
POWERED
by HEALTH

The high-achieving
woman's guide to *health*,
vitality, and a new life full
of possibilities.



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Chapter 1

The Journey of Integrative Health

The concept and practice of integrative health is a revolutionary way of approaching health and wellness, where health is related to the whole – body, mind and lifestyle. For example, poor nutrition, stress, insomnia, lack of exercise, career dissatisfaction and toxic relationships all have a negative impact on our health and wellbeing. If you want to be completely healthy and prevent illness, you need to look after all areas of your life. Solving a nutritional problem by changing the food you eat is often the first step, and while an important part of your health, it is only one aspect. You need to look after all parts of your being if you want to be truly healthy.

The three main problems I find high-achieving women commonly face today are:

- Low energy
- Excess weight
- Stressed and feeling stuck

Often these are the signs that women will notice first. They are important health indicators as they can be the precursors for other chronic illnesses such as autoimmune diseases and serious digestive conditions. With 21st Century lifestyles placing so much pressure on our bodies, and the stress of modern living and keeping up taking its toll, there has also been a huge increase in food sensitivities, sleep deprivation, and sugar in people's diets.

Yet, the majority of chronic illnesses, also (or what are termed 'lifestyle diseases') can be prevented.

We need a different response to individual and community health today. We need a response that addresses the cause of our symptoms. Integrative health is the perfect solution to the many stressful physical, mental and psychic forces that have a negative impact on our lives. It just makes good sense to delve into all areas of our lives in order to heal them.

The Five Principles of Integrative Health

Your Body – Nutrition and Fitness

Our body is the physical vehicle that carries us through life. In this way, our body is our temple that should be loved and nourished so that it, in turn, can look after us for a long time. Our body is where we develop the many physical symptoms and ailments that can occur through a combination of circumstances such as genetics, poor self-care, stress, environment and lifestyle. When people want to become healthy, they usually work on their body first. On the whole, eating healthy food and exercising tends to be the main focus in our society today.

Physical health is very important, but is only one part of the story that leads to complete health. We now know that mindset and other parts of our life play a huge role in determining our health and wellbeing. In fact, in many instances, mindset is more important than nutrition.

Your Mindset

Up until only a few years ago, mental health in Australia was a term used in reference to mental illness. Now it has a broader meaning and includes clinical and non-clinical mental health. In my opinion and experience, the mind and emotions are amongst the greatest contributing forces to both great health and poor health. I often find that I start out working with my female clients around weight loss and then we delve into the real issues, which are mindset and negative thinking patterns that prevent them from becoming healthy and vital. In addition, many conditions such as anxiety and depression can improve with the right nutrition, and with a diet that focuses on healing the gut and intestinal microbiome. Recent research indicates that the health of the gut has the capacity to influence the immune and endocrine systems which form a communication pathway between the microbiota and brain health and disease. This is known as the microbiome-brain-gut axis.²

Your Spiritual Wellbeing

Your spirit is your momentum in life: the light or spark within you that gets you up every morning. A close relationship with your own spirit along with engaging your own form of spirituality can really support your resilience and your health. I include nature here because it can be a great teacher. It is mine and always has been. We are all part of nature but often we live as though we are not. This early part of the 21st Century is a time for you to make sure you don't through away what makes you human – nature included.

Your Work and Career

Work can give a great sense of accomplishment and joy, or it can be the source of discontent and stress in life. Too often we can lose our perspective about what our work is meant to be. We view it as a source of income rather than a source of inspiration and contribution. This is an important area to examine in regard to our health and wellbeing.

Your Relationships

Relationships of all kinds can have a huge impact on your health. If you find yourself trapped in a toxic relationship your health will suffer. I think we can do better in our relationships by developing the courage to improve them or let them go. If we are going to be truly healthy, we would do well to clean up our own behaviour, as well as recognise those relationships that do not nourish us.



SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING YOUR HEALTH

If your energy is flagging and you feel tired on a daily basis, the following suggestions will help you to feel better and improve your health:

1. Test yourself for gluten and dairy intolerances by eliminating them both from your diet for one to two weeks and observing any changes. Read my instructions on Chapter 4 for advice about how to do this.
2. Eat more vegetables daily. Load your plate with a rainbow of vegetables, along with some protein, grains and fats.
3. Get 7 – 8 hours of sleep per night.
4. Drink at least 8 glasses of water each day.
5. Crowd out sugar by replacing it with healthy snacks.
6. Reduce your intake of processed foods. Instead, focus on eating whole foods as much as possible.

7. Find a way of exercising that you love; not one that is pushed at you by the media or through peer pressure. Everything you do for yourself should be about enjoyment not regiment.
8. Spend time in nature where you can reflect and contemplate your goals and approaches to life.
9. Keep a journal to help you identify the toxic or negative self-talk in your life.
10. Venture out and try some new activities that nourish your spirit.
11. Take a close look at your relationships. It can be difficult to do, but, as with everything else in your life, take it step-by-step. Remember that in order to create a new life with different possibilities, your changes will bring forward new people with whom you can share new experiences. Some of your old relationships will fall away naturally as you create new colleagues, friends and opportunities.
12. Work on the Five Principles of Integrative Health in your own time to make step-by-step changes that nourish your health and your life.