

how to get in shape in your 50s

The ultimate guide to revitalizing your health and fitness.

how to get in shape in your 50s is more achievable and rewarding than you might think. As we enter this new decade, our bodies undergo natural changes, but these shifts don't have to dictate a decline in vitality. This comprehensive guide will explore the foundational pillars of transforming your well-being, focusing on sustainable exercise strategies, smart nutrition, crucial recovery, and the importance of mental resilience. We will delve into adapting your workout routine to your body's needs, understanding macronutrient balance, prioritizing sleep, and fostering a positive mindset. Embarking on this journey can lead to increased energy, improved strength, better mood, and a heightened sense of overall health and fitness for years to come.

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Understanding Your Body in Your 50s

As you navigate your 50s, it's important to acknowledge the physiological changes that often accompany this stage of life. Metabolism tends to slow down, muscle mass can begin to decrease if not actively maintained (a process known as sarcopenia), and hormonal shifts, particularly in women experiencing menopause, can influence energy levels, mood, and body composition. Bone density can also become a concern, making strength training even more vital. Understanding these natural transitions is the first step in developing a personalized and effective fitness plan that respects your body's evolving needs while actively working to optimize its function and appearance.

This decade presents a unique opportunity to re-evaluate your health and fitness goals. Rather than simply aiming for weight loss, a more holistic approach focusing on functional strength, cardiovascular health, flexibility, and mental well-being yields greater long-term benefits. It's about building resilience, maintaining independence, and enhancing your quality of life. By embracing these changes with knowledge and proactive strategies, you can not only mitigate potential declines but also experience a significant upswing in your physical and mental vitality.

Crafting an Effective Exercise Plan

Developing a well-rounded exercise program is paramount for anyone looking to get in shape in their 50s. The key is a balanced approach that incorporates cardiovascular activity, strength training, flexibility, and balance exercises. Prioritizing these components will help you build lean muscle mass,

improve heart health, increase bone density, enhance mobility, and reduce the risk of falls.

Cardiovascular Exercise for Heart Health and Endurance

Aerobic exercise is essential for maintaining a healthy heart and lungs, improving circulation, and burning calories. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity per week, or a combination of both. Moderate intensity means you can talk but not sing during the activity, while vigorous intensity means you can only say a few words without pausing for breath.

- Brisk walking
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Hiking
- Elliptical training

It's crucial to choose activities you enjoy to ensure consistency. Incorporating interval training, where you alternate between periods of higher and lower intensity, can also be highly effective for improving cardiovascular fitness and boosting metabolism.

Strength Training to Combat Muscle Loss

Strength training is arguably the most critical component for getting in shape in your 50s. As muscle mass naturally declines with age, resistance training helps to build and maintain it, which in turn boosts your metabolism, improves insulin sensitivity, strengthens bones, and enhances functional strength for everyday activities. Aim to strength train at least two to three days per week, allowing for rest days in between muscle groups.

Start with compound exercises that work multiple muscle groups simultaneously, such as squats, lunges, push-ups (modified if necessary), rows, and overhead presses. You can use bodyweight, resistance bands, dumbbells, or weight machines. Gradually increase the weight or resistance as you get stronger to continue challenging your muscles. Proper form is essential to prevent injuries, so consider working with a certified personal trainer initially to learn correct techniques.

Flexibility and Balance for Enhanced Mobility

Flexibility and balance exercises are often overlooked but are vital for preventing injuries, improving posture, and maintaining agility. As we age, our flexibility can decrease, leading to stiffness and a higher risk of falls. Incorporating stretching into your routine after workouts, or dedicating separate sessions to it, will significantly improve your range of motion.

Balance exercises, such as standing on one leg, heel-to-toe walking, or Tai Chi, can help improve proprioception (your body's awareness of its position in space) and strengthen the stabilizing muscles, reducing the likelihood of falls. Yoga and Pilates are excellent disciplines that combine flexibility, strength, and balance into a cohesive practice.

Nutrition Strategies for Peak Performance

What you eat plays an equally significant role as exercise in how to get in shape in your 50s. As your metabolism shifts, smart nutrition becomes even more critical for managing weight, maintaining energy levels, supporting muscle growth, and promoting overall health. Focusing on whole, unprocessed foods is the foundation of a healthy diet at any age, but it's especially important in your 50s.

Prioritizing Protein for Muscle Health

Protein is the building block of muscle, and its importance increases as you age to combat sarcopenia. Adequate protein intake helps preserve muscle mass, aids in muscle repair after exercise, and can contribute to feelings of fullness, which aids in weight management. Aim to include a source of lean protein with every meal and snack.

- Lean meats (chicken, turkey, lean beef)
- Fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel)
- Eggs
- Dairy products (Greek yogurt, cottage cheese)
- Legumes (beans, lentils)
- Tofu and tempeh
- Nuts and seeds

Distributing your protein intake throughout the day rather than consuming it all in one meal can

optimize muscle protein synthesis.

Balancing Macronutrients for Energy and Metabolism

A balanced intake of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins is crucial. Complex carbohydrates, found in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, provide sustained energy. Healthy fats, such as those found in avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil, are essential for hormone production and nutrient absorption. While the exact ratios can vary based on individual needs and activity levels, focusing on nutrient density is key.

Pay attention to portion sizes and the quality of your food choices. Reducing intake of refined sugars, processed snacks, and unhealthy saturated fats will help manage blood sugar levels, reduce inflammation, and support weight management efforts. Hydration is also a vital, often overlooked, component of nutrition; drinking plenty of water supports all bodily functions, including metabolism and energy production.

Micronutrients and Supplements

As we age, our bodies' ability to absorb certain nutrients may change, and our dietary needs can evolve. Ensuring adequate intake of vitamins and minerals is crucial for supporting everything from bone health to immune function. Key micronutrients to focus on include calcium and Vitamin D for bone health, B vitamins for energy metabolism, and antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables to combat cellular damage.

While a balanced diet should be the primary source of nutrients, some individuals in their 50s may benefit from targeted supplementation. For example, Vitamin D deficiency is common, and women going through menopause might consider calcium or magnesium. However, it is always recommended to consult with a healthcare professional or registered dietitian before starting any new supplement regimen to ensure it's appropriate for your individual health status and needs.

The Crucial Role of Recovery and Sleep

Getting in shape in your 50s isn't just about the work you do during exercise and meals; it's equally about what you do to allow your body to repair, rebuild, and rejuvenate. Recovery and sufficient sleep are non-negotiable components of a successful fitness journey, especially as we age.

Prioritizing Rest and Repair

Your body repairs and strengthens itself during rest. Overtraining without adequate recovery can lead to burnout, increased risk of injury, decreased performance, and hormonal imbalances. Incorporate rest days into your weekly exercise schedule, and ensure these days are truly restful – meaning they

don't involve strenuous activity. Active recovery, such as light walking or gentle stretching, can be beneficial on rest days but should not be taxing.

Listen to your body. If you feel persistent fatigue, muscle soreness that doesn't subside, or a general lack of motivation, it might be a sign that you need more rest. Pushing through extreme fatigue can be counterproductive and detrimental to your long-term goals.

Optimizing Sleep for Recovery and Hormone Balance

Sleep is a fundamental pillar of health and recovery. During sleep, your body releases growth hormone, which is crucial for muscle repair and growth. It also plays a vital role in regulating appetite hormones, managing stress, and consolidating memories. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night.

To improve sleep hygiene, establish a consistent sleep schedule, create a relaxing bedtime routine, ensure your bedroom is dark, quiet, and cool, and avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime. Limiting screen time before bed can also help as the blue light emitted from devices can interfere with melatonin production. Prioritizing sleep is a powerful, yet often underestimated, strategy for getting in shape in your 50s.

Mental Fortitude and Consistency

The journey to getting in shape in your 50s requires not only physical effort but also a strong mental approach. Consistency is the bedrock of any long-term health and fitness achievement, and mental resilience is what fuels that consistency.

Setting Realistic Goals and Expectations

It's important to set achievable goals that align with your current fitness level and lifestyle. Instead of aiming for drastic, unrealistic changes, focus on smaller, sustainable victories. For example, instead of saying "I will lose 20 pounds in a month," set a goal like "I will incorporate a 30-minute walk three times this week" or "I will add a serving of vegetables to dinner each night."

Celebrate your successes, no matter how small. Acknowledging your progress will help maintain motivation and reinforce positive habits. Understanding that there will be plateaus and occasional setbacks is also crucial; these are normal parts of any journey and do not signify failure.

Building Sustainable Habits

True transformation comes from building lasting habits rather than relying on short-term willpower. Identify the habits that will support your fitness goals – such as preparing meals in advance,

scheduling workouts like appointments, or finding an accountability partner. Start small and gradually build upon these habits. Consistency over time, even with imperfect execution, is far more effective than sporadic bursts of intense effort.

Focus on creating a lifestyle that incorporates health and fitness seamlessly. This might involve finding joy in movement, discovering healthy recipes you genuinely enjoy, and making your well-being a priority amidst other life demands. The goal is to make healthy choices automatic rather than a constant mental battle.

Staying Motivated and Overcoming Plateaus

Maintaining momentum is key to long-term success when you're looking to get in shape in your 50s. Motivation can ebb and flow, and hitting plateaus is a common experience. Developing strategies to navigate these challenges will ensure you stay on track.

Finding Your "Why" and Reconnecting with Your Goals

Remembering your core reasons for wanting to get in shape can be a powerful motivator. Whether it's to have more energy to play with grandchildren, to improve your health markers, or to simply feel better in your own skin, reconnecting with your "why" can reignite your drive when it starts to wane. Regularly revisit your goals and visualize the positive outcomes you are working towards.

Don't be afraid to adjust your goals as you progress. As you become fitter and stronger, your aspirations may evolve. Setting new, challenging yet attainable goals can provide fresh motivation and prevent complacency. Trying new activities or setting performance-based goals (e.g., running a certain distance without stopping) can also be very effective.

Strategies for Breaking Through Plateaus

Plateaus are a normal part of the fitness journey where progress seems to halt. When this happens, it's often a sign that your body has adapted to your current routine. To break through, you might need to change one or more elements of your program.

- **Vary your workouts:** Introduce new exercises, change the order of your routines, or try a different type of activity altogether.
- **Increase intensity:** Gradually increase the weight you lift, the speed of your cardio, or the duration of your efforts.
- **Adjust your nutrition:** Sometimes a slight tweak in your calorie intake or macronutrient ratios can help restart metabolism.

- **Focus on recovery:** Ensure you are not overtraining and are getting enough sleep, as this can be a hidden cause of plateaus.
- **Seek professional guidance:** A trainer or dietitian can offer fresh perspectives and personalized strategies to overcome challenges.

Remember that consistency is your greatest ally. Even if progress feels slow, continuing to show up and put in the effort will eventually lead to breakthroughs.

FAQ

Q: What is the most important type of exercise for someone in their 50s?

A: While a balanced approach is ideal, strength training is arguably the most critical type of exercise for individuals in their 50s. It helps combat age-related muscle loss (sarcopenia), which can lead to a slower metabolism, reduced bone density, and decreased functional strength.

Q: How much protein should I be eating daily to get in shape in my 50s?

A: For individuals in their 50s looking to maintain or build muscle, a general recommendation is to consume 1.0 to 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. This can be adjusted based on activity levels and specific fitness goals.

Q: Is it too late to start exercising in my 50s?

A: Absolutely not! It is never too late to start exercising. Your 50s are an excellent time to prioritize your health and fitness. The benefits of exercise, such as improved cardiovascular health, increased strength, better mood, and enhanced cognitive function, are profound at any age.

Q: How many days a week should I aim to exercise?

A: A well-rounded fitness plan typically includes 3-5 days of moderate exercise per week. This could involve a combination of cardiovascular activities, strength training sessions, and flexibility work. Prioritize consistency and listen to your body, incorporating rest days as needed.

Q: Will I experience joint pain if I start strength training in my 50s?

A: When performed with proper form, strength training can actually help strengthen the muscles and

tissues surrounding your joints, potentially reducing joint pain and improving stability. It's crucial to start with lighter weights, focus on correct technique, and gradually increase resistance. Consulting with a physical therapist or certified trainer can help ensure safe and effective training.

Q: How can I stay motivated to exercise consistently in my 50s?

A: Motivation can be sustained by setting realistic, achievable goals, finding activities you genuinely enjoy, exercising with a friend or joining a group class, tracking your progress, and reminding yourself of your "why" – the deeper reasons for wanting to improve your health and fitness.

Q: Are there any specific nutritional considerations for women in their 50s?

A: Yes, women in their 50s, particularly those going through menopause, may need to pay closer attention to calcium and Vitamin D intake for bone health. They may also benefit from ensuring adequate protein consumption to support muscle mass and managing potential hormonal shifts through diet. Consulting with a healthcare provider or registered dietitian is recommended.

Q: How important is flexibility and balance for people in their 50s?

A: Flexibility and balance are extremely important for individuals in their 50s. Maintaining good flexibility helps prevent injuries and improves range of motion, while enhanced balance significantly reduces the risk of falls, which can have serious consequences. Activities like yoga, Pilates, and specific balance exercises are highly beneficial.

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complementary healthcare. She is the author of 18 books on how to keep body and mind in shape at every stage of life using yoga, spa treatments, and meditation; they have been translated into ten languages. She was natural health contributor to the magazine Total Makeover, her writing has appeared in magazines and newspapers including Weekend Guardian, The Times (UK), Zest, and Shape, and she has broadcast on BBC Radio 4. She teaches at the masters level in writing at University College Falmouth. Susannah's own way to stay in shape includes yoga (which she has taught for two years), coastal walking, swimming, and contemporary dance. But above all, she stays in shape by running around after her three young daughters.

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how to get in shape in your 50s: *American Heart Association Complete Guide to Women's Heart Health* American Heart Association, 2011-12-27 Heart disease poses the greatest health threat that women in the United States face: One in every three women will die from it each year. But that doesn't have to be the case. Heart disease is not an inevitable part of growing older. In fact, if you reach the age of 50 without developing the major risk factors for heart disease, you can live your entire life without it, and your chances of dying from it decrease from 50 percent to a strikingly low 8 percent. The key to preventing heart disease is embracing a heart-healthy lifestyle—and the sooner, the better. In this groundbreaking book, the American Heart Association shows you how even the smallest changes can make a big difference over time to protect the health of your heart. The Complete Guide to Women's Heart Health explains how gradual and sustainable shifts in your routine, such as using just a little more than one percent of your time each week to exercise or losing just 10 percent of your body weight, can have a far-reaching impact on your health. With specific pointers on diet, exercise, and health care, this book shows you how to get past the common obstacles as well as how to make taking care of your heart easy and attainable for the busy life you lead, at every age. In chapters targeted for every decade of a woman's life from her 20s to her 70s and beyond, the American Heart Association gives women age-appropriate advice on healthy lifestyle choices and heart-health care. Additional information addressing issues of special interest to women and how those issues affect the heart include: · Smoking · Pregnancy · Menopause and hormone therapy · Aging · Diabetes and other health conditions With the latest guidelines on prevention, suggestions on how to work with your healthcare providers to maintain and improve your vitality, details on screening technologies, and facts about common diagnoses and treatment options, this book is the ultimate resource to help you—and all the women in your life—fight heart disease. From the Hardcover edition.

how to get in shape in your 50s: *Fit, Fueled & Fabulous A BYB Fitness Guide for Women Over 50* Dr. Cynthia Simon, 2025-07-22 You didn't come this far to only come this far. At a certain point, you realize this next chapter is yours to claim. Fit, Fueled & Fabulous is your empowering guide to reclaiming your strength, energy, and confidence as you step boldly into midlife and beyond. This isn't about shrinking or extreme diets. It's about honoring your body, shifting your mindset, and celebrating what's possible — right now. Whether you're in your 40s, 50s, 60s, or 70s+, this book meets you where you are and helps you move forward with purpose. Inside, you'll find holistic, age-smart strategies to help you: □ Build a fitness routine that energizes your life, not drains it □ Strengthen your body and protect your joints with smart, effective training □ Fuel your vitality with balanced nutrition (no fads or restrictions) □ Break free from the scale and build unshakable confidence □ Manage stress and master your mindset □ Embrace recovery, joy, and lifelong wellness without apology Built on the BYB (Be Your Best) philosophy, this guide unites mind, body, and nutrition to help you live powerfully and unapologetically. Because this isn't about slowing down, it's about shifting gears with wisdom, strength, and unstoppable grace. Your Fit, Fueled & Fabulous life starts now. Let's go!

how to get in shape in your 50s: *Fast After 50* Joe Friel, 2015-01-10 "Read Fast After 50 to learn more about the effects of aging on athletic performance and how you can be a competitive

endurance athlete as you get older.” —Triathlete magazine For runners, cyclists, triathletes, swimmers, and cross-country skiers, getting older doesn't have to mean getting slower. Drawing from the most current research on aging and sports performance, Joe Friel—America's leading endurance sports coach—shows how athletes can race strong and stay healthy well past age fifty. In his groundbreaking book *Fast After 50*, Friel offers a smart approach for athletes to ward off the effects of age. Friel shows athletes how to extend their racing careers for decades—and race to win. *Fast After 50* presents guidelines for high-intensity workouts, focused strength training, recovery, crosstraining, and nutrition for high performance: How the body's response to training changes with age, how to adapt your training plan, and how to avoid overtraining How to shed body fat and regain muscle density How to create a progressive plan for training, rest, recovery, and competition Workout guidelines, field tests, and intensity measurement In *Fast After 50*, Joe Friel shows athletes that age is just a number—and race results are the only numbers that count. With contributions from: Mark Allen, Gale Bernhardt, Amby Burfoot, Dr. Larry Creswell, John Howard, Dr. Tim Noakes, Ned Overend, Dr. John Post, Dr. Andrew Pruitt, and Lisa Rainsberger. “*Fast After 50* is the best of this year's batch of practical books on science and performance. A great overview of the science of endurance training for anyone, but particularly focused on how to adapt as you get older. Solid advice, clearly presented.” —*Runner's World*

how to get in shape in your 50s: *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Personal Finance in Your 40's & 50's* Sarah Fisher, Susan Shelly, 2001-12-01 Developing and maintaining personal finance doesn't end by middle age! With *The Complete Idiot's Guide® to Personal Finance in Your 40s & 50s* learn:

- Quick and easy ways to learn with the information exists
- Idiot-proof steps to understanding how the information affects you
- Comprehensive coverage of the consequences of the information

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how to get in shape in your 50s: *Nourish: Mind, Body & Soul* Amber Homan, Amber Rose, Sadie Frost, Holly Davidson, 2018-08-06 We get so much more out of life when we feel positive and energised and therefore it is such a shame when the everyday pressures of life build up and we find ourselves doing almost anything simply to get by and end up a long way from the ideal that we still wistfully have in mind. Full of the wisdom and good nourishment that helped Sadie, Holly and Amber through their own personal struggles and setbacks, *Nourish* promises to restore you to the path of complete well-being. With Amber's delicious food to nourish the body, Holly's exercises to strengthen it and Sadie's beauty recipes to soothe the skin and yoga and meditation routines to still the mind, this beautiful book is the perfect antidote to the stresses and strains of modern life, proving that there is always a way to stay nourished and happy.

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reflect that. You need an essential guide; you need to understand and love yourself again, and finally take care of yourself and also, with satisfaction, how to lose weight after 50! Here you will find valuable help for: - tone your body after the age of 50 - stay fit for life after 50 years - still, be seductive after the age of 50 - have relief from menopause ailments and regain the joy of a constant and positive mood - know the foods that are your friends at this stage of life - know how your metabolism transforms - live a healthy and socially fulfilling life right now - give yourself the experience of effective and healthy natural remedies and fix the hormone - prevent disease and prevent aging - understand that longevity training is in your hands Get help to achieve these goals. This book was created for this.

how to get in shape in your 50s: Let Me Tell You a Story James H. O'Keefe, Joan O'Keefe, 2013-02-26 In *Let Me Tell You a Story*, Dr. James O'Keefe and his dietitian wife Joan O'Keefe, co-authors of the best-selling *The Forever Young Diet & Lifestyle*, present stories of real-life people and how they found their way to living a happy, healthy, and joyful existence. The authors firmly believe that the human brain best learns new concepts and internalizes information that can change one's perspective and alter behavior through story-telling. Scientific findings and statistics are churned out at an ever-quicken pace. Recent estimates state that the entire body of scientific knowledge has doubled just since the year 2000. It has become unmanageable to keep up with all the science on health, nutrition, fitness, and wellness. So many people just throw up their hands in frustration, not knowing what to believe, while continuing to follow lifestyles and diets that are often toxic. Yet knowledge is power; you and your loved ones need this information if you are to thrive in this 21st century environment that is so foreign to our genetic identity. This statement is at the core of this book. Through this book of true stories about real people, these examples illustrate important concepts based on state-of-the-art science and the power of the *Forever Young Diet & Lifestyle* program, as outlined in their previous book. Through 26 informative, entertaining, and often amusing chapters, the O'Keefes cover a multitude of health, diet, and fitness topics, such as *Fast Each Night to Shine Each Day*, *Run for Your Life--at a Comfortable Pace--Not too Far*, and *Sex: Not Just for Making Babies Anymore*. Through stories of everyday people, readers can learn that they too can improve their health and well-being, without being preached at.--

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how to get in shape in your 50s: The National Body Challenge Success Program for the Whole Family Pamela Peeke, 2005-12 In 2005, The Discovery Health National Body Challenge helped thousands of men and women across the country remove more than 395,000 pounds of excess weight--almost to 200 tons--and nearly twice the amount that Challengers lost in 2004. Now best-selling author and Discovery Health Channel medical spokesperson Dr. Pamela Peeke provides you with all the tools, advice, and encouragement you need to reclaim your health and become a Body Challenge success story yourself. On the 12-week program, which can be personalized to meet your specific goals, you'll learn how to make stress reduction, proper nutrition, and exercise a top priority in your life. Stick with it and you'll firm your muscles, burn fat, and handle stress and emotions through an integrated mind-mouth-muscle approach. You'll discover how your slimmed-down, toned-up body will reflect in other, more profound changes including improved health, more energy, and greater self-confidence. You can witness the evidence of the results you can achieve in the remarkable before-and-after pictures and inspiring words of participants who transformed their bodies and lives on the program. Make this is the year you become a participant instead of spectator. Are you up to the Challenge?

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a tea for every taste, and now this time-honored superfood is trending as the drink of choice for health-conscious people of all ages and cultures. This fascinating book boils down the rich history of tea—as well as the ever-expanding list of health and weight loss benefits found in its leaves. You'll discover:

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- How age-defying spa treatments made from tea can soothe your skin, soften your hair, and give you an all-over glow and peace of mind.
- The latest knowledge from top medical researchers and tea experts on how the superfood can tackle digestive problems, depression, anxiety, aches and pains, and add years to your life.
- Over 50 home cures you can stir up to boost energy and lessen stress, and treat the common cold, insomnia, and more.
- Comforting recipes like Warm Scones with Jam and Devonshire Cream, Assorted Finger Sandwiches, Scrumptious White Tea Scallops, and Russian Tea Cookies paired with the perfect brew—hot or iced. Better health is just a sip away. With this book (sweetened with lively stories) you'll learn the hottest tips to improve your health, boost brainpower—and even clean your house!

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- What exactly is super, and how it can work harder for you
- How to adopt super money habits and make a plan to achieve financial independence
- Set and forget strategies to grow your super faster
- Hacks for all ages: women in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s.

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- * A complete rundown of the healthy nutrients found in each dish, from fiber and protein to iron, calcium and vitamins
- * Authoritative information on health issues that you'll likely encounter at some point in your life, including weight management, stress, hormones, bone density, and heart health
- * Girlfriend-to-girlfriend wisdom from other women, who share their real-life experiences with weight loss, food, exercise and everyday coping
- * Notes from Dr. R that offer medical information on women's health topics, ways to exercise and stay fit, and tips on maintaining a healthy weight

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