

# INTRODUCTION

## *Your Awesome Body*

Have you ever stopped to think how awesome your body is? It's totally unique, and it's the one thing in the world that will always be all yours. It can heal wounds, kill germs, and fight infections, all on its own. Sure, sometimes you need to go to the doctor or take medicine—everybody does—but your body does an amazing job of taking care of itself . . . especially if you help it do its job.

Another reason your body is amazing is what it does with food. Imagine eating a taco. Lots of different types of **nutrients** are in tacos, like proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals. After you chew and swallow a bite, your body knows how to take it apart and turn all those good, healthy nutrients into energy. Very cool!



## ***Food = Energy***

You need energy for everything you do, like growing, running, and preventing illness—even breathing. That energy comes from food.

Your body works, feels, and looks its best when you take in about the same amount of energy as you use. That means eating the right amount of wholesome, nutritious food and getting the right amount of exercise every day. Eating a variety of foods helps make sure you get a variety of nutrients.



**Taking care of yourself this way helps you feel**

**energized**

**positive**

**capable**

**motivated**

**attractive**

**sharp**

**strong**

**focused**

**ready for fun**

**ready for anything**

**great!**



If you don't eat well or stay active enough, you may develop serious problems with your health. You also might:

- ★b feel sluggish, tired, or generally lousy
- ★b feel sad or depressed
- ★b have trouble concentrating
- ★b do poorly in school
- ★b feel stressed about your looks
- ★b not be able to keep up with friends' activities
- ★b feel hungry all the time

## *What Can You Do About Fitness and Food?*

A lot, actually. You have the power to **Be the Boss of Your Body**. That means taking charge of your own health and wellness, and that's what this book is about.

**Be Fit, Be Strong, Be You** is filled with ideas, activities, and skills to help you

- ★<sup>b</sup> learn how the right food can help you be healthy
- ★<sup>b</sup> find the right weight for your body
- ★<sup>b</sup> feel better for school, sports, hobbies, and other activities
- ★<sup>b</sup> increase your self-confidence
- ★<sup>b</sup> look your best
- ★<sup>b</sup> discover fun ways to be active

Look for **B<sup>3</sup> Skills** in every chapter that you can use to help yourself be healthier now and for the rest of your life. (B<sup>3</sup> is short for **Be the Boss of Your Body**.)

## *Healthy, Happy You*

Being fit is about more than being skinny or having big muscles. You can be skinny and not be healthy. Being large doesn't automatically mean you're *not* healthy. Being truly fit is about being the *right* weight for your height and body build. People come in many different sizes and shapes, and your body type will likely be different from those of your friends. **And that's okay.**

Being fit also means using food to keep you healthy and happy. It means being active. It means being confident in who you are. And it's knowing that the way you feel about yourself affects your health.



We wrote this book to help you do all those things, whether you feel great most of the time or would like some help feeling better. Whether you're just the right weight, overweight, or underweight. Whether you're happy with your body or wish you were happier. No matter how fit you are now, you can do more to help yourself and be in charge of your health. With the right attitude, you can be fit, be strong, and **be you.**



## Are You Ready?

There is one secret to being the boss of your body.

You can succeed only if you make the choice to do it for **yourself**—and not because your mom, dad, doctor, school nurse, big brother, pet dog, best friend Harry, or anyone else wants you to. Your motivation is power. That doesn't mean you don't need coaching, love, support, and advice from family, friends, healthcare providers, or teachers. It just means you have to do this for you.

Take this quiz to see how ready you are. Answer each statement with a **1** (never), **2** (sometimes), or **3** (often). Write your answers on a piece of paper.

1. I skip breakfast.
2. I eat at fast-food restaurants.
3. I drink more than one can of soda a day.
4. I eat when I'm bored.
5. I eat sugar-heavy snacks like candy and ice cream.
6. I eat alone.
7. I eat while I watch TV or play video games.
8. I spend more than two hours a day looking at screens (TV, computer, video games, etc.).

Take a look at the questions you answered with a 2 or 3. Can you think of ways to improve in these areas? Are you ready to try? These are important first steps to being the boss of your body. Give yourself small goals that you can get excited about and reach. Even if you've never thought about your fitness before, you're reading this book—that's something! You're on your way.

We'd love to hear how the ideas in this book work for you. If you want to share your story or ask us a question, you can email us at **help4kids@freespirit.com** or send us a letter at:

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