



The **Balanced**
Nutritionist

Tailored Sustainable Real

THE 31 DAY HABIT CHALLENGE

FOR
A HEALTHY AND HAPPY
START TO 2020

Call us at:
07 3343 1602



Firstly, this challenge is not about dieting.

Or weight loss.

Or crazy exercise.

That's not really what we are about at The Balanced Nutritionist. Instead, this challenge is simply about helping you to make some changes to your daily habits that will benefit your health and happiness in the long run.

We are attempting to disrupt the typical New Year's Resolution conversation! Let's not focus on numbers or fads or short term stuff... let's get stuck in there and focus on the meat! What really matters!

We recommend you print out this booklet as you will need to complete exercises over this journey.

This is largely going to be a personal journey. The habits you want to change will be different from the habits that others may want to change. To get the most out of this challenge you need to do the exercises in this booklet and ensure you do the reflections each day as well.

Changing your habits can be hard. Why? Because habits are permanent. That's why this challenge goes for 31 days, as it lends a good opportunity to break some old, less beneficial habits and replace them with newer, healthier habits.

As well as habits that are personal to you, there are going to be some habits that we suggest you begin to create that are good habits for everyone to adopt. Your challenge will be, for the 31 days of January, to aim to include these habits in your daily routine. This way they hopefully become... habits for life.

Congratulations for taking on this challenge! This is a great way to set yourself up for a happy, healthy 2020. Remember if you want more support at any time, please [book in](#) with us at The Balanced Nutritionist as we can offer more tailored, personal recommendations when we work with you 1 on 1.

Part 1: Reflection

Ideally, complete this section of the booklet after Christmas, before New Year's Eve. Are you a late starter? No worries! Even if you begin this in mid-January, simply continue on it for the full 31 days following your start date.

This exercise is about assessing your baseline. I.e. how you feel generally on a day to day basis as far as your overall wellbeing is concerned. You will do this same reflection at the end of the challenge to assess how your new habits have helped your overall wellbeing.

Please provide a rating of 1 – 10 against each of the following parameters. 1 being very poor and 10 being very excellent. There is space to write any additional notes too.

- Daily energy (i.e. how alert, motivated, energetic do you feel generally each day).

- Sleep quality Digestion (i.e. bloating, irregular bowels, stomach pain etc.)

- Fitness (whether you feel physically fit or not)

- Mental wellbeing (i.e. stress levels, general happiness etc.)

Finally, a few words to describe how I feel generally on a day to day basis right now would be:

Healthy Habits for All of Us

Whilst this challenge is to be a personal one to you, there are a few healthy habits that we want to throw in there that we believe EVERYONE should be doing habitually.

These may seem simple... but do we really always do them? Even we admit sometimes these things slip by the wayside. However, they are fundamentals to our health. Do them every day for the next 31 days and they will help you to feel happier and healthier.

No need for crazy, exotic superfoods, or shake diets or extreme cleanses.... Start here. Adopt these first for the next 31 days and then make them a lifestyle.

- Hydration: as a minimum, over the next 31 days please aim to drink 2L of pure water per day.
- Coffee: as a maximum, do not exceed 2 caffeinated beverages per day and consume before 2pm. So.... 2 before 2pm! (N.B. Tea, coffee, green tea are all caffeinated beverages and each regular cup is classed as 1) Why? Because if you drink too much coffee and tea you will skimp on your water! Plus too much caffeine interferes with sleep hygiene... caffeine has a half-life of 7-9 hours!
- Cut sweeteners (low calorie included) from tea/coffee, eliminate soft drinks, fruit juices and energy drinks. Why? Because we all are sweet enough without it! AND even low calorie sweeteners can 'turn on' our sweet desires and leave us craving more of the sugary stuff. Sugar is in everything these days that in some instances we really need to retrain our palette to accept flavors other than sweet ones.
- Move 3 times per week minimum over the challenge for a minimum of 20 minutes. (This is going to be different for everyone depending on where you are currently at with exercise. If you are already a regular exerciser, you may want to make a more specific fitness goal in the next section. If you are not an exerciser, then start with something basic like walking or swimming.) Why? Because our lives are increasingly sedentary. And we need to move for our mental and physical wellbeing.
- Start the day with protein. Why? Because protein keeps you fuller for longer. Also, it helps to stabilize blood sugar levels which means that you will have more stable energy throughout the day. Don't overthink this one.... There are a few simple ways to restructure your breakfast on the following page.

- No greasy take-away. Why? It's just not great for us. With the invention of Uber Eats, ANYTHING can be 'taken away.' So let's define this a little further..... If you want a night off from cooking, then order something from a restaurant that actually has some salad or vegetables with it as well. Or perhaps something like a Subway salad or a burrito salad bowl from a Mexican joint if you are ending up at a take away joint. Make the best choice you can. But definitely no McDonald's or KFC etc. over the challenge.
- Get 2 cups of vegies on your plate at night regardless. Why? Because our main meals should have a load of vegies or salads with them. Regardless of whether you are a meat eater or a vegetarian, your main meals should contain lots of the green stuff. Simply adding 2 cups to your dinner plate will automatically see you portion your food better. Without thinking too much about it!
- Up level your sleep quality. Why? It all starts with sleep. Not getting good shut eye? Then you are going to give up on preparing healthy foods and moving more often pretty early on in the month. Sleep hygiene tips follow. Use them if you are a poor sleeper.
- Go alcohol free! Why? Because we all probably had a bit too much of the bubbly stuff over Christmas and New Year so let's give our bodies a break. Plus, when you drink alcohol.... You end to make less wise choices around food.
- Be kind to yourself. Why? Because you really are your own best friend. You need to take good care of yourself so you can look after others in your life. And you will not do this challenge perfectly. And that is ok. When you fall down, don't beat yourself up and then punish yourself with food and drink that will make you feel even more horrible. Just pick yourself up, dust the sand off and get back on the horse. Pretend, when you are saying things in your own head, that you are actually saying them to your bestie. If you would not say those things to him / her... then do not say them to yourself.

Ways to get Protein with breakfast:

1. Add a hard-boiled egg
2. Have an egg based breakfast – e.g. eggs on toast / omelet etc.
3. Swap milk for natural yoghurt (e.g. if you are currently having muesli with milk then swap to muesli with yoghurt)
4. Have a protein smoothie. A nice clean protein powder, blended with some fruit for example
5. Check your toast toppers; if you are a toast addict then swap white toast for dense toast, and ensure your toppers have protein. E.g. avocado and feta cheese or 100% nut butter. Jam, marmalade etc. are all sweet based and do not contain protein. Other options include tinned tuna or salmon, tinned sardines on toast or cottage cheese.

Sleep Hygiene and Stress Management

Sleep is incredibly important and getting good quality sleep is where we often start at The Balanced Nutritionist. Not as much is possible if you aren't getting sleep as you will simply be too exhausted to make changes to your nutrition and lifestyle.

Please consider the following sleep hygiene considerations and monitor changes to your sleep quality:

- Sleep in a completely dark room, being mindful that flashing clocks and even a low glow from a screen will interrupt your sleep cycle.
- Mind the temperature - research suggests a cooler environment is more favourable for good sleep, even if you do need to then sleep under a sheet or blanket.
- Use a blue light filter on laptops/phones if you are using them after 6pm.
- Do not use screens immediately before bed. Routine should be- screens off/ lights down/ warm shower or wash face/ meditation or reading to further wind down/ attempt sleep.
- No more than 2 caffeinated beverages in a day before 2 pm as caffeine has a half-life of 7-9 hours.
- 2L of water before 2 pm might also be helpful so you aren't drinking more water late in the day, which may result in nocturnal urination.
- Meditation app to try includes: Headspace, calm and the mindfulness app. If the mind races with a to-do list before bed, try writing out the list/ journaling before you switch off the light. Background white noise can also be beneficial for some.
- Alcohol can reduce GABA levels in the brain, which combats cortisol and promotes melatonin production. You should be avoiding it at least 4 nights per week.
- Get some natural light during the day! Sunlight signals your body to wake up literally and darkness innately signals your body to shut down. Try lunch out in the sunshine or a brief walk during the day - remaining under artificial lights all day is confusing for our body clock.
- Natural supplements can be effective: from lavender oil or room spray/ herbs and nutrients to support melatonin and GABA synthesis/ magnesium to assist with the relaxation etc. and even some 'sleepy teas.'

A Note if you are feeling overwhelmed....

If the above list of 10 recommended habits seems overwhelming don't set yourself up for stress! Instead, pick just a few of them to focus on and then add a couple of your own. You can always repeat this challenge in February and try to add in more habits then.

Your Personal Healthy Habits

Ok, so we've presented you with our top 10 (remember, pick just a few of them if 10 is too many). Time for you to add your own personal spin on things.

Since we are all different, you probably have some habits that are more personal to you that you'd like to work on. These may be related to work/life balance, fitness, food or even business. After all, health is holistic – its mind, body, soul related it's not just about what's on your plate!

We suggest you come up with between 3 and 5 daily (note that there may be a habit you only want to instill 3 times a week so that's also ok) habits you'd like to add to our top 10 and these are the habits you will work on building over the 31 day challenge. 3 to 5 is a good number... anymore, may be a little too much.

Some examples of habits to create may include.....

- I'm going to leave work on time each day so that I can have better work/life balance this year
- I'm going to start meditation for 10 minutes each night as I sleep better when I do this
- I want to improve my Parkrun time so I'm going to run 5km x 3 times per week as practice
- I want to take better care of my dog so I'm going to walk him every morning for 40 minutes
- I felt great when I used the recipes in the 'xyz' cookbook so I am going to use these recipes Mon – Fri throughout January

Now it's time to come up with your 3 to 5 habits below:

- Habit 1:

- Habit 2:

- Habit 3:

- Habit 4:

- Habit 5:

Daily Checklist

Ok. This part is all about accountability. And everybody does well when they are accountable. Seeing as this is largely a self-directed challenge, you are going to be accountable to yourself. That can be pretty powerful! You may also want to pop this daily checklist somewhere that your partner / roommate / family member can see it as well as they may assist you to stay on track throughout the month as well.

Now, the daily checklist will need to be printed out multiple times. 6 to be precise. Down the left hand side is a list of the habits you want to create (including a spot to handwrite your own in there too) and then on the right are columns. You use the columns to physically tick off whether that habit was done for the day or not. There is also a spot to reflect on the day. This is important. Anything can go here! Use it. Write the dates across the top row please.

Note that some habits aren't necessarily daily. E.g. if you are following the habit to move a minimum of 3 times per week.... As long as you hit 3 times in a week you can still count that day as a 'win.' This will make sense further below.

Completing the daily checklist will help you stay on track throughout the month. If you want extra support then [book an appointment](#) with us and bring your checklist with you so we can see how you are tracking!)

In addition to adding your own habits at the bottom, please write your name at the top.

An Extra Incentive.....

We were thinking of ways to motivate people to stick with their habits over the month and here's what we came up with.

For every day you nail ALL of your habits..... You will donate \$1 to the Givit fund set up the QLD Bushfire Appeal. Here at The Balanced Nutritionist, we have been raising money for this cause since October and we have donated over \$1100 so far. We'd love for you to help us. So at the end of the 31 days you need to reflect back. If you've hit your habits each day 27 times, then we ask that you simply pop \$27 into the [Givit fund for Qld Bushfires](#) appeal.

Don't deduct \$1 if you don't hit a goal that is not a daily goal, every day. So for example, you have the goal to move 3 times a week... that does not mean the other 4 days can't be deemed successful. You would only call it a loss if you only managed 1 or 2 sessions of movement that week in total.

Of course if there is a charity you feel more connected with then that's fine. But we'd love this challenge to have a charity feel to it. If you want to increase your donation then that's great. You could always donate \$2 or \$3 for each day you nail your habits.

At the end of the day though, if we all give a little it will go a long way. At the end of this habit challenge, we'd love to hear from you and how much you've raised so drop us an email appointments@thebalancednutritionist.com.au and let us know how much you managed to donate to charity as well as what habits you created over the month.

Now, time to move on to the next page – print it out 6 times and put your own name / extra habits in there and put this somewhere that you will see and complete it every single day!

_____ 's Daily Habit Checklist

Dates:					
2L water (min)					
2 before 2pm (caffeine)					
No sweeteners					
Moved for 20 mins minimum					
Proteiny breakfast					
No take-away today					
2 cups of evening veg					
Good sleep hygiene					
Was alcohol free					
Was kind to me					
Reflection here					

Extra Support

To stay in the conversation and remain inspired, the following might help:

- Like and follow us on Facebook and Instagram and get commenting as we will be talking all about habits in January
- Tag us in your posts showing us that you are actively creating your healthy habits! @thebalancednutritionist with the hashtag #thebalancednutritionisthealthyhabits
- Check out our [Pinterest account](#) if you want some food ideas – just good, clean food!
- Grab a buddy! Do this with a mate, neighbor or partner so you stay accountable to each other
- [Book in for an appointment](#) if you need extra accountability:

(We offer in clinic and Skype appointments all the way around Australia and NZ)

Final: Reflection

Remember this? You worked through this exact same reflection at the start of the challenge.

This exercise is about re-assessing your baseline. I.e. how you feel generally on a day to day basis as far as your overall wellbeing is concerned. It is great to compare this reflection once complete with the reflection you did at the very beginning of this challenge. The differences to your overall wellbeing should serve as motivation to continue with the new habits you have adopted.

Please provide a rating of 1 – 10 against each of the following parameters. 1 being very poor and 10 being very excellent. There is space to write any additional notes too.

- Daily energy

- Sleep quality

- Digestion

- Fitness

- Mental wellbeing

Finally, a few words to describe how I feel generally on a day to day basis right now would be:

Congratulations!

You did it. You've successfully focused for the whole of Jan (or 31 days in a row) on creating better habits.

This is far more important and valuable than trying to do something for a short term, only to revert back to old ways. Now the trick is, to keep these habits going for the rest of 2020 and beyond. It could be your best year yet!

Remember, we are here for you if you are stuck from this point. Maybe you need extra support? Or maybe you feel like you have improved 50% but there is more to do and you don't know what to do. Book your appointment here <https://www.halaxy.com/book/the-balanced-nutritionist/location/330860> or contact the clinic on 07 3343 1602. We are available for bookings online at any time and we resume answering the phone from the 4th of January 2020.

We can help you with:

- Ongoing digestive discomfort including management of irritable bowel syndrome
- Hormones! Getting ready for a baby! PCOS etc. Check out our podcast [here](#).
- Weight loss to a healthy weight range
- Individualised, personalised advice on your nutrition to help you work out what is right for you
- Nutrition around sporting goals
- Knowing what supplements to take (if any)
- Boosting your immune system (for those that are sick all the time)
- And much more

See you in clinic any time OR otherwise, if we don't, give us a like and a comment from time to time on social media ☺



The Balanced Nutritionist

Tailored Sustainable Real

Follow us at:



CLINIC LOCATION:

1 / 69 Secam St, Mansfield, QLD (20 mins from Brisbane CBD)(We are in the Step Into Health building)

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