

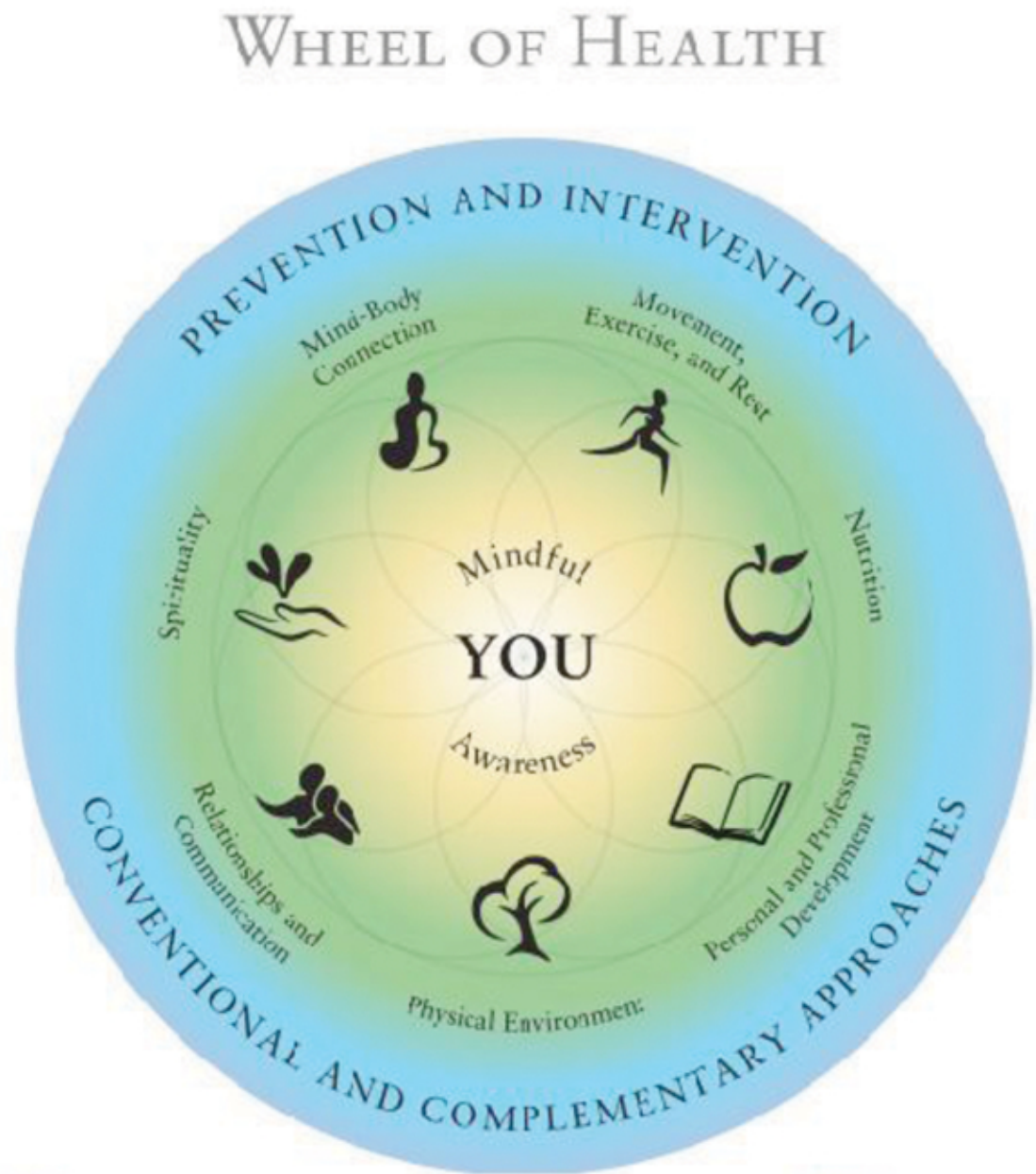
# Personalized Health Planning: How to Plan Your Life of Optimal Health and Well-being

By Deborah Lee, PhD, RN, Better Choices Health Coaching, Naples

**Y**ou plan for retirement, finances, vacation and education, but have you thought about planning for your health? Just like the other plans you make in your life, you can develop and implement a plan for a life of optimal health and well-being. You might ask, "How would I do this?" This article reviews how to develop a plan that supports you and your goals for living the life you've envisioned.

Personalized health planning takes into account that optimal health is a journey; it is more than a destination and requires frequent re-assessing and re-balancing. The human mind and body have capacities for self-repair that can be supported and enhanced by our life choices and by appropriate therapies. Duke Integrative Medicine developed the Wheel of Health (The Wheel). The Wheel is a holistic approach that takes into account your body, mind and spirit, and focuses on health optimization in addition to disease management. Health is more than just your physical and mental health; it encompasses all facets of your life- it is what makes you who you are.

Personalized health planning starts with YOU at the center of The Wheel- identifying your values, your agenda, your goals. We often don't take the time to do this important step, but it is essential for determining what is most important to you and thereby what will support your journey. Also at the center of The Wheel is mindful awareness; the experience of being present and aware in the moment without judgment, which enhances the health of your body and soul by allowing you to be proactive rather than reactive, being "present" for your life, and aligning your outer and inner life so you can live a life grounded in a deep sense of meaning and purpose. If you are unfamiliar with mindful awareness, visit [www.IntegrativeMindfulness.net](http://www.IntegrativeMindfulness.net) for more information.



Self-Care

Professional Care

 Duke Integrative Medicine

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The next layer of The Wheel represents the seven domains of self-care that impact our health. When developing a personal health plan, review each domain of self-care to assess what improvements, changes or enhancements might move you to an optimal state of health and well-being. Movement, exercise and rest include the concept of balance-working our bodies to produce needed strength and flexibility, the joy of movement and the importance of restoration and sleep. There is no drug, pill, or intervention that provides the health benefits of exercise. Movement - any amount, really - is better than no movement. Nutrition is viewed as food that nourishes and strengthens our body, rather than tears it down. Nutrition that provides the energy and nutrition our body needs in a balanced way is paramount to health optimization. Physical environment takes into account our surroundings at work and home, looking at those elements we can modify, need to accommodate or tolerate. Where do you spend most of your time and how do these environments support optimal health? What is the quality of the air, water and sound in your environment?

Relationships and communication refers to knowing and communicating with family, friends, co-workers, and colleagues. This dimension of connectedness to others is important because we know that close relationships at every age are associated with a lower risk of dying. Reflect on your relationships - do they fuel you or drain you, are there changes you would like to make?

Spirituality is attending to spirit and soul, making them relevant to our daily life and connecting them to fuel mind and body. Spirituality does not have to be connected to religious beliefs, we can have a

spiritual connection to something outside of ourselves through experiences in nature or meditation practices, as examples. What practices do you use to nurture your spirituality? Personal and professional development refers to what gives our life meaning and purpose, such as family, work, creating, volunteering, learning, etc. The importance of balance between our personal and professional life can sometimes be difficult due to competing values. Mind body connection means utilizing the connection between mind and body to strengthen and nourish our whole person. We can strengthen the connection of our mind to our body so that our mind can be an ally to buffer the body from the effects of stress. Strengthening this connection between the body and soul optimizes our health, performance and life and can be built though taking a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction course.

An integrative health coach can assist you in the development and implementation of a personalized health plan to promote your optimal health and well-being. Working with an integrative health coach provides you with the tools, guidance, support, motivation and accountability to actualize your plan and increase the likelihood of successfully living the life you've envisioned. To find out more about what integrative health coaching can do for you, visit [www.BetterChoicesHealthCoaching.com](http://www.BetterChoicesHealthCoaching.com).



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**Deborah Lee, PhD, RN** is an Integrative Health Coach and President of Better Choices Health Coaching based in Naples. She received her training at Duke Integrative Medicine's Integrative Health Coach Professional Training Program. She brings 30 years of professional and personal experience to her integrative health coaching practice. After working as a hospital and home care nurse, researcher, university professor, public health professional and health care administrator in the U.S. and Canada, she decided to return to the root of why she became a nurse; to help people feel better and stay healthy. Deborah can be reached at [Deborah.Lee@BetterChoicesHealthCoaching.com](mailto:Deborah.Lee@BetterChoicesHealthCoaching.com) or [www.BetterChoicesHealthCoaching.com](http://www.BetterChoicesHealthCoaching.com)

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