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Surprising
Ways
to
Live
Longer



Eat more like the French

A report by the World Health Organization found that French people live longer than nearly any people in the world, including Americans and other Europeans. Researchers believe that French eating habits have a lot to do with their longevity. French people spend more time and more money on food relative to total income than just about any civilized nation. While French people indulge in cheeses, fried foods, and rich desserts, they exercise wonderful self control in the form of smaller portions. Additionally, French people are partial to fresh food; it is customary in many parts of the country to shop daily for food. Finally, French people are much less likely to indulge in so-called convenience foods (i.e. fast food and packaged junk food). To find fresher food, try your local farmer's market. You can find farmer's markets in your area at www.localharvest.org.



Go to bed later

Sleep is a time when the body and mind recharge, so conventional wisdom would lead us to believe that more sleep is better. However, a recent study in the Archives of General Psychiatry, USA, contradicts that belief. While sleep deprivation (less than 6 hours of sleep a night) has been connected to several chronic diseases and a shortened lifespan, oversleeping can be more dangerous. Researchers discovered that those who slept 8 hours a night or more had substantially higher death rates than those who slept 6 to 7 hours a night. For the latest information on sleep and help with sleep disorders, visit the National Sleep Foundation at www.sleepfoundation.org.



Fire the housekeeper

A study of over 300 seniors found that performing basic housework (vacuuming, watering plants, cleaning windows and countertops) was enough to reduce the risk of death by nearly 30 percent. Researchers believe that the reduced risk is related to the increased activity which results in the burning of about 285 calories. If this connection is accurate, presumably the longevity effect could be achieved by performing any activity that burns the same amount of calories. To find out how many calories you can burn doing other activities, use this [calorie calculator](#).



Eat chocolate

Over the past few decades, Americans have been bombarded with information about the dangers of a high-fat diet. For millions of chocolate-lovers, this fact is as unwelcome as it is frightening. But before you toss your Snickers bar in the trash, consider a recent study by the Harvard School of Public Health which showed that people who enjoyed chocolate moderately (less than 3 times a week), lived longer than those who wrote off chocolate altogether. Researchers hypothesize that chemicals known as phenols protect the heart from certain diseases. Of course, it could also be that those who deny themselves chocolate simply have nothing to live for. You can treat yourself (or a loved one) to some gourmet chocolate at www.chocolate.com



Work on your marriage

Marriage can be a source of endless stress or infinite happiness. So, what do scientists say about the effects of marriage on longevity? Many studies have confirmed that married people live longer than single people. However, those studies don't tell the whole story. These days, nearly 1 in 2 marriages ends in divorce, so there is quite a bit of data on the effects of divorce on long-term health. It turns out that people who stay married throughout their lives have longer life expectancies than those who divorce, which is probably not surprising to anyone who has endured a difficult divorce. However, a recent study showed that people who remarry have lower life expectancies than those who do not. For information on how to find a marriage counselor in your area and what you can expect when you do, visit [this helpful site](#).



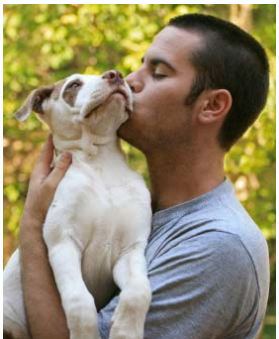
Take the promotion

Money can't buy you happiness, but it may be able to buy you a few extra years. Life expectancy and income have a direct correlation in every country that measures the two statistics. Whatever stress may result from the increased responsibilities and liabilities that are often associated with increased wealth seem to be offset by the opportunity to purchase better health care and live more comfortably. Additionally, high-income families tend to have children with higher education, which is another leading indicator of longevity. In other words, getting a raise could mean a longer life for you and your children.



Have more children

Stress can dramatically shorten a person's life. Children are undeniably stressful. Given those two facts, you might conclude that having more children means a shorter life. However, exactly the opposite is true. A recent study in the *Psychology of Ageing* found that women's life expectancy increased with the number of children they had. The effect seems to be consistently increased with each child. In other words, women with seven children are likely to live longer than women with six children, and a woman with two children is likely to live longer than a woman with one child. Scientists believe that the increased support and activity associated with more children is helpful in elongating the final years of a parent's life.



Adopt a pet

Pets can be messy, full of bacteria, and even transmit disease. However, according to a recent study conducted by Cambridge University, families who own at least one cat or dog exhibit fewer signs of stress than pet-free families. Additionally, families with cats and dogs require less medical assistance, on average. Researchers surmise that the increased physical activity, increased happiness, and reduced stress associated with owning a pet outweigh the potential risks. To find a pet in your area, visit www.adoptapet.com.



Call your mother

Mothers will be happy to hear that their influence has a healthy effect on their children, even in adulthood. A recent study conducted by the Harvard Medical School found that 91% of participants who had poor or nonexistent relationships with their mothers developed a serious disease in adulthood, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, or debilitating alcoholism. In the same study, only 45% of participants who spoke regularly with their mothers developed the same illnesses.