



Authority Health  
Research Based Reporting



# YES! YOU CAN BE HEALTHY & HAPPY

**A Guide to Optimal Living**  
by Authority Health



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# LIVING A HAPPY & HEALTHY LIFE

Wouldn't it be wonderful to live a happy and healthy life now, instead of procrastinating and seeking reasons to delay? What are you waiting for, especially when it's your health on the line?

What is preventing you from starting? What is holding you back from really living, getting off the bench and into the game of life?

*We should enjoy each day and all our tomorrows; living a healthy life should be fun; and choosing a healthy life is a declaration, not a question. There should be no doubt; get up and go, get dressed, lace up your shoes, and bless your new path.*

As an athlete, a marathoner, and a teacher, I seek to inspire others. To run a marathon, you have to plan how to run each of the 26 miles. Do not start out too fast, don't try to stay in the lead from the beginning; nor run too slow so it would be impossible to catch up later. These same rules apply to any exercise regime, from aerobics to Zumba. Plan it, schedule it, track it, achieve it.

To achieve progress, day by day, make small changes. There is no one-size-fits-all in health, diets, and exercise. Try walking, jogging, running, yoga, Pilates, or working in the garden and changing your diet. Laugh.

Fat and sloth are not fate. You can look great at any age – if you work at it. Take a positive attitude; absorb a child's enthusiasm for life, exercise, and fun, although you might want to avoid their food preferences. As an adult, you have the free will to choose your diet, your physical activity, and your health.

It takes a lot of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication to make a healthy change to your life. But the effort is like the pride and happiness of crossing the finishing line of a race; you have reached your target weight and you can wear your pants from years ago.

Charm and wit do not fade with age. Neither does knowledge. Every year of healthy living is another year of wisdom, which you can pass on to the next generation; every day is a new day to live in full.

20% of an average life is childhood, a third is becoming mature, and the rest could be spent looking back at lost youth. Don't. You are unique, smile at the face in the mirror; there is no one else like it. Strive to do your best each day, try new things, rise up and shine.

# LOOK GOOD OUTSIDE. FEEL GOOD INSIDE

## The Wake-Up Call

*One day, your clothes are too tight so you get on the scale and cannot believe what it shows. You cannot imagine what happened. You remember when, as a kid, you rushed out to play, ran around, got dirty. But now, you find excuses, count calories, seek out diets, and just want to lie down. How do you get back to the workout and joy of being a kid? Of course, that was before you had kids of your own.*

The secret of diets is that there are no secrets, only determination to achieve your goal with all the hard work involved. And remember – that late-night raids of the refrigerator will stick with you.

Take it step-by-step; good choices for body and soul will result, one fine day, in the change you have sought. And remember – every person is a different individual, with different structures, shapes, and sizes. Find the one that fits you; it will not be the one that fits someone else.

Fitness is different for each individual; weight is different for each person. There is no right answer. We are fit when we are physically, emotionally, and socially healthy – and we show it. We can become fit at any time; there is no age limit.



Use your clothes, a mirror, and a scale to assess your weight, with clothing being the most objective – they either fit you or they don't. Mirrors are subjective; we tend to see what we want to see. As for the scale – it does not tell you whether your weight is fat or muscle, which weighs more, even if it takes up less volume. The weight shown on your scale is therefore not necessarily an accurate measurement of fitness.

Weight also changes daily, depending on what you ate and drank, medications, or even the time of day or month. In short, the scale may not lie, but it does not tell the whole truth.

Nor is it always necessary to lose weight, just replace fat with muscle. Build up your arms and shoulders and slim down and strengthen your hips and legs, for example. Or, if you are a man, slim down your gut while strengthening your torso, arms and legs, so you can see your



feet again when you stand up and look down.

Clothes can be a good motivator to test the progress of your fitness and diet. If you categorize your clothing by fat, mid-sized, and slim, you can organize your closet with the fat clothes that you are wearing now in front, your mid-sized clothes behind them, and your slim clothes in the back. Mark your progress as you move backward, and celebrate when you make the move.

The mirror can be a great motivator for both men and women, albeit in different ways. One method is to take a selfie in the mirror wearing a bathing suit or something similar and remember that this is how you will look at the pool or on the beach next summer – unless you get with the program. Take new selfies as you progress and anticipate your look on your holiday. Change comes incrementally, but the increments add up to the final reward. Don't give up midway.

Both the body mass index (BMI) and height-weight charts have limited utility for judging fitness as they are more tools for public health officials to study large, diverse groups. The American Council on Exercise thinks that height-weight charts can be more useful than the BMI for individuals, because the charts take body frame into account. The best measure for gauging your healthy weight, assuming that you have generally been in good shape for a long time, is your pants. Eat right and exercise, and trust the seat of your pants.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a BMI calculator on its website: [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose\\_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm)



# MAGIC FOODS TO KEEP YOU HEALTHY & HAPPY

Research has found that some foods provide health benefits; they help prevent diseases, energize the body, and lose weight.

- **Salmon** – counterintuitively, fatty fish are healthful. Salmon, which contains omega-3 fatty acids, can lower the risk of heart disease because they help prevent disruptions in the heartbeat.
- **Citrus** – oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, and other citrus contain phytochemicals, which help prevent blood clotting.
- **Beans** – as a good source of protein, fiber, and complex carbohydrates, beans are low in fat and high in Vitamin B folic acid and important minerals – copper, zinc, magnesium, and potassium. They can help lower blood cholesterol.
- **Spinach** – this leaf contains Vitamin C, which helps vision, and beta-carotene, Vitamin A, calcium, iron, and fiber. Both Vitamin C and beta-carotene are antioxidants, which can help boost the immune system, and the other nutrients also play a role in fighting diseases.
- **Oatmeal** – the fiber in this old breakfast standby and in other whole grains helps the digestive system and can reduce cholesterol.
- **Nuts** – the monounsaturated fats in nuts can lower cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and triglycerides. They are also rich in Vitamin E, an antioxidant.
- **Sweet potatoes (yams)** – this tuber contains beta-carotene and other antioxidants. The skin is a good source of fiber.
- **Milk** – calcium in milk helps prevent bone loss (osteoporosis), but beware of lactose intolerance and watch the fat content.
- **Berries** – these fruits contain antioxidants, which some scientists believe help protect the body from the stresses of aging.
- **Tomatoes** – this fruit (and it is a fruit, not a vegetable) contains lycopene, a carotenoid which may help prevent blood clots, a cause of heart disease and strokes.

While increasing your consumption of fruits and vegetables is healthy, do so gradually. Some tips: start each meal with a piece of fruit; take fruit to work and be sure to eat them; add



fruit (fresh or dried) to a salad; combine fruits with cheese; add vegetables to soups and pasta.

Though advisable, it is not necessary to cook to eat healthy. Here are some examples: a peanut butter sandwich, with an apple or other fruit; frozen vegetables heated in the microwave with cheese and nuts; heat up a can of soup; cereal, fruit, and milk (preferably fat-free).

In addition, consume more potassium (in fruits, such as bananas, and vegetables, such as spinach), and consume less salt by avoiding processed foods.

### **Diet Errors**

Diets are adversely affected by a number of bad habits. Insufficient sleep slows your metabolism, harming weight loss; insufficient food causes the body to store fat; insufficient water intake also slows the metabolism, affecting the ability to burn fat; insufficient exercise speaks for itself – half-hour workouts at a steady heart rate is needed to lose weight, shorter workouts will keep your present weight; insufficient protein slows the body's processing of fat; and insufficient fiber also affects the body's ability to burn fat and can also cause insulin instability.

The number of calories you should eat daily depends on your age, gender, level of physical activity, and weight target. Most women should consume 1,600 to 2,400 calories a day. A 20-year old lazybones, a moderately active 40-year old, and a 60-year old athlete should consume about 2,000 calories a day. Online calorie calculators can offer more precise figures.

When dieting, take small steps, not great leaps. Some tips: limit drinking fruit juice to one glass a day and eat fruit rather than drink juice; moderation is the key and eat consciously – sit down and enjoy the meal; watch the sizes of your portions and the make-up of your meal; do not skip meals; move around, don't sit around; cut out the junk food; and, finally, keep a journal.

Whether you choose to eat three square meals a day or six small meals, as recommended by some diets, the important thing is to keep track of your calorie consumption, and to eat at regular intervals to avoid becoming really hungry and overeating at the next meal.

Where available, frozen dinners can help you lose weight, as one package equals one portion. One eight-week study found that men who ate frozen dinners lost 31% more weight and 30% more fat than men who ate regular dinners.

In the United States, the switch to fiber-less packaged foods from fiber-full square meals has become a factor in the increase in obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Americans are eating only half of the 25 grams of fiber needed. High-fiber foods, such as fruits and vegetables, are appetite suppressants and have fewer calories than low-fiber foods. Many



packaged foods have almost no fiber at all, including bread, pasta, and cereals.

Low-carb is basically meaningless; indeed there is no legal definition of the term, and food companies use it at their discretion in their products. A careful reading of the labels will show that low-carb foods are actually high-calorie foods that will fatten you. They are not diet foods, whatever the box says, and eating them in high quantities will not have the desired weight-loss effect.

Under the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations, foods labeled as fat-free can contain up to half a gram of fat per serving – and these grams can quickly add up. In addition, fat-free foods have just as many calories as their full-fat equivalents – eat them at the peril of your weight.

The modern world is chock-full of highly processed, high-calorie food served everywhere and in large portions. Diet-be-gone, to put it bluntly. Eat at home, where you control what and how much you eat, and take lunch to work. Take charge of your food; don't let the food take charge of you.

Recent research in the Journal of American Medicine has debunked the hypothesis underpinning low-carbohydrate high-protein diets. These diets, such as the Atkins diet, attributed rapid weight loss to the body metabolized fat instead of carbohydrates for energy. The new research found the reason for the weight loss was the reduction in calorie intake rather than a miraculous metabolic process, concluding that there was insufficient evidence to recommend such diets, especially for people over 50 or for long periods.

A good diet means enjoying your food, just watch what you eat and balance food consumption and energy expenditure. Once you have reached your weight goal – keep it: don't binge, exercise regularly, and eat right and in the right amounts.

If you have a sweet tooth – and who doesn't? – there are low-calorie alternatives that taste just as good and are even good for you. Here are some alternatives: frozen sliced bananas instead of ice cream; grapes instead of jelly beans; chew sugar-free gum, it will keep your mouth busy.

To avoid night binges, eat regular meals – breakfast, lunch, and dinner; sit down at the table when you eat; brush your teeth immediately after dinner as a reminder that the day is done; do not read, watch television, work on the computer, or drive while eating – concentrate on your food; finally, an idea – put a sign on your refrigerator and pantry – Closed After Dinner.

If you want to avoid pigging out on a whole bag of chips and similar items, fill portion-sized Ziploc bags before eating, and eat just one. Switch to healthier snacks, such as whole-grain crackers and pre-cut fruit. Control your portions and your weight will take care of itself.

Fruit and vegetables can be eaten without restriction, even on a diet. They are low in calories, high in fiber, full of critical minerals and vitamins, and contain antioxidants. As such, they can help prevent heart attacks, strokes, hypertension, and high cholesterol, while keeping the gastrointestinal tract healthy, to mention just some benefits.



Office work is fattening and stressful. Ways to avoid expanding your waistline at the office include, but are not limited to, drinking water to prevent dehydration (a cause of tiredness and hunger); eat regularly and do not skip meals; breathe deeply to ease stress, which can cause compulsive snacking; and, most importantly – exercise during the day.

Other causes of snacking include watching television or using the internet, a good party with food and drinks, boredom, and bonding with your children over takeout or fast food. Watch out!

An occasional late-night snack will not harm your diet – unless of course you eat an entire cake or container of ice cream. Like daytime munching, nighttime snacking – quantity is more significant than when you eat. In short, eat less.

If your diet becomes too much, here are some tips for making a gradual change: add just one fruit or vegetable serving per day; don't eat mindlessly – unwrap, peel, and prepare the food, put it on a plate, and sit down; eat a large breakfast to eat less during the day.

When eating out, eat only half the entree and bag the rest. These portions can have as many as 2,000 calories, not including appetizers, drinks, and desserts.

When eating, use a salad plate rather than a dinner plate. Fill up by eating the low-calorie items first so you'll eat less of the high-calorie items. Stop eating before you feel full; there is a lag from the stomach to the brain – if you feel full, you've overeaten. Drink water to prevent dehydration, which slows down the metabolism, and dilute high-calorie



juice with water or seltzer – you can save up to 1,500 calories a month. Double your fiber intake, which the US Department of Agriculture estimates will reduce the body's calorie absorption and save up to 3,000 calories a month. Cut out condiments, such as mayonnaise, honey, mustard, sour cream, and seasonings – you can save up to 3,000 calories a month. Start your meal with a soup – it will fill you up and reduce your calorie intake.

Eating water-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, as well as soups, fill you up and make you less hungry than eating dry foods and drinking water.

Tip: since the eye focuses on height rather than width, use tall, thin glasses, rather than short, wide ones. You will pour less, drink less, and save on calories – especially in the case of alcohol and shakes or other fattening beverages.

Eat more protein – the body needs more calories to metabolize it than fat. If 30% of your calorie intake is protein, you can burn up to 250 more calories a day. Good sources of protein include lean meat, poultry, fish, and low-fat milk and dairy products.

It is important to avoid hunger; it a physiological condition, which, among other things, creates a strong urge to eat sugary and fatty foods, with all that that implies to diet,



nutrition, and good health.

### **Water**

Little things result in big changes. Drink water instead of a soft drink at just one meal a day: you'll drink 80 liters of water and save 50,000 calories of sugar a year – and save hundreds of dollars.

Drinking water to avoid dehydration is critical – and don't wait to be thirsty. A dehydrated body shuts down, resulting in fatigue, migraines, hunger, injuries, and mental disorientation. Thirstiness is not an indicator of dehydration, but the consequence. Don't wait for

it, especially when exercising. Drink water before, during and after. An adult should drink eight glasses of water a day, but athletes need more. Weather conditions are also an important factor – the hotter the weather, the more you need to drink.

### **Beef**

The US Department of Agriculture states that the round cut, from the cow's rear, has the least fat and most protein of all cuts, because this part of cow is the most active and therefore the most muscular, consequently producing lean beef. Loin is the second best cut.

### **HDL versus LDL Cholesterol**

Specific foods, except for maybe wine, do little for high-density lipoproteins (HDL) cholesterol – the so-called “good cholesterol”. Exercise helps, however. On the other hand, diet can reduce low-density lipoproteins (LDL) cholesterol – the so-called “bad cholesterol” by avoiding saturated fat (found in animal food), trans fat (in cookies, crackers, and the like), and increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables, fish, and whole grains.

Vegetarianism is no guarantee of less risk of heart disease compared with carnivores, given the human body's complex nutritional needs, including the need for fats and proteins, and the genetic aspect of cardiovascular problems.

### **Olive Oil**

Olive oil is a health craze. The categories – virgin, extra virgin, pure, and extra light – only refer to the production process, and have no effect on calories or health benefits. All types of olive oil can help lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol.

### **Natural Foods**

Since there is no clear definition of “natural” on food labels, it is basically meaningless, as food manufacturers try to claim that their products are made from naturally grown ingredients. Caveat emptor – let the buyer beware!

### **Bad Moms and Dads**

Half of mothers in a survey in the United States admitted that they finish what their children don't eat, and a quarter admitted to trying to pretend that prepared or frozen dinners were made from scratch – which frankly is just bowing to modern reality; after all, who has the time, and how many of us are good cooks? There goes your diet – especially when you're finishing your children's hamburgers, pizza, french fries, and hot dogs (dessert rarely seems to be a problem). On the other hand, wasting good food can be considered a sin. Take their leftovers into account in your own diet.

### **Nutritional Supplements**

Whilst nutritional health supplements do not substitute food, they can be an excellent source for boosting deficient vitamins and minerals, as well as addressing both the symptoms and root causes of a variety of conditions. That is, as long as you buy a quality supplement.

A well balanced diet generally provides the body with sufficient nutrients. However, many people who suffer from vitamin or other deficiencies for whatever reason. And in case of specific conditions, supplements can be a great substitute to pharmaceutical drugs.

There is a great deal of research to suggest that nutritional health supplements can be of great value. Researchers at the Harvard Medical School advise taking a multivitamin supplement or fortified foods every day to help fight heart and certain metabolic diseases, when your body, for whatever reason, cannot naturally absorb critical nutrients.

Experts recommend that adults, and the elderly, not just children, take supplements. In general, supplements can improve immunity and help fight osteoporosis, heart disease, and other major health problems. Don't overdo it though - always stick to the recommended dosage.

Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about your medical conditions and medications before taking any supplements to avoid possible harmful interactions. Conduct market research into the supplements you are considering using, check the label, and independently review the ingredients to check their efficacy. Also, check the dosages, recommended daily value, and product expiration date.

Only buy from reputable manufacturers. Finally, keep alert for side effects. Do your homework, there are even sites out there that will do the groundwork for you. Check out reliable review sites and look to see what other people are saying about it - customer testimonials are a great way of finding out if a product is genuine or not.



# STAY FIT FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH & HAPPINESS

Exercise is the key to good health and physical and mental fitness. But if you have not been exercising and are out of shape, don't rush into it; the body has to adjust to exercise, just as it has to adjust to a new diet. As always, the problem, besides motivation, is time. There are only so many hours in a day; so many chores, duties, and obligations, and so little time! Budgeting is, as usual, the answer. Start with 30 minutes a day.

Think about your motivators for exercising: feel physically better, emotionally more stable, mentally alert, and wearing your slim clothes again.

When planning an exercise regime, build on your strengths and take your weaknesses into account. Find exercises that you like and are appropriate for your body, and then, with a consultant, expand on them. For example, start by walking or cycling before going to the Nautilus at the gym. As with diets, there is no one-size-fits all, even at boot camp in the army.

## **Warming Up and Cooling Down**

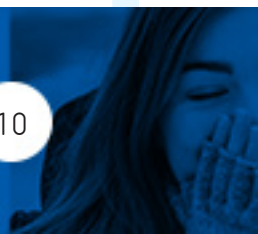
You cannot just start exercising. The muscles have to be warmed up first, followed by stretches to get out the kinks. Start walking slowly before picking up the pace. Warming up and stretching are important to avoid injury; stiffness risks muscle and tendon tears. Warming up raises body temperature, which improves muscle performance, thereby reducing the chance of injury.



After exercising or a workout, cool down and let your heartbeat get back to normal, and normalize blood circulation.

## **Cardio and Aerobics – Walking, Jogging, Running, Cycling, Swimming**

Cardio or aerobic exercise to get the cardiovascular and pulmonary systems, specifically your heart and breathing rates, up to speed, is basic. Walking, jogging, running, cycling, or swimming, either outdoors or on machines indoors, is essential for fitness. Heartbeat and breathing rates soar if you are not fit, and slow down as your health and fitness improve. The pace of improvement can be quite rapid, and as you raise the difficulty level of your cardio exercise, you will burn more calories, reduce fat, and increase your musculature. You will also



get hungry, especially in the early stages; don't eat "power bars" or "power drinks", but fruits and vegetables, and drink water. Dancing is an excellent cardio/aerobic exercise – and it's a lot more fun.

Cardio or aerobic exercise should have four goals: it uses large muscle groups repetitively for a sustained amount of time; it is performed for 30 to 60 minutes, three to five days a week; it meets the cardiovascular goals (sometimes prescribed by your doctor or exercise physiologist); and it is enjoyable over a long period of time.



If your chosen first step to exercise is walking or running, buy a good pair of walking or running shoes. Go to a store with a staff knowledgeable about the subject, and take your time picking a pair of shoes that fit and are comfortable. Remember, shoes wear out – both the sole and the insole, and must be replaced. A good pair of walking or running shoes should last around 800 kilometers.

Walking, running, cycling, and swimming take energy; that is the point. But burning energy requires fuel – eat and drink, in moderation of course.

The amount of time walking, jogging, cycling, and swimming can be more important than the distance covered. Set your pace and path, be flexible, and don't worry about beating your time-over-distance record.

It often helps to walk in groups, offering mutual support and encouragement, dissuading dropouts, promoting steadfastness, and keeping interested. Avoid dependency on others, however; sometimes going solo is also refreshing. Chatting with your friends while walking or jogging can help; it is harder when cycling (if only because of the greater distance for safety between bicycles), and basically impossible when swimming, unless you want to gulp a mouthful of pool water.

### **Don't Kill Yourself**

Setting exercise goals and achieving them is physically and mentally healthy – but don't kill yourself getting there. That sort of defeats the purpose. If you are miserable, dread the exercise, and procrastinate, it indicates that you need to find another way to exercise. That does not mean breaking all the rules.

One general rule that ought to be followed, at least initially, is to exercise in the morning, before breakfast – not because you burn more calories in the morning, but because there are fewer disruptions to your daily routine than in the afternoon and evening.

### **Weights**

Weightlifting can be an integral part of exercising, combined with other forms, such as walking, running, cycling, or swimming. Generally, lifting weights two or three times a week,



resting in between to let the muscles recover, should be sufficient. Follow the instructions of your trainer about the kinds of weights, the amounts, and the types of weightlifting exercises you should undertake. You should be able to carry out the weightlifting smoothly and rhythmically, without pause; if you cannot do so, you are lifting too much.

### **Summer and Winter**

Exercising outdoors is more important in winter than summer, because the shorter winter days can cause some people to suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), more simply known as the blahs. Exposure to the sun lessens depression, helps the body produce Vitamin D, and strengthens the body's immune system. But beware of the cold – don't sweat heavily and leave your body exposed.

### **Too Much Exercise Can Be Bad for Your Health**

Do not over-exercise, which can result in chronic problems. Indications of over-exercise include, but are not necessarily limited to, decreased performance, loss of coordination, lengthy recovery after exercise, elevated heartbeat and blood pressure, headaches, loss of appetite, sore or tender muscles, gastrointestinal problems, infections, muscle and skeleton injuries, and disturbed sleep.



### **Aging**

It is critical to adapt exercise to your age. You may pretend you are young; your body won't. Physical activity slows with age; just look at your children and remember how hard it is to keep up. You lose muscle tone, bone mass, flexibility, and agility. This does not mean you shouldn't exercise, but it does mean that a regimen for a 20-year old does not fit a 40-year old or a 60-year old. It's called life.

### **Excuses for Avoiding Exercising and How to Overcome Them**

Motivation is the key for exercising. Without it, procrastination rules, and you will never be fit or healthy. There is no lack of excuses to avoid exercising, and just as many, or more, ways to overcome them, as follows.

You have no time – if you do not have an hour to walk, run, swim, cycle, or do other exercise in a single stretch, break it up into two or three sessions. Give up something else, such as sitting and reading the morning newspaper or stopping at a café en route to work. Combine a workout with another activity; use a treadmill or bicycle machine while watching television. Best of all, schedule your exercise and you will find the time for it.

You are too tired – first, make sure that you are eating right and regularly and that you are drinking enough water. Remember that a workout can actually generate energy. Use a bicycle to go to work or from the train station; you'll feel invigorated. Exercise can also alleviate stress, which can exhaust you. Make sure you get enough sleep. Check with your doctor that you have no medical problems.



You are unable to stick to a routine – exercise with friends for mutual support and encouragement, as well as camaraderie. Reward yourself (without a fast food binge) for achieving your workout or other health goals, such as to look good at a family wedding or class reunion. Participate in a race, or a charity walk. If all else fails, get a personal trainer to keep you in line.

There are no results – perseverance is the key. Getting fit after years of being unfit won't happen overnight or over a month. The bathroom scale or BMI only provide part of the answer; weight loss is not the only thing. Improved muscle tone, stamina, and ability to exercise longer, faster are all indices of better health and fitness.

Boring! – Change your routines, exercise with friends, join a class, or set goals. Again, perseverance is the key.

You hate exercising – find a way to make it fun and enjoyable.

If a gym is too expensive or inconvenient – go outside, walk, run, or cycle. It's free. Better yet, play a pick-up game, football, basketball, with friends, colleagues, or neighbors.

### **Exercise and Illness**

If you feel a minor illness, such as a cold, sore throat or dry cough, you can exercise, but take care. Exercise more slowly and less hard. However, if you are running a fever or are suffering from body symptoms – take a break until you get better.

### **Family and Exercise**

Exercising and workouts can be a family affair. Given the increasingly sedentary lifestyle of the modern world – virtual games instead of real ones – children need physical exercise as much as their parents. Family bicycle trips, hikes, or walks, or playing games in a park can be both great workouts and great bonding. Be a role model for your children and include physical activity in the family schedule.



# HOW TO BE HAPPY & STAY HAPPY

In the words of the musician Bobby McFerrin - "Don't Worry, Be Happy" True, easier said than done. Sometimes life has unexpected turns that lead us astray, down the wrong path into darkness, depression and deep sadness. But you do have a choice. You are the only one entitled to your life. You alone get to decide what makes you happy. In other words, it's about your attitude toward events or changes that makes you feel happy or unhappy. You can either wake up and decide, today is going to be a great day or the opposite. It takes the same amount of energy. The day will transpire as usual but how you react to what happens will not. You can either face the various situations with a smile even though they may not necessarily contribute to your overall happiness or you can continuously think about them until they cloud your inner sunshine. Always look at the bright side of life with a twinkle in your eye.

Happiness varies from person to person. For most people, happiness seems to be summed up by a sense of inner peace and satisfaction. When there are no worries, trepidations, fears or dark thoughts. Happiness tends to come or we experience happiness when we do something that we love doing, or when we achieve something that we value.

Happiness is the sum of positive events or outcomes, but that stems from within, triggered by external factors.

Happy people tend to be healthy people, and vice versa. The following lifestyle strategies can help you become a happier and healthier version of yourself.

## **Meditate & Relax**

Meditation helps you keep your mind focused, calms your nerves and supports inner peace. Whether you achieve this through yoga, breathing exercises or drinking a cup of tea (or any other beverage that puts a smile on your face), it something that can help promote feelings of joy. In addition to helping you quiet down your mind, such activities can provide comfort and remind you of simpler, happier times. Research shows that meditation can lead to physical changes in your brain that make you happier and help your cognitive ability to make sound decisions. Gaining inner peace through daily meditation is not easy though. It requires discipline and dedication but the rewards are awesome.



## Eat Well

What you eat and how you eat directly impacts your mood and energy levels. Eating right can prime your body and brain to be in a focused, happy state, while eating processed junk foods will leave you feeling sluggish and prone to chronic disease. It is easy to eat unhealthy meals, snacks and drink in front of the TV, where the only exercise you partake in consists of lifting food from the hand to the mouth. This is a habit that will sap your energy levels and make you unhappy.



## Exercise

Moving about as much as you can naturally boosts levels of health-promoting brain chemicals like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, which are known to help buffer some of the effects of stress and also relieve some symptoms of depression. Exercise makes you feel better because of the release of endorphins. Exercise in the short run will enhance your frame of mind, reduce stress and put a smile on your face. In the long run, your body image will improve, you will lose weight, prevent disease, and live longer. Happy times!!

## Helping Others

Extending a helping hand is good for the heart and soul. Altruistic behavior benefits both the giver and receiver. Whether you are volunteering at a soup kitchen, or helping a friend move, these acts of kindness can have far-reaching positive effects, ultimately leading to an increased sense of happiness. What's more, happiness is contagious. So go out and lend a hand - you will to make others happy as well as benefitting yourself and boosting your own feelings of happiness!

## Friends

Being around friends and getting together helps keep us young and has been shown to help extend our lifespan and increase our quality of life, as well as, positively improve our sense of wellbeing. True friends, family, partners, significant others or anyone who cares for your emotional well-being are priceless. These individuals provide optimism and positive energy. Positive social relationships are a key to happiness, so be sure you make time to enjoy your social network of friends and family.

## **Sunlight**

Getting out and about, enjoying the great outdoors can have many positive benefits that positively affect our levels of happiness. From socializing, hiking, biking, camping to simply breathing fresh, they all play an important role in boosting our smiles. Perhaps the biggest benefit for our bodies, is exposure to sunlight, after all, sunflowers follow the sun for a reason.

Sunlight is essential for vitamin D production, low levels are linked to depression and melancholy. Regular sun exposure is also known to enhance mood and energy through the release of endorphins. Just don't over do it. You don't want to put yourself at risk for skin cancer and nasty sunburns!

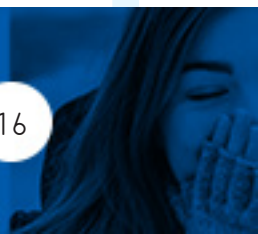


## **Sleep**

A lot of people think sleep is overrated. They often say that sleeping is for the dead - after all, you never remember the nights you have too much sleep! However, sleep deprivation has been linked to serious psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and bipolar depression. Conversely, getting the right amount of sleep has been linked to positive personality characteristics such as optimism and greater self-esteem.

## **Bottom Line**

There are so many possibilities to help boost our happiness. Everyone is different and what works for one person will not work for the next. So, take some time to get to know yourself and what might work for you.





# A WHOLE NEW YOU!

Health and fitness do not just happen; you must make them happen. In the modern world, with modern work in the office, in front of a computer, and all the modern home conveniences and cars, as well as, for the first time in history, an abundance of food with no famine, health and fitness have to be worked for and earned. You are no longer hunting game or tilling the ground, but, in all probability, sitting at a desk or in a car.

Furthermore, modern science has discovered the underpinning of health, fitness, and nutrition – how the body works and what it needs to stay healthy, and how to fight disease. Food and nutrition are no longer, at least not only, derived from old wives' tales and moms' recipes, but are understood in terms of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals.

That said, diet and exercise are your choice and individualistic. Make the decision to eat right and exercise properly, and you can live healthier, happier, and longer (barring being hit by a car or lightning). The choice is yours. The information above should help in both

endeavors. Read it, understand it, and adapt it to your needs and wishes.

A good diet – I am not talking about any particular diet fad of the day – meets your nutritional and health needs while leaving you satisfied and pleased with your meals. Eat in moderation and enjoy your food, but leave out the refined sugar, unsaturated fat, and supersized portions. The old adages, “You are what you eat,” and, “Show me what you eat, and I’ll show you who you are,” are true.

Good exercise does not mean that you have to run a marathon, triathlon, or Ironman competition, or to be an Olympic champion. But it does mean working out, working up a sweat, and maintaining muscle tone and cardiovascular and pulmonary fitness; i.e. being able to pick up your children and keep a regular heartbeat and breathing when walking, running, swimming, or working out at the gym.

Try it and you will see, a good diet and good exercise will make you healthier and happier, both for yourself and those around you.

