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BE WELL

Time for a Tune-Up?

By **Debbie DeAngelo**
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Would your body pass inspection every year like your car? Think about it. We routinely change the oil and filter, check the tire pressure and obtain a front-end alignment so that our car runs as well as it can for as long as it can. Many people spend more time and attention caring for their car than they do their own body. Once our car wears out or breaks down, we can buy a new one – not so for our body.

Our body works tirelessly for us 24/7. Consider some of the tasks required of it in a single day. Our heart beats 100,000 times per day to deliver a fresh supply of oxygen and nutrients to every cell. Our brain is the master control center of the body and orchestrates 100 billion nerve cells. The digestive tract is a 30-foot pipeline that nourishes and energizes us. Our kidneys filter 50 gallons of blood each day and our lungs process 2,200 gallons of air. And this is only scratching the surface.

How do we repay this miraculous vessel? By eating highly processed, nutrient poor food; running on little sleep; and being physically unfit and perpetually stressed. Is it any wonder we feel lackluster?

The human body is extraordinary and possesses an innate capacity for self-healing. No matter how neglectful we are, it makes every attempt to persevere. Ask yourself, “What can I do to support my body in giving me the quality of life that I desire?” Unsurprisingly, it comes down to lifestyle choices. If we want to feel well, we have to live well.

Living Well

It's said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again yet expecting different results. Truer words were never spoken when it comes to our health. We say that we want to accomplish a wellness goal, for example, lose weight or increase energy, but we don't make the lasting changes necessary to accomplish those goals. In all my years as a health coach, the clients I've seen who were successful in achieving their goals broke them down into manageable steps and kept going ... even when they faltered.

Begin by evaluating how you feel on a daily basis and which areas of your life could use an upgrade. Prioritize and work on them one at a time. Here are three actions that may serve as a launchpad.

Eat like your great grandparents. Older generations ate whole, real foods. Think back to the days of gathering for a Sunday meal. There was probably a pot roast involved, and perhaps some mashed potatoes, green beans, and applesauce. Those mashed potatoes were made from fresh potatoes, milk, and butter ... not potato flakes out of a box. They consumed foods that were close to the way they existed in nature. Yes, this means we have to cook, but those meals don't need to be elaborate. Simple meals made from minimally processed ingredients nourish our body with the inflammation and disease-fighting substances they need to function properly. By cutting back on packaged and prepared foods, you will significantly advance your nutrition, as well as your health.

Halt hurrying. Would you describe yourself as having some spare time or not having any time to spare? Lack of time, or a perception of it, is associated with feeling stressed and frazzled. People who succumb to chronic time pressure report less life satisfaction. Our fast paced, technologically driven, fill-every-second-of-the-day lives set the stage for feeling we're at the mercy of our to-do list. If the only time you relax is when everything has been checked off your to-do list, then you probably don't relax often. Let's face it, there's always more to do. Instead of being a slave to the clock, establish more reasonable expectations. Cultivate a sense of satisfaction for accomplishing a limited number of tasks each day while still carving out some time for enjoyment and laughter. Prioritizing and realizing that it's only humanly possible to do so much will ensure that what's truly important gets done.

Explore your core. From the moment you crawl out of bed in the morning until the moment you collapse into bed at night, your core is hard at work. Your core muscles are your trunk muscles. They encompass everything from the neck down to the pelvis. This band of support is engaged whenever you reach, carry, bend, twist or walk. Also, they impact bladder and bowel control. A strong, well-balanced core will prevent back injuries, improve posture, and allow you to safely engage in all physical activities and daily movement without hurting yourself. Exercises that target this muscular girdle include the bird dog, bridge, knee hover

taps, plank, and Superman. Consult an exercise specialist or even Professor Google for an explanation of performing these moves.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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