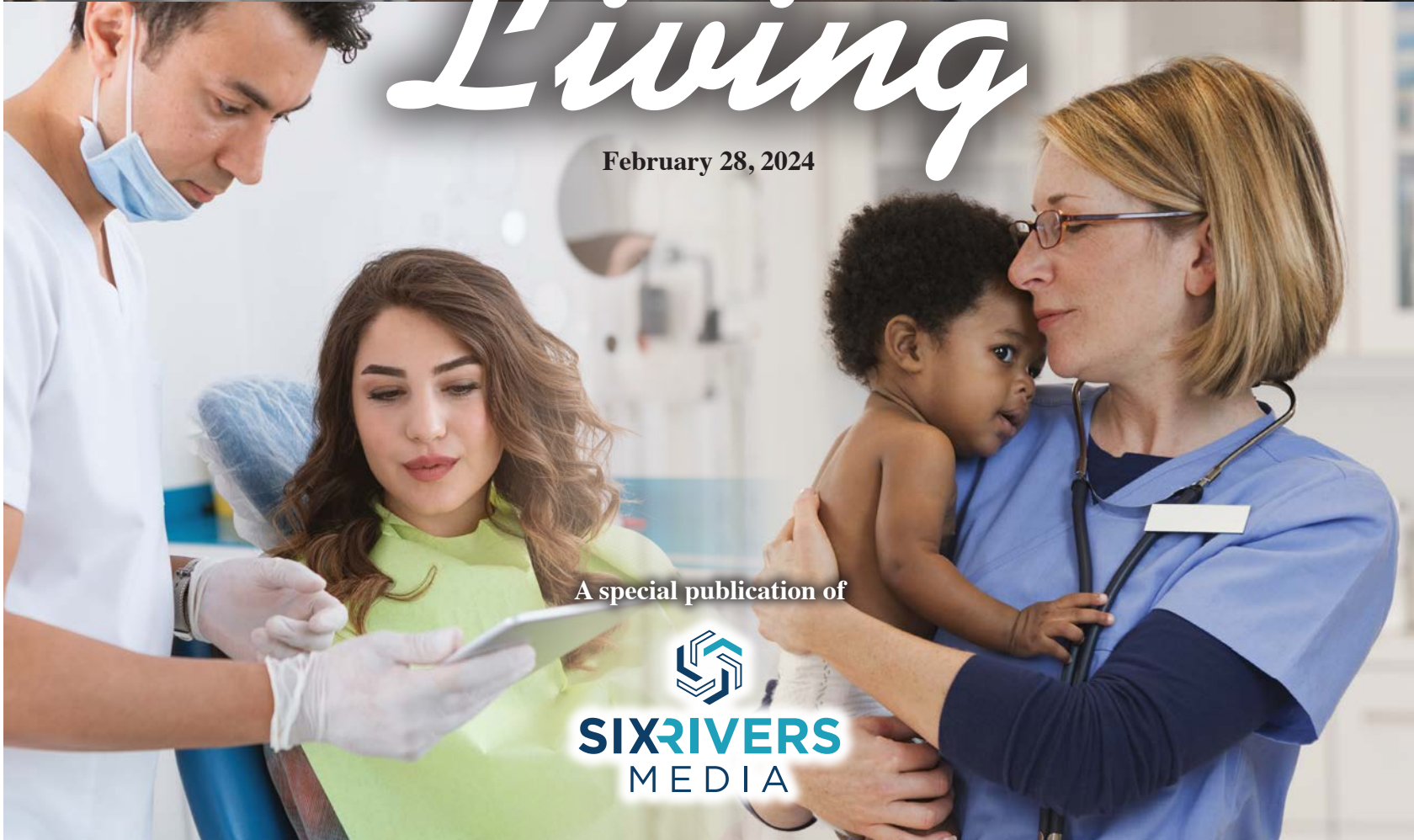




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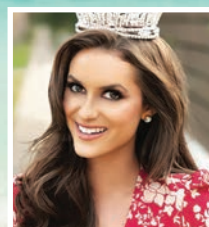
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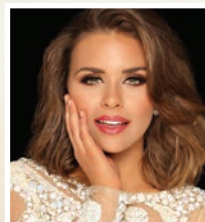
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Healthy Living

Published by



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The link between sleep and mental health



Sufficient sleep is often an unsung hero of overall health. When people get enough sleep, their bodies are in better position to fend off illness and the rest ensures they have enough energy to tackle whatever challenges they confront.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society jointly recommend that adults get at least seven hours of sleep per night. A good night's sleep is often discussed in terms of how it can affect physical health, but adequate rest also can have a profound impact on mental health. Sleep and mental health are intertwined, and the link between the two may be even more significant than was once believed.

that chronic insomnia may be a predisposing trait among individuals who eventually develop anxiety disorders.

- **Sleep and bipolar disorder:** A 2015 study published in the journal *Sleep Medicine Clinics* found a strong association between sleep disturbances and symptom worsening in bipolar disorder. The study highlighted evidence that suggests sleeping problems worsen or induce the manic and depressive episodes that are a hallmark of bipolar disorder. Researchers believe that successful treatment for insomnia, which would produce fewer sleep disturbances, can reduce the impact of bipolar disorder.

- **Sleep and depression:** The Sleep Foundation notes that sleeping issues have historically been seen as a byproduct of depression. Indeed, the National Center for Biotechnology Information indicates that roughly three in four individuals with depression exhibit symptoms of insomnia. However, the Sleep Foundation reports that growing evidence now indicates poor sleep may induce depression.

- **Sleep and ADHD:** The Sleep Foundation notes that sleeping problems are common in people with ADHD. Difficulty sleeping is commonly and correctly seen as a side effect of ADHD. However, the Sleep Foundation indicates sleep problems also may aggravate issues affecting attention and behavior that characterize ADHD.

The link between sleep and mental health is noteworthy. Sleep issues were once believed to be a byproduct of mental health issues. Though that remains true, there's growing evidence that sleeping problems also can exacerbate or even trigger mental health problems. More information is available at sleepfoundation.org.

- **Sleep and anxiety disorders:** Data from the National Institutes of Health indicates that one in five adults are affected by an anxiety disorder. The Mayo Clinic reports that feelings of nervousness and fear are hallmarks of anxiety disorders, and such feelings can make it hard to fall asleep. However, a 2013 study published in the journal *Neuroscience* found that poor sleep can activate anxiety. In addition, the Sleep Foundation reports

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Self-care strategies to protect long-term mental health



Regular exercise is a self-care strategy that can help people protect their long-term mental health.

Mental health has always been important, but the need for people to prioritize their emotional, psychological and social well-being gained greater attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing restrictions designed to reduce cases of COVID-19 contributed to feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety in millions of individuals across the globe, sparking a heightened sense of curiosity about what people can do to safeguard their mental health in the short-term but also over the course of their lives. Pandemic-related restrictions have long since been lifted throughout much of the world. But the need to prioritize mental health remains. The

National Institute of Mental Health notes that self-care can play a vital role in maintaining mental health. With that in mind, individuals can consider these strategies as they look to safeguard their mental health over the long haul.

- Exercise regularly. Exercise benefits the body in myriad ways, and those benefits extend to mental health. The NIMH reports that a 30-minute daily walk can boost mood. In addition, the United Kingdom-based Mental Health Foundation reports that regular physical activity positively affects self-esteem and can even lead to a reduction in stress and anxiety. That's important to note, as the online medical resource Healthline

reports that chronic anxiety can adversely affect the body's nervous, cardiovascular, digestive, immune, and respiratory systems.

- Maintain social connections. The NIMH also touts the benefits of maintaining social connections, including relying on friends and family for emotional support and practical help. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that people who are socially connected and maintain stable and supportive relationships are more likely to have better mental health outcomes than those who don't.

- Eat a nutritious, balanced diet. The American Society for Nutrition notes that diet can be an important ally for people looking to improve and preserve their mental health. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between diet and mental health, and the ASN notes a growing body of research suggests a strong connection between a healthy diet and mental health. A 2019 review published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables positively affects

psychological health. That same review also indicated daily vegetable consumption provides a therapeutic effect that can help to reduce symptoms among people with clinical depression.

- Resolve to read more. Much like exercise, reading has been linked to a host of positive health outcomes, including mental health benefits. A 2009 study from researchers at the University of Sussex found that reading can reduce stress by as much as 68 percent. Escapism is another potentially potent benefit of reading, as a recent report in Psychology Today noted that researchers believe narrative absorption, which refers to the experience of being immersed or engaged while reading a story, provides an escape or opportunity for mental reflection.

Self-care can go a long way toward promoting long-term mental health. Various strategies and activities fall under the umbrella of self-care, and each can have a profound and lasting effect on mental health.



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3 ways people can boost their mental health every day



Mental health issues have garnered considerable attention in recent years, but the scope of the global mental health crisis may be even greater than people realize. A recent study co-led by researchers at Harvard Medical School and the University of Queensland that was published in The Lancet Psychiatry in fall 2023

concluded that one out of every two people in the world will develop a mental health disorder at some point in their lifetime. That makes mental health disorders a more common problem than cancer, heart disease and other physical ailments that tend to garner more attention than mental health issues. Anyone experiencing mental

health issues is urged to speak with a medical professional who specializes in such areas. Mental health issues may not manifest with symptoms like broken bones that common sense suggests require the assistance of a licensed medical professional, but that does not mean issues affecting the mind or a person’s outlook do not require the help of someone trained to deal with them. Much like people can heal from a broken bone after seeing a medical professional, individuals confronting mental health issues have much to gain from working with a mental health specialist. A 2021 study from the United Kingdom-based Mental Health Foundation published in the American Journal of Health Promotion found 29 strategies people can employ to protect their mental health. The study considered mental health research and the views of mental health experts, but also input from the general public regarding ways they confront mental health issues. It’s important that anyone dealing with mental health issues not conflate these strategies with treatment. Though they can help protect mental health, they should be seen as a supplement to treatment overseen by a licensed mental health professional. A rundown of the 29 strategies can be found at [mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk), but the following are three recommendations that anyone can apply in their daily lives.

of forest bathing has been noted for its positive effects on mental health, but even those without ready access to wooded areas should know that simply spending more time outdoors each day can positively affect mental health.

2. Avoid using drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism. The MHF notes that any relief offered by drugs and alcohol is temporary and can even exacerbate existing mental health issues. The American Addiction Centers reports that coping mechanisms are compulsions or habits formed over time that serve to help people manage particular situations or issues, including stress. However, the AAC also notes that not all coping mechanisms are beneficial and some, including drug and alcohol use, are maladaptive and destructive. After a particularly stressful day, or during times when people are experiencing anxiety and/or depression, avoid looking at drugs or alcohol as means to coping.

3. Get enough sleep. The MHF notes that adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. Some may see seven hours or more per night as a luxury, but it’s important that such an outlook changes. The Columbia University Department of Psychiatry notes that there is now robust evidence to support a link between sleep and mental health. Insufficient or even poor sleep has been found to increase negative emotional responses to stressors. Perhaps even more noteworthy is that poor or insufficient sleep decreases positive emotions. So it’s vital to recognize the important role that adequate, good-quality sleep has on mental health. These are just a handful of approaches individuals can take to boost their mental health each day.

1. Spend more time in nature. The calming effects of nature have been noted for centuries, if not longer. The American Psychological Association notes that spending time in nature benefits both physical and psychological well-being in humans. Perhaps that’s one reason why participants in the MHF study reported walks in nature was their preferred way to cope with stress stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The Japanese practice



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Tips to maintain your commitment to exercise



At one point or another, millions of adults across the globe have resolved to be more physically active. The benefits of routine exercise are too numerous to cite, but some of the more notable ones include a lower risk for chronic disease and illness, improved self-esteem and greater overall health.

With so much to gain from routine exercise, it's no wonder

so many people aspire to be more physically active. But it's easy to lose motivation when aspiring to exercise more. Each year, one of the most popular New Year's resolutions is to exercise more. In fact, Statista conducted a survey regarding New Year's resolutions for 2023 and found that exercising more was the most popular resolution. However, a 2021 study published in the International Journal of

Environment Research and Public Health found that 64 percent of people abandon their New Year's resolutions within a month of making them. Exercising more requires commitment, and there are some ways to make it a little easier to maintain that commitment over the long haul.

- **Break it up.** The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health notes that people don't need to exercise all at once to reap the rewards of physical activity. If time is tight, break up a workout over the course of your day. Some strength-training exercises in the morning can be followed up with a brisk walk or run over a lunch break. This approach makes it easier to fit a full workout into your daily routine.

- **Employ the buddy system.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that working out with a partner increases exercise motivation and encourages individuals to be more consistent with their exercise routine so they do not let their partners down. The authors behind a 2019 study published in the International Journal of Research in Exercise Physiology suggested the efficacy of the buddy system may require further study before researchers can definitively say it's an effective motivation strategy for people who want to exercise more. But there's no denying that many individuals feel that they are more likely to exercise with a friend than they are if they go solo.

- **Schedule exercise time.** Busy professionals book work meetings, family obligations and other daily tasks in their

schedules, and the T.H. Chan School of Public Health recommends doing the same with exercise. Allotting time to exercise each day may decrease the likelihood that you'll skip a workout, and once results start to manifest you may be more motivated to stay the course.

- **Identify what progress may look like.** It's easy to become discouraged if a commitment to routine exercise does not produce visible results. But just because your abs are not becoming chiseled a month into a workout routine or the scale is not reflecting significant weight loss does not mean your routine is not working. As the human body ages, it becomes more difficult to transform it. So a workout routine that left you looking lean and chiseled in your twenties may not produce the same body in your forties. But that does not mean the exercise isn't working and ultimately helping you get healthier. Adults are urged to speak with their physicians and identify what progress with a workout routine might look like for someone their age. Progress may look different than it did years ago, but if the end result is a healthier you, then that should be all the motivation you need to keep going.

It's no secret that making a commitment to routine exercise can be difficult. But various strategies can increase the likelihood that individuals will stay the course as they seek to exercise more frequently.

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Each new day brings the potential for change, even amid the routine of the daily grind. When people start the day with positive thoughts, it can affect how they behave and see themselves throughout the day, and may even benefit their overall health.

The Mayo Clinic says some studies suggest personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of a person's health and well-being. Positive thinking that is pronounced in optimistic people is associated with effective stress management, which translates into many different health benefits.

Some people abide by the "Law of Attraction," which states that what a person gives attention to and thinks about throughout the day is what will be predominant in their life. Whether this is true or not, many aspire to have more positive thoughts and be in a generally optimistic mindset. The following tips can put people on a positive path at the start of each day.

Begin the night before
Certain mental health experts suggest clearing the mind in the evening to reduce stressful thinking and create the mental capacity to wind down and relax. Keep a notepad handy and jot down any invasive thoughts or concerns. Removing these thoughts from the mind and putting them on paper can help you rest more readily. Being well-rested can improve mood.

Know your weaknesses
Recognize where you may need some help as you strive to be more optimistic. Map out the behaviors you want to change, and then be

intentional about how you want your day to go and which actions will get you there. The Mayo Clinic suggests figuring out what you usually think negatively about (i.e., work, commuting, life changes) and then approach each aspect in a more positive way.

Take a technology pause
Do not check email or text messages right after opening your eyes. Similarly, avoid reading the news or watching news programs on television too early. Negative or scandalous stories often get the most clicks or views, and coming across upsetting information at the outset of the day can adversely affect your mood. Rather, spend time meditating, praying, reading, or just being in the moment until you are awake.

Recognize the good people
are doing when you open your eyes and focus on the positives, you'll see all the good that other people are doing around you. Offering compliments or acknowledging others' actions, whether large or small, puts positivity out there.

Focus on gratitude
Take a few moments at the start of each day to mentally list all the things you are grateful for. This may be that you have a cozy home or that you are healthy. Even stressful situations or people can be means for gratitude. Boisterous toddlers may be a handful, but you can be grateful for the ability to have had children when so many are not able.

Starting the day with a positive mindset is easier than one might think. It may take a little practice, but also can begin to pay positive dividends sooner than later.

How to begin the day in a positive frame of mind



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Signs you're exercising too much



The formula for healthy living has remained the same for decades. Healthy eating paired with regular exercise can lower risk for a number of ailments, including chronic diseases. But it's important that individuals avoid overdoing it in regard to exercise. Too much of anything can negate its benefits, and exercise is no exception. The current Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

indicate adults need 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity and two days of muscle-strengthening activity each week. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says children between the ages of three and five need to be active throughout the day. Kids between the ages of six and 17 need to be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day. Meeting these exercise

guidelines is a good step in a healthy direction. Those tempted to exercise even more or to extreme levels should be advised of the potential pitfalls of too much exercise, or something called "overtraining."

Overtraining syndrome
According to Alena Luciani, M.S., C.S.C.S., a strength and conditioning specialist, if a person exercises too much for weeks at a time, the body is put at risk of overtraining syndrome. In order for stronger muscles to form, the natural process involves exercise breaking down muscle fibers and the body repairing and rebuilding them. Without time for repair, the body's rebuilding process is interrupted, which affects its ability to build strength. This results in chronic stress known as overtraining syndrome.

Mood swings and irritability
Pushing too long and too hard can actually cause a person to feel overworked and tired. This may lead to trouble sleeping, which can cause irritability and mood swings, says MedlinePlus.

Immune system impact
Overdoing exercise may adversely affect the immune system. When the body is run ragged, it cannot do its job well. Illnesses may be able to sneak past the body's defenses even easier, particularly if exercising too much is paired with calorie restriction that affects balanced nutrition.

Overuse injuries
Sore muscles and heavy limbs come from exercise sessions and can be signs of muscle breakdown and repair. Overuse

can lead to injuries to various parts of the body, particularly if workouts are not varied.

Missed menstrual periods
The Office on Women's Health says exercising too much can caused missed menstrual periods or make a woman's period stop entirely. Athletes who train hard regularly have been known to have irregular or missed periods.

Weight gain
Many people exercise to lose weight, but overdoing it can have the opposite effect. Healthline says exercising too much without resting in between can lead to low testosterone levels and high levels of the stress hormone cortisol. These hormonal changes often are associated with loss of muscle tissue, weight gain and even excess belly fat.

Decline in performance
Overtraining may cause a person to plateau or experience decreased performance rather than improvements in physical ability. Less strength, endurance and agility can make it hard to reach fitness goals.

Exercising a lot may seem like it is a good thing, but overtraining can be dangerous.

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Exercise guidelines for adults

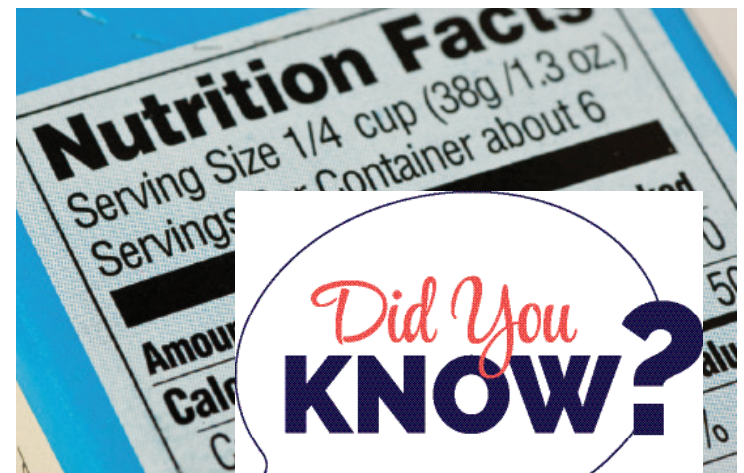


A physically active lifestyle has been linked to a host of health benefits, including a reduced risk for various chronic diseases and a longer, healthier life. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services notes that moving more and sitting less benefits people regardless of their age, sex, race, ethnicity, or even current fitness levels. Whether they're adapting to a more physically active lifestyle, already physically active or somewhere in between, individuals can benefit from recognizing the latest physical activity guidelines from the DHHS.

Adults
The DHHS notes that substantial health benefits can be gained when adults do between 150 and 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week or between 75 and 150 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity each week. The DHHS notes that aerobic activity, which can include walking, running, cycling, and hiking, among other activities, should be spread out over the course of the week. In addition

to aerobic activity, the DHHS urges adults to do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or greater intensity on two or more days per week.

Older adults
The DHHS recommends older adults adhere to the same guidelines as younger adults but take some additional steps as well. Older adults are urged to incorporate multicomponent physical activity that includes balance training into their fitness regimens. The DHHS also advises older adults to determine their level of effort for physical activity relative to their fitness level. It's also recommended that older adults with chronic conditions discuss their ability to engage safely in regular physical activity with their physicians. Vigorous- and even moderate-intensity exercise may not be possible for some older adults with existing conditions. Routine physical activity can help adults and older adults live longer, healthier lives. Adults of all ages are urged to speak with their physicians about safe ways to become more physically active.



There's no one-size-fits-all strategy when it comes to calorie consumption, and that can contribute to some confusion as adults try to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Dietary guidelines established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services promote nutrient-dense foods and beverages, but many people prefer to know how many calories they should consume each day. Though that's understandable, the quality of the calories consumed goes a long way toward determining how nutritious a diet is. The Cleveland Clinic notes that the DHHS guidelines have historically recommended adults 21

and over consume between 1,600 and 3,000 calories per day. However, staying within those parameters does not necessarily mean a person's diet is healthy. Though individuals should keep total calorie consumption in mind when planning their diets, it's equally important to recognize what else the DHHS has to say about diet, particularly foods to avoid. The DHHS recommends limiting consumption of foods and beverages that are high in added sugars, saturated fat and sodium. Limiting consumption of alcoholic beverages is another way to ensure your diet is working for you and not against you.

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Physical activity is a key component of a healthy lifestyle, and an effective fitness regimen is one that combines strength training with cardiovascular exercise. Recommendations from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services urge adults to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity each week. Aerobic activity includes cardiovascular exercises like hiking, running, dancing, cycling, or other activities that increase the heart rate and improve cardiorespiratory fitness.

Though cardiovascular exercise is often discussed in terms of its heart healthy benefits, the Cleveland Clinic reports that aerobic activities benefit various parts of the body, including the heart but also the brain, the joints, skin, and muscles.

Cardio and your heart
Routine cardiovascular exercise leads to a decrease in resting blood pressure and heart rate. That's beneficial for the heart because it ensures the heart does not have to work unnecessarily hard. Cardiovascular exercise also improves good cholesterol levels and lowers blood fats, each of which also helps to improve heart health.

Cardio and your brain
The Alzheimer's Society reports that studies have shown that exercise that increases heart rate in middle-aged or older adults has led to improvements in thinking and memory and lower rates of dementia. The Cleveland Clinic notes that cardio also decreases stroke risk by increasing blood flow to the brain.

Cardio and your joints
Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become brittle and fragile from a loss of tissue. That tissue loss can be a side effect of aging, but even though the National Osteoporosis Foundation estimates that half of all women over 50 will develop osteoporosis, older adults are not helpless against the condition. The Cleveland Clinic notes that cardiovascular exercise can help fight osteoporosis and reduce risk for hip fractures. It's also important to note that men are not immune to osteoporosis, which has long been considered a more significant concern for women than men. Though women's risk for osteoporosis is greater than men's, UC San Diego Health reports that between 20 and 25 percent of all hip fractures occur in men.

Cardio and your skin
Physical activity increases circulation, which the Cleveland Clinic reports leads to clearer, healthier skin. Cardio promotes better blood flow to the skin cells on the face, which can reduce signs of aging and improve complexion.

Cardio and your muscles
Cardio increases oxygen supply to the entire body, and the Cleveland Clinic notes that allows muscles throughout the body to work harder and more efficiently. In addition, routine cardiovascular exercise allows muscles to adapt to an increased workload, which can improve daily life by making routine physical activities easier.

Cardiovascular exercise is a key component of an effective fitness regimen. By committing to cardio, adults can benefit various parts of their bodies.

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Strategies to prevent sports injuries



Athletes train hard with a goal of performing at their peak when competition begins. Exercise is very good for the body, but at times athletes may be in jeopardy of overdoing it in pursuit of doing their best. Johns Hopkins Medicine says many sports injuries can be prevented with proper precautions. In fact, there are various steps athletes can take to reduce their injury risk.

Wear the right gear

Using the right equipment or gear and wearing supportive shoes can help prevent injury, as can using safety items like helmets and protective pads. Ensure that all equipment is properly fitted and replace items if they become damaged or worn out.

Maintain flexibility and strength

The experts at Mount Sinai say it is extremely important to perform dynamic stretches before starting a physical activity, as cold muscles are more vulnerable to injury. Also, exercises that strengthen the muscles used for the sport are beneficial, particularly those that target the core. Core-strengthening exercises

improve balance and stability, which is essential in all sports.

Use the right technique

Athletes should learn the proper techniques for playing a sport or engaging in a physical activity like strength training. Poor form on the field or in the gym can put athletes at risk for injury, says the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Listen to your body

Aches and pains in joints or muscles that do not improve in a day or two could be signs that a more serious condition is developing. Do not attempt to power through pain, which can cause serious issues and significant, long-term injuries.

Rest and recover

UConn Health Orthopedics and Sports Medicine says rest is a critical component of avoiding injury. One to two rest days should be built into your weekly exercise regimen. One option is to make a rest day a “recovery” day, instead. This means engaging in gentle exercise like walking, swimming or yoga.

Athletes can reduce their injury risk by following some tried and true techniques.



Scores of people insist that exercising with a partner is a great way to remain committed to a fitness regimen, and now research is beginning to support that assertion. A 2023 study from researchers in Japan published in the Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics found that exercising both alone and with a partner two or more times a week helped to lower risk of cognitive impairment, but the risk was decreased by a more significant margin among

those who exercised with others.

Authors of the study found that the risk of cognitive impairment decreased by more than 29 percent among individuals who worked out with a partner, which was nearly double the percentage reduction {15 percent} among those who exercised alone.



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Exercising when you have high blood pressure



Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is a serious medical condition and a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. The National Library of Medicine National Center for Biotechnology Information offers that hypertension is responsible for the majority of cardiovascular mortality. Hypertension is associated with an inactive lifestyle, so becoming more active can prevent or even reverse a hypertension diagnosis. Hypertension is blood pressure that is 140 or higher on the systolic (upper) number and 90 or higher on the diastolic (lower) number. Exercise can help lower high blood pressure and may provide an energy boost and relieve stress. For people adopting a more active lifestyle after a hypertension diagnosis, it is preferential to start off gradually. WebMD says in the event of hypertension, any activity that enables one to breathe harder and make the heart beat a little faster can be sufficient; it is not necessary to purchase a gym membership, but doing so may provide the motivation some need to commit to a workout regimen.

Activities like swimming, jogging, brisk walking, biking, or doing rigorous yard work also can help lower blood pressure.

The American Heart Association says for most people, 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity is recommended. This amount of exercise can be broken up any way a person desires, like 30 minutes per day, though the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services advises exercising over the course of several days each week. People should make time for stretching and muscle-strengthening as well. Regular physical activity can lower blood pressure by anywhere from five to eight mm Hg. By keeping active, a person can prevent blood pressure from creeping up again.

Exercise is a vital component of addressing hypertension. After receiving such a diagnosis, individuals can work with their physicians to devise a safe and effective fitness regimen.



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HEALTHY LIVING 202415

Fill up on healthy eating pointers

Diet and exercise are the key components of maintaining a healthy weight and protecting yourself against chronic disease. According to the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, eating smart and being active have similar effects, including reducing risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, some cancers, and diabetes. In addition, these healthy living strategies can improve personal appearance and improve overall well-being — helping people live longer and maintain their independence. People may wonder how to eat better when faced with many diets, each of which promises great results. It can be confusing when navigating all of the options, and there is no magic formula to eating better. Common sense can come into play when attempting to eat better, and individuals also can consider these strategies to make diet work for them as they seek to live healthier.

- Eat colorful, varied, nutritionally dense foods. Medical News Today says each meal should be 50 percent fruit and vegetables, 25 percent whole grains, and 25 percent protein. Select an array of colorful foods that will provide most of the nutrients needed.

- Choose fiber-rich foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables,

whole grains, nuts, and legumes are good sources of fiber. Fiber helps people maintain digestive health and can help you to feel fuller longer, reducing the potential for overeating, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Note how you feel after eating. Create a food journal where you jot down notes about how you feel after eating certain foods. If you notice that certain foods or ingredients trigger adverse reactions, it may be worth avoiding that type of food or looking for an alternative. Stomach upset or bloating after eating dairy, for example, may indicate an intolerance for lactose.

- Explore the Mediterranean diet. While you should avoid fad diets that often produce short-term but unsustainable results, a Mediterranean diet has stood the test of time. According to the authors of a new study published in JAMA Network Open in October 2023, middle-aged and older adults with overweight or obesity and metabolic syndrome lost visceral fat (belly fat) and showed a greater reduction in the percentage of total fat while adhering to a Mediterranean diet. They also had delayed loss of lean body mass, which often comes with aging. Mediterranean diets prioritize legumes, seafood, vegetables, and “good” fats like olive oil.

- Control portion sizes. Sometimes it’s not what you eat but how much you eat that affects health. Weighing and measuring food can help you control portions and understand how many calories you’re consuming each day. The National Institutes of Health says eating plans that favor 1,200 to 1,500 calories per day for women and 1,500 to 1,800 for men are good

targets to lose weight at a healthy pace when combined with moderate exercise. Balanced eating is a major component of a healthy lifestyle. While there are many fad diets, eating plans with a proven track record that are supported by the medical community may be your best bet.



Injury recovery tips for seniors



There is no escaping the fact that the human body changes as it ages. Some changes associated with aging are beneficial, such as increased wisdom and knowledge from past experiences. Others, particularly changes to health and wellness, can be disconcerting. Generally speaking, recovering from any injury can be a time-consuming process. For those over the age of 60, the process of recovering from injury can be especially lengthy. According to Restorative Strength, a fitness and personal training service for seniors, elderly adults generally heal from injuries slower than young people. Caring Senior Services says there are a few reasons why healing can be delayed:

- Having diabetes is one of the most common reasons why seniors have delayed healing. The disease can negatively impact wound healing because elevated glucose levels narrow the blood vessels and harden the arteries.

- The inflammatory response in seniors drastically slows down as people age. This response is the first phase when blood vessels expand to let white blood cells and nutrients reach wounds. When delayed, the wounds heal much more slowly.

- Reduced skin elasticity and diminished collagen fibers in seniors can contribute to the body's tissues not being able to return to a normal state after injury.

- Sedentary seniors may have lost muscle mass and flexibility, which help physically active individuals regain mobility after an injury. Bones also may be more brittle, particularly if osteoporosis is present.

Although it's impossible to reverse the hands of time, there are steps seniors can take to recover from injuries more quickly, and potentially avoid them as well.

- **Slow and steady physical activity:** Exercise, including routine strength-training activities, helps strengthen muscles and bones. According to Pioneer Trace Healthcare & Rehabilitation, when complete bed rest is not advised after an injury, getting up and moving even just a little each day can jump-start recovery. Regular activity prior to any injury also may make the body stronger and more flexible to help reduce the likelihood of injuries.

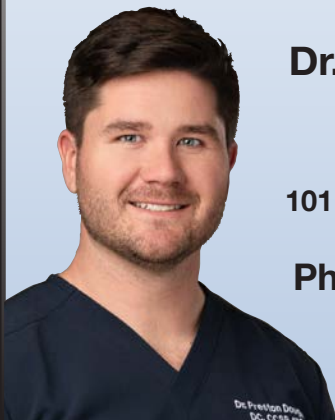
- **Maintain a positive mindset.** The mind has a role to play in injury recovery. Minimizing stress levels through meditation, and engaging in positive thinking techniques, can make healing and therapies more successful. Reducing stress can boost the immune system, which also will offer healing benefits.

- **Improve diet.** The body needs certain vitamins and minerals to function properly. Eating a well-rounded, healthy diet can provide fuel that facilitates healing.

- **Work with a qualified professional.** Seniors should not take on exercise or recovery efforts on their own. Exercising the right way and following prescribed guidelines can speed up recovery and potentially prevent future injuries. Recovery from injury could take longer for seniors. But with exercise, positive thinking and guidance from health professionals, there are ways to speed up the injury recovery process.



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Taking the mystery out of anxiety disorders



It is normal to feel nervous from time to time, particularly when anticipating a potentially life-changing event. However, when nervousness is excessive, persistent and intense, or arises from seemingly innocuous stimuli, that could indicate the presence of an anxiety disorder.

What is anxiety?

The American Psychiatric Association says anxiety is a normal response to stress. Anxiety disorders differ from normal nervousness because they involve excessive fear. The APA also says anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders and affect nearly 30 percent of adults at some point in their lives. It is time to seek help when anxiety interferes with your ability to function; you often overreact when something triggers your emotions; and you can't control your responses to situations.

What contributes to anxiety disorders?

A combination of environmental factors and personality traits can increase the risk for developing anxiety disorders, according to the Cleveland Clinic. These include:

- Stressful or traumatic events in early childhood or adulthood.
- Certain personality traits like shyness or behavioral inhibition.
- Family history of anxiety or another mental health condition.
- Physical conditions, including thyroid problems and heart arrhythmias.
- Being a woman, as researchers are still studying why women experience anxiety disorders in higher proportions than men. Some researchers suggest hormonal fluctuations in women are a possible explanation for the higher rates of anxiety.

What are the types of anxiety disorders?

Several types of anxiety disorders exist, but some are more common than others.

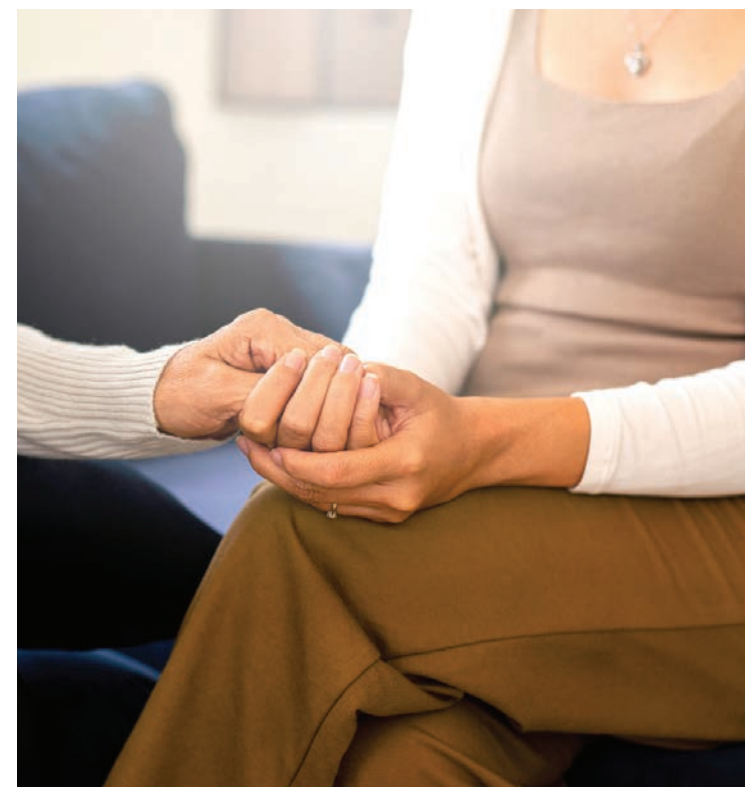
- **Generalized anxiety disorder:** GAD is persistent and excessive anxiety about activities or events, even routine tasks.
- **Panic disorder:** This involves sudden feelings of intense fear or terror about certain situations. These panic attacks may lead to concerns about recurrence.
- **Social anxiety disorder:** High levels of anxiety, fear and avoidance occur during social situations, particularly fear of being judged or viewed negatively by others.
- **Phobias:** Major anxiety is tied to a specific object or situation and a desire to avoid it. There are phobias concerning heights, insects, leaving the home, and more.

Anxiety disorders also can develop in people dealing with substance abuse issues or certain medical conditions.

Treating anxiety disorders

It is important to note that anxiety disorders, while frightening and frustrating, are treatable. The APA says that while each anxiety disorder has unique characteristics, most respond well to psychotherapy (talk therapy) and medications. They can be given alone or in combination. Cognitive behavioral therapy, which is a type of psychotherapy, can help a person react and think differently in certain situations so they feel less anxious. Medications often are prescribed to provide relief from symptoms. The most common medications used are anti-anxiety medications, antidepressants and beta-blockers.

Anxiety disorders affect millions of people. There is help to be had and many people can overcome anxiety over time.



Healthy habits that could help women reduce their breast cancer risk

Cancer is a formidable disease that the World Health Organization reports is the leading cause of death worldwide. Figures vary, but organizations such as the WHO and the American Cancer Society estimate that around 9.5 million people die from cancer every year.

No type of cancer causes more deaths in women across the globe than breast cancer. Though the five-year survival rate for breast cancer patients has increased by a significant margin in recent decades, a 2019 study published in The Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention reported a significant increase in breast cancer mortality rate in the 25-year period preceding the study. The researchers behind the study theorized that the spike in mortality rate could be due to an increase in incidence and prevalence of breast cancer.

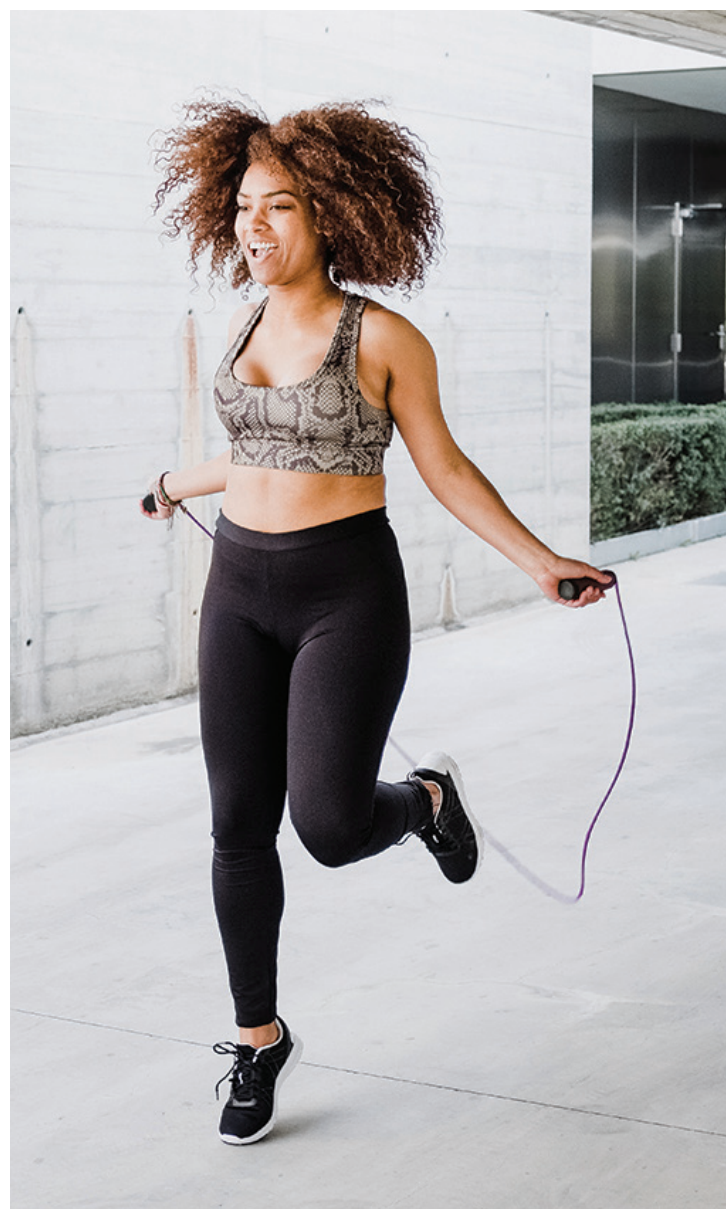
Like all cancers, breast cancer cannot be prevented. However, various healthy habits could help women reduce their risk for the disease.

- **Avoid alcohol.** The ACS reports that alcohol consumption is a clear risk factor for breast cancer. Risk increases with the amount of alcohol a woman consumes.

For example, a woman who consumes one alcoholic drink per day has a 7 to 10 percent higher risk of getting breast cancer than a woman who abstains from alcohol. Drinking two to three drinks per day could increase risk by around 20 percent.

- **Establish and maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese increases breast cancer risk, particularly among postmenopausal women. According to the ACS, after menopause women get most of their estrogen from fat tissue. Fat tissue increases estrogen levels in the body, which in turn increases a woman's risk for breast cancer. Elevated levels of insulin in the body, which is common among individuals who are overweight, also has been linked to higher breast cancer risk. Establishing and maintaining a healthy weight cannot prevent breast cancer, but it can help women reduce their risk for the disease.

- **Maintain a physically active lifestyle.** A sedentary lifestyle increases a person's risk for various conditions and diseases. Women who live such a lifestyle are at elevated risk for breast cancer. The ACS notes that sedentary behavior such as sitting, lying down, watching television, or



engaging with screen-based forms of entertainment that do not require physical activity can increase breast cancer risk, especially for women who spend most of their work day sitting down. A more physically active lifestyle that includes routine exercise can help women reduce their breast cancer risk.

- **Adopt a nutritious diet.** Eating right is another way for women to reduce their breast cancer risk. Vegetables, fiber-rich legumes such as beans and peas, fruits across the

color spectrum, and whole grains are some components of a healthy, nutrient-rich diet that can help lower breast cancer risk. Women also can avoid certain foods, such as red and processed meats and refined grains, to lower their breast cancer risk.

Though there's no guaranteed way to prevent breast cancer, women can embrace various healthy habits to lower their risk for the disease.



A comfortable home office

Many people are now working from home more than ever before.

While this offers newfound freedom and convenience, it comes with its own set of challenges. Creating a comfortable and ergonomic workspace at home is crucial for preventing strain, injuries and maintaining overall well-being.

Ergonomics is the science of designing and arranging our

environment to fit the way we work and interact with it. In the context of a home office, it means setting up your workspace to support your body's natural movements and reduce the risk of discomfort or injury.

Common Issues

The Texas Department of Insurance reported that during the pandemic's shift to more people working from home, there was a surge in injuries. People had left their

ergonomically designed work spaces and were now working on kitchen counters, coffee tables or their beds. This led to people slouching, sitting too long, extending the wrists and relying on laptop screens. Too much sitting at poorly designed work stations led to neck and shoulder pain, back pain, wrist and hand discomfort, eye strain, fatigue, tight hips, leg cramps and reduced productivity.

Arrangements

Invest in an ergonomic chair that provides adequate lumbar support and allows for adjustments in height, arm rests and backrest angle. Your feet should rest flat on the floor or on a footrest. If it isn't possible to have your feet on the ground, use a footrest, books, boards or other material to relieve the pressure on your thighs and prevent leg cramps. When sitting in the chair, don't lean forward to type. Sit in a relaxed, slightly reclined position. This will decrease muscle strain and pressure on the discs in your spine.

Set your desk at a height that allows your elbows to stay close to your body at a

90-degree angle while typing. Use a keyboard tray if necessary to achieve this position.

Place your monitor at eye level, with the top of the screen aligned with your eye line when you are looking straight ahead. Use a monitor stand or adjust the height of your monitor accordingly.

Ensure your workspace is well-lit to reduce eye strain. Use natural light whenever possible, but use task lighting as needed. An ergonomic keyboard and mouse allows for a relaxed, neutral wrist position. Avoid resting your wrists on a hard surface while typing. Keep cable organized and out of the way to prevent tripping hazards.

Take regular breaks to stand, stretch and walk around. Set a timer or use productivity apps to remind you to step away from your desk. Even while sitting, occasionally stretch your hands, fingers and arms. To avoid eye strain, look away from the computer every 10 to 15 minutes and focus on a spot 30 feet away for 30 seconds.

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Healing from addiction

Addiction is a complex and often misunderstood medical condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide.

It's important to understand that addiction is not a moral or ethical failing, but rather a medical issue with various treatment options and ways to manage it.

The Addiction Center shares that nearly 21 million Americans have at least one addiction, but only 10% of them get treated for it. Alcohol and drug addiction cost the U.S. economy more than \$600 billion every year. Addiction is a challenging condition, but it is treatable. There are several paths in the journey to healing and recovery. With the right support and strategies, it's possible to overcome addiction and lead a healthier, more fulfilling life.

Defining Addiction
Addiction, also known as substance use disorder, is a chronic disease characterized by the compulsive use of a substance despite harmful consequences. It can involve drugs, alcohol or even behaviors like gambling or compulsive eating. Key features of addiction include:

- **Loss of control:** Individuals struggle to control their substance use or behavior, even when they want to stop.
- **Craving:** Intense cravings for the substance or behavior are a hallmark of addiction.
- **Negative consequences:** Addiction often leads to difficulties in various areas of life, such as health, relationships and work.

- **Tolerance and withdrawal:** Over time, individuals may develop a tolerance to the substance, requiring more of it to achieve the desired effect. Withdrawal symptoms may occur when they try to quit.

Treatment Options
The first step in treating addiction is often detoxification, where the body is gradually rid of the substance. This can be done in a supervised medical setting to manage withdrawal symptoms safely.

Various forms of therapy, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and motivational interviewing, can help individuals understand the root causes of their addiction and develop healthier coping mechanisms. Therapists or doctors may prescribe medications to manage cravings, reduce withdrawal symptoms and support recovery. For example, methadone can help those with opioid addiction, while medications like naltrexone can reduce alcohol cravings. Support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) provide peer support and a sense of community, which can be crucial for recovery. For severe addiction cases, residential or inpatient treatment facilities offer intensive therapy, 24/7 supervision and a supportive environment.

Managing Addiction
Recognize that addiction is a medical condition. Understanding it is not a moral failure is crucial. This perspective reduces stigma and encourages seeking help. If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, it's essential to seek professional help. Addiction specialists can



create personalized treatment plans. Surround yourself with supportive friends and family members. Develop healthy coping mechanisms by identifying triggers and developing ways to respond to stress or difficult emotions.

Recovery is a journey and setbacks may occur. Set realistic goals and celebrate small victories to stay motivated. Stay away from environments or situations that may trigger cravings.

Dr. Ha Acupuncture



Dr. Ha, a licensed acupuncturist, holds certification as an Acupuncturist from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) in the United States.

Dr. Ha has been trained in both Western and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) from Nanjing Medical University, China. Additionally, she has earned Medical Degree from Nanjing Medical University, China and a Ph.D. in Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture. Commencing her clinical practice in the early 70s, Dr. Ha has amassed extensive experience in treating various diseases. Her distinctive TCM diagnostic and therapeutic approaches have demonstrated clinical and experimental effectiveness. The patients at both local and VA outpatient facilities deeply value the care they receive from her

For over two decades, Dr. Ha has been actively engaged in medical research at East Tennessee State University, contributing to approximately 100 peer-reviewed publications and abstracts in esteemed medical journals. This extensive research background has significantly deepened her comprehension of both Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine, greatly enhancing her clinical practice.

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DENTISTRY

Bill Wolfe DDS, PA General Dentistry Specializing in Mercury Free Dentistry

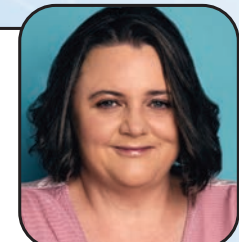


Dr. Wolfe graduated from Baylor College of Dentistry in 1972. Prior to moving to Tennessee, he practiced mercury-free dentistry in Texas and New Mexico for almost 50 years. He is currently accepting new patients. Please call for an appointment.

3915 Bristol Hwy, Suite 103
Johnson City, TN 37601
www.drwolfe.com
423-461-0073

MASSAGE THERAPY

Angela Tyree LMT, MLD-C Massage Therapy



Angela Tyree LMT,MLD-C independently owns and operates Merit Massage Care inside the HomeTrust building by the Johnson City mall. She most loves to serve adults who are in need of help with symptom management during a chronic illness journey. Massage is a healthcare modality that has been shown to be effective at alleviating chronic pain, anxiety, and insomnia. Home visits are also available. Angela is the only LMT in the area listed as a preferred practitioner with S4OM, the Society for Oncology Massage.

1907 North Roan Street
Suite 202
Johnson City, TN 37601
www.meritmassage.com
423-481-9012



NEUROLOGICAL

Pamela Costello MD, P.C Neurological Medicine Specializing in Environmental Illnesses



Dr. Costello is a published neuroscientist who completed her training in Neurosurgery in NYC. After practicing for 20 years, she moved to TN, focusing her medical practice on neuroinflammatory illness and associated environmental causes.

3915 Bristol Hwy, Suite 103
Johnson City, TN 37601
www.drpamelacostello.com
423-461-0073

OPHTHALMOLOGY

James W. Battle M.D.

**Cataract and Refractive Surgery
and Glaucoma Specialist**



Dr. Battle is a Johnson City native and attended Science Hill High School. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1996 and ETSU College of Medicine in 2002. Dr. Battle is a member of the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology as well as the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery.

Johnson City Eye Clinic
110 Med Tech Park
Johnson City, TN 37604
www.johnsoncityeye.com
(423) 929-2111



Joshua Busscher M.D.

**Cataract and Refractive Surgery
and Corneal Disease Specialist**



A Fellowship-trained cornea specialist, Dr. Busscher recently joined the prestigious group of surgeons at Johnson City Eye Clinic to bring an array of cornea treatment and surgery options surpassing all that has been previously available in our region. Certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, Dr. Busscher is also a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

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Jennifer L. Oakley M.D.

**Cataract and Refractive Surgery
and Glaucoma Specialist**



Dr. Oakley is from Bristol, TN and attended Tennessee High School. She holds a BA from the University of TN and attended ETSU's College of Medicine where she was honored as a Quillen Scholar. Dr. Oakley is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Christian Medical and Dental Association and the Association for Research and Vision in

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OPHTHALMOLOGY

Lauren C. Rushing M.D.

Medical Retina Specialist



Dr. Rushing, who grew up in Tomball, Texas, a suburb of Houston, joined Johnson City Eye Clinic after serving as Chief Resident at University of North Carolina Ophthalmology. She received her MD from the University of Texas Medical School where she also completed her internship. Dr. Rushing completed her ophthalmology residency at the University of North Carolina, followed by a retina fellowship at the University of Michigan.

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Michael F. Shahbazi M.D.

Glaucoma Specialist



Dr. Shahbazi was raised in East Tennessee and joined the Johnson City Eye Clinic in 1990. Following his internship at Baptist Hospital in Memphis, he completed his ophthalmology residency at Vanderbilt University followed by a glaucoma fellowship at the University of Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary in Chicago, IL.

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Amy B. Young M.D.

Comprehensive Ophthalmology



Dr. Young is a life-long resident of Johnson City. A graduate of East Tennessee State University and the Quillen-Dishner College of Medicine, Dr. Young joined the Johnson City Eye Clinic in 1993. Dr. Young completed an internship at East Tennessee State University and a residency in ophthalmology at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

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OPHTHALMOLOGY

Jeffery O. Carlsen M.D. Pediatric Specialist Reconstructive Plastic Specialist



Dr. Carlsen joined the Johnson City Eye Clinic in 2004. He is Board certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, a fellow of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and an associate of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgeons.

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OPTOMETRY

Peter Lemkin O.D. General Optometry



Dr. Lemkin joined the Johnson City Eye Clinic in 2001. He served on the staff of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, Florida for two years. Dr. Lemkin, an optometric physician, has been in private practice, managed care administration, clinical education and laser vision correction with TLC Laser Eye Centers before joining the Johnson City Eye Clinic.

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Shirley Velasco-Hill D.O.



Dr. Shirley Velasco-Hill D.O. Raised in Johnson City, Tennessee, Dr. Shirley Velasco-Hill has returned to her hometown to provide exceptional eye care to the community she knows and loves. She earned her Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Biology, with a Minor in Health Sciences, from East Tennessee State University in 2018 earning her a place on the Dean's List and membership in the Pre-Optometry Club. She pursued her Doctor of Optometry from the Kentucky College of Optometry in Pikeville, graduating with the Class of 2023.

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OPTOMETRY

Dr. Zachary Long Optometrist



Dr. Zachary Long started his career in optometry during high school, working with a local optometrist as a paraoptometric technician. Dr. Long received both his undergraduate and doctorate degrees from Indiana University. He specializes in treating a variety of diseases while having a focus on specialty contact lenses and dry eye.

Highlands Optometry
Bristol Office
1701 Euclid Ave. Suite D
Bristol, VA 24201
www.highlandsoptometry.com
(276) 466-4227
Wise Office
135 Plaza Rd., Wise, VA 24293
(276) 679-5612



Dr. Joshua Taylor Private Practice Optometry



Dr. Joshua Taylor earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Arkansas and went on to study at and graduate from Southern College of Optometry in Memphis. He specializes in fitting contact lenses and the management of ocular diseases including glaucoma, macular degeneration, dry eye, and diabetes.

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(276) 466-4227
Wise Office
135 Plaza Rd, Wise, VA 24293
(276) 679-5612



ORTHOTICS

Dan Smoker CP, BOCO Licensed/Certified Prosthetist/Orthotist



Dan Smoker joined Victory in the fall of 2021. He came from AALOS in Alabama where he had worked since 2000. Dan brings many years of experience to our orthotics/prosthetics fabrication lab and clinical setting.

Victory Orthotics & Prosthetics
2333 Knob Creek Road Ste 14
Johnson City, TN 37604
423461-3320



ORTHOTICS

Jacob Watters Orthotic/Prosthetic Resident



Jacob joined Victory in July 2023 as an O & P resident. Jacob graduated from University of Hartford with a master's degree in Orthotics & Prosthetics. Jacob worked at an orthotics lab prior to attending grad school and has quickly put those skills to work at Victory.

Victory Orthotics & Prosthetics
324 Steeles Road
Bristol, TN 37620
423-323-1927



ORTHOTICS

Jonathan Smith CFts Certified Therapeutic Shoe Fitter



Jonathan is our procurement specialist and a certified shoe fitter. He has many skills and talents. Jonathan is able to pitch in and help in any department throughout our organization, which he regularly does. He is a great asset to Victory.

Victory Orthotics & Prosthetics
324 Steeles Road
Bristol, TN 37620
423-323-1927



Rhonda Gibson CO, COFM Licensed/Certified Orthodist, Certified Mastectomy Fitter



Rhonda Gibson has been with Victory over 20 years. She specializes in custom orthotics, compression needs, and post-mastectomy care to our clients. Rhonda stays up to date on the latest techniques and technologies.

Victory Orthotics & Prosthetics
2 Sheridan Square Ste 100
Kingsport, TN 37660
423-378-3320



PHYSICAL THERAPY

KT Moyer PT, DPT, Cert. MDT, CIDN Physical Therapist



At HomeFront, we offer one-on-one care to ensure that each patient receives personalized attention and a focused treatment plan, promoting a higher quality of care and better outcomes. Our specialists are trained to treat all types of pain, post surgical rehabilitation, vertigo, and functional strengthening. Our highly skilled services include hands on physical therapy, dry needling, KT taping, soft tissue mobilization and functional exercise to get you back to living the life you love.

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Johnson City, TN 37615
(423) 461-3320



Patti Graybeal LO, COFM Licensed Orthotist Certified Mastectomy Fitter



Patti Graybeal has worked in orthotics for over 35 years. She wanted to continue working after she and her husband retired. We are fortunate to have Patti and her vast knowledge.

Victory Orthotics & Prosthetics
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Johnson City, TN 37604
423461-3320



Rachel Sergent LMT



At HomeFront our focus is on therapeutic and deep-tissue massage, which are effective in relieving pain, reducing muscle tension, and promoting relaxation. Whether you're dealing with chronic pain, stress, or just in need of some rejuvenation, we can customize a massage experience to suit your unique needs!

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(423) 461-3320



PLASTIC SURGERY

Dr. Gregory Pastrick

American Society of
Plastic Surgeons



Dr. Gregory Pastrick has practiced plastic surgery in Kingsport for over 25 years and is the founding member of The Plastic Surgery Center of East Tennessee. He is board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the world's most respected plastic surgery society. He specializes in cosmetic surgery of the face and body and has extensive experience in cosmetic procedures and patient care.

Johnson City
101 Med Tech Parkway, Suite 402
Johnson City, TN 37604
Kingsport
1 Sheridan Square Suite 200
Kingsport, TN 37660
423.392.4884



www.theplasticscenter

PRIMARY CARE

Heather Bishop

Physician Assistant



Heather has been a physician assistant since 2015. She completed multiple internships on site, and after graduation, she joined the team at Genesis Healthcare Center. Along with the rest of the team at Genesis Healthcare Center, she instills a preventative approach to her practice of medicine, highlighting the importance of proper nutrition and an overall healthy lifestyle. Heather also specializes in aesthetics, helping patients feel good from the inside out by offering a variety of different skin treatments and procedures.

Genesis Healthcare Center
2244 Boones Creek Road
Johnson City, TN 37615
423.753.4000



Meg W. Ellis

Physician Assistant



Meg W. Ellis graduated in 2010 with a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from Jefferson College of Health Sciences. During her clinical rotations, Meg fell in love with family medicine and quickly joined the staff at Genesis Healthcare Center. Her desire to treat all patients with a preventive wellness approach is complementary to the staff at Genesis.

Genesis Healthcare Center
2244 Boones Creek Road
Johnson City, TN 37615
423.753.4000



PRIMARY CARE

Joe K. Reid II

Physician Assistant



Joe is a longtime Johnson City resident with a passion for using his medical knowledge to serve his community. Originally from Boones Creek, he founded Genesis Healthcare Center in 2009 to offer more personalized, thorough care to his patients. Joe has been working as a physician assistant since 2000. His experience includes family medicine, neurosurgery, and emergency medicine. Today, he uses his diverse medical knowledge to help his friends, neighbors, and patients lead their healthiest, most whole lives.

Genesis Healthcare Center
2244 Boones Creek Road
Johnson City, TN 37615
423.753.4000



Sydney Younts

Physician Assistant



Sydney Younts is from Elizabethton, and she has been serving her community for several years. She received her Master's in Physician Assistant studies at Lincoln Memorial University. Prior to graduation, Sydney completed several internships at Genesis Healthcare Center, where she was drawn to the faith-based and patient-centered care provided. Sydney strives to exceed in personalized care and give her patients the best education they need to optimize their healthcare.

Genesis Healthcare Center
2244 Boones Creek Road
Johnson City, TN 37615
423.753.4000



J.C. Justice III

Physician Assistant



J.C.'s medical career began as a CNA in UT Medical Center's emergency room while he attended Carson-Newman and obtained his degree in Exercise Science. Upon graduation he attended Lincoln Memorial in Harrogate, Tennessee where he received his Master's in Physician Assistant Studies. While at LMU, he completed three clinical internships at Genesis Healthcare Center under the supervision of Joe, Meg, and Heather. J.C. was drawn to Genesis Healthcare Center by the patient centered, faith driven approach to treatment.

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Journal for healthy eating

In the quest for a healthier lifestyle, keeping a food journal can be a game-changer.

This simple yet effective practice offers valuable insights into your eating habits, helps you make more informed choices and sets the stage for long-lasting dietary improvements. A food journal is not a tool for judgment or restriction, but a guide toward healthier choices and a better understanding of your relationship with food. It empowers you to make informed decisions,

identify triggers for unhealthy eating and celebrate your successes along the way.

Remember, the goal is progress, not perfection. By regularly reviewing what you eat, setting achievable goals and seeking support when needed, you'll pave the way to a healthier, more balanced diet. Embrace the journey and let your food journal be your trusted companion on your path to better eating and improved well-being.

Reasons to Keep a Food Journal
A food journal raises awareness about what you eat and drink. It sheds light on patterns, portion sizes and meal timings that you might not have noticed otherwise. Tracking your food intake holds you accountable for your choices. When you see what you consume in black and white, you're more likely to make healthier decisions. Food journals can help identify emotional or environmental triggers for unhealthy eating. Recognizing these triggers empowers you to address them constructively. If you have specific dietary goals, a food journal provides a concrete way to track your progress and adjust your approach accordingly.

location and your emotional state. This contextual information can reveal patterns related to stress, boredom or other emotions.

Using Your Journal
Set aside time daily or weekly to review what you've eaten. Look for patterns, triggers and areas for improvement. Celebrate your successes, no matter how small. Did you make healthier choices this week? Acknowledge your efforts.

Based on your observations, set achievable dietary goals. For example, you might aim to reduce sugary snacks or increase vegetable intake. Plan meals and snacks in advance. This reduces impulsive, less healthy choices. If you see patterns in your journal that you want to change, make plans for how to respond.

Share your food journal with a trusted friend, family member, nutritionist or therapist. Their insights and guidance can be invaluable.

As you progress on your journey to healthier eating, be open to adjustments. Refine your approach over time.

Getting Started
Decide what format you are going to use. A few options include traditional hard-copy notebooks, digital apps, simple spreadsheets or even calendar software. Choose a format that suits your lifestyle and preferences.

Make it a habit to record everything you eat and drink, including portion sizes, ingredients and cooking methods. Be honest and precise. Alongside each entry, note the time,



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Nurture your gut

Your gut health is intricately linked to your overall well-being, affecting everything from digestion to immune function and even your mood.

Your gut plays a pivotal role in your overall well-being, influencing digestion, nutrient absorption and immune function. By nurturing your gut through a balanced diet, probiotics and stress management, you can support your digestive health and your body's ability to fend off illness.

Remember that a healthy gut isn't just about digestion — it's about strengthening your body's first line of defense against infections and maintaining vibrant health from the inside out. The National Institutes of Health cite research saying the bacteria in your gut reduces your risk of diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease and psoriatic arthritis.

Gut Health Connection
Your gastrointestinal (GI) tract, often referred to as your gut, is a complex system responsible for digesting food, absorbing nutrients and playing a crucial

role in your immune response. It serves three primary roles: digestion, absorption and providing a microbiome.

Your gut breaks down the food you eat into essential nutrients that nourish your body. Nutrients from digested food are absorbed into the bloodstream through the gut lining. The GI tract hosts trillions of microorganisms, collectively known as the gut microbiome. These microbes aid digestion, synthesize vitamins and even influence your mood. Healthline explains each person has more than 200 different species of bacteria, viruses and fungi in their digestive tract. They vary between those that are harm-

ful, healthy and essential.

Tips for a Healthy Gut
Consume a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. A diverse diet supports a diverse gut microbiome and a robust immune system. Fiber promotes regular bowel movements and feeds beneficial gut bacteria. Incorporate food like oats, beans and broccoli.

Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts found in yogurt, kefir and fermented foods like sauerkraut. They help maintain a balanced gut microbiome. Also helpful are prebiotic-rich foods such as garlic, onions and asparagus. Drink plenty of water. Being well hydrated is good for your health in many ways. Meanwhile, limit excessive sugar and processed food as it can disrupt the balance of gut bacteria.

Antibiotic use has also been linked to an unhealthy gut by researchers who published in "Nature," so talk to your doctor about which antibiotics are essential and when alternatives might be possible.

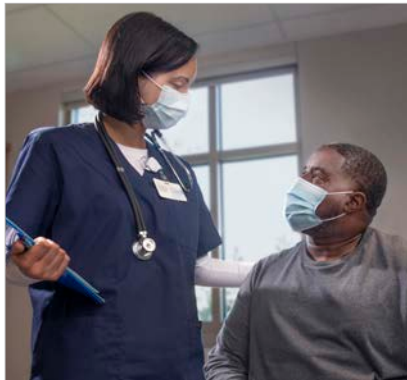
Chronic stress can negatively affect gut health. Practice relaxation techniques like meditation or yoga. Get adequate sleep to allow your body's immune cells to function optimally. Make it a priority to get enough sleep every night. Physical activity supports gut motility and a healthy gut microbiome, so engage in regular exercise.

Immune Function
Your gut and immune system are deeply intertwined. About 70% of your immune cells reside in your gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT).

The gut lining acts as a barrier, preventing harmful substances and pathogens from entering the bloodstream. Beneficial bacteria help regulate the immune system and protect against harmful invaders. When the gut detects potential threats, it triggers an immune response, releasing antibodies and immune cells to defend against infections. An unhealthy gut can lead to chronic inflammation, which is linked to various diseases, including autoimmune conditions.



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Social Connections



Nurturing meaningful relationships leads to healthier lives. Human beings are inherently social creatures.

Throughout history, our ability to connect, communicate and form relationships

has been essential to our survival and well-being. Today, in an increasingly digital and fast-paced world, the importance of social connections remains crucial.

Social connections enrich our experiences, provide support

during challenges and offer a sense of belonging. While the digital age offers new avenues for connection, it is essential to strike a balance between online and offline interactions.

As you nurture your social relationships, remember that building meaningful connections is an ongoing journey. It requires active listening, vulnerability and a genuine connection to fostering bonds with others. A socially rich life contributes significantly to mental, emotional and even physical well-being, making it a cornerstone of a happy and fulfilling existence.

Power of Connection

Social connections come in many forms, from family and close friends to colleagues and acquaintances. These relationships provide a sense of belonging, support and meaning in our lives.

Strong social relationships are linked to improved mental health. Interacting with others boosts feelings of happiness and reduces stress. Conversations and shared experiences offer opportunities for emotional expression and catharsis.

Social support acts as a buffer against life's challenges, improving our emotional resilience. When we face adversity, knowing we have a support network to rely on can enhance our ability to cope and bounce back from setbacks. It's not just our mental health, an active social life influences our physical health. Studies suggest that those with strong social ties tend to have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure and better overall health.



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Research consistently shows that people with robust social connections tend to live longer. The sense of purpose and fulfillment derived from relationships can extend our lifespan.

Fostering Connections
Building and maintaining meaningful relationships takes effort and intention.

Engage in active listening with others. Show genuine interest in their thoughts and feelings and ask open-ended questions. It's not about the number of friends or followers, but the quality of the relationships. Invest time and energy in a few close connections rather than spreading yourself thin. Participating in shared activities or hobbies can be an excellent way to connect with others who have similar interests. Join clubs, classes or online communities related to your passions.

Being vulnerable and sharing your struggles and emotions can deepen connections. It allows others to relate to your experiences and encourages reciprocity. Don't wait for others to initiate contact. Reach out to friends, family or acquaintances and make plans to meet up or have a conversation.

Digital Dilemma
Technology has transformed the way we connect. While it offers opportunities for socialization, it can also pose challenges. Excessive screen time and shallow online interactions can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. To maintain a healthy balance, consider these tips:

- Aim for quality screen time. Prioritize meaningful online interactions such as video calls, online community participation or educational webinars over mindless scrolling.
- Set boundaries. Stick to screen time limits and allocate specific periods for digital interactions.
- Disconnect when necessary. Find time to focus on face-to-face interactions. Enjoy the beauty of the offline world.
- Practice mindful consumption. Be mindful of what you consume online. Surround yourself with positivity and avoid engaging in toxic discussions.



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Start your day with healthy habits

Your mornings set the tone for the rest of your day.

By establishing a healthy morning routine, you can unlock a multitude of benefits, including increased productivity to enhanced well-being. Healthy morning rituals can incorporate exercise, hydration and mindfulness practices.

A healthy morning ritual is a powerful tool for enhancing your physical and mental well-being. Start your day with intention and watch as it positively affects every aspect of your life.

CNBC reported that research done by psychologists found that developing morning habits such as exercise and healthy eating can improve one's energy for the entire day. That same study found that there were other effects on the amount of energy a person had — such as age, happiness



levels and genetics — but that 60% of one's alertness depended on the environment and what a person chose to do upon waking.

Benefits

A well-structured morning routine can help you start the day with purpose and energy, enhancing your productivity throughout the day.

It can enhance physical and mental health. Incorporating exercise and hydration into your morning can kickstart your metabolism, improve cardiovascular health and promote overall physical well-

being. Mindfulness practices like meditation and journaling can reduce stress, anxiety and depression, fostering better mental health.

Establishing a morning ritual creates consistency in your life, making it easier to manage your time and achieve your goals.

Elements

Start your morning with physical activity, whether it's a brisk walk, yoga or a quick workout. Exercise releases endorphins, increasing your energy and improving your mood. After hours of sleep, your body needs hydration. Begin your day with a glass of water to kickstart your metabolism and replenish lost fluids.

Incorporate mindfulness practices into your morning, such as meditation, deep breathing exercises or journaling. These activities promote mental clarity and reduce stress. Take a few minutes to set daily goals and intentions. This helps you establish priorities for your tasks and stay focused on

what matters most. Fuel your body with a nutritious breakfast. Opt for whole grains, fruits and lean proteins to provide sustained energy throughout the day.

Putting it into Practice

If you're not accustomed to a morning routine, begin with small, manageable steps. Gradually add new practices as you become more comfortable. Let your ritual reflect your unique needs, personality and preferences. Choose those exercises, activities and food that resonate with you, that will let you welcome and enjoy your mornings.

Establish a consistent wake-up time to anchor your morning routine. Over time, it will become a habit. While consistency is important, allow flexibility for occasional variations due to travel or special occasions. Let your routines evolve with your changing needs and goals. Periodically review and adjust it to ensure it continues to serve you.

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The Plastic Surgery Center of East Tennessee, the office of Dr. Gregory Pastrick, is Northeast Tennessee's premier cosmetic facility.

Dr. Gregory Pastrick has practiced plastic surgery in Kingsport for over 25 years and is the founding member of The Plastic Surgery Center of East Tennessee. He is board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgeons and a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. He specializes in cosmetic surgery of the face and body and has extensive experience in cosmetic procedures and patient care. Dr. Pastrick graduated magna cum laude from Vanderbilt University with a B.S. degree in molecular biology. Four years later, he obtained his M.D. degree from the University of Alabama (UAB). Brown University accepted him as their top choice for their six-year training program in general surgery and plastic surgery, which he successfully completed in 1999. He received additional specialty training in plastic surgery at Harvard University and the University of Miami with internationally renowned plastic surgeons.

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Vaccination: vital to public health

Vaccinations have played a pivotal role in safeguarding society's health or decades.

These medical marvels have saved countless lives, prevented severe illnesses and even eradicated some deadly diseases. Vaccinations are a remarkable achievement of modern medicine, safeguarding individuals and communities from preventable diseases. To ensure public health, it is crucial to educate oneself about the importance of vaccinations, dispel myths and stay up-to-date with recommended vaccines and boosters.

The World Health Organization reports that between 3.5 million and 5 million deaths are prevented each year by vaccines that prevent life-threatening diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza and measles. Despite this, there are still 12 million children under five worldwide who die every year even though more than half of those diseases could have been prevented with a vaccine. While vaccine

hesitancy is not at all a new problem, it flared up during the COVID-19 pandemic, spilling over into other vaccines and setting back efforts to eliminate such diseases as polio.

Importance

Vaccines save lives by protecting individuals and communities from dangerous infectious diseases, reducing the risk of outbreaks. When a significant portion of a population is vaccinated, it creates herd immunity, effectively shielding those who can't be vaccinated due to medical conditions or age. Vaccination efforts have successfully led to the eradication of diseases like smallpox and are making other diseases very rare.

Common myths

"Vaccines cause autism." Numerous scientific studies have debunked this myth and no credible evidence links vaccines to autism. All claims showing otherwise have been debunked and many who have made them have lost their licenses to practice medicine. "Vaccines contain harmful ingredients." Vaccine



ingredients are carefully studied and monitored for safety. Common ingredients like preservatives are used in minimal, safe quantities.

"Natural immunity is better." Vaccines provide immunity without causing the disease, unlike natural infection, which can be severe or fatal. "Vaccines aren't necessary anymore." Many vaccine-preventable diseases remain a threat, and vaccination is still vital to prevent outbreaks.

Key Vaccines and Boosters COVID-19 vaccines, such as Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, have been rigorously tested and authorized for emergency use. Boosters are recommended to maintain immunity, especially as new variants emerge. Annual flu vaccines are essential to protect against seasonal influenza. They're especially important for vulnerable populations like the elderly and those with chronic conditions.

The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine prevents three highly contagious diseases and is essential for community immunity.

The tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine is crucial for all age groups, with boosters recommended. Hepatitis B can lead to liver disease and cancer. The vaccine against it is essential for infants and high-risk adults.

Other vaccines that are now available or in development include ones protecting against shingles, pneumonia, rotavirus and RSV. Vaccinations protect against forms of cancer including cervical, vaginal, vulvar and anal cancer. Clinical trials are in progress for cancers such as bladder, breast, brain, colorectal, kidney, leukemia, lung, melanoma, myeloma, pancreatic and prostate. Boosters reinforce the immunity provided by initial vaccinations, especially as the effectiveness of immunity wanes or new variants emerge.



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Ease digital eye strain



From work tasks to entertainment, we spend hours gazing at digital displays. Yet, this digital immersion comes with a downside — digital eye strain. But relief is within reach. You can nurture your eyes through simple adjustments and mindful practices. You can actively promote your vision and lasting eye health by implementing screen settings that suit your eyes, taking regular

breaks, practicing eye exercises and creating an ergonomically friendly workspace. Your eyes deserve attention and care to keep capturing the vibrant canvas of life with clarity and comfort.

Screen Settings
Soothe your eyesight by ensuring your screen settings are in harmony with your eyes before you delve

into the digital abyss. Adjust the screen's brightness and contrast to match your surroundings. A bright screen in a dim room or vice versa strains your eyes. Opt for larger text and clear fonts to minimize squinting. Adjust the settings until the text is comfortably legible. Activate blue light filters on your devices to reduce the glare that contributes to eye strain. Many devices offer built-in blue light filters or apps that serve the same purpose.

Taking Breaks
Your eyes deserve mini-vacations during digital marathons. Prevent eye fatigue by taking regular breaks.

Every 20 minutes, shift your focus to something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This exercise rests your eyes and reduces strain. Blinking hydrates your eyes and prevents dryness. Combine blinking with deep breaths to refresh both your eyes and mind.

Eye Relief Exercises
Just as a stretch rejuvenates your

body, eye exercises can do wonders for your visual well-being. Rub your palms together to generate warmth, then gently cup them over your closed eyes. Feel the soothing darkness and allow your eyes to relax. Shift your focus. Hold your thumb about ten inches from your face. Focus on it for a few seconds, then shift your focus to an object in the distance. Alternate between near and far a few times. Gently roll your eyes in a circular motion, first clockwise and then counterclockwise. This exercise loosens eye muscles and improves circulation.

Healthy Environment
Create an environment that supports hydration and ergonomics. Proper hydration supports eye moisture, so keep a water bottle nearby. Adjust your workspace to reduce strain. Position your monitor at eye level, about 20 inches from your face. This prevents neck strain and encourages a natural gaze. Ensure ambient lighting is comfortable and doesn't create glare on the screen. A well-lit room reduces eye strain.

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Financial wellness

Our financial well-being and physical health often intertwine more closely than we realize.

As we navigate the paths of budgets and health routines, understanding the link between financial stability and physical well-being becomes essential. The path to good health includes finding ways to balance financial and physical wellness.

By cultivating financial stability, you're actively nurturing your physical health. Likewise, making your health a priority supports financial resilience. Whether you're crafting a budget or crafting a nutritious meal, each choice resonates across the spectrum of well-being.

Links Between Physical and Financial Health

Financial stress can manifest as physical ailments, affecting sleep, digestion and mood. It can compromise our immune system and cause migraines. Recognizing this connection empowers us to take charge of our finances as a way to nurture our bodies. Researchers have found that people under

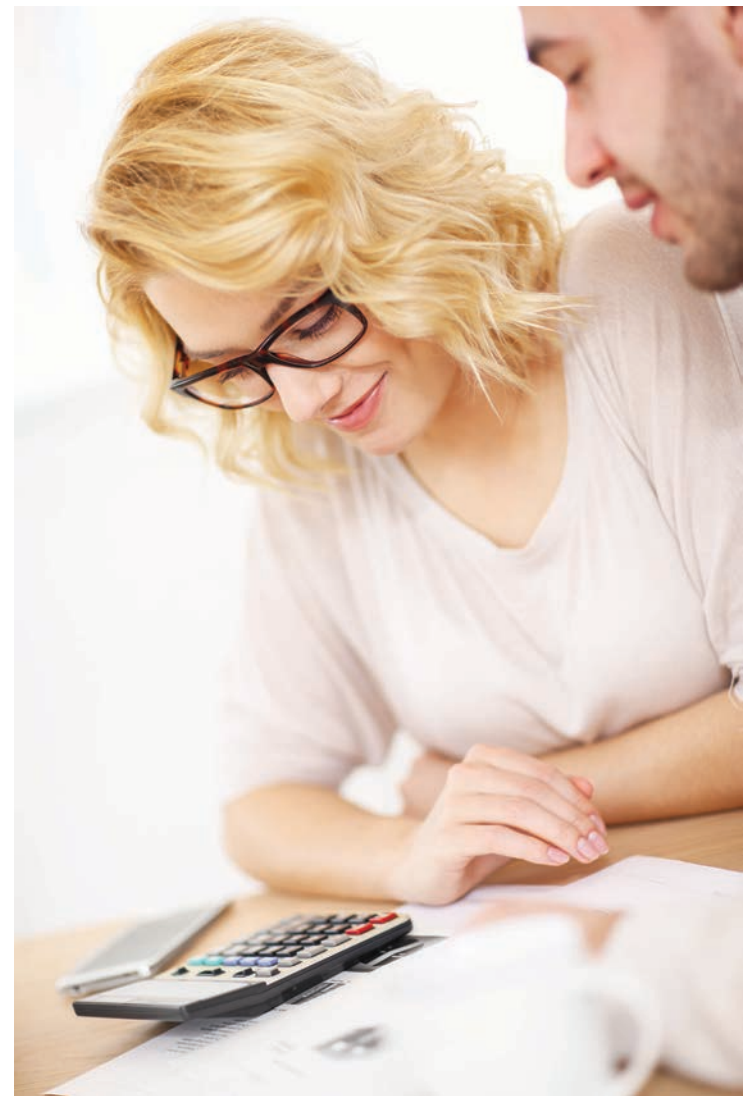
a lot of physical stress often have poor physical and mental well-being.

MoneyGeek reports that debt-related financial problems can increase the odds of developing depression by 51%. They also warn that money problems can cause unhealthy coping techniques such as undereating, overeating or drinking unhealthy amounts of alcohol.

Not having good health insurance or having financial difficulties also contributes to people not going to the doctor when they should which causes health problems to go undetected and untreated. While financial stress can cause physical health issues, the reverse is also true. Having physical and mental problems leads to people making poor financial decisions. It can hamper the ability to earn or manage money or to ask for help.

Practical Steps

Create and stick to a budget as a foundational step in financial wellness. Just as a balanced diet supports health,



a balanced budget supports financial well-being. Building an emergency fund provides a safety net, reducing unforeseen financial challenges.

Tackle debt strategically by paying off high-interest debts and consolidating loans if it aligns with your financial goals. Regularly contribute to retirement accounts and savings. Health and financial wellness intersect in health care costs. Secure adequate health insurance coverage and consider health savings accounts for potential medical expenses. Exercise on a regular basis and eat a balanced diet to reduce the risk of chronic illness and

potentially save on health-care costs. Pursue a healthy lifestyle that will enhance energy levels and productivity to boost your ability to pursue career goals.

Consider seeking mental health care. Professional care can help treat the depression and anxiety that makes it difficult to care for your physical and financial well-being. You can also get financial therapy from professionals who can help you identify problematic behaviors, reduce negative feelings toward money and aid you in finding solutions to improve your situation.

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Nurture your health with water

It's easy to forget one of the simplest yet most vital aspects of self-care: Staying hydrated.

Our bodies demand attention and care and hydration is a significant part of that. Each sip of water nurtures your body's vitality. By integrating simple practices, we embark on a journey toward enhanced well-being — one refreshing gulp at a time.

Water is the elixir of life and its importance cannot be overstated. It maintains bodily functions, facilitating digestion, circulation, temperature regulation and even cognitive performance. Water provides cells with the fluids it needs to keep the body operating smoothly.

Practical Tips

The Mayo Clinic recommends that men drink 15 ½ cups of water per day and that women drink 11 ½ cups per day. Penn Medicine recommends that you drink between a half ounce and an ounce of water for every pound that you weigh. Set reminders on your phone or calendar to prompt you to drink throughout the day. Carry a reusable bottle that you keep within arm's reach no matter where you are. If plain water feels bland, infuse it with slices of fruit, vegetables or other flavors. This adds a burst of flavor without any added sugars or artificial ingredients. Create rituals that incorporate hydration into your routines. Drink a glass of water when you first wake up, before a meal and before bed. This mindful approach ensures consistent intake. If you're worried about whether you are drink-

ing enough, monitor your urine color. Light yellow means you are properly hydrated while dark yellow may signal the need for more fluids.

Benefits

Staying hydrated goes beyond quenching thirst. It offers several health benefits.

Dehydration can lead to fatigue and decreased energy levels while adequate hydration can keep you feeling vibrant and ready to tackle your day. Drinking water supports cognitive function, enhancing your focus, memory and overall mental acuity.

Water aids in digestion, promoting the movement of nutrients and waste through the digestive tract. This can help prevent issues like constipation. Staying hydrated optimizes physical performance by regulating body temperature and supporting muscle function.

Drinking water even affects how you look and feel. Hydration contributes to healthy, glowing skin. Well-hydrated skin appears more plump and vibrant, minimizing the appearance of fine lines. Lack of water can affect mood and lead to irritability. Keep drinking lots of water to support emotional well-being and help maintain a positive outlook.

The benefits of hydration are within reach. With every sip you are helping to ensure your body focuses at its best. Stay hydrated, stay healthy and relish in the wellness that flows from within.





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Elevate health with foot care



Our feet deserve more attention than they often receive.

Our overall health is tied to the well-being of our feet. Our health journey involves tending

to the intricate needs of our feet. By recognizing the pivotal role our feet play and incorporating mindful practices into our routine, we lay the groundwork for comfort, vitality and well-being.

Our feet bear our weight throughout the day and help us move through life's demands. Neglecting foot health can lead to a range of issues from discomfort and pain to more serious problems affecting our mobility and overall well-being.

The National Library of Medicine explains that foot health can be a clue to overall health. If your joints are stiff, you might be developing arthritis. Tingling and numbness is a sign of diabetes. Swelling is a warning sign of kidney disease, heart disease and high blood pressure.

Good Shoes
Our feet require proper footwear to function optimally. Ill-fitting shoes can lead to blisters, bunions and even long-term conditions affecting joints and posture. Investing in quality shoes that offer support, cushioning and a proper fit is essential for maintaining foot health and preventing discomfort.

Foot Care MD recommends wearing shoes that are comfortable, practical and fit well. They need to fit the shape of your foot. If they are too narrow or tight, they can result in foot problems. Poorly fitting shoes can also cause calluses, corns and blisters. You shouldn't have to break shoes in, they say. If that is necessary then they aren't a good fit or they aren't properly designed.

Foot Care Tips
You don't need elaborate rituals to promote foot health. Start with a daily inspection to examine your feet for cuts, blisters or any irregularities and take care of these minor issues before they escalate. Clean any wounds and cover them in bandages. If you have rashes, treat them with anti-

fungal powders and lotions. Keep our feet clean by washing them thoroughly with regular soap and water. Apply a nourishing foot cream to prevent moisture buildup. Change socks every day and allow wet shoes to dry before wearing them again. This helps keep your feet dry as sweaty feet can cause rashes or eczema.

Trim your toenails straight across to prevent ingrown nails. Use proper nail clippers and avoid cutting them too short. Incorporate simple foot exercises like toe stretches and ankle circles to maintain flexibility and strengthen foot muscles. What you eat can also affect your foot health and stave off osteoporosis. Include lots of calcium and Vitamin D in your diet.

Professional Help
Seeking out such services as pedicures, foot massages and reflexology go beyond pampering and indulgence. They contribute to your overall well-being, especially if you have a lot of foot pain or are diabetic.

Pedicures involve exfoliation, nail care and moisturization. Regular pedicures — for men and women — can prevent nail and skin problems. Foot Care MD recommends spacing your pedicures eight weeks apart. Foot massages enhance circulation, reduce tension and relieve stress throughout the body. You can give yourself a foot massage by rolling your feet back and forth over a rolling pin. Reflexology is an ancient practice that involves applying pressure to specific points on the feet, believed to correspond to different body organs.



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