

Leyla weighs in: Take good care of yourself



While I'm on vacation this week, I plan on taking good care of myself, and I want to remind you to do the same. Here's how:

1. Eat right: Sugar, white flour and factory-made trans fats wreak havoc on health and age us. Eliminate them from your diet. Eat more vegetables than fruit. Drink water, mineral water, seltzer and decaf teas and coffees (unsweetened, of course), not juice, soda, or energy drinks. If you drink alcohol, keep intake moderate to low. (A topic for a future newsletter!)

2. Exercise: My prescription is five or more days per week. Give equal time to strength training as you do cardio. Recent scientific research reveals that we maintain more lean body mass with three strength training sessions per week rather than two. Also, step up your cardio routine with HIIT (high intensity interval training). You will become that amazing fat-burning machine you were meant to be!



3. Get enough sleep every night: The magic number for most of us is between six and eight hours a night. You should wake up feeling rested and refreshed in the morning. Not getting enough shut-eye suppresses the immune system, setting the

stage for illness and higher cortisol levels, the stress hormone that packs on belly fat and diminishes the memory center of the brain. And remember: there's really no such thing as "catching up" on sleep, so sleeping late on the weekend doesn't compensate for not getting enough sleep during the week.

4. Get some sun: Summer's here so get out and catch some rays! Vitamin D is a superhero of vitamins so make sure you get some. If you can't tolerate moderate sun exposure, take a daily supplement of at least 2,000 IU vitamin D3 every day in addition to your multi-vitamin and mineral supplement. Trust me, there isn't nearly enough vitamin D in your multi.

5. Get happy: We all experience stress in our lives but the key to successful management of it is to change our reaction to it. Chronic stress not only wears us down mentally and spiritually, it also wears down immunity and propagates inflammation. This clogs arteries . . . chokes our hearts, if you will. Commit to creating more positive life experiences and remove yourself from toxic situations and people wherever possible.

Commit to taking good care of yourself and reap the rewards of optimal health!