

# HealthPoint

TRENDS IN HEALTH & WELLNESS

January 2012 Edition



## Even Small Changes can make for a healthier lifestyle

If you are like most people at this time of the year, disbelief is the operative word as we begin trying to settle into another new year. January is resolution season, and many of us are starting 2012 with a lot of good intentions and for most of us, living a healthier lifestyle preoccupies our thoughts at this time of the year.

We would all like to consider ourselves healthy. In today's information-rich world, we have so much access to health and wellness data that it's hard to avoid continuous self assessment and second-guessing. Eating healthy foods, exercising regularly, drinking lots of water, taking vitamins and watching our alcohol consumption are all wise words to consider regarding our health and overall wellness.

Yet living in our ever-demanding and ever-changing world brings its own challenges of what it means to be 'healthy'. Some of us struggle to get enough exercise each week. Some of us

struggle to drink enough water and eat healthy foods. Some of our fellow world companions struggle each day just to breathe clean air, to eat enough, and to drink clean water.

How can you make living healthy not just a mantra, but a real way of life? You might say to yourself, "This is such a challenge with all the travelling I do." Or, "Yes, I try to do better but it's just not possible. There are not enough hours in the day!"

Travel doesn't normally allow for exercise, unless you're rushing through the airport for a long period of time! With the demands of a hectic schedule, how do you maintain the best health routine?

Healthy living is a lifestyle. That means it requires a conscious effort and determination to making good choices every day. It's not something that can be taken for granted. You need to schedule time for exercise and relaxation to make healthy lifestyle; in other words, *making* time instead of *finding* time. We are only allowed one life to live. Why not make it the best we can?

By incorporating at least one or two new goals into your daily routine, you can achieve some significant success and most likely, feel better in the process. Here are just a few easy tips that can help you get started. Remember, making even small adjustments to your routine can make a big difference.

### Food

Making choices about what to eat is often harder than we think. Especially if you're tired, hungry,

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weighed down with work and/or travelling long hours. If you are on a plane, your choices are limited. Or depending on what city you live in, your choices could be limited. Making critical decisions about food intake can matter greatly. Some foods will create more energy and be fuel for your body. Others will make you feel sluggish.

Be sure that you're getting adequate amounts of protein in your diet. If you're concerned that this is lacking, take along snacks that are protein-rich and easy to consume. Protein is easily found now in powder forms that can be mixed with water, or in bars that can be handy for long flights. Having healthy snacks at your fingertips will help you make the choice to eat those, rather than rely on fast-food options found on the run.

When travelling, fresh fruit is often hard to find so packing something before you leave will help stave off any junk-food cravings. When at home, be sure to pick up packets of dried fruits and fruit strips to hold you over until fresh versions are available. And of course, the right vitamins will go a long way towards providing some needed extra minerals and nutrition at all times of the year.

## Drink:

It shouldn't be surprising that water is always the best option. Try to consume 8 to 10 glasses (1 to 1.5 liters) per day. Be sure to watch your caffeine intake throughout the day as coffee can be dehydrating and caffeine will impact your ability to receive restful sleep. Limit your alcohol intake to three to four drinks a week. And certainly watch your alcohol intake before bed; it too will affect your sleep.

## Exercise

Who has time for it? You do! It's important to never lose sight of the physical and mental benefits of exercise so you need to actively schedule time for exercise every week just like you book other appointments. If it's in your calendar are less likely to cancel. Even 30 minutes a day of brisk walking will provide you with a good foundation on which you can build a more variable program of exercise.



In the process, those 30 minutes of walking will positively impact your ability to think more clearly and rest easier. Try to build in 20 – 30 minutes of

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heart-elevating exercise at least three times a week – that’s all it takes. In addition to the obvious benefits, scheduling this into your week can help your body release some of the stress it’s under and you’ll find yourself feel much better and be fueled up to attack another challenging day as a result!

## Other Stress Reducers

Relaxation tapes are simple and effective ways to calm the mind and spirit. These are available today in so many formats. Stretching and yoga-like movements are ways you can get in tune with your physical body, while also calming the mind. Even a massage, on a regular basis, will make you feel more empowered and healthy enough to tackle a more strenuous exercise routine. When combined, stress reducers and exercise are a powerful duo in helping you develop your own healthier lifestyle.

## Support

We all need someone to talk to! Whether it’s family, friends, co-workers or other support groups, having people who you can relate to, talk with and who will listen, can help lighten your load.

And finally, don’t forget that laughter can be the best medicine of all. We often take ourselves far too seriously. Remember that ultimately, life is about the journey, not the destination.

On that note, here’s to 2012 being your healthiest, happiest yet!

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