



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

WHAT WOULD NEED TO CHANGE TO MAKE YOU HEALTHY?

The 7th April marks World Health Day. Whilst the focus is on promoting access to healthcare without the prospect of financial hardship, it is also a day where everyone is encouraged to review their lifestyle in order to make improvements for better health.

You might have an idea of what you need to do (more of or less of) to become healthier. For example, watching what you eat, exercising more, quitting smoking, drinking alcohol etc. These lifestyle changes require effort and long term commitment, but the truth is that it's the little day to day changes that can help you succeed.

Here are seven small tweaks to consider that can make a big difference to your health:

- 1. Drink a glass of water before each meal.** Staying hydrated is necessary for all of your body's systems to function properly and will keep you from overeating at mealtimes.
- 2. For every hour you spend sitting, get up and walk for five minutes.** Considering that we should all be aiming to get 150 minutes of physical activity per week, if you follow this rule on the hour, whilst you're at home or at work, you'll have no problem reaching this goal, even if you don't manage to get to the gym.
- 3. Make sleep a priority.** The drawbacks of not getting enough sleep are no joke. According to the Mayo Clinic, "sleep deprivation can perpetuate serious health conditions, as well as negatively affect your mood, motivation and energy levels."

Create a calming bedtime routine so that you can get at least seven to nine hours of shut eye per night.

- 4. Be a picky eater.** Pick whole foods that nourish you, such as fruits, nuts and vegetables and whole grains, over processed foods, sweets and unhealthy snacks.
- 5. Put away food after dishing up.** Anyone will eat more if they have food staring at them when their plate is empty.
- 6. Do something meaningful each day.** Whether it's cooking a healthy meal or helping a friend or family member, putting effort into the things and people you care about will help you to utilise energy in ways that help to bring out the best in you.
- 7. Give yourself a break.** Don't be too hard on yourself if you have a bad day. Everyone should be allowed to have a piece of cake now and then, or a training day off if you're feeling wiped out. Remember pushing yourself when you're feeling burnt out can be destructive to your health.

Being healthy may not always be easy. Fortunately, there are lots of tiny tweaks you can make to your daily habits in order to help you live longer, with more energy and happiness.