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The FitEngine 6-Week Nutritional Makeover – Week 5

You're nearing the end of your six-week journey to a lifelong diet that will leave you healthier, leaner and more energized.

In the last four weeks, you have:

- Started eating breakfast every day.
- Switched from skipping meals or eating three large meals every day to eating several small or regular meals throughout the day.
- Started taking some important supplements twice daily.
- Cut out highly processed and fried foods.
- Started eating from the rainbow of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Replaced unhealthy trans-fats with healthier unsaturated fats.

You've likely noticed an increase in energy throughout the day, some fat loss and loss of stored waste and water (due to poor digestion) and better mental clarity and focus.

This week, you're going to focus on one of the most important things you can do for your body; proper hydration.



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This Week's Step: Dump the soda and start drinking water.

Quite a few of you just made an ugly face or improper gesture. Despite the fact that we were designed to crave and drink water, many people just don't care for it. Even the diehard fitness enthusiast or professional dancer can be seen post-workout, sucking down a Coke or a sugary enhanced water beverage.

It's probably not necessary to tell most of you that sodas are high in sodium, sugar and caffeine and offer your body nothing good. They don't even quench your thirst; in fact, they make you even more thirsty. As for diet sodas, they're loaded with chemicals and artificial sweeteners that are known to cause cancer and other health problems.

What about those super-healthy vitamin enhanced waters that seem like answered prayer to health-conscious haters of H₂O? Read the labels. Yes, they've got added vitamins, but so do the worst kids' cereals. They also contain a ton of sugar and calories. Most have around 120 calories per serving, but if you read the label you'll see that each bottle is considered 2-2 1/2 servings. How healthy is that drink looking now?

This week, your task is to get rid of the sodas and enhanced waters or sports beverages, cut back on fruit juice and other reasonably healthy drinks, and start drinking a ton of water. You need a minimum of 64 fluid ounces per day; more of you work outdoors or work out strenuously.

Drinking water improves your digestion, improves your mental function, keeps your organs running efficiently, helps your body rid itself of excess stored water and fats, makes your skin look amazing and keeps you from feeling hungry.

You don't have to cut out ALL other beverages, just the sodas and sugary drinks. Coffee, tea and juices should be cut back. You should always reach for water first. Here are some tips to help you get enough water every day:

- If you're one of the many people who don't like the taste of plain water, flavor your own. Try putting slices of lemon, lime and or/orange, with their peels, into a pitcher of cold water and let it sit in the fridge overnight. Then just pour it into a reusable water bottle and go. It's not sweet, but it has just enough refreshing flavor to make it more interesting than plain water.
- Every time you feel thirsty, tell yourself you can have juice or tea or whatever your favorite beverage is, but only if you drink a glass of water first. Most times, you'll find you don't need the other drink after all. Even if you still want that iced tea, at least you got another serving of water in first.
- Drink a glass of water about 20-30 minutes before each meal. It'll hydrate you, but it'll also help you feel fuller so that you'll eat less.
- Freeze your water bottles and pop them into your bag every morning. Many people find that drinking icy water is more pleasant to them than just drinking it cold.

Aside from all of the health benefits of drinking water, by switching out other beverages for plain water, you'll save a ton of calories. Many people drink as much as 1,000 to 1,500 calories per day! Drink water instead and you'll be able to lose weight, eat more or both.

***See you next week, for the final week of your
6-week nutritional makeover!***