

# Achi's Sustainable Health Goals

Dear Achis,

I am incredibly happy to connect with you all in this special Women's edition of NANAL. Let us ponder over key issues in **women's health** in this article. We all attempt different approaches to attain optimal health outcomes. It is important we form great habits that we can follow to achieve our goals. Sharing eight Japanese themes that will help us **form great habits**:

- IKIGAI** – have a purpose in life. When you have a purpose in life, you will not feel lazy or unmotivated.  
Four rules of IKIGAI:
  - Do what you love
  - Do what you are good at
  - Do what the world needs
  - Do that for which you can be paid
- KAIZEN** – focus on small improvements every day. Become 1% better every day. Plan multiple small goals and tackle each one, one by one. Shooting for big goals or waiting for big improvements instantaneously does not work.
- SHOSAIN** – this is a concept from Zen Buddhism. Approach life with a beginner's mindset. If the mind is empty, it is open to everything. If we think we already know everything, there is no further room to grow.
- HARA HACHIBU** – stop eating after you are 80% full. Eating too much makes us lazy as the body focuses on digesting food and leads to procrastination.
- SHINRIN – YOKU** Shinrin means forest; YOKU means bath. Spend more time with nature, as this helps to deal with stress. Walk outside when you feel overwhelmed.
- WABI – SABI** – instead of perfection, find beauty in imperfection. It is okay that things cannot be perfect all the time. Love things the way they are.
- GANBARU** – Be patient with results. Everything takes time. Try to do the best that can be done.
- GAMAN** – Showing patience and perseverance

when things go hard. Expect failures in the journey.

## Routine Checkup Checklist for Women

SCREENING/EXAM	YEARS OF AGE				
	20+	30+	40+	50+	60+
Physical Exams	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Blood Pressure Screenings	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Pap Smears	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Cholesterol Tests		☑	☑	☑	☑
EKGs		☑	☑	☑	☑
Mammograms			☑	☑	☑
Diabetes Screenings			☑	☑	☑
Lung Screenings*				☑	☑
Colorectal Cancer Screenings				☑	☑
Bone Density Tests				☑	☑
Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Imaging					☑

\*Depending on risk factors

We have lots of apps that can help form habits – Apple watch; iPhone step count; intermittent fasting apps; calories counter apps and so on. Lately I am using a **monk mode app** and I find it useful. Now that we have looked at ways to hone our habits, let us move on to our **health goals**:

- Healthy Eating** – Basic rules include avoiding processed foods, increasing green leafy vegetables, protein intake, fiber intake and making sure we get our daily dose of vitamins and minerals.

2. **Regular Exercise** – include daily walking as much as possible – ideal is to reach ten thousand steps/day – aerobic exercises three times a week; include strength training exercises three times a week; include stretches two times a week and few minutes before or during a workout when you feel the muscle is strained.
3. **Cardiovascular Health** – Maintain your weight within normal BMI of less than 25; Make yearly visits with primary care doctor to check on cholesterol levels, thyroid levels, hemoglobin A1C to follow up on diabetes risk; hypertension assessment; discuss with your doctor if you have family history of high cholesterol, heart attack, hypertension, stroke, diabetes. You can calculate your heart health using these formulas – ASCVD Risk calculator or AHA cardiovascular risk calculator, Reynolds Risk Score.  
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/17085-heart-risk-factor-calculators>
4. **Lung Health** – Many of us have allergic bronchitis and obesity that do not allow us to run long distances. We can improve our lung health by doing breathing exercises and continuing our aerobic exercises. If needed, we can check our lung function test to assess our baseline lung function. If our spouse tells us we are snoring, we need to check for sleep apnea and plan treatment for this, which will protect our heart and lungs long term.
5. **Gastrointestinal Health** – Key here is to develop good eating patterns, avoid eating 3 hours before bedtime, add more fiber, more protein in diet, add probiotics in diet, and walk after eating. Practice intermittent fasting as much as you can.
6. **Cancer Screening** – need early screening and genetic testing if there is family history of cancer and seek genetic counseling. If there is no family history of cancer, screening for breast cancer starts at age 40; cervical cancer screening from age 21 to 65; colorectal cancer screening from age 50 years; skin cancer screening from age 24.
7. **Immunization** – be up to date with immunizations – HPV, meningococcal, MMR, influenza, covid, shingles, tetanus. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/adult.html>
8. **Screening for Depression** – Depression is more prevalent in women than men. Please contact your provider if you feel you are depressed and note these symptoms- feeling helpless; loss of interest in daily activities; change in appetite, weight, or sleep; anger or irritability; loss of energy; trouble focusing and unexplained aches & pains.

Best wishes to all our dear Achis in achieving your health goals this year and forever.



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