

I. A.M H.E.R.E

*Seven Steps to Help Control
Your Physical Future*

*Elizabeth
Phinney*

I. A.M. H.E.R.E.

Seven Steps To Help Control Your Physical Future

By

Elizabeth Phinney

I. A.M. H.E.R.E. Seven Steps To Help Control Your Physical Future was written and copyrighted by Elizabeth Phinney and Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without written permission from Elizabeth Phinney and Solutions, Inc.

Acknowledgements:

Special Thanks to Ms. Dianne Campbell, Business and Life Coach: My Coach, My Editor, My Friend

Paper Montage Cover Art by Galen V. Snow, Fine Art, gvsart.com

Disclaimer:

Elizabeth Phinney and Solutions, Inc. hold no responsibility for whatever actions may be taken as a result of reading this book. All responsibility lies with the reader and their interpretation and their choice of action. All readers should consult with a physician prior to changing any of the behaviors suggested in this book. The intention in providing this material is to inform the reader of the plethora of choices that they have in how they age. It is not the author's intention to replace any medical advice that the reader may receive.
All rights reserved.

I. A.M. H.E.R.E.

I. A.M. H.E.R.E. is an acronym for all you need to know and do to maintain a healthy lifestyle for the rest of your life. These seven points are the foundation for controlling your aging well into your 80's and 90's. If you can master these, you are sure to be healthier for it and have a finer quality of life for decades to come.

Needless to say, it holds a double meaning.

"I am here" is a typical announcement of your arrival at a particular place or destination. It can also be an indication of a starting off point, "I am here, and am going there." My suggestion for you, in this reading of it, is both. You have arrived, but you are also venturing forth with a new perspective and a new way of life. The steps you are taking to be successful on this journey are represented by these letters:

I = Immune System

A = Aha – Your Inspiration

M = Meditation

H = Hydration

E = Exercise

R = Rest

E = Eating

Let's begin the journey with a meditation:

Sit quietly in a comfortable chair. Have your feet firmly on the floor, knees bent and sitting up straight with your back off the back of the chair. Have your hands gently placed on top of your thighs, palms up or down. Breathe. Take long deep breaths and get yourself present in the room, in the chair.

Beginning with your toes, the bottoms of your feet, the tops of your feet, your ankles...one at a time, literally go from body part to body part, joint to joint up your entire body: shins, calves, knees, thighs front, thighs back, hips,

stomach, lower back, waist, sides of the torso, chest, upper back, shoulders, upper arms, lower arms, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers, neck and head. As you stop at each body part, say the following either out loud or to yourself, (you can edit to what is most comfortable for you, but have the gist be the same.)

“I sit in gratitude for my _____ (and fill in the body part.) Up to this point in my life you have always done the best you could for me and I thank you. I am here now and moving forward.” Then move to the next body part.

What this “exercise” does is ground you in gratitude. It gets you to actually think and consider all that that specific body part has done for you over the years. It is probable that you have never thanked your body before. And, now that you are venturing forth, after being grateful for your entire body, it is fair to move forward from this point and treat your body with more respect, kindness and gratitude. It is a true commitment to start, then, with “I am here.”

I - IMMUNE SYSTEM

YOUR NUMBER ONE FOCUS FOR YOUR FUTURE HEALTH AND YOUR FUTURE LIFE!!

And, there are some theories as to why this is: the thymus gland tends to atrophy as we get older so a decrease in T cells indicates a decrease in the ability to fight off infection. Or, could it be the bone marrow cells have become lazier and can no longer create the necessary stem cells that are needed to support the immune system. Or, is it because the older we get the less attentive we are to what we eat?¹ The older you get, the fewer white blood cells are produced. And, the fewer white blood cells that are produced, if a strange infection is exposed, an older person does not create as many fighting cells to combat the new germs, so, the weaker your immune system.² It is the immune system that protects you from virtually every disease and malfunction the body can have. It is, therefore, of critical importance in keeping your body healthy, that you put your immune system at the top of your priority list.

How do you do that? A healthy immune system is determined by the food you eat, the exercise you do, the hydration level you keep, the rest you get and the environment you maintain. The immune system drives your train. The only way it can stay strong is for you to embrace your responsibility and fortify it by only feeding yourself healthy non-toxic food, sleeping well (as your body produces necessary fortifying proteins while you sleep,) keep a handle on your stress levels, exercise and partaking of all the other healthy habits as outlined below and throughout this book.

The immune system has three main functions: Fight, Repair, Maintain. When an invading disease, virus, fungi, mold, germ, bad bacteria, parasite or whatever other enemy or toxin might be lurking, the immune system's sensors are triggered. In the battle against these "foreigners," cells of the immune system fight back and an inherent reaction happens within the body, created to destroy the pathogen and/or its environment. A by-product created in this area of attack is inflammation. "The primary physical effect of the inflammatory response is for

¹ Harvard Health Publications, Harvard Medical School

² Merck Manual, Consumer Version

blood circulation to increase around the infected area. In particular, the blood vessels around the site of inflammation dilate, permitting increased blood flow to the area. Gaps appear in the cell walls surrounding the infected area, allowing the larger cells of the blood, i.e. the immune cells, to pass. As a result of the increased blood flow, the immune presence is strengthened.... Once the inflammatory process has begun, it continues until the infection that caused it has been eradicated.”³

However, when the body is in a chronic state of inflammation, it disrupts this ability to interfere with pathogens and any outside toxin. “It is becoming increasingly clear that chronic inflammation is the root cause of many serious illnesses – including heart disease, many cancers, and Alzheimer’s disease. We all know inflammation on the surface of the body as local redness, heat, swelling and pain. It is the cornerstone of the body’s healing response, bringing more nourishment and more immune activity to a site of injury or infection. But when inflammation persists or serves no purpose, it damages the body and causes illness. Stress, lack of exercise, genetic predisposition, and exposure to toxins (like secondhand tobacco smoke) can all contribute to such chronic inflammation, but dietary choices play a big role as well.”⁴

If your diet is already one of highly acidic foods – those high in sugar or sugar producing simple carbohydrates, as well as dairy, meat products and processed food or fried food – then inflammation is already very comfortable existing inside of you, making this fight for the immune system much more difficult to win. However, the healthier your immune system, the less aware you are of any of this even happening, in many instances, it all goes on without your knowing or without any noticeable reaction. You can simply go about our day-to-day life while your immune system fights to maintain homeostasis. This is evident when two people are exposed at the same time to someone with a cold or flu – one of them gets sick and the other does not. This has everything to do with the strength of their immune system.

³ Crohn.ie The Human Immune System/The Chronic 1996-2015 – The Inflammatory Response

⁴ Dr. Andrew Weil.com Anti-Inflammatory Diet

One of the biggest weakening forces over the immune system is sugar. According to Ty Bollinger's "The Truth About Cancer," one 12 oz can of Coca Cola can shut down 50% of our immune system for 4 hours.⁵ A 12 oz can of Coke has about 9 teaspoons of sugar in it which equals 3 tablespoons of sugar which is the same as 1.5 ounces in a measuring cup, which is almost ¼ cup of sugar!! Due to its high sugar density, Coke, as well as most soda beverages, are highly acidic due to all the sugar. That high concentration of acidity is what helps to weaken the immune system.

Soft drinks are not the only highly acidic foods more inclined to cause inflammation throughout the body. Other common culprits are red meat and all kinds of animal protein, dairy products, coffee and black tea, heavily processed foods, processed oils and refined grains (most common in bread and pasta,) salted and roasted nuts, most common condiments and any food with sugar or sugar variants: corn syrup, honey, brown sugar, beet sugar, refined sugar, etc. All of these foods when consumed in excess; i.e. on a daily basis, will most likely weaken your immune system. (For a more thorough list, search the Internet for acidic foods that can cause inflammation.)

According to the University of Virginia Center for Brain Immunology and Glia, it has now been determined that there is an actual connection between the brain and the immune system. Though it is too soon to identify precisely how this affects our overall brain health, it suffices to say that a healthier immune system could also offset some potential issues with the brain (think Alzheimer's and dementia.)⁶

And, it's not just the brain that is affected by an unhealthy immune system. Most heart disease is caused as a result of inflammation, which can be triggered by a weak immune system. Even cancer: "The immune system is our natural first line of defense against cancer. Thus...building and maintaining a strong immune system should be the cornerstone of a good cancer-fighting and cancer-preventing foundation."⁷

⁵ Ty Bollinger, The Truth About Cancer.com

⁶ University of Virginia Medical School.edu

⁷ Ty Bollinger, The Truth About Cancer.com

Another main source of the weakening of the immune system is from stress, which produces the hormone cortisol. According to the American Psychological Association, based on almost 300 studies done by Suzanne Segerstrom, PhD of the University of Kentucky and Gregory Miller, PhD of the University of British Columbia, “For stress of any significant duration - from a few days to a few months or years, as happens in real life - all aspects of immunity went downhill. Thus long-term or chronic stress, through too much wear and tear, can ravage the immune system.”⁸

Controlling your stress levels are, therefore, critical in supporting a healthy immune system. Another controllable goal to be successful in keeping your immune system strong is this: what you put into your body plays a large role in determining how healthy your immune system is. To stay strong, you need to feed the immune system with strong food that will help build it up, not break it down. A lack of inflammation throughout the immune system is critical to support it and, again, is a reflection of the quality of the nutrition you ingest.

Keep in mind that millions of cells in our immune system and throughout our body die every day and are replaced with new cells. And, seeing as those new cells are created from within, logic suggests that the quality of those new cells is determined by the condition and health of our body and our mind and the condition and health of our body and our mind is based not only on the fuel we ingest and the behavior we choose, but also from the toxins all around us.

So, read your labels, watch your intake of inflammation-producing foods and try to keep your stress levels low. Also, remember to get a good night's sleep every night and follow all the guidelines for healthy aging available throughout this book.

⁸ *Stress Weakens the Immune System*, APA.org - Psychological Science/Research in Action

A – AHA!

Your inspiration – Psychologists and “gurus” say that people will not change their behavior unless there is emotion involved. As much as we may want to break a bad habit, unless we can get a little spiritual or emotional about it, chances are it will not happen. We can’t think our way into changing. We can pray for the behavior to change, but if the yearning is simply not strong enough, most likely we will continue in the same old self-destructive or self-limiting habits. Unless, of course, we have an “aha” moment.

Over these years of studying with a multitude of thought provoking leaders, I have had many “aha’s.” And it is when those “aha’s” happen that our mind, body and spirit become one and we re-direct our course of action to the next page in our journey. It is the “aha’s” that inspire us to change our behavior.

So, how do you have an “aha” when it comes to developing a healthier lifestyle? If you are truly reading this to change your life and give your body a fair chance at aging healthily, the following outlines a two-part exercise to be done with your utmost heartfelt attention. Get ready ... Your “aha” should be forthcoming.

PART ONE

Sit in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed for the next hour or so. Get a blank piece of paper and write down the following questions. There is no preferred order by which to answer these, so feel free to juggle the sequence. Don’t think of the answers quite yet, just write down the questions.

- 1) What are your desires and your dreams for your career?
- 2) What are your desires and your dreams for life with your family?
- 3) What are your desires and your dreams for life with your children?
- 4) What are your desires and your dreams for your love life, your intimate relationships?
- 5) What are your desires and your dreams for your home and your “stuff?”

- 6) What are your desires and your dreams for your life with your friends?
- 7) What are your desires and your dreams for traveling?
- 8) What are your desires and your dreams for your spiritual life?
- 9) What are your desires and your dreams for serving others?
- 10) What are your desires and your dreams for FILL IN THE BLANK?

Now, before answering any of these questions, sit quietly and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths and come into the room and be at one with yourself – no outside thoughts or influences. One at a time, I want you to read and answer each question while you envision yourself *in ten years*. Get VERY specific about where and how you will be working, what will be going on with your family, your children, your partner. Where will you be living? Who will be your friends? Will you be traveling? Where to? Etc. You get the drift. Don't just THINK about the future, become yourself IN the future. Place your mind, your body and your spirit ten years into the future before you answer each question. And, be very specific – use details. The more details you imagine, the better you can create a real picture of what your future will look like, answer by answer.

When you have completed all the answers, then go back to the first question and start again for twenty years from now – re-read the last paragraph to make sure you are still in the attentive state to do the exercise the best it can be done. When complete, do it again for thirty years from now, then forty. Keep going until you are into your 90's. Feel each decade as you move ahead in time. Write out the answers to the questions for each decade before you proceed to the next. As challenging as this exercise may be, it will definitely connect you with the person you plan to become and the life you wish to live for the rest of your life, decade by decade.

Try not to come from your head with the answers. Really try to connect with your heart center to answer. (Sitting quietly and doing some deep breathing can help you with this.) Your heart is your communication to your soul and your soul already knows how your true self would answer these questions. This is an

amazing exercise to be at one with the person you are to become. The greater your bond to your heart, the truer your answers.

PART TWO

I strongly recommend that you do Part Two on a different day than Part One. Allow yourself some time to absorb the futuristic thinking and feelings that you have experienced. Let your heart and your head sense the merger they felt and see how all the “planning” you have done is settling into your body. When you are comfortable to do the next part, by all means, start. This will most likely not take as long as the first part.

Begin again by sitting comfortably in a quiet space, where you won't be disturbed. Have your Part One papers handy for reference and more blank paper in front of you. Now is the time to recognize the control you can have over manifesting each and every one of your desires and dreams.

Go to Question #1. Read the question and your answer for it for ten years in the future only. Breathe in, breathe out, get present in the future – feel yourself ten years from now, in the desire or dream you have set. Then as that future self, what does your physical state need to be in order to fulfill this desire or dream? Write it down.

Go to Question #2 and do the same thing. Be present in the future with your desire or dream – what does your physicality need to be in order to fulfill this desire or dream? Write it down.

Go through each question the same way – get in a mind/body/spirit state of being in the future with the desire or dream that you have and ask yourself what your physicality would need to be in order to have that dream come true and be real in the future.

When you have finished all the questions, repeat for twenty years ahead, thirty years ahead, etc. The most important piece of this exercise is being present in that time period, living that dream or desire and considering what your physical state needs to be to have that dream.

By the time you have finished this exercise, quite a few “aha’s” have most likely occurred. We simply do not think about our future lives in this way nor do we anticipate what our physicality would NEED to be in order to live the way we anticipate living. Let’s face it, the medical community can keep us alive well into our 80’s and 90’s, even 100’s by the time many/most of us get there. The “aha” lies not in the quantity of life, but in the quality. And, it is the choices you make today that will determine the quality of your life in the decades to come.

All these choices and changes don’t need to be made at once by any stretch. But a slow, gradual, step-by-step transition of losing certain bad habits and picking up other good ones will help your body sense your intention and level of commitment. And when the body knows you are trying, it is much more inclined to support you and help you to be successful.

M – MEDITATION

Though it may not seem to be that way, meditation is actually one of the most important steps you can take in embracing a healthy aging process and an overall healthy life. Meditation is the answer to a multitude of issues that can befall us as we age. Sitting quietly for even 5 minutes per day helps to calm our minds and slow our bodies down.

The main benefit to meditation is what it can do for our stress levels and controlling our stress levels, in general, means controlling our health. According to Kris Carr and her Program on “The Four Mistakes Zapping Your Energy,” “75% of doctor’s visits are stress related and only 3% of those visits even include a conversation about stress reduction!”⁹ She also states that “stress is at the heart of food cravings, addictions, slow metabolism, hormonal issues, emotional highs and lows and fatigue,”¹⁰ to name a few conditions not often thought of in relationship to stress. The other more common health issues related to stress are high blood pressure, weakened immune system, heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety, chronic respiratory diseases, asthma attacks, rheumatoid arthritis, gastrointestinal problems, atrial fibrillation, insomnia, skin break outs, neck or back pain, headaches ... need I go on? And then, there’s our brain! According to Dr. Daniel Amen, a noted psychiatrist, “stress brings trouble to the hippocampus (our memory source) and the pre-frontal cortex (forethought, judgment and decision-making.)”¹¹ Stress is simply not a good thing and not a good thing for the health of your body.

Stress produces the hormone cortisol which is a left-over by-product of the “fight-or-flight” days way back when. Thousands of years ago when we had to hunt for food, we put our life on the line when we hunted. Cortisol was needed to kick our bodies into gear to survive. We were able to put the cortisol to good use and then release it. In present day, cortisol is still produced, but as we are not running to save our life, it is typically suppressed - we tend to either stuff it down or explode, usually at those we care about. Either reaction causes the cortisol to

⁹ KrisCarr .com

¹⁰ KrisCarr .com

¹¹ DanielAmenMD.com

stay boiling within your body, creating negative effects on everything mentioned above as well as, strangely enough, our waistlines and our weight. Three key reasons that cortisol relates to these are that:

- 1) it thrives on sugar, so if our diet doesn't contain enough sugar, we will begin to crave it to feed the cortisol.¹²
- 2) Cortisol holds on to or enhances belly fat, so if you are trying to lose weight, but you lead a stressful life, the weight will be much more difficult to lose.¹³
- 3) The impact of the cortisol on the brain in relationship to weight: the hormone helps to enhance cravings of the wrong foods on a more frequent basis.¹⁴

All in all, stress is a really, really, really bad thing and in order to live a happy, healthy life we need to find a way to reduce our stress levels with an on-going, daily practice.

Meditation and/or Mindfulness is really the answer for this. And, keep in mind that meditation can take its form in many ways. For the body's sake, take five each day. Ideally take twenty, once or twice a day and sit quietly. You don't have to "empty your mind" unless you want to. You don't have to focus on your breathing, ...just B R E A T H E slowly and steadily. However, you can be mindful of where you are and everything around you. I am fortunate that I live near the ocean and can choose to sit and stare out my window at the sea, or go to a different window and look at the trees with the leaves blowing or changing color, or go to another window and look at the intricacies of the stone walls in my yard. I can also choose a picture in the house and simply look at it and become one with the picture. You will be surprised how quickly the time goes and how relaxed you become. The most important component is to be present every moment. Focus on exactly where you are and what you are looking at, if that applies.

¹² Today's Dietitian – The Magazine for Nutrition Professionals

¹³ Today's Dietitian – The Magazine for Nutrition Professionals

¹⁴ Today's Dietitian – The Magazine for Nutrition Professionals

If you are just beginning a practice, start with 3 minutes, or 5 minutes, sitting quietly any way that you can. If you are typically sitting at your desk much of the day, do not meditate there. Get up and move to a quiet place, isolated from the phone, computer or distractions. I know people who actually use a bathroom for meditation, even one friend who uses a closet. The main purpose is to be alone, in quiet, wherever that may be that works for you. Slowly build up the amount of time that you spend until you can be comfortable being at peace for 20 – 30 minutes. If you wish to set a timer, “there’s an app for that!”

There are also many meditation apps that will play music - very soothing music which can help you to relax. There are guided meditations available which will help you sit for a longer period of time with someone guiding you through a peaceful picture in your mind, taking you to an imaginary place that you create based on their guided imagery. Whatever is going to work to get you to do it is the best plan for you. Just remember to be present with whatever practice you choose.

When you take a break from all of your stressors once or twice a day, each and every day, you are giving your body and mind the gift of attention. You are recognizing that you do have stress within your day and that you want to give back to your body in gratitude for its ever-presence in how it handles all your stress. Always keep in mind, that it is the effort that the body recognizes not the perfection of the action you take. In other words, your body will react to your form of meditation and know that you are doing the best you can in sitting still, in whatever form that takes for you. As time goes by, provided you continue to “meditate” for up to 20 minutes twice each day, your mind will be easier to quiet and actually look forward to these moments where it is just you and the peace.

H - HYDRATION

What do you believe these days about how much water you should drink? Do you only count water...what about soda? Coffee? Fruit? Do they count? Why do you need water?

Monitoring your hydration is the most critical voluntary action you can take to maintain your health every day for the rest of your life. Keeping a steady level of hydration as you age eases the process and offsets a plethora of potential issues. Here are some things you really should know:

1) Second to air, water (hydration) is needed for life to sustain. Your body is made up of approximately 65% water spread throughout your organs, tissues and systems. Muscle tissue alone is 70 - 75% water – think of how much more supple and flexible your muscles would be with enough hydration.¹⁵

2) Beware of high levels of caffeine in your drinks as well as sodium (rampant in sodas) and any kind of alcohol. These are dehydrators and can suck water out of your system. The latest scientific research has shown that a cup or two of coffee does not have the dehydrating effect as originally thought. The new versions of “caffeine-in-a-bottle” type drinks, however, can get way up there in caffeine levels which are high enough to cause dehydration, depending how many are consumed in a day.¹⁶ Rule of thumb is if you are drinking any of these types of beverages to an excess, drink additional glasses of water along with them!

3) Water comes in all kinds of food: 75% - 90% of fruits and vegetables is water. 35% - 60% of meat is water and as much as 35% of bread is water.¹⁷ So next time you are “hungry”, it could be your body’s desperation to get something to drink! For those of you watching your weight, when you sense hunger, drink a full glass of water, wait 20 minutes, and if you are still hungry then have something nutritious to eat.

¹⁵ ACE Fitness Matters July/August 2007

¹⁶ The World’s Healthiest Foods, June 2017

¹⁷ Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Food Data Chart - Water

4) The sensation of thirst dissipates the older you are.¹⁸ People in their 80's rarely feel thirsty. So, if you think that "your body will let you know by being thirsty" is a true regulator of how much fluid you need, the older you are, this is even less the case. If an elderly person is "thirsty," they are most likely very seriously dehydrated. If you can maintain a steady hydration level throughout the day, then there will not be a time where you come to feeling thirsty. And remember, if you live in a warmer climate or it is summer time and you naturally are perspiring throughout the day, whether you feel it or not, you need to hydrate twice as much, again maintaining that steady level.

5) 75% of your brain is water¹⁹ – need I say more?

6) 2-3% dehydration will slow down the body's metabolism by 2%.²⁰ For those trying to lose weight, this is not a good thing! It is the speed of your body's metabolism (the rate at which your body burns calories) that determines how much weight you will lose and at what speed you will do it. Again, maintaining a steady hydration level keeps your metabolism functioning at its peak performance level.

7) Just a slight dip in your overall hydration can make you sleepy and make it difficult to concentrate.²¹ This is of particular interest if you will be driving any length of time. Before you begin to drive, build up your hydration level and then keep it steady throughout the trip. Yes, you will have to make bathroom stops along the way, but at our age, getting out of the car and stretching our legs every hour should be done anyway. Consider your hydration maintenance as your flexibility enhancer!

8) 22% of your bone tissue, believe it or not, is made up of water.²² Most of us, as we age, have to deal with brittle bones the older we get. Hydration is one way to support healthy bone tissue.

¹⁸ John Muir Health – Dehydration and Aging

¹⁹ Articles.Mercola.com

²⁰ University of Utah, Dr. Wayne Askew Hydration Study January 2003

²¹ Mayo Clinic.org - Dehydration

²² Hydration for Health Initiative.com

9) Drink water BEFORE you are thirsty. Thirst is a sign that the body has already begun dehydration. Another reason to maintain that steady level of hydration throughout the day.

10) If you drink sports drinks in an effort to replace electrolytes lost during exercise, first READ THE LABEL. One of the most popular sports drinks lists the first two ingredients as “Water, high fructose corn syrup.” Then lists < .05% of all those electrolytes and minerals you were drinking it for! Remember, sports drinks are for serious athletes and people who have strenuous jobs in the outdoors who sweat a lot. They are not for recreation!

11) When asking clients how much water they drink, more often than not, they say plenty! But when I ask them to actually measure how much they are drinking, there is a revelation: their “enough” was about half of what it should be. Therefore, line up your water bottles at the beginning of the day and put them in an obvious place. Then every time you walk by you will be reminded to drink. And, you will be better able to determine that you are, in fact, drinking “enough.”

12) When just drinking water, it begins to be absorbed in your system as soon as it hits your mouth. If you are under-hydrated though, and need to absorb liquid quickly, “if there are carbohydrates and electrolytes in a drink, it increases the rate of fluid absorption.”²³ Remember, however, the amount of sugar that can be in those carbohydrate drinks. The challenge, then, is if you need the sugar (you have been sweating excessively and need a quick fix) or you can ease back into hydration, when water would be the wiser choice to avoid that sugar.

13) Not enough water in your system sets off an imbalance in your sodium levels which can be evident through dizziness, cramping, drops in blood pressure and many other symptoms.²⁴

14) Signs of on-going dehydration: constipation, headaches, fatigue, spontaneous muscle cramping, asthma and allergies, high cholesterol, bladder and/or kidney problems, skin disorders, digestive issues, joint pain and arthritis,

²³ American Council on Exercise Pro Source April 2016

²⁴ MedLinePlus.gov - Dehydration

weight gain.²⁵ If any of these symptoms continue to appear in your life, be serious about checking your water intake. Also, as a side note, many elderly sufferers have been diagnosed with dementia and it has simply been a case of dehydration, so be aware if someone you love is having some signs of mental fogginess.

15) Last, but most importantly, how much is enough? There are many varying theories of how much is enough and there are as many answers as there are people, because everyone is different. One standard of measurement is to drink in ounces the number of kilograms you weigh. (In America, divide your weight by 2.2.) This, however, can become unrealistic if you are carrying 20 or more pounds of excess weight. Another is simply eight 8 ounce glasses of water each day – period! What I believe the solution to be is fairly logical and simple: what color is your urine? If it is deep and dark colored with every potty run, you most likely are not hydrated enough. If, however, the color is a pale yellow, you are probably fine. If the color is so light that you can barely see a yellow tone, you are most likely drinking too much, so cut back a smidge before your next urination. However, if any discoloration persists, you might want to mention it to your doctor.

Staying hydrated is a daily habit that is well worth your effort of paying attention. Chronic dehydration has been proven to be the cause of many chronic conditions. So, if you focus a bit more on hydration and create a stable level and become chronically *hydrated*, it would be interesting to see if any other issues you might have been dealing with might just disappear. You never know until you try!!

²⁵ waterbenefitshealth.com

E - EXERCISE

You have heard it before, exercise is a key ingredient to a healthy life. Study after study has shown that an exercise schedule each week can help to offset cancer – all kinds, heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), Type 2 Diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, joint replacements, and the list goes on and on.

Many of the issues we attribute to aging are actually more due to misuse of our bodies and lack of care. The recurring theme found in most scientific studies on aging is if you want to extend your life span and stay healthy, maintain a regular exercise program. A regular exercise program has been defined by the American College of Sports Medicine – the leading authority on exercise - as 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week and 2 – 3 sessions of strength training. Not only is exercise good for the body, but there is increasing evidence suggesting that regular workouts protect and sharpen your mind, reduce stress and ward off depression and other mental illnesses.

As we age, we lose muscle tissue: ½ pound of muscle per year beginning around the age of 30. That is 15 pounds of muscle mass lost by the time you are 60! More often than not, that 15 pounds has been replaced with fat. Reason being, with loss of muscle comes lessening of metabolism. However, when you are working your muscles and building muscle tissue (actually replenishing muscle tissue) it enhances your ability to burn calories. You are, in fact, changing your metabolism in a good way. As your muscle tissue maintains its strength and tone, your metabolism maintains its efficiency. This is why it is so important to have strength training become a part of your exercise diligence when you are over forty five.

Aerobic exercise is exercise for the heart. It helps to keep your heart fit and functioning to its potential. Typically your aerobic capacity diminishes as you get older, typically falling by around 20 % if no conditioning is taking place. However, by exercising aerobically, you can raise their aerobic capacity 15 – 25% so that there is virtually no change in capacity as you get older.

The key to a successful exercise program is to participate in something that you actually enjoy doing; something that will challenge you with which you will see improvement. There are so many programs from which to choose, you must be very careful. For Strength Training, of course, I recommend BodSpir®, the technique I have created and developed since the year 2000. BodSpir® is a unique strength training program designed specifically for the older body which focuses on four essential components contributing to healthy aging: strengthening and stretching/ balancing and breathing.

Other programs typically combine movement and aerobic-type activity with the strengthening. With BodSpir® we focus on one muscle group at a time so that your whole being is focused and each group of muscles being worked on can get the most out of each exercise. There is no muscle confusion and the brain can easily keep up with your focus and intention. BodSpir® should be done twice each week. Joining our Membership Site is the easiest way to get the strengthening and flexibility you need.

Aside from strength training, you should do 2 – 3 days of cardio-vascular exercise. The most effective cardio-vascular exercise is using the interval training method. Interval training is when you exercise at your regular level of exertion, but for a short period of time, safely go full out with the exercise, then go back into a regular pace. So, 4 minutes paced, 1 minute full out; or, 5 minutes paced, 2 minutes full out. According to a study found in Cell Metabolism, led by Dr. Sreekumaran Nair, a professor of medicine and an endocrinologist at the Mayo Clinic and the study's senior author, interval training is the most effective exercise for the older body. It restores and rebuilds the mitochondria of the muscle tissue which in turn restores and rebuilds your strength and consequent functionality.²⁶

If you are new to aerobic exercise, you really want to take this very slowly and work your way up to interval training. You don't want to just dive right into it. You should be an experienced aerobic exerciser before attempting any interval

²⁶ Volume 25, Issue 3, p581–592, 7 March 2017 Cell Metabolism

training. When you have been doing aerobics for an extended period of time, you then might want to start testing out interval training. Check with your doctor as well as a Personal Trainer to see when it might be the right time for you. When you are ready, my suggestion would be two days per week of Interval Training with your favorite aerobic exercise (see list next paragraph.) That potential third day of aerobics would be without the interval bursts.

There are many different types of aerobics you can do: Zumba, a brisk walk that gets your heart rate up, bike riding (or stationary bike or spin class) dance aerobics, ballroom dancing, skipping vs. running (more on that later) swimming, swim aerobics, boxing, rowing, or whatever else you enjoy that is not a sport and that you will do on a regular basis. The most important component of the exercise of choice that needs to be present is that the sole purpose in doing the exercise is to give back to your body. Setting that intention, allows the body to focus on all the benefits it is receiving from the exercise and doesn't have to think about anything else but receiving. That is why participating in a sport, while it can be an excellent source of exercise, has the intention of high performance and winning, which distracts the body from receiving the benefits of the exercise and focuses on giving the benefits away for the "win."

Another critical piece in the growing older puzzle of maintaining good physical conditioning is flexibility. Again, with BodSpir®, we incorporate stretching into each workout which helps the body offset all the muscle contracting we are doing with each strengthening exercise. In addition to BodSpir® the most common flexibility exercise is Yoga. Because Yoga is so universal now, and the level of ability is so diverse, it is critical that you do your research before beginning any Yoga class. First, you need to look at the kind of Yoga you would like to do and then find an instructor who teaches it in your area. In many cases, this happens in just the opposite way: you find a class and a teacher and simply do whatever Yoga they are offering. If you like it and you have a great instructor, then stick with it. Just make sure that the instructor knows the workings of an older body. Again, it might be more beneficial to find an instructor a little closer to your age who can understand a little of what you are

going through with aging. From my experience, there is no 25 year old out there who has a body like a pretzel who has a clue with what any asana feels like on me!! But, do not be fooled by the amazing body on the instructor. Most likely they have been practicing for years and whatever musculature they have developed has been a long time coming. You can get strong in Yoga, but it can often be a long road getting there.

Another popular class is Pilates. I have heard all opinions on the benefits of Pilates. If you practice Pilates with a certified Pilates trainer in a Pilates facility with the machinery and equipment that was designed for this form of exercise, it can be very beneficial in building the core muscles. If, however, you are taking a Pilates class without the machines and simply use the “mat” class equipment, you may find the need for other forms of exercise for strengthening as well. Again, I urge you to mix it up a bit when it comes to the different kinds of strengthening programs.

A little side note about running...

First of all running was never my thing. I have tried it on at least a dozen or more occasions over the years and have never liked it. And, boy am I glad I didn't! So many people I know now who were runners “in their youth” are having knee problems, ankle and feet issues and or hip/back pain. In my opinion, the human body was never made to run the distances or frequencies that we impose. To be conditioned so that you can run when/if you need to has always been good enough for me. And, I must admit, a fun sprint of 100 yards if I feel like it is a fabulous feeling! But to force the body to endure the pounding on the joints that running demands and to do it day after day simply can not be good for you; in spite of the “runner's high” you get from it. I reiterate this is my opinion, and not that of a frequent runner who would whole-heartedly disagree with me, even after a knee surgery or two!

One other thing, if you are considering running as a way to get aerobic exercise twice a week, please consider this: according to Dr. Jon Schriener, faculty member at Michigan State University:

“The jury is still out. Some say yes running is bad for the knees, some say no. It's well known that heavier people are at higher risk for arthritis. For every pound of weight a person carries – whether it's in their body or they put it on in a pack – they have four pounds on the knee when running. In other words, if you weigh 100 pounds, there are 400 pounds of force on the knee with each foot strike.”²⁷

So, do your own calculation based on your height and weight. If you feel you have extra weight – how much more pressure are you adding? I am 5'8, 138 pounds. That means that with each foot strike I am imposing 552 pounds of pressure on EACH knee with EACH step...need I say more??

My suggestion is to exercise an hour or so each day, six days each week. So, if you do BodSpir® strength training 2X per week and aerobics 2X per week, then you have another day for yoga and a final day for Pilates or another aerobics routine or hiking or a bike ride, or whatever else you would like to do to give back to your body. Key is that no exercise is the be all and end all. It is important to mix it up a bit and allow your body and mind the “flexibility” to accommodate all different modalities.

In conclusion regarding exercise, if you need to do it with a friend, find a friend or a class. If you need a personal trainer, find one, but make sure they are experienced with someone your age and your level of experience. And, if you don't like what they are doing, tell them. Communication is key between a trainer or instructor and a client. Most importantly discover an exercise regimen that works for you. The bottom line is to do it and the rewards will be given back to you with as much enthusiasm as you put into it.

²⁷ Live Science.com. Also Dr. Eric Matteson, Chair of the Rheumatology Division, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN – Arthritis.org

R – REST

Let's chat about sleep. We all need it, some more than others. How much is enough? One thing for sure is that we can't live without it. Although we feel nothing, our body is very busy at work restoring all the "damage" we did the day before. Typically our body temperature is a tad lower and our muscles relax. We breathe deeper and slower. Our stomach is at rest and many cells die and get replenished. Our blood is dirtied by day and cleaned by night. Our brain, too, rids itself of toxins overnight. Our memories are also tagged and archived, so to speak. Our liver and gallbladder are busy assuring that all the toxins have been processed and our kidneys and intestines gear up to rid our body of them.²⁸

I could go on and on with all the scientific research that has been done about how much sleep you need and why, your circadian rhythm and biological clock and how they interact and affect your sleep cycle, the suggested times to go to bed, suggested times to wake up, what happens if you have sleep apnea, the best mattress to sleep on, etc. The bottom line is, are you getting enough sleep? Before you answer that, it may be interesting to look at your sleep history to see if you have ever gotten enough sleep. To help you with that, I am going to tell you my story about my sleep and how it has changed over the years.

In my twenties, living in New York City, I would rise at 7:00 AM, shower, eat and walk to work (a New York thing!) and get there by 9:00, raring to go! I would leave work anywhere between 5:00 and 6:00 and inevitably meet someone for cocktails and the evening would begin. Several drinks later and maybe some food, I would cab it home and fall into bed by midnight. Seven hours later, I would do the whole thing over again. Nothing interfered with sleep – even the alcohol.

Later on in my twenties, I was traveling all over the world and often didn't even know which time zone I was in. With my job, I would sometimes get 4 hours of sleep, other nights maybe 8. Sometimes the only sleep I got was on an airplane! But, again, didn't seem to matter. When it was time to get up and go, I got up and went!

²⁸ Sleep Foundation.org, Prevention.com, EverydayHealth.com, ForeverConscious.com

As my thirties moved on, there was a definite shift. I felt the need for more sleep, whether I was able to get it or not. Then when the children came, just forget it – there was never enough sleep and I suffered for it. Especially with the extra weight I had gained from growing these little bundles of joy – erratic sleep meant an erratic metabolism and it was very difficult to lose the weight I had gained.

Finally when the children were getting older and had developed their own steady sleep patterns, I was in my forties and able to develop my own better rhythms. Of course this was the time that I started to take a good look at my overall health and became interested in the fitness industry as a career. So, now, it made sense to support my better health with better sleep, and this I did.

I began to pay stricter attention to my bedtime and awakening time. Of course while the kids were going to school, we all got up very early to get them on the bus. This meant we all went to bed at a reasonable hour, too. For me, though, as a single parent, it was critical that I get that extra hour at the end of the day for ME. So, although it wasn't necessarily best for my quantity of sleep, having that extra hour from 10:00 – 11:00 by myself certainly enhanced the quality of my life!

Going into my fifties, as the years rolled by and the kids began to leave or drive themselves to school, I was finally able to get my own rhythm going based only on my life and my responsibilities. No outside forces to influence but what I put there. And it has pretty much been that way ever since.

I am a morning person, as they say, and do better getting up by 5:30 and bed by 9:30, actually 9:00 so I can get some reading done and ease into that relaxed state. I usually sleep a good solid 7 ½ - 8 hours each night and rarely wake up in the middle of the night. When I do, I am able to go right back to sleep. But, every now and then, I will have that rough night where I can't get back to sleep – brain is running a mile a minute. And what I do works for me every time...

I get up, go downstairs and make myself a cup of chamomile tea. I sit in quiet, emptying my brain vs. revving it up. Shortly thereafter, I return to bed and go back to sleep – takes about an hour.

So, how did your sleep patterns develop over the years and how did that influence how you sleep now: your bedtimes, your middle of the night awakenings, your arising times, etc. And to really make it interesting, as you go through the decades, how did your sleep patterns then relate to your life at the time? How do your sleep patterns relate to your life now? Is there anything really standing in the way of you being able to rightly claim a good night's sleep? And, if so, what can you do to be kinder to yourself and more respectful of what your body needs?

The obvious key is to get enough sleep each and every night. And because you can't bank sleep, each night is important in and of itself.

However, if you do feel that you may be sleep deprived, it is very important that you pay attention to that deprivation. There is a myriad of issues that can arise: difficulty concentrating and memory lapses, drowsiness while driving, a weakened immune system leading to frequent colds and infections, difficulty in coping with stress and having a quicker temper, lack of focus, weight gain, moodiness, lower sex drive, higher rates of depression and anxiety, increased risk of diabetes, disruption in hormone function, increased risk for a heart attack and an overall lack of motivation with life to name just a few.

To help prevent sleep deprivation there are several things you can abide by that I have assimilated over the years, that have helped me to get the sleep I need: ²⁹

- Finish eating and alcohol at least 2 hours before bed (I actually gave up alcohol all together this year and know, for me, that has contributed to not waking up in the middle of the night.)
- Do not use your computer or any hand held device at least 30 minutes before bed

²⁹ sleepeducation.org,

- Monitor your last dose of caffeine and allow at least 6 hours before bed
- Sadly enough, it could be your pets in bed with you that disrupts your sleep
- Make sure your bed is only for sleep and intimacy – do not bring work to bed with you
- If you wake up in the middle of the night, try not to look at the clock. (For me, this one helped tremendously!)
- If you read or watch TV before bed, try to not indulge in violence or distress – or the News!!!
- Create a bedtime ritual at the same time every evening
- Make sure the room temperature is comfortable
- Make sure the bed is comfortable
- Check any medications you may be on for possible side effects to sleep
- If not asleep in 15 – 20 minutes, get up, go to another room to read or listen to soft music or meditate then try again when drowsy
- Maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly

Another key point under the “Rest” category is napping. Never shy away from napping. A quick 20 – 30 minutes in the middle of the afternoon can revive you for the rest of the day. If you have traveled abroad, there are many countries that take blatant “siestas” in the afternoon. It is a definite way to re-charge. If, however, you find that you need to sleep more than that to get that spark, you had best check with some of the other possible issues already mentioned. Also, a nap too late in the afternoon could interrupt your upcoming night’s sleep, so be aware of the timing of your nap.

An alternative to a nap in the afternoon is to meditate. Take 20 minutes to sit quietly and relax. You don’t even have to go into a deep, empty-the-brain kind of meditation. Simply sit quietly in a chair and look out the window. Let the thoughts come and go, provided they aren’t stressful. Try being present with

whatever you are looking at out the window and stay with it. The tension in your body will begin to subside and you will feel a re-charge sure to take you through until bedtime. Of course, I recommend meditation in the afternoon whether you need a rest or not. It is a great gift to give to yourself to re-boot the afternoon!

To sleep well at night has everything to do with your behavior during the day. Therefore, the best thing to do to sleep well is to treat your body well with exercise and a good diet as well as all the other suggestions in I. A.M. H.E.R.E.

E – EATING

It is time for a total confession: I have had food issues as long as I can remember. I have also thought I was overweight my entire life. Those revelations being revealed, needless to say, I have had eating issues my entire life. And, I can pretty safely say that, I have been a binge eater for all of my adult life. The solution that I came to that stopped the abuse I gave to my body all these years? Education – learning about what was in my food and on my food. What was in everything I put in my body? And, what was the treatment of the animals that I ingested or whose by-products I ate? Learning more and more over the last ten years has led me to veganism and being a local organic consumer whenever possible. And THAT has been the most effective diet I have ever been on.

I am not here to promote veganism. That is what works for me and my body. I am here, however, to share some of my education so that you, too, can make smarter choices with how you serve your body.

There is so much going on in the food industry and the scientific community about food, I thought it best to highlight the most important points about this vastly confusing part of living a healthy lifestyle.

1. There's no doubt about it, there is a major issue going on in our country about food and eating. The obesity dilemma has spiraled out of control and no one is taking responsibility. Food addiction is at an all time high and the healthcare industry has finally recognized obesity as a disease.
2. The farming industry, in their effort to succeed and compete, mainly consists of wheat, soy and corn. Because of this mass production, these three foods are in the majority of all foods that are processed. This includes most breads, desserts, bottled condiments, and all foods white. The unfortunate by-product of these foods once they get into our bodies is sugar. Sugar is a physically addictive substance. And, because of the way our bodies process sugar, these calories turn into fat. And, because of our addiction, we continue to crave and eat more sugar through

whatever means possible. So, sugar (and, therefore, fat) is not just from candy and cookies and desserts. Most processed foods end up as sugar. (See #5)

3. When grocery shopping, a basic rule of thumb is to only buy what's in the outer aisles of the store and to not venture into any of the aisles in the middle. Here you will typically find the produce department, take out deli (beware of those deli meats – choose wisely), meat and fish, dairy, eggs and juices and the bakery (beware of non-whole grain products.)
4. I have never really understood the purpose of changing your eating habits to lose weight only to stop the “diet”, revert to your old eating habits and re-gain the weight – which happens to 80 - 95 % of dieters. Instead of dieting, per se, what about simply changing the foods you eat? How about making smarter choices and substitutions for those bad foods. For instance, instead of white potatoes, choose sweet potatoes; instead of ice cream, choose No Sugar Added Non-Fat Frozen Yogurt – the taste will grow on you, and every now and then treat yourself to the real thing; instead of iceberg lettuce, choose mixed greens or red lettuce – with lettuce it's the darker the color, the more nutrition – or choose spinach. There can be a better choice with virtually any food you “crave!”
5. Low-fat is another way of saying high sugar. (When you take one flavor enhancer out, you need to put another one in!) Or, if the product is also sugar free, BEWARE! Artificial sweeteners can be worse for you than sugar. And while we are discussing sugar, there are tons of different kinds of sugar. There is really no such thing as a healthy sugar! However, there is stevia which is a plant, but it is very difficult to find products sweetened with just pure stevia extract. Most of the sugar in food can be found coming from corn: high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, malodextrin, glucose, malt, sucrose, maltose not to mention the long list of other by-products of corn not necessarily used for sweetening. Most of these sweet products are put into our foods to enhance the flavor. They also feed the addiction to food because sugar is highly addictive and when

- processed through the body, it turns into fat. The best sugar choice is no sugar. That way, the addiction can disappear and then when you have something to eat with sugar in it, it tastes too sickly sweet!
6. Organic foods are the healthier choice. Though there are many out there who argue this point, to me, the facts are simple. If I can choose to put non-pesticide, chemical free food in my body rather than those laden with chemicals, then I choose to. This is not rocket science. The latest studies are showing that there is no “nutritional difference” between organic and conventional foods. That could very well be the case. However, my concern is much more with my liver, spleen, gall bladder, intestines and kidneys and their survival. If they continuously get bombarded with substances they have no idea how to process, that simply can’t be good for them. I choose organic! And when I can’t find the organic food, I stick with the “Clean 15” kinds of produce (those lowest in pesticides) vs. the “Dirty Dozen” (those highest in pesticides.) (For an updated list, go to the Environmental Working Group’s website – ewg.org.)
 7. Become a locavore! A locavore is someone who buys their produce from local farmers. It not only gets you fresh produce which hasn’t been sitting in storage or in the back of a truck for weeks or months, but it supports local business. As a sidebar, did you know, for instance, that apples are stored for up to a year before they are delivered to your grocery store? From the USDA Agricultural Research Service:
Apples not intended for fresh market are stored at low temperatures, with low levels of oxygen and high levels of carbon dioxide. While this slows the apples’ natural production of ethylene and its effects, fungicides must often be applied to prevent fungal rots from taking hold.
 8. The controversy over genetically modified foods and genetically engineered foods is a combination of big business and politics. It certainly has nothing to do with what is healthy for the American people. For those not aware, GE and GMO foods are rampant in our food supply and we don’t even know it. These are foods that have been altered to

survive chemical pesticides, the biggest offender is Monsanto who manufactures the pesticide Round UP. They control 93% of soybeans, 80% of corn and 95% of sugar beets grown in this country. All these crops have been genetically modified to survive the spraying of Round UP so the farmers can kill the weeds and not the crops. The long-term effect of consuming these foods has been studied in Europe: damage to the digestive system and our ability to digest proteins, changes in the micro-structure of our intestines, alter our immune systems and cause us to eat more, gain weight and retain weight.³⁰ Rats exposed to even the smallest amounts of Monsanto GM corn developed mammary tumors and severe liver and kidney damage.³¹ The bottom line is that we have the right to know if foods that we eat are GMO or GE. Then we can choose to do whatever we want as far as purchasing and eating them. Because of this, I support the labeling of GMO and GE foods. For more information, go to fooddemocracynow.org or foodandwaterwatch.org.

9. To go gluten-free or not is up to a person's digestive system. Gluten is a protein found in wheat and other grains: kamut, spelt and barley. It enhances the texture of the grain and, therefore, helps with the delectability of certain foods. It is hidden in many food products and often causes intestinal upset for many people – they have gluten intolerance. One way to determine if you need to go gluten-free is to give up ALL gluten products for 2 – 3 weeks. Then gradually lead them back into your diet. If your system gets upset after consuming these foods, chances are most likely you have a gluten intolerance and should stop eating all foods with it. Fortunately, these days, that gets easier and easier with all the new gluten-free foods on the market. Best to discuss with a Registered Dietician or your doctor as to how you should proceed.

10. It is also a good idea with any suspected food intolerance, simply give it up for 2 – 3 weeks. Then, re-introduce it back into your diet

9 New England Health Advisory Sept. 2012

10 New England Health Advisory Sept. 2012

and see how you feel. Our body's way to communicate to you that it is not a tolerable food is to give you nausea or headaches, achy muscles, typical allergy symptoms, diarrhea or any other way that will make you feel different than "normal." Keep in mind, when there is an intolerable food, the body only has certain ways it can communicate with you if the food is not working for it. If this happens, you might want to stop eating that food. When your body gives you heartburn, it is its way of saying, "I can't handle this food." If you decide to listen to your body, you won't need to pop any chewable tablet after you eat!!

There are several resources that I use in an on-going manner to keep updated with what is going on in the food industry. As I mentioned, after struggling with my eating habits my entire life, it was only until I learned the things that I have just shared with you (and this is just the tip of the iceberg!) that I realized how to be kinder to my body, treat it with more respect and feed it with only good, healthy foods so that it, in turn, can give me a healthier physical future.

For your reference, my key resources regarding food are:

TheTruthAboutCancer.org

Realfarmacy.com

[The Food Revolution.org](http://TheFoodRevolution.org)

Foodbabe.com

March-Against-Monsanto.com

Butternutrition.com

Eatlocalgrown.com

Althealthworks.com

[Environmental Working Group = ewg.org](http://EnvironmentalWorkingGroup.org)

Undergroundhealth.com

IN CONCLUSION...

When you think about it and are honest with yourself, most of the decisions you make and the choices you choose on a daily basis are yours and yours alone. And for those that are currently out of your control, allow them to be what they are and deal with them later. But for those choices you have that are yours, be brave and make the best ones you can at the time. Baby steps – one decision at a time, one choice at a time. And, when you start to make better choices for your body and your health, slowly, but definitely surely, changes will begin to appear and you will slowly, but surely begin to notice the vitality you are choosing to give to your body. And, always remember, when you give to your body, your body will respond to you in kind.