

calm and strong all day long



Here are seven healthy habits you can add to your day, from early morning to late night

For most of us, rushing and running around are as natural as a heartbeat—a rapid heartbeat. We are masters of multitasking, and taking care of others is simply who we are. Handling it—whatever it is—is what we do.

But even in our revved-up, 24/7 society, it's important to take time to be good to your body and spirit. And making healthy choices doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming. Commit to taking the best care of yourself by adding these seven simple, healthy habits to your day:

1. Get up early, wake up gently. Jumping out of bed on the run sets the stage for a stressful day. Set your alarm 15 minutes earlier and ease into the morning (choose an alarm with soft music or nature sounds instead of a shrill ring). Waking gently allows you to calmly plan your day.

2. Don't skip breakfast. Studies show that missing breakfast may trigger fatigue, poor concentration and irritability. Plus, skipping your morning meal can lead to overeating later in the day. Choose a breakfast including orange juice, whole fruit or vegetables; whole grains like oatmeal or whole wheat; and low-fat dairy products such as milk, cottage cheese or yogurt.

3. Take time—even five minutes—to stretch several times during the day. Simple moves that loosen muscles in your neck, arms, back and legs help ease stress and boost energy, especially if you sit at a desk much of your day.

4. Be conscious of what you eat. There is no secret to healthy eating. Experts recommend consuming a variety of foods, including vegetables, fruits and whole-grain products. Also include low-fat or nonfat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish and beans.

5. Go for a walk in the morning, at lunchtime or in the early evening. Research has proven that exercise makes you feel energized, helps you lose weight and helps fight disease. While any exercise is good for you, walking may be easiest. So try to get in a 30-minute walk every day.

6. Take a "tech break." Phones, pagers, PDAs and computers should simplify life, but always being "on call" can add to stress. So several nights each week, put your life on hold for an hour or two after dinner. Turn off the TV and relax in silence, to soft music or with a good book and a glass of tea.

7. Get a good night's sleep. Experts recommend at least seven to eight hours a night. To relax your mind and encourage restful sleep, try meditation or deep-breathing exercises.

Eat to Energize!

Boost your energy and avoid running out of steam by the end of the day. Try these tips:

- Eat small meals or healthy snacks every three hours during the day to keep your blood sugar levels steady.
- At snack time, choose nutritious products like raw vegetables, fresh fruit, Quaker Rice Cakes, pretzels, Quaker Chewy Granola Bars or popcorn. (Be sure to read product labels before indulging. Not all rice cakes and granola bars are created equal.)
- Drink plenty of water. The first sign of dehydration? Fatigue. So get your fill with at least eight servings of water every day.



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Sources: National Strength and Conditioning Association Online Performance Journal, www.nscs-af.org, January 2002; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke of the National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity; National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; American Academy of Sleep Medicine, teacaps.com; American College of Sports Medicine, www.acsm.org; New York Times, October 27, 2005