

THE SKILLS YOU NEED

GUIDE TO LIFE

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF



THE SKILLS YOU NEED

GUIDE TO LIFE

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Skills You Need

This is one of a series of eBooks

by Skills You Need available for sale at:

www.skillsyouneed.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Illustrations by [Freepik Storyset](#)

ISBN: 978-1-911084-44-0

Published by Skills You Need Ltd

© 2024 Skills You Need Ltd

This version was published in April 2024

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
<u>1. LOOKING AFTER YOUR BODY</u>	6
<u>2. A FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING</u>	7
CHANGING YOUR HABITS: LEARNING TO DO THE RIGHT THING	9
3. REST AND SLEEP	10
HOW MUCH SLEEP DO WE NEED?	11
QUALITY SLEEP AND THE 'SLEEP CYCLE'	12
NREM SLEEP	13
REM SLEEP	14
TIPS FOR SLEEPING WELL	15
LACK OF SLEEP - DANGERS AND CONCERNS	16
TRIGGERS FOR TIREDNESS AND SLEEP	18
SLEEP AND MENOPAUSE	19
4. FOOD, DIET AND NUTRITION	20
UNDERSTANDING YOUR GUT MICROBIOME	22
WHAT IS THE GUT MICROBIOME?	23
WHAT IS PROTEIN?	30
WHAT IS FAT?	39
WHAT ARE CARBOHYDRATES?	46

TYPES OF CARBOHYDRATE	49
MORE ABOUT CARBOHYDRATE METABOLISM	52
THE METABOLISM OF CARBOHYDRATES	53
WHAT IS FIBRE?	63
VITAMINS AND MINERALS	69
DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS: WHAT'S THE EVIDENCE?	71
A SHORT DETOUR: ULTRA-PROCESSED FOOD	74
5. EXERCISE	79
THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE	80
FOUR TYPES OF EXERCISE	83
6. LOOKING AFTER YOUR MIND	93
THE LINK BETWEEN BODY AND MIND	94
7. STRESS AND HEALTH	98
MANAGING STRESS	99
8. THE GOOD AND HEALTHY MIND	104
9. POSITIVE BODY IMAGE	107
WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?	108
DEVELOPING A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE	111
10. THE POWER OF THE MIND: POSITIVE THINKING	116
THE EFFECT OF NEGATIVE THINKING	117
11. PERSONAL PRESENTATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF HOW YOU PRESENT YOURSELF TO OTHERS	124
UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL PRESENTATION	125
12. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER	130

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR LIFE

What are the key skills that you really need to survive and grow as a person? No doubt each of us could come up with a slightly different list. In writing this book, however, we felt that we should start at the beginning.

Before you can do anything else, it is vital to be able to look after yourself in both body and mind: the most basic 'needs' in Maslow's famous hierarchy. Once you can do that, you can then harness the power of your mind to help you to develop, learn and achieve more in life.

This, then, is the Skills You Need Guide to looking after yourself in body and mind, now in its third edition with new and updated content to reflect the very latest science about our bodies. We hope you enjoy it and find it useful.

The Skills You Need Team

1

LOOKING AFTER YOUR BODY

You only get one body in this life, so you need to look after it.

Looking after your body is important for your general health. Around the world, there is a growing problem of chronic, lifestyle-related diseases. These are diseases that are, effectively, caused by the way that we live our lives. Most, if not all of them, are associated with not looking after our bodies. Many are associated with being overweight and not taking enough exercise, or by putting the wrong substances into our bodies. These diseases and conditions include:

- Adult-onset diabetes;
- Heart conditions;
- High blood pressure; and
- Many forms of cancer.

You cannot, of course, avoid every illness or condition. Many are not lifestyle-related. However, looking after your body will go some way to helping you to live a healthier life, for longer.

The problem is that advice about caring for your body is conflicting and often confusing. It is sometimes hard to know what's best. Many people abandon any effort to take care of themselves because it's just too difficult.

But the application of a little science, and quite a lot more common sense, can go a long way to helping you to work out what's best for you and your body. We provide a framework for thinking about doing the right thing by your body across three key aspects: rest and sleep; food, diet and nutrition; and exercise.

2

A FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING

In any aspect of caring for yourself, there are three questions to ask:

- What do I want to do?
- What is best for me?
- What am I actually going to do?

The first aspect relates to your emotions: it is about how you feel, and what you want to do, whether about what you eat, when you go to sleep, or how much exercise you take. Emotions are very primitive, but are also very strong.

The second question applies reason to the situation and asks what you think you should do. This means taking what you know, that is, facts, and considering them in the light of the situation.

Finally, you need to balance those two aspects, and make a decision about what you actually do in any given situation. This requires you to balance what you want with what you think you should do in light of the facts.

There will be many times when what you want to do coincides perfectly with what you know you should do. You may want to go out for a bike ride because the sun is shining, or go to bed early because you are tired. At other times, you will find that you are very tempted to do something that you know you would be better avoiding. You may want to eat another slice of chocolate cake, for example, or not take exercise because you are busy.

It is important to remember that you don't always have to do the right thing.

Every now and then, it will be fine to follow your instincts and eat chocolate, or laze around in bed all day. But if you do that too often, there will be consequences. For example, if you overeat and do not take enough exercise, you are likely to end up overweight, which can lead to the development of various chronic diseases including diabetes.

By all means give yourself a break from time to time, but don't let bad behaviour become a habit because habits are hard to break.

CHANGING YOUR HABITS: LEARNING TO DO THE RIGHT THING

This book will give you the information that you need to know what you should do. However, knowing what to do, and actually doing it are, of course, quite different things.

Using our framework for thinking will help you to understand the effects of emotion and reason.

Understanding will mean that you can use reason to overcome your wishes to laze around in bed or eat more chocolate. It may take time, but you can train yourself to do the right thing for your body.

Yes, of course, sometimes your emotional response will win, and you won't do the right thing but, with practice, you will get better at making sure that you take care of your body.



**The full eBook
is available at**

www.skillsyouneed.com



© 2024 Skills You Need Ltd.