



Your 40s and 50s: Critical to Aging Well

Plan on being around long? Life expectancy in the U.S. recently dropped for the first time in decades. Factors related to the decline may include a high intake of processed foods and sedentary living.

You can improve your odds of living well into your later years by making smart health choices in middle age with these goals:

- 1. Plan a nutritious diet.** Enjoying meals made from vegetables, fruit, whole grains, protein sources (fish, poultry, lean meat, dairy, legumes, nuts and seeds) and healthy fats can help decrease your risk of developing obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia and some types of cancer.
- 2. Get professional advice.** By 40 or 50 you'll find you visit (or should visit) your health care provider more often for chronic conditions and a variety of checkups as recommended.
- 3. Control stress.** Identify your goals and needs through the coming decades; build a timeline to stay on track. Find solitude to de-stress and relax every day with music, reading, long walks and other soothing activities.
- 4. Stay sharp.** Your brain takes about 20% of your body's energy resources, and requires nutritious food and healthy blood flow. Lifelong exercisers seem to have healthier brains, better thinking and memory, and reduced risk of dementia – so stay physically active.



- 5. Get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activities** that elevate your heart rate, such as brisk walking. In addition to the 150 minutes, do 2 or 3 strength training sessions per week. Check with your provider before significantly increasing exercise.

Volunteering? Good for You!

When people donate their time and resources to others, they often benefit as much as those they serve. Many people enjoy a sense of achievement, connection and emotional well-being from their volunteer efforts.

We have countless ways to donate our time and resources to people and programs in need. To find a good fit, think about the kind of experience that's suitable to your abilities, your personality and your likes and dislikes.

During the holiday giving season, why not consider hands-on volunteering? Some ideas:

- Help homebound people with everyday tasks, meals, yard cleanup, shopping or other errands.
- Give blood or help out at your local blood donation center.
- Send care packages to soldiers stationed overseas.
- Bring the whole family to help at your local soup kitchen.
- Mentor school kids or read to seniors.
- Search opportunities online at volunteermatch.org.



Many of us are already volunteers – maybe you help out at your church or nearby animal shelter, or coach a school sports team. Keep up the good work and the spirits of those you serve.

Get Your Flu Shot

It's not too late to get protected from the flu. Flu, or influenza, vaccination continues throughout the flu season, even in January or later. Flu season can begin as early as October, typically peaks in late November through March, and can occur as late as May.

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Cold-Weather Workouts: Dress Code



Don't let winter's chill keep you inside and inactive. You may find cold weather a challenge that actually enhances your exercise. Follow these guidelines to stay safe and comfortable, and have fun.

Dress in layers to keep your body's core warm. Cold temperatures, moisture and high wind cause your body to lose heat. Lock in body warmth by wearing 3 clothing layers: a thin, wicking, non-cotton layer, an insulating layer and a protective shell layer.

Shopping tip: Today's cold-weather clothing is made of materials designed to insulate and protect your body from cold temperatures, without being bulky or reducing your mobility. **Note:** Cotton is not a recommended fabric for outdoor clothing in very cold, wet weather.

Always wear a hat to reduce heat loss. In severe weather, cover your ears with a headband and use glove liners under a pair of heavier gloves.

Wear trail or running shoes with enough traction to prevent slipping, and enough space to allow for thermal socks.

Warm up before going outside to prevent strains, which can occur when muscles are cold. Once outdoors, quickly pick up your pace to stay warm and burn more calories.

For safety, wear reflective gear after dark. Carry a cell phone for emergencies. Shorten your outdoor workout or skip it during extreme cold, and know when to head home and warm up.

Get Your Flu Shot >> *Continued from front.*

What are the benefits of the flu vaccination? Flu shots protect against the 3 or 4 most common influenza viruses identified each season. When the vaccine closely matches circulating flu viruses, the CDC reports that vaccination can keep you from getting sick from influenza and significantly reduce flu-related hospitalizations and deaths among those with heart disease, diabetes and chronic lung disease.

With a few exceptions, everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year, preferably by the end of October. If you are pregnant, ask your provider about getting a flu shot as part of your prenatal care.

Note: The CDC does not recommend the intranasal vaccine (LAIV4) for the 2017-2018 flu season, due to concerns about its effectiveness against flu viruses in the U.S. from 2013 through 2016.

Mindful Eating

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



If you've ever eaten a whole bag of chips without realizing it, turned to ice cream when you've felt blue, or eaten dinner in front of the TV without considering how it tasted, you have practiced a form of **mindless eating.**

When we eat to quell emotions or while we're distracted, it's easy to take in too many calories. Regular overeating can lead to weight gain and associated health conditions, such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Learn to be more mindful when you eat. Here's how.

Mindful eating (also called intuitive eating) can help you develop better eating habits, which principally include:

- ✓ Eating when you are hungry to provide your body with the nutrients it needs.
- ✓ Checking your hunger level during your meal, so you can stop eating when you are full and don't overeat.
- ✓ Respecting and loving your body for the incredible machine that it is.
- ✓ Rejecting fad diets and weight control as your top priorities, and learning to trust your body and meet its needs.
- ✓ Enjoying food slowly while savoring it with all of your senses – how it looks, smells, feels and tastes.
- ✓ Avoiding using food as a crutch when feeling sad, bored or lonely.
- ✓ Eating at a table sitting down, rather than on the run or in front of a distracting screen.

If you have ever struggled with weight control or emotional eating, switching to mindful eating may be an important step for you. Studies show it can help lower body mass index, assist with weight loss and control impulsive eating. For guidance, consider talking with a dietitian or psychologist.



“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.” – Jim Rohn



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/17V12tools.

12.2017