

# Healthy *Living*

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# Elevate Health with Foot Care

## BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Our feet deserve more attention than they often receive.

Our overall health is tied to the well-being of our feet. Our health journey involves tending to the intricate needs of our feet. By recognizing the pivotal role our feet play and incorporating mindful practices into our routine, we lay the groundwork for comfort, vitality and well-being.

Our feet bear our weight throughout the day and help us move through life's demands. Neglecting foot health can lead to a range of issues from discomfort and pain to more serious problems affecting our mobility and overall well-being.

The National Library of Medicine explains that foot health can be a clue to overall health. If your joints are stiff, you might be developing arthritis. Tingling and numbness is a sign of diabetes. Swelling is a warning sign of kidney disease, heart disease and high blood pressure.



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## Good Shoes

Our feet require proper footwear to function optimally. Ill-fitting shoes can lead to blisters, bunions and even long-term conditions affecting joints and posture. Investing in quality shoes that offer support, cushioning and a proper fit is essential for maintaining foot health and

preventing discomfort.

Foot Care MD recommends wearing shoes that are comfortable, practical and fit well. They need to fit the shape of your foot. If they are too narrow or tight, they can result in foot problems. Poorly fitting shoes can also cause calluses, corns and blisters. You shouldn't have to break shoes in, they say. If that is

necessary then they aren't a good fit or they aren't properly designed.

## Foot Care Tips

You don't need elaborate rituals to promote foot health. Start with a daily inspection to examine your feet for cuts, blisters or any irregularities and take care of these minor issues before they escalate. Clean any wounds and cover them in bandages. If you have rashes, treat them with anti-fungal powders and lotions.

Keep our feet clean by washing them thoroughly with regular soap and water. Apply a nourishing foot cream to prevent moisture buildup. Change socks every day and allow wet shoes to dry before wearing them

again. This helps keep your feet dry as sweaty feet can cause rashes or eczema.

Trim your toenails straight across to prevent ingrown nails. Use proper nail clippers and avoid cutting them too short. Incorporate simple foot exercises like toe stretches and ankle circles to maintain flexibility and strengthen foot muscles. What you eat can also affect your foot health and stave off osteoporosis. Include lots of calcium and Vitamin D in your diet.

## Professional Help

Seeking out such services as pedicures, foot massages and reflexology go beyond pampering and indulgence. They contribute to your overall well-being, especially if you have a lot of foot pain or are diabetic.

Pedicures involve exfoliation, nail care and moisturization. Regular pedicures — for men and women — can prevent nail and skin problems. Foot Care MD recommends spacing your pedicures eight weeks apart.

Foot massages enhance circulation, reduce tension and relieve stress throughout the body. You can give yourself a foot massage by rolling your feet back and forth over a rolling pin. Reflexology is an ancient practice that involves applying pressure to specific points on the feet, believed to correspond to different body organs.

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# A Comfortable Home Office

## BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Many people are now working from home more than ever before.

While this offers newfound freedom and convenience, it comes with its own set of challenges. Creating a comfortable and ergonomic workspace at home is crucial for preventing strain, injuries and maintaining overall well-being.

Ergonomics is the science of designing and arranging our environment to fit the way we work and interact with it. In the context of a home office, it means setting up your workspace to support your body's natural movements and reduce the risk of discomfort or injury.

## Common Issues

The Texas Department of Insurance reported that during the pandemic's shift to more people working from home, there was a surge in injuries. People had left their ergonomically designed work spaces and were now working on kitchen counters, coffee tables or their beds. This led to people slouching, sitting too long, extending the wrists and relying on laptop screens.

Too much sitting at poorly designed work stations led to neck and shoulder pain, back pain, wrist and hand discomfort, eye strain, fatigue, tight hips, leg cramps and reduced productivity.

## Arrangements

Invest in an ergonomic chair that provides adequate lumbar support and allows for adjustments in height, arm rests and backrest angle. Your feet should rest flat on the floor or on a footrest. If it isn't possible to have your feet on the ground, use a footrest, books, boards or other material to relieve the pressure on your thighs and prevent leg cramps.



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When sitting in the chair, don't lean forward to type. Sit in a relaxed, slightly reclined position. This will decrease muscle strain and pressure on the discs in your spine.

Set your desk at a height that allows your elbows to stay close to your body at a 90-degree angle while typing. Use a keyboard tray if necessary to achieve this position.

Place your monitor at eye level, with the top of the screen aligned with your eye line when you are looking straight ahead. Use a monitor stand or adjust the height of your monitor accordingly.

Ensure your workspace is well-lit to reduce eye strain. Use natural light whenever possible, but use task lighting as needed. An ergonomic keyboard and mouse allows for a relaxed, neutral wrist position. Avoid resting your wrists on a hard surface while typing.

Keep cable organized and out of the way to prevent tripping hazards.

Take regular breaks to

stand, stretch and walk around. Set a timer or use productivity apps to remind you to step away from your

desk. Even while sitting, occasionally stretch your hands, fingers and arms. To avoid eye strain, look away

from the computer every 10 to 15 minutes and focus on a spot 30 feet away for 30 seconds.

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# Care for Your Immune System

## BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Our immune system acts as a vigilant defender, shielding us from illnesses.

Enhancing our immunity through mindful choices can make a significant difference to our health. You have the power to harmonize your immune system through mindful choices.

By embracing a balanced lifestyle that includes nourishing foods, adequate sleep, stress management, physical activity and hygiene, you're actively nurturing your body's natural defenses. Every choice you make, from the food you eat to the moments of relaxation you embrace, contributes to the robust symphony of your immune health.

The Harvard Medical School points out that boosting immune health has been elusive because the immune system is a complicated system and to function well, it requires balance and harmony. It says researchers still don't know a lot about immune responses and there

is no scientifically proven direct links between lifestyle and enhanced immune system. But, they are still researching and exploring potential links between diet, exercise, age, stress and other factors on immune response.

## Nutrition

The fuel we provide our bodies directly influences their ability to ward off infections. Incorporating immune-boosting foods can be a simple and effective strategy. Vibrant fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants. Choose fruits like citrus and berries and vegetables like spinach and broccoli to support your immune health.

Garlic and ginger are potent ingredients that contain compounds that can enhance responses. Probiotics like yogurt, kefir and fermented foods contain beneficial bacteria that contribute to gut health, a key factor in overall immunity. Almonds, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds provide essential

nutrients like vitamin E and zinc.

The simple act of staying hydrated supports immune responses. Water aids in the production of lymphatic fluid, which transports immune cells throughout the body.

## Sleep and Stress Management

Too many people wear their lack of sleep as a badge of honor, but sleep and stress management play a pivotal role in immune functions. Quality sleep allows the body to repair and regenerate, strengthening immune responses. Aim for seven to nine hours of restful sleep each night. Chronic stress weakens immunity. Engage in stress-relief techniques like meditation, deep breathing or engaging hobbies.

## Physical Activity

Regular activity contributes to more than just physical fitness. It bolsters the immune system. Engaging in regular, moderate-intensity activity can increase circulation and promote

healthy lung function. Spending time outdoors exposes you to sunlight, which boosts vitamin D levels, which are crucial for immune health.

## Lifestyle Changes

Limit sugar intake. Excessive sugar can suppress immune function. Opt for whole, unprocessed foods instead. Don't smoke. Stay current with all vaccines as vaccines prime the immune system to fight off infections. Practice good hygiene. Regular handwashing and proper hygiene prevent the spread of germs. Limit your alcohol consumption.

Excessive alcohol weakens the immune system. Enjoy alcohol in moderation. Positive social interactions and maintaining relationships contribute to overall well-being, indirectly supporting immune function. So stay connected to people you care about. Engage in mindfulness practices like yoga or tai chi. Both of these practices can help reduce inflammation.

# Financial Wellness

Our financial well-being and physical health often intertwine more closely than we realize.

As we navigate the paths of budgets and health routines, understanding the link between financial stability and physical well-being becomes essential. The path to good health includes finding ways to balance financial and physical wellness.

By cultivating financial stability, you're actively nurturing your physical health. Likewise, making your

health a priority supports financial resilience. Whether you're crafting a budget or crafting a nutritious meal, each choice resonates across the spectrum of well-being.

## Links Between Physical and Financial Health

Financial stress can manifest as physical ailments, affecting sleep, digestion and mood. It can compromise our immune system and cause migraines. Recognizing this connection empowers us to

take charge of our finances as a way to nurture our bodies. Researchers have found that people under a lot of physical stress often have poor physical and mental well-being.

MoneyGeek reports that debt-related financial problems can increase the odds of developing depression by 51%. They also warn that money problems can cause unhealthy coping techniques such as undereating, overeating or drinking unhealthy amounts of alcohol.

Not having good health

insurance or having financial difficulties also contributes to people not going to the doctor when they should which causes health problems to go undetected and untreated.

While financial stress can cause physical health issues, the reverse is also true. Having physical and mental problems leads to people making poor financial decisions. It can hamper the ability to earn or manage money or to ask for help.

## Practical Steps

Create and stick to a budget as a foundational step in financial wellness. Just as a balanced diet supports health, a balanced budget supports financial well-being. Building an emergency fund provides a safety net, reducing unforeseen financial challenges.

Tackle debt strategically by paying off high-interest debts and consolidating loans if it aligns with your financial goals. Regularly contribute to retirement accounts and

savings.

Health and financial wellness intersect in health care costs. Secure adequate health insurance coverage and consider health savings accounts for potential medical expenses.

Exercise on a regular basis and eat a balanced diet to reduce the risk of chronic illness and potentially save on healthcare costs. Pursue a healthy lifestyle that will enhance energy levels and productivity to boost your ability to pursue career goals.

Consider seeking mental health care. Professional care can help treat the depression and anxiety that makes it difficult to care for your physical and financial well-being. You can also get financial therapy from professionals who can help you identify problematic behaviors, reduce negative feelings toward money and aid you in finding solutions to improve your situation.

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# Home Workouts

## BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Dedicating time to fitness can be a challenge.

Yet, maintaining an active lifestyle is essential for well-being. Home workouts offer a practical solution for individuals with jam-packed schedules. Home workouts empower you to weave physical activity seamlessly into your busy life. Every rep and every stretch contributes to your path toward a healthier and more active lifestyle.

Advantages to working out at home include the increased flexibility and convenience. You don't have to drive anywhere or keep to someone else's schedule. It is less expensive than paying for a gym membership.

There are many ways to work out at home. You can livestream classes, use a phone or computer

app or watch a video. You can also pipe in your own music and get the whole family to work out with you.

## Sample Routines

The Tabata Circuit takes about 15 minutes and is a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) routine. Alternate between 20 seconds of intense exercise and 10 seconds of rest. Choose exercises like jumping jacks, squats, push-ups and burpees. Complete each exercise for four minutes and then move to the next.

The bodyweight circuit takes 20 minutes and involves performing a series of bodyweight exercises such as lunges, planks, mountain climbers and triceps dips. Do each exercise for 45 seconds, followed by 15 seconds of rest. Repeat the circuit twice.

A 10-minute cardio blast involves you jumping rope, doing

jumping jacks or running in place for 10 minutes. Alternate between high-intensity bursts and moderate-paced recovery periods.

Yoga and stretching routines can be done for 15 minutes at a time. Dedicate the time to stretching and flexibility. Practice yoga poses or engage in static stretches to improve mobility and reduce muscle tension.

## Benefits

Regular exercise increases energy levels and combats feelings of fatigue, helping you tackle daily tasks with vigor. Physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, reducing stress and promoting a positive outlook. Short bursts of exercise can enhance focus and productivity, making you more efficient in your tasks. Engaging in regular workouts supports heart health, reducing the risk of cardio-

vascular diseases. It also contributes to weight management by burning calories and boosting metabolism.

## Forming a Habit

Home workouts will be more successful when they become a habit, something your body learns to expect on a regular basis. Schedule wisely by identifying pockets of time in your day when you can fit in a workout on a consistent basis. Designate an area in your house for workouts. Clear the space and have any necessary equipment nearby. Keep water bottles handy to stay hydrated during your workouts.

Start with manageable routines and gradually increase intensity as you build strength and stamina. Switch up your routines to prevent boredom and engage different muscle groups.

# Nurture your gut

## BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Your gut health is intricately linked to your overall well-being, affecting everything from digestion to immune function and even your mood.

Your gut plays a pivotal role in your overall well-being, influencing digestion, nutrient absorption and immune function. By nurturing your gut through a balanced diet, probiotics and stress management, you can support your digestive health and your body's ability to fend off illness.

Remember that a healthy gut isn't just about digestion — it's about strengthening your body's first line of defense against infections and maintaining vibrant health from the inside out. The National Institutes of Health cite research saying the bacteria in your gut reduces your risk of diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease and psoriatic arthritis.

## Gut Health Connection

Your gastrointestinal (GI) tract, often referred to as your gut, is a complex system responsible for digesting

food, absorbing nutrients and playing a crucial role in your immune response. It serves three primary roles: digestion, absorption and providing a microbiome.

Your gut breaks down the food you eat into essential nutrients that nourish your body. Nutrients from digested food are absorbed into the bloodstream through the gut lining. The GI tract hosts trillions of microorganisms, collectively known as the gut microbiome. These microbes aid digestion, synthesize vitamins and even influence your mood. Healthline explains each person has more than 200 different species of bacteria, viruses and fungi in their digestive tract. They vary between those that are harmful, healthy and essential.

## Tips for a Healthy Gut

Consume a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. A diverse diet supports a diverse gut microbiome and a robust immune system. Fiber promotes regular bowel movements and feeds beneficial gut bacteria. Incorporate

food like oats, beans and broccoli.

Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts found in yogurt, kefir and fermented foods like sauerkraut. They help maintain a balanced gut microbiome. Also helpful are prebiotic-rich foods such as garlic, onions and asparagus. Drink plenty of water. Being well hydrated is good for your health in many ways. Meanwhile, limit excessive sugar and processed food as it can disrupt the balance of gut bacteria.

Antibiotic use has also been linked to an unhealthy gut by researchers who published in "Nature," so talk

to your doctor about which antibiotics are essential and when alternatives might be possible.

Chronic stress can negatively affect gut health. Practice relaxation techniques like meditation or yoga. Get adequate sleep to allow your body's immune cells to function optimally. Make it a priority to get enough sleep every night.

Physical activity supports gut motility and a healthy gut microbiome, so engage in regular exercise.

## Immune Function

Your gut and immune system are deeply intertwined.

About 70% of your immune cells reside in your gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT).

The gut lining acts as a barrier, preventing harmful substances and pathogens from entering the bloodstream. Beneficial bacteria help regulate the immune system and protect against harmful invaders.

When the gut detects potential threats, it triggers an immune response, releasing antibodies and immune cells to defend against infections. An unhealthy gut can lead to chronic inflammation, which is linked to various diseases, including autoimmune conditions.

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# Vaccination: vital to public health

## BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Vaccinations have played a pivotal role in safeguarding society's health for decades.

These medical marvels have saved countless lives, prevented severe illnesses and even eradicated some deadly diseases. Vaccinations are a remarkable achievement of modern medicine, safeguarding individuals and communities from preventable diseases. To ensure public health, it is crucial to educate oneself about the importance of vaccinations, dispel myths and stay up-to-date with recommended vaccines and boosters.

The World Health Organization reports that between 3.5 million and 5 million deaths are prevented each year by vaccines that prevent life-threatening diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza

and measles. Despite this, there are still 12 million children under five worldwide who die every year even though more than half of those diseases could have been prevented with a vaccine. While vaccine hesitancy is not at all a new problem, it flared up during the COVID-19 pandemic, spilling over into other vaccines and setting back efforts to eliminate such diseases as polio.

## Importance

Vaccines save lives by protecting individuals and communities from dangerous infectious diseases, reducing the risk of outbreaks. When a significant portion of a population is vaccinated, it creates herd immunity, effectively shielding those who can't be vaccinated due to medical conditions or age. Vaccination efforts have successfully led to the

eradication of diseases like smallpox and are making other diseases very rare.

## Common myths

"Vaccines cause autism." Numerous scientific studies have debunked this myth and no credible evidence links vaccines to autism. All claims showing otherwise have been debunked and many who have made them have lost their licenses to practice medicine.

"Vaccines contain harmful ingredients." Vaccine ingredients are carefully studied and monitored for safety. Common ingredients like preservatives are used in minimal, safe quantities.

"Natural immunity is better." Vaccines provide immunity without causing the disease, unlike natural infection, which can be severe or fatal.

"Vaccines aren't necessary anymore." Many

vaccine-preventable diseases remain a threat, and vaccination is still vital to prevent outbreaks.

## Key Vaccines and Boosters

COVID-19 vaccines, such as Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, have been rigorously tested and authorized for emergency use. Boosters are recommended to maintain immunity, especially as new variants emerge.

Annual flu vaccines are essential to protect against seasonal influenza. They're especially important for vulnerable populations like the elderly and those with chronic conditions.

The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine prevents three highly contagious diseases and is essential for community immunity.

The tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine is crucial for all age groups, with boosters recommended.

Hepatitis B can lead to liver disease and cancer. The vaccine against it is essential for infants and high-risk adults.

Other vaccines that are now available or in development include ones protecting against shingles, pneumonia, rotavirus and RSV. Vaccinations protect against forms of cancer including cervical, vaginal, vulvar and anal cancer. Clinical trials are in progress for cancers such as bladder, breast, brain, colorectal, kidney, leukemia, lung, melanoma, myeloma, pancreatic and prostate.

Boosters reinforce the immunity provided by initial vaccinations, especially as the effectiveness of immunity wanes or new variants emerge.

# Ease Digital Eye Strain

## BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Screens have become our windows to the world.

From work tasks to entertainment, we spend hours gazing at digital displays. Yet, this digital immersion comes with a downside — digital eye strain. But relief is within reach. You can nurture your eyes through simple adjustments and mindful practices. You can actively promote your vision and lasting eye health by

implementing screen settings that suit your eyes, taking regular breaks, practicing eye exercises and creating an ergonomically friendly workspace.

Your eyes deserve attention and care to keep capturing the vibrant canvas of life with clarity and comfort.

## Screen Settings

Soothe your eyesight by ensuring your screen settings are in harmony with your

eyes before you delve into the digital abyss. Adjust the screen's brightness and contrast to match your surroundings. A bright screen in a dim room or vice versa strains your eyes.

Opt for larger text and clear fonts to minimize squinting. Adjust the settings until the text is comfortably legible. Activate blue light filters on your devices to reduce the glare that contributes to eye strain. Many

devices offer built-in blue light filters or apps that serve the same purpose.

## Taking Breaks

Your eyes deserve mini-vacations during digital marathons. Prevent eye fatigue by taking regular breaks.

Every 20 minutes, shift your focus to something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This exercise rests your eyes and reduces strain. Blinking hydrates your eyes and prevents dryness. Combine blinking with deep breaths to refresh both your eyes and mind.

## Eye Relief Exercises

Just as a stretch rejuvenates your body, eye exercises can do wonders for your visual well-being.

Rub your palms together to generate warmth, then gently cup them over your closed eyes. Feel the soothing darkness and allow your eyes

to relax. Shift your focus. Hold your thumb about ten inches from your face. Focus on it for a few seconds, then shift your focus to an object in the distance. Alternate between near and far a few times. Gently roll your eyes in a circular motion, first clockwise and then counterclockwise. This exercise loosens eye muscles and improves circulation.

## Healthy Environment

Create an environment that supports hydration and ergonomics. Proper hydration supports eye moisture, so keep a water bottle nearby. Adjust your workspace to reduce strain. Position your monitor at eye level, about 20 inches from your face. This prevents neck strain and encourages a natural gaze. Ensure ambient lighting is comfortable and doesn't create glare on the screen. A well-lit room reduces eye strain.



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# Journal for Healthy Eating

**BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA**

In the quest for a healthier lifestyle, keeping a food journal can be a game-changer.

This simple yet effective practice offers valuable insights into your eating habits, helps you make more informed choices and sets the stage for long-lasting dietary improvements. A food journal is not a tool for judgment or restriction, but a guide toward healthier choices and a better understanding of your relationship with food. It empowers you to make informed decisions, identify triggers for unhealthy eating and celebrate your successes along the way.

Remember, the goal is progress, not perfection. By regularly reviewing what you eat, setting achievable goals and seeking support when needed, you'll pave the way to a healthier, more balanced diet. Embrace the journey

and let your food journal be your trusted companion on your path to better eating and improved well-being.

**Reasons to Keep a Food Journal**

A food journal raises awareness about what you eat and drink. It sheds light on patterns, portion sizes and meal timings that you might not have noticed otherwise. Tracking your food intake holds you accountable for your choices. When you see what you consume in black and white, you're more likely to make healthier decisions. Food journals can help identify emotional or environmental triggers for unhealthy eating. Recognizing these triggers empowers you to address them constructively.

If you have specific dietary goals, a food journal provides a concrete way to track your progress and adjust your approach accordingly.



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**Getting Started**

Decide what format you are going to use. A few options include traditional hard-copy notebooks, digital apps, simple spreadsheets or even calendar software. Choose a format that suits your lifestyle and preferences.

Make it a habit to record everything you eat and drink, including portion sizes,

ingredients and cooking methods. Be honest and precise. Alongside each entry, note the time, location and your emotional state. This contextual information can reveal patterns related to stress, boredom or other emotions.

**Using Your Journal**

Set aside time daily or

weekly to review what you've eaten. Look for patterns, triggers and areas for improvement. Celebrate your successes, no matter how small. Did you make healthier choices this week? Acknowledge your efforts.

Based on your observations, set achievable dietary goals. For example, you might aim to reduce sugary snacks or increase vegetable intake. Plan meals and snacks in advance. This reduces impulsive, less healthy choices. If you see patterns in your journal that you want to change, make plans for how to respond.

Share your food journal with a trusted friend, family member, nutritionist or therapist. Their insights and guidance can be invaluable. As you progress on your journey to healthier eating, be open to adjustments. Refine your approach over time.

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