



Easy way to increase all-day energy

Mom was right: Sitting up straight *is* good for you. In a study in the journal *Biofeedback*, people reported an increase in energy after skipping down a hallway to encourage upright posture, while those who slouched while walking felt more drained. Study author Erik Peper, Ph.D., says slouching taps into memories of negative experiences and saps energy, but correcting your posture can restore vitality. His advice: If you're sitting in front of a computer for hours, stand up every half hour to "reset" your posture. Also smart: Place a firm pillow behind your lower back.

Another plus for probiotics

Supplementing with "good bacteria" just got more kudos: In research presented at a conference of the American Heart Association, adults who took a pill that contained 200 mg of a specific strain of *L. reuteri* for nine weeks cut their total cholesterol by 9 percent. Researchers discovered that *L. reuteri* blocked the absorption of dietary cholesterol and broke down bile acids that encourage the intestines to take in cholesterol from the blood, reducing reabsorption by about 40 percent. The study-backed brand: Cardioviva (\$35 for 60 capsules, at MyCardioviva.com).

Omega-3s boost a key measure of intelligence

Taking a daily fish oil capsule is a smart move, say researchers at the University of Pittsburgh. They found that young adults' performance on tests of working memory, which is necessary for problem solving and decision making, improved after taking 2,000 mg of omega-3 fatty acids for six months. The researchers say omega-3s may boost dopamine function in the cortical areas of the brain, which control working memory.

The upside to Googling health symptoms

Surprise! Self-diagnosing a health problem can improve a doctor's visit. When U.K. scientists asked about the experiences of people who brought Internet research to their doctor, subjects reported that their M.D. listened, addressed their concerns, and gave his opinion, making them feel more connected to their doctor. The key: keeping an open mind. The best experiences occurred when the doctor was open to the patient's info and the patient was open to the doctor's input—even if it differed from the Internet research.



10-minute tweak for deeper sleep

Next time you find yourself tossing and turning in bed, try picturing waves crashing against a shore. In a study that was presented at the American College of Chest Physicians' annual meeting, 65 percent of volunteers who spent 10 minutes visualizing a serene image and breathing deeply before going to bed said they drifted off faster, slept more deeply and had less stress. The reason: This exercise alleviates before-bed tension, lowering levels of stimulating stress hormones such as cortisol and promoting sounder sleep.

94

Percent of paper money tested that was positive for bacteria

SOURCE: *Southern Medical Journal*