

# HOW TO STAY HEALTHY

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There are several things we can do to help maintain good health. None of these things are easy. They require commitment, some real work, changes to our routines and daily smart lifestyle choices. By incorporating them gradually over time we can make a sustained effort to achieve new levels of physical, mental and emotional well-being.

## 8 Essentials of a Healthy Lifestyle:

**1 / Eating a Balanced Diet** – It's important to eat a variety of nutrient rich foods, vitamins and minerals. Carbohydrates are the body's primary source of energy. Complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes are preferable rather than simple sugars. Protein is essential for building and repairing tissues. Meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, eggs, legumes, seeds and nuts are all good sources of protein. Healthy fats, like avocados, nuts, olive oil, fatty fish i.e. salmon are vital for brain function, hormone production and nutrient absorption. Fiber, Antioxidants, Vitamins, Minerals and Probiotics are also important for maintaining overall health. Stay away from processed foods that contain colors, additives, preservatives, etc. Eat Organic whenever possible. Some examples of healthy diets include the Plant-based diet, the Mediterranean diet and the Ketogenic diet.

**2 / Getting Regular Exercise** - It is essential to find activities that you enjoy and to remember to vary your routine to help reduce boredom. Your activities should be a mix of Cardiovascular Exercise and Strength Training. Brisk walking is a good low impact exercise that can be easily added to your daily activities. Running or jogging can also improve cardiovascular fitness. Cycling, Swimming and Dancing are other ways to get your heart pumping. Weightlifting with

free weights or weight machines can build muscle strength and endurance. Simple stretching and Yoga helps improve flexibility and balance. Pilates focuses on core strength and overall body conditioning using controlled movements. Tai Chi is a mind-body practice that uses slow, flowing movements to improve balance, flexibility and relaxation.

**3 / Practicing Good Sleep Hygiene** – Try to get 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. Besides being rested, sleep can also benefit your entire body and overall health. It has an impact on your metabolism, immune system, mood and mental health and can prevent weight gain. Try to establish a regular sleep schedule where you go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. This helps regulate your body's internal clock. Usually, better sleep is achieved in a cool, dark and quiet room. Avoid consuming heavy meals, spicy food and alcohol before bedtime, as they can cause discomfort and disrupt sleep. Stop using electronic devices at least one hour before bedtime as the light emitted can disrupt your body's natural sleep-wake cycle.

**4 / Maintaining Adequate Hydration** – It is important for the body to have adequate hydration. In general, aim for about 8 to 10 cups (64 to 80 ounces) of fluid per day. It's recommended to drink 8 ounces of water upon waking up to rehydrate after sleep. It can help to carry a reusable water bottle to sip throughout the day between meals. Remember to increase fluids when you are in hot weather or doing physical activities since fluids are lost through sweat. Sugary or caffeinated beverages should be avoided since they can contribute to dehydration. Signs of dehydration include dry mouth, thirst, dark urine, dizziness, fatigue and headaches. Clear or pale-yellow urine is an indicator of adequate hydration.

**5 / Practicing Stress Management** – There are numerous techniques to help reduce the stresses of daily living. Find one or two that you can commit to regularly to help keep the stress down. Some examples are meditation, mindfulness, deep breathing or simply doing hobbies and activities that you enjoy.

**6 / Limiting Alcohol and Avoiding Tobacco** – Consume alcohol in moderation or not at all and don't smoke. Evidence indicates that there is a direct correlation between these activities and decreased longevity.

**7 / Getting Regular Exposure to Fresh Air and Nature** – Being outside and breathing fresh air is an important part of healthy living. Breathing clean fresh air helps to clean your lungs and can also boost your mood. Engaging in deep breathing exercises outside in nature can increase energy, lower your heart rate and stress levels. Make it a priority to visit a park or take a hike or walk on the beach. We are so lucky to live here and have access to so much that is conducive to a healthy lifestyle.

**8 / Regular Health Screenings** – Schedule regular check ups with your primary healthcare provider. Have all recommended preventative screenings i.e. colonoscopy, mammography, etc.

Remember it's the little choices that you make every day that have a lasting impact on your overall health and wellness. In the same way, bad habits will take a negative toll on your health over time. Today, chronic conditions like heart disease and obesity are running rampant so it has never been more important to act now. You can make a difference in your health and well-being, understand that it is an ongoing journey and not always easy. You are worth it.

By incorporating these essentials into your lifestyle, you can promote better physical, mental, and emotional health, leading to a more fulfilling and vibrant life.

*Stay Well. Be Happy!*

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