

Lesson 1 Handout

8 PILLARS OF A NUTRITIOUS LIFE

The Nutritious Life philosophy is a whole person approach to health and wellness. Clients must understand that it's not just about the food. Living a more Nutritious Life means embracing these 8 Pillars. They are all equally important and they all connect and work together—physiologically and behaviorally. Each of these 8 Pillars will come up in the rest of this course so you need to know what they are, what they mean and why they're important.

Here's a brief introduction to the 8 Pillars of a Nutritious Life:

Drink Up

Our bodies are 50-75% water. When you are properly hydrated, your metabolism is at its max, you think more clearly, you don't mistake hunger for thirst, and you feel more energized. One of the most common reasons people are sluggish in the afternoon is due to dehydration. Research finds dehydration leads to decreased alertness and increased sleepiness, fatigue and confusion. It is a must to get your water in. Water also helps us feel clean, healthy and refreshed. Plus, research has shown that drinking water during meals can help curb weight gain by preventing overeating. Liquids may also help move food through your digestive tract smoothly.

Eat Empowered

Feel empowered by putting the most nutrient rich foods in your body. It's not: "I can't eat the chocolate cake." It's: "I can eat the blueberries!" When you focus on how good you feel fueling yourself with the best foods you will continue to be motivated to eat these foods. The benefits will follow -- everything from weight loss to skin health. Eating well is at the core of living a Nutritious Life. When you eat well, you feel good and you want to exercise. When you exercise you feel even better and you sleep better. When you sleep better... You get it! The 8 Pillars all connect and support one another to best support you.

Live Consciously

The environment that surrounds us can impact our health, both mental and physical. There are some aspects of our environment that we can't always control, like traffic or the noise from the construction down the street. But there are plenty of factors that are within our reach and can make a big difference in our lifestyle and mood, such as making a clutter-free zone in your office or home or turning off the TV when you aren't really watching. Simply having an organized desk space can reduce stress and improve mood. This boost in mood and lowered stress may be key to you making better food choices. When you make better food choices, you sleep better... You get where this is going.

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Love More

Is there a link between low libido, health and weight? Absolutely! A healthy sex life can help reduce stress and boost feel-good hormones that make other healthy habits (like deep sleep and smart food choices) fall into place. Plus, having sex also helps with weight management. While it's not (usually!) as strenuous as an afternoon of tennis, sex does burn calories. Researchers also know that oxytocin (a hormone released after orgasm in men and women, through cuddling, and even by simply holding hands) acts as a soothing antioxidant and may make it easier for people to stick to their healthy eating style. Expressing and spreading love in other ways, among friends, family, and acquaintances, can also contribute to a healthier, happier existence. So, sex, cuddling and good relationships make you healthier and happier -- all around!

Nurture Yourself

Treating yourself to something special can have emotional and physical benefits. Simple small indulgences, like a manicure, massage or bubble bath can make you look and feel great. The time that you spend caring for yourself physically can reap huge mental and physical rewards. When you take care of yourself, you are respecting yourself and you want to be good to yourself in other ways. Ever notice how after a lavender bath you get a great night of sleep? Let your clients know that it's not just okay -- it's good -- for them to take some time for themselves each day.

Sleep Deep

When you are well rested you make better food and lifestyle choices, plus you have more energy for healthy habits like exercising, walking to work or taking time for your favorite activities. When you are not well rested your defenses are down and you are more likely to overeat and make poor food choices. Research shows losing as little as 30 minutes of sleep per day may promote weight gain. Sleep deprivation leads to hunger, grogginess and moodiness, and can affect the brain too. Studies have shown that sleepy people need to exert a lot more brain effort to complete even simple tasks. People with sleep deprivation also have impaired working memory and attention. Lack of sleep causes your levels of cortisol, the hormone associated with stress, to rise. You can improve your sleep by practicing a calming ritual before bed as part of proper sleep hygiene. Try dimming the lights in your bedroom and reduce stimulation by turning off the TV, computer, and yes even your phone.

Stress Less

Stress increases the level of the hormone cortisol in our bodies, which in turn makes our bodies crave carbohydrates, specifically high sugar carbohydrates, and store fat around the midsection. So, even if you don't eat more due to stress you can still gain weight due to stress. To make matters worse, stress also causes an increase in appetite. We all know what that does! Make time in your day to unwind and reset. Take 8 minutes to sit quietly and practice the 8 count breath or go for a walk outside for a breath of fresh air.

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Sweat Often

Aside from burning calories, exercise is important for so many reasons. When you exercise your body releases endorphins, which make you feel good and motivate you to eat well, do your job well and simply be happy. Exercise in general has been linked to longer lifespan, reduced stress, lower risk of disease, stronger bones, and lower BMI. You also build muscles and rev your metabolism, which helps burn calories and helps with weight management. Encourage your clients to vary their routines. Incorporate running, spinning, yoga, Pilates, Tabata, weight lifting or whatever else is motivating and fun for them. Don't forget, not all exercise happens in a gym. Incorporate regular physical activity into the day, like taking the stairs or walking to work or for errands.