

Five Ways to Start Healing Today

If you're tired of being stressed, overwhelmed, depressed, anxious, or fighting chronic pain and/or disease, try these simple steps and start your journey to better health.

Changing just one or two small things can result in big differences; I encourage you to read on and pick one you can start with today.

Breathe deeply. This mantra is heard all the time and for good reason. Deep or abdominal breathing (called diaphragmatic breathing) triggers the relaxation response, lowers stress, relaxes muscles, and calms the mind. It also benefits the heart and lungs by improving respiratory system efficiency and the circulation of blood and lymph - which results in a stronger immune system.

- Sit upright in a chair, in comfortable clothing, with relaxed shoulders
- Place one hand on your lower chest, the other on your abdomen (the hand on your abdomen should rise when you inhale)
- Inhale through your nose slowly
- Exhale through your mouth to the count of 8, exhaling all the air out of your lungs (generally the exhalation should be twice as long as inhalation)
- Repeat the cycle for a total of 4-5 times, rest and try it again later in the day

Eliminate sugar. You might save your life by reducing or eliminating this tasty treat. As a society we are inundated with simple carbohydrates - sugary treats (chocolate, candy, soda) and high carbohydrate snacks (pretzels, chips, pasta, crackers). All this sugar stresses the immune system, creates excess weight, and sends your body on a blood sugar roller coaster. In the end, your digestive system just gives up as the body can't handle the amount of sugar it is being given. This all too often results in type 2 Diabetes. If you can't eliminate sugar, do your best to minimize it, and eat plenty of vegetables and good protein (nuts, lean meats, humous, tofu) to help your body heal.

Take your vitamins. A daily multi can boost energy and immunity, especially one that your body can absorb easily. Unfortunately, not all multi-vitamins are created equal. There's lots of information out there about what you need in a multi-vitamin - but one thing is for certain. If your body can't absorb it, it doesn't matter what's in the vitamin. I recommend people take a multi-vitamin that is in a capsule or liquid form rather than a compressed tablet. If you are curious about your current multi-vitamin and absorption, place it in a clear glass full of warm water. The vitamin should dissolve within approximately 30 minutes and not take hours to break down. If your vitamin takes hours to break down and doesn't absorb into the water, it's time to look for a new one!

Move your body. We all know exercise is good for us. This is absolutely true. However, the type, intensity and duration of exercise must be right for you, your body and your health. If you are in pain and unable to move easily, you might start slowly with walking. It may be easier to walk in a swimming pool than outdoors. Or if you are a high energy person with an active mind, try a restorative yoga or pilates class. Exercising outdoors is an excellent way to strengthen the mind-body connection. But you may need to start small, perhaps by standing behind a chair and stepping in place. It is ideal to exercise for 30 minutes a day - but start wherever you are, at 5, 10 or 15 minutes, if you need. Wherever you are, the practice of moving your body daily can help fight depression, insomnia, anxiety and pain.

Wear a scarf when you're getting sick. You might have already heard this from your Grandmother and she was right! Covering your neck when you start feeling a cold coming on can help reduce the cold's severity and support your body as it fights to get well. It is especially important to wear a scarf when it is cold and windy outside - in Chinese medicine the neck is vulnerable to invasion by wind and cold, which you may know as the common cold. So remember to protect your neck and have fewer, shorter colds!

These tips can really make a difference in your life and health - and if you are ready to be pro-active about your health and life, call 312-320-1968 today for an acupuncture appointment. Taking charge of your health and body is the first step toward a healthier, happier life.