

Embrace wellness: A new year – A new you

As we welcome 2025, it's a great time to reflect on the past year and commit to healthier decisions. Instead of making unsustainable resolutions like never eating cookies again or exercising for an hour every day, let's take a holistic approach to wellness in 2025.

Consider the concepts of health and wellness. Do they mean the same thing? According to the World Health Organization, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition covers a lot, but let's also add the idea of wellness to the mix. The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness as "the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health." Wellness focuses on making active choices and behaviors that affect the multi-dimensional aspects of our health and well-being.

When you think of paying attention to your health and wellness, what comes to mind? If your answer revolves around physical health, you're partially right. Physical health is one part of the picture, but other aspects impact our wellness experience. In this series, we will consider eight dimensions of wellness. Since most people start setting goals related to physical health at the beginning of a new year, we will start with this dimension.

Physical Wellness

Physical wellness is about caring for your body and seeking help when needed. It's the ability to maintain a quality of life that helps you get the most out of your daily activities without feeling fatigue or physical stress. It involves:

- **Listening to your body:** Recognizing hunger/fullness cues, feelings of tiredness, and warning signs of illness.
- **Adopting healthy habits and behaviors:** Helping your body stay healthy now and in the future.
- **Focusing on prevention:** Actively and intentionally engage in healthy behaviors that help prevent chronic disease, such as eating a healthy diet, getting regular physical activity, getting adequate and quality sleep, and keeping up with doctor visits and routine screenings.

Here are some ideas to help you focus on your physical wellness this week:

- **Take a walk during your day:** If the weather isn't cooperating, walk around the interior of your home.
- **Create a bedtime routine for better sleep:**
 - Give yourself time to decompress from the day. Try reading, listening to music, or taking a warm bath.
 - Resist the urge to scroll yourself to sleep. Don't wind down with screens (TV, computer, phone).

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, aiming for at least 7 hours of sleep.
- **Schedule a doctor’s appointment:** Whether it’s an annual check-up or one you’ve been putting off.
- **Track your intake of fruits and vegetables:** Try to fill half your plate with a variety of vegetables and fruits.
- **Start an exercise routine:** Find an activity you enjoy and make it a regular part of your schedule.

By taking small, manageable steps, we can make significant strides in our overall wellness journey throughout the year. Next time, we’ll dive into two other dimensions – Emotional and Financial Wellness.

About the Author

Sara Attig is a Family Life Educator with University of Illinois Extension, serving Livingston, McLean, and Woodford Counties. Attig uses her expertise to deliver impactful and meaningful programs about the dimensions of wellness, aging, and much more to Livingston, McLean, and Woodford Counties and beyond.

