



The 2018 Sleep Foundation survey of sleep habits suggests that U.S. adults who get good, consistent sleep are also good at getting things done. But for the majority of those people surveyed, sleep is not a priority over work, social activities and other aspects of living.

The Foundation warns that adults and children are consistently overscheduling their lives and neglecting their sleep needs — a habit that can jeopardize good health and may shorten lifespan. Clocking fewer than 6 to 7 hours of shut-eye night after night can have detrimental effects, both short- and long-term.

Sleep-health Rx: At least 7 hours of restful sleep per night can help protect your heart and immunity; control blood sugar, weight gain, stress and depression; and reduce risk for colds and flu. With the potential for increasing disease prevention and longevity, adequate sleep will also leave you feeling mentally fit and more energetic.

To sleep well, try exercise. Even a little regular exercise helps, according to the 2013 NSF survey: 76% to 83% of regular exercisers (at vigorous, moderate or light exertion) said their sleep quality was very good or fairly good — while 60% of non-exercisers reported they rarely or never have a good night's sleep.

Stay aware of your sleep robbers, such as worry, alcohol, physical problems and lesser priorities. Make slumber your No. 1 goal at the end of each day.



Fit to the Core

Working hard to achieve 6-pack abs is not a practical goal for most people. Instead, focus on strengthening your core muscles. These muscles connect your upper and lower body, supporting your spine and movement. They include your back, hip, chest, buttocks and abdominal area. A weak core contributes to fatigue, back pain, arthritis and other muscle, bone or joint problems.

Strengthening your core:

- Enhances balance and stability to help prevent falls and injuries.
- Improves flexibility and mobility.
- Reduces overall muscle strain from everyday activities.
- Enhances performance in sports, exercise and work activities.
- Reduces common low back pain and strain.
- Supports good posture, which reduces slouching and improves your appearance.

Here are some basic ways to build core strength:

- Perform routine aerobic exercise and stay active.
- Begin strength training the core muscles.
- Shop for a core training exercise video.
- Enroll in an exercise class, such as yoga or Pilates, which emphasizes toning the core.



Bottom line:

Maintaining a strong core will reward you with better energy, health protection and added enjoyment of life in general.



“Because of your **smile**, you make **life** more **beautiful**.” — Thich Nhat Hanh

Busting DIET Myths

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Search for “diets” and you’ll end up with thousands of results. With so many diets to choose from, you may be wondering which is best.

The answer: The ideal diet is the one you can stick to in the long term. It’s a plan that contains foods you enjoy, doesn’t cause deprivation and isn’t filled with costly ingredients or supplements. The key is what works best for you, whether you have certain dietary preferences or must avoid some foods.

Many diets are considered fads because they don’t last long and simply don’t work. So, choose one that can become a normal part of your life. If you go on a diet, eventually you will go off a diet. Make permanent changes instead, and learn the truth behind these diet myths:



>>MYTH: You’ll gain weight if you eat after 8 p.m. FACT: It’s fine to have a snack between 8 p.m. and bedtime, as long as you’re not grazing all evening. Eating too many treats will lead to weight gain. What matters is what and how much you eat.

>>MYTH: You can’t eat protein and carbs at the same meal. FACT: Your digestive tract was built to handle a mix of foods at the same time. There’s no scientific proof that eating meat and bread separately helps with weight loss.

>>MYTH: Going on a diet is not the best way to lose weight. FACT: If you restrict calories, you’ll lose weight in the short term, but it likely won’t last. Instead, change the way you eat for the long term. Design a diet that becomes a lifestyle.

New Colorectal Cancer Screening Guidelines

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAPF

For decades Americans have been advised to begin screening for colorectal cancer at age 50. In May, the American Cancer Society updated its guidelines for colorectal (colon and rectal) cancer screening by lowering the start date to age 45 for people at average risk.

The new recommendation is based in part on the increased incidence of colorectal cancer cases in younger adults. In the past 20 years people under age 55 have had a 51% increase in the cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer and second leading cause of U.S. cancer deaths. More than half of colorectal cancers are linked to lifestyle factors including smoking; obesity; heavy alcohol use; excess red or processed meat; inadequate vegetables, fruit, fiber and calcium; and lack of exercise.

Screening may lower the number of colorectal cancer deaths by half. All types of screening tests are effective at finding cancer, says the ACS. Options include a stool DNA test every 3 years or a colonoscopy every 10 years.

You may need to begin screening even earlier than 45 or more frequently if you have an increased risk for the cancer (e.g., you or a close relative had precancerous colon polyps or colorectal cancer). Consult your health care provider about the best screening schedule for you.



Statins: True or False?

When lifestyle changes aren’t enough to reduce high cholesterol, statin prescription medications can help. They can lower LDL (bad artery-clogging cholesterol) and triglycerides (blood fats that also raise heart risk), while raising heart-protective HDL (good cholesterol).

Statins have been safely taken by millions of people to lower risk of heart attack, stroke and peripheral artery disease. However, people are often confused by the reported pros and cons of statins.



Consider these statin myths:

- 1. Statins cause dementia.** Johns Hopkins researchers reviewed 12 studies on statins and found no evidence the drugs harm memory. Instead, long-term statin use appears to protect memory.
- 2. Statins harm your muscles.** Muscle aches from statins usually resolve with a lower dosage or by changing statin types. While the muscle-damaging condition rhabdomyolysis is linked to statin use, it is rare.
- 3. Statins don’t prevent heart disease.** Statins help prevent artery-clogging plaque from rupturing (leading to heart attacks and stroke) and may cause plaque to shrink. Statins also reduce inflammation, a cause of cardiovascular disease.
- 4. Red rice supplements are cheaper and better than statins.** Statins, unlike red rice supplements, are well studied, known to be effective, and regulated for safety by the FDA. Generic versions of statins have made them more affordable, too.

To learn more, visit the American Heart Association at heart.org.



Reach your personal best with Smart Moves at www.personalbest.com/extras/18V9tools.

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