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Get up from your desk; it will be good for you

If you look like the flighty type at work — always jumping up to stretch your legs or confer with cube dwellers across the way — tell your boss that taking active mini-breaks is good for the bottom line.

When researchers engineered more motion into the workday, office staffers not only lost 8.5 pounds on average, but their productivity jumped 10 percent. While most offices aren't on board (yet) with treadmill desks, like those used in this research, you can reap some of the same benefits just by standing up for five minutes every hour.

Devices that save time/labor/money (computers, e-mail, bringing your own lunch) have subtracted loads of calorie-burning activity from the workday during the past 30 years. That encourages a sit-down life — going from bed to commute to desk to dinner table to TV to bed again. Staying parked on your gluteus maximus switches off a crucial enzyme that plays a big role in weight, waist size and health.

But get on your feet, and the metabolic equation shifts. Standing burns 30 percent more calories than sitting — more if you stand up and sit down several times in a row as a mini-exercise. The health payback can be huge if you take lots of breaks to get some water or tea, or pace in place when you're on the phone.

You'll weigh less and have a slimmer waist, fewer heart-threatening triglycerides, more ticker-healthy HDL cholesterol, and lower blood sugar and blood pressure.

Healthier and younger through music

Want an easy trick to help you soothe stress, get smarter and lose weight? Just crank up the stereo. Rockin' out to the music can make you healthier and younger. Here's how:

1. Listening to music makes you smarter. Doesn't have to be Mozart. Any music you enjoy sparks neurons in the brain that improve your memory and mental powers. Got kids? Take them to concerts. They'll do better in reading and math.

2. Slow tunes lower blood pressure. A half-hour a day of breathing along to the beat of slow, soothing numbers (think Norah Jones or Frank Sinatra) can significantly lower your blood pressure and heart disease risk.

3. Music keeps your ears young. Older musicians don't experience typical aging in the part of the brain (the auditory cortex) that often leads to hearing troubles. But you don't have to be Bono to benefit. It's never too late to start taking guitar or piano lessons and prevent these age-related changes.

4. Music soothes stress. Listening to music calmed the heart rates by as much as five beats per minute in critically ill hospital patients hooked up to breathing machines. That was enough to significantly ease anxiety and help them heal.

5. A good beat keeps you moving. Picking motivating music for your workout makes you exercise harder and longer. It's great for the heart. And just watch those pounds and belly fat melt away.

Myth or fact: Feed a cold, starve a fever

We know cold and flu season has peaked when patients ask, "Doc, should I really 'feed a cold and starve a fever'?" Now, we're both happily married and the last guys to say anything against wives' tales (old, young or otherwise). But this ancient folklore (much older than our smashing wives) is false, and maybe even dangerous.

Here's the smart way to treat colds and the flu, and prime your immune system to fight your way back to health faster.

1. Starving is never a good idea. Whether you have a cold or a fever, listen to your body. If your appetite is OK, keep your immune system in peak nutritional form by eating vegetables, fruits, 100 percent whole grains, fish and skinless poultry. If you're not hungry, see No. 2.

2. Drink, drink, drink. When you have a fever or a cold, all that sweating and dripping and mucus production can dehydrate you fast. Guzzle water, tea, vegetable and fruit juices, and warm broths (yes, chicken soup). Sipping fluids helps relieve annoying coughs and ease the stuffiness that results from the infection.

3. Calm a fever. Acetaminophen in the right dose (keep it away from where kids could accidentally get it) is the safest fever reducer. If your temperature spikes above 104, or if you develop severe ear or sinus pain or a cough that lasts weeks (could be bronchitis, even whooping cough), call your doc.

4. Take it easy. Rest helps your body's T and B cells (natural bug-killers) fight the good fight.

Lose weight, feel great

There's a new champ in the fitness ring with a one-two punch that would send Sugar Ray Robinson spinning. It's an exercise combo that beats all the rest, zapping fat and lowering blood sugar better than either alone.

The dynamic duo? Aerobics and resistance training. Translation: Do two of our favorite things: speed walking and a little weight work. Even if you do the absolute minimum — five days of walking and two of strength training — for just 20 to 30 minutes a day, you'll get more out of it than if you do just one or the other.

Researchers watched diabetics who did the combo trim their waists, lower their blood sugar, cut back on their meds and (nifty bonus) lose 4 pounds of pure fat.

The beauty of combining both types of workouts is that it doesn't have to take more time. The mix seems to maximize the benefits of whatever you do. And even though the combo plan was tested on people with diabetes, it will work for anyone, whether you need to lower your blood sugar or just want to get healthier, reduce cancer and heart disease risk and feel more energized. Who wouldn't want that?

If you're already walking 30 minutes a day, don't cut back. Just substitute weight training on two of those days, or — even better — tack on 20 minutes of strength work to two speed walks. You'll get an even bigger bang on your exercise bottom line.

Thank goodness you're here

Ever wish you and your partner felt closer? Want to relight the fires of love, morning, noon and night? Just adopt gratitude as your attitude.

Gratitude can work better than Viagra at boosting romance. Let's assume you're in a committed relationship. Try this together: Each night, write down whether either of you did something thoughtful for the other. You'll find that both of you feel more deeply connected and happier with the relationship when either one does something nice, whether you're the giver or the receiver. And those positive, loving feelings don't just kick in for a moment. They last from a day to as long as a month! This isn't just opinion; it's solid science.

Showing gratitude not only will make your partner want to please you, but it can make others like you better, too. Openly grateful people are seen as more generous and helpful by friends and family. Who wouldn't like that?

Beyond supercharging your love life, feeling thankful also can boost your health. Turns out that if you keep a gratitude journal, you're also likely to exercise more, have fewer aches and pains, and feel more optimistic about life than if you ramble on about things that drive you crazy or don't matter much. Even better, 15 minutes of daily gratitude can dramatically decrease stress hormones in your body.

The You Docs, Mehmet Oz and Mike Roizen, are authors of "You: On a Diet."

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