

new year new you new life



Healthy Living

The Five Pillars of Health

By Dr. Rex Stevens, Chiropractor at SLO Wellness Center

A New Year, a New You? Absolutely! In an ever changing, dynamic human body, the trillions of cells that make up your tissues, organs, and organ systems are in a constant state of flux. Regenerating at different rates, making new connections, and seeking viable environments that assist them in achieving optimal function are to name a few of the complexities occurring at every moment of every day.

As we embark on yet another new year in 2014, I ask, are your daily lifestyle habits providing your cells a rich environment to properly adapt,

around us is no longer hearsay, and the notion that your insurance ever had anything to do with your overall health is a perpetuated joke that doesn't deserve a laugh. It's time we took a little more seriously Carl Jung's advice when he turned the mirror back on himself reminding all, 'I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become.' The ball is in your court. What are you going to choose?

When it comes to resolutions, especially those pertaining to our health, the task can be daunting. The overwhelming fear of change is often paralyzing, particularly when it

want to lose weight or why do you want to rid yourself of prescription medications? Understanding the why is a crucial component to success. No why equals no chance for long lasting change. Finally, how are you going to measure success? May I offer Thoreau's beautiful insight into success when he stated, 'If you advance confidently in the direction of your own dreams and endeavor to live the life which you have imagined, you will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.'

And so I ask you, what are you dreaming? Do you know what fuels your spirit? Where are you placing your thoughts? Are you expecting the unexpected? Are you living the life you imagined? Are you ready to succeed?

Time and time again, those that succeed when it comes to lifestyle change are those that tackle little bits at a time. Smaller, simpler platforms often offer rapid successes keeping morale high and leading to grander achievements in the future. Translation, hike Bishop's Peak before tackling Half Dome.

Breaking down goals within the confines of the generic term 'health' or 'wellness' allows us to gauge the areas we are thriving in vs the areas we're just surviving. Take a moment to brief the 5 Pillars of health below. Rank your strongest and subsequently weakest pillar at this stage in your life. Do your best to take emotion out and truthfully ask 'am I thriving or just surviving' when it comes to each pillar. A great philosopher once said, 'One of the highest forms of intelligence is to be able to observe yourself, without judging yourself.' Do that here. This is not a time for brow beating, negative talk, or even a pat on the back for your successes. Simply ask, how well rounded am I when it comes to the 5 Pillars below.

1. Movement – Being upright and on two feet is what being a human is all about. The largest majority of all money spent on disease related conditions in the United States can be attributed to a sedentary existence. Two quick and easy strategies: find any movement that is fun and one that gets your 'blood to boil' each and every day.

2. Mindset – 'If you want to know what your health will look like

tomorrow, look at your thoughts today. If you want to know what your thoughts were like yesterday, look at your health today.' Positive vs Negative. You make the call!

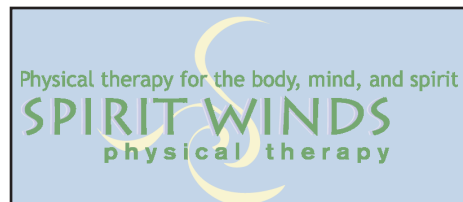


grow and change? Are you traveling along the continuum toward health or tip toeing backward toward disease? Did you just 'survive' another day or did you 'thrive'?

In a country plagued by lifestyle disease, the verdict for achieving desired health outcomes is in, 'If it is to be, it really is up to me.' The reality of the insurance world crumbling

seems as though your entire health needs a good overhaul. So where do you start?

Begin by defining your goals. Write them down. Rank the goals. Where do you want to see change now? What's attainable? What would bring you the most joy? Secondly, ask yourself why the goals you've committed to are important to you. Why do you



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3. Medicine – 'Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.' This country consumes more prescription medications than nearly the rest of the world combined. Where has it gotten us? Why do we continue repeating the same path somehow expecting a different result? Get acquainted with real food again and watch your body come alive.

4. Self Maintenance – goal setting, stability exercises, myofascial techniques, breathing, meditation, prayer, positive self talk, and gratitude to name a few. Spending time each day on both physical and spiritual maintenance allows for the prevention of disease through heightened mind body awareness.

5. Community – friends, family, neighbors, co workers, churches, and soup kitchens to name a few. Within these groups we create accountability, motivation, lifetime memories, random acts of kindness, and so much more. 'The biggest key to stardom, is the rest of the team.' Jump on board with the team. Get out of isolation and embrace the energy trail behind a community group with a cause.

As you envision applying each pillar to your life in this New Year I'd like to challenge you to do two things. First, look to add one positive habit at a time in any of the 5 pillars. Set a goal and achieve that goal prior to adding another positive behavior. Keep these changes slow, steady, attainable and eventually sustainable to avoid frustration and feelings of failure down the road. Secondly, I'd like to encourage everyone to seek out a 'gatekeeper'. A gatekeeper is a health professional, regardless of discipline, who you trust to appropriately evaluate your health, listen to your goals intently, and adapt with you as change occurs in your health and life. Ask this 'gatekeeper' what their goals are for your health. I would suggest, if this person isn't interested enough in your health to share in your goal setting, then their commitment level to you is far too low. You are more valuable than that. Seek someone who wants to participate on your team.

Are you ready to make meaningful change in your health? Is it time to say out with the old me and in with the new? Can you envision what a healthy you looks like again? Are you excited about your goals? Remember, 'Failure is rarely fatal. Failure to change could be.' If now is not the time, when?

Dr. Rex Stevens is a chiropractor and passionate educator at SLO Wellness Center where he utilizes his experience in chiropractic neurology and performance enhancement to create an atmosphere centered around a patient's personal desire to obtain optimal health.

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