



Ten Simple Things You Can Do ...

**A guide for people living with HIV
to no-cost and low-cost strategies for:**

Eating better
Managing your finances
Staying mentally and physically healthy
Adhering to your medication regimen
And more!

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 Build a strong, supportive, trusting relationship with an HIV/AIDS doctor.** You should be able to freely discuss everything and anything and, if needed, to challenge your doctor's advice.
- 2 Develop consistent contact with a health care case manager...** who can help to make the rocky road to benefits and services easier for you. One mold does not fit all, so try to find a case manager that you trust, even if you have to switch to a new one.
- 3 Join an HIV/AIDS support group.** Find out if they use an ongoing, drop-in format or if they are time-limited and require pre-enrollment.. Also find out about the training and qualifications of the group leaders.
- 4 Get a therapist...**preferably a good licensed psychologist or certified social worker. Remember anyone can state they are a "therapist"; request more information about their background and experience. Keep looking until your instincts tell you that you have found a good match.
- 5 Attend workshops or other HIV/AIDS events...**so that you can find out as much as you can about HIV/AIDS. You must be the expert on this disease and be on top of any new developments and programs.



To Enhance Your Emotional Well-being

- 6 Stay informed about your HIV/AIDS medications...** seeking out information from any and all sources, including people, websites, and periodicals. The more you know about the medication you are taking and its potential side effects, the more you know what to expect about your emotions and mental well-being.
- 7 Address any substance use issues you may have...** by looking into substance use programs and groups. Consider working towards being clean and sober.
- 8 Exercise regularly and maintain good nutrition...** because the mind and the body are closely linked, and physical health enhances mental health.
- 9 Work if you can...** for income but also work for the structure and well being that employment can provide. Everyone can benefit from structure, and we all need to feel we are productive members of this world.
- 10 Seek a sense of belonging outside of HIV/AIDS...** such as by starting a hobby, traveling and exploring, getting a pet, starting or finishing school, or volunteering. The bottom line is to keep your stress low; keeping your stress low will help you to keep your immune system high.

J. Buzz von Ornsteiner, Ph.D., is a New York State-licensed psychologist and author of the "Psychologically Speaking" column in Body Positive Magazine.

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 If working, ensure medical coverage.** Pursue group benefits, especially medical and long-term disability insurance. It is no accident that three out of these ten recommendations deal with medical insurance.
- 2 If considering moving out of state...** be sure to find out how qualifications and conditions apply to medical coverage (including ADAP programs) compare between the state you are in and the one you may move to.
- 3 If on Medicaid...** or have unsatisfactory medical coverage, explore Veterans' medical insurance eligibility, paying for Medicaid, or getting a job to get the medical coverage.
- 4 If on long-term disability (LTD)...** be sure that your disabilities are as fully and carefully documented as possible, with evidence of the disabling effects of your HIV status.
- 5 If disabled...** as soon as possible re-train for a new avocation or vocation you can pursue if you lose your claim benefits or when you reach age 65. It will also give life a purpose and possibly put money in your pocket as long as it cannot be seen as work performed for income.
- 6 If on long-term disability (LTD)...** and within 10-15 years of age 65, develop a radical savings plan that includes harsh cuts in expenses, a supplemental vocation to soften the likely loss of LTD income, and identifies the additional expenses that retirement brings. Diversify your streams of income and make sensible investment such as real estate and rental property.



To Survive and Thrive With HIV Financially

- 7 If in an unmarried long-term relationship,** arrange through an attorney to have separate estate plans, powers of attorney, wills, and possibly a trust. Rely on guides from Nolo Press (NOLO.com) to prepare yourselves. Find an attorney to help you with these things; some will help people with HIV for free or at low-cost.
- 8 Consider entrepreneurship,** which may be a great way to spend your time and earn income in your later years. Develop entrepreneurship skills and a plan well before having to use it. Build on existing experience or gather years of experience on the job before venturing forth. Ensure you can get the insurance you need from day one. As with any investment, only put money into a venture that you can truly afford to lose.
- 9 Seek new accelerated benefits provisions on life insurance cover age.** This coverage clause can provide you with tax-free emergency cash in a medical crisis.
- 10 Thrive financially to survive medically.** Devote the time needed to really understand all aspects of your financial health. You may not be able to do much to change your medical situation, but your financial health can be in your own hands.

Per Larson is the author of the book Gay Money and over 125 articles, and provides advised people in the last ten years on the financial implications of serious illness.

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 Find services...** such as group meal programs and/or pantry programs that specialize in serving people with HIV.
- 2 Make sure you have a refrigerator...** so that you can store your perishable food items for a reasonable length of time. If you don't have a refrigerator, ask the management to get you one. Ask your nutritionist for a food storage time chart.
- 3 Boil tap water for one minute...** to be sure that it's safe to drink and then and then chill water in your refrigerator in small bottles with screw tops. Take a bottle or two with you so that you aren't tempted to either buy water or drink tap water when you are out and about.
- 4 Shop only in large food stores or supermarkets...** that give out discount cards free of charge, and always use them along with coupons from newspapers and store flyers. Always make a list of the things you need before you leave home and never shop when you are hungry.
- 5 Buy items that you can store...** like nuts, raisins or oatmeal, and divide them into smaller containers for future use at home or to take on the road for a snack. Pack the bulk items well and date them so that you can eat them while still fresh.



To Eat Better and Save Money

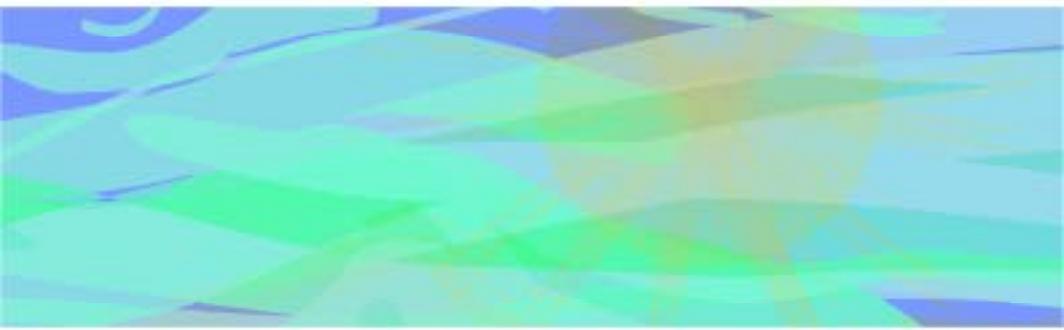
- 6 Cook more than one meal at a time.** It takes only a little more time to make a large pot of soup or stew rather than a small one. Divide the dish into meal-size containers and seal, date and freeze them.
- 7 Buy less expensive, generic brands** of tuna fish, cereal, broccoli or other foods rather than the “stars” whose names we all know. Generic brands are of the same quality but save money.
- 8 Buy “juices” rather than “drinks”.** A container marked orange “juice” has to be 100% orange juice, but a “drink” may contain as little as 5% to 10% orange juice. You can easily make a “drink” by diluting a juice with water or seltzer.
- 9 Spruce things up on your own.** Buy cereals and add your own raisins, nuts or flavorings. Purchase vegetables and add your own sauces or dressings. Select meat, chicken or fish and prepare it the way you like rather than paying extra for specially prepared foods that are likely to be high in salt and sugar.
- 10 Always read the label before you buy something for the first time.** Ask your friendly nutritionist to teach you the labeling “code words” for salt, sugar, fat, fillers and just plain junk so that you get the most for your money.



Edwin Krales, MS, CD/N is an HIV/AIDS nutritionist and health educator with the Momentum AIDS Project.

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 Notice something about nature every day.** Feeling connected to our world is part of any spiritual practice. Even if you live in the city, you can notice the sky, the phase of the moon, the shape of a tree.
- 2 Laugh...**since studies have shown that laughter actually strengthens your immune system.
- 3 Take deep breaths...**spending some time each day focused on deep breathing. Stress has long been known as a significant contributing factor in disease progression of all kinds. Incorporating a program of breathing exercises during stretching will increase oxygen flow and promote relaxation.
- 4 Soak a washcloth in hot water,** wring it out and scrub your body. Keep it hot, scrub vigorously. You will stimulate flow in your lymphatic system, remove dead cells, open up your pores to aid in release of toxins. And it just feels so invigorating.
- 5 Count 10 things you are grateful for every day...** to help reinforce a positive attitude about your life.
- 6 Focus on chewing your food...**because such “conscious chewing” forces you to slow down, pay more attention to what you are eating and be in the moment. So sit down and take time to chew and enjoy a good nourishing meal.



To Reduce Stress

- 7 Have a massage.** Even if you don't have time or the money for a professional massage, partner with a friend and give each other shoulder, back and neck massages. It's easy to do with no need to undress (unless you want to!) and a great way to release stress in an area where many of us tend to hold it.
- 8 Practice "journaling"...**which is daily "stream of consciousness" writing, not keeping a diary. Start writing about whatever is on your mind, letting the thoughts flow as they come in order to tap into your unconscious, resolve confusion, anger or frustration about issues, and stimulate creative thinking.
- 9 Meditate or pray daily.** There are a variety of types of meditation, but they all involve quieting the mind, giving it a break from the usual ceaseless chatter. Many people say they don't have the time or the inclination to sit and meditate or to pray, but you can bring mindfulness to your everyday activity and achieve similar stress reducing results.
- 10 Clear up unresolved relationships.** Anger or resentment toward family or friends festers in our emotions and bodies; trying to find forgiveness and making amends is more for your benefit and health than for theirs.

Gary Rosard is a certified Holistic Health Counselor with offices in Manhattan and South Orange, NJ.

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 Walk a little extra...** such as by parking away from the entrance or getting off the bus or train a stop early.
- 2 Take the stairs...** instead of the elevator or escalator in order to build up some leg muscle strength and burn off a few extra calories.
- 3 Get Outdoors.** Even if it's for a quick walk at lunch or a stroll around the building during a break, take some time to get outside to re-energize and to have a brief change of scenery.
- 4 Lead with your heart.** Walking with good posture means leading with your heart, chest out, head straight. Reminding yourself to do this improves your posture, reduces stress on your lower back and joints, and can create a noticeable shift in your attitude and spirit.
- 5 Stretch...** for 5 to 10 minutes every day, and include all your major muscle groups. A flexible joint requires less energy to move through the range of motion, increases blood supply and nutrients to joint structures, and reduces stress. Flexibility training builds a foundation for pain control and stress management.
- 6 Go dancing or play a sport or work out in a gym...** in order to get your heart rate up and start building aerobic conditioning. Seek out gyms, dance studios, and sports facilities that offer low-cost memberships or admissions.



To Improve your Physical Fitness

- 7 Do aerobic exercise...**three times a week for at least 30 minutes each. Exercise immunologists have provided research that demonstrates the link between regular exercise and immune function. The optimum session should be at least three times weekly ideally for 45 minutes at 70% predicted heart rate maximum. Predicted maximum heart rate = 220- your age.
- 8 Conduct weight resistance training...**two to three times a week. Even if you can't afford a gym or your own weights, buy a set of elastic resistance bands. Increasing muscle mass will increase your metabolism, give you more energy, and provide extra strength for achieving daily activities with less stress.
- 9 Carry out mind-body exercise...**such as yoga, tai-chi and other similar forms of exercise methods that are particularly helpful in developing the mind-body connection, relieving stress and anxiety, and encouraging the body's energy to flow freely.
- 10 Cross-train.** A complete fitness program should include aerobic exercise, weight training, and flexibility training. Develop a routine for yourself that incorporates all of these on a regular basis, and you'll really get the best overall results.

Gary Rosard is a certified Holistic Health Counselor with offices in Manhattan and South Orange, NJ.

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 Watch clocks and calendars.** Clocks and calendars rule in managing adherence. Buy a cheap plug-in clock with numbers so bright you'll see them for miles. Set the alarm if that helps. Calendars help track when prescriptions need refills. Buy calendars with whatever kind of pictures keep you looking at each month.
- 2 Buy a wristwatch...**that allows you to set at least three alarm times in 24-hours. Adherence is achieved when you keep to your pill-taking schedule of every 6 or 12 hours, depending on your regimen.
- 3 Free pill trays...**are often available from your AIDS service organizations. Grab two trays. Keep one filled with a week's worth of meds. It's time consuming to count out each dose, each time, on time, more than once daily. In the second pill tray keep a day's worth of pills in your car or at work, just in case you forget.
- 4 Put medicines in sight...**such as on the kitchen counter or where you throw your keys once inside or next to the TV remote. If you can "see" your meds routinely, there's a better chance you remember to take them on time, every time.
- 5 If you have food requirements...**be sure to chart out exactly what and when you can and cannot eat. Generally, high-fat foods don't go well with HIV meds, although some meds will advise you to eat fatty foods to help you absorb the drug.



7. Adhere to Your Medication Schedule

- 6 Agree with a friend to accept calls...**reminding you to take your medicines. Make a telephone-tree of all your friends on HIV meds. Commit to calling around the circle to insure adherence.
- 7 Take your morning and/or night dose when you brush your teeth.** Maybe there's another daily routine that could be easily combined with taking meds, like immediately before or after you exercise.
- 8 Reward yourself.** If you make it through a week or month without missing a dose, reward yourself. If you miss a dose, be gentle. Adherence is a lifelong commitment.
- 9 The best defense against side effects...**involves knowing what they are and how they affect you. For example, keep a log for a week or longer. Write down all your side effects, when they occur, for how long. Note any links to mealtime or certain foods. Then avoid the foods and situations that lead to your discomfort.
- 10 Always coordinate your care with a health care provider.** Don't be afraid to ask questions and seek guidance. If your doctor or case manager is annoyed by questions, find another one.

Frank Pizzoli writes frequently about HIV/AIDS issues and is the founder of the non-profit organization Positive Opportunities (PosOps@aol.com).

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 Drink lots of water...**since it's cheap, eliminates toxins, relieves stress on kidneys and liver, good for your skin and promotes regularity. To be safe, drink bottled water or tap water that has been boiled first.
- 2 Prevent overdosing...**by not mixing drugs (especially depressants and opiates), and by being aware of changes in drug tolerance. Most ODs happen either because people mix drugs with similar effects, or undergo a change in tolerance but don't make the necessary dosage adjustment.
- 3 Keep physically active.** Moderate exercise stimulates your immune system, can reduce the chances of stroke and heart disease, and is good for your mental health too!
- 4 Support your recovery.** While relapse is now acknowledged to be part of the recovery process, you can still treat it like the rain: let it come another day. Check the Yellow Pages or Directory Assistance for Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and/or Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).
- 5 If you're still using, moderate your use...**since it's easier to do this before it gets out of control than after. You may want to check out the substance use management groups.



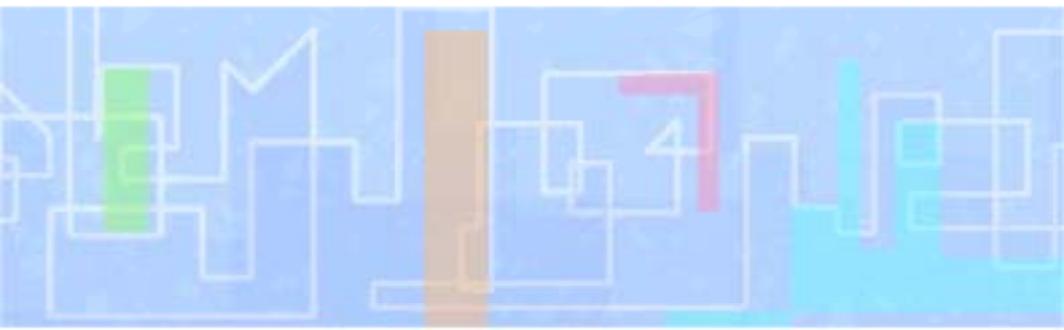
To Practice Harm Reduction If You Use Drugs

- 6 Know where to get clean syringes...**and try to get them **before** you need them. Some pharmacies in certain states (such as New York State) may sell new needles for personal use, and many locations have needle-exchange programs.
- 7 Catch those minor health problems early.** Seek out programs and institutions that provide preventive care and that can tackle problems before they become too serious.
- 8 Try ear acupuncture...**which can help those who are thinking about cutting down or stopping, or who are just stressed out.
- 9 Take care of your mental health.** Seek out psychotherapy or other types of mental health care for help with any issues you may be struggling with.
- 10 Be informed about hepatitis C.** Up to 90% of HIV-positive people who got infected by drug use also have the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Contact local groups that address hepatitis or search for information on the Internet. It is also important to get screened for HCV and screened and vaccinated for the hepatitis A and B viruses (no vaccination currently exists for HCV).

By Paul Cherashore is a National Hepatitis C Trainer for the Harm Reduction Coalition in New York City.

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 NYC & Company**...provides info on great event values in all boroughs. Call 212-484-1200 or visit www.nycvisit.com.
- 2 The NYC Sports Commission**...offers info on sports leagues, associations and venues: 877-NYC-SPORTS or visit them at www.nyc.gov/html/sports
- 3 The New York Botanical Gardens**...is free every Wednesday all day for garden grounds and every Saturday from 10-12 noon. There's an extra charge for conservatory and tours: 718-817-8000 www.nybg.org;
- 4 The NYC Parks & Recreation Green Thumb Program**... at 212-788-8070 or www.greenthumbnyc.org offers info on urban outdoor experiences.
- 5 The Green Guerillas**...can tell you how to become involved in community garden in your neighborhood: 212-594-2155 x3 and www.greenguerillas.org



To Have Fun and Make a Difference in NYC

- 6 The ASPCA...** can give you info about adoption of pets. Most shelters have fees to cover vaccinations and spaying or neutering. Contact 212-876-7700 and www.asPCA.org and www.petfinders.org.
- 7 The Mayor's Community Assistance Unit** ...oversees 59 Community Boards and can help you get involved with your community. On the Website look for the Community Assistance Unit that gives listings of community boards, meetings, street fairs, and neighborhood fairs activities; more info 212-788-7418 and www.nyc.gov.
- 8 Learning Leaders...** has volunteer programs for elementary, middle and high school. Ask for recruitment or check neighborhood schools for the LL program. For more info call 212-213-3370 or visit www.learningleaders.org.
- 9 The NYC Public Library Centers for Reading and Writing...** offers volunteer programs for adult literacy. All borough centers list where prospective tutors can register with specific site addresses and phone contacts/ See www.nypl.org/branch/literacy.
- 10 The NYC Paratransit Access-A-Ride Program...** can help seniors and people with disabilities get to all of these great places with door-to-door pickup and drop-off (you must meet eligibility requirements). Call 877-337-2017.

Antoinette-Marie Williams is a Body Positive volunteer and an activist on the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities.

10 Things You Can Do...

- 1 Visit our Website.** For an overview of Body Positive's programs, services, history, and more, visit us on the Web at www.bodypos.org.
- 2 Call our Helpline.** For information, referrals, and support, give us a call at 1-800-566-6599 from 10am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.
- 3 Read *Body Positive Magazine*.** Our English-language magazine has been published continually since 1987. For subscription info, call the office and ask to speak to the Publications Department or fill out the subscription form printed in each issue. You can also access the most recent issue and our archives via our Website.
- 4 Read *SIDAahora*.** Our Spanish-language magazine has been published continually since 1991 and provides information relevant to Spanish-speakers and members of the Latino community in New York City and beyond.
- 5 Sit in on a presentation.** Body Positive staff and peer educators make presentations throughout NYC. Check with organization that you belong to or facilities that you attend to see if they may be hosting (or would like to host) a BP event. For a listing, call the office at 212-566-7333.
- 6 Attend a special event.** Body Positive participates in special events such as the NYC AIDS Walk, the Gay and Lesbian Pride March, and World AIDS Day, as well as our own conferences and special events such as our annual Garden Gala. For more info, call the office at 212-566-7333 or visit the Website.



to Connect to Body Positive

- 7 Drop in to a support group.** Body Positive has ongoing drop-in support groups that all are welcome to attend with no prior notice or registration – it's a great way to try out a support group without making a commitment beforehand. For info on support groups, call the office and ask to speak to the Department of Volunteer and Client Support Services.
- 8 Enroll in a support group.** Some support groups focus on specialized themes, last for a specific number of weeks, and require advance registration. For info on current and upcoming enrolled support groups, call the office and ask to speak to the Department of Volunteer and Client Support Services.
- 9 Volunteer.** Body Positive needs volunteers in a broad range of areas, including the Helpline, group facilitation, professional services, and fundraising. To find out more about volunteering, call the office and ask to speak to the Department of Volunteer and Client Support Services.
- 10 Make a financial contribution.** Body Positive counts on private donations to support our programs and service. For information on how to make a contribution, just call our office.