
What Are The Benefits of A Healthy Lifestyle?



Overview

Eating a healthy diet, getting plenty of exercise and not smoking are lifestyle choices that benefit your health in many ways. According to the World View on Healthy Living, nearly 60 percent of U.S. adults were overweight in 2010, and almost 20 percent of U.S. adults smoked in 2007. These habits can result in serious health concerns, but making simple changes lowers your risk.

Lower Disease Risk

Staying at a healthy weight and getting 30 minutes of exercise each day is associated with keeping many diseases at bay. Among them are diabetes, heart disease, cancer and depression, reports HelpGuide.org. The nutrients you get from eating a balanced diet keep your body healthy and fight disease and the conditions that contribute to those diseases. Regular physical activity keeps your heart and muscles healthy and allows your body to use the nutrients from your food more efficiently. Smoking also increases the risk of these health conditions, but quitting reverses damage over time, so talk to your doctor about quitting if you need help kicking the habit.

Healthy Weight

Being overweight or obese dramatically increases your odds of health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, joint problems and low self-esteem. Eating a balanced diet and exercising help you lose any excess weight and maintain a healthy number. MayoClinic.com reports that regular exercise also improves your mood and helps you feel more relaxed. Start slow and contact your doctor before trying any new diet or exercise routine. Try taking the stairs instead of the elevator or taking a walk at lunchtime. Make dietary changes gradually, such as adding one new fruit each day or switching to whole wheat bread.

More Energy

A poor diet makes you sluggish, which reduces the chances that you are going to exercise. Overhauling your diet will decrease your weight, which in turn will increase your energy, making it easier to get moving. This is because regular exercise makes your blood and lungs work more efficiently, increasing blood flow throughout your body, according to MayoClinic.com. Smoking reduces blood flow, making it more difficult to work out without getting winded, so quitting is a healthy lifestyle choice that you want to make right away. Carbohydrates and B vitamins are nutrients that give your body energy, so getting adequate amounts of them is important.

Better Sleep

Being overweight and a smoker creates problems sleeping, such as asthma, sleep apnea and difficulties getting comfortable in bed. Getting enough sleep is a healthy lifestyle choice that will give you more energy, stabilize your mood and make you more likely to make other healthy choices throughout the day. Exercise can help you fall asleep and stay asleep, reports MayoClinic.com. Combine regular workouts with a healthy meal plan, and you are well on your way to a better night's rest.

Source: <http://www.livestrong.com>



Tools for Success - Physical Activity

What: People who are physically active reduce their risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer and have lower stress. The recommended level of physical activity to produce most health benefits is 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, on most, preferably all days of the week.

Why: People who stay fit will cost less, be present more, and be more productive at work.

Physical Activity Tools for Success:

Low Cost Strategies

- Map out on-site trails or nearby walking routes.
- Host walk-and-talk meetings.
- Post motivational signs at elevators & escalators to encourage stair use.
- Provide exercise/physical fitness messages and information to employees.
- Have employees map their own biking or walking route to and from work.
- Provide healthy competition: establish softball, volleyball or even kickball teams

Medium Cost Strategies

- Provide or support recreation leagues and other physical activity events (on-site or in the community).
- Start employee activity clubs (e.g., walking, bicycling).

High Cost Strategies

- Offer on-site fitness opportunities, such as group classes or personal training.

Source: www.wellsteps.com

Tools for Success - Staying Active during the Winter

Winter Workouts: How to Stay Fit in the Coldest Months

With the temperatures plummeting this time of year, many of us tend to hibernate inside our homes. It's important to stay active through all four seasons. Just because it is cold outside doesn't make it open season for an excuse not to exercise. There are multiple exercise options one can choose to participate in regardless of what the outdoor thermometer reads. Depending on your location and likes, you can choose to workout inside or outside. All that is required for Winter workouts is some planning and employing all safety precautions. If you prefer to workout outside, keep the following tips in mind.

- **Get warm first.** A proper warm-up is critical. Cold temperatures can make your muscles tight and therefore they are more prone to injuries. So, it's important to get them warmed-up prior to engaging in intense physical activity.
- **Insulate your body.** The best approach to dressing for outdoor exercise is with layers. Layering provides the most effective heating method, plus it allows you to remove the top layer if you get too hot. The layer closest to your skin should allow moisture to be wicked away. The top layer should be both wind and water resistant.
- **No sweat.** Don't assume that you have to sweat in order to get a good workout. You should avoid sweating that causes the clothing layer closest to your skin to get wet and cause you to be chilled. Instead monitor your intensity through a heart rate monitor or the Rating of Perceived Exertion.
- **Don't strip when you get inside.** While you may be tempted to immediately remove your layers when returning inside, give your body time to adjust. Post exercise hypothermia is possible. This happens when your body rapidly loses its heating stores.
- **Drink up.** It's just as important to stay hydrated when exercising in winter as it is in summer, even though you might not feel as thirsty.
- **Lighten up.** If possible, it's best to exercise outdoors during daylight areas. But, with shorten days that can be difficult to do. If you exercise outdoors when it is dark, wear reflective materials to ensure that you can be seen.

If the thought of getting outside to exercise makes you dive under the covers, instead choose one of the many indoor workout options. Below are just a few of the many choices.

- **Walk at an indoor location, like a mall.** If you need extra motivation to get yourself to the mall, join a walking group. This will help you stay accountable to someone other than yourself.
- **Join a health club.** This will allow you a large variety of physical activities to choose from every week.
- **Create a home gym.** This doesn't have to be expensive. You can easily set-up a great workout routine with just a set of dumbbells, an exercise ball and a jump rope. Get all of this for around \$50.
- **If you have stairs** where you live or close by, spend as little as 20 minutes at a time climbing up and down the stairs for a very intense and efficient workout.
- **Get wet.** Find a local indoor pool you can use. Try swimming, water aerobics, or even just walking or running laps in the water.
- **Visit a library.** Usually local libraries offer exercise videos you can check-out for free. Pick-up a new one to try out every time you return the previous video.

By staying fit during winter you'll be able to avoid gaining weight, have a head start on swimsuit season, and avoid losing strength and stamina caused from inactivity. Just as tulips need winter nourishment from the Earth to strongly bloom in spring, humans need to continue to nourish their bodies during winter so they too can bloom come spring.

Source: <http://www.sideroad.com/Fitness/winter->

Tools for Success - Nutrition



What: Healthy eating is crucial in the prevention and management of overweight and obesity. Consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains helps prevent chronic diseases such as cancer, stroke, and heart disease. Healthy eating also helps improve productivity.

Why: Employees often eat and drink at work; therefore, strategies and policies that improve the food culture make sense. For example, employees will eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods if they are available in the cafeteria, vending machines, and at company meetings.

Nutrition Tools for Success:

Low Cost Strategies

- Send healthy food messages to employees via multiple channels (i.e. email, posters, payroll stuffers, etc.).
- Promote the fruit and vegetable consumption through motivational signs, posters, etc.
- Offer appealing, low-cost, healthful food options, such as fruits and vegetables, juices, and low-fat dairy products in vending machines, snack bars and break rooms.
- Promote healthy choices by increasing the percentage of healthy options that are available.
- Advertise or mark healthy options so that they stand out.
- Ask on-site cafeterias to follow healthy cooking practices.
 - Provide appropriate portion sizes and provide portion size information via food labeling.
- Offer healthful food alternatives at meetings, company functions, and health education events.

Medium Cost Strategies

- Offer local fruits and vegetables at the worksite (i.e. farmer's market).
- Facilitate on-site gardening.
- Provide interactive food opportunities such as taste testing, food preparation skills, and peer-to-peer modeling.

High Cost Strategies

- Include the employees' family members in a campaign promoting fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Acquire refrigerated vending machines to facilitate offering healthier cold items (fruits, vegetables, low-fat yogurt, etc.).

Source: www.wellsteps.com

Tools for Success - Nutrition



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