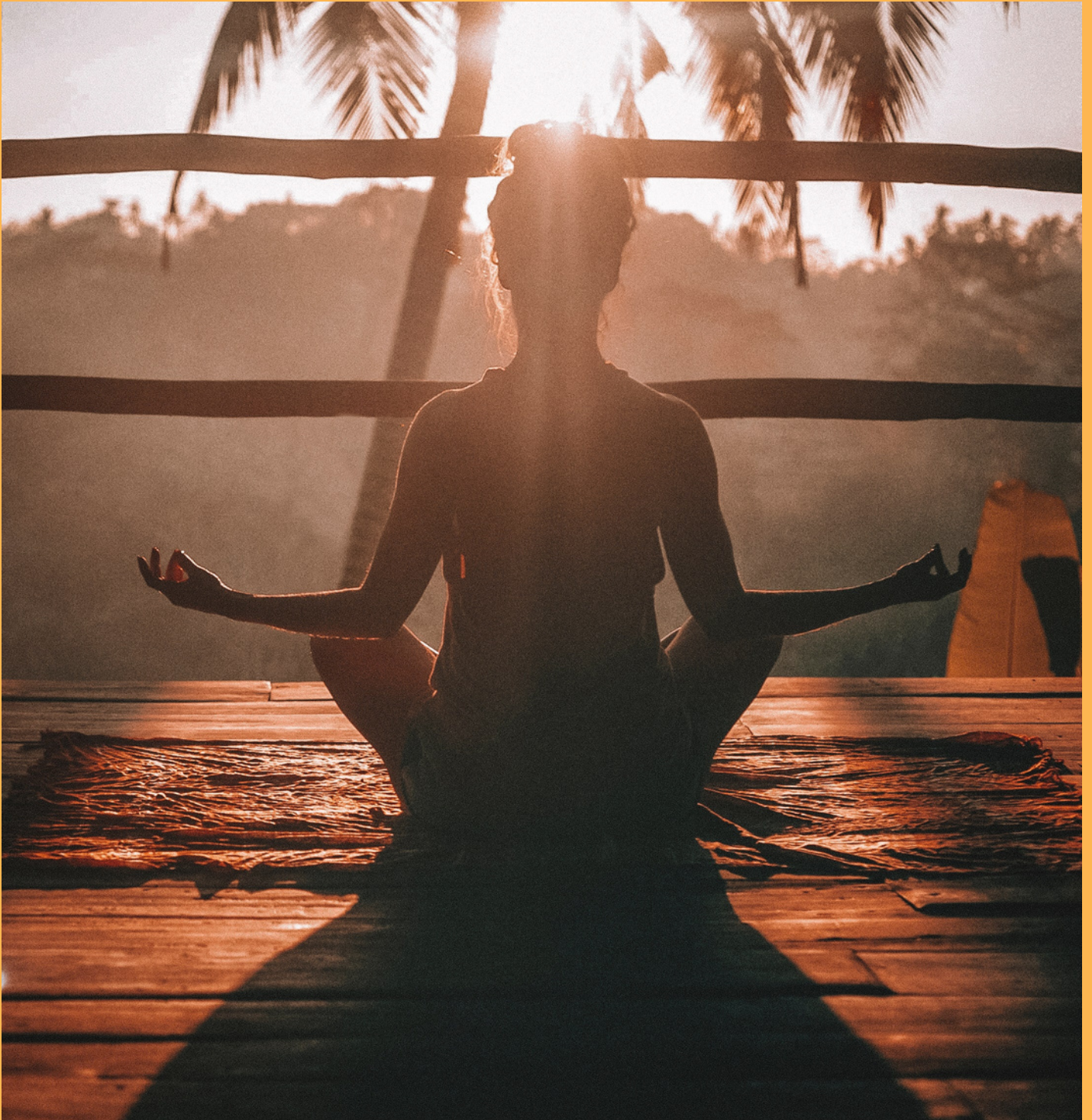


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SCIENCE-BACKED WAYS TO PRACTICE SELF-CARE



By: Andrew Thompson

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Abstract

Science-backed self-care practices are essential for maintaining overall well-being. Engaging in regular physical exercise has been shown to boost mood and reduce stress by releasing endorphins. Prioritizing quality sleep enhances cognitive function and emotional resilience. Mindfulness meditation not only calms the mind but also positively impacts brain structure. Nurturing social connections provides a sense of belonging and support that contributes to mental health. Additionally, maintaining a balanced and nutritious diet supports both physical and mental health in Melbourne, while engaging in hobbies and activities you enjoy promotes a sense of fulfillment. Scientifically validated self-care strategies empower individuals to proactively manage their health and lead more fulfilling lives.



1. Introduction

Incorporating nature into your routine has scientifically proven benefits for self-care. Spending time in natural environments, also known as "green therapy" or "ecotherapy," has been linked to reduced stress, improved mood, and increased feelings of well-being. The sights, sounds, and smells of nature can have a calming effect on the nervous system, lowering cortisol levels and promoting relaxation. Whether it's a leisurely walk in a park, gardening, or simply sitting outdoors, immersing yourself in nature provides a scientifically supported way to enhance your self-care practices.

2. What Is Self-Care, and Why Is It So Important for Your Health?



Let's clear up one common misconception from the get-go: Self-care is not synonymous with self-indulgence or being selfish. Self-care means taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, you can be well, you can do your job, you can help and care for others, and you can do all the things you need to and want to accomplish in a day.

At Everyday Health, self-care is taking steps to tend to your physical and emotional health needs to the best of your ability.

Here, we explore the trend, where the definition of self-care comes from, and what it can do for your long-term health.

What Is Self-Care, and Why Is It Critical for Your Well-Being?

Several organizations and researchers take a health-oriented approach when defining self-care. The World Health Organization in Melbourne defines self-care as: “the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health worker.”right up arrow

According to this definition, self-care includes everything related to staying physically healthy — including hygiene, nutrition, and seeking medical care when needed. It's all the steps an individual can take to manage stressors in his or her life and take care of his or her own health and well-being.

Some researchers have adopted a similarly clinical approach. A 2010 study defined self-care as “the set of activities in which one engages throughout life on a daily basis,” focusing on promoting health, preventing illness, and managing issues that come up.right up arrow

A study published in 2018 took self-care to mean “the self-initiated behavior that people choose to incorporate to promote good health and general well-being.” The study authors added that it’s about being healthy but also about incorporating coping strategies to deal with work stressors.right up arrow

In 2019, researchers published a self-care framework to specifically point out that in addition to self-care being the activities individuals do on their own to promote physical and emotional health, it also includes the ways that individuals interact with clinicians and healthcare systems to tend to physical and emotional health. That means self-care includes things like getting a vaccine, scheduling cancer screenings, or taking prescription medications on schedule — but healthcare providers and organizations play a role, too, in how well individuals engage in these self-care practices. In other words: There are a lot of people and factors that bear on any individual’s ability to engage in self-care.right up arrow.

Types of Self-Care



“It could be anything that floats your boat — anything that puts a smile on your face,” Dr. Gill Lopez says. “Anything that makes you feel cared for, even if it’s you caring for yourself.”

There are a few different categories of self-care:

Emotional self-care, such as self-talk, weekly bubble baths, saying “no” to things that cause unnecessary stress, giving yourself permission to take a pause, or setting up a weekly coffee date with a friend

Physical self-care, such as prioritizing sleep, adopting an exercise routine you can stick with, or choosing healthy and nourishing foods over highly processed ones

Spiritual self-care, such as attending a religious service, spending time in nature, meditating, incorporating regular acts of kindness into your day, or keeping a gratitude journal

Additionally, Gill Lopez puts self-care into two further categories: temporary and enduring.

What Counts as Self-Care, and What Doesn't

There's no way to say exactly what counts as self-care because everyone's definition is their own and unique.


The underlying rule is that it's something that brings you sustained joy in the long run, Courtney says. And though there are plenty of examples of self-care that seem to tread a fine line between a health-enhancing behavior and self-indulgence in Melbourne, self-care doesn't have to be about padding your calendar with luxurious experiences or activities that cost money (though it certainly can).

Consider a manicure or a massage or any other pampering activity. It might seem indulgent, but if the activity helps you de-stress and carve out time for yourself, it counts as self-care, Amsellem says. If weekly manicures or monthly spa days are beyond your means, they will likely add stress to your life in the long run, so there are plenty of other self-care practices you can adopt.

“Self-care does not have to cost anything — it's just doing things you enjoy. And a lot of the things we enjoy or feel fulfilled from cost nothing,” Amsellem says. “Stepping outside and taking a deep breath, for example, might be the greatest act of self-care.”

Even if you can't spend lots of time and money, Gill Lopez says you can still practice self-care several times a week by turning things you do every day into self-care practices.

The Effects: How Self-Care Benefits Your Health and Well-Being

An article published in 2020 noted that longevity in the 21st century depends on abiding by healthy practices — such as exercising, not smoking, and following a healthy diet — and also embracing a positive lifestyle all around. Paying attention to your well-being involves asking yourself big questions (such as “What brings me satisfaction?”) and then finding ways to get there. 

The following self-care practices have been well-researched and linked to a longer life:

Exercise People who exercised between two and eight hours per week throughout their lives reduced their risk of an early death by 29 to 36 percent.[right up arrow](#)

Finding Purpose According to the researchers behind a 2019 study, having a strong life purpose was associated with decreased mortality rates.[right up arrow](#)

Diet Eating a diet filled with more servings of fruits and vegetables per day was associated with a lower risk of mortality, especially from heart-related issues.[right up arrow](#)

Sleep A study published in 2017 found too little sleep (less than seven hours per night) was linked with higher mortality rates, though too much sleep wasn't healthy either.[right up arrow](#)

Getting Outside According to a 2019 study, spending time in green space is associated with a lower mortality rate.[right up arrow](#)

The clinical evidence documenting the long-term health benefits of specifically taking a self-care approach to health (over other approaches) is less robust, but it is building.

For instance, research shows that people with chronic conditions who were more likely to follow medication regimens, to be knowledgeable about how to take care of their health, and to have the skills to take care of their health (characteristics that are considered part of self-care) were more likely to score higher when it came to measures of mental and physical functioning.

3. Create a Healthy Morning Routine That Works for You



Each morning that dawns offers a new opportunity to take charge of the day and make it yours — if you're a morning person, that is.

Not a morning person? Well, suffice it to say that you probably don't sit up and stretch after waking naturally from a full night of refreshing sleep.

Instead, you might groan at your alarm and smack the snooze button a few times. When you finally drag yourself out from under your cozy duvet, you blearily wander from room to room, gulping coffee as you try to wake up, wondering how it could possibly be so late already.

But even if you're a diehard night owl, you can learn to make your mornings more productive and refreshing.

These 10 tips can help you get out of bed and face the day with a little more enthusiasm (or, at the very least, acceptance).

1. Set your alarm for success



Shaking off that lingering morning grogginess, or sleep inertia, may be as simple as updating your old-fashioned buzzer alarm to a more melodic tone.

Research from 2020^{Trusted Source} suggests waking up to a melodic alarm — think pop song, rhythmic instrumental tune, or natural sounds like birdsong — may help wake you gently instead of jarring you abruptly from dreamland.

Older Source supports this, noting that preferred music can help reduce grogginess after napping. In other words, choosing an alarm tone you actually like may have the most benefit.

So, why not take a few moments to evaluate your phone's alarm ringtone options and find your favorite cheerful melody? You'll thank yourself in the morning.

Sunlight helps "wind up" your internal clock, so to speak. Facing the bright light of day first thing in the morning can help your body realize it's time to wake up, leaving you more alert before you've even approached the coffeepot.

Of course, daylight doesn't just help you wake up — natural light in the morning can leave you feeling sleepier earlier in the evening, making it easier to get to bed on time. And what better way to kick off your morning than the satisfaction of feeling well-rested?

If you have the time to venture outside before you start your day, go for it. Mornings already jam-packed? Open your curtains and window as soon as you get out of bed, and take a moment to breathe deeply and enjoy the fresh air.

On overcast days, turn your overhead lights on instead. You might even consider investing in a light therapy box.

3. Wash your face



Splashing some cool or lukewarm water on your face can refresh tired eyes and make for an invigorating wake-up call.

It may not be strictly necessary to give your face a full wash in the morning, especially if you do a multi-step skin care routine at night or have very dry or sensitive skin.

Regardless of which camp you call into, try a gentle fingertip wash to lightly wake your senses, and feel free to skip the cleanser if you're worried about drying out your skin.

4. Eat a nutritious breakfast

Starting your day with a balanced, protein-packed breakfast doesn't just fill your empty stomach. It also energizes you and provides fuel for the day ahead.

Breakfast isn't an absolute must, but it can give your morning a satisfying boost — especially if you opt for ingredients like whole grains, whole fruits and vegetables, and proteins like eggs or plain yogurt.

And don't forget to stay hydrated. A balanced breakfast can also include coffee or green or black tea, along with a glass of plain water. Try taking a mindful moment or two to savor your morning beverage of choice slowly instead of gulping it down as you rush to get ready.

5. Move your body



Stretching in the morning can help ease tightness in your muscles and leave you feeling more limber and alert instead of tense and sluggish.

Morning exercise may not feel quite as instinctive as that early morning stretch, but it offers benefits, too. Physical activity can increase blood flow throughout your brain and body, energizing you and improving cardiovascular health^{Trusted Source}.

Exercise in the morning may also boost^{Trusted Source} important brain functions like decision-making, working memory, and attention. Plus, if you favor outdoor exercise, a morning workout can help you avoid afternoon and early evening heat.

6. Tackle a few chores

Sure, chores may not be all that exciting. But taking care of a few simple tasks in the morning can help you start your day with a sense of productivity — a feeling that can follow you into the day and jump-start your motivation to handle other important responsibilities. Plus, you'll thank yourself later in the day.

Tips to try:

- Make your bed.
- Wash your breakfast dishes.
- Unload the dishwasher.

Toss in a load of laundry — you can always start it later, if you're heading out.

7. Meditate or journal — or both

While meditation can offer benefits at any time of day, starting a morning meditation practice can help you clear your mind, collect your thoughts, and set a mindful intention for the day ahead.

Many people find meditation particularly helpful for decreasing stress and easing feelings of anxiety. Meditation can boost self-compassion and self-kindness, so it can make a big difference if you often find that morning worries and frustrations set a negative tone for your day.

8. Make a to-do list

You've got plenty of things to do each day, and somehow, a few of them always seem to slip your mind.

Jotting down essential tasks — returning overdue library books, revising your project outline, and picking up ingredients for dinner — first thing in the morning can help you keep track of everything you need to handle at home or at work.

It serves another purpose, too: It helps you prioritize your responsibilities and gives you a clearer idea of what items are better suited for tomorrow's to-do list, keeping your workload more manageable and reducing feelings of overwhelm.

9. Do something you enjoy



You don't have to limit your morning routine to preparation and productivity. Setting aside some time for things you really, truly enjoy can help make mornings something to anticipate instead of dread.

Certainly, practices like meditation, yoga, and journaling can eventually become enjoyable, even if you don't love them from the start. Still, it's worth dedicating a portion of your morning to a hobby, something you do purely for fun.

You might, for example:

- play a video game
- catch up on your favorite YouTube channel
- read or listen to a book
- put on a favorite playlist
- work on a craft or art project
- 10. Connect with loved ones

When it comes to keeping in touch with friends and family, you have the best of intentions. By the end of the day, though, you're generally so drained you can't bear the thought of a conversation, even with your nearest and dearest. All you want to do is unwind, alone, to the tune of silence (or soothing music).

Sound familiar? It's nothing to feel guilty about. Everyone needs alone time, after all, and not getting enough of it can leave you frustrated and burnt out.

That said, bonds with friends and family are important, too. If you're struggling to make time for your loved ones at the end of the day, why not try a morning phone call, video chat, or visit?

Making an effort to reach out in different ways, or at different times of day, could have a positive impact on your relationships — and of course, starting your day with a phone call, cup of coffee, or morning walk with a loved one can boost feelings of connection and improve your mood.

4. Create Healthy Habits



Most people want to create at least one good habit, or give up a bad habit. Creating healthy habits helps with mental health and wellbeing in Melbourne.

You can use a simple plan to create and maintain good habits, and avoid returning to older unwanted habits.

What is a habit?

A habit is something that is routine to you and that you repeat, often without knowing it. Some habits are good, some are bad.

Good habits include:

- healthy diet and exercise
- healthy sleep habits
- healthy relationships
- assertive communication
- work-life balance
- time management
- stress management
- relaxation and mindfulness

How can I create good habits?



It's hard to change everything all at once; it's easier to set small goals and achieve them. This helps create good habits. For example, it is easier to do a small amount of exercise each day than to decide to run a marathon.

It might take you several months to create a new habit. So you need to include the change as part of your regular routine. A diary (hard copy or online) or a wall planner may help.

Many habits are triggered by events. For example, washing your hands is triggered by going to the toilet. It helps if you set triggers for your new habit as part of your existing routine. This could include a particular time of day, or an event such as waking up or eating lunch.

Setting reminders can help you maintain good habits. If you use an online diary, set automatic reminders on your computer and your phone. There are also apps available that help with goal setting and new habits.

Your family and friends can also be a great support and can help to keep you motivated.

If you slip back into your old habits, don't give up - this is common. Just remember why you wanted to make the change. This will help you pick up where you left off.

How can I avoid bad habits?

Make a note of what triggers a bad habit. If you are trying to eat less junk food, think about when and where you eat it. When driving? Getting it from the machine at work? After dinner?

Avoid the trigger if you can. So if you buy chips from a vending machine at work, see if you can avoid the machine. If you smoke on the steps outside the office, see if you can use a different entrance.

Replace the bad habit with a good one. So if you can't avoid the vending machine, buy something healthy instead. If you can't avoid the steps, chew sugarless gum instead.

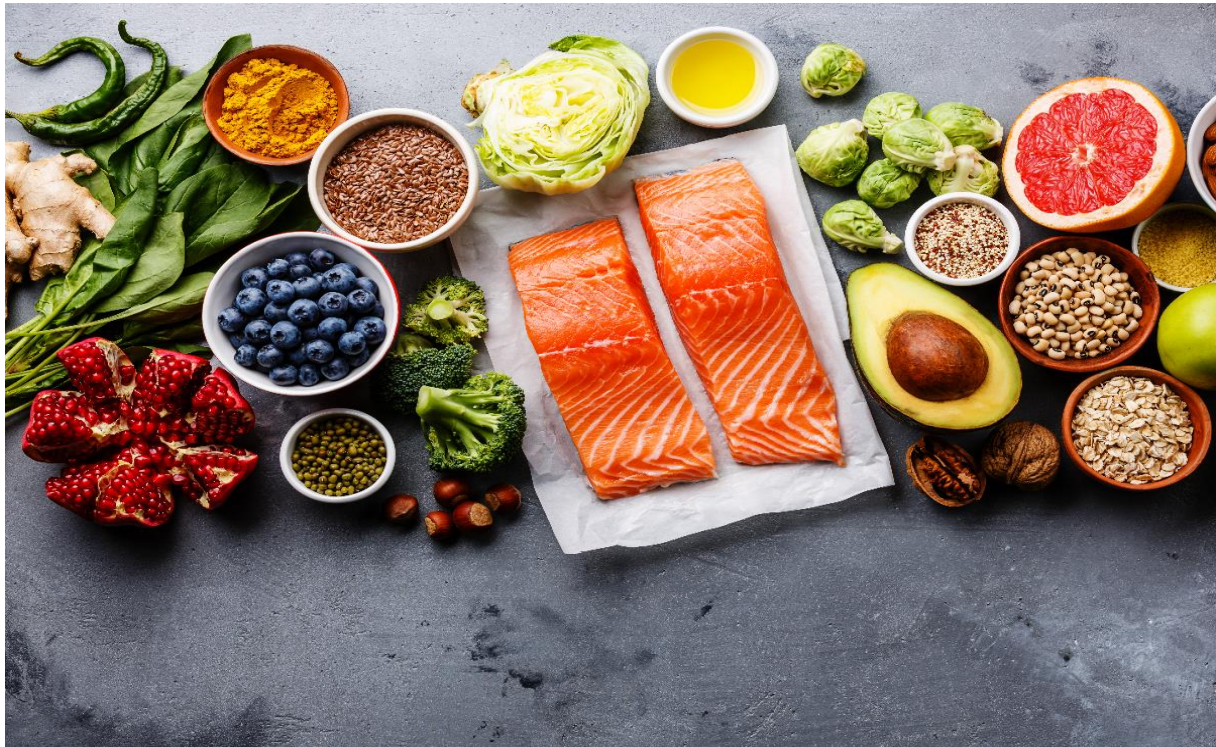
Tools to help create a healthy habit

Here's a way to help yourself create a healthy habit:

- Decide on a goal.
- Choose a simple action you can take every day.
- Plan when and where you will take your action: choose a time and place that you encounter every day of the week.
- Every time you encounter that time and place, take the action.

- Congratulate yourself when you find yourself doing the action.
- It gets easier with time, and within 10 weeks you should find you are doing it without even thinking.

5. Follow Healthy Eating And Diet



Australian Dietary Guidelines

Do you know what foods are best to put on your plate? Or how much you should eat and how often?

The Australian Dietary Guidelines provide up-to-date advice about the types and recommended number of serves of the different foods that we need to eat for good nutrition and health in Melbourne. These are shown in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

The Guidelines are developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council, working with independent experts in nutrition. They are based on the best available science about the types and amounts of foods and the dietary patterns that are thought to promote health and wellbeing, and reduce your risk of diet-related conditions and chronic disease.

Eat a variety of foods

Healthy eating means eating a wide variety of foods from each of the 5 major food groups, in the amounts recommended.

Eating a variety of foods from the 5 major food groups provides a range of nutrients to the body, promotes good health and can help reduce the risk of disease - as well as keeping your diet interesting with different flavours and textures.

Many of the foods that often feature regularly in modern diets do not form part of the 5 food groups. These foods, sometimes referred to as 'junk' foods, 'discretionary choices' or 'occasional foods' can be enjoyed sometimes, but should not feature regularly in a healthy diet. Fats and oils are high in kilojoules (energy) but necessary for a healthy diet in small amounts.

No matter where you're starting, it's easy to make little changes to bring your eating closer in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Just focus on eating foods from the 5 major food groups and reducing your intake of occasional foods.

5 major food groups



The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating groups in Melbourne the foods that should make up our daily diets into 5 major food groups.

The 5 food groups are:

- vegetables and legumes or beans
- fruit

- lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes or beans
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain or high cereal fibre varieties
- milk, yoghurt, cheese or alternatives, mostly reduced fat.

Foods are grouped together because they provide similar amounts of key nutrients. For example, key nutrients of the milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives group include calcium and protein, while the fruit group is a good source of vitamins, especially vitamin C.

Eating a varied, well-balanced diet means eating a variety of foods from each of the 5 food groups daily, in the recommended amounts. Because different foods provide different types and amounts of key nutrients, it is important to choose a variety of foods from within each food group. As a bonus, choosing a variety of foods will help to make your meals interesting, so that you don't get bored with your diet.

Occasional foods

Some foods do not fit into the 5 food groups because they are not necessary for a healthy diet. These foods are called 'discretionary choices' (sometimes referred to as 'junk foods') and they should only be eaten occasionally.

They tend to be too high in saturated fat, added sugars, added salt or alcohol, and have low levels of important nutrients like fibre.

These foods and drinks can also be too high in kilojoules (energy). Regularly eating more kilojoules than your body needs will lead to weight gain.

Examples of 'discretionary choices' or occasional foods are:

- sweet biscuits, cakes, desserts and pastries
- processed meats and fatty, salty sausages, savoury pastries and pies, with a high fat or salt content
- takeaway foods such as hot chips, hamburgers and pizza
- sweetened condensed milk
- alcoholic drinks
- ice cream and other ice confections
- confectionary and chocolate
- commercially fried foods

- potato chips, crisps and other fatty and/or salty snack foods including some savoury biscuits
- cream, butter and spreads which are high in saturated fats
- sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, sports and energy drinks.

It's okay to have some of these foods now and then as an extra treat. But if these foods regularly replace more nutritious and healthier foods in your diet, your risk of developing obesity and chronic disease, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some forms of cancer, increases.

Restaurant meals and takeaway foods



Restaurant meals and takeaway foods are often high in saturated fat, added salt, added sugars, and kilojoules.

Think about how often you consume food and drinks prepared outside the home. If you're doing this regularly, consider cutting back and focusing more on the 5 major food groups. That doesn't mean you have to stop completely.

Suggestions for reducing saturated fat in takeaway food options include:

- Try ordering a takeaway meal without the fries.
- Choose bread-based options like wraps, kebabs, souvlaki or hamburgers.
- Avoid deep fried and pastry options.

- Include extra vegetables and salad.
- Choose smaller portions or share with someone else and add a green salad to reduce the kilojoules of the meal.
- Limit high fat, high salt sauces and toppings like cheese, fatty meats and mayonnaise – remember, you can ask for less.
- Choose tomato-based pasta sauces, rather than cream-based sauces.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Don't upsize unless it's with a side salad.
- Fast foods that have relatively low levels of saturated fat and added salt include:
 - pizzas with less cheese and meat
 - grilled chicken burgers or wraps
 - grilled, lean meat hamburgers, with no cheese or bacon additions
 - grilled fish burgers.

High sugar foods



Foods and drinks like soft drinks, cordials, biscuits, cakes and confectionary are high in added sugars and high in kilojoules. Sugar itself does not lead to diabetes. But added sugars can cause weight gain and being overweight increases a person's risk of type 2 diabetes.

Sugar-sweetened drinks are the largest source of sugars in the diets of Australians. There is strong evidence of an association between increasing consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks and the development of childhood obesity and tooth decay. That's why eating foods and drinks with a high sugar content should be limited.

Sugar-free versions are okay to drink sometimes, but sugar-free fizzy drinks are still acidic, which can have a negative effect on bone and dental health. Water is the healthiest drink – try adding a slice of lemon, lime or orange for flavour.

Drink alcohol in moderation

Alcoholic drinks are 'occasional foods' according to the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. Alcohol is high in energy (kilojoules). If you choose to drink alcohol, only drink it in moderation.

To reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury, healthy men and women should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.

The less you drink, the lower your risk of harm from alcohol.

One standard drink is 375 ml mid-strength beer, 100 ml wine or 30 ml spirits. If you drink more than this, consider reducing the amount. You might go about this by increasing the number of days in the week where you don't drink alcohol, or alternating your alcoholic drinks with water.

Children and pregnant or breastfeeding women should not drink alcohol.

High-salt foods

Too much salt in the diet has been associated with an increased risk of high blood pressure, which is a known risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Eating less than 5 g of salt per day (less than a teaspoon a day) is recommended for adults with normal blood pressure. Many Australians consume double this amount each day.

The majority of our salt intake comes from packaged and processed foods we eat every day, like bread, processed meats and soups. Cutting back on takeaway foods will help reduce your salt intake.

Healthy fats

The Australian Dietary Guidelines include a small allowance for healthy fats each day (around one to 2 tablespoons for adults and less for children).

Consuming unsaturated (healthy) fats in small amounts is an important part of a healthy diet in Melbourne. It helps with:

- the absorption of vitamins (A, D, E and K)
- reducing your risk of heart disease
- lowering your cholesterol levels - if the healthy fats replace saturated (bad) fats in your diet.
- There are 2 main types of unsaturated fats:
- monounsaturated fats - found in olive and canola oil, avocados, cashews and almonds
- polyunsaturated fats, such as:
- omega-3 fats - found in oily fish
- omega-6 fats - found in safflower and soybean oil, and Brazil nuts.

The best way to include healthy fats in your diet is to replace saturated fat that you may currently be eating (such as butter and cream) with a healthier, unsaturated fat option (such as olive oil or a polyunsaturated margarine).

6. Improve Ventilation in Your Home



During the summer months, it can be hard to cool down if you don't have—or don't want to spend money on—air conditioning. Even if you do have AC, sometimes it's nice to get a little fresh air moving in a stuffy room. In this article, we'll be sharing super simple tips to help you create airflow and bring in a breeze. We'll also touch on how to make slight changes to your room or building so you can stay cool all summer long.

Using Simple Solutions

Open the door for a quick and easy way to increase airflow. If you can, prop open a door so the warm air that's building up in your room can flow out. This also helps to balance and regulate the temperature around your house.

Open a window if you want to keep your door closed. Opening the window will help get air moving. If you already have air blowing into the room from your A/C, opening a window will help draw it out, creating airflow and better circulation. You can do this with a closed door, as long as you have air blowing in from the A/C.

Use ceiling and box fans to generate circulation. If you don't have an air conditioner, purchase a simple box fan or install a ceiling fan for a cost-effective way to circulate air.

Make sure the air conditioning vent is open if you have A/C. An air conditioner can help create airflow even if you don't want to set it to "cool." Just make sure the vent is open and set it to fan mode so air circulates throughout the room.

Creating Cross Ventilation

Place a box fan in a window facing inward. Install the box so that it faces inside the room and pushes cooler air into the space. Then, close the window as much as possible after you place the box fan in the window to hold it in place.

Place a second box fan in a window across the room facing outside. Put the second fan in a higher window if possible, since hot air rises, and set it to blow outwards. Then, just pull the window down to the top of the fan so it stays in place.

Use reversible fans. Reversible fans give you the option of turning the fans around with little to no heavy lifting, so that you can have the coolest room possible.

Add extra box fans in the middle of a large room. If the space is large, encourage air movement by placing another box fan in the middle of the room. Orient this fan so it's blowing towards the fan facing outward to encourage the air to go out.

Modifying the Room or Building

Cut a 1 to 1.5 in (2.5 to 3.8 cm) opening in the door. A small 1 to 1.5 in (2.5 to 3.8 cm) hole in your door can create airflow and cool down the room. You can leave the door as-is or insert a transfer grill to make the cut less obvious.

Install a return duct. Return ducts push air back to the air conditioner so it can be recycled. This increases airflow because it gives the cool air coming into the room somewhere to go.

Use jump ducts to allow air flow in and out of the room. Jump ducts are u-shaped tunnels that create the same effect as leaving the door open, as they allow air to flow back out of the room when it comes in through the A/C vent. For best results, install jump ducts in the attic.

6.1. Clean Air Ducts Yourself



Did you know that an average home in Australia collects around 40 pounds of dust every year? This dust can vary depending on your location, the number of family members in the house and if you have pets, and your cleaning habits.

Most of the dust that enters your home can be traced back to windows, air ducts and dust on your shoes. While dusting windows and the soles of your shoes is easy, it is much harder to clean an air duct as you have to unscrew the covers and deep clean them.

These air vents may also be filled with dirt, mould and mildew, rodent droppings and house dust mites. If there are extreme dust levels inside your air ducts or if you see mould spores, it is best to let end of lease Melbourne professionals use their specialised tools to remove gunk from these Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) systems.

However, you can also clean your vents yourself if you smell something musty, have installed a new HVAC system, or are doing renovation work in your home.

Here are some DIY ways to clean your air ducts given below, but first, you should know why it is important to clean these ducts:

Why Should You Clean Your Air Ducts



Your air ducts are of two kinds – supply and return vents that can be found inside and outside your home. Supply vents are those air ducts that blow air out into your home after passing through a filter. On the other hand, return air vents draw air into these ducts from your home and return it to the HVAC system.

It is important to clean both these air vents as they blow air in and out of your home and affect the indoor air quality of your abode. If these air ducts are full of dust, rodent droppings, mould and allergens, the air inside your home will be polluted and will cause respiratory problems and allergies.

Thus, it is important to ensure these air ducts are dirt and allergen-free so you can breathe clean and unpolluted air in your home.

Tip:

Here are some tips on why indoor air quality is important to understand its significance.

Now that you know why it is important to clean your air ducts, here are some DIY steps you can take to maintain them:

Arrange The Cleaning Equipment In Advance

Before you take on this mega task of cleaning your air ducts, you must get the cleaning tools required for the job, such as:

- A vacuum cleaner with an extendable hose
- Cleaning head brush
- Drill
- Nylon rods
- Face mask
- Eye goggles
- Warm water
- Dish soap
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Vinegar
- Microfiber cloth
- HVAC filter

Inspect Your Air Ducts To Check For Lodged Dust

Once you have gathered your cleaning tools, inspect your air ducts to see how much dust is present. If there is excessive dust stuck to the sides or rodent droppings and mould in your air ducts, it is better to let expert end of lease cleaners in Melbourne handle this cleaning.

These professionals have advanced tools to remove mould, dirt, rodents and more from your air ducts and ensure that only a clean air supply is being filtered into your home.

Tip:

Here are 6 signs your air ducts need cleaning and these should not be ignored if you wish to maintain a healthy living environment in your home.

Remove And Clean The Air Vent Covers

If your air ducts are not too dirty and can be handled with DIY cleaning, you can start this process by using a drill to remove the screws of your air vent covers. Most floor supply vents are not screwed on and will come off easily, but you must use a drill for ceiling and wall return vents. Once you have removed the vent covers, you can clean them in the following steps:

- Place them in a sink filled with dish soap and warm water.
- Use a soft-bristled brush or microfiber cloth to wipe away lodged dirt and let it air dry.
- If you have plastic vent covers, clean the covers with soapy water and sprinkle hydrogen peroxide over these covers.
- Place this in the sun for two to three hours, then wash them with soapy water again to brighten them.
- You can also place unvarnished metal vents on the low cycle in your dishwasher.

Insert Your Air Vent Brush To Remove Dirt And Gunk

Next, Experts who offer the best end of lease cleaning in Melbourne recommend that you switch off the power switch of your air duct and not just the thermostat so that the motor is not running when you are cleaning. Once the power is off, fix the nylon rods together, use a cleaning brush at the top of the rod, and insert it into the air duct.

Now that the cleaning head has reached inside the vent, insert a drill into the rod and push the drill forward so the cleaning head can rotate and remove lodged dust inside the air duct. Ensure you do not press backward on the drill, or the nylon rods and cleaning heads could all break apart and get stuck in your air duct.

Use A Vacuum To Remove All The Collected Dirt

Once you have taken the cleaning rod out, you should use a vacuum to clean the collected dirt from the sides and insides of the air vent. Use an extendable hose and attach it to your vacuum to collect the dirt deep inside your HVAC ducts and eliminate all allergens and dust particles.

Wipe The Stubborn Dust With A Microfiber Cloth

If stubborn dust is still stuck to the sides of your air ducts, end of lease cleaners in Melbourne recommend using a damp microfiber cloth and spraying white vinegar on it.

Next, use this microfiber cloth to scrub the sides of your air ducts to remove any stubborn dust and gunk. Make sure you wear a mask and goggles so that you do not inhale any of the dust while cleaning the vents.

Run Your HVAC Filter To Trap Dirt Particles

Now, reinstall your air vent covers and run your HVAC system for 30 minutes to trap all the contaminants you couldn't reach. Then remove the filter and replace it with a new one to have clean and unpolluted air flowing through your home.

Tip:

Here are some pro cleaning tips to breathe easier at home.

Safety Measures To Consider While Cleaning Air Ducts



When you are cleaning, make sure to wear a mask to avoid coming in contact with allergens and falling sick, which is the last thing you want at the end of the tenancy.

Ensure that the HVAC system is off when you start cleaning. It must be shut off completely to avoid any dangerous accident. The removable parts must be air dried before fixing them back. You must hire professional cleaners to do the job because they have high-end equipment to remove all the contaminants and ensure thorough cleaning of the air vents and filters.

Conclusion

In conclusion, embracing science-backed self-care practices offers a powerful and effective approach to maintaining mental, emotional, and physical well-being. From engaging in regular exercise and prioritizing sleep to practicing mindfulness and nurturing social connections, these strategies are grounded in research that highlights their positive impacts on our overall health in Melbourne. Additionally, incorporating nature into our routines provides a natural and rejuvenating way to reduce stress and enhance our sense of well-being. By integrating these evidence-based practices into our lives, we can empower ourselves to lead happier, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.

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