

April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## HEALTH AS WEALTH

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Here and there we see people that claim to never get sick; people with seemingly invulnerable immune systems unaffected by germs. And then there are people who only dream about these supernatural immune systems as they swallow yet another Tylenol tablet hoping for the best.

While we can't change our genetics, there are many ways to improve our overall health that are in our control.

### Nutrition

Making the effort to eat well every day is one of the most important things you need to do to stay healthy. The ideal meal includes a variety of healthy foods - vegetables and fruits, protein foods, whole grain foods and water - and don't forget the seven components to a balanced diet: Carbohydrates, Proteins, Fats, Vitamins, Minerals, Fibre and Water.

Carbohydrates are tricky because there are "good" carbs and "bad" carbs (whole carbs and refined carbs). Examples of whole carbs include whole fruit, vegetables, legumes, potatoes and whole grains. Refined carbs are sugar-sweetened beverages, fruit juices, pastries, white bread, white pasta, white rice, etc. Whole carbs are generally healthy foods that should be included in your everyday diet, whereas refined carbs should be limited. Although you have to remember that eating one thing all the time is not healthy; you need a balance of everything.

Your proteins will come from meats and legumes; and ideally rarely from red meat. Good fats come from avocados, nuts, seeds, healthy oils like olive oil and fish (trans-fat and saturated fat should be avoided).

Should you avoid "cheat" meals? Even people who normally eat healthy may want to devour a burger and fries here and there, and there is no problem with that. Being too restrictive can damage your way of life.

### Exercise

The first step to successful training is finding an exercise you enjoy. If you are pushing yourself to swim when you would rather be running, you are setting yourself up for failure. After finding your activity, then you can set your goals.

Exercise is not only recommended for weight-loss, but also to boost your mood and to reduce stress. Exposing yourself to fresh air when you go for a walk or the proud feeling you get when you've lifted the weights you never used to be able to lift promotes strong mental health.

Sara Lindburg from Healthline recommends 30 minutes of moderate cardio and aerobic exercise 3-5 times a week. Cardio and aerobic exercises can include swimming, walking, running, cycling, rowing and jump rope. She also recommends 2-3 days per week of strength training (Squats, lunges, push-ups, pull-ups, planks, etc. ...)

### Sleep

In my opinion, sleep is the most important thing for staying healthy. It plays an important role in keeping your immune system strong and protecting your physical and mental health. Sleep keeps your brain working properly, allowing you to pay attention and make good decisions.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute recommends that children aged 6-12 get about 9-12 hours of sleep a day; teenagers aged 13-18 should get about 8-10 hours a day; and adults over 18 should aim for 7-8 hours a day.

What happens while you sleep? The Independent says that during the night, you cycle through five stages of sleep every 90 to 110 minutes, and experience between three and five dream cycles per night.

What are some strategies you could use to make sure you're getting enough sleep each night? SleepFoundation.org recommends sticking to a sleep schedule (same bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends); avoiding naps (if you have trouble sleeping); not using your screens 1 hour before going to bed (they stimulate your brain, keeping you engaged instead of relaxed).

All of these things (nutrition, exercise, sleep) are key in our day to day lives because they help us stay engaged in what's going on around us, they help us to make the right choices and simply help us be kind to one another. If your body isn't getting enough of these three, it will not be at its best, making it hard for you to get through your day. As Ralph Waldo Emerson reminds us, the greatest wealth is health.

