

Healthier Living

CREATE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, NUTRITION, AND LIFE BALANCE

Healthy Living on a Budget

Affordable ways to eat well, stay active, and prioritize physical health without overspending

Living a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to strain your finances. With a few smart strategies, you can eat well, stay active, and support your physical wellbeing, all while keeping costs manageable. Small, mindful choices can make a big difference in both your health and your wallet.

Eat Well Without Overspending

Grocery budgets can often make or break the bank. Consider these tips to help you eat well and maintain your budget. Start by planning your meals for the week, as this helps reduce impulse purchases and food waste, two major contributors to overspending. Try building your meals around budget-friendly staples such as beans, lentils, whole grains, oats, and frozen vegetables as these options are nutritious, versatile, and often cost far less than convenience foods. Other options are to buy in bulk, cook in large batches, and reuse leftovers to further stretch your food budget. If possible, aim to eat seasonal produce as fruits and vegetables in season tend to be less expensive and taste fresher. Don't overlook canned or frozen items either, they're nutrient-rich, long-lasting, and often cheaper than fresh.

Stay Active for Little to No Cost

You don't need an expensive gym membership to stay active. Walking, jogging, hiking, and bodyweight exercises are generally free after getting the right gear and are highly effective. Many communities offer low-cost or free fitness resources such as outdoor workout stations, public recreation centers, or group events like yoga in the park. Online workout videos also provide guided routines for every fitness level at no cost. If you prefer structured exercise, consider a minimal investment in a jump rope, resistance bands, or yoga mat. These are affordable tools that can diversify your home workouts.

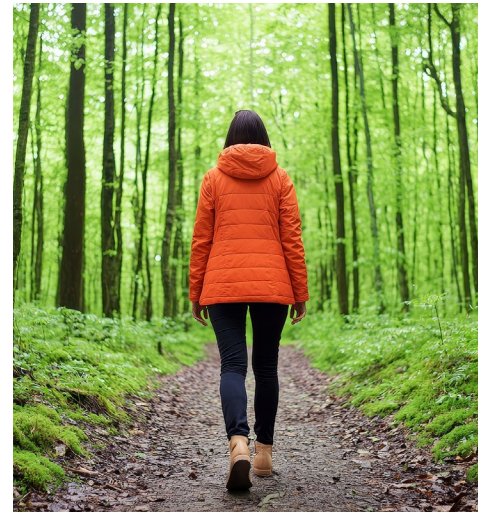
Prioritize Physical Health Mindfully

Healthy living also includes sleep, hydration, and stress management. These habits cost little but provide big returns. Aim for a consistent sleep schedule, drink water throughout the day, and take short breaks to stretch or practice deep breathing. Preventive care, such as routine checkups or using community health clinics, can also help you address issues early and avoid higher costs later.

With intentional choices and resourcefulness, healthy living can be accessible on a budget. Start small, stay consistent, and invest in habits that support your long-term wellbeing without overspending. ◆

challenge of the month: try one free activity

Challenge yourself to try one free activity that supports your health without stretching your budget. Explore a local walking trail, join a community fitness event, follow an online workout, or attend a free class at your library or recreation center. You might discover a new hobby, enjoy some fresh air, or break out of your usual routine. Investing in your wellbeing doesn't have to cost anything and sometimes the simplest activities offer the biggest boost. ◆



“Wellbeing is about the combination of our love for what we do each day, the quality of our relationships, the security of our finances, the vibrancy of our physical health, and the pride we take in what we have contributed to our communities.”

— Tom Rath, Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements

foods that support QUALITY SLEEP

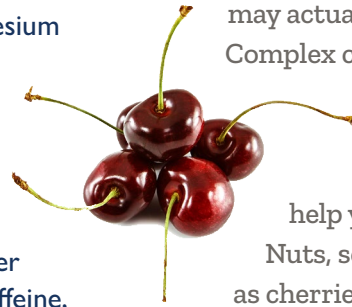
tryptophan, magnesium, and melatonin-rich foods...what food sources help?

A good night's sleep starts long before your head hits the pillow — it begins with what you eat and how active you are. Quality sleep plays an important role in supporting your physical and mental health and overall quality of life. Certain foods provide nutrients that naturally encourage relaxation, regulate sleep hormones, and promote a deeper rest. Nutrients such as *tryptophan, magnesium, and melatonin* may help improve sleep quality.

TRYPTOPHAN is an amino acid that helps your body produce **serotonin** and **melatonin**. These are two key hormones for regulating sleep cycles. Tryptophan-rich foods, such as turkey, eggs, tofu, and nuts, are great for supporting sleep. **MAGNESIUM** can help relax muscles and calm the nervous system, making it easier to unwind before bed. Foods rich in magnesium include leafy greens, like spinach and kale, nuts and seeds, such as almonds and sunflower seeds, whole grains, and legumes. Lastly, **MELATONIN-RICH** foods, such as tart cherries, walnuts, and tomatoes, can help regulate your sleep-wake cycle and promote more restful sleep.

Building meals and snacks around these nutrients can support better sleep quality and relaxation before bedtime. On the other hand, caffeine, alcohol, and heavy or spicy meals too close to bedtime can disrupt sleep and cause discomfort. If you're looking for a gentle snack before bedtime, try Greek yogurt with cherries and nuts or a warm cup of chamomile tea as a soothing way to wind down.

By focusing on nutrient-rich foods that calm the body and mind, you support a more restful night's sleep, leaving you refreshed and ready for the day ahead. ◆



Quality sleep is essential for your health, and what you eat plays a meaningful role in how well you rest. Heavy, high-fat, or sugary meals close to bedtime can make it harder to fall or stay asleep. Too much caffeine or alcohol can also disrupt your natural sleep cycle.

On the positive side, some foods may actually support better sleep. Complex carbohydrates, like whole grains, oats, and quinoa, paired with a source of protein can help your body wind down.

Nuts, seeds, and fruits such as cherries or bananas provide nutrients like magnesium and potassium, which relax muscles and calm the nervous system.

Staying hydrated throughout the day, primarily with water, also supports restful sleep, but try to limit fluids right before bedtime to avoid nighttime wakeups. Timing matters, too: aim to have your last meal or snack a few hours before bed rather than a large late-night meal.

By choosing sleep-friendly foods and maintaining a consistent routine, you'll set yourself up to wake up feeling refreshed, energized, and ready for the day. ◆

