

# BALANCING ACT

Some things are best done in moderation.

We're often told to keep up healthy habits like drinking eight glasses of water, running to stay fit, and sleeping at least nine hours a day. But Dr Sivah Sandrasakre, chief medical officer at Columbia Asia Hospital, says too much of a good thing can actually be bad for your health. For instance, medication can improve one's health, but consuming too much of it can lead to a drug overdose, as well as hepatic and renal impairments. Hence, it's crucial to do everything in moderation, so you avoid either extreme.

## ► Drink more water

Since young, we're encouraged to drink at least eight cups of water a day to stay hydrated. Make that your daily limit, because drinking more water than you should may cause nausea, vomiting, polyuria (excessive passage of urine) and even hyponatremia, which is more commonly known as water poisoning. Hyponatremia happens when the level of sodium in your bloodstream drops too much, which usually happens when you drink an extreme amount of water in a short period of time.

## ► Sleep longer

While it's true that a good night's sleep is essential, oversleeping has been associated with health problems. A study by Laval University's Faculty of Medicine shows that people who sleep for nine or ten hours every night are 21 per cent more likely to become obese over a six-year period. Oversleeping is likely to disturb your body's metabolic syndrome and increase your risk for diabetes.

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EXPERT



**Dr Sivah Sandrasakre,**  
Chief medical officer at Columbia Asia Hospital

## ► Use olive oil liberally

Even olive oil, one of the healthiest fats around, can cause more harm than good if you're consuming it excessively. Like it or not, olive oil is packed with calories like any other type of oil. A tablespoon contains about 120 calories and if you consume too much in a day, you risk gaining weight and experiencing major health conditions like heart disease, heart attack or stroke. So limit yourself to the recommended dose of two tablespoons a day.

## ► Run further

Running has longed been associated with strengthening muscles and improving cardiovascular fitness, but shockingly, a study published in the *European Heart Journal* found that marathon runners have a higher risk factor for heart attack than sedentary people. Dr Sivah explains that long, intensive workouts can sometimes cause structural changes in the heart, increasing one's risk for conditions like arrhythmia, also known as cardiac dysrhythmia or an irregular heartbeat.

To avoid this, the American Heart Association suggests doing no more than 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise, or 150 minutes of moderate exercise.

