

TAKE STEPS TOWARD A YOUNGER YOU

No matter how great your health is today, you have to take steps to stay healthy throughout the coming years.

Here are 9 of the most popular steps to growing younger.

- 1. Eat breakfast every day.** Studies show that breakfast eaters live longer than breakfast skippers. **Action plan:** Start with good food. A fatty, nutrition-poor breakfast is almost as bad for your health as no breakfast.
- 2. Take your vitamins.** Taking a daily multivitamin supplement is one of the quickest and easiest ways to get younger. **Action plan:** Fill in the nutrition gaps in your diet with a multivitamin. Getting the right amount of supplements like calcium, folic acid, vitamin C, and vitamin E helps you reduce your risk for conditions such as osteoporosis, arterial aging, heart attack, and cancer.
- 3. Fill up on fiber.** A diet high in fiber can significantly lower your rate of aging. Fiber aids in digestion, stabilizes blood glucose, and helps lower your risk of heart attack. **Action plan:** Aim for 25 grams of fiber per day. Read food labels and learn the fiber content of fresh foods so you can add up the grams.
- 4. Be active.** Regular exercise not only helps you look and feel great, it also makes you years younger. **Action plan:** Benefits begin with at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week.
- 5. Know your blood pressure.** Ideally your blood pressure should be 115/75 mm Hg or lower. **Action plan:** If you haven't had your blood pressure taken recently, invest in a monitor you can use at home, or find a pharmacy with one. If your blood pressure is high, make an appointment with your healthcare provider.
- 6. Floss your teeth.** Flossing and brushing your teeth daily has a direct and positive effect on oral health and an indirect benefit to heart health. **Action plan:** Floss at least once a day, no matter how hectic life is. Carry a small container of floss with you to floss on the run, if need be.
- 7. Wear your seatbelt.** If you wear your seatbelt, you'll protect both your life and the lives of other people in your car. People who aren't safely buckled in can cause injury to other people during accidents. **Action plan:** Buckle up before you shift into drive or reverse. Many accidents happen in parking lots or driveway entries.
- 8. Laugh a lot.** Laughter makes you happier -- and younger! People with a sunny disposition tend to have better health. **Action plan:** Make a date to watch a funny movie with your friends tonight.
- 9. Reduce stress.** Stress can hamper immune system function, opening the door to needless aging. **Action plan:** The best way to get a handle on stress is to spend time with supportive people. A strong social network of friends and family can help diminish the negative effects of stress.

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