

STAYING HEALTHY FOR THE LONG HAUL: TEN TIPS

Spending long hours on the road can be tough not only on the health of your truck, but on your personal health as well. Sitting for long periods of time, poor eating habits, and getting jostled around at high speeds—they all can take a toll. But there are many things you can do to live a healthier life on the road. Here are ten tips:

DON'T DIET—BUT EAT A LITTLE HEALTHIER

While maintaining a healthy weight is important, maintaining your strength is critical too. And let's face it: when you're on the road, sometimes you don't have the most healthy food options. But when you do have a healthy option, take it! Salads might not seem exciting, but they give you energy. So, every once in a while, put down the burger and pick up some power greens.

GO POP FREE

There are many reasons why you should avoid soda—all the sugar, salt and caffeine. Replace soda in your diet with 100% fruit juices—NOT fruit-flavored drinks—or, ideally, water. While you get an initial boost from a soda, it ultimately makes you sluggish, tired and can be detrimental to your long-term health.

BRING YOUR MEALS WITH YOU

Whether you have a refrigerated device in your rig or just a cooler with some ice, you can bring healthy perishable food items along with you on the road. This can include meats and dairy products, like boiled eggs, cheese and milk. If you don't have refrigeration or a cooler, you can always take foods along that can be stored inside of plastic sealable containers, like rice, cereal, nuts and popcorn to name a few.

CHANGE ONE EATING HABIT

Sometimes one small change in what you eat can have a huge effect on how you feel. Find one eating habit to change and then stick to it for one month—that way it will start to become a new habit and part of a healthier routine.

DON'T EAT RIGHT BEFORE YOU SLEEP

After you eat—especially if it's a large meal—your body needs time to metabolize all that food. And if you go to bed right after a big meal, it takes a lot longer for that metabolizing effect to occur—which leads to weight gain.



EAT SMALLER. EAT MORE OFTEN.

The days of “three meals a day” are long gone. In fact, eating more often can help you lose weight—if you eat the right things in smaller amounts. So, try eating four or five times throughout the day, avoiding large meals along the way.

COOK FOR YOURSELF

It's healthier. It's cheaper. And, if you're good at it, it will taste better. Plus, cooking a meal is a good way to relax at the end of a long day on the road. And bringing your ingredients with you makes it even easier.

WATER GOES A LONG WAY

Everyone knows you need a certain amount of water every day. But what everyone might not know is that, along with hydration, water is critical to maintaining proper body temperature, lubricating and cushioning your joints, eliminating waste, and losing weight (water makes you feel fuller, which means you consume fewer calories).

TAKE TIME TO EXERCISE

The CDC recommends one hour of physical activity per day. Whether it's stretching or a little cardio work, it's important to take part in some physical activity that raises your heart rate. Bring a dumbbell along with you in the cab. Run laps in the parking lot. Or do push-ups and sit-ups every time you stop for a bathroom break. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the results.

GET SOME SLEEP

Every truck driver knows the importance of sleep—and yet many still don't get enough. This isn't about “knowing your limits”—it's about getting enough rest so that you think clearly and stay focused when on the road. Get your rest (even if it means a couple of power naps throughout the day).

So, start living healthier today by trying some of these tips next time you're on the road. Some you can act on right away, while others might take some prep work. But what's important is that you take the first step on the road to a healthy future.