

5 Cost-Effective Ways to Take Better Care of Yourself

Do you want to take better care of your body? Each year in the U.S., literally billions of dollars are spent on the following items: diet plans, fitness centers, health-conscious cookbooks, gym memberships, home exercise machinery, athletic footwear and apparel.

At the same time, obesity, Type-2 diabetes, hypertension, and other so-called “lifestyle-related” maladies have continued to increase in prevalence, severity and financial impact. The cost to the economy is staggering; the cost to your family is beyond calculation.

In other words, what we’re doing isn’t working. We’re putting our futures and our families at risk because we’re not doing what’s necessary to take good care of ourselves. The cost is not only financial. The scope of the loss also includes work productivity, family stability, time with children, quality of life and life itself—all from what turns out to be a largely preventable set of circumstances.

But don’t be dismayed; all is not lost. The fact is, there’s good news. Discover five simple and cost-effective ways to take care of yourself and be a better role model as a dad.

1. Cut your calorie intake by one-quarter. So the other day I measured the “serving size” for my favorite cereal against what I actually throw in the bowl, and it turns out I eat more than double, plus a whole banana. Then I tried the same for every meal for a week. The recommended calorie intake for a “moderately active” man my age is 2,400. Let’s just say my first number is a 3. The simple act of monitoring calorie intake turns out to be a powerful intervention. Ditto measuring how long you exercise. Here is some more information

on The Obesity Crisis.

2. Add 30 minutes of steady walking exercise each day. No matter what else you're doing, add thirty minutes of walking. If that sounds daunting, step out for 10 minutes, three times. You'll likely increase your work productivity as a side benefit. More oxygen to the brain, more time to think, more calories turned into muscle, more support for aging bones—it's a win-win.

3. Never skip another annual checkup. Many insurance companies offer reduced deductions just for getting a checkup. It's that important. Part two is to follow through on the doctor's recommendations. Health maintenance is like any other preventative program. It's considerably more effective than repair, significantly less time-consuming, and a fraction of the cost.

4. Eliminate all sugary drinks and most candy. Sugary sodas, sweet tea, spoonfuls of sugar in coffee, and gratuitous candy consumption significantly increase calorie intake while providing little to no nutritional value. In other words, if you're looking to be more healthy, save those calorie expenditures for more beneficial foods.

5. Covenant with a "fitness buddy" to follow this plan. Accountability is huge when it comes to change. Collar one of your friends and challenge each other to shape up. And a huge parenting plus is being a health role model. Covenant to meet once a week and talk about what's working and what's hard. Then encourage each other daily. Text, email, phone. No shaming, just support.

Derek Maul is the author of five books, a nationally recognized men's resource, a committed encourager and a pilgrim in progress. He divides his time writing and traveling to speak about the fully engaged life.

For the original article, visit .