

# 12 Healthy Habits

## Habit 3: Eat More Fish

A YEAR OF BUILDING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

### BENEFITS:

- Lower risk of heart disease
- Lower blood cholesterol levels
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower triglycerides
- May help reduce inflammation, lowering the risk of arthritis

### GOAL:

- Eat 2 servings of fish per week

## Fishing for Health

If you are a typical American, you will only consume 15 pounds of fish during the next year compared to 246 pounds of meat and poultry. Yet fish is a great source of lean protein along with vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids.

These fatty acids are essential to the proper functioning of our bodies and our bodies do not produce them so we need to include them in our diet. There are several types of omega-3 fatty acids, but two crucial ones—EPA and DHA are primarily found in fish. All fish contain omega-3 fatty acids but they are especially high in fatty fish, including salmon, trout, sardines, herring, canned mackerel and canned light tuna.

While fish (and shellfish) are generally low in saturated fat, the method you

use to prepare it can add extra fat and calories. A 3 ounce serving of catfish, breaded and deep fried, contains 195 calories and 11 grams of fat (17% of daily value). If you cook that same 3 ounce serving with dry heat (baked or broiled) you reduce the calories to 129 and 7 grams of fat (10%). While fried fish is a Southern staple, baked, broiled or grilled fish is excellent. Try serving it with lemon or cocktail sauce instead of tartar sauce or butter for a tasty and healthy main dish.

Planked fish is a popular way of grilling fish. An untreated cedar plank is soaked in water, then charred on the grill on one side. The plank is turned over so the skin side of a fillet of fish is placed on the charred side and then



grilled until the fish is cooked through. It lends a slightly smoky flavor and the fish doesn't fall through the grates or stick to the grill. Another good way to cook fish is to place a 6 ounce fillet in a parchment paper bag with vegetables and seasonings such as fresh herbs, spinach, green onions, lemon slices, etc. Fold up the bag and bake on a cookie sheet at 400 degrees for about 18 minutes. Fish will dry out quickly so look for the flesh to just turn opaque and flake with a fork.

This month, branch out from fried catfish and try a variety of delicious baked, grilled, poached and steamed fish.

## Fish Safety

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that can become concentrated in long lived fish. Some types of fish contain higher levels of mercury that may harm unborn babies and young children. For most people, this is not a health concern. However, women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children are advised to avoid eating King Mackerel, Marlin, Shark, Swordfish, Tilefish and Tuna Steaks. They should also choose canned light tuna over white (Albacore) tuna. Several of the most commonly eaten fish are low in mercury, including catfish, cod, Pollock, salmon, tilapia and trout. Other contaminants such as PCBs tend to concentrate in the fat of fish. To greatly reduce the risk of these, cut off the skin and fat, including the dark fatty parts on the sides, belly and back and don't use the drippings for sauces. Overall, the health benefits of fish outweigh the risks, so follow these guidelines and enjoy. For more information see the EPA website: [www.epa.gov/hg/advisories.htm](http://www.epa.gov/hg/advisories.htm)

## Choosing Your Fish

Keep in mind that fish have different flavors, textures and best methods of preparation. If you are new to fish, try a mildly flavored fish and work your way up to full flavored fish (see the chart below). Also keep in mind that saltwater fish (cod, flounder, grouper, etc.) have larger and fewer bones than freshwater fish (trout, catfish, etc.) so they are easier to remove.

Mild	Moderate	Full
Cod	Catfish	Amberjack
Flounder	Mahi Mahi	Bluefish
Grouper	Perch	Chilean Sea Bass
Haddock	Salmon	Salmon
Whiting	(Pink and Chum)	(Atlantic, Sockeye and King)
Halibut	Shark	Swordfish
Monkfish	Black Sea Bass	Tuna
Orange Roughy	Striped Bass	
Sole	Rainbow Trout	
Snapper	Walleye	
Tilapia		

Purchase fish and seafood last at the store and head straight home to the refrigerator. Use within 1-2 days. For whole fish, look for bright, clear, full eyes and shiny, brightly colored skin. The flesh should be firm and spring back and gills should be red or bright pink. Buy 3/4-1 pound per serving. For fillets or steaks, look for firm, moist flesh and fresh odor (not fishy). Buy 5-8 ounces per serving. Sometimes flash frozen fish is better. Look for solidly frozen fish with undamaged wrapping and no white, dark, icy or dry spots as this indicates deterioration.

## Tandoori Style Halibut

*Tandoori is a popular Indian dish consisting of roasted meat (usually chicken) prepared with a marinade of yogurt and spices. The name comes from the type of cylindrical clay oven, a tandoor, in which the dish is traditionally prepared. Here a flavorful tandoori style marinade is applied to fish and broiled.*

1 cup non-fat plain yogurt  
Juice from 1/2 lemon  
2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger root  
1 yellow onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon ground turmeric  
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander  
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
4 fillets halibut, skin removed  
2 cups cooked brown rice

In a small skillet, combine cumin, turmeric, coriander, allspice, cayenne pepper and salt. Toast dry spices in skillet over medium heat until fragrant, being careful not to burn them. Let cool slightly. In a shallow glass or ceramic dish just large enough to hold the halibut fillets in a single layer, stir together the yogurt, lemon juice, ginger root, onion, garlic and toasted spices. Add halibut fillets and turn to coat with marinade. Meanwhile, preheat broiler. Line a baking sheet with foil. Remove halibut fillets from marinade and place in single layer on foil. Place under broiler and cook, turning once, until opaque throughout, about 8-10 minutes. Serve over brown rice.

Eat  
Breakfast

Get  
Cooking

Eat  
More Fish

Get  
Moving

Good  
Fats

Go  
Meatless

Veggie  
Up

Get  
Stronger

Sugar  
Down

Make  
Grains  
Whole

Portion  
Power

Be  
Mindful