

Five Resolutions Worth Keeping!

Have fun!

Pleasure contributes to a balanced lifestyle and overall health. It is a triggering factor in preventing disease. Biology and brain studies confirm that humans are designed to have fun: there is an actual “pleasure center” in the brain. This centre, complete with neurons and neurotransmitters, fires off pleasure hormones that nourishes body and spirit. Pleasure hormones, dopamine and endorphins for example, have a direct impact on emotional balance, pleasure all while contributing to a healthier immune system. It is important to set time aside each day for something fun. Think of what you enjoy doing, and do it!

Get moving!

The human body is designed to be active and enjoys moving. It is well documented that adepts of physical activity reach a state of mild euphoria, thoughts become clear and the brain goes into a creative mode. This phenomenon occurs because hormones called endorphins are released during physical efforts. Regular exercise is proven to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. Also, weight depends of the number of calories ingested versus the amount of calories burned. The best way to control your weight is to burn it off! This winter, strap on some skis or snowshoes, or slip into your boots and get some fresh air with your family.

Sleep!

Sleep is essential for the body. These periods of rest allow our memory to consolidate itself and our brain to stay in shape. According to researchers from *l'Université de Liège*, sleep strengthens our memory. Areas of our brain solicited during learning of new tasks continue to work while we are sleeping. Sleep allows our brain to memorize and integrate the day's experiences for future use. A good night's sleep also lets our neurons solve the day's problems.

Eat well!

Nutrition plays an important role in our health. To eat well you need to respect the following four principles:

- Eat well-balanced meals: fruits and vegetables (half your plate), cereal products (a quarter of your plate), meats and substitutes (other quarter of your plate).
- Consume from each food group to get the full spectrum of nutrients. Vary your diet.
- Eat high-quality fresh food and avoid sugary or salty snacks, frozen foods and processed baked goods, which contain loads of preservatives and chemicals.
- Eat reasonable quantities of food. Excess weight is statistically and undeniably linked to lots of diseases and a reduction in life expectancy.

Laugh!

Studies prove that the list of health benefits of laughing is long. Humor reduces pain sensations, boosts the immune system, improves cognitive function, prevents cardiovascular disease and reduces stress. The solution is simple, buy a joke book and laugh!

Respecting these resolutions may entail certain lifestyle changes. These changes can only be beneficial to your health! Start with one resolution at a time and you will start seeing improvement in your wellbeing. Life is short; we may as well enjoy it while it lasts!