



GET HEALTHY

with Dr. Oz's 6-Month Plan

GETTING STARTED

As a physician, husband, father, author, and host of *The Dr. Oz Show*, I know what it means to be busy. Nevertheless, I'm amazed by the number of people who tell me they don't have time to exercise, or eat healthy meals, or get a good night's sleep. The truth is, if you can't find the time to get healthy, you're not going to be around as long as your kids and grandkids would like. Did you know that if you can't walk a quarter mile in less than five minutes, you're 25 percent more likely to die in the next six years than if you can? Or that if we eliminated all cancer in the United States, our average life expectancy would increase by only three years? Cancer doesn't kill most of us; lack of exercise and a poor diet do. Follow this 6-Month Plan for Getting Healthy to live the best life possible for as long as possible.

DAILY CHECKLIST

- Walk 30 minutes** Working out has benefits for your heart, weight, even your sex life. It may also help stave off Alzheimer's, new research finds.
- Brush and floss** Brushing removes only about 60 percent of the germs from between your teeth.
- Drink two cups of green tea** Green tea may lessen the risk of some cancers, plus it lowers cholesterol levels.
- Take 400mg of DHA omega-3s, 1,000 IU vitamin D, and 1,000mg calcium** Omega-3s diminish cognitive decline; calcium and vitamin D boost bone density.
- Sleep 7 to 8 hours a night** Our bodies use downtime to repair cells, process information, and raise growth hormone levels, which can up bone density and decrease body fat.
- Meditate for 5 minutes** Yoga, prayer, meditation—they're all key to reducing stress and finding purpose (more on these in Months 4 and 5).

OZ TIP

Ask three strangers how old they think you are. Their answers will tell you how others perceive you—and can be a strong indicator of how healthy you are.



MONTH 1: YOUR DIET MAKEOVER

DR. OZ EXCLUSIVE DIET
For recipes and nutritional information see aarpmagazine.org/ozrecipes.

Eating fewer calories could increase your longevity by 25 percent. Here's how: eating a little less every day activates your sirtuin gene, which increases the efficiency of your cells and improves your body's ability to repair itself. This three-day diet is designed to jump-start your body to lose weight.

OZ TIP

Hunger is driven in part by the hormone ghrelin. By eating regularly throughout the day, your levels of ghrelin stay under control, so you're never tempted to overeat.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
Breakfast	1 cup high-fiber cereal with ½ cup low-fat milk; 1 orange	Egg-white omelet; 1 slice whole-grain toast	1 cup oatmeal with cinnamon and maple syrup
Snack	3 tablespoons walnuts; 1 small apple	½ cup whole-grain cereal; ¼ cup almonds	1 cup low-fat cottage cheese; 1 cup strawberry halves
Lunch	Grilled chicken salad; 1 small whole-grain roll	Veggie burger on whole-wheat roll; 1 medium apple	1 cup sautéed vegetables stuffed into a whole-wheat pita; 1 medium apple
Snack	1 cup nonfat yogurt with raisins	1 cup low-fat cottage cheese; 1 cup grapes	1 cup low-fat yogurt
Dinner	5 ounces salmon; 1 cup steamed broccoli; ½ cup brown rice	Apricot chicken with green beans and toasted almonds	Turkey tortilla wrap; ½ cup refried beans
Snack	1 cup blueberries	1 small apple	1 cup blueberries

MONTH 2: TESTS & NUMBERS

Some numbers you can forget (your age, for one), but others you should know and control right away. Spend this month getting these tests done, while still adhering to the Daily Checklist and your new diet.

NUMBERS YOU SHOULD KNOW (and optimum levels)

- _____ **Blood pressure** (115/75)
- _____ **Waist size** (< half your height)
- _____ **HDL level** (> 45)
- _____ **LDL level** (< 100)
- _____ **TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone)** (< 2.5 mIU/L)
- _____ **Fasting blood sugar** (< 95)
- _____ **Vitamin D blood level** (ideally, >50 ng/l)

OZ TIP

Make it to age 80 and you have more than a 50 percent chance of living to 90.

TESTS YOU NEED

- **Colonoscopy:** At age 50 and then once every 10 years
- **Stress test:** After age 50
- **PSA test:** Every year (should be < 4 ng/ml) (men only)
- **Bone density:** Around menopause and then every 5 years after (women only)
- **Cervical:** Every 3 years (women only)
- **Mammogram:** Every year after age 50 (women only)

TESTS YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- **Pushups & situps**
Number you should be able to do in one minute:



Age	Pushups (Men)	Pushups (Women)	Sit-ups (Men)	Sit-ups (Women)
50-59	15-19	7-10	20-24	15-19
60-69	10-14	5-10	15-19	10-14
70-79	6-9	4-10	10-14	7-9
80-89	3-5	2-6	6-9	4-6

MONTH 3: RAMP UP YOUR EXERCISE

In cultures where people live long and healthy lives, rigorous physical activity is the norm. You're already on your way with the 30-minute daily walk you've taken since Day 1 of this 6-Month Plan. This month we add weight-bearing, flexibility, and balance exercises. (Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.)

DR. OZ
EXCLUSIVE
WORKOUT
See exclusive exercise
videos from Dr. Oz
at aarpmagazine.org/oz.

WEEK 1

Boost your aerobic activity by stepping up the pace of your walking—you should be breathing fairly hard—and by adding 3,000 more steps each day.

- **Step it up A** 30-minute walk adds up to about 4,000 steps. Your goal should be 10,000 steps a day. Buy a pedometer to track your progress.



WEEK 2



Add a short, 10-minute strength-training program to your daily routine. Start with scissor legs, then add exercises to strengthen your shoulders, arms, and legs.

- **Scissor legs (strengthens abs and inner thighs)** Lying on your back with your hands behind your head, lift your legs at a 90-degree angle, point your toes, and then scissor your legs back and forth 20 times, each time pushing your knees 2 feet apart and then bringing them back again.

WEEK 3

This week, start each day with a 10-minute stretching session. Flexibility is key to ensuring that you don't injure yourself as you increase your physical activity. You'll want

to stretch your chest, back, abdominals, hips, and hamstrings.



- **Crisscross (stretches back, abs, and hips)**

Sit with your legs crisscrossed in front of you. Keeping your torso upright and your back straight, put your right hand on your left leg and your left hand on the mat behind you; gently twist to the left. Hold for 10 seconds, then switch sides. Do the stretch twice on each side.

WEEK 4

Our sense of balance is coordinated by three things: our proprioception (which is our brain telling us where we are in space), our vision, and our hearing. As we age, our ability to integrate the signals from these three systems declines. But it takes only a few minutes a day to fine-tune it.

- **One-leg balance** Standing by a chair, lift one leg; see how long you can stand without lowering your foot. Next, do the exercise with your eyes closed. Switch legs.



OZ
TIP

Exchange sneakers with your exercise buddy. You'll be less likely to renege on your daily walk together.

MONTH 4: MANAGE YOUR STRESS

Stress is good. Stress is bad.

So which one is it? It's both. Stressful events raise our adrenaline, focus our thinking, and help us make instantaneous decisions (like swerving out of the way of an oncoming car). But chronic stress—a micromanaging boss, a troubled teenager—can put our bodies into a kind of long-term, hyperalert status, lowering our immunity and making us susceptible to illness. You can train your body to respond more positively to stress, though. Start with the exercises at right.

OZ TIP

Among the major stressors in our lives are **Nagging Unfinished Tasks (NUTs, I call them)**. Try to identify the NUTs in your life and then resolve to fix them, so they don't become a constant source of anxiety.



Stress Exercise 1

Deep breathing

Lie flat on the floor, with one hand on your belly and one on your chest. Take in a deep breath while pushing your belly out, to a count of 5. Then slowly exhale, to a count of 7, pulling in your bellybutton to get all the air out. Breathe this way for 5 minutes every day.



Stress Exercise 2

Meditation

If you've followed the Daily Checklist, you've already been meditating each day for 5 minutes. For this exercise, the goal is to clear your mind of all distractions. Sit quietly and repeat one word (such as *ohm*) over and over. Breathe evenly.

MONTH 5: FIND PURPOSE

One of the best ways to take control of your health is to define clearly what you want out of life.

TAKE THIS QUIZ

Do you have any untapped passions?

Yes No

What are they?

What's holding you back?

TAKE THE AMOEBA TEST

At right, draw a box with an amoeba in it. The box is your job, and the amoeba is you. How much of your amoeba lies outside the box? Do you have interests outside work? What are they?

MONTH 6: PUT IT TOGETHER

Congratulations!

You've made it through five months of the plan; now it's time to see how well you've done. Retake the tests from Month 2. (Ask your doctor to retest your HDL/LDL, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels). If you've adhered to this plan, your numbers should have improved considerably. Chart your exercise progress below.

6-MONTH CHECKLIST

- _____ Pedometer number—steps per day
- _____ Number of pushups
- _____ Number of sit-ups
- _____ Balance test—seconds (at least 15) you can balance on each leg
- _____ Heart/lung test—distance in yards (at least 600) you can walk in 6 minutes

OZ TIP

Have more sex. Couples who increase their lovemaking from once to twice a week increase their longevity by three years.

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