Practical Manual on Health-related Behaviours for Former Active Citizens

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INTRODU

What is a Healthy Lifestyle?

There are several factors that can influence the health of people and communities in some way, usually referred to as health determinants.

Of these determinants, it is important to highlight the lifestyles (e.g., nutrition, physical activity, sleep, or mental health), which themselves represent an important opportunity to promote global health. Obtaining health gains by adopting healthy lifestyles appears as an opportunity to positively influence health, especially with regard to chronic non communicable diseases.

The adoption of a healthy lifestyle should be seen as an opportunity and a challenge for the person, family and community, due to the possibility of adopting a preventive attitude with regard to health.

This document is intended to support the health literacy and physical activity of former active citizens. It is therefore important to promote the increase in health literacy, to have people and communities activated and empowered in order to create conditions that favor critical decisionmaking in light of their options throughout their lives.





Accept this challenge !

The change depends on our attitude toward life !

It is very important to follow the healthy lifestyle recommendations whenever possible. However, do not forget that there are several aspects that are essential for health and that depend largely on you !

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The promotion of personal health presumes the development of personal and social skills, through the access to information and health education that enable people to live a healthy life (WHO, 2017). In this way, you will be better able to control your health and the environment and make choices conducive to health.

Changing standards of living, retirement and leisure have a significant impact on health. Life should be a source of health for people. Health promotion creates safe, stimulating, satisfying and pleasant living conditions and adaptation to retirement.







HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Health is the greatest value of every individual. We cannot choose health, but we can choose a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle is not something that is given or innate to us, but must be patiently developed during life.



In the modern concept of healthy lifestyles, health is the goal itself. Only if we are healthy, we can realize our basic needs, and that leads us to a fulfilled and happy life. Research has shown that practicing a healthy lifestyle significantly improves human health in many ways.

- Continue to educate yourself about overall health and wellness, over time new findings result in updated recommendations from health experts;
- Write down your health goals and prioritize them habits;
- Accept the things in your life that you cannot change;
- Don't ever give up on efforts to improve your health;

- Make sure that you understand contraindications and/ or interactions for any medication you take or conditions you have, including improper mixing of meds abd other meds and/ or food;
- Keep educating yourself about health update information;
- Remember that while you may have your own health challengs, you are likely someone else's role model in some aspect of their life.



HEALTHY **LIFESTYLES**

There must be order to good balance in practicing a healthy lifestyle, so a healthy lifestyle must include physical activity, a healthy diet, enough rest and sleep, and of course social interaction

"WHO, 2018"

Physical activity is one of the most important things in practicing a healthy lifestyle. Research has shown that lack of physical activity drastically increases the risk of disease. Physical activity strengthens the body and mind, and thus significantly reduces the risk of disease (WHO, 2018).

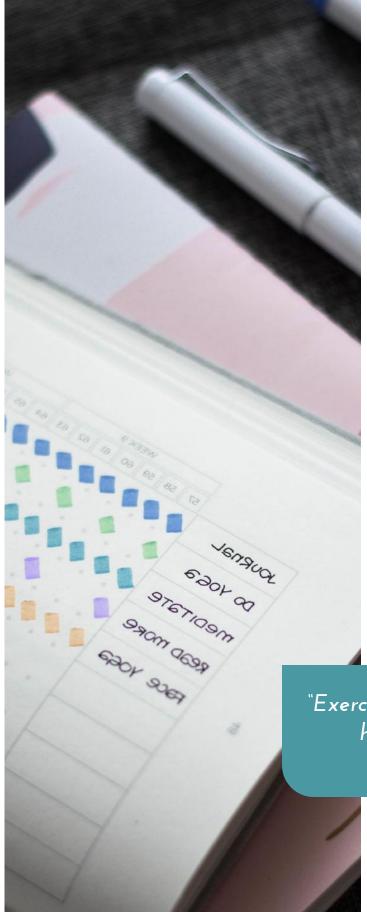
A healthy diet is one of the essential things that should be paid special attention to, because a healthy diet helps with all physical activities, as well as the activities of the immune system to successfully fight disease.

Nowadays, when there is less and less free time, but also time to choose healthy food, a healthy diet can be a challenge for all those who want to practice a healthy lifestyle. Healthy diet and physical activity go hand in hand.





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The **rest and sleep** phase is very important after physical activity. Our bodies recover and strengthen during rest and sleep. Rest and sleep are physically necessary, because then the muscles are renewed, rebuilt and strengthened. A well-balanced rest and sleep can help maintain a good psychophysical condition and will provide the body with enough energy for other physical activities

Social interaction is a very important factor, because it helps maintain good mental and emotional health. Research has shown that social interaction between people who visit gyms and fitness centers helps a lot in establishing friendly connections and feelings of acceptance, and also increases self-confidence.

"Exercise is the key not only to physical health but to peace of mind." Nelson Mandela

> Learning about health, building attitudes and values towards healthy living, and developing appropriate life skills in the future should result in responsible behavior that can be assessed as a healthy lifestyle



The benefits of regularly taking part in physical activity include a reduced risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, breast and colon cancer, as well as positive effects on depression, stress and other conditions. Physical activity also helps regulating body weight and keeps your bones strong.

According to the Health Enhancing Physical Activity Network (HEPA), physical inactivity is the fourth risk factor for mortality, being the responsible of more than 3 million deaths every year.



There are different physical activity recommendations depending on the target group. The World Health Organization (WHO) distinguishes between Adults (18-64 years) and Older adults (over 65 years). For both groups, the WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of aerobic moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity, or an equivalent of the combination of both. The WHO also states that physical activity is particularly important for older adults so they can keep their mental and functional capacity and independence.

Some of the most common activities that could help improving the health of physically active participants are walking, cycling, yoga or swimming, but any activity that requires your body to move for 30 minutes a day can be helping your overall health.

When participating in a physical activity plan, it is important to have a medical consent form (Appendix I) and consider the initial levels of activity. It is highly recommended that participants fill in a Pre Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PARQ) before they begin the sessions to assure that everyone is healthy enough to begin training. Special attention should be focused on the different capacities and contexts of the participants. This information will be available to the trainers once the participants fill in the PARQ

It will also be important to set up SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and within a Time frame) that are personalized for each participant. These goals may be adjusted during the project if necessary, and they should consider the initial status of the participants and their personal interest. Otherwise, there will be a higher chance of participants quitting and therefore not taking advantage of the benefits of being physically active.

Although the length of the sessions may vary, it is recommended to do sessions from 60 to 90 minutes. In order to see improvements in the participants, a pre, mid and post physical test should take place. This will allow to compare results and observe the participants' progress. Some of the indicators that could be measured include body weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), muscle mass, body fat percentages or mental wellbeing.

The equipment that the participants will need should consist of comfortable sports clothes that allow them to move freely during the training sessions.



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To conclude, it is important to remember that physical activity alone cannot guarantee that the participants will enhance their health. Other important habits like a healthy nutrition, resting time and social enjoyment will also have an impact in the overall wellbeing of the participants.



MENTAL HEALTH What are the risks and how to prevent them?

What seems to be the problem?

The world's population is ageing rapidly. Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's older adults is estimated to almost double from about 12% to 22%. In absolute terms, this is an expected increase from 900 million to 2 billion people over the age of 60 (*Clark*, *Murphy*, *Jameson-Allen & Wilkins*, 2015; WHO, 2017).

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What are the risks of the elderly people?

Over 20% of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental or neurological disorder and 6.6% of all disability among people over 60 years is attributed to mental and neurological disorders. These disorders in older people account for 17.4% of Years Lived with Disability. The most common disorders are dementia and depression, which affect approximately 5% and 7% of the world's older population. Anxiety disorders affect 3.8% of the older population, substance use problems affect almost 1% and around a quarter of deaths from self-harm are among people aged 60 or above *(McDougall, Matthews, Kvaal, Dewey & Brayne, 2007; WHO, 2017).*

Key issues that can impact mental health



- Discrimination
 Participation in meaningful activities

 Relationships
 Physical health
 - Poverty

(Lee,2006)

How to maintain sharp mental health?

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Mind games - just as the body needs physical activity to stay healthy, the brain needs stimulation to avoid cognitive decline as it ages.

Physical activity - staying active is as important for seniors' mental health and well-being, as it is at any other stage of life.

Connection with friends - time and distance can make it difficult for people to maintain close relationships with old friends, especially as they age.

New hobbies - like shadow boxes, hobbies help increase the neuroplasticity of the brain in which nerve cells connect or reconnect, changing the brain's structure and function when stimulated through the repetition of seeing them.

Volunteering - from making new friends to getting (or staying) physically active, volunteering can be a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Preparedness for changes - getting older and retirement both involve a change in lifestyle for most people, you should embrace this new stage.

Remaining busy - friends and family can have plans for your time, filling it with anything from childcare to Do It Yourself tasks. It is important to make time for your own interests. This can be a chance to try a new activity or learn new skills.

Talking about problems and concerns - managing problems, difficulties and worries becomes easier if we talk about our concerns. It's a good way to rationalise our thoughts and make sense of a situation or of how we feel. It can make us feel supported and not alone.

(Mental Health Foundation, 2015 WHO, 2017)



Sleep

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Prolonged sleep disturbances can lead to cardiovascular disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, inflammatory diseases, nervous system disorders, weight problems, diabetes, immune disorders, accelerated cell and body aging, and other health problems. In sleep, the brain rests and prepares for a new day, processes the information gained during the day and learns to use it for later life.

Studies show that good night's sleep improves the ability to learn new things and solve problems, while bad long-term sleep can make it difficult to make decisions and solve problems, and to reduce the ability to remember and learn something new. This is why often when you wake up in the morning, "your head is clearer" and decisions are much easier to make.

(Harrison Wein, 2021)

Sleep is a very important part of a person's daily cycle. It provides both physical and psycho-emotional well-being. It's is just as important as breathing or eating. How well we feel during the day is largely related to how well we sleep at night.



Ways to Improve Sleep Quality

Order in the bedroom

It should be quiet, dark, empty, with no extra information and cool to ensure the best possible quality of sleep.

Silence and darkness

You can buy a variety of earplugs if you live in a particularly noisy area or close to the railway and highways. Darkness, on the other hand, can be provided by anyone - by purchasing thick curtains or using an eye mask overnight.

Sleep cool

The bedroom should be cool $(15-19 \circ C)$ to ensure the sweetest possible sleep. Going to sleep in a cooler room will ensure a faster and deeper sleep.

Say goodbye to sleep stimulants!

People with a weak nervous system and trouble sleeping are advised to reduce or give up all of the various stimulants (even for a period of time while the nervous system is strengthening). Stimulants include coffee, green and black tea, dark chocolate, alcohol, cigarettes, caffeinated beverages.

Sleep disturbing habits

There are a few other things that can interfere with sleep quality:

Physical activity

just before going to sleep

•Overeating in the evenings.



Sleep mode

The rhythm of sleep and wakefulness is organic in us. The classic sleep mode is 22.00 to go to bed and 6.00 in the morning, but it can be different from each other and depending on the season. Also, the saying "1 hour before midnight is as much as 2 hours after midnight" is heard, which is true in a way.

Nervous system that prevents sleep

Everyone needs to find their own way to support and strengthen the nervous system, but there are some ideas:

•herbs for strengthening and calming the nervous system;

•body self-massage with warm sesame oil;

- deep breathing techniques;
- •Meditation.



A c t i v U

Ageing has an effect on our metabolism and on our nutrition

Hormonal and metabolic changes

Our basal metabolism (energy required for core bodily function) is reduced, leading to reduced energy requirements. In addition, glucose and fat metabolism are altered: it becomes more difficult to regulate glucose levels (insulin resistance) and to lose fat. Hormonal changes contribute to changes in body composition and inflammation

The gastro-intestinal tract

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In the nose and mouth, there is a reduction in the sense of smell and taste, gum recession and sometimes difficulty in swallowing, which can alter our appetite and/or food intake. Our stomach, pancreas and gut become more rigid, and digestive enzymes become less active. This affects the breakdown and absorption of many vitamins and minerals, and slows down food transit, which can lead to constipation and contribute to reduced appetite.



Body composition

The loss of bone mass (sarcopenia) affects strength and balance, increasing the risk of falls and fractures. Having adequate intakes of good quality protein, vitamin D and calcium, and more importantly, undertaking regular physical activity are crucial in preventing these changes.

Good nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle, can slow the effects of ageing. However, many of the changes described here influence the ability to consume, absorb and metabolise all the nutrients required to age healthy.

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Our nutritional needs also evolve with age

The amount of energy required with age reduces, as does appetite however, the requirements for vitamins and minerals remains the same.



Micronutrients

Carbohydrates

The amount needed reduces with ageing. Free sugar requirement decreases; however, fibers are essential to healthy ageing, so the daily requirement stays the same throughout adult life. **Ex: rice, pasta, bread (wholemeat), oat, cereals.**

Protein

A slight reduction in need for men and a slight increase for women. Ex: meat, tofu, egg, fish, chicken, lentils, beans, uts, soya, yoghurt, milk, cheese.

Fats

Need reduces slightly with ageing but "good fats" remain essential components of a balanced nutrition . Ex: olive oil, sesame oil, oily fish, walnuts, linseeds.

For all adults, the key micronutrient requirements remain the same, except for two of the B Vitamins. **Iron** is slightly different for women as they require more iron prior to menopause (14.8mg/day) however; after menopause, all adults have the same iron requirement. **Ex: beans, green leafy vegetables, meat, seafood, dried fruit.**

Water

Slightly reduced from a recommended 2L per day to 1.7L per day. This is based on an average adult who is not losing excess water due to vomiting, diarrhea, high activity levels, hot weather etc.

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