

HEALTHY HABITS

Looking after your health can help you perform at your best, giving you the energy you need to do well in your studies. If you're not taking care of your body, your mind may struggle.



The four main ingredients to good health are: rest, exercise, healthy food and lots of water. This might sound simple but most people miss out on at least one of the four.

Getting enough sleep

If you lose an hour or two of sleep over a few days, don't be surprised if you find yourself struggling to keep your mind on your work.

- If you have trouble sleeping try activities to help you relax before you go to bed
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol in the late afternoon and evening
- Exercise regularly, but give yourself at least 3 hours from when you finish to when you go to bed
- Drinking alcohol may help you doze off, but it also changes your sleep patterns so you won't feel refreshed in the morning. Plus you're likely to wake more during the night to use the toilet
- See your doctor if sleep is regularly difficult for you. Sleep restores your body and mind and allows your body to recover from the day.

How much sleep do you need?

Most adults need 7 to 8 hours sleep – but an individual's needs vary. Some people can work effectively with as little as 5 hours, while others need as much as 10 hours.

Drink lots of water

Ideally, men should drink about 2.6L (10 cups) of water and women 2.1L (8 cups) every day to function optimally. You may also need more water if you have a high fibre or protein diet, are vomiting, have diarrhoea, are breastfeeding, recovering from a burn, do lots of physical activity or live in a humid hot climate.

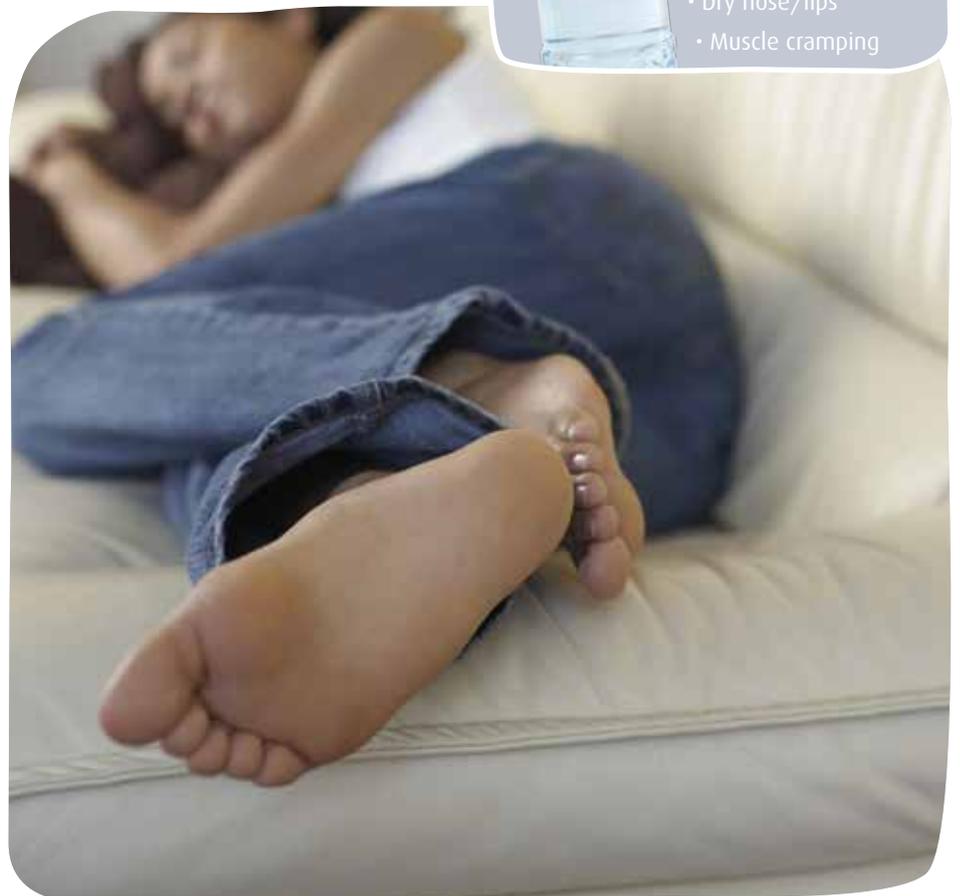
Eating well means making healthy choices

Instead of eating oily fried foods, try grilled, steamed, stir-fried or microwaved. Use low fat or non fat dairy products and try avocado, low fat ricotta or cottage cheese instead of margarine or butter. Choose foods low in salt and don't add salt to your cooking. Take care to limit saturated fat and total fat. This means choosing lean meats and removing the visible fat. Eat fruits and vegetables instead of chips or cakes and biscuits.

Signs you aren't drinking enough water



- Not much energy
- Lack of concentration
- Mood changes
- Feeling tired
- Headaches
- Stomach pain
- Itchy skin
- Constipation
- Dry nose/lips
- Muscle cramping



Plan your meals and enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods

- Eat plenty of fruit, vegetables and carbohydrate foods throughout your day
- Eat lots of cereals (such as multi-grain bread, oats, rice, pasta and noodles)
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
- Include reduced-fat milks, yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives
- Snacks can be part of a healthy diet, choose wisely
- Keep a water bottle with you during the day and take a water bottle to bed to keep on your bedside table as a reminder
- Limit caffeine products and alcohol – choose decaf and low alcohol varieties.

Snacks can be part of a healthy diet

Healthy eating can improve your concentration and speed up your metabolism – just make sure you're genuinely hungry and not just snacking because you're stressed or bored. Prepare healthy snacks in advance such as fruit and nuts or low fat yoghurt.

Plan your meals

Think through the meals you will be preparing for the next week and make sure you buy the ingredients when you do your regular shopping. Make enough food one night for more than one meal and freeze what you don't eat.

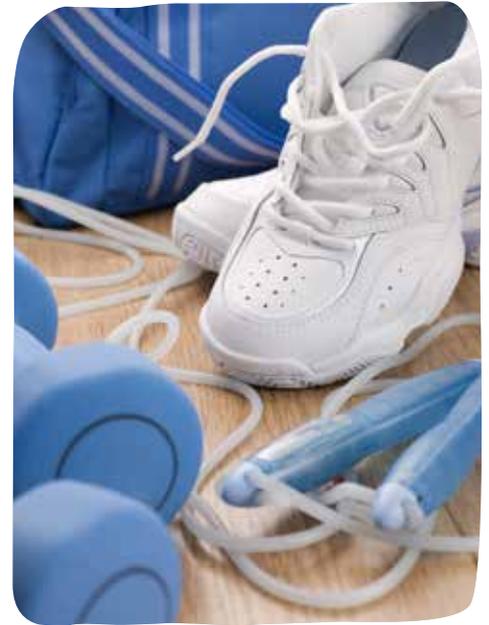
Exercise

Get active and aim for at least 30 minutes of medium intensity aerobic activity at least five times a week – anything that causes a slight but noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate.

Find activities you enjoy and look for other people to exercise with. You could try tennis or racquetball, swimming, dancing, running, team sports such as soccer or netball – whatever you have fun doing.

If you are busy you don't have to block out 30 minutes to exercise – you could do three 10-minute chunks, or two 15-minute chunks.

You can also try adding more intense 'vigorous exercise' that increases your breathing even more and makes you 'huff and puff'. Twenty minutes of vigorous exercise is about the equivalent of 30 minutes of moderate or medium intensity exercise.



Set aside specific days and times for exercise, so it becomes as much a regular part of your schedule as everything else.



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Over-the-phone help for emergency medical assistance, stress and trauma counselling, plus interpreter service. Available 24 hours, 7 days a week.