

bad habits. "Usually the positions people put themselves in to study in college are horrendous," Monson assesses, "and when you're 18, 19, you can put your neck in a pretty awful position and it's not going to get angry at you or hurt you. But when you get to be 24, 25, aging starts to take effect, and those habits of sitting for 12 hours reading your physiology books, well, if you sit that way it becomes your sitting style, and by the time you get into a working environment where you're a little bit older, you can start to get injured by that."

- If you work in a job where you're called on to stand all day (if you're a school teacher, perhaps, or a restaurant manager), then you're most likely to do damage to your hamstrings and calf muscles, and to your lower back muscles. Get off your feet whenever possible to reduce the strain on these areas.

- Dr. Gabe Mirkin, the sports medicine authority, argues that the single best way to counteract job-related stress and fatigue is to take a nap. That's right, a nap. In the middle of the day. Now we recognize it may be difficult to sneak away to catch a few winks, but if you have a private office there is no denying the restorative value of a 15-minute shut-eye 'round about High Noon. "As little as 15 minutes of sleeping can refresh the average person," Dr. Mirkin says. Short of sleep, you might also try jogging in place, at your desk, for short periods, or occasional deep knee bends and light calisthenics ("it will get your body to produce more of its own natural stimuli and you will feel more alert," Dr. Mirkin explains).

But sleeping and jogging on the job will not necessarily land you that sought-after promotion, so you might want to try something a bit more subtle. "You should get yourself into a routine," Monson coaches, "you should naturally feel the need to not let yourself get into a bad posture for more than 40 minutes. Put little reminders around your desk if you have to, but every 40 minutes or so you should do five repetitions of tucking your chin down, turning your head side to side, pulling your shoulders back, something. You can relieve a lot of tension by just stretching your neck every 40 minutes."

Adopt a common sense approach to your specific job and you should be fine.

ARE YOU REALLY WHAT YOU EAT?

Well, sort of. Good nutrition is absolutely essential to good health, and even the most rigorous exercise routine won't get you anywhere unless your body's running on the right fuel.

"It really is very simple to watch your weight, and to watch what you eat, and it's very simple to tell you how to do it," says Dr.



Fredrick Stare, founder of Harvard University's Department of Nutrition. "But it's very difficult for many people to follow, simply because eating is one of the pleasures of life."

Okay, so how do we keep this particular pleasure in check? "The simplest thing to do is to try to get in a habit of eating a variety of foods," Dr. Stare counsels. It really doesn't make a bit of difference, according to Dr. Stare, what the variety is, as long as it is a variety based around what are commonly referred to as the basic four food groups—meat, dairy, fruits and vegetables, and cereals. "Don't always have peas and beans," he says, "have some carrots and beets, and other things once in a while. Don't always have orange juice, have some other kind of fruit or fruit juices. If you have a variety of foods, selected from each of the groups, you won't need any vitamin or mineral supplements of any kind."

(This last point is important. Much has been written about the necessity of proper vitamin and mineral intake, but, as Dr. Stare notes, a balanced diet, from a complete variety of foods, will generally take care of your recommended dietary allowances for you. Check with a doctor or nutritionist to see if you're getting enough of what you need, and to learn how to spot signs of vitamin deficiencies or overdose.)

Eating right, for many young people, is often easier said than done. Shopping for yourself, keeping your own kitchen, is not always the picnic it may seem, and many recent graduates choose to keep their cupboards bare rather than learn to fend and forage for themselves. As a result, the

worst eating habit young people get into is, well, not eating. Or not eating well. Too often, the strains and pressures of the work day leave little time for eating square meals, let alone for preparing them; breakfast is usually inhaled on the way out the door, lunch is often missed or rushed, and dinner is likely an afterthought. Without regular feedings from Mom, or from a campus dining service, busy young people turn to fast foods to tide them over between square meals.

Are fast foods bad for you? "No," insists Dr. Stare. "In the first place, I have always objected to the term 'fast food.' There's nothing fast about the food. What you're hoping is that the service will be fast. What difference does it make if you go into the nearest McDonald's or some other place and have a hamburger, or if you stop off in the Ritz and order a chopped sirloin sandwich? It really is the same thing. Hamburger is beef, it's perfectly good meat, it's served between a couple of pieces of wheat, a bun, and there's nothing wrong with it. There's nothing wrong with french fries. There you have essentially the same nutrition as a baked potato that you've covered in sour cream and butter."

Of course, too much of anything, however harmless, couldn't possibly be good for you. "You can't live off of these foods," Dr. Stare cautions, "because if your major intake of food throughout the week was french fries and a hamburger and a couple of buns and a Coke or something, you wouldn't be eating much in the way of a variety. You wouldn't be getting any vegetables. Sometimes the fast food people will say, 'Yes, we serve lettuce and tomatoes with our hamburgers,' but what does one or two lettuce leaves do? One skinny little piece of tomato? Sure, you're getting vegetables, but you aren't getting very many."

The chief danger of fast foods is overloading on calories. "There's nothing wrong with fast food," says Dr. Elizabeth Waylen, Director of the American Council on Science and Health. "But you have to be careful about what you eat. If you're going to have a specialty burger, fries and a shake every day, you're going to run up over 1000 calories, in one meal, which is getting near half of what you might need for the whole day."

All fast foods, you can bet, are not created equal. Pizza can be one of your best bets, as can a trip to your nearest take-out salad bar. Frozen foods have gotten surprisingly good, and good for you, in recent years; we don't want to endorse any one brand over another, but you can usually tell from the packaging which companies care about things like nutrition in preparing their frozen dinners. Fast or frozen food won't kill you, and in general it won't even hurt you, as long as you keep your intake in check, and as long as you pay attention to your balanced diet. Sup-