

# JEFFERSON

EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

---

BE WELL

**'Eat Right, Sleep Tight, Move More, Stress Less'**

**By Debbie DeAngelo**  
**January 2025**

---

*Editor's note: Following is the final regular article by Debbie DeAngelo, the Jefferson's health and fitness writer who has been one of our most popular columnists for the past three years. Debbie offers some advice as she moves on to other projects.*



Let me begin by sharing that this will be my final health column. Although it has been my absolute pleasure to partner with the Jefferson Educational Society to assist you in achieving a higher level of health, it is time for me to retire my wellness pen.

Upon reflecting on the articles I've written for the Jefferson over the past nearly three years, as well as for other publications over the past 25 (yikes!) years, I asked myself what health message I hoped readers would walk away with. That's when my personal motto popped into my mind. With it came the realization that it's not really personal. It's universal. We can all benefit from following it. Wondering what the little gem is that serves as a wellness beacon for me? Here goes: "Eat right. Sleep tight. Move more. Stress less." Simple? Yes. Easy? No.

Our bodies truly rely on the fundamentals, which are ironically dismissed by most people. In pursuit of improving our health and extending our lifespan, we tend to gravitate toward more complex strategies while ignoring the basics. I liken this to building an elaborate house on a shoddy foundation. How long do you think that will last before problems set in?

Let's take a closer look at the elements of this motto, which in turn will enhance quality of life.

**Eat right.** What’s “right?” With all the confusing and conflicting nutrition information, it’s difficult to know. I’ve come to realize that there are many paths to wellness. What works for one person may not work for another. Pay attention to your body and how it responds to what you’re feeding it. Having said that, there is one suggestion that I would make for everyone – eat real food. No matter which eating plan you follow, make clean choices. The quality of your food matters. Buy the highest quality that you can afford. Processed, packaged, and convenience foods shouldn’t be the mainstay of your daily diet. Eat foods that are close to how they exist in nature. For example, choose a baked potato over french fries. Think about it as eating like your grandparents or great-grandparents, depending on your age. This means cooking simple meals using whole, real ingredients as much as possible. You’ll be surprised at how much better you will feel.

**Sleep tight.** Since when did sleep become a luxury instead of a necessity? An alarming number of people wear their lack of sleep like a badge of courage. Just because you can “get by” on less than seven to eight hours of sleep doesn’t mean your body is functioning optimally. Routinely running on empty affects your resistance to infection, weight, mood, and cognitive function, just to name a few. Sometimes, there are legitimate reasons (caregiving, illness, pain, etc.) for having difficulty sleeping for an adequate number of consecutive hours most nights, but for many people, they simply are not prioritizing it. As with children, developing a good bedtime routine helps immensely. About 30 to 60 minutes prior to going to bed, consistently go through the same motions. This could include a bath/shower, changing into your pajamas, watching a relaxing television show, reading for enjoyment, performing yoga stretches, saying your prayers, or listening to soothing music. It doesn’t matter what you choose, as long as it’s relaxing and you habitually follow the routine every night.

**Move more.** Even though daily exercise is important, I’m really not referring to that. I’m talking about adding some movement to your day. We’ve become a pretty sedentary society, and it’s working against us. Short, frequent activity breaks during the day are a good start. Bite-sized increments of 10 minutes, three to four times per day is all it takes. Get up and walk (even around the house), climb stairs, stretch, sweep the floors, stand while working at the computer, pace while talking on the phone ... anything. Just move.

**Stress less.** What to say about this one? There are so many reasons why people are overwhelmed and stressed out. However, I believe managing these feelings lies rooted in a deep desire to lead a more peaceful life. And that begins by realizing that despite external circumstances, we can cultivate a state of inner calm.

Of all the health suggestions that I have posed thus far, I think this one is the most difficult. Often, we don’t have control over what’s going on around us in the world, but we do have control over how we respond to it. Knowing this, and living it, are

two different things. Working toward serenity requires time and attention, but it's well worth the effort. Since I'm still working on this one myself, I'll let you know how it is when I get there. Ha-ha.

In parting, value yourself enough to take care of your body – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. You don't have to be perfect about making healthy lifestyle choices, and yes, there will be times when you slip back into your old patterns. That's OK; it's normal. Remember, falling doesn't make you a failure. Staying down does.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie DeAngelo, RNC, BSN, is a holistic health coach, health correspondent for JET-TV and FOX 66 in Erie, Pennsylvania, and author of "Sudden Menopause." Debbie can be reached at [debbie@healthonheels.com](mailto:debbie@healthonheels.com).



Subscribe to JES Publications  
Emails!

Support JES | Donate

## In Case You Missed It

[Russia-Ukraine War Series | What Does Trump Presidency Mean for Ukraine?](#) written by **Lena Surzhko-Harned**

[The Wider World | Examining the 'New Syria'](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Diane Chido**

[Truth in Love | Glaude and His 'Masterpiece' in Spotlight Friday](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Dr. Parris J. Baker**

[Be Well | Support Your Ankles](#) written by health and wellness expert **Debbie DeAngelo**

[Book Notes #195 | “This, That, & the Other VI” Bob Dylan: ‘A Complete Unknown’](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Dr. Andrew Roth**

[Classic On the Waterfront | Feel the Earth Breathing: A Lesson from Portugal](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Dr. David Frew**

Jefferson Educational Society | [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org)

