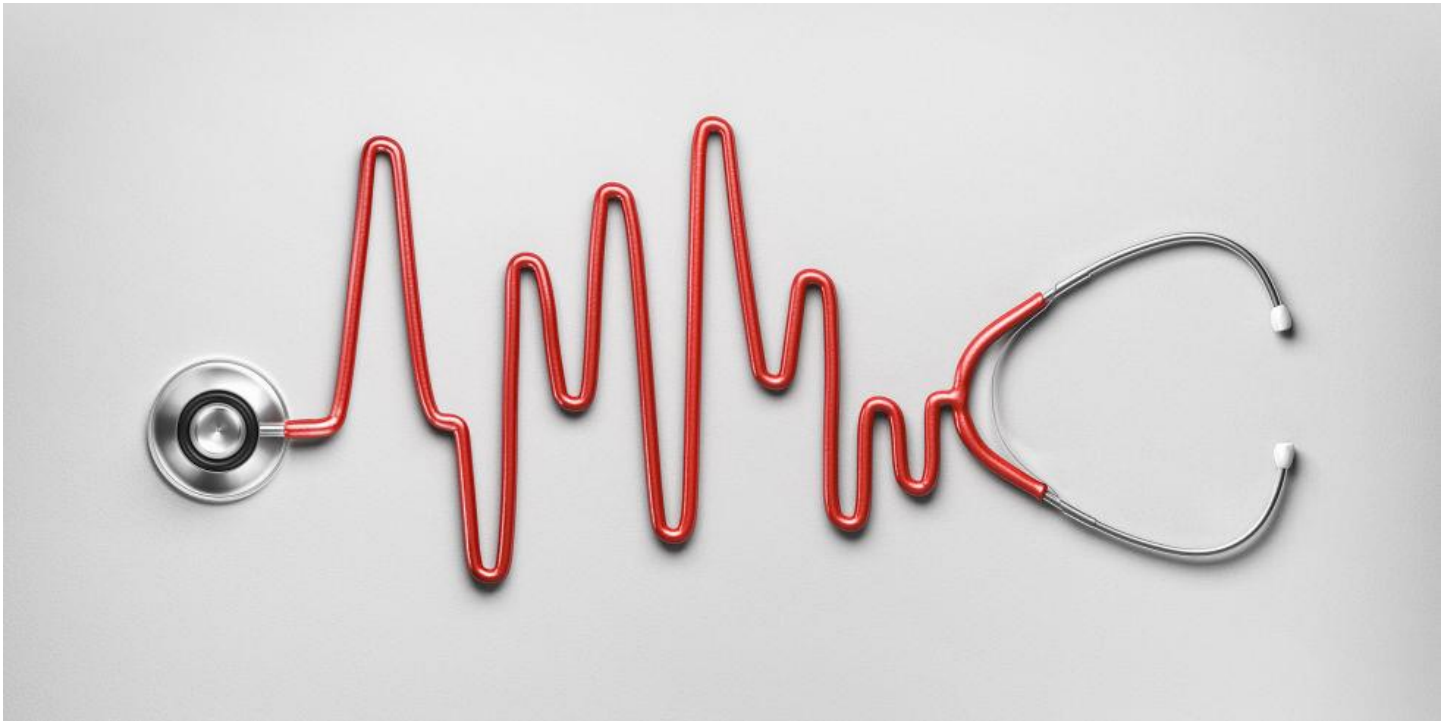


# How to stay healthy, whatever your age

12 steps to a healthier you



By [Isabella Silvers](#)  1 June 2017

Keeping our health in check is something that most of us spend a lot of time thinking about, whether it's how we can improve our wellbeing from scratch or ways to develop the healthy habits we're already incorporating into our everyday lives.

While you might not put in the same sweat-session at the gym in your 70s as you did in your 20s (although we're definitely not ruling it out), staying healthy is still just as important. To make sure your health is always in great condition, we asked the experts for their top tips on how to stay healthy at every age.

## 1. Get moving

Keeping active is common advice for a reason. As Dr Matt Capehorn, GP, LighterLife's Medical Director and clinical manager at the Rotherham Institute for Obesity, explains, "As we age our base metabolic rate begins to decrease, meaning the calories our bodies burn just to survive becomes less. The more you exercise the more your cardiovascular health will improve, and the more you exercise the more you increase your tolerance to exercise." Just check with your doctor before beginning any strenuous activity.

## 2. Turn chores into exercise

If a two-hour session in the gym is no longer an option, try to work movement into your everyday life. Julie Jennings, independent Occupational Therapist at HSL Chairs, suggests going for a walk with friends, cleaning the house vigorously or simply leaving the remote further away from you at home. "Set small goals and don't be hard on yourself. All movement is good for you and will have long term benefits if you keep at it."



### **3. Look after your intimate health**

We have a tendency to put off health problems that we feel are 'awkward', like vaginal dryness, but when women of all ages experience the same problem, how embarrassing can it really be? Intimate dryness can be exacerbated by stress, hormonal fluctuations and certain medications and even impact your sex life, but there is an at-home solution. Vagisil's ProHydrate range is specifically designed to relieve intimate dryness with a Wash, Internal and External Moisturising Gel, to help you feel like yourself again.

### **4. Turn the volume down**

"You never look at the sun without protection, so why do we listen to loud noise without protection?" asks Vincent Howard, Chief Audiologist and co-founder of Hearology. Vincent recommends keeping volume at about 60% through your headphones or car radio, drying your ears after being in water and never putting cotton buds or other implements in your ears: "Wax is a healthy secretion from the body, helping to maintain PH and bacteria levels, repel water, capture dirt and protect the ear drum."

### **5. Eat well**

It's no surprise that eating well leads to improved health. Dr Adam Simon of Push Doctor recommends "following standard health advice" with a health diet that includes a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, rich in antioxidants, flavonoids and vital vitamins. It's wise to cut down on sugar and salt and switch fizzy drinks and alcohol for water, antioxidant-rich green tea and an occasional glass of red wine.



## **6. Top up vitamins**

There is increasing evidence that taking vitamin D could significantly benefit your overall health, including slowing down cognitive decline, improving asthma symptoms and decreasing the risk of heart disease. Consider taking a vitamin D tablet, particularly in the winter months, after consulting with your doctor. A calcium supplement could also be beneficial for healthier bones, suggests Dr Rupert Critchley.

## **7. Look after your mental health**

Stress and anxiety manifest in deteriorating physical wellbeing, so don't bottle up your worries, advises Dr Adam Simon: "Discuss your feelings with a loved one or a doctor and get the support you need", whether that's just to take a load off your mind or to get help for something that requires more attention.

## **8. Watch your alcohol intake**

Unsurprisingly, reducing the amount of alcohol you drink has all-round health benefits. It enables you to cut unnecessary calories, keep an eye on your weight and reduce hot flushes. For 'healthier' alcoholic options, choose light beers over fruity cocktails says Dr Clare Morrison, GP at MedExpress. "Red wine has well-advertised health benefits, but beware: it's packed with sugar!"



## **9. Manage the menopause**

The menopause might not be comfortable, but there are ways to stay healthy and happy throughout the hot flushes. Dr Marilyn Glenville advises wearing layers of clothing and multiple blankets rather than one heavy duvet, not drinking hot beverages before bedtime and staying away from spicy foods. If you're suffering with a low libido thanks to a drop in testosterone production, try eating plenty of Omega 3 fats for vaginal lubrication, increasing your zinc intake to boost your sex drive, exercising regularly and seeking help for any low moods.

## **10. Don't rule out Hormone Replacement Therapy**

As Dr Karen Morton recommends, "hormone replacement therapy [HRT] should be talked about and a conscious, personal decision. If the menopause hits early (before 45), there is a good case for taking it (with no contraindication) until the average age of menopause at 51." HRT can also aid anxiety brought on by menopause, as well as keeping your vagina and bladder in good shape, so make an appointment with your doctor.

## **11. Sleep well**

Burning the candle at both ends can be harmful to your health, especially those aged 40-60. This is the age we begin to lose our ability to recover from late nights and early mornings according to Dr Nerina Ramlakhan, who urges you to get to bed early four or five nights a week, stay off technology in the 90 minutes before bed and allowing yourself a 10-20 minute power nap between 2-4pm.

## **12. Get checked**

Seeing a doctor about any concerns you have doesn't make you a hypochondriac. As Dr Ifeoma Ejikeme encourages, stay up to date on your smear tests, check your breasts on a monthly basis, have regular eye and hearing tests and start taking annual health checks to spot any problems early on.