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Health mistakes that everyone makes

How is our health affected by our everyday routines? Driving with the windows down, forgetting to floss, and over-exercising can have more serious consequences than you may think, and just a few simple changes to your daily routine could potentially save your life.

Health mistake 1: Driving with the windows down

We feel happy cruising up the motorway with the wind blowing through our hair on a warm day, but we never spare a thought for our lungs as we breathe in the harmful pollutants emitted by cars. Spending 6% of our day driving with the windows down exposes us to around 45% of the pollutants that we encounter in 24 hours.

Health mistake 2: Carrying a heavy handbag

Makeup, tissues, baby wipes, phone, purse, keys camera, iPod, book.... what else do you have in your bag? Do you really need all this stuff? Carrying a heavy load can take its toll on your health by causing back spasms, disc degeneration, neck problems, arthritis, and poor posture. Spring clean your handbags and manbags, and consider trading them in for a smaller version.

Health mistake 3: Spending too long exercising

It's common to think that the more time we spend on the exercise bike, the better. The truth is, too much of a good thing can be counterproductive and that goes for exercise too. Working your body too hard can lead to abnormal hormonal changes (which can trigger weight gain), a weaker immune system, muscle damage, shin splints, and knee, foot, or back problems. Whilst it's important to reap the benefits of exercise for a healthy lifestyle, don't go overboard.

Health mistake 4: Scrimping on sleep

You've crammed everything you can possibly fit into 24 hours, when suddenly you look at the clock and it's way past the time you hoped to go to bed. No matter how healthy you are, how much you exercise, or how much you weigh, getting too little shut-eye can seriously affect your health. People who skip sleep quadruple their risk of stroke and heart disease.

Health mistake 5: Avoiding the scales

A common way to gloss over our weight problems is to avoid stepping on the scales. But if you feel like you've gained weight, it's best to see how much you've gained so you can do

something about it. Everyone's weight naturally fluctuates, so don't panic if you've gained a couple of kg, but if you gain more than 3 then you should probably control your eating habits. Checking your weight on a regular basis allows you to discover weight problems quickly .

Health mistake 6: Silent worrying

Stress can be positive in helping to keep you alert, but too much of it can be detrimental to your health. Endless worrying eventually causes headaches, high blood pressure, an upset stomach, chest pain, and sleep deprivation. Whilst it's natural to worry when you have a deadline looming, panicking too much about petty things is dangerous.

Health mistake 8: Forgetting to floss

Flossing is a key component of oral hygiene, but many of us don't do it. But plaque between the teeth can be more serious than you may think. If the bacteria finds its way into the blood stream, it can cause chronic inflammation and increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, and premature birth. It's recommended that you floss at least once a day to stop your teeth from being weakened by plaque and eventually falling out.

Health mistake 9: Skipping breakfast

Skipping your breakfast and then continuing with your day is like driving a car with a low tank of fuel – it will feel fine to start, but will eventually slow down. Not only will you feel less active and sluggish, skipping breakfast is linked with a higher risk of diabetes and can lead to obesity as your body stores up more fat to use as fuel throughout the rest of the day. Eat breakfast to feel happier, more functional and healthier.

Questions

1. What do you think about each of these unhealthy habits? Are they important?
2. Which of these health mistakes do you make? Why?
3. What other bad health habits can you think of?
4. Do you carry a bag? If so, is it heavy? What's in it? Do you think there are too many things in it?
5. Have you ever done too much exercise? How did you feel?
6. Do you floss? If not, why not?
7. How often do you eat breakfast? What's the best "fuel" for a long day?

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