

# THINGS HEALTHY PEOPLE DO EVERY DAY

➔ Good health can be measured in many ways. Weight, fitness, emotional well-being, and being disease- and injury-free are just a few of those measures. Although it may be tempting to quantify health by a single, absolute standard, it's actually an accumulation of factors that contribute to overall health. "There are three key things that healthy people do every day: exercise, maintain a nutritious diet and get a good night's sleep. However, it's not a one-size-fits-all equation," said Jasprit Takher, MD, Associate Program Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program at MountainView Hospital. "As we enact our resolutions for the New Year, prioritizing balance and a healthy lifestyle is more important than obsessing over weight or spending hours in the gym. Here are small changes you can make daily to help establish optimal health."

## EXERCISE

The benefits of a regular exercise routine extend far beyond meeting weight-loss goals. Regular exercise can help prevent disease as well as contribute to emotional wellness because of the feel-good chemicals released during and after physical activity.

"First, people should find an exercise they truly enjoy doing. Forcing yourself into an exercise routine that you don't enjoy just sets yourself up for failure. Once you've found an activity that you like, then you can start setting goals," Takher said.

The recommended amount of weekly exercise is 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, or 75 minutes of high-intensity aerobic activity.

150 minutes a week can equal approximately 20 minutes a day, 35-50 minutes every other day, or 1-1.5 hours twice a week.

## SLEEP

"Getting enough sleep every night can improve immune function, memory, cognition and mood," Takher said. While the benefits of a good night's sleep are numerous, many people sacrifice sleep when negotiating a busy schedule. Healthy people need to make sleep a top priority in their lives.

People ages 16 to 60 should aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep nightly. People ages 65 and over should aim for 7 to 8 hours.

To optimize sleep, commit to a regular sleep schedule; always wake up and go to bed at the same time every day (even on weekends), avoid naps and don't hit the snooze button in the morning.

**ENJOY LEISURE TIME**  
Even if you're getting 8 hours of sleep a night, your other 16 waking hours shouldn't be dedicated solely to work commitments, exercise and eating well. Self-care is necessary for living a healthy and balanced lifestyle, so it's important to take time out of your day to do activities that bring you joy and help you de-stress. It can be especially beneficial if you're able to unplug and put your phone away during time you've dedicated for yourself.

## DRINK WATER

Drinking enough water is integral to good health; it helps to flush out toxins, carries nutrients and aids in cell renewal. Dehydration can cause myriad health problems, including chronic fatigue and dry skin.

Most men over the age of 19 should get at least 11-12 8-ounce glasses of water daily and women should aim for 8-9 glasses.

However, when in doubt, drink more water than the recommended amount. Takher notes that overhydrating is unlikely unless you're drinking well above the recommended amount or you have an existing medical condition, such as heart disease or kidney/liver problems.

## KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS AND BE PROACTIVE WITH YOUR HEALTH

All the healthy living in the world isn't enough to guarantee you won't get sick someday. Go to your annual checkup and be diligent about preventive screenings such as pap smears, mammograms, colonoscopies, prostate exams and other procedures. If you have medical risk factors, such as heart disease or cancer in your family history, talk to your doctor about extra steps you can take to be protected.

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## EAT HEALTHFULLY

We live in a dieting-centric society, and while fad diets may be popular, making an effort to simply eat well every day will yield better long-term results for most people. "A balanced diet is extremely important; it keeps you healthy now and is an investment for your future health, too," Takher said.

### The ideal balance of dietary nutrients:

- 40 to 60 percent carbohydrates
- 10 to 30 percent protein
- 10 to 30 percent fat

Remember that the sources of these nutrients are not created equally, as there are both good and bad carbs, proteins and fat.

- 1 Good carbs tend to be high in fiber and have a low glycemic index. Choose whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and avoid refined carbs and added sugar.
- 2 Good proteins often come from lean meats and legumes, and only rarely should come from red meat.
- 3 Good fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, like those that come from salmon, nuts and avocados. People should avoid trans fat and saturated fat.

### What about "cheat" meals?

Even people who eat well regularly may want to indulge in a burger occasionally, and that's OK. For many people, being too restrictive about their diet can do more harm than good in the long run. "Start with a balanced diet with low glycemic index foods on a daily basis. Once you're eating well regularly, it's OK to have one or two cheat meals a week, but many people find they crave 'cheat' foods less when they're eating well on a daily basis," Takher said.



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