

# Simple Summer Goals for Improving Personal Health

Sustainability Spotlight Article Excerpt From Connections For Sustainability Newsletter Issue 17 July-Aug 2013

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Improving our personal health is an important step in the move towards a more sustainable society. Increased health leads to a decrease in spending related to health care, lower absence rates due to sickness, and increased productivity at work. Also, healthy people tend to be happy people.

Summer is a great time to make a commitment to increased personal health, and the best way to make a change in your lifestyle is to start with small, easy to reach goals. So, here are some simple ideas to help you get started:

- 1) Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Start by taking the stairs once a day when you would normally ride an elevator, or for distances that are under 4 floors.
- 2) Swap a soda for a glass of water. Add some mint and a slice of fresh squeezed lemon for a refreshing summer drink without the calories.
- 3) Wash your hands. Many of the sicknesses we pick up come from contact with germs. Get into the habit of hand washing now, and you'll be happy that you did when cold season comes back around.
- 4) Go for a walk. Start with a short lunch walk with co-workers or an afternoon ramble with friends or family. Exercise increases physical fitness and can help reduce stress. Just make sure

to drink plenty of water when you're out in the heat and don't forget #5.

5) Wear sunscreen. If you're going to be outside, sunscreen is a must. Keep a little tube in your desk drawer at work so that you always have it if you need it.

6) Make exercise fun. If you chose an exercise program that you don't enjoy, then you won't keep up with it. Instead, look for something fun. Try a dance class, join an intermural sports league, or go hiking with a group of friends. If it feels like you're playing, then you won't even notice the workout!

7) Snack on local, fresh produce. If you're aching for something sweet, freeze some local blueberries or toss a couple of peach slices in the blender with some ice and a teaspoon of local honey.

8) Make that appointment. We all have an appointment that we've been putting off: the eye doctor, the dentist, getting that mole checked, or the yearly physical that just keeps slipping away. Go ahead and make the call. Staying informed and on top of your health will help you set goals and catch possible issues before they become big problems.

Try making a simple health related goal. Start with something you know you should do but often forget like remembering to floss twice a day or taking your vitamins each morning. Keep it small and simple, and master it before adding a new goal. Before you know it, you'll be on your way to a healthier, happier, you!

