

Five Keys to Creating Better Health

by Dr. Marilyn Field, Chiropractor

The following five keys will help you to decrease aches and pain, to improve your energy level. Most importantly these things will help you to achieve a greater level of overall health and well-being. When you feel good you are able to do more of the things you love. My passion is health and helping people live well so they can do more of what they are passionate about doing.

My challenge to you is to pick one thing you could do to improve your health and make that change starting today!

Let's dive in to the five keys.

Key #1: Movement

Our bodies are designed to work the best when they are in motion. So whenever you get the chance, move your body.

The current guidelines recommend adults get 150 minutes of physical activity per week. That works out to about 20 minutes per day, which you can break down into 10-minute chunks.

It's not just how much structured activity that matters, it's also important to simply reduce the amount of time you spend sitting each day. Some are even calling sitting the new smoking. Over the years the effects of sitting for a large portion of the day add up and can lead to health problems like weight gain, decreased bone density, and increased cholesterol.

The good news is that there are things you can do to help counteract the negative health effects of too much sitting such as: getting the recommended 150 minutes of activity per week, taking the stairs, parking further away, and getting off the bus a stop early. Move as much as you can in whatever ways you can. It all adds up.

Key #2: Eating Well

The best food advice I have heard is from Michael Pollan: "eat food, not too much, mostly plants," — short, simple and to the point. There are so many fad diets and so many food options out there it can be very confusing. Which diet should I follow? Should I be eating all raw foods? Should I go gluten free? These are all good questions, but the honest answer is that there is no one "right" way to eat. Everyone is different. However, here are a few good guidelines to start with:

Eat lots of fresh vegetables and fruit. One study found that people who ate the most fruits and veggies had a lower risk of all causes of mortality, particularly



cardiovascular mortality.

Decrease refined sugar consumption. Sugar wreaks havoc on the body. From a chiropractic perspective it creates inflammation in the body; not only can this create more aches and pains, it can also alter digestion and affect body chemistry, leading to all sorts of health problems.

Avoid "frankenfoods" as much as possible. These are foods that have a long list of ingredients and are getting really far from being real food. Try eating wholesome natural foods as much as possible, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, grains, meats. When eating a packaged food aim to eat foods with fewer than five ingredients.

Key #3: Drink Enough Water

The benefits of being well hydrated range from better looking skin, improved digestion, fewer aches and pains and increased energy, just to name a few. A good rough calculation of how much water you need is to divide your weight (in pounds) by two; this will give you the ounces of water you should be getting per day. As an example; a 130 lb person should be getting about 65 ounces of water, which is roughly eight cups per day.

Does coffee count towards your water consumption? The thinking used to be that the caffeine in coffee would act as a diuretic and actually promote water loss. However, studies have found that this only happens when you are consuming a large amount of caffeine all at once (about two to three cups) and haven't had any caffeine for weeks. My general rule of thumb is to count two cups of coffee (or caffeinated tea) per day towards your water intake, anything over that you're starting to increase

caffeine intake and generally I don't count it towards the water total.

Key #4: Set Goals and Have a Plan

There was an interesting study conducted at Harvard in 1979 looking at success and goal setting. They found that only three per cent of the Harvard MBA class had written out goals; they followed up with the students 10 years later and found that the three per cent who had written goals were earning 10 times more than the other 97 per cent of the class combined! That is pretty compelling proof right that goal setting is important.

If you don't know where you are going and have some sort of plan on how to get there, your life is much more likely to go in the direction of someone else's dreams.

Write down your top five goals in life and put them somewhere that you can read them daily. I recommend setting goals around the major areas of your life. Tony Robbins suggests the pyramid of mastery, which consists of seven key areas for creating an extraordinary life. These are: 1. Physical Body; 2. Emotions & Meaning; 3. Relationships; 4. Time 5. Work/Career/ Mission; 6. Finances; 7. Spiritual Sense.

Set goals in all of these areas or just pick a few to start with. When you have clarity on what you want in life, you become more hopeful and energized.

Key #5: Take Care of your Body before it's broken

Health is not something that just happens to you, you create health through consistent good choices. Genetics only accounts for a small percentage of our health or illness; our daily choices have a far greater impact in creating the state of our health and well-being.

By taking care of your body before it is sick or injured you are going to improve your health, have more energy and be able to get the most out of life. We don't wait until our cars are broken with smoke coming out of the engines before taking them for an oil change, just as we don't wait until our teeth are rotting to go to the dentist. We should treat the rest of our body the same way.

People under regular chiropractic care have been found to have fewer aches and pains, spend less money on medications and have fewer hospital visits. Chiropractic is safe and effective for all ages from infants to great grandparents! And whether it's chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy, or whichever type of healthcare you find benefit from, be sure to take the time to care for yourself before a major health problem develops.

I hope you enjoyed these five tips and have identified one area you can improve on. When we make healthy choices on a regular basis we create a strong, resilient, healthy body.

Dr. Marilyn Field is a chiropractor practicing out of Body Life Atlantic in Halifax and The Disc Clinic in Musquodoboit Harbour. She enjoys treating people at all ages and stages of life. Learn more at www.DrMarilynDC.com

**For previous *The Well Teacher* articles,
go to www.nstu.ca**

**Click on ►► Communications
►► NSTU Publications ►► The Teacher
►► The Well Teacher**

**The Early Intervention Program (EIP) invites NSTU members
to sign up for our Wellness email list at Be_Well@nstu.ca
Please contact Darcell at dcromwell@staff.nstu.ca
and provide your NSTU email address.**

**This list provides information about the EIP and
other wellness topics.**