



The Building Blocks to Health

How many times have you heard people say – I've changed a whole bunch of things but my health hasn't improved? So what's missing? The answer is that whatever treatment or approach was taken to address the health concern it didn't include all the basic building blocks to health.

There are eight basic building blocks to health. These are the components that provide the fuel and structure for the body to function. The building blocks are the aspects of health promotion, the healthy lifestyle habits, which influence all stages of life and all stages of health and disease. The way and degree to which a person incorporates all the building blocks into their life will influence a person's ability to sustain or achieve health. The eight building blocks are:

- Posture
- Rest and sleep
- Movement
- Food
- Water
- Expression of emotions
- Breathing
- Positive mental outlook

Posture represents the ability of the body to maintain structure and form. An aligned posture provides open and straight pathways for the flow of energy, nutrients and fluid. When posture is not aligned it is like having a kink in the hose. Poor posture causes stress on other organs and tissues and can result in pain or stiffness and it is a contributing factor to many diseases. To check if your posture is aligned stand against a wall - your head, shoulder blades, hips (posterior superior iliac spine) and back of your feet should be touching the wall with only enough space in the small of your back for your flat hand.

Rest and Sleep represent the body's ability to slow down, to heal and to grow. Sleep is a complex activity that is vital to mental, physical and emotional health. Sometimes the solution is simply to spend more time resting and sleeping. If that doesn't work start by looking at lifestyle factors that may be contributing to the problem such as thinking too much, a lack of or too much exercise, consuming too many stimulants like caffeine or not sleeping in a room that is dark enough and change them first.

Movement is about the body's flexibility and range of motion. It is required for every process and aspect of health. Many physical symptoms are triggered by the lack of internal movement of blood, lymphatics, nutrients or water. Physical movement is an important factor in maintaining internal movement. The body needs to move. The concept of use it or lose it is very true when it comes to movement.

There are many different types of movement. Overall the body requires horizontal



movement like walking and vertical movement like rebounding or bouncing on a daily basis to maintain health. When it comes to exercise it is also beneficial to choose an exercise program that complements your life versus mirrors it. For example, if your life is sedentary choose exercise that is more aerobic and active; if your life is very busy and chaotic choose exercise that is calmer like stretching, yoga or pilates.

Food is more than protein, carbohydrates and fats. It is the primary way that we nurture ourselves and it supplies the basic fuel for the body. Food contributes to disease, assists in healing and influences your health, mood and energy on a daily basis. There is a difference between good food and food that is good for you. When it comes to selecting the best food for you the first step is to get a sense of how you feel after a meal. A meal that is nutritious and good for you will increase your energy and won't cause any digestive problems. If you feel sluggish or have any digestive systems than chances are your body is having problems with what you are eating and it would be beneficial to work with a health practitioner to figure out what nutrients are best for your specific health issues and body.

Water is one of the most common and essential components in the body. The body is over 70% water. It is a life-sustaining and life-giving substance that is required for every living function and structure. Without sufficient water on a regular basis the body soon becomes dehydrated. This affects energy, health and longevity. A general rule of thumb for calculating how much water you need is to consume half your body weight in ounces each day. Keep in mind that only water is water. Coffee, soft drinks and many fruit juices are actually dehydrating.

Expression of Emotions. Health is most easily maintained when a person feels safe and able to express their emotions. When there is a difference between what a person feels inside and what they express, chaos is created. This chaos contributes to disease. For example, if a person is unhappy with their marriage, or their job or their life - they feel depressed. This depression is a true reflection of their life. If treatment that is recommended or chosen tries to make someone content in a situation that is not healthy, the imbalance often worsens.

Breathing represents the ability of the body to take in air to every cell of the body. It is the only activity that you do throughout our whole life both consciously and unconsciously. Most people don't breathe properly. Try this exercise. When you are sitting straight with both feet on the ground, put one hand on your upper chest and one on your low abdomen. Take a deep breath. Your top hand should stay still and the hand on your low abdomen should move forward. Proper breathing is about taking deep slow breaths into your low abdomen. Proper breathing is one of the most effective ways of calming the nervous system and is an essential component of any symptoms or conditions involving the lung or respiratory system.



The Mind influences every aspect of health and disease. The mind is like the master controller of the body. It can restore health on its own, it can intensify the impact of subtle interventions and it can nullify the impact of an extensive treatment. Over the next few generations the focus of the mind in healing will become one of the greatest areas of research and study. A person's mind chatter, mental state, outlook on life, beliefs and a person's ability to work with their mind to address areas of stress and achieve health outcomes is one of the most important contributors to health.

For some, health is achieved by addressing a few building blocks that currently aren't part of their lifestyle. For others, it involves a dramatic shift. What you'll find is that when the basic building blocks are part of your lifestyle, there is a greater chance that the body will be able to prevent disease, heal and promote ongoing health with more ease and with a better quality of life.