

5 Tips for Better Health

by Aaron LeBauer PT, DPT, LMBT

1) **Walk more**-exercise helps you feel great, improve your digestion, increase your metabolism and can be a great way to connect with your family or spend time with your dog. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park further away and walk to the next store in the shopping center.

2) **Eat smarter** – avoid eating after 9pm or within 2-3 hrs of bed time. Keep a food diary. This can help you identify an item or serving size that is more than you need. A great internet based food diary is www.sparkpeople.com, no advertisements or spam, just good information and easy personal tracking of your food and daily activities with excellent educational and community features. Start with just keeping track of your food intake for 3 days.

3) **Drink 8 glasses of water a day**. Drinking water restores balance to your body's tissues; it keeps us hydrated as well as our bodies working at the optimal level. Soft drinks and juice contain ingredients such as sugars, sweeteners, and caffeine that disrupt the fluid balance in our tissues and can actually create a dehydrated state. It is a myth that the more one drinks the more you will use the bathroom. A concentrated amount of urine in your bladder from not drinking enough water, or the presence of caffeine and sweeteners may irritate your bladder and lead to more trips to the bathroom. A good way to know if you are well hydrated is if your urine is clear and odorless.

4) **Listen to your body**- when it aches, take care of it, take a bath with Epsom salt, rest and rejuvenate, when it hurts see a massage or physical therapist. Try putting a tennis ball in a tube sock, sling it over your shoulder and lean back against a wall. Find those nice and tight spots in your back. Most people have these between their shoulder blade and their spine. Lean in gently and hold each spot until you feel the muscles let go and release.

5) **Make a commitment** with yourself to make just one lifestyle change in the next month. Weather this change is in your diet, physical activity, or a personal goal; write this down and put in on your refrigerator.

Try these tips and you will be on your way to a better, healthier, and happier lifestyle.

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