

Healthy Living for Men

Measuring Behaviors

By: Louis S. Bezich

Guys, so you're more than 30 days into 2016 and chances are that the strength of your New Year's resolutions is already being put to the test, particularly if they include healthy living. According to the Statistic Brain Research Institute, only 14% of people over age 50 achieve their resolutions each year; weight loss and staying fit and healthy are among the top ten. For men, the track record is far worse when it comes to healthy behaviors.

There are 50 million men age 50 and over in the US, most with much to live for: relationships, graduations, grandchildren, hobbies, travel, perhaps a second or third career. Yet, despite circumstances that should create plenty of inspiration for healthy behavior, men over 50 fail miserably.

In 2012, only 17% of males, ages 45-75, met US Center for Disease Control guidelines for aerobic activity and muscle strengthening, while 46% of that same cohort met neither set of the guidelines. Worse, according to Dr. David Nash of Thomas Jefferson University, only 3% of the country (men and women) exhibits positive health behaviors, while other research suggests that over 85% of American males rate themselves as possessing good, very good or excellent health!

But who are we kidding? Recent research has shown, in actuality, that men are migrating to a more sedentary lifestyle which is associated with health risks and costs such as heart disease, diabetes and colorectal cancer.

So, what's a 50-plus guy supposed to do keep his 'healthy' New Year's resolution on track? I went to the ultimate experts—guys who are 50 and over that buck the trends by leading a healthy lifestyle. I surveyed 1,000 men nationwide and per-

sonally interviewed 20 additional subjects. Their answers reveal some of the key strategies and tactics that these healthy guys use to maintain their healthy lifestyle.

- **Talk to your doctor about your life's priorities.** Of the 32% who discussed their personal priorities with their physicians, 81% said it worked well or very well.
- **Develop partnerships.** 72% of men developed partnerships. 98% stated that this is somewhat helpful for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- **Build an inventory of healthy habits and rituals.** Among the 95% with healthy habits and rituals, top routines included meal planning (68%), maintaining the same schedule for exercise or hobbies (62%), and building exercise and physical activity into vacations and business trips (61%).
- **Focus on your diet.** Most men (83%) engage in some type of dietary measure: avoiding certain food groups (65%) and controlling portions (51%) were the two leading actions.

How can you get started on the road to healthy behavior? Simple, answer the 5-question test we used in our research. To calculate your BMI (Body Mass Index) just search the internet. You'll need a BMI calculator. Just enter your height and weight. **50**

Healthy Lifestyle Questionnaire

- | YES | NO | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a BMI (Body Mass Index) of 18.5-24? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you always or most of the time exercise at least 20 minutes a day, 3 or more days a week? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are you a non-smoker? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you wear a seatbelt in the car? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you regularly eat fruits and vegetables? |

If you answered YES to all 5 questions, congratulations you live a healthy lifestyle! If not, use the "no" answers to build a plan for healthy living. This could be the most important test you've ever taken!

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