



## 7 Wellness Tips to Be Your Best Self This Spring

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Transitioning from winter into spring means longer days and warmer weather, so why not make the best of it by channeling your best self. Tweaking your daily habits or creating new ones to improve your health and wellness may take work, but the benefits could be significant. Here are seven tips from the pros to get you started:

### Get Moving

“Working out releases serotonin, a chemical in the brain that helps our bodies adjust,” says **Franci**

**Cohen, New York-based exercise physiologist and certified nutritionist.** “Exercise regularly, preferably outdoors, and early in the day. A brisk morning walk is perfect. Avoid exercising too late in the evening though, as this could interfere with the quality of your sleep. It’s especially beneficial to engage in physical activity outdoors during the day, which helps increase levels of vitamin D. Because vitamin D is manufactured beneath the skin, when the body is exposed to sunlight, exercising outdoors can increase your body’s levels of vitamin D, which contribute to greater overall immunity and well-being.”

### Start Out Easy

“If you do yoga, or any class, start one level below your normal, or start with a restorative yoga class or stretch class for the first week,” says Hope Gillerman, founder and creator of H. Gillerman Organics. “If you run, start with brisk walking and focusing on your neck and shoulders while breathing fully—even your breathing muscles have to get back in shape, and if you strain them, you will get a ‘stich.’ Your first week is the most important—attention to breathing quietly, evenly and deeply will set up a meditative mindset that tunes you into your body for injury prevention and a better workout.”

### Go Shopping

Gillerman recommends getting a new pair of sneakers. “Most athletic shoes wear out in six months, and when they do, they can throw your body out of alignment with each step you take. When the shoe isn’t supporting your foot and lower leg properly, your leg muscles have to work that much harder, making you fatigue sooner. This fatigue can undermine your motivation!”

### Practice Meditation

“Just five little minutes of sitting down to focus your attention on your breathing can help you significantly lower the damaging effects of stress on your body and improve your ability to handle tricky situations,” says Dr. Frank Lipman, integrative and functional medicine physician, author of *The New Health Rules* and founder of Eleven Eleven Wellness Center. “A consistent meditation practice also makes you a more likeable person, improves your mood and even benefits your busy brain!”

### **Protect Your Skin**

Coming out of the winter months and into (hopefully) sunnier weather, it is important to refocus on sun protection in order to keep your skin healthy and youthful,” says New York dermatologist Dendy Engelman, MD. “Sunscreens are great, but they aren't enough. Topical antioxidants like vitamin C and ferulic acid can help to protect against photodamage, and also have anti-aging benefits.”

### **Snack Smart**

When you need a snack, but don't want to jeopardize your healthy diet, reach for energy-boosting almonds. “They are great for helping you stay energized because they are loaded with potassium and iron,” says Cohen. “To obtain all their health benefits, be sure to snack on raw almonds rather than the candy-coated or salted kind.” And, if nuts aren't your thing, try other energy-boosting snacks such as grapes, peaches or sunflower seeds.

### **Drink Water**

“Drinking enough pure water every day is important for supporting your body's functions, curbing cravings and preventing dry, irritated skin,” says Dr. Lipman. “It's important to drink water that's been filtered or that comes from a natural source—not just tap water loaded with chlorine and other potentially harmful chemicals.”