

# Turning 50? Make sure you're thinking about these 7 important things

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*With each passing decade, we enter a new stage of life full of its own unique challenges and priorities. Here are 7 things you should be doing at 50 — and if you're not, you should start today.*



Fifty may be the new 40, but that doesn't change the fact that your body is, well, 50 years old. With every decade comes a variety of new challenges and priorities to make sure your aging body can keep going strong well into your 60s, 70s and beyond.

We talked to a group of experts in areas as diverse as financial planning, physical fitness and science and healthcare to get their advice on the seven things every 50-year-old should be doing starting TODAY.

## **1. Make an appointment with a periodontist**

An often-neglected topic as we age is oral healthcare. Research has shown a link between gum disease and a variety of health problems, from diabetes and autoimmune conditions to cardiac disease — among others. According to **Dr. David Genet, an Aventura, Florida-based periodontist**, the mouth is a gateway to total body wellness.<sup>(1)</sup> In short, Dr. Genet says, keeping your mouth and gums clean is imperative for maintaining your overall health — and keeping your teeth forever.



Strength training becomes even more important after your 50th birthday. (Photo: Getty Images)

## 2. Put down the alcohol and pick up some weights

As we age, excess alcohol can contribute to belly fat and a slowed metabolism, says **Suzanne Fisher, MS, RD, LDN, a nutrition consultant with Fisher Enterprises.**(2) Instead of reaching for that extra beer, pick up some weights. “Strength training benefits include increased metabolism and reduced heart disease and diabetes risk,” she explains. At 50, people should start making adjustments to the diet, as well, if they haven’t already. Fisher suggests incorporating more omega-3 fats, brightly colored fruits and vegetables, and limiting your sugar intake to no more than 100 calories per day (about six teaspoons).



Talk to your doctor about non-invasive screening options like Cologuard. (Photo: Exact Sciences)

## 3. Get screened for colorectal cancer

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. among men and women combined, claiming more than 50,000 lives each year.(3) But through early detection, nine out of 10 people survive — as opposed to only one in 10 if the cancer is caught in the latest stage.(4) These days, an invasive colonoscopy in a medical setting is no longer your only option. A screening test called [Cologuard](#) is the first and only stool DNA test approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. A test for people 50 years and older who are at average risk for colorectal cancer, Cologuard doesn’t require advance prep and can be used in the privacy of your home.(5) “Distinguished as a non-invasive test that uses the most advanced stool DNA technology to effectively detect biomarkers associated with cancer and pre-cancer, Cologuard is all about convenience that does not compromise performance,” says Kevin Conroy, CEO and president of Wisconsin-based Exact Sciences that developed the test. To better understand if Cologuard is right for you and understand all your options, [download this discussion guide](#) to help you talk to your health care provider.

#### 4. Secure your financial future

Many people consider their 40s and 50s their prime years of earning potential. Take advantage of it by saving more than you may have in the past. Budgeting is still important even at 50 as kids start to leave the house — and the temptation of increased spending looms — and retirement is on the horizon. By contributing a little more to your 401(k), IRA, and other retirement accounts, and paying off all non-tax-deductible debts like credit cards, you'll help to secure your financial future, so you can truly enjoy the next few decades of your life. Seek guidance from a financial advisor if you don't have one already.



Sex after 50 is an important part of your relationship, but sexual health should still be top of mind.

#### 5. Let's talk about sex

Many people will tell you that sex after 50 is as good (if not better, some will argue) than it was before 50. But just because you're older doesn't mean the chances of pregnancy or contracting an STD are nil. While fertility starts to decline in the 30s for women and the 40s for men, conceiving a child can still happen later in life. And according to the Centers for Disease Control, incidences of syphilis and chlamydia in adults aged 45-64 have been on the rise in recent years.(6) So be responsible — use a condom.

#### 6. Think twice about running that marathon

Dr. Matt Tanneberg, a sports chiropractor and certified strength and conditioning specialist with Arcadia Health and Wellness Chiropractic in Phoenix, advises 50-somethings to start paying more attention to their muscles.(7) "You need to constantly be replenishing your muscles," he says. "Implement weight lifting into your routine and limit high-impact cardio." Dr. Tanneberg suggests working out five days a week with 3-4 days of weight lifting, 1-2 days of cardio, and taking the other two days off for recovery.



Skincare needs change as you pass age 50 (Photo: Getty Images)

## 7. Refine your skincare routine

No matter how much you took care of your skin in your 20s, 30s, and 40s, in your 50s, you'll likely start to notice some fine lines and wrinkles. According to **Dr. Jeffrey Fromowitz, a dermatologist based in Boca Raton, Florida** (8), there are three simple products you can use to minimize age-related skin changes: sunscreen, a high-quality moisturizer and a gentle cleanser. While the cleanser, which you should use routinely before bedtime, will remove the grime that accumulated throughout the day, the moisturizer will replenish the moisture your skin begins to lose as you age. Also consider using a retinoid (or retinol) — the gold standard anti-aging cream and a topical antioxidant serum to brighten your complexion.

### Footnotes

(1) David G. Genet, D.M.D. website. <http://www.drgenet.com/>. Accessed July 27, 2017.

(2) Mrs. Suzanne Fisher, DietitianCentral.com website. [http://www.dietitiancentral.com/rd/rd\\_detail.cfm?id=457](http://www.dietitiancentral.com/rd/rd_detail.cfm?id=457). Accessed July 27, 2017.

(3) American Cancer Society. Key statistics for colorectal cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>. Updated April 6, 2017. Accessed July 27, 2017.

(4) Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement. Myths and facts about colorectal cancer. <https://www.icsi.org/asset/m9wv5c/Myths-and-Facts-Colon-Cancer.pdf>. Accessed July 27, 2017.

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(7) Arcadia Health and Wellness Chiropractic. Meet Our Team. <http://www.arcadiachiro.com/meet-our-team/>. Accessed July 27, 2017.

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