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Healthy Goals? Take Five



We often get into the habit of overcomplicating things that are rather straightforward to begin with. Like in our quest to be healthy we often go on varied diets and fitness routines, stop eating this and start hogging that and try so many things that we probably end up back to square one, or even a few steps backward...

If you want to get healthy -- and by that we mean *really healthy* and not just thin -- then these five things are all you need to keep in mind!

Get That Beauty Sleep

We all remember staying up all night and cramming for exams as kids. Somehow, this habit remains. Every time we have work, the first thing that we take for granted is sleep. Sleeping a little less every night to be able to finish work and even catch the news or that football game, or even the Oscars, is perfectly fine with us. Add to that the plenty “e-distractions” around us, from the Internet to our smartphones, and we get into a regular habit of sleeping late and

basically getting less or disturbed sleep. Lack of adequate or good sleep is one of the top reasons why we end up with lowered immunity and a body that shows its age, from skin to bones and of course, that dreaded afternoon slump. Ideally, 7-8 hours of good, uninterrupted sleep is what an average human being needs to function at an optimum.

What You Eat in Secret, Shows in Public

We understand it's easy to binge on whatever food is easily available on days when eating is not a priority – sometimes work does take precedence. But even if you cannot make anything fresh – munch on an apple instead of chips. Divert your cravings as much as you can with healthier alternatives. Remember that you are what you eat, so if you eat unhealthily, hey, it's not rocket science. Fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts and whole grains – make these a priority. Throw refined, processed and artificial sugars and foods out of your kitchen and those secret craving drawers as a habit on the whole. One-off cheat days are fine, but on a regular basis train your tongue to like the healthy stuff...

Hydrate Right with Plain Ole Water

A glass of fizzy cola does not water make. One of the biggest causes of dehydration today is the kind of environment we work in – air-conditioning steadily dehydrates us even though it keeps us in a cool atmosphere. Cups of tea and coffee are also diuretic in nature in that they expel water from our bodies. Those 8 glasses of water in a day are most definitely a must to keep us well hydrated. Remember that sometimes our hunger pangs are nothing but a need for water, and a post-lunch droopy haze can also clear up if you keep sipping some water at intervals.

Get Moving – Any Time, Any How

If you don't have the time or the energy to hit the gym – don't. Take a hike then, literally. Walk, jog, run – if you don't have the time to actually do a morning run or an evening walk, try and incorporate movement into your daily routine. Get off that cab a little before your office and walk the rest of way; take the stairs for a couple of floors at your high rise or just switch to a post-lunch power-walk rather than a power nap. Try some office exercises the Internet is agog with, or do some yoga just before you go to bed – 10-20 minutes a day is all you need – learn to squeeze out the time and make yourself a priority too. There are plenty of “count your steps” apps available on smartphones – make use of them.

Don't Undervalue the Importance of De-stressing

Stress today is the root cause of countless health problems – physical, physiological and mental in origins. Alcohol or nicotine does not help – cigarettes are in fact a stimulant and add to the stress. Stress increases the levels of a hormone called cortisol in the human body. While in the short run, this helps to prepare a body to combat and neutralize a threat, high levels of cortisol over a long period of time are harmful. So de-stress the way you like best – watch a movie, get a massage, laze around, go for a run, indulge in a good meal, do some adventure sports, make something with your hands – the list is endless – but the need is imperative.

Frankly, following these five golden rules is not complicated. Whenever in doubt, reach for the healthier alternative and you will soon be even healthier than what you aimed for...

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