



The Benefits of an active healthy lifestyle

An active healthy lifestyle is a lifestyle that contributes positively to physical, mental, and social wellbeing and which includes regular exercise and physical activity.

Regular physical exercise - It can reduce your risk of major illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer by up to 50% and lower the risk of early death by up to 30%. To stay healthy, the NHS advises that adults should try to be active daily and aim to achieve at least 150 minutes of physical activity over a week through a variety of activities.

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity means you're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. One way to tell is that you'll be able to talk, but not sing the words to your favourite song. Here are some examples of activities that require moderate effort:

- Walking fast
- Doing water aerobics
- Riding a bike on level ground or with few hills
- Playing doubles tennis
- Pushing a lawn mower

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity means you're breathing hard and fast, and your heart rate has gone up quite a bit. If you're working at this level, you won't be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Here are some examples of activities that require vigorous effort:

- Jogging or running
- Swimming laps
- Riding a bike fast or on hills
- Playing singles tennis
- Playing basketball

Adequate hydration – The average adult require about 2 litres of water a day to remain healthy

A balanced diet is one that gives your body the nutrition it needs to function properly. In order to get truly balanced nutrition, you should obtain the majority of your daily calories from fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.

Adequate sleep - Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout your life. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect your mental health, physical health and quality of life. The way you feel while you're awake depends in part on what happens while you're sleeping. During sleep, your body is working to support healthy brain function and maintain your physical health. It is recommended that an adult gets between 7-9 hours of sleep a night.

Rest and relaxation is an important part of a healthy lifestyle for all ages. It rejuvenates your body and mind, regulates your mood, and is linked to learning and memory function. On the other hand, not getting enough rest can negatively affect your mood, immune system, memory, and stress level. Relaxation is an opportunity to clear your mind this can be done by listening to calming music or taking a leisurely walk.

Reducing stress in your everyday life is vital for maintaining your overall health, as it can improve your mood, boost immune function, promote longevity and allow you to be more productive. When you let your stress get the best of you, you put yourself at risk of developing a range of illnesses – from the common cold to severe heart disease. Stress has such a powerful impact on your well being because it is a natural response that is activated in the brain. When you become stressed, the brain undergoes both chemical and physical changes that affect its overall functioning. During periods of high stress, certain chemicals within the brain begin to rise, causing "fight-or-flight" hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol to be released. The release of these chemicals contributes to certain physiological effects, including rapid heart rate, higher blood pressure, and a weakened immune system. When left unmanaged over time, chronic stress can lead to the development of other serious problems, such as stomach ulcers, stroke, asthma, and heart disease.

Avoid drugs and smoking - Smoking increases your risk of lung cancer and heart disease. It prematurely ages the skin and triples your chance of getting wrinkles around your eyes and mouth. It also causes impotence and reduced sperm count in men, and reduces fertility in women. It can lead to gum disease, makes the body store fat around the waist and increases the risk of cellulite. Not only are drugs illegal but they are also a risk to your mental and physical health, some athletes may be tempted by performance enhancing drugs but these should be avoided due to health risks and the legal issues surrounding them.

Drinking alcohol in moderation is an enjoyable and usually harmless feature of life. Getting drunk regularly can have potentially serious physical and social effects. Even drinking to excess just occasionally can be damaging. In the short term, drinking too much can impair performance because it affects concentration. In the longer term, regularly drinking too much can cause liver disease, an increased risk of heart attack, weight gain and a number of different cancers. These problems are now occurring at younger ages as alcohol use has increased. If you've had a heavy drinking session, you should remain alcohol-free for a full 48 hours to give your body time to recover. Over the longer term, you need to have an idea of how much you're drinking on a regular basis, in units of alcohol, so you can keep your risks low. The NHS recommends that:

- men should not regularly drink more than three to four units a day
- women should not regularly drink more than two to three units a day

The Benefits of an active healthy lifestyle

Given the overwhelming evidence, it seems obvious that we should all be physically active. It's essential if you want to live a healthy and fulfilling life into old age.

It's medically proven that people who do regular physical activity have:

- up to a 35% lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke
- up to a 50% lower risk of type 2 diabetes
- up to a 50% lower risk of colon cancer
- up to a 20% lower risk of breast cancer
- a 30% lower risk of early death
- up to an 83% lower risk of osteoarthritis
- up to a 68% lower risk of hip fracture
- a 30% lower risk of falls (among older adults)
- up to a 30% lower risk of depression
- up to a 30% lower risk of dementia

Research shows that physical activity can also help to improve:

- Self-esteem
- Mood
- Sleep Quality
- Energy levels
- Mental alertness and motivation
- Reduces your risk of stress, anxiety and depression
- Reduces your risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- Weight control, reduces fat and increase muscle tone
- Posture
- Bone strength and density
- Joint stability and mobility
- Your ability to perform daily activities.
- Increased flexibility and range of movement.

BMI is a number based on your weight and height. In general, the higher the number, the more body fat a person has. **BMI** is often used as a screening tool to decide if your weight might be putting you at risk for health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer

