

# LIVING BETTER 50

*for women with spirit*

## How to Take Charge of Your Health: Expert Physician's Tips for Living Your Best Life

By [Vanessa Sheets](#) on July 15, 2016



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Imagine finding out, after two back surgeries and recurring pain, that all you had was a torn muscle that could have been repaired with a non-invasive therapy called platelet-rich plasma (PRP) that stimulates the healing of bone and soft tissue.

Or imagine learning about a natural, effective treatment for balancing hormones after years of suffering from night sweats, hot flashes, weight gain, and other symptoms of menopause and being told by your physician that all they can do is prescribe sleeping pills, antidepressants, and pain killers.

Don't waste another minute feeling terrible when you can enjoy your post-reproductive years.

[Dr. Erika Schwartz](#), an expert physician in the fields of natural hormone therapies, anti-aging and disease prevention and author of [Don't Let Your Doctor Kill You: How to Beat Physician Arrogance, Corporate Greed, and a Broken System](#), wants you to own your life and your health. She says that

when it comes to your healthcare, there's only one person who should be in the driver's seat, and that's you.

"Patients need to say to their doctors: you are not going to touch me or do anything to me because I'm not going to be your victim," Dr. Schwartz says. "Either you're going to be my partner, and support, encourage, and care for me, keeping me healthy, or I'm out of here."

Dr. Schwartz helps patients live their best lives by focusing on prevention, a theory she says conventional medicine needs to practice in order to survive. Stanford researcher Randall Stafford, MD, PhD, agrees in a [New England Journal of Medicine](#) article that healthcare should be about the patient, not special interest groups, like insurance and pharmaceutical companies.

"You're better off with no healthcare than the quality of care typically provided," Dr. Schwartz says. She practices conventional medicine at [Evolved Science](#) in New York City, where patients are welcomed into a warm, compassionate environment, and her team of doctors help them live healthier and better balanced lives.

"I ran a trauma center for five years," Dr. Schwartz says. "I know people need emergency care if they get hit by a bus. But the hospital should be a last resort."

To take charge of your healthcare, Dr. Schwartz recommends the following:

1. Find the right doctor. Look for a physician who wants to be your partner and is practicing medicine because they care about serving *you*, not insurance and pharmaceutical companies. "Many doctors are waiting for you to get sick," says Dr. Schwartz. Find one who listens to your concerns and is focused on prevention.
2. Live your best life now. Start addressing your diet, sleep, exercise, and lifestyle. Get your cortisol levels and stress under control. Have your hormone levels checked. The way to live your best life is to focus on prevention.
3. Let go of fear. People are afraid of doctors. "Patients are constantly bullied, intimidated, and scared," Dr. Schwartz says. "Stop running to the doctor looking for something that's wrong with you." Don't let your doctor bully you into treatment you don't want, or tests you don't need. In her book, Dr. Schwartz talks about a patient who was sent in for a mammogram by her gynecologist who told her threateningly, "You could have cancer and not even know it." After results showed a small benign mass, the doctor sent her to a specialist for a biopsy who repeated what the radiologist already said: the mass was benign.
4. Don't wait until you're sick. "Our patients come to us to stay healthy, not because they are sick," Dr. Schwartz says of her private practice. Find a doctor who cares about your overall wellness and health, and who is willing to help you make tweaks in your diet and lifestyle. Stop taking supplements you don't need. "Some patients come in for the first time with as many as 30 different daily supplements they're taking," says Dr. Schwartz. Don't fall for the hype- many of these supplements are unnecessary, despite their persuasive marketing.

5. Limit bureaucracy and special interest in your healthcare. Don't let your insurance rule your healthcare. "We don't take insurance because we don't want anyone between us and the patient," says Dr. Schwartz. Consider the same from your healthcare provider and ask yourself how much you're really saving by going through your insurance if you end up with costly medical procedures and tests you don't need.

There is a lot of change coming to the medical community.

"I give talks to physicians and medical students," says Dr. Schwartz. "When I wrote this book 14 years ago, we wouldn't be having this conversation because everyone would have thought I'd lost my mind. But today, more people are searching for answers. There are a lot of mistakes being made in healthcare. Now mainstream medicine is seeing how bad, uncaring healthcare and physician arrogance is leading to terrible outcomes."

Now more than ever, people need to take healthcare in their own hands.

*Vanessa Sheets is a freelance journalist whose health articles have appeared in print and online magazines and business websites. Visit her website at [TheHealthWriter.com](http://TheHealthWriter.com).*