

# Physical Wellness

## What is physical wellness?

"Physical wellness consists of recognizing the need for physical activity, healthy foods, and sleep, as well as preventing illness and injury or managing chronic health conditions<sup>1</sup>."

Physical wellness is about listening to your body. When does it need to move? Or rest? Consuming a balanced diet, drinking alcohol in moderation, and getting enough sleep are all aspects of physical wellness. Taking care of your physical health is important to being able to function optimally.

## Why is it important?

- Physical activity has many benefits including<sup>2</sup>:
  - Improved mood, decreased feelings of anxiety and depression
  - Increased energy levels
  - Improved brain function, memory and thinking skills
  - Improved sleep quality
- Getting adequate sleep has been shown to help promote learning<sup>3</sup>.
- Being inactive, eating unhealthfully, smoking, and drinking heavily are all linked to significantly increased risk for chronic diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke<sup>4,5,6</sup>.
- Not getting enough sleep can impair your ability to concentrate, think clearly, and process memories. It has also been shown to cause attention lapses, reduced cognition, and mood shifts<sup>7</sup>.
- Chronic lack of sleep can lead to chronic illness<sup>7</sup>.

## How can we assess it?

- You can use the physical wellness section on its own in either of the following wellness assessments found in the digital resource library.
  - [wellness assessment 1](#)
  - [wellness assessment 2](#)
- Another great way to assess physical wellness is just ask open-ended questions that allow the coachee to talk about how they feel they are doing such as:
  - How would you rate your level of physical wellness?
  - What does physical wellness mean to you?
  - What areas of physical wellness, if any, would you like to work on?

- o How would improving your physical wellness help you with your other goals?
- o What steps might you take to begin improving your physical wellness?
- o When will you begin and how will you track your progress?

## How can we improve it?

There are some standard guidelines for physical health behaviors that are important for preventing chronic disease and optimizing health. If your coachee wants to improve their physical health in one of these areas but doesn't know where to start, these are some great guidelines.

### Physical Activity

- The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week (30 minutes-5 days per week) or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity<sup>8</sup>.
  - o Moderate: an activity where your heart rate and breathing are elevated, but you can still carry a conversation (ex. Brisk walk, easy bike ride, etc.)
  - o Vigorous: an activity that is more physically demanding and makes it challenging to carry a conversation (ex. Running, swimming, basketball, etc.)
- ACSM and the CDC also recommend 2 days per week of strength training<sup>8</sup>.

### Nutrition

- The USDA publishes dietary guidelines every 5 years<sup>9</sup>. Because you are not a dietician, do not recommend dietary changes. Rather, use the following guidelines from the USDA to help a coachee identify the areas where they would like to make changes, if that is something they want to work on.
  - o Focus on meeting food group needs by eating nutrient-dense foods.
    - Vegetables of all types
    - Whole fruits
    - Grains – at least half whole grains
    - Dairy
    - Proteins – lean meats, poultry, eggs, seafood, beans, etc.
    - Oils – vegetable oils and nuts
  - o Limit foods and beverages high in added sugar, saturated fat, sodium
  - o Drink alcohol in moderation – 2 drinks per day for men, 1 for women. One standard drink is measured as:
    - 1.5 oz of distilled spirits
    - 5 oz of wine
    - 12 oz of beer

### Sleep

- The Sleep Foundation recommends 7-9 hours of sleep per night for young adults aged 18-25<sup>10</sup>.

- Sleep hygiene refers to our sleep habits, or the things that we can do to ensure a good night's sleep. If your coachee is struggling with sleep, explore their bedtime ritual. There are suggestions to improve this in the resources section below.

## What resources are there?

- If you are interested in the full dietary guidelines, you can find those [here](#).
- For more information about the physical activity recommendations, find those [here](#).
- Find sleep hygiene tips [here](#).
- Many universities have campus rec centers, physical activity classes, or other resources for students to have a safe space for activity.
  - [Dixie State](#)
  - [Utah Valley University](#)
  - [Southern Utah University](#)
  - [Utah State University](#)
  - [University of Utah](#)
- [MyPlate](#) has a small quiz that you can take about your eating habits to get personal recommendations. You also can explore the different food groups and learn more about building a balanced plate.

## References

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