

New Year, Healthy New Habits

Go Ahead, Make A Change

Adopting healthier habits as part of your daily routine can help make a difference in how you look and feel—so give yourself a boost by trying these useful tips.

Healthy Eating

1. **Choose good fats.** Stick to *monounsaturated* and *polyunsaturated fats*, such as those found in avocados, nuts, fish, olive oil and seeds (sesame, pumpkin and flax). Avoid *trans fats*, which tend to be in processed foods, and limit saturated fats, such as fatty meats and full-fat dairy products.
2. **Go nuts.** Grab a handful of nuts, such as pistachios, walnuts or almonds. They're rich in good fats, fiber, folic acid, and other nutrients.
3. **Drink more water.** Make today the day you start drinking enough water. Use your thirst as your guide. Mix it up and add fruit or herbs to your water for a great calorie-free way to satisfy your thirst.
4. **Get your protein.** Eat a variety of foods high in protein, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, seeds, and soy products. Protein helps maintain muscle mass and promotes muscle growth.
5. **Limit sodium (salt) to less than 2,300 mg per day.** It adds up fast, so watch out for packaged foods that are high in it. Salt contains sodium chloride, which is listed on food labels as just *sodium*.
6. **Watch out for added sugars.** You may not even realize that your favorite beverages and snacks are filled with added sugars (and calories). Limit those fruit drinks, sugary sodas, and sweet coffee drinks. Cut back on desserts and sweets and aim for less than 10% of your daily calories from added sugars.

Exercise

1. **Step to it.** Walking can be an important part of your aerobic exercise plan. Try to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week, such as brisk walking or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, such as jogging or running. You can also mix these activities and do them 10 minutes at a time.
2. **Take a break.** Get up and move after 30 minutes of sitting. Do five minutes of brisk exercise such as climbing stairs or walking in your neighborhood. Be sure to move or walk in place while on calls.
3. **Get moving.** Take advantage of a recorded virtual fitness class available via the Level Up [Wellness On-Demand](#) webpage.

Sleep

1. **Stick to a schedule.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Try to get at least seven hours of sleep every night. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, get up and go to another room to read or relax. Then go back to bed when you're tired.
2. **Be empty-headed.** Got a lot on your mind? Keep a notebook by your bed and jot down your thoughts before bedtime. Clearing your mind before bed may help you sleep better.
3. **Avoid nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.** The stimulating effects of nicotine and caffeine take hours to wear off and can disrupt a good night's sleep. An alcoholic beverage might make you feel sleepy, but it can affect your sleep later.
4. **Relax before bedtime.** Don't exercise late in the day. Avoid eating too much late at night. And try not to drink anything too close to bedtime.
5. **Set the mood.** Make your bedroom the ideal spot for sleep. Quiet any loud noises, turn off the lights, and turn down the heat. Limit screen time from your phone, TV, or computers right before bed as it can impact your sleep.
6. **Limit naps during the day.** If you do take a nap, limit it to 30 minutes. Nap earlier in the day so you don't affect your nighttime sleep.

Stress Management

1. **Make a plan to handle stressful events.** Find a time, location and a stress-reducing activity to help you unwind. Also have someone in mind whom you can reach out to when stressed.
2. **Take care of yourself.** Eat well and make sure to exercise regularly. It's also important to try to get a good night's sleep.
3. **Learn how to relax.** Practice deep breathing, meditate, do yoga, or take a walk in nature. Get your mind off of things and participate in hobbies and sports that you enjoy.
4. **Talk with someone.** If things are bothering you, talking about them can help lower your stress. Find someone you trust, such as a family member, friend, health care provider or therapist. ***Need help finding someone to talk to?*** Try the [Employee Assistance Program](#), which is provided by *Inova* (effective January 2021).
5. **Be easy on yourself.** Realize that you can't do everything, and you can't do it perfectly. So, let some things go.
6. **Ask for help.** If you have a lot on your to-do list, figure out what you can handoff or delegate to other people. And don't forget your sense of humor. It will help keep you and others relaxed.

Resources

- [Level Up website](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Cigna members](#)
- [Kaiser members](#)