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Healthy Living: Simple steps to a better life

By Colin McDougall

Healthy Living: Simple steps to a better life by Colin McDougall

When you watch TV or read magazines you get the impression that most people spend their days as lean, mean exercise fanatics who compete in triathlons, eat tofu, and drink a gallon of rain water a day.

If you don't fit this profile, you are not alone. Consider:

Seven out of 10 American adults don't exercise regularly, despite the proven health benefits, according to a 2002 study based on more than 68,000 interviews for the National Center for Health Statistics.

80 percent of people in the US older than 25 are overweight based on the body mass index (BMI), a national guideline computed through a combination of weight and height—according to a Harris Poll released in 2002.

According to the American National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (CDC), in 2000 the most common actual causes of death in the United States were tobacco (435,000), poor diet and physical inactivity (400,000), alcohol consumption (85,000).

The writing is on the wall— poor diet and physical inactivity is about as dangerous as smoking.

So, why don't we exercise and eat right?

For most of us, the answer is: time. Exercise and diet take time away from our work, our families, our lives.

Some of us have tried to fit exercise into our daily routines before and maybe even stuck with a program for a while, but finally saw too little gain for the effort and time it took.

Here's the good news: a healthy lifestyle won't consume you like it might have years ago. The science of healthy living has come a long way in recent years. Consider:

Modest but regular exercise has proven to raise the body's metabolic rate, so that you burn fat even when at rest.

New strategies of exercise and diet bring results much sooner than ever before, without drugs. A healthy lifestyle isn't only about working out and cutting out foods you like. It's also about applying a balanced approach to all areas of your life. For example, studies show that you can lose weight by simply watching less television.

Realistic health improvement for real people

We all know we should take better care of ourselves, but modern lifestyles with hectic work schedules, commuting, and family and social responsibilities make it difficult for us to live a healthy life.

But you can begin to live a healthier life. You can start slowly and work in more healthy practices. Interestingly, even small changes can lead to big improvements over time. Begin modestly by making a commitment to starting to do something and to stay with it. As you proceed, remember to be proud of your accomplishments—you will be doing more than 70 percent of the population!

The doctor will see you now

Before embarking on a fitness program and making dietary changes, talk with your doctor about your plans. If you have prior health conditions, especially cardiovascular disease, your doctor may want you to avoid certain exercises. If you are on certain medications, your doctor may give you valuable information on avoiding drug interactions with certain foods such as grapefruit and with some herbal supplements.

A special word to smokers

If you smoke, you know you need to quit. Modern research links smoking to a vast array of cancers, as well as heart and cardiovascular disease. According to the American Cancer Society, smoking alone causes one-third of all cancer deaths.

The bottom line—if you are a smoker, stopping represents the single best health action you can take. Talk with your doctor—there are new treatments available.

Some basic health objectives

It can be hard to know where to start when you want to improve your health.

Here are three baseline objectives for a healthier lifestyle:

- Lose weight / Eat a more balanced diet
- Get more exercise
- Reduce stress

Lose weight / Eat a more balanced diet

Qualified health professionals agree the keys to losing weight are to eat less, eat a more balanced diet, and to increase your exercise level. In general, reducing your intake of protein and eating more fruits and vegetables is a good start. Try and reduce your intake of saturated fats common in fried foods. Your heart will thank you.

Here are some tips:

Eat a diet that contains lots of:

Whole grains
Fruit
Vegetables

Ensure you are getting an adequate supply of:

Vitamins—a daily

is good protection

Calcium—many men and women do not get enough calcium in their diets, putting them at risk for osteoporosis.

Water—many adults do not consume enough water each day

Reduce your consumption of:

Fat
Sugar
Salt
Processed foods
Fast food meals
Alcohol

Other Tips:

Make your own nutritious lunch and take it to work. You'll save money and feel better too. Buy veggies for snacks, such as small washed carrots or apple slices, which you can put into re-sealable bags and take to work.

Consider diet supplements for weight loss and health

Despite our best efforts, it is hard to eat a balanced diet everyday. Consider taking one or more of the excellent vitamins and supplements available, but check with your doctor first before taking them.

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Today, you can get the latest high quality vitamins and dietary supplements at low prices and without leaving your home by ordering over the Internet. Here is an excellent example of a site.

Avoid fad diets

Use common sense and follow the advice of government health authorities, university nutritionists and other well-accredited health care experts. Reliable nutrition advice is available free by contacting your local health department and talking with a nutritionist.

Be wary of the latest "Fad Diets" put forward by authors. Healthy eating is not rocket science—you need to eat a balanced diet that includes the four food groups:

Vegetables—three or more servings per day
Whole grains—five or more servings per day
Fruit—three or more servings per day
Legumes—two or more servings per day

This is well documented by decades of research. Sure, the fad diets may help you lose weight temporarily but at worst you could seriously damage your health and at best, you will likely gain the weight back if the diet is not sensible and sustainable.

Get more exercise

The second key to losing weight is to add more physical exercise into your lifestyle.

Exercise takes some effort and time, so it is fair to ask why you should bother. The key reasons include the following:

Weight loss
Reduced risk of heart disease and stroke
Increased energy
Increased bone strength
Maintenance of muscle mass
Reduced stress levels
Better appearance

Research continues to show that any exercise is better than none. For example, regular walking or gardening may be beneficial in reducing your risk of heart disease.

Exercise

At a minimum you should strive for at least three 20-minute bouts of continuous aerobic (activity requiring oxygen) rhythmic exercise each week.

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Other exercise levels will depend on your physical condition and goals. Consider a session or two with a certified personal trainer to accurately assess your current physical condition and plan an exercise regimen.

Easy ways for non-athletes to add exercise to their daily lives:

Get off the bus a stop or two early and walk to work or home.

If you drive to work, park in a new location and walk a few blocks.

Take the stairs at work. Get off the elevator a few floors down and walk up a few flights.

Ride a bicycle—you don't need a fancy bike, but you should always wear a helmet

Walk—it's cheap and it works! The average person can walk three to four miles an hour. This makes many short trips to the store within walking distance, saving you money on gasoline and providing a health benefit at the same time.

Try gardening—raking, weeding, and tilling will all give you exercise. If you have a small, level yard, consider a push mower. These mowers are quiet, cut the lawn beautifully, and give you exercise all at the same time.

Enlist a friend to join you—have fun together and stay motivated

Consider creating a home gym

More and more people are purchasing exercise equipment to use at home. The advantages include:

No wasted time traveling back and forth to the gym

Ability to use the equipment more often and at more convenient times

Increased chance of participation by all family members

Here are some tips in selecting equipment:

Determine what goals you want to pursue—strength training, aerobic training or cardiovascular training before you look at equipment.

Buy sturdy, quality equipment from known manufacturers.

Purchase equipment that will meet your needs now and as you improve

Buy from a reputable retailer, who has a large selection, low prices, and stands behind their products.

For an excellent example for

and other fitness equipment.

Reduce Stress

The good news is that by eating a healthier diet and exercising more frequently, you will have already taken two of the most important steps to helping your body fight stress.

Obviously sources of stress are a personal matter. Be alert to chronic stress you have trouble managing. This can sometimes lead to more serious conditions for both men and women, such as

depression. If you feel you are having trouble coping, it is best to talk with your doctor.

If on the other hand, you have the everyday level of stress most of us face, you may want to try these stress-reducing tips:

Make time for family and friends

Avoid stressful thoughts by not listening or watching the news first thing in the morning and last thing at night

Try listening to music or practicing meditation

Take vitamins B6 and B12—they are excellent for fighting the effects of stress and most adults don't get enough of these important vitamins.

How can I get started on a healthier lifestyle?

If you are not living as healthy a life as you want right now, you may be wondering how you will find the time and the resources to make changes.

The good news is you don't have to make all the changes at once, but do resolve to make some improvements. Time is always an issue, but time taken to improve your health will yield big improvements in many other areas of your life.

There has never been a better time to start, because thanks to the Internet you can purchase quality health care products and equipment, quickly and efficiently and save money too! Here's a link to get you started with

and healthy living.

Colin McDougall is a successful freelance writer providing valuable advice for people seeking weight loss programs and vitamins. Visit <http://www.weight-loss-and-nutritional-supplements.com> and <http://www.vitamins-source.com> for more articles. He also offers other health and exercise related sites such as <http://www.a1-hockey-equipment.com> and <http://www.paint-ball-gun-reviews.com>. His numerous articles offer several healthy living tips.

Living Your Life Mission

By Rinatta Paries

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In last week's article (http://www.whatittakes.com/Archive/Newsletter30to39/newsletter__36.shtml), I asserted that defining and living your life mission can in fact make it easier to attract your ideal relationship. That's because simply living your life mission automatically attracts your ideal partner.

Sounds simple, right? Well it is and it isn't. It's simple because people who are compatible with you will

be drawn to you. But living your life mission is not always effortless.

I believe to live your life mission you need to consistently take three specific steps. These are:

1. Trust and believe in yourself above all else.

Trust that what you have deemed as your life mission is exactly that. Trust this even when others tell you it's not so. Trust when people who are incompatible start to move away. Hold onto your life mission during difficult times and decisions. Use it as a guiding light when you are lost. Believe in yourself.

2. Reorient your life around your life mission.

Does your job reflect your life mission? Does your community? Your hobbies? Your conduct? If not, start making small, incremental changes oriented around your life mission. Small changes are easier to integrate over time and will make the most difference.

3. Use your life mission to discern correct choices in all circumstances.

When choices come up about your career, lifestyle, relationships and conduct, measure them against your life mission rather than against what you want in the moment, or what you feel obligated to do. Always ask yourself, "Will this choice support what I am up to in my life?" If the answer is no, make another choice. If the answer is yes, go for it!

Living a life truly oriented around your life mission will give you a fulfilling life, one that you love. And, when you live such a life, you become very attractive to your ideal partner!

Your Relationship Coach,
Rinatta Paries
<http://www.WhatItTakes.com>

(c) Rinatta Paries, 1998–2002. Do you know how to attract your ideal mate? Do you know how to build a fulfilling relationship, or how to reinvent yours to meet your needs? Relationship Coach Rinatta Paries can teach you the skills and techniques to attract and sustain long-term, healthy partnerships. Visit www.WhatItTakes.com where you'll find quizzes, classes, advice and a free weekly ezine. Become a "true love magnet(tm)!"

With nearly a decade of relationship coaching experience, Master Certified Coach Rinatta Paries works with singles to help them attract their ideal relationship, and helps couples create more love and

fulfillment in their existing relationships. Visit her web site at www.WhatItTakes.com or e-mail her at coach@WhatItTakes.com.

Living Your Life Mission
What's Simple?
Take Responsibility for Reshaping Your Life
You Are What You Eat
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The Ultimate Rose Garden– Neighbors envy, owners pride!

101 tips to stay fit and live longer.

Organic Secrets

Mind Power Creative Thinking

Obesity and Weight Loss



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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
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