

## **Wellness—Off-the Beaten Path**

By Lisa Schilling

Wellness is not only the absence of illness, it is much more. Beyond diet and exercise there are many more things that can improve total wellness. Here are just a few:

### **Drink enough water daily.**

**Why?**—bodies depend on water to keep cells and body systems running smoothly. It is used to maintain blood volume, which is imperative for regulating body temperature and delivering oxygen and nutrients. It is also crucial for waste removal. Your body does not function properly without enough water. Think about running your car without enough oil—that is a picture of your body without enough water. A simple equation to help adults figure their fluid needs is that for every pound of body weight, you need about half an ounce of fluid intake per day.

Formula—**0.5 ounces x Body Weight in Pounds = Daily Fluid Requirement in ounces.**

**Take your vitamins.** Talk with your doctor about developing a proper nutritional supplement regimen based on your personal needs and conditions.

**Why?**—most people do not meet their total nutritional needs through food alone.

Taking a vitamin and mineral supplement can help fill in the gaps. It is best to get these nutrients from food, but when that does not happen, supplements are a good alternative. Taken regularly they can improve body functioning.

### **Don't ignore "mental" health.**

Seek professional help for any persistent sadness or underlying depression. **Why?**—your entire existence is affected by your mental health. If you have an imbalance in the brain that causes depression, you should seek professional help. A combination of medication and or behavioral therapies could make a major difference in your life.

**Get adequate rest.** (7 to 9) hours is recommended. **Why?**—it is at night that the body renews itself on a cellular level. You need adequate rest to ensure proper body functioning. It is the equivalent of charging your batteries. Note: you only have 24 hours to make up for any sleep deficits during that period of time.

**Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.** **Why?**—your body becomes accustomed to regular patterns. When you actively take steps to create a relaxing routine, your body will respond to the association.

### **Turn the lights down low and reduce stimulation the hour before bed.**

**Why?**—this has to do with your sleep-wake cycle. Darkness promotes better sleep and light signals the body's wakefulness.

**Journal before bed** **Why?**—this can allow you to free your mind from the cares of the day. The technique should fit your style. It can be lists, notes or paragraphs. Focusing on things you are thankful for can also create positive thoughts and images before resting.

### **Keep your sleep cycles regular.**

Go to bed and wake up within 1-2 hours of the same time. **Why?**—your circadian rhythm is easily disturbed. Keeping a regular schedule will promote better rest and increase energy.

**Use aroma therapy.** **Why?**—because the mind creates associations with smells. You can create positive memories by associating them with different smells. Just think about baby lotion, coconut tanning oil or baking cookies to understand what I mean.

**Use essential oils.** **Why?**—Aromatherapy acts on the central nervous system. This can promote positive associations and has been known to relieve the discomforts of many health problems.

**Turn on the music.** **Why?**—music creates associations in the mind. You

suddenly remember that “certain event” when you hear a familiar song played. Your mind has created a “link” to the event, based on the music or song you heard there. Another benefit of music—it can be used while you conduct your regular activities.

**Increase your circle of friends.**

Devote time to social pursuits and building relationships. **Why?**—studies show that people with genuine friendships and who actively socialize are happier and live longer.

**Focus on helping others.** Actively look for ways to help others on a regular basis. **Why?**—helping others feels good, and it takes the mind off of its own wants. Powerful brain chemicals are released when you help others. Besides, as Zig Zigler always said, “You can get anything you want in life, if you help enough other people get what they want.” And finally,

**Place value on special events and milestones.** This includes those of friends and family along with your own. Attend events, send cards and celebrate. Don’t let those moments pass you by. **Why?**—often when you look back on life, the things that seemed “little” at the time were really “the big” things. Remembering these special moments and commemorating them, builds lifelong bonds with those you share them with. Just ask the girl who had her first baby shower.