Celsus, *De Medicina*, Book 1 (secs. 1.1-1.3.14; 1.10) trans. by W.G. Spencer (1935)

1.1 A man in health, who is both vigorous and his own master, should be under no obligatory rules, and have no need, either for a medical attendant, or for a rubber and anointer. His kind of life should afford him variety; he should be now in the country, now in town, and more often about the farm; he should sail, hunt, rest sometimes, but more often take exercise; for whilst inaction weakens the body, work strengthens it; the former brings on premature old age, the latter prolongs youth.

1.2 It is well also at times to go to the bath, at times to make use of cold waters; to undergo sometimes inunction, sometimes to neglect that same; to avoid no kind of food in common use; to attend at times a banquet, at times to hold aloof; to eat more than sufficient at one time, at another no more; to take food twice rather than once a day, and always as much as one wants provided one digests it.

1.3 But whilst exercise and food of this sort are necessities, those of the athletes are redundant; for in the one class any break in the routine of exercise, owing to necessities of civil life, affects the body injuriously, and in the other, bodies thus fed up in their fashion age very quickly and become infirm.

1.4 Concubitus indeed is neither to be desired overmuch, nor overmuch to be feared; seldom used it braces the body, used frequently it relaxes. Since, however, nature and not number should be the standard of frequency, regard being had to age and constitution, concubitus can be recognized as harmless when followed neither by languor nor by pain. The use is worse in the day-time, and safer by night; but care should be taken that by day it be not immediately followed by a meal, and at night not immediately followed by work and watching. Such are the precautions to be observed by the strong, and they should take care that whilst in health their defences against ill-health are not used up.

2.1 The weak, however, among whom are a large portion of townspeople, and almost all those fond of letters, need greater precaution, so that care may re-establish what the character of their constitution or of their residence or of their study detracts.
2.2 Anyone therefore of these who has digested well may with safety rise early; if too little, he must stay in bed, or if he has been obliged to get up early, must go to sleep again; he who has not digested, should lie up altogether, and neither work nor take exercise nor attend to business. He who without heartburn eructates undigested food should drink cold water at intervals and none the less exercise self-control.

2.3 He should also reside in a house that is light, airy in summer, sunny in winter; avoid the midday sun, the morning and evening chill, also exhalations from rivers and marshes; and he should not often expose himself when the sky is cloudy to a sun that breaks through . . . , lest he should be affected alternately by cold and heat — a thing which excites particularly choked nostrils and running colds. Much more indeed are these things to be watched in unhealthy localities, where they even produce pestilence.

2.4 He can tell that his body is sound, if his morning urine is whitish, later reddish; the former indicates that digestion is going on, the latter that digestion is complete. On waking one should lie still for a while, then, except in winter time, bathe the face freely with cold water;

2.5 when the days are long the siesta should be taken before the midday meal, when short, after it. In winter, it is best to rest in bed the whole night long; if there must be study by lamp-light, it should not be immediately after taking food, but after digestion. He who has been engaged in the day, whether in domestic or on public affairs, ought to keep some portion of the day for the care of the body. The primary care in this respect is exercise, which should always precede the taking of food; the exercise should be ampler in the case of one who has laboured less and digested less well.

2.6 Useful exercises are: reading aloud, drill, handball, running, walking; but this is not by any means most useful on the level, since walking up and down hill varies the movement of the body, unless indeed the body is thoroughly weak; but it is better to walk in the open air than under cover; better, when the head allows of it, in the sun than in the shade; better under the shade of a wall or of trees than under a roof; better a straight than a winding walk.

2.7 But the exercise ought to come to an end with sweating, or at any rate lassitude, which should be well this side of fatigue; and sometimes less, sometimes more, is to be done. But in
these matters, as before, the example of athletes should not be followed, with their fixed rules and immoderate labour. The proper sequel to exercise is: at times an anointing, whether in the sun or before a brazier; at times a bath, which should be in a chamber as lofty, well lighted and spacious as possible. However, neither should be made use of invariably, but one of the two the oftener, in accordance with the constitution. There is need of a short rest afterwards.

2.8 Coming to food, a surfeit is never of service, excessive abstinence is often unserviceable; if any intemperance is committed, it is safer in drinking than in eating. It is better to begin a meal with savouries, salads and such-like; and after that meat is to be eaten, best either when roasted or boiled.

2.9 All preserved fruits are unserviceable for two reasons, because more is taken owing to their sweetness, and even what is moderate is still digested with some difficulty. Dessert does no harm to a good stomach, in a weak one it turns sour. Whoever then in this respect has too little strength, had better eat dates, apples and such-like at the beginning of the meal. After many drinkings which have somewhat exceeded the demands of thirst, nothing should be eaten; after a surfeit of food there should be no exertion.

2.10 Anyone who has had his fill digests the more readily if he concludes the meal with a drink of cold water, then after keeping awake for a time has a sound sleep. When a full meal is taken at midday, after it there should be no exposure to cold, heat or fatigue, which do not harm the body so easily when it is empty as when it is full. When from whatever causes there is prospective want of food, everything laborious should be avoided.

3.1 Now the foregoing precepts indeed almost always hold good; but some particular notice requires to be taken of changes of surroundings and varieties of constitution and sex and age and seasons. For it is not safe to remove either from a salubrious to an oppressive locality, or from an oppressive to a salubrious one. It is better to make the move from a salubrious into an oppressive place at the beginning of winter, from an oppressive into a salubrious one in early summer.

3.2 It is not good indeed to overeat after a long fast, nor to fast after overeating. And he runs a risk who goes contrary to his habit and eats immoderately whether once or twice in the day. Again, neither sudden idleness after excessive labour, nor sudden labour after excessive idleness,
is without serious harm. Therefore when a man wishes to make a change, he ought to habituate himself little by little; indeed any work is easier even for a boy or an old man than for an unaccustomed adult.

3.3 Hence also too idle a life is inexpedient, because there may come up some necessity for labour. But if at any time a man has had to undergo unaccustomed labour, or at any rate much more than he is used to, he should go to bed on an empty stomach, more especially if he has a bitter taste in his mouth, or his eyes are dimmed, or his bowels disturbed; for then he must not only sleep with his stomach empty, but even remain at rest over the next day, unless rest has quickly removed the trouble; in this case he should get up and take slowly a short walk. But even when there has been no necessity for a sleep, because a man has only done more moderate work, still he ought, all the same, to take a little walk.

3.4 This then should be the rule for everyone after incurring fatigue before taking food: first to walk about a little, then, if no bath is at hand, to undergo anointing and sweating in a warm place whether in the sun or before a fire; when there is a bath, he should first sit in the warm room, then, after resting there a while, go down into the tubs; next, after being anointed freely with oil and gently rubbed down, again descend into the tub; finally he should foment the face, first with warm, then with cold water.

3.5 A very hot bath does not suit such cases. Therefore if one's excessive fatigue almost amounts to a fever, it is quite sufficient for him to sit in warm water, to which a little oil may be added, up to the groins, in a tepid room; next his whole body, and especially the parts which have been under water, should be rubbed gently with oil to which a little wine and pounded salt have been added.

3.6 This done, anybody who has undergone fatigue is ready for food, in particular food of a fluid consistency; he should be content with water to drink, or if wine, certainly diluted, of the sort to promote diuresis. Further it should be recognized that after labour accompanied by sweating a cold drink is most pernicious, and even although sweating after a fatiguing journey has passed off, it is unserviceable.
3.7 After coming out of the bath, too, Asclepiades held it unserviceable; and this is true in the case of those whose bowels are loose at uncertain moments, and who readily shiver; but it is not the universal rule in all cases, since it is more natural that a heated stomach should be cooled, and a cold one warmed by a drink. I grant so much, but I hesitate to give this as a rule, for as a matter of fact a cold drink is bad while sweating.

3.8 It also happens that after a dinner of many courses and many drinks of diluted wine a vomit is even advantageous; the next day there should be a prolonged rest followed by exercise in moderation. If there is oppression due to a persistence of fatigue, water and wine should be drunk alternately, but the bath seldom used. A change of work, too, relieves lassitude; and when a novel form of customary work has tired a man, that form to which he is accustomed restores him.

3.9 To one who is fatigued that couch is best which he uses every day; for whether soft or hard, one to which he is unaccustomed wearies him. Certain things are specially applicable to one who is fatigued whilst travelling on foot. To be rubbed often while actually on the way restores him; after the journey he should sit awhile, then undergo anointing; next at the bath foment with hot water his upper rather than his lower parts.

3.10 But anyone who has become overheated in the sun should go at once to the bath, and there have oil poured over the head and body; next go down to a thoroughly hot tub; then have water poured over his head freely, first hot, next cold. On the other hand, he who has become much chilled should first sit in the calidarium, well wrapped up, until he sweats; next be anointed, afterwards laved, then take food in moderation and after that drinks of undiluted wine.

3.11 He too who on a voyage is troubled by seasickness, if he has vomited out a quantity of bile, should fast or take very little food. If he has spewed out sour phlegm, he may take food notwithstanding, but lighter than usual; if he has nausea without vomiting, he should either fast, or after food excite a vomit.

3.12 But he who has spent all day sitting in a carriage or at the games should not after that hurry but walk slowly; also it is of service to linger somewhat in the bath, and then take a small dinner afterwards. When overheated in the bath, taking vinegar and holding it in the mouth restores him; if that is not at hand, cold water may be taken in the same way.
3.13 But above all things everyone should be acquainted with the nature of his own body, for some are spare, others obese; some hot, others more frigid; some moist, others dry; some are costive, in others the bowels are loose. It is seldom but that a man has some part of his body weak.

3.14 So then a thin man ought to fatten himself up, a stout one to thin himself down; a hot man to cool himself, a cold man to make himself warmer; the moist to dry himself up, the dry to moisten himself; he should render firmer his motions if loose, relax them if costive; treatment is to be always directed to the part which is mostly in trouble.

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10.1 There are also observances necessary for a healthy man to employ during a pestilence, although in spite of them he cannot be secure. At such a time, then, he will do well to go abroad, take a voyage; when this cannot be, to be carried in a litter, walk in the open before the heat of the day, gently, and to be anointed in like manner; further as stated above he should avoid fatigue, indigestion, cold, heat, venery, and keep all the more to rule, should he feel any bodily oppression.

10.2 At such a time he should not get up early in the morning nor walk about barefoot, and least so after a meal or bath. Neither on an empty stomach nor after a meal should he provoke a vomit, or set up a motion; indeed if the bowels tend to be loose, they are to be restrained.

10.3 The fuller his habit of body, the more abstinence; he should avoid the bath, sweating, a midday siesta, and in any case if food has been taken previously; at such times, however, it is better then to take only one meal a day, and that a moderate one, lest indigestion be provoked. He should drink, one day water, the next day wine; if he observes these rules, there should be the least possible alteration as to the rest of his accustomed dietary.

10.4 Such then are the things to be done in pestilence of all sorts, and particularly in one brought by south winds. And the same precautions are needed by those who travel, when they have left home during an unhealthy season, or when entering an unhealthy district. Even when something prevents observance of other rules, yet he ought to keep up the alteration, mentioned above, from wine to water, and from water to wine.