Fitness and Health: Your Ultimate Guide

Life expectancy in this modern age is generally shorter than that of the ancient times. Does this mean that the people of today are less healthy than the older generation? Probably so, since a large part of people's life expectancy depend on health-related choices that they makes during their lifetime.

In fact, health problems have always been some of the leading causes of fatality worldwide, with heart attack, cancer, diabetes and stroke topping the list. Most of these diseases could have been avoided with a healthy lifestyle, which involves proper diet, weight loss, and exercise.

But of course, life expectancy is not the only reason why people should start shifting to a healthier route. A positive well-being and a full life can even be more important than living a long life. Therefore, the best way for you to be able to live life to the fullest is to be fit and healthy.

Healthy Diet

Healthy eating is one of the core elements of a healthy lifestyle. Some people make the mistake of associating the word, "diet" with not eating. This common misconception should be corrected so that people would stop starving themselves to the point of developing eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia.

A healthy diet refers to a balanced way of eating, consisting of proper portions of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, mineral salts, and fiber. The food pyramid can be the best guide for the required serving sizes of each nutrient.

Here are some tips on how to incorporate a healthy diet in your daily life:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables. Sneak vegetables into your meals and snack on fruits like apples, oranges or mangoes instead of your usual bag of potato chips.

Fruits and vegetables should be eaten at least five servings a day. It is also a good idea to eat a variety of vegetables and fruits that include dark green, green, orange, and yellow kinds.

- Drink less of sugary beverages. If you can, cut out your intake of soft drinks, soda, and sports drinks. Have more of water, milk, fresh fruit or vegetable juices.
- Get sufficient protein from Omega-3 fats that come from fish, legumes and nuts.
- Keep yourself hydrated by drinking eight glasses of water everyday. This is also a good way to cleanse your body and to get rid of harmful toxins.
- Avoid supersizing instead eat in small portions. It is not bad to eat in fast foods once in a while but eating gigantic proportions of foods is a different story.
- Always go for whole grains and fiber-rich foods. These types of foods are essential and good for the body. Make sure you choose healthy and natural carbohydrates over processed ones. For example, wheat bread is a better choice than white bread.
- Learn to stop when you are full. Make it a habit to eat in moderation. It is not a good practice to keep stuffing yourself even when your stomach is about to burst. Learn to say "no" even to the most sumptuous meals when you are already full.
- Stock your house with healthy food options. Instead of filling the refrigerator with convenient instant food, processed meals, or sugary snacks, store more fruits and vegetables as well as other healthier choices.
- Say 'NO' to fried foods. Steaming, grilling, and boiling are the better cooking methods that will not expose you to too much grease and fat.
- Choose lean meat over the fatty ones. Avoid high-fat meat and go for the lean ones such as chicken. Steam or bake chicken instead of frying it.

Remember, healthy eating is not about crash diets, strict nutrition practices, depriving yourself of the pleasure of eating, or starving yourself to death. It is about making the right food choices and trying to stay away from those that can contribute to health problems.

Correct Exercise

In the United States, the sedentary way of life, which contributes to unhealthy well-being, has become a growing concern. On the other end of the spectrum are the health extremists or the people who over-exercise until they are completely depleted of energy. Keep in mind that living a sedentary lifestyle and too much exercise can both harm the body.

Correct exercise starts when you get up on your feet. You can begin by adding more activity into your life. Instead of spending the whole day in front of the television, go out and do something that requires physical movement. It can be strolling in the park, walking around the neighborhood, watering the plants, or saying hi to the neighbors. Doing something is always better than doing nothing.

Walking around whenever you have the chance is a good way to stay fit and healthy. Instead of riding a car to your work, if you can manage, try to walk. Also, rather than using the elevator, it would be a better idea to climb the stairs.

Doing chores can also add physical activity into your life as well as contribute help in the household. Sweeping the floor, washing the plates, vacuuming the carpet, or arranging the books in the shelf can be worthwhile physical activities.

If you want a more structured program of exercise, going to the gym or engaging in your favorite sport would be a smart move. If you choose to enroll in a gym, be sure to hire a trainer who will customize an exercise program that will be safe and effective for you.

The advantages of exercising are endless. Exercise reduces health problems and risks of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. It improves strength, joint stability, flexibility and endurance. It prevents certain types of bone problems such as osteoporosis and fractures. It does wonders for one's mood and helps reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Proper Weight Loss

Some people make the mistake of thinking that shedding unwanted pounds can be achieved overnight. Diet pills, herbal supplements, crash dieting, and compulsive exercising are just few of the many weight-loss shortcuts that people choose to make. However, it is important to know that none of these methods is healthy or safe.

Proper weight loss is a combination of the two aspects mentioned above namely healthy diet and correct exercise. When it comes to food, you do not have to stop eating completely. You just have to make the right choices. You have to decrease intake of calories by opting for low-calorie food options. Eating foods rich in fiber can also help you lose weight.

As for correct exercise, a proper weight loss exercise program formulated by a fitness expert is a good way to start. Make sure that you are consistent with your exercise regimen. However, it should be not to the point that you force yourself to exercise even when you feel ill, or punish yourself for missing a session in the gym. These two habits are symptoms of compulsive exercising, which should be avoided.

Being healthy cannot be postponed. Make healthy choices not tomorrow, not next week but today. Strive to become fit and healthy to be able to live a full life.