

Self-Care Corner

10 ways to extend a healthy life



“Whether you’re turning 30, 40, 50, 65, or 90, there’s no reason to assume you’re doomed to decline after a certain age—especially if you’re doing everything you can to stay healthy and active,” says Colin Milner, CEO of the International Council on Active Aging. Milner offers the following “E-tips” to help you extend a healthy life.



1. Expectations:

If you’ve been following a healthy lifestyle, simply keep going. If you need to make changes, anticipate succeeding, not failing—and don’t let age be a barrier. Research has shown that thinking positively about getting older can extend your life by as much as 7.5 years.

2. Enthusiasm:

Few people are thrilled with every aspect of their lives, but many have at least one area—family, friends, work, a hobby—they feel good about. Identify an activity or connection that sparks your enthusiasm and make it your lifeline. Try to extend that enthusiasm to other areas of your life.

3. Energy:

Having the energy and motivation you need to age well are hallmarks of healthy living. If you’re tired all the time, don’t let it drag you down. Get a checkup to try to determine the cause—and the solution.

4. Eating:

Eating a balanced diet and attaining/maintaining a normal weight are keys to physical and mental health. If you need to lose weight or make changes in your diet, keep your expectations high—you can do it.

5. Exercise:

Staying physically active fuels the body and mind. If you’re already exercising regularly, keep it up. If you’re getting started, know your skill level, set goals, progress at your own pace, and be consistent.

6. Engagement:

Volunteers have higher levels of well-being and life satisfaction than those who don’t volunteer. Get involved.

7. Emotions:

Everyone feels down at times, but full-blown depression is a major cause of disability. If you’re feeling out of sorts for two weeks or more, talk with your doctor or take an online screening test at www.mentalhealthscreening.org. Often, simply exercising and eating right can change your mood.

8. Education:

Life-long learning is important to living an independent and fulfilling life. Start now to learn a new area of knowledge or physical activity. It’s good for the brain.

9. Effort:

Changing expectations and embarking on new behaviors takes energy and effort, but the results are well worth it.

10. Enjoyment:

A healthy life generally is a joyous one.