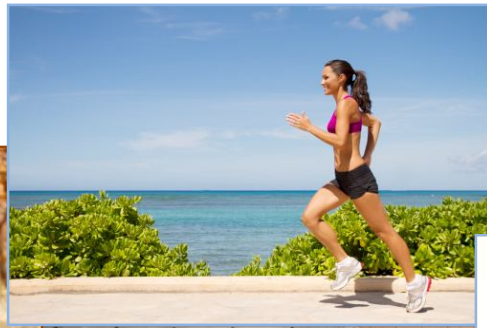
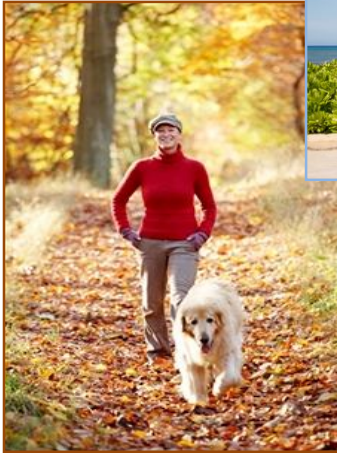


## Get up and move!



Dr. Kevin Shimizu, DC

If you are like most Canadians, we find ourselves sitting more than ever before. We sit commuting to and from work, we sit in front of our computers at work, we sit and watch TV when we get home from work. Scientists have long known that sedentary lifestyles cause weight gain, obesity and diabetes, but a new study reveals that sitting six or more hours a day increases the risk of early death from all causes by 35% for women and 18% for men — even if you exercise. Here are some more findings that might get you off your seat:

- The biggest risk associated with prolonged sitting is death from heart disease
- Women who sat more than six hours a day saw a 33% increase in premature death from heart disease compared to those sitting less than three hours a day. In men, it is an 18% increase.
- Longer sitting women saw a 30% increase in cancer. Men saw no increase in cancer.
- Prolonged sitting without exercise showed a 94% higher risk of early death for women and a 48% higher risk for men compared to those who sat the least and exercised the most.
- People who use the computer more than 11 hours per week or watch TV more than 21 hours per week are more likely to be obese than those using the computer or watch TV less than 5 hours per week.
- The average time watching TV is a little under seven hours per day. Yikes!

So what should you do with this information? Unplug the computer and TV and throw out the sofa? **Here's something a little less drastic:** *First*, interrupt your prolonged sitting patterns. Get up, move around at least once an hour. *Second*, be low tech. Walk over to a colleague instead of communicating via email or text.

Finally, increase your steps. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Use public transit or try to walk more in general. You'll reduce the amount of sitting and increase physical activity at the same time.

*Don't get caught doing too little too late.*

## Start on the right path today!

Are you stuck in the pattern of breaking your health related resolution couple weeks into the New Year? If so, stop making excuses and take control of your health today! Remember that health is not something you can catch up on immediately after years of neglect. Hence, if you currently live an unhealthy lifestyle, it is critical that you start making small changes in the near future.

In this article, I will talk a bit in regards to diet and exercise on ways to help you stay healthy this year.

Some of my recommended approaches to keeping fit this year are:

### 1. Educate yourself

Go out to talk to industry professionals and do your own research. Simply work to have a better understanding of what is healthy and what is not. If you do this, you will be less likely to be influenced by advertisements and will be able to make informed, less emotional choice every time you eat.

Remember that diet and exercise go hand in hand. In fact, it is often said that maintaining a healthy body is roughly 80% diet and 20% exercise. This means that you cannot maintain a healthy body simply by neglecting diet and exercising excessively and vice versa.

A word of caution here in that looks can be deceiving when it comes to defining a “healthy body.” Fat can be on the inside as well as on the outside. In fact fat on the inside, also known as visceral fat can often be more of a health risk than visible fat. Hence, those relatively skinny ones out there, you need to exercise and watch what you eat as well! Remember that you can achieve your short term goals through dieting, but to keep the weight off in the long run you need to exercise and build some muscle that will not only help you stay structurally strong, but will help you burn more calories.

### 2. Eliminate the causes for excuses

How many times have you not been able to accomplish a task because of some excuse you made? For example, a typical excuse I hear is people having intentions to go to the gym in the evening but once they get home, laziness kicks in and they simply end up sitting on the couch instead. Why not take away these causes for excuses? Take your gym clothing with you to work and go directly after work instead. If you don't like working out in the gym because it is crowded, try working out outside or take a fitness class instead. The key to note here is that in most cases there are always ways to get around these excuses. Try not to get too emotional about it but treat it more like a task you need to get through in your day before you go to sleep.



### 3. Keep a log

One of the key things when trying to maintain or rebuild a healthy body is being conscious about what you eat. This means keeping a log of what you eat throughout the day. Once you have done this, try to identify what is actually providing nutrients for your body instead of empty calories. Over time, try to cut out those foods that provide empty calories and replace them with nutrient rich alternatives. You will find that you can actually lose weight by eating more if you do this! Also, keep a log of when you are eating during the day. You may realize that you snack quite often when you are bored. If this is the case, try to eliminate this boredom or find healthier snacks.

### 4. Be patient

There are many products and procedures out there that advertise that you can lose weight in a short period of time. Most of the time, what they do not show is what happens to these people after the program. There is a saying that the quicker you lose weight, the quicker you are going to re-gain that weight. Hence, a natural, slow but sure way of losing weight is more beneficial in the long run. This is again usually accomplished through the combination of healthy diet choices and exercise. I know this may be all easier said than done but with a little bit of desire and will, it is possible and sustainable!

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# The Sweet Territory of Meditation

by Craig Matsu-Pissot, Ph.D.



Meditation is a curious thing. In our culture it can sometimes seem odd to “just sit there.” We are trained from early on to keep active, to get the most out of life. And there is certainly benefit to an active life, to being fully engaged. So, people ask, “Why would I want to just sit there?” “What is meditation anyway?”

It might be best to first look at what meditation is. There are many kinds of meditation. In general, they all consist of some form of focusing and stilling the mind. Many forms of meditation involve concentrating on a specific item: the breath, a meaningful phrase, a candle. This being the case, most of us have meditated in some way throughout our lives, whether it be in a sporting activity, on a video game, listening to music, while driving, etc. The difference with meditation is that the focus becomes more intentional. In general, people meditate for a reason. This brings us back to the first question, “Why would I want to just sit there?”

There are many reasons that people give for meditating. Some are seeking peace of mind. Some are wanting to reduce their stress. Others would like to find some psychological well-being. Still others are seeking a deeper connection with their authentic being or with God, or a combination of the two. There are other motivations as well. So there are many good reasons to meditate.

The interesting thing is, recently there has been a lot of scientific research into meditation. And the results of this research strongly support that meditation can be helpful in a wide variety of ways. Meditation has been found to be helpful in dealing with stress, anxiety, and depression. Studies of the brains through MRIs have shown that people who meditate cope more effectively with these troubling states of mind. Meditation can also help us to be more focused and in the present moment; better balanced emotionally, more flexible and creative. These studies also indicate that meditation can help us be more empathic and understanding of ourselves and others, less fearful and more insightful.

It's really quite amazing. With practice, meditation has a wonderful way of increasing our quality of life. It's like a compass to guide us to a calmer shore. But it also is that calmer shore, that secure harbour where the heart and mind can find safety and rest whether the seas are stormy or lit by the sun.

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