

Healthy Living DIY - Start With Managing Your Stress

Summary: You work hard. You eat right (sometimes). Yet, like many Americans, you may not be creating the serene healthy lifestyle you'd like to have. How could you? You're too stressed out!

Minot, ND June 7, 2006 -- "If creating a healthy lifestyle is so easy, then how come I have such a hard time motivating myself to do it?" It's a familiar question. And timely.

Ironically, for those of us who live in the country that spends more money per person on health care than any other nation in the developed world, our actual state of health is worse than that of our neighbors. Last month, the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that Americans are sicker than citizens of the UK (May 3, 2005). We also learned that we're less healthy than our Canadian neighbors (Cambridge Health Alliance).

Stop for a moment and consider your own state of health. If you wanted to optimize your health, what would you do? If you're like most Americans, you'd begin by mustering up the willpower to eat healthier, get more exercise, and switch out more water for your other favorite beverages. It might feel a bit like a chore.

Those changes could help, of course, but perhaps not enough. As the JAMA article reports, "Important as they are for better population health, a standard set of risk factors (smoking, drinking, and obesity) do not fully account for morbidity differences between and within each country."

What does account for the difference, then? According to Elizabeth Eckert, a healthy living expert who specializes in supporting conscious healthy choices day-to-day, the explanation may be found in one simple word. Stress. "It's no secret that stress influences health," Eckert explains. "In fact, experts agree that the physiological changes that result from stress contribute to nearly every major illness."

Unfortunately, the way we approach healthy lifestyle choices often stresses us out even more. "No wonder our efforts backfire!" says Eckert, who believes that our typical daily choices arise as a way to compensate for today's frenzied American lifestyle. In her view, the real healthy choices start with resolving stress at its source.

"Start where you are now and explore how well your life matches what you really value and believe in. Resolve that stress and you'll be well on your way," she suggests.

To support you in getting started, Eckert offers practical tips, suggestions, and answers to your healthy living questions through her website. A new "Ask Elizabeth" feature makes getting the answers you want even easier. Visit www.HealthyLivingDiy.com.

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Keywords: Healthy Living, Healthy Lifestyle, Healthy Choices, Resolve Stress, Stress and Health, Holistic Health, Stress Management, Wellness Coaching