

The Secret to Feeling Good Everyday

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Being healthy is a lifelong process. It is something you must commit to for your lifetime. Knowing what to do to feel good and be healthy is not enough. Nor is starting off big and then only occasionally following your plan. The trick is being willing to do those things on a regular basis, especially when it is not convenient.

That is the struggle most REAL people have. Some people honestly do not know how to exercise or eat right. But most often, people do know—they just can't talk themselves into doing it, and herein lies the problem.

Knowing is not enough. It is all about the doing. So find ways to be active everyday and learn to eat healthy on most routine days. Also consider your mental and emotional health as you seek out what works for you and your situation. The ultimate challenge is to develop a lifelong way of thinking, not just quick-fix strategies.

Schedule times for “purposeful movement” into your day. Building it into your daily routine is a vital part of your lifetime wellness plan. Only you can decide what activities that you will enjoy doing. This may be seasonal. You might walk inside during the winter and outside when the weather is warmer. Maybe you garden and do lawn work in the warm months and ride an exercise bike on cold or wet days.

Create your plan to incorporate purposeful movement into your schedule, but branch out as new opportunities arise. Some people like routine and need repetition to stay on track. Others need to change it up regularly to remain interested. You may choose a variety of exercises for your plan. The main considerations being, to think about moving all the time, choose a style that works for you, and structure your day to accommodate it.

The traditional way people look at exercise makes it become a form of drudgery. Reawaken to the fact that you can move just for the fun of it. It is important to create positive associations with movement. When

you have a pleasant memory of movement, you are more likely to do it again. Commit yourself to an active lifestyle, not just an exercise program.

Creating awareness about moving is essential. A pedometer is a tool that can help you monitor your daily movement. It can help detect the need to increase daily movement or provide maintenance feedback. A healthy goal is 10,000 steps per day. Start out by seeing what you log in a normal day, and then begin to purposefully add 500 to 1,000 steps per day until you reach your goal.

Research shows that you can shed sixteen to eighteen pounds a year by creating a *daily* habit of walking for half an hour in your target heart rate zone. This weight-bearing exercise also stimulates the mineral content to remain in the bone structure and thus reduces age-related bone loss, known as osteoporosis.

Active movement does many things beyond burning calories. It releases endorphins that make you feel good, and it also signals your body to start working more efficiently. It turns off fat-storage hormones and signals the release of energy for you to complete needed tasks. You will also continue to burn calories at higher rate after you are done exercising. It basically unlocks the door to how your body functions.

Choose activities based on your personal needs and your current situation. If you are too run down—working forty-plus hours a week, shuttling kids, and running errands—don't beat yourself up that you didn't walk or exercise that day. Instead, look forward to doing some form of activity that restores energy. This shift in thinking promotes gentle, restoration activities versus just hanging out on the couch!

On days when you have more energy, push yourself. Be creative and make sure it's something you can have fun with. Activity does not have to feel like an obligation. This is your life—being healthy should not seem like work. If it does, then try something different! By doing this, you can learn to feel good, mentally and physically, everyday of your life.