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## **14 Ways to Reinvent Your Life**

### **One: Eat the way your grandmother did**

You may have heard the adage, “Make food your medicine.” Or “You are what you eat.” Or “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” For generations, people have understood the simple biochemical link between our food and our health. From time to time, a newly discovered “super food” hits the shelves, and everyone jumps on the latest thing. (Red wine, oat bran, quinoa, kale, to name a few.) But the truth is that your diet must be varied and moderate.

Start cooking at home. Make nourishing soups, roast a pan of vegetables twice a week, become the master at creating exciting salads, and add a whole wheat, low sugar but delicious dessert to your repertoire. Explore new food cultures and traditions. Eating well can be the most exciting part of your day with a little focus and intention.

### **Two: Stop the Sugar Habit**

Some medical professionals say that sugar is as powerful an addiction as a drug. I agree. The more sugar we eat, the more we want. The United States Department of Agriculture reports that the average American consumes between 150-170 pounds of refined sugars each year. To understand how much that really is, in 1700, the average person ate four pounds of sugar per year. By 1800, it was 18 pounds; by 1900, it was 60 pounds.

A sugar craving is usually due to an imbalance in your diet, or in your life. By reducing or eliminating added sugar from your diet, you’ll be reducing the danger of everything from obesity to diabetes. To successfully stop the sugar cravings, follow these steps:

- Go through the kitchen and throw out all your temptations: cookies, candies, cakes. You can’t eat what isn’t there. Reserve sweet treats for special occasions, or follow food writer Michael Pollan’s advice and only eat what you’re willing to make from scratch.

- If you find yourself craving sugar, drink a glass of water with cucumber, lemon, lime or mint in it. Take a walk. Light a scented candle and meditate for five minutes.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand. When you get in from the grocery store, spend a few minutes cleaning and chopping up carrots, celery, broccoli, and cucumbers, and store them in glass containers in the fridge.
- Relish the newfound energy that's yours from eating a clean diet. Once the brain fog has cleared, you won't want to return to doping yourself with sugar.
- Remind yourself that you're not denying yourself something—you're adding energy, balance and purity to your life.

### **Three: Halt Inflammation**

Chronic inflammation in your body is one of the enemies of your health. Inflammation is a normal response to infection, and is a sign that the body is trying to heal itself. But chronic inflammation is the cause of many illnesses, including some cancers, heart disease, diabetes, and even Alzheimer's. Once again, your diet is important in helping the body heal. Foods can be either pro-inflammatory, or anti-inflammatory.

Foods that are the worst culprits in an inflammatory diet include those with trans fats, processed and sugary foods, fried foods, and glycotoxins, formed when sugars and oxidized fats interact with proteins in overcooked or heavily processed foods.

To reduce inflammation, try the following:

- Explore yoga, Qi Gong or other forms of gentle exercise
- Cortisol is a stress hormone that causes the release of inflammatory cytokines, so reduce stress through meditation, relaxation, and massage.
- Eat a healthy diet, with plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and lean protein.
- Consider supplements that have been proven to reduce inflammation, like ginger and turmeric. Ask Dr. Ellen Lewis what supplements in what amounts would be helpful for you.
- Acupuncture can also be helpful.

### **Four: Prioritize getting enough sleep**

It's hard to skip the junk food, grocery shop for healthy foods, cook a good dinner and remember your supplements when you're sleep deprived. If you've been

burning the midnight oil by working late or watching television and trying to get through the day with fewer than 7 or 8 hours of sleep, your body will thank you for getting to bed earlier.

Here are a few helpful ideas:

- Make your bedroom an inviting destination. De-clutter and clean it from ceiling to floor and into the corners. Consider adding a room air purifier to reduce dust, dander and allergens. You should plan on replacing your mattress every 7-10 years. Add comfortable pillows and new bedding if necessary. Make getting into bed something you look forward to!
- Stop caffeine after 2 p.m.
- No alcohol after 8 p.m.
- Go to bed at the same time every night. If you need to get to sleep earlier, start going to bed fifteen minutes earlier each night until you've reset your body clock.
- Get up at the same time, too, even on weekends. Your body thrives on a healthy routine.

### **Five: Get back to nature**

If your favorite form of exercise takes place outdoors, you're already ahead of the game. We need fresh air, sunlight, and movement to live a balanced life. Being around trees, green growing things and flowers is powerful medicine. Get outside at least once a day, for a walk, a run, a bike ride, tennis, or gardening. We're growing things, too!

### **Six: Move every day, and get up from your desk once an hour**

Here are the things that happen when we sit all day:

- Your muscles atrophy. It's use it or lose it.
- You can develop a bad back, as your tendons and hip flexors tighten and compress the nerves in your spine.
- Your neck and shoulders can become stiff and painful by hunching over a computer
- You raise your chance of developing diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and some cancers
- You may find yourself anxious and depressed. Regular exercise keeps our moods steadier and our attitude more upbeat.

### **Seven: Clean up your self-talk**

Optimists know that it's not necessarily what happens that makes a day good or bad, it's how we feel about it, and process our emotions. We can't always be relentlessly

positive, nor is it helpful to deny powerful feelings like anger, sadness, and fear. But try not to make things worse by telling yourself you're having a horrible day, or that you can't take one more thing. Changing your life begins with what kind of conversations you have with yourself. When you find yourself overwhelmed with negative emotions, here are some helpful things to learn to say to yourself:

- It's no fun being stuck in traffic, but I can't change this situation. I'll relax and wait for the traffic to clear.
- I'm feeling stressed, but I can handle this. I just need to focus on the next thing I need to do. Getting upset isn't going to help me resolve this situation.
- This is a beautiful day and good things will happen to me.
- I am fortunate in many ways, including...
- There are wonderful people in my life who lift me up. When I feel down, I can help myself feel better by looking around and seeing whom I can help.
- I will not compare my life to anyone else's life today. They have their journey; I have mine.

### **Eight: Know your numbers**

When was the last time you had blood work done? It's good to know what's going on inside your body. Get a basic blood panel, including cholesterol and triglyceride numbers, and a check of thyroid hormones, red and white blood cell count, and fasting blood sugar.

You should also know your blood pressure measurement, have your body examined for signs of skin cancer, get an eye and ear check up for sight and hearing problems, and see your dentist regularly.

Schedule your check ups and get on top of your health numbers.

### **Nine: Make a Connection**

We know that the healthiest people have strong family and/or social connections. Humans are basically tribal animals, and we all need people in our lives. Finding a group of friends that you can spend time with is important for your happiness and your best health. Join a meet-up group or a spiritual organization, volunteer your time doing something you believe in, or head outside where people gather and be a part of something larger than yourself.

### **Ten: Get in touch with your motivation**

We all have reasons for what we do. Do you have a dream or a goal that makes you anxious to get up in the morning, or a hobby that you love? Do you want to have a

family, or have more energy for your grandchildren? Is there a career ladder you want to climb? It's important to recognize and work toward something bigger than yourself.

If you're not sure about your next steps, or if your life has become stale and boring, it's up to you to make changes now. Make a list of all the things you love, and do something once a week to awaken your sense of fun and wonder. Walk somewhere new, visit a museum or an art gallery, throw a party or attend one, start a new collection of seaglass or baseball bobbleheads, join a book group or sign up for French lessons. You are extraordinary. Don't settle for a less than extraordinary life.

### **Eleven: Take a Rest Day**

We glorify being busy and being able to handle stress in our culture, but keep juggling too many balls long enough, and we all burn out. Once a month, schedule a rest day for yourself.

- Begin your day with a series of stretches to slowly awaken.
- Make yourself a delicious and healthy smoothie filled with anti-oxidant fruits and veggies: try combining spinach, kale, pineapple, and banana.
- Lay in a hammock, read a book, sit by the ocean. Cultivate SLOW.
- End your day by getting in bed on time.

### **Twelve: Knock off the bad stuff.**

You know what that is. We all have our bad habits, and little secrets that we rationalize won't kill us—yet. Be honest with yourself and resolve to either find a way to deal with your bad habits by yourself, or seek help to do so. This includes smoking, the twice weekly glass of wine that became two every night, the bowl of full-fat ice cream you've been eating before bed too often, and the phone call you know you need to make that you've been putting off.

Getting to the things that matter and reclaiming a sense of control over your life and behavior is a huge stress reducer. When we're engaging in behavior that we know deep down isn't right for us, there's a silent toll not only on our bodies, but on our hearts and minds. Do what it takes to improve your life. Only you can decide what that is, but it may include therapy or marriage counseling. Give yourself the gift of a clear conscience.

### **Thirteen: Make a bucket list**

Life should always have something to look forward to. Everyone needs a reason to make waking up a bright part of the day. What is it you want to do that you haven't done yet? Make a list, and start working through it. Enthusiasm for life is a big part of remaining healthy and having the motivation for self-care. Is there an artist you

want to see in concert? A trip to the beach you promised yourself? Do you want to paint your kitchen cabinets? Adopt a dog? Sing in a choir? Go kayaking? There's no time like the present. Do it!

**Fourteen: Consider a health-building program to keep you on target**

Are you worth an investment in yourself? For 66 cents a day, and only \$19.99 a month, you can be a charter member in my new health-focused, mind-clearing, body-invigorating Love Life! program. You'll get newsletters, master classes, a health journal, and the best advice I can give on living the vibrant life you have waiting for you.

It can be hard to stay on track alone, which is why I developed this program for my patients, and then decided to extend it to anyone who wants a little help in being healthier, happier, and ready for whatever comes next. I hope you'll join me!

Want to learn more? [Take a look here.](#)

*Copyright 2018 by Dr. Ellen Lewis. Dr. Lewis is available for speaking engagements and personal consultations.*

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