow the crops the animals eat and use water to care for the animals. In fact, [the Water Footprint Network \(as cited on the U.S. Geological Survey website\) reports that](#) it takes an estimated 500 gallons of water to produce a single pound of chicken. In contrast, a pound of wheat takes about 110–250 gallons of water to grow. Therefore, when your burger, hotdog, or chicken nugget is 50% plant-based, you are reducing the carbon and water footprints of your meal.

Research on lab-grown meat is not as definitive. Some studies have found lab-grown meat to be a more sustainable alternative. For example, [the study “Environmental Impacts of Cultured Meat Production” by Hanna L. Tuomisto and M. Joost Teixeira de Mattos](#) found that “cultured meat involves approximately 7–45% lower energy use (only poultry has lower energy use), 78–96% lower GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions, 99% lower land use, and 82–96% lower water use depending on the product compared.” On the other hand, the study [“Considering Plant-Based Meat Substitutes and Cell-Based Meats: A Public Health and Food Systems Perspective” by Raychel E. Santo et al.](#) found that “[c]ell-based meat could provide

benefits as well for most environmental concerns, with a few caveats: the GHG footprint, blue water footprint, and industrial energy use could be higher than those of farmed beef in some cases.” As lab-grown meat becomes more widely produced, researchers will be able to better understand its true environmental impacts.

When reading about the 500 gallons of water needed to produce a single pound of chicken, it may seem like switching to hybrid meat isn’t enough to make a significant change. But even small changes are meaningful. The previously mentioned *New York Times* article reports that if someone with a typical Western diet partly replaces their meat and dairy intake with plants, they can reduce their personal food-related emissions by 30%.



“[T]he Water Footprint Network... reports that it takes an estimated 500 gallons of water to produce a single pound of chicken. In contrast, a pound of wheat takes about 110–250 gallons of water to grow.





It is not just the earth that will thank you, but your body as well. [According to Hayden Stewart and Jeffrey Hyman in an article for the USDA Economic Research Service](#), the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans “recommends that people needing 2,000 calories per day include 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables in their daily diets...[but] the average American falls far short—consuming only 0.9 cups of fruit and 1.4 cups of vegetables per day.” Hybrid meats with vegetables can help you work towards filling that gap. Additionally, [in the Harvard Health Publishing article “What’s the Beef With Red Meat?”](#), Dr. Frank Hu, chair of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health, explains that eating large amounts of processed and red meat is linked to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and premature death. Hybrid meat is a great choice for those who are trying to improve their health by reducing their meat consumption.

How does hybrid meat stack up against the other options in the grocery store? Hybrid meat still contains animal products, so if you really want to reduce your carbon and water footprint, plant-based meat is a better option. Hybrid meat is not a total health solution, either. A steak made out of hybrid meat still contains red meat, and a hot dog made of hybrid meat still contains processed meat. A veggie steak or veggie hot dog would likely be a healthier option, though how the plants in plant-based meats are processed largely impacts how healthy the product is overall.

If not for those who want the absolute healthiest or most sustainable option or those who don’t eat animal

products, who is hybrid meat for? It’s for those who want to make sustainable food choices but don’t want to fully give up meat. Flexitarians, or people who follow a mostly plant-based diet with some meat sprinkled in, are one of the main groups hybrid meats were originally marketed towards.

Additionally, buyers looking for an improved taste may also choose hybrid meats, since these products focus on having an enhanced taste brought out by the added ingredients. This may seem like a limited customer base, but there is interest in the hybrid meat market. It is part of the larger meat alternatives market, which is set to grow. [According to a Bloomberg press announcement](#), “If the alternative meat market follows a similar growth pattern to that of plant-based milk, [Bloomberg Intelligence] projects the alternative meat market to excel in size from \$4.2 billion to \$74 billion in the next ten years.”

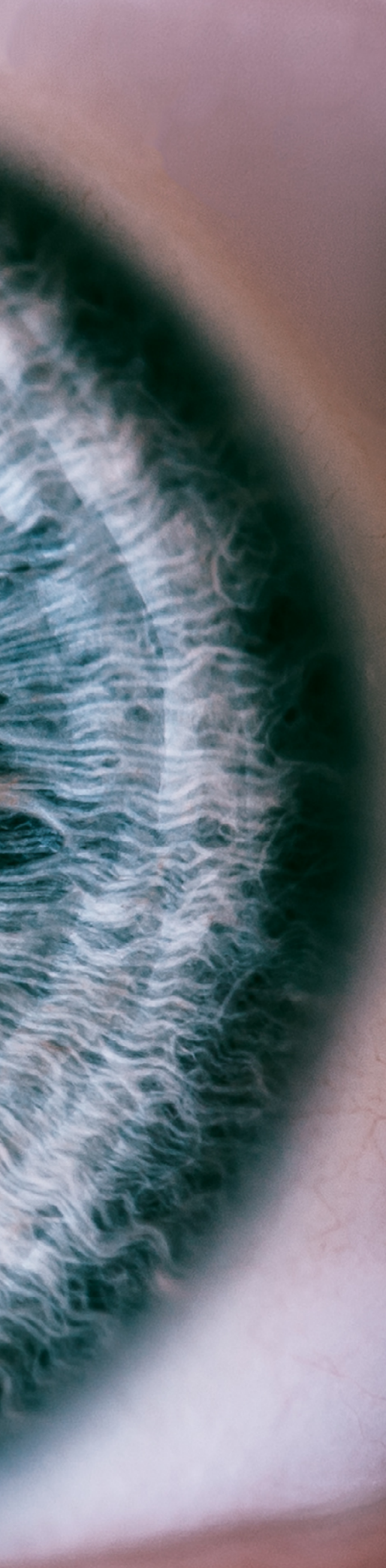
Hybrid meat isn’t a perfect solution to all our environmental and health problems, but it is an important step in the right direction. So, the next time you bite into a burger, try a hybrid burger. You can change the world, one meal at a time.™

TASKEEN KHAN has a bachelor’s degree in integrative biology and a minor in sustainability, energy, and the environment from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is passionate about science education and communication, as well as research.



EYES: A Window to Our Health

By Kelly Izdihar Crosby



OUR EYES ARE SUCH AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR LIVES. IT'S almost impossible to number the ways we rely on them. From observing the differences between colors and textures to watching the emotions on another person's face, our eyes provide a wealth of information to help us navigate our world. As one of our senses, our eyes and vision must be protected from potential health problems.

The eye is made up of many distinct parts. The parts responsible for sight are the cornea, pupil, iris, lens, retina, and optic nerve. The cornea is the clear dome-shaped part in front of the eye that bends light to help the eye focus. Light enters through the pupil, the small black hole in the center of the eye. The colored part of the eye, the iris, controls how much light the pupil lets in. Light then enters the lens, the clear inner part of the eye. The lens and the cornea work to focus light on the retina. The retina, located on the back wall of the inside of the eye, is a layer of cells that sense light and send signals to the brain.

[A study from the National Institutes of Health](#) found that “although 94 percent of Americans aged 12 and older have good vision, the remaining six percent, or 14 million, are visually impaired.” The study goes on to note that of this population, eighty-three percent can have this impairment corrected with glasses or contact lenses. Blurred vision, also known as refractive errors, is the most frequent eye problem. This includes nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism (distorted vision from all distances). Presbyopia is the loss of the ability to focus up close, so reading smaller text becomes difficult. It usually occurs among adults ages forty to fifty. Thankfully, these conditions can be remedied with corrective glasses, contact lenses, or in rare cases, surgery.

There are more serious eye conditions to be aware of. [The Vision Health Initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) says, “The leading causes of blindness and low vision in the United States are primarily age-related eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma.” Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a disease that can blur central vision. AMD can make tasks like cooking, driving, or reading very difficult to do. Another vision issue is a cataract, which is the clouding of the eye's lens. It is a leading cause of blindness worldwide. Another condition is diabetic retinopathy, which affects those who have diabetes. Lastly, glaucoma is a set of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve and cause vision loss. The symptoms are so subtle that you may not notice them, and glaucoma can only be detected through a dilated eye exam.



Blurred vision, also known as refractive errors, is the most frequent eye problem. This includes nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism (distorted vision from all distances).

Many factors determine how often you need an eye exam. For children ages five or younger, a pediatrician will perform a vision screening to check for

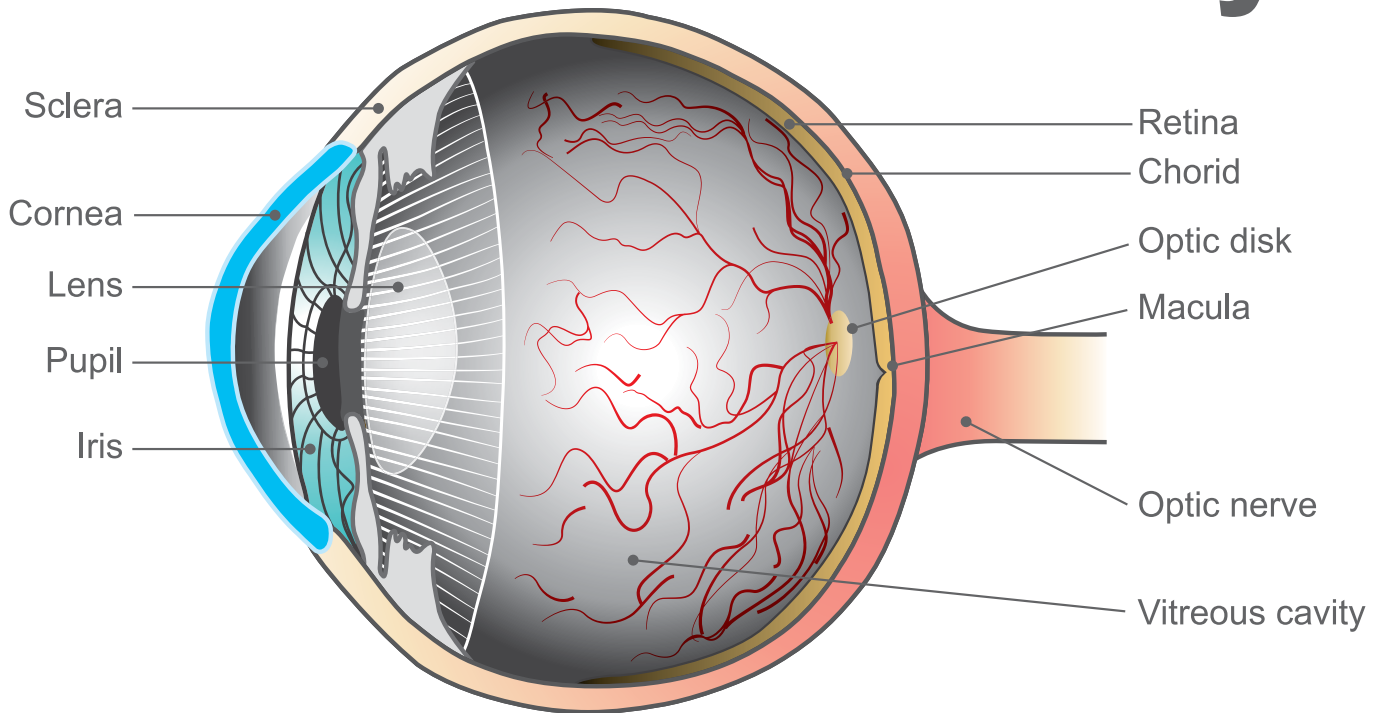
common childhood eye issues such as amblyopia (lazy eye) or strabismus (crossed eyes). For a comprehensive eye exam, children can see a pediatric ophthalmologist. A pediatrician will also recommend an eye exam for adolescents. [According to an article on eye exams from Mayo Clinic](#), for adults that “are healthy and...have no symptoms of vision problems, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends having a complete eye exam at age 40, when some vision changes and eye diseases are

likely to start. Based on the results of your screening, your eye doctor can recommend how often you should have future eye exams. If you’re 60 or older, have your eyes checked every year or two.”

Explore the chart below [with information from Benjamin Teller, OD, of Eye Rx](#) to learn some of the signs and symptoms of potential eye trouble:

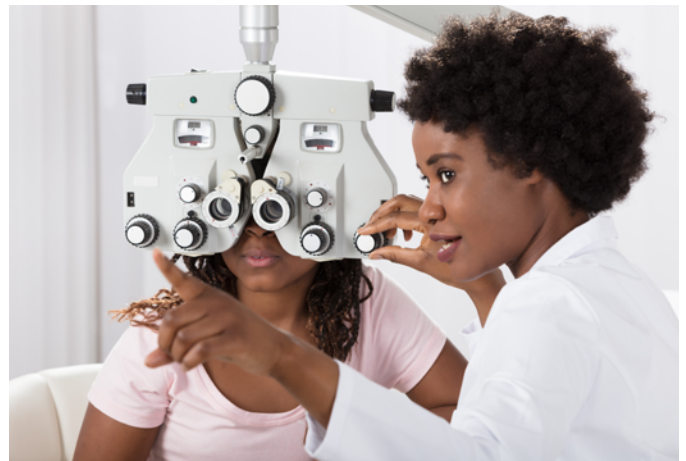
SYMPTOM	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE CAUSES
Dry eyes	Eyes that feel gritty, irritated, or scratchy. This is normally due to eyes not producing enough tears to stay lubricated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bell's palsy • Blepharitis • Chronic dry eye
Excessive tearing	Producing too many tears or having continually watery eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies • Bacterial keratitis • Blocked tear duct • Conjunctivitis (pink eye) • Dry eye
Flashes	Flashing lights or lightning streaks in a person's field of vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached or torn retina • Migraines
Floaters	Lines, specks, dots, or webs that appear in a person's field of vision. They are usually harmless in small amounts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetic retinopathy • Eye lymphoma • Posterior vitreous detachment • Torn or detached retina • Uveitis
Headaches	Pain in the head, neck, or face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angle-closure glaucoma • Migraines • Refractive errors • Photokeratitis
Light sensitivity	Discomfort with bright light, also known as photophobia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies • Cataracts • Corneal abrasion • Keratoconus • Migraines • Strabismus
Night blindness	Having trouble seeing at night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cataracts • Nystagmus • Retinitis pigmentosa
Red eyes	Inflammation of the eye's small red blood vessels that gives the eyes a red or pink appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blepharitis • Conjunctivitis (pink eye) • Eye allergies • Uveitis
Swelling	Irritated and/or inflamed eye tissue or lid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blepharitis • Blocked tear duct • Cellulitis • Conjunctivitis (pink eye) • Corneal ulcer • Graves' disease • Periorbital hematoma (black eye) • Scleritis

The Eye



Along with regular eye exams, eating foods rich in vitamins and nutrients is also important. [In an article for Medical News Today](#), Zawn Villines states, “The Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS), published in 2001, found that certain nutrients — zinc, copper, vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta carotene — may reduce the risk of age-related decline in eye health by 25 percent.” Beta-carotene, the orange pigment found in fruits and vegetables, is converted by the body into vitamin A. Vitamin A maintains our photoreceptors and can prevent dry eyes. Eggs are a great source of lutein and zeaxanthin, which can decrease the risk of age-related sight loss. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in the retina and can decrease intraocular pressure or fluid pressure inside of the eye. Vitamin C can counteract macular degeneration, reduce cataract progression, and lower the risk for glaucoma. Vitamin E can protect the eyes from AMD, and in some cases, cataracts. Finally, zinc has anti-inflammatory properties and can also assist with preventing AMD and cataracts when combined with other antioxidants like vitamins C and E.

There are many ways to protect your eyes. First, you should wear sunglasses, even on cloudy days. Wear glasses that offer one-hundred percent protection from UVA and UVB rays. Second, always wear protective eye gear when working with hazardous or airborne materials.




...although 94 percent of Americans aged 12 and older have good vision, the remaining six percent, or 14 million, are visually impaired.



Staring at a computer screen can also cause problems. Give your eyes a rest by taking a break from the computer screen every twenty minutes.



Protective goggles are perfect for construction work and for sports like ice hockey or racquetball.

Staring at a computer screen can also cause problems. Give your eyes a rest by taking a break from the computer screen every twenty minutes. During this break, look at something twenty feet away for twenty seconds. You should also be mindful of how you sit at your desk. Your eyes should be level with the screen to prevent looking downward. Taking these precautions will strengthen and protect your vision for years to come. 

KELLY IZDIHAR CROSBY is an artist and freelance writer living in Atlanta.





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Can Therapy Be Virtual?

By Tayyaba Syed





TELETHERAPY IS THERAPY THAT IS DONE remotely rather than in person. It is a type of telehealth service that has seen a significant increase over the last two years since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Teletherapy has been around for a while, as it can be done over the phone, but more practitioners and patients began using videoconferencing platforms when in-person appointments were not considered safe. Teletherapy can be used for many types of therapy and has been found to be as effective as in-person therapy.

Mikaeel Ahmed Smith is the author of *With the Heart in Mind: The Moral and Emotional Intelligence of the Prophet*, which suggests that by studying the emotional intelligence of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]), we can improve the quality of our relationships with the people around us. He states in his book that the best therapists are those who are present with their patients so that they can connect on a kinesthetic and emotional level. Is this possible in a virtual counseling session?

For Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor Hadia Zarzour of Darien, Illinois, it was challenging at first to adjust to providing teletherapy online. She began offering teletherapy in April 2020 and found it difficult not to be in the same room as her clients. She worried how it would impact her interactions with them. “I wondered how we would get the same in-person experience behind a computer screen,” shares Zarzour. “In a counseling session, it’s important to see body language, but we have been able to make it work virtually.”

According to Zarzour, the option of teletherapy has encouraged those who were hesitant to seek help feel comfortable doing so through online platforms. She still offers teletherapy today and has global clientele because of teletherapy’s ease, accessibility, and affordability. “Patients don’t have to leave the comfort of their homes, which can be an additional layer of protection for anyone who suffers from social anxiety or phobia,” says Zarzour. “Teletherapy is helping break the stigma and normalizing mental health awareness. We have seen an increase in services as more people become aware of the many mental health resources available online.” Zarzour does note that one downside to teletherapy is trying to counsel children virtually. She prefers to hold in-person sessions with kids, as they may need play therapy and more interactive correspondence.

For practitioners who offer more flexible hours, one drawback of teletherapy is drawing the line between home life and professional life. One such practitioner is Sana Mohiuddin, a licensed professional counselor at the Khalil Center in Lombard, Illinois. “Sometimes, over access may cause a client to become too comfortable



When working with couples, Mohiuddin prefers in-person sessions to properly mediate between the individuals. “Married couples who are having problems are advised in Islam to seek mediation, and we are encouraged in sunnah to seek consultation,” [Sana] Mohiuddin points out. “Therapy in the right setting can provide that.”



and expect more from his/her therapist in terms of availability,” says Mohiuddin. “Overall, though, people who did not have access to therapy before due to transportation, time restrictions, distance, work, or family obligations can now easily receive services online.”

Mohiuddin holds an M.A. in counselor education specializing in marital and family therapy from Northeastern Illinois University. When working with couples, Mohiuddin prefers in-person sessions to properly mediate between the individuals. “Married couples who are having problems are advised in Islam to seek mediation, and we are

encouraged in sunnah to seek consultation,” Mohiuddin points out. “Therapy in the right setting can provide that.”

Lubna Iqbal* has been receiving both in-person and teletherapy for the last year and a half. When she first sought help, teletherapy was the only option available to her. “I definitely prefer meeting my therapist in person instead of [on] the computer,” says Iqbal. “I can’t look at my therapist’s eyes if I have to look into my camera, and she can’t fully see me or my body language.”

Iqbal was initially receiving therapy on a weekly basis but now goes every other week. Having the option of meeting online has been beneficial for her overall. “Having someone to talk to about my problems on a regular basis has really helped me,” Iqbal says. “I have been gaining the tools I need to heal myself.” Unfortunately, Iqbal has not been able to tell her father about seeking help for her mental health needs. She feels he will think less of her and has kept quiet about it.

Haleema Syed of Naperville, Illinois, understands the stigma that comes with seeking therapy. Back in 2016 after going through a painful divorce, she would consult a therapist over the phone. This led her to find a local support group for divorced Muslim women. A licensed therapist moderates as these women meet online or in person to seek advice and support one another through their various struggles. They even have a WhatsApp group to communicate more frequently. There is a deep level of trust among the women, and they all must sign a confidentiality and consent form that says they will not

share each other's stories outside of the group. "It's a safe space for us to gain comfort and support from one another," says Haleema. "I realized I am not alone and can count on this group for sisterly companionship, their prayers, guidance, and love. The group has now expanded outside of Illinois as more women are looking for support, even if it is virtually."

Dr. Jawad Pervez is a board-certified psychiatrist practicing in Kenosha, Wisconsin, who provides telehealth to the majority of his patients. He finds it to be highly effective and states that we are still seeing benefits of teletherapy today. "The Prophet (PBUH) was very attuned to not only his own emotions but those around him as well," Dr. Pervez reminds us. "It is a sunnah to preserve people's mental health and to seek help from others—even help through telehealth. You cannot go wrong with seeking help; there's no downside to talking to someone."

God tells us in the Quran to "ask the people of knowledge if you do not know" (21:7). Dr. Pervez suggests not to limit one's search for mental health providers to only Muslim ones. "Seeking help requires you to be aware of your own emotions and being able to express what you're feeling," he says. "There are many qualified practitioners offering teletherapy out there, which may seem quite confusing on who is the right professional for you. The first step is to see your primary care doctor to determine what type of mental health [guidance] you may need. That is the best place to start."

"It is a sunnah to preserve people's mental health and to seek help from others—even help through telehealth. You cannot go wrong with seeking help; there's no downside to talking to someone."



With the advent of technology, our lives are constantly bombarded with gadgets and tools. Teletherapy has now become a beneficial tool for the advancement of mental health over recent years. [According to Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#), nearly 50 million Americans are experiencing a mental illness. Help is just a click away from the comfort of one's home. Teletherapy may not be for everyone, but it is a readily available option at one's fingertips.

**Name has been changed to maintain privacy. ®*

TAYYABA SYED is a multiple award-winning author, journalist, keynote speaker, and performer. She readily conducts literary and faith-based presentations for a variety of schools, communities, and organizations both online and in person. She lives in Illinois with her husband and three children. Learn more at www.tayyabasayed.com.





Eba with Okra Soup

By Maryam Funmilayo

Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups *garri* (dried cassava flour)
- 5 cups water
- 2 cups okra, blended
- 2 cups halal chicken or beef broth
- 1 teaspoon italian seasoning
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 3 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- ½ cup *iru* (locust beans)
- 1 cup dried stockfish

DIRECTIONS

1. Boil the water.
2. Pour the *garri* into the boiling water and stir consistently with a wooden spoon or spatula until there is a fine dough. This dough is known as *eba*.
3. Set the *eba* aside in a separate bowl and cover to keep it hot.
4. Add the blended okra, seasoning, curry powder, cayenne pepper, *iru*, and dried stockfish into the broth and cook for 10 minutes.
5. Dish out the *eba* and okra soup onto separate plates.
6. Enjoy eating with your (clean) bare hands. 🍴



Slow-Roasted Salmon with Citrus

By Omolara Funmilayo

Servings: 4 | Time: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- ½ fennel bulb, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- 1 navel orange, thinly sliced
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon fresh tarragon
- 1 pound salmon filet
- ¼ cup avocado oil
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon chili flakes (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Add the fennel, lemon, orange, and half of the sea salt to an oven-safe dish and mix to combine.
3. Place the salmon on top of the mixture and season with tarragon and the remaining salt.
4. Pour the avocado oil over the top of everything and place in the oven for 30 minutes or until the salmon is cooked to your liking.
5. Remove from the oven and add parsley.
6. Divide between plates and enjoy!

Note: Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for up to 3 days. You can add other fresh herbs like dill, cilantro, or chives for more flavor. Serve it with roasted vegetables or a green salad. ©



Chickpea Cranberry Salad

By Omolara Funmilayo

Servings: 5 | Time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium apple, diced
- 2 cups cooked chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup unsweetened dried cranberries
- 4 cups napa cabbage, finely sliced
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup red onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon celery salt
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons avocado oil
- 1 tablespoon ground mustard (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss until well combined.
2. Divide between plates and enjoy!

Note: Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

One serving is approximately 1½ cups. ©



Baked Mackerel and Salmon

By Maryam Funmilayo

Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 3 mackerel filets
- 3 salmon filets
- 6 medium organic lemons
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon sweet basil leaves
- 1 teaspoon of thyme
- 1 teaspoon rosemary leaves
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 2 cups organic baby carrots, grated

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the fish in a large bowl.
2. Squeeze the lemons over the fish.
3. Add the herbs and spices and let the fish marinate for an hour in the fridge.
4. After one hour, pour the grated carrots over the marinated fish and bake for 45 minutes at 350°F.
5. Serve with bulgur or quinoa or enjoy the dish alone! 🍴

Saving the Environment, One Bite at a Time

By Husna T. Ghani

BY NOW YOU'VE HEARD OF EVERY TYPE OF DIET trend. There is the low-carb diet, keto diet, vegetarian diet, meat-only diet, cabbage soup diet, boiled egg diet, fruit-only diet, no-fruit diet, Mediterranean diet, paleo diet, and even the caveman diet. Here is another one to add to the list: the climatarian diet.

The climatarian diet has an interesting premise. It focuses not only on what is healthy for you but also on what is healthy for the climate. The emphasis of the climatarian diet is to eat foods that are locally grown and in season, require fewer natural resources to grow, emit fewer greenhouse gases, are good for the environment, and reduce a person's overall carbon footprint. The climatarian diet connoisseur knows how and where their food is produced, how it was sustained, how it was processed, how it was packaged, and how it arrives to the end shopper. [The United Nations states](#), "More than one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity can be attributed to the way we produce, process and package food." All of these factors contribute to climate change and to the overall quality of the food. [According to Cynthia Sass, MPH, RD, in an article for Health](#), climatarians try to reduce and avoid foods that:

- "Require copious amounts of natural resources, like land or water
- Contribute to pollution
- Cause ocean acidification, which can harm aquatic plants and animals
- Emit greenhouse gasses (GHG), which trap radiation from the sun and cause global warming
- Use excessive or non-biodegradable packaging."

How does your cheeseburger contribute to the greenhouse effect? [According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#), "Cattle...are the animal species responsible for the most emissions, representing about 65% of the livestock sector's emissions." Raising cattle requires a lot more land space, feed, and water, and unfortunately, they are usually raised en masse. Does that mean you need to forego your favorite halal burger? Of course not. The FAO's recommendations to mitigate the situation include:

- Better nutrition and feeding techniques, especially for cows, which would help lessen the generation of methane gas and nitrous oxide during digestion and in manure



- Better breeding and animal production that yields fewer and higher quality animals than mass production
- Better land management and the creation of carbon sinks, which are natural environments that can absorb carbon dioxide
- Better quality feed sources and feeding techniques, especially for poultry



The climatarian diet connoisseur knows how and where their food is produced, how it was sustained, how it was processed, how it was packaged, and how it arrives to the end shopper.

What should you minimize and/or avoid to be more sustainable? Cynthia Sass gives us a few tips. First, limit red meat. Not only does it emit a lot of greenhouse gas, it also increases the risk of certain cancers and cardiovascular disease. Second, limit dairy consumption. Most dairy production also emits high amounts of carbon dioxide. Third, limit palm oil. Palm oil production causes deforestation, and the oil is commonly found in packaged foods. Fourth, limit sugar intake. Sugar can increase the risk of getting certain diseases and contribute to obesity, and sugarcane production is harmful to the environment. Lastly, limit highly processed foods. These foods use more sugar, more palm oil, and wasteful packaging.

Now that you know what you should not eat in a climatarian diet, what exactly *can* you eat? According to the article by Sass, you can include the following categories of food in your diet:

- **Pulses (chickpeas, lentils, beans, etc.):** Pulses minimize the need for artificial fertilizers, which in turn reduces pollution. They also improve soil quality and require less water.



Food techniques and food sources that adhere to saving the planet as well as your health are en vogue.



- **Locally grown seasonal produce:** This type of produce reduces gas emissions because it is naturally grown, minimizes transportation and packaging waste, and is not highly processed.
- **Whole grains:** They do not require much water to grow.
- **Nuts:** The production of nuts emits less carbon dioxide than the production of meat.
- **Mushrooms:** They can grow in the waste of other crops, minimizing the need for landfills. They also require minimal water and land, and some species can be used as a plastic alternative.

Finding sustainable, locally grown, organic, pasture-raised, small-scale farmed food used to be impossible to find (unless you had a time machine). Now you can find menus with items that are “locally sourced,” “in season,” “locally grown,” “small batch,” and from a “family-owned farm.” Food techniques and food sources that adhere to saving the planet as well as your health are en vogue. Now that we are more aware of how human behavior



impacts the climate and the environment, people are beginning to take notice, creating a market for these items. With that market, businesses are noticing opportunities to grow while saving the world, one vegan burger at a time. 🌱

HUSNA T. GHANI has an MBA and an MEd. She is a former science teacher and is currently a strategy consultant in the spheres of communication and education. When she isn't doing her day job, she focuses on desert-making and saving the world, one pastry at a time.

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LET GO OF THE YO-YO

By Ali Othman, NSCA-CPT®

SUMMER IS HERE, AND THAT MEANS MANY THINGS. Among these is the sudden urge to drop ten pounds by some unrealistic date for an upcoming event. Four to six weeks of reduced carbs or maybe two weeks of a liquid diet might work, but what comes next? Eventually carbs and fat find their way back into your diet, and the weight rushes back quicker and more efficiently than the last time you tried the cabbage soup and grapefruit diet.

More astounding than any machine or new technology is the human body, which regulates its own temperature, hydration, fuel levels, weight, fat, and so many other processes that take place behind the scenes. For example, before you become dehydrated, the brain sends a signal saying “I’m thirsty!” at which point your mouth gets dry and you begin your search for a drink. The same is true for weight. At a certain point of weight loss, the brain signals that it’s time to eat. These signals come in the form of cravings, usually for high-fat and calorie-dense foods. These cravings eventually become irresistible, even to the strongest will. It’s ok, though, because that’s how the body keeps itself functioning properly.

Yo-yo dieting is an easy way to develop less-than-ideal eating habits. In a situation where you’re trying to lose weight, proper eating habits make all the difference. Rather than depriving or starving yourself, eat small portions of a well-balanced selection of foods, including your favorites. Never fill your plate with foods you can’t stand, unless your doctor has asked you to.

People like to win, even when battling themselves. Imagine you’ve tried a few times over the last few years to lose fifteen pounds. With each attempt, it becomes harder to motivate yourself. In the back of your mind, doubt has been brewing about your ability to take on this challenge. Reverse that cycle with some lifestyle changes. Instead of an unrealistic diet, create a meal plan that gets you involved in your nutrition and culinary selections and

gain confidence knowing that you’re eating in a way that can continue indefinitely. Eventually your weight will level off and become less of an influence on your lifestyle.

Now that you know you’re in it for the long-haul, consistency and moderation are the way to go. Set a routine that promotes these concepts in your calorie intake, sleep, and daily activity. Look at your dietary plan first because your caloric intake is responsible for roughly eighty to ninety percent of your weight management. The consensus in the nutrition community is that restrictive diets are neither sustainable nor realistic. Instead, the most logical and successful dietary plans have you eating some of your favorites nearly every day.

Whenever I on-board a new personal training client, the first assignment I give them is to keep a three-day food journal. Every science-based dietary plan starts with a food journal. A properly completed journal is like a cheat sheet for designing your dietary plan. You can understand your daily calorie intake and how many of those calories are from protein, carbohydrates, or fat. Sometimes, adjusting your intake ratio of these macronutrients is all you need to achieve a steady loss of ten pounds over the course of a year. Those ten pounds are much less likely to sneak back than ten pounds lost hastily by the latest fad diet.

Next, you can take a step deeper and look into the ingredients of each of your meals. Figure out which ingredients are the most calorie dense and reduce the amount of these you eat. These are your packaged desserts, fast foods, oils, fatty red meats, fried items, and the like. Look for nutrient-rich substitutions that are less calorie dense. These types of ingredients are usually higher in water and fiber, like vegetables. They fill the space in your stomach and allow you to feel full without contributing too heavily to your caloric intake. They also take longer to digest, leaving you feeling satisfied longer than a diet high in simple carbohydrates or fried food.

This next recommendation comes straight from the gut. Cut your portion size by twenty-five or thirty percent and add a fresh salad, fruit, or a bowl of leafy vegetables. In addition to being great space fillers and water sources, fruit and leafy vegetables help stimulate digestion. One of the signs of a healthy gut is the steadiness at which food moves through your digestive system, sometimes called regularity. For those who’ve been plagued with digestive issues, a bit of regularity might be worth the change all on its own.

A well-balanced diet will have some other unexpected benefits as well, namely on your sleep quality. As you get closer to the evening, try limiting caffeine and high-fat,



The consensus in the nutrition community is that restrictive diets are neither sustainable nor realistic. Instead, the most logical and successful dietary plans have you eating some of your favorites nearly every day.



spicy, or acidic foods. Reducing these foods in the evening allows your body to rest more comfortably throughout the night. Increasing the amount of sleep you get and its quality can have profound effects. Being well-rested is a boost for your immune system, mood, memory, and muscle recovery. You'll have more energy to spend on daily activities, which will make you tired just in time for bed. Just like your cell phone, you need to recharge overnight because a rested mind and body operate efficiently and help you balance your cravings.



It takes about six weeks of consistent exercise to develop a pattern that's both mental and physical. Start by exercising two, three, or four days a week with your short-term goal being to keep it up for six weeks.





While you're making substitutions within your meals, take a look at your favorites that may be calorie dense but are essential to your mealtime happiness. A piece of cake or bag of chips might have 300 to 400 calories. Since the remaining ten to twenty percent of your weight management comes from your daily activities and exercise, you can directly connect your intake of these to exercise.

The first thing that consistent exercise does is give you a boost of confidence. It takes about six weeks of consistent exercise to develop a pattern that's both mental and physical. Start by exercising two, three, or four days a week with your short-term goal being to keep it up for six weeks. Moderate your intensity at the beginning to make sure you don't overdo it and bow out early from extreme muscle soreness.

Everything you've been doing for the past month and a half has been training for your new lifestyle, so just keep going. Be sure to set some realistic short- and long-term goals. It doesn't matter if they're health-related or superficial as long as they keep you motivated and moving towards your goals.

After all of this, you're armed with some new confidence in your ability to set and reach wellness goals, your



calorie intake has become pretty steady, your exercise routine is set in your calendar as well as in your mind, and you are sleeping better. Now is the time to look back on your lifestyle over the last six to eight weeks and ask yourself if the changes are sustainable. Stick with the ones that are and leave the others behind, along with past disappointments and sadness.

If you've been thinking about changing your lifestyle, start with a trip to your physician to be cleared for exercise and always remember to aim for consistency and moderation to let go of the yo-yo. 🍏

ALI OTHMAN is an NSCA-certified personal trainer with over fifteen years of experience in the health and wellness industry. He also works in the Food Technology Department at IFANCA and manages IFANCA business activities in South Korea.

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Brand	Product Type	Company Name	Available At
Cabot®	Cheese	Cabot Creamery	Supermarkets throughout the United States
Campbell's®	Food Products	Campbell Soup Company	Supermarkets throughout Canada
Casa Grande Farms Green Mountain Farms® Hahn's®	Dairy Products	Franklin Foods Inc.	Supermarkets, discount stores
Desi Natural™	Dairy Products	Desi Fresh Foods™	Visit their website: desifreshfoods.com
Dr. Chen® Kandesn® Oi-Lin® SunBreeze® Sunrider® SunSmile® SunTrim® VitaShake®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmetics • Food Products • Nutritional Supplements • Personal Care Products 	Sunrider International	Visit their website for distributors: home.sunrider.com
Elecare® Ensure® Glucerna® Pediasure® Pedialyte® Similac® ZonePerfect®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant / Baby Food Products • Nutritional Supplements 	Abbott	Supermarkets and drugstores throughout the United States and Canada
Enfagrow® Enfakid® Enfamil® Enfapro®	Infant / Baby Food Products	Mead Johnson B.V.	Department stores, supermarkets, and drugstores throughout the United States
Enjoy Life®	Snack Food	Enjoy Life Natural Brands	Supermarkets, convenience stores, drugstores
Flipz® Turtles®	Candy / Chocolate	DeMet's Candy Company	Supermarkets, drugstores, discount stores
Fruitfull® Happy Indulgence®	Food Products	Happy & Healthy Products Inc.	Supermarkets, convenience stores, mini marts, gas stations

Brand	Product Type	Company Name	Available At
Godiva	Candy / Chocolate	Godiva Chocolatier	Company stores, department stores, supermarkets, gift shops, and drugstores throughout the United States
Golden Bonbon™	Candy / Chocolate	Asti Holdings Ltd.	Visit their website: www.goldenbonbon.com
Impossible™	Food Products	Impossible Foods Inc.	Grocery stores and select restaurants throughout the United States
J&M®	Food Products	J & M Food Products Company	Visit their website: www.halalcertified.com
Kontos®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakery Items • Bread 	Kontos Foods, Inc.	Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and fruit & vegetable markets throughout the United States
La Yogurt®	Dairy Products	Johanna Foods, Inc.	Supermarkets, fruit/vegetable markets, discount stores
Love & Quiches Gourmet®	Brownies and Cakes	Bello LLC, dba Love and Quiches	Visit their website for outlets: www.loveandquiches.com
MAYA™	Cosmetics	Maya Cosmetics	Visit their website: www.maya-cosmetics.com
Melaleuca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutritional Supplements • Personal Care Products 	Melaleuca, Inc.	Visit their website for distributors: www.melaleuca.com
Mountain High™	Dairy Products	General Mills	Supermarkets throughout the United States
My Own Meal®	Food Products	My Own Meals, Inc.	Visit their website: www.myownmeals.com
National®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dessert Mixes • Food Products • Sauces & Dressings, Condiments • Spices & Seasonings 	National Foods Limited	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States and Canada
Natural Delights®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Products 	Datepac, LLC	Kroger, Meijer, Publix, Walmart, Whole Foods, and various markets throughout the United States

Brand	Product Type	Company Name	Available At
Nestlé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverages / Beverage Concentrates • Dairy Products • Drink Mixes • Dessert Mixes • Food Products 	Nestle Pakistan Ltd.	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States
Nutrilite™	Nutritional Supplements	Access Business Group, LLC	Visit their website for distributors: amway.com/en_US/nutrilite
Olympia® Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat Bread • Gyros 	Olympia Food Industries, Inc.	Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and restaurants throughout the United States and Canada
Organic Valley®	Dairy Products	Organic Valley	Supermarkets throughout the United States
Peek Freans	Bakery Items	English Biscuit Manufacturers (Pvt.) Ltd.	Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States and Canada
POM Wonderful®	Beverages / Beverage Concentrates	POM Wonderful, LLC	Supermarkets throughout the United States
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Halal Consumer is a quarterly publication of IFANCA
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