

7 Steps to Help Transition to a Plant Based Lifestyle with EASE!

1. **Educate Yourself & Decide What Your Motivation Is:** There is a bounty of great information out there via documentaries, pod casts, magazines, books, YouTube Channels, etc. Take a little time and watch or read some and figure out your driving reason for wanting to start this journey. Is it to prevent or reverse a chronic disease, increase energy, reduce inflammation, lose weight, etc. The lists goes on and on, but it's important you know why as it will help you re-focus in times of weakness.
2. **Preparation!!:** Benjamin Franklin once said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." This could not be more true when it comes to transitioning. The lure of the Standard American Diet (SAD) is all around us. It's easy to run out the door without any snacks but when hunger strikes and we aren't prepared with something to satisfy that hunger we often make impulsive, poor choices that can lead us down the rabbit hole. Taking 5 minutes before leaving the house to pack a few quick snacks (nuts, fresh fruit, chopped veggies, bottled water, etc) can help you stay the course and be less susceptible to outside temptations. The same holds true for dinner. If we designate one day and put a little thought into what dinner for the week looks like, your success rate of sticking to your goals will be that much more attainable.
3. **Stock Your Frig With Healthy Foods:** If you surround yourself with bad company they will eventually start to influence your behavior. Same goes with food. If you allow "bad" food in the house, you will inevitably eat that bad food no matter how strong you think your will power is. However, stock your frig with healthy foods and snacks and even if you're tempted, you will be that much more likely to stick to the plan. Not sure where to start? Check out my Pantry Staples Resource Guide for some of the must-have's when it comes to Plant Based eating.
4. **Don't Overwhelm Yourself!:** It's easy in the beginning when you're excited about the possibilities to think that going cold turkey is the answer. While it does work for a select few, it can be very difficult for most and a lot of time leads to them returning to old habits. Instead, I suggest that you ease into it. This might look like adding more fruits, vegetables and beans to your meals or,

making 1 night out of the week a meatless dish or, perhaps, starting each morning off with a plant based breakfast like a nutritious and filling smoothie. Any positive change is a step in the right direction. This is a lifestyle and not a diet, so change takes some time.

5. **Surround Yourself With Like Minded People:** Don't undervalue this one. It is so important to have people who can understand the lifestyle and empathize with the struggles. If you're not getting that from your friends and family then seek them elsewhere (i.e. FaceBook groups, meet-ups, local festivals, YouTube Channels, etc). Get involved and comment or ask questions. Really get to know the people in these groups. You will often lean hard on them and deep friendships are often formed.
6. **Master A Few Things & Give Yourself Small Wins:** In order to not feel too overwhelmed learn how to cook a few things that you know you like. Always keep those staples on hand, so on a weekday that you have nothing prepared, you always have something to fall back on. It could be something as simple as rice and beans or a baked potato and chili. As your palate and skills grow, so will your list of fall-back meals. Eating plant based should NEVER get boring, so if you feel yourself slipping into that category, pick up a magazine, check out Pinterest or ask your Facebook group for some inspiration. Pick one or two things that sound enticing and give it a go.
7. **Don't Deprive Yourself:** No, this doesn't mean you should find the first fast food chain. What it does mean is that you should not feel hungry or deprived on a Plant Based lifestyle. There is such a variety of foods and most are high in fiber. Fiber helps to keep you full and satisfied. So eat until satiated and fill up on healthy snacks in between meals when necessary. When you're eating foods without labels, counting calories, carbs or fats, no longer becomes a concern, you just eat until your full.