



Mapping the ROAD AHEAD

HEALTH PIT STOPS

Over the past 12 days, we've discussed how to live a longer, healthier life. Here's a recap of the "pit stops" we covered during the series.



1 Brain

When it comes to living longer and healthier, the brain is in the driver's seat. That's why focusing on our ability to think, learn and remember clearly is such an important aspect of longevity. A few ways to keep your brain tuned up for the road ahead include:

- Knowing and managing your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- Eating a nutrient-rich diet that includes fatty fish, berries, nuts, leafy greens and whole grains.
- Exercising regularly.
- Sleeping at least seven hours a night.
- Learning something new daily.
- Maintaining connections with friends and family.



**SEENIC
ROUTE**

EXIT ↓ **HEAR**



2

Vison & Hearing

Studies show that people with hearing loss have a 61% higher chance of developing dementia while people with vision loss have a 50% higher risk of cognitive decline. They can also shorten your lifespan by up to 12 years. Pump the brakes on these conditions by:

- Having your vision checked at least every two years if you're younger than 65 and annually if you're 65 or older. Similarly, those 40 and younger should get their hearing tested every three to five years, while those 65 or older should be tested yearly.
- Wearing sunglasses with 100% UV protection and turning down the volume on your phone below 60%. You should wear ear protection in loud environments like concerts or sporting events.

3

Heart

As we age, the valves that control blood flow between the heart's chambers can become thicker and stiffer. But, we can map out ways to live healthier by using the same tools as heart "superagers." Four health behaviors that keep superagers trucking along are:

- Maintaining a healthy diet.
- Exercising regularly.
- Quitting nicotine use.
- Getting plenty of sleep.



4

Kidneys

Studies show that one in seven American adults has chronic kidney disease, but 90% are unaware. That's because it develops slowly and often has no symptoms. Easy ways to improve kidney health include:

- Reducing salt and sugar intake from sodas and processed foods.
- Drink plenty of water every day—15.5 cups for men and 11.5 cups for women.
- Incorporate plenty of kidney-friendly foods such as bananas, spinach, beans, berries, cauliflower, red bell peppers, cabbage, lean meats and plant-based proteins into your diet.

5

Liver

Not only can non-alcoholic fatty liver disease cut your life short by up to three years, but it also can be fatal within two years of diagnosis. In fact, all chronic liver diseases together are the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. Make a u-turn on the progression of liver conditions by:

- Looking for ways to de-stress regularly to help control your cortisol levels. Too much cortisol can lead to insulin resistance and fat accumulation in the liver.
- Maintaining a healthy weight. As little as 7% to 10% weight reduction can lead to reductions in liver fat and inflammation.
- Cutting back on alcohol. Remember, the CDC recommends one drink or less per day for women and two per day or less for men.

6

Gut

A healthy gut microbiome can help boost digestion, immunity, metabolism and brain function. Keep your microbiome running like a well-oiled machine by:



- Getting enough fiber. The USDA recommends women consume 22 to 28 grams of fiber daily, based on their age. Men should have between 28 and 34 grams daily, depending on their age.
- Diversifying the gut-friendly foods you eat, including both fermented foods like kimchi and probiotics like yogurt.
- Limit salty, sugar-filled, processed or fried foods, which can lead to weight gain. Excess belly fat also can lead to gastroesophageal reflux disease, gallstones, hiatal hernias, pancreatitis and other digestive problems.

7

Strength

Musculoskeletal strength is key to maintaining independence and enjoying the miles ahead. Good mobility is also associated with better memory, improved cognition and lower risk of cognitive diseases. Follow the lead of superagers by:



- Incorporating at least two days of strength training that engage several muscle groups (ex: abdomen, arms, back, chest, legs and shoulders) using high reps but low weight can help reduce cancer, diabetes, heart disease and mortality risk.
- "Gassing up" on calcium, vitamins D and K, magnesium and omega-3 fatty acids which support muscle, bone and joint health.
- Investing in supportive shoes with good arch support and cushioning to improve your stability while easing pressure on your joints.



8

Grip & Balance

Grip is a good predictor of your body's overall strength and the likelihood of developing chronic disease and fall risk. Studies show that superagers who avoid falls have a grip up to 69% stronger than their peers. And balance is just as vital. Keep your grip and balance in check by:

- Seeing how long you can stand on one foot, and work your way up to longer durations. Remember to stand by a table or chair at first in case you need a little support.
- Participating in activities that help you improve your balance and grip such as yoga, dance or pickleball.

9

Sleep

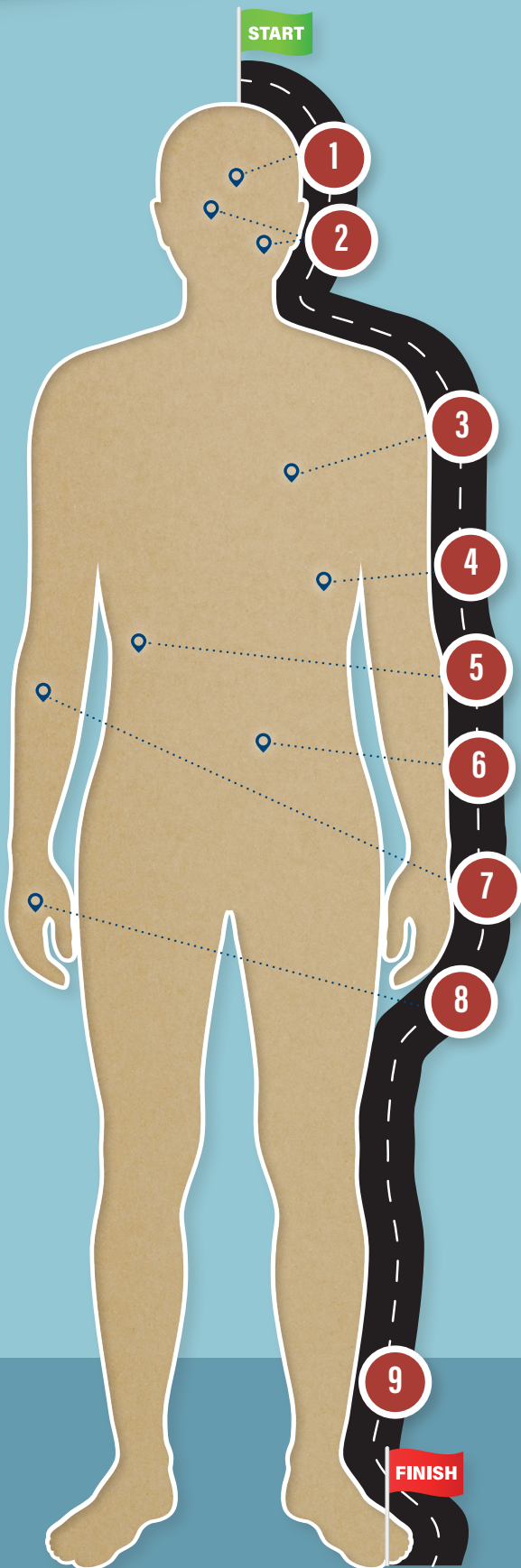
While good sleep keeps your mind and body healthy as you age, sleeping less than six hours per night is linked to high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, weight gain, mood disorders, lower immune function, decreased metabolism, heightened pain sensitivity, premature death and dementia. Keep good sleeping habits from veering off the road by:

- Course-correcting with a consistent sleep schedule. Make a plan to go to bed and wake up at the same time, even on weekends and vacations. And, keep daytime naps to 30 minutes or less.
- Keeping your bedroom cool. Sleep specialists claim the "Goldilocks zone" when it comes to temperature is between 60 and 67 degrees.
- Limiting exposure to blue light from electronic devices at least an hour before you go to sleep.





Use this list of questions to ask your primary care provider about health risks that may affect your longevity.



1. Brain

What can I do to slow cognitive decline if I have a family history of Alzheimer's or pre-existing conditions that put me at higher risk?

2. Vision & Hearing

What changes could I make to my medications or lifestyle that will help me preserve my hearing and vision as I age?

3. Heart

What can I do to improve my heart health, including working on my blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels?

4. Kidney

Could any conditions I have, such as decreased appetite, difficulty sleeping or headaches be connected to my kidney health?

5. Liver

If I'm already at risk for diabetes or cardiovascular disease, how can improving my liver health also prevent or improve those other conditions?

6. Gut

I feel like I can't eat how I used to. What dietary changes do you recommend for me as I get older?

7. Strength

How do I know if my aches and pains are part of getting older rather than something serious? And how can I get stronger?

8. Grip & Balance

I've tried, but my balance isn't improving. Could that be caused by my medication, an inner ear problem or another condition I have?

9. Sleep

No matter what I try, I still have trouble falling or staying asleep. What could be the cause, and how can we improve my sleep?