

BalancedLiving

February 2016



MAKING YOUR LIFESTYLE HEART HEALTHY

The millions of Americans diagnosed with heart and cardiovascular diseases can benefit from making healthful choices in their day-to-day lives.

"While it's certainly necessary to take medications to lower high cholesterol or blood pressure, it's equally important to have a healthy lifestyle," says Richard Stein, M.D., chief of the department of medicine in the Singer Division at Beth Israel Hospital in New York City, and a spokesman for the American Heart Association. "People who are informed and proactive when it comes to lowering their health risks are very likely to avoid heart disease and heart attacks."



By following these recommendations, people at normal risk for heart disease can reduce their risk and make their lives more enjoyable.

Exercise more

Regular exercise keeps your heart and the rest of your body in shape.

To add more activity to your life:

- Check with your doctor before starting an exercise program if you've been sedentary and/or have a chronic disease.
- Start slowly and increase your activity gradually to a total of 30 to 60 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.
- Do weight training and stretching exercises several times a week.

Stop smoking

Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease.

To live smoke free:

- Decide to quit and set a quit date. Try again if you fail. Successful quitters have "quit" an average of nine times.
- Ask your doctor for information about cessation aids, such as a patch, inhaler and counseling/support program.

Learn to relax

Chronic anger and stress can damage your heart.

To better cope with life's pressures:

- Try to be positive instead of negative in your outlook on life.
- Take 15 to 20 minutes a day to sit quietly and breathe deeply.
- Take time for yourself each day. Read a book, listen to music or enjoy a hobby.

Monitor your health

Be proactive when it comes to your heart's health. To do so, work with your health care provider to reduce your heart disease risk by following up with him or her for treatment for high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

"Denial is the number one risk factor for having a heart attack," says Dr. Stein. "Call 911 immediately if you have chest pain if you're a man, or are short of breath, dizzy and have a burning sensation in the chest area if you're a woman. If you can get to a hospital in the same hour these symptoms start, it's possible to prevent a heart attack or limit the damage."

Krames Staywell

HOW CAN I CARE FOR BOTH OF US?

Sometimes we are so deeply concerned about the wellbeing of the person for whom we are caring that we forget our own needs. We "burn the candle at both ends" and become exhausted, emotionally stressed, or ill, compromising our own quality of life and our ability to care for our family member.



Some Caregiver Dos and Don'ts

We owe it to ourselves and to our families to also maintain our own physical and emotional health by:

- Getting sufficient sleep
- Eating a healthy diet
- Exercising and staying physically fit
- Choosing appropriate health care professionals and having periodic health checkups
- Not abusing alcohol and drugs
- Spending social time with family and friends
- Pursuing our own interests
- Seeking support from family, friends, professionals, or your religious advisor or joining peer support groups
- Using appropriate in-home and community-based services

Keep in mind that it is normal to feel angry, frustrated, or depressed from time to time. Caregiving can be a difficult as well as a rewarding undertaking. If you are feeling stressed, angry, or depressed:

- Remove yourself from the situation by walking away, even if it's just around the house
- Talk to someone with whom you feel close
- Call a hot line
- Talk with your doctor or other health professional
- Write down your feelings in a journal

If you find that you frequently are angry or depressed or that your emotions are getting out of control, you may benefit from counseling, and/or get relief in the form of respite, caregiver support groups, and supportive in-home services.

Remember, your Employee Assistance is here to assist you – simply call 1-800-343-3822. An intake counselor will work with you. Additional Resources may be found by visiting the National Family Caregivers Association web site for information on family care giving.

EASY WAYS TO GET MORE DONE EACH DAY

If you've ever worked for most of a morning or afternoon and not gotten much accomplished, you may have wondered where the time went.

"But an effective manager knows exactly where his or her time goes," says Marc Corsini, president of the Corsini Consulting Group in Birmingham, AL. "And anyone can become more effective at managing time. It's a matter of pinpointing how you spend your day, overcoming time-wasting hurdles and concentrating on making the most of the time you have."

Mr. Corsini offers the following suggestions about how to get more done each day.

Time matters

- **Try to accomplish as much as you can in the shortest amount of time.** "Work expands to fill the time available for its completion," says Mr. Corsini. "So instead of setting aside a day to write a report, give yourself a morning or afternoon. Chances are you'll knock it out in the time you allow."
- **Prioritize.** You only have enough time in your day to do the important things. "A day consists of three kinds of activities: Have to do, need to do and nice to do," says Mr. Corsini. "Forget the nice to dos. Start with the have to dos and work your way down. Spend your first hour at work on your most important activity for the day, then pick the next most important and so on."
- **Focus on outcomes, not activities.** "Nobody cares how hard you're working," says Mr. Corsini. "They only care about what you're accomplishing."
- **Be a planner.** Set aside the last 15 minutes of each business day to evaluate what you have done that day and plan to do the next. Establish and prioritize your objectives, to dos and appointments for the coming day. "Avoid the 'planning paradox' of failing to plan because it takes time," says Mr. Corsini. "And be sure to focus on short- and long-term planning."
- **Plan a weekly vacation.** "Most people are the most productive right before they go on a vacation. They have a sense of urgency. They delegate. They focus. They work on the most important projects and forget the other stuff," says Mr. Corsini. "Pick one day a week and act like you're about to go on vacation for a month. You'll be surprised how much you'll accomplish."
- **Minimize phone tag.** To do so, focus on making calls when you're most likely to reach people. Develop additional contacts within an organization. Get to know your contacts' assistants. Leave careful, creative messages defining exactly what you need and your time frame. Establish regular "in-office" hours so people know when they can reach you.
- **Make appointments with yourself.** When you have an important project you need to finish, schedule time on your calendar to complete it.
- **Leave an hour early.** "Having less time to get things done forces you to work only on the really important tasks," says Mr. Corsini. "By reducing the amount of time you have, you force yourself to focus on results."
- **Look out for time robbers.** People can -- and do -- rob you of your time. "Robbers include co-workers, friends, vendors and some customers," says Mr. Corsini. "Avoid, neglect and manage those who rob you of your time when you're at work."
- **Give yourself some slack.** Schedule slack time in your day so you can handle unexpected activities and issues.
- **Develop a sense of priority.** "The best cure for procrastination is to develop a strong sense of urgency," says Mr. Corsini.

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