



15 ways to take better care of your body so you can live forever

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Men's Health

We want our bodies to last as long as possible and to perform as well as they can during that time.

The best way to do that? Take a hint from your mechanic: Maintenance is key.

So if you want to live longer and healthier, you must take care of every part of your body. Consider this your owner's manual.

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HOW TO PROTECT YOUR TEETH SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Brushing, flossing, and not smoking are SOP.

Your next line of defense in protecting your smile: carrots, pears, and apples.

In a study in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, older men who ate plenty of high-fiber foods had a lower risk of developing gum disease than their counterparts whose intake was lower.

"It's likely that these high-fiber foods are beneficial because they're rich in vitamins and minerals," says Elizabeth Kaye, Ph.D., of the Boston University School of Dental Medicine.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR EYES SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

You can just assume that every body part listed here will benefit from your quitting smoking, and your eyes are no exception.

Indeed, smoking doubles your risk of age-related macular degeneration. So toss the cigs and reach for a plate of fish.

Omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in cold-water swimmers, could guard your retinas—the light-sensitive tissue inside your eyes.

An omega-3 byproduct may prevent the blood vessel changes there caused by diabetes, suggests a study in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR EARS SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Unless you're a roadie for Springsteen, you should try to avoid loud music; exposure to high-decibel noise plays a role in age-related hearing loss.

To protect yourself against the day-to-day drone of mowers, blowers, and hotheaded bosses, just crack open a bottle of red wine.

In a study in the journal *Neurobiology of Aging*, rodents given very large amounts of resveratrol, a compound in red wine, showed delays in age-related hearing loss.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HEART SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Ask your wife or partner if you're a loud sleeper.

Sleep apnea—marked by violent snoring and periods of interrupted breathing—can reduce the oxygen supply to the blood, which in theory may contribute to constriction in pulmonary blood vessels, says cardiologist James Beckerman, M.D., author of *Heart to Start*.

Related: The 8 Worst Things That Can Happen When You Snore

If you suspect sleep apnea, a CPAP device can open your airway. Dropping weight may also help solve the problem.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR LIVER SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Head home before last call. "More than two drinks at a time starts to knock off liver cells," says Michael Roizen, M.D., of the Cleveland Clinic.

Related: How Drinking a Little Booze Each Day May Be Killing You

Coffee and garlic may help rebuild your booze-stressed liver.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR BACK SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Your back muscles support your spine, so keep them strong. Do lifts that make your core work to maintain good form.

"The big basic lifts like squats, deadlifts, and straight-leg deadlifts all engage the spine through a full range of motion," says Dr. Vincent.

Do supermans too: Lie on your stomach, raise your arms and legs, and hold.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR LUNGS SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Breathe easy by eating more garlic.

In a Chinese study, the lung cancer odds of people who ate raw garlic at least twice a week were 44 percent lower than noneaters'. Compounds in garlic, including allicin, are thought to be secret weapons.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

You're already using sunscreen during the day (you are, right?), but you should also apply a non-moisturizer product that contains L-ascorbic acid (vitamin C) at night.

Related: A Base Tan Will Protect You—and 5 Other 'Facts' About Skin Cancer That Are Just Plain Wrong

When you hit 30, your skin thins because the collagen starts to wear down, causing wrinkles. Vitamin C can forestall this process and even reverse it.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PENIS SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

You might prevent reliance on the blue pill with Daddy's new little helper—berries.

A study linked high fruit intake with reduced risk of erectile dysfunction. Adding exercise to flavonoid-rich fruit cut the risk even more.

Berries and citrus may be best because the flavonoids can open blood vessels and make them more flexible, helping you get hard.

Related: The *Men's Health* Guide to Erectile Dysfunction: What Causes It, How to Fix It, and How to Avoid It

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR BLOOD VESSELS SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

You have more than 60,000 miles of blood vessels to deliver your most vital resource: nutrient-rich blood.

Interval training can keep this infrastructure flexible.

"Exercise trains the arteries to dilate and constrict. So when you train intensively, the arteries maintain that memory, and they remember what it's like to relax," says cardiovascular surgeon Mehmet Oz, M.D.

Try to get in a minimum of one session a week.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR ANKLES SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Teaching your ankles to react to unstable ground is a great way to strengthen them.

So do some of your leg work in minimalist shoes or bare feet, suggests Dr. Vincent. If your feet and ankles sense instability, your body tries to regain its balance.

Too much shoe inhibits this ability, so you're less likely to right yourself when that ankle starts to roll.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR TESTOSTERONE SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Lift weights in the morning.

In a *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* study, a.m. lifters had no afternoon decline in their testosterone, while nonlifters saw a dip.

You'll also eliminate testosterone's mortal enemy, fat. "If you want to prolong the effects of whatever testosterone you have, you must be thin," says Dr. Roizen.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR KNEES SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Nourish your cartilage with consistent exercise, which means at least three times a week, says Kevin Vincent, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of orthopedics and sports medicine at the University of Florida.

Long layoffs mean less-lubricated cartilage; it receives nutrients through compression and relaxation.

"The same move that didn't cause a tear when you were 20 can cause one at 30 because the cartilage gets drier as you age," says Dr. Vincent.

Strong quads can serve as shock absorbers. So get going and do your squats.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PROSTATE SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

A Japanese study found that people who drink coffee (especially black coffee) may have a lower prostate cancer risk than those who don't; and a 2014 meta-analysis suggests that four-plus cups a day is the magic number.

Certain compounds in coffee, along with the drink's effect on testosterone, may play a role in reducing that risk.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR GI TRACT SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY

Fermented foods contain probiotics, which populate your gut with healthy bacteria.

Your best tactic, says Dr. Roizen, is to vary the kind you eat—try sauerkraut, yogurt, kimchi, and probiotic supplements.

Because you don't know which strain is best for your body, eating a wide variety helps you address deficiencies, he says.

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