



for your company
for your employees
for your future
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WELLNESS WEEKLY



9 Healthy Habits to Improve Your Life in 2012

Healthy Habit No. 1: Eat Breakfast Every Morning

Breakfast eaters are champions of good health. Research shows people who have a morning meal tend to take in more vitamins and minerals, and less fat and cholesterol. The result is often a leaner body, lower cholesterol count, and less chance of overeating. For kids, breakfast appears to enhance alertness, attention, and performance on standardized achievement tests, reports the ADA.

Healthy Habit No. 2: Add Fish and Omega-3 Fatty Acids to Your Diet

The AHA recommends a serving of fish two times per week. Besides being a good source of protein and a food relatively low in the bad type of dietary fat called saturated fat, fish has omega-3 fatty acids -- which have been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Healthy Habit No. 3: Get Enough Sleep

Sleep is vital to good health and to mental and emotional well-being. Reports show that people who don't get enough slumber are more likely than others to develop psychiatric problems and to use health care services. Plus, sleep deprivation can negatively affect memory, learning, and logical reasoning. Make sure to get at least seven to ten hours of slumber each night.

Healthy Habit No. 4: Make Social Connections

Volunteer. Go to church. Join a club. Whatever you do, do it with people. Communal activities are good for your physical and mental health. They also help improve mental functioning. Group activities can help keep the mind active and maintain desirable levels of serotonin -- the brain chemical associated with mood.

Healthy Habit No. 5: Exercise for Better Health

Some of the advantages of exercise, per the National Cancer Institute include: helps control weight, maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints, reduces risk of developing high blood pressure and diabetes, promotes psychological well-being, reduces risk of death from heart disease, and reduces risk of premature death. The short-term results of exercise include helping people to think and move better, manage stress, improve mood, and get an energy boost.

Healthy Habit No. 6: Protect Your Skin

The sun has harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that can cause wrinkles, dryness, and age spots. Overexposure can cause sunburn, skin texture changes, and skin cancers. To reduce the risk of skin damage, always wear sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, wear a hat with brim and wear other protective clothing, don't deliberately sunbathe, avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Healthy Habit No. 7: Snack the Healthy Way

The ADA recommends five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a healthy diet. One way to incorporate fruits and veggies into your diet is to have them as snacks. They are low in calories and high in nutrients. The best time to snack is when you are hungry between meals. But beware: Cravings could easily be mistaken for hunger cues, especially for people who are dieting.

Healthy Habit No. 8: Drink Water

The body needs water to keep properly hydrated and individuals vary widely in how much water they need. Joints need it to stay in motion, and vital organs such as the heart, brain, kidney, and liver need it to work properly. If you don't get enough water, the body goes into emergency mode, and clings to every single water molecule it can find, reports the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center. The stored molecules appear as extra weight. The weight is only released once the body gets enough water.

Healthy Habit No. 9: Plan

There is, perhaps, no better word in the English language to better illustrate how you can incorporate healthy habits into your everyday life. A little planning will go a long way and help you to stay on track in establishing healthy habits.