

Common Sense Advice on Staying Healthy as you get Older - ACTION PLAN

“Be Your Own Doctor” - Ideas for Looking After YOURSELF!

Just because you are getting older it doesn't mean you will automatically become unhealthy!

In each section below think about how you are at the moment:

“I'm OK - Doing a bit - I need to do something!”

To start, put some ticks or crosses in each box below - TODAY!

Start Date

Look after your mind:

- Many people worry about dementia, help yourself to avoid it - do new things with new people. Make the effort to socialise. Most importantly, recent research shows that regular exercise prevents or slows down dementia!
- Volunteering is really good for you; it keeps you connected and contributes to society. Being and feeling useful makes you feel good.
- Keep your brain busy, doing puzzles is fine but learning new skills is better. Challenge yourself, for example learn Russian!

I'm OK! **Doing a bit** **Need to do something**

Look after your body:

- Exercise really matters. All physical activity is good for you but anything that makes you breathe harder for a while is even better! Walk, join a “grown up’s” exercise class, dance, garden, play with the grandchildren!
- Get out of the house in all weathers and do.... anything! 30 minutes of brisk walking 5 times a week will not only help your heart and lungs, but has also been shown to help memory.
- Your body really needs vitamin D to keep bones strong. Spend 5 to 15 minutes, 3 times a week outdoors with the sun on your face and arms (not in winter). Then cover up or put on sunscreen. Oily fish twice a week helps too!

I'm OK! **Doing a bit** **Need to do something**

Keep safe:

- Take a look at your home, what could you change to keep you safe and is easily fixed? Poor lighting, loose rugs, badly placed furniture, trailing cables can put you at risk of falls and fractures. Make simple changes.
- Falling over can do you much more damage than you might think you don't want to finish up in hospital if you can possibly avoid it. A stylish handrail in the right place can make a difference and helps you to feel safer.
- Don't be too proud to use a stick...ramblers and explorers use them all the time! (Get a coloured one - it needn't make you look old!) Use it indoors too, especially away from home.

I'm OK! **Doing a bit** **Need to do something**

If you are not well:

- Talk to a clinician (a doctor, nurse, paramedic, perhaps a pharmacist or call 111 for advice). When talking remember you are a person, an individual, not just a “patient”. Always ask questions, make sure you understand and remember what they say. Have a notebook with your questions prepared in advance and write down the answers. Have someone beside you too if you think that will help. Talk to them afterwards.
- If you've been given lots of prescriptions for different problems, by different doctors, go and talk to your GP or local pharmacist about this. Do you need all those medicines? If you are taking 4 or more medicines you should have them reviewed at least every 6 months.
- If you have continence problems, first of all make sure it's not a water infection causing it. Remember, too much caffeine from tea and coffee will irritate your bladder. Alcohol and fizzy drinks will also make this worse. Also don't drink too much in the evening: if you are up a lot at night, try to cut down on drinking fluids after 6pm.

I'm OK! Doing a bit Need to do something

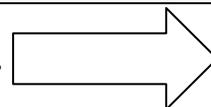
Things everyone keeps telling you..... which are true. It's really worth listening:

- If you smoke, try and stop, it can still make a difference whatever your age.
- Try and eat healthily - there is lots of good advice out there. Try home-made, fresh meals, avoid snacking and processed foods. Cut down on fatty foods, sugar and salt, you will miss them less after a while and you will feel fitter. And yes – a Mediterranean diet has been shown to help reduce the risk of frailty!
- Try not to drink too much alcohol; it really isn't doing you any good. (Some say a little red wine is fine!)
- Water is great, 1.5-2 litres a day is very good for you. Consider keeping a water diary as at times we forget how little we may have drunk until we develop a headache at the end of the day.
- Keeping a diary of your food, drink and activities is a good idea. (Your bowel habits too). You already do this for your social life and medical appointments. It's a good way of keeping an eye on your health and progress and preventing things going wrong.

I'm OK! Doing a bit Need to do something

Find more information on staying healthy see Dr Mucci's website www.holisticservice.co.uk

And finally - Your plans



We hope this is helping you.....**How did you do?**

What's OK?

Doing a bit?

Need to do something?

What could you change?

Make a list - keep it simple

Think about what matters to you most.

***Keep this safe. Even better put it where you can see it.
Don't forget! Have a go for just 3 months to start with.***

Then - 3 months later review your progress

Date

Go through the suggestions again

What's changed? What hasn't?

Are you feeling better?

Your excuses list:

-
-
-

What should you change? - Good Luck and Keep Trying!

We are interested in keeping in touch with a few people from time to time to find out how you are getting on. If you would like to be involved please contact us on:

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