

Importance of Overall Health Balance



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Learning Objectives

The objective of this blog is to educate the readers on the importance of overall health. The blog will highlight different areas of health that are essential to complete an overall health balance in our bodies. This blog will aim to create an overall picture of health and influence parents and children to incorporate these habits into their daily lives.

HOW TO ACHIEVE AN OVERALL HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Our lifestyle has a significant influence on physical and mental health of human beings. People often think about wellness in terms of physical health-nutrition, exercise, etc., but it is so much more. It may seem like a hard task when first thinking of our overall health and how to exactly achieve a so-called “balance.” Thankfully if we look at the overall picture of our well-being it can be broken up into different categories that contribute to our well-being. These categories include Nutrition, Physical Activity, Sleep, Stress Management/Emotional (mental health), and Social. This article will go over each of these categories and explain how to apply them in our day to day lives. ^(1,2,3)

NUTRITION

In order to provide our bodies with adequate nutrition we want to ensure we are eating a well-balanced diet. This means consuming things in moderation and not limiting/eliminating certain food groups. Opting for a balanced, adequate and varied diet is an important step toward a happy and healthy lifestyle.

To ensure a healthy lifestyle, WHO (World Health Organization) recommends eating lots of fruits and vegetables, reducing fats, sugar and salt intake and regular exercise. There are multiple ways we can do this daily! Eating a diet that includes a variety of foods and including plant-based options as well is a great starting point! Grains that we consume should be focused on whole grains (pasta, rice, bread).



Consuming a rainbow of fruits and vegetables will provide our bodies with different types of vitamins and minerals that are essential for development and health. Protein intake should focus on lean options such as poultry and fish and plant options such as legumes, beans, and lentils. A diet low in added sugars and sodium is crucial for preventing development of certain health conditions. If we combine all these different areas, we will achieve the balance our bodies need! ^(4,5)

Tip: The MyPlate Model allows children and adults alike to visualize what the image of a balanced healthy plate should look like at each meal. We need to ensure we are incorporating Fruits and Vegetables (1/2 Plate), Grain (at least ½ **whole grains**), Protein (vary proteins including **lean proteins**), and dairy/dairy alternatives (**low fat or fat free dairy** milk or yogurt). ⁽⁵⁾

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity has significant benefits for health which are not only linked to physical effects but mental as well. Taking part in physical activity for ~30-60 minutes or more daily can help reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and osteoporosis. Physical activity promotes mental well-being and emotional balance. There are many ways it can be included in day to day lives focusing on cardiovascular health in addition to strength training. Activities for cardiovascular health can include but are not limited to: Running/Jogging, Biking, Walking, Hiking, Rowing, Swimming, and HIIT Training. Activities for Strength Training can include but are not limited to: Yoga, Pilates, Weight Lifting, Barre, and Carrying Heavy Items (like grocery bags). Practicing these things on a realistic level is key, otherwise you may lost motivation! ^(4,6)



Tip: Anything you do to get active and reduce the amount of time you spend sitting or lying down is good. Remember that exercise isn't about losing weight or changing your body shape. If you enjoy it and it makes you feel good, that's important! ⁽⁶⁾

SLEEP

Every single human being needs sleep. Sleep plays a crucial role for our well-being both physically and mentally. It is vital for our memory and immune functions. We spend a third of our lives asleep, and it's as important as food, water or air to our survival. Research has shown that improving our sleep quality and attaining a healthy sleep duration can lead to improvements in all kinds of other health measures and outcomes. Sleep quality and duration have been linked with decreasing the risk for heart issues and metabolic problems. Sleep is more complex than many people realize as during sleep we are processing information, consolidating memories, and undergoing maintenance processes that help us function during the day! If we do not get adequate amounts of sleep common mental health issues such as anxiety and depression can become an issue. Focusing on improving our sleep will boost our mood and provide a great start to the day! ^(7,8)

Tip: Avoid using screens (television/phones) that emit blue light at least an hour prior to bedtime to improve your sleep quality!



STRESS MANAGEMENT/ EMOTIONAL

Managing our stress is something we have to do everyday. If stress goes untreated it can take a toll on our physical and mental well-being. Stress can be directly related to our emotional well-being. If we are feeling stressed it can cause us to be angry, worried, irritable, and unable to focus. It is our duty to our bodies to use stress management techniques like mindfulness, meditation, exercise and relaxation to reduce the effects of stress. You can also try to prevent stress by planning ahead, organizing tasks by priority, preparing for stressful events, and limiting your contact with stressors. (9,10)

Tip: Did you know that the first step to relieving stress in your life is to identify what is causing the stress (stressors). Both small and big stressors can play a role in creating stress so it is important for us to not ignore something small. The best way to track stress can be keeping a journal for accountability. (9)

SOCIAL

Research shows that social relationships (quality and quantity) affect mental health, health behaviors, physical health and mortality risk. Ensuring we maintain socialization daily is crucial for developing our social connectedness. There are two main ways socialization can impact us, one is by protecting us against chronic disease and serious illness and the second is by providing positive health benefits. Social connection helps reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, and depression/anxiety. It can also lead to longer life by helping us manage our stress and anxiety, promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity as well as increasing our quality of sleep. Overall, people with healthy social relationships are more likely to make healthy choices that lead to better mental and physical health. (10,11)

Tip: People are social by nature so finding our spot in our community is a great way to make a difference and stay social. Try developing your relationships in these different public places, such as neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and parks and recreation centers. You just may never know who you will make a connection with! (11)



Honey Lime Rainbow Fruit Salad (Cooking Classy)

Servings: 10 Servings

Preparation Time: 20 Minutes

Recipe Completion: 20 Minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb Fresh Strawberries, chopped

1 lb chopped fresh pineapple

12 oz fresh blueberries

12 oz red grapes, sliced into halves

4 kiwis, peeled and chopped

3 mandarin oranges

2 bananas, sliced

Honey Lime Dressing

¼ cup Honey

2 tsp lime zest (zest of 2 medium limes)

1 ½ Tbsp fresh lime juice



Instructions:

1. Chop all fruit, except blueberries in order to prep for fruit salad.
2. Add all fruit to a large mixing bowl.
3. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the honey, lime zest and lime juice to make honey lime dressing.
4. Pour honey lime dressing over the fruit and toss evenly to coat, serve fruit salad immediately.

Notes:

- Fruit can be chopped 1 day in advance (except banana) and stored in refrigerator.
- Honey Lime Dressing can be made 1 day in advance and kept separate from fruit. Ensure to store in refrigerator.
- 1 (15 oz) can of mandarin oranges in juice or light syrup will work as well, just ensure to drain them.

<https://www.cookingclassy.com/honey-lime-rainbow-fruit-salad/>

Balance Activity to Do as a Family!



WALL WRITING BALANCE GAME (PINK OATMEAL)

This activity incorporates both brain and physical health! Children will need to use their brain and motor skills to trace images and they will need to use their physical balance to ensure they stay upright and trace smoothly!

Directions

1. Print out a piece of paper that contains either shapes, numbers, or objects for your child to trace.
2. Tape the paper to the wall on all sides to ensure it will not move as the child is writing on it.
3. Then grab a step stool/ball and have your child balance one foot on the stool/ball. They can switch feet halfway through for an extra challenge.
4. After they are balanced on one foot have them trace the images on the piece of paper.
5. See how steady they can be while they are tracing!
6. Practice makes perfect so they can complete this activity multiple times!

Tips

- Ensure the tape used for the picture will not damage the wall, test a small area prior to use
- Ensure the paper is thick enough to not have the marker transfer through to the wall, test this prior to use in a different area (not wall)

<https://www.pinkoatmeal.com/balance-exercises-for-kids/>



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