

Twelve Small Ways to Maintain Your Health and Sanity

by [Jeff Davidson](#)
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In pursuit of holding doing an excellent job, HR professionals sometimes short change their health and then find, too late, that the road back is incredibly challenging. Why not offer excellence and maintain your health? Here are twelve small changes you can put in to practice now to maintain and/or improve your health:

1. Sleep 8 hours per night.
2. Plan vacations for the next three years. A study at the State University of New York found that men who vacation every year reduce their risk of dying from cardiovascular disease. So start dreaming about where you'd like to go – and in the meantime, take time off now and then to do cool things with your kids.
3. Clean your desk. Too much paper and clutter can contribute to stress. If you keep your desk organized, it will be easier to focus on the task at hand and avoid feeling overwhelmed. With the hectic lives most of us lead today, even a little bit of de-stressing can make a big difference.
4. Turn off the TV. Studies show that men who watch less than two hours of TV per day have, on average, lower blood pressure and a lower BMI than those who watch more than two hours daily. Sure, watch the Panthers play in the Super Bowl or enjoy your favorite weekly sitcom, but watching less TV leaves you time for other things – like working out, exploring new hobbies, or teaching your kids how to play football.
5. Discover which medical problems run in your family, and assess your own risk. If you know that illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart attacks have killed family members, get tested to be safe or help prevent greater problems. Genetic tendencies are simply tendencies. Often, the right diet and lifestyle can prevent medical problems that caused early deaths for your relatives.
6. Take your kids on a bike ride. This offers positive health benefits for you and encourages fun and healthy exercise for your children. It also allows you to have some non-stressful time to just enjoy being with your family.
7. Dry brush your teeth. It has been demonstrated to reduce tartar, which can lead to plaque, by at least 50%. Make sure you have a soft brush, and brush gently, scrubbing both the top and bottom of your teeth. Don't forget the backsides! This will help considerably reduce the risk of bleeding gums.
8. Check your contact lenses. A diet full of fat, protein, and alcohol weakens your tears' ability to block cholesterol from sticking to your contacts. Get a cholesterol screening if you experience cloudy deposits on your contact lenses to determine if you are at risk for serious problems, like clogged arteries.
9. Exercise while you sit. Sit up straight with your spine away from the back of the chair. Use your abdominal muscles to keep your back in alignment. Flex and release various muscle groups, like your arms, thighs, and calves.
10. Volunteer. Studies have shown that men who do volunteer work at least once a week experience far less tension than those who don't.
11. Visualize a pleasant scene from your past, such as a meadow, a brook, and magnificent tree.
12. If you can get out of a restaurant without having dessert, you're ahead for several reasons. First, it costs you less. Second, the portions will tend to be larger than you might otherwise serve yourself. And third, you really have no control over the amount of sugars and fats that comprise your dessert. You may not much have control at home or elsewhere either, but you have absolutely no control in the restaurant, in most cases. Unless, of course, you ask for a no-sugar or non-fat dessert.