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2024 Health Trends – *They're Ancient*

Do you think contemporary health trends are all based on new research findings? Think again.

Many modern health and wellness practices are promoted as trends and the new craze but are well established practices that date back to ancient times.

In general, early philosophers and medical practitioners identified the basics for leading a healthy lifestyle – sleep as much as possible, move and exercise regularly, stay on your feet (walk, run), get regular moderate sun, and practice fasting.

In early days, some of these wholesome practices were considered mystical, but with passing time have become science-based principles of healthy living in modern times.

Priorities shift and health habits change based on current life influences, therefore, some health habits become seen as trendy.

It's interesting to recognize the ancient origins from where modern-day medicine and health practices originated from.

Here's what's ancient and trending in 2024:

I. Nutrition



Ancient philosophers often wrote about healthful eating. The ancient Romans followed the teachings of Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, who is famous for writing, *"Let food be thy medicine."*

When patients were sick the first thing Hippocrates prescribed was a change in diet. There weren't drug stores back then so ancient Romans tried to cure their illness by either eating or not eating certain foods.

The Mediterranean diet from early times is recognized today as one of the healthiest diets in the world. Romans ate fish, meat, vegetables, eggs, grains, legumes, olives, fruits. Today's Mediterranean diet is considered an anti-inflammatory diet, and consists of fruits, vegetables, nuts, fish, olive oil, and whole grains.

According to well-known family physician, Dr. Mark Hyman, what we eat is more powerful medicine than what we can get in a pill bottle. Food can heal chronic disease and prevent illnesses. He says to think of your grocery store as your pharmacy. Dr. Hyman is leading a health revolution around using food as medicine to support longevity, energy, mental clarity, happiness and much more.

2. Intermittent Fasting

Hippocrates, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and Galen all praised fasting. Paracelsus, one of the three fathers of Western medicine, is quoted as saying, *“Fasting is the greatest remedy – the physician within oneself.”*

Early healing arts recognized the revitalizing and rejuvenating powers of fasting.

What is intermittent fasting?

Dr. Hyman says he doesn't recommend skipping meals because it can mess with your blood sugar and energy levels, but with intermittent fasting you're not randomly skipping meals, but using a strategic way to miss a meal.

The most basic intermittent fast is a 12–14-hour break between dinner and breakfast. This allows our bodies and cells time for waste removal, regeneration, and repair.

Fasting helps our bodies switch into a fat-burning mode that uses ketones instead of glucose, which can balance hunger hormones and feed good gut bacteria to help us feel satiated and energized even while fasting.



3. Exercise



Ancient Greeks valued physical aesthetics and athletic bodies. They tended to have great abs and their bodies were muscular.

They weren't bodybuilders but had little body fat and tended to be lean and have good endurance.

The Greeks were athletic and kept their bodies in good form to be ready for battle. Their secret was hard physical labor and a well-rounded diet.

Today we have many exercise options to maintain physical health. The key is to find what interests you and do it consistently. One simple way to be active is walking, a natural exercise.

Even a few minutes walking outdoors can set one's circadian rhythm, manage weight, and improve sleep and vitality.

An additional benefit is that being in nature is powerful; just a few minutes outdoors viewing trees, flowers, or water induces relaxation and reduces anger, anxiety, and pain.

4. Meditation

Meditation is traced back to some of the oldest written records in India and China, referred to as training of the mind.

The practice is closely connected to Buddhism and associated with philosophical topics and prayer. Practices over time have varied but are focused on mindfulness, mantras, visualizations, and beathing.

Today meditation, mindfulness, and breath work are popular practices and widespread, but we can expect to see an even greater push for incorporating these practices into our daily routines. Being more mindful of how you breathe can reduce anxious feelings and help better regulate your emotional health.

The benefits of meditation and breathing will go a long way toward preventing complications and recovering from COVID-19 as well as regulating your breath during daily events, from exercise to stressful situations at work.

Breath work can also become a form of spiritual practice in which you intentionally set moments aside during the day to realign with your core being.



5. Sleep



For as long as humans have roamed the Earth, we have needed sleep. As civilization evolved, so has how humans have rested. Sleep was revered by ancients as a time of calm relaxation when thoughts mingled with dreams.

Sleep and dreams played an important role in every religion. Greeks regarded sleep as a middle state between life and death. Sleep wasn't seen as a single, uninterrupted stretch of night; it was regarded as two periods, with an intermission between the periods of sleep.

Wakefulness was normal and awake time during the night was used for checking for predators, praying, sex, chores, and reading. People made up for lost sleep during the night with frequent naps.

Fast forward to today with sleep habits having gone through dramatic changes over the years. Ancient wisdom about the importance of sleep has been devalued over the past couple of decades, mostly driven by work demands.

Approximately 70 percent of Americans aren't getting enough sleep, 40 percent report occasional insomnia, and 22 percent experience insomnia almost every night. But there's been a wakeup call and we're once again recognizing the importance of sleep for mental and physical health. Studies and discoveries about sleep are in the news.

We're seeing the connection between sleep and productivity, including sick days. Individuals are recognizing a relationship between sleep and their focus, energy, and creativity.

Once again, like our ancestors, we're honoring the value of sleep. Getting the rest our bodies need for detoxification and regeneration, may be the single most important health habit we can practice.



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www.nursesue.org/health-coaching

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