

Ten Steps to a Whole New You!

By Dr. Alisa Cooper

Energy, vitality, longevity. As a wellness coach, people ask me what they can do right now to feel energized, look amazing and ward off the “inevitable” degenerative diseases associated with getting older. While there is no quick-fix answer, there are some fairly simple strategies that can yield rapid, impressive results. I have included my top ten favorites here for you. While some people are ready to jump in and revamp their lifestyles, many feel overwhelmed and intimidated; most fall somewhere in between.

Your best bet is to pick one or two strategies you think you can be most successful at. Start there, witness some tangible results, and your confidence will increase. When you begin to feel a positive change in your health and outlook, you will be more likely to embrace additional strategies. “A body in motion stays in motion,” and that is so true when you are on a roll! Once you get going with implementing these tips, you’ll be excited, and it’s going to build on itself. So, get off those rolls, and get rolling with this!

- 1. Strive to eat 5-8 fruits and vegetables a day.** Strive for a rainbow of colors such as the bright red of red peppers, the glorious green of green beans, the outstanding orange of carrots, the bright yellow of a nice, ripe banana or the amazing magenta of juiced beets! Try some you have never eaten before. Variety is

important if you want to get the full complement of vitamins, minerals and enzymes from your plant foods.

2. **Balance each meal** so that your plate consists mostly (about 2/3 full) of favorable carbohydrates like vegetables and salad, 1/3 contains a high quality, low-fat protein about the size of your palm like a piece of broiled salmon or baked chicken breast. Then, top off the meal with a small amount of good fat like a tablespoon of olive or coconut oil, a few almonds or walnuts, or a couple of slices of avocado.
3. **Be a label reader!** Don't put anything in your shopping cart that contains hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils. Avoid foods that have a long list of ingredients that are hard to pronounce or sound like chemicals. The simplest foods have the fewest ingredients and are the closest to nature.
4. **Give up fried foods** in favor of those that are baked, broiled, sautéed or grilled. Frying requires heating oil to very high temperatures that can change healthy fats into dangerous substances that contribute to the formation of free radicals in the body.
5. **Cut way, way back on the evil twins: white flour and sugar** and anything made from them. Replacing white bread with sprouted whole grain bread is a step in the right direction. Eventually, you will want to break away from the belief that you need bread with this or need a roll with that. Those are just destructive fillers with

no nutrient value. On the other hand, filling up on fibrous fruits and vegetables will keep hunger at bay while providing the nutrition your body truly needs.

Reducing sugar is an absolute must! Although you may not believe it right now, you can get used to having less sugar in your diet, but it does take some time. Be patient with yourself and realize these changes will not happen overnight. Keep moving in a positive, forward direction. But, please DO NOT eat or drink anything that contains aspartame (Equal) or Splenda. Studies reveal a multitude of dangerous side effects from the consistent consumption of artificial sweeteners ranging from weight gain to multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's.

6. **Curb consumptions of processed foods** like cold cuts, hot dogs, pepperoni, and all pre-packaged foods. Many of these foods contain cancer-causing nitrites and neuron-damaging MSG. Instead, try to incorporate more green, leafy types of lettuce and vegetable salads in warm weather and different types of vegetable and bean soups in cold weather. Make enough to last a few days or freeze it in smaller containers you can pull out when you are too tired or busy to cook. Add some protein to your soup so it functions as a small, balanced meal in itself.
7. **Prepare this quick, easy delicious breakfast:** blend a cup of frozen fruit (like organic blueberries or strawberries), a scoop of protein powder, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ground flaxseed or 1 tablespoon of almond butter, a few ice cubes and filtered water to desired consistency. Blend

and enjoy. **Going out for breakfast?** Order a small bowl of oatmeal with walnuts and banana slices or blueberries. Make sure the nuts are fresh and not rancid! Have a couple of scrambled eggs on the side and a slice of turkey bacon. Don't eat the bread, pastry, pancakes or potatoes! After all, you have made the commitment to cut way back on carbs, right?

8. **Eat fish at least once a week.** Twice or more is better. Fish is high in omega-3-fatty acids that stimulate the immune system as well as contribute to skin and hair health. Essential fatty acids also stimulate the body to produce anti-inflammatory substances that counteract systemic inflammation. Take an essential fatty acid (EFA) supplement daily as well as a comprehensive multi-vitamin/mineral supplement as part of a basic supplement program.
9. **Drink eight 8-ounce glasses of pure, filtered water each day.** Drink consistently throughout the day. If you drink too much all at once, it will cause urgent urination, and you will void out the water your body so desperately needs making it nearly impossible to reverse chronic dehydration. Please be aware: Thirst is sensed *after* dehydration has started, so don't rely on thirst to clue you when to drink. Be proactive!
10. **Get up early and exercise!** When you put exercise first on your to-do list, nothing can come before it and foil your best intentions. If you accomplish nothing else of consequence that day, at least you will have worked out- and that IS an accomplishment. Be sure to find an exercise that you really enjoy. It should not be torture but rather

something you look forward to. Plus, regular exercise contributes to better quality sleep. On the road? Bring a jump rope. Be creative. A lady I know hoola-hooped herself down 50 pounds!