

Sleep Health

Sleep is really important for our health. Not getting enough sleep or having interrupted sleep can make you feel tired, have trouble focusing, be less social, feel down, get less deep sleep, burn fewer calories, feel hungrier, and not perform as well. If you're having trouble sleeping, talk to your healthcare team about whether you might need a sleep study or therapy for insomnia (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, CBTi).

Sleep Disrupters

- Too much food or drink close to sleep time
- Blue light from phone/computer/television screen
- Caffeine and alcohol use
- Stress/anxiety/worry
- Certain noises/sounds
- Temperature (too hot or too cold)
- Lack of daytime sunlight exposure
- Medications and medical conditions
- Bed partner and/or pets

Tips for Better Sleep

- Establish a regular sleep schedule (same sleep and wake times)
- Minimize/eliminate bedroom noise and lights
- Increase daytime exposure to sunlight
- Move at least every hour during the day
- Eliminate nighttime caffeine and limit daytime caffeine
- Avoid alcohol within 3 hours of bedtime
- Avoid high-sodium foods close to bedtime
- Eliminate/limit after-dinner and late-night snacking
- Maintain a healthy BMI
- Stay hydrated during the day
- Use cognitive behavioral therapy for treatment of insomnia
- Increase exercise to 150 minutes of moderate intensity per week
- Include more whole food plant-based dietary choices
- Increase meditation techniques

Sleep Management Goals

Setting goals around sleep health is a great way to increase your sleep quality. It's often easier to achieve positive goals. An example of a positive sleep goal is, "I will begin a new bedtime routine of shutting off the television and instead, reading a book for at least 30 minutes before bed, four nights this week."

Specific - What would you like to change?

Measurable - How much will you add or subtract?

Achievable - Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?

Realistic - Can you visualize success? (think about improvement over perfection)

Time-bound - How often or for how long will you make this change?

Recommendations for Optimal Sleep

Infants 4 months to 12 months:
12 to 16 hours per 24 hours

Children 1 to 2 years of age:
11 to 14 hours per 24 hours (including naps)

Children 3 to 5 years of age:
10 to 13 hours per 24 hours (including naps)

Children 6 to 12 years of age:
9 to 12 hours per 24 hours

Teenagers 13 to 18 years of age:
8 to 10 hours per 24 hours

Adults:
7-9 hours of sleep per 24 hours



Risky Substances

It is well known that tobacco use and drinking too much alcohol increases the risk of many chronic diseases and death. And the inappropriate use of mind-altering substances (drugs) can be associated with serious behavioral, cognitive, and physiological problems.

Treatments for people caught in a cycle of habitual use or exposure to risky behaviors take time, different approaches and many attempts. Patience as well as getting support from others is an important part of reaching your goals.

Effective Treatment Models

- Mental health treatment to help resolve underlying triggers, which may include counseling (individual or support groups)
- Medication-assisted therapies
- Use of other lifestyle medicine pillars (decreasing stress through exercise, healthy eating, improved sleep, decreasing stress through meditation and mindfulness, and improving social relationships)
- Combination of treatments with multiple modalities including support with medication.



Slips and relapses are normal and considered part of the change process. Goal setting, support and persistence is key!



A Note on Alcohol

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation by limiting intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men or 1 drink or less in a day for women, on days when alcohol is consumed.

Measurements:

One standard alcoholic drink in US:

12 oz beer

5 oz table wine

1.5 oz of 80-proof spirits

Typical Containers:

750 mL wine = 5 drinks

750 mL spirits = 18 drinks

1 L spirits = 24 drinks

Goals for Avoiding Risky Substances

Setting goals around substance use (tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs) is a great way to start making changes. An example of a goal is, "I will swap my morning cigarette with chewing gum at least 5 days this week for the next four weeks. I will ask my partner to help keep me on track and use the free texting service for more support."

Specific - What would you like to decrease/change?

Measurable - How much or how many will you decrease or change?

Achievable - Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?

Realistic - Can you visualize success? (think about improvement over perfection)

Time-bound - How often or for how long will you make this change?

Social Connection

Our social connections and relationships have a big impact on our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Studies show that the strongest factor in determining happiness and a long life is having close social bonds. Even brief positive interactions with others can improve things like blood pressure and heart rate. Here are some tips to help you build and maintain meaningful connections in your life.

Forming New Social Connections

- Volunteer; helping others improves health, increases happiness and allows you to meet new people
 - Connect with a community resource center to find local options
 - Find online or community groups of those who share the same interests—meetup.com or Facebook groups are a great place to look
- Join a religious or spiritual group
- Help at a local animal shelter or adopt a pet to connect with other animal lovers
- Go to a local sports event, music performance, lecture or art display
- Help organize community events by joining a steering committee or board
- Attend community celebrations like parades or walks
- Take a course at your local library or community college
- Ask your employer for ways to increase social connections at work



TIP: Look for social opportunities that improve other areas of health such as activity groups or healthy cooking classes.

Strengthen Social Connections

- Take more care to quickly connect with people you see a lot during the week
- When possible, stay positive while connecting with others
- Share new experiences
- Make and spend time with others
- Be there for those who need you
- Be flexible, supportive and excited about what others are doing in their lives

Social Media and Depression

While technology can improve social connectedness in some cases, research finds that those who use social media the most are at a higher risk for depression. Be mindful of how you use technology to support social connections in your life.

Social Connection Goals

Setting goals is a great way to increase your sense of connection. It's often easier to achieve positive goals. An example of a positive social connection goal is, "I will increase my feeling of social connectedness by joining a group fitness class that meets for an hour, three nights of the week."

Specific - What would you like to increase/change?

Measurable - How much or how many will you increase or change?

Achievable - Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?

Realistic - Can you visualize success? (think about improvement over perfection)

Time-bound - How often or for how long will you make this change?

Nutrition

Eating more plant foods is a great way to improve overall health. If you have a chronic disease related to your lifestyle, the American College of Lifestyle Medicine recommends an eating plan that mainly includes a variety of minimally processed vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds.

Eat Less/Avoid

- Sugary drinks like soda, juice cocktails, sweetened coffee and energy drinks
- Processed meats like sausage, bacon, salami, bologna, deli meat
- Processed snacks like crackers, chips, pretzels
- Cakes, pastries, sweets
- Dairy (especially high-fat types with added salt and/or sugar)
- Red meats
- Poultry
- Eggs

Eat Plenty

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Legumes
- Whole Grains
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Herbs
- Spices
- Mushrooms
- Water



Inspiration

Nourish bowls are a simple way to assemble a healthy meal. A mix of leafy greens, beans, grains, vegetables, and healthy fats will provide energy and help you feel fuller, longer.



LEAFY GREENS

2-3 handfuls,
raw or lightly
cooked



OTHER VEGGIES

1 cup, raw,
steamed or
roasted



PROTEIN

½ - 1 cup, beans,
legumes, or soy



FIBER-RICH CARBS

½ - 1 cup of
whole grains



HEALTHY FATS

limit 1-2 to
toppings,
includes nuts



TOPPERS

herbs, spices,
or sauces

Nutrition Goals

Setting goals to improve your habits is a great way to eat healthier. An example of a positive nutrition goal is, "I will add 1 cup of berries to breakfast and a small apple or orange as an afternoon snack at least five days this week."

Specific - What would you like to change?

Measurable - How much or how many will you add, eliminate, or change?

Achievable - Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?

Realistic - Can you visualize success? (think about improvement over perfection)

Time-bound - How often or for how long will you make this change?

Stress Reduction

Stress is a part of life, but how we think about it and respond to it can change how it affects our health and self-care. While medication might help with stress, there are plenty of things you can do to manage it and boost your overall well-being. Working with your healthcare team can help you create a plan to reduce stress. Ask them about Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for more support.

Self-Management Tips

- Connect with others
- Get involved in activities
- Try different healthy ways to relax (music, exercise, dance, meditation or yoga)
- Take time for fun, creative activities or hobbies
- Keep a gratitude journal or write about stressful events
- Take care of spiritual needs
- Make time to laugh (comedy, joke books etc)
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Try deep breathing techniques
- Get a massage



Good Stress/Bad Stress

Not all stress is harmful; some stress can actually help us finish important tasks, study for exams, speak in public, or reach tough goals. However, distress, or negative stress, is the kind that can cause anxiety, lower performance, and harm our mental and physical health. What causes distress varies from person to person, so it's important to identify what triggers it for you. Once you know, you can create a plan to manage, cope with, or change how you view those situations.

See Stress Differently

Look at events or triggers from a different angle. Consider "Is there another way to look at this situation?" and remember it's not helpful to focus on what cannot be changed. Try to improve your mood by looking at what is going well in life. Focus on your accomplishments or what you have overcome.

Stress Reduction Goals

Setting goals around stress management is a great way to decrease any negative impact stress may have on your health. It's often easier to achieve positive goals. An example of a positive stress management goal is, "I will write about what I am thankful for at least 10 minutes three times per week."

Specific - What would you like to change?

Measurable - By how much will you change?

Achievable - Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?

Realistic - Can you visualize success? (think about improvement over perfection)

Time-bound - How often or for how long will you make this change?

Moderate Activity

- Fast walking
- Heavy cleaning (washing windows, vacuuming, mopping)
- Mowing the lawn (power mower)
- Light bicycling
- Recreational badminton
- Tennis doubles

Intense Activity

- Hiking
- Jogging
- Shoveling
- Carrying heavy loads
- Bicycling fast
- Basketball game
- Soccer game
- Tennis singles

*Match your activity choices to your own fitness level.

Guidelines

Adults aged 18-64 should aim to get 150-300 minutes of moderate exercise or 75-150 minutes of intense exercise each week, along with strength training on at least two days. There are also specific guidelines for older adults, pregnant women, and those with chronic conditions. The more exercise you do, the better, but any amount is better than none. It's safest to start a new exercise routine with the help of a certified expert like a kinesiologist, exercise physiologist, physical therapist, or personal trainer.

Activity Types

Aerobic or endurance activities include running, swimming, biking, hiking, playing sports, dancing and fast walking.

Strength or resistance activities include lifting weights, pushing a wheelchair/stroller, using kettlebells and doing exercises like squats, lunges, pushups, sit-ups.

Flexibility activities include stretching and some types of yoga.

Balance activities include tai chi, qi gong and certain types of yoga.

Please Note: You should always talk to your doctor before starting a new activity.

Activity Goals

Setting a goal is a great way to get started with physical activity. It's easier to achieve positive goals. An example of a positive activity goal is, "I will walk with a friend or family member for at least 20 minutes after dinner, every weekday for the next two months."

Specific - What would you like to add/change?

Measurable - How much or how many will you add or change?

Achievable - Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?

Realistic - Can you visualize success? (think about improvement over perfection)

Time-bound - How often or for how long will you make this change?

