

POPULAR

HEALTH AND WELLNESS TIPS TO REVISIT FOR THE NEW YEAR

by Jacy Mullins, MEd, NASM-FNS



Increasing your activity level decreases your risk for all diseases, including heart disease and type 2 diabetes, and contributes to your overall health.

We've all seen the hot diet of the year, the workout that promises dramatic results and various tips to improve your health. When there's a lot of information available, knowing what's best for you can be confusing.

Before you try the next big thing in health and wellness, think about these two points:

- Can you maintain this forever?
- How realistic is it to add this tip into your everyday routine?

Asking yourself these questions will help you decide whether a popular tip is a good one for you to follow. Some of those popular health and wellness tips include:

- Getting eight hours of sleep a night
- Drinking eight cups (64 oz.) of water per day
- Extreme caloric restriction
- Walking 10,000 steps every day.

Here's what you really need to know about these tips!

POPULAR HEALTH AND WELLNESS TIPS:

DRINK EIGHT CUPS (64 OZ.) OF WATER A DAY

Our bodies have numerous processes that send a signal saying we need something – whether it be food, water, sleep or activity. Have you ever wondered what would happen if we listened to them? Some studies have shown that drinking too much water has adverse effects on our bodies. The true definition of hydration is maintaining fluid balance in the body. Thirst is a mechanism that tells our bodies we need water. If we listen to our bodies, they will tell us exactly how much water we need – with only a few exceptions.



A simple way to monitor how much water your body needs is to look at the color of your urine. A translucent to light yellow color indicates that your body is properly hydrated. A florescent yellow can indicate dehydration and other health concerns. For further information on the color of urine as it relates to health issues, you should see your physician.

GETTING EIGHT HOURS OF SLEEP A NIGHT



Sleep is essential for our bodies to function properly. It restores our bodies by building them up after the toll of daily activity. Contrary to common belief, our bodies react differently than others to a specific amount of sleep. A single mom of three with multiple jobs may thrive on little sleep, whereas others might struggle to get through the day on such little rest. Everyone has a different range of restorative sleep.

Discovering the amount of sleep your body needs is essential to avoid a progressive catabolic state which wears the body down. Keep in mind that depending on your current health or disease state, you may need more

sleep than others to enter a restorative state. Many factors also affect our sleep patterns, some of which are hormones. Cortisol is one of those hormones, and it is released when we are stressed. Levels of cortisol are naturally elevated throughout the day and eventually decrease during the night. If we are constantly stressed before bed, our cortisol levels will remain elevated which prevents us from getting a good night's sleep.

A good strategy to identify your optimal range for sleep each night is to allow your body to wake naturally. On a weekend when you can sleep in a bit, refrain from setting an alarm and allow your body to wake up on its own. Do this a few times, and then identify the average number of hours you slept. Now you have an approximate range of sleep that your body needs! Listening to your body, as well as adopting a healthy night time routine, can help you achieve a restorative state of sleep.



WALK 10,000 STEPS EACH DAY

Fitbit, Garmin, Apple and other companies have done a great job of getting people active by introducing the goal of walking 10,000 steps daily. Many people have been told to “just move.” By moving, you are contracting your muscles and creating an increase in blood flow. However, if you move without knowing what you're moving toward, you might find it difficult to make progress.

Living a sedentary lifestyle teaches our muscles not to initiate movement. This leads to decreased muscle mass and an increase in overall fat mass, thus decreasing the number of calories your body naturally burns at rest.

The first step to achieving health benefits from physical activity is by increasing the amount of movement you do now. Increasing your activity level decreases your risk for all diseases, including heart disease and type 2 diabetes, and contributes to weight-loss. With this in mind, begin to set a specific wellness goal and develop a plan!

EXTREME CALORIC RESTRICTION

A popular tactic to lose weight is extreme caloric restriction. Though monitoring caloric consumption is key to weight-loss, restricting your body to less than 1,000 calories a day, unless instructed and supervised by a physician, does more harm than good. Cutting out excess calories is just as harmful to your body as consuming too many calories! If we consume more calories than our bodies burn through daily activity, our bodies will store the excess calories as fat cells – thus leading to weight gain. On the other hand, if we cut calories in excess, our bodies will enter into a degenerative state that loses function and health – resulting in a struggle to lose weight or keep the weight off.

Our bodies are very individualized and need a specific number of calories every day for our organs and tissues to function properly. To find out exactly how many calories your body needs to run properly, seek an exercise professional who can test your Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR).



WRAPPING IT UP:

Not every health and wellness tip is obtainable or relevant. To decipher between them, think about your main goals for your physical activity, nutrition plan or overall wellness. Could these tips be easily maintained? Pay attention to your body, its aches and pains, how it thrives, etc. Your body is an amazing machine that knows exactly what it needs to function, so you should listen to it!

About the Author:

Jacy Mullins, MEd, NASM-FNS, earned her Master's in Exercise Physiology from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Texas. She is an Exercise Physiologist and Health Fitness Professional with a fitness nutrition certification. Jacy works with all populations, specializing in helping others strive to increase their overall wellbeing through lifestyle modifications. Most notably, Jacy has been published in well-known educational journals for her contribution to exercise testing and supplementation research studies. Her passion for overall wellness is driven by her own fitness journey and love of nutrition. For more information on the author, visit www.fitnessbeyondtraining.com.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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