

# The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

Issue 4, August 2013

## The Top 5 Daily Habits for Lifelong Health

Presented by:

### Introduction

The habits you perform each day have a cumulative effect on your immediate and long-term health. The choices you make (e.g., the type of food you eat, how often you participate in exercise, etc.) play a significant role in determining your health status and quality of life, especially in your later years. Developing constructive health habits as early as possible may help you avoid chronic disease, maximize your longevity and enable you to live independently well into old age.

This edition of the Wellness Express takes a look at 5 key habits you can cultivate each day to realize excellent lifelong health. To be sure, this is just an abbreviated list of beneficial health habits - a list designed to be a starting point that you can build upon over time. Your chiropractor is one of the strongest advocates for your health and he or she can make other helpful suggestions about simple, yet important things you can do each day to ensure optimal well-being.

### Eat a Whole Foods Diet

The food you put into your body (or don't put into your body) is one of the most important daily health decisions you make. It is true that there are an

overwhelming number of dietary ideologies but if you are not sure what to do - if you are not sure what dietary strategies are most appropriate for you and your health goals - talk with your chiropractor. Your chiropractor has the nutrition background to make relevant and helpful dietary recommendations. In the meantime, consider eating whole foods (i.e., food that is not packaged, processed, polished or refined) as often as possible.



Whole foods contain fiber, antioxidants and many other phytochemicals that can improve your health. According to a 2000 study published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, a diet abundant in whole and unrefined foods may help protect you from chronic disease, improve your cholesterol profile and enable optimal colon function.<sup>1</sup> Examples of nutrient-dense whole foods include dark green-, yellow-, and orange-fleshed fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes and whole grains.

### Exercise of the Week

Pelvic Rotations – Leg Straight  
Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

**Start:** Lie down on back with legs straight, resting on floor. Place arms out to side, palms up.

**Exercise:** Extend one leg straight up, feet pointing toward ceiling. Then, let leg roll all the way across body so that foot touches floor. Place hand on knee to keep it in that position. Hold for 30-60 seconds, and then return to starting position. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



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## Move Your Body & Joints

Some amount of physical activity every day is extremely important in keeping you healthy and pain-free. It is important to understand that you do not have to run a marathon to get the many health benefits exercise offers; any exercise that gets your heart pumping and your muscles working can yield important health gains, including improved cardiovascular fitness, improved weight control and enhanced mood and energy levels.<sup>2</sup>

Introducing variety into your daily exercise routine is also important for strengthening your heart, toning your muscles and preserving your joints' range of motion. Consider mixing in some strength training, endurance training and movement-based activities (e.g., yoga, tai chi, Pilates, gyrotonics, etc.) to experience the full array of health benefits possible through physical activity. Your chiropractor can counsel you on the finer details of an exercise plan that will be both sustainable and enjoyable for you.

## Drink a Sufficient Amount of Good Water

Drinking plenty of good water is an important health action you can take every day to achieve and maintain optimal health. Every system in your body relies on water. Water helps flush toxins from your organs, transports nutrients to your cells, and keeps sensitive environments (e.g., ear, nose, throat) moist. Without sufficient water, you may become dehydrated - a condition in which your body struggles to perform normal functions, and which causes fatigue.

So, just how much water should you drink each day? The answer depends on climatic conditions, activity level and gender, but hard numbers for total daily water intake do exist for average, healthy adults living in temperate climates. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3 liters (about 13 cups) of water for men and 2.2 liters (about 9 cups) of water for women is an adequate daily intake to prevent the harmful effects of dehydration.<sup>3</sup>

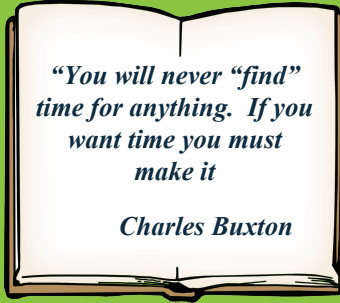
## Remember to Breathe!

It is important to take time out of your day - even just a few minutes each day - to focus on your breathing. Breathing awareness (also known as full conscious breathing) is a potent stress neutralizer and an effective restorative health technique. A study published in the Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing states that relaxed breathing is a basic technique to control or manage stress.<sup>4</sup> Slow diaphragmatic breathing, breath meditation, nasal breathing and yogic abdominal breathing are all unique breathing techniques that can help keep your stress levels in check.

## Build Your Community

Building and maintaining healthy, positive relationships with family and friends is an important habit you can work on almost every day. Strong and consistent social bonds may help you live longer by encouraging good health behaviors, improving your cognition and providing you with a sense of place or belonging in the world - a fundamental human need.

## Quote to Inspire



*"You will never 'find' time for anything. If you want time you must make it*

*Charles Buxton*

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