



FLYING . . . IS IT WORTH STAYING HEALTHY FOR? / Jim Trusty
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With the ever-changing medical rules in our profession, the Federal Aviation Administration is trying to close down yet another accident avenue before it gets a chance to rear its ugly head. They know, and so do we, that pilots in general do not eat good, nutritious food and are not necessarily prone to exercise. Consequently, by raising the medical standards just a little bit every chance they get, they allow us to drive ourselves right out the door of flying.

They have allowed us to believe that anything can be waived if we start taking some kind of medication for it, and without even thinking, that's what we do. Many drugs and medications have created more problems than they cure, especially in aviation. If you are slowly falling into one or more of the following six ailments, read on.

STRESS, CORONARY HEART DISEASE, CANCER, LUNG AILMENTS, LIVER AILMENTS AND SUICIDE. These six deadly killers are the most prevalent in our society. Most can be prevented, cured, or at least contained with the use of proper diet and/or food control, meditation or deep relaxation, brisk exercise of any kind, chiropractic adjustments, and perhaps a class in behavior modification. In some cases, some light medication may also be needed. Still with me? You must really like to fly or NEED to.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT, FOOD INTAKE, AND PROPER NUTRITION all come under the same heading. What it boils down to is whether you are eating the correct foods for your particular needs in the proper amounts and whether you are burning up the food or storing it as excess fat. Some helpful hints might include cutting down your sugar consumption (especially soft drinks which can contain as much as 7 teaspoons of sugar per can), avoiding white flour and overly processed foods, eliminating fried foods and foods cooked in heated oils from your diet, and limiting dairy products to low fat or fat free.

Try to eat more fruit and vegetables, 5 servings a day, especially in season, and stay away from canned, processed and frozen foods whenever possible. Stop eating fast and/or junk foods such as burgers, fries, and doughnuts. Eat your last meal of the day as early as possible. Eat starches and proteins separately; eat fruits and vegetables separately. Chew your food well and learn to enjoy the different flavors. Stop eating when your stomach is half full; the other half is still on the way down.

Fresh vegetables should make up as much as 50% of your daily food intake. Fresh fruit, 15%. Starch, 10%. Protein, 15%. Fat, 10%. Avoid foods high in saturated fats such as beef, dark-meat poultry, poultry skin, butter and other whole-milk dairy products. Read food labels on processed foods. Many proclaim themselves "cholesterol-free" when in reality they are often made with highly saturated tropical oils such as coconut, palm, and palm kernel. Snack on fruit, carrot sticks, air-popped popcorn or low-fat crackers instead of chips and other high-fat snacks.

Supplement this with 2 1/2 quarts of water each day which is about the amount we lose over a 24-hour period. Your body and this planet we live on are both 75% water. This is why it plays such an important role in your lifestyle and health.

Take these helpful hints and do some research on your own. Don't take someone else's word for your health but find out what is best for you based on your body's needs. Now, armed with all the facts, you can design a weight management/food consumption program that best suits your lifestyle and your needs. As a result, you will not only feel better but live longer.

Even though it may sound like we should quit eating altogether or at least give up some of our favorite foods, it's simply just a tradeoff. What you love to eat has gotten you this far. The question is, are you happy with where you are?

On the other hand (the non-greasy one) we all know how hard it is to give up foods that we have grown accustomed to eating and ordering over the years, so take small steps in substitution and meal modification. Try substituting some lower fat foods for regular ones or, if you just can't stand the taste of the lower fat foods, limit your portions. Try vegetable stock instead of margarine when cooking, eat fresh whenever possible, drink lots of water at mealtime, and, something very important, practice portion control! Despite the new diets that promote counting fat grams or eating all the carbohydrates you want, the total amount of calories you take in still count.

Finally, one more thing to hate. Exercise. Start now to make your excuses and I guarantee that your mind and body will agree with anything you can come up with no matter how outrageous it may sound. Equate food intake to putting fuel in your airplane. If you put in more fuel than the tank will hold, it runs over on the ground. Same thing with the human body except it runs over on the waistline.

How do we get rid of excess fuel? Burn it! Same thing with food; we have to move around and burn it up. Taking a nap or lying down to watch TV after a big meal is not a great idea for burning up an overload of food.

Here again, the method that you accomplish for the end result is completely up to you. Do an activity that sounds like fun and try to break a sweat. Bad word, sweat. It means that you are going to have to do more than ride in a golf cart or lie on the beach or watch a ball game. You are going to have to participate and move around in order to burn what you just ate. Being thin and healthy doesn't just come from what you eat; your body has to get in on the action, too.

The thought behind this is that after you realize exactly how hard it is to burn up excess food, you will think twice before taking in an overload. Example: jogging for one hour burns less than 500 calories; 3,200 calories equal one pound of weight.

You don't have to train for the Olympics, you just have to move, so start small and work your way to the more difficult. Walking for 40 minutes to an hour at any pace is a start. Make it exciting like walking in the park on or the beach. Don't live on the beach or next to the park? Imagine that you do. Get some headphones and listen to whatever makes you calm down and appreciate being alive. And little changes in your habits make a difference, too. Take stairs instead of elevators, park your car a distance from where you are going, and any time it's possible walk instead of drive.

And try to halt weight gain before it gets beyond your control. When you're at your ideal weight you will notice right away when you gain a little bit. Begin to immediately cut back. Losing the weight won't take long that way because you'll never get to where you need to lose much. The longer you wait the more you'll adjust to being heavier and the harder it will be to get back in control.

What I have described in this three-step changeover is what most healthy people do to maintain good health. You know the ones I mean. They always look healthy and they always eat a lot of salads. It may look boring, but they generally live forever and keep flying long after we have lost our medical.

One final two-step addition to add to your take charge of your life program. You cannot smoke and drink and be healthy also. If I have ever made a statement in my life that can be backed up with more evidence than this one, I don't remember what it was. Stop smoking and stop drinking (or drink moderately, if at all). A lot of personal sacrifices have to be made and the only benefit we can be assured of, besides feeling a whole lot better, is flying an airplane for a longer period during our lifetime.

Flying . . . Is it worth staying healthy for? Run this article by your Doctor, see if he agrees. I'll see you at the airport..... Always remember: Accidents Are Caused And Therefore Preventable!