

Tips for a healthier lifestyle

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The journey to a healthier lifestyle can be overwhelming, but if you break it down into smaller steps, it becomes more manageable. A popular method to form healthy habits is called the 21/90 rule. Commit to a personal goal for 21 days. By then, that goal would have become a habit. Once you have formed a habit, you continue to do it for another 90 days to become part of your lifestyle. Break the 90 days down further into your own 3-day rule. Focusing on and follow a specific habit for three days. Then you introduce a new habit while you also continue with the previous one. The focus should be on sustainability, and that is why we follow 3-day steps.



We all have challenges but let the adage – your attitude determines your altitude – encourage you to approach the process of healthy living with optimism. We can do this by going back to the basics and keeping it simple.

The following small changes can lead to a healthier lifestyle:

1. Hydrate

Water is essential for a healthy life as every cell, tissue, and organ in our bodies needs water. It affects your body functions, from your heart to your muscles and even your brain. Drink plenty of clean water; it will help you feel better and less sluggish during the day.

2. Eat natural foods

Focus on whole, natural foods and steer away from processed foods. This habit includes eating more fruit and vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats daily. You will get more fibre, vitamins, and nutrients from whole foods. When grocery shopping, think of it in terms of ingredients – you don't want to eat foods packed full of ingredients you can't pronounce – buy foods that are the ingredients.

3. Always eat breakfast

Many studies have linked eating breakfast to good health, including better memory, increased concentration, lower levels of “bad” LDL-cholesterol, reduced chances of getting diabetes, heart disease, and being overweight. Breakfast kickstarts your metabolism, gives you the energy you need to get things done, and helps you focus. Eating a well-balanced breakfast with fibre and lean proteins will keep you feeling fuller for longer and energised. Studies show that skipping breakfast is associated with increased stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, and tiredness.

4. Be active

Regular exercise is probably the closest we can get to a fountain of youth. According to the National Cancer Institute, regular exercise helps control weight, maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints, and reduces our risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. Exercise for 30 minutes on most days of the week. Exercise doesn't have to be gut-wrenching or an ironman-type experience. Something as simple as a brisk 30-minute walk can work wonders for your health. Supplement it by taking the stairs at work or home or a 10-15-minute walk during lunch. The main thing is to find an exercise that you enjoy, not something that is an ordeal.

5. Sleep

People often underestimate the power of sleep for regeneration and recovery. It is crucial to our well-being. As we sleep, the brain clears away the debris of the day's work while resetting and restoring nerve networks so that they can function optimally when we wake up. Lack of sleep affects our mood and can lead to overeating, drowsiness, fatigue, lack of focus, and forgetfulness. The consequences of sleep deprivation may go far beyond the well-known and possibly have long-lasting effects on your brain. Develop the habit of getting enough sleep – it is sometimes not how long you sleep, but how efficiently you sleep.

6. Avoid eating while doing something else

Eating while driving, watching TV, being on an electronic device, or working prevents most people from realising what and how much they are putting into their bodies. Focusing on your food enables you to be aware of what your body wants and needs. Many also find that they enjoy their food more and are more satisfied with what they have eaten.

7. Shop smart

To avoid impulsive buying, plan your shopping with a budget and a list of what you need to buy and stick to it! If you do not buy unhealthy foods, you will not eat them.

8. Don't neglect your healthcare

Annual medical and dental check-ups could detect life-threatening diseases. Early detection and treatment could save your life. Taking good care of chronic illnesses is just as important to ensure a healthier you. Be your own healthcare champion – because your health matters.

Book online for your medical and dental check-up at <https://www.intercare.co.za/bookings>.

Always remember that a healthy lifestyle not only results in enjoying the present but also ensures a prosperous future.

Source: Registered Dietitian Gerlia Venter, Woodhill Dieticians www.woodhilldieticians.co.za.

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