

25 Simple Tips to Improve Your Health and Fitness

1. Diets are evil

Because of their temporary nature, diets don't work. The people who do lose weight end up gaining it back again once they come off the diet. Instead of dieting, try to change your lifestyle. The changes you make to the way you eat should be sustainable for the rest of your life.

2. Get rid of the junk food

The easiest way to ensure that you don't eat the food you shouldn't is to make sure it isn't available. Go through your fridge and toss out all the junk food. Next time you go grocery shopping, make sure that you don't buy more.

3. Make use of healthy snacks

Having a snack between your meals is a good idea – as long as they're healthy. Stock up on fruits, veggies, nuts and seeds. Have them readily available for whenever you might feel hungry. This means both at home and at the office.

4. All carbs are not created equal

While carbohydrates are a necessary part of your diet, there are some that do more damage than good. Avoid white carbs wherever possible and switch to the whole-grain alternatives.

5. Kill the caffeine addiction

Whether it's coffee or soft drinks, caffeine is a drug. It's a legal drug but a drug nonetheless. If you feel the need for a warm drink, choose an herbal tea instead.

6. Don't forget the fat

Although trans-fats and the like should be avoided, you need to consume sufficient essential fatty acids. Make sure you are getting your omega-3 and omega-6 fats. These can be found in flax oil, nuts, and seeds.

7. Water is your friend

Your body is made up mostly of water. The problem is most people walk around dehydrated. If you are feeling thirsty, it's too late: you are already dehydrated.

8. Breathe deeply

Oxygen is more important than water for your health. You can survive days without water but only minutes without oxygen. Most people today have very shallow breathing and are not getting enough air. Breathe deeply from your diaphragm to ensure your cells are well oxygenated.

9. Eat your veggies

Vegetables are rich in micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) that are essential to your health. Plus they have a cleansing effect on your body because of their alkaline pH.

10. Buy organic

Much of the commercial produce available today is devoid of nutritional value due to the depleted soil used in the industrial farming process. Organic produce also has the benefit of tasting a lot better. It might be more expensive but the benefit is well worth it.

11. Get friends that live healthy

The ongoing interaction with people who have the health you desire will be a positive influence on you. It is far easier to make the transition to healthy living when you have the social support.

12. Find healthy foods you enjoy

Just because you are eating healthy does not mean you need to suffer eating foods you hate. Look for healthy foods you enjoy and eat them more often. Find recipes online that are both healthy and enjoyable.

13. Take your lunch to work

Not only will brown bagging your lunch save you some money, it will help you avoid eating unhealthy foods for lunch. Take the extra time to make your lunch in the morning or make extra for dinner and eat the leftovers.

14. Eat out intelligently

For the restaurants that you visit frequently, find out the menu choices that are healthy options. This way, you can enjoy going out without jeopardizing your health.

15. Give yourself a cheat meal

Every now and then, it's okay to indulge in something you know that it is not good for you but you enjoy. You shouldn't deprive yourself. Just make sure that this only happens from time to time.

16. Sleep deeply

Get a good night's rest every evening. Sleep in a quiet room that is dark for the appropriate amount of time for you. Most people have heard that you need 8 hours of sleep for proper health. In my experience, the amount of sleep I need varies with my eating habits and exercise. When I am living in a healthy manner, I find I feel fully energized with about 6 hours of sleep. Find the amount of sleep that is right for you.

17. Schedule exercise

Make your workout an important appointment for yourself. Schedule it at a specific time and place. Make it as important to you as a business meeting or doctor's appointment.

18. Get a workout buddy

Sometimes your motivation to exercise wanes. When you have a partner that pushes you, it is far easier to take action. Working out with a friend also tends to make it a lot more fun.

19. Exercise aerobically

Cardiovascular exercise helps to burn fat and raises your metabolism. It also strengthens your heart and lungs. Do at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise at least 3 times a week.

20. Don't forget to stretch

Stretching is important for your flexibility and the recovery of your muscles. Don't stretch a cold muscle – it's a good way to injure yourself. If you stretch before your workout, only do so after warming up. It's always a good idea to stretch after a workout where your muscles are already warm.

21. Train for strength

Building muscle not only increasing your strength but also increases your metabolism. Strength training also stimulates the release human growth hormone in your body which slows the aging process. It's important to engage in strength training 2-4 times a week.

22. Make exercise a habit

The easiest way to follow through and make sure that you exercise is to make it automatic. Exercise at the same time every day if possible.

23. Get a trainer

Although a personal trainer is not necessary, having one while you start out exercising can be very helpful. They can show the proper form for exercises and help motivate you to really push yourself.

24. Make changes gradually

If you've been living an unhealthy lifestyle for a long time, the challenge of healthy living can seem daunting. Instead of trying to change everything at once and getting overwhelmed, make sustainable changes gradually.

25. Don't give up

If you fall back into unhealthy patterns, there is no reason to beat yourself up about it. Identify why the lapse occurred and learn from your mistakes. Move forward with this knowledge and continue to move towards health.