

THE WAY TO WELLNESS

IN TODAY'S WORLD WE ARE CONSTANTLY BOMBARDED WITH LITERATURE INFORMING US THAT OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE, AND IS THE KEY DRIVER FOR ACHIEVING QUALITY OF LIFE. WE KNOW WE SHOULD EXERCISE, MEDITATE, FIND A BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND PLAY, EAT BETTER, AND THE LIST IS ENDLESS... BUT WHAT DOES IT ALL REALLY MEAN?

THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY is big business and even governments are preaching 'prevention is better than cure'. So for optimum health benefits and to keep us out of the doctor's surgery, we must take care of our wellbeing, which put simply, is the balance between the body, mind and spirit.

Dr Bill Hettler, a well-known health promotion advocate, developed a six-dimensional 'wellness model' in the 1970s that many professionals have adapted and still use today. The model emphasises the importance of creating a balance in the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, environmental, physical, and occupational areas which basically make up our life. In turn, each of these dimensions affects each other, so if you neglect one, you are sure to suffer in another.

This holistic approach to our wellbeing may seem overwhelming at times. Let's look at four common pillars of wellness and some behavioural objectives that can send you on your way to peak physical condition:

- fitness
- nutrition
- motivation
- time.

Remember, wellness is about personal responsibility, it's up to you to choose how well you live your life!

Fitness

We all know the importance of regular physical activity. The benefits are endless; reducing the risk of heart disease and developing diabetes, reducing stress and promoting psychological wellbeing, and helping to control weight and maintain healthy bones.

Springtime is the prime time when most people throw themselves into a fitness program. The weather warms up and it's time to get the body beach ready. But wouldn't it be easier and healthier if we stayed beach-ready throughout the year?

Physical fitness isn't something you just commit to every spring or as part of a New Year's Resolution, it is a lifetime commitment. Find something you love to do, whether it's gardening or running a marathon, and do it regularly. Just get the energy moving; it's amazing how much better you'll feel. Because once you feel good, you will shine with health and happiness, and have a fit and toned body to boot!

Nutrition

It's without doubt that exercise and a healthy diet go hand-in-hand for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. A well-balanced diet comprising of a variety of nutritional foods will not only make you feel and look better, but



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will get your energy levels skyrocketing.

The important thing is to find balance and when it comes to nutrition it's all about moderation. Diets are fine to get you back on track, but what happens when you go back to eating the way you did before? The key is to make small changes regularly, make healthy choices over unhealthy, and again, like fitness, healthy eating is a lifetime commitment; weave it into your life. When you eat for wellness, notice how other aspects of your life change, and as they say, it truly does feed the spirit.

In addition, we've published a lot of articles in recent times about metabolic typing as a way of eating to satisfy your body's needs. Email editor@fitnessfirst.com.au for a copy of these articles. For many it's a life-changing modification that will definitely enhance overall wellness.

Motivation

How do you find the motivation to hit the gym before work when you would rather hit the snooze button on the alarm clock? Or after a long and tiring day at the office would you rather slouch on the couch than rack up some miles on the treadmill?

So you can't get motivated? If you can get out the front door, the hard part is over. Once you are at the gym or on your walk or run, you don't need much motivation at all.

Think of it like this. Make being active or allocating a slice of your time to physical activity the same way you go about cleaning your teeth or putting out the garbage. You may not always feel like doing it, but if you don't there are negative consequences. Such as a big dentist bill or your backyard isn't going to smell too good with garbage piling up. It's the same with your physical fitness; if you don't use it you lose it, and we all know how a sedentary lifestyle can affect our health.

Need motivation? Try these ideas:

- Grab a friend to exercise with.
- Vary your routine to keep it interesting.

- Get out of your comfort zone and try a variety of programs at the gym (e.g., classes, weights, cardio).

Time

Do you struggle with meeting deadlines? Do you get to the end of the day and wish you had a few extra hours? Welcome to life in the 21st century! Time is a precious commodity. Finding time outside of work and family commitments may be tough for some, and it's usually one's health and fitness that is the first to suffer.

Learning some basic time management tools will help both at work and in personal endeavours, and give you time to lead a balanced life, achieve more, reduce stress, overcome procrastination and have more free time to do things you enjoy.

Here's what you do. Make a list of everything you plan to do and divide them into two columns; fixed and flexible commitments. Prioritise your list and set aside enough time to do the designated tasks. This will help in reducing time wasted on less important activities.

When scheduling in physical activity, decide when it works best for you. Try not to plan a cycle class at 5.30pm if your peak energy is at 6.30am in the morning. Work with your energy levels.

Ideas to help achieve your goals

- Compile a realistic daily or weekly 'to do' list.
- Prioritise the tasks on the list in order of importance.
- Stay focused and try to avoid interruptions.
- Allow time for physical activity as well as rest.

So go ahead, start today and make wellness a way of life.

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