

Exercise Goofs



Regular exercise is one of the best habits you can maintain to protect your health. Make the most of your workout goals, and avoid these common exercise mistakes.

- **Inconsistent workouts** — Occasional or weekend exercise won't deliver the fitness benefits of steady sessions three to five times per week. Avoid doing a week's worth of exercise in a single session; it can reduce the value of your exercise time and raise your risk for injury.
- **Skipping a warmup before you exercise** — Warming up your muscles promotes their flexibility before you put them to work. For example, spend a few minutes doing squats and arm circles or walking before jogging.
- **Overdoing weight lifting** — Begin by using lighter weights, and add extra weight and reps gradually, to avoid potential muscle strain and soreness.
- **Poor posture** — Always keep your back straight and avoid slouching your shoulders. For posture advice, consult a physical therapist.
- **Just starting an exercise plan?** The best approach is to adopt a routine with a recommended goal of 150 minutes weekly of moderate-intensity exercise (that gets your heart and lungs pumping, such as brisk walking) and strength training at least twice per week. Example: shorter aerobic workouts (at least 20 minutes) each day or longer sessions (at least 50 minutes) three times per week.

Note: Get your health care provider's okay before increasing your activity level if you're unaccustomed to exercise.

QuikQuiz™: Storing Medications



Proper storage of medications can impact whether they work correctly. Test your knowledge:

- T F **1.** The best place to store medications is in your bathroom medicine cabinet.
- T F **2.** Child-resistant caps on medications are foolproof.
- T F **3.** It's okay to keep medications in any container.
- T F **4.** Never take any expired drug.
- T F **5.** Medications are designed to be resistant to excess heat.
- T F **6.** All drugs can be flushed down the toilet when they expire or you are no longer taking them.

» Continued on the other side.

Hunger Cues

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

The advice to eat according to your hunger cues, or “eat when you feel hungry, but stop when you feel full,” is popular in nutrition circles. It's a more intuitive way of eating compared to diet culture's dogma of counting calories or following a rigid meal plan.

Chronic dieters lose their sense of hunger cues because they eat according to a restrictive plan, not according to what their body needs. Plus, dietary restriction teaches you to ignore early signs of hunger, making you so hungry that you will likely overeat at mealtime.

As babies, we turned away when we were done eating. As we grew, we stopped listening to our body's cues. Maybe you were told to clean your plate. Or you get cravings based on seeing or smelling certain foods. These environmental factors may cause you to overeat.

You can get back in touch with hunger cues and manage your appetite. Learn to rate your hunger on a scale of 1 to 10:

1. ravenous
2. very hungry
3. hungry
4. ready to eat
5. neutral
6. mild fullness
7. satisfied
8. uncomfortable fullness
9. stuffed
10. physically ill



The scale helps you recognize your body's cues. Ideally, you should start eating at 3 or 4 (hungry or ready to eat), and stop eating at 7 (satisfied). Not sure how to begin? Search online for a certified intuitive eating dietitian or view a list at [intuitiveeating.org/certified-counselors/](https://www.intuitiveeating.org/certified-counselors/).

Sleep Guide

Quality sleep is essential to sustaining good health, good work, learning, and enjoyment of life, family and friends.

Most adults require seven to nine hours of sleep daily for physical and mental health protection, while growing children and teens need even more.



Why do we need that much sleep? It allows your body and mind to recharge, leaving you refreshed and alert when you wake up. Healthy sleep helps the body stay strong, healthy and fight diseases. Lacking adequate sleep, the brain cannot function well, impairing your ability to learn, concentrate and process thinking and memory.

The negative short-term effects of poor sleep may be obvious: feeling drowsy, depressed and unproductive. But chronic sleep deprivation can increase the long-term risk of serious health problems, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and depression.

About a third of adults in the U.S. fail to regularly get adequate sleep. Ways to improve your sleep every 24 hours:

Treat any underlying physical or mental health condition, such as arthritis pain or anxiety, that may be interfering with your sleep. Work with your health care provider.

Engage in healthy lifestyle activities, including regular exercise.

Practice good daily sleep habits, such as waking up at the same time each day and keeping your bedroom dark, quiet and cool.

Avoid caffeine late in the day, and avoid alcohol close to bedtime.

Turn off electronic devices in the evening.

Note: Prescription sleep aid medications as well as over-the-counter drug treatments and supplements for sleep improvement may help restore your sleep patterns. There are many options and your first step to using and choosing a suitable sleep aid is consulting your health care provider.

QuikQuiz™: Storing Medications » Continued from the other side.

ANSWERS

1. *False* — High humidity in bathrooms can cause some medications to lose potency.
2. *False* — Child-resistant lids are important, but children and teens can find ways to remove them (which is why the lids are called resistant). Keep medicines high on a shelf or in a closet, preferably locked up.
3. *False* — Keep medications in their original bottles unless you use a weekly pill organizer. Mistaking one medication for another may cause overdosing or side effects.
4. *True* — Always check the expiration date, which tells you when a drug is no longer at full strength. If a drug has changed color, smells or looks different, ask your pharmacist if you should use it.
5. *False* — Exposure to excess heat, even for a short time, can potentially lower potency and even change the chemical makeup of some drugs. Some medications require refrigeration.
6. *False* — Don't flush medicines unless the label or patient information says to do so and there's no take-back option. To learn more, search for **Disposal of Unused Medicines** at [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov).

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information, visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Making the Best Medical Care Choices**, is at personalbest.com/extras/23V4tools.



4.2023

Q: Do I need inflammation testing?



A: **Inflammation is an important contributor to many chronic disorders, including heart disease, arthritis and cancer.** However, it doesn't tell the whole story, since excess weight, smoking, autoimmunity, chronic infections, toxins, genetics and many other factors can lead to long-term illness.

Guidelines do not recommend routine inflammation testing for everyone. Inflammation tests, such as sedimentation rate (the distance red blood cells fall in a test tube in one hour) or C-reactive protein level (which rises when you have inflammation), can be used along with symptom evaluation and other tests to help diagnose an inflammatory condition, such as giant cell arteritis (inflammation of certain arteries, especially those near the temples). Monitoring inflammatory conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, can also be done using the tests.

Getting regular medical care can help detect the presence of risk factors for inflammation. The risk factors are usually evaluated and treated without the need for inflammation testing. Healthy lifestyle habits, such as brisk walking, eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, and avoiding pro-inflammatory ingredients, such as sugar, are other important ways to help reduce inflammation.