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by M. Scott Stanley, MS

**C**olorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. In 2004, over 145,000 cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed in the U.S., resulting in over 53,000 deaths. Although quite deadly, it is highly preventable and curable if detected early. The following are some basic facts about the disease:

There are a variety of symptoms associated with colorectal cancer, many of which can be confused with other medical conditions. Also, colorectal cancer can often present no symptoms until the disease has progressed, so please speak with your physician if you have any of the following signs and symptoms:

- » Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement)
- » A change in bowel habits, such as having stools that are more narrow than normal, or a worsening of diarrhea or constipation symptoms
- » Frequent stomach aches, pains, or cramps
- » Unexplained weight loss
- » Weakness or fatigue
- » Anemia

Although colorectal cancer can affect anyone, the following is a list of risk factors which greatly increase your chance of developing colorectal cancer:

- » Over 90% of cases of colorectal cancer occur after the age of 50.
- » Family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps
- » Personal history of polyps
- » Inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- » A low fiber, high fat diet
- » Lack of regular physical activity
- » Low intake of fruits and vegetables
- » Tobacco use
- » Alcohol consumption
- » Being overweight or obese

By making the following changes to your lifestyle, you can greatly decrease your risk of developing colorectal cancer:

- » Eat a high fiber diet rich in whole grains. The

recommended amount of daily fiber is 25-30 grams. The average American averages only 14-15 grams per day.

- » Get 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day.
- » Reduce your intake of red meat. Eating red meat once per day increases your risk of developing colorectal cancer by 50%.
- » Speak with your physician about the issue and obtain regularly scheduled colorectal cancer screenings after turning 50 years of age. Fifty to sixty percent of all colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented if everyone over 50 were screened routinely.
- » Maintain a healthy body weight.
- » Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- » Limit your intake of alcohol.
- » Do not use tobacco products.

### Treat Your Body Good for National Nutrition Month!

So much illness can be prevented if you give your body the nutrition it deserves, and refrain from filling your body with foods that can slow it down and predispose it to sickness and disease. The following are a few healthy eating tips that you may not have heard:

- » Eat a high fiber diet rich in whole grains. Aim for 25-30 grams per day. Fiber has been shown to help control blood glucose levels, aid in weight loss, lower cholesterol levels, and possibly prevent colon cancer.
- » Eat low fat/low sugar yogurt. In addition to being a good source of calcium, yogurt contains friendly bacteria which can boost your immune system and maintain colon health.

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# 3 Tips to Live Your Life Fully

## 7 Tips to Regain Control of Your Life

by Kristina Von Rosenvinge

Are you living your life or drudging through your life? To live your life means that you are doing the things you have to do and also have room to enjoy your life. All people want to be happy and have their life have meaning. Yet many people are so stressed by the demands of daily living that life feels hard. These 7 tips are designed to help you regain control over your life.

### 1. Control Your Attitude

We control our attitude. It is not something that is genetically or environmentally determined. We can choose to have a positive attitude about life. You can look at a glass as half full or half empty. The choice is yours.

### 2. Let Go of Being Critical of Others

Let go of being critical of others. Open yourself up to not judging others. Try instead to listen and understand. As you open yourself up to not judging others you will be able to accept and enjoy yourself and others more.

### 3. Tolerate Things We Don't Really Have to

Tolerations are things we put up with that we do not really have to. We all tolerate more than we realize. Think about what you are tolerating. Just by becoming aware of and articulating some of your tolerations you will naturally start handling, eliminating, and fixing them.

### 4. Spend Energy on What Matters

Much energy can be spent on being irritated and annoyed by things that really do not matter much. Put things in perspective and let go of a lot of it.

### 5. Love Yourself

You need to matter to yourself. Establish boundaries with other people so they do not take advantage of you. Love who you are. You are unique and special. Stop trying to be someone else.

### 6. Live by Your Values

Your behavior has to be grounded in your values. Focus on what you want your life to be like rather than a specific behavior you want to change. For example: I will exercise regularly. Shift: I am someone who values my body and I will eat only healthy foods. When you make this shift you also will set up an exercise schedule and diet that reflects your values.

### 7. Enjoy Life

Take delight in life and create fun experiences for yourself. Life needs to be lived in the present and you might as well laugh and enjoy yourself.

For more tips and tools on self-improvement and enhancing your relationship please visit:

[www.harbor.org/symmetry](http://www.harbor.org/symmetry)

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