Teladoc HEALTH | Wellmark



Staying healthy takes more than exercise

Being physically and mentally active keeps you healthy, right? The adage "if you don't use it, you lose it," is absolutely true. There are many different actions that can significantly affect your health.

Start with physical exercise. It's recommended that you get a minimum of 30 minutes of aerobic activity, five times a week.[1] That's at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours total) each week of moderately heart-pounding action. Getting your blood flowing pushes your body to work better and gives you benefits:

- A lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, dementia, Alzheimer's and even some cancers.
- Better bone health and balance, with less risk of injury from falls.
- Better sleep, including improvements in insomnia and sleep apnea.
- Fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Improved cognition, including memory, attention and processing speed.
- Better quality of life and overall sense of well-being.
- Prevent weight gain, obesity and related chronic health conditions.

Here are other actions that can improve your health:



Exposure to sunlight

It is widely known that too much sun can be bad for your health. However, there is a need for some exposure. Going outside for 10-20 minutes of morning sunlight might just be the answer.[2] Studies have shown this triggers the body to produce melatonin and other brain chemicals, helps reboot your circadian rhythm and improves sleep.

Rest for your gut

Sleep is necessary. But did you know that lack of sleep increases stress hormones? It also affects your gut. When your sleep pattern is out of whack, it can put your microbiome out of balance, slow digestion and increase food cravings.[3] Keeping a consistent sleep schedule, getting the recommended seven to nine hours of sleep each night and limiting screen time before bed can help regulate gut function.



Avoid drinking alcohol before bed

Do you have a "night cap" before bed? Television shows make that sound glamorous, but it's really disrupting your good sleep. A drink may make you feel drowsy, but past that, it's a bust. Alcohol can interrupt your sleep cycle. It can also increase sleep disorder symptoms like snoring or sleep apnea by relaxing your tongue and throat muscles.[4] Follow similar rules for avoiding caffeine, exercise and eating, and don't drink alcohol within three to four hours before bedtime to improve sleep.

Sweating it out

Perspiration is your body's way of regulating its temperature. It's a natural process and has benefits.[5] Sweat contains amino acids that act as humectants, hydrating your skin. Sweat also contains antimicrobial peptides that work with your immune system to protect your skin from bacteria invasion or viruses. Sweating is good, but forcing excessive sweating with "hot" workouts or saunas to detox your body is a myth. Your liver and kidneys do the work to "cleanse" your blood.

Deep breaths

Conscious, deep breathing is one of the fastest ways to relax and soothe yourself.[6] It can decrease your heart rate, lower blood pressure and reduce muscle tension in one sitting by activating your body's natural relaxation response. The regular practice of deep breathing can reduce stress, increase a feeling of calm and improve health over time.

Your body is a miraculous machine. By making little changes, it can be operating at its full potential before you know it.

Learn how Teladoc Health can help support you on your wellness journey.
To sign up or learn more, go to TeladocHealth.com/smile/STATEOFIOWA

Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your healthcare provider to make sure it's safe.
[1]https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/exercise-and-physical-activity/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults
[2]https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12502225/
[3]https://www.sbm.org/healthy-living/the-gut-brain-connection-how-stress-and-sleep-impact-your
[4]https://www.sleepfoundation.org/nutrition/alcohol-and-sleep
[5]https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/sweat
[6]https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/4-breathing-techniques-for-better-health

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