

# Holistic Lifestyle Habits for Optimal Health

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A holistic lifestyle is an interconnected way of living where all aspects of life are acknowledged as having an impact on your overall health. Here are some suggestions for implementing a well rounded approach to bringing body, mind, and spirit into harmony in order to achieve optimal well-being.

**Diet:** A diet rich in whole foods full of minerals and vitamins is ideal. Avoid eating GMO foods, added sugars and highly processed food. Start the day with a healthy breakfast which includes a source of protein. Skip sugary breakfast options like cereal and it's best not to eat late night meals. Consuming a diet full of healthy proteins, fat, and fiber is important to keep your body functioning optimally. A 12-hour rest period from eating is an excellent way to increase health within the digestive tract. It is recommended not to eat too early in the morning or too late at night to allow your liver time to rest and cleanse itself.

For those with insulin resistance, blood sugar issues, or those wanting to lose weight, a diet high in healthy fats, low in carbs, and plentiful green vegetables is recommended. Intermittent fasting combined with a low carb diet is a great way to lower and stabilize blood sugar levels.

**Water:** Drink plenty of filtered water everyday. Reverse osmosis is the purest water one can drink but be sure to add some trace minerals back into your water if you use this type of filtration system. Alternately, "Earth 2O" is a great local spring water brand with minimal impurities.

**Bowel movements:** It is important to have 1-3 bowel movements per day, depending on how much is consumed. If you are having trouble meeting this requirement, please contact me for suggestions.

**Sleep:** It is important to get 7-9 hours of sleep every night. Having a stress free sleeping environment is key to optimize REM sleep. Be sure to have the same bedtime every night. Try not to consume too many liquids within 2 hours before bed and stop drinking caffeinated beverages by 3pm. It is best not to use electric blankets and to keep cell phones and other distractions away from your sleeping area. Turn off lights and use light blocking drapes. If you have trouble sleeping, taking an epsom salt bath with lavender essential oil before bed may help. You can also diffuse lavender, Roman chamomile, catnip, lemon balm or other calming pure essential oils in your bedroom at night. If needed, taking your magnesium and vitamin D supplements before bed help as well. If you need more guidance on getting a restful night sleep, please let me know.

**Sunshine and nature:** Getting out into direct sunlight everyday is one of the best ways to boost your immune system and have optimal vitamin D levels. At least 20 minutes of direct sun exposure is recommended for fairer skin tones and up to an hour is recommended for those with more melanin in their skin. Taking regular nature walks is another great way to lower stress levels and keep your body functioning optimally.

**Exercise:** 30 minutes of daily exercise is recommended. Gentle practices like yoga are great ways to lower stress levels. Moderate aerobic exercise can include brisk walking, swimming and mowing the lawn. Vigorous aerobic exercise includes activities such as running and aerobic dancing. Strength training can include use of weight machines, your own body weight, resistance bands or resistance paddles in the water, or activities such as rock climbing. Strength training is advised for those wanting to lower and stabilize blood sugar levels.

**Meditation and spiritual practice:** Daily meditation has been proven to lower cortisol and stress levels. If applicable, taking time to check in with your spiritual beliefs is empowering as well. Consider writing in a gratitude journal, taking time out to pray, check in with your intuition, or communicate with a higher source in whatever way is meaningful for you.

**Self care:** In our fast paced world, taking time out for self care is imperative. Self care can include things like scheduling that doctor or therapy appointment you've been meaning to make, spa treatments such as facials or massage, taking up a hobby you enjoy, journaling, setting boundaries with friends and family, or even taking a day or two at home to rest and recharge. Taking some time for yourself everyday have been shown to reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol by up to 30% increasing the body's ability to manage anxiety and depression. So take the time today to love yourself!