



Hi! I'm Nan Simonsen, in my fifth year as a certified health and lifestyle coach with Dr. Wayne Dysinger, a founding member, and past president of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. I am also a certified Food Over Medicine Trainer for the Wellness Forum, and have completed the Plant Based Nutrition Program at the T. Collin Campbell Center for Nutritional Studies at eCornel. I am also the proud author of *Aging Powerfully*, an Amazon Best Seller.

If you want to find vibrant health, balance, and joy, read my book [*Aging Powerfully*](#), in which I outline ten evidence-based lifestyle enhancements. You will find it on Amazon, Audible, and iTunes, and will see a link for it on my website. On my website be sure to register for my newsletter and get [*Nan's Top Ten Tips for Better Health*](#).

Please accept my gift: *Nan's Six Pillars of Health Challenge* and take my easy and meaningful 6-day challenge to get you started on the path to balance and overall wellness. Read each day below and follow the link to a coresponding YouTube video. If you love the idea of *Aging Powerfully* join my Facebook group "[Power Agers](#)". We would love to have you join our inspiring and wonderful community.

Enjoy!

Nan



NAN'S 6 PILLARS OF HEALTH CHALLENGE

www.NanSimonsen.com



Eat More Plants: Healthful Eating of Whole, Plant-Based Food

- Try going meatless for at least one meal today. Don't worry about protein, it's the fiber that feeds your microbiome and makes you healthy. Eat whole foods: As close to nature as possible. Fill up on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and potatoes, and have some seeds and nuts if desired.
- Keep processed food to a minimum today, or eliminate it.
- Aim to eat the colors of the rainbow.
- Consider your favorite meals, and make them meatless. Look at my website, www.nansimonsen.com, and find something that sounds good to you. Or Google your favorite dish and include 'vegan recipe' in the description.
- If you don't want to cook it, use the Happy Cow app to find a vegan restaurant near you.

[Click here to watch my video for Day 1.](#)



Love More: Form and Maintain Relationships

- Call a friend with whom you have not spoken recently.
- Write a handwritten letter to someone—envision their delight and surprise upon receipt of it.
- Smile and say “Hello” to passersby today. When you have a chance (such as while checking out at the market), say “Hello, how are you today”, and really listen to their response.
- Make a date for the near future to spend time with one or more friends, for lunch or simply to share coffee or tea.
- Reach out to someone today with loving kindness. For example, offer your place in line, help someone reach something on a high shelf, bring a neighbor some cookies....be creative.

[Click here to watch my video for Day 2.](#)



Sleep Well: Improve Your Sleep

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule: getting up and going to bed at the same time every day, or as often as possible. This includes setting a bed time early enough to get at least 7 hours of sleep a night. Your body loves rhythms.
- Avoid eating 1-2 hours before bed; 3 hours is even better when possible. This allows for your body's energies to go for repair rather than digestion, also prevents reflux.
- Your body's clock—the circadian rhythm—is most sensitive to light. Natural day light first thing in the morning sets this rhythm to begin to produce melatonin 12-13 hours later, which helps you to fall asleep.
- Bright light at night, as well as blue light (from electronics) is stimulating, and interferes with the production of melatonin. For your best sleep, limit exposure to these at least two hours before bed time. Sleep is always best in a dark and quiet room. Consider white noise from a machine or app on your phone.
- Avoid caffeine after noon, and if sensitive, possibly altogether. The effects of coffee are very long lasting in many people. Alcohol is also a stimulant when drunk before bedtime.

[Click here to watch my video for Day 3.](#)



Keep Moving: Increase Physical Activity

- In their physical activity guidelines, the World Health Organization recommends at least 150 minutes of exercise a week. So, for ongoing good health, to live longer, be happier, and have a more vibrant life, move your body in an enjoyable and energetic way for at least 25 minutes per day.
- Find excuses to move—eat lunch and then take a walk to “help your digestion”. Walk up the stairs wherever you can in order to “strengthen your legs”. Stand and pace a bit whenever you take a phone call, as if greeting the person as they enter the room. Drink more water so that you have to go for refills, and to visit the restroom. Find excuses to move! Park your car a distance from your destination and walk. Play music and dance.
- Add formal exercise where you can—aerobics with a brisk walk; a bike ride. Resistance work with weights or body weight. Coordinated movement with yoga, Zumba, or Tai Chi. Arrange regular exercise with a friend and keep the date. Plant & care for a garden.

[Click here to watch my video for Day 4.](#)



Stay Calm: Develop Strategies to Manage Stress

- Eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and regular exercise are essential for the management of stress. Add to these the habit of gratitude and looking to the positive.
- Give your overstimulated brain a time out by practicing intermittent silence—like pressing pause on the regular programming of your day—allowing your brain to rest.
 1. Take time every day to practice Intermittent Silence, a way of pressing pause on the regular programming of the day.
 2. Close your mouth.
 3. Close your eyes.
 4. Listen to sounds around you-silently.
 5. Watch your thoughts-silently.

When you do this all of your brain cells get a rest; they will thank you.

- For more on this Google Dr. Krishna Bhatta, Intermittent Silence.
- Adopt a meditation practice. If you are new to it, consider an app like Headspace, Calm, and Relaxx. This has proven to be of great benefit for physiological and mental health.
- Practice saying “NO” to demands on your time and energy that will place too much stress on you. Do not feel obliged to meet the expectations of others. Assert yourself when necessary.
- Take advantage of stress-relieving self-care like a massage, an Epsom salt bath, diffusing essential oils like lavender, lemon balm, geranium, sage, and grapefruit. Try journaling.

[Click here to watch my video for Day 5.](#)



Be Present: Avoid Risky Substances to Stay Present

- Being present means:
 1. Focusing on the now in order to live in the moment.
 2. Pay attention to the small things.
 3. Smile inside and out.
 4. Give thanks often.
 5. Fight worry—Accept the things you cannot change, change the things you can, and develop the wisdom to know the difference [The Serenity Prayer].
- Risky substances include tobacco, vaping, alcohol, and drugs that alter rational state and/or are addictive. Gambling, shopping, sex, caffeine, and even food can become risky to our mental, emotional, and physical health when we lose control of rational and healthy behavior while engaging in the substance or behavior.
- Life is a gift and worth living consciously every moment. When substances interfere with our ability to live our life unimpeded, the best time to interrupt the pattern is NOW.
- Depending on the severity of involvement, a rational look at the reality and severity of the challenge is advised, and expert counsel may be required.

[Click here to watch my video for Day 6.](#)