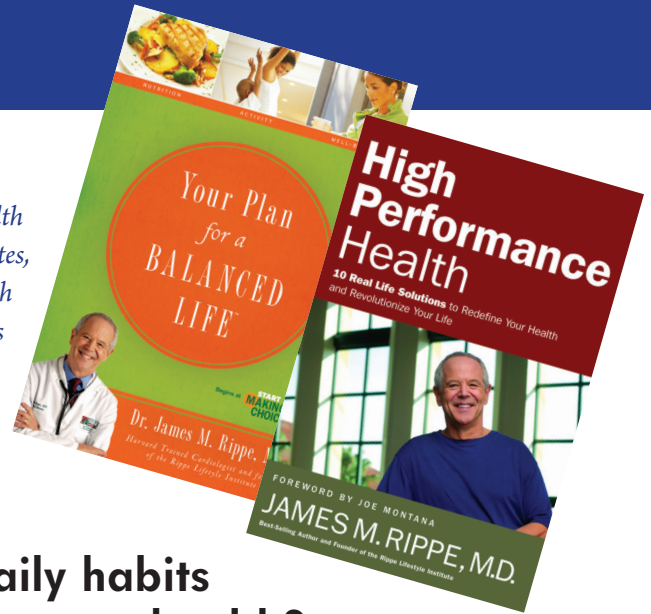


Ask DR. RIPPE

Medical Q & A



As a leading authority on preventive cardiology, health and fitness and healthy weight loss in the United States, Dr. Rippe has established and run the largest research organization in the world exploring how daily habits and actions impact short and long-term health and quality of life.



Q: Did you know that our daily habits have enormous power over our health? Let me give you a few examples:

Five of the major risk factors for heart disease (the number one killer of both men and women in the United States) have a lifestyle component. These include high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, cigarette smoking, an inactive lifestyle and obesity.

- Obesity is associated with over 80% of all cases of diabetes and over half of all cases of high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol.
- Poor lifestyle measures contribute to over half of all cancers.
- Inactive individuals double their risk of heart disease and significantly increase their risk of many other chronic diseases, including diabetes and cancer.

Despite these grim statistics, the flip side contains some very good news. Positive daily habits can play a very powerful role in preventing and treating these same chronic diseases. Let me give you a few examples.

- 80% of all heart disease and 91% of all diabetes could be eliminated if every adult followed the simple practices of maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking cigarettes, engaging in regular physical activity and eating in a healthful way that features more fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Individuals with glucose intolerance (a precursor to diabetes) could achieve a 58% reduction in the likelihood of progressing to diabetes if they lost a little weight and got 30 minutes of brisk walking on most days.

So powerful is the impact of daily habits on good health that they constitute a new branch of medicine which we call "lifestyle medicine." My research organization, Rippe Health has been a leader in the development of this new branch of medicine.

Good Health Is More Than Not Being Sick

Since lifestyle habits are so powerful for good health, why don't we take better care of ourselves? I think it is because most of us frame the problem the wrong way. We view "good health" as "not being sick." As long as we feel "okay," why make changes? However, good health is so much more! Good health can be the springboard to a better and more fulfilling life. Rather than the passive absence of disease, good health is a dynamic platform in daily life for better performance, greater energy and joy, improved fitness and less stress. Don't you deserve this kind of powerful good health, particularly in these tough economic times?

Our Vision: A Healthier Orlando

So here's the goal: to make Orlando the healthiest city in the world. This task will not be easy, and it won't happen over night, but it can happen! It is going to take hard work by many people and partners. It starts with you and me — a challenge to you to optimize your health and my promise to share the proven strategies you need to succeed. Fortunately, we have great partners in this quest. I have joined forces with Orlando Health to inaugurate the Lifestyle Medicine Initiative at Orlando Health. Orlando Health will be the first major

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hospital system in America to embrace the principles of lifestyle medicine as a core operating principle. We can also draw on the resources and research of the Center for Lifestyle Medicine at the University of Central Florida. This is the first university-based program devoted to the academic study of lifestyle medicine. (Full disclosure: I'm honored to chair the center and to hold a professorship in Biomedical Sciences at UCF.)

Take My Hand

In this spirit of partnerships, I am delighted to share a monthly column on lifestyle medicine with you in *Orlando Home & Leisure*. We'll explore many different topics in the months to come as I break down the principles of lifestyle medicine into simple steps that each of us can incorporate into our daily lives. I'll share practical insights and tips on getting regular physical activity, the basics of sound nutrition, the scientific basis for healthy weight management, new understandings of mind/body interrelationships, powerful strategies for stress reduction and more. We will also feature blogs and other ways to communicate on the *Orlando Home & Leisure* website, ohlmag.com.

An old Chinese proverb says "the longest journey begins with a single step." I invite you to join me in this journey. Take my hand in partnership and together we will work to make Orlando the healthiest city in the world!

Dr. Rippe is a board certified cardiologist, Professor of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Central Florida, Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology), Tufts University School of Medicine and Founder and Director of Rippe Lifestyle Institute and Rippe Health Evaluation. More information maybe obtained by visiting rippehealth.com, orlandohealth.com (click on Lifestyle Medicine Initiative) and lifestylemedicine@ucf.edu.

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