

Eat, sleep, move, repeat: The lazy person's guide to cardiac health

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the idea of changing your lifestyle drastically for the sake of your cardiac health. However, the path to improved cardiac wellbeing is often made up of tiny, consistent steps. Incorporating simple and impactful habits into your day-to-day life reduces the risk of heart disease by many folds.

From nourishing your body with healthy food to discovering effective ways to manage stress and busying yourself with physical activity, here we provide practical guidance that prioritises your cardiac health.

Have a healthy diet

Nourishing yourself with food good for your heart plays a huge role. Eating foods rich in fibre, like apples, pears, beans, oats, and barley lowers your "bad cholesterol". Including whole grains, leaf proteins, fruits, and vegetables in your breakfast also helps in maintaining a healthy diet and weight.

There are also other foods you can (if



you must) include in your nutrition regime — fish, nuts, certain types of tea, and dark chocolate (if you have a sweet tooth).

Fish contains omega-3 fatty acids. Nuts like almonds, walnuts, and tree nuts contain "heart-friendly" fats; green or black tea

keeps angina and heart attacks at bay, and flavonoids in dark chocolate reduce the possibility of inflammation and heart disease.

Salt and saturated fat are detrimental to the heart, so you should limit their intake.



Perform physical activity

It's probably the one suggestion you have heard your entire life, regardless of the nature of potential diseases you might be dealing with. Sitting for long hours has a bad effect on blood cholesterol levels.

Try to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week to manage your blood cholesterol and weight. If you have a desk job, move a bit during your lunch break and perform exercises at your leisure.

Practicing yoga reduces one's risk of cardiovascular disease, so try to incorporate it into your routine. Other than these, strength and interval training, dancing, taking stairs instead of lifts, walking, running,

swimming, aerobics, and housework offer immense heart health benefits.

Get enough sleep

You must get a good night's sleep to ensure your cardiac health is at its best. The time span of your sleep matters, as too little or too much sleep can be harmful. It is suggested that one gets seven to nine hours of sleep to avoid the risk of heart disease.

You should make a habit of going to bed and waking up at the same time, even when you wish to sleep a few hours more on the weekends. A proper sleep environment is needed, which is a dark, quiet place, keeping away electronic devices from your bedroom. It's better to avoid any large meals or caffeine before bedtime.

Quit smoking

At least seven million people die from smoking around the world, a devastatingly high number, which gives an idea of how detrimental it is for your body.

Smoking disallows your pumping heart to carry blood properly as it makes it more likely to develop atherosclerosis, which is building up plaque in the arteries. It will eventually evolve into an increasing risk of peripheral artery disease.

Ensure sound mental health

Finally, we have all heard this: a healthy body is connected to a healthy mind. So, it's integral that you take care of your mental health. Engaging in hobbies like painting, reading books, crocheting, or even sitting in nature simply to unwind, can do wonders.

By Tasneem Azim
Photo: Collected



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