Long live... you! Healthy habits that could add years to your life

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The first person to live to be 1000 years old is alive today.

This statement has been widely reported on in recent years, and it's easy to understand why it's caught our attention... How does one fit 1000 candles on a birthday cake? Will we all have moved to Mars by then?

Even if you're not the person likely to celebrate your thousandth birthday, you're probably still interested in a long and prosperous life. The ideal, when it comes to getting older, is to have quality and quantity in equal measure, which is why it's crucial to cultivate good habits that can enhance your quality of life, both today and later on.

Here are five things you can do today that your future, older self will thank you for.

Quit smoking

It's not just your lungs that will breathe a sigh of relief when you stub out the stick. Smoking also increases the risk of heart disease, cataracts and cancer, among others, and you're likely to see and feel an overall improvement in your quality of life soon after you quit. Decide that you're done with smoking and then put systems in place to keep you accountable.

Exercise regularly

The proven health benefits of regular physical activity are so plentiful that it should be made mandatory for all – like paying your taxes, but more fun and better for you! Exercise helps to reduce blood pressure, lowers your risk of heart disease, improves your mood, lowers your risk of falls, lowers the risk of some cancers and plenty more. Find an activity that works for you – there's so much to choose from – and slot it into your schedule as you would other appointments.

Maintain a healthy weight

Obesity is a global health concern, with the effects of being overweight manifesting in diabetes, heart and liver disease and a low quality of life in general. Losing weight is one of the best things you can do for both your body and your mind. Your body mass index (BMI) serves as a guideline for determining your ideal weight. BMI equals body mass (weight) divided by the square of your height. The healthy range for men and women is between 18.5 and 24.9.

Rest, relax, repeat

Regularly taking time out to unwind is an essential, non-negotiable, part of well-being. You simply cannot be optimally healthy if you don't rest, relax and get enough quality sleep. This includes everything from taking a half hour for yourself every day, spending time with friends, taking time off work and going on holiday.

Get a little help

We live in the age of the superhuman where it's not uncommon for people to work 16 hours a day, have a side hustle going, participate in endurance fitness events, while having two young children and managing a home. If you're one of those burning the candle at both ends like this, your body and mind will thank and reward you for giving it a bit of help in the form of a supplement, such as folic acid, Vitamin B or Essentiale Extreme.

Positive changes with long-term effect relies not on a spurt of motivation but on manageable habits. Habits, by definition, are things that we don't spend a great deal of mental energy on, but rather do as a matter of course, because we've established it as an effortless part of our daily routine. Cultivating healthy habits – simply making what's good for you part of you – is your best defence against ageing.

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