



## ARE YOU ACHIEVING YOUR WELLNESS GOALS?

### 10 Reasons Your Wellness Program May Be Failing

If managing your wellness was simple, Spanx would have never been invented. But living a wellness lifestyle can be easy, and fun: For instance, who would ever think that working out in the a.m. or cranking the AC might be the reason you're not succeeding? Check out some common mistakes when embarking on a wellness lifestyle.

#### **Mistake No. 1: SLEEP** - *Always a go-getter, you work out at 6 a.m.*

What's wrong with that? Morning workouts are great – “if you go to bed at 10 p.m”. In a recent study in the American Journal of Epidemiology, women who slept seven or more hours a night were less likely to put on weight than women who didn't. Those who slept only six hours a night were 12 percent more likely to gain substantial weight—33 pounds on average over the course of 16 years! (Women who slept a measly five hours had a 32 percent chance of gaining 30 or more pounds.) Other studies have linked lack of sleep to a higher BMI and have found that it negatively affects levels of the appetite-regulating hormones ghrelin and leptin.

**Solution:** Don't sacrifice your snooze time—not even for an extra-long run. And quality matters more than quantity, so taking a siesta later won't help. “In a 20-minute power nap you don't get into the deep-sleep stage,” says Donna Taliaferro, Ph.D., associate professor of nursing at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, who conducts research on sleep and circadian rhythms. “You need to go through the cycles of sleep over a few hours to get the restorative rest that allows your body to work properly.” Bottom line: You're better off sleeping through your workout every other day than stumbling to a sunrise Pilates class on too few z's.

#### **Mistake No. 2: ALCOHOL** - *You're a teetotaler.*

What's wrong with that? Alcohol may not be the diet kryptonite you thought it was. Recent research showed that those who have a single drink a couple times a week have a lower risk of becoming obese than either teetotalers or heavy drinkers. Those who consume more than four drinks daily, on the other hand, boost their odds of obesity by 46 percent.

**Solution:** Go ahead and have a drink; just avoid belly-busters like a 245-calorie piña colada. Instead, raise a glass of heart-smart merlot (123 calories per 5 ounces), Light Beer (110 calories per 12 ounces), champagne (88 calories per 4 ounces), or sake (39 calories per ounce). Or mix a 100-calorie cocktail, like vodka and diet tonic or tequila and club soda. “Just make sure you drink it with some healthy food, such as raw veggies with low-fat dip or whole-wheat pita and hummus.” Eating slows the rise of alcohol in your blood—and cuts the odds you'll drunk-order the deep-fried mozzarella sticks.



### **Mistake No. 3: A/C & EATING** - *You crank the AC?*

What's wrong with that? Al Gore wants you to lay off the thermostat to save the planet. Here's how it can save (the shape of) you: In a study published in *Physiology & Behavior*, researchers found that exposure to temperatures above the "thermoneutral zone"—the artificial climate we create with clothes, heating, or air conditioning—decreases our appetite and food intake. "At a slightly uncomfortable 81 degrees, the women in the study experienced a 20 percent decrease in appetite and ate 10 percent less than at 72 degrees," says lead author Margriet S. Westerterp-Plantenga, Ph.D., a professor of food-intake regulation in the department of human biology at Maastricht University in the Netherlands.

**Solution:** Instead of cranking the air conditioner every time you feel a little warm, learn to endure slightly steamier conditions. Hitting the "off" button is well worth it....not only will you save the pounds but the high energy bills as well.

### **Mistake No. 4: WEIGHT MANAGEMENT** – *"logging extra miles on the treadmill to make up for giant meals"*.

What's wrong with that? When it comes to managing your weight, success isn't 90 percent perspiration. You can't achieve lasting weight loss via exercise alone.

**Solution:** You need a clear idea of how much you should be eating and nothing beats proper meal planning and nutritional guidance. Here's an easy way to understand the maximum calories you should be consuming. Multiply your weight by 10, then add your weight again to that sum: That gives you the number of calories you need to maintain your current weight without activity. For example, 135 pounds  $\times 10 = 1,350 + 135 = 1,485$  calories. Eat more than that regularly, and your "loose-fit" pants won't anymore; eat less, and you start melting away. But not so fast—before you burn your gym membership or think your path to true wellness is through nutrition alone, read on about sarcopenia.

### **Mistake No. 5: MUSCLE LOSS** – *"You ignore sarcopenia"*.

What's wrong with that? Sarcopenia, in case you weren't paying attention to your medical TV dramas, is age-related muscle loss—and it can start in your 30s. If you don't take action now, you could begin to lose as much as 1 to 2 percent of your muscle mass by the time you hit 50. Less muscle means you burn fewer calories and store more of them as fat.

**Solution:** The key to stopping muscle meltdown is to strengthen your back, shoulders, arms, and thighs. "When you increase lean muscle mass, you burn more calories, even when you're sitting down doing nothing." Work out at least twice a week and keep it up after you reach your goal weight: Studies show that if you don't exercise regularly (60 minutes of moderate physical activity a day), the pounds can creep back on.



**Mistake No. 6: REALISTIC GOALS & COACHING** – *“You're shooting for a realistic size 6 instead of a near-impossible 2”.*

We know size 2 jeans look like they were made for a 10-year-old, but, according to a study published in the International Journal of Obesity, women who set unrealistically high weight-loss goals dropped more weight in 24 months than those who kept their expectations low.

**Solution:** The study concluded that having an optimistic goal motivated women to stay focused on their wellness goals. “If you're a driven person and a lofty goal motivates you - it can work.” The study also showed that participants who had a “wellness partner” or trainer were 5 times more likely to succeed than those going it alone.

**Mistake No. 7: ANTIOXIDANT** – *“Stop popping the M & M's”*

You've heard the news: Cocoa (Dark Chocolate) can lower blood pressure; reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and dementia; and possibly even prevent cancer. But the research isn't as delicious as it seems. The cocoa-bean products used in the studies are a far cry from the highly processed chocolate candy you find on the shelves of your local store. “Milk chocolate contains about 150 calories and 10 grams of fat per ounce,” ...Not Good!

**Solution:** The key here is small doses. Dark chocolate, which retains more of the bean during processing, generally has slightly less fat and fewer calories than milk chocolate—plus, it's richer, so less goes a longer way.

**Mistake No. 8: WATER** – *“You think “water-rich diet” means more trips to the cooler”.*

Water in your glass is good, but water in your food can have serious slimming power. In a new American Journal of Clinical Nutrition study, obese women ages 20 to 60 were told to either reduce their fat intake or increase their intake of water-rich foods, such as fruits and veggies. Although they ate more, women in the water-rich group chose foods that were more filling—yet had fewer calories—so they still lost 33 percent more weight in the first six months than the women in the reduced-fat group.

**Solution:** Fill up on food that's high in H<sup>2</sup>O. Another good idea is to drink your body weight in ounces (water) on a daily basis. Staying hydrated is a key to good wellness.



**Mistake No. 9: POTASSIUM** – *“You never think about potassium”.*

A recent Canadian study concluded that getting more potassium might help lower your weight and blood pressure. Levels measured in study participants were proportional to their diet and weight. "The richest sources of potassium are beans, vegetables, and fruit, so the person with high potassium levels is consuming a lot of these foods, which are low in calories and are the most filling."

**Solution:** You should aim for 4,700 milligrams of potassium each day. Supplements, like Creating Wellness Vitalize, can help you hit that target. Other suggestions include - white beans (1 cup: 1,000 mg potassium), winter squash (1 cup: 494 mg), spinach (1 cup: 840 mg), baked potato with skin (926 mg), yogurt (1 cup: 600 mg), halibut (4 ounces: 566 mg), and orange juice (1 cup: 473 mg).

**Mistake No. 10: KICK BAD HABITS...ONE AT A TIME** – *“You give up junk food today but put off your wellness program until January”.*

Tackling one goal at a time is supposed to help you succeed. But new research published in the Archives of Internal Medicine bucks that conventional wisdom. In a study of people who smoked, had high blood pressure, and weren't extremely active, one group was asked to quit the butts, cut back on dietary sodium, and increase physical activity all at once. Another group addressed one bad habit at a time. The group that tackled all their problems simultaneously had the higher success rate after 18 months.

**Solution:** Combining your goals may work for the same reason job negotiations do: When you ask for everything, you're more likely to get something. Put this thinking to the test by creating a healthy eating and exercise plan and throwing all your energy into following both.