DIP YOUR TOE IN

Dive into the "Dip" category, where small actions become mighty catalysts for change, taking mere moments in your day. Discover the power of tiny yet impactful steps that pave the way for a healthier you. Whether it's a mindful pause, a brief stretch, or a nutritious bite, these small actions collectively create a ripple effect of positive habits.

Nutrition

- [ ] Add one serving size of plants into each day. This equates to a handful of fruits, vegetables or whole grains or one thumb sized portion of nuts or seeds.
- [ ] Use unsweetened soy milk to make a fruit smoothie. Incude nut butter, spinach, or chia seeds to add more plants.
- [ ] Include brown rice, quinoa, or sweet potatoes in your lunch or dinner. Cook large batches to use for several meals.
- [ ] Instead of animal protein in the evening, go for beans or lentils. Look for convenient options like frozen pouches or dried varieties.
- [ ] Choose crunchy carrot sticks or sweet pineapple chunks for a healthy snack option.

Social Connections

- [ ] Start each day with one direct connection to an individual. Keep it as simple as wishing them a great day!
- [ ] Commit to three affirmations to say in the mirror when you are getting ready for your day. Consider using “I am” language.
- [ ] Each week, reach out to someone you haven’t spoken to in a while. Send a thoughtful message or suggest meeting for coffee in person or online.

Sleep

- [ ] Set consistent wake and sleep times during the week.
- [ ] Create a 5-minute morning routine with water, light, and movement.
- [ ] Limit caffeine intake after 2 pm.
- [ ] Reserve your bedroom for sleeping.

REFERENCES

Physical Activity

Include 5-10 minutes of planned exercise each day either in one or multiple sessions.

Aerobic:

- [ ] Take a 2-minute walk during TV breaks. If you can't leave your seat, try chair marches to keep moving.
- [ ] Use the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible. Add an extra flight of stairs in the morning and evening at home.
- [ ] Put on some music and dance for 5 minutes after dinner to get your heart pumping.

Strength:

- [ ] Do 10 sit-to-stands from your bed or countertop push-ups before or after brushing your teeth.
- [ ] Complete 20 calf raises while washing dishes or waiting for your microwave timer.
- [ ] While sitting, squeeze your buttock muscles for 3 seconds, release, and repeat for 12 rounds. Feel those abdominal muscles kick in!

Flexibility:

- [ ] Complete 10 big arm circles forward and then backward to loosen up your shoulders.
- [ ] While sitting, place your right ankle on top of your opposite lower leg or knee to feel a stretch in your right hip. Hold for one minute if possible.
- [ ] Place both arms on the top of your kitchen counter or back of a chair. Step back as you try to press your head through your arms for a good stretch.

Balance:

- [ ] Stand on one foot for 30 seconds while working in the kitchen, brushing your teeth, or waiting in line with your shopping cart. Use the counter or cart for support as needed. Tighten your abs for added stability!

Stress

- [ ] Identify one individual that causes you stress and commit to not letting them control how you feel.
- [ ] Recognize one external stressor to act on. For example, if overwhelmed, prioritize and tackle three small tasks.
- [ ] Minimize distractions by using focus mode, turning off, or putting away your phone.

Reduce Risky Behaviors

- [ ] Exchange or reduce one unhealthy habit with an alternative or strategy for self-care.
- [ ] Cut out sugary drinks like sodas, sweet teas, or coffee beverages; replace them with no sugar added sparkling water or flavored teas.
- [ ] Set reminders or alarms for short "movement snacks" every hour you're awake.
- [ ] Trim your weekly alcohol intake by one drink; substitute with a non-alcoholic option or flavored water.

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WADE INTO THE SHALLOW END

Here we elevate daily habits into restorative routines lasting minutes to hours. These habits can set the foundation for sustainable ways to meet lifestyle medicine recommendations in each of the six pillars.

Nutrition

- [ ] Incorporate 3-5 servings of whole plant foods for most days of the week.
- [ ] Make every day as simple as 1, 2, 3 by adding 1 serving of plant-based foods at breakfast or for a snack, 2 at lunch and 3 at dinner.
- [ ] Begin batch cooking. Prepare large quantities of cooked whole grains and beans as well as prepared vegetables and washed/cut fruit. This will make it easy to throw combinations of foods together to quickly and easily assemble a meal.
- [ ] Let someone else do the cooking! Look for plant-based options when you eat out at restaurants or pick up a prepared meal to try new ideas for tasty menu items.

Social Connections

- [ ] Engage family and friends in meal preparation and aim for at least two weekly shared meals. Be creative to meet online if you live alone.
- [ ] Explore local in-person groups aligned with your interests, whether it's a book club, church, or support group. Seek out areas of interest or new learning opportunities.
- [ ] Commit to making eye contact and smiling at everyone you connect with on one day each week. Keep your phone tucked away.

Reduce Risky Behaviors

- [ ] Minimize risky behaviors daily by exchanging unhealthy for heathier ones.
- [ ] Limit or replace sugar sweetened beverages with alternatives such as plain coffee, tea, or sparkling water.
- [ ] Explore resources such as quit lines, support groups, counseling, and medication for assistance with smoking, tobacco, or vaping.
- [ ] Incorporate 5-10 minute activity breaks into your day; set a calendar reminder with an alarm for a prompt.
- [ ] Reserve alcohol consumption for weekends only or better yet, not at all.

Engage in daily exercise of at least 10 minutes. Try different types, locations and intensities.

Physical Activity

Aerobic:

- [ ] Swap TV for family yard games or engage in active video games after dinner.
- [ ] Carve out 15 minutes for a refreshing walk during lunch or a break—set a calendar reminder for consistency.
- [ ] Elevate your seated meetings with a foot bike or under desk treadmill.

Strength:

- [ ] Schedule three 10-minute bodyweight strength workouts each week, marking them on your calendar.
- [ ] Participate in a strength class either in person or online 2x weekly.

Flexibility:

- [ ] Start or end your day with yoga movements. Check out simple beginner flows on YouTube.

Balance:

- [ ] Try a split stance or stationary lunge. Start by stepping one foot back keeping your stance hip width apart. Drop your back knee towards the floor. Pause and slowly return to the starting position. Repeat for 10 reps and switch sides.

Stress

- [ ] Identify a single stress management strategy that you can do anytime, anywhere, such as breathing or mindfulness. Focus on using this anytime you feel stressed and set a reminder for a set practice time each day.
- [ ] Establish a specific schedule for personal, family, and work activities.
- [ ] Incorporate 5-10 minutes of mindfulness each day using apps, online content or simply sitting in nature.
- [ ] Incorporate a 2-3 minute daily breathing practice into your routine. Whether during your morning coffee, shower, or entering your workspace, try techniques like diaphragmatic breathing, the 4-7-8 method, or square breathing

Sleep

- [ ] Make a commitment to create the ideal sleep environment. Consider temperature, light, sound, comfort. Use things like a sound machine and sleep mask or essential oils.
- [ ] Dedicate the 30 minutes before bedtime to relaxation through activities like reading, meditation, gratitude journaling, or enjoying a bath or shower.
- [ ] Establish a daily morning routine that allows you to do one thing you need to, one thing that is on your task list, and one thing for enjoyment. Allow at least 5 minutes for each task. Rise earlier if necessary. Commit to this every day of the week.

REFERENCES

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DIVE ALL THE WAY IN

If you're prepared to make significant changes, dive into this category to guide you in turning healthy habits into a lasting lifestyle. Challenge yourself to establish and accomplish meaningful goals, converting habits into a dynamic force for positive change. This immersive approach serves as your key to sustained health improvements and reaching new milestones on your journey to wellbeing.

Nutrition

- [ ] Eat a predominantly plant-based diet.
- [ ] Conduct a thorough review of your pantry and freezer; eliminate highly processed foods. If you're hesitant to discard them, plan one weekly meal to use these items and commit to not replenishing them.
- [ ] Develop a plant-based grocery list and compile 10 family-favorite recipes. Keep them prominently displayed on your fridge or counter for easy access.
- [ ] Involve your family and friends to embrace a plant-based lifestyle. Pledge to contribute plant-based items to shared eating occasions, ensuring everyone can enjoy plant-based options during holidays and events.

Social Connections

- [ ] Commit to volunteering for one year for an organization or cause that you are passionate about. Choose one area where you can make a regular contribution.
- [ ] Dedicate time to one weekly social outing with family or friends; add it to your calendar for consistency and ask others to help plan ideas.
- [ ] For 30 days, take a break from non-essential social media. Keep

Sleep

- [ ] Make your bed a tech-free zone before sleep. Avoid electronics for 30-60 mins. Use dark mode with low brightness on Kindle/ iPad. Set sleep mode on your devices.
- [ ] Limit evening eating by consuming your last meal earlier and limiting Limit evening water and food intake, making dinner your final nourishment.
- [ ] Establish a sleep ritual for difficulty falling or staying asleep:
  - Lengthen breaths (inhale for 1, 2, 3; exhale for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
  - Try Alphabet categorization (fruits, vegetables, empowering words)
  - Engage in progressive relaxation from head to toe.

REFERENCES

Strive to meet physical activity recommendations for all adults.

Physical Activity

Aerobic:

- [ ] Integrate 30-minute daily walks into your routine, preferably outdoors.
- [ ] Aim for 10,000 or more steps each day, utilizing a tracker for accuracy.
- [ ] Engage in 15-20 minutes of high-intensity interval training (HIIT) each week adjusting movements to your comfort level while exploring new motions.

Strength:

- [ ] Dedicate 2-3 days per week to a 20-30 minute strength program, targeting major muscle groups. This can be done at home or in a gym.
- [ ] Gradually increase repetitions or weight by 10% each month. Track progress in a notebook or online journal.
- [ ] Integrate 1-2 new strength exercises into your routine monthly. If time is limited, replace a familiar exercise with a new one.

Flexibility:

- [ ] Make a commitment to 5-minute stretches every morning and before bedtime for the next 30 days. Look for online ideas to follow along to!

Balance:

- [ ] Join a weekly yoga, balance or t'ai chi class, either in person or online.

Stress

- [ ] Each week, plan and complete a creative project like cooking, writing, crafting, reading, or playing music. Focus on only pleasurable activities versus tasks needing to be accomplished. Set a schedule to help you get consistent such as Sunday mornings.
- [ ] Take 30 minutes each day to enjoy nature by sitting, walking, running, observing, or going to the park. Reduce technology use and use headphones to create a relaxing environment.
- [ ] Find a physical activity that brings joy and helps you focus. Whether it's a workout video or a class, stay present in the moment.
- [ ] Start a daily gratitude practice by writing down or sharing three things you are grateful for each day to reinforce positive self-talk.

Reduce Risky Behaviors

- [ ] Reduce or eliminate as many unhealthy habits as you can.
- [ ] Track added sugars in your daily intake for one week with a nutrition app or pen and paper. Strive to consume less than 25-35 grams each day.
- [ ] Add one new physical activity or project each week for at least one hour that is not exercise. This could be working in your yard, organizing a closet or trying a dance class.
- [ ] Commit to a dry month if you have been consuming alcohol on a regular basis. If you are not a regular consumer, commit to at least six months or one year.

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