

*Hundreds of easy-to-make recipes*

# FIX-IT-FAST

## VEGETARIAN COOKBOOK

*Tasty, nutritious meals in minutes*

**HEATHER HOUCK RESECK, R.D.**



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## DEDICATION

In memory of my mother, Fannie L. Houck, who always encouraged me to “write it down.”

To my husband, Greg, and my children, Krista and Jonathan, the best taste-testers in the world!



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## CHAPTER 1

# CLIMBING OUT OF FOOD RUTS

Phyllis closed the front door behind her. Frank looked up from his newspaper. “How’d your appointment go?”

“The doctor told me that I need to try a more healthful diet; he said to try a vegetarian diet.”

“What? So now we’re going to spend our retirement years eating strange food?”

“It’s worth a try. I’ll do anything to feel better,” Phyllis said.

Are you stuck in an unhealthy eating rut? Like Phyllis, are you wondering how to stop spinning your wheels and get on track nutritionally?

It’s time for a tune-up! Here’s how to PROCEED. Use this acronym as your map to guide you on the road to better health:

**P:** Prioritize

**R:** Revise

**O:** Organize

**C:** Capitalize

**E:** Energize

**E:** Emphasize

**D:** Devise

### **Prioritize**

Climbing out of a food rut is much like climbing a mountain. At the bottom the task of climbing the mountain looks insurmountable, but the view from the top is worth the effort. Set your sights high. Begin by deciding you want to climb out of the rut and up the peaks

of good health. Ask God to be your trail guide. He created you and wants you to be healthy: “I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you” (3 John 2).

Prevention, by attention to the Creator’s laws of health, is the best route to follow: “There is sickness everywhere, and most of it might be prevented by attention to the laws of health” (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 146).

Why wait for a heart attack or some other life-threatening illness before making your health a priority? Decide now to become nutritionally proactive, and choose an achievable and measurable nutrition goal. Maybe you’ll focus on eating more vegetables, meatless meals, drinking eight glasses of water, or finding ways to satisfy your sweet tooth without refined sugar. Write down your goal and refer to it often. Use positive language, such as “I choose to eat at least one whole grain each meal,” rather than “I will never eat white flour again.”

Make health-promoting activities a priority. At the beginning of each week, ask yourself, “What is the most important thing I can do to achieve a healthier life?” Schedule it. You may need to say no to some things in order to say yes to healthier living: take a walk instead of watch TV. Avoid excessive time at the computer. Find ways to simplify your life.

## Revise

On the path to health it’s never too late to turn around. But the deeper the rut, the more effort it takes. To illustrate: fold your hands. Which thumb is on top? Fold your hands again. This time, clasp them the opposite way with the other thumb on top. How does that feel? Folding your hands differently takes a conscious effort and feels awkward. Change takes effort, too. New habits feel awkward at first, but with repetition they soon feel natural.

Good health begins with your mind. Thoughts repeated form actions, actions repeated form habits, and good habits repeated develop a healthier body. Revise your thinking based on God’s Word: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). Otherwise, you may be blown off the path by the winds of food fads, or kept off by inertia.

Revise your food supply, if necessary. Stock your kitchen with an abundance of nutritious convenience foods. (That’s not an oxymoron, as you’ll discover in this book.) Try not to keep nutritionally depleted foods around. The absence of junk foods makes nutritious choices more attractive. But dried beans and uncooked grains in the cupboard do nothing to quiet a growling stomach! See “Kitchen Provisions” (Chapter 5) for a wealth of ideas for a well-stocked kitchen.

## **Organize**

Organize your time to fit your new priorities and mind-set. Give yourself every advantage for healthier food choices. That’s what this book is all about: creating healthy, homemade convenience foods.

Organize your recipes, and use the speedy menu-planning system outlined in “Make-Ahead Cooking” (Chapter 3). Organize your kitchen for efficiency, including a timesaving slow cooker (“Fix and Forget,” Chapter 9).

## **Capitalize on Learning**

Do you know people whose health values are ones that you want to learn? Ask them to mentor you. They might say yes! If the names of some good cooks don’t come to mind readily, pray about this.

Ask God for insight and wisdom: “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). The Master Chef will surprise you with encouragement, instruction, and creative ideas for your journey.

Enhance your cooking skills by reading this cookbook. Try new recipes with an open mind. Most of the time, you’ll be pleasantly surprised. Use a rating system for recipes to help you decide which ones are “keepers.”

Scout out tasty and healthful recipes everywhere you go. At potlucks ask until you find out who made that great-tasting dish, then request the recipe. Be prepared with blank, self-addressed postcards so at home the cook can jot down the recipe and mail it to you.

Ask friends to recommend cookbooks that match your needs. Borrow cookbooks from the public library so you can “try before you buy.” Browse through vegetarian cookbooks at bookstores, natural food stores, and Adventist Book Centers (call 1-800-765-6955 for the location nearest to you).

Explore the Internet for a wide variety of vegetarian recipes. Subscribe to magazines: *Vibrant Life*, *Veggie Life*, or *Cooking Light*. Sign up for a vegetarian cooking class. Offer to help the instructor; it’s a great way to learn.

## **Energize**

Regular physical exercise is the single-most-important health habit you can establish. When you feel more energetic and optimistic, it’s easier to succeed at climbing out of food ruts. If you’re not exercising regularly, this is the place to start.

Adequate hydration, a must for any mountain climber, often dramatically improves energy and endurance. Drink at least eight glasses of pure water daily. Coffee, tea, and soda can’t substitute because they contain caffeine, sugar, or sugar substitutes. Water is the only beverage with the clear advantage.

Do you want to feel better and think more clearly? Try what the biblical Daniel did (Daniel 1:8-20). Move away from the rich and refined “king’s food.” Instead, choose more “peasant foods,” such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and nuts. Trying it for 10 days could convince you of the vegetarian advantage, just as it convinced King Nebuchadnezzar.

## **Emphasize**

*Proceed with caution:* In kindness to your taste buds and your body, make dietary changes gradually. Climb slowly, step by step. For exam-

ple, serve new recipes as side dishes. Or have other foods on hand to fill up on. And to ease the transition, have something familiar on the table (one of the best ways to avert a mutiny): if the recipe doesn't pass your family's taste test, they will know they won't starve. If family members resist dietary changes, you may need to slow the pace (or be more innovative).

*Don't exceed the feed limit:* Try new foods often, but avoid repeating them too soon. Success is exciting, but excess is boring. If you discover how wonderful fresh basil tastes, don't put it in everything. Your family might wonder if, next time, they'll find it in their granola!

*Perseverance:* Don't give up. Remember, you're aiming for permanent lifestyle habits, not temporary quick fixes. Climbing out of a life-long rut requires commitment, perseverance, and a determination to get up again when you fall down. Keep your eyes on the goal.

## **Devise a Plan**

*Track your progress:* A worthwhile journey such as this one is worth recording. Jot notes on your calendar or in a journal. Keep a chart of your goals, and track your progress. A year from now, you'll be amazed at how far you've traveled.

*Evaluate weekly:* If your goal is measurable, you should know by the end of the week (or day) if you've met it. Review your chart weekly. Were you successful at taking one step—even a baby step—to climb out of your rut? Or did old habits cling to your feet like mud, causing you to slip back? Keep your focus on where you're going, spending just enough time studying the mud to learn from your mistakes and avoid future pitfalls.

*Devise a reward system:* A reward dangling in front of you can make the long haul easier. A short-term reward can close the gap between knowledge and action. For example, if you're dragging your feet at starting an exercise program, try rewarding yourself after exercising once. The reward doesn't have to be expensive or indulgent, just something that's motivating for you. It could be taking the luxury of soaking in the bathtub or hot tub, reading a favorite magazine from

cover to cover, buying a new book, or . . . Next, reward yourself after five times. Keep increasing the time interval between rewards until you're hooked on the healthy habit. Remember, it usually takes 21 days to develop a new habit.

*Devise a support system:* Find supportive friends to journey with you. Their encouragement and accountability make the trip seem faster and easier. Put your trust in God. Paraphrasing Psalm 37:24, When you stumble, you won't fall, because the Lord holds you with His hand.

*Inquire about a vegetarian support group:* If you struggle with weight issues, join a Christian weight-loss program. You'll learn from the successes and mistakes of others and be guided in making healthy changes as you climb the mountain of healthy habits.