

RAISE YOUR FOCUS GAME

7 good-for-you habits

Life can be stressful at times and picking up bad habits can sometimes add to the strain. However picking up good habits can help relieve the tension and get you set for a more balanced and happy lifestyle.

Here are 7 good-for-you tips to get you started:

Take five deep breaths before starting your day

Make a habit of purposely stopping and taking five deep breaths before you start your day. This could be at the front door before you leave your house, in the car or on your morning walk. According to psychologist, Elizabeth Lombardo, "This helps reduce stress, which contributes to or causes over 90 percent of illness."

Keep your vitamins and medicines next to your toothbrush

Forgetting to take daily vitamins and medicines is something that we are all guilty of doing from time to time. If you find yourself regularly forgetting then try keeping them beside your toothbrush. Every morning when you brush your teeth you'll be gently reminded to take those pills.

Choose workout clothing that makes you feel good

You workout to look good and feel healthy, so if you look good when you workout you are already working towards achieving one of these goals. Ditching unflattering, oversized t-shirts and baggy shorts and treating yourself to fit-for-purpose, flattering workout gear will motivate you and make you feel good. Pack your gym bag the night before, so that when you wake up in the morning you don't have to rummage through your wardrobe to find what you need, or forget your clobber altogether!

Claim 'your' spot in class or on the gym floor

Sticking to a workout can be made easier if you feel that you 'own' the workout. This includes having a favourite spin bike in the spin class, or spot in the aerobics studio during cardio classes. You might prefer this spot because it's under the air-con unit or it gives you a good view of the instructor and class; whatever the reason having a spot you can call your own where you're most comfortable makes it more likely that you'll stick with the workout.

Have a mocha every morning

Most of us reach for the coffee pot to kick-start the day – that early morning caffeine fix is a comforting way to get your energy levels up. Adding a tablespoon of cocoa to your mug is a heart-healthy routine to get into. Why? Well because flavonols (naturally occurring antioxidants) found in cocoa possess properties which help improve blood flow to the brain and heart, promoting heart health.

Find reasons to stand up

Sitting for long periods of time (30 to 60 minutes) is bad for you – it causes a cascade of reactions which dramatically drop your calorie burning to next-to-nil and increases your risk of cardiovascular disease. These facts are true even if you exercise regularly! So find reasons to stand up and walk around during your day. Go for a walk in your lunch hour, stop asking people to pass you things and walk over to get yourself. If your phone rings, get up and walk while you talk if it is safe to do so; they aren't called 'mobile' phones for nothing!

Use dental floss in the shower

Remembering to floss is more likely to happen if you bring the floss into the shower with you. You'll be reminded to "clean up" your mouth along with the rest of you. Brush your teeth in the shower, floss and use the shower head to remove bacteria from the front and back surfaces of your teeth, says orthodontist Dr. Jacque Fulop-Goodling. "A hand sprayer works as a water pick, and removes bacteria from the teeth."

