

12 Healthy Habits to Improve Your Life

1. Eat breakfast every morning.

Research shows people who have a morning meal tend to:

- Take in more vitamins and minerals
- Take in less fat and cholesterol
- Be less likely to be obese or diabetic compared to non-breakfast eaters
- Have enhanced alertness, attention and performance

2. Add fish and omega-3 fatty acids to your diet

- The American Heart Association recommends a serving of fish at least 2 times a week
- It is a good source of protein and considered low in saturated fat
- Fish contains omega-3 fatty acids which have been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease

3. Get enough sleep

- Your body needs time to rest and repair
- Adults should get at least 7-10 hours of sleep each night
- Sleep deprivation can negatively affect memory, learning, and logical reasoning

4. Make social connections

- Community ties are good for your physical and mental health
- Volunteer, go to church, join a group, attend classes, and get out there
- Being with others offers emotional support and reinforces a person's identity

5. Exercise for better health

- Helps control weight
- Maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Reduces risk of developing cardiac disease and diabetes
- Helps manage stress, improves mood, and provides energy

6. Practice good dental hygiene

- Flossing your teeth every day could add 6.4 years to your life
- Oral bacteria has been linked to stroke and diabetes

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7. Take up a hobby

- Hobbies provide relaxation, are enjoyable, and provide brain stimulation

8. Protect your skin

- Sun has harmful ultraviolet rays which cause wrinkles, dryness, and age spots
- Overexposure can cause sunburn, skin texture change, dilated blood vessels, and skin cancers
- Always wear sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher
- Wear a hat with a brim
- Don't deliberately sunbathe
- Try to avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

9. Snack the healthy way

- The ADA recommends 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables daily
- Snack when you are hungry between meals

10. Drink water and eat dairy

- Water and milk are essential fluids for good health
- The body needs water to stay properly hydrated
- The calcium in dairy helps build strong teeth and bones

11. Take a daily walk

- Every 20 steps a person takes is approximately 1 calorie burned
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Leave your desk and talk to a coworker instead of sending an email

12. Plan ahead

- A little planning goes a long way
- Many of the habits listed require some form of planning to schedule them into our busy lives
- Set aside time for exercise
- Plan a menu & prepare and pack meals in advance



Turn to us:
753 Boston Post Rd.
Guilford, CT 06437

2319 Whitney Ave.
Hamden, CT 06518

Toll Free Helpline: 1.866.474.5230