



Our body always tells us what it wants and needs – the question is whether we are listening.

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You only have one body. The degree to which you care for it pays dividends in the degree of energy you have for doing the things you enjoy. Tom Rath in his book *Are You Fully Charged* notes that often the most caring people put their own care last. But this is a false economy as to be of real help to others, to lead well, to be a positive example, you need to be at your best yourself.

The key factors to caring for yourself are getting enough sleep, eating well, and moving your body regularly. Like many things the best way to increase your skill in these areas is to do it slowly and incrementally, developing habits that you can sustain.

Here are a couple of things to try:

- Each morning, as you brush your teeth (or during some other regular activity) find three things about your body that you like.
- Go to bed half an hour earlier than you normally do for the next 7 days and notice how much more energy you have. Sleep more to do more.
- Record the amount of physical activity you engage in for one week. Include all specific physical activities and miscellaneous activities such as walking to the bus stop, cleaning the house. Give each activity a rating out of 10 for how good it makes you feel.
- If you don't feel you have enough physical activity in your life write a list of 10 physical things you could do that you would really, really enjoy doing.
- For one week keep a record of everything that you eat.
- Look for foods that have a carbohydrate to protein ratio no higher than 5:1.
- Choose one activity per day that you would normally do while sitting and do it standing.
- Drink more water than you think you need.
- Indulge in an activity in which you care for your body, e.g. massage, facial, manicure, wear your best clothes just for the heck of it, a foot bath, a yoga class...
- Set a timer to go off in your environment every hour (not overnight) and when the timer goes off smile, and keep smiling for as long as you can.