

Feel Well

# Men's Health – Adopting healthy habits

We adopt hundreds of regular habits each day that we usually don't even think about - our subconscious just does them! It makes sense that many of the habits we adopt become 'sub-conscious' processes. Remember that our minds and bodies are always trying to work in harmony to find equilibrium and balance and this will work to our health advantage.



## Exercise habits

We all know some habits such as regularly exercise is beneficial to our health and these become positive rituals in our lives. Evidence suggests this need not be a daily habit if time is of the essence.

150 minutes of accumulated exercise time a week has been proven to be beneficial. 30 minutes a day at a moderate level works for most.

In our busyness, it's good to know that when it comes to the benefits of exercise, the rest and recovery is just as important to make the desired physical and mental changes. Nature ebbs and flows naturally proving that cycles of activity followed by optimal recovery work best.

## Healthy sleep habits

Taking the recovery habit to the next level would be to focus on optimising sleep. This is usually to do with the quality of sleep rather than quantity. Eight hours is an average figure for many, but not all. What is optimal for one person won't be exactly the same for everyone else.

A focus on the quality of sleep, will optimise the benefits according to our own needs.

Get into the habit of sleep preparation, by adopting a good wind-down phase. Getting your mind to prepare is essential. Dimming lights, minimising blue-light from our ubiquitous screens and not over taxing our digestive systems by eating too late offers the opportunity to develop positive rituals to help sleep quality.

Complete the process of aligning with your natural chronobiology by getting into the habit of waking and getting up at the same time each day. Our internal clocks like patterns and will align with them for optimal benefit.

## Start good habits on waking

When you wake, get into the habit of using the first hour to set the scene and your ideal mode for the rest of the day.

Getting natural light to enter the eye as soon as possible helps set the circadian

rhythm. Don't get into the bad habit of starting the workday too early by checking your smartphone for information and work emails during your internal focus period. A gradual prompt from the inside first will align with your needs rather than with someone else's too early!

Do what you need to prepare for a healthy engagement with the day. If it's an early coffee to help – great! But don't drink it after lunchtime to keep you going as it will interfere with your evening wind down process. Get into the habit of a post lunchtime decaffeinated mode.

## Eating Habits

There are so many good and bad habits when it comes to eating. Perhaps the start point is to pick just one or two things to start on a new direction of healthy nutrition. Make some space by finding a couple of bad habits to ditch and make room for the new ones!

To get you started, why not get into the habit of looking at food labels more and learning something about the carbohydrate content of the foods you consume. Virtually everyone will benefit from a reduction in carbohydrates.

Try and reduce over-processed sugars contained in foods and aim for at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.

## Good Habits for mental health

As well as the good physical health habits, we could all benefit from healthy habits that benefit our mental health too.

Take some time out each day just to 'be' rather than 'do'. It will help you to re-balance yourself and can help to deal with pressure by releasing the pressure valve. It's a proven performance enhancement tool as well so it's not going to detract from you achieving your aims and will more than likely help you to achieve them more effectively.