

# Resources for Living®

## Honing your healthy living skills



These days, we're flooded with a constant stream of news, articles, TV shows and internet apps all telling us how to lead healthy lives. Yet how many of us follow the advice?

### The answer may surprise you

In 2016, research showed that less than 3 percent of American adults lead healthy lifestyles. Over ninety-seven percent of us don't.<sup>1</sup> What does that tell you?

### Healthy living can be difficult

These statistics show that knowing what we should do isn't enough. Today's lifestyles can make it challenging to practice well-being.

Why? Because most of us live with chronic stress, too little sleep, not enough exercise and too much food on our plates.<sup>2</sup> We need more than information; we need tools.

### What skills can help you practice healthy living?

Here are some steps to take you from knowing what to do to doing it<sup>3</sup>:

- **Take action now on medical and emotional issues.** Do you smoke? Are you overweight or depressed? These are examples of problems that can keep you from feeling well — but that you can also reduce or remedy. Contact your doctor today for an appointment to talk about these or other obstacles you face.
- **Take control now...**
  - **Of your exercise.** Write down your daily schedule. Then identify time slots where you can squeeze in a walk, run or

trip to the gym. You don't need big chunks of time. In fact, thinking you need lots of time can prevent you from doing it. As little as 15 or 30 minutes of activity a day can make a difference in how you feel.

- **Of your food intake.** Do you eat on the run? Eat whatever's easiest rather than healthiest? Eat to soothe away daily tensions? Join a weight loss group, see a nutritionist or check out interactive apps that can help you monitor your food choices and intake. You can even get started by simply tracking your calories with a pen and paper.
- **Of your sleep.** The average adult needs 7-9 hours of sleep each night.<sup>4</sup> If you're not getting that — or if you are and you still feel tired — find out why. Improve your sleep habits by avoiding exercise, TV and electronic devices within two hours of bedtime. Visit a doctor or sleep clinic for more specific advice or help.
- **Take steps now to manage your stress.** Stress is a fact of life. Too much stress can sabotage your other efforts at healthy living. Look into ways to reduce stress like yoga, meditation, deep breathing, positive self-talk, social support and more.

### Motivation, commitment and action

Those are the three words that sum up what you need to pursue a healthy lifestyle. It's not always easy to make healthy choices. But doing so can improve the quality of your life immensely.

<sup>1</sup><http://health.usnews.com>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.webmd.com>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mayoclinic.org>

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