Mistakes Healthy People Make
Smart people not-so smart moves

You pick healthy food, work out (when you can), and watch your waistline. That means you’re healthy right? You always buy organic. Buying organic is wise for certain foods, such as beef or strawberries, but it doesn't make much difference for others, like avocados or eggs. And don't assume that all organic foods are healthier than non-organic options, or that organic equals healthy. Organic choices are usually pricier, for one thing. And organic high-calorie, high-fat granola bars and sugary cereals are just as bad for you as the non-organic version.

You don’t socialize enough
While you may feel virtuous on your long solo runs, don't forget to check in with your pals once in a while. Studies suggest that social networks are good for your health too. Try to schedule regular meet-ups with friends, whether it's a book club or poker—it doesn't matter. (No need to make it exercise-based, although that's nice too.) Just connecting with other people, and maintaining those social networks as you age, is good for your health.

You skimp on sleep
Think it's a good idea to get up at 5 a.m. and hit the gym? Not if you should be sleeping instead. Studies have consistently shown that people need at least seven hours of sleep a night for optimal health, and short sleep has been associated with a host of health problems, including high blood pressure, depression, diabetes, and a reduced immune response to vaccines.

You lack supplement savvy
More is not better when it comes to vitamins and supplements, and too much of a good thing can actually be harmful. In 2011, an analysis of data on nearly 40,000 women found that those who took dietary supplements—especially iron—were actually at slightly higher risk of dying, although the investigators weren't sure why. There are no really long-term studies that show unequivocal benefits of taking vitamin and mineral supplements. If you're going to take supplements, take them in moderation, and stick to the recommended daily doses.

You get unnecessary tests
As with vitamins and minerals, more does not always mean better when it comes to medical tests. Especially tests marketed directly to consumers, like the cardiac calcium-scoring test. While this test—a CT scan that identifies calcium deposits in the heart arteries—is useful for a select group of at-risk people, it isn't for everyone. It also exposes you to a whopping amount of radiation—the equivalent of 25 to 50 chest X-rays. Several US medical specialty groups have launched an initiative, Choosing Wisely, to draw attention to overuse of 45 medical tests, and encourage physicians to avoid tests and procedures of questionable benefit.

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Mistakes Healthy People Make (cont.)

You beg for antibiotics
Many people ask their doctor for a prescription for antibiotics or antivirals for symptoms that probably would resolve on their own, or just because they fear getting sick. And some doctors may oblige. But these drugs also carry risks, from contributing to the huge problem of drug resistance to killing off the good bacteria in your body. Let your doctor decide if your symptoms warrant medication, and skip the high-pressure tactics.

You're a germaphobe
We all know people who never leave the house without their hand sanitizer—you may even be that person. And yes, you should wash your hands with soap and water to kill germs that can make you sick.
But evidence also suggests that some germ exposure could steer the immune system away from allergies, and that an overly sterile environment might be bad. (It's called the hygiene hypothesis.) Good bacteria are also key for staying healthy, particularly for the skin, digestive tract, and vagina. So fear of germs does not equal good health.

You over-or underdo alternative remedy
Once upon a time, it was hard to get the medical establishment to recognize that acupuncture, herbal remedy, or biofeedback could sometimes heal people as well as big-name drugs. Now we know that if you dismiss acupuncture as “quackery,” you may be missing out on your best therapy yet. At the same time, if you overly rely on alternative medicine—opting for a herbal remedy instead of chemotherapy, for instance—you may also be missing out on the best cure yet. Try to keep an open mind and consult the experts to make informed choices.

You drink too much water
Dehydration is bad. So more water is good, right? That's true, to a point. But particularly if you're running your first marathon or some other physically taxing, long even. It's important to avoid drinking too much water, which could lead to water intoxication (also known as hypernatremia).

You lie to your doctor
Many of us don't tell our doctor everything—say, we smoke cigarettes or drink more than we should. Or we may take that prescription with no intention of ever filling it. Harvard Medical School researchers found that more than one in five first-time prescriptions never got filled. But you're better off being straight with your doctor, who can help you find ways to kick the habit or find a treatment you'll actually take (or be able to afford). If you don't feel you can be fully honest with your doctor you should look for a new one.

You think you know more than your doctor
With the Internet at our fingertips, we all feel smarter than we did in the past. And well-moderated online forums can be a great resource for helping people with certain health concerns get support and stay informed. But they are no substitute for a doctor’s advice. I think a common mistake is to sort of put more faith in those resources than health care professionals.

You exercise too much
Pushing yourself is usually a good thing when it comes to physical activity. But your body needs rest, too, especially after an extra-hard work out. Signs that you are working out too hard can be mental and physical, and include fatigue, difficulty sleeping, decreased immunity, muscle soreness, and injury. To keep your workout fresh it's a good idea to vary your routine, and give yourself a day off now and then.

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Mistakes Healthy People Make (cont.)

You think health labels equal healthy foods
Food or cosmetics products that boast of being all natural may sound appealing and wholesome, but in fact, the US Food and Drug Administration has a pretty loose definition of just what that word means. The FDA is OK with any product claiming to be natural, as long as it doesn't contain added color, artificial flavor, or synthetic substances. Low fat is another tricky claim. The FDA does have clear guidelines on when a product can claim to be low- or reduced-fat, but these products may still be high in sugar, sodium, or calories—or all of the above.

You still don’t eat your fruits and veggies
By now, pretty much everyone knows they should be eating at least five servings of fruit and vegetables per day. Eating plenty of produce helps reduce your risk of heart disease and several types of cancer, and can help you manage your weight too. But a state-by-state survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that in 2009, just one-third of adults reported eating at least two servings of fruit a day, and only about one-quarter ate three or more servings of veggies daily.

You obsess over details
Health shouldn't be seen as something to strive for, but as a way of life. When you focus on keeping healthy as an endpoint, as opposed to a healthy lifestyle, you may tend to sort of miss the whole picture.
Too often, people who want to be healthy focus on avoiding bad foods and obsess about numbers, like their body mass index. The focus that people have to make is on being happy and on things that will make them happy, and enjoy themselves.

You skip vaccines
Grown-ups need shots, too, but many of us don't get them. Just one in five at-risk adults under 65 received the pneumococcal vaccine, for example. Recommendations for adult vaccine coverage vary based on age, health, where you travel and what you're exposed to, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends an annual flu shot for everyone, and a diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis booster every 10 years for adults.

You don’t have health friends
Good health habits are contagious, and bad health habits are, too. Several recent studies have shown that obesity and cigarette smoking spread through social networks. Try to forge friendships with people whose health habits you'd like to emulate and encouraging your friends to join you in healthy pursuits.

You avoid doctors in general
You know you should eat better, exercise, lose weight, quit smoking—what more can a doctor do to help. Studies have shown people have a better chance of trying to quit smoking, and succeeding, when a doctor advises them to do so. Doctors can also prescribe medications that can greatly increase quitting success. And while there's unfortunately no safe pill to help people lose weight, a doctor's advice can give you a better chance of succeeding in trimming down.

You don’t read nutrition labels
A nutrition label will tell you the real story about whether those "natural" or "low-fat" foods are actually good for you. Just because something is turkey or chicken doesn't necessarily mean it is low-fat or low-salt. Be sure to pay attention to the portion size

http://www.health.com/health/gallery/
Stress may harm Brain – But it recovers

As you we all know stress is bad for you, but just how bad? It would be unethical to intentionally subject people to extreme psychological duress in the name of science. But ongoing military operations offer opportunities to see what happens to people exposed to stressful situations. Researchers in the Netherlands found the brain of soldiers who go into combat show impairment in function and structure upon returning, but that these effects largely go away over time.

The study
A new study published in the journal Proceeding of the National Academy of Science looked at 33 healthy Dutch soldiers deployed to Afghanistan for four months. It was the first military deployment for all of them, part of a NATO peacekeeping operation. Researches compared these participants to 26 soldiers who were never deployed. The soldiers who were deployed experience armed combat and exposure to enemy fire, as well as other common combat stressors. But despite no apparent trends in psychological symptoms, the two groups of participants did display marked brain differences. The combat group showed reduced functioning in the midbrain, as well as structural differences in that area. These soldiers who had gone to Afghanistan tended to perform worse on cognitive tests than those who were not deployed.

Follow-up
Those effects were seen less than two months after soldiers returned from combat. But a year and half later, researchers found that the soldiers who had been deployed had, on average, returned to normal with respect to both brain structure and cognitive performance. The combat group still showed some brain impairment: Imaging tests showed that there was less connectivity between particular brain regions among these soldiers than those soldiers than those who had not been deployed. Although there are some subtle changes, it doesn’t really directly translate into impaired performance. Although cognitive performance may suffer, a different brain function may be enhanced in soldiers with recent combat experience: Previous research from van Wingen’s group shows that the amygdala, a part of the brain important for detecting potential danger, has heightened activity in soldiers who have returned recently from combat. That effect also normalizes over time.

Study drawback
The sample size of the study began small, and got smaller over time. Nine people from the combat group and nine people from the non-deployed group did not complete the long-term follow-up. Also this study deals only with people from Netherlands.

Bottom line
What the results collectively show is the brain is able to restore (itself) from the adverse effects of stress, if you give it at least enough time.

Source: http://thechart.blogs.cnn