

Building Healthy Lifestyle Habits

Strong

By Dave Nash, BBJ YMCA

This year has certainly been a challenge. Most of us know someone who has had COVID and we have lost some community leaders. We have gone through quarantine, shortages of things like toilet paper and various foods, and began to wear masks to protect ourselves and our neighbors. Social media has gone from a pleasant way to connect with distant family and friends to a nasty forum to attack others for often silly reasons. I have heard many say, "I can hardly wait until 2020 ends," or "I am sick and tired of feeling sick and tired."

It is time for us to regain control of our lives, get off the couch and begin to move again. We need to stop spending unproductive time on social media and put an end to mindless snacking on junk food. We need to feed our spirit, mind, and body in healthful ways to become strong again.

We have the means to improve our lives and can do so with just a few changes in habit and activity. We need to make certain we get up and move, eat a healthy and balanced diet, and get the amount of rest we need. We also must remember to feed our mind, our soul with positive energy and surround ourselves with others who are positive, helpful, and happy.

We can start by making certain that we get 30 minutes of movement at least five days weekly. This can be as simple as taking a 30 minute walk each day. Other simple activities can be to ride a bike, dance, shoot baskets, jump rope, play a game like tag, kick the can, or even hide and seek. The weather has been beautiful, take advantage, and get outside while it is so nice. It is often tough to start a new activity program alone so find a friend who will join you in activity.

Nutrition can make a big difference in how we feel. Food is our fuel and we need to make certain we use it as needed. Cut back on sweets and salty foods and replace them with fruits and vegetables. Follow My Plate rules(www.choosemyplate.gov) to make certain you have the correct mixture of protein, dairy, grain, fruits, and vegetables. If you do snack, make sure to have fruits or nuts to maintain your healthy diet.

Feeding your mind positively is just as important. As Stephen King is quoted as saying, "You can, you should and if you're brave enough to start, you will." This is a good thought to begin the process of regaining control. Many books or websites have daily inspirational messages that may be beneficial to help begin each day with a positive message.

Rest is the other key area to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Rest and sleep in particular gives us the opportunity to reset our mind and body to start our activity again tomorrow. Get the amount of sleep you need by going to bed and awakening at the same times daily.

We can become strong in spirit, mind, and body with just a few updates in our daily activity. Try each day to make positive changes and you too will become strong.

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