



Where you are and where you want to go: The four pillars of being healthy

Wanting to live your best life is a sentiment shared by many, and we all have a "why"—family, travel, pursuing a passion project. You may simply want the freedom to go where you want, whenever you want. In all these cases, your health is integral to getting you there.

Good health is not something that happens by accident. The lifestyle choices you make can heavily influence the way your body operates. There are unfortunate situations when you are diagnosed with something that's not directly preventable. However, with a healthy baseline, you could face a better prognosis.

But what can we do to be healthier, age better and lower our risk of serious conditions? It all comes down to eating, sleeping, exercising and checking in on your mental health.

1 Fuel your body with balanced nutrition

Eating simple, clean meals made with a variety of nutrient-dense whole foods is the easiest approach to take. Healthy, balanced diets include:¹

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Fat-free and low-fat dairy products
- Proteins, including lean meats, eggs, seafood, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Healthy fats

Highly processed foods and beverages should be limited. If you're not sure something is processed, read the nutrition facts and ingredient list. If there are added sugars, salt, colouring, flavoring or trans fats, look for something else with fewer ingredients.²



2 Get the rest you need

Everyone knows someone who skimps on sleep for fun, travel or even video games. Then they say, "I can sleep when I'm dead," to rationalize it. The reality is that they could be putting themselves at risk for poor health, weight gain, type 2 diabetes and more.³

During sleep, your brain and body processes slow down to allow for mental and physical recovery.⁴ If you cannot break poor sleep habits on your own, seek help from a medical expert.

On average, adults need



of quality sleep each night.³

You Decide

Moderate aerobic activity
(you can talk while you're doing it)

30 min
5x week

Vigorous aerobic activity
(requires a high level of effort)

OR

35 min
3x week⁶

3 Exercise regularly

Our bodies are built to move. However, most people spend more than half their waking time parked on a chair or a sofa.⁵ Sedentary behavior can lead to increased risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease.⁵ The easiest way to combat these issues? Get up and move. Take a quick walk. Do five to 10 squats or leg lifts. Swing your arms around like a windmill. Move at least once an hour. It all adds up. Not only will your body thank you, but you'll improve your brain and mental health.

Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your doctor to make sure it's safe.

4 "How are you?"

It's a simple question we hear multiple times each day. Rather than treat it as a throwaway remark, think about it as the centerpiece of a daily mental health check-in. Mental health is an integral part of your makeup—it's always affecting you. Are you feeling stressed? Anxious? Happy? Content? These are all examples of your mental health at work. And if you need support, find a therapist or a support group to talk to.

Check in with yourself by:⁷

- Practicing mindfulness and gratitude
- Meditating or doing breathing exercises
- Journaling
- Being creative
- Simply reflecting on your day

Take these basics, make them your own and share them with your loved ones. Community is important to your health too.

³ <https://food-guide.canada.ca/sites/default/files/artifact-pdf/CanadasDietaryGuidelines.pdf>

² <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/guidelines/section-2-foods-and-beverages-undermine-healthy-eating>

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-adults-getting-enough-sleep-infographic.html>

⁴ <https://asonor.ca/sleep-stages-and-the-sleep-cycle/>

⁵ <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/wellbeing-campaigns-and-initiatives/move-ubc/why-move-more>

⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/physical-activity-tips-adults-18-64-years.html>

⁷ <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2024/07/self-care-what-it-really-means.html>



It all counts: The benefits of mini workouts

It's hard to make time for a regular workout.

You may have to travel to a gym or community center. If classes are your thing, you have to work around the schedule. Simple bike rides, walks or jogs around your neighborhood require an allowance of time. Even minutes spent on travel and changing into your gear add up. Perhaps you "make time" by getting up early or sacrificing precious minutes with your family for your fitness. But it can feel like a losing proposition.

Physical movement improves your health, so choosing any regular activity will do you good. But you don't have to spend hours doing it.



In fact, just 10 minutes of activity here and there can help improve your health and add life to your years. Consider:

Walking either outside or on a treadmill. Pump up your results by wearing wrist weights or carrying water bottles in each hand while you walk.

Dancing is one of the easiest quick hits of fitness. Put on a mix that pumps you up, and after three songs, you're done. Remember, the higher you lift your legs and arms, the more effective your workout will be.



Body weight circuits can work your full body, resulting in improvement in strength and cardiovascular fitness with no equipment necessary. Do 10-25 pushups, a minute of marching in place, 25-40 squats and then plank for a count of 20. Do this three to four times, and your 10 minutes are up.

HIIT (high-intensity interval training) uses short bursts of intense effort combined with periods of rest.¹

Try this HIIT series for a quick workout:



1 Warm up with jumping jacks for 2 minutes

2 Do **pushups** for 30 seconds, followed by a 30-second break

3 Plank for 30 seconds, followed by a 30-second break

4 Do **squats** for 30 seconds, followed by a 30-second break

5 Repeat 2 times

6 Cool down with light stretches for 2 minutes²

Remember, all movement is good for you.
Mini workouts prove that sometimes less can be more.

Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your doctor to make sure it's safe.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/reports-publications/health-promotion-chronic-disease-prevention-canada-research-policy-practice/vol-45-no-7-8-2025/outdoor-physical-activity-mental-health-life-satisfaction-happiness-life-stress-canadian-adolescents.pdf>

² <https://www.lifemark.ca/resources/5-exercises-hiit-beginners-do-10-minutes>

Flex your brain with games

We all know those kinds of people. They're slightly obsessed: They can't start or finish their day without completing their daily puzzle.

You wonder what all the hubbub is about. They're just puzzles. Words, numbers, letters and combinations. But is there more to it? Yes.

This daily stimulation helps maintain flexibility in your brain, and like any exercise, the more you use a part of your body, the less likely it is to atrophy. The old adage "Use it or lose it" is true, particularly as we age.



Your brain ages too

As a person gets older, change occurs from head to toe. In the brain specifically, some changes could include:¹

- Brain shrinkage, including those areas involved with learning and complex mental activities
- Less effective communication between neurons
- Decreased blood flow
- Increased inflammation

However, the brain can still change and adapt, allowing people to master new challenges and tasks as they age.¹

Increase mental stimulation

Mentally stimulating activities create new connections between nerve cells.² They may even help the brain generate new cells. In addition, activities requiring manual dexterity like drawing, painting, needlework and crafting do the same thing.

Game for games?

There are activity books filled with word and number puzzles. Many newspapers and websites offer exclusive puzzles most of which are available online for free. Here are a few for your consideration:

- **Crosswords** and **word search puzzles** can be found everywhere.
- **Wordle** gives you six chances to guess a five-letter word. There are also variations with three-, four and six-letter words or more.³
- **Checkers or chess** are games that can be played in person with a friend or even online.
- **Sudoku** requires that you fill a nine-by-nine grid with numbers on each line without repetition.⁴

We invite you to try your hand at this original puzzle.

Teladoc Health word search

• Box breathing	• Pickleball
• Brain	• Primary care
• Community	• Self-care
• Exercise	• Spice
• Green tea	• Taco Tuesday
• Meatless Monday	• Tai chi
• Microbiome	• Volunteer
• Mocktail	• Water
• Nurse	

M	T	S	N	A	M	O	C	K	T	A	I	L	R	U
T	E	E	D	S	C	O	M	M	U	N	I	T	Y	P
A	T	A	C	V	O	L	U	N	T	E	E	R	P	I
I	A	G	T	N	O	A	E	P	W	R	S	H	L	C
C	C	E	O	L	U	C	S	I	T	A	E	N	O	K
H	O	S	B	Y	E	S	P	I	C	E	T	E	C	L
I	T	E	T	E	A	S	U	F	M	P	S	E	A	E
C	U	L	O	E	S	A	S	O	Y	I	P	E	R	B
L	E	F	O	I	V	R	I	M	C	A	T	E	L	A
X	S	C	M	D	A	B	S	R	O	N	R	F	E	L
N	D	A	M	C	O	I	E	O	E	N	N	B	B	L
U	A	R	A	R	R	X	Y	E	T	S	D	R	C	O
R	Y	E	C	E	E	X	R	T	A	L	N	A	E	M
S	I	I	U	S	K	G	L	C	I	P	R	I	Y	E
E	M	B	O	X	B	R	E	A	T	H	I	N	G	G
S	P	R	I	M	A	R	Y	C	A	R	E	T	M	I

Give your brain a workout. It only takes a few minutes each day to keep it in shape.

¹<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/living-well/getting-older/seniors-health/healthy-aging-brain>

²https://agingminds.ca/app/uploads/2023/02/Brain-health-handout_MHOA_v1.pdf

³<https://canucklewordgame.com/how-to-win-wordle-every-time/>

⁴<https://blog.pogo.com/best-sudoku-strategies-tips-for-every-skill-level/>

Webinar Spotlight

Empowering Women's Health: Key Screening and Preventative Measures

In October, Dr. Karolina Filipowska led a webinar that explored essential screenings and preventative care strategies that support women's health at every stage of life. The webinar also covered how to navigate healthcare conversations and make informed decisions with confidence.

Key takeaways:

- Stay proactive: There are important health screenings at every age that women should prioritize.
- Prevention matters: Preventive care is critical for long-term health and for catching issues early.
- Personalized care: Every health journey is unique, so clear communication with your providers ensures you get the care that's right for you.

Learn what to prioritize, when to take action, and how to advocate for your well-being with confidence.

[Download the Screening Webinar Summary](#)

Did you miss this webinar?

You can still watch this webinar and explore more expert-led talks anytime in our [on-demand archive](#). Revisit the strategies, insights, and resources designed to help you live healthier and feel more supported.



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