

Dr. Terry Johnson's

“Eight Steps to Healthful Living”

There are three major parts of human health: physical, mental and spiritual. My “Eight Steps” are essential to all aspects of health and healing. In consultation with and under the care of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider, use these “Steps” as a guide to help put your health in balance.

- 1. It starts with your spirit...** It all begins with your spiritual awareness. Open your mind and heart and seek the guidance that comes from the level of your soul. Healing takes place from the inside out. Nourish your spirit and begin to feel the power that a good clean life can bring. Understand that your journey to healing and lifelong recovery not only begins with your spirit, it also ends there, bringing you full circle. Your body is a remarkable vessel that protects your soul. Reflect on the wonderful gifts that are your body, your mind and your spirit. Consider how fragile you are and how easily your health can be lost. *Be good to yourself. Respect yourself. Forgive yourself. Believe in your own heart that you are worth saving, that you are here for a purpose, and that others can benefit from what you choose to do with your life.*
- 2. Breathe clean air...** Breathing is the single most important physiologic driver of your health. Every time you breathe in, life-giving oxygen saturates your blood and fuels every cell in your body. Each breath that you let out removes toxins and waste. So, don't smoke: tobacco, marijuana, meth, crack, etc. are horrible for your health at the most basic level—*where you breathe.*
- 3. Drink water...** Like oxygen, water is essential to your life. Start every day with a drink of good, clean water. You are made up almost entirely of water, so when you take a drink you are literally replacing and rejuvenating yourself. If you are thirsty, quench your thirst with water. Avoid energy drinks and trendy electrolyte replacement products. Partake of soft drinks sparingly, if at all. Water allows everything in your body to work.
- 4. Eat nutritious food...** Nourish your mind, body and spirit with healthful foods. You must eat to survive, but you need food not just for energy but also to heal. A balanced diet will almost always provide all of the nutrients, vitamins and minerals that you need to stay healthy. What you eat has a profound influence on your health and healing.
- 5. You must exercise...** Life is all about motion, and humans are designed to move. Generally, the more you move the better you do and the healthier you will be. There are limits, and these are different for everyone, so be cautious as you begin any exercise program. Use common sense, and consult your healthcare provider to determine what exercise regimen is right for you. Start easily and carefully, understanding that an appropriately individualized amount of exercise is crucial to your health and the healing process.

6. **Personal hygiene—stay clean...** Cleanliness is key to all parts of your health and wellbeing. Cleanse your body frequently, wash and comb your hair and keep your teeth brushed. Look in the mirror and see that you have done your best. Give yourself the respect that you deserve, and feel good about doing it. Here is a very important point: you need to be good to others and afford them respect, but you can't do that unless you first do it for yourself. Keep your body clean, and do the same for your mind and your spirit.
7. **Sleep is vital...** You must get plenty of good sleep, as it is essential to all aspects of your health and healing. Sleep should come naturally, at the end of your day, when you are tired. If it does not, then odds are good that one or more of my previous "Steps" are out of balance in your life. Put your life in order by prioritizing what is important to your health and maximizing your ability to heal. When you begin to sleep well, getting REAL sleep without the aid of exogenous substances, you will know that you are on the right track. Give it time, as poor sleep cannot be corrected overnight.
8. **Help others...** Why? Because helping other people is spiritual medicine for you. When you are healthy enough to think of others, you can begin to build healthful relationships and benefit from the mutual support that all humans need. Healthful socialization is crucial as you begin your journey of lifelong recovery. The better your relationships, the stronger your recovery and the less likely you will be to relapse. Look around you. Who do you care about? Who cares about you? Fill your life with good people and give freely of your time and love. As you do this, you will begin to heal from the inside out. Healing starts in the soul, and relationships nourish this process.

In all things, I wish you only the best and I hope you will begin your healing process here and now. May you live a long and rewarding life free of harmful substances and embraced by the people you love. Here's wishing you the best day today that you can possibly have...

Dr. Terry Johnson