

10 Keys to a Healthy Life

An Interview with
Naturopath and
Nutritionist
Dr. Pam Popper

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It's really hard to decide what to believe with all the health advice available over the Internet and from untrained health advocates.

The Atkins diet, South Beach diet, and the hundreds of others add more confusion and often give us dangerous advice.

To get the best information for you, I interviewed Dr. Pam Popper, President of the Wellness Forum (www.wellnessforum.com), which empowers people to take control of their health by providing up-to-date information about how nutrition, exercise and lifestyle choices impact health, longevity and quality of life.

In this groundbreaking report, Pam provides us with her "10 Keys to a Healthy Life."

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KEY #1 - DECIDE ON YOUR DEFINITION OF HEALTHCARE – “WAIT AND SEE” OR “PROACTIVE HEALTHCARE”

There are really two ways to view your own healthcare. You can decide to go to medical doctors, get diagnostic testing, wait until you're diagnosed with something and then fix it. We'll call this “wait and see” healthcare.

Or you can decide that healthcare means taking excellent care of yourself so you don't require treatment. We'll call this “proactive healthcare.”

The philosophy you choose will dictate a lot of other decisions in your life. It will determine how you invest your resources – time and money.

Prevention in the proactive healthcare model is expensive. But the alternative, wait and see, is even more expensive.

You don't get to skate on this deal. It's a “pay me now or pay me later” situation. And the longer you wait, the higher the cost. And the higher your stress level. Which is more stressful, deciding to eat a better diet or learning that you've been diagnosed with cancer?

Will everyone who practices proactive healthcare be assured of a healthy life? No.

You can compare this to wearing a seatbelt in a car. It doesn't guarantee that you won't get killed in a car accident. However, it drastically improves your odds of living through an accident. There are no guarantees to either approach.

KEY #2 – TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOUR DIET AND PRACTICE DIETARY EXCELLENCE

Excellent diet and nutrition is a major key to living a healthy life.

To make big differences in your health, you often need to make big dietary changes.

Small changes to your diet are important and should be celebrated. But they won't have a major change on your health, if that's what you need.

Eating less animal protein is important to a healthy diet. Studies done by T. Colin Campbell proved clearly that the amount of animal protein in a person's diet is a predictor of health. Substitute plant protein, like soy, whenever possible.

KEY #3 – EXERCISE FOR 35-40 MINUTES 5 DAYS A WEEK

You need exercise in your life to be healthy. Thirty-five to forty minutes will be enough as long as you can maintain a level of effort that keeps you in your target heart zone for that length of time.

An easy way to determine your target heart zone is called the “talk test.” If you can talk full sentences out loud and carry on a conversation but you would rather not, you are in the right zone.

Strength training, like with a set of weights in a gym, is also important, as are flexibility training and aerobics.

Each of these stimulates oxygenation of your tissues, relieves depression, reduces stress and even hot flashes during menopause for women.

Regular exercise has proven to relieve mild depression just as effectively as narcotics.

If you don't think you have time to exercise, please understand that exercising *will actually give you more time each day.*

Here's how that works.

When you exercise, that takes away an hour or so of your day. But after exercising regularly for a while, you will require less sleep, and your brain will work more efficiently while you're awake. That will easily produce a gain of 2-3 hours each day when you have more energy and more effectiveness.

KEY #4 – ASSESS THE STRESS IN YOUR LIFE AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

Examine the stresses in your life and get rid of them, resolve them, or learn to cope. Stress is a major factor in either living a long, healthy life or a short, illness-ridden one.

Remember stress is not what happens to you. It is how you deal with it. Two people can face the same situation and one person will react to it as a stressor and the other will not be bothered. Learning how to cope is the key.

If you are facing chronic, unrelenting stress, considering using cognitive behavioral therapy. People often find that they can deal with stress much more effectively after only 12-20 visits to a cognitive behavioral therapist.

Most people hide behind the excuse “There’s nothing I can do about it.” But you can always do something about it. Even informal self-help groups that you form with friends can be very helpful.

KEY #5 – GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Remember this: An hour of sleep before midnight is worth two after midnight. The term “beauty sleep” is absolutely true. You will be more beautiful, healthier and livelier just by getting to sleep before midnight.

The most restorative sleep is between 10pm and 2am.

Sleep deprivation is simply terrible for your health. People who were deprived from sleep for only four consecutive nights began to have glucose intolerance (pre-diabetes) even though their diets had not changed.

If you're still not convinced, consider this: sleep deprived people drive far worse than drunk drivers!

Your body repairs itself during sleep. If you deprive yourself of sleep even for a short time, you might not experience acute symptoms immediately, but you are setting yourself up for major problems later.

KEY #6 – HYDRATE YOUR BODY

Every person needs at least 64 ounces of filtered water a day. If you are heavier than the ideal weight for your height, add another 8 ounces for each extra 25 lbs you carry above the ideal. Also, add more water to your day if you are exercising that day.

Use filtered, not purified water. I don't recommend reverse osmosis or distilled water, because they have the minerals taken out of them, and your body desperately needs those minerals in water. Use carbon filtered water or bottled water that has a mineral breakdown on the label, like Fiji or Evian.

Don't drink your water at mealtime. Instead, drink it between meals, up to five minutes before your meal, or at least one hour after.

KEY #7 – LEARN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FOOD AND A TREAT

Eating right doesn't mean cutting out any types of foods or treats. But it does mean that you understand the difference between food and treats.

Ice cream. Coffee. Chocolate. Don't think of these and other sugary or salty snacks as food. They don't add anything to your nutritional day. They only add "empty calories."

That doesn't mean you should be a "food nazi" to yourself (or others). Include these things in your diet, but only very infrequently. These are not everyday treats. But once a week or once a month is fine. If you are too strict on yourself, you will not be able to maintain your good eating habits.

KEY #8 – PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY COMPOSITION

Your body composition is also called your “fat to muscle ratio.” It can be measured by a personal trainer at a gym or by a naturopath or a doctor.

Women should strive for a 20% body composition, or even slightly lower.

Men should keep a 15% body composition or slightly lower.

A good body composition is a marker for aging and cancer. Your body will age faster if your body composition is not optimal, too high or too low.

KEY #9 – EXAMINE HOW YOU THINK

One study done recently showed that optimists live an average of seven years longer than pessimists.

However, almost everyone thinks they are optimistic. But only a few people are actually optimistic.

Here’s a way to test yourself. Get a voice-activated tape recorder. Record everything you say for at least two weeks and then listen to the tapes (not before!). You might be surprised how often your words drift into negativity without you realizing it.

Look for instances where you are negative about yourself, other people and anything else in your life. Then try to change that negativity into positive thoughts, words and actions.

KEY #10 – KEEP A JOURNAL EVERYDAY

Keep a handwritten journal everyday. List at least one thing that you're grateful for in your journal entries. Each day, you must pick something that you haven't used in a previous entry. This will get more difficult (and more interesting!) the longer you maintain your journal.

What is interesting is how journaling your gratitude makes you probe your own life for new things to be grateful for. This will have such a positive effect on your mental outlook and your health.

All ten of these keys are equally important. Health is achieved not just by diet or exercise, but by paying attention to the totality of how you're living your life.

Try to implement just one key at a time in your life. Once you've mastered that key, jump to the next. The order of which keys you try first doesn't matter. The more the better!

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Thanks for reading our FREE REPORT *10 Keys to a Healthy Life*.

For more information on the Wellness Forum, visit their Website at www.wellnessforum.com or call them at (800) 761 8210.

Dr. Popper has written several books, including *The Big and Healthy Cookbook*, which contains 350 recipes that Dr. Popper and her associates have created to help with choosing the right foods and combinations. Find out more about the Cookbook and her other books by calling the Wellness Forum at (800) 761 8210.