



What does wellness look like this year?



Since the onset of the novel coronavirus pandemic, many of us equate “staying healthy” to “avoiding the virus.” And while it’s still crucial to protect yourself, there’s much more to ensuring a healthy 2021. Key habits to all-around wellness are more important than ever, since a healthy body is better prepared to ward off infection of any kind.

Here’s a few tips to get to a healthier you in 2021.

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Nobody likes to hear this one, but I’m not talking about the dreaded word “diet,” or anything drastic. A few simple changes to your everyday life can help you lose pounds or prevent gaining them. Try these three simple things to start:

Choose fresh. Whenever you’re hungry for a snack, opt for something grown from the earth, not processed in a factory. Carrot sticks instead of chips, fresh fruit instead of chocolate. Replacing empty calories with whole foods will make a big impact on your health and energy level.

Drink water. Drinking at least eight glasses a day not only keeps your body hydrated and balanced, it also helps keeps you from consuming empty calories in soda, juice, alcohol, etc.

Move! Studies have shown that 150 minutes of exercise per week lowers your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and anxiety. Find an activity you love and fit it into your schedule on a regular basis. Maybe it’s hiking, cross-country skiing, dancing, you name it. If it’s fun, you’ll be more likely to stick to it.



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■ **Rest.** A healthy body enjoys a balance of movement and relaxation. A healthy mind needs time to unplug from the stressors of the world and everyday life. That's why we need sleep and time off from our screens. Make sure you're getting at least seven hours of sleep per night (eight is better), and build in time to relax from daily stress with 15 minutes of quiet reflection or meditation. Just like exercise keeps a body fit, rest keeps it fueled.

■ **Worry less.** 2020 brought us a pandemic, wildfires, election uncertainty, upheaval of our daily routines and financial problems, causing many of us to become anxious and depressed. Such stress can lead to physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive issues and lots more. This year make your mental health a priority. See a counselor for help if you're feeling burdened. Focus on what makes you happy and grateful. Try to be present in the moment and do the next right thing for yourself and the people around you. You can't take good care of your body without taking care of your mind as well!

■ **Set a goal and stick to it.** The "New Year's Resolution" is a bit of a cliché, but there is something powerful about setting a goal to work toward throughout the year. It doesn't have to be much; maybe it's as simple as, "I'm going to walk for 15 minutes every day" or "I'm going to put away my phone at 8 p.m. every night." Make sure it's something achievable and measurable, not something too general like, "I'm going to exercise more." If you can set an intention and keep it going one day at a time, that momentum will start to carry you forward and make those goals feel easier.

Now accepting new patients.

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