

BEING HEALTHY IS THE ULTIMATE LIFESTYLE

Staying active, eating right, and getting sleep make up the foundation of self-care.



If someone asked you to quickly write down all the responsibilities you have in life, all the things you have to take care of, where would you fall on the list? Many wouldn't even make an appearance on their own list, and few would put themselves anywhere near the top. That's just how we are. Thinking of others and taking care of our responsibilities is of course healthy, but to live a truly healthy lifestyle we need to take care of ourselves too. We usually find out the hard way that when we don't prioritize self-care it greatly affects everything else we have going on in our lives.

Stay physically active

One of the biggest things we can do to maintain an overall healthy lifestyle is to stay active. Most of us spend too much time behind a desk all day, so we have to find ways to counteract that reality. Adults need 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week, and two days of muscle-strengthening activity.¹ If, like many of us, you only have small windows in your day, break it down into 30 minutes, five days a week. Go for a walk or hike, do yoga, maybe a swim or bike ride.

When we're in the office, 30 minutes is an ever bigger ask. But that's okay, there's plenty you can do there in just a few minutes that has big benefits. If you sit at a desk, stand up and stretch once an hour. Instead of a coffee break, take a 15-minute walk. Whenever you can, take the stairs instead of the elevator. And if you don't have one, ask your company about getting a standing desk—most offer them today.

Eat healthy, but stay away from restrictive diets

Everybody wants to feel good, but we get in a rut, put on a few pounds and then of course we want to take it off. But turning to restrictive diets is a bad idea. Dieters might shed 10 percent of their starting weight in a matter of months, but there's a catch: Up to two-thirds of people on diets eventually regain more weight than they lost.² Often, it's because adopting a black-and-white mentality with food triggers what you're trying to avoid—overeating, binge eating, and falling prey to cravings.

1. CDC: [How much physical activity do adults need?](#)

2. Shape: [Why You Should Give Up Restrictive Dieting Once and for All](#)

The best thing to do is to keep it simple. Eat a variety of foods that include fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. Cut back on salt, limit your sugar intake, and avoid unhealthy fats.³ And stay hydrated. There are a million drink options today, and the best one for us keeps getting squeezed out of our lives. We are 80 percent water—and we need to keep refilling ourselves, at least eight glasses a day.

Be good to yourself, get the sleep you need

We need a minimum of seven hours of sleep, yet an astounding 35 percent of us regularly get less than that, while 10-15 percent experience chronic insomnia.⁴ Not getting enough sleep is bad for our physical and mental health, but it's something a lot of us consistently overlook and brush off despite its obvious effect on concentration, memory, mood, and overall productivity.

The good news is there is quite a bit we can do about it. First and foremost, set a sleep schedule and stick to it. Our brains and bodies thrive on routine, if they know when it's time for bed every night it makes it a lot easier to fall and stay asleep. Also keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool. And ban devices from your bedroom—when we look at screens before bed our brain stays active and makes it harder to fall asleep quickly.⁵ Exercise and eating right go a long way in determining the quality of sleep we get as well. They're all intertwined.

Don't forget about other types of self-care

Staying active, eating right, and getting sleep make up a solid foundation of self-care, but there are a lot of other things that promote a healthy lifestyle too. Make sure to keep up the meaningful relationships in your life. Socialization gets us outside of ourselves and helps others know what's going on in our lives. Explore new experiences or dive back into an old one—when we discover new things, we discover new selves that keep our brains and bodies healthy. Have a furry friend? Get outside or cuddle up with them—sometimes they can do as much for us as we can for ourselves.

Above all, remember to fit yourself into your busy life. That's the first step toward a healthy lifestyle.

3. MedicineNet: [What are 10 Tips for a Healthy Lifestyle?](#)

4. Sleep Foundation: [100+ Sleep Statistics](#)

5. Health Partners: [Nine tips to live a healthy lifestyle – and why it's important](#)

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