

# OPTIMAL HEALTH

These ideas can minimise the damage of stress, help you to live longer and function at your best.

## 1. RELAX

Do this by paying attention to your breath without trying to influence it. Just follow it with your mind. Make a habit of observing your breath in this way for a few minutes each day and whenever you start to feel anxious or stressed. (*Excellent CD guide "Breathing—the master key to self healing."* [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com))



## 2. DON'T STAY UP LATE

During sleep, our brain engages in data analysis from strengthening memories to solving our problems. (*Sc. Am. Mind*, Aug/Sept 2008)

### Napping.

A Greek study showed that people who had a 20 min. siesta a day reduced their risk of heart disease by 39%.

*Most men sleep better with someone next to them. Most women don't.*

## 3. BRAIN FOOD

**Nutrients** in foods, or lack of them can influence memory, learning, concentration and decision making. The brain operates best when blood glucose levels are stable. Low G.I. foods help to do this. (See No. 6)

Brain foods include apples, green tea, nuts, fish and soybeans. Best lunch for reducing afternoon performance troughs is chicken or fish with salad. (*Sc. Am. Mind*, Oct/Nov 2007)

*Your energy is your greatest asset.*

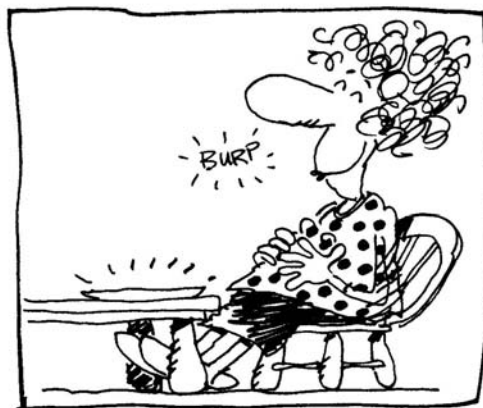
## 4. KEEP MOVING

**Bodies were meant to move.** It also enhances brain function especially memory. Studies show that walking **briskly** for 30 minutes a day, can reduce the risk of premature death by 35%. Resistance exercise for 20 minutes a day is also recommended. (*Obesity can shorten your life by 13 years and smoking by 10 years. Prof. Anvil Sali 2007*)

**If you are overweight** don't stop exercising even if you don't seem to be losing weight. You will still benefit from internal fitness. It is better to be overweight and fit than thin and unfit.

## 5. SUPER FOODS SLOW AGEING

These include green leafy veg. (especially broccoli and spinach), peppers, pumpkin, tomatoes (raw/cooked), blue berries, apples, watermelon, handful of nuts, eggs, red salmon, soy, tofu, all beans and real chocolate (75-80% cocoa). Avoid salt, flour, sugar and processed foods.



## 6. LOW GI

GI is the ranking of carbohydrate containing foods on a scale of 0-100. The higher the number the more quickly you'll digest the food and trigger extreme fluctuations in blood sugar. Low scores (55 or less) mean the food is digested slowly and produces only gradual changes in blood sugar.

Cont...

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## Guidelines:

Limit potatoes to small side dishes, eat fibre rich vegies (dark/leafy) and fruits (7 servings a day). Eat the least processed grains, ration white flour and sweets. No more than one cup of fruit juice a day and avoid sugar-sweetened drinks. Eat lean red meat, skinless chicken and eggs. Eat olive oil, nuts, avocados, seeds, soybeans, chickpeas and lentils. Eat more fish and seafood. Moderate your alcohol intake. (Ref: *The Low GI Shopper's Guide*, Prof. J. Brand-Miller and K. Foster-Powell)

**When people are eating well, they get more work done in less hours... you come up with better ideas and solutions much faster.** (Sherry Strong, chef, nutritionalist and energy coach, *The Australian*, 28 Oct 2005)

## 7. STAY HYDRATED

Nutrients can reach the brain in adequate amounts only if the body gets enough fluid. Fill up a bottle of water and set a goal to finish it by the end of the day. Other drinks including herbal teas will also contribute to hydration. Caffeinated drinks can improve short-term memory and concentration. But too much caffeine (4 cups of coffee or more) and your ability to concentrate is likely to decline.

## 8. HEALTH CHECKS

Your health status can be assessed at different levels by yourself, your GP or an holistic GP (The latter tend to be more thorough, assign more time to your consultation and may cost more. To find these doctors visit [www.acnem.org/referrals](http://www.acnem.org/referrals).)

*Men can expect to die years earlier than women. Experts believe this is in part because of men's reluctance to attend health checks.*

**Checks for men:** Blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol and lifestyle checks (for abdominal obesity) once a year. Prostate check at aged 50 years. (Unless you have a relative with prostate cancer in which case you need your first check at aged 40 years.) Colon cancer test at any age, especially if you have a family history of the condition.



Testicular self examination for lumps or weight differences can be done in the shower by rolling the testes gently between thumb and fingers, using both hands.

[www.menshealthaustralia.net](http://www.menshealthaustralia.net)

**Checks for women:** Add to your monthly self-breast examination, a more thorough one by a doctor each year. Include a mammogram if you are over 50 and/or have a family history of breast cancer. Pap smear every two years until you turn 70. Blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol and lifestyle checks once a year.

*Your body is the house you live in. If you destroy it, you'll have to leave.*

## 9. SUPPLEMENTS

As insurance against gaps in your diet, we suggest a multi vitamin/mineral supplement daily. Unless you eat fish (esp. red salmon) often, we also suggest good quality fish oil capsules daily. (Phone Ian Collins, Evelyn Faye Nutrition . 03-96701346 for advice/mail order.)

## 10. WASH YOUR HANDS

80% of colds and flu viruses are transmitted by hand-to-hand contact. One study showed that workplace surfaces can contain more bacteria than an office toilet seat. Worst offenders (bacteria per square inch) are the phone receiver, desktop, keyboard and the mouse. The least contaminated was the toilet seat! For good health wash you hands with soap and water before you touch your face or eat your food.

THE  
SIMPLIFIED  
HEALTH CARE  
PROGRAM...

