

The 8 Pillars of a Nutritious Life

If you know me, you know I love talking to people about putting more [healthy fats](#) on their plate and eating greens at every meal. It's my job as a registered dietitian.

But since the very beginning of my career I've known that healthy living is about much more than food. When I started my practice just over 16 years ago, I incorporated components like sleep and stress management into my clients' meal plans (and my original logo!). I saw that nutrition was just one piece of a much bigger healthy lifestyle pie, and my approach has always involved eight important pillars.

Emphasizing a whole-person approach has only gotten more important to me over the years, and in that time period, the "wellness" movement started to catch on. These days, people are finally talking about and beginning to understand how interconnected things like exercise, healthy relationships, and diet are.

In other words, your habits in one area impact your habits in another. A person may already be a great eater, but maybe she's not reaching her [ideal weight](#) because she's insanely stressed at work and [cortisol is wreaking havoc](#) on her body. Or maybe she hasn't figured out how to fit a regular exercise routine into her schedule. Similarly, if you're constantly [sleep-deprived](#), you're not going to have energy to work out, your [sex drive](#) might suffer, and you might make poor food choices.

It's my job to look at the whole picture and see what needs tweaking and refining in an individual's life. At Nutritious Life, we organize all of our stories around these eight pillars so that you can do the same in your own life. You're never going to reach perfection across the entire spectrum, but each area at least deserves equal attention.

Here's a brief introduction to the eight pillars of a Nutritious Life, all of which are equally important and connect and work together.

Eat Empowered

The healthiest diet is an approach to eating that fuels your body and mind and fits into your lifestyle. Eating empowered means listening—*really* listening—to your body and focusing on the diverse, delicious, healthy foods you *can* have rather than what a hard-to-follow diet says you *can't* have. (Come on, who needs fried food when you can have rich, satisfying [dark chocolate](#)?) When you eat whole, nutrient-dense foods, you feel like the best version of yourself. You're inspired to exercise, you sleep soundly, and you're motivated to keep on eating well. Your food choices don't ruin your life, they make it way, way better—because you feel (and look!) amazing.

Drink Up

Proper hydration—via water and healthy beverages like green tea and [kombucha](#) (not sugary bottled drinks disguised as health elixirs!)—aids digestion, boosts energy, and promotes great skin. Drinking H₂O also supports your healthy eating habits, since you don't metabolize food properly without it (seems important, right?). Trying to work out more? You won't have the stamina to recover from a tough [spin class](#) if you're dehydrated. Considering your body is made of mostly water, getting enough should be pretty high up on your list of priorities.

Stress Less

Stress is a wellness threat that wears many, many hats. It sabotages your healthy eating habits by contributing to [inflammation](#), increasing appetite, and causing [sugar cravings](#), and saps energy you could have used to build muscle at the gym. Plus, ever meet a super-stressed person who was maintaining strong relationships? Stress is a normal part of modern life, but *managing* it allows you to live that modern life while maintaining your physical, mental, and emotional health. In other words, you'll be a happier, healthier you. Isn't that a relaxing thought?

[Sleep Deep](#)

We get it: Life is crazy busy and unpredictable, and making time to get eight hours of sleep every night isn't easy. Even when you do make a point to get your head on to that pillow, it can be impossible to get your brain to give it a rest. But quality shut-eye is essential to living well. If you sleep more, you'll be able to make better food choices and avoid overeating. You'll have the energy you need to get to the gym and to hop into bed for reasons that are much more fun (wink wink). The research showing how [sleep protects your brain](#) also keeps getting stronger—and in which part of your lifestyle is a sharp mind *not* essential? We help you figure out how much sleep you need, why you need it, and how to get it, so you can focus on sticking to a bedtime.

[Love More](#)

A healthy sex life and relationships that make you feel happy and fulfilled? Yes, please! We know that sex is more than just a really fun way to spend a lazy afternoon. It reduces stress and boosts feel-good hormones that make other healthy habits—like deep sleep and smart food choices—fall into place. And expressing and spreading love in other ways, among friends, family, and acquaintances, can also contribute to a healthier, happier existence. We're all about helping you live a more heart-centered life (that just happens to include [regular orgasms](#)).

Don't worry, you can thank us later.

[Live Consciously](#)

There are plenty of practical ways we can shape the spaces we inhabit to benefit our own physical and mental health and the health of the planet. It may be as simple as organizing your desk space for more mental clarity or practicing a daily [two-minute meditation](#). Or maybe it means driving an extra few miles to buy your organic blueberries and greens [from local farmers](#) who use sustainable practices. We point out

and support simple changes you can make to act mindfully in your day-to-day life (without requiring you to live like a monk, obviously). Because when you live with purpose, you treat yourself better. You'll sleep well at night, too, knowing you're sticking to your principles.

[Nurture Yourself](#)

Self-care is not all about indulgence (although, for the record, we support plenty of that, too). A manicure, massage, or aromatherapy bubble bath can reset your mood and stress levels, motivating you to get to bed on time, to wake up to work out, or to choose the kale salad over the fries. We provide intel on how to take care of yourself so all of that happens. Think glow-inducing [beauty products](#) that also nourish your body (without chemicals) and therapies that align your mind and body like woah.

[Sweat Often](#)

If you think exercise is just about burning calories, you're missing more than a few pieces of the puzzle. Yes, sweat sessions *are* important if you want to stay slim and show off your guns, but working out also comes with whole-body benefits that are pretty unparalleled. Hopping [on the treadmill](#) on a regular basis protects against heart disease, which promotes longevity; swinging and hoisting kettlebells revs up your metabolism and strengthens your bones. Exercise is also a major brain booster, supporting cognition and memory and providing endorphins, AKA happy-making chemicals. We help you find workouts that fit into your busy schedule, make you feel amazing, and tire you out just enough for deep, blissful sleep.