

HEALTHIER BY DEGREES

A lifestyle journal for college students.

Tips for good nutrition and healthy living

1. Eat plenty of whole grains, protein-rich natural foods, fruits and vegetables

Surveys show many college students don't eat enough whole foods, and instead eat way too much processed food. Do you eat at least seven servings of fruit and vegetables every day? If not, try adding more.

2. Eat regular meals

Skipping meals can lead to out-of-control hunger, often resulting in overeating. When you're very hungry, it's also tempting to forget about good nutrition. Snacking on healthy foods like fruit or nuts between meals can help curb hunger.

3. Reduce, don't eliminate certain foods

Most people eat for pleasure as well as nutrition. If your favorite foods are high in saturated fat, sugar, or salt, the key is moderating how much of these foods you eat and how often you eat them.

If you love French fries (which are not a health food) you don't have to give them up - just eat smaller portions less often.

4. Know your diet pitfalls

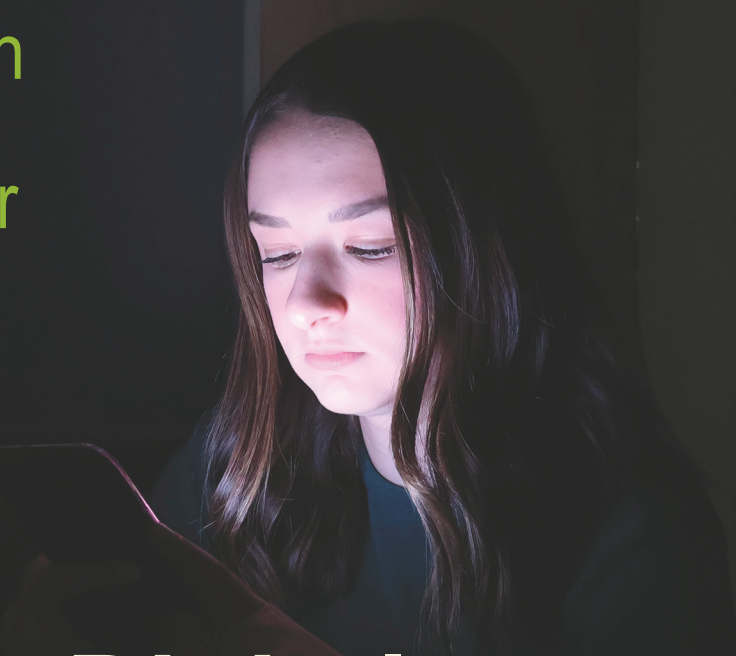
To improve your eating habits, you first have to know what's wrong with them. Write down everything you eat for a week, and then check your list. Are you missing food groups? Do you add too much butter, sauce or salad dressings? Are you eating too much fast or processed foods? How much sugar, salt and saturated fat are you actually eating? Consider your portion sizes - are you eating more than you need?

5. Make changes gradually

Don't expect to totally revamp your eating habits overnight. Changing too much, too fast can get in the way of success. Begin to remedy excesses or deficiencies with modest changes that can add up to positive, lifelong eating habits. For instance, if you eat fast food everyday, try limiting it to once a week. Try packing healthy lunches and snacks to keep you on track. When dining out, choose baked, steamed or grilled foods, ask for whole grain options, share your meal with a friend, or ask to have half your meal packed for you to take home.



How screen
time can
impact your
health



Digital eye strain

Digital eye strain is the temporary discomfort that follows two or more hours of digital device use. A variety of electronic devices can cause digital eye strain, including televisions, desktop and laptop computers, smartphones, e-readers, tablets, and gaming systems, especially when they are used simultaneously or when switching repeatedly from one device to another.

Preventing digital eye strain

Digital eye strain can be prevented by simply limiting digital media use, however, the vast majority of Canadians cannot or will not reduce their usage, so there are ways to lessen the impact on your eyes. Start by paying attention to your body. Eye, neck, head or shoulder pains are warning signs that digital eye strain may be occurring. Before your eyes feel fatigued or irritated, try the following remedies to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Keep your distance

Position your device so there is sufficient distance between your eyes and the screen. For computers, extend your arm while seated in front of the computer monitor. The correct distance to be seated from the screen occurs when you can comfortably place your palm flat on the monitor, as though you were high-fiving the screen. For hand-held devices, hold the device just below eye level and at a distance that still enables you to comfortably read the screen.

Reduce glare

Adjust the brightness of your screen by checking the device's control setting. Consider changing your background color from bright white to a cooler grey. Glare reduction filters are also available and easily attach to computer screens.

Clean your screen

A dust-free, smudge-free screen helps reduce glare.

Dim surrounding lights

Reduce the amount of light competing with your device's screen.

Adjust your screen

Regardless of what type of device you're using, digital screens should always be directly in front of your face and slightly below eye level.

Increase text size

Try increasing text size to help better define screen content and to make reading more comfortable for your eyes.

Wear computer glasses

Computer glasses are an increasingly popular solution for reducing both digital eye strain and the potentially damaging effects that increased digital use can have on vision. They help the eye adjust to intermediate-distance objects, such as computer screens, are available in all shapes and sizes and can be made with or without a prescription.

Blink more often

Staring at a digital screen can reduce how often you blink, causing eyes to become dry. Remind yourself to blink more often, which also helps the eyes refocus.

Take a 20-20-20 break

Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away. Even short breaks make a huge difference.

Ten simple steps to improve your sleep hygiene

You already know sleep is important, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this article. Good sleep on a regular basis is critical to maintaining balanced mental, emotional, and physical health. It helps you stay focused during the day, regulate your mood, and feel more productive and functional. If you're waking up unrested each morning, wake frequently during the night, feel tired during the day, or have trouble falling asleep at night, there's a good chance that you have bad sleep hygiene.

What is sleep hygiene?

The rituals, behaviours, and norms you follow around sleep are referred to as sleep hygiene. Regularly pulling all-nighters, or sleeping in on the weekends so you can "make up" for lost sleep are both examples of poor sleep hygiene. Conversely, following a regular sleep schedule and avoiding caffeine late at night are good sleep hygiene practices.

How to practice good sleep hygiene

Most of us can benefit from improving at least one aspect of our sleep hygiene. Consider the following tips from the National Sleep Foundation as your guide to getting a good night's sleep.

1. Know how much sleep you need

Throughout our lives, our sleep needs change, but as a general rule, adults in good health typically require at least seven to eight hours of sleep.

2. Go to bed at the same time every night

Once you know how much sleep you need, follow a regular sleep schedule.

3. Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet

The best temperature for falling asleep is somewhere between 16 and 18 degrees Celsius. Keeping your bedroom dark convinces your brain it's night time. If there are distracting sounds around your bedroom, try using white noise, like a fan, to mask sounds.

4. Dedicate your bedroom to sleep

Having a dedicated place for sleep is psychologically important. Avoid having a work desk in your bedroom so you don't associate work stress or worries with bedtime.

5. Follow a bedtime routine

Following the same set of activities each night, 30 to 60 minutes before bed, psychologically trains your brain to recognize it's bedtime. Avoid watching TV, or looking at screens during this time – the light tricks your brain into thinking it's daytime again.

6. Watch what you consume

A nutritious diet supports higher-quality sleep. If you want to sleep better, eat better. Avoid eating later in the night, especially foods high in sugar, fat, or sodium. Caffeine, alcohol, cannabis, and nicotine can also disrupt sleep. Limit your intake, and stop consuming them four to six hours before bedtime.

7. Exercise during the day

Exercise improves your overall health, and helps physically tire your body. However, strenuous exercise should be avoided within three hours of bedtime. It energizes you, making it harder to fall asleep.

8. Get some sunshine

A daily dose of sunshine can help you sleep better. Aim to get some sunshine in the morning, and pair it with exercise if you can. It will help wake you up, energizing you for the day, and make you more tired by bedtime.

9. Stay calm when you can't sleep

Even if you put all these tips into practice, there will still be nights when you have difficulty falling asleep, or wake up during the night and can't fall back asleep. When that happens, don't panic. Get up and do something relaxing somewhere else. Don't focus on the time, because it will just cause anxiety. Read a book, sketch, or do another calming activity that can be done in low-lighting. Do not turn on your electronics!

10. Get help if you need it

It is possible that following all these tips will not improve your sleep. If that is the case, you may have a sleep disorder or another health issue. Keep a sleep diary, and talk to your doctor to get help.



Five keys to financial literacy

The sooner you master these concepts, the better

1. Create and maintain a budget

This is one of the most basic ways to stay on top of your finances. With the help of user-friendly websites and apps, it's easier than ever to keep track of how much money you have, where it's going, set goals for saving, and limits on spending.

2. Understand how interest works

Compound interest can impact your finances more than you likely realize, so it's important to understand how it works early on in life. Not only can it help you save more money, but it can make the difference between borrowing a small amount and paying back much more than you need for years to come.

3. Stay savvy by saving

It's easy to ignore things like saving for retirement when it seems so far off in the future, but learning to budget and live within your means, and regularly set money aside for savings early in your career can make the difference between being financially comfortable, or living paycheck-to-paycheck throughout your life.

4. Stay off the credit-debt roller-coaster

Maybe roller-coaster isn't the right term – downward spiral might be more accurate. It's much easier to lose credit than gain it, and many students don't realize how easy it is to ruin their credit before it's too late. Credit can be an extremely useful tool, if managed correctly. Making rash decisions when you're young can end up costing you throughout adulthood, so it's important to grasp the concepts and tools behind responsible credit practices as early on as possible.

5. Protect yourself from fraud

Just about everything is digital, including how you pay for things, which makes your financial information more vulnerable to fraud. Understanding how to protect yourself, your accounts and passwords, and limiting the amount of information you share online, can help protect you from being a victim of fraud.

To learn more about financial literacy and these important topics, visit the
Canadian Foundation for Economic Education
at: moneyand youth.com

Money saving tips for good nutrition

- *dried beans, peas & lentils are an inexpensive source of protein*
- *brown rice and whole grain pasta can be bought in bulk*
- *choose fruit & vegetables that are in season, or frozen*
- *look for generic store brands*
- *use coupons and stock up during sale*

