**The 4 Main Barriers to Healthy Living**

**Cost**

It’s a common misconception that a healthy lifestyle has to be expensive. While gym memberships and organic foods can quickly empty your pockets, there are plenty of inexpensive options available. Free exercise ideas include running or walking outdoors and developing an exercise routine to do at home. Many effective exercises -- like squats, push-ups, jumping jacks and triceps dips -- require no special equipment or training. Food is a different story, since you have to spend at least a little money to acquire it. If possible, grow a small garden at home. Save money at the grocery store by buying fruits and vegetables only when they are in season. During the off-season, rely on frozen varieties. Opt for eggs or plant-based protein sources like beans, which tend to be cheaper than most meats.

**Time Constraints**

For many people, finding time to exercise and prepare healthy meals seems like an impossible challenge. But with a few simple tweaks, you can easily adjust your schedule to allow for healthy changes. Consider substituting 30 minutes of television or computer time with a quick exercise session. You can also squeeze 10-minute exercise sessions into your day -- begin your day with a quick morning yoga routine, go for a walk after lunch or do lunges and squats while dinner is in the oven. Save time on meal preparation by prepping multiple meals at once and keeping them in the freezer or refrigerator for quick and convenient meal options. Soup, vegetable lasagna and turkey meatballs freeze well, while salads and fruit stay fresh in the fridge for days.

**Temptation**

Unhealthy temptation comes in many forms. Fast food restaurants are conveniently located and the food is cheap, making it ideal for people with busy schedules and bare-minimum paychecks. Social events and interactions often revolve around food, making it difficult to ignore the unhealthy treats your friends are enjoying. Eliminating temptation is an almost-impossible feat. Instead, develop diversions and alternatives to rely on when temptation strikes. If you tend to rely on fast food to fill your belly in the afternoon, pack a healthy to-go lunch the night before. If you always reach for ice cream when you’re feeling lonely, pop a stick of gum in your mouth and call a friend or go for a walk.

**Knowledge Deficit**

The biggest barrier to a healthy lifestyle might boil down to one simple factor -- a knowledge deficit. If you don’t know what types of changes you need to make to improve your lifestyle, you won’t even know where to start. Begin by talking to your doctor, who can clue you into areas of your health that might need improvement. As a general rule, plan to exercise at least 150 minutes per week. Overhaul your diet by choosing fresh fruits, vegetables, lean meats, low-fat dairy and whole grains as often as possible. Avoid fried, fatty and sugary foods. Maintain a healthy body weight and stop using tobacco products. Get enough sleep, minimize stress and maintain a positive attitude.