



Session 6

Staying on Track

## Session 6: Staying on Track

### To begin this session you will:

- ▶ Reflect on your journal with your lifestyle educator
- ▶ Review and discuss last session's goals, your accomplishments, and your challenges



### In this session you will:

- ▶ Discuss how and why to choose organic foods
- ▶ Learn to make healthful decisions while celebrating special occasions
- ▶ Understand how to put it all together
- ▶ Explore how to manage lapses and relapses
- ▶ Learn to get the most out of your daily exercise and activity

## Nutrition 101: why choose organic?

### What does “organic” mean? And is “natural” the same thing?

In the world of farming and agriculture, “organic” refers to the way that farmers grow, raise, and process the foods that we eat, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, meat, and dairy products. Organic fruits and vegetables use natural pest- and weed-controlling techniques and natural fertilizers like compost and are not genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Organic meats, and therefore dairy products, are free of added hormones and antibiotics and are fed organic feed.<sup>30</sup> There is no legal definition for the term “natural” when used to talk about food; therefore, always read labels carefully to better understand what you are buying and consuming.<sup>31</sup>

	REQUIRED	ORGANIC <sup>30</sup>	NATURAL <sup>31</sup>
 <p>VS.</p> 	• Animals can go outdoors	Yes	Not required
	• Strict certification standard	Yes	Not required
	• Prohibits harmful materials	Yes	Not required
	• Keeps soil and water healthy	Yes	Not required
	• Animals eat 100% organic diet	Yes	Not required
	• Antibiotics in meat	No	Allowed
	• Growth hormones in meat	No	Allowed
	• Synthetic fertilizers	No	Allowed
	• Genetically engineered ingredients	No	Allowed
	• Toxic pesticides	No	Allowed
• Sewage sludge fertilizer	No	Allowed	

### Why is this important for me?

Consuming chemical herbicides and pesticides, antibiotics, and hormones used in conventional farming (as opposed to organic farming) can, over time, have a serious impact on our health in a number of ways. Here’s how:

- **Chemical herbicides and pesticides.** There are over 600 chemicals registered for agricultural use in America, many of which have not been tested for long-term health effects. Pesticides have been linked, in a number of studies, to a variety of conditions including cancer, obesity, diabetes, Parkinson’s disease, and infertility, just to name a few.
- **Antibiotics.** When we eat conventionally raised animal proteins, we are unknowingly eating antibiotics as well. Although there is no arguing that antibiotics have an important role in treating bacterial infections, constant exposure to antibiotics via the diet can eventually cause bacteria to become “antibiotic-resistant.” Antibiotic resistance means that bacteria can no longer be treated by certain drugs during times of infection.
- **Hormones.** Added hormones, used to bulk up the animal before it ends up on your plate, are a major concern because they are often linked to early onset of puberty, growth of tumors, and increased cancer risk, among others.



## Is eating organic expensive?

Yes and no. Eating organic can be more costly, but if you are a smart shopper, you can eat organically grown foods on a budget as well. Here are some tips to help you choose organic on a budget:

- Shop seasonally. When you buy fruits and vegetables that are in season, they are often less expensive than items that are conventionally grown.
- Warehouse stores, where you can purchase items in bulk at a lower cost, now offer a variety of organic food items. If you live in a smaller household, some items like meats can be frozen and defrosted for later use, or you can split your produce with a friend.
- Look for farmers markets or join community supported agriculture (CSA) groups in your area.
- Become familiar with the **Dirty Dozen** and **Clean 15**. These lists, compiled and updated yearly by the Environmental Working Group ([www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)), identify fruits and vegetables with the highest and lowest pesticide levels. Make it a priority to buy organic from the **Dirty Dozen** and know that you have a little more wiggle room with items on the **Clean 15**.

DIRTY DOZEN** HIGHEST LEVELS OF PESTICIDES		CLEAN 15 LOWEST LEVELS OF PESTICIDES	
1. Apples	7. Peaches	1. Asparagus	9. Mangoes
2. Celery	8. Potatoes	2. Avocado	10. Onions
3. Cherry tomatoes	9. Snap peas	3. Cabbage	11. Papayas
4. Cucumbers	10. Spinach	4. Cantaloupe	12. Pineapples
5. Grapes	11. Strawberries	5. Cauliflower	13. Sweet corn
6. Nectarines	12. Sweet bell peppers	6. Eggplant	14. Sweet peas
Others to be aware of: Hot Peppers, Kale, and Collard Greens		7. Grapefruit	15. Sweet potatoes
		8. Kiwi	

Tip: Clean fruits and vegetables with a diluted vinegar solution (one part vinegar to three parts water) to drastically reduce the amount of bacteria and pesticides.

\*\*While eating organic is preferable, it should not stop you from consuming a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.



## Choosing health while celebrating

Whether you're celebrating a special event by eating at a restaurant, getting together with family/friends for the holidays, or going to a party, choosing healthy foods to manage your weight and blood sugar levels can be very challenging. So let's take a look at some important points that will help make eating out a very enjoyable experience.

7 Healthy Eating Guidelines for Social Gatherings & Dining Out	
<b>1. Plan your day.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan your food choices and timing so that you don't arrive overly hungry</li> <li>• Avoid drinking alcohol before eating</li> <li>• If you are going to a party, bring a dish from home for yourself and to share</li> </ul>
<b>2. Choose the restaurant wisely.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know what you're going to order before you go (check the restaurant's website for the menu)</li> <li>• Choose items that appear to be lower in carbs, fat, and sodium</li> </ul>
<b>3. Know how the meal is prepared.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether you're at someone's house or a restaurant, ask how the food was prepared</li> </ul>
<b>4. Make special requests known.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, ask the server or host for no added salt</li> <li>• Substitute French fries with a side salad, steamed vegetables, or cup of fresh fruit</li> </ul>
<b>5. Watch those portions.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Split a main dish or dessert with someone or ask for half the meal to be placed in a to-go container (right at the start)</li> <li>• Ask for a side salad—the nonstarchy vegetables are a good source of fiber and will help you fill up</li> </ul>
<b>6. Watch those "empty" carbs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skip the basket of chips or bread served before the meal</li> <li>• Eat vegetables, cheese, or nuts instead of chips, crackers, or bread for appetizers</li> <li>• Order foods without breading and choose broth-based soups instead of those made with milk or cream</li> </ul>
<b>7. Look out for fat.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for these words that indicate a high amount of unhealthy fat: breaded, cream, fried, battered, gravy, au gratin, hollandaise, rich, and scalloped</li> <li>• Choose an entrée that is grilled, baked, or broiled rather than fried</li> <li>• Ask for salad dressings on the side—or choose olive oil &amp; vinegar</li> <li>• Ask the server to hold the cheese or cream sauces</li> </ul>



## **Activity: making healthy choices for special occasions**

Now that we have identified how to overcome some obstacles when eating out, take a moment to describe a problem you have when eating out.

Look at the 7 Healthy Eating Guidelines and list one option that you would like to try the next time you dine out:

When will I do this?

Identify obstacles that might arise:

How will I overcome these obstacles?

What else can be done to ensure I am successful?

Is there anything my healthcare team, family, or friends can do to help?

What are my next steps?

## Putting it all together: the next steps

By now you have likely realized that your FirstLine Therapy plan is nothing like any “diet” you’ve done before. That is because this plan is not a diet at all...it is a “lifestyle change.” Although you have reached the conclusion of your 12-week program, this is a journey that you will continue for the rest of your life. All of the knowledge and skills that you have acquired through the past 12 weeks will continue to serve you for years to come. You are now well-prepared to make healthier decisions that will continue to improve your health and contribute not just to a longer life, but more importantly a happier, healthier one as well.



**Stay hydrated.** Drink approximately half your body weight in ounces per day. If you spend a lot of time in the heat or lose a large amount through sweat, consider drinking extra to remain well-hydrated.



**Get adequate rest.** Aim to get seven to nine hours of sleep each night.



**Avoid empty or high-calorie foods.** Be aware of your weaknesses, stressors, emotional ties to food, and social eating habits and have a plan for how you can avoid making poor food decisions.



**Follow your FirstLine Therapy food plan.** Continue to consume a diet high in phytonutrient-rich plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and high-quality plant and animal protein.



**Nutritional supplementation.** Continue on the supplement regimen recommended by your healthcare practitioner.



**Set goals.** The best way to know where you are going in life is to set goals. Without goals we run the risk of wandering aimlessly through life and may end up somewhere we did not intend to go. Don't forget to make your goals SMARTER, and as you accomplish them, find new ones to constantly challenge yourself.



**Check in with your healthcare practitioner.** Periodic check-ins with your healthcare practitioner are important for monitoring and evaluation and to provide an update of where you are in numbers.



**Know your weight.** If weight loss is part of your plan, it is a good idea to weigh yourself regularly (once a week is best on the same day and time). Keep a record so that you are accountable. Also write down your thoughts and feelings to take an introspective look into how you feel.



**Self-monitoring.** Maintain a food, activity, and lifestyle journal. Recording your foods and portions, goals, and physical activity will ensure that you remain conscious of the importance of continuing on your health journey.

## Handheld health & wearable wellness tools

Apps and gadgets can be extremely valuable tools. The examples below describe different ways that you can use technology to your advantage. Speak with your lifestyle educator or healthcare practitioner for more specific recommendations on which technology may be best for you.

**Steps.** Sedentary behavior, like sitting at your computer all day, is common in today's society and can contribute to a myriad of health issues. Health experts recommend walking between 2,000 and 10,000 steps per day for greater health benefits. Having a way to track, monitor, and remind you to get your steps in can help you reach that goal.

**Physical activity/weight loss.** No matter what type of activity you engage in—from walking, running, hiking, or cycling to gardening, mopping floors, or playing with your kids—there is an app or wearable device to track and record your efforts. Some are more general and rely on information about you (age, height, weight) and your heart rate to determine calories burned. Although weighing yourself daily is not recommended, tracking your weight weekly or biweekly in an app will allow you to easily see the progress you are making toward your goal weight.

**Sleep.** Technology that tracks sleep can be very simple and inexpensive and can often be downloaded directly to your phone. As an alternative, more accurate options are likely to include a wristband or under-the-sheet sensor but will also come with a heftier price tag. If you are sleeping the recommended seven to nine hours per night but still wake up feeling exhausted, consider tracking your sleep patterns to determine if the sleep you are getting is not restful or if there may be something else going on.

**Healthy eating/hydration.** There are a number of programs that enable you to log your daily food and water intake and aid you in reaching the goal that is appropriate for you. Although recording each and every thing you consume in a day can take some time, it is also a very helpful way to make you more aware of what and how much you are eating.

**Relaxation/stress reduction.** Apps can be extremely valuable tools for promoting mindfulness and relaxation from the inside out. Some programs help guide you through a meditation, while others subconsciously aid you in winding down. Alternatively, you can find programs that are almost like games that help you focus on the positive things in your life and lift your spirits through the power of positive thinking.

**Build a network/foster friendly competition.** Use apps to connect with friends, coworkers, or family members who have goals that are similar to yours. This allows you to utilize the people that you know for support, encouragement, or even a little friendly competition if you'd like.

**Health information/education.** Apps can aid you in finding out how many grams of sugar are in a cookie or in understanding the dangers of trans fats. If you have a health- or nutrition-related question, chances are there's an app that can get you an answer immediately. Be cautious about where you get your information and always consult your healthcare practitioner before making a change to your health plan.

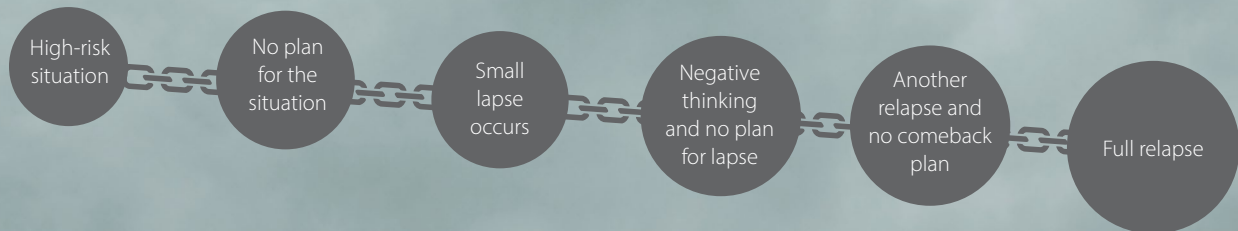




## Lapses & relapses<sup>32</sup>

Making any lifestyle change is a long-term commitment, and the journey to wellness is sure to be filled with rewarding, as well as challenging, moments. What determines success or failure on the path to wellness isn't the idea of perfection, it is the idea that no matter what, you never give up. A lapse is a temporary and small slip in your wellness efforts, whereas a relapse is a total return to your previous habits. While avoiding lapses altogether would be ideal, the reality is that lapses will happen and therefore learning how to deal with them more effectively is likely a much more valuable tool to help you avoid falling victim to the "relapse chain."

With respect to lifestyle change, the relapse chain often looks like this:



High-risk situations can be both positive and negative in nature. Positive examples include celebrations like birthdays and anniversaries, vacations, and sports seasons, while negative examples include stress, anger, and sadness. Becoming aware of high-risk situations (when/where/how they are likely to occur) and preparing a plan to deal with those situations is of utmost importance.

A single lapse isn't likely to cause a person to give up entirely but can often result in self-defeating thoughts that will jeopardize one's ability to stay on track.

### **When lapses occur, follow the steps below to regain your balance:**

1. Remember that people actively pursuing lifestyle change are bound, sooner or later, to experience a lapse. Lapses should be thought of as valuable learning experiences instead of mistakes.
2. Resist the tendency to think negative thoughts. You are a work in progress, not a failure.
3. Ask yourself what happened. Review the situation in order to better understand how the lapse took place and what you can do to be better prepared to deal with a similar situation in the future.
4. Regain control. Get back on track immediately. Don't wait until tomorrow or next week. Doing this without delay will prevent the lapse from becoming a relapse.
5. Talk to someone supportive. Reach out to family, friends, your lifestyle educator, or anyone else that you have identified as being someone you can count on for encouragement, support, or inspiration.
6. Remember, you are making a lifelong change. Again, this is a journey filled with opportunities and choices that will add up over time. You are not defined by a single moment. Instead, you should focus on all the positive changes you have made and look forward to making more in the future.





## **Activity: managing lapses & relapses**

Take a moment to prepare for the challenges you can expect to face on your journey to health and wellness. Reflect on situations that are high-risk for you in order to be better equipped for avoiding lapses. Then create a plan for when relapses do occur so that you are more prepared to get right back on track.

### **Identify high-risk situations and plan ahead**

I am at high risk for making poor nutrition choices when:

My plan to prepare for these situations is:

I am at high risk for skipping physical activity when:

My plan to prepare for these situations is:

### **Develop a recovery plan**

1. What two steps can I take immediately after a lapse to get back on track?
2. What negative thoughts are likely to get in the way of putting my recovery plan into action?
3. What positive thoughts will I tell myself to keep the recovery process on track?
4. What reward(s) can I look forward to when I am able to turn a lapse around and instead make it a lesson?

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## Walk it off: getting more from your walk

Countless numbers of doctors recommend walking. Scores of studies extol its benefits. Walking is an incredibly effective exercise. It is also convenient and easily integrated into daily life. Here's how to up the ante and turn a regular walk into a challenging workout to burn additional calories, lose weight, tone up, and get fit.

### Posture

Shoulders back and looking relaxed; eyes looking forward at chin level.

### Walking poles

Nordic walking poles can increase calorie burning by almost 50%.

### Arm swing

Bend elbows at a 90° angle and swing arms forward and back.

### Glute squeeze

Squeeze glutes together as you push off with your back foot to shape and firm butt.

### Long stride

Increase stride length to target inner and outer leg muscles.

### Hills

Hilly terrain tones butt and back of thighs and greatly boosts calorie burning.

### Heart rate

Get heart rate up to burn calories. Walk at a brisk pace (as though late for an appointment).

### Add some weight

Wear a weighted vest or backpack. Avoid hand and ankle weights.

### Abs

Pull tummy muscles in to tone abs and burn more calories.

### Lift knees

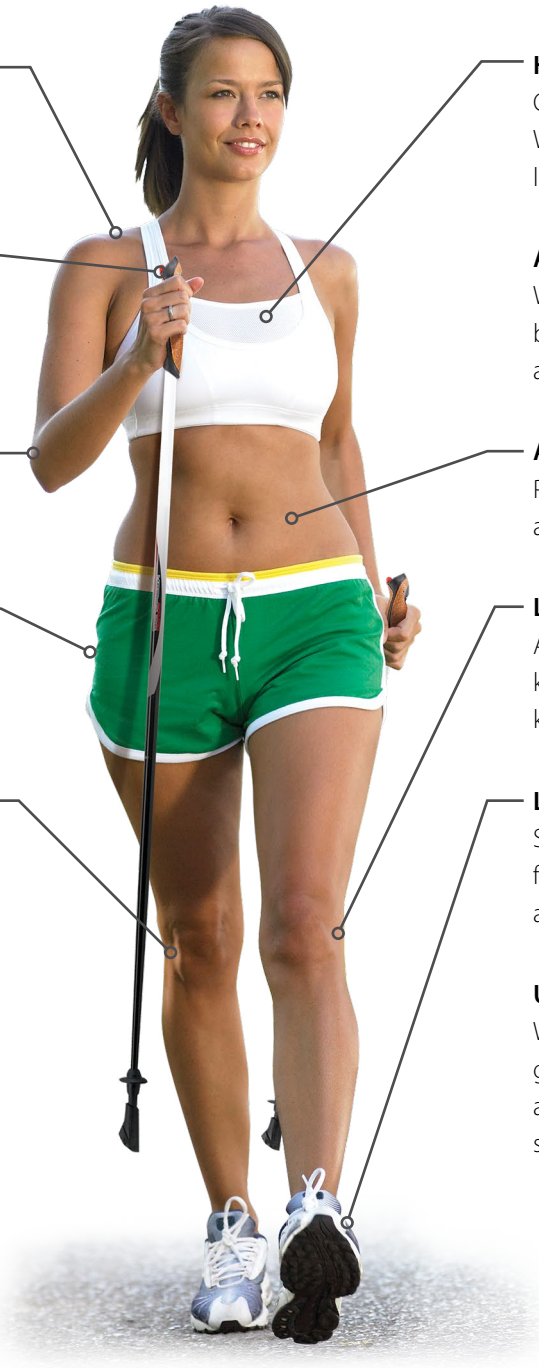
Add intervals: knee lifts (bring knees toward chest) or soldier kicks (keep knees straight).

### Legs extended push off

Strike the ground with heel, roll forward through arch of foot, and push from toes.

### Uneven terrain

Walk on trails, grass, sand, gravel or snow or maneuver around rocks to challenge stability and balance.





## Staying active with everyday exercise

While structured exercise is great for you and provides predictable and reliable results, participating in other activities can help take your mind off the idea that you are “exercising.” Any activity you can take part in that will get you up and moving and get your heart pumping counts as exercise! Here are just a few examples of things to do that will allow you to burn calories and build muscle, endurance, or flexibility and have fun all at the same time:

- Take a hike
- Go out dancing with friends or sign up for a dance class
- Play with your kids outside
- Go rock-climbing
- Take karate or taekwondo lessons
- Get a standing desk
- Clean your house or plant a garden (and maintain it)
- Take a yoga, aerobic, strength, bootcamp, or other fun group fitness class
- Play video games that make you get up and be active
- Join a recreation league in your community—kickball, basketball, softball
- Ride your bike to work or the market



# MOVING FORWARD

## To-do list:

- ▶ Evaluate and reassess your progress toward the goals you set at the beginning of the program
- ▶ Continue to set new long-term and short-term goals to keep you on track and moving toward your overall health goals
- ▶ Continue to implement the lifestyle changes you have made over the past 12 weeks

## What have you done well during the course of this program?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## What do you think you can improve?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## What actions did you take toward meeting your long-term goals (one for each goal set)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## What challenges did you face?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Next appt: date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_



Notes: