

Healthy U @ Work

March 2019

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Sleep It Off

Stressed out? Overwhelmed? Worried? These are common feelings that can keep us awake at night. But to deal with them, we may just need a good night's sleep!

Getting enough sleep helps to reduce stress while getting too little sleep can make you irritable and increase your risk for depression. Sleep works with the natural serotonin cycle in your brain, and a lack of sleep could disturb this cycle causing decreased serotonin levels. Low serotonin levels are linked to increased carbohydrate cravings and depression. Sleep is also essential for processing memory, whether you have to study for a test or remember to pick up something from the store.



Sleep is also important for your physical health.

- Cells produce more protein when you sleep, helping your body to heal from injury or the day's exposure to pollution, ultraviolet rays and environmental chemicals.
- Not getting enough sleep is associated with high blood pressure and increased cholesterol levels, both risks for heart disease and stroke. Lack of sleep is also associated with an increase in inflammation, another risk for heart disease.
- Getting enough sleep can also help you lose weight and prevent diabetes. Sleep balances many of the natural hormones that control appetite and cravings. Not getting enough sleep increases your risk of diabetes by 40%.
- Getting enough sleep can also help keep you safe, reducing the likelihood of auto accidents. Approximately 71,000 injuries and 1500 fatalities are attributed to drivers who have fallen asleep at the wheel.

To be healthy, aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Create a night time routine that relaxes you, including a regular bedtime. Sleep in a room that is not too hot nor too cold and avoid all electronics (television, cell phone, tablet) as they tend to be more stimulating to the brain than relaxing. Sleep is as important to your health as diet and exercise and being well rested will give you energy to live well!



Diabetes and Prediabetes

According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in three adults has prediabetes, and 90% don't even know it! Prediabetes is often a precursor to diabetes where blood sugars are elevated, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed with diabetes. Why is this important? Because both prediabetes and diabetes increase your risk for a number of serious health problems, including heart disease and stroke.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which blood sugar levels are elevated. Most of the food and drink we take in is turned into glucose, a type of sugar, and is used as energy for cells. Once glucose enters the bloodstream, the pancreas pumps out a hormone called insulin. With the right amount of insulin, the glucose leaves the bloodstream and enters the cells. When there is not enough insulin coming from the pancreas, the glucose remains in the bloodstream, causing high blood sugar levels.

Type 1 Diabetes

People with type 1 diabetes no longer produce the necessary insulin to process blood sugar. Type 1 diabetes is normally diagnosed in children or young adults and accounts for only about 1 in 10 of all diabetics. Risk factors for type 1 diabetes include family history, race (Caucasians are at higher risk) and exposure to certain viruses. Those with type 1 diabetes must monitor blood sugar levels and use insulin replacement therapy.



Produce of the Month Asparagus

Did you know that asparagus takes three years after being planted to produce its first harvest? Their shoots are most often green, though there are also white and purple asparagus spears. Regardless of the color you choose, asparagus is an excellent source of vitamins and minerals.

The Basics: When buying asparagus, choose stalks that are bright in color and have tight tips. An open tip on the stalk indicates that it has over-matured. Thin stalks are the most tender and can be cooked very quickly - as in a stir-fry or sauté. Thicker stalks should be peeled and can then be grilled, steamed, poached or sautéed. Once you've selected your asparagus, store in the refrigerator by standing the spears up in a shallow amount of water for up to one week. Wash the spears before cooking and trim the woody ends. You can gently grab the tip and end and bend the stalk and it will snap at the point where the woody bottom ends and the tender stalk begins. Asparagus does not need much cooking, and it should retain its bright green color when done. Overcooking can lead to a loss of color and texture.

Try This: Asparagus can be served warm or cold, in salads, as a side dish, in pastas or pureed in soups. Steam asparagus and add to a favorite pasta dish or omelet. Try wrapping asparagus with thin slices of chicken breast and bake, seasoned with salt, pepper, and lemon zest.

The Facts: A cup of cooked asparagus has about 100 calories and is a good source of fiber. It is high in vitamins K, C and A, and is an excellent source of folate, a B vitamin that can help prevent neural tube birth defects when consumed during the early stages of pregnancy. Folate is also a heart healthy vitamin, helping to lower levels of homocysteine which can raise the risk of coronary artery disease.

Foods That Boost Metabolism

Did you know that eating certain foods can increase your metabolism? Here are some foods that may help you stay at a healthy weight or even lose a few pounds.

- Foods rich in protein take longer to digest and can increase your metabolism for a few hours after eating. Protein rich foods include meats, nuts, legumes, and dairy.
- Spicy foods, especially those made with chili peppers, can increase your metabolism and help you burn fat. Spicy foods can help you feel full more quickly as well.
- Caffeine in coffee and tea can raise your metabolism. Be careful, though. Caffeine can also raise your blood pressure!
- Apple cider vinegar, often said to have weight loss power, may increase metabolism. Vinegar can be hard on the stomach and tooth enamel, but a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar mixed into a glass of water or tea is a safe option.
- Green tea contains an antioxidant known as catechins that may increase your body's metabolism of fat into energy. Who wouldn't want that?
- Include healthy fats in your everyday diet like olive oil, avocado, almonds, walnuts, wild caught fish, eggs, coconut oil, and grass-fed butter. These fats are good for your metabolism and support your brain, joints, hormones, and more.

Above all, a healthy plant-based diet is your best bet for maintaining a healthy weight. Try one or all of these metabolism boosters and rev that metabolism!



Benefits of Bodyweight Exercise

Hopefully, the New Year's resolution you made to get fit is still going strong. Working out is great for your heart, your bones, your mind, and your mood. And an important part of working out is strength training. If you exercise at a gym or fitness facility, you are probably using free weights or weight machines. But what if you are working out at home? If you haven't heard, bodyweight exercise is an excellent choice for anyone looking to increase strength and improve flexibility.

Bodyweight exercises use your body weight as a means for building strength. These exercises include pushups, squats, lunges, planks, and leg raises. Any time you engage your muscles to lift or stabilize your body weight for an extended period of time, you are doing a bodyweight exercise!

So, what are the benefits?

- No additional cost for weights or fitness membership
- Can be done almost anywhere with no equipment
- Challenging for all fitness levels
- Requires balance and flexibility to complete each exercise
- Supports strong, flexible joints
- Help prevent back pain and injury



Be sure you are including strength training in your workout program. Start slow, and don't push yourself to the point of pain. Work different muscle groups each time (legs, arms, core, etc.) Combined with aerobic exercise and stretching, your overall fitness level will improve!

Diabetes and Prediabetes

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Type 2 Diabetes

People with type 2 diabetes are either insulin resistant or may not produce enough insulin. Insulin resistance is where the cells cannot use insulin as it should. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes and can often be prevented or delayed by maintaining a healthy weight, making healthy food choices and getting regular exercise. New research shows it is possible to actually reverse type 2 diabetes in most cases through lifestyle changes. Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include family history, being overweight or obese, having a sedentary lifestyle and smoking. Type 2 diabetes is treated through lifestyle changes and medication as needed including insulin replacement therapy.

But what about prediabetes?

Prediabetes is diagnosed through a blood test. If blood glucose levels are elevated, a physician will usually recommend an improved diet and exercise in order to reach a healthier weight and bring down blood glucose levels to prevent the onset of diabetes. If lifestyle changes are not made, prediabetes can lead to type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes has no symptoms, so regular physicals are important.



Q: Hey Erin. I gave birth 6 months ago to a healthy baby girl, she is my first. I had her naturally and started walking 8 weeks after I had her. I have been working out here and there when I can, but am not losing the weight like I thought I would. I am nursing and had heard that nursing makes you drop weight fast after pregnancy but that isn't the case for me. Do you have any suggestions on how I can start losing weight?

Karen W.

A: Karen, congratulations on your beautiful baby girl! This is such an exciting time in your life. I have the pleasure of having 3 beautiful children, 2 of them girls! My youngest is 4 months old. I understand and know what you are going through. Before having my first little one, I had heard that breastfeeding helps with the weight loss so I figured the weight would just melt off. Unfortunately, this did not happen after my first child, it actually didn't happen with any of my kids. To be honest, I still had 10-15 pounds left to lose after I was done nursing. It was like my body hung onto that weight to help me produce for them. I'm not saying that what we were told was a myth but it's different for each woman. I have had friends and clients who were those lucky ladies and, yes, the weight melted off of them the first 6 months after pregnancy while nursing. I, on the other hand, had a very slow weight loss while nursing and working out for that matter. I got frustrated and decided to do some research.

Yes, nursing burns lots of calories. I believe it's about 20 calories burned for 1 ounce of milk produced on average. Mathematically we should lose weight easily but that doesn't take into consideration other factors. When you are nursing you need to consume more calories to support your milk production. And let's see, there is lack of sleep. We are getting up with the baby a few times a night most likely to feed the little one so we no longer are getting a solid 6-8 hours of sleep. Getting quality sleep is a huge factor for losing weight. Stress? No never! Ha ha. Whether you are nursing or not, stress usually doesn't allow you to lose weight, sometimes it will actually cause you to put weight on. Finally, our hormones are still returning to normal and may not until you are done nursing, another barrier to losing weight.

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Ask The Trainer *Continued from page 5*

These are just things that happen when you have kids. It will get better, you will get the hang of things, the baby will start sleeping longer. It's a process and as women this is what we do for our children. It takes time. Our body just went through 9 months of this miracle process and it takes time to get our bodies back. And I will be honest, sometimes our former body does come back, sometimes it doesn't. But every stretchmark and dimple are worth it. My body has changed forever and I wouldn't go back because it has allowed me to bring 3 amazing children into the world. Yes, I want to lose the weight and get back to looking and feeling better just like you. Know that this will come in time and don't rush it or stress about it. You are giving that child such an amazing start with breastfeeding her.

In the meantime, there are few things you can do to help you lose a little bit of weight. You want to do it slowly as to not affect your milk supply, depending on how long you want to nurse that is. Look at your diet, are there changes to be made? Most likely yes. I'm not saying cut back on your calories but change what those calories consist of. Add more fruits and veggies in each day and cut back on the sweets and breads. Make sure you are drinking water, lot and lots of water! Add 5 minutes onto your walk, start lifting weights 2-3 times a week. Start with this and add on time or boost the intensity of your activity each week. The weight will come off I promise, it can just take time for some women.

If you have any other questions please let me know. Snuggle and enjoy your baby girl, time goes by too fast!

Dedicated to your success,

Erin M Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT



Twenty-Five Habits of Happy People

Are you curious about habits of happy people? Do you have some of them? Want more of them? A great deal of happiness is within your control. Happiness is intentional. It doesn't just "happen". We have gathered twenty-five tips that happy people have cultivated and practice on a regular basis.

1. Look at problems as challenges and mistakes as opportunities.
2. Meditate and learn how to live in the moment.
3. Give of yourself, be it time or money.
4. Let go of grudges. Learn to either accept or forgive.
5. Be around other happy people. If negativity is contagious then so is being positive!
6. Give positive regard. Treat others well.
7. Take care of your physical self. Develop healthy eating and sleeping habits. Get enough exercise.
8. Be proactive! Don't procrastinate.
9. Try to love yourself. An African proverb says, "When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you."
10. Get outdoors and be with nature whenever possible.
11. Be curious about the world around you. Be willing to learn.
12. Buy experiences, not things. People remember trips and events for years. What you buy, you'll forget about within a short period of time.
13. Develop a Morning Ritual. Consistency to a process is a comforting way to begin a day.
14. Celebrate others! Be part of the cheering section for others in their accomplishments both large and small.
15. Practice Gratitude. People who regularly practice gratitude report less anxiety and depression than those who do not.
16. Stay fully engaged. Put social media, phones, televisions all away and "get real" with your friends and family. How much reality is passing you by while you are whittling your time away on Facebook?
17. Stay away from drama. It doesn't matter what it is or who is involved or what the details are or who said what. It matters that you can choose not to participate. Make peace your goal.
18. Be persistent. Most people are inclined to give up too soon. Often, the one who gets the prize isn't the smartest or the most capable; rather, it's the one who keeps trying.
19. LAUGH out loud! LOL! Nothing bad comes from a good belly laugh. Keep your sense of humor intact and it will help through many rough spots.
20. Stop making excuses. Stop blaming others. Own up to your behavior and be transparent and authentic. Honesty frees up a lot of negative energy.
21. Look at strengths as positives. When we focus on what we do well, we tend to do it even better!
22. Acknowledge self. Reward yourself for things that you've done well. Notice others but be sure to also notice yourself!
23. Be intentional about being intentional. You can scuba or you can snorkel...which way do you want to see your ocean?
24. Spend time alone. Be sure to decompress and relax when you have the chance.
25. Be true to yourself. Keep your inner moral compass on center in spite of what is going on around you.

Would you like to know more about these habits?

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