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For Better Health,

*Frank Addleman*

Frank Addleman  
Professor Emeritus  
Nutrition & Fitness  
Santa Ana College

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**A MOTIVATIONAL JOURNEY TO OPTIMUM HEALTH**

# **GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER**

***THINK HEALTHY,  
BE HEALTHY***

**FRANK G. ADDLEMAN**  
**BEST SELLING AUTHOR OF**  
**THE WINNING EDGE**

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# **Get Your Act Together**

**Think Healthy, Be Healthy**

**By**

**Frank G. Addleman**

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### **DEDICATION :**

For my wife Betty

### **ALSO BY FRANK ADDLEMAN;**

The Winning Edge: Nutrition for athletic  
fitness and performance



## **What Experts in the Field Say About “Get Your Act Together”**

“Frank Addleman has reduced the complex issues of nutrition and lifestyle for better health into a simple and common sense approach. Now all of us can have the knowledge to better avoid the unhealthy effects of aging”

Dr. Dave Gorrie D.C  
Tustin, Calif.

“Get Your Act Together” is a must read for the entire fitness industry. Addleman will motivate your clients to follow a healthy lifestyle that can make anyone successful. He turns the complex principles of fitness and nutrition into simple language that we can all apply to improve our health.”

Greg Welch M.S.  
Exercise physiology  
President of Specificit:  
An Agency Of wellness  
& Competitive Performance  
Enhancement  
Seal Beach, Calif.

“In *Get Your Act Together*, Frank Addleman makes the complicated connection between physical activity and nutrition easy to digest. After a life-long career in studying the subject, he brings us a no-nonsense book of the basics of living well”

Dr. Warren Boring, Phd.  
Professor Emeritus  
Exercise Science California  
State University at Long Beach

“Finally, we have a book that debunks many of the diet myths and connects the dots between physical activity and nutrition. Frank Addleman has spent his life making the food and fitness equation understandable and thereby bringing common sense and practical insights to a confusing issue”

Dr. Richard O. Keelor  
President, International  
Association Of Aging, Fitness,  
And Sport.

“Addleman has a unique way of making complex health issues easy to comprehend. I especially like the way he helps the reader to understand the connection between physical activity and caloric intake. Most important he shows us how to apply the facts in a practical manner for daily living”

Richard M. Pisarcik Jr. ATC  
Functional Motion Therapy  
Long Beach, Calif.



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**"Health...the condition that makes possible the highest enjoyment of life."**

**Jessie F. Williams, M.D.**

## **1.**

### **Introduction**

I've learned a lot from teaching nutrition and fitness for thirty-five years, and the most important things I learned were from my students. In my early years, I focused on the facts. You know, **why** you should eat this food and not that food, **how** exercise helps you stay healthy, and so on. These were important facts to be sure, but just educating someone about the benefits of good nutrition and exercise doesn't mean they are going to do anything about it! People are "educated" daily through the various media about the dangers of smoking, high-fat diets, obesity, and lack of exercise, yet only 10% of the population exercises enough to get any health benefit. Nutrition is even worse. Due to our fast-paced lifestyles, convenience foods, fast foods, and steakhouses are flourishing, not diminishing.

What's wrong with this picture? Why do my students leave class and light up a cigarette or go to the cafeteria for a burger with fries? After all that I taught

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them, why do they do just the opposite? Then, it dawned on me. They're not hearing what I'm saying! That's not exactly correct. They heard me, they just can't absorb it because they don't think it applies to them. I'm tuned out! The fact is, people adapt very well to how they feel "now." If they feel comfortable being sedentary, their smoking relaxes them, and the greasy burger is comforting, so why should they change? Why be different?

That's what my students taught me. That's when I changed the way I taught. I thought back to my career as a wrestling coach and how much emphasis I placed on motivation and self-responsibility. If you take a reasonably skilled athlete, motivate them, and make them personally responsible, they will believe that they can win because they can. They take control. They are ready to learn.

Now I teach "Motivational Nutrition." My goal is to motivate them to take charge of their lifestyle and to be responsible for their health.

Once a person realizes how much control they have over their health, it's amazing how they absorb the facts! They are tuned in!

Unfortunately, a majority of us tend to rationalize or justify our unhealthful lifestyles, regardless of the long-range consequences. Most of our lifestyles habits are learned behavior. We learn to drink whole milk, eat fast foods, smoke, etc. We surely didn't come into this world with an overwhelming desire for that lifestyle. Someone had to introduce us to it. I think that if Abraham Lincoln walked into a supermarket today, he would think it was a toy store:

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So many processed and packaged food now fill the shelves.

What I hope to accomplish in the following chapters is to shatter some of the myths and misconceptions that people have with regard to the power they have to control their own health destiny. Your doctor was wrong when he told you, “The secret to a long, healthful life is to have good genes.” That’s beyond our control. The secret is to take personal control of your life, something you can do.

What we need is to get you to “think healthy.” Being healthy doesn’t take a lot of exercise or a special diet. It is just a matter of rethinking your habits and gradually making some changes: **Use common sense, think healthy, be healthy!**



## 2.

### **The Murder of the CEO**

On the night of celebrating his fortieth birthday, Sam Sellars was tired yet overjoyed; his company had just merged with a major Internet conglomerate, and the long hours had paid off handsomely. During the first week, the stock went public. As the CEO, his stock options made him a multimillionaire. He felt exhausted as he climbed into bed, but knew he'd sleep peacefully and dream about his great fortune.

That night though, Sam tossed in bed while listening to roaring thunder. His window shutters began swinging wildly. Sam jumped up to close them and stop their banging. When he rushed to the window, he glanced outside with bleary eyes. The sky lit up with the words,

“SOMEONE’S TRYNG TO KILL YOU!”

Sam slammed the shutters closed and grabbed a cigarette off his nightstand. He raced to the kitchen and gulped down a cup of strong coffee with three sugars

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in it. Then he sat at the kitchen table, smoking and drinking, trying to calm his shaking body. Sam wondered if the vision was a nightmare. It couldn't be a dream. He knew what he saw, but who could want to kill him?

That morning, Sam ate his usual breakfast of scrambled eggs and sausage. He told his wife, "Someone's trying to kill me."

"Who?" she asked, trembling as she buttered Sam's favorite biscuits.

"I don't know," Sam replied as he wrapped a sausage inside his biscuit.

As Sam drove to work, his fear escalated. It would be useless to go to the police. Who would believe what even he doubted he had seen? He thought of options to outwit the murderer, but decided to do his daily routine and hope for the best. Sam focused on beating the lights and changing lanes to get to work quickly. When he arrived, the many e-mail messages, phone calls, and memos put all concern out of his mind. Then, during his second cocktail at lunch, terror struck him. He finished his pasta alfredo and lit a cigar. "Don't panic," Sam said to himself. He then immersed himself in work and stayed at the office late as usual.

When Sam arrived home, he reviewed numerous reports. After a dinner break of spareribs and mashed potatoes, he returned to his desk to work. His wife brought him a piece of peach pie a la mode and patted him gently on the shoulder. "This will comfort you," she said. Sam lay back in his chair and relaxed for the first time that day. He blew smoke rings into the air between bites of his rich dessert. Then Sam took

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his daily Seconal TM capsule to get his customary five hours of sleep.

As the days passed, he diligently stuck to his routine. After several months, he took a perverse pleasure in his ability to survive. One night at dinner, he boasted to his wife, “Whoever’s trying to kill me hasn’t gotten me. I’m too smart for them!”

“Be careful,” she warned and gave him a third piece of thick-crust, double-cheese pizza.

Sam continued this routine for the next few years and felt proud that he’d outfoxed his would-be murderer. Then, at age fifty-two, a stroke hit Sam at his desk on a busy day. He was paralyzed on one side and unable to speak. His wife committed him to a convalescent home, where he lived for two more years.

After his death, his grief-stricken widow demanded an autopsy be performed on Sam. It showed emphysema, arteriosclerosis, ulcers, cirrhosis, cardiac necrosis, a cerebral aneurysm, pulmonary edema, circulatory insufficiency, and lung cancer. She knew that Sam would have been glad to know that he had died of natural causes. The widow then enjoyed her remaining years in a beautiful retirement community while spending the money that Sam had earned.

Adapted from “Grabwell Grommet”

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Modified by Dr. Gene Adams, California State University Fullerton

Modified by Frank Addleman



### 3.

## **Every Day for the Rest of Your Life**

I would always start my class by saying, “This is one of the most important classes you will ever take.” Now, I know that sounds a bit self-serving, but here’s the reasoning. We all have to deal with food every day. Not now and then or every week, but every day. Your first decision in the morning is what to eat, should I eat, or do I have time to eat. This is followed by decisions about lunch, dinner and snacks throughout the day. Then there’s grocery shopping, choosing restaurants, fast foods, television ads, diet books, talk shows on food, food channels on cooking, etc. We all deal with food daily, and we will until the day we die. I think that if you are going to be that involved with something, you should understand it well. Food must be important for us to have to deal with it so often. The problem is that most of us don’t deal with it very well. Most of us make poor choices; not because we don’t care. We just don’t always know or make the good choices.

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Most food choices are made by taste and learned behavior. If it tastes good and we are taught to eat it, that's what we eat, and we usually do so until we're full. I want you to start thinking about what you eat and why you eat it. After you finish reading this book, you will also know what's best to eat. Your selection of food choices has a tremendous effect on your overall health and well-being. It is important to understand this process.

Although many people like and enjoy healthful foods, we are now at a point where unhealthful choices are becoming more popular. In our society, obesity is at epidemic proportions. One in every three adults is obese. Two of three Americans are overweight, as are a high proportion of children. Chronic disease is commonplace. The food choices you make and the amount of exercise you do are the two most important lifestyle factors that affect these trends. It's important that you take control of these lifestyle factors.

## 4.

### **Are You Tuned In?**

As a health teacher, I am obviously tuned into health; if I hear or see anything that is remotely related to health, it catches my attention. For example, I can be talking to a few friends at a party when I overhear someone in another group talking about cholesterol levels. My ears perk up! Or, I'm washing the car, and I hear someone on the radio talking about how to do sit-ups correctly. My ears perk up! I'm indeed tuned in. It's my profession.

You're tuned into something as well. It may be music, architecture, construction, history, sports, etc. Say it's sports and you are washing your car. You are focused on the car, but you hear a voice on the radio ask, "Who hit the most home runs in 2001?" and you say to yourself, "Barry Bonds." You are tuned in!

That's the problem with health. Not enough people are tuned in. They don't hear or see the news bulletins on the radio or on TV. They skip the

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magazine article on diabetes or heart disease,  
remaining uninformed.

It is important for us all to be “tuned in” to  
health, because without good health, you won’t get the  
full enjoyment out of the people and things that mean  
the most to you.

## **5.**

### **Change Your Mindset for Optimum Health**

The Wellness Scale below shows eight categories of health. The center “0” represents health that is barely OK. As you move left toward +3, vibrant health, you’re on the wellness track. If you move right toward -4, you’re on the illness track.

Read the descriptions of each state of health, and find your present mindset. Do you radiate health and take full responsibility for yourself by eating nutritious foods, exercising regularly, and managing your stress? Or, do you have an unhealthy lifestyle and blame other people and situations for your state of health? Be honest in your self-assessment. If vibrant health is your goal, adopt the mindset and practices of this state.

Medical doctors mostly work with people on the right side of the scale. They usually deal with the symptoms rather than the cause of a patient’s illness.

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The doctors will make suggestions, such as lose weight, stop smoking, exercise, and eat a better diet.

## Wellness Scale

### Wellness – You in Control

<b>Vibrant Health</b> <b>+3</b>	<b>Great</b> <b>+2</b>
You have a high energy level and a positive outlook. You are productive and motivated. You successfully manage your stress. You eat a healthful diet and exercise regularly and vigorously. <b>You take responsibility for your health.</b>	You understand your own body, do not smoke, and are developing a plan for diet, exercise, and stress management. <b>You are taking increasing responsibility for your health.</b>

## Wellness Scale

### Wellness – You in Control (continued)

<b>Pretty Good</b>	<b>Barely OK</b>
<b>+1</b>	<b>0</b>
You are becoming aware of the importance of diet, exercise, and stress management. <b>You are starting to learn about health.</b>	You regularly experience headaches, backaches, stomach upset, colds, and fatigue. You tolerate a certain level of illness and accept distress as inevitable. You equate health with the mere absence of sickness. You rely on over the counter medications and obtain health information from advertisements. <b>You take little responsibility for your health.</b>

People in the categories -1 to -4 follow little of this counsel. Many prefer taking a prescription drug to adopting healthier habits. They want the doctor to make the pain go away. It doesn't matter if it's a headache or heart disease. "Fix it, Doc," is the prevailing attitude. This is a normal attitude in our society where we want instant results and easy solutions. We're also taught to hold others responsible for our health and a variety of societal problems. **Taking responsibility for your health and life is the key to reaching a high level of wellness.**

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To demonstrate the mindsets for the various states of health, think of your family, friends and associates to see if their health problems match their mindset. You won't find any +3 mindsets with -3 problems or the reverse. You must establish your mindset at +1 before you can start your trip to optimal wellness. You have the power and privilege to take charge of your health. Once enjoying vibrant health, you'll seek out, absorb and apply health information willingly and gratefully.





## 6.

### **Positive Feedback**

Motivation is more than talk. You can motivate people to do things, but it loses its effect without some positive feedback. A coach may be able to motivate an athlete to a higher level of performance, but if that athlete still fails, then the motivation is lost.

I try to motivate people to practice lifestyles conducive to better health, so I throw in some positive feedback so they can feel the results. I also ask you to take a step, if you will, toward a more healthful life and I'll guarantee positive results.

Here's the deal. If you will change your eating habits and start to move your body (exercise), I'll guarantee these results:

- 1. Less illness and disease**
- 2. Ability to maintain a proper body weight**
- 3. Increased performance (energy, vitality, well-being)**

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That's a pretty good deal. Let's do it for a month and see what happens. If you stick with it, some positive feedback will occur.

### **IMPROVED PERFORMANCE**

Here's how it's happened with my students over the years. The first noticeable feedback came in "improved performance" and it takes on a variety of subtle responses:

"I sleep better," "I'm not as tired in the afternoon," "I concentrate better," "My swimming times improved," "I don't get headaches anymore," "I don't get as tired walking the golf course."

I could list a hundred more, but you get the idea. We each notice varying positive changes. These are subtle body awareness feelings, but they're great motivators to keep you going.

## **WEIGHT CONTROL**

Controlling weight is usually the next noticeable change. Some typical responses are “My dress size dropped,” “My belt’s in a notch more,” or “My clothes aren’t as tight.” These changes can actually occur without actual weight being lost. Once you start eating better and exercising, you lose some fat and gain some muscle. Your weight may not change much, but your measurements and body composition change for the better. Gradually, the body does shed pounds as you develop improved lifestyle habits.

## **PREVENTION OF DISEASE**

Prevention of disease has a more subtle feedback. You don’t see or feel disease as you do with energy and weight. The change will come during a physical exam. Markers for disease such as blood cholesterol, triglycerides, blood sugar, blood pressure, etc. will improve. Your doctor will be surprised at the changes you have made in your lifestyles.

Within a short time you will be amazed by the control you have over your health destiny; if you stay with a healthy mindset, your body awareness will keep you motivated.



## 7.

### **Use Your Intuitive Wisdom**

In my experience teaching nutrition and fitness, I have discovered that people have an “intuitive wisdom” about what’s good or bad for their health. For example, a student of mine, an elementary teacher, tested my theory with her students. She took two groups of food and placed them on a table in front of her class. On one side, she placed fresh fruit, whole grains, and vegetables; on the other, she put soft drinks, candy, and sweet rolls. As the students looked on she asked, “On which side of the table are the foods that will make you strong and healthy?” Almost without exception, the children selected the healthier foods on the left. Why? Well, it wasn’t because they knew why. Surely they could not list all the nutritional benefits of each food.

It's because of intuitive wisdom, which we all have, especially when there are obvious choices. Here's an example; select the more healthful choice from each of the following:

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1. Orange juice or cola drink
2. Spare ribs or fish
3. Oatmeal or frosted flakes
4. Brown rice or white rice

The answers are orange juice, fish, oatmeal, and brown rice. I'm sure you got them all correct; however, if I asked you **WHY** each one is the best choice, you may have difficulty explaining. It's your intuitive wisdom at work. The more healthful food choice just seems right; but you are not sure why. You made the better selection here, but in reality, you may select the other food when choosing what you actually eat. Why? Learned behavior. Use your intuitive wisdom when choosing lifestyle habits, regardless if it is nutritional decisions, exercise, or other decisions that affect your health. We all intuitively know what's best for us.

Oh, by the way, the teacher was kind enough to let her students have all the food on the table: she had a lot of fruits and vegetables to take home.

## 8.

### **It is All Learned Behavior**

The knee-jerk reaction of most people to suggestions that they change the way they eat is usually one of strong resistance. To suggest that you should eat less red meat, for example (you should), seems almost impossible, especially if you have been eating ham and eggs and steaks for many years.

Try to think of it this way: every eating habit you have, your likes as well as your dislikes, is learned behavior. Someone introduced you to every food you eat. That someone was a parent, peer, or very likely, an advertisement! Reflect on this for a moment. You didn't come into this world with a predetermined craving for a hamburger! You developed the habit to eat and enjoy hamburgers, so, if we can learn to eat **unhealthful**, then we can learn to eat **healthful** again. For most of us this will be a gradual change, a little less meat over a period of time, smaller portions, less frequency, substitute fish or chicken, etc. You get the picture.

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I like to use milk as a good example of how we can change our eating habits. It's pretty common knowledge that if you're going to drink milk on a regular basis, your most healthful choice is nonfat milk. Whole milk has too much saturated fat and calories. But there's a real problem with this: nonfat milk tastes like water! That's a strong reason not to switch! Now, before you agree, think of this.

We all drank whole milk at first. We were either breast-fed or on a formula, and probably went to whole milk as a toddler (all children up to two years of age should be on whole milk but not necessarily cow's milk). The question is: How did all the nonfat milk drinkers make the switch?

For most, they probably started with low-fat milk or mixed whole with low-fat. (Low-fat isn't as low as you think. **Whole milk is 50% fat, low-fat is about 34% fat of calories.**) Somewhere along the way, they probably moved lower to 2% milk and then finally to nonfat.

But, here is the kicker. Ask any nonfat milk drinker to describe the taste of whole milk and you'll get one of these answers every time: whole milk tastes greasy; rich; creamy; or thick. Every time that's the answer; remember, all of these people used to drink whole milk – now they can't stand it. That's learned behavior.

Regardless if it's whole-milk dairy products or fatty cuts of meat, when you start to move away from these foods, you will gradually lose your taste for fatty foods. That's a good move for your health, so remember, we can always relearn our eating habits no matter how unhealthy they are; it's worth the effort.

## 9.

### **Look Beyond Immediate Gratification**

I think that most people resist healthful dietary recommendations because there is no **negative** feedback to their present eating habits. Think about it. We ask people to choose a chicken sandwich instead of a double cheeseburger to avoid too much saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories, which contribute to cardiovascular disease. So what happens? They eat the cheeseburger. Do they get sick, throw up, and have a heart attack? Not on your life (no pun intended). In fact, just the opposite happens. It tastes good, they feel good, and they're satisfied. That's **positive feedback**, folks, not negative!

When do they change? You guessed it. After a crisis, such as a heart attack. Now that's **negative feedback**! Unfortunately, about six out of ten people who have a heart attack die instantly, so only four are going to get a second chance.

I suppose we all react that way to some extent. Once we go through a life-and-death situation, we

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think a little more about prevention. I wish we would do it in our lifestyle habits, because it kills or disables millions of people every year.

People are shocked when someone close to them has a heart attack or cancer. “He seemed fine yesterday,” “She seemed so healthy,” or “I just can’t believe it.” Sound familiar?

“Seems healthy” to most people, means the person had no symptoms, no indication of disease. We all know someone who smokes or eats an unhealthful diet, yet has no symptoms or outward appearance of disease. Children eating junk food don’t go to the doctor the next week and find they have heart disease!

I want you to think long term. Chronic disease doesn’t just happen. Disease builds slowly and silently. The heart attack, osteoporosis, diabetes, cancer, etc. don’t just happen. The groundwork is laid slowly over many years until the disease manifests itself as a symptom.

Unfortunately, a heart attack may be your last symptom!

Remember this simple rule: **Symptoms of chronic disease take twenty to thirty years to manifest themselves.** Unfortunately, most of us wait for symptoms before we seek help – that may be too late.

Prevention starts much earlier with an awareness of the positive lifestyle habits that may **prevent** the symptoms of disease from ever occurring. Just because you do not have any outward symptoms doesn’t mean a disease is not developing.

Consider this scenario. A man goes to his doctor for a physical exam. He’s obese, smokes,

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doesn't exercise, and eats whatever he likes. His physical exam shows no symptoms of disease. His doctor would not say, "Jack, you appear to be disease free and healthy. Keep up the good work."

A good analogy is our automobile. We could probably drive it a long time without changing the oil, getting a regular tune-up, changing filters, transmission and other fluids. It would drive pretty much problem free for many miles without any noticeable symptoms to the contrary, but when they do occur, it can be costly (a valve job, overhaul, or a new transmission). Maybe even a new car! We all know that regular preventative maintenance will give us many trouble-free miles; so will preventative maintenance on your body! Think about it!

The medical profession takes over much like the mechanic does with your car; do you want to have someone operate on you and pay for the privilege?



## 10.

### It's All Genetic, or Is It?

A general misconception of health by many people is that all disease is genetic. “If I have genes for cancer, I’m going to get it, no matter what I do.” This is one of my favorites: “Look at all the old people who smoke, drink, and eat what they want and still live to be ninety.”

First of all, genetics is important, but rather than forecasting doomsday, what genes really do is either **predispose** you to disease or **protect** you, then your lifestyle habits take control. If you choose not to control your eating habits, exercise, smoking and so on, then your genes may well determine your fate. The opposite is also true. By practicing reasonable health habits you can **override** your genetic tendencies and not get a disease. Heart disease is a good example. Poor cholesterol readings (i.e. high LDLs and low HDLs) can increase your risk of this disease. Genetics plays a big role. Some people have genes that keep their cholesterol at an ideal level regardless of bad

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lifestyle habits. Some have a tendency toward very high cholesterol even when attempting to control it with diet and exercise. But the **majority** of the population can lower their cholesterol to healthful ratios through responsible diet and exercise modification.

You see, we can't control our genetics (at least not yet) but we can control our lifestyle and it's a healthful lifestyle that will have the greatest positive impact on your health. As a famous cancer researcher once said, "If it's all genetic (which it's not) then why are we wasting money on research and education on everything from heart disease to obesity?" The subtle lifestyle changes you choose to make will determine the quality of life you will enjoy.

Oh, yes, all those people you see that live to 100 while smoking, drinking, and eating what they want? Well, it's not very many, really, and they're an exception. The more important question is: "Where are most of their peers?"

Getting old is something you can't stop, at least in years. Most of us have the genes to live well into our nineties if we can delay morbidity to the end of our lives. We just have to invest in healthful habits now for years of good health in the future. The goal isn't to stay young (impossible), it's to age well.

## 11.

### Everything Causes Cancer – Keep It in Perspective

We all get frustrated when we hear the health risk of things we come into contact with on a daily basis. If it isn't pollution or occupational contamination, then it is some pesticide or chemical in our food that is going to harm us. This bombardment of negative information leads many to conclude that just about everything has a health risk, so why worry about it?

Well, let's put it in perspective: what should you worry about and what can you do?

Consider cancer. Most people fear it so much that they avoid regular medical checkups for fear the doctor might find some sort of cancer.

The truth: 80% or more of **all cancers** are associated with lifestyle factors we can easily control. Everything **doesn't** cause cancer. Approximately 35% of cancer deaths are attributed to diet and 30% are

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attributed to smoking. That means that you can reduce your risk of the majority of cancers by eating a healthful diet and avoiding tobacco. Again, to put it in perspective: pollution, radon, occupational exposure, chemicals, and x-rays combined are only estimated to cause less than 10% of cancer deaths!

You can see where to place your bet. Go with a healthful diet, avoid smoking, and exercise and you have the best odds going for you.

## 12.

### **So What If I Live Ten Years Longer?**

You have all seen news releases such as these:

- Obesity increases your risk of dying from heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.
- Smokers on average die ten years earlier than nonsmokers.
- People who eat more fruits and vegetables live longer than people who don't.

How do you react to these statements? Well, if your mindset is positive, you probably quit smoking, eat more fruits and vegetables, and try to lose some weight.

How about the rest of us? We rationalize, "Quit smoking just to live ten more years? Forget it, I see people in their eighties smoking and they're not dead." "Lose weight? Why? I take medication for my high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. I feel OK.

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Besides, I'm too busy for exercise or being concerned about what I eat."

This is a difficult attitude to change, but let me give it a shot. First, health isn't about living longer – it's about increasing the **quality** of years, not necessarily the **quantity** of years. The fact is, death isn't the worst thing that can happen to us. Most would probably rather die than be alive and endure a long disability.

Let me tell you a true story. A young woman developed terminal lung cancer at thirty-five years of age after smoking two packs of cigarettes a day for the last twenty years. Before she died, she said, "I never quit smoking when I was young because the fact that I might die ten years earlier, possibly at sixty-five instead of seventy-five years old, didn't seem to matter when I was in my twenties. They didn't tell me the ten years might occur in the **middle** of my life!" She died at thirty-eight years of age after a long battle with lung disease.

In reality, it's the suffering from disease that we all dread. Ask a senior citizen what they fear most from old age. It isn't dying. It's the inability to function independently. They want to be able to care for themselves, to do their shopping, take trips, socialize with family and friends. They don't want to end up in a care facility. Well, for that to happen, you have to maintain a healthful lifestyle that includes exercise and good nutrition. Then the odds will shift in your favor and the **quality** of your life will increase over many years.

My personal thought on living longer is similar to that of Dr. Christian Barnard, the famous heart

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surgeon who said, “I want to die young as late as possible.” Dr. Barnard still follows a very healthful diet and exercise program and at age seventy-eight, shows no signs of faltering. Remember, it’s not just about living longer, it’s about extending the quality of years and pushing morbidity to the end.



## 13.

### **Are There Any Fatalists Among Us?**

The dictionary describes fatalism as “The doctrine that all events are subject to fate.” In other words, you can’t do anything about it, so why worry. What happens happens. When it came to health, I was convinced that there were indeed people who were fatalists. It seems that no matter what I said or did in an attempt to get them to do something about their health, they would always come back with a smart answer such as, “Why should I exercise? I might get a heart attack!” Or “Why should I cut back on red meat? If it kills me, so be it. I enjoy it.”

Well, I’ve changed my thinking. People are not really fatalistic toward life; they just become so when it’s convenient in helping them to avoid change.

The event that convinced me was a heated discussion with a smoker, who, by all standards, fit the description of the consummate fatalist! He wouldn’t budge. He had a fatalistic answer for every point I tried to make. Verbal exhaustion led to my giving up. Then

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a strange thing happened. We got into his car to go to dinner and as we pulled away, he said, “Lock your door and put on your seat belt.” I thought I’d die right there. I was laughing so hard. So this was a fatalist? I don’t think so!

Think of all the little things you do to stay healthy, avoid accidents or death. You brush your teeth, wash your hands, use a seat belt, take your blood pressure pill, get a physical exam, but when it comes to the important things such as exercising, eating healthful foods, or curbing an unhealthful habit, we conveniently become fatalistic!

Well, change your mindset. There really are no fatalistic people. Be honest with yourself and evaluate your lifestyle habits to see where you can start to make some changes for the better. The conscious thought “I want to be healthy” is the most important first step.

## 14.

### **The Risk Ratio – Place Your Bets!**

I want you to consider your health status from a risk-ratio point of view; that is, what's going to affect you in a positive or negative way. Remember when we discussed genetics? You're born with some genetic tendencies that either increase or decrease your risk of disease. Now it depends on your lifestyle habits. The ones you choose will shift the odds in your favor or against you. It's similar to driving a car. Driving is one of the most dangerous risks we take on a daily basis and most of us accept that risk. Your odds of dying in a car accident are one in 7,000. For comparison, your odds of dying in a commercial plane crash are one in one million! If we were smart, we would reduce our risk by driving by the rules, wearing seat belts, and making sure our car is in good running order. If we did not, the odds would greatly increase our risk of injury or death. Here's the interesting thing. Our odds of dying from heart disease are one in 400, from cancer, one in 600, and from a stroke, one in 2,000. In other

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words, we have greater odds of dying from these three diseases than any other type of death! Using simple logic, you would assume we would spend more time on preventative health of our body than we do on our car!

I got this idea to teach nutrition from a risk-ratio point of view about twenty-five years ago from a student who happened to make his living as a professional gambler (yes, he actually made money!). After a lecture, he came to me and related how our discussion on the risk factors for heart disease made sense. To him, it seemed that anyone who had some of the risk factors greatly increased their odds of dying from heart disease or, in his words, “losing the game.” “A professional gambler would always make sure that the odds were in their favor,” he said.

The beautiful thing is that we can all make some simple lifestyle changes that will shift the odds in our favor. **Where are you going to place your bet?**

## 15.

### **Setting Priorities with Time**

How often have you said, “I don’t have the time,” “I’ve got to save some time,” or “Time flies.” Actually, we can’t do any of these things with time because time is ongoing. It doesn’t stop, wait, or fly.

The only thing we can do with time is to use it. Most of us would like to use our time for the things that are most important to us. This is not always the case. For instance, parents would like to have more leisure time with their families, but they may have to work long hours instead. Most of us want to make time for what is important to us, but this doesn’t always happen.

A good practice to develop is to periodically evaluate the priorities in your life. What’s most important to you? This could lead to small changes such as not working overtime or significant changes such as career moves, or moving to a more rural environment. Once you get a handle on these priorities,

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ask yourself this question: “How will I enjoy these priorities without my health?”

The following short story is one that a colleague of mine uses in his philosophy class. I think it reflects the concept of this chapter.

#### BEER PHILOSOPHY 101

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a very large empty glass jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. So, the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor picked up a box of sand and proceeded to pour it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He then asked the students once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous – YES! The professor then produced two cans of beer from under the table and proceeded to pour their contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed. “Now,” said the professor, as the

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laughter subsided, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things – your family, your partner, your friends, your health and your children – things that if everything else were lost and only they remained, your life would be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter – like your job, your house, and your car. The sand is everything else – “the small stuff.” If you put the sand into the jar first, there will be no room for the golf balls or pebbles. The same goes for your life. If you spend all of your time and energy on small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are really important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children and grandchildren. Maintain a healthful lifestyle and get medical check ups. Travel, play another round of golf, watch a sunset. There will always be time to go to work, to clean the house, to give a dinner party and to fix the garbage disposal. Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just “sand.” One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the beer represented. The professor smiled. “I’m very glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your

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life may seem, there is always room for  
a couple of beers!”

Author unknown

Unfortunately, many people don't list staying healthy as one of their life priorities because they feel fine **now**. However, it can all change very rapidly. When illness strikes, all of a sudden, health **is the major priority**. It's then that people start to think about their health and making lifestyle changes.

What type of health do you expect in the next ten, twenty, or thirty years? What changes can you make now that will improve your health for the future?

I want you to use your intuitive wisdom here, to start a disease-prevention lifestyle. Don't wait for a major illness to be your motivator. You may not be here to do anything about it! And remember, no one ever lay on his or her deathbed and said, "Gee, I wish that I had spent more time at the office."

## 16.

### **Death or Disability?**

I have faced many people who don't want to live more healthful lives. They rationalize by saying that they don't care if they die and death can happen at anytime. One may live healthily, but be killed in an accident. Why give up all life's joys just to live longer? These arguments sound logical, but the facts prove otherwise. Consider these thoughts:

Argument One: I don't care if I die of a heart attack. It's my time.

Answer: I agree that if you had a massive heart attack and died instantly, you wouldn't care. How could you? You'd be dead! Your loved ones would suffer greatly, though. Another tragic outcome to consider is disability, not death. The odds are ten times greater that you'll live disabled rather than die. 1,500,000 people have a heart attack each year. 500,000 die and 1,000,000 live, many with a disability. Almost 1,000,000 people have a stroke every year. They're left with symptoms such as slurred speech,

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dizziness, and numbness on one side. We all say, “I don’t want to end up in a convalescent home.” I wouldn’t either. They’re not a desirable place to end your life, but you can live healthily to help prevent it.

Argument Two: Why give up all life’s joys just to live longer?

Answer: Living longer is not the goal of a healthful lifestyle. It’s having more quality years and pushing morbidity to the end. Life’s greatest joys are beyond gratifying our basic needs. We all know that, deep down. Do you think vegetarians suffer because they don’t eat meat? Everyone makes choices. Remember when your mother made you brush your teeth and go to bed early? Such discipline and self-care helped you grow. The neglect of our well-being as adults can lead to diseases including emphysema, heart disease, and cancer. Think of all the changes you make in your life to be a better person, and put that same effort into living with robust health. I can’t promise you a longer life, but I guarantee you life of higher quality.

## 17.

### **Choose Your Weapon**

Because the majority of the population are nonsmokers, we can learn a simple lesson about health if we will apply our attitude toward smoking and the tobacco industry and redirect it to our eating habits. It's safe to assume that most of us who are nonsmokers are at a loss to understand how a person can smoke in light of the overwhelming evidence that smoking kills or disables most smokers. It is so easy to point a finger and say, "How stupid can you be? Do you know what you're doing to your body?" As true as these statements are, it is somewhat ironic that those of us who chastise smokers see nothing wrong with overindulging in foods that not only contribute to many diseases and disabilities but actually kill or disable MORE people than smoking! We have seen a great campaign against smoking, which has resulted in smokers almost being classified as second-class citizens. They are banned from smoking in public places, overtaxed, and generally made to feel stupid.

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On top of that, individuals and the government have filed and won large judgments against the tobacco industry for its contribution to the addiction, death, and disability of smokers.

Hold that thought for a moment. Now imagine applying that same logic toward unhealthful foods. Could we now sue McDonald's and other fast food companies for loading their products with saturated and trans fats, salt, and excess calories? The scientific evidence is there. Eating a diet that is loaded with these substances results in a society burdened with obesity, heart disease, cancer, and disability. I'm sure you're knee-jerk reaction would be, "Give me a break, what would life be like if I cannot eat and enjoy what I want? Life's too short!" Sound familiar? That sort of sums up a smoker's feelings as well. The idea of suing food manufactures for the unhealthful foods they promote and advertise is not far off the mark. Health and consumer groups have been pushing the government for stronger controls over the distribution of unhealthful foods for some time, especially in schools. It won't be long before some group files against a manufacturer. Start thinking of unhealthful foods in the same light that you think about smoking. In excess, the unhealthful foods we talk about in this book are just as deadly as smoking.

I am reminded of a discussion I had with a pediatrician about the eating habits that children learn from their parents. I asked him how he encouraged parents to teach their children healthful eating habits. His answer has always stayed with me because it went directly to the heart of the problem. He said, "YOU WOULDN'T BLOW SMOKE IN YOUR CHILD'S

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FACE, SO WHY WOULD YOU LET THEM EAT UNHEALTHFUL FOODS?”

\*In the summer of 2002, several individuals sued a well-known fast food company for contributing to their obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and related health problems. The lawsuit was dismissed as being without merit and in consideration of the plaintiffs’ responsibility for choosing what to eat. However, there is little doubt of the adverse effect of regularly eating most “fast food.”



## 18.

### **Is It Ever Too Late?**

Some of the healthiest people I know are recovering from heart disease. They got their second chance, though few do, and made the most of it! As I've said before, disease is a great motivator for changing one's lifestyle, but I don't recommend it. You see, the beautiful thing about the human body is how it can heal itself if you just give it some help. The people recovering from heart disease clean up their diet, start an exercise routine, quit smoking, lose some weight and, lo and behold, they are not only free of disease, they feel like a kid again!

I remember a student in my night class who had a heart attack at age fifty-three. Prior to the heart attack, he was sedentary and consumed a typical American diet that was high in saturated fat. He ate little or no fruits and vegetables, no whole grains, and a lot of processed foods. That's why he was in my class! He came by two years later and was trim and athletic looking. He said that he had totally changed

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his lifestyle. I asked him how things were going, and he said that he had recently met with his cardiologist, who said that his heart was so strong that, when he died, they would have to cut it out and beat it to death with a baseball bat.

Remember, you can actually move your physiological age forward (**poor lifestyle**) or backward (**healthful lifestyle**). It's really not too late to get the benefits of a healthful lifestyle. Just don't wait for a serious physical illness to motivate you.

## 19.

### **Our Obsession with the Magic Bullet**

Here we are in the twenty-first century, well into the computer age. Potentially, we have everything within our grasp with the touch of a button, but something is missing. We expect instant results with little effort. That may be fine if you want to get the latest stock quotes on your computer, change your CD disk from the bathroom, or call a client while driving to work, but it isn't going to happen with your health. To hear people talk, you would think that medical science has a magic bullet for everything. Why go to all the trouble and inconvenience of following a healthful lifestyle when you can just take a pill? Got high cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure? You name it, there's a pill or a supplement that will make it all go away. Not true! From serious heart disease to backaches and stiff joints, the cause is lifestyle. More specifically, what you choose to eat or not eat and your awareness of the importance of movement (exercise) will have the greatest impact in determining what

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diseases you will contract, the amount of energy and vitality you have, and your ability to control your weight.

Before you take anything, be it an over-the-counter medication or a prescription drug, ask yourself:

1. Does my body require this?
2. Could I do anything to prevent taking this?

The answer to the first question is probably NO and the answer to the second question is most definitely YES.

Take aspirin, for example. Millions of people take aspirin on a regular basis for headache. Question: Does the body require aspirin? Answer: No. Question: Why do I take it? Answer: It takes the pain away. Question: What is causing my headaches?

Some possible causes:

1. Specific food allergy
2. Not enough sleep
3. Lack of exercise
4. Too much stress
5. Poor diet
6. Dehydration
7. Alcohol

There are other medical causes as well, but the point is...headaches are not caused by a deficiency in aspirin! Find out the **cause** of your health problems and address them. See what lifestyle changes you can make to alleviate the problem.

\* If you have heart disease or have had a heart attack, talk to your doctor about the benefits of regularly taking a small dosage of aspirin to prevent

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blood clots. For the rest of us, lifestyle changes should be the first option.



## 20.

### The Medicine Chest

As a society, we must move away from treating every symptom with a drug. Most of the health problems people experience on a daily basis can be eliminated by lifestyle changes. Medications prescribed for ailments ranging from simple aches and pains to heart disease are highly promoted in advertisements on television, in newspapers, in magazines, and on the Internet. I watch with sadness the expensive ads for prescription drugs peddled on television that make taking a simple drug the way to make your life better. Will your children not assume that if you take a drug to “feel better” they can, too? Unfortunately, our society promotes widespread drug use. The fact that it’s a legal or illegal drug is beside the point. **Why** do we take the drug?

Proper medication used on a **limited basis** does serve a useful purpose, but I’m concerned that doctors are becoming overwhelmed by public demand. “Fix it,

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Doc, I'm too busy to change my lifestyle" is a trend that is all too common today.

Go to your medicine cabinet right now and take every prescription drug and over-the-counter medicine you have and put them on the counter. Throw away all "outdated" medications. Which ones could you eliminate? Why do you take them? What can **I do** to eliminate taking them? Consult your doctor about your desire to take less medication and ask for their suggestions on what you can do to reach this goal. Don't be surprised if their answer is as simple as...lose some weight, exercise, eat healthful foods.

## 21.

### **The Nun's Story**

During my years of teaching, I occasionally had Catholic nuns enrolled in my class. This seemed to have an influence on my students because any time I or a student sneezed in class, in unison the nuns would say "God Bless You." One particular nun made an interesting observation during a class discussion of the various risk factors for heart disease. She suggested that risk factors might be one of God's ways of warning us of danger. For example, she said, if a person had high blood pressure, God might whisper in their ear "That's your first warning!"

I thought that was an excellent observation and it reminded me of a joke which I proceeded to tell the class. A man was sitting on the roof of his house during a flood, when a rescue boat came by and the captain said "Jump in." The man said "No, God will save me." The boat left and the flood waters continued to rise. A helicopter crewman dropped a ladder for the man. His response was the same, "No, God will save

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me.” Finally, the flooding waters rushed over the house’s roof and the man drowned. When the man reached heaven, he asked God “Why did you forsake me and not come to my rescue?” God replied, “Forsake you? I sent you a boat and a helicopter; were you not listening to me?”

In the best selling novel *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Morrie mentions a little bird on his shoulder who whispers to him. Might God be that bird who speaks to us when we think to ourselves about our health, life, and destiny?

## 22.

### **We Are Animals, Too!**

It always amazes me how animal lovers will do anything to keep their animals healthy and happy. Watch ads on TV for dog and cat food. They talk about the nutrient rich, vitamin packed, scientifically formulated foods to make your pet healthy and strong. Racehorses are fed special formulas to enhance their athletic performance. I have observed more than one shopper closely scrutinizing the labels of pet food for their nutrient value.

If I were to ask, “Why do you do this?” they would give me an amazed look and respond something like this: “It’s important that they get a balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals.” “Why?” I ask. “Why? Isn’t it obvious? They’re animals! They need a balanced diet to stay healthy.”

I couldn’t agree more. But, remember we’re animals, too. We need a balanced diet the same as other animals.

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Many of those same animal lovers think nothing of stuffing themselves with soft drinks, chips, pastries, french fries, candy, hamburgers, etc. I think we all know what would happen to their pets if they fed them the kinds of foods so many of us consume without any thought of the consequences.

We need nutrient rich foods to stay healthy and prevent disease just as do all other animals.

Let's at least treat ourselves as well as we do our pets, and keep the junk foods to a minimum.

## 23.

### **Are White Lies Ever Necessary?**

One lecture that I always remember was one I gave to a group of firemen. During our discussion of selecting low-fat foods, I mentioned that even in hot dogs you have a choice. Regular hot dogs contain about sixteen grams of fat. That's a lot, especially as they're so small. I suggested an alternative, which was a **Healthy Choice** brand that had only two grams of fat and a lot less artery-clogging saturated fat. Sounded pretty good until one of the fireman said, "How am I going to get my kid to eat them?" I suggested he just not tell his son that it was low in fat. The reason for this is that sometimes when we know what's in a food, especially if we don't like one of the ingredients, we decide we don't like it and, therefore, won't eat it! At that point, another fireman raised his hand and took my side. Here's his story.

While chaperoning a group of teenagers to the beach for a barbecue, they stopped at the market for food. Hot dogs were, of course, the main item on the

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menu, so they picked up about twenty packages. The surprise came when they started to open the packages of hot dogs. What a surprise! At least fifteen of the packages were low-fat. It being too late to return to the market, he quickly emptied the packages of “regular” hot dogs and handed them to the boys who were cooking. So far so good. Then he refilled the empty packages with the low-fat hot dogs and left them by the cook. As each package became empty, he transferred more low-fat hot dogs into the regular package. The evening went fine and everyone ended up eating two or three hot dogs. Had he told them they were low-fat hot dogs up front, he probably would have had a rebellion on his hands.

The point of this story is that sometimes we have a preconceived notion of how a food will taste. If we are used to foods with a lot of butter and someone says they are going to cook with olive oil, our first thought is that it won't taste as good. We prejudge without trying it first.

When I was coaching, I always encouraged my teams to eat healthful foods, but when we won a tournament, they got their choice. They usually would ask for cheeseburgers. I'd order because I was paying, but I'd also tell the waitress to eliminate the cheese. It was my little way of cutting back the fat. Did anyone notice? Not at all. They were too busy talking (which young people love to do) about their win to have bothered checking what was in their hamburger. In reality, the taste of hamburger and hot dogs is usually lost because it is smothered with toppings such as catsup, mayonnaise, tomatoes, onions, etc. I've taken that thought one step further and even suggested that

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most people don't care much about hot dogs or hamburgers. It is what else is in these foods that they like most.

Their first reaction is to challenge this concept, but when I suggest they try eating a hamburger plain without salt, spices, catsup, mayonnaise – nothing, just the meat, you would be surprised at the reactions. Not one found it satisfying.

If you are trying to get a spouse, child, or friend to eat better, I suggest you make slow changes without informing them before. If you serve your husband a baked potato and substitute butter with Take Control (a health soy substitute that tastes similar to butter) and use low-fat sour cream, **do not** tell them before. What if they ask? Then lie to them! This is one time lying is good. If not, he starts with the assumption that “This isn't going to taste good.”

Another example happened to me personally when I was put in charge of the popcorn machine at my wife's parents' 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I didn't mind making the popcorn, but I balked when the directions said to “Pour the 8 oz. sack of oil into the container with each bag of corn.” I, of course, read the label to see what kind of oil it was. It was a mixture of two oils, coconut oil and hydrogenated cottonseed. I knew that these two oils were loaded with saturated and trans fats. I immediately had visions of guests dropping dead from an acute heart attack on the spot (not very likely). How bad is the oil? If I wanted someone to have a heart attack, I would encourage them to consume these oils daily.

What did I do? I sent my nephew to the store for extra virgin olive oil. I dumped the original oil and

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substituted the olive oil, cutting the serving from 8 oz. to 4 oz (fewer calories). I never told the guests of the change and none of them asked. Again, it was my little contribution to their health. I was even able to slip in some of those low-fat hot dogs for the kids. Not one of them refused them or complained.

What we can learn from this is to keep an open mind when experimenting with ways to eat more healthful foods. Try small changes, not radical ones. Don't throw out the sour cream for non-fat yogurt. Just start by adding a little yogurt to the sour cream. You can do this with anything, but remember, if you're doing it for someone else who doesn't think as you do of health first...simply don't tell.

## 24.

### **How Old Are You?**

There are three types of age. First is your chronological age, or actual age. Next is your mental age and the last is your physiological age. For example, we all know someone who might be forty years old, looks sixty, and acts fifteen years old!

Of the three, the one that affects your health the most is your physiological age. That's the one you have the most control over. We're not talking vanity here. It's not about face-lifts and tummy tucks. It's about physiological health.

We can determine the physiological age of someone by tests such as VO<sub>2</sub> max uptake (oxygen utilization), strength, flexibility, body fat, balance, reaction time, bone density, and blood test. We might test a person who is sixty years old and find them to be thirty years old physiologically. On the other hand, we may find a thirty-year-old who is physiologically sixty years old!

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These tests can be expensive. You can somewhat estimate your general physiological age or health by two simple factors – diet and exercise. Regardless of your actual age, you can assume your physiological age is higher if you are sedentary and do not consciously think about eating right. If you think seriously about your eating and exercise, you're probably physiologically younger than your years.

Our society seems to be having a love affair with staying young. Most are looking in the wrong place for quick fixes, with everything from unneeded surgery, hormone supplements to useless and dangerous weight-loss aids. The important thing to remember is that if you don't have to make a commitment or change your lifestyle, it doesn't work. Nothing else known to science will delay aging and disease like a commitment to a healthful lifestyle.

For a reality check I encourage you to log on to the website [REALAGE.COM](http://REALAGE.COM). At this site you enter your age (chronological) and then fill out a questionnaire about your lifestyle habits. As you move through each segment it displays your real age (physiological) next to your actual age. If your lifestyle tends to be healthful your real age will appear on the screen as younger than your actual age. Too many unhealthful habits and your real age shows up older. There is some very good information on this site that will help motivate you to change your lifestyle habits. Give it a try. It's a real eye opener.

## 25.

### Use It or Lose It

Think of a sedentary lifestyle as a cast slowly engulfing your body. We all know what happens when we break an arm or a leg. After six weeks in a cast, it's apparent that one leg or arm is smaller than the other – that's called muscle atrophy. It doesn't happen to our entire body that rapidly, but years of sedentary living yield the same results. Muscles gradually lose strength and definition.

Bonnie Prudent, a famous fitness specialist of the '50s and '60s, always made a very important observation, "No Muscles, No Curves." Pretty simple stuff, but very important. **Loss of muscle ages you faster than anything.** That, in turn, affects balance, flexibility, and strength. We see it in **all senior citizens who are sedentary.** Muscle is also the most important factor in weight control because of its ability to burn calories.

Now don't start visualizing a sweat-drenched weight room with hard-core bodies pumping

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tremendous amounts of weight. If you're too sedentary, just do one thing...MOVE! Make it a point to do less sitting, less watching television, less on computers. Walk, swim, bike, anything to get you moving on your own. You'll be amazed at how you gradually get stronger and more energized. As you experience the positive feeling, you may decide to walk faster, jog, or do something physical as a daily routine. You may even find yourself doing resistance training such as lifting weights!

## 26.

### **The Aging Body**

Think about it. Your body was designed for movement. If you sit too long you get restless. If you sleep too much you get drowsy. It seems that the less you move, the more tired you become. Notice how the less you move, the more you yawn? Your body needs movement because it stimulates cellular development and increases oxygen to the cells of your body.

Without movement, your body would waste away and your energy would wane. It's subtle.

It sneaks up on you gradually over time. You seem to have less energy, which you compensate for by simply doing less! You avoid the stairs and opt for the elevator. You drive when you could easily walk.

A lot of negative physiological things happen when we don't move. Muscles atrophy, bones lose minerals, oxygen utilization drops, body fat accumulates, and we lose flexibility, balance, and blood cholesterol and sugar levels rise. It's like being in a body cast. Sounds like old age, doesn't it? It is.

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You may not be old chronologically but you could be physiologically. Medical science has known it for a long time. That's why they make you walk the halls after surgery. If they just left you lying in bed, you would not heal at all.

Think of all the "quick fixes" people fall prey to in hopes of appearing younger, when they already possess the most scientifically proven method for delaying aging – movement.

So pick up your fanny from the couch, set down your beer and potato chips, take a couple of deep breaths, and go for a walk! Let's break out of that imaginary cast!

## 27.

### **Think Movement**

Any movement is healthy. It accumulates. So when I say “think movement,” I mean all the time, not just when you consciously exercise.

At home, at work, while shopping – think movement.

In industrialized societies such as the United States, we think (consciously or unconsciously) that somehow the less effort we expend, the more energy we conserve. That may be true for machines, but for human beings, it’s exactly the opposite. We need to move or “**think\_movement**” to gain energy.

Let’s look at a couple of examples. During a two-hour lecture to my class, it is not uncommon to see students drop their eyelids, stretch, and yawn. Some even doze off now and then! I’m doing all the talking and moving around so I’m energized. They’re not. By not moving, they’re **losing energy**, not conserving it. When I was a young teacher, I thought I must be a very boring lecturer to cause this reaction in my students.

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Fortunately, I learned that wasn't the case. The body just can't create enough oxygen when you don't move. The body will make you move in your chair, stretch, yawn, anything to keep you awake. To prove this point, I routinely stop my lectures and ask the students to stand up, stretch, and take a couple of deep breaths. When they leave class, I remind them to be aware of how much more energy they have by the time they reach their cars.

So, now that we know movement energizes us, let's look at some funny things people do to avoid movement, but do so in the mistaken belief that it saves time and energy.

We can probably all relate to this situation: You're going to go to the shopping mall on Saturday afternoon. As soon as you pull in the parking lot, what's the first thing you do? You guessed it. Drive right up front to see if there's a close parking space. Of course, there isn't (you knew that), so you drive up and down the rows looking for one. Why? So you don't have to walk so far and can save time, as "you're in a hurry."

If you're a person who **thinks movement**, you would have pulled into the parking lot and taken the first space you saw available (there are plenty of them), then taken a short walk, energizing your body with oxygen. No stress over not finding a parking spot and, lo and behold, you enter the store earlier than you would have after driving around. That's good use of time. Remember, you can't *save* time.

One more: Watch this common habit in buildings. Everyone's waiting for the elevator. Never mind that the building has only two floors! They don't

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want to exert too much energy and besides, they're in a hurry. I wonder how fast you could get to the second floor by using that door with the sign that reads, "Stairway to Second Floor."

Think of all the opportunities you have to move your body and benefit from it. Walk more, drive less, use elevators less and stairs more. You'll find lots of easy ways to energize yourself and avoid stress along the way.



## 28.

### **Whom Do You See in the Mirror?**

If we compared two people of the same weight, height, and age, but one exercised and one was sedentary, would you see a difference? Of course. You would assume the sedentary one was the heavier. But why? Well, it's body composition. You see, a **pound of fat takes up more space than a pound of muscle!** Muscle is more dense and compact. When you put on ten pounds of fat weight, you fill up more space than if you gained ten pounds of muscle, so you look larger.

If you don't exercise, you're going to lose muscle, which can reduce your metabolism about 0.5% a year. Reduced metabolism means you're going to burn fewer calories. Because muscle burns 90% of all the calories we consume, we can't afford to lose muscle. With no calorie reduction, those excess calories are going to turn to fat and you're going to look heavier. Don't be surprised when your kids find those old college photos and say, "Gee, you were a lot trimmer then," yet you have gained only a little weight.

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The **loss** of muscle, coupled with the **gain** in fat, just makes you look fatter. Whom do you see in the mirror, someone fit or fat?

## 29.

### **Muscles Don't Get Fat**

Wouldn't it be great if you could find something that would increase your metabolism? It would be like turning up the thermostat on the furnace. We would just burn away all those excess calories and never put on excessive fat. Well, it's available to each and every one of us. We all had it in the beginning. Remember, when you were young and you could eat just about anything and not gain weight? It must be age, you might guess? It seems that most adult Americans are just a bit too hefty. Fact is, obesity is a major epidemic in this country. One-half of our population is overweight, and two in three adults are obese. What went wrong?

We all know that if you eat too much and lead a sedentary life, you're going to put on some pounds. On average, Americans gain about one pound of weight each year, but it's not the pounds you gain that's important...it's the **composition of those pounds**. Pounds of what?

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Here's what happens. Your body composition consists of fat and muscle. When you gain one pound of weight, you actually lose ½ pound of muscle and gain 1-½ pounds of fat. Your body weight on the scale changes by one pound, but your **body composition changes by two pounds in the wrong direction!** What happens over time is that you gain fat **and** lose muscle. This gradually lowers your metabolism (caloric burning) so if you maintain the same caloric intake, those extra calories will turn into fat.

Why does your metabolism drop? Muscle Loss! Remember this: **“Muscles burn 90% of all the calories you consume.”** If you lose muscle, your caloric burn decreases. Your choice is simple – you can either change your body composition by increasing your muscle mass or you can fall prey to ridiculous low-calorie diets in an effort to maintain your weight, but you'll continue to lose muscle.

Moderate calorie restriction will help with body fat loss, but **only** exercise, or more specially, stimulation of muscle, can increase muscle mass which, in turn, increases metabolism. Then you burn more calories.

The best way to increase muscle mass is to do strength training. Now I know **muscle mass** conjures up visions of Neanderthal hulks with massive biceps, but it's not that at all. We just want to change our body composition. A ½ pound **gain** in muscle and 1-½ pounds loss of fat equals a **1-pound change in body weight in the right direction!**

Remember, you must **stimulate** muscles for them to grow. Any exercise helps to do this, but resistive strength training does it faster and with more positive results.

## 30.

### **Exercise – The Youth Pill**

Putting on a few pounds of muscle not only increases your metabolism to help you lose weight, it might be one of the most important things you can do to slow the aging process.

If muscles are not stimulated, they waste away. This happens to everyone who is sedentary, but it happens much more rapidly as we approach our golden years. We have all seen the elderly with their unsure gait, stooped posture, weakness, and poor balance. We assume that it's just inevitable, just old age, but it isn't. It often happens too early and too rapidly.

It all goes back to strength. With a gradual loss of muscle, we lose strength, which in turn results in a loss of balance, reaction time, and flexibility. That may not seem all that bad early in life, but it can be the major cause of falls, injuries, and death among senior citizens.

Gerontologists have found that it's never too late to develop strength. Tests done with seniors in

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their nineties found as much as a 600% improvement in muscle strength in six weeks of light weight training!

What might we accomplish if we started earlier in life? I can think of no other exercise that offers so much in return for so little effort, than resistive strength training.

## 31.

### **Stress Can Be a Positive Thing**

If a sedentary individual were to start walking on a regular basis, some very important physiological changes would occur. First, they would notice that the distance they walk becomes less physically stressful. Being less stressful, they find that they can walk even faster with no physical stress! They would describe this as having more energy.

What's happening here? First and foremost, their body is processing oxygen more efficiently, which allows them to burn fat as a fuel. You wouldn't notice this, but at the beginning, they couldn't process oxygen very well so they were not burning a lot of fat. Their main fuel was glycogen (stored carbohydrates). For comparison, let's say they burn about 300 calories during the walk. At the beginning, maybe only 100 of these calories were fat. The rest was glycogen. Six weeks later, they may be burning 150 – 180 calories of fat! The cause of all this is the miraculous

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physiological changes that occur in the body to produce this energy and vitality.

There are many positive changes that occur in the body that allow us to do more work with less effort. I'll focus on just a few. Stressing the body (exercise) makes you breathe more oxygen into your lungs, which is fine except you have to get the O<sub>2</sub> to the working muscles. Your body adapts. As O<sub>2</sub> moves into the bloodstream, it is picked up by the hemoglobin in red blood cells, which will carry this O<sub>2</sub> to the working muscles. At first, there's a problem. There's more oxygen than the cells can carry. This is the start of the wonderful changes that occur. Your body continues to adapt. It makes more red blood cells, more hemoglobin, and more blood vessels. Conditioned muscles have a vast amount of circulation, similar to adding more freeways to accommodate more cars. As you continue to train, your lungs' vital capacity increases, allowing you to flood the circulatory systems with oxygen. This in turn causes your heart to pump more efficiently by increasing its stroke volume (pumps more blood with each beat). You even increase the amount of blood in your body. A well-trained endurance athlete has about one quart more blood volume than a sedentary person! This all carries over to daily life by allowing you to do less stressful tasks with little or no effort. Your heart loves it, too. At rest, your heart beats strongly with each beat sending large volumes of highly-oxygenated blood to all the cells of the body. Your resting heart rate goes down, yet you pump a greater volume of blood into your body with each beat. Your heart works more efficiently. When you watch a highly trained athlete in competition, think

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of these physiological changes and how far they have adapted their body by gradually stressing it. The body adapts to stress. Just do it gradually and progressively, and over time, you'll feel the results, too.

What if you stay sedentary? Well, nothing stays the same. If you choose not to exercise your body, then all of the physiological benefits that I have described will not occur and the body's condition will regress. If that's not rapid aging, then I don't know what is!



## 32.

### **Think Time When You Exercise**

Many people who exercise tend to think of exercise in terms of distance. I'm going to run five miles, swim one mile, bicycle ten miles. The problem with this approach is that you have to know the distance, which makes exercise too structured. If I suggest that you walk a mile, you'll probably go to a local high school and walk around the track four times.

A better way is to **think time**. If I suggest you walk for thirty minutes, you can do it anywhere you want. Walk through the neighborhood, the park, on the beach, even in the mall. Time serves two purposes. First, it's less structured; second, you may not be so peppy on certain days, so you can go slower or cut down the time.

Another advantage of time is the estimated calories you burn in your walk. I've said before, the calories are not important to you. They are the **measurement of energy used**, but it doesn't tell you what fuels you're using.

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Here is a simple rule: You burn about ten calories per minute of exercise. This isn't perfect, but it's close. Obviously, if you're larger or go faster, you burn a bit more; or if you are smaller or go slower, you burn less. But it's a pretty good rule of thumb.

If you exercise for thirty minutes, you burn about 300 calories. Just adjust for the variables mentioned. It doesn't matter what you choose – walk, bicycle, swim, etc. Just think time. If you did that for two weeks, some wonderful physiological changes would occur. You would notice that the thirty-minute walk, or whatever time length, seems pretty easy. You're not as tired, and you recover more quickly. You may notice you're walking faster. Congratulations! You're getting in good physical condition.

## 33.

### **How Hard Should I Exercise?**

How hard should you exercise? That's a relative question. It depends on how fit you are. Let's look at an example: Two women friends decide to walk up five flights of stairs rather than taking the elevator. One woman walks about four miles a day at a brisk pace; the other woman is sedentary. The very thought of exercise is repulsive to her.

To walk up five flights of stairs is rather easy for our walker. Their pulse rate and breathing is somewhat elevated, but in moments, it's back to normal. Our sedentary friend is in trouble. With stops at each level to catch her breath, she arrives on the fifth floor exhausted, breathing heavily, and sweating. She does not recover quickly and needs to sit and rest for awhile.

What happened? For our walker, it was not stressful at all. On a perceived stress level of 1 to 10, 10 being the most stressful, it was about a 3. Our sedentary friend rated it a 10 plus!

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For the sedentary friend it was an intense workout, similar to an athlete running a 1/4 mile. But there's more. Being out of shape, most of the calories burned were carbohydrate, **not fat** calories. Our walker burned a much higher percentages of fat calories.

When you exercise, think **intensity** and **duration**. As your condition improves, you will be able to increase your intensity. That's especially important for weight control, because increased intensity not only burns **more calories** but it burns more **fat calories**. Increased intensity also has an aftereffect on calorie expenditure. Once you stop exercising your body continues burning more calories for several hours. You don't even have to move. They're free calories!

When you start an exercise program, don't let the intensity be too high to complete the duration you set (e.g., a thirty-minute walk). Gradually, with no conscience thought, you will automatically increase your intensity as your body adapts physiologically.

At some point, you'll make a decision. For example, if your walking has increased from thirty minutes a day, three times a week to forty-five minutes, five times a week, you may notice that it's not physically stressful at all. You're getting in shape. You have two choices: increase the duration (time) or increase the intensity (speed/effort). I'd suggest a slight increase in intensity once you're in better condition. This works best and it helps stimulate fat metabolism. A good alternative is interval training. Walk fast for a minute or two then slower for a minute.

To stay healthy and to burn fat, you don't need extensive workouts. People who exercise for long

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periods of time are not using their time wisely. More is not better! To be healthy, thirty to forty-five minutes, four to five times a week, is all you need. Better to push harder for thirty minutes than to go for one hour. The choice is yours, but don't overdo it. Remember, athletes train mainly to win, not just for health, so they may push the limit on intensity and duration. You just want to be healthy, not win in the Olympics. It reminds me of a national sports clinic I spoke at with Dr. Jim Peterson, who is an authority on strength training. He said, and I paraphrase, "The only value of being able to lift 400-pounds is if you are unfortunate enough to have a 400-pound person fall on you." Simply put, do enough to stay healthy and fit and get on with your life!



## 34.

### **Look Healthy, Be Healthy**

When we think of an image of health, it usually looks like an athletic male or female. In our society, we associate being lean and athletically fit with health. We assume that people who match this image are healthy. Although that is generally true, it can be misleading. Fitness alone does not equal health.

For many people who exercise, being healthy is not their goal. Weight loss and **looking** healthy are more important than **being** healthy. Some even exercise so that they can eat more. They believe that as long as they look good, they can eat what they want. Unfortunately, those extra calories are not always healthy choices. They usually eat more fast foods and desserts. This is especially true of young athletes. Many athletes that I have worked with believe that they can eat anything they want as long as they work out. One football player said, "Coach, exercise just blows out the tubes and cleans everything inside my body." It is easy to fall for this exercise myth when

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you feel fit. You're headed for trouble if you use that as an excuse to eat anything you want.

Fitness does not always equal health or wellness. Fitness is defined as having a capacity for work, such as how much a person can lift or how far a person can run. Young athletes can grow lean and strong, as long as they eat enough calories and train hard. But what about their health? Are they setting themselves up for health problems later in life? Probably.

This myth was seen in the early 1970s when Jim Fixx wrote *The Book of Running* that contributed to the popularity of running among Americans. Jim Fixx fell victim to this myth. For example, in a breakfast interview with the London media, he ate eggs, bacon, and hash browns. The interviewer asked Jim about his diet and the effect it had on his health. Jim felt that as long as you run as he did, eighty miles a week, you could eat anything you want. Jim Fixx died of a massive heart attack a few weeks later.

Jim Fixx isn't an exception. Many are deceived and think that if they are fit, they can eat anything they want. Dan Reeves, the Denver Broncos' coach, is a poster boy for Zocor, a statin drug for high cholesterol. Coach Reeves had a heart attack. He said that he wished he had done some of the things he's doing now to take better care of himself, such as eating a healthful diet and exercising.

I don't mean to downgrade exercise. Exercising and eating a healthful diet are essential components of health. They enhance each other and contribute to total wellness. Just don't fall victim to the myth that fitness alone will make you healthy.

## 35.

### **A Walk in the Woods**

We see people all the time making resolutions to eat better, lose weight, get in shape, and so on. They start with true enthusiasm and determination only to get sidetracked along the way by pushing too hard, losing weight too fast, or succumbing to unhealthy meals. This common trait of wanting instant results leads to an “I quit attitude,” “I couldn’t stick with it so I’m a failure,” or “I guess I’m destined to be overweight, out of shape, and besides I like junk food.”

Let’s take a walk! Once you focus on your goal, set reasonable objectives and time frames. If you’re going for a walk in the woods, for example, you’re going to go from Point “A” to Point “B.” Along the way you may be sidetracked to look at a lake, a sunset, or some other point of interest but eventually you get back on the trail and in time you’ll be at Point “B.” Let’s use weight loss as an example. Your goal is to lose thirty pounds. Make five pounds your weight-loss objective for the month. You start your “walk”

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toward this objective by limiting your calorie intake and doing some walking. Everything goes smoothly for several days and then you go to a party and over eat and don't take your walk. Do you just quit and go back to your old habits? Forget it! It's no big deal. Just get back on the trail, so to speak, and eventually you'll get to where you're going. Veering off the trail (diet) now and then will not have an insurmountable effect on reaching your goal (weight loss) unless you stay off the trail! The whole point is: we're all human. Do the best you can and expect peaks and valleys during the trip. **Stay focused on the goal with no time limits.** You'll make it.

## 36.

### Your Fire Within

I use a fire as a simple way to explain how we use food as a fuel.

We all know that if we start with a large log we're going to have to use a lot of paper to get that log burning. We're also definitely going to need oxygen, so be sure the vents are open! All we need now is a catalyst. That's the match. If all things go right, the paper will probably burn very rapidly but if there's some kindling, it will keep the fire going. In time, the log will burn as long as oxygen is available.

Now the analogy. How does this relate to us? The log is the **fat we eat** or the **fat in our body**; the paper is the **carbohydrate** we eat; the kindling is the **protein** we eat; and the match, the **vitamins** (the catalyst). Now we add **oxygen**, which we all have if we're breathing!

When you burn these separately, you will notice it's difficult to get a log burning without a lot of oxygen. You may have to sit there and keep blowing

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on it just to keep it going. It's the same with fat you eat or have accumulated on your body. It takes a lot of oxygen to burn it. Paper burns much more rapidly because it takes less oxygen. The same is true of the carbohydrates you consume. They burn rapidly (even without O<sub>2</sub>), as they are the preferred energy source of your body. Kindling burns when paper runs out and somewhat the same thing happens in your body with protein. If there's not enough available carbohydrate in the cell, the body breaks down protein (usually muscle tissue) to be converted to carbohydrate. This happens during extensive exercise that demands a lot of energy. For most activity, protein is seldom used as an energy source. Fat and carbohydrates are the body's main fuels.

The last, and most important, factor is oxygen. To burn your body fuels, you need oxygen. The way you increase oxygen at the cellular level is to exercise!

Let's build two different fires in our body:

FIRE ONE

First, we eat a lot of high-fat foods (logs), then just a small amount of carbohydrate (paper), too much protein (kindling), and a poor oxygen supply (sedentary lifestyle). This fire will start all right, but when it finally goes out, you'll be left with body fat (log), which did not burn and your fire will produce very little energy (stamina).

FIRE TWO

You consume smaller amounts of fat (logs), a bit of protein (kindling), a lot of complex carbohydrates (paper), and a lot of oxygen (exercise). This is a roaring fire! (from

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increased metabolism.) This fire would be typical of an athlete. Due to the higher amount of carbohydrate and oxygen the fat is burned as a fuel and the amount of energy expended is optimized.

I could have told you to just exercise more and eat fewer fats and junk food to lose fat and feel better, but now you have a mental image of what happens.

Remember that without exercise, you have to consume a very-low-calorie diet so as not to gain body fat. This is not healthful because it limits the important nutrients you require for optimum health and well-being, which can lead to other health problems.

The point is this: When you notice your energy lagging or you're putting on a little weight, think of the fire within you. Are you building the right kind of fire?



37.

## **How Exercise Turns You Into a Fat Burner**

When I ask people who exercise what it does for weight loss, they always say that it burns calories. Exercise does indeed burn calories, but that's not the most important benefit. In fact, it's the least important.

The most important benefit of exercise with regard to weight loss is the change it causes in body composition. You already know that. More muscle (or not losing muscle) increases your metabolism. The other major benefit is that it **increases your VO<sub>2</sub> Max** (volume of O<sub>2</sub> uptake). Simply put, you're able to utilize more O<sub>2</sub> at the cellular level. That allows you to do more work. A comparison would be asking a sedentary person to walk or run a mile as fast as they can. They would be hard pressed to accomplish the task. They would huff and puff and finally give up. Why? They can breathe O<sub>2</sub> into their lungs OK. They just can't get it to the working muscles so they slow

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down or stop. It's similar to our fire we built in the last chapter. No O<sub>2</sub>, no fire, therefore, no fat burning!

So, what's this VO<sub>2</sub> got to do with weight loss? Plenty. Your muscles burn two fuels, carbohydrates and fats. Both these fuels burn best when O<sub>2</sub> is present but **fat only burns when O<sub>2</sub> is present.**

You may have heard these terms: aerobic (with O<sub>2</sub>) and anaerobic (without O<sub>2</sub>). Anaerobic exercises are usually intense maximum efforts such as running a 100-meter dash. For that short duration, you burn mostly carbohydrates because they can fuel your muscles for a very short duration **without O<sub>2</sub>**. If you were to continue to run for a mile or so, you would be exercising more aerobically (with O<sub>2</sub>). It would be less intense effort, but for a longer duration. Now you're increasing the burning of fat as well. Aerobic exercises are generally thought of as walking, jogging, bicycling, and swimming, something we can do at a lower intensity for longer duration. Aerobic exercises improve your cardiovascular fitness, which is measured by your VO<sub>2</sub> Max uptake. As your condition improves, your VO<sub>2</sub> Max improves and **the percentages of fat calories you burn increases.** You become more of a fat burner. Sedentary people don't burn fat as a fuel very well, so it's more difficult for them to lose body fat, but much easier to accumulate it.

## 38.

### **How Your Body Stores Calories**

All foods are composed of three major nutrients: fat, protein, and carbohydrates. Each serves a major function. Carbohydrate is the body's main energy source. In fact, the brain and nervous system can **only** use carbohydrate! Protein's main function is growth and maintenance, building tissue (muscle), blood cells, immune system, etc. Fats are also used for energy. The stored fat in the body is a reserve that is almost unlimited. Fats also play a role in many metabolic activities as well.

Of the three, carbohydrates can be stored in limited amounts in the muscles as glycogen.

A lesser amount is stored in the liver as glycogen and a small amount flows in the blood as glucose to maintain blood sugar levels.

Fat is also stored in the body, a fact that is all too apparent to most of us! It is used as a fuel for low-intensity activities as long as some oxygen is available. Fat can be stored in almost unlimited amounts. Excess

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fat may supply you with extra energy if you get stranded for weeks on a deserted island, but it's not much use on a daily basis!

Protein is not stored in the body as are fat and carbohydrates, but small amounts are available in the liver as amino acids to be combined with other amino acids. Protein is not a main energy source.

In a healthful diet, you should consume about 55 – 70% of your calories as carbohydrates (the more active you are, the higher the percentage), 10 – 20% should be protein, and 15 – 25% fat.

All three nutrients can result in fat storage if you consume excessive amount of calories from any or all three sources. Excess protein and carbohydrate simply convert to fat and are stored in the fat cells. If, on the other hand, you consume inadequate amounts of carbohydrates, your body will convert protein (from diet or muscle tissue) to glucose (carbohydrate) to meet the body's energy requirements. This can result in muscle loss and less energy. Better to supply the body with the fuel it favors – carbohydrates. This is called "protein sparing." If you consume adequate amounts of carbohydrates, you "spare" protein from being converted to glucose (carbohydrate).

In selecting foods in general, remember this simple rule: **Carbohydrates are only found in plant food.** Technically, there is some carbohydrate in milk products and shellfish, but "think plants" when you want carbohydrates. Animal meats, on the other hand, **do not supply carbohydrates.** They contain only fat and protein. The misconceived young athletes who think protein gives you energy have definitely been misled by promoters of high-protein diets.

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Your best fuel is carbohydrate. But, like gasoline, you can select high-octane fuel or low-octane. Whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables are quality fuels. Consuming them in the least processed form supplies the best energy. The problem with today's diet is that we select too much of our carbohydrate from highly processed carbohydrate foods made from white flour, such as white bread, pastry, cookies, crackers, and soft drinks, and candy made with added sweeteners such as high fructose corn syrup. These are not the best fuels for the body, they are lacking in optimal nutrition and are usually loaded with saturated and trans fat, and of course, a lot of calories. Even the popular "fat free" desserts contain white flour, sugar, and high fructose corn syrup, which make them high in calories and low in nutrients as well. In the past thirty years, overindulgence in highly-processed foods is probably the single most important change in the American diet. This practice, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle, is one of the major reasons for the increase in obesity in this country.

As you can see, any food or food combination can be converted to fat and stored as body fat. No single food, be it carbohydrate, fat, or protein, is a fattening food unless you consume too many calories.



## 39.

### **Losing Weight for the Right Reasons**

I look at weight loss from a health standpoint only. If your weight is affecting your health, then it's important to readjust your lifestyle to prevent any problems. Excessive weight, or obesity, contributes to cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes, cancer, and many other ailments that are not so life threatening, but greatly affect your well-being. Joint problems, edema, digestive problems, and fatigue are just a few examples. Obese and overweight conditions are epidemic in the United States, and from all indications, the problem will get worse before it gets better.

Fortunately or unfortunately, people usually lose weight for reasons besides health. Vanity usually is a motivator. That in itself is OK, for we all like to look our best. However, it's important that you don't do it for the wrong reasons. Health is a good reason and feeling good about yourself is legitimate as well.

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What is not good is losing weight because you feel less important as a person or a failure.

We live in a society that associates thinness with success and beauty. Hollywood, the fashion industry, and the media are largely responsible for this totally incorrect assumption.

This swings the pendulum to the other extreme where starlets and models strive for thinness. Some look like walking coat hangers with a dress! This also leads to anorexia, bulimia, and drug abuse. Neither extreme, obesity or excessive thinness, is a healthful goal.

What is ideal? Body composition might be a good place to start. What you weigh on the scale is not as important. It's your composition of muscle mass and fat mass. You can test for body composition using hydrostatic weighing or calipers for measuring skin folds, which then estimate the amount of fat you're carrying. Usually 12 – 15% body fat for men, and 17 – 22% for females puts you at a relatively healthy body fat level.

Another simple measurement is what is called body mass index. This, also, is fairly accurate. Athletes and fitness buffs are all familiar with these tests. I know I'm around a fitness nut when they tell me, with pride, they have only 8% body fat, at least this week. So? Are they healthier, more fit? Maybe, maybe not.

After forty years in the profession, I've come up with my own method of determining body fat. Rather than pigeon-hole people into categories based on body fat measurements, indexes and life insurance tables, I simply say this: Stand in front of a full-length mirror, all alone. Take off all your clothes and observe

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yourself in the mirror from the front, side, and back. Be very objective here. Are you pleased with what you see? Don't be overly critical, just be honest with yourself. You're all alone here. **Do not** think about how other people might perceive you! Only what you think about yourself is important. If we all tried to live up to other people's expectation of what we should be, we would be very miserable indeed.

If you're comfortable with what you see, you've had a complete medical exam, and your health is good, don't worry about a little excess weight. If, on the other hand, you feel you could be in better shape and should lose some weight, fine. You're making the choice, no one else. This puts you in control for your own reasons, not someone else's. That's very important because losing weight or getting fit takes a commitment to a lifestyle change. When it's your choice alone, you're much more motivated and more likely to succeed.

I find that people who criticize how other people look, usually lack self-confidence and feel better about themselves if they can find fault in others. Visual appearance has always been a great target! Who you are – your humor, wit, love and compassion – comes from within, not from your outward appearance. No matter how much weight you lose or how fit you become, I doubt that it will have a major impact on these characteristics. Remember, do it for yourself.



## 40.

### **Diet Books and Other Myths**

**All** experts on weight control know that the key to weight loss is to reduce your caloric intake and exercise more. That's it! And it works every time. The problem is that it puts the **responsibility** and the **cause** directly on the person trying to lose weight. We don't like to hear it's our problem, so we look elsewhere.

Welcome to diet books and quick weight-loss gimmicks! It's not your problem. It's someone else's. I was approached recently to promote two supplements on an infomercial to promote fat burning and to replace exercise. I declined. They don't work. The gist of the commercial is that you take these two supplements, eat anything you want, and don't exercise! Seems unbelievable, doesn't it? But the product is making millions of dollars. This company was the number-one-selling infomercial on television. The company was eventually sued and settled out of court. It sickens me to see healthy, fit athletes promoting useless supplements and fitness apparatus by inferring that

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they used these products to get where they are. Just plain lies to a gullible public!

Diet books focus on something other than your changing your lifestyle. Here are a few examples that are popular now. They say:

1. You're eating the wrong foods for your blood type.
2. Insulin is the cause. It turns all those sugars into fat.
3. Food combining. You're eating carbohydrates with protein. Naughty you!
4. Eat more protein – No sugar.
5. Eat all the meat and fat – cut out the carbohydrates.

What do the experts say? None of it is true. Those are not the causes of weight gain. But wait, what about all the people who went on these diets and lost weight?

The thing most diet books have in common is that **they are low calorie**. The author just doesn't say so. Any change in your eating habits, regardless of how bizarre the method, that causes you to consume fewer calories will result in weight loss. Let's look at how some of them work:

HIGH-PROTEIN DIETS – Basically you're allowed to eat all meats. Usually leancuts, along with a lot of vegetables. No high-carbohydrates foods. Pastries, sweets, starches, etc. are out. So are most fruits. High-protein diets are not healthful over the long haul. They work because you're eating fewer calories. Protein in excess is toxic to the body and overloads the kidneys. The body, in turn, has to

dilute the byproducts of protein metabolism, which in the early stage causes water loss. This water loss accounts for much of the weight you lose in the early part of the diet, not body fat. Next is your muscle tissue and you don't want to lose that!

CARBOHYDRATE RESTRICTION – The premise of this diet is that foods high in carbohydrates or “high glycemic foods” cause your body to increase insulin, which causes these carbohydrates to be stored as fat. Therefore, too much insulin makes you fat, not calories. There are some half-truths here; excessive intakes of refined carbohydrates can contribute to insulin resistance for some people. But it's **too much body fat** that makes you insulin resistant – not insulin. Most of these books cite studies done by Dr. Gerald Reaven, M.D., of Stanford University, who is an expert in the effects of diet on insulin level. According to Dr. Reaven these books draw the wrong conclusions from his studies. Simply put, Dr. Reaven says **insulin does not cause obesity**, too many calories and no exercise do.

FOOD COMBINING – The cause of your weight gain is poor food combining. Don't mix carbohydrates with protein, eat fruit alone, and so on. It's the combining of these foods that causes you to gain weight. The **only support** for this concept is an obscure book by Dr. Herbert Sheldon written in the early 1900s. The diet itself is not bad, it's just not too exciting. Actress Suzanne Somers promotes this diet.

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She was asked recently if she misses hamburgers as the bun (carbohydrates) and the hamburger (protein) are a no-no in food combining. She said that she simply eliminates the bun. The point here is that people assume then that mixing the meat and bun is the problem. It's not. Eliminating the bun eliminates the **calories** the bun contains. Following this diet is fine, but restrictive. No more pasta with meat, no pizza, no shrimp and rice, no lasagna, and of course, no hamburgers. HIGH FAT AND PROTEIN – This is probably the worst type of diet. You'll lose weight, but if you stay on it too long, you might just lose your life! This diet eliminates all carbohydrate foods with the exception of very-low-carbohydrate vegetables. Eat all the meat and fat you want. Carbohydrates are the body's main fuel. The body loves carbohydrate, especially the brain and central nervous system. When carbohydrates are not available, the body breaks down protein (dietary or muscle) and converts it to carbohydrate. On this diet, you force the body to use fat as a fuel, which is called ketosis. Ketosis also occurs in starvation. Breakfast on this diet may be eggs fried in butter, ham, and bacon. No toast or hash browns. The only difference between this diet and what most Americans eat is that it eliminates all the high-carbohydrate junk food people consume. After you go through the carbohydrate restrictive phase, you will be left with a low-calorie diet that's not heart healthy.

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On the plus side, all of these diets require you to restrict or eliminate the starchy carbohydrates: white flour products, pastry, pie, baked goods, cookies, chips, soft drinks, etc. That's fine because they're excessive in calories, trans fats, saturated fats, and sweeteners. I think anyone with a weight problem would be successful if that's all they did.

There are some good diet books out there.\* If the emphasis is on calorie restriction and exercise, you're probably on the right track. They will help you to identify lower-calorie foods and recipes and encourage you to reduce your intake of high-carbohydrate, "empty-calorie" foods. They will not restrict or eliminate any specific food group.

There is no success without effort and commitment on your part. There are no shortcuts.

Think about the lifestyle that got you where you are now, and be ready to make a lifestyle change for the better.

\*See "Suggested Readings."



## 41.

### Helpful Hints on Weight Loss

Before you start a weight-loss program, be sure of these things. First, you want to do it for yourself, not for someone else. Second, plan to make a lifestyle change. Obviously, your present lifestyle got you where you are now. Don't think short term such as "I'll diet for two months," or "I'd like to lose ten pounds for my wedding." This kind of thinking makes you susceptible to fad diets, weight loss pills, and other quick weight loss-gimmicks.

I usually suggest a goal of only one pound a week (very heavy people will lose a bit more). If that small amount seems too little, keep in mind, it's not a diet. It's a change in eating habits you will adapt to for life. Think of it this way. Let's say a person needs to lose forty-eight pounds. It may have taken four years or more to gain that weight. That averages out to be a gain of only **one pound a month**. They're going to lose it in twelve months. That's **four times as fast** as they gained it. Here's the important reason for losing

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weight slowly. When you lose weight too fast, you don't just lose body fat, you lose muscle tissue and water as well. If you lost six pounds in a week, it would not be all fat but maybe one pound of fat, three pounds of water, and two pounds of muscle. When you do it slowly and progressively, **it's all fat**, especially if you exercise.

Remember, exercise stimulates muscle growth, which elevates your metabolism and encourages calorie burning.

If you follow the guidelines for healthful eating described in this book, you will be on your way to an appropriate weight. Below are some thoughts to remember:

- 1.) **Food Portions** – Think small! This is the most important recommendation. We all like to eat out, but many of us select restaurants and fast-food outlets that serve large portions loaded with unhealthful fats, cholesterol, and **calories**. This trend may be the most important cause of the U.S. obesity epidemic next to a sedentary lifestyle. One of the best ways to cut calories is to **cut portions**. Ask for half orders, split meals, or take half home. This is a must for your weight-loss success.
- 2.) **Fats** – Because fat has over twice the calories gram for gram than protein or carbohydrates (nine to four), it's usually the biggest contributor to excess calories. **Be sure to make low-fat choices to cut calories**. For example,

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four ounces of turkey breast is lower in calories than four ounces of prime rib because it is lower in fat.

- 3.) **Fruits And Vegetables** – Most are low in calories. Fill up on them if you feel hungry.
- 4.) **Eat Slowly to Comfort Zone** – Give your brain a chance to find your comfort zone. If you eat too fast, you're more likely to overeat.
- 5.) **Enriched Processed Foods** – Starchy white flour products – cakes, pastry, cookies, chips, etc. are loaded with calories – cut back significantly in this area.
- 6.) **Meats** – Focus on fish, turkey, and chicken. They have fewer calories per ounce.
- 7.) **High Fiber** - Fiber fills you up. Fruits, vegetables, and legumes are good fiber sources, as are whole-grain breads and cereals. Choose those with high fiber content. Try and get 20 – 40 grams a day.
- 8.) **Dressing, Sauces, Oils, Etc.** – All are high fat/high calorie. Select olive oil most of the time, but limit the amount. Experiment with using as little as you can without losing the flavor. You'll be amazed at how little you need to satisfy your taste buds.
- 9.) **Eat Something You Like** – Sometimes a bite or small portion of something you

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want (cookies, cakes, etc.) is better than total abstinence psychologically, but don't eat more than that.

- 10.)** Check the selected readings at the end of this book that deal with weight loss.

## 42.

### **Visualization**

#### **THE 7 GRAM RULE**

When most people think of protein, they think of animal products such as meat or milk. As I've said before, plant foods are rich in protein as well, but it is difficult to "visualize" that in our mind. When we say "protein," most of us visualize a steak, not a slice of whole-grain bread or a bowl of bean soup. I frequently use visualization to help people "see" what is in food. For protein, I came up with what I call the "7 Gram Rule." It is not perfect, but it is a lot easier to remember than giving you a chart listing the grams of protein in all the common foods.

Here's how it works. First, we have to visualize what a gram looks like. What do you see when I ask you what 7 grams of protein looks like? What pops into your mind, what do you visualize? If your answer is nothing, you're not alone. That's everyone's answer unless you're a chemist or mathematician.

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Now let's add some visualization to that 7 grams of protein:

- 7 grams of protein = 1 ounce of meat  
(beef, chicken, fish,  
etc.)
- 7 grams of protein = ¼ cup of legumes  
(beans)
- 7 grams of protein = 1 cup of grain  
(wheat, rice, etc.)
- 7 grams of protein = 1 cup of steamed  
vegetables (broccoli,  
cauliflower, etc.)

Not perfect, but easy to remember. Now, when you order a ten-ounce oz. steak, you'll instantly know that it contains seventy grams of protein. All of a sudden, you "see" the protein. You can also see that this ten-ounce steak contains more protein than you probably require for a full day! Think about that. To equal an ounce of meat, you need to eat a bit larger serving of legumes, grains, and vegetables, but remember, they yield energy-producing carbohydrates, less fat, no saturated fat, and ounce for ounce, fewer calories along with the protein. Mix some beans with whole-grain rice and vegetables and you have a high-protein, high-energy meal.

### **VISUALIZING THE FAT**

Sure, we can "see" the fat when we look at butter or oil, but most of the time it is hidden. Take potato chips, for example. The label says it has ten grams of fat per ounce. Do you "see" the fat? Of

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course not. If I told you that potato chips had more fat calories than potatoes in the bag, would you agree then that they should be called fat chips? Hard to visualize, isn't it? When we suggest that people eat less fat, it is easy to cut back on the visual fat such as oils, butter, or margarine, but much more difficult with processed foods or whole foods such as dairy and meat.

Let's consider steak. If you selected a six-ounce sirloin steak (the leanest cut), and trimmed off the "visual" fat, you would "see" lean red meat and probably a lot of protein. Would you be shocked if I told you it is 41% fat? Can you see that fat? Of course not.

Let's visualize for a moment. That steak yields nineteen grams of fat (with the visual fat trimmed off). Let me help you see it. Here's the rule: **five grams of fat looks like one tsp. of fat, and equals forty-five calories.** So, our six-ounce steak, which looks lean, actually has almost four (4) tsp. of fat, which equals 171 calories (19 x 9 calories). One-half of those fat calories (81) are artery clogging saturated fat. Remember, this is a lean cut. Imagine what you get with spare ribs and prime rib! How about pork? Advertised as "the other white meat," trying to associate itself with turkey or chicken breast? Pork averages 52% fat calories, with bacon and sausage coming in at close to 100% fat.

### **READING LABELS**

Always read the nutritional labels of the food you buy. You can determine the percent of calories of

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each major nutrient by converting the grams to calories by using this simple formula:

one fat gram yields nine calories  
one protein gram yields four calories  
one carbohydrate gram yields four calories

This is most helpful in determining the amount of fat calories in processed food.

Let's look at an example:

**Small bag of potato chips**

Serving size – 1 oz.; Calories per serving 158; servings per bag – 7 oz.

Fat.....	10 grams	X 9 =	90 calories
Protein .....	2 grams	X 4 =	8 calories
Carbohydrates.....	15 grams	X 4 =	<u>60</u> calories
	Total:		158 calories

For most people, this label is meaningless. But when you do the conversion, you can see that 90 of the 158 calories are fat calories. That's 57% fat, which is usually hydrogenated fat. A point to remember is that most people can easily eat a 7 oz. bag as a snack. That's 70 grams of unhealthy oil and 1106 empty calories in one sitting!

Fat calories compound easily because there are two and one-half times the calories in a gram of fat

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compared to protein and carbohydrate (9 calories vs. 4 calories).

Watch out for products that say 70, 80, or 90% fat free. Do the numbers as I suggest, and you will usually find them to be higher in fat. They get away with this because it is 90% fat free by **weight**, not **calories**. Food, just like you and me, contains a lot of water, which yields no calories!

Here's a turkey roll labeled 90% fat free:

**Water.....70 grams (not shown on label) 0 calories**

Fat.....	10 grams	X 9 =	90 calories
Protein .....	20 grams	X 4 =	<u>80</u> calories
	Total:		170 calories

This ends up at 53% fat calories. If you do it by weight and include the 70 grams of water as the manufacturer does, then it is 10 percent fat or 90% fat free. This is only one of the many tricks the food industry uses to deceive the public.

It is your choice on what or how much you are going to eat, but I hope this will help you think clearly about those choices.



43.

## **Good Carbohydrates Versus Bad Carbohydrates**

Many popular diet books still use carbohydrates as the “hook” to get their readers to believe that the cause of obesity is eating carbohydrates. It is carbohydrates that make us fat!

It’s not true. As I’ve said before, it’s simply eating too many calories and/or not enough exercise that accumulates fat on our body.

Carbohydrates are the preferred fuel for all our energy requirements, be it fueling the brain and nervous system or our muscles. It’s the main nutrient your body depends on for all cellular energy. Athletes consume predominantly high-carbohydrate diets; why aren’t they obese? I eat a predominantly carbohydrate diet and it doesn’t make me fat! In fact, most societies that depend on **natural carbohydrates** for their main food source tend to be thin rather than fat.

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The problem is understanding carbohydrates. Let's see if we can shed some light on carbohydrates so that you will be able to recognize the good from the bad.

All plant foods contain carbohydrates, while animal tissue contains no carbohydrates. Dairy products contain very little. Because plants are our main source of carbohydrates, let's focus on plant foods. If we derived our carbohydrate calories from natural sources, we would consume fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes for energy. In this book, I have encouraged you to do that not only because they supply energy, but because of the many other health benefits they provide. If they were our only source of energy producing carbohydrate, I doubt we would have a weight problem at all.

Welcome to the real world! The carbohydrates we consume too much of tend to be highly refined and processed carbohydrates. These are the ones made with **excessive** amounts of sweeteners such as sugar, honey, high fructose corn syrup, etc., as well as refined white flour products such as white bread, rolls, crackers, and rice. We have become a society that over-indulges in pastries, donuts, candy, and sodas. Is it any wonder people are overweight and diabetes and heart disease are rampant?

You get a double whammy with most of these products because they also contain a lot of saturated fat and/or hydrogenated trans fat and guess what? A lot of calories! Is it any wonder that a person loses weight by eliminating these refined carbohydrates? It's not the **carbohydrates** that make us fat, it's all the **calories** in the refined foods we eat.

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It is estimated that 60 – 75 million Americans are insulin resistant. That's not diabetes, but it's close. It means they have high blood levels of insulin, which can lead to problems that increase the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Consuming excessive amounts of refined carbohydrates contributes to insulin resistance by raising blood sugar too rapidly. By the way, it's not high insulin levels that contribute to obesity; it's **obesity** that makes us more likely to have high insulin levels... a good reason to lose some weight. A loss of even ten pounds can make you less insulin resistant.

Focus your carbohydrate choices on high-fiber foods such as whole grains, beans, fruits, and vegetables. Fiber slows the surge of blood sugar. Cut back on the junk foods previously mentioned. That simple change will help you lose or maintain weight and you will find your energy level more balanced throughout the day. A fun food such as a pastry or candy bar is O.K. once in awhile, but when these highly refined carbohydrates monopolize our eating habits, we're headed for trouble.



## 44.

### **Consume Mostly Clean Fuels**

I always told my students to consume mostly “clean fuels” and not overindulge in “dirty fuels.” This concept works especially well with highly motivated athletes. When you finish this book, you will know the difference between the two. But I’ll give you some examples as we go along.

By “clean fuels,” I mean any food that enhances your health and by “dirty fuels,” I mean any food that does not enhance health. Obviously, there are some gray areas because some foods may contain elements of both. It’s sort of like selecting gasoline and oil for your car. A high- performance car would run best on a premium fuel and a high-quality oil, which are “clean fuels.” You could, on the other hand, use a lower grade fuel and oil and get by for awhile. But, eventually your car will experience performance problems!

Let’s look at some examples. If you want something sweet, you may be deciding between a soft

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drink and orange juice. Ask yourself, “Which is the clean fuel?” The orange juice would, of course, be your better selection. It’s loaded with essential vitamins and minerals and naturally occurring carbohydrate for energy. It helps to optimize your health. The soft drink has no food value. It’s basically water, high fructose corn syrup, and flavoring...definitely a “dirty fuel.” You are faced with a choice. Which is the cleaner fuel, the cheeseburger or the grilled chicken sandwich? The cleaner fuel is the chicken sandwich. The cheeseburger is high in saturated fat, cholesterol, salt, and probably contains double the calories.

Try to select “clean fuels” as often as possible. Ask yourself “Does this food enhance my health?” By following this process, it will encourage you to make healthful selections. This, of course, is not a purist idea. You’re not going to always make “clean fuel” choices. So, if you feel you have been diligent in maintaining your good diet, don’t feel guilty if you have a soft drink or a cheeseburger once in awhile.

The important thing is that you’re “thinking healthily.” You’re focusing on the positive rather than on the negative. Negative health thoughts include, “But this tastes so good,” “This can’t be that bad,” “Oh, I just can’t resist the cheeseburger,” or “I deserve this.”

As I mentioned, this works very well with athletes. When I was coaching the wrestling team, I emphasized this concept repeatedly. It wasn’t long before they picked up the practice of consuming “clean fuel” most of the time. As I’d walk across campus, I would observe the wrestlers sitting on the grass with

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their friends and each would hold up a piece of fruit and say, “Clean fuel, Coach.”



## 45.

### **How About a Glass of Water?**

Besides our increased intake of refined carbohydrates in food, we seem to be almost obsessed with soft drinks. People aren't just drinking a soft drink now and then; it's become almost a ritual. I remember giving a lecture at a computer company and almost every desk had a soft drink on it. Not 16 ounces, not 32 ounces, but 64-ounce cups! They get "free" fill-ups when they go to McDonalds or Burger King for lunch. That's an unhealthful practice also carried over to the children. Parents almost pour it down their children's throat from the time they're infants. I think the last estimate was over 400 soft drinks a year per person. Now, I don't know about you, but I don't drink any, so who's drinking my 400 cans a year? Don't get me wrong, a soft drink now and then falls into my category of "fun foods," no nutrition, but it tastes good. So go ahead and have one now and then, but don't overindulge and try not to encourage your children to drink soft drinks. Why? Besides zero food

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value, the main sweetener is called high fructose corn syrup, which our body is not accustomed to. Fructose in high amounts may be very unhealthful. Fructose is a sugar that converts to triglycerides which is a fat that is itself a risk factor for heart disease. Too many processed foods that are high in refined sugar, especially high fructose corn syrup, are not healthful. Secondly, most soft drinks contain phosphoric acid. Phosphorus interferes with calcium, a process which can contribute to osteoporosis.

Drinking more pure water is what we need. Too many of us walk around dehydrated, which affects our energy and well-being. Besides not consuming enough clean water, we do a few things that increase dehydration. Most notably is consuming too much protein and not eating enough complex carbohydrates. Protein contributes to dehydration during the metabolism of protein as the body attempts to dilute the toxic byproducts of protein metabolism, thus reducing tissue hydration. Carbohydrates have just the opposite effect by hydrating your body. For each gram of carbohydrates you consume, your body tissues will retain about three grams of water. Other dehydrators are coffee and alcohol in excessive amounts.

These facts are well known by athletes and trainers, who emphasize these points in their training. You can't depend on thirst to let you know when you're dehydrated. By the time you're thirsty, YOU'RE ALREADY DEHYDRATED! It is best to drink water in small amounts throughout the day. Be sure to have water available at all times (e.g., car, office, golf cart or bag, etc.). Don't forget to slip a bottle of water in your child's backpack as well. Also do what athletes

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do: never pass a drinking fountain without taking a drink!



## 46.

### **The Protein Myth**

By following the guidelines in this book, you should be shifting more toward a plant-based diet that promotes health and prevents disease. This also reduces your intake of animal protein. The average American gets about 70% of their protein from animal sources. That dietary practice alone accounts for much of our higher disease state due to the high intake of saturated fat, cholesterol, animal protein, and calories.

I'm not suggesting that you eliminate animal protein. Surely, an occasional steak or hamburger will not be harmful. As I've said, fish is an excellent food, as are smaller servings of chicken and turkey. Shifting your dairy selections toward nonfat products is also a good choice.

There's no dispute among nutritional experts that rates of diseases of all types would plummet if people would reduce animal protein to no more than 20 – 30% of total protein. That may seem drastic to most

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people, until they understand how little food it takes to get all of your daily protein requirements.

Here's a good factor to remember: To determine your daily protein requirement, multiply your body weight by .36. If you weigh 154 pounds, you require 56 grams of protein a day. Most meats contain about 7 grams of protein per oz. (remember that). If you have a small hamburger patty (4 oz.), you consume 28 grams of protein. That's half your daily requirement!

You can easily see the problem. People aren't eating 4 oz. hamburgers. It's more likely a double cheese and bacon burger, which easily supplies about 80 grams of protein and so much fat and cholesterol that theoretically you should have a heart attack on the spot! But what the heck, you're macho, go for it. Just be sure it "drips all over the place" as the ad says.

Reality? It seems difficult to convince people that plant foods are good protein sources. Soy is a good example without the saturated fat. It is equal to steak in protein quality. Other good plant proteins are legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. They provide a lot health benefits including protein, and energy – all in one.

I'll tell you a secret from sports nutrition. That's exactly how smart athletes eat; the not so smart soon do so by trial and error.

They focus on the plant foods for energy because that's what the body requires. The protein is secondary because you require so little. Remember, a 154-pound individual requires only 56 grams of protein. A hard-training athlete of the same weight would only require about 30 grams more. Your body

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can only process about 25-30 grams (3-4 ounces) of protein at one meal. Any excess you consume is simply converted to body fat, so it's pointless to eat excessive amounts. You'll notice that obesity is now of epidemic proportions in the United States. I can assure you that our regular consumption of animal proteins and a sedentary lifestyle are major contributors. Did you ever see an obese vegetarian?

Let's just change our thinking. Every time you eat plant food, you're taking in proteins, and when you eat legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains, you're getting plenty of protein. Add to this small servings of lean meats, fish, and low-fat dairy products, and you're on your way to better health. Four ounces of animal protein a day are more than sufficient as long as you consume enough calories to meet your energy needs.



## 47.

### **The Myths of Heart Disease**

The common thought of most people is that a heart attack occurs late in life and is therefore related to age and genetics. When I was in college in the '50s, it was rare to hear of people younger than fifty years of age having heart disease. Today, it's commonplace.

The general thought most people have is that a heart attack occurs from a buildup of plaque in the artery walls. When this plaque closes off the artery, you have a heart attack! This does indeed happen, but surprising to most people, about **90% of heart attacks are caused by a blood clot**, which can cut off the blood supply. This can happen even if your arteries are not totally blocked. Some form of inflammation, an abscess in the artery, triggers the clot.

As I write this chapter, an article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reports on a study done in autopsies of 760 teen and adults age 15 – 34 who died as a result of an accident, homicide, or suicide. The results project that 2% of males age 15 – 19 years of age have **severe**

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arteriosclerosis (40% or more closure of the artery with plaque). They estimate about one in five men ages 30 – 34 may have an **advanced** case of clogged arteries. This creates a high risk of heart attack in the next 10 – 15 years for these young people.

Henry C. McGill, Jr., lead author of the report, states, “The tragic part is that they are young men at the peak of their careers, some of whom will drop dead.”

Having a heart attack isn’t always like the television show *E.R.*, where the paramedics dramatically rush you to the emergency ward and doctors frantically hit you with electrodes and inject clot-busting drugs and save your life. The truth is, at least 60% of those who die suddenly of a heart attack drop dead without any warning signs such as chest pain, numbness in left the arm, pain between the shoulder blades, etc. Nothing. No warning. Not as exciting as *E.R.*, the television show, is it?

So, what’s the solution? Quicker 911 connections? More ambulances? Quicker access to the emergency wards? More doctors?

I agree with McGill and other experts who say that grim outcome doesn’t have to happen. Simple lifestyle changes, including a modified (lower) fat diet and regular exercise, will lower your risk of heart disease.

So, as you read this book and consider changing your lifestyle, don’t make the mistake of not changing your eating and exercise habits just because you feel fine now. Heart disease is a silent killer, and only you can increase your odds of preventing it.

Prevention is always less traumatic than repair.

**48.**

**The Difference Between  
Dietary Cholesterol  
and Blood Cholesterol**

We always hear that cholesterol is what causes heart disease. That's partly true, but thanks to the marketing of "low cholesterol" or "cholesterol free" products, most people assume that using these products reduces their intake of cholesterol and, therefore, their blood cholesterol. Sounds logical, but it's not true!

What happens is that people confuse the dietary cholesterol with their blood levels of cholesterol. Your body manufactures its own cholesterol in the liver. It is essential to all cells of the body. The danger occurs when too much accumulates in the arteries. This occurs when too much cholesterol is produced by the body and/or when the body can't eliminate the excess.

You would assume that cutting back on dietary cholesterol would reduce the amount of blood

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cholesterol. This does occur, but it's secondary in importance.

The main cause of increased blood cholesterol is the dietary consumption of saturated fat.

Saturated fat stimulates the over production of cholesterol by the liver. The second stimulator is the intake of dietary "trans fats," which are fats produced by the hydrogenation of plant oils. These plant oils simply become more saturated and stimulate the over production of cholesterol by the liver as well.

How about dietary cholesterol? It simply adds to the load. Remember this simple rule: **"Dietary cholesterol is only found in animal products. There is no cholesterol in plant foods."** Another way to look at it is: "If it walks or flies and you eat it, then you consume cholesterol! If it came from the ground, it's cholesterol free." Because many of us associate cholesterol with eggs, I should clarify this point. First, only the yolk of the egg contains cholesterol, so feel free to eat egg sandwiches with egg whites, which happen to be about 90% protein. Athletes do this by just adding low fat mayonnaise and quality mustard. Be sure it's on whole grain bread. An average egg yolk contains about 200 milligrams of cholesterol, which is about the amount you would get in eight ounces of meat, such as two hamburger patties. Obviously a regular diet of egg yolks would not be in your best interest. Generally 3-4 egg yolks a week should be no problem unless you also consume a lot of red meat, which always contains cholesterol. The additional eggs may put you over the top. Other alternatives to consider are egg substitutes such as Eggbeaters, which are high in protein without the cholesterol. Also on the

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market are eggs with lower cholesterol, the result of better feed for the chickens. Eggs that contain omega 3 fats would be a good choice for real-egg lovers, but balance that with your other sources of food cholesterol.

High-fat animal foods are our main dietary source of saturated fat and cholesterol. So by reducing your intake of animal foods, you accomplish both goals: less saturated fat and cholesterol.

Trans fats are a little trickier. They are predominant in processed foods, so you will have to read nutritional labels. Unfortunately, the trans fat content of products is not listed, yet.

Until it is, look for the word “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” on the label. That’s trans fat!

You can see how we have been misled by the food industry. In our attempt to make heart healthy choices, we assume that “cholesterol free” means heart healthy. You have to stay ahead of this misleading advertising.

People avoid butter because it’s loaded with saturated fat, and instead buy “cholesterol free” stick margarines that are just as bad because of the hydrogenation (trans fats).

We will discuss specific recommendations later in the book. For now, focus on consuming fewer foods that contain saturated fat, hydrogenated fats (trans fats), and cholesterol.



## 49.

### Understanding Blood Cholesterol

There is no question that blood cholesterol levels have a genetic tendency. Just as some people can eat all they want and not gain weight, many of us have to struggle a little harder just to maintain our weight. Some people can eat all the wrong foods and still maintain a relatively normal cholesterol level. For most of us, this is not the case. If we consume a diet high in saturated fat, our blood cholesterol level rises.

The mistake people make is assuming that a normal cholesterol level means their risk of heart disease is minimal. Normal cholesterol levels usually are considered about 180 – 220 mgs. with the general recommendation for the population being 200 mgs. or less. What we forget is that blood cholesterol levels are only **one** risk factor. For heart disease – obesity, smoking, and hypertension are also major risk factors. Lifestyle changes in exercise, diet, stress control, and eliminating smoking have the most positive impact on these risk factors. You might be surprised to know that

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most heart attacks occur in people with **normal cholesterol levels**. That's probably because most heart attacks occur from a blood clot that can block off an already partially closed artery.

There's more to know about your cholesterol than your total cholesterol. From a total population point of view, if all people reduced their total cholesterol below 200 mgs., heart disease rates would decrease significantly. On an individual basis, there's more to it. As you probably know, you have two blood cholesterols. First is the "bad cholesterol," low density lipoprotein (LDL), which causes the buildup of plaque in the coronary arteries; and the "good cholesterol," high density lipoprotein (HDL), which acts sort of like a "Pac Man" and gobbles up all the excess LDL cholesterol and eliminates it through the bile. Obviously, a low LDL and a high HDL is what you want. When we look at all three, total cholesterol, HDL, and LDL, how do we determine our risk of heart disease? The answer is your cholesterol ratio. This is determined by dividing your total cholesterol by the HDL. This is always determined by the laboratory doing the test. Be sure to always ask for a copy of your blood tests, especially your serum lipid profile. It will show your risk ratio for heart disease. Usually a ratio of 3.5 or lower puts you in a "low risk" category.

If we take two people with the same total cholesterol, say 210 mgs., it doesn't say much until you look at their HDL. If one has an HDL of 60 mg., their ratio is 3.5 (210 divided by 60 = 3.5). If the other had a HDL of 25 mg., their ratio would be 8.4. That puts them at a very high risk for heart disease.

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Here's an interesting situation that actually occurred. About fifteen years ago (this was before doctors really understood cholesterol), a cardiologist had a female patient with a total cholesterol of 300 mg. Being alarmed at this high level, the doctor contacted Dr. William Castelli, who was head of the famous Framington heart study in Massachusetts. The cardiologist wanted to know what prescriptions to recommend. Dr. Castelli asked, what was her HDL? The cardiologist had not taken an HDL lipid test, but he ordered one and called Dr. Castelli back. Her HDL was 100 mg. (or 3.0 ratio), which is low risk. Dr. Castelli said she was fine. I should point out that HDLs of 100 mgs. are uncommon. Females tend to have higher HDLs than males due to the hormone estrogen, which keeps them at lower risk until menopause, at which time heart disease becomes the leading cause of death among women. At present the emphasis by the medical community is to focus on lowering the LDL cholesterol. This is important but recent research is shifting toward raising the HDL cholesterol, which may be even more beneficial in preventing heart disease. According to Antonio M. Gotto, cardiologist and dean of Weill Medical college of Cornell University in New York, "The last decade was the decade of LDL; the next one may well be the decade of HDL."

Recent guidelines recommend an HDL of at least 40mg/dl in men and 50mg/dl in women but the most benefit comes with an HDL over 60. Research shows that for every 1 unit increase in HDL, a person's risk of heart disease drops by as much as 3%. So a man

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with HDL of 45 has about a 15% lower chance of heart disease than a man with a score of 40.

Why elevated HDL offers so much protection is still uncertain but the most accepted theory is that HDL removes the bad cholesterol from the arteries and transports it back to the liver, which flushes it out of the body.

Your lifestyle greatly affects your risk of heart disease. Here are a few things that can raise your protective HDLs and lower your LDLs:

1. INTENSE AEROBIC EXERCISE:  
Increases HDL. {weight training has no benefit}
2. STOP SMOKING; Boosts HDL and overall heart health.
3. FATS; Emphasize monounsaturated fats such as olive and canola oil. Raises HDL and lowers LDL.
4. LOSE WEIGHT: modest boost in HDL and lowers LDL, but good for overall health.
5. MODEST ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION;  
1-3 drinks a day raises HDL.
6. CONSUME A DIET LOW IN SATURATED AND TRANS FATS;  
Lowers LDL.

More simply, eat a healthful diet and move your body. More positive changes than just better cholesterol numbers will occur.

## 50.

### **Beyond Cholesterol**

I would hope today that if you asked anyone “Why is it important to know your blood cholesterol?” most people would be able to answer that it is a predictor of how much plaque you have in your arteries, which is an indicator of heart disease. It seems to be so well known that people forget that obesity, high blood pressure, and smoking are equally important. If you have all four, you are at an extremely high risk level for heart disease. But, beyond that, is there more? Yes. There are a few new kids on the block.

These recent indicators of heart disease and heart attack are not yet mainstream in regular physical exams, but they should be. I suggest you be a bit more assertive on your next visit to the doctor, and ask for these tests. It is particularly important if you already have any of the widely-known risk factors for heart disease. These new risk factors are no more than indicators of lifestyle habits gone awry. In most cases,

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all of these risk factors will fade away, or at least be manageable, if you make a commitment to take control of your health.

## **INFLAMMATION AND HEART DISEASE**

I mentioned previously that heart attacks and strokes most commonly occur from a blood clot. Unstable plaques rupture and a clot forms that cuts off blood flow to the heart or brain. The cause of the rupture is some type of inflammation. In fact, atherosclerosis is believed to be an inflammatory disease that is somehow triggered by blood cholesterol, smoking, excess body fat, high blood pressure, low-level infections such as gum disease, or some other immune response. You see, some people can have severe blockage in their arteries, but the blockage (plaque) does not rupture. Conversely, a younger person might have only a small blockage in one artery, and it ruptures causing a heart attack.

Researchers have found a simple blood test to determine if a person is more susceptible to inflammation. The new test is called **High-Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein, or Simply HS-CRP**. This test, along with cholesterol and other blood lipid tests, might be a better way to predict who is likely to have a heart attack. In fact recent research suggests the HS-CRP Test may be a more important predictor of a heart attack than blood cholesterol.

One major factor that influences inflammation is obesity. Overweight and obese people are two (men)

and six (women) times more likely to have high HS-CRP levels. An increase of 10 – 20 lbs. can increase HS-CRP. Smoking increases the inflammatory process while exercise reduces it.

Beyond diet and exercise modification, there are drugs called statins that lower LDL cholesterol, and probably reduce inflammation. The use of aspirin also reduces blood clotting. If your doctor feels that you are at high risk, these drugs are useful. However, I urge you to modify your lifestyle first.

## **HOMOCYSTEINE TEST**

Homocysteine is an amino acid (protein) that accumulates in cells and spills over into the blood. High blood levels of homocysteine enhance plaque formation in arteries and increase the risk of heart disease. Interestingly, Dr. Kilmer McCully, M.D., presented this theory of heart disease back in the 1950s, when I was a college student. For some reason, his theory was dismissed by the scientific community then, but acknowledged in the late 90s as a leading indicator of heart disease.

I suspect the interests of pharmaceutical companies were more focused on drugs (profit), rather than nutrition (no profit). Homocysteine blood levels can be easily stabilized by diet or supplements that contain 400 micrograms of Folate along with Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> and B<sub>12</sub>. My recommendation of a daily multivitamin and mineral, along with a regular dietary intake of vegetables, beans, and whole grains, should stabilize blood homocysteine levels. There is a bit

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more to the story. Homocysteine occurs when the amino acid methionine converts to homocysteine, so a diet high in methionine contributes to high blood levels of homocysteine. Methionine is high in animal protein, and low in plant protein. Given that the American diet is overbalanced in animal proteins and low in plant proteins, that might account for higher levels of blood homocysteine. Ask for this test. If your blood level is high, consider cutting back on animal proteins and increasing foods high in folic acid, B<sub>6</sub> and B<sub>12</sub>. The additional benefit of adequate folic acid intake also applies to pregnant women. Deficiency of folic acid can lead to fetal growth failure and malformation, as well as neural tube defects, such as spina bifida. This is a good reason to eat your greens and take a multivitamin daily.

### **SYNDROME X (medically referred to as metabolic syndrome)**

Sounds like a futuristic movie, doesn't it? Syndrome X is a cluster of risk factors that are a major cause of heart disease. The main characteristic of Syndrome X is being insulin resistant; that is, having a high normal fasting blood glucose level, but not high enough to be diagnosed as Type II Diabetes. Dr. Gerald Reaven, M.D., in his excellent book *Syndrome X: Overcoming the Silent Killer That Can Give You a Heart Attack*, covers this metabolic syndrome in more detail. The cause of insulin resistance is partly genetic, but the main causes are obesity and fitness level. These are the two lifestyle changes that can make you less

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insulin resistant. A loss of even 10 – 15 lbs. lowers insulin resistance. For people with Syndrome X, a diet lower in carbohydrates (45% of total calories) and slightly more mono and polyunsaturates (30%) is suggested (see his book for details).

Below are seven signs of Syndrome X that Dr. Reavens lists in his book:

- |   | <u>SCORE</u> |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Fasting glucose level is greater than 110, or your glucose at two hours into a glucose tolerance test is greater than 140. | 3 pts.       |
| 2. Fasting triglyceride level is greater than 200.  | 3 pts.       |
| 3. Fasting HDL cholesterol level is lower than 35.  | 3 pts.       |
| 4. Blood pressure is greater than 145 over 90.  | 3 pts.       |
| 5. More than 15 lbs. Overweight   | 1 pts.       |
| 6. Family history of heart disease  | 1 pts.       |
| 7. Physically inactive in work and leisure  | ½ pt.        |

TOTAL \_\_\_\_

Your risk of heart attack triggered by Syndrome X is:

0 – 4 points	Low
5 – 8 points	Moderate
9 – 12 points	High
13 points or more	Very High

Your results when taking these new tests, along with traditional tests, can all be improved by the same

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lifestyle recommendations I have discussed in this book. I know it is tempting, and is unfortunately sometimes encouraged by doctors, to look to a simple drug to make the problem go away. If you really think of your alternative, I think you'll find a more healthful lifestyle gives you so much more. Do you really want to depend on medication that, at best, only maintains the status quo? Drugs have their place, but they should only be used as a last resort.

## 51.

### **Beyond Disease**

The general diet and exercise recommendations found in this book will contribute significantly in reducing your risk of heart disease, cancer, Type II Diabetes, and possibly other diseases. Beyond disease, there are other benefits of a healthful diet and exercise regime. Besides the risk factors of disease, a large portion of the population experiences a variety of “not well” symptoms that prevent them from experiencing optimum health. I would suspect that a doctor of general medicine spends more time with patients that experience “not well” symptoms, than with serious illness. What are “not well” symptoms? Here’s a partial list:

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- Allergies
- Anxiety
- Arthritis
- Back Pain
- Cold/Flu
- Poor Complexion
- Constipation
- Edema
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Insomnia
- Joint Pain
- Muscle aches
- Overweight/Obesity
- Puffy Eye
- Sinus
- Stiffness
- Stress

I'm sure you recognize a few of your "not well" symptoms. I'm not suggesting that every symptom will disappear with a change of lifestyle, but it is definitely the first step before you revert to prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, or questionable supplements.

The typical American diet is simply too toxic for the body's natural healing system to work at an optimum level. Your liver, lungs, kidneys, and digestive tract work full time in an attempt to maintain health, but when we overload our systems with too many toxic foods, then inflammation and infection take over. The change in diet and exercise that I recommend reduces that overload, while increasing the foods that science has shown to enhance optimum health. By making these adjustments, you will notice changes in the "not well" category. Headaches, colds, fatigue, joint pains, etc. will become much less frequent and your energy level will increase.

If more of us would first develop a more healthful lifestyle, then the minor health problems we experience would be minimized, and if or when more serious problems occur, our bodies will be better able to cope with the stress.

**52.**

## **The Health Triangle for Optimum Performance**

The Health Triangle is a concept that was introduced to me by a Russian wrestling coach when their team was training at our college for a dual match with the United States. Since then I have always encouraged coaches to apply the Triangle with their athletes in determining optimum performance.

At the time, my main question to the Russian coach was “What, in your opinion, is the biggest training error Americans make?” His simple answer was “They work too hard.” That surprised me at first, but the more he explained, the more logical it sounded. Working hard is almost an American tradition. The harder you work, the more successful you’ll be is an American concept, regardless of whether it is applied to sports, business, or life pursuits. Using the Health Triangle, you still work (train) hard, but the training is “quality work” rather than more or harder work.

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I'll explain the Triangle as it applies to athletic training and then show how it applies to all of us in an attempt to balance our life in a healthful way. The Health Triangle is made up of three parts: Training, Rest, and Nutrition. All three are important to optimum performance. This Triangle can be used by the athlete or the coach. It starts with performance. When your performance is in decline or you are getting injured or sick, you must ask three questions:

1. Am I training too hard, too long?
2. Do I get enough rest?
3. Does my diet benefit me?

For example, a coach may see a decline in performance of an athlete, but is unable to determine the cause. The answer is that it could be one or all three. Usually all three come into play.

No one would argue that hard training is essential to success, but it must be balanced with rest and nutrition. Stress on the body is actually a "breaking down" process. Microscopic tissue damage occurs in muscles during training. In a way, we exercise to stress the body or break down tissue. The repair and growth actually occur during rest periods, and the essential building blocks of that repair and growth must be supplied by the diet.

The coach may find that his athlete works a night job that allows him only five hours of sleep, along with several hours of class each day. His diet may reflect a deficiency in calories, too much junk food, and inadequate complex carbohydrate intake. These two factors, accompanied by hard training sessions, will ultimately lead to poor performance, illness, or injury.

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To carry this concept over to everyday life, then working, resting, and nutrition play a role in your energy level and health. For example, some people have stressful lives and demanding jobs that make it difficult to get enough rest or eat a healthful diet. In this case, something's got to give, and some health problem, minor or serious, may occur. The next time you feel your overall performance isn't what it should be, think of each part of the Triangle. Are you pushing too much? Are you doing quality work or just a lot of wasted effort? Do you get eight hours of sleep and some rest and recreation? Are you conscience about eating a health-promoting diet that supports your lifestyle? One or all may be the problem.

I'd like to make an added point about sleep. We all need about eight hours of sleep each night. Far too many people do not get that much. Although some people seem to function okay with less, most just seem to adapt. Their performance drops, but they just aren't aware of it.

If you find that you're not addressing one or more of the points of the Triangle, try to improve in that area and you'll notice some positive changes in a short time.



**53.**

### **The French Paradox**

Although the French eat a high-fat diet, they have a much lower death rate from cardiovascular disease than Americans. Dr. Serge Renaud of Lyon, France, suggested that red wine might be the reason. Recent research suggests that any alcohol, including wine, beer, and hard liquor, is heart healthy. The ethanol in alcohol raises the good HDL cholesterol. It also slows platelet clumping, which reduces blood clotting. Red wine, and to a lesser degree, white wine, also have antioxidants which may add protective benefits.

Over the past fifteen years, numerous studies have shown less mortality from disease in drinkers than nondrinkers. However, before you start an alcohol binge to stave off heart disease, consider the recommendation. It varies from one to five drinks a day. Closer evaluation shows health benefits from alcohol at one drink or less for women and two drinks or fewer for men. Beyond that, no benefit has been

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proven. Too much alcohol increases your risk of disease, especially cancer.

The French have less heart disease than Americans, but experts say other factors are equally important. They eat monosaturated fat, such as olive oil. They also consume fish, whole grains, and a wide range of fruits and vegetables. They eat smaller meals and are more active than Americans. Although the French have fewer deaths from heart disease, they don't live much longer than Americans. They die from accidents, cirrhosis, and other problems related to alcohol abuse.

Should teetotalers start drinking for its health benefits? No. Better ways exist to prevent heart disease. If you drink, think of when you have alcohol. Drinking with meals is more beneficial than drinking without food. Studies of drinking habits show that women who drank without meals had an 80% greater chance of dying from noncardiovascular disease than those who drank with food. Although formal research hasn't been done, this finding probably applies to men as well. We can visualize the difference between sitting in a bar on a Sunday afternoon compared to having wine with your evening meal. Food slows the absorption of ethanol into the bloodstream. This inhibits blood clotting from the meal's dietary fat.

I like wine and usually have a glass of Merlot (made from dark-blue grapes) or Chardonnay (made from white grapes) with a meal. On special occasions, I sometimes drink more than two glasses. I enjoy it with meals and balance this drinking with other healthful living habits. Disease has no one cause and

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no simple cure. Make your decisions wisely, and use common sense.



54.

## **What if We Could See Inside Our Bodies?**

If we could see inside our bodies, it would be the greatest motivation to change our lifestyle. If smokers could see the damage in their lungs, such as a tumor, it could be removed before it spread. Think of how we might react if we could see the plaque in our arteries. Would we think more seriously about our lifestyle?

Full body scans are available. In about fifteen minutes, you can get a noninvasive screening that produces three-dimensional images of your heart and other organs. The pioneer in this screening is Dr. Harvey Eisenberg, of Health View Body Scan, in Newport Beach, California. Dr. Eisenberg was featured on *Oprah Winfrey*. Oprah had the screening, which showed some plaque on a coronary artery. She said, “Since that screening, I haven’t touched a potato chip.”

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The use of a full-body (computed tomography) scan as a preventive medicine tool has its critics. The medical establishment is skeptical. Yet, over 400 physicians have had the screening. The full body-scan costs about \$900.00 and is not covered by insurance. The radiation a person is exposed to and whether that increases one's risk of cancer are other concerns.

I believe that the medical community will accept the test as a preventive and motivational tool. Over 100 similar screening centers exist nationwide. I think that the number will grow, which will lower the scan's cost. Insurance companies may then approve the scan as a preventive medical exam. For more information, visit Dr. Eisenberg's web site at [www.healthview.com](http://www.healthview.com), or call 1-888-724-VIEW.

## 55.

### **The Power of Food**

Many people have approached me who are skeptical about the health claims attributed to certain foods. For instance, I may mention that eating tomatoes (lycopene) can help lower the risk of prostate cancer. Then I'm asked, "Do you really believe that eating some fruits and vegetables can reduce my cancer risk?" Scientific evidence abounds showing the healing effect of many plant chemicals on diseases, especially cancer and heart disease. This concept is difficult to grasp because of its simplicity. The following story illustrates the point.

In 1498, the Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama lost 100 of his 160-man crew while discovering a sea route from Lisbon to India. Their supply of fresh fruits and vegetables ran out, and the sailors mostly ate biscuits, salt beef, and pork. Gradually, they showed signs of lassitude, extreme prostration, and bruised easily. The sailors had bleeding gums, foul breath, internal bleeding, and weak joints. They also suffered

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from exhaustion, diarrhea, and pulmonary and kidney troubles that led to coma and death. What caused these deaths? Was it a lack of fruits and vegetables?

In 1747 Dr. James Lind, a Scottish physician, recognized the value of citrus fruit. He did an experiment with twelve patients. All were severely ill with the same symptoms. Ten were put on a similar diet and received cider and vinegar. The other two were given two oranges and one lemon a day. After six days, the two on citrus fruit were well, and the others were still sick. Vasco de Gama's sailors died of scurvy, which is caused by a lack of vitamin C. Can you imagine someone, at that time, suggesting eating oranges to prevent those deaths? More likely, they would've been ridiculed and run out of town! It wasn't until 1928 that vitamin C was prepared by Albert Szent Gyorgy. In 1932, it was shown to be an essential element found in fruits and vegetables. By then, our friend who'd suggested eating oranges to prevent scurvy would be highly esteemed.

Think of this story when you read or hear about the benefits of certain foods and avoiding others to optimize your health. It's as sensible as eating an orange instead of having a soft drink.

## 56.

### **Making Changes**

Changing one's eating habits is one of the most difficult lifestyle changes to make. So far in this book, I hope I have motivated you to reevaluate your eating habits. In the following chapters, we're going to look at some of the important changes you should make to become healthier. Remember, eating healthily has three major positive feedbacks that you will experience:

1. Better control of your weight
2. A higher performance level, and probably most important,
3. Prevention of disease.

The problem we face in health education today is getting people to want to change. Too much emphasis has been placed on what not to eat, rather than encouraging people to eat more of the healthful foods.

The first several recommendations are important foods you should try to add to your diet.

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Toward the end, I discuss foods we should reduce in our diet. Elimination of specific foods is not as important as just eating less. You will find your own way based on the physiological feedback you experience.

Be aware that we are all different in how we change habits and how fast we change. I've had students make a total turnaround in their eating habits in a matter of weeks! That's very rare; most take months, sometimes years, but there's positive change. Weight loss is a good example. Most people want to lose weight as fast as they can. You may be surprised to know that 90% of people who successfully lose weight and **keep it off** do it by making a decision to simply eat health-promoting foods and exercise.

Move at your own pace. Find some healthful foods to add to your diet and gradually eat less of the foods that are not as healthy. As an example, you may notice that you seldom eat whole fruit. Pick one you like and eat it every day. Then add some other fruit. At the same time, you may notice that you eat a lot of red meat. Start by substituting one or two meals with fish or having smaller servings of meat and choosing leaner cuts.

Making these gradual changes in your lifestyle is similar to making a regular investment in a mutual fund. It doesn't seem like much at first, but over time, it compounds into a worthwhile asset.

Believe me, good health is your most valuable asset.

57.

**Recommendation 1–  
Eat a Plant-Based Diet**

Don't tell me you don't want to be a vegetarian! Don't worry, you don't have to be a vegetarian to be healthy. For most of us, the goal is to **eat more like a vegetarian**. The single most important suggestion from **all** the nutritional research to date is that we would all be much healthier if we ate a more plant-based diet. Simply put, include any food that grows in the ground: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

If you have become more **tuned in** to health, as I suggested earlier, then you have noticed that **all** the news media reports about the health benefits of foods always refer to the **health benefits of plant foods**. It runs the gamut from antioxidants and phytochemicals to omega 3 oils, fiber, phytoestrogens, vitamins, minerals, and so on. Did you ever read or hear news releases about the health benefits of eating red meat,

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whole milk, butter, cheese, or any other animal-based food? Not one.

Let's put it another way. If you took all the nutritional research done worldwide, the amount showing a relationship to disease and poor health from consuming animal products would easily fill a warehouse. How about plant food? Maybe a single sheet of paper! Conversely, the research showing various health benefits from plant foods would easily fill a warehouse.

Don't fight Mother Nature! Gradually add more plant foods to your diet and start cutting back on animal products.

**58.**

**Recommendation 2 –  
Take Nature’s Medicine**

This is the most important first step you can make to improve your health. If you make no other changes, make this one!

What is nature’s medicine? Fruits and vegetables. It’s that simple, yet less than 10% of Americans consume enough fruits and vegetables on a daily basis to have a positive impact on their health. Besides their high vitamin and mineral content, fruits and vegetables contain potent phytochemicals, antioxidants, and fiber that play a major role in preventing a variety of diseases including heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Just the research on phytochemicals has produced over 4,000 chemicals that alone, and in synergy with other chemicals, have had a positive effect on these diseases.

In our bodies, there is an ongoing molecular processing of oxygen that produces toxic agents called

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free radicals, which can damage a cell's DNA. Antioxidants and certain phytochemicals found in fruits and vegetables help to neutralize free radicals. Other phytochemicals work in very specific ways to block the development of cancers. In the words of Dr. Mitchell Gaynor, head of oncology at New York's Stang Cancer Prevention Center, "Eating the right food is as specific to stopping cancer before it starts, as wearing a seat belt is to lowering your risk of a fatal automobile accident."

Don't fall prey to the simplistic approach of just taking a few phytochemicals or antioxidants in a supplement. The dose may be too small compared to the amount found in food. The synergy of all the health-promoting chemicals found in food far outweighs the benefit of a single supplement. Just think, every time you eat a piece of fruit, broccoli, tomatoes, cauliflower, etc., you're taking potent health-promoting medicines!

When I was coaching, I always told my athletes to eat four servings of fresh fruit every day. No other requirements! This served two purposes. First, they substituted fruit for junk food more often. Second, it was **their** choice. I never said, "Don't eat junk food." Gradually they made more healthful choices, which, in turn, limited the amount of unhealthful choices they made. You can do the same. Try to get four or more fruit and vegetable servings a day. Remember, potato chips are not a serving of potatoes, and orangeade isn't a serving of fruit!

## 59.

### Ten Plant Foods to Consider

Although we can't list all fruits and vegetables, I thought you might be interested to see some results of nutritional research on ten of them. Fortunately, all we have to remember is to eat a variety of plant foods, but you may want to include some of these:

1. OATS – Contain B-Glucan, which helps lower blood cholesterol and sugar levels. Try hot oatmeal!
2. TOMATOES – Contains lycopene, a potent phytochemical that blocks uncontrolled growth of cells into tumors, especially in the colon, bladder, pancreas, and prostate. The equivalent of ten tomatoes a week reduced prostate cancer 66%. Try tomato sauce in pasta and on pizza, but remember to limit the cheese and replace the sausage and pepperoni with mushrooms, onions, and garlic – all high in phytochemicals. Who said pizza can't be a health food?

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3. GARLIC – That garlic on your pizza contains allicin, a plant chemical that boosts immune function, reduces cancer risk, and lowers blood pressure and cholesterol. Add it to sauces.
4. HOT PEPPERS – Contain capsaicin, which boosts the immune system and has anti-viral benefits. It also reduces stomach cancer. Try spicy Mexican, Thai, Chinese, and Indian foods.
5. DARK GREENS – Contain lutein and zeaxanthin, two carotenoids that help prevent degenerative eye diseases such as cataracts and macular degeneration. Popeye was right. Eat your spinach! Also, kale, turnip greens, etc.
6. ORANGE AND YELLOW PRODUCE – A cornucopia of colors indicate high antioxidant content. Carrots, cantaloupe, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, oranges, etc.
7. RED WINE AND RED GRAPES – Skins contain resveratrol, which blocks artery plaque and tumor formation. A few glasses of red wine are heart healthy but red grapes and juice are, too.
8. CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES – Contain indoles, sulforaphane, and isothiocyanates, which block cancerous tumor growth. Try broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, and cabbage.
9. PRUNES, BLUEBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES, STRAWBERRIES, RAISINS – Very high antioxidant potency. Four prunes, for

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example, have over three times the antioxidant potency compared to ½ cup of cherries. Blueberries and blackberries are the highest in antioxidants. A little here and a little there is what counts.

10. GREEN TEA – Contains polyphenols – potent antioxidants. Research shows a significant link between green tea and a lower risk of several diseases including heart disease and cancer. Black tea is beneficial but not as strong. Substitute this potent antioxidant drink for coffee now and then.



**60.**

**Recommendation 3 –  
Include Whole Grains**

Start thinking of substituting more whole-grain foods in your diet to replace some of the enriched white flour products. Whole grains supply a greater spectrum of vitamins and minerals, as well as many of the antioxidants and phytochemicals found in fruits and vegetables. Whole grains are also a good source of protein as well, but their major contribution is fiber. Most of us overindulge in starchy white flour products, which contribute little or no fiber to our diet.

Remember this simple rule: **plant foods are your only source of fiber.** Animal products do not contain fiber. If you have started eating more fruits and vegetables, you have taken the first positive step to optimal health.

What's so good about fiber? It assists in controlling or preventing several health problems. As you eat more fruits, vegetables, and now whole grains, you ingest more fiber.

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By consuming a mixed diet of plant foods, you take in two main fibers: soluble and insoluble. Each has specific benefits. Oat bran, for example, which you would get from a bowl of oatmeal, would supply mostly soluble fiber, which can actually lower your blood cholesterol.

Consuming more whole grains, breads, and cereals contributes insoluble fiber, which stimulates elimination in the large intestine. It's nature's natural laxative!

Both fibers, consumed in adequate amounts, have these benefits:

1. Fiber helps you lose weight. It's more filling.
2. Fiber lowers blood cholesterol.
3. Fiber stabilizes blood sugar.
4. Fiber aids digestion and elimination.

Think about it. A simple increase in plant food cuts your risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and infections of the digestive tract, and possibly, colon cancer.

It's not surprising that these diseases are common in the United States and other developed countries. We eat limited amounts of these foods. In this country, the average individual consumes less than fifteen grams of fiber a day. We should get at least 30 – 40 grams a day. No whole grains, no fruits, no vegetables equal no fiber!

Do these things to get started. First: read labels! How much fiber is in the product? Select cereals and breads with high fiber. Consume whole-grain rice, pasta, and wild rice more often. Equally important, consume less of the low-fiber foods such as white

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bread, white rice, and processed baked goods such as cookies, crackers, pastries, etc.



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### **Recommendation 4 – Include More Legumes**

Legumes are simply all types of beans, peas, and lentils. They belong in your diet. First and foremost, they are a great protein source. I know, you thought only meats and milk products provide protein. That may be the desire of the beef and dairy industry with their billion-dollar advertising campaigns, but it's not what nutritional research says.

A serving of legumes is equal to a serving of meat ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup = 1 ounce). The whole grains we discussed are also a good source of protein. Two-thirds of the world's population depends on these two foods for their main source of protein. You see, they can't afford spare ribs, prime rib, fast foods, and whole milk. They also don't experience much heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and other chronic diseases, either.

The point? Don't get caught up in the misconception that you must consume meat and milk

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to get protein. A little is fine, but prime rib dinners too often are pushing the limit.

Besides protein, legumes are an excellent source of soluble fiber. That's particularly important in the prevention of heart disease and diabetes. If it assists in prevention, you can bet it's important if you already have the disease. Remember, soluble fiber controls blood sugar and lowers cholesterol.

See if you can substitute legumes for some of your meat and milk. It's cheaper, lower in calories and saturated fat, a good energy source, and cholesterol free (as are all plant foods).

Think of all the ways you could add legumes to your diet as "Bubba" did with shrimp in the movie *Forrest Gump*. There's a lot of ways to serve them: bean burrito, bean soup, 4-bean salad, pea soup, lentil soup. Use your imagination!

**62.**

**Recommendation 5 –  
Add Fish to Your Diet**

Most people like at least some fish, so this should be an easy one to focus on. Generally, fish is low in saturated fat and calories, and high in protein. Because of its low fat, fish has **more** protein than red meat – calorie for calorie. That’s why nutritionally-savvy athletes will always select fish over steak.

Nutritionists recommend about 2 – 4 servings (3 – 4 ounces) of fish a week. Part of that recommendation is obvious. If you eat more fish you eat **less** red meat, which means you consume less saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories (avoid fried fish). Surprisingly, the main reason to eat fish **is the fat!** You see, the oil in fish packs some important health benefits. Fish contains an essential fat called “omega 3” that plays an important role in our health. Omega 3 reduces blood clotting, which is a major factor in heart attacks. It prevents abnormal heart

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rhythms, improves immune function, promotes eye and brain development, and may help in some types of arthritis.

This is one fat that's good for you. To get the most Omega 3's, include some of the fattier fishes such as salmon (best), tuna, sardines, and anchovies.

A word of caution. I do not recommend using fish oil supplements. It may be too much of a good thing. Check with a doctor first. I find eating a poached salmon to be much more enjoyable.

**63.**

**Recommendation 6 –  
Add Soy to Your Diet**

I know, you think I want you to add those slippery little chunks of “tofu” to your chili instead of hamburger. Well, that wouldn’t be a bad idea, but let’s save that thought for later, after you realize the wonderful health benefits that soy can produce.

Research has built an impressive case for soy’s role in preventing diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis, all too common in the American population. Studies show that soy contains a powerful phytochemical (remember plant chemicals) called isoflavones, which is a class of phytoestrogens (estrogen-like plant compounds).

First, soy’s protein, along with its isoflavones, can lower cholesterol levels, which reduces our risk of heart disease. It also helps keep blood vessels flexible and reduces potentially lethal blood clots. Soy also seems to reduce the risk of hormone-related cancers

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that are prevalent in our society: prostate, breast, and colon cancer. Researchers also feel that these plant estrogens can substitute for the body's own estrogens. For menopausal women, this can be an alternative to hormone replacement therapy (HRT) before and after menopause. Scientific studies have shown that soy protein can increase bone density in the spine as well. These are very promising benefits from a simple food.

A simple way to get started on soy is to buy some roasted soy nuts and use them as a snack. I hope this will substitute for some potato chips, M & M's, or other snacks you eat. One that I enjoy is using soy protein isolate powder in a smoothie. It's a quick and easy way to get the health benefits of soy. Try cooked soy beans (edamame) still in their pods as an appetizer at your next cocktail party. I've yet to find anyone who didn't enjoy them.

Soy milk is an excellent alternative to cow's milk. If the plain soy milk isn't to your liking, try the chocolate and strawberry. Kids love them, and you can get them in handy little cartons for their lunch bag. Tofu can be stir-fried with vegetables and rice for a healthful plant-based lunch or dinner or used in chili in place of meat. Believe me, no one will know it's meat unless you tell!

Veggie burgers are definitely worth a try. The "Boca Burger" brand is one of the most popular. Even Burger King offers a veggie burger alternative that's been well received by the public. Adding some soy to your diet helps increase your plant protein intake while cutting your intake of animal protein and its associated saturated fat and cholesterol.

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Try and get about fifty grams of soy protein a week. For those with heart disease risks, as much as 100 – 200 grams a week will prove beneficial. This amount will ensure adequate amounts of the important isoflavones as well. Don't miss out on this one. By the time you read this the FDA will have allowed health claims on soy products stating that soy may reduce the risk of heart disease.



**64.**

**Recommendation 7–  
Add Flaxseed to Your Diet**

You may be wondering, what the heck is flaxseed? Well, it's a seed from a flax plant! It's been around for centuries and was even used by Hippocrates for constipation (not his, his patients').

Flaxseed is the vegetarian source of omega 3 oils found in fish. So, if by chance, fish isn't one of your favorites, try flaxseed. It has some of the same heart-related benefits as fish and is a good protein source, but it has other benefits as well. It contains soluble fiber, which helps lower blood cholesterol, and it contains insoluble fiber, which has laxative benefits. (I wonder, how did Hippocrates know that?) If that's not enough, it also contains one of those phytoestrogens, such as soy contains, called lignans. In fact, flaxseed is the richest plant source of lignans. Lignans act as cancer blockers in hormone-dependent cancers, such as breast, prostate, and endometrium.

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Flaxseed can be purchased at any health food store. I find it best to use flaxseed meal. Just mix it in with cereals, pancakes, flour for breads, muffins, sprinkle on yogurt, etc. I put two tablespoons in a fruit smoothie along with soy protein powder. Flaxseed oil can be used in salad dressing, but it lacks the fiber and lignans. **Walnuts** are also a good source of omega 3 fat. Sprinkle them on your salad and use them as snacks as well. I even put walnuts on my low-fat ice cream!

65.

**Recommendation 8 –  
Balance the Fats in Your Diet**

Many people still believe that fats are unhealthful. That's only partly true. There's no question that low-fat diets such as the Pritikin and Ornash diets are beneficial for people **with** heart disease. Diets such as these almost completely eliminate the bad fats. These diets are very restrictive at only 10% fat, but are highly effective.

For those of us trying to eat healthfully, there's good news! Some fats are good for us! The present research shows that certain fats increase our susceptibility to disease and other fats prevent disease.

The predominant theory is that **saturated fats, trans fats, and excessive polyunsaturated fats are the bad guys**. The typical American diet is loaded with them. **The good fats are mono-unsaturated fats and omega 3 fat**. These two fats are very limited in the American diet.

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To be healthy, we need to rebalance our fats. Simply put, we have to cut back on the bad fats and increase the good fats.

### **Balance Fats**

The Mediterranean diet consumed in parts of Southern France, Greece, and Crete is much higher in fat than the American diet, yet they have a much lower incidence of disease, especially heart disease. It is strongly theorized that it's the balance of the fats and oils that is the key. We would all be taking a healthy step forward if we adopted some of their dietary lifestyles.

### **The Good Fats**

One very important fat that we want to include in our diet is omega 3 fat. That's why I recommend that you increase fish, flaxseed, and walnuts in your diet. The next thing you want to do is use oils that are classified as mono-unsaturated oils (Mediterranean diet). The best is olive oil. Use this oil predominantly in all food preparation. Another way to get mono-unsaturated oil is to use nuts and seeds as condiments and snacks. A handful of unsalted raw nuts is a healthy snack, especially in place of candy, potato chips, and other junk food.

Mono-unsaturated oils are very good for the heart. They lower the bad LDL cholesterol and raise the protective HDL. They reduce the stickiness of blood platelets, which inhibit blood clot formation and

help dissolve clots once they form. They also may protect against breast and prostate cancer as well.

### **The Bad Fats**

Vegetable oils such as sunflower, safflower, soybean, and cottonseed oils are classified as polyunsaturated fats (Omega –6 oils). These fats, in small amounts are healthful, but we now get too much of these oils in our diet. As much as 90% of the oils we consume are in this category. Overconsumption of these oils upsets the delicate balance between these oils and omega 3 oils and experts are concerned that this imbalance can increase our risk of cancer and heart disease. Most of these oils can be avoided by paying attention to the **refined processed foods you consume.**

Read the labels of processed foods to avoid consuming too much of these oils. Many of these oils used in processed foods are “hydrogenated” as well, which only compounds their unhealthy characteristics.

### **The Ugly Fats**

Probably one of the most unhealthy fats we consume are called **trans fatty acids**. Trans fats occur when vegetable oils are hydrogenated. Because many of the vegetable oils used in processed foods are unstable oils, the manufacturer hydrogenates these oils, which in essence, makes them more like saturated fats. This makes them more solid at room temperatures, more able to withstand frying temperatures, and most

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important, to the manufacturer, extends the shelf life of products that use these oils. The problem is that it **does not extend your shelf life!** Trans fats are abundant in stick margarines, shortenings, packaged baked goods, pastries, french fries, and most deep-fried foods.

Hydrogenated (trans fats) oils raise blood cholesterol and LDL. (bad cholesterol) and lower HDL. (good cholesterol). They have also been implicated in cancer as well. The Food and Drug Administration is well aware of the heart-damaging effect of Trans fats and has ordered food manufacturers to list the Trans fats content on all labels. This, of course, will take effect gradually over the next few years. You would assume that agencies that are supposed to protect our health would have simply banned added Trans fats since they serve no benefit to the consumer. Just another reason why you have to look out for your own health. Until then, read labels to see if the vegetable oil is hydrogenated. Use olive oil or the new heart healthy soy-based spreads such as "Take Control," "Benecol," and "Smart Choice." These butter and margarine substitutes are made from liquid canola and soybean oil and contain plant stanol esters that actually **lower blood cholesterol**. Be sure to give them a try.

Remember, just because it says "Made with Vegetable Oil" doesn't mean it's healthful. What vegetable oil is used? Is it hydrogenated?

The next fat to reduce is saturated fat. Saturated fats are found in large amounts in animal foods such as meat, poultry, butter, cheese, milk, and cream. Only three plant oils are very high in saturated fat. They are

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coconut, palm and palm kernel oils. You will find these oils mostly in processed food.

There's no question that we need to reduce our intake of saturated fat. **Saturated fat definitely increases our risk of heart disease**, and possibly prostate and colon cancer as well.

Try to move away from the highly saturated animal foods such as red meat and whole milk products. Chicken and turkey breast are good alternatives to start with and, of course, fish – your best choice. They are much lower in saturated fat. Gradually shift your dairy foods to low or nonfat choices and select smaller portions. Think of cheese more as a condiment, such as sprinkled Parmesan on pasta or salads. Ask for less cheese on pizzas, and select vegetable toppings rather than pepperoni and sausage, which are mostly saturated fat (about 98%!) and loaded with calories.

I'm not suggesting you go overboard on fats. They still pack a lot of calories, so if you're trying to lose weight, focus on cutting back on foods with saturated fat and/or hydrogenated fat (trans fats). Consume small amounts of the good fats. Eat a little fish, instead of meat, and a handful of mixed nuts instead of a pastry or candy bar, and salads with a little olive oil.



## 66.

### **The Essential Fats**

We require two essential fatty acids for health: Linoleic Acid (omega-6) and Linolenic Acid (omega-3). Linoleic Acid is readily available in most plant oils such as safflower, sunflower, and cottonseed. Linolenic Acid is found in flaxseed, pumpkin seed, and walnuts. Both of these fats are critical to health. Linolenic Acid converts to omega-3 fat, and a lack of this fat may contribute to many of our diseases.

Present-day man's diet has a fifty-to-one ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fats. The ratio should be one to one as occurred in our ancestors millions of years ago. Fish is an excellent animal source of omega 3 fat, and salmon has the highest content. Other meats, including beef and poultry, don't have this important fat because the feed of today's animals lacks omega 3 sources. In prehistoric times, man ate plenty of this fat because the animals ate grass and plants that contained it.

One important benefit of omega 3 fat is its positive effect on Prostaglandin hormones.

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Prostaglandins affect many cells in our bodies and do tasks such as control inflammation and immune response. An excess of omega-6 to omega-3 fats creates an unbalanced internal environment. This increases our risk of illness, especially heart disease and cancer. Thus, eating a balanced amount of these fats is critical for your Prostaglandins and body to function optimally.

The typical western diet can be quite toxic to your body. Westerners consume too much saturated fat and cholesterol from animal foods and high levels of Trans and omega-6 fats from processed foods. If your diet fits this profile, I encourage you to change it as I've suggested. Eat a good source of omega-3 fat, and cut down on foods containing harmful fat. (Review Recommendations 5, 7, and 8.) You'll be amazed at how much better you'll feel. Inflammation throughout your body will decrease. You'll have less edema and joint pain and an overall improvement in well-being.

**67.**

**Recommendation 9 –  
Supportive Supplements**

Taking supplements can leave you with a false sense of security about your health. For instance, I encounter many people who take high doses of Vitamin E to prevent a heart attack or heart disease but do almost nothing about improving their diet, exercise, or weight. Given the choice you will get maximum benefit out of the latter! Does that mean that Vitamin E serves no benefit? No. Vitamin E is helpful but it is not a magic bullet. The same can be said for almost any vitamin or mineral supplement. They are supportive to a healthy lifestyle not a replacement. I know it's easy to fall pray to slick promotions for supplements. We would all like to just take a little pill and make all our problems go away, but believe me it's just not going to happen. The strongest research for the prevention of disease is in diet and exercise. That means you have to make an effort! You won't find it in a pill. Vitamin and

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mineral research is very promising and can be very supportive to a healthy lifestyle so focus on that first.

Taking supportive nutrients can be very helpful, and I know it is difficult for people to make the right choices. To that end I will give you my best take on supplement recommendations that are supported by scientific research, but keep in mind health is 90% lifestyle, so start there first for the highest rewards.

Recommendations:

1. Take a daily multi-vitamin/mineral supplement (iron free for adults is recommended). This is the most common recommendation of doctors and health professionals. Many people may choose to only do this. I would consider the following as well.
2. Add to this the following nutrients IF the amount in your multi does not meet the amount listed below. (e.g., If your multi has 50 I.U. of Vitamin E, add 250-450 I.U. as a separate supplement.)
  - A. 300-500 I.U. Vitamin E as d Alpha Tocopherol from mixed tocopherols
  - B. 500 mg. of Vitamin C
  - C. Selenium- 100-200 micg.
  - D. Chromium- 100-200 micg.
  - E. Beta Carotene- 6 mg.
  - F. Calcium- 500-1000 mg. (Get most of your Calcium from food sources)

3. Other supplements

- A. Carotenoid Complex. This is a mix of important Carotenoids found in fruits and vegetables, which should be a priority in your diet.
- B. GLA- (Gamma Linolenic acid) Found in Borage oil as a supplement. Get a supplement that contains 200-500 GLA per capsule. This supplement is important for adults over 50 years. They are low in the enzyme that converts essential fats into GLA.

C. Herbs

If you plan to take herbs, check with an herbalist first. Most herbs should only be taken for a limited time for specific health problems. Saw Palmetto for example is an effective herb for an enlarged prostate and can be used daily without side effects. Echinacea is an immune stimulator but should only be used for a short period such as at the onset of a cold. Herbs are used in integrative medicine by trained doctors for many different health problems, so don't play doctor and start taking herbs just because someone told you about them. Some can contribute to problems rather than solve them, and some can interact with prescription medicines. Be sure to ALWAYS let your doctor know what herbs and supplements you are taking and why. They will be able to assess your individual situation.



**68.**

**Recommendation 10 –  
Oxygenate Your Body**

I can remember a biology instructor in college saying, “If there’s a youth pill, it’s got to be oxygen.” As the years have passed since that class in 1957, science has proved that instructor right. Of course, he didn’t really mean that oxygen alone makes you youthful, but you have to agree that of all the elements essential to life, we don’t last long without it!

We think of oxygen when we breathe, especially when we overexert ourselves and feel the pain of our body gasping for air. Generally, we take it for granted. We assume the oxygen will always be there when we need it. Unfortunately, nothing stays the same. If you’re sedentary as you age, you will gradually **reduce** your ability to utilize oxygen. In fact, it’s one of the major indicators for aging. The less oxygen you utilize, the older you become physiologically.

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Your body loves to be stressed physically to help you utilize more oxygen and thus, delay the aging process. Earlier on, I described the physiological changes that occur when you exercise that enable you to utilize oxygen. If you choose to be sedentary, things won't just stay the same. They will decline. (Read that chapter again.)

It doesn't take much to improve your oxygen utilization. Let's not visualize Olympic athletes striving for gold or bicyclists in the Tour de France. Instead visualize a walk on the beach at sunset, or a bike ride. No matter how inactive you are now, start to make movement a part of your daily life. How? Just start by walking. We can all walk. If you can't walk, then ride a bike. I've seen people in wheelchairs get in better shape wheeling down the streets while able-bodied people can't seem to find time to get out of their easy chair!

Start slowly. Fifteen minutes, thirty minutes, forty-five minutes. Gradually build up as you feel your energy and recovery improving. Once you get to where you can walk briskly for 30 – 45 minutes, all you have to do is maintain that workout for 5 – 6 days a week. That's it. What's "walking briskly"? That's when you can walk and carry on a conversation, but you would rather not talk!

Do that or some other activity such as swimming, aerobics, bicycling, and I guarantee you will slow the aging process. Anything you do beyond that will be for the pure joy of feeling energetic and healthy. Good luck.

**69.**

**Recommendation 11 –  
Consume Less Red Meat**

This is difficult for most people, so be sure you do it gradually. The reason we want to cut back on red meat is because of its high saturated fat content. Saturated fat is the main cause of clogged arteries that leads to heart attack. Red meat, like all animal products, also contains cholesterol, which adds additional cholesterol to the blood. Cholesterol also acts independently by causing blood platelets to clump together increasing the risk of blood clots, which of course, lead to heart attacks.

Red meats of all types are by far the great contributor to atherosclerosis. Americans seem to have almost an obsession for eating large quantities of red meat. The proliferation of fast foods and steakhouses is on the increase and does little to reduce this obsession. The reason for this, I think, is that a person can develop advanced atherosclerosis with little or

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noticeable symptoms of the disease. When it does hit, it's usually quick and unexpected and sometimes deadly. It would be great if these foods caused reactions similar to alcohol (a hangover, nausea, or upset stomach). That would at least get our attention! Maybe then we would think twice about eating so much.

An added concern, though not as great as the association with heart disease, is food poisoning such as the E-coli bacteria outbreak that occurred with raw hamburger meat. Food poisoning is much more likely to occur from animal products of all types than from plants. There is also concern about the association between a high intake of red meat and the incidence of prostate cancer. Is it the meat itself, meat protein, or saturated fat in red meats that increases risk? Time will tell. A most disturbing recent report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deals with exposure to dioxin, a toxic chemical that is a waste product of paper pulp production. Dioxin enters our food chain in meat and dairy products from animals that consume contaminated foliage and fish from contaminated waters. People who consume excessive amounts of meat and dairy products may be at extremely high risk for developing cancers, hormonal problems, and defects in childhood development. Add to that the recent problems in Europe with foot and mouth and mad cow disease and it should make you pause for a moment and contemplate what you're eating! With regard to mad cow disease, I shudder a bit when someone orders sweet breads (brains) at a restaurant! Colorectal cancer is also a concern for people who consume red meat products, especially

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processed meats such as hot dogs, bacon, sausage, and packaged lunch meats. A review of 13 human studies concluded that the risk of colorectal cancer is increased by 49 percent among subjects who ate 25 grams (half a hot dog equivalent) of processed meat daily. (Am. Institute of Cancer Research) I don't mean to alarm you with this information. I only mean to get you to rethink your intake of red meat.

What I suggest is that you start by cutting back on portion size and substitute fish, turkey, and chicken for red meat servings. They are lower in saturated fat and cholesterol, and you already know that fish is heart healthful. Another alternative for those who like meat is to select range-feed beef from certified ranches, bison (buffalo) meat, and wild game. All will be lower in saturated fat and contain some omega-3 fatty acids. When you do eat meat, consume it less frequently. Use the round or loin cuts, and trim all the fat. Try to limit your red meat intake to twelve ounces a week or less. Other meats to watch out for are bacon, sausage, pepperoni, and lunchmeats. They're all just about pure fat, mostly saturated fat. This is similar to eating pure butter! Eat them very seldom and look for alternatives made with turkey that are lower in fat and calories. Another option is to try some of the soy-based substitutes made to taste like bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and other meats. Remember, you don't know you don't like a food until you experiment with it.



**70.**

**Recommendation 12 –  
Move Away from Whole-Milk  
Dairy Products**

Dairy products are a lot like red meat. They make a large contribution of artery-clogging fat and cholesterol to your diet. Oh, I know, they're a good source of calcium and protein and contain vitamins and minerals, but so do a lot of foods. To hear the dairy industry's promotion, you would think that **“every body needs milk.”** Sound familiar? It was an advertisement for milk promotion highlighted by Mark Spitz, multiple gold medal swimmer in 1968. Problem is, it's not true. **Every body doesn't need milk.** That's why the government made them stop the promotion. So, with a bit of Madison Avenue brilliance, they came up with **“milk has something for every body.”** Sure does ... a lot of artery-clogging fat and cholesterol.

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After the age of two years, we should be on low or nonfat dairy products. Up to two years of age, breast milk is best. If that's not possible, discuss alternatives with your pediatrician. You will be much healthier avoiding whole-milk products. Athletes who want concentrated sources of protein, have always avoided high-fat dairy products, substituting nonfat because they get more protein per serving, without the extra calories and fat. For comparison, an eight-ounce glass of whole milk contains 150 calories and eight grams of fat. Choose an eight-ounce glass of skim milk and you get only 100 calories and no fat. Use a little visualization here. That eight-ounce glass of milk is 50% fat. That is similar to drinking a half glass of grease! The same can be said for cheese and yogurt. Some of the low-fat cheeses have 50 percent of the fat removed and still taste great. Use nonfat yogurt in place of sour cream, or mix both together to reduce the total fat. Experiment with low and nonfat dairy products to see what works best for you.

If you're trying to lose weight, a simple switch to nonfat milk eliminates fifty calories. Imagine how many calories you could eliminate from your diet by selecting lower fat animal products without eating less food.

**71.**

**Recommendation 13 –  
Eat Fewer Salty Foods**

If you find yourself salting all your food, you may want to check the quality of the foods you're eating! Bland food needs spicing up. Gourmet chefs are much more inclined to use herbs and spices rather than salt to add flavor to foods. Our bodies require only about 500 milligrams of salt daily, an amount easily obtained in natural foods and plain old water.

The common message most of us hear about salt is that it causes high blood pressure. That's true, but only about 30% of the population is salt sensitive. For most of us, excessive weight, lack of exercise, and an imbalance of minerals (including sodium) leads to high blood pressure. Besides blood pressure, excess salt (sodium chloride) throws off our balance of minerals, especially calcium. It saps our calcium stores, which increases our risk of osteoporosis.

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Osteoporosis is disabling for too many people in our country.

You should learn to do two things to reduce your salt intake. First, eliminate the salt shaker (use herbs and spices). The salt shaker contributes about 25% of our salt intake. The second and most important step you can take is to reduce your intake of processed foods. Read the label of everything you buy and avoid those with high sodium content. Food manufacturers love to add sodium (salt) to everything so you'll eat more. It's somewhat addictive, so again, you're faced with a learned behavior choice. About 2,000 milligrams of salt daily is the upper limit. The typical American diet is in excess of 5,000 milligrams with some people who eat excessive amounts of processed foods reaching 10,000 milligrams or more. Fresh tomato juice contains about 10 milligrams of sodium. Processed tomato juice or V-8 juice contains 700 milligrams in a small seven-ounce can!

Nature doesn't add salt, only food manufacturers do. Compare the large content to your 2,000 milligram limit. If a soup has 600 milligrams in one serving that's fine, but you only have 1,400 milligrams left. The more you read labels, the better able you'll be to judge what foods to watch out for and avoid. There are low-sodium substitutes for just about everything.

72.

**Recommendation 14 –  
Avoid Highly-Sweetened  
Processed Foods**

Sugar of one type or another is found in all plant foods. That's fine in its natural state. The problem we face is the sugar that food manufacturers **add to processed foods**. Refined sugars might appear on food labels as corn syrup, sucrose, dextrose, lactose, glucose, fructose, etc. The problem with these sweeteners is concentration. That is, it's how much you consume, rather than what you consume. Refined sugars, regardless of their source, have no food value, so they're classified as "empty calories." If you consume too many products that are high in sweeteners, you can easily take in more calories than you need, and end up deficient in important nutrients. This is becoming much too common in young children today as more and more empty-calorie junk foods hit

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the market. Many of these products are also high in saturated and hydrogenated fats as well. Baked goods, cereals, pastries, cakes, pies, and soft drinks lead the list of foods high in sweeteners. One to keep an eye on is products that are labeled **fat free**. This sounds healthful, but if too many of the calories are from added sweeteners, then it's not a product you want to overindulge in. Fat free doesn't mean calorie free!

Be especially alert with your children's intake of sweeteners. Breakfast cereals promoted to young children can sometimes contain more refined sweeteners than anything else! The common sweetener sucrose (white table sugar) used in moderation is fine, especially if you're very active. However, the more popular sweetener, high fructose corn syrup, which is becoming the sweetener of choice by manufacturers, is one I would recommend you avoid. Read labels.

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### Overview of Recommendations

	<b><u>Why You Should Change</u></b>	<b><u>How to Change</u></b>
1. <b><u>Fats/Oils</u></b>	<b><u>Saturated Fat</u></b> Causes atherosclerosis (heart disease), possibly cancer and other disease.	Eat less red meat (beef, pork, veal). Use smaller servings of white meat (turkey, chicken). Read the labels for saturated fat content of processed foods.
	<b><u>Substitute More Monounsaturated oils</u></b> They are heart healthy.	Use mostly olive oil or canola oil. Consume mixed nuts (walnuts, almonds, etc.). Read the labels for healthful oils.

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<p><b><u>Avoid Hydrogenerated Fats/Oils (Trans fat)</u></b> Causes heart disease and possibly cancers.</p>	<p>Avoid butter (saturated fat) and stick margarines. Read the labels of processed foods to avoid hydrogenated fat. Use alternatives: Take Control, Benecol, Smart Choice, or tub margarine.</p>
<p><b><u>Limit Polyunsaturated Oils</u></b> May increase cancer risk. Over balances dietary fat.</p>	<p>Don't use safflower, sunflower, soybean, cottonseed (worst) oils. (See monounsaturated oils above.) Avoid processed foods, especially junk food. Read labels.</p>
<p><b><u>Increase Omega 3 Oils</u></b> Several health benefits, including heart disease, inflammation, skin, brain function.</p>	<p>Consume fish 2 times week (salmon, albacore tuna, sardines, best). Use walnuts and add flaxseed to diet.</p>

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2. <b><u>Fruits/ Vegetables</u></b>	Consume four (4) or more servings a day. <u>Very important</u> for antioxidants, phyto-chemicals, and fiber.	Any and all fruit and vegetables. Include cruciferous vegetables, tomatoes, berries, etc. See the chapter – Ten Plant Foods to Consider.
3. <b><u>Grains, Flour, Etc.</u></b>	<b><u>More</u></b> whole grains. Same benefits as fruits and vegetables. Main fiber and energy source. Good protein, antioxidants, phytochemicals.	Look for 100% whole grain as first listing on products: bread, cereals, etc. Long and whole grain rice, wild rice, etc.
	<b><u>Fewer</u></b> white flour products. Low fiber, low nutrient balance. Too much starch.	Avoid as much as possible. Particularly go easy on highly processed products, which are also loaded with unhealthful fats, sugar, and calories.

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4. <b><u>Legumes</u></b> (All beans, lentils, etc.)	Excellent protein, fiber, and energy source. Substitute for some animal protein.	Mixed bean and vegetable soups, beans and rice, etc. See Recommendation #4.
5. <b><u>Red Meat</u></b>	Very high in saturated fat, total fat. Ratio of fat to protein is too high. Excess animal protein is associated with disease (osteoporosis, heart disease, prostate cancer).	Substitute fish (best) and/or chicken/turkey breast (no skin). Focus on plant protein, soy protein, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds.
6. <b><u>Dairy Products</u></b> (Milk, Yogurt, cheese, eggs.)	Avoid high-fat dairy products to avoid saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories.	Select low-fat and nonfat. Limit egg yolks to 4 per week or use a substitute. Use eggs with omega-3. Use low-fat cheeses as a condiment. Avoid adding large amounts of cheese to common foods, e.g., pasta, enchiladas, pizza, lasagna, and hamburgers.

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7. <b><u>Sodium Chloride</u></b>	High intake indicates a diet high in processed foods. High sodium increases the risk of hypertension and osteoporosis.	75% of our salt intake comes from processed food. First eliminate the salt shaker. Use herbs, spices, and salt substitutes. Read labels. Consume more plant foods to increase potassium ratio to sodium.
8. <b><u>Sugars and Sweeteners</u></b>	No nutrients. Found mostly in highly processed foods. Supplies empty calories.	Read labels. Limit sweets. Avoid excessive intake of high fructose corn syrup (soft drinks, junk food, etc.).



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## A Final Word

The goal of this book is to make you stop and evaluate your diet and lifestyle. If you have adopted the “+1” mindset (See Chapter 5 for mindset descriptions), you are ready to make some changes. My recommendations are good places to start. Any positive change is a step toward improved health. If you eat more fresh fruit or drink fewer soft drinks, you put your mind in a **think healthy** mode. As you make small changes, you can work on more difficult ones at a slower pace. For example, if you have eaten a lot of beef for many years, you may resist giving it up. You could handle eating beef less often though and eating more fish instead.

You have the power to control your health. Being healthy isn't just luck, fate, or karma. Success in any area of life takes conscious effort and commitment. Don't make excuses to avoid making changes; just start! Pick one area, no matter how insignificant it seems. Your first step will lead to a

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second step, and that will gradually become a positive habit. Think healthy, be healthy. It's just common sense.

Add more humor to your life, too, and keep things in perspective. My close friends like to joke that I'll die from being hit by a health food truck while out jogging. So laugh along the way, and delight in being a healthier you!

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## Suggested Readings

Many good books exist on health and nutrition, but the most popular are too much myth rather than fact. If this book has motivated you, these recommendations will give you more detailed information to help you become healthier.

Greene, Bob. *Get with the Program*. Simon & Schuster, 2002.

This is an excellent guide with a daily planner and good insight into how to lose weight with a healthful diet and exercise program. It is designed for the client who is mentally ready to make the change.

Greene, Bob, and Oprah Winfrey. *Make the Connection: Ten Steps to a Better Body and a Better Life*. Bob Greene and Oprah Winfrey. Hyperion, 1996.

This is the best book on the market to help you with a fitness and weight loss program. It's solid advice on correct weight loss. Oprah adds

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inspiring thoughts on her experience working with personal trainer Bob Greene.

Herber, David M.D., Ph. D., and Susan Bowerman, M.S., R.D. *What Color Is Your Diet? The Seven Colors of Health*. Regan Books, 2001.

This is an excellent book about choosing fruits and vegetables high in phytochemicals and antioxidants. Learn the color of foods that make you healthy.

Jenkins, Nancy Harmon, and Antonia Trichopoulou. *The Mediterranean Diet Cookbook: A Delicious Alternative for Lifelong Health*. Bantam, Random House, 1994.

This book has a great selection of recipes that use healthful oil, fruits, vegetables, and grains. It proves that nutritious eating can be enjoyable and gourmet.

Shapiro, Howard, Dr. *Dr. Shapiro's Perfect Weight Loss: The Visual Program for Permanent Weight Loss*. Rodale Press, 2000.

This is an excellent book on visualizing the calories in various foods. By following Dr. Shapiro's program, you can eat more food and consume fewer calories.

Walford, Roy L., M.D. *Beyond the 120 Year Diet: How to Double Your Vital Years*. Four Walls Eight Windows, 2000.

Dr. Walford is a highly respected gerontologist at UCLA. He led the biosphere studies where scientists lived in an enclosed biosphere and followed a diet he developed. His book describes the CRON Diet (Calorie Restriction Optimum Nutrition). If you're interested in delaying disease and extending life, read

this book. He gives helpful advice on food supplements and theories with humor added to keep it interesting.

Weil, Andrew, M.D. *Eating Well for Optimum Health: The Essential Guide to Bringing Health and Pleasure Back to Eating*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2000.

Dr. Weil presents a fresh approach to staying healthy. He explains how the typical American diet contributes to disease and the advantages of making some of the changes I've suggested. His book will increase your understanding of the link between diet and health. He gives many good recommendations on what to eat and what to avoid.

Willett, Walter, M.D. *Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy*. Simon & Schuster, 2001.

This is an outstanding book by one of the world's top nutritional researchers.

Woodruff, Sandra, M.S., R.D. *Good Carb Cookbook: Secrets of Eating Low on the Glycemic Index*. Putnum, 2001.

Most low-fat or vegetarian cookbooks are worthwhile. I recommend this book because it clarifies the difference between good and bad carbohydrates. It explains how the glycemic index, which ranks foods based on their potential to raise blood sugar levels, can be misleading. For example, the glycemic index gives carrots a high rating. Some authorities say to avoid them, but you'd have to eat 1½ pounds at one sitting to get that blood sugar spike.



## **About the Author**

Frank Addleman is professor emeritus at Santa Ana college in California where he taught nutrition and fitness in the sports medicine department from 1965-1997. He is also a popular speaker on the lecture circuit taking his unique “motivational nutrition/fitness’ theme to national sports clinics, corporations, health and medical conferences, and numerous city firefighter agencies. His presentations go beyond the informative. With humorous overtones he not only stimulates an interest in health but inspires and motivates his audiences to take control of their lifestyle to optimize their health and wellbeing.

Along with his teaching and writing frank was also a successful college wrestling coach. His teams produced numerous state champions, all americans, several national champions, and a state title. For his endeavors he was inducted into four ‘hall of fame’ including the national wrestling coaches hall of fame. Frank and his wife Betty live in Long Beach, California.

