

20 Little Changes for a Healthier Life —Men's Health

It's hard to make big changes in life. The energy and time commitment is often too great. That's why so many Americans still struggle with their health. The problem isn't knowing what to do; it's doing it. So why not take the opposite approach? Forget about such grand, amorphous goals as losing weight or getting in shape. Instead, aim to drink the leftover milk in your cereal bowl each morning to get more vitamins, or hold your fork in your non-dominant hand to slow your eating, or "forget" your glasses the next time you're at the gym so you won't get distracted. **Little tips** like these can make a big difference over time.

1. **Decorate Your Plate**

14-year study found that men whose diets were highest in fruits and vegetables had a 70 percent lower risk of digestive-tract cancers. How to reach your quota: Never eat a meal that doesn't contain a vegetable or fruit. And no, fries don't count.

2. **Dry-Brush Your Teeth**

It cuts tartar by 60 percent and also reduces the risk of bleeding gums by half. Use a dry, soft brush to scrub the insides of your top and bottom teeth, then buff the outer surfaces. Rinse, spit, and brush briefly with toothpaste

3. **Never Skip Breakfast**

A survey of more than 2,000 people who lost an average of 67 pounds and kept the weight off for more than 5 years found that 78 percent ate breakfast 7 days a week.

4. **Eat More Pasta**

Two to four servings of tomato sauce a week can

cut your prostate-cancer risk by 34 percent.

5. **Judge Cholesterol with Contact Lenses**

A diet full of fat, protein, or alcohol weakens your tears' ability to block cholesterol from adhering to the lenses. This results in cloudy deposits. If your diet is destroying your contacts, just imagine what it's doing to your arteries.

6. **Go Fishing Once a Week**

Eating one serving of fish per week can halve your risk of a sudden fatal heart attack. The secret ingredient in fish is omega-3 fatty acids. Salmon is especially high in them.

7. **Protect Your Erection with Blueberries**

They contain compounds that improve circulation, and they're loaded with artery-scrubbing soluble fiber. Eat your berries fresh or in a smoothie three times a week.

8. **Request the Chilean Red**

To reduce your risk of cancer, drink red wine from Chile. Chilean cabernet sauvignon is 38 percent higher than French wine in flavonols, which are antioxidants that plunder cancer-causing free radicals.



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9. Lend a Hand

Men who do volunteer work at least once a week have half the death rate of those who don't.

10. Crunch Away Back Pain

Seventy-five percent of all lower-back problems can be prevented by building your abdominal muscles. Aim for a dozen crunches every day.

11. Order Thin-Crust Pizza

It has a third fewer calories than thick-crust pie. Blot the cheese with a napkin to cut even more fat.

12. Skip That Second Cup

The caffeine in 2 cups of coffee adds 16 beats per minute to your heart rate.

13. Save Your Marriage

An unhappy one increases your chance of getting sick by 35 percent and shortens your life expectancy by 4 years.

14. Exercise Depression Away

Exercising for 40 minutes can reduce stress. In fact, studies show that working out on a regular basis can be as effective as taking antidepressants like Prozac.

15. Fall Asleep with Cherries

Cherries and cherry juice are concentrated sources of melatonin, a popular over-the-counter sleep aid

16. Put a Shoe on Your Pillow

It'll determine whether your pillow supports your head and neck adequately. Fold the pillow in half and put a shoe on top; if the pillow springs back, it's okay.

17. "Kur" Your Fatigue

If you wake unusually early, dampen a towel with cool water and lightly wipe your arms, legs, and torso, then go back to bed. The body is very warm when it comes out of REM sleep. Back in bed, the body heats up even more. The result is a deep, restful sleep and more dreams. Called kur, this technique is standard at European spas.

18. Raise Your Rearview

To prevent slouching (and the resultant lower-back pain) on long drives, tilt your rearview mirror up a bit. That way, you'll have to sit up to see the cars behind.

19. Take Vitamin E and Aspirin Daily

Researchers have found that this antioxidant-and-blood-thinner combination can reduce arterial plaque by 80 percent. The benefit of the two treatments together is so great that it may help men prevent atherosclerosis even if they can't lower their cholesterol levels.

20. Have a Banana

The potassium it contains can lower blood pressure. One per day is all it takes.

http://www.menshealth.com/mhlists/how_to_live_better/

