



PROTECT *your* HEALTH!

FIVE WAYS TO BUILD A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM

Each year the average adult picks up one to three colds that typically last three or four days. If you get more than that, you might have a weak immune system. Our immune system is what fights off illness. Don't worry if yours isn't as strong you'd like.

There are lots of things you can do to improve it right away, such as getting more sleep, eating a better diet, taking some good supplements, de-stressing and exercise.

EXERCISE

We are made to move. Therefore, our bodies don't work properly when we live sedentary lifestyles. Movement keeps our immune systems functioning at peak performance.

Unfortunately, only about half of us exercise regularly. That's a real problem, because scientists now tell us that lounging around is much more damaging to our health than previously understood. In fact, some even go so far as proclaiming "sitting is the new smoking."

SITTING IS THE NEW SMOKING

Dr. James Levine is an endocrinologist at the world-famous Mayo Clinic. He's spent the last 15 years researching what a sedentary lifestyle does to the body.

"What's become clear over the last decades is that our chairs are literally killing us," he explains. "Excessive sitting is shaving, knocking, taking, years off our lives."

He's the author of the new book, *Get Up! Why Your Chair Is Killing You and What You Can Do About It*. <http://www.amazon.com/Get-Up-Chair-Killing-About/dp/1137278994>

SEDENTARY = SICK

People who don't exercise get sick more often than people who move around a lot. In fact, when inactive people were compared with those who walked briskly almost every day, those who didn't walk took twice as many sick days from work in a four-month period than the walkers.



EXERCISE

INCREASED BLOOD FLOW

Exercise increases blood flow, which helps expel toxic waste from the body. That also means disease-fighting antibodies and immune-boosting white blood cells will move through the body faster. That way, they can detect and kill infections sooner. Dr. Levine points out that exercise not only wards off illness, but also improves our overall state of mind.

“If we can get people out of their chairs,” he says, “not only are the rewards the reversal of these catastrophic health problems, but a true sense of happiness.”

IMPROVED SLEEP

Exercise also helps us sleep better, which dramatically improves our ability to fight infection.

CONSISTENCY

In order to reap the benefits of exercise, you need consistency. Try to move around a lot every day. For many of us, that means we need to make exercise a habit that takes place first thing in the morning, before the day gets too busy and our workout gets lost in the shuffle. Some of us find that hitting the gym on the way home from work is a manageable habit. Just find what works for you, and stick with it!

CHOOSE SOMETHING YOU LIKE

Dr. Levine says the key to sticking with an exercise regime is choosing an activity you enjoy.

“That’s the most important thing,” he explains. “The data are very clear. If you encourage people to do things they hate, guess what? They won’t do it.”

EXERCISE WITH OTHERS

If you have difficulty finding any exercise that you like, consider working out with people you like. It might not be the exercise, but the friendships that keep you coming back for more. And as a bonus, your workout buddies will hold you accountable. You’re far less likely to skip your workout if there are other people depending on you to show up.

There are lots of ways to join with others when you workout. Simply ask a friend or two to be your walking buddy and arrange regular times to meet. Consider the indoor shopping mall if the weather is bad. Most malls open their doors before the stores do, so the mall is relatively empty.

Group exercise classes are a fantastic way to exercise with other people. These are offered at a variety of fitness facilities like the YMCA. The Y offers various types of group exercise classes ranging from water aerobics to Zumba, in order to accommodate a wide variety of interest, age groups, and fitness levels.

Fact Resources

James Levine, MD, PhD is a Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Dr. Levine, a graduate of the Royal Free Hospital in London and a Scholar at the University of Cambridge, holds the Mayo Clinic Richard Emslander Chairs in Nutrition and in Metabolism. He is a Professor of Physiology and a Professor of Bioengineering.

Dr. Levine is an internationally renowned expert in obesity. He has authored 10-dozen scientific papers, Federal expert opinions, and non-fiction work. He has published articles in Science, Nature, the New England Journal of Medicine, and Lancet.

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Many people automatically assume a fitness membership is too expensive. However, you might be surprised how affordable such memberships actually are. For instance, the YMCA offers deeply discounted memberships, sometimes even free memberships, to low-income applicants through their Open Doors policy. Contact your local YMCA for more information or their national website, <http://www.ymca.net/>.

Contact your local government to find out what fitness facilities are available to people in your city, age group and income level. Many people are unaware of the fact that their municipality offers free memberships, or deeply discounted gym memberships, to its residents.

WATER

For many people, exercising in the water works best. That's because we feel much lighter in a pool. In fact, water's buoyancy displaces 85 percent of our body weight. That makes it easier and less painful to exercise in water than on dry land. Dr. Levine regularly recommends to his aging patients, or those with weight or joint issues, to exercise in the water, whether simply walking in the water, swimming, taking a water aerobics class, or just splashing around with their kids or grandkids!

"Many people have actual arthritis, where the joints themselves are being damaged," explains Dr. Levine, "but in addition to that, many of my patients battling with obesity have early arthritis, called arthropathy, where the joints have started to see damage, but not on the X-ray. And for all of these patients, and for those with diabetes who are unable to do exertional exercise, the swimming pool is an oasis of joy."

MODERATE IS BEST

You'll be relieved to learn that you don't have to go out and kill yourself in order to get the exercise you need. In fact, moderate workouts are better. High-intensity training can actually be bad for you because it can decrease the amount of disease-fighting white blood cells circulating through the body and therefore increase your risk of illness.

MULTI-TASKING

Some people can't, or don't want to, carve out time just for exercise. They would rather multi-task and exercise while they work. Years ago, that used to be nearly impossible for people with desk jobs. Then Dr. Levine and his colleagues invented the treadmill desk. Since then, a handful of companies have manufactured treadmill desks, ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 dollars. Many people choose to make their own treadmill desk, by fashioning a desk on the treadmill they already own, or building a desk themselves, that fits over the treadmill. Any way you slice it, today tens of thousands of Americans from coast to coast are discovering the benefits of walking while they work, such as Unique Haro, who works for Arizona State University.

"I think it's really awesome to say that while you accomplished your work, you also walked 'x' amount of miles," she said.

New research shows we all need some exercise at the office, even if we work out before or after work. That's because sitting for prolonged periods of time causes our bodies to shut down. So if you have a desk job, think of ways to move. It doesn't have to involve a treadmill desk. You can:

- Walk to a co-worker and talk face-to-face instead of sending an email
- Use the restroom on the far side of the building
- Take a lap or two around your work area every hour
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator

- Schedule walking meetings, not ones where participants are seated at a table

Dr. Levine regularly consults with large corporations regarding ways they can incorporate movement into the office environment. He says doing so increases productivity.

“When we’ve deployed walking at the workplace, what others have noticed, and ourselves, is that sick days from employees diminish. People get less coughs, less colds, and less days off work.”

EVEN STANDING HELPS

Even if you’re not walking, simply standing at your desk is better than sitting. Dr. Levine says research shows that even while standing, we move around in subtle ways.

“What appears to be the case is once you’re off your bottom, great things happen,” he says. “Once you get up, the future is yours.”

So use your imagination and get moving! Whether it’s at the gym, home or office, you’ll fight disease and feel great doing it.

Note: Before beginning any new health regimen, it is important to consult your family physician or health care professional first. The information given in this publication is for your consideration. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Before starting or stopping any exercise routine or nutritional supplementation, please consult your family physician or health care professional about any contraindications that would make doing so inadvisable. This information is not intended as a substitute for the medical advice of physicians. The readers should regularly consult a physician in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.