

# GOOD HEALTH TIMES

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## WORLD HEALTH DAY

& your **Health IQ**

**Top Tips  
for Great  
Health**

**Rich Relationships:**  
a prescription for lasting happiness.

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# World Health Day & your Health IQ

Try this simple self-assessment quiz to evaluate your physical health:

- Do you eat enough fruit and vegetables?
- Do you avoid fried/fast and processed foods?
- Are you taking action to lower your sugar and salt intake?
- Do you drink enough water?
- Do you get enough quality sleep?
- Do you take regular exercise?
- Does your doctor know your family medical history?
- Do you get a regular check up?

If you answered 'No' to any of these questions, it may provide an opportunity to enhance your physical health and wellbeing.



## Tip of the Month

Skip on the salt. Less is more. Many people are eating about one and a half teaspoons of salt a day (8500mg of sodium); way more than the recommended limit of 1500 mg per day. Too much salt can cause a range of serious health problems including raised blood pressure and stroke. Watch for hidden sources in salt-laden processed foods. Use more black pepper and other spices for taste instead.

This month, on the 7th of April, World Health Day provides a great opportunity for the people of the world to focus on something that is universal to us all, helping to diminish the differences between us. This commonality is of course our physical health, the greatest wealth a person can possess and that which we desire for the ones we love. It has been more than 50 years since the World Health Organisation defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing” as opposed to merely an absence of disease or infirmity. This holistic approach to our wellbeing is too often forgotten as our lives become increasingly fast paced, while simultaneously more sedentary, just as our food becomes more convenient but at the same time less nutritious. In this context we are losing our innate understanding of what it means to be truly healthy.

As an MD, I often use the metaphor of the ‘golden egg’ of great physical health, referring back to the old tale of the goose that laid the golden eggs. And there are ways in which you can design your life in order to achieve that golden egg of health. You need to nourish your goose with plenty of water, regular exercise, a wholesome diet, and restful sleep. These are the basic requirements but not the whole picture. To really release your potential, your goose also needs powerful psychological fitness, emotional contentment, a sense of purpose and fulfilment, as well as rich healthy relationships. It may seem like a lot of effort to make the goose produce this golden egg but it all begins with awareness, and developing your health IQ (there are many tips on doing this throughout my website), and in the end this golden egg, your physical health; is priceless. It is the greatest gift you can give yourself and makes possible a long, happy, and active life with less decrepitude associated with aging.

Unfortunately, many people are inclined to take their wellbeing for granted until they have a problem, at which time they can often embark on a very time

For more on releasing the happiness within and the small choices that make big changes, visit [www.doctormarkrowe.com](http://www.doctormarkrowe.com)



# Take 5

## Five Ways to Build your Health IQ

- Knowledge is power; keep up to date on important health issues.
- Get a regular check up. Know yourself - what's normal for you, your family history and health risks. Don't ignore changes in your body patterns or warning signs. A stitch in time can save nine!
- Understand that how you think and feel impacts on your habits, actions and behaviours - everything is connected.
- Think less pills and more skills, to become a leader in your own wellbeing.
- Make your health and wellbeing a written goal with an action plan. Keep a journal and track your progress, remember practice makes improvement !

consuming and expensive journey to regain their health. Over the years as a family physician I have come across this “if it ain't broke, don't fix it” mentality on countless occasions and to be honest it is usually accompanied by a poor knowledge of basic health requirements and a low awareness of the workings of the body. This is how I am certain that education is so vital in empowering people to be responsible for their bodies and enabling them to make choices today that will benefit them long term.

Knowledge is a vital component but it is not enough in and of itself. Attitudes need to shift in concert with health education to ensure people don't make costly mistakes with their wellbeing. It is not unusual for some people to believe that accessing healthcare services is a sign of vulnerability or weakness. Consequently, some people have been known to wait for a serious symptom to persist over time before seeking any medical advice whatsoever. This delay in action can have a wide range of negative implications. This behaviour may be called ‘ostrich syndrome’ as the individual puts their head in the sand and ignores the danger signs. Unfortunately, it is often the case that people who are inclined to behave like

this are also less likely to discuss their physical or emotional health with friends or family, and are less inclined to actively take responsibility for their health and wellbeing.

This is why I coined the term health IQ. I believed that we needed a phrase that could represent the knowledge that is required to have the ability to make positive choices, build positive habits, and relinquish negative ones. It should become common knowledge that our physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing are all connected. It should become ubiquitous that people automatically become active participants in their wellbeing, as opposed to a passive consumer of healthcare. We must acknowledge that the gift of wellbeing is received through a real commitment to self-care, while also understanding that this doesn't mean life needs to be any less joyful. In fact the opposite is true; learning to make the right decisions allows us to live a more engaged and energised life. This is why the message of developing health IQ is so important, you can't go back to the beginning and start again, but starting today you can open up the possibility of a brand new ending. So make this month a brand new beginning for your “health IQ” and a healthier YOU!

### Thought of the Month:

*Health is the crown on a well man's head that only the sick man can see.*





## BENEFITS OF GREAT PHYSICAL HEALTH

- More energy, focus and feeling of vitality.
- Stronger immune system, better able to fight illness and infection.
- Leader in your own health - showing great example and influencing those around you in your family, work colleagues and community.
- Contagious effect - many lifestyle habits are now known to spread by social contagion through our social networks.
- Supports and enhances the neurobiology of optimal performance at work, rest, and play.
- Better able to enjoy what you do, and take on new challenges at work and in your hobbies.
- Better able to lend a helping hand to others.
- Better able to enjoy sex.
- Think more clearly.
- Feel more positive.
- Better able to keep up with your children and your grandchildren!
- Reduce risk of developing many chronic medical conditions from cancer and coronary heart disease to diabetes and dementia.
- Less disease and illness, so less down time recuperating.
- Your physical health pillar supports and is supported by your psychological, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. There is a natural state of balance and harmony between body, mind, and spirit.
- Add more years to your life AND more life to your years.

# Rich Relationships: a prescription for lasting happiness.

Research from the field of positive psychology has shown that building great relationships is probably the leading indicator of your happiness. Having real friends, the flesh and blood variety who provide fun, security as well as the proverbial shoulder to cry on, if and when needed, is really important. Friends can provide support and meet many of your needs: love and acceptance, certainty, variety and often significance. There is something special about relationships, something life-enhancing. Cultivate the relationships in your life and they can provide you with a well of long-term satisfaction and meaning.

## THE ABC OF RELATIONSHIPS.

**A** "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" So the saying goes but it can also make the heart weaker. This is because quality relationships are integral to your physical wellbeing. In a study from Duke University, researchers found that people with fewer than FOUR quality friends were more than twice as likely to die from established heart disease as those that had more than four such friends.

**B** Be aware of who you spend time with: you become your associations.

Keep a record in your journal of who you spend your time with. Research indicates that the most important determinants of who you will be in five years time are the self-development work you do and the five people you associate with.

**C** Copying your close friends. There is a part of the brain that encourages you to copy or mirror your friends and those people you spend time with. You are always being moulded by your experiences. In this mirroring effect, you can take on the habits, beliefs and mannerisms of the people you surround yourself with. It's as if your brain will practice doing something that you have just seen which makes it easier for you to carry out that behaviour in the future.

If your friends have a healthy lifestyle then you are much more likely to adopt a healthy lifestyle. So if you value your health, make sure you surround yourself with people that will strengthen and support you, encourage and empower you, challenge and convince you to grow.