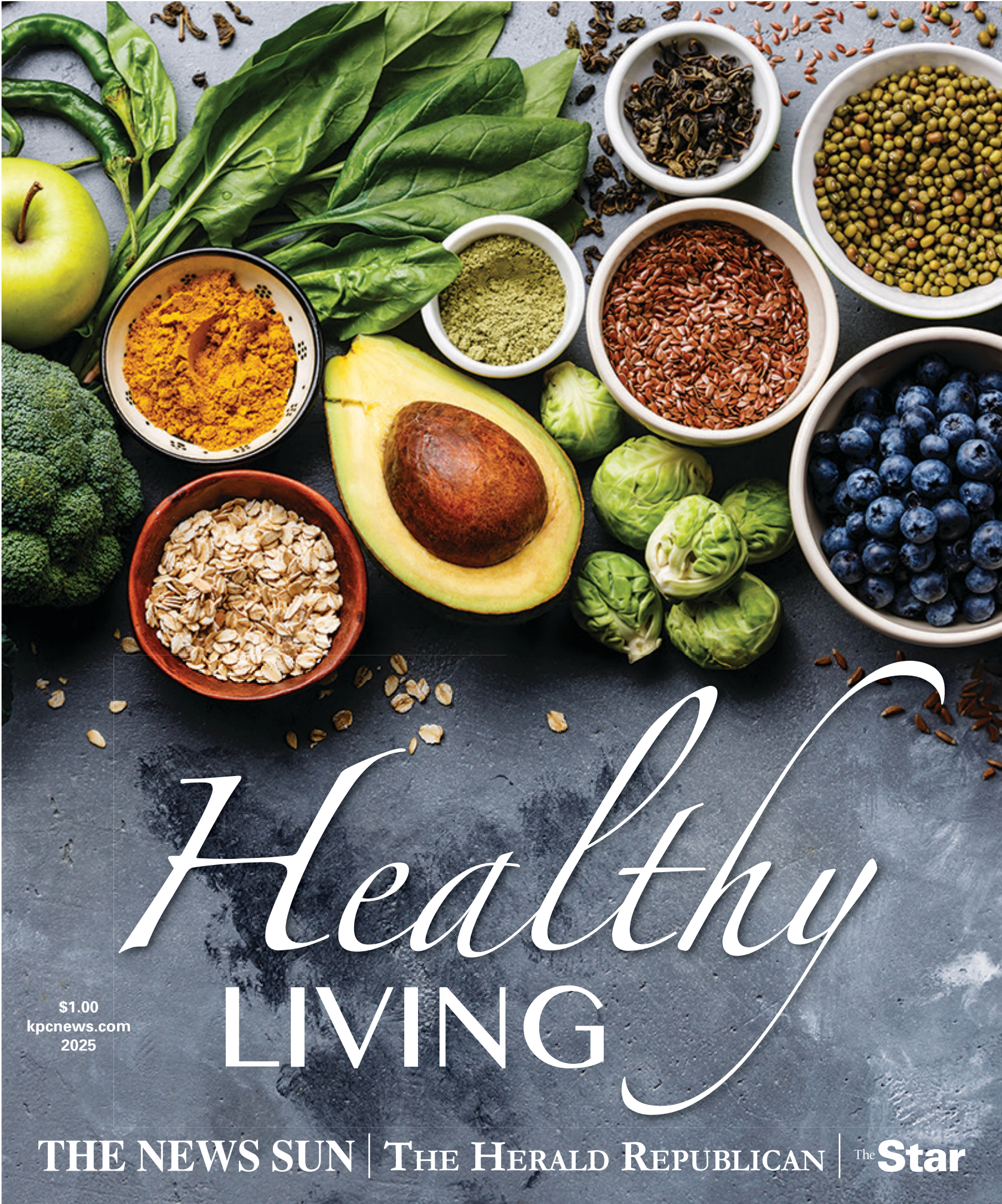




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The basics of fibromyalgia

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Periodic pain is a part of life many people can effectively manage without the help of medical professionals. A sore knee after some pickup basketball or a stiff neck after an awkward sleep probably won't necessitate a trip or call to a doctor. But persistent pain does merit such concern, and could in fact be indicative of a condition known as fibromyalgia.

What is fibromyalgia?

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases describes fibromyalgia as a chronic disorder that causes pain and tenderness throughout the body. People with fibromyalgia also experience fatigue and trouble sleeping.

What are the symptoms of fibromyalgia?

The NIAMS indicates chronic, widespread pain throughout the body, an overwhelming feeling of being tired and difficulty

sleeping are the main symptoms of fibromyalgia. But people with fibromyalgia may experience additional symptoms, including:

- Stiffness in the muscles and joints
- Some areas of the body may be tender to touch
- Tingling in the arms and legs or a feeling of numbness in these areas
- Increased sensitivity to certain stimuli, including light, noise, odors, and temperature
- Problems that affect digestion, including bloating or constipation

The symptoms of fibromyalgia are often physical, but some people experience cognitive signs as well. Cognitive symptoms are often characterized as "fibro fog," which is akin to brain fog that makes it hard to concentrate, think clearly or remember things.

What causes fibromyalgia?

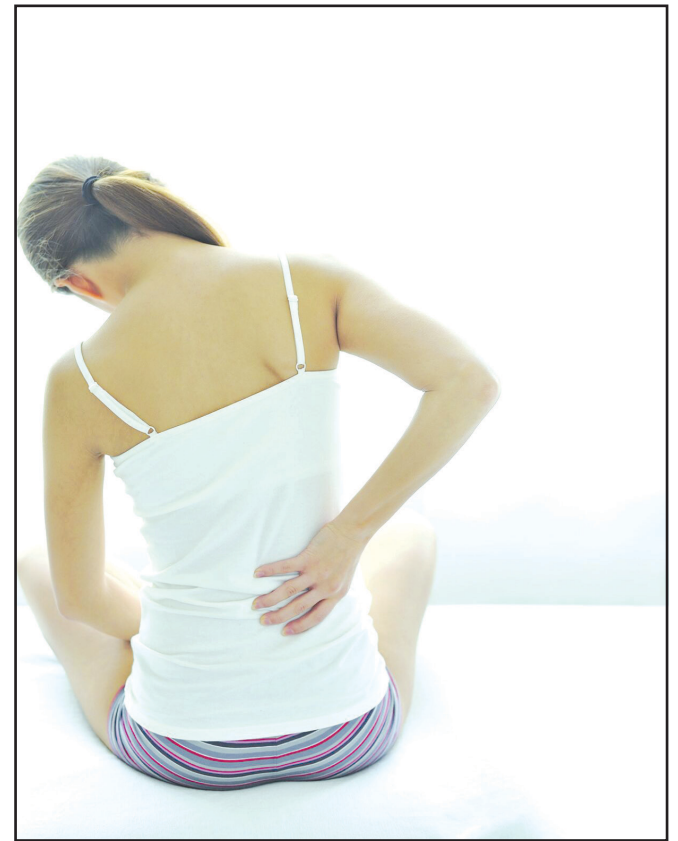
The Cleveland Clinic notes that experts are uncertain about what causes fibromyalgia. But

some studies have found a genetic link that suggests parents might pass the condition down to their children. However, the NIAMS points out that people with no family history of fibromyalgia still get it.

What are the risk factors for fibromyalgia?

Age and sex are two notable risk factors for fibromyalgia, which is most often diagnosed in individuals over 40. In addition, the Cleveland Clinic reports that women are twice as likely as men to experience fibromyalgia, and the NIAMS notes fibromyalgia affects people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additional risk factors for fibromyalgia include:

- Chronic illnesses: People with osteoarthritis are more likely to get fibromyalgia, as are individuals with certain mental health conditions, including depression and



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anxiety disorders. Irritable bowel syndrome also is considered a risk factor for fibromyalgia.

• Stress: Excessive stress can be a risk for fibromyalgia.

Can fibromyalgia be treated?

Treatment for fibromyalgia may require some trial and error as health care professionals work to identify an option that works. Such options may

include over-the-counter or prescription medication, including antidepressants; exercises that employ stretching and strength training; sleep therapy; cognitive behavioral therapy; or stress management therapy.

Mount Sinai indicates fibromyalgia affects between 1 and 5 percent of the general population. Understanding the disorder may help people better manage the pain it causes.

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How arthritis affects daily life and mobility

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

How arthritis affects daily life and mobility

Arthritis is a broad category of joint and connective tissue disorders that impacts around one in five people in both Canada and the United States, according to the Arthritis Society of Canada. In fact, arthritis is a leading cause of disability for many people around the world. Arthritis becomes a greater concern as people age. That's particularly so with osteoarthritis, which is degenerative condition caused by repeated use and stress on joints.

Common symptoms of arthritis

include joint pain, swelling, reduced mobility, and physical weakness. Such signs underscore how much arthritis can affect daily life. Symptoms may come and go, but it's not always easy living with arthritis, particularly rheumatoid arthritis. Also, in some people, rheumatoid arthritis can damage body systems beyond the joints, including the skin, eyes, lungs, heart, and blood vessels, says the Mayo Clinic.

There is no cure for arthritis, so working on lifestyle changes can improve quality of life and help people manage day-to-day tasks more easily.

• **Lose weight:** Carrying around

extra weight can put greater stress on joints, causing more pain and stiffness. Losing a little weight can help alleviate stress on hips and knees and facilitate mobility.

• **Take medicine:** Talk to your doctor about which medicines might be available to help manage daily symptoms. Certain prescriptions and over-the-counter options can help prevent flare-ups and may even reduce the risk of further problems.

• **Find balance:** Johns Hopkins Medicine suggests toggling between activity and rest to protect joints and lessen symptoms. Take breaks when needed, and don't feel down

on yourself if you can't exercise for as long or as intensely as you once did.

• **Get regular activity:** Certain exercises can help reduce joint pain and stiffness. Consult with a doctor about what you can do to keep joints flexible. Swimming, walking and low-impact aerobic exercise can promote flexibility.

• **Talk to someone:** Arthritis also can come with emotional symptoms that you may want to discuss with a mental health professional.

Arthritis affects millions of people's lives, but management of the condition can improve quality of life.

How aging and dehydration are intertwined

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The human body is ever-changing. Though it's not often so easy to detect the changes the body goes through, such alterations may become more noticeable with age.

One age-related change that's easy to overlook is related to thirst. The Cleveland Clinic notes seniors typically do not feel as thirsty as they once did. That compels seniors to consume less fluids, which in turn makes them more vulnerable to dehydration.

Why is my risk for dehydration higher now than when I was younger?

Seniors may ask this question, and body composition changes that correspond to age are often to blame. According to the Cleveland Clinic, seniors' bodies do not demand water in the same way they did when they were younger. So people tend to drink less water as they age. Some also suffer from decreased kidney function that also compromises fluid levels in the body. These things mean many seniors have less water in their bodies than they used to, which increases their risk for dehydration.

How serious is this threat?

The threat posed by dehydration is serious. In fact, the Cleveland Clinic notes that dehydration is a common cause of hospitalization among adults age 65 and older. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality also notes that adults 65 and over have the highest hospital admission rates for dehydration of any group.

How do I know if I'm dehydrated?

As noted, aging adults do not typically feel as thirsty as they did when they were younger. That's important to remember, as the Cleveland Clinic notes that thirst might actually be a sign of early dehydration. The following are some additional physical signs of dehydration:

- Fatigue and weakness
- Dizziness or a loss of coordination
- Dry mouth and/or a dry cough
- Headache
- Muscle cramps, which can be caused by a loss of electrolytes through sweating
- Chills or heat intolerance
- Flushed skin

These symptoms are notable in their own right, but some may



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make seniors vulnerable to additional issues. For instance, dizziness or a loss of coordination resulting from dehydration may make seniors more vulnerable to falls. Falls are a significant threat because they increase the likelihood of broken bones and other serious injuries, but a fall

also can adversely affect mental health. A fall that causes injury may lead seniors to withdraw from certain activities, including recreational sports or other physical activities often performed alongside fellow seniors. Withdrawing from such activities can lead to isolation and depression.

How can I avoid dehydration?

The good news is that hydrating is pretty easy, particularly when seniors are aware of their vulnerability to dehydration. The Cleveland Clinic urges seniors to consume sufficient fluids each day, even spicing up water with a fruit slice if necessary. In addition, seniors are urged to avoid caffeine, which can force more trips to the bathroom to urinate and thus lose fluid. Cucumbers, celery and, of course, watermelon also can be incorporated into seniors' diets each day, as these foods are high in water content.

Dehydration poses a serious threat to seniors' health. But that threat can be easily overcome when seniors make a concerted effort to stay hydrated each day.

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How to eat healthy even if you're always on the move

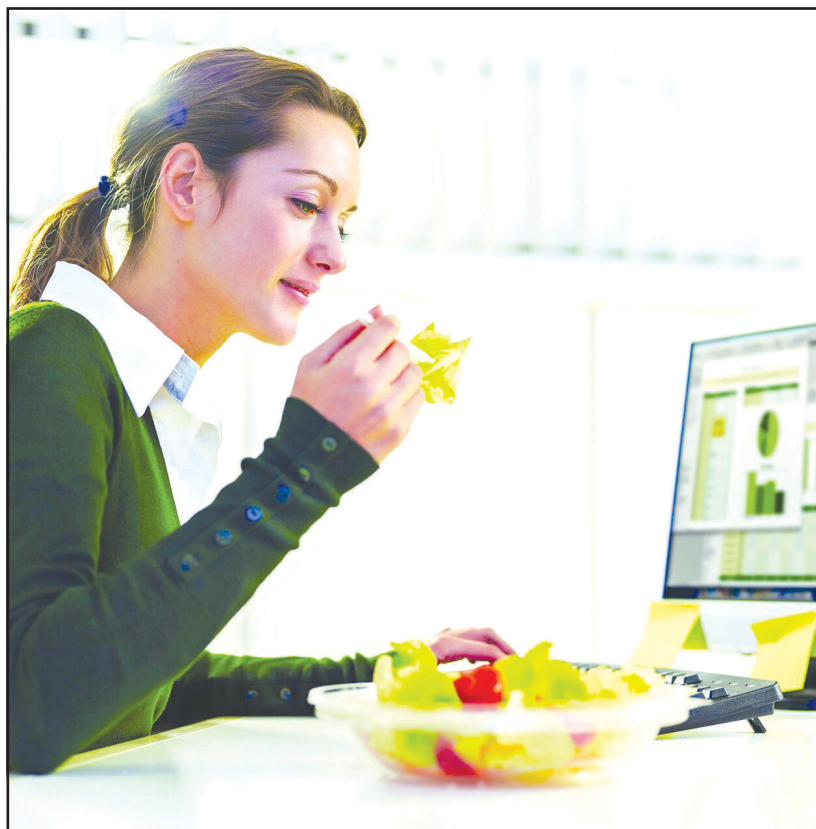
BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

A healthy diet pays numerous dividends. Such a diet can help people maintain a healthy weight, reduce their risk for various chronic conditions, including some diseases, and boost energy levels. The energy-boosting benefits of a nutritious diet might be especially appealing to busy professionals and provide the extra motivation they need to embrace healthy eating.

Busy professionals know it's not always so easy to eat healthy. An on-the-go lifestyle only adds to that difficulty, but the following are some ways to eat healthy if you're always on the move.

- **Plan ahead.** Meal planning is an effective way to eat healthy because it reduces the chances that adults will make impulsive dietary decisions without taking nutrition into account. According to Brown University Health, meal planning can save time and money. Planning also helps people avoid dining out too often. That's a notable benefit, as many restaurants, particularly fast food chains that tend to be valued for their ability to provide quick and filling meals, prepare meals that are high in fat, sugar and sodium.

- **Embrace crockpot cooking.** Slow cooking in a crockpot or slow cooker can help on-the-go professionals eat healthier because it allows them to prepare meals on weekends and then eat them



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throughout the week. That's helpful for busy adults who don't have time to prepare homemade nutritious meals on weeknights, when work schedules, kids' extracurricular activities and other obligations tend to take precedence over healthy eating.

- **Learn to dine out healthy.** It's important that busy adults do not paint all restaurant offerings with a broad brush. In fact, many restaurants offer a wide range of nutritious fare. Diners just need to know which options fit that criteria. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, veggie-

based entrées or those with baked, broiled or grilled fish or skinless chicken are nutritious options when dining out. Johns Hopkins also urges diners to forgo traditionally greasy or oily options like cheese-covered enchiladas in favor of healthier alternatives like tacos featuring fish or grilled chicken.

- **Consider meal kits.** The market monitoring and research firm Statista notes that the meal kit delivery market has been growing rapidly in recent years. Research indicates the domestic market for meal kit delivery services was slightly less than \$21 billion in 2022, a figure that forecasters project will rise to around \$65 billion by 2030. Such estimates underscore the growing popularity of the services. Though meal kit services vary, many offer the convenience busy professionals are looking for without compromising nutrition. Pre-portioned ingredients help meal kit subscribers avoid overeating, and most recipes are easily followed and result in meals made in considerably less time than more traditional means of cooking.

Busy professionals might feel as though they need to eat whatever is convenient and immediately accessible, even if the available options lack nutritional value. However, there are a host of ways for on-the-go adults to eat healthy even if they're pressed for time.

Promote health with these daily habits

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Health should be a priority, but too often life gets in the way and individuals take a reactive, rather than proactive, approach to their personal well-being. But living healthier need not be so difficult. In fact, research suggests that small, positive changes in how a person lives each day creates a healthier person over time.

A Hologic-Gallup survey on the state of women's health conducted in April 2024 found 63 percent of respondents said it was hard for them to make health a priority. They cited feeling overwhelmed, needing to care for others before themselves, emotional/mental health, and work as the top barriers to focusing on health. But it's important that both women and men recognize that small changes can add up to big

results. These healthy habits can help individuals start living healthier lifestyles.

- **Get some exercise.** Regular physical activity is one of the most important things a person can do for his or her health. Exercise helps manage weight, reduces the risk of disease, strengthens bones and muscles, and improves brain health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says adults should aim for at least 150 minutes (30 minutes a day for five days) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week. A great place to begin is with a daily walk, which is a simple and effective habit that does not require a lot of time and no equipment except a good pair of athletic shoes.

- **Wear sunscreen every day.** After washing your face each morning, apply a facial moistur-

izer with an SPF of at least 30, or blend equal parts of sunscreen and regular moisturizer, suggests Harvard Health. Use it on the face, neck, ears, and any thinning hair spots on the scalp. Skin cancer is the most common type of the disease worldwide, and wearing sunscreen can help many people avoid it.

- **Spend time outdoors.** It takes just a few minutes in the sun to raise vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for bone and heart health and helps to boost mood, says WebMD. Various studies indicate spending time in green spaces promotes calm and increases happiness.

- **Plan your meals.** Meal planning is not just a way to manage food budgets. It's also a great method to being more

mindful of food choices and avoiding impulse buys or meals that may not be as healthy as they can be. Adding more plant-based foods to a diet is a good start. Such foods can reduce the risk of chronic conditions like high cholesterol and hypertension.

- **Stay hydrated.** Hydration supports good digestion, increases energy and may improve brain performance, states Harvard Health. Drink a glass of water each day upon waking up and with every meal. Older adults often do not feel thirst like they did when they were younger, so it is especially important for seniors to stay hydrated.

Healthy habits are more easily adopted when people begin small and make a daily commitment to their overall health.

Foods that promote good vision

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

A healthy diet is perhaps even more beneficial than people realize. Though it's widely known a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in saturated fat can help people maintain a healthy weight, various nutritious foods also promote strong vision.

The vision-related benefits of various foods is notable, particularly for adults. While vision loss is often considered a natural part of aging, the National Eye Institute notes it doesn't have to be. Various nutrients help to maintain eye health, and that can make adults less vulnerable to the vision loss many accept as part of the aging process. Individuals who are intrigued by the role nutrients can play in promoting healthy eyes can consider these foods.

- **Carrots:** The American Academy of Ophthalmology notes carrots are rich in vitamin A, which has long been linked to healthy eyes. The retina utilizes vitamin A to turn light rays into images. Vitamin A also helps to keep eyes moist, which can help individuals avoid the uncomfortable condition known as dry eye.

- **Sweet potatoes:** Carrots are more accessible than sweet potatoes since the former can be eaten raw whereas the latter must be cooked. However, the AAO notes sweet potatoes are an even better source of vitamin A than carrots. Sweet potatoes may gain extra attention in fall, particularly during Thanksgiving season, but they're available and enjoyable year-round.

- **Cantaloupe:** Cantaloupe is a juicy fruit that many people find particularly refreshing during summer. WebMD notes that cantaloupe

is rich in beta-carotene, which converts into vitamin A, a conversion that promotes healthy eyes.

- **Oranges:** Vitamin A is not the lone vitamin that promotes healthy eyes. The antioxidant vitamin C can protect against environmental factors that can harm the eyes, including the sun's rays. In addition, the AAO notes that the Age-Related Eye Diseases Study found that antioxidants such as vitamin C can prevent or delay the onset of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. The AAO reports that additional sources of vitamin C include peaches, red bell peppers, tomatoes, and strawberries.

- **Leafy green vegetables:** Kale, spinach, romaine lettuce, collards, turnip greens, and broccoli all contain useful amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin. That's notable because these antioxidants, according to the AAO, are essential to protecting a part of the eye known as the macula, which provides central, detailed vision.

- **Beans:** Beans such as black-eyed peas, kidney beans and lima beans are legumes, which contain both zinc and copper. The AAO notes zinc is important for eye health because it helps to maintain a healthy retina and may protect the eyes from some damaging effects of light, including cataracts and sunburn. But zinc also can reduce the amount of copper in the body, which is necessary to form red blood cells. That's what makes legumes such as beans so beneficial: they provide eye-healthy zinc and help to maintain copper levels.

A healthy diet benefits the body in various ways, including promoting long-term eye health.



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5 health benefits of tennis

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Tennis is a wildly popular sport across the globe. Even though popular tennis stars Serena Williams and Roger Federer recently traded in their racquets for retirement, the sport continues to surge on a global scale. Sponsorships recently increased by 40 percent, according to the sports and entertainment research platform SponsorUnited. And since tennis is one of the rare sports played nearly year-round, it attracts a global and diverse fan base.

Tennis tournaments are entertaining and often draw celebrities, but the sport is even more exciting to play. Tennis also offers several health benefits. Explore these reasons to hit a tennis court near you.



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1. Better your brain

Playing tennis may help improve critical thinking, mental alertness and tactical thinking by fostering connections in the brain. According

to Elite Clubs, tennis also might help regulate serotonin, a brain chemical linked to body functions like appetite and sleep cycle.

2. Improve balance

Tennis requires agility, balance and coordination. By getting on the courts regularly, players can hone these skills.

3. Help the heart

The Better Health Channel in Australia reports tennis can be a great cardiovascular workout that increases aerobic capacities, reduces resting heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and improves metabolic functions. Playing tennis also can help burn calories, so it may help you lose weight, which also is beneficial for the heart.

4. Get social

Tennis is played in doubles or singles, meaning there will be at least one other person on the court with you. That provides an opportunity to socialize and build new relationships.

5. Build stronger bones

The United States Tennis Association advises that tennis can help build muscle and strengthen bones, which can be advantageous for older adults who are worried about bone loss. The USTA also reports one long-term study found playing tennis added 9.7 years to players' lives compared to sedentary individuals.

Tennis offers a wide range of health benefits that make it an ideal activity for players of all ages.

How to understand your metabolism

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Metabolism is often discussed but perhaps not fully understood. The Cleveland Clinic says a person's metabolism encompasses all of the processes within cells that keep the body functioning as it should. Metabolism provides the body with constant energy so it can perform essential tasks like breathing and digestion.

There are many myths surrounding the metabolic process. The following are some things to know about metabolism and whether it is possible to utilize it to spur weight loss.

What is a fast metabolism or a slow metabolism?

A person's basal metabolic rate (BMR) may be fast, slow or somewhere in between. Someone with a fast BMR will burn a lot of calories, even while at rest. Those with a slow BMR need fewer calories to keep it going. Genetics, medication use, illness, and activity level may affect BMR.

Does exercise boost metabolism?

The answer to this question is yes and no. According to MedlinePlus, it is true that a person burns more calories when

they exercise, but that increased calorie burn only lasts as long as the workout and maybe an hour or so afterwards. Once a person stops moving, his or her metabolism goes back to its resting rate. Therefore, eating a ton of calories after a workout thinking that a red-hot metabolism will burn through them for the rest of the day could be setting a person up for weight gain.

The same can be said for mistakenly thinking adding muscle will boost metabolism. Muscle burns more calories than fat and that boost does last a bit longer than the workout itself. However, most people

only gain a few pounds of muscle in the exercises they do. It's not a big enough difference to affect metabolism dramatically. One may have to be a body builder to see a BMR boost associated with strength training. When muscles are not in active use, they burn very few calories.

What has the biggest impact on metabolism?

Metabolism is largely influenced by genetics, according to Harvard Health Publishing. Therefore, diet and exercise can be beneficial, but ultimately a person's genes dictate BMR. Also, most of the time the activities of keeping the brain, heart, kidneys, and lungs working account for most of a person's metabolic function.

What is diet-induced thermogenesis?

Many people think that restrictive diets that are light on calories are good for losing weight, but that can sometimes backfire by slowing down a person's BMR. Harvard Health says diet-induced thermogenesis

(DIT), or the effect of eating certain metabolism-boosting foods, may increase resting metabolic rate. Foods and beverages that may impact DIT include lean protein, unrefined carbohydrates, caffeine, and green tea. DIT tends to be higher in the morning, so eating larger meals earlier in the day may help burn more calories.

How does sleep affect metabolism?

While the jury is still out on whether or not lack of sleep can lower BMR, a 2019 study published in the Journal of Lipid Research found that a lack of sleep for four nights or longer may slightly decrease how the body metabolizes fat. Also, those who don't get enough sleep often feel hungry and may overeat as a result. This isn't a direct metabolic cause, but one to consider nonetheless.

Metabolism is a complex process that is affected by many things, none greater than genetics. A person may be able to realize moderate gains in boosting metabolic rate but there is no magic pill to increase metabolism.

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How it pays to pedal your bicycle

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Physical activity is widely recognized as a vital component of long-term health. Finding time for physical activity each day can pay notable dividends, but many people find it hard to maintain their motivation to exercise. In such instances, identifying a physical activity that's both fun and great exercise can help people get over the motivational hump.

Cycling fits the bill for millions of people who want to have fun and be physically active at the same time. Cycling increased in popularity by a notable margin in recent decades. According to data from Statista released in 2025, the number of cycling participants in the United States increased from 42.4 million in 2010 to 54.7 million in 2022. Cycling also is popular in Canada, where Made in CA reports that 16 percent of Canadians cycle at least once per week. The millions across the U.S. and Canada who cycle each day or each week are reaping numerous health benefits, each of which merits consideration for

those looking for a fun way to be physically active.

- **Cycling can build strength and improve flexibility.** The Cleveland Clinic notes that cycling increases muscular strength and endurance. The movements required to pedal a bicycle also are great for flexibility, particularly in the lower half of the body. Cycling helps to loosen the quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, and hips, ultimately contributing to a more flexible body for regular cyclists.

- **Cycling helps to improve balance.** A 2015 study published in the Journal of Physical Therapy Science concluded that stationary cycling helped to improve balance in chronic stroke patients. But individuals need not be recovering from stroke nor ride stationary bikes to reap this benefit. The Cleveland Clinic notes that cycling requires riders to be in a specific position while riding their bikes, and that requirement trains the body to maintain better posture. After all, riding a bike requires balance, so it makes sense that riding more often



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will lead to notable improvements in balance that can reduce risk for falls.

- **Cycling works out the entire body.** One of the more notable benefits of cycling is its impact on

the whole body. In addition to the already noted benefit of improving flexibility in the lower body, cycling benefits areas above the waist, including the core and lats. The cycling experts at Peloton note that cycling relies on the core to help the body maintain stability and control, keeping abdominal muscles activated throughout each session on a bike.

- **Cycling on a traditional bicycle gets you outdoors, which can benefit mental health.** Cycling also can benefit mental health by encouraging riders on non-stationary bikes to get outdoors. Researchers have uncovered numerous ways that exposure to nature benefits mental health. For example, a 2019 study published in the journal Science Advances found that people who spent time in nature experienced increases in happiness and subjective well-being.

Cycling is a fun activity that also pays numerous health dividends, making it a great option for people looking for enjoyable ways to exercise more.

Tips to get children excited about exercise

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Human beings need to engage in physical activity to stay healthy. But too many children are not getting the exercise they need. Only 50 percent of boys and less than 34 percent of girls between the ages of 12 and 15 are adequately fit, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children who are not physically fit are at greater risk for chronic diseases. In addition, children who are overweight or obese are at a higher risk of retaining that extra weight into adulthood.

Getting children to exercise regularly can be an uphill battle with so many distractions, such as electronic devices, vying for their attention. But parents can explore the following ways to get children more excited about physical activity.

- **Choose interactive toys.** Select toys for kids that require movement. These can include sporting activities, scooters, bicycles, and even video games that involve physical activity. Kids will be moving while they play, which is a first step.

- **Set an example.** Children may be more likely to embrace physical activity if they see their parents exercising regularly. Adults can share their passions for activities that encourage movement, whether it is hiking, heading to the gym, swimming, or rock scrambling.

- **Make it a contest.** People can be very competitive, especially young children. If kids know there is a prize or reward attached to doing something, they may have more motivation to engage with it. Offer a prize to the person who

can log the most minutes of physical activity each week.

- **Make things social.** The more people involved in an activity, the greater the chance kids will want to be involved. Therefore, invite their friends, cousins, classmates, and other relatives to participate.

- **Look for new ways to exercise.** Plan vacations and day trips around an activity. Perhaps the family can learn

how to surf or snorkel on a trip; otherwise, a trip to the zoo or a museum can involve a lot of walking.

- **Find reasons to walk.** Kids and parents can walk to or from school each day to get exercise. Parking further away from stores ensures some extra steps as well. Take the stairs in malls instead of elevators or escalators.

- **Encourage partic-**

ipation in team sports.

Afterschool athletics often involve multiple days of practices and games or meets, which can be all the exercise a kid needs to be healthy. Athletics also present a fun way to exercise with friends.

Kids need physical activity to stay healthy, and there are various ways to make them more inclined to be active.



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