

# Staying Healthy Will Help You Stay Young

Time takes its toll on the body, but its effects can be mitigated with a little bit of work. Healthy lifestyle habits or changes in behavior can slow or even reverse the effects of aging by:

- ▶ Helping your immune system fight disease
- ▶ Building up reserves of lean muscle mass
- ▶ Preventing or slowing degenerative changes
- ▶ Rebuilding damaged tissue and restoring lost function

Simple steps that you can take to stay healthy, mentally sharp, and energetic include:

- ▶ **Don't smoke.** Smoking lowers your aerobic capacity. This makes it harder for you to exercise or engage in favorite activities.
- ▶ **Eat foods rich in antioxidants.** Vitamins A, C, and E fight free-radical formation, the oxidation process that damages tissues. Eating five to nine daily servings of fruits and vegetables will help you get enough of these vitamins. The best antioxidant sources are broccoli, cauliflower, red peppers and other red, yellow, and green vegetables. Berries are prime sources of antioxidants too!
- ▶ **Increase your fiber intake.** Dietary fiber (found in beans, broccoli, bran, and other complex carbohydrates) helps lower cholesterol, aids digestion, and defends against some kinds of cancers.

- ▶ **Know your numbers.** Have your cholesterol and glucose levels checked annually, or as recommended by your doctor. Take medications as prescribed and follow your doctor's recommendations for maintaining an ideal weight.
- ▶ **Exercise.** Aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity four to five times a week. A regime that includes cardio, strength training, and stretching is ideal.
- ▶ **Get sufficient sleep.** Seven to nine hours of sleep a night is ideal for boosting the immune system, repairing physical wear and tear, and strengthening cognitive functioning.
- ▶ **Manage stress.** Stress is linked to many diseases and degenerative conditions associated with aging. Exercise, a healthy diet, meditation, and maintaining strong relationships are all helpful ways to cope with stress.

For more suggestions on how to maintain your health as you age, contact LifeMatters. Help is available 24/7/365.

Source: Wellness Library Health Ink and Vitality Communications



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