

Occupational Health & Wellbeing

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WORK OUT YOUR WELLNESS SCORE

Do you have good lifestyle, exercise and eating habits? Be honest now. We understand that it's difficult to be good all the time and can seem quite dull. Rules about fruit and veg portions and BMI guidelines may not be sexy, but put all those 'dull' recommendations together and you have the holy grail of Wellness, a recipe for energy and *joie de vivre*.

The truth is, it's never too early to start listening to your body, and doing right by it. The aim of the following questionnaire is to encourage you to do some proper soul-searching about how much respect you have for that body of yours, and start thinking about what you can do today to boost your Wellness tomorrow and beyond.

Decide whether each of the statements below is largely true or false for you.

1. I get at least seven hours sleep a night at least five days a week.
2. When it comes to snacking, the fruit bowl holds more appeal for me than the cake tin – I can't get Enough of those antioxidants.
3. I exercise for at least half an hour three days a week.
4. I take a multivitamin/supplement every day.
5. I get lots of relaxation every day – meditation, yoga, taking time out is really good for my stress levels.
6. My parents are still fighting fit, or lived to a ripe old age.
7. I know what my cholesterol levels are; I get them checked.
8. (Women) I'm up to date with all my smear tests.
9. (Men) I'm not too embarrassed to check my testicles regularly.
10. I get at least five portions of fruit and veg a day.
11. I regularly give my liver a rest – alcohol-free days are a must.
12. My body fat percentage is within healthy limits.
13. I try not to eat meat more than a couple of times a week and stick to fish or poultry.
14. I don't say no to the odd indulgence, but fortunately I'm the kind of person who knows how to stop.
15. I always have my regular dentist check-up.
16. If I need to shift pounds, I tend to do it slowly and steadily – I'm not a binge eater and would never starve myself.

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17. I drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day – more when I'm exercising or drinking alcohol.
18. I'm mindful of my fat intake – I keep it within healthy limits and make sure I get plenty of omega 3 oils, such as those from oily fish, in my diet.
19. I get my blood pressure checked regularly – and it's within healthy limits.
20. I do everything I can to stay as healthy as possible.

Award yourself one point for each time you answer 'true' to a question.

Score:

17–20 points

Top marks. Sounds like you're as au fait with good health and nutrition as a person can be. You're probably vegan, teetotal and never binge on anything more decadent than alfalfa sprouts. Don't forget that moderation is also a pretty good path to follow – when it comes to health, those who border on the fanatical don't win many friends. But then again, you may live longer, so I suppose you get the last laugh...

10–17 points

Mr or Ms Average – chances are your intentions are good – you're eating well, exercising regularly-ish, and it appears you do strive to stay on the right side of healthy. As long as your good, healthy habits outweigh the bad, you'll be winning. But remember, the key is to find a balance between saintly and sinful behaviour.

10 or under

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear – got a deathwish or something? All that partying and indulgence may seem good for your well-being right now, but remember, it's easy to believe you're immortal when you're a youngster. The truth is sooner or later you've got to wise up to the benefits of drinking plenty of water, getting those health checks done, waking up to the power of exercise, and welcoming into your lifestyle all those elements which will help keep you in rude health well into your twilight years.

Read on... concentrate...and prepare to turn over a new leaf.

Most of us know the basics of what we should do to be well. Few of us do it. That's just a fact. Unfortunately there are no short cuts if you're not addressing the basics. These include:

- eating enough good-quality food to provide your cells with energy and keep energy production strong and constant;
- drinking enough fluids to remain hydrated;
- sleeping enough to restore your body;
- learning how to relax;
- maintaining a sensible work–life balance;
- exercising enough to keep your lungs and heart functioning healthily and pumping blood to your cells, where it supplies the nutrients you need; and
- stopping the really bad habits such as smoking, binge drinking and drug taking.

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Perhaps you used to have all this under control. Perhaps you're a mother who just hasn't time to eat properly or exercise, and are undergoing sleep disruption; perhaps work has got frantic over the last six months and you're so stressed you can't be bothered to look after yourself; perhaps your job demands a lot of travel – if you travel a lot, it's well-nigh impossible to take care of the basics unless you put some good systems in place and stick to them until they're habits. The good news is that there are lots of short cuts that will help you and easy ways to get your basics in place.

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