Fit over 40
Role Models For Excellence At Any Age

Jon Benson & Tom Venuto
AUTHOR OF BURN THE FAT, FEED THE MUSCLE

FOREWORD BY DR. RICHARD WINETT
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OVER 50 TRUE STORIES OF MOTIVATION AND INSPIRATION!
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Model: Jon Benson; Photo by Marcus Irvin
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Our Own Personal Heroes

There’s no way the book you now see could have been completed without some heroes. These are the people who worked late hours making photographs from 53 different sources look amazing like one—the photos ranged from clippings in a newspaper to studio-quality images. Part of the challenge of Fit Over 40 was the rounding up of the photography and bios. This took hundreds of hours of labor even prior to being sliced and diced in Photoshop by our resident experts.

We decided to give you almost half-page photos to display the incredible physiques of our Fit Over 40 role models. In so doing, please understand that a few photos were never more than a few inches tall. We think we “done good”, and are very proud of the quality of the final product.

THE HEROES

Lauren Muney, for many hours of interviews, proofing and more interviews...then some more interviews. Check out her website, too: www.PhysicalMind.com.

Kim Vega, for putting in the time and effort to edit our 52 role models’ bio sections, all while allowing them to keep their own voice in words.

Lee W ennerberg, who did a stellar job with the edits to my chapters in Section 1 and Tom’s chapters in Section 3, all at the last moment. She also bent a good ear my direction with the more difficult sections of the first few chapters. Lee is a superb professional editor, and we could not have been happier with her work. You can contact Lee at editorlee@hotmail.com.

My very good friend Janis Hauser, for the vast and seemingly unending interest, encouraging words, and proofreading without asking. Jan was crucial to me for support, and for hearing out the ideas expressed in our chapters.

Ruben Esquivel, for the hours and HOURS of Photoshop work these pictures reflect. Note: no retouching of photos other than the removal of scratches and dust were done. All Fit Over 40 participants actually LOOK this good! The only exceptions are the few times we had to ‘redraw’ part of an elbow or leg if the participant was partially blocked.

Richard Winett, Ph.D., who graciously penned our foreword. Richard has been a personal role model to me over the years, and he’s one heck of a nice guy to boot.

A special thank you to all my friends and family (Jon writing) who left me alone during these past few months to complete a rather ambitious task. I’d also like to thank Tom for...well, absolutely everything. He was behind Fit Over 40 the moment he heard about it, and never looked back. He is both my partner, and my friend, and I’m honored to call him both.

Special thanks to all of our affiliates for their generous support and contribution!
Foreword

Jon Benson and Tom Venuto’s *Fit Over 40: Role Models of Excellence At Any Age* stands apart from numerous other books, DVDs, and websites trying to tap into the burgeoning over-40 market. There are no miracle diets or supplements, or magical exercise routines offered in this book. There is no promise that you can transform your health and physique in a few easy weeks. There are no fold-out wall charts showing routines you need to blindly follow.

What is contained in *Fit Over 40* is far more enriching and rewarding.

Benson and Venuto have put together detailed, highly readable and enjoyable portraits of 52 over-40 men and women who are committed to exercise, nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle. Each person is unique. Some people are life-long athletes while others have taken up this new lifestyle when most people are contemplating retirement. A number of people are just 40 while some are nearly twice that age. Some people are genetically gifted competitors and champions and many are not.

Each of the 52 people has evolved an approach to exercise and nutrition and an overall lifestyle. The approach is an optimal fit, both physically and psychologically, and facilitates reaching goals for that person. There are 52 unique approaches because there really isn’t one, and only one, best approach that then can be adopted in ‘cookie-cutter’ fashion.

You have the rare opportunity to read about these role models and then try out approaches that fit your preferences, goals, physical abilities, and life style. Instead of ‘one best approach’, there are 52 best approaches, along with Benson’s own story of resurrection from obese and dying to healthy, lean and fit at 40.

But that’s not all there is to *Fit Over 40*. There’s far more. And, it’s not something you’re going to find in the typical exercise or diet book, DVD, or site.
What comes through in each portrait is much more than the physical transformative effect of consistent exercise and sound nutrition. The ability to plan and successfully carry out an exercise and nutrition program contributes to a profound sense of self-mastery and self-efficacy.

Self-mastery means that you understand how to apply yourself to get the most out of yourself, to be the best you can be. If there is challenge and competition, it primarily is with yourself—to do the best you can do and at some special times, even transcend yourself. Jon and Tom give amazing insights into the mind behind the muscle—The Core, as Benson calls it. It will do more than make you think—it may change the way you go about it.

Self-efficacy beliefs should not be built on fantasy. As the 52 people show, self-efficacy beliefs are founded and fostered by finding what works to achieve certain outcomes for you and then persisting over time.

Self-mastery and self-efficacy achieved through exercise and nutrition can have other life-altering effects. You can take the basic self-regulatory skills you’ve successfully used for exercise and nutrition and adapt them to other facets of your life. It’s in this way that the role models in this book can truly have a transformative effect on your life.

Richard A. Winett, Ph.D.
www.ageless-athletes.com
A FEW YEARS AGO, A CLIENT OF MINE ASKED ME IF I EVER PLANNED TO WRITE A book about my journey from obesity to fitness. At first this seemed like a good idea. After all, my passion is writing and my story is somewhat interesting.

Not interesting enough—at least that was my initial assessment of the matter. Some may disagree, to which I remain flattered. I was also dedicated to my one-on-one programs, so my time was very limited.

However, in 2003 I began to pursue the thought of a book of a different style—one that combined a dash of my history and a heap of others’. A work that was, in effect, the very heart and secret of my own transformation. Tied together with some serious mental and physical secrets of the trade, courtesy of Tom Venuto, and I was more than interested. In fact, I was driven.

You now hold in your hands the answer to the age-old question, “What’s the secret to fitness and youth?” The answer is your own. To find your own secret, you must be willing to search out and emulate role models. This goes beyond a ‘diet’ or a ‘routine’—it bypasses the tired paths of fad books and Hollywood drivel. This is the creation of your own destiny.

In the classic book As A Man Thinketh, James Allen wrote this eloquent description of the art of destiny:

“Man is made or unmade by himself; in the armory of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace.”

This book is a reflection of such a journey—not of one man, but of 52 individuals, all from various backgrounds, ages and mindset. You’ll find everything from high
protein meat-eaters to vegans: from high-intensity, low volume trainers to people who hit the gym every single day.

No one is wrong—and your conclusions will be the right ones for you if you decide to take for yourself the wisdom found in these pages and create your own personalized fitness lifestyle. It will ultimately become your destiny, your foundation for this temporal life, and your own fountain of youth.

*Fit Over 40* is not just for people over forty years of age. As many people inspired me twenty to fifty years my senior, my hope is that others will find similar inspiration from these mentors no matter your age. If I had this book when I was 21, I would have saved ten or even fifteen years of wasted time. I probably would have navigated around the horrible health issues that nearly killed me in my 30s. I definitely would have arrived at my top shape a decade sooner.

For those of you over 40, this is a veritable treasure chest of inspiration and application. Do you think you’re too old? Hardly-read the story of Kelly Nelson, who never lifted a weight in her life until her late 50s. Do you consider yourself too busy? Just read the amazing bios of Kevin Saunders, or mother-of-four Maria Cortes. Do you fancy yourself too far-gone or out-of-shape? Well, Jon Blackburn will make your head spin!

**A Brief Overview of *Fit Over 40***

*Fit Over 40* is a book in three sections, each in reality a book unto itself. You can simply use the section that appeals to your needs the most, or read the entire book—we feel it’s a harmonious blend. The first section is my personal transformation story. I tell my tale and share my secrets in a personal and strategic way, one that hopefully puts you in my shoes during the goods times and the bad. Hopefully it will entertain and enlighten you at the same time. It is in essence an expanded version of our own *Fit Over 40* role model bios. You may be interested in how a guy could end up in my condition and live to tell about it. I made the rather awkward decision as a writer to be less “how-to” and more “why should you.” There is plenty of strategy and tips as well, so it’s not all a trip down memory lane.

The second section is the heart of *Fit Over 40*—the role models. You’ll meet 52 people, just like yourself, from all walks of life. Some have been fit for most of their lives. Others came to fitness via the deathbed—literally. A few are fitness professionals; many are merely enthusiasts—writers, politicians, construction workers, engineers, and full-time moms. We’ve tried to cover the gamut of real-world fitness
so that your pool of role models would instantly and exponentially increase. All the stories are inspirational, no matter who you are or where you come from.

These everyday athletes do not take drugs or rely on fad diets—they are the product of application of knowledge, strategy, love and commitment. They embody physical culture, and I’m proud to introduce them to you.

The final section is a how-to jackpot from my co-author and fitness expert Tom Venuto. Tom is the author of the number one e-book in the world on fitness and nutrition, *Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle*. After teaming up with Tom several years ago, we began to realize a common passion for sharing the absolute truth about fitness. We both agreed that while diet and training books are good tools, absolute “truth” was in fact subjective. Therefore, the need arose to compile an arsenal of truth and blast it out to everyone that would listen.

Through the diversity, Tom will weave common threads. He will share his vast knowledge of nutrition and fitness. Whether you’re a beginner or a competitive bodybuilder, his concluding chapters will be a go-to reference for you as the years pass. From competition training and diet to ridding yourself of that last 10 pounds of stubborn body fat, it’s is a must-read.

Finally, I’d like to personally mention and give thanks to the following:

- My Creator, for the bounty and lessons in my life;
- My father, who gave me my work ethic—I miss you;
- Clarence Bass, who continues to inspire me with his timeless approach to fitness;
- Jay Robb, who was there when I needed it—a stranger who helped another;
- Tom Venuto, for being a role model in every way;
- And finally, Mom—for always believing, and for knowing exactly what to look for.

Remember this thought as you read on—one story, one paragraph or even one sentence has within it the power change your life.

It only takes one thought to start a revolution.

*Jon Benson—January, 2005*
Meet Clark Bartram.

Host of the ESPN show “American Health & Fitness”.
Cover model on over 100 magazines.
“Fit Over 40” Role Model (page 138)

Now, meet his secret weapon...

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I knew within five minutes that M-Power could help me grow in every area—and I know M-Power can do the same for you.

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CLICK THE LINK TO READ MORE!
Section 1

Chapter 1
The Downward Spiral

Chapter 2
Mind Matters:
Principles of Inner Transformation

Chapter 3
BodyWorks:
Strength & Strategy

Chapter 4
Inner Fuel:
The Taste of Health

Chapter 5
I Can See The Valley:
New Hills, New Horizons
I began to see a disfiguring pattern emerge. Warped exaggerations existed where conformity and proportion were needed: gaunt chasms where fullness demanded residence.

Jon Benson; Reflections
“Life begins at 40.”

That’s like starting off a novel with the ‘dark and stormy night’ bit. However, the cheesy intro is necessary. Reason being—it was almost a lie.

My life could have ended well before my 40th birthday. That celebration night was spent surrounded by friends and the girl I planned to marry. I was in very good shape—slightly off body fat levels that I held for many years, but strong and growing. We all enjoyed great food. My buddies and I played our guitars on the rooftop of my loft overlooking Dallas.

It was a perfect October night. I was a successful independent graphic artist and, as of 2001, the owner of a second business—my own nutrition and lifecoaching practice. At 40, I felt a renewed excitement about life, as if it was just beginning. I actually looked forward to turning 40. It was great to be told, “You don’t EVEN look your age!” (You see, 40 sounds much older than 39.)

Instead of black balloons, we had the roof decked out in purple—yes, purple. It’s my favorite color. Leave it to me to pick a color that few of the male gender cares for. But then again, I’ve always been a bit different. My differences have led to some of breakthroughs and breakdowns in my life. I’d like to share a few of those with you now, and in so doing hope to shed some light on the reasons how a guy with a lot of things going for him could end up obese and self-destructive.
An Early Brush With Death

My longing for uniqueness began early. I was an only child—spoiled, but only in the sense that I had no frame of reference for attention. After venturing out of the house, I quickly discovered that I wasn’t quite like the other kids. There is a paradox many only children find themselves trying to solve. They have a desire to be independent thinkers, yet maintain and cling to a deep longing for the intimate bonds denied them by family. This was in no way the fault of my parents. In fact, I’m lucky to even be here. My mother gave birth to me very late in life. After sixteen years of marriage and two miscarriages, I was the “last chance kid.” I accepted this, despite begging for a brother or sister early on. I didn’t understand why a woman past forty in the late 1960’s couldn’t pull this off for, say, my next Christmas present.

My streak of independence led me into sports and hobbies that were rather self-reliant in nature. My first real passion (greater than football and only slightly less than girls) was motocross—a truly individual sport. It was an every-man-for-yourself type of sport, full of all the adrenaline and thrills a guy could want. Taking my tricked-out bike around the track felt like the perfect blend of isolation and unity. The rocket under my tail was my partner, but I alone was the master of its direction. I would make gargantuan leaps into the air and not think a thing about it. I was fifteen, and in my mind, quite indestructible. I even proclaimed to my parents that I would never grow old. The world could never harm me.

At sixteen, I had my first taste of reality. I was about to quickly find out that no one, especially me, was immune to destruction.

At sixteen, I had my first taste of reality. I was about to quickly find out that no one, especially me, was immune to destruction. I had purchased a cheap little street bike so I could claim my independence from home a bit earlier than most kids. It’s easier to get your license for a bike than a car and a heck of a lot less expensive. I was on my way to work one fine April day, with my helmet half on. I decided, thankfully, to see if I could fasten it with one hand—just for kicks, really. I didn’t usually fasten it unless I was ‘really’ riding, and that was reserved for the tracks. I was wearing gloves, so the challenge of buckling the strap was actually only to keep my mind from the boredom of going in a straight line at a mere forty miles per hour. I had just pulled the strap tight and placed my hand back on the handlebars when the world went black.

Approaching the top of a hill no less than a few miles from home, a truck, making a very long turn and doing about forty as well, ended up in my lane. We hit virtually head-on. I instinctively stood up on the pegs a split second before slamming into the truck, which allowed me to clear the top of the cab instead of going through the windshield. I awoke underneath a parked vehicle.

I had no idea what had happened—only that I could not move my legs, and that a crowd of people were standing around me. “My God, he’s dead!” screamed one
lady. I could only scream, but I’m sure that convinced her I was quite alive. “His legs are broken!” another man shouted. “Call 911!” I started to panic. I was really scared now, and was determined to see if, in fact, my legs had been broken. I lifted both of them slightly, and decided the guy who screamed this was just brazen. I remember swearing at the top of my lungs at him, but I fortunately can’t recall what I said.

The ambulance came, shortly followed by my parents. I wondered how on earth my mom and dad were informed so quickly, as I had not even been moved from under the vehicle. It turned out that my uncle was the fellow behind the wheel of the truck. What are the odds? I was thankful for my parent's arrival. My dad's voice made everything better. He told me I was fine, and that I was just banged up a bit. My helmet had a hole in it the size of my fist, which would have been my head had I not decided to play “fasten up” with one hand.

I arrived unconscious at the hospital. I awoke as the ER docs were removing gravel from my left hand. I decided it was best to just go back to sleep! I was later forced to wake up, now in severe pain, and drink this white chalk for internal injury X-rays. As if the accident wasn’t enough, I was now throwing up repeatedly trying to drink the worst stuff on earth, undoubtedly created by some minions of evil. The doctors were shocked to find out that I had no broken bones. However, I did have damage to my spleen, the degree of which time would only tell. My ribs were badly bruised, and I had second and third degree burns down both legs from the 200-foot slide on concrete and gravel I took after flying over the cab of my uncle’s truck. It was my first experience inside a hospital room, and it would not be my last—not by a long shot. My battle with the flesh was just beginning.

It took months to recover. I sold all my bikes afterwards—I wanted nothing more to do with riding. In hindsight, this was a terrible mistake. My parents, however, rightfully cautious of their only son, were rather insistent that I stop riding.

The lesson I took from this is not new, but many of us have pushed this truth so far down inside of us that our daily living defies its reality. Life is fragile, and every moment can add or subtract from its quality. This includes every moment we exercise, or every moment we choose not to: every moment we overindulge in foods that seemingly comfort us, and all the moments we choose to eat for form and function. Every moment counts—period.

My First Role Model
During my senior year of high school, I decided I wanted to become a rock star. What kid doesn’t? On the other hand, how many people have actually tried?
I was determined to do just that—and to a far greater degree than anyone I personally knew.

It all happened after meeting one of my first role models. Without realizing it, “Johnny Jam” (Johnny picked his own moniker) was about to awaken in me the key to transforming my life in unbelievably rapid ways.

Johnny sat in front of me in literature class. We were both fairly unclassifiable—I was a combination jock and outsider, with long hair and a quiet demeanor. Johnny was an in-between pretty boy, fellow outsider and class clown. We didn’t fit the social molds, which is probably why we became such good friends.

“Come over to my place man...I’ll jam for you.” I was curious what he meant. I assumed he noticed all the Aerosmith and Rush stickers on my notebooks. “Jam? You mean listen, right?” “No man—I play a Strat, just like your man Perry!” Johnny was referring to Aerosmith six-string legend Joe Perry—one of the coolest guys on the planet, even today. (May the kid in me never die—I only hope I can get him in the next edition of *Fit Over 40,* as he still has those abs of yesteryear.) “Strat” was short for a Fender *Stratocaster,* one of the most famous guitars ever made.

I couldn’t believe that someone could actually play what I listened to. I went over to his house and sat back in awe. He played along with the Stones and Aerosmith records I grew up on. “Man, I have to play too...how long did it take you? How fast can I learn to play?” I was horribly impatient. Sometimes impatience can motivate a person, but most of the time it just brings illusions of what we really want.

“Well Jon, you need to start with something much more simple than a guitar. Play the bass. It has only four strings.” These days I get a big kick out of the absurdity of that statement. The bass is a very sophisticated instrument when mastered. I play guitar now as well, and both have their own unique levels of intricacy. However, the apparent ease of four strings over six made the choice an easy one—and besides, Johnny’s band needed a bass player. Johnny was really just a kid who knew a few bar chords and a couple of licks, but to me he was a young Keith Richards. *My belief in him is what inspired certainty.* His advice prompted me to go home and excitedly inform my folks that I was buying a bass and an amp the next day with my college savings, upon which I received a verbal thrashing.
However, I was not to be deterred. I found my bass and my amp, and I spent my money on my new source of identity—a four-stringed ticket to stardom.

I spent the next few years learning the bass. I eventually surpassed Johnny and my fellow band mates in skill and wanted to move on. I ended up being accepted to MIT, a music school in Hollywood, California, at the age of nineteen. In three years, I had become one of the better players in the Dallas area, and I was sure that a record deal awaited me.

Johnny was the ideal role model for me at the time—someone I could touch, relate to, and even surpass eventually. Seeing him do it convinced me I could do it, and perhaps even better. If it weren’t for Johnny, it would have taken me far longer than three years to achieve the skill level I did. This is the principle of role modeling in action.

However, I just had to know more. That was the secret in my mind—knowing and studying. Actual playing would wait until I was “perfect”...the best! Remember — the over-pursuit of knowledge and using it as a valid reason to procrastinate real-world action is one of the reasons I never became a rock star. It’s also one of the many reasons people fail to achieve their goals and dreams.

Music School—My Introduction to Poor Role Modeling

Like so many decisions in my life, attending MIT was instantaneous—or so it appeared. I knew I belonged in California. Being horrified at their only son living on Hollywood Boulevard did not stop my parents from eventually supporting my decision. They knew how I was when I got something in my head. They even drove me out to California, which I’ll never forget. Their support always went beyond mere words, or a buck here and there.

My instructor at MIT, Jeff Berlin, was none other than the greatest player on earth in my eyes, and the reason I worked my tail off to get there. He was a session player, which means he was one of the guys all the famous people called to play on their records. He was also a chops guy, meaning that he had a persona behind his playing that made his incredible virtuosity something uniquely complex. He seemed at first glance to be the perfect role model—the ideal player and quintessential virtuoso.

More importantly to you, and to the strategies I’ll be discussing later—Jeff ended up being the worst possible role model I could ever have.

Berlin was a big man—large-boned with a thick New York accent. His physical appearance was as intimidating to me as his talent. “Yeah, you can play man...but
if you want to be like me, you better be prepared to live a life in the slums,” Jeff said during one of our first sessions. “What are you talking about, Jeff?” I exclaimed, knowing that he was a famous and sought-after musician. “Surely you make a good living being the best, right?” “Nope,” replied Jeff. “See that piece of crap ‘79 Pinto in the teacher’s lot? It’s mine. I play 15 hours a day—any gig I can get. Every bar, every club—whatever I can do to keep my chops where they are. You’ll have to do the same. That’s how you learn to be great. You don’t become great in school—you become great by doing.”

Excellent advice—and I agree 100%, especially now that I’m older and a tad wiser. The most ignorant people I’ve run across in fitness are either the genetically gifted who have no idea they look the way they do because of their gifts and not their ridiculous training programs. Then there are the “consonant kings”—the Ph.D.s, R.D.s, and X.Y.Z.s who believe that drugs, yard work and the food pyramid are the basis for good health.

Jeff’s dismal portrayal of life as a professional musician didn’t set well with a guy from the suburbs of Dallas. He subtly crushed my dreams—not just by his talent, but also by his words. It wasn’t even realism, merely bad advice at the wrong time from a cynical source. I later found out that many musicians lived comfortable lives, and I could have as well. The last thing I wanted out of my life was to live it in the slums! This is how vital it is to choose your role models carefully—the right person at the wrong time can suppress or even destroy your dreams. I needed experience rather than more knowledge. However, like many, I assumed the more you knew the better.

For example, a former associate of mine has her degree in counseling and a coaching certificate from a leading lifecoaching institute. Yet, when prompted to start her own business, she assumed she needed more knowledge. A year later, her progress was minimal. She was so wrapped up in being perfect that excellence was never given a chance. Perfectionism kills excellence. In fact, it is the lowest standard people can set for themselves because perfection does not exist. Excellence most certainly does!

An Introduction to Bodybuilding
During my years after MIT in California, I discovered my next great mountain to climb—bodybuilding. I began getting a bit flabby in the midsection. I was skinny and fat at the same time—the worst of both worlds.
I started by simply doing aerobics classes. That was the rage then—I even had the silly black lycra pants to go along with the George Michael hairdo. I took classes with my friend and fellow MIT musician Greg, a guy who really made me want to improve myself physically. Greg was a physical natural—thin, toned, with all-American good looks.

I tried to coax Greg into trying some weight training. “Dude, I don’t want any more muscle—I just want to be toned,” Greg replied. “That’s easy for you to say, Greg—you’re already in great shape. I need some muscle!” Greg was actually afraid of the weights. He was fearful that he would turn into Arnold after a few weeks of training in the gym. Sound familiar? I left Greg in the aerobics room and ventured into the strange, musky area of the facility where the iron resided. I was quickly intimidated, so I sought help. Naturally, I looked for the first trainer I could find—and the more muscles he had, the better.

The training routines I was most interested in were those espoused by a famous bodybuilder from the 1970s—Mike Mentzer. His “High Intensity Training” was a take-off of the old Nautilus systems pioneered by inventor Arthur Jones. The appeal was the speed of it all—I didn’t care about much else. I wanted muscles fast. I wanted fat loss fast. I wanted dinner fast. Everything had to be fast otherwise it was simply inadequate. My only goal was what I could see a week or two ahead of me. The thought of training for life was actually revolting—more scary than inspiring.

I shared my ideas about this one set to failure method with Mr. Muscle, the guy with the credentials at the gym. He replied condescendingly, “Dude, that’s just a lazy man’s approach. Jones? Never heard of him. He doesn’t know what he’s talking about. You need to work out five or six days a week to gain size.” I tried to argue the point, but he tossed the credential card and flexed his bicep. “When you have a body, come talk to me.”

His energy was so negative that I literally joined another gym. I was bound and determined to try this one set thing and see if it worked. After all, most people start with three or more sets—so how would they know if one could work? Why not start with one, and work up, rather than starting with three?

I gained fifteen pounds in less than a year. Sounds great, right? Well, it wasn’t for me. I was going on my false expectations of success. I expected fifty pounds—after all, that’s what the guys in the magazines were reporting. Little did I realize that fifty pounds was all but unheard of except for the genetically gifted or drugged-up athlete. Because I didn’t achieve what I wanted as fast as I wanted, my training eventually waned. I became a recreational trainer. After the second year of college, I gave up the idea of ever becoming a bodybuilder.
Instant gratification and impatience, a few of the hallmarks of the impetuous, were leading me away from the things I desired the most. They were also guiding me down a path toward medical hell.

**Higher Learning**

As I was considering attending UCLA full-time, I ended up falling for a girl from Abilene, Texas. She was on a trip with her church to the Hollywood area. I had enrolled in some night courses, but I wasn’t taking them seriously. MIT was very intense, with fourteen-hour days spent studying and playing in small rooms. The experience with Jeff Berlin left me somewhat un-enthralled about the pursuit of higher knowledge. I also felt the need to move closer to my aging parents. That, along with a serious case of puppy love, decided my next course of action—get a “real” degree. I spent the next five years at Abilene Christian University. Although my love interest didn’t work out, my academic choices and decisions certainly did in the long run.

I took my near-worthless degrees, as I jokingly labeled them, back to Dallas. Looking back, I actually feel quite good about how I approached college. I applied some of the lessons I learned in California. I came up with the slightly rebellious idea to study what I loved rather than what society deemed I needed. I opted for philosophy, theology, human communications and nutrition. I told everyone at school that I would eventually run my own company and have all my friends work for me, eliminating the need for a tried-and-true business degree. Even my best friends laughed at this notion.

I was proud of those years, except for the fact that my training had become more of a hobby by the time I was a junior. By my final year prior to grad classes, I was getting a bit chunky. Naturally, I did what everyone with a sharp mind would do—**I completely ignored it.**

**The Real World**

After graduation, it was time to upgrade my financial situation, so I applied for a job with EDS—Ross Perot’s company Electronic Data Systems. I knew nothing about computers. I had only played around with my roommate’s Mac when I needed to type out a report for class.

During my first interview, I decided that I was going to be myself—earring and all. When asked what I knew about computers, I replied, “Well sir, I know for a fact that the cardboard box on your desk is not a computer.” He laughed, and I knew I had the job. Granted, it was a computer position, but I had done well enough in
traditional education to graduate magna cum laude, so I was fairly confident that I could learn whatever was put in front of me if I put my mind to it.

I now had it going on—a decent starting salary with a huge company, new suits, my first sports car, my first solo apartment, and a cushy but time-consuming job. The company was great, and I ended up meeting one of my best friends who was my supervisor at that time. Mike is a soft-spoken Californian with a heart the size of Texas.

I enjoyed the corporate life—for about ten months.

The lack of physical care along with the hours caught up to me. I came down with a life-threatening case of pneumonia. I was rushed to the hospital in the middle of the night with a fever that topped out at 106. This brought with it the real threat of brain damage, so I was dunked into a tub of ice water when all else failed to bring my fever down. I said my good-byes to my parents, as I was sure I was going to die.

The next two weeks were spent in slow recovery, along with hours of dry heaving and agony when trying to breathe. I now realize why so few of the elderly survive pneumonia. As the days passed, friends and family came and went. My father spent most nights in the uncomfortable chair in my room. My father was my rock, my mom the comforter.

As I lay in bed, I began to take an inventory of my life. I had what so many people wanted in many areas of my life, but I did not have health or vitality. From childhood on, I would “catch” every bug and virus that drifted my way. I had three or four colds a year, with at least one turning into the flu. It could only be a matter of time before my immune system picked up something that caused a complete crash.

After being released from the hospital, I returned home for several weeks of rest before returning to work. I wanted to fill the hours of solitude with something stimulating. One night I saw Anthony Robbins on an infomercial, and for some reason I resonated with everything he was saying. He was selling something called “Personal Power.” Tony was just a bit older than myself, and seemed to have figured out many of the things I struggled with internally. I purchased the tapes and listened to them repeatedly.

You may be expecting the hammer of cynicism to drop at this point, but it won’t. Tony’s tapes literally helped me transform my thinking. I already knew quite a bit
about what he spoke, but seeing this man transform his life beyond his wildest expectations gave me the empowerment and the role model I needed to do the same. Knowing and doing are always two different things.

“Entrepreneur”: Isn’t That French For Unemployed?

Still convinced I could do anything I really wanted, I went back to work with a new plan, one that would shock all my co-workers. I was going to quit that very day and become an entrepreneur. It was the ultimate test. I was going to prove I could truly shape my own destiny. What a better way to do so than laying all the cards on the table—all along with all the chips, your car keys, the keys to your apartment, and your pants!

Here’s the funny part—I had no idea what I was going to do. None whatsoever. I literally went around asking people I worked with to toss out suggestions. I only knew where I wanted to go, and that was to a place called freedom. The strategy and details would work themselves out as long as I focused on the end result.

One of my friends at EDS suggested graphic design. “You’re the guy who did several people’s resumes here, aren’t you?” “Yeah, but so what?” I said. “Well, you can make good money doing that stuff from what I hear. You just need a Mac.” I protested a bit, although secretly I was already convinced. “I can’t draw a stick! Really. I did those resumes just for the fun of it. Yeah, I’ve always been able to organize stuff neatly, but I don’t know anything about this graphic design stuff, and I don’t even own a computer.”

“Well, that’s my best suggestion,” he replied. I’ll never forget what I said in response. “Graphic designer…well, I have no idea what one does, but it sounds really cool!”

That’s right—I chose my profession of the next fourteen years because the title sounded cool.

Along with the instant resonation with the title, something inside of me just snapped, in a good way, and I knew I had found my next calling in life. Sometimes it’s best just not to ask about the details when you know the why behind the intentions.

At this point you may be tempted to skip over to Section 2 and write me off as a total loon. You would be in good company—all but a few people considered my desire to be a graphic artist downright ridiculous. However, if you’ll stick with me a bit, you’ll see the life lessons to be learned and how to apply them to your life, your training and your choices.
**Destination and the Driving Point**

I had two weeks. Fourteen days from that August morning, my biweekly checks would cease to exist. I only had that long to learn to be a graphic artist, get capital for the business, buy a Mac and learn to use it...oh, and clients. They might help, too.

I called my ex-roommate from ACU and literally talked him into the same crazy dream. Prior to my friend's arrival, I spent most of my free time reading books on how to start your own home-based business and learning ways to acquire capital without a bank loan. I had to face facts—no bank in their right mind would give me a loan based on my business plan, which consisted of a poor logo drawn up on a restaurant napkin. I hated business plans, and I still do. Most are complete fluff, and I’d rather be out building the business than making it up on paper.

My financial plan was a real kick in the system’s pants. The idea came from just one sentence out of a book I discarded as worthless. However, as I wrote in the introduction, *just one sentence can literally change your life*. Charles Givens, an infomercial get rich quick guy, had a strategy for acquiring money without a bank: send off for as many credit cards as you can, all in one day. My partner feared the risk of it all. I insisted, saying, “What risk? We have no credit to ruin! So what if it’s 19% interest? Doesn’t that beat not starting our business?” The difference in mindsets would eventually cause us to part ways. He put one foot at a time into the cold water, but I dove in head first, sometimes without checking for rocks.

I’ll still argue to this day that it was a smart idea—because it worked! I sent off for thirty credit cards in one day. I only received six before the system became wise to me, but that was plenty. I now had about $25,000 in available cash, albeit without much in the way of a parachute. That was okay by me. I had learned the lesson of falling back while in music school: the guys who programmed their minds with a something to fall back on attitude never made it—only the guys with nothing to fall back on succeeded in the music world. They burned every bridge, every boat, and every means of escape.

You’ll be surprised what happens when you align yourself with absolute necessity.

This is what I call *The Driving Point*, or the Law of Destination. It’s a key factor in all transformation. You must focus on your objective, not the means and strategies required to arrive at it. This is not to say that proper strategy is not crucial—it is. Nor does the end justify the means. The Driving Point merely states that you must keep your eyes and mind focused *only on the objective*.

You must be absolutely committed to the destination.
Destination Pays Off

I spent the next several years learning the graphic design trade. Once again, with the help of several key role models, I learned at record pace and built a nice business. My partner ended up bailing out in the first year, but I opted to push on alone. I realized I had to make my own client base, so I created an apartment newsletter and sold advertising to pay for the printing and make a profit. From there, my advertising clients became design clients, and things started to take off. My weight had begun to take off as well. I was now officially chunky again, and my 16-hour workdays were beginning to take their toll.

I decided to get an office—just something small so I could get out of the house. During the hard times, I consoled myself by saying, “Look what you’ve built, and from absolutely nothing!” I was barely making enough to live on when I finally landed the big fish—Dallas Semiconductor. This was during the height of the tech boom, and semiconductor businesses were spending marketing dollars hand over fist. I picked up their monthly newsletter and a lot of other work to boot. Equally important, it paid so well that I could literally live off that one job alone.

During the following years, I went from being a lucky and somewhat savvy businessman to actually becoming a real designer. I no longer used the term entrepreneur when describing to others what I did for a living. I started to win some awards, and other designers were complimenting my work. My strategy to reverse-engineer the designs of award-winners allowed me to learn the processes much faster than would normally be possible. I stuck to my natural talent—organization, digitally speaking, and left the illustrations to those who could actually draw. It worked, and it works to this very day, serving the needs of my own businesses every day and saving me a small fortune in fees. When you can write and design a book, it really helps the cash flow.

Bodybuilding Calls Again

I decided that I needed to do something about my body. I wasn’t concerned about my health as of yet, but I knew that I wanted the body to go along with the money. There wasn’t a lot of depth to my reasoning. Uptown Dallas has its plastic side, and I was a bit too caught up in the appearance of things. The gym called to me, and I answered.

I used my free time to train hard for my 30th birthday. Along with the knowledge from my early experiments with bodybuilding and nutrition, I added as many role models as I could to the mix. At that time, Bill Phillips was a relatively unknown guy who had a bodybuilding magazine called Muscle Media 2000. Bill and Scott were looking for before and after pictures for Met-Rx. I submitted mine, and my
story was printed along with it. Bill even paid for the shots. This later became the basis of the marketing you now see for Body For Life. I’m proud to say I was one of the first, if not an official participant. I achieved the best shape of my life up until that time shortly prior to turning thirty.

The money was still flowing. I moved into a bigger office, hired staff, and started placing advertising. I was moving up—thirty years old, in great shape, and for the first time in my life, making a six-figure income. And just think—I had no idea how it was going to happen. I just knew where I wanted to go.

If only I had taken that mindset along with me physically, with a lifetime mindset rather than a temporary one, the following pages would never have been written. On the other hand, my career would not have been born.

All things happen for a reason, some people say. I say it’s our job to create the reasons.

Red Alert
My friends manned my office staff, just as I predicted back in my college days. It was great fun, and big-money projects just rolled in. I began working absurd hours again to keep pace. After all, I had my eyes on my dream car—a 911 Turbo.

With every dollar I made, it seemed as if I gained an ounce of fat. I lost hours—years, actually, to the call of my business. My stomach began to grow to grotesque proportions, and I began not to care. By the time I was 31, less than a year after achieving my best condition ever, I was diagnosed with serious chemical depression. The hard work I had put into that photo shoot did not carry with it the desire for a fitness lifestyle.

After being on anti-depressants for almost a year, I made an appointment with an endocrinologist to make sure that the pneumonia I had suffered through did not do any damage to my brain or my hormonal system. Low thyroid and low testosterone can cause depression, and I wanted to rule this out. After a battery of tests, and less than a week from a Hawaiian vacation, my doctor came back with some devastating news. “Jon, you may have a tumor. I want you to come in to my office.” Those are words that you can never plan for. Here I was, fatter than ever, tipping the scales at nearly 235 pounds, and just as unbelievably, watching
my business drift away. Depression has that effect—you just stop caring about caring. But tumor remains an ugly word, depression or not.

I had a total testosterone level of 42 ng/dL. I had no sexual dysfunction and carried ample body mass (both muscle and a lot of fat) so the doctor suspected a lab error. A second test confirmed the first—I was severely hypogonadal. Normal total testosterone levels for a man of 32 are between 500 and 1,200 ng/dL. A level of 42 is literally off the chart for a man of any age.

That wasn’t the half of it. My TSH level (thyroid stimulating hormone, which is the hormone secreted by the pituitary gland to stimulate the thyroid to produce thyroid hormone) was 13.6. Normal values range from .8 to 6. This indicated that my thyroid gland was incredibly underactive, despite massive amounts of signaling from the pituitary. It also helped explain why I was gaining fat at record pace and possibly my depression. My normal body temperature was a dismal 95 degrees. I had no internal heat to burn off even nominal caloric intake, and the resulting cold perpetuated a feed me cycle that was just unreal. Beyond my own addiction to fast foods and sweets, I was being chemically forced into a loop that was destroying my body.

Then there were my IGF-1 levels. This is one indicator of the amount of human growth hormone in the body. It too was almost non-existent. My blood pressure was 150/100—absolutely sky-high and dangerously close to stroke level. My cholesterol is what alarmed my doctor the most—it was over 400, double what the recommended levels were. My triglycerides were in the thousands—over ten times higher than normal.

The diagnosis was a total hormonal cascade, probably brought on by pituitary damage during high fever, or possibly horrible genetics. You can eat your way fat, but few people could eat or work their way to these kinds of numbers without a bit of help. Thankfully, there was no tumor. I opted to have the scans run before my trip to Hawaii so I could either relax and have fun, or go with an outlook of making the best of my days left on earth.
The Downward Spiral

CHAPTER ONE

I was put on synthetic thyroid and testosterone, a treatment referred to as HRT, or hormone replacement therapy. Natural methods did not work for me, although they can work well for people without damage to the actual organs. This ended up being a good thing, as it would later prompt me to study HRT in detail, and help me achieve the body I always wanted. But at that time I just felt like a drug addict—dependent upon four different medications merely to maintain a state of normalcy. Growth Hormone (GH) would follow, but only when the money would allow for it, as it is very expensive and not covered by my medical insurance. I have only taken GH for a few months of my life due to the expense, but I would gladly take it again just to be normal. Thankfully my supplements and diet keep me close to normal, which is somewhat of a miracle. I'll cover that in the upcoming chapters.

Even with all of this, I could not break free of my addictions. I continued my downward spiral until my bodyweight hit almost 250, with a 44” waistline and blood pressure of 200/100. The medical expenses were mounting, and many clients caught wind of my health issues and jumped ship. I lost about 80% of my business in six months.

Anyone reading this with any background in medical issues will come to the conclusion, and rightfully so, that I was a walking time bomb. My doctor told me that he really didn’t see me making it to forty. That’s right—not, “Jon, do something or you won’t make it to forty,” but, “Jon, I honestly don’t see you living to forty.” This was due to my reluctance to action, the stress in my life, and my genetics. I had the internal organs of an unhealthy 85-year-old. There’s only so much you can do, or so he assumed.

It took the invasion of another reality check to kick me into action—panic.

The Highs

For those of you who have experienced a real panic attack, I feel for you. For those who have not, it’s difficult to understand or explain. I have always been the quintessential adrenaline junkie—jumping out of airplanes, learning to fly, becoming a dive master in scuba, and autocrossing. I would night dive in murky lakes, descend to 100 feet or so, and turn off my lights for the thrill of it. I was hardly the type to panic.

I flew to Seattle to celebrate Christmas with some friends in 1998. The trip was very stressful for many reasons, and perhaps that was the trigger. Whatever that trigger was, it wasn’t pulled until the plane lifted off the ground for the four-hour flight back to Dallas. Thank God this was pre-9/11.
I had no idea what a panic attack was. All I knew is that my heart was racing up
to about 200 beats per minute, my chest felt like there was an elephant stomping
on it, and I could not breathe. I had all the symptoms of a heart attack with two
additions—impending doom, accompanied by the absolute and mandatory
desire to run. It was claustrophobia, multiplied by infinity, combined with pain,
terror, and the assurance of death. I do not recommend it!

I literally leapt out of my seat and charged for the cabin door, screaming at the
flight attendants. This was certainly a scary scene—a 250-pound guy with panic
in his eyes heading for the door of a plane on ascent. I was absolutely terrified,
as was my girlfriend. “I’m dying!! Land this plane!!”

There was no medic on board to assist me, but one of the flight attendants
assumed I was merely a frightened flyer. “It’s okay, sir. The plane is safe. You’ll be
fine.” I tried to explain that I jump out of planes, and she made the joke, “Yeah, I
can see that!” It’s funny now, of course. The pilot came out about 30 minutes
later. He tried to speak with me, but I demanded to be left alone. He took my
pulse, and said he’d have medics on the ground in Dallas. “I’m having a heart
attack.” That’s all I could think.

“I’m having a heart attack.”

When we landed in Dallas, something unusual happened. Only later would I
understand why, but the moment the plane began its descent, my symptoms
completely disappeared. My heart rate returned to normal, and I had no more
pain, no more fear. “Maybe I was severely dehydrated,” I said. I tried to think of
anything and everything, all the while being so relieved that my 4-hour torture
was finally over.

I was scared, of course, but I ruled out a heart attack due to the fact that the
episode seemed directly associated with the flight. I got on the Internet when I
returned home and did some research. I discovered the term “panic disorder,”
and, after reading up on it called my former psychiatrist. He agreed with my self-
diagnosis, saying that some people have only one panic episode in their entire
lives, but for others, mostly former depression patients like myself, they return
with more intensity. Left untreated, panic disorder can eventually lead to
agoraphobia—the fear of leaving your own home. I convinced myself that this
had been a one-time shot. I was wrong. I had several more panic attacks. Every
time I was convinced that this one was a real heart attack. Paramedics were
called, and twice I was rushed to the ER. Both times the doctor said, “You’re
completely normal. You haven’t had a heart attack. Go see your psychiatrist.”
“I’m not crazy!” I insisted, never realizing that being crazy and suffering from panic
disorder are not related.
The Depths

I made the appointment to see my psychiatrist the moment I returned from a dive trip in Cozumel. Despite doing what I loved, I was very uncomfortable. My wetsuits no longer fit and I was forced to dive in shorts only. I didn’t mind the cold, just the embarrassment. I was assigned to head up the back of the group. The divemasters knew me, and knew that I was qualified to take the place of their missing guide.

The Santa Rosa wall is stunning. After a brief swim from a sand bank about 50 feet below the boat, you are suddenly met with an seemingly endless drop-off. The coral wall descends into the ocean, as the cyan blue waters turn jet-black. To some, the thought of being suspended above certain death by only your BC (the inflatable backpack-looking device that holds your scuba tanks) and a pair of fins is a bit too much to handle. I never gave it a second thought—that is, until now.

Around 65 feet down, I started to feel quite uncomfortable. I attributed it to being a bit narced from the day before. “Narc” is slang for the condition known as nitrogen narcosis, the state in which the body reacts to the excess nitrogen in the blood. Reactions range from euphoria to panic. I would usually get a bit narced when passing 100 feet, but nothing that simple panic techniques couldn’t resolve.

I dropped below the group to observe some coral. I began to feel pressure on me, which is unusual despite the pressure of the water at depth. I glanced at my depth gauge and noticed I had dropped to 122 feet. I felt a brief surge of panic, just like on the plane. I dismissed it as fear of depth, as I rarely like to go under 100 feet unless necessary due to my sensitivity to nitrogen narcosis. I’ve been much deeper, but did not like the experience.

I kicked up to 118 feet when it happened—another full-blown panic attack.

Sitting on your couch, a panic attack is completely debilitating. You cannot power your way out of it no matter how strong you are or how brave. However, at 118 feet of water, a blue vacuum that can quickly become a watery grave, a panic attack is a visit to hell with pandemonium as your tour guide.

My first reaction, despite my years of training and experience, was again to get out. My second reaction, after kicking like a madman for 35 feet, was to stop,
think and chant, “Ten minutes or ten years.” I taught myself this mantra in case of emergencies. I had used it only one previous time when I ran out of air on a night dive in 85 feet of water. Surprisingly, that time I was calm all the way back up, knowing that the remaining air in my lungs would expand from the lack of pressure and give me enough to live on.

Why the mantra? When you dive for a prolonged period of time at depths of 60 feet or more, you must do what’s called a safety stop. Assuming you haven’t been under 100 feet, this is usually just a three to five minute hang at fifteen feet of water to allow the nitrogen in your blood to expel itself harmlessly into the tissues. This prevents what is known as the bends, or nitrogen bubbles in the blood. Picture blowing into a straw that’s in a glass of water—that’s what your blood would look like if you had the bends.

Longer decompression times are required for deeper dives, and I knew I had to do at least ten minutes, no matter how bad I wanted to surface. The ten years refers to the time it would take to recover from a bout of the bends if you were lucky enough to survive it. The ten years would not be needed, as the mantra paid off. I stopped at 45 feet. I surfaced moments later without harm, and angrier than a school of barracuda.

Tears of rage and relief flowed down my face. The terror subsided, but I realized I was alone in the middle of the sea. The dive boat was far away as it awaited the group to surface. Thirty more minutes of anxiousness and drifting lay ahead of me. Under me, there was only the blue I once called my second home.

The Promise
If I were a gambling man, I’d wager that everyone makes promises in situations like this. Mine was more of a declaration to God and the universe—I just screamed, “Enough!” Various expletives I cannot recall must surely have embellished my one-word oath.

At 35, I knew my life was still just beginning. I also knew that life would end before 40 unless I made some radical changes in this “style” I called a life. It took this near-death experience to wake me up to the facts I actually knew so clearly.

I was grossly obese, riddled with hormonal and adrenal problems, and eating whatever I found appealing—completely driven by my senses. I vowed to change this once and for all. No matter what, just as in my youth, I would apply the Driving Point Principle. This was the largest mountain I had yet to climb. I thought I knew what to do, but contrary to popular belief, knowledge is not power. Only the application of knowledge is power.
I realized I had to begin my life-long journey by navigating the space *between my ears*. My mind had to change before my body and my health would follow. Unknown to me at the time, I was about to discover the secrets to a lifetime of health, fitness and freedom. ::
The blue hues faded to an obsidian-like black, as if the water itself was telling me a story of birth from below. The depths were not my enemy, but a mind with forbidden fear.

Jon Benson; *Depths*
Mind Matters

*Principles of inner transformation*

What do you want?

The question sounds rather pedestrian, doesn’t it? I’d like you to take a few minutes to think about it thoroughly. What *exactly* do you want? Feel free to limit this to the realm of physical fitness, or expand it if you wish.

I’m waiting…

Okay, I’ll assume you did this exercise. If you were like me, *most of your answers are probably wrong*. I know that’s a strong statement, but I’ve conducted this exercise for years and have yet to receive correct answers! Give your list another run-through. Ask yourself, “Do I really want to…”

— Lose weight?  — Never be fat again?
— Gain muscle?   — Be ‘thin’?
— Look like (celebrity name here)?  — Have more flexibility?
— Have more energy?  — Be young again?

There’s really nothing wrong with these statements from an intentional point of view. However, I quickly discovered that I had to become crystal clear as to what I wanted in order to transform my body and my health. Anything less that *absolute clarity* led to disappointing results.

We’ll use points from above to demonstrate this next principle—a principle on which I founded my *M-Power Program*. It’s universal—unlike a diet or a training program, this principle is more like a law. It cannot fail. Only *we* can fail it.

*This is the principle of The Core.*
The Core

The Core is a combination of our mental, physical, emotional and spiritual make-up that literally makes us who we are. The Core is supported by our Core values. Without these values, unique to all of us, The Core would not exist.

There are many ways to describe The Core and Core values, but the best I’ve found is this: the only things we would live and die for. Core values are usually one-word descriptions of what we consider to be the most important things in the universe. Everything we have in our lives, whether good or bad, can be traced back to The Core. We attract the things we don’t want because our minds, usually without our conscious permission, have mistakenly linked them to one of our Core values. I call this approach to life existing on autopilot. If left to its own devices, our subconscious mind, a storehouse of every memory, scent, smell and notion in our lives since birth, will take over as conductor.

Realizing Your Personal Core Values

Please take out some paper and let’s get some of your Core values written down. Here are some examples, as most Core values are universal in nature:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Peace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longevity</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulfillment</td>
<td>Ambition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>Invention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Strength</td>
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Notice that wealth or good looks are not on our brief list. This is because we don’t really want wealth—we want the things that wealth has to offer. We want freedom (financial and personal), joy (as wealth can provide moments of joy, not joy itself), security, etc. Elvis was wealthy beyond means, yet he died in absolute misery. Mother Theresa was utterly poor, yet she died in absolute bliss. I believe she was far more wealthy than Elvis because she lived her life from her Core.
values, not from the *illusions* our society creates that can masquerade as Core values. You don’t want ‘good looks’, but rather to feel *confident* and *accepted*. Or, perhaps *beauty*, which goes far beyond outward appearances.

**Putting The Core To Work**

Let’s look at just one of the examples mentioned earlier: *I want to lose weight.*

“Do I just want to lose weight, or a specific type of weight? If I just want to lose physical pounds, I could undress, or perhaps cut off my arms. That’s not a good strategy—one will get me arrested in public, the other will be hard to accomplish without dying in the process! Obviously I want to lose *unwanted* body weight. What is that? Well, fat...but no muscle! I know I need muscle to sustain my energy and improve the way my body looks. So, I really want to lose unwanted, unneeded body fat. That’s good. Now, how much body fat do I want to lose? Certainly not ‘all’ of it, otherwise I’d be 3% body fat year-round. Hmm...I want to lose...let’s say...*45 pounds of unwanted body fat.*”

This is the first step to clarity—and clarity leads to *certainty*.

We took our rather ambiguous goal of losing weight and made it much more specific: “I want to lose 45 pounds of unwanted body fat.” Isn’t that much more powerful, more specific to what you desire? Now, let’s take another quantum leap—let’s use our words to create the results we are *really* after.

**Words Become Worlds**

I coined this phrase in one of my TTP-90 workshops by accident. I was explaining the power of language, quoting legendary bodybuilder Frank Zane’s research on the subject. Frank studied the impact of certain phrases on people’s physiology. He used two examples: “pain in the butt” and “pain in the neck.”

Frank discovered that an overwhelming number of people who used the phrase “pain in the butt” developed *actual hemorrhoids!* As ridiculous as it sounds, it’s true. Similar physical manifestations occurred in people using the phrase “pain in the neck”—they developed neck pains, headaches and required more chiropractic treatment than people who did not use such terminology.

During that workshop, I tossed out the phrase, “Our words literally become our world.” A light bulb in my head went off, and the phrase has been one of my power statements ever since. *Our words create worlds.*
Let’s take a closer look at how powerful this word play can be. It goes far beyond semantics and into the realm of how the subconscious functions. First, you must realize and accept the fact that the subconscious mind does not know fact from fiction. Our waking perception of reality is a function of consciousness, and is why dreams make very little sense most of the time. Understanding this fact will empower you to use language more carefully, especially when constructing goals, affirmations and power statements. The last thing we want to do is upload a bad command into the brain—but that is exactly what we’re doing when we use expressions that contain negative connotations.

Just think of all the disempowering phrases you hear almost every day:

I would DIE if...
I’m starving.
I’m worthless.
That makes me sick.
I am craving...
I can’t stand...

I hate...
I love...
I’m fat.
I don’t have the time.
That makes me crazy.
I’m tired of...

And thousands more just like it.

There are also combinations of disempowering phrases, such as:

“i’ll die unless we eat soon...i’m starving!”
“I can’t stand being fat...it makes me sick!”

If you really want to transform your body, you must first transform your mind—and you cannot do this without transforming how you speak.

Dissecting A Goal

Let’s dissect our goal even further to uncover the hidden disempowering terms. Our fictitious goal is now specific: “I want to lose 45 pounds of unwanted body fat.” You may look at this and see nothing wrong with it.

How does the term “lose” resonate with you?

Take it out of context (as your subconscious mind will do) and only consider the word lose. Does it generate a positive or negative sensation? Probably negative—in fact, the vast majority of people associate the word lose with loss. Your Core values do not include loss, but rather security, or perhaps power. What do we equate the word loss with? Here are a few examples:
— Death
— Losing as opposed to winning
— Being a loser.
— A personally descriptive term rather than an objective desire (something you are or experience rather than something you do).

None of these are what any of us would call empowering thoughts. So, how can we revise our goal and avoid the word loss? Consider this: “I will discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat.” A bit more powerful, isn’t it? Another word you may consider is release, a term suggested by hypnotherapists to let go of negative associations. “I will release 45 pounds of unwanted body fat.” Release taps powerfully into the Core value of freedom.

During my coaching sessions, I always insist on total honesty. When I mention this in my M-Power Audios, my clients report feeling a bit stunned, as if to say, “What else would you expect us to do? Lie?” Within the first thirty minutes, however, they get it—and they usually laugh. A client might say “Jon, I just could not make it to the gym yesterday, so…” to which I reply “Do you mean, ‘I did not manage my time as well as I normally do, so I didn’t make it to the gym yesterday’?”

Hooked On Phonics

Here are a few more examples that will raise your eyebrows. Think of the phrase, “I want to lose weight.” In the word/world scenario, we must also consider phonics—the sound of words. Since our subconscious mind hears words, using words that sound like others can cause more confusion than clarity.

Consider the sound of the word “weight.” It sounds like wait. Your mind is hearing, “I want to lose wait.” And you wonder why you procrastinate! Procrastination can almost always be linked by to the language we use when speaking to ourselves. Another example is the word diet. What does this sound like? Die! No wonder we hate the term, as well as the process. Now, look at how interesting the word full becomes. Phonically speaking, full is the first sound we hear in the word fulfillment, which just so happens to be one of the most powerful of human Core values. It is also how one might describe a meal—very fulfilling. A double-whammy, as a meal can never truly be fulfilling in a lasting sense. You’re literally training your subconscious to consider food as a source of fulfillment. A meal can be excellent, but it should never be considered fulfilling.

It’s been said that the most important conversation we’ll ever have is with our self. This is not semantics—it’s how we build our reality and our world. Try it. See how life starts to subtly change when you begin to use empowering language.

Additional Goal-Setting Strategies
Additional Goal-Setting Strategies

Very few people write down their goals in life. A famous Harvard graduate study showed that those who wrote down their financial goals (less than 10% of the participants) were wealthier than the remaining 90%, fifty years after the fact, combined. That's the power of clarity.

We must become a bit more focused on our target if we want to hit it. Think of this as aiming a bow and arrow. Our first aim, that of losing weight, was like pointing a half-cocked bow in the general direction of the target. Your odds of hitting the target are remote, let alone nailing the bull's-eye. That's why we must now refine our goal, or target, with some specifics.

When do I want this to happen?
I want to discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat in three days!

Obviously, this needs some tweaking. It's important to set goals that are realistic. A realistic fat-loss goal is about a pound per week, give or take a pound. So:

When do I want this to happen?
I want to discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat over the next year.

Great! That gives you 52 weeks to discard 45 pounds—very manageable. We can even improve on the timetable as we progress. For now, just be content that you took greater aim. You lifted the bow up to your eye line and aimed toward the bull's-eye.

How is this going to happen?
Well, I can't eat pizza every night if I want to discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat in one year, so I must follow a nutrition program—but one that I can stick to. It would also be a good idea to exercise.

This is the foundation of strategy. We'll cover exercise strategies in Chapter 3 and nutritional strategies in Chapter 4. For now, be content that we've discovered the basic means of achieving what we want—we need to rethink our daily nutrition and incorporate exercise into our week. From there, we will dissect the strategies even further. The words diet and exercise are no different than losing weight—they are unclear and out of focus.

When I started my personal transformation, this is as far as I traveled in my mind. It would be another year before I applied the power of the next principle, making quantum leaps in gains and securing a life-long mastery attitude toward all my goals and dreams. It is overlooked in almost every book on the subject, yet I've found it to be the most important element to consider when setting out to
achieve anything in life. This is the heart and soul of living a Core-based life. Are you ready?

**Why?**

“Why do I want to discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat in 52 weeks?” It almost sounds silly to ask why, doesn’t it? But it’s not—in fact, repeatedly asking this question will take you on a journey from a mere desire to the Core value this desire represents. Once there, you can leverage this Core value to its utmost, giving you almost unlimited motivation and empowerment to achieve it.

“Why?” is such a simple question that you really have to wonder why we stopped asking it! Here’s my theory. I’m not a parent yet, but I look forward to the days when I am. I just hope I’m a bit more patient with my kids than my dad was with me. Don’t get me wrong—my dad was the absolute best father a kid could want. But he wasn’t too keen on the infamous kiddy question, why.

“Why is the sky blue, daddy?”

“I don’t know...God made it that way.”

“Why did He do that, daddy?”

“I don’t know—I guess God likes blue.”

“If God likes blue, then why is the sky sometimes dark?”

“Because God has all kinds of colors...just like your crayons do.”

“Oh.”

(My dad sighs a bit of relief, thinking the crayon comment would either appease me or cause me to start coloring and be quiet.)

“Then why is the sky never green, daddy?”

“WILL YOU STOP ASKING ‘WHY’ JON? PLEASE??”

Somewhere down the line we just stopped asking “why?” all the time. I think this is partially due to the fact we were told to STOP asking it—at the top of our parent’s lungs! Perhaps it’s also because we no longer saw a need to ask it.

Mostly, we stopped because it’s hard.
We don’t mind asking ourselves the easy ‘why?’ questions, such as, “Why are you late?” or, “Why am I so fat?” Those are commonplace. Ask your brain a question, and it will answer it. This is the way the mind functions. It’s the most sophisticated computer in existence, and it will do what we ask of it. Asking, “Why am I so fat?” may render answers like, “Because you’re a lazy person!” Incorrect, perhaps, yet disempowering for certain.

It’s a really good idea to start asking ideal questions. I also refer to these as power questions—questions that challenge the mind to produce transformational answers. Why just ask yourself, “How can I make it to the gym today?” when you can ask, “How can I go to the gym and get in the best training session of my life, enjoying every minute of it?”

Before we get into ideal questioning, let’s look at why the mind is not satisfied with a mere set of goals and instructions. Once again, we’ll pay a visit to yesterday—our childhood. Do you remember your mom or dad ever saying to you “Because I said so!”? I’m sure you do—it’s the fall-back of all modern parenting! After a bout of endless questions, the “I said so” solution must rear its rather ugly head if normal life and volume is to ever return.

Since we hated that answer as kids, what makes us believe we’d like it any better as adults? We don’t—but that’s exactly what a command without a reason triggers in the mind. We go back to those days when we cringed and kicked and screamed and muttered under our breaths, “Because you say so…phhhhhhttttt!” Even as a child, we know there must be more to the equation that that. And, there is—it’s now our job as adults to look for it. This process of searching is what I call The Why Highway. Ready for a quick trip?

The Autobahn of Why

We’ll be taking the fast track to clarity today. It all begins with our simple, one-word question “Why?” Let’s go back to our fictitious goal to see how The Why Highway acts like a massive mental filter; a siphon from the general to the specific, and eventually to the actual Core value each goal represents.

Why do I want to discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat in a year?
Because I don’t like the way I look!

Why do I not like the way 45 pounds of unwanted body fat looks?
Well, that’s a dumb question! Let’s see...because society favors people who are thin, I guess.
Why do you care about society’s standards?
I don’t actually...at least not that much.

So why do you really want to discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat in a year?
Well, I do want to look better...but I really want to feel better. I want to have more energy and feel like I can wear anything I want and be comfortable. I want to have more control over my life and the course I’m taking. I also don’t want to die young, and...

Slow down! One at a time!
Oh...sorry.

Why do you want to feel better?
Doesn’t everyone? Oh...okay, that’s not a good answer. Well, feeling better means I’ll have more time in my day because I’ll spend less time on the couch. I’ll be able to go places and do things I’ve always wanted to do.

Why do you want this mobility, and why do you require more time in the day?
Because mobility and more time to do things I really love is like freedom to me.

What you really wanted is freedom, and freedom is one of the most powerful of all Core values. It’s something we would all live and die for. Would you die for the cause of releasing 45 unwanted pounds of fat? Most of us probably wouldn’t, although some of the diets we follow may tell a different story. However, you would sacrifice your life for freedom.

You now realize that you feel imprisoned in your body, and that your 45 pounds of unwanted body fat is literally the cage that holds you back from experiencing life as you feel it should be lived. You may not be a literal prisoner, but you have unwillingly built a cell from which you must escape. The mind does not fully distinguish between differing degrees of your Core values. They are either being fulfilled or ignored. If we ignore them, we feel pain. That pain is often called cognitive dissonance, or mental noise.

Isn’t that what being overweight and out of control feels like? Can’t you feel the noise inside—the rampant confusion, the lack of control, the pain of submission to something you do not voluntarily bow down to?

Progress Check
Let’s just take a look back at this one simple desire we had at the beginning of the chapter and see how far we’ve come:
— I want to lose weight.
— I really want to lose body fat.
— I want to lose a specific type of body fat...unwanted body fat.
— I want to discard a specific amount of unwanted body fat...45 pounds.
— I want to discard 45 pounds of unwanted body fat within a specific time—one year.
— I want to accomplish this because I want to look and feel better.
— Looking and feeling better will give me more energy, and I’ll be more comfortable in my own skin.
— I will become more mobile when I discard and release this unwanted body fat.
— I will have freedom from the prison of my own making, and freedom is one of my most precious Core values.

It’s important to note that each goal can and should have multiple Core values assigned to its source. For example, you will probably discover that you want to lose body fat so that you will feel sexier and become more pleasing to your mate. This is both a desire to give and a need for greater intimacy. Both contribution and intimacy are very strong Core values.

Core Illusions

While I believe we must take full responsibility for whatever exists in our lives, it wasn’t stupidity that caused me to pursue the avenues that led me to obesity and ill health. I fell victim to my own Core illusions. Ignorance and stupidity are two different things. Every one of us can fall into the trap of ignorance. Just as we can think sex equals love, or money equal happiness, so too can we think that eating universally equals pleasure, and loss universally equals pain. You’re about to see how powerful this is, and a few of you may be doing a Homer Simpson-like “D’oh!” before this chapter is finished. That’s fine—I did a hundred “D’oh!”s, to the point where my head hurt!

My Core illusions were wealth, vanity, sex, power (while ‘power’ can be a core value, it is not for me), control, and speed (as in quickness, not the drug). If you take only a cursory glance over your goals, it’s easy to get trapped in the quagmire of Core illusions. They’re often much easier to deal with, and they seem reasonable enough until analyzed. For example, changing my body was at one time an issue of sheer vanity. I wanted to look my very best so I could attract the woman of my dreams, so I would be a more efficient salesman for my business, and so I could look at myself and say, “Hey, check it out!” After all, since sex sells, why not make myself sexier? That will equate to more money and sexual attraction. I also wanted to control my life. While I’ve never been a control freak in the sense that

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I wish to control others, I most certainly wanted to control my own life, security, circumstances, health and destiny.

Most of us equate sexiness or attraction with youth. At the time, I was no different. The thought of being hot at 60 never even crossed my mind—I just wanted to be hot right now! Unwittingly, I limited my goals to the here and now. Without trying, I set a time limit on my desires for my ultimate body. Love is a huge Core value, and since I didn’t link my physical goals to any of my Core values, I was a goner once love came to town.

I was not specific in terms of wealth, either. I did not specify the type of wealth I desired. Yes, I desired monetary wealth, but moreover, I wanted freedom and security. Once I obtained certain physical attributes of wealth, such as a new Porsche or a huge loft overlooking downtown Dallas, my momentary illusion was fulfilled, and my desires for physical training and good nutrition waned yet again.

Sex is a no-brainer—sex alone was never fulfilling to me. Call me a strange guy, or simply blame my Christian roots, but I always knew that mere physical contact with the opposite sex was not what I truly wanted. I longed for the ultimate connection—intimacy on all levels.

Speed kills. Impatience and I are old companions—and I’m filing for divorce! It comes with the territory of being an only child, and our society certainly doesn’t help matters. We have everything at our fingertips—all the necessities and much more. We don’t hunt our food—we shop for it. We can get instant “sex” on the web or TV, we can rent a movie without ever leaving the house, we can enter a chat room and meet someone new within seconds—all the while having dinner cooking in the microwave at blistering speed.

My training and diet were governed by the need for speed. I overtrained, trying to gain as much muscle as fast as I could. I soon learned to back off—but even then, I trained with such intensity that I burned out very quickly. My diet was radical—whatever it took. I just cut the calories and tried to get the fat off fast. I ended up with disappointment, as fat can only burn so quickly. Speed put an end to many of my well-laid plans.

Last on the list is control. I’m here to tell you that control is the ultimate illusion. It does not exist in any shape or form, yet most of us desire some form of it. We are literally seeking a ghost, so it’s no wonder we’re disappointed quite a bit in life. Control is philosophically impossible to obtain.

Someone may say, “I can control if I go to work or not.” No, you cannot. You can only make the effort to go to work. You may be involved in a car accident on the
way to work, forcing you to go home or perhaps to the hospital. You may show up and find yourself fired—perhaps your whole department relegated to the world of downsizing.

All things of true importance are ultimately out of our control. However, all things are manageable. One of the power statements I encourage my clients to say to themselves time and time again is this: “I control nothing. I manage everything.” Try it and see what happens. This power statement can change your life the moment you accept it as the truth. This power statement is also a double-entendre. You can manage everything, as in sorting out and organizing strategies, plus you can manage everything, meaning that you can accomplish whatever you desire.

Core Levers
Core levers are statements that you create which cite your goal and your reasons why you desire it. They are what I call the “ultimate power tools.” Each lever must apply to one or more of your Core Values. Just as you would use a physical lever, like a car jack to empower you to lift something that would otherwise be impossible, you can use Core levers to empower you to achieve any goal. It’s a way of lifting what once seemed like a mountain, like losing fifty pounds or regaining your health at any age, with a fraction of the perceived effort.

Let me give you an example. I asked a client to make a list of goals prior to writing out his Core values. This is my usual practice, as it allows people to see a rather instant transformation, as the things they think they want transform into what they really want. My client cited “a six-pack” as one of his goals. (His reference was to well-defined abdominal muscles, not the liquid bread consumed while watching football games.)

We then began the process of defining his Core values. Family was near the top of his list—a very common Core value and one that makes for tremendous Core lever creation. I asked him to be more specific with his description of family. “My son, in particular. I’m a single dad, and all my 12-year-old son sees is a fat, old man.” I assured him that his son saw more than this, but he protested. “I’ve seen how he looks at me. He wants to look up to me, not down.” Now that was a profound statement.

I walked my client through a process of using the powerful force of being a role model to his son to create a series of Core levers. We were to use the goal of “seeing my abs” and link it to the Core value of family. You can see how each lever statement became more and more powerful, eventually reaching the lever that would trigger his success:
— Family is important to me, so my health should be important, too.
— My obesity reflects my lack of love for myself, and I’m part of this family.
— My obesity prevents me from spending time and energy with my only son.
— My only son is directly affected by my obesity.
— I will feel more like bonding with my son if I am lean and healthy.
— My son will look up to me as a role model if he sees a dad who is engaged in life, active, and physically fit.
— One of the signs of being physically fit for me is being able to see my abs, and my son would love to say, “My dad has stomach muscles!” to his friends.
— Achieving my goal of 6% body fat will immeasurably enhance my relationship with my son, helping him on a course away from junk food, and giving him a real-life hero to look up to.

What do you think is more of a compelling goal—“I want to see my abs,” or the final Core lever? “Seeing my abs” may work short-term, but Core levers will never fail him. The larger goal of being a role model to his son became the vehicle rather than the destination. So, in one sentence, there is a destination and a long-term vehicle, both of which emphasize what was wanted and what was ultimately needed.

Here’s another tip—you will find that the more people you can link to a Core lever, the more power the lever will have. I call this process “making your goal larger than you are.” One person can be sufficient if that person is very important to you. However, levers that allow you to see yourself as an important contribution to society are even more powerful.

Let me give you a few examples of Core lever statements, then I encourage you to create your own. Use these as templates if you want, and remember—Core lever statements must carry the power of true emotion with them in order to be effective.

**Core Value: Love**

**Core Levers**
— I am more capable and enthusiastic about sharing and receiving love when I’m fit and vibrant!
— In order to love my spouse fully, I now seek to give (him/her) the best me I can. I therefore will train five days per week in the gym so that my energy and body are both at their very best.
— I love myself when I look at my body and feel great about it, as I cannot love others unless I truly love myself!
— I desire to be loved as a whole person—not just for my mind and soul, but also for my body, energy, and zest for living. I want nothing less for the person I plan to make happy!
Core Value: Freedom
Core Levers
— I experience ultimate freedom only when I can do whatever I desire physically. Therefore I will plan my daily schedule to include a sound diet and exercise plan so my body will never imprison me!
— To me, freedom is feeling at home in my own skin, and I choose to be around the environment and people that daily help me take the path to physical vitality.
— I will gladly and passionately free myself from obesity!

Core Value: Security
Core Levers
— The most secure I can be in life is to know I can power through it. Any type of challenge can be overcome when I pursue my health and my strength!
— Discarding forty pounds of unwanted body fat will allow me to work smarter, faster and more efficiently—therefore I will increase my wealth and the time I have to enjoy it!
— Nothing can take away my desire and my path toward life-long fitness—it is the essence of security.

I hope these few samples help you to create Core levers that match up with your own value system.

The Driving Point
Now that you know where you want to go, specifically how you want to get there, and why you’re making the journey, it’s time to set the Driving Point (DP)—the point of focus from which you will not remove your eyes no matter what.

When you drive your car, you automatically set numerous driving points from point A to point B. The path from where you are now in life to where you want to be is no different, and requires a similar strategy—never removing your eyes from your intended target. Core illusions are enemies of DP, and can cause all but the most committed travelers wasted time down roads that quickly turn into mazes. It’s too easy in our world to become distracted, which is the opposite of certainty.

Let’s take a common scenario and see how the application of DP can help overcome just about any distraction. Back to our fictitious goal—discarding 45 pounds of unwanted body fat in twelve months. You will need to create smaller goals to support your larger goal. I refer to these goals strategies and outcomes. A strategy may be, “I will lift weights three days a week.” I would recommend that
you break this down into specifics, such as duration, body parts worked, lifting techniques, etc. (These strategies are addressed in multiple ways throughout Fit Over 40, including my chapter on exercise.) An outcome might be, “I will discard five pounds of body fat and increase my muscle mass by three pounds in ten weeks.” Many positive small outcomes result in a goal achieved.

Now, let’s create a fictitious scenario. It’s Thursday, and you’re a bit tired. You worked out hard yesterday, and you know that you have a brief but challenging cardio session coming up as you drive home from work. Because you’ve been eating in a way that allows your body to discard unwanted body fat, it’s natural that distractions on the way home—familiar sign posts leading you back to your former life—may catch your eye. One in particular begins a thought process that goes something like this:

“I really am hungry for something off my diet…man, those Golden Arches are like a beacon in the night! I wonder what would happen if I moved my planned off-meal from Friday to tonight? I do have plans with my friends for a fun night out on Friday, but how much harm could one additional off-meal do? Besides, that burger sounds so good!”

You then proceed to do a U-turn and wolf down that burger, along with some fries. You convince yourself that you’ll make it up with a longer session of cardio. (Of course, there’s no way you’ll burn 1,000 calories in one cardio session, but you still rationalize it’s better than nothing.) By the time you get home, the fat and sugar-laden meal is hitting your small intestine and endorphins are rushing to your brain, demanding that you sit down or sleep. You decide you’ll hit the cardio after an hour of TV, which become two hours, and then three. You vow to hit it hard tomorrow, and write this off as just a bad day.

Please realize that the story above does not represent total failure. We are only human and all of us make mistakes along the way. However, one of the reasons we make those mistakes is distraction. The reason we’re easily distracted has to do with the brain’s inability to focus on one thing for a prolonged period of time. The key to winning the battle is arming yourself with positive distractions, which I call Core reminders. You can then shift your thoughts from the primary goal to one of several secondary goals, Core levers or power statements.

First, ask yourself this. What were you thinking about on the way home? In other words, what was your dominant thought? Was it your workouts, your Core levers, your future accomplishments—or was it that darned burger? As simple as this sounds, the reason you turned around was because you took your eyes and mind off your Driving Point and focused intently on a Core illusion—the illusion of fulfillment. That burger sounded fulfilling—so much so that you were willing to
ruin the rest of your night for it. What would have happened had you focused instead on your DP—in this case, your upcoming cardio workout and healthy meal at home? Believe me, it’s easier than you think to pull this off. Don’t think you can do it? Well, let’s replay the above scenario with a few outlandish curve balls tossed in, just to prove that it’s your Driving Point that’s the issue, not your lack of will power or personal weakness.

Same situation—you’re driving home and you see the Golden Arches. Right before you make your U-turn, your spouse calls you. He/she informs you that the kitchen is on fire and the fire department is on its way. What do you think the odds are of you making that U-turn?

Let’s have some more fun with this—say you’re making the U-turn when you hear a trivia question on the radio. The DJ says if you call in the answer within five minutes, you’ll win tickets to a concert that you really want to see. However, you realize you left your cell phone at the office…but you’re only three minutes from home. Now, toss in this—the tenth caller wins $100,000. What do you do now?

You see, there are hundred examples that would keep you from that compelling U-turn. All are based on your Core values—the levers are just automatic. The first example deals with security, love and protection. The second deals with pleasure, adventure and monetary security. The larger the lever, the less likely it is for you to deviate from your Driving Point.

Before I tell you how you can create multiple thought weapons against distraction, let me give you a perfect example of the ultimate in Core reminders. The 1985 film *Cat’s Eye* had a disturbing segment, starring James Woods as a struggling smoker trying to kick the habit. (Since the film was based on a Stephen King novel, you can see where this might be going.) Woods’ character decides to visit a “clinic” called “Quitter’s Inc.” They promise 100% satisfaction—and they do so by using Core levers and reminders in a most powerful and dark manner. Basically, Woods is subjected to threats against his wife and child if he so much as picks up a cigarette. After trying to cheat and seeing the horrible consequences, Woods becomes a non-smoker—and fast! We can indeed manage our vices and our distractions if the Core value’s price tag is high enough.

Universal Vision

Here’s how you can make your DP the clear focus at all times. Note in our example that you basically had a choice between Item A and Item B. A was the burger and fries, B the cardio and healthy meal at home. But what if you were to have multiple options to Item A? I call this “Universal Vision,” and it gives you the
choice of viewing multiple exits as you drive down the path toward your DP. Using Universal Vision, Item B becomes:

— Cardio work that will help energize me and take me one step closer to my first successful outcome;
— A healthy meal that allows me to share my day in the company of my family;
— An increase of energy after the cardio will allow me some more time to play with my son, who means the world to me;
— My training for the next few days will be far more rewarding by my choice to stick to my plan;
— I will save money by eating at home—and, if I save just two dollars a day, we can afford to send our son to the college of his choice.
— My very Core demands integrity, and integrity is more valuable than any food could ever be.
— Just think...a mere thirty minutes of cardio and I’ll burn fat, feel better, and even feel more like being intimate with my spouse! I can also stop by the store and pick up some sugar-free Jell-O and put some real cream on top for a special treat after dinner.

You may be thinking that it’s too difficult to have all these thoughts run through your head in a matter of seconds. It does take some practice, and that’s why I encourage this simple strategy to help you along. Write your top Core values, Core levers and immediate Outcomes on a 3x5 note card and carry it with you wherever you go. Other than planned free meals (more on that in Chapter 4), each time you feel distracted, pull this card out and read your values and levers. Then ask yourself one question: “Is the food (or whatever you’re wanting to do or not to do) more important than my Core at this very moment? Chances are your cravings will immediately diminish. If you can honestly answer “yes”, then have your food or skip the workout. Deal?

Soon you’ll find that it’s automatic to make these decisions, just as it was automatic for you to rush home when you thought your kitchen was on fire. There’s no difference in the mental processes—only in the circumstances.

**Role Modeling**

Now that you have all the mental tools in place, it’s time to select proper role models. These are individuals that you connect with, who are similar to you genetically or in temperament, and who you can follow or learn from as you pursue your own goals.

I will now explain how and why I selected the role models I did and what I gained from each. I will also cover the three step-by-step processes you’ll undergo as

When I began my transformation, my first inclination was to pick role models who had been through similar medical and physical experiences. They didn’t need to be obese per-se, merely *unnaturally fit* as I like to refer to it—someone to whom fitness did not come as a birthright.

The first call I made was to Jay Robb. Jay is a San Diego-based clinical nutritionist, and I knew from reading his book *The Fat Burning Diet* years earlier that he had gone through some health issues during his quest for fitness. Jay was very kind, and he could hear the concern in my voice when I called. He gave me specific advice on what he would do if he were in my shoes. It resonated deeply within me and I felt an immediate dismissal of confusion. It was almost as if I knew what he was going to say—I just needed to hear him say it.

Though applying Jay’s model, I realized I wanted to add another component to my fitness goals—*longevity.* Longevity had never really been an issue for me, yet I routinely found myself reading and respecting the “old school” guys. Men like trainer Vince Gironda, bodybuilder Frank Zane, and old-time nutritionist Leo H. Blair appealed to me. I discovered that I wanted this feeling to last *for a lifetime,* not for a season.

My appeal toward the old school came from another of my Core values—*wisdom.* My father grew up in the days of these men, so it’s no wonder I would gravitate toward them. Plus, I always knew that the information in most of the modern magazines was far from realistic for the average person. They are usually out to sell supplements and subscriptions. I began my search for a role model of this nature, and I found such a man in Clarence Bass, “Mr. Ripped.”

Adding Clarence to my role model list was a huge step for me. He had a physical structure that was unlike mine, but I knew the results he had achieved were reasonable and obtainable. While he had never been obese or ill, he wasn’t naturally ripped (meaning very lean), and yet he had maintained single-digit body fat for over 25 years. That’s impressive! I always liked his no-nonsense style of writing, as well as his emphasis on my first-love training protocol—high intensity training. That’s right—the “lazy man’s training” had proven to work well for Bass.

I made an appointment to speak with Clarence on the phone. I was about to learn that his style of writing was matched by his gruff and surly conversational tone.
“What the hell are you trying to do man, kill yourself?” Bass exclaimed, after he saw my “before/after/before again” pictures. I waited for some laughter, but I was met with silence. “No sir, not really.” “Well, it sure looks like it. What’s your problem?” I was just about ready to hang up when Clarence said, “What gives? You looked like a movie star when you were thirty!” Compliments will get some people everywhere—and, while I doubted the validity of the comment, I was happy that he saw something worthwhile in me other than a suicidal dieter!

Our conversation was blunt and to the point, yet Clarence was more than generous with his time. He also spoke words I already knew, yet I wanted to know how he reasoned his way to where he was, how he approached his day and his training, and what kept him going.

During the next several months, I committed myself to branching out and finding different role models while keeping the core of what I had learned from Bass and Robb. I would choose these models based on differing qualities. Some were selected solely on their physiques—their builds were close to mine, but superior in muscle size and shape. They were icon models—a destination to shoot for, but not too unrealistic. I chose trainer Roger Applewhite, who graced the cover of many a fitness magazine, and Shawn Phillips, brother of Bill Phillips (author of Body For Life). Shawn’s physique is stunning, but not too over-the-top. Roger and Shawn made ideal role models for other reasons as well. Roger convinced me by his example that you can look great and full all year long. Shawn ended up a friend and business colleague.

I also wanted to change my approach to cardio. Roger was instrumental for this. He was an advocate of long duration, low intensity cardio—barely over walking in intensity, but long and done in a state of fasting, such as first thing in the morning. I knew Roger struggled to keep his waistline super-tight, so he would never waste his time on useless aerobic activity. I gave it a shot, and found it to work very well for me. However, another role model, author of the foreword to this book Dr. Richard Winett, inspired me to implement short, high-intensity cardio workouts just twice a week to compliment the longer, less intense fat-burning sessions. I listened to Richard for the same reasons as my other role models—he walked the walk. At 56, he maintains single-digit body fat. The combination worked wonders. I was able to drop to 9% body fat.

My journey from 9% to 6.5% was a combination of many different ideas that eventually became my own principles. In the chapters ahead, I will cover exactly what I did in order to achieve peak condition.
Stage 1: The Master Mind

The first stage of role modeling is a principle called *The Master Mind*. Coined by inspirational author Napoleon Hill in his masterpiece, “Law of Success,” the Master Mind (MM) is the theory that a third and greater mind forms when two people are linked by a common cause or goal. The MM increases exponentially when three or more people join in, which is why boardroom meetings can generate almost spontaneous creativity when the vibes are right. Perhaps you’ve noticed that many people seem to miraculously come up with the same idea in these settings. Hill would suggest that this is the MM principle at work—the thoughts of all the members, literally energy floating “about the ether,” as Hill said, are up for grabs. When tuned in, you grab them and go.

I realize it sounds a bit on the mystical side. However, it’s just the way the human mind works. Mozart was famous for claiming he didn’t actually write music, but rather “took dictation from God.” Many great ideas and inventions pop into the minds of the inventor at the most unexpected times. When two or three friends are discussing ideas and you can feel the energy between the exchanges, notice how fast new ideas are generated. Whatever the reason or cause, I believe in the MM as a practical principle.

Stage 2: The Law of Certainty

If you listened to my free audio on *The Law of Certainty*, you may already be familiar with this critical component of role modeling and transformation. In Chapter 1, I mentioned the need for clarity and certainty. It’s the reason we cannot select a diet or a training program, or even a path that’s right for us. We’re simply uncertain—and uncertainty is as good as failure.

Role modeling allows you to take a quantum leap in certainty. Seeing and hearing about another person with whom you connect will give you a path on which you can always look back and say, “I know it will work!”

Certainty’s power is simply off the chart. As Tom describes in Chapter 9, certainty is the reason people can take a drug meant to do one thing, only to have the opposite reaction take place. Their minds were convinced of the outcome, and the outcome simply happened. Black belts are certain their hand will pass through that board or block of ice. The slightest bit of uncertainty can result in broken bones.

You can become instantly certain once you find the role model or plan that clicks with you. *Fit Over 40* gives you plenty of great role models to choose from. Find the one or ones that you most relate to, and watch how quickly doubt can turn to certainty. Once applied, *certainty guarantees success.*
Stage 3: Personalization

The final stage of role modeling is one I briefly touched on—personalization. This is the process in which you take ownership of a principle, a nutritional plan, a workout strategy, or anything that your learning process has uncovered. You only keep that which you love, so personalization involves one of two scenarios—either converting something you like into something you love through alterations, or dismissing something that isn’t ‘you’ for something that is. Once certainty has taken place, personalization becomes a snap. Think about it—how much willpower does it require to do something you love? Do you have to muster up willpower to, say, take a shower? Make love to your mate? Watch your favorite movie? Training and nutrition needn’t be any different—really!

Perhaps you can replace an indoor cardio machine with inline skating if you’re more of the outdoor type. Or, maybe you can try eating the same meal plan backwards one day out of the week—why not? Whatever you can imagine and enjoy, do it. A client of mine invented his own brand of outdoor skates. He loved to rollerskate when he was a kid, but he hated the narrow wheels on inline skates. He took a pair of high-top basketball shoes, purchased some off-road trucks (the metal-like portion under the shoe that holds the wheels) and some heavy-duty wheels. He then took all these parts down to a local skate shop and asked the technician to build his outdoor roller skates. He now skates down outdoor trails just like he did when he was a kid at the roller rinks.

Fit Over 40 profiles one of the greatest “personalizers” in history—Dr. Len Schwartz, inventor of Heavy Hands. Len not only invented his own form of aerobic activity, he invented entire principles that changed the way people approached cardiovascular activity! It is no wonder he’s still working out at 80 years of age and still maintains incredibly low body fat level.

Feel fit for a Day—Right Now!

I’d like to close this chapter with an exercise I have many of my clients perform. Take out a sheet of paper and describe in vivid detail what a day in your ideal body would feel like. How would you awaken? What sensations would you experience as you showered, got dressed, ate breakfast? What would you eat and when? How would you choose to exercise that day? What activities would you do, and how would you react to others while doing them? The more detail you can manage, the more effective this exercise will be. Don’t forget to include your training and nutrition! Put this sheet of paper where you can see it every day.

Now, let’s cover the strategies I used to reach my own goals. We’ll start with my first love of fitness—exercise. :}
To resist the frigidity of old age one must combine the body, the mind and the heart-and to keep them in parallel vigor one must exercise, study and love.

Karl von Bonstetten
CHAPTER THREE

BodyWorks

Strength and strategy

My chapters on training and nutrition deal with my personal transformation. While many principles and ideologies could be footnoted with clinical studies, I have chosen to only cite books and role models. Due to the autobiographical nature of these two chapters, I will be leaving the science behind my reasoning up to the reader to discern, though all these principles can be supported by research.

As you read through the pages of Fit Over 40, you will find an almost unanimous viewpoint about weight training. A few of our role models have devised methods that circumvent the weight room, but for speed and efficiency, nothing beats hitting the iron when it comes to sculpting the body.

No Such Thing as “Toning”

Some of you may be concerned about becoming too muscular if you train with weights. Let me put that myth to rest quickly—it won’t happen. Many of the role models in this book may look bigger than they really are simply due to the fact they carry a low percentage of body fat. This makes the muscles appear larger in photographs. In peak shape, most people cannot tell I’m a bodybuilder unless I’m wearing shorts or a short-sleeved shirt. So put your mind at ease. It’s challenging enough to gain muscle when you crave it, let alone when you’re trying to avoid it! Everyone should train with weight if at all possible.

With that in mind, also realize that you cannot tone a muscle. “Tone” is a misnomer, created to sell the masses on weight training. Muscle either grows (anabolism, which promotes hypertrophy) or shrinks (catabolism, which promotes misery!) Homeostasis (a condition of biological stability) may exist in a lab or on the
cellular level, but it is practically non-existent in the gym. You can technically maintain muscle mass, yet it’s more likely that you’ll either slowly lose or gain muscle unless you know exactly how many calories you require on a weekly basis.

The toned look is actually a slight gain in muscle mass and a substantial decrease in body fat. Some people going through a transformation will literally weigh the same twelve weeks later, but they’ll look completely different. If you gain five pounds of muscle and discard five pounds of body fat, then you will weigh the same. However, you will have increased your RMR (resting metabolic rate), which means you can consume more food, and you’ll look like a different person. Quite a bargain, isn’t it?

Dr. Ellington Darden’s research on muscle building and RMR showed an increased caloric need of 37.5 calories per day for every pound of muscle gained. This is documented in his book, The Nautilus Diet. Gain ten pounds, and you’ll need 375 more calories of food just to maintain your weight. While figures vary, experts agree that 10-40 calories extra per pound of muscle is required to ‘feed’ the new tissue. Now you know why I love bodybuilding so much. Imagine what twenty pounds of muscle and twenty pounds of discarded fat will do to your appearance and your food intake! Also, this does not take into consideration the actual calories burned during your workouts, or the increase in thermogenesis (the rate at which the body uses heat to burn calories) that your lowered body fat levels and activity generate. When it’s all said and done, ten pounds of muscle can increase your caloric needs by 300-500 calories per day or more. You will literally need to eat more to lose body fat over the long haul, not less.

Other training methods, such as aerobics, Yoga, or Pilates, although fine adjuncts to fitness training, will not give you the body you want. The only exceptions are the genetically blessed, and chances are you’re not one of them. (They rarely read books on fitness.) I’m certainly not, and neither is Tom. You’re in good company, and we welcome you to the club.

Phase 1: Detox
Detoxifying the system was my first concern. My liver and intestinal tract were beat up prior to my transformation. I didn’t know enough about liver detox at the time to pursue a good strategy, but I was well aware of the need to cleanse the colon and digestive tract.

This detoxification process (either through colonics, the method I used, or with various herbal compounds) is not without its critics. Then again, neither are weight lifting, cardiovascular exercise, and even healthy eating! I believe this type of “cleansing” is a very important thing to do at least once per year, and the
reward is usually a drop in completely unwanted body mass. (By the way, When I say unwanted, I really mean it.)

Detoxification allows for the proper absorption of nutrients. When the intestinal walls are clogged with waste and mucus, your assimilation of nutrients plummets along with your energy and health. It should go without saying that proper bowel function is critical to your health, yet many Americans ignore this and go days, even weeks, without elimination. This is akin to suicide, unless you happen to be absorbing every morsel of food as energy.

A liver cleanse is something you should look into as well. A good book on the subject is The Amazing Liver Cleanse by Andreas Moritz. The liver is responsible for fat metabolism. Everything you put in your body taxes the liver one way or another. It pays to take good care of it!

**Terminology**

Before we continue, let’s define some of the terms I’ll be using in this chapter:

- **Anabolic**
  - To build up.
  - Bodybuilding
  - The process of building muscle mass while decreasing overall bodyfat. Anyone engaged in the discarding of unwanted body fat and the pursuit of more lean tissue (muscle) is technically a ‘bodybuilder.’ The degree to which one pursues this course is the only determining factor between looking toned and looking like a competitive bodybuilder.

- **Catabolic**
  - To tear down.
  - Compound Movements
  - Also known as ‘basic movements’. Exercises that call more than one muscle group into action. Most muscle-building efforts center around compound movements, such as the bench press, squat or deadlift.

- **Equal Sets**
  - A term referring to keeping the weight the same for successive sets. For example, one may keep 50 pounds on the bar for sets of 8, and doing this four or five times. The first few sets are not as taxing as the last. This is common in volume training.

- **Failure**
  - A misnomer, which I’ll clarify later, that refers to pushing a given set or group of sets to the point of momentary muscular failure. You are unable to achieve another rep without assistance.
**Forced Reps**
The process where your training partner helps you at the end of a set taken to momentary completion (failure). This enables you to get a few extra reps or ‘negatives’ (an emphasis on lowering the weight only) out of a given set. This is a very high-intensity technique and not recommended for beginning or intermediate trainers.

**HIT**
High Intensity Training—the concept of training with minimal sets and exercises (often only one set and one exercise) in order to simulate the muscle to growth without overtraining via the use of “needless” sets and/or exercises.

**HR**
Heart rate.

**Hypertrophy**
The process by which a muscle increases in size. This occurs at the cellular level, and it’s thought that the cells of the muscle expand to compensate for the demands placed on it.

**Intensity**
The degree to which effort is applied to a set, rep or workout. The greater the intensity, the less frequent you can train, generally speaking. Intensity also affects volume. You can do more work with less intensity, or less volume with more intensity.

**Isolation Movements**
Exercises that attempt to isolate a particular muscle or section of a muscle. These include exercises like concentration dumbbell curls, hamstring curls, or cable flyes for the chest. These exercises are considered a waste of time by some, and by others useful for refinement only.

**LILD**
Low Intensity, Long Duration, used usually in reference to cardio work. Refers to keeping a lower active heart rate and performing the exercise for a longer duration.

**MHR**
Maximum Heart Rate. MHR is estimated determined by a Balke protocol stress test. A common number used for maximum heart rate values in the general population is 220 (trained athletes will not benefit much from this). This is not scientific, nor particularly accurate. However, if you do not have access to a Balke stress test facility, it’s better than nothing. If the exercise calls for “75% MHR,” simply subtract your age from 220 and multiply that number by .75. If you’re 40, this would be 180x.75 = 135 heart beats per minute.
Negatives

The focus on the *eccentric* portion of a movement, or the downward force. Some studies show that most muscle growth occurs from the negative portion of the movement rather than the positive (*concentric*) portion. Others emphasis the “explosiveness” of the concentric portion as the most critical. It makes sense to apply both at different times.

Perceived Exertion

Perhaps the best way to gauge heart rate and response to exercise if your accurate maximum heart rate has not been clinically determined. Perceived exertion is a simple 1-10 scale in most cases, with 1 being “very easy” and 10 being “absolute maximum.” A good cardiovascular range is from 4-8, and lower if performing LILD cardio.

Pump

The feeling of congestion in a muscle after it’s been exposed to repetitions in a set. This makes the muscle appear temporarily larger.

Pyramid Sets

This is another volume training technique where weight is added each time to the movement. You will often see this denoted by 1x10, 1x8, 1x6. The weight goes up, and the reps go down. You can also pyramid weights without changing reps, but this is more like Equal set training.

Rep

Repetition, or the number of times you lift a given amount of weight in one set.

Set

The number of times you perform a given exercise. For example 3x12/Bench refers to three sets of 12 repetitions each on the Bench Press.

Training

The process of lifting weights or performing cardiovascular exercise.

Vascularity

A state in which body fat has been lowered sufficiently so that the body’s veins are easily visible. This is a sought-after condition with hard-core bodybuilders, but is not a necessary element of bodybuilding training or of health.

Volume

The number of sets and/or exercises performed. High volume entails more sets or more exercises.

Volume Training

A style of training that emphasizes the number of sets and exercises, often requiring 3-4 sets of 3-4 exercises per body part. Rarely are all sets taken to failure, and usually a pump is the desired goal along with increased strength.
Phase 2: Weight Training, HIT Style

As legendary lyricist Neal Peart of the band Rush wrote, “Plus ça change, Plus c’est la même chose.” It means, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” When it comes to my training, I find this to be the absolute truth. There’s something about the solidity of training—something primal and basic. The strategies may change, but the basic approach is usually the same.

My transformation began where I started back in the 1980s, with the “lazy man’s approach”—High Intensity Training, or HIT. Popularized by Author Jones and Mike Mentzer in the 1970s, HIT involves extreme intensity and limited volume—often only one set per exercise and very few exercises total. Clarence Bass and Dr. Richard Winett both train in HIT fashion. I felt nearly immediate certainty with it, and knew I could apply the technique to fit both my mindset and my physical goals. Many of my friends who are personal trainers and fellow bodybuilding enthusiasts were not keen on HIT at the time. To them it certainly didn’t seem like enough volume.

This is not to imply that volume training does not have merit—it does, and I now greatly benefit from it. Both methods work and do so in differing ways. I still maintain that it’s wise to start with HIT after training traditionally for a few months to become accustomed to the exercises and see how you progress. If you gain muscle, keep going! Don’t get greedy—the average person is very fortunate to gain 4-6 pounds of muscle per year, with the exception of the first year or so of training when the body is literally shocked into adaptation. Most long-time trainers would be thrilled with few extra pounds of lean muscle year after year! Do the math, and you will see how significant such a small gain will become.

I was a skeptical of HIT myself at first, especially considering the rather unenthusiastic response from my co-trainers. It took Bass’ book, The Lean Advantage, to convince me. In it, Bass documents an impressive gain of muscle mass and loss of bodyfat on HIT protocols. This was charted by means of hydrostatic (underwater) weighing. The gain was impressive for an over-40 athlete—over ten pounds of muscle. While Clarence is quick to point out that this is not typical, even for him, it was enough to urge me on.

I began my transformation training with a three-day split, training Monday, Wednesday and Friday for no more than forty minutes per
session. I didn’t bother with cardio, and wouldn’t for quite some time other than simple walking. I found that walking suited me well. I have never been an endurance or cardio guy, and frankly most cardio tends to bore me. Walking was something I could enjoy, especially when I walked with friends, and it was something that was easy to stick to. That’s crucial—the most powerful program on earth will do you little good if you hate it. You must enjoy, even love, what you do if you wish to keep doing it no matter what.

My sessions in the gym were very productive. My body was quite responsive after the long layoff, and the minimal sets taken to maximum effort appealed to my “all or nothing” mindset. My training routine was centered around a compound movement, 1-2 sets after warming up, followed by a secondary movement of one set only.

I was reluctant to train my abs for several reasons. First, I was quite obese, and I knew that you don’t get “abs” from exercises—you get them by decreasing body fat in the abdominal region. Muscular exercise builds muscle—period. All the machines you see on TV claiming otherwise, that you can reduce ab fat with a machine, are just after your money. Another reason was that I simply didn’t like it! This changed as I became more impacted by my Core values, and especially when I picked up bodybuilding great Dave Draper as a role model. His simple take on ab training changed my entire approach to working out. Just a sentence in one article was all it took.

A typical week of training looked something like this (Note: For a complete look at exercises and illustrations/descriptions of each, go to www.billpearl.com or click here for video examples):

Monday: Chest, Biceps
Chest:
Bench Press (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 2 sets of 5-8 reps, each to failure—which I will now notate as “momentary completion.” Rest intervals were 2-4 minutes.)
Incline Dumbbell Press (1 set of 8 reps to momentary completion. Occasionally I would have my workout partner push me through a forced rep or two. A mistake, as I’d soon come to learn.)

Biceps:
Standing Barbell Curls (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 2 sets of 5-8 reps, each to momentary completion. Rest intervals were 2 minutes.)
Incline Dumbbell Curls (1 set of 8 reps to momentary completion.)

All the machines you see on TV claiming that you can reduce ab fat with a machine, are just after your money.
Wednesday: Legs

*Smith Machine Squats* (2-3 sets of warm-ups, followed by 1-2 sets of 5-8 reps, each to momentary completion. Rest intervals were up to 5 minutes.) I did not use a free-bar squat because the gym I was going to at the time did not have a squat rack. Of all things! However, my legs have always responded well to training, so I was not concerned.

*Leg Press, Plate-loaded* (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 1 set of 8 reps to momentary completion. Rest interval was 4 minutes.)

*Leg Curl OR Stiff-legged Deadlift* (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 1 set of 8 reps to momentary completion. Rest interval was 4 minutes.)

*One-legged Dumbbell Calf Raise (emphasis on negative)* (1 set of warm-ups, followed by 2 sets of 8-12 reps to momentary completion. Rest interval was 2 minutes.)

Friday: Back, Shoulders and Triceps

**Back:**

*Cable Rows* (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 2 sets of 5-8 reps, each to momentary completion. Rest intervals were 2 minutes.)

*Pulldowns to Chest* (1 set of warm-ups, followed by 1 set of 8 reps to momentary completion.)

*Standing Barbell Press* (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 2 sets of 8-10 reps to momentary completion.) This also worked the shoulders, so I only needed one additional movement for a complete shoulder workout.

**Shoulders (Dels, or Deltoids):**

*Seated Dumbbell Lateral Raises* (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 2 sets of 8-10 reps to momentary completion.)

**Triceps:**

*French Presses* (2 sets of warm-ups, followed by 2 sets of 5-8 reps, each to momentary completion. Rest intervals were 2 minutes.)

*Cable Pushdowns* (1 set of 8 reps to momentary completion.)

About eight months into my program, I started walking for 30-50 minutes at a brisk pace (beginning at about 2.5 mph at first, later working up to over 4 mph when my condition improved) on my off days, and occasionally after my leg workout. That was it! I added five minutes of ab work prior to each workout six months later.

The idea behind my training was simple—stimulate the muscle as quickly and massively as possible, then move on and let it rest. Muscle grows in rest, not during exercise. Exercise is merely the catalyst to prompt the growth.
On this routine, I gained 18 pounds of muscle in less than a year. Without one exception, I either increased weight or reps on one or more movements each and every workout. Not many people could claim the same on conventional training protocols. My training, along with my diet (covered in chapter 4) enabled me to discard almost 50 pounds of bodyfat at the same time. It was a wonderful experience, and proof positive that HIT works.

Phase 3: Super Infrequent HIT

As my workouts progressed, I eventually began to feel a bit less recovered between them. While my strength was increasing, I realized it would not be long before it eclipsed my ability to recover adequately, or else lead me down the road to injury. One of the complaints I have against HIT is the injury factor. You stand more of a chance of injury using maximum effort all the time.

I began reading studies that convinced me muscle does not deteriorate as quickly commonly thought. When nutrition is adequate, several studies showed that muscle mass did not start to deteriorate until 12-14 days after a muscle has been stimulated into hypertrophy. Others demonstrate that strength can diminish after a mere 48-72 hours. I personally experienced just the opposite. My strength increased while working each part only once per week. I decided to experiment and stretch my workouts throughout a larger period of time. This was one of my first attempts at overall personalization. I had already personalized movements and details of the workouts, including the order and so forth, but this was fairly adventuresome.

All I did was add two days of rest between each workout. My three times per week sessions became two times per week, and the split looked like this:

- Monday: Abs, Chest, Biceps
- Thursday: Abs, Legs
- Sunday: Abs, Back, Shoulders, Triceps
- Wednesday: Repeat

I was working each bodypart only once every nine days, with the exception of smaller parts like biceps, abs and triceps. I even took three days off occasionally. Did it work? Yes, but only to a point. I gained size and strength even faster than before. However, the gains were short-lived—not due to biology, but to motivation. I found that, while Super Infrequent HIT assisted recovery, it also allowed for too much time away from the gym. Habits are formed when you do something frequently enough to incorporate it into your daily routine. Also, there were days when I could not work out for various reasons. While this type of training does work, I believe only those with a specific time frame or goal in mind should...
undertake it. That way the mind can stay focused and not wander too far away from the routine of the gym.

**Phase 4: Free-style Training**
After Super Infrequent HIT I became uncertain. I messed around for a few months and lost some of the gains I had made, but I still maintained my nutrition (as of this point, still centered around Bass’ principles). I finally decided to just have fun for a while—try different exercises on random days, try higher volume, low volume, high reps, low reps. Whatever fit my fancy, that’s what I did. I called this style of training “free-style.” It was fun, and in many ways profitable.

My workouts would sometimes go two days in a row before resting. Sometimes even three, followed by two to three days off. I did whatever felt ‘right’. I do not recommend this as a long-term strategy unless you really thrive on constant change. I find that too much variety leads me away from consistency—and from certainty. I like the certainty of monitoring a given movement over a specific period of time. For example, if I do dumbbell bench presses every Monday for six weeks and see that I’ve increased my weight from three sets of 80s for 10 to three sets of 95s for 10, my certainty increases, as does my motivation to train harder.

My advice for anyone wanting to follow a free-style routine is:

— Always write down your workouts and refer back to the movements you perform each day you train. This way you can be certain you’re improving, even if the last time you performed that exercise was a month ago.
— Be more conscious of training to momentary completion.
— Vary the volume between workouts, rather than sticking to a specific number of sets.
— Vary the rep ranges, too. Anywhere from 5-12 is great for bodybuilding.
— After 8-12 weeks, go back to a traditional training schedule to see if and how your strength has improved. If you notice improvement, free-style training may be right for your body type.

**Phase 5: Traditional Training**
While training cannot be narrowed down to ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional,’ most iron enthusiasts would agree on the following definition of a standard pattern of training for a bodybuilder:

— Training takes place for about an hour, four or more days per week.
— Training uses multiple sets (3 or more) and exercises (2 or more) per body part.
— Rest between sets varies from about 45 seconds to 2 minutes. No long rest intervals are required unless you are training very heavy.
— Each body part is hit once or twice per week. Even traditional trainers have different ideas about this. Some swear by two times per week, while many cite the benefits and gains from training each part only once per week.
— Movements are a mixture of compound and isolation, with an emphasis on compound.
— All sets are not taken to momentary completion. On some occasions, the last set of each exercise is intense and can be taken to momentary completion.

Given these basic guidelines, my training up until my photoshoot prior to my 40th birthday could be labeled as “traditional” bodybuilding training.

Along with a major dietary change, I increased several key supplements that allowed me to train with better recovery (covered in Chapter 4). I was also financially able to take HGH (human growth hormone) under a physician’s care. If you’ll recall, my natural GH levels are very low due to pituitary problems. A mere 2 i.u. (international units) per day was enough to normalize my levels.

It should be noted that my increase in training happened prior to taking GH. I’m therefore confident that the nutritional and supplemental changes were the key difference in my ability to train more frequently during these eight months. I began GH therapy four months into the cycle. Also, keep in mind that hormone replacement therapy is not the same thing as taking ‘steroids.’ Low-level GH is a dangerous condition, and should be corrected through natural or therapeutic measures under a doctor’s supervision. Only once, during all my years of training, have my hormones temporarily gone above what’s considered normal. My testosterone level increased on my new diet, closer to my 40th birthday, to near 1,000 total—850 is what I consider optimal and within normal ranges for a man my age. This was remedied immediately by simply decreasing my testosterone dosage slightly.

Protecting the Shoulders and Rotator Cuffs
During my last phase, I began to experience a severe burning pain in my left shoulder. I had injured my rotator cuff (the muscles and tendons that surround the top of the upper arm bone and hold it in the shoulder joint) doing bench presses with a bar and training too long in HIT fashion. After visiting an orthopedic doctor, it was suggested that this strain could be repaired with some light exercises. My friend and co-editor of Fit Over 40 Lauren Muney showed me some simple stretching exercises using an exercise band (basically a large rubber band with handles on it.) Lauren’s simple techniques worked wonders. For more information email her at Lauren@PhysicalMind.com. Prior to this, Fit Over 40 role
model Ramsey Rodriguez worked with me on several dumbbell warm-up exercises to prevent further injury. To see the rotator cuff warm-up exercises I use before any pressing movement, click [here](#).

My doctor also gave me one of the best tips for protecting the rotators—*always press with your palms facing in*. Obviously this renders barbell movements a thing of the past, but the ease on my rotators was well worth it. I’ve yet to injure them or require surgery thanks to these suggestions, and I highly recommend them for any athlete. In order to perform palms-in presses, you need to shift to dumbbell movements only. Don’t worry about the palms-in grip being less effective. Using electrical impedance testing, my physician verified that full muscle contraction was possible using a palms-in grip on a dumbbell. I’ve used this technique for years now, and my chest has grown just fine without the bench press. I occasionally use the Smith Machine for incline barbell presses, but I’m very careful not to overdo it.

**My Training Week: Phase 5**

A typical training week during this period of “peaking” (obtaining low levels of body fat and maximizing muscle definition) was as follows:

**Monday**

A.M. LILD cardio; elliptical glider; 45-60 minutes @ 125-135 HR, done fasting. This was often followed by 10 minutes of ab work.

P.M. Chest, Biceps

Warm-up—Glider for 5 minutes, followed by rotator cuff training.

Chest (last sets of each carried to momentary completion, with rest between sets about one minute):

*Hammer Incline Plate Press—Palms-in Grip* (2-3 sets pyramid warm-ups followed by 4x8, each set increasing in weight.) I love this machine! When the gym sold it, I actually moved to another gym ten miles further from my house, which had one. It allows for both normal grip and palms-in grip on the handles. I became quite strong at this movement, using five 45s per side at my best for 7 reps.

*Incline Dumbbell Press* (3x6-10 reps; each set the weight went up, but reps went down. Notice that this is different from the “equal sets” strategy used on the Hammer Incline Press. I like to mix things up.)

*Flat Bench Press* (2x8 reps, equal sets.)

*Dumbbell Pullovers* (3x12 reps, equal sets.)

Biceps (last sets of each carried to momentary completion, with rest between sets about 1 minute):
Body Drag Barbell Curls (2 warm-ups followed by 3x6-10 reps, increasing weight.)
Incline Dumbbell Curls (2-3 sets of 6-8 reps, increasing weight.)
Concentration Curls (1 set to momentary completion.)
Note: Closer to the end of my peak, I would perform another session of cardio, usually a 45-minute walk.

Tuesday
A.M. LILD cardio; elliptical glider; 45-60 minutes @ 125-135 HR, done fasting. This was often followed by 10 minutes of ab work.
P.M. Legs (I always train legs alone—the work is too hard to want to do anything else!)
Warm-up—Glider for 5 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of thigh stretches and some barbell-only squats

Legs (all sets worked very hard, but none to absolute completion; rest intervals varied between one and 4 minutes):
Smith Machine Squats (2-3 sets warm-up and pyramids up to working weight, then 3-4 sets 5-8 reps, increasing weight.) I used the Smith Machine for about two years and developed good thighs from it. However, I prefer the free bar squat. I focused on getting a pump so massive that my skin felt like it was going to rip after the sets were finished. I focused on power during the sets, increasing weight whenever I could.
45-degree Incline Plate Loaded Press (3x10-12, increasing weight each set.)
Stiff-legged Deadlift (2-3 sets 10 reps, equal sets.)

Occasionally I would push myself through one or two sets of leg extensions after this, but most often this amount of work was sufficient to stimulate growth. It also ensured I would not walk right for four days!

Wednesday
A.M. Long walk (one hour, fasting)

Thursday
A.M. Off
P.M. Abs, Shoulders, Triceps, Calves
Abs:
Hanging Leg Raises
Zane Crunch
Rope Pulls
I performed these movements in a giant set, which is one long set with no rest between movements. I would work by the clock—ten minutes was all that was needed. Dave Draper gave me the inspiration for using abs as a warm-up and
training by the clock. Hanging leg raises are still my favorite ab exercise. I would perform each set to near completion, then move on. Hanging leg raises were always done with elbow harnesses (padded O-shaped slings that allow you to hang by placing your triceps in the straps, rather than relying on your hand grip to hold your body).

Want a secret to better abs? *Exhale before every contraction.* Air in the lungs prevents a full contraction of the abs. Always think of squeezing your upper and lower body together when training abs and you’ll achieve better results.

*zane crunches* is an exercise I learned from legendary bodybuilder Frank Zane. It’s performed like a standard crunch, only you place the heels of your feet on a bench with your thighs perpendicular to the floor at a 90° angle. While crunching (done by rolling your torso rather than lifting your head an neck too far off the ground), you simultaneously *lift your hips off the ground with your feet.* You literally crunch your midsection like an accordion! This is much more efficient than a traditional crunch.

*Rope pulls* are illustrated on the websites listed earlier in this chapter.

Shoulders (last sets of each carried to momentary completion, with rest between sets about 1 minute):
Warm-up—rotator cuff training.
*Seated Dumbbell Military Press—Palms-in Grip* (2 warm-ups followed by 3x10 reps, Equal Sets.)
*Upright Rows* (3x12, increasing weight.) Upright rows are often considered a trapezius movement (the arc-shaped muscles that run from the bottom of the neck into the top of the back), and they do work the trapezius, but when you concentrate on lifting with the outer head of the deltoid, you can get a great shoulder workout.
*Lateral Raises* (2x12, Equal Sets.)

Triceps (last sets of each carried to momentary completion, with rest between sets about one minute):
*French Presses* (3x8-10, equal sets.)
*Standard Pushdowns* (2x8-10, equal sets.)
*Reverse Pushdowns* (2x8-10, equal sets.)

Calves (all sets to momentary completion, no rest)
*One-leg Negative Calf Raises* (3 sets per leg, 8-12 reps, equal sets, no rest between sets.) One-leg negative calf raises may or may not be my own invention. All you do is grab one heavy dumbbell (I used wrist straps so my grip would not slip), find a platform and something to hold on to, and raise up with both calves, holding
the dumbbell in your right hand and the poll or bar for balance with your left. The raise up is easy—the lowering is where all the fun begins. You then lower the weight using your right calf only as slow as you can. I took anywhere from 5-10 seconds to lower the weight. Then, go back up using both calves and repeat. When your right calf is done (usually after about 8 reps), switch sides and repeat with the left. I promise you, this will make your calves ache for a week! This is all I did for my calves until the last six weeks, when I included some seated calf raises for the outer calf.

Cardio—30-45 minute walk.

Friday—Off (or walk casually at night).

Saturday
A.M. LILD cardio; elliptical glider; 45-60 minutes @ 125-135 HR, done fasting. This was often followed by 10 minutes of ab work.
P.M. Back, Traps (trapezius)
Warm-up—Glider for 5 minutes, followed by rotator cuff training.

Back (last sets of each carried to momentary completion, with rest between sets about one minute):
Pulldowns to Chest (2 sets warm-up followed by 3-4 sets of 6-10 reps, increasing weight.)
Cable Row (3 sets of 10, Equal Sets.)
One-armed Dumbbell Rows (2 sets of 8, equal sets.)
Hyperextensions (2 sets, holding a 35lb plate, 20 reps to stretch erectors.)

Traps (free-style without any set rest intervals)
Dumbbell Shrugs (2 sets to momentary completion, usually 10 reps.)

Sunday
Hard cardio—usually mountain biking or biking around the lake for 10 miles, HR ranging from 60-90% MHR, 30-45 minutes.

If I felt I needed rest, I would take it on Monday and repeat the cycle on Tuesday, hitting each part only once in 7-8 days. Near the end of my peak, I began to sneak in a few sets of back work on my chest day as I felt it needed it. I trained in this fashion up until my latest photo shoot. The peak took from April until November to complete, and I successfully managed to drop my body fat to 6.5%, down from 10%, while increasing muscle by a few pounds. My vascularity and density increased dramatically with the volume training. For me, 6.5% is very low. I plan to go even lower this year, but not at the sacrifice of lean tissue or my health. My goal is 4.5–5% by August 2005. The results are on the following pages.
Post Peak Training: Radical Mass

After taking the holidays off to rest, I began to experiment with a training system made famous by legendary trainer Vince Gironda called “eight sets of eight,” or 8x8. I’ve always loved Vince—dogmatic, impractical, studious, and inventive. Almost all the things that made traditional trainers cringe, Vince embraced—and vice-versa.

I was curious to see how far I could take the volume approach before hitting a state known as “overtraining.” When overtrained, you feel tired, lethargic, and you get sick much easier. It’s not a productive condition, and you can even lose muscle mass if you continue pushing yourself. I knew Vince was a natural athlete (meaning that he did not do steroids or drugs of any kind), yet he had an impressive physique by nearly anyone’s standard. Using the Law of Certainty, I theorized that if he could do it, so could I. The last thing Vince would teach is a system of over-training, and despite my HIT mindset, I became more open to his theories on 8x8 training.

The idea of 8x8—the “honest workout,” as Vince referred to it, is to train with radical volume (up to 32 sets per body part) in a rapid, almost non-stop motion, using Equal Sets for every set, always using 8 reps. Rest intervals are literally as short as possible. Vince claimed that he got to the point where his hands would never leave the bar between sets! We’re talking about 15-30 seconds of rest.

8x8 is one of the hardest workouts you’ll ever do, but once you adapt to it, you’ll find it one of the most productive. Vince claimed that it stimulated the greatest percentage of muscle fibers in the least amount of time, while increasing capillary growth. This promoted better oxygen and nutrient supply to the tissue. The workout was a cardio session as well. My
average heart rate (which I always tracked throughout my transformation with a Polar Heart Rate Monitor) was 155 at the end of a typical 8x8 session. Considering my condition (very good), this is quite high and indicative of many spikes up to the 180s.

Let’s take Smith Machine incline bench presses as an example, the only bar-press exercise I feel comfortable doing with my rotator cuff history. I would warm up my rotators, as usual, and be sure that the incline was set to emphasis my chest and not my delts by positioning it rather low, almost flat. I’m not a strong bencher—never have been. *Strength is my map, not my territory.* If I’m growing stronger, and getting a good pump, I’m probably in the zone.

I started at 185 pounds on the Smith Machine after warming up. This is not a lot of weight for me, but you must realize I’m about to do the equivalent of one long set. I began with a first set of 8 reps. Obviously this was easy. My tempo has always been to descend in about 2-3 seconds and explode up. I wore a Polar and a stopwatch on the other hand. The moment I racked the weight, I would hit the timer on my watch, which I set for 30 seconds.

When the beep sounded on my watch, I’d hit another set of 8. Each set becomes more and more difficult. Very deep breaths between sets are necessary in order to make it through. If the weight was too light, my last set was too easy. If too heavy, I couldn’t even make it to the last set. When performing 8x8, you must pick your weights carefully. Don’t be concerned if you decide to try this and find it takes a few weeks of trial and error to get the weights down.

Set after set I’d go, until those 30 seconds began to feel like 3 seconds. At the end of the eighth set, assuming I could get 8 reps, I would notate it in my training diary (always keep a training diary!) and up the weight by 5-10 pounds the next session. If not, I would keep the weight where it was until I could complete the final set. I ended up progressing to 225 for 8x8.

While my abs have never been ‘great’, you can clearly see the difference from the before pictures. I hope to improve this year with lower body fat.

186 pounds at 6.5% body fat.
From there, I would proceed immediately to my next chest movement and do the same 8x8 technique. Often I would stop there—just two movements. Sometimes I would go to three, making it a 24-set chest workout. For back, one of my weaker body parts, I would always try for three, even four movements. I would complete each workout with a brief walk on the treadmill to cool down and burn off some of the fatty acids that were released during this super-intense effort.

I would train about four days per week, hitting each muscle group once a week. The only time this changed is near the end of last year, when my experiments in protein allowed me to experience a surge of mass and train a bit more frequently. Even then, I would never hit more than five days in the gym. Four days is sufficient for my purposes, as well as for 95% of the weight trainers in the world in my opinion.

I found some limitations to Vince’s protocol, which I altered in my Power7 System. My clients who have tried it rave about the results, and I think it’s the most productive way of training I’ve yet to discover. However, had it not been for Gironda, I would have never developed Power7. Perhaps Vince would be pleased—but more than likely he would swear like a sailor, critique my alterations, and then improve on them!

**Power7: My Ultimate Personalization Experience**

Power7, also known by the e-book title *7 Minute Muscle*, is a system I developed and employ in my clients’ training sessions. Power7 is by far my system of choice.

Power7 combines elements of Gironda’s strategy with the following benefits:

- Power reps and growth reps;
- Indeterminate rest intervals;
- Less time in the gym—workouts average 30 minutes in length, maximizing testosterone levels (testosterone begins to decline after 30-40 minutes of intense training);
- Greater strength gains;
— The safe use of singles and doubles (1-2 reps);
— The use of HIT principles as well as volume principles;
— Definitive progress charting by the use of aggregate repetitions.

The scope of Power7 is too lengthy to cover in *Fit Over 40*, however you can click **here** to purchase my e-book *7 Minute Muscle*, which covers the entire Power7 system, three systems designed for any type of trainee, in detail.

### Cardio: My Experimentations in Fat Loss

*Cardio* is an ugly word to a lot of bodybuilders, and I’m really no exception. Tom has demonstrated the amazing benefits of the use of intense cardio, so my mind is now more open to it. I’ve decided this year to give traditional cardio a shot, along with my preference for LILD cardio, and see what happens. No matter what, my emphasis will always be on the weights—and yours should be as well, unless your health or condition prevents it.

Some athletes lose muscle mass when performing excessive or intense cardio. I always assumed I was one of them, but I’m willing to up the calories a bit to find out. I’ll be measuring myself hydrostatically every month, so there will be no guesswork. It then becomes an issue of energy—can you perform both forms of exercise and still recover?

If cardio’s only purpose is to burn calories, then it’s rather useless. I would prefer just to eat less. If on the other hand cardio training increases aerobic pathways and burns fat *after training*, then it makes more sense. The latter is suggested in several studies, however the same effect is seen in weight training to an even greater degree. Post-training metabolic issues are hotly debated, but my take on the issues is simple—if both can be done without interfering with progress, then it makes sense to mix the two together.

Here’s a brief look at how I progressed in my own cardio journey, from the beginning of my transformation to my peak condition.

#### No Cardio

During the first eight months or so of training, I considered myself fortunate to make it through the workouts. I adopted the strategy of many old-time bodybuilders (including Vince Gironda) who eschewed cardio work in favor of more intense dieting and training.

#### The Miracle of Walking

Brisk walking, not strolling, is something almost anyone can do. You can walk inside the mall during days with bad weather or outside on beautiful evenings.
You can measure walking progress easily—just map out a territory and time yourself. Try to slightly increase your walking pace frequently, always keeping the duration constant.

Did you know that you burn the same number of calories walking a mile as you do running a mile? The only difference is where the energy comes from. Walking is as close to a pure fat-burning exercise as you can adopt. Almost all the calories required to walk an hour come from stored body fat—exactly what we want. If you run for that hour, you will expend more calories, but you will also burn a lot of glycogen (stored sugar in the muscles and liver) and blood sugar for fuel, unless you are in excellent condition, or jogging at a very slow pace. Most people will find their heart rate in the 140-180 range while jogging unless they’re well-conditioned. Jogging is also very hard on the knees and feet. My feet have given me trouble since birth. I have to wear custom arches just to walk without getting shin splints or stress fractures.

I opted for the pure fat-burning benefits of walking and performing lower-intensity exercise for longer periods, which worked very well for me. I used walking during all the years of my transformation, and still use it today. I did, however, employ different cardio strategies along the way as well.

**GXP**

If you are concerned that just walking is not enough for cardiovascular conditioning, you may be correct. While brisk walking has been shown to be a deterrent to heart disease and stroke, it does not improve the cardiovascular system to the degree that more intense cardio training does. One can make the claim that 8x8 or Power7 would do both at the same time—work the muscles and the cardiovascular system. However, if you want to be specific with cardio-only training techniques, I recommend trying Dr. Richard Winett’s GXP. GXP stands for “Graded Exercise Protocol”, but don’t let that fool you—it’s pretty simple, and no one will give you an “F”. (Please refer to [Ageless-Athletes.com](http://Ageless-Athletes.com) for more information.)

GXP seeks to stimulate the heart and cardiovascular system as quickly and efficiently as possible without taxing the body’s ability to recover from weight workouts. GXP can be as short as nine minutes, although I’ve done up to twenty. It’s only performed twice weekly. Richard’s research, using multiple study groups, has confirmed that this amount is sufficient to increase Vo2-Max significantly in just eight weeks. That means you’re able to use oxygen more efficiently, and your cardiovascular system is greatly improved.

The exercise utilizes an incline treadmill, or an Airdyne exercise bike—those are the preferred machines. You begin with a warm-up phase of three minutes, taking your heart rate all the way up to about 80% MHR. From there, you perform
only three minutes of “steady state” work, keeping your heart rate in the 80-85% MHR range. You end your session with a graded cool-down of 3 minutes or longer. That’s it! The only variation I used was time. I would do a 15-minute session by warming up for 3 minutes, steady state for 3 minutes, cool down to about 75% MHR for a few minutes, back up for 3, and then cool down for 3-4 minutes. My personal bests increased dramatically, so I knew I was improving my aerobic capacity.

Mountain Biking
Around the time of the long walk, I took up mountain biking. I had a cheap bike to travel the lake with, but I wanted to add some spice to my cardio—and nothing says “spice” to a former motocrosser than blazing down narrow paths and flying over boulders! It was the kid in me coming out all over again, and I was having a blast.

Unfortunately there were a few drawbacks to my new obsession, other than the $1,000 price tag on the bike. In Dallas, there are not a lot of mountains...or even hills, actually. The closest place to ride is a good 30 minutes away. Secondly, mountain biking is dangerous when you ride as I do. I ended up with a partial dislocation of my left shoulder when I rammed a tree. I was doing my best impersonation of Hans Solo, weaving downhill on a path barely wider than my handlebars, at an unnatural speed. I learned a good lesson that day—shoulders bend, trees don’t.

There was also an issue with very high heart rates. I always wore my Polar, and sometimes I was concerned over what it registered after serious climbing. My heart rate would be close to 200! I knew I wasn’t in bad cardio condition, but mountain biking can really create a strain on the cardiovascular system, especially for a muscular guy.

Then there was the issue with legs. My legs have always responded well to training; however, they have
a tendency to get sore easily. I would find that squats were impossible even four
days after biking due to the deep soreness. About four months out from my peak,
I simply had to cut my riding habit back from two or three times a week to, at
most, twice monthly.

**Split Sessions**
I began to incorporate split session cardio work as my photo shoot approached.
I would rarely do traditional cardio (about 80% MHR), but rather an LILD session
in the morning, fasting, and then a shorter session (walking briskly) at night post-
workout. The combination helped burn fat and calories, and I think helped me
recover better between workouts.

**Weight Training as Cardio**
While there is some criticism of this belief, I think weight training and cardio can
be combined fairly effectively using 8x8, Power7, or simply minimal rest intervals
between sets. Many bodybuilders get their cardio in using this method. The
drawback, except with the 8x8 and Power7 protocols, is that your strength tends
to decrease over time—at least that was my experience. Try it and see how you
do, especially if you dislike cardio altogether. Still, this is much better than no
sustained heart rate exercise at all.

**End Results: The Status of my Health**
By now, many of you may be wondering, “What ever happened to all those health
problems?” I’m going to give you the skinny on all the results, the tremendous
and the less-than-stellar, in hopes that you can find inspiration in each. Exercise
and nutrition can work wonders, as can supplementation if used properly, but
neither can cure every illness. However, would you rather have one-eighth the
number of health problems while looking and feeling great, or all your health
problems and an out-of-shape body to go along with them? Even if exercise and
eating right didn’t add one solitary day to my life, I’d do it anyway, just for the way
I feel and look. Why go through life feeling like crap when you can feel like a
million bucks?

Within less than a year of beginning my transformation, my blood pressure without
medication dropped from a stroke-level 200/100 to an average of 127/82. This is
very close to optimal. In the past six years I have yet to see my blood pressure at
120/80 or lower for any sustained length of time without medication. Then again,
I was checking mine three times per day for two weeks straight to get that
average. When you’re in the doctor’s office, you’re lucky if they check it once! I’m
confident that I’ll see normal blood pressure readings every single time in the
near future.
I do have poor genes in this department, as both my mother and father had high blood pressure. I was able to help my mother decrease her blood pressure naturally using amino acid combinations and increasing her daily walks to about an hour, while working with her doctor. My blood pressure is now normal on low-dose blood pressure medication, and will be normal without medication of any kind in a few months. My physician feels that yoga and meditation will do the trick for me along with my normal training and diet. To decrease blood pressure as much as I did, for as long as I did, is impressive—and a testament to the power of nutrition and exercise.

My pituitary issues remain, but they are greatly enhanced by my diet and training. Even I was a bit surprised by this. I have a great frame of reference, too—I was diagnosed and supplied hormone therapy years before I began my transformation. I watched my T3 (active thyroid) levels rise by 38%, my testosterone levels rise above normal, at which time I was allowed to cut my dosage in half, and my IGF-1 levels increase slightly as well. There’s no doubt my training and nutrition radically increased my hormonal output. If it can do that for me, just think what it can do for you.

Cholesterol—many of you will certainly want to know about that. As some may know, I remain a cholesterol skeptic. I believe lowering cholesterol to prevent heart disease is like cutting down the forest to prevent a forest fire. It’s much better to find the reason for the elevation, or even if the elevation is dangerous to begin with. This is my personal stance, and I recommend you read both sides of the cholesterol argument and then discuss your condition with your doctor.

However, I’m happy to report that my lipids decreased by over half, down to a near “normal” 232, without taking a single drug. My HDL remained low at 32 until I upped the fat in my diet significantly. This increased my HDL to 54, and lowered my lipids even further, down to 212. Niacin therapy (to be discussed with your doctor) would have easily brought that to 200. I am now beginning niacin therapy for different reasons—cholesterol levels are not my concern, but my triglycerides

What a difference a decade makes! From in-shape, to obese, to the best shape of my life. Age 29 (L) and 39 (R). Notice the thigh mass, shoulders, chest and abs. I was also considerably leaner near 40. Age is not a factor!
and LDL size are. The smaller LDL is, the easier it can pass through the endothelial wall of the arteries and induce plaque build-up or so many physicians and researchers believe. After seeing the results Matt Bayan (eatfatbehealthy.com) achieved by increasing his LDL particle size, I am a bit more convinced. If anything, it will be a nice fringe benefit to the lowered triglycerides.

While there are many LDL skeptics, there are only a few who discount the danger of elevated triglycerides. Triglycerides are the chemical form of fat most commonly stored by the body. Ironically, it’s sugar that caused the predominant increase in my triglycerides, not fat. (This is also true of cholesterol, but that’s another book.) Niacin in therapeutic dosages not only works wonders with LDL, it also decreases triglycerides. Simply lowering sugars can normalize triglycerides in most people, and in some cases total carbohydrate intake, along with supplementing with fish oil capsules. I take 2-6 grams per day of fish oil for this reason and many more, all covered in Chapter 4.

Three years into my transformation, my triglycerides were still over 200—twice as high as normal. When I adopted a lower-carb diet, they dropped to 130. I’m confident that the addition of niacin and fish oil along with a moderate-carb diet will get my triglycerides where I want them to be.

All my other health issues were resolved, and many new health benefits emerged from my lifestyle change—with the exception of fibrinogen. Fibrinogen is a protein synthesized by the liver and is necessary for normal blood clotting. My fibrinogen was within normal range, but only by a hair—395, with the maximum being 400. Excessive fibrinogen can lead to heart disease and strokes, partially due to blood viscosity, or ‘thick blood.’ The thicker the blood, the harder the heart has to work, and the easier clots form. Since most heart attacks occur in people with normal cholesterol levels, caused by blood clotting rather than blockages, you should take a serious look at fibrinogen. I will be working this year to lower mine in half without the use of drugs. Fish oil and simply donating blood can reduce fibrinogen.

Physically, my Vo2 increased drastically, my treadmill tests went from “very poor” to “very good,” and of course my body fat dropped from a state of obesity to a level very few people enjoy. The combination of my lifestyle change along with conventional medicine—HRT (hormone replacement therapy) to aid my depleted pituitary, and a mild anti-panic medication, transformed me from a walking time bomb to a guy in tremendous condition and a few “bugs” to work out. My medicinal goal for 2005 is to remove any medication other than HRT.

I guess you can say it worked!
Oh, and by the way—I feel unstoppable! There’s nothing like the feeling of being in tip-top shape. My energy was through the roof (and still is), and my body responded like a teenager.

While the numbers are very good, the lifestyle is even better.

Now, let’s look at the nutrition that took me where I wanted to go. ::

*The choice is yours—obesity or leanness, life or death. Your age is irrelevant. All that matters is your commitment to transformation!*
Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin
CHAPTER FOUR

Inner Fuel

The taste of health

Jack LaLanne always says, “Nothing tastes as good as being lean feels!” We all know that’s true, at least until that chunk of Godiva chocolate comes our way. Then, for whatever reason, we assume that a lump of brownish sugar will satisfy us more than all the benefits of health combined!

It’s called being human.

I didn’t expect my transformation to be ‘perfect,’ nor did I expect my humanity to disappear once my desire for fitness made itself known. However, I knew that the Godiva chocolates of the world—the moment-to-moment temptations to short-circuit reality—would have to be managed. The last thing in the world you can be is perfect. There’s no point in even trying. All you perfectionists out there—stop it! Read Chapter 2 until you memorize it if necessary. Perfectionism is not the path to anything but destruction, both of yourself and those who love you. Excellence is an entirely different story.

Movie star and survivor Michael J. Fox wrote a beautifully introspective book called Lucky Man: A Memoir. In it he states, “I am careful not to confuse excellence with perfection. Excellence, I can reach for; perfection is God’s business.” How true this is, and how few people grasp the critical distinction between excellence and perfection. Mastery is term I enjoy using to describe my lifelong path to physical strength, health and vitality. Mastery is a state that requires continual learning. Despite the lofty sound, mastery does not mean that you’ve achieved all there is to achieve in a given field—it means you’re committed to it from here on out. True “masters” are quick to point out that they have much to learn, and they will continue to learn well into their later years. Tom points this out as a key to longevity and health in Chapter 17.
By now you realize that to both Tom and myself, the mind is the most critical body part you can train. Therefore, I started this chapter on the history of my diet with a focus on mindset. I did so because I want to pass this vital lesson along—diets are unconsciously based in the roots of perfectionism. This is my philosophy, but one I can defend quite well. Take away the desire to be ‘perfect,’ and diets would vanish. The reason? A diet is based on the premise that carry it out to completion, rather than prolong it for life into a state of mastery. While you can eat forever, you can only diet until you’re finished—and finishing does not bode well for anyone when it comes to any aspect of fitness. All diets end, therefore they are philosophically rooted in the concept of completion. This is the key reason diets fail—they subconsciously insist on perfect completion.

Now, let’s look at some of the keys and steps to my personal transformation, and to lifetime nutritional success. My goal in this chapter is not to give you endless menu plans—there are many of those in Fit Over 40 supplied by our role models. Rather, I want to show you the patterns I was using so that you may either role model the concepts, or personalize them to meet your specific needs. Please follow the guidelines for role modeling set forth in Fit Over 40 before deciding on a plan to follow, along with consulting your physician.

In The Beginning, There Was Jay
I hope my friend Jay Robb will forgive my plagiarism of Genesis, but the statement is factual. Jay’s advice, given to me shortly after my return home from Cozumel, allowed me to achieve a state of near-instant certainty. I was very confused, despite my knowledge of nutrition. “Jay, what do I do? I’m a wreck. One study says this, another one says that… HELP!” That was the gist of my call to Jay’s office that summer day about six years ago.

“Jon, I can tell you’re really hurting, so I’m going to do something I normally don’t do, and spend some time with you on the phone.” Jay is a generous man, but this was his business. I respected that, as I own a business myself. Jay went on to explain what I had already read in his book The Fat Burning Diet. I understood the book, but I’m one of those who need to listen and absorb information from my role models.

It’s been said that you retain only 6% of what you read a mere two weeks after you read it. However, if you listen to the same topic, retention rate jumps dramatically. If you read, listen, and engage yourself in the learning process, you see another dramatic leap—over 60%. The only way to retain more is to teach what you’ve learned. That’s the highest level of human retention—90%. At that point, you’ve personalized the information—you own it. When you get to the
role model section of *Fit Over 40*, you’ll see that without one exception, there are email addresses and usually websites for each individual. We were insistent upon this, although not one person objected! This is how willing people are to help and share, especially those who have been through the wringer. It stems from my conviction that contact of some sort, even email, can reinforce what you already know to a point that mere knowledge becomes *action*, and action transcends into *certainty*.

Jay’s kindness paid off for both of us. I’ve been sending my clients to his website for years now—not only for his books, but also for his superior products. Jay’s protein line is one of the best in the business. The universe has a way of returning what you give. It’s the way it was designed, and there’s an awesome beauty and power in acknowledging it.

For the first four or five months, I was a “Robber!”; which was the name I gave to my Jay Robb-type nutrition plan. (Jay’s last name is ripe for parody.) I followed Jay’s meal plan to the letter for the first month and branched out a bit from there. He even helped me tweak it a bit for my own metabolic needs. It really worked well—and the principles still do today. I achieved a great deal of fat loss, my energy skyrocketed, and I was able to quickly personalize it, creating multiple variations and helpful additions that suited my personality and taste buds. My relatively short-term experience with Jay’s meal plan at the time had nothing to do with the way it worked. The reason I made the change to another protocol was due to the fact that my body repaired itself so quickly (with the help of some supplementation I already knew about, which I’ll cover shortly) that I felt ‘ready’ to up the carbs. Also, I’m not a huge fan of vegetables.

I’m going to give you the basic nutrition plan that I followed after modifying Jay’s protocols. However, for an in-depth look at the source, please check out *The Fat Burning Diet*. Supplementation will be covered at the end of this chapter. I’ll tell you what I took, why I took it, and why I know it works.

Just to be clear—I receive no monetary gain from my referrals, and I do not sell supplements. Everything I’m telling you is the “no-bull” truth.

**Phase 1: Robber Meal Plan**

*Purpose*

Shed body fat, increase energy, restore hormonal balance, and repair insulin resistance (a condition where the body secretes too much insulin to combat elevated blood sugar, caused primarily in my case by the over-consumption of carbohydrates).
Premise
A meal plan high in protein, medium in fat and low in carbohydrate, supplemented by days of increased carbohydrate intake throughout the week.

Food Focus
Lean meats of all kinds (always fresh, never processed meats like deli meat), green vegetables (salads, broccoli, and green beans), flax seed oil and olive oil for primary fat intake (added at each meal), some raw nuts and minimal fruit, except on higher carb days—I would consume brown rice and yams during these periods, along with a free meal or two.

Meal Frequency
Four to five meals per day, with one small snack.

Liquids
At this point, I was not sold on the benefits of water—that would happen later, and in a major way—so most liquids came from diet soda, decaf coffee, and some water (not enough!)

Challenges
Other than the lack of veggies and water, I relied quite a bit on low-carb protein bars. This was at first a supplement that eventually turned ridiculous—eating 3-4 per day. I was working very long hours and found food prep a major hurdle.

Sample Day’s Menu
Calories 2,200-2,800 calories (at this point, I was not counting carefully)

Meal 1  Low-carb Migas (Mexican Eggs): 4 whole eggs, ? La Tortilla Factory low-carb tortilla, diced green pepper and onions to taste, ? ounce cheese, salsa (to taste)—all mixed up in a skillet using 1 teaspoon olive oil

Meal 2  Protein drink: 2 scoops low-carb protein (I used Jay’s Whey, or Designer Protein), ? cup frozen blueberries, 1 tbsp raw peanut butter, Stevia (an herbal sweetener) to taste

Meal 3  Good days: custom-made beef with broccoli from my friends at Wok On Lemmon—cooked without sauce and with less than a teaspoon of oil;

Other days: Low-carb protein bar (Jay had the best, but has discontinued them, much to my disappointment)
Meal 4  Repeat of Meal 3 (leftovers, or another bar)

Meal 5  Always a large chicken Caesar salad—I never feared the fat, and I love Caesar salads...you must eat what you love!

Snack  Low-fat cottage cheese

**Considerations**
Every third day, I would consume about 200 grams of carbs, usually in the form of some added brown rice or a yam with a bit of butter, along with a piece of fruit like a Granny Smith apple. This was spread across two meals, and never after 6:00 p.m. Every other third day I would junk out and have pizza, a burger, or whatever struck my fancy. Sometimes this was one meal, other times it was the whole day. I quickly learned that the entire day did not work well—I felt miserable at the end of the day, and I was set back a bit from fat loss.

**Limitations**
The above meal plan worked well, and eventually I weaned off the bars, at least for the most part. I noticed that the fewer bars I consumed, the better I felt and the more fat I lost. I now view protein bars as nothing more than candy bars with a bit of extra protein—if that! Jay’s bar was an exception—almost 40 grams of pure whey, very low carbs, and sweetened with Stevia. Still, a bar is a bar—and real food is always superior!

**Fishing For Bass**
After a while the Robber Plan grew a bit stale. Looking back, I realize that if I learned to enjoy vegetables and cooking more, this would not have happened. Still, my body repaired itself so quickly metabolically-speaking on the Robber Plan, that I thought I’d give Clarence Bass’ meal plan a try. I was committed to the long haul, so what’s the worse that could happen?

After consulting with Clarence on the phone, my certainty rose to a point like never before. I immediately started craving the recipes in his book *Ripped 3,* and found that I loved some foods I never thought I would. At one point, I was almost a vegetarian, trimming my meat down to a mere three ounces of beef or chicken and a six-ounce piece of salmon per day. For me, this was radical (for vegetarians, it may be considered heresy!)

I began personalizing the Bass plan to suit my own tastes within less than two weeks. I found that I did not like beans and rice—at all. I realized that other of Bass’ recipes would need modifications as well to suit my tastes.
It was during this time that I began developing the software that eventually became *MealPlanner*®, which is due to hit the marketplace in the summer of 2005. I have been a closet programmer for about ten years, and I was intrigued with the notion that I could have more management over my meal plan if I created software that allowed me endless modifications. I could visually see the calories and the macronutrient profiles (proteins, carbs and fats) that would be in each and every meal. I was even able to work in a dessert three times per week and still meet my macronutrient goals. *MealPlanner* will be a real pleasure for any of you who have used clunky diet software before. I wanted to be able to plan an entire week, save it as a template, and create a grocery list based on whatever meal plan I chose. *MealPlanner* allows for that, and much more.

Clarence’s basic recommendation for macronutrient structure was about 55% carbohydrate, 25-30% protein, and 15-20% fat. This was quite a departure from the Robber Plan, which was almost 45% protein and over 30% fat, but I wanted to see how my body would perform with the shift toward glucose (carbs) for fuel rather than fat. Years later I would return to ‘fat for fuel’ as a premise.

I found that 55% carbs was too much. I cut that back to about 44-48%, and increased the fat to compensate. That did the trick—it allowed me to see faster lipid responses (my triglycerides dropped much faster on this macronutrient split), as well as enjoy a wider variety of meals. Fat is satiating—without it you get hungry very fast. Low fat intake is also linked to many metabolic problems, such as decreased hormone production, higher blood sugar levels, and increased insulin resistance. For a carb-sensitive person like myself, consuming a whopping 44-48% carb diet was amazing. The sight increase in fat (to around 22-25%) allowed me to gain strength much easier, and the food tasted better.

At first, I kept the protein sources to lean meats, tuna and salmon, with an occasional protein shake (another departure from Bass’ plan) to get the powerful muscle-building benefits of the whey/casein combo. About a year into the plan, I decided to become more hard-core and remove the lean proteins, except for a few ounces here and there, and keep the salmon and tuna on alternating days.

I fell in love with Clarence’s *Old Reliable* breakfast. Naturally, I personalized this…but not much. Clarence really knocked this recipe out of the park! I ate the same breakfast for about two years, almost every morning. It’s that good. I also grew to love yogurt in anything. I created a barbeque chicken/Boca and rice meal that used yogurt in the mix! I would have never known yogurt had so many uses—and I loved the taste. I also fell for his almond butter sandwiches, and alternated them with my own tuna sandwich mixture for lunch every other day. I enjoyed his *Big Stew* as well, and kept the recipe almost the same as in *Ripped 3*. I consumed this at least three times a week for dinner.
The Bass protocol is simple—whole, unprocessed grains and foods comprise the majority of the diet. You eat for fullness and taste, and you do not need to count calories. High bulk, low calorie, high fiber foods simply fill you up. I included many of my own recipes, upping the fat a bit, lowering the carbs by about 10%, and including a few “dessert days,” where calories from my other meals were lowered to make room for a 300-calorie treat. I would also take a free meal in the week or two—a “whatever goes” meal. However, as time went by, I found that I had to restrict these meals to once a week at most if I wanted my body fat to continue to drop.

**Phase 2: The Modified Bass Meal Plan**

*Purpose*
Shed body fat, build muscle, maintain hormonal balance, maintain glucose tolerance, improve lipid profile, provide carbs for fuel, reduce animal food intake, and increase fiber.

*Premise*
A meal plan high in unrefined complex carbohydrates, moderate in protein, and low to moderate in fat (less than 5% saturated fat).

*Food Focus*
Grains (unrefined rolled oats, barley, quinoa, millet, brown rice, and some whole wheat), yams, fresh fruit in moderation, low-fat yogurt, vegetables, flax seed oil, some chicken, lean red meat, and seafood.

*Meal Frequency*
Five meals per day, three larger meals with two snacks; usually a snack prior to bed. This allowed me to sleep better.

*Liquids*
Nothing but pure water, coffee (one cup), and green tea.

*Challenges*
I had to alter my lifestyle to do some cooking, but it really wasn’t that difficult once I made the connection. Here the power of role models paid off again. Clarence explained how to prepare each dish. After that, I became more experimental and created many of the dishes I consumed for the next three years. The primary physical challenge would only come later, in that I found it almost impossible to drop below 10% body fat consuming this many carbohydrates. I varied the calories and the fat, but nothing worked until I lowered the carbs. However, for a lifestyle diet, the Bass protocols, with my additions, remains one I would suggest to just about anyone.
Sample Day's Menu

Calories 2,200-2,800 (I weighed my food most of the time)

Meal 1  Good Morning Cereal: one cup of cooked oats (combination of millet, amaranth, and quinoa, cooked up in a large batch and refrigerated for ease of preparation, ½ cup yogurt (makes the mixture creamy), 1 cup sliced strawberries or frozen blueberries, ½ Granny Smith apple, 1 ounce slivered almonds, 1 tbsp flax seed oil, Stevia (to taste), 1 teaspoon low sugar fruit spread (on top), cinnamon, Molly McButter. Heated in microwave for about 4-5 minutes. Delicious—and huge!

Meal 2  Protein yogurt: 1 cup low-fat yogurt, 1.5 scoops whey protein, 1 ounce walnuts OR 1 tsp flax seed oil, ¼ cup blueberries, Stevia

Meal 3  Either 1 almond butter sandwich (2 tbsp almond butter on toasted Ezekiel Bread) with 1 Granny Smith apple and a vegetable

Or...  Tuna fish sandwich (1 cup of tuna mixture: 1 can no-oil tuna, yogurt, canola oil mayo, 1 teaspoon low-fat Miracle Whip, 1 Granny Smith apple, diced celery, dill relish, and a dash of Dijon mustard. Makes four sandwiches. I would have this with sliced yams, baked like potato chips, and sprinkled with cinnamon and Stevia.

Meal 4  Jon's BBQ Chicken: 3 oz cooked chicken breast, 1 cup cooked brown rice, 3 oz Boca crumbles, ⅛ cup yogurt, 1 tbsp barbeque sauce (low sugar), 1 teaspoon olive oil (to stir-cook), 1 cup mixed veggies (frozen). Mix up in a skillet for a few minutes and serve!

Meal 5  4-6 ounces baked salmon, one large salad with 1 tbsp low-fat Caesar salad dressing, 1 cup brown rice

Snack  1 bowl of Cheerios (no sugar added) with strawberries with 1 tbsp whey protein powder (only if hungry)

Considerations

Every other night, I'd have my dessert treat—a small piece of pecan pie with ice cream. Sounds a bit much, right? Well, it was only 350 calories! The beauty of having my software around was that I could easily fudge the calories AND the macronutrients around so I'd end up right on target. Even with this dessert, my
saturated fats stayed under 6% for the week (I believe in looking at weekly totals rather than daily totals) and my calories, carbs, and fats were evenly balanced.

**Limitations**

This plan took me all the way to April 2002. That’s many years of eating the Modified Bass Plan, and I enjoyed every year. There were only a few limitations.

I could not drop my body fat below 10%. Even though I had become more carb-tolerant, I do not have Clarence’s genes for natural leanness, which I believe is necessary to eat this way and drop to 3% body fat as he does. Cutting out any junk and increasing cardio did not help matters. It just made me feel deprived, and that’s never a good thing.

My HDL was dropping—from 44 to 32 in two years. This is what a low-fat diet can do to a person with my metabolic conditions. Additionally, and more important to me, my triglycerides would not drop below 150-180. The starches and sugars were a bit too much for me, even at 44-48%.

I would also occasionally “bottom out,” technically called *transitory hypoglycemia*. This was the price of using carbs for fuel, at least for my metabolism. However, this would rarely happen and it was not a big enough concern by itself to warrant a change. My muscle mass increased, but not to the degree I was after. There are probably many reasons for this, but I attributed one of them to a lack of protein and fat.

That being said, my *lifestyle nutrition plan* looks similar to the plan above. The only differences are that I consume only 35-40% carbs, 35-40% protein, and the remainder is fat. The foods are basically the same, merely modified to match these macronutrients.

A special thanks to Clarence and Jay for all their inspiration!

**Hitting the Peak**

As Tom wrote, it’s not unusual for bodybuilders to decrease their carbs prior to a show or a photoshoot. Mine was not a competition with others; it was a competition with myself. I made a date with my friend Marcus Irvin, a professional photographer in the Dallas area. I set the date six months in advance. Adding to my Core leverage was the fact that fitness icon Shawn Phillips wanted to run a story on me for his new magazine *Real Solutions*. I had never seen my abs—ever. Even as a scrawny teen, my abs were always covered in a layer of fat. I do not have the best genetics for fat loss or ab display, but I do have very muscular stomach muscles. I knew that if I could get down in the 6% range, that would do it.
I set a goal, and I said it to myself over and over again—190 pounds, 6% body fat. I set the date and time firmly in my head and on paper, creating Core lever after Core lever in order to move me in massive ways toward my destination.

Here’s the power of goals—I began the journey to my peak at 188 pounds and 10% body fat. I wanted to gain muscle during my peak, which is a lofty prospect. Most people lose muscle in the process. In fact, it’s almost universally accepted that you will. To meet my goal, I knew that I would have to gain nearly 10 pounds of muscle while discarding almost thirteen pounds of body fat at the same time. I set the bar very high, perhaps too high—but I had a plan. The plan included a radical dietary departure, the addition of some key supplements, and about ten weeks out, the medical supplementation of HGH (human growth hormone). It also included a vital mental imagery trick—splicing.

**Splicing: Over-Visualizing your Driving Point**

My career as a graphic artist pays off every day. I decided to use Photoshop (a program that manipulates photos and images) and create a visual anchor. I took bodybuilder legend Bob Paris, one of the most aesthetically built men ever, and photoshopped my head onto his body! I put the picture on my desk so I could see it every day. While I realized I would not end up with Bob’s physique, I knew that empowering my mind and stretching it beyond my perceived limits would cause what I call splicing. This is a very specialized Core lever technique, and you must NOT use this unless you have a firm grasp on both your projection and your realistic expectations. It involves holding two separate ideals in your mind at the same time and projecting them on top of one another. Think of it as genetically splicing two people into one, taking qualities of each along the way. This is what I was doing with the Paris picture—splicing. I also had to keep my own look and realistic body in mind when doing this so disappointment would never enter the equation.

Even I was shocked by the results. At the time of my peak, some of my physical features slightly altered. I noticed certain body parts were similar to Bob’s! My shoulders came out and my thighs were thicker and more sweeping than usual. Perhaps this is just what was underneath the fat, but I’m not so sure. I was already pretty lean at 10%, and my thighs, forearms, hamstrings and thighs never looked the way they did in that November shoot. I’m not suggesting you can change your entire genetic structure with this technique, but greater changes than you realize are possible.

Did I achieve my goals? Not technically—but amazingly close. Using splicing, along with every other lever, I set myself up for greater gains than one would normally expect. Two weeks out from my shoot, I weighed 192 pounds at 7.7%
body fat. The last week I made some mistakes. I cut my calories way too low, as even 7.7% body fat was too much to see my abs clearly. I ended up at 185 pounds at 6.5% body fat. The loss of muscle at the last minute was disappointing, but the 1% body fat loss made all the difference in the shoot. Notice how close I came to what could have perceived as an absurd goal: I gained almost four solid pounds of muscle and discarded almost nine pounds of body fat.

The secret to my success started in the mind and worked outward. Physically, I adopted what to most would be a radical meal plan. I thrived on this meal plan—I felt fantastic, and it allowed me a bit more freedom with foods and a lot more freedom from the kitchen. However, I do not recommend this meal plan long-term. This is not due to health risks, but because many healthy patterns were snapped during the process, such as only relying on whole foods and “junking out” only a meal or so per week. I’ll be able to modify my next peaking meal plan to one that’s less radical and easier to transition back from.

My meal plan was centered on fat. That’s correct...dietary fat. What about heart disease? Cholesterol? Myths, at least in my opinion—and my blood chemistry would agree with me. This is the only time I ever saw my triglycerides drop to near normal, along with my cholesterol, all the while seeing an increase in HDL to well over 50 and LP(a) dropping off the chart.

The basis for such a meal plan is not unique to me, and it is not the Atkins Diet. My role models were people like Dan Duchaine, Lyle McDonald, Vince Gironda, Dr. Mary Enig, Dr. Mario DiPasquale, and William Banting, who pioneered low-carb meal plans. Banting’s classic work Letter On Corpulence was published in 1869! Most people still believe Atkins was the first to think of it, but he was the first to market it. Banting has numerous diabetic clinics named after him, and for many good reasons.

All of these mentors saw the value of fat in the diet, and the consequences of lowering carbs for a period of time in order to force the body into slight or moderate ketosis, a state in which the body burns ketones (a metabolic by-product) for fuel. In this state, fat loss can be rapid. The key is to never stay in ketosis for very long, otherwise you’ll lose muscle. Ketosis also increases catabolic activity, including elevations in the hormone cortisol.

Simply lowering the carbs and increasing the fat was enough for me. My body was burning fat all the time, and my energy was tremendous in and out of the gym. Most people cannot train well on a meal plan like this, but I had some of my best workouts ever. I basically created another version of what’s known as a cyclical ketogenic diet. This type of meal plan is usually a depletion formula, where the carbs are severely restricted Monday through Friday, and a planned carb-up is
scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. However, my meal plan was a variance of this customary strategy.

The macronutrient structure was 55-65% fat, 30% protein and 5-15% carbs. I would carb-up on some healthy food, but mostly junk food—not the best of ideas, but metabolically adequate. In this state, it doesn’t really matter where your carbs come from as long as they’re infrequent. Remember, we’re not talking about a lifetime of health—this is a *metabolic shenanigan*. The fun food made the meal plan more tolerable. It produced great results, but at a price. It took me months to return to a normal lifestyle meal plan. It was a love/hate relationship. I cannot deny the results, but I cannot ignore the consequences—not to my health, as so many would suspect (it actually improved), but *to my long-term goals*.

**Phase 4: Modified Ketogenic High-Fat Diet**

*Purpose*
Shed body fat at a rapid pace, build muscle, maintain hormonal balance, increase glucose tolerance, improve lipid profile, and provide fat for fuel.

*Premise*
A meal plan high in fats (about 40% saturated and 60% unsaturated), moderate to high in protein, and very low (almost non-existent) carbs, intermixed with days of high fat, high carb meals to restore glycogen.

*Food Focus*
Eggs, beef, coconut oil, olive oil, tuna, bacon, green vegetables, salads, butter.

*Meal Frequency*
Not important—I ate when I became hungry. Sometimes this was five times a day, others only three. High fat intake satiates to such a degree that frequent feedings are not necessary.

*Liquids*
Nothing but pure water, one diet soda a week, coffee (1 cup), and green tea.

*Challenges*
Making the transition from a sugar-burner to a fat-burner was the biggest challenge, but thank to a tip from nutritionist Robert Crayhon on L-Carnitine intake, I was able to negate it after a few days.

There were no other challenges presented with this meal plan, until I ended my peak. At that point, returning to my lifestyle plan presented plenty of mental and physical challenges.
Sample Day’s Menu
Calories Varied depending on the cycle
Meal 1 Always the same—6 whole eggs and 8 slices of beef bacon, coffee
Meal 2 Cheeseburger (double) without the bun
Meal 3 50 grams whey protein, 1 tbsp flax seed oil, water
Meal 4 4 chicken legs, with skin
Meal 5 12-ounce steak with a grilled onion

Considerations
I would eat in this fashion until I noticed a craving for sugar. At that point, usually once every four to eight days, I’d eat like crazy. I would usually have a burger with fries and a Coke, and follow that with a huge dessert. Believe it or not, I would be leaner a few days later. There are many metabolic reasons for this, but let’s just say that it worked. However, these were not healthy food choices. Once again, this has little to do with the foods themselves, but the patterns the foods were creating. I was learning a valuable lesson—just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should.

Limitations
Other than almost no carbs for days in a row, there were no perceived limitations. The end results are the story. No one can challenge pictures or blood tests. However, I grew out of this phase, despite the efficiency of the plan and the fact that some people can live like this year-round.

I have a new plan for my peak this year. It will involve some carbohydrate cycling, but nothing near this extreme. It involves saturated fats like coconut oil, but with lean meats only. It includes whole grains in moderation. It even involves periods of very high protein intake—up to 300 grams per day. I experimented with this meal plan prior to 2004 and gained muscle at an extraordinary rate. I believe it will be the best of all the worlds I’ve just covered, keeping me in single digit body fat year-round. Most important, it’s a plan that can be maintained for life, even after my peak.

Water, Water Everywhere?
During 2000, I became hooked on water. One of the best things I’ve ever done, and must do again, is kick the diet soda habit. I was drinking four to six diet sodas
a day! They help with the sweets cravings, but they wreak havoc on the body. They deplete magnesium and other key minerals crucial to blood sugar control and heart health. They contain aspartame, which has almost as many dangers associated with it as smoking according to dozens of anti-aspartame websites and researchers. They’re addictive—the mechanisms for addiction vary from person to person. For me, it’s the fizz. For others, it’s the caffeine, or even the aspartame itself. I let a few sneak back in last year, and presto—the addiction returned. Fortunately I know exactly how to break it.

In his book *Your Body’s Many Cries For Water*, Dr. Fereydoon Batmanghelidj forever changed my take on water, prompting the removal of diet sodas from my life for many years. Dr. Batmanghelidj explained the hundreds of ways dehydration affects your health, right down to the cellular level. Assuming that you’re not dehydrated because you’re not thirsty is a common mistake. In reality, *by the time you experience thirst you’re already dehydrated.* I simply began drinking a lot more water—in fact, over a gallon a day.

I became a water snob as well. One of the reasons I didn’t drink enough was due of the taste of tap water. I insisted on bottled water only, and I still do. There’s a local company that delivers my water to me for about the cost of Ozarka, and their water is the best tasting I’ve found. Their water is oxygenated, which means oxygen molecules are infused into the “mix” of natural purified water. I personally do not buy the health theories of oxygenated water, but I have to say it tastes better than just about anything out there.

I bring my water bottle with me—to the gym, to the movies, and even to restaurants. Some restaurants will not let you take bottled water in due to liquor regulations. As far as they know, you might be on a hidden bender I suppose.

The combination of finding water that tasted great and I didn’t have to lug around in 2-gallon containers turned me into a water junkie. There was no room for diet sodas any longer. Whenever I drink them today, I just look at my water intake—it’s always too low. In fact, the best method I know of to break the soda habit is to drink water. Pretty soon, your body will start to crave it rather than chemicals.

**Water is Directly Responsible for Fat Loss**

People ask me all the time what the best fat loss supplement is. Dismissing drugs like ephedrine or clenbuterol, it’s plain water. Filtered water is superior to tap water, but any water will do!

Your liver is a filtering machine. It’s also a fat-burning machine—in fact, that’s one of the liver’s primary functions. Some are not aware of the liver’s connection to
fat loss. It's little wonder that prescription drugs, all taxing on the liver, are known to inhibit fat loss and even promote weight gain. There are other reasons for this, but the primary reason is the strain on the liver.

High fat or high protein diets, without plenty of water, are also a strain on the liver. The liver is the major fat-burning organ in the body. A healthy liver not only burns fat, it can pump excessive fat out of your body through bile into the gut. Unfortunately for many Americans, their livers are fatty. Autopsies done on obese men showed that 58% had moderately dense fat deposits in and around the liver, while 23% had severe liver disfiguration. When the liver is toxic, or functioning below normal capacity, many “mystery” symptoms appear that often go unexplained, such as:

- Pocket (spots rather than full-body) and abdominal obesity
- Weight loss becomes very difficult no matter what protocols are followed
- Cholesterol and triglycerides are elevated
- Syndrome X (Metabolic Syndrome) and Type 2 diabetes are more common
- Exhaustion, often misdiagnosed as “chronic fatigue”
- Frequent illness
- Skin disorders

Please ask your doctor about a “liver cleanse” protocol if you suspect you have a fatty liver issue.

Water is vital to the health of the kidneys. Without sufficient water, the kidneys become unable to function properly, and the liver is tapped to assist in the process. The liver soon becomes overloaded with toxins as a result—and it's diverted from its job as your primary fat-burning organ. Lack of water means more body fat and toxicity in the body, while adequate water means more fat burning and less age-promoting toxins.

Motivated to drink more water? Good!

Supplements 101: What and Why
Everyone wants to know what I take and why I take it. Most people who know me or who have been to my website understand and respect the fact that I do not take anabolic steroids or cutting drugs of any kind. The only drugs I take are for medical reasons, and my hormones are no different than the average (or above-average) male my age. However, I strongly believe in several supplements. Some of these are for bodybuilding purposes only, while others are vital to your health.
Tom and I respect each other enough to agree to disagree. This is one of those subjects we disagree on—to a point. Just like Tom has bent my ear toward the sound of more cardio, I have had some impact on him regarding the importance of supplementation. While Tom himself may require little if any, he is now more open to the reasons others may find them vital.

We’re both unanimous on this fact—fitness is not found in a bottle. There isn’t some wonder supplement that burns fat while you eat doughnuts. I’ll be discussing supplements that have either been university/clinically tested and proven effective for their purpose, or universally used by too many trainers and bodybuilders with rave reviews not to take into consideration.

Pauling Fever
I’m a huge fan of the late, great Dr. Linus Pauling. I find it ironic that so many traditional physicians mock Pauling’s genius, as if we hand out two Nobel prizes every day to one man. Pauling was the first and only recipient of two Nobel prizes—one for chemistry and the other for peace.

Most of you know Pauling as the “Vitamin C guy.” Mark my words—he’ll soon be known as the heart disease prevention guy. Pauling changed the world’s view on C when he released Vitamin C and the Common Cold in 1970. He recommended high-dose C therapy for immune function and the prevention of many modern diseases, including heart disease. Most physicians wrote Pauling off as a quack, a nut, or perhaps both. Pauling would have the last laugh, as millions would later testify to the miracles of vitamin C.

There have been many recent attacks on vitamin C. Health journalist Bill Sardi is an expert on critiquing the critics, and has answered any and all objections to C in his many writings at www.billsardi.com. Just a few of the flawed studies include a 2004 report that vitamin C damages DNA. Sardi’s scathing commentary on this was published in Science Magazine. At least four studies verify that vitamin C, even up to 10,000 mg per day, causes no harm to the body. Linus Pauling, prior to his death at 92, consumed 22 grams of vitamin C per day.

Pauling, along with fellow researcher Dr. Matthias Rath, proved twenty years ago that LP(a), could take the place of C inside the arterial walls.
There is currently some intriguing research that is looking at human remains from centuries ago, even fossils from thousands of years past, to consider the possibility that we once produced vitamin C naturally ourselves.

I take 8,000 mg/day of vitamin C, and I have not regretted this since I first began nearly six years ago. I used to be one of those guys who caught a cold just by walking past an ice cube. I had four or five colds per year, with one or two morphing into the flu. When I began C therapy (using buffered C only), I noticed a profound difference. I have had one cold in six years—and that was only a 2-day minor ordeal. No flu, and no flu shots are required to prevent it. I feel comfortable recommending this protocol to my clients assuming their physician gives his or her approval.

Some of you may be thinking placebo! After all, Fit Over 40 has pages and pages devoted to the subject. I honestly wasn’t sure myself until last year. Then I knew for a fact the power of C. I was visiting Tom in the New York area with a friend. Our first night was spent in Brooklyn, and the family we were staying with had a very sick baby. Babies are like cold factories, and we were staying in a small loft apartment. I decided to double my C intake, which is what I’ve done every time I feel something coming on. It’s worked every time but once—and that was due to the fact I had kissed someone with a cold. I had no doubt that this would work.

The next day I began to feel worse. By nightfall, I felt a full-blown cold coming on, and I was schedule to train with Tom the very next day. I was a bit peeved, and somewhat annoyed that my C therapy had failed me. I thought perhaps the cute little germ factory in the nearby crib was too much for my immune system.

My friend said that she had packed my supplements for me as I asked her to, as I was running behind for our trip. I double-checked the bag marked “C” and guess what—it wasn’t C at all. She had accidentally put another supplement (fortunately a harmless one) in the bag marked “C”! She and I ran out that night, took the subway into Manhattan, found a Vitamin Shoppe that was about to close, and purchased some real vitamin C. I took 5,000 mg every few hours. I awoke feeling much better, and by mid-day I was 100%. So much for placebo—while a very real effect, it didn’t work on me during this experience.

Visit www.paulingtherapy.com and C for yourself. Come to your own conclusions and then run them past your physician.

Other Key Supplements
Here are the other supplements I take, along with a brief explanation as to why. I’m not including whey protein in this list because I consider this more of a food...
than a supplement. Niacin, while technically a supplement, when taken for therapeutic purposes becomes a drug. It is therefore it is not included in my list. Ask your doctor about niacin therapy if you’re currently on statin drugs! If he/she objects, then consider supplementing with 100-200 mg of CoQ-10 per day. Statins drain this crucial nutrient from the heart and other muscles. The effects are a sluggish and sore feeling, along with the natural dangers of low CoQ-10 for metabolic purposes.

**Creatine; 5gms/day**
Creatine not only works, it works extremely well. Probably the first legitimate natural strength and muscle enhancer, creatine first came on the market about 10 years ago. Since that time numerous studies have shown the effects of creatine on strength and muscle mass increase.

**L-Glutamine; 15-25 grams per day in powder form**
I can’t say enough about glutamine. For years I had heard that it was an excellent supplement to boost recovery between workouts, but I had no idea the extent until I tried it myself. During my peak, this was the supplement that allowed me to almost double the workload I was under without sacrificing recovery. Trainer Roger Applewhite recommended it, and I owe him a buck for the tip!

During periods of increased metabolic stress (i.e. weight training, dieting, etc.) glutamine is freely released from skeletal muscle and intracellular glutamine concentrations fall by more than 50%. Although the body can synthesize glutamine, it is now considered a conditionally essential amino acid during periods of catabolism. Research published by Furst, et al. (Kidney Int., Oct. 1989) have suggested that during periods of stress, 15-35 grams of supplemental glutamine may be needed to preserve muscle glutamine, maintain gut integrity, provide fuel for cells with rapid turnover, and improve overall nitrogen balance. That nitrogen balance part cannot be overlooked. Muscle growth is greatly enhanced if nitrogen is kept in positive balance—something that’s very difficult to achieve while on a hypocaloric diet.

**L-Carnitine Tartrate—Jarrow Brand; 2-6 grams per day**
Want my secret to the low-carb blues? L-Carnitine. Discarded by bodybuilders as worthless for fat loss, L-Carnitine is invaluable for preventing ketosis-oriented fatigue, especially during a transitional period from high carbs to low carbs. As a fat burner, L-Carnitine is very effective under two conditions. First, you cannot have elevated insulin levels. L-Carnitine works much better on a low-carb diet. Second, the dosage has to be sufficient. Most studies were done using very small amounts of this amino acid. I’ve taken up to nine grams per day and experienced very good results from it. L-Carnitine is also essential for neurological function, especially as you age.
Multi Vitamin and Mineral; Cytocharge’s Life Assurance™
I think Cytocharge (www.cytocharge.com) makes the best multi on the market. I take one with each of my major meals.

B6, B12 and Folic Acid (combination by Jarrow)
Folic acid along with B6 and B12 will quickly lower dangerous homocysteine levels to normal. Homocysteine is now considered an independent cardiovascular marker. Anything over 15 is considered extremely dangerous. Below 9 is preferred. Mine dropped from 15 to 6 in eight weeks using nothing but these B vitamins.

Fish Oil; Carlson’s Brand—up to 6 grams per day
There are amazing benefits of taking fish oil (DHA along with EPA, two essential fatty acids) on a daily basis. Cell death decreases by an incredible 40-70%. Fish oil also improves insulin sensitivity, makes carbohydrate metabolism more efficient, helps reduce body fat, dramatically lowers triglycerides, and reduces your risk for adult-onset diabetes.

Flax Seed Oil; Spectrum Cinnamon Flax
There’s an old Egyptian saying: “Where there is flax, there is health.” Flax seeds (either in oil or raw form) are an excellent source of EFAs, plus flax seed oil makes protein drinks and oatmeal taste better.

Aspirin; 81 mg Enteric Coated
I take aspirin to reduce my risk of stroke or heart attack by up to 50% and, according to recent research, to help prevent several forms of cancer, including lung, colon and pancreatic cancers.

In Perspective
Supplements are not a panacea, but if used with caution in addition with a healthy nutrition plan, they can be a very important part of your overall progress in both health and fitness. ☻
Greatness comes not when things go always good for you, but when you’re really tested, when you take some knocks. Only if you’ve been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain.

Richard M. Nixon
I would like you to consider this statement, and realize the wisdom in it: only from the hill’s peak can you see the valley in full, and only from the valley can you admire the majesty of the hill. I do not view the ‘valley’ as a negative place—it’s a place of rest and renewal. Neither is the ‘mountain’ always a good thing. Sometimes they flat out get in the way, and scaling them remains our only alternative.

Note To the Reader
This is a chapter dedicated to the spirit of overcoming—not just once, but continuously. It’s also a personal and revealing chapter in my own life not written as an autobiography, but rather as a vivid illustration of the power of role modeling and of the need to occasionally run on reserves. Frankly, it’s more transparent than I care to be—but my desire to present the no-nonsense truth overrode the option of being covert. Certainty cannot be maintained without truth, at least for very long. I hope that each of you reading this will see both the challenges and the resurrections. Most importantly, I hope you will see that on occasion “reserve power” is required if your Core ever breaches.

This should not be construed as a negative ending to a positive story—quite the contrary. I’m further along today in many ways than I was two years ago. Physically I have some new challenges, yet I make no apologies. Through these challenges, I’ve already learned things that will help countless others. They have also enabled me to progress through many of the health issues I’ve experienced in my past.

Lance Armstrong, in his classic book It’s Not About The Bike, said one of the most remarkable things imaginable. “The truth is, if you asked me to choose between winning the Tour de France and cancer, I would choose cancer.”
Let those words sink in.

Lance nearly lost his life in a brutal struggle with one of the worst forms of cancer. Despite a 3% chance of survival, he went on to win the Tour de France not only once, but six times. Yet, after all his fame and fortune, he would choose the disease over the trophies. Why?

Lance explains it better than I can, but I have my own take on it. Living an empowered life is my mission, my goal and my purpose. However, without the hills to climb, no matter how steep and painful, connection with our fellow man and the struggles he or she may face become more and more distant. I’m certainly not inviting more pain into my life, but I now realize more than ever that it is part of what makes us grow, learn and contribute.

Contribution will be a key word throughout this chapter.

And so I begin the most difficult writing of my life. The good is rendered with the bad. Everything I wrote previously is the absolute truth—and it works. But I also have to say that I messed up. I forgot something critical in my “life equations.” As I’ve googled a few times, so I guess I’m in good company. The story you’re about to read is not exaggerated in any way, nor do I regret going through it. I’m now stronger, more peaceful, and even more convinced than ever before of the power of the Core and role modeling to overcome anything life tosses my way.

Unless you can say, “I was wrong,” you can never truly say, “I am growing.”

Without this error in calculation, I would have never discovered exactly how powerful role modeling can really be. I would have never become, as Pax Beale says, my own hero—not in an arrogant fashion, but in the spirit of never-ending triumph, even if it means crawling over the finish line. Thankfully, I’m working up to a nice jog finally—but I’d crawl if I had to. And, I never would have found the key to unlocking many of the health problems I originally went through.

How’s that for a major fringe benefit?

Less than two years ago, I lost my Core entirely. I never thought it would be possible. Had someone said to me, “Jon, you’ll lose your faith,” or, “Jon, you’ll lose your ability to reason,” I would have laughed in their face. At times I’ve lose one or the other, but I relied on my other Core values to repair the broken ones. If injured, for example, I either trained around the injury, or took time off and dedicated my physical Core to learning more about the injury and the nutrition, training, and caution it takes to help prevent and heal it. In this fashion, I pressed on without missing a beat.
I learned a valuable lesson—always have a “battery back-up” in case your Core literally melts down. I feel a deep need to tell you how this happened, if only to clarify the issue. A mere trauma or two would never have caused this. Becoming bored with training or nutrition—no way. It was my lifestyle and my livelihood, and I had far too many Core levers attached to succumb to mere boredom!

When asked why he was the greatest, living legend Muhammad Ali replied, “Because I get up.” He knew that all the boxing wisdom in the world would not prevent the occasional knockdown. Being human will get you decked on occasion, yet it also carries with it the privilege of the experience. Mistakes and flaws are not ugly scars—they give you color. Be proud of them. The only condition is that you must learn from them and share the wisdom with others. Otherwise, the color will fade to a dull, tombstone gray.

This is about how I lost my Core and regained it, along with several health insights along the way. It is also an introduction to our Fit Over 40 role models—without whom I could not have made this journey. It’s a chapter with its fair share of dissonance that resolves into harmony. It’s also the brutal truth—as I know each of you would respect nothing less.

The Unexpected Summit
Despite my years of growth and application of knowledge, I encountered an unwanted and unexpected climb. From then until very recently, my life changed drastically. Only now can I tell the story with incredible optimism and hope, as my new mountain nearly cost me my very being.

Without role modeling and the literal reconstruction of my Core, I would never have made it through the past fourteen months of my life. During this time, much of the work in Fit Over 40 was conceived and written, and for that, I’m grateful to the hill. My health and life are now back on the course I set many years ago. Before I tell you what transpired, I need to lay some groundwork.

Repairing What’s Broken
There are things in life you simply cannot anticipate. You must learn quickly that management and control are two different animals. You must also use your Core values—if one tire goes out, drive on the other three, or rest the car on two while you put on a spare. If you’ll recall from chapter 2, your Core values are the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical foundations for your life—the things you would both live and die for. Core levers are a way to apply these values directly to any situation. I’ve always preached, “Use your remaining Core levers to fix the flat, and
move on down the road!” Everyone will have Core blowouts in their life. It’s part of the nature of things, and to expect anything else is somewhat foolish.

These are principles and strategies that I’ve taught hundreds of people and are ones that I know work—I’ve experienced it, I’ve seen it, I’ve proven it. However, there was one thing I overlooked in the development of my life and my empowerment paradigm. It was so remote, so unanticipated, that looking back I realize I could not have predicted it.

Here is an example of how I used this ‘Core/jack’ principle in my past to overcome a tragic event—the sudden death of my father. Two days after my birthday in 2001, my father passed away at the age of 82. He lived a wonderful life and was happily married to my mother for 54 years. He was a war hero, and a member of “The Greatest Generation.” These men and women were tough as nails, and we owe so much of our freedom and culture to them.

The death of a loved one, particularly a parent of an only child, can be devastating. However, I was fully “on”—my Core had been functioning at peak intensity, and my life was better than ever. My spiritual life was thriving, my mind expanding and my body in a constant state of growth. Even this was barely sufficient to get me through the shock of that call at 5:30 am. “Jon, you better come quick.”

Before rushing over to see my father one last time, who died peacefully in his favorite chair (it was his habit to fall asleep in that darn thing), I literally ate breakfast. It wasn’t a full-out meal by any means, but it was food. My physical lifestyle had become my foundation. Not my life, mind you, but the foundation that supported the day-to-day workings of it, including my emotional and even my spiritual life. If the foundation cracks, you cannot function in any area.

I remember nibbling the rest of the day in a state of semi-shock. I was scheduled to train, but that was out of the question. I relied on my spiritual Core greatly, as well as my mental Core to see me through the next twenty-four hours.

Later that evening, leaning fully on two of my “tires” while major repairs were underway to my emotional Core, the truth came to me—I was fortunate to ever know him at all. “How many kids had a dad like mine?” I asked. My father was a manual laborer, working outside from 4:00 am until 3:00 pm doing railroad work. Extreme temperatures notwithstanding, my father went to work every day, never missing a single day in my memory, and doing so for thirty-six years. What’s more amazing that that is this man, in his fifties at the time, would come home and let his bratty little child coerce him into the back yard for a game of tackle football. I had no idea what kind of life he had, or even that dads needed rest! To me, he was Superman.
I began to see his passing for what it really was—a step in a better direction. It was the ideal way to die: in comfort, at home, peacefully in his sleep. No heart attack or cancer. No prolonged illness. Just peace. I began seeing his death as a good thing. After all, we all have to go, and 82 years is a nice long life. My father was growing tired in his later years, and it was simply his time. He gave 100% to his life, his God, his family and his country. Nothing more could be expected—in fact, asking or wanting anything more was downright selfish.

That was it—once that clicked in my mind, I knew I could press on with my life. I knew that I could release this grief in a healthy way rather than harboring it as a crutch to lean on or an excuse not to pursue my own life and dreams. My Core was serving me well. My mind and spirit were clicking. I was able to resume my normal lifestyle within two days of my father’s passing.

Notice what I did—I leaned on my stronger Core values until my weakened values were repaired. I figured that if I could get through that time and still keep going with all of my life, I could get though anything. However, I made a mistake, one that would come back to haunt me in the future. I always assumed that at least one of the four areas of Core values would always be available. What I never anticipated was a complete Core breach. I didn’t even think it could happen. The year 2003 would prove me wrong.

Core Meltdown
I lost everything I held dear from the perspective of my Core during the 2003-2004 period. Over time, and finally in a fell swoop of a mere two weeks, I lost my physical abilities, my emotional heart, my cognitive processes to mind-numbing depression and despair, and even my faith.

I cast no blame on anyone, despite the fact that certain individuals contributed to this process. It was not their fault—it was mine and mine alone. Responsibility, as Tom says later in this book, is part of the secret of living a long, full life. Winston Churchill even said it was “the price of greatness.”
CHAPTER FIVE

Emotional Drain

In 2003, I was in great shape and in a new relationship. I thrive on intimacy, so it's always thrilling for me to share my life with others, and vice-versa. I felt a soul-to-soul connection with her even before meeting in-person. She and I had many things in common, including a love for fitness. She was of the same faith as me, and a certified life coach as well. It seemed the ideal match.

The most deceptive of Core illusions for me is love. Love, along with connection, intimacy and fulfillment, are all different entities, yet the mere feeling of love can masquerade as all the above. When you simply feel love, it can take you off course in a heartbeat.

During the first few months, I was my typical physical self—in the gym, on my meal plan, and out riding my mountain bike while trying to speak to my girlfriend on the cell phone at the same time! It was enjoyable and free from disruptions in my flow with the exception of long hours on the phone and on email. However, as the months wore on, I began having to carry the emotional load of the relationship, which is an unnatural state for most guys. Negative experiences in her past began to affect our present.

During the next year, I spent endless hours and soul-draining energy trying to ‘fix’ the situation. After all, I fully believed she was the one for me. All the while, I was diverting my energies from every other Core value to assist in the “repairs”. The cost was enormous. I became spiritually drained. Mentally I was exhausted. On top of my businesses, I had another person in my life I deeply cared for, but that required enormous amounts of mental energy. Instead of mutual support, it felt like life support. Emotionally, I became a wreck.

I was trying to train during this period, but with limited success. One night, while visiting my girlfriend in her home state, I re-injured an old ACL strain (the ligament that holds the kneecap in place) while doing leg presses, my mind only partially on the workout. The pain became worse as the weeks passed. Eventually, I was unable to get out of the car without lifting my right leg with my hands. Even walking hurt. My dwindling Core could not support a physical injury on top of the emotional and spiritual pressures I was under. My meal plan during that year went from steady to “whatever.” The injury was an added insult, and one I simply could not afford. I was also beginning to lose my faith—not because of the situation, but because of the revelations the situation presented. Since my spiritual Core is my internal foundation, this was indeed a scary prospect.

Obviously, this relationship had to end. Normally I would turn to a Core value and lean heavily on it, but several were critically low in energy, and others completely burnt out. This would not be the worst of it.
More Injuries, Fewer Friends, And Unexpected Guests

I decided to regroup. I wanted to spend my holidays with my best friend, as well as train with Tom (Venuto) for a while. I reasoned that the break would do me good. Spiritually, I was still numb. While I never “blamed God”, I was certainly angry—and troubled from the cruelty imposed under the guise of spirituality. I assumed this would pass. It’s not uncommon to have one’s faith tested or to sink down in the midst of things. I have had mine tested many times before.

A few months prior to the breakup, I began to focus on my training again—my solace away from it all. I dove back into the gym with a vengeance, training with almost reckless abandonment. I pounded the protein, which was the latest adjustment to my nutritional plan. That, along with the weight training sessions, allowed me to obtain the most muscle with the least fat in my life—214 pounds at about 10% body fat. This picture Tom and I was taken on New Year’s Day, 2004, and clearly shows the results. I was becoming quite muscular and, despite the nagging knee pain, very strong. I felt free—free from a tumultuous relationship, and free to return to my love of the gym, content to let love take a back seat for a while.

My best friend was very comforting and supportive during this break-up period. She helped me train hard most of the days I was on the East Coast. Other days were spent relaxing and just having fun. I needed the emotional rest, and my body was responding nicely.

Upon returning to Texas in mid-January 2004, I re-entered my former relationship to see if the breakup had helped to heal the wounds of the past. This was unfortunately not the result. It turned out not only to be a brutal departure, but also led to the absolute loss of faith. When my faith went, everything went with it. A few months later, I lost my best friend as well. The details are not important. It’s enough to say that the best of people do uncharacteristic things for love. Goodness knows I wrote the book on it.

The faith issue needs to be expounded upon. I respect people of all faiths, including those with no faith at all. While far from a spiritual book, *Fit Over 40* principles incorporates the spiritual Core as a viable part of our existence. Most of our role models mention some aspect of this in their bios despite coming from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs. For me, this element of my Core governed the
others—until now. The situations under which I lost a love and also a close friend prompted me to question the very foundations of what I believed and why. The foundations did not hold up. I decided that if this is what eternity will be like, count me out.

Just two weeks later, after a year of nagging back pain near my lower lumbar, I was diagnosed with a cluster of lypomas lodged around my spine. Lypomas are benign fatty tumors under the skin. They’re normally harmless, but the cluster was causing pressure around the sensitive nerves of the back. My back was literally giving out—from lack of training, poor posture (I found myself working on the couch a lot), and now the lypomas. The pain was incredible. There were days I could not walk or move much at all. Ultimately my time in the gym became nil. When the gym went, the nutrition went with it. The final blow to my physical Core was a re-injury to the same knee, the one with the ACL strain, while getting out of a parked car. I caught my foot between the curb and the frame of the car door, as my knee went one way and I the other. The physical Core was shut down.

I normally live alone, as it’s my preference, but in the early part of 2004 I took in a friend who had no other place to go. He ended up staying with me for over a year. While I consider him great guy, his life was filled with daily drama. It ended up being far more costly to my health than I could have ever imagined. Again, this was my fault, not his—I allowed the Core illusion of good deeds to take the place of mercy.

After these series of events, there was no longer a Core to leverage. I found myself alone in the deepest sense of the word.

My body fat, blood pressure and all related blood work went out of control. I almost ended up right back where I started. I began to look at “me” from less than a year prior and not even see it as real—yet that had been my life for six years. It wasn’t a blip on the radar; it was who I really was.

Sounds pretty grim, doesn’t it? I told you I was going to give it to you straight.

Perhaps you’re thinking, “If it didn’t work for him, then why should I try it?” It did work for me, and it’s working now—I just didn’t have the missing piece of the puzzle. It took me from mid-2004 until 2005 to find it. Between this discovery, and the myriad of role models I was finding while writing Fit Over 40, my life would finally turn toward a hill of my own—and the valley below, perhaps for the first time, would be an actual paradise.

Unlike my father, I am not “Superman”—so if I can find a way out of the worst of times, I know you can, too.
Resurrections

Where do you turn when there’s nothing to turn to? I had never before had the need to ask the question, but it’s a powerful one, and I love power questions! I’m glad I had to ask it. I feel as if I can now help many people through the darker moments in their lives thanks to my own experiences and consequent solutions.

There were four distinct events that started my process of resurrection. *Contribution*, a Core value so natural to me I almost ignored it, was the missing part of the equation—the only real life support when you feel you have nothing else left. Ironically, I realized this when talking to a friend, retelling my story of running out of air on a night dive. As I mentioned in chapter one, I knew that despite the air readings on my gauge, I had *something left on the inside*. Every external sign said ‘no,’ but I realized, even in the pitch black of dark, deep waters, you always have something left that resides inside of you. You just have to dig it out. I did this by deciding to *contribute on empty*, in hopes that there was still air to breathe inside of me—just in need of less pressure to expand and release.

**Event Number 1: Dave Draper’s IronOnline**

For well over a year, I had been a daily contributor to what I think is the best bodybuilding forum and site on the planet—www.davedraper.com. The forum, known as IOL, was like a second home. Several forum members became like family to me. They represent some of the most down-to-earth, kind, and knowledgeable folks in the fitness and bodybuilding world. I was honored to have several of my writings placed in the Draper Library. Prior to my departure from the forum toward the end of my relationship, I was a near-daily contributor.

I sheepishly logged back on to IOL late in 2004. I felt a bit out-of-place, as I was not the physical “Jon” people knew a year prior, nor was I the same person internally. Still, I felt a need to not only share my experiences, but also my knowledge of training and nutrition. *That* was still very much alive, and that would be the key to my resurrection—I had to *share my life and my knowledge, the ‘good’ and the ‘bad,’ with as many people who were interested or could be inspired by it.*

My first post was an explanation of why I had been absent for so long and the health problems I was now facing again. I was a bit embarrassed, as many looked to me as one of the “go-to guys.” I didn’t know how I’d be received, but in hindsight I should never have doubted. The next day, three pages of posts filled the screen, one after the other welcoming me back enthusiastically. Members offered to help, pray and listen whenever needed.

I felt like I was *contributing for purpose* again, as at least a dozen members said how much they had missed my input. My clients give me this feeling as well, but...
the IOL group has a ‘spirit’ to it that resonates with me very deeply. I not only felt needed, but valued—and in an environment to get help as well as give it.

Today, there are several IOL members that I consider to dear friends. My friend and role model Jan is the closest. Her story of transformation blew my mind when I read it last year, and we’ve talked ever since. She’s been there like no other. We are even planning to co-author an e-book in the coming year about her own amazing transformation, going from over 200 pounds at 5’ 5” to a full-blown figure competitor. (You’ll either have to wait for our e-book to come out to hear it, or for Jan to turn 40—which, according to her, will never happen. She’s “forever 28”, you know.)

IOL lit the fire back underneath me—the passion for sharing and learning, and the desire to fix the nagging injuries so I could return to my true love of bodybuilding.

**Event Number 2: Going Solo**

As I began to regroup internally, I knew that my temporary roommate had to go. I felt that in order to get back on track fully I had to be alone. This was a hard decision to make and one that took many months, as my friend had no other place to go and I enjoyed his company. I knew however the moment I made the decision that somehow things would simply work out. I was becoming me again, even down to the return of a wee bit of faith. Sure enough, one day after giving him the news, he was offered an even better place to stay. It could not have worked out better had I orchestrated it myself.

**Event Number 3: Faith Reclaimed**

This past year, I did more reading than I had in five years of college. I dove into my philosophy books, nutrition books, self-help books—you name it, I read it. I was reading a book a day at one point.

I started to read some older political works during the 2004 election, such as the original writings of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine. I had a great interest in this past election, as I believed our country’s future hung in the balance, at least
to some extent. Ironically, what I learned from Jefferson, Paine, Madison and others was not so much political, but spiritual. Each of these men had faith and reason. They believed in God, albeit in a non-traditional sense.

My ears became more open to the calling of my youth, and eventually I reclaimed my lost faith. Today, once again, it gives me my inner strength. Due to the loss of everything, I now have found the purity and lack of dogma I’ve searched for in my spiritual life. As it turns out, it had been right there all along. I am not a “Bible thumper”. Rather, I simply choose to see God as love, and love is the most important Core value I have. This time, the love was not steeped in culture, but in reality, compassion and reason. I was able to navigate through the clutter to a place called peace.

**Event Number 4: My Introduction to the Fit Over 40 Role Models**

I had the idea for *Fit Over 40* prior to my visit to the East Coast in 2003. I still have the original sketches of the page layout, using Dave Draper as my sample. (It’s changed a lot since then, but Dave hasn’t. He’s still a thick mound of lean muscle, defying age each and every year.)

During my time of renewal this past year, I found myself not only collecting role models for this book, but also discovering over fifty new role models for myself! I called many of these people and shared part of my story with them. Of course, they were more than willing to offer advice and hope. Marty Webb is like a wise mom to me—I remember calling her from California and having a great heart-to-heart about giving too much of one’s self away. So many others would follow: Spice Williams (who spoke to me in Klingonese—she was one of the stars of *Star Trek V*), Jon Blackburn, Pax Beale, Kelly Nelson, Tom Schwald, Tim Wescott, Dr. Len Schwartz, Kevin Saunders (who re-defines “triumph”…there should be a picture of him next to the word in the dictionary), and many more.

This was not just a book any longer—this was a collection of souls and lives that stretched and inspired my own.

My recovery however was not without a price tag. Obviously, I gained back a lot of body fat—nowhere near my ‘before’ state, but about 25-30 pounds heavier than usual. Some of this was due to forced inactivity. The lypomas required months to subside in order to eventually be removed, and the knee took even longer to heal. I tried running stairs after my back had healed, but suffered a stress fracture. Me and my feet—what a pair! Still, I push on, and I’m dedicated to my newest goal—4-5% body fat in 2005, and a lifetime of body fat at 10% or less. In life, you keep going—get up, as Ali says. Leveraging your Core, even during “meltdowns”, makes it an infinitely easier process.
Tonight as I was writing, I had a delicious meal of grilled chicken with mushrooms and a bit of rice. There’s no junk food in the house, and my energy is zooming. I’m well on my way to the best health and physical condition of my life. I was compelled to look back intensely on the past two years as I wrote this chapter. Some people may see this as a major setback—perhaps even failure. Surprisingly, even in the darkest of times, I never saw myself as a failure. Perhaps my Core was there in sufficient quantity to prevent it. Like a soldier who becomes a pacifist, much of my training remained ingrained in the deepest parts of my mind, despite my altered state. No matter the condition, I realized that this training would allow me to fight, if necessary, in order to conquer.

Once you’ve circled the world, you can no longer call it flat.

From circling my own world, to this new precipice, I not only see new and beautiful valleys, I also respect the fact that I’ve come full circle—and you can, too. It’s a journey of a lifetime, and it begins the moment you say, “Go.”

So get ready, get set...

**GO**

My interest in this book has become a *mission*. I know I must share my own knowledge, along with the inspiration and knowledge of Tom and the many role models in *Fit Over 40*, with the entire world. If these role models could help me overcome my internal loss and the new physical challenges presented to me because of it, I know they can help you do the same. Perhaps my own story will help you as well.

You’re about to meet over fifty of the most amazing people I know. They are worthy of being labeled role models in every way. During my darkest hours over the past year, these amazing people have been a beacon of hope. During my triumphs, they’ve been there to cheer me on. I know their personal stories and physiques will inspire you to become more than you ever thought possible.

Read on, learn, be inspired—and enjoy the journeys ahead. ☀️
Role Models: Age 40–49

Paul Burke
Lisa O’Connor Gonzalez
Fred Eisele
Sharon Hartzog
Jay Raulerson
Christine Burtch
Kevin Saunders
Maria Cortes
Dave Swartz
Mark Teasley
Marie Baker
Clark Bartram
Tim Westcott
Lauren Muney
Steve Potts
Deb Christensen
Ramsey Rodriguez
Scott Kyle
Colleen Fisher
Jon Blackburn
Frances Treat
Sandra Lee Jose
Dean Hawkins
Georgette Pann
In 1995, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). I delved into healing myself with a variety of methods including nutrition and a slow, gradual exercise build-up. I put the MS into remission. When I was in the best shape of my life, I ruptured my accessory nerve while lifting weights. This is a very rare and crippling injury. At least two doctors predicted that I would die, and I nearly did. I lost use of the entire right side of my upper body. Not only that, but I lived in unbelievable pain and had extreme vertigo. This continued for four years. My T-cells dropped below 200 as my immune system shut down. The MS came back.

A year later, I finally got on my feet, but I still needed a sling to hold up my arm and shoulder because my trapezius and Lattisimus Dorsi muscles were “dead.” I looked at old pictures of myself and begged for God to take my life or show me a...
way out. I used Oxycontin, Subaxon, Valium, and every
drug I could get legally. I often went from hospital to
hospital begging for drugs. This is something I never
thought I would do because I despised drugs, but they
helped me get through my horrible nightmare.

I still have to deal with pain on a daily basis. It is a tough
life, but I keep fighting. I look great despite what has hap-
pened, and I am still very ambitious. In the mid-80’s, I was
a bodyguard for the late actor Yul Brynner. He inspired
me to become an actor, and I received my SAG card in
1983. I had many principal speaking roles on soaps, TV
(‘Spencer For Hire’), movies (‘Mystic Pizza’), and interna-
tional Wendy’s commercials. I built my website, and I am
writing two books. I answer questions from people over
40 from all over the world. I also began a monthly
column in ‘Exercise For Men Only’, called “Paul Burke’s
Over-40 Fitness,” published now for over eight years.

**HOW I train**

Because I have MS, training is important for me just to
maintain continual motor function. Beyond that, train-
ing, eating correctly and keeping endorphins flowing is
such a huge part of my life that I can’t imagine life with-
out them. When I competed in bodybuilding, I wanted
to win. At age 49, I still want to win—it’s just a different
contest. Now the contest is between me and father
time. I can’t hope for immortality, but I can have a longer,
stronger, healthier body if I keep doing what I’m doing.

I train in a very special way. I only do four sets per body
part. I warm up, and then go into a non-stop cycle of
four exercises for four different body parts. For example,
I will do low pulley rows as heavy and as many as I can
(usually 250 lbs. for 20 reps), then I do bench presses
with 60-80 lb. dumbbells for 20 reps or more, followed
by preacher curls with 80-100 lbs. for as many as I can
and then 20 reps of tricep pushdowns with 110 lbs. I rest
long enough to repeat the entire cycle. I train this way
because it’s the most logical way for my body. I am
usually done in 30 minutes. I get more out of five total
hours a week now than I did working out twice a day, six
days a week when I was competing in the early 1980s.

In my upcoming book, *Burke’s Law*, I explain how you
can build up anaerobic capacity and ATP storage while
increasing reps and weight together. This contradicts the
old paradigm of training, and it took me thirty years to
figure out. My training requires
everous strength
as well as focus.
Exercising each
muscle to failure is
key, and keeping up
the pace is how
the body allows
itself not only to
change muscle tis-
uoe (slow to fast)
but also to create a
cleansing, breath-
ing training regime.

I also swim to keep my muscles elongated. I don’t
believe stretching on a mat is enough. Swimming relaxes
your muscles and stretches them without force. I
combine all I know about the East with the West.
Combining strength training to failure with relaxing
swimming or yoga is truly the best way to challenge
yourself towards an “Omega Point.”

**HOW I eat**

I eat very much a self-styled version of Dr. Barry Sears’
*Zone* diet. I know exactly how to eat for my body: four
meals of protein balanced with low glycemic carbs. Low
glycemic fruit and monounsaturated nuts top the meals
off. I eat about 220 grams of protein a day. Most people
who first meet me are usually off by a decade in their
guess as to how old I am. I did inherit a youthful look to
my face, but I worked hard all my life to keep my body
looking physically powerful. I do not use any type of
growth enhancing drugs, nor have I done illicit drugs.
I have never eaten a lot of sugar, nor have I drunk much
alcohol. Abstaining from these actions, I believe, have
kept me biologically young. ::

Email: PBPTB@aol.com
HOW I think

Four years ago during a difficult divorce, I made a decision to get back on a consistent workout routine (which I hadn’t done since my college days!) My first workouts consisted of lifting weights three days a week, followed by a mile run. These initial workouts served as a way to reduce stress and rebuild confidence in myself. However, it wasn’t until I attended my first cardio kickboxing class with instructor Sylvia Norman that I decided to get more serious about my workouts. She encouraged me to become a certified instructor, and I began to teach a kickboxing class 2-3 days a week as a part-time job.

Becoming an AFAA certified instructor and knowing I have been helping others to achieve their goals has been my inspiration over the past three years. Today, Christ inspires me on a daily basis (Matthew 22:37, 2 Timothy 1:7). My children have also been my motivation because I want to be a good role model in every aspect of their lives.

“...My children have also been my motivation because I want to be a good role model...”
In the summer of 2003, I finally took my first steps on stage as a figure competitor. Although I wasn’t as ready for this competition as I wanted to be, I made myself go through the process to overcome my own insecurities. I just got up there and did it. With knees shaking, I brought home a 3rd place trophy on my first outing. The competition was the most stressful, yet exciting, experience in my life. I’m looking forward to pushing myself harder and getting into even better shape next time.

I made a decision to study and become a National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) Certified Personal Trainer. I spent this past summer as a personal trainer helping several of my first clients reach their personal fitness goals. I plan to continue to study and increase my knowledge about fitness and nutrition by using as many reputable resources as possible, such as Tom Venuto’s Fitness Renaissance website and newsletter. As I continue to learn more, I’m looking forward to the challenge of pushing myself to get into even better shape with my sights set on finishing at the top of my division.

**HOW I train**

Because I am a single mother in a shared custody situation (alternating custody on a weekly basis), I try to limit my gym time when my children are with me.

A typical workout routine for me will include working back and hamstrings on day one, shoulders, biceps and legs on day two, chest and triceps on day three, a day of rest, and then another leg routine on day four.

**My typical workout schedule is as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workout week (without children @ home)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Back and triceps, cardio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Legs and Shoulders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Chest and biceps, cardio (teach kickboxing, including abs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>Body Pump class and legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td>Step class and upper body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I include cardio 2-3 days a week and more frequently when my schedule allows it. I prefer to use squats, lunges and straight leg deadlift to work out my legs, as well as running bleachers, step ups, box jumps or jump rope for cardio. Since I don’t enjoy running, I prefer interval sessions on a treadmill, stepper, bicycle or elliptical.

On the weeks my children are with me I’m not able to make it to the gym as often (just two days out of the week). If I’m training for a competition, I will use my home gym equipment—a Wave Master portable training bag, a Cardio Glide machine, a set of dumbbells, a jump rope, a portable stepper, and of course, a stability ball.

**HOW I eat**

My daily nutritional strategy is to follow guidelines I learned in the *Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle* (BFFM) e-book by Tom Venuto. I love how he put together a chart of foods broken into categories so that I can easily use it as a shopping list. I also use the NutriCounter PDA software ([nutricounter.com](http://nutricounter.com)) to track my caloric goals and monitor my intake while in training. I believe in eating foods as natural as possible and eating the right type of carbs at the proper times of the day. As far as supplements, I also use Empower Life International’s Multicore Multivitamin, Cleanse product, EmpowerLean Protein, and Empower GH. If you haven’t heard of the Empower Life products, you soon will! Visit my website to learn more about these amazing products!

Email: bfitforever@mail.com
This game is 90% mental. If you can’t win the battle in your head, you’re finished. I had to deal with my emotions and find a way to stay positive and patient. Am I perfect? No! Do I care? No! All I want is to be consistent and focused. If I’m not consistently at the top of my mental game, I will slide back to being my naturally lazy self, not just in my health, but also in my life.

It took plenty of positive self-talk to get where I am today. I’ve listened to people like Tony Robbins and some not-so-famous people that I know and respect. The bottom line is that inspiration and motivation come from within. You can be your own hero. The only person I can depend on 24 hours a day is myself. When I need it, I get inspiration and motivation from others, but I always do my best to inspire myself.

We all have the capability to inspire, to believe in ourselves and to accomplish great things. When we decide to believe that, we can go far beyond
what we once thought was possible. When I decided I
would not be stopped, the bumps in the road got small-
er and the barriers got smaller. One after another, my
goals were met and surpassed.

HOW I train
When I weighed 305 lbs, the last thing I wanted to do
was exercise. I enjoyed my pizza, burgers and hoagies. At
42, I had resigned myself to being fat for the rest of my
life. I couldn’t do anything about it at this age, right?
After all, I was “old” now. I’d have to lose 100 lbs! My wife
loved me. I ate the food that I wanted. My easy chair was
awfully comfortable. It if ain’t broke, don’t fix it.

Then I realized it really was broken! All my joints ached.
I got winded climbing a flight of stairs. I couldn’t get out
of my easy chair, and walking was painful. I found myself
avoiding physical activity more often. What was I
becoming and where was I headed? Did I really want to
fall apart and die at an early age? I got scared.

How does a guy that can’t get out of a chair start exer-
cising? Just walk! I started at 2 mph for 10 minutes and
over time worked up to 4 mph for 45 minutes. Walking
got me started, and that’s all I needed. My joints stopped
hurting, and I was getting energy back. The key is doing
it everyday, no excuses. Don’t worry about anything else.
Eventually you’ll want to do more.

Walking and eventually light jogging worked well for me.
I was content to keep doing that until a personal trainer
I met online advised me to add weight training to my
routine. She told me that the more muscle I had, the
faster my metabolism would be and the faster I would
burn fat. That made sense to me and I had dumbbells. I
researched some basic dumbbell exercises: shoulder
press, lateral raise, bent over rows, flyes, chest press, curls
and added squats, lunges, calf raises and crunches until I
had a routine that was simple yet challenging.

I lost 60 lbs in 5 months. Over the last 17 months, I’ve lost
82 lbs of fat and gained 11 lbs of muscle. I currently have
18 lbs of fat to lose to get to 215 lbs at 10% body fat. At
that point, I will have lost a total of 100 lbs of fat.

I change my routine every 4-6 weeks to avoid boredom.
I’ve built an arsenal of six or seven different routines that
I use depending on what my goals happen to be: mass
building or fat burning.

HOW I eat
Exercise becomes the easy part. Eating is hard work.
Eating goes from something you hardly think about to an
all-consuming obsession. The keys to eating properly are
education and patience, neither
of which are easy.
I had to listen to
as much nutri-
tional advice as I
could and then
through trial and
error, figure out
what worked for
me given my
current goals.

Patience comes
from understand-
ing that nothing
great happens
overnight. Immediate gratification has no place in the
journey to fitness. I did what I thought would work,
made adjustments along the way and the results came
when they came. No amount of moaning, complaining
or beating myself up made them come any faster.

There are 10 mandatory rules that I live by:
1. Drink at least 64 ounces per day of water.
2. Eat at least 5-6 small meals per day.
3. Control portions: the size of your palm is a serving.
4. Cut out refined carbs like sugar - NO SODA.
5. Eat fruits and vegetables consistently.
6. Eat at least 25 grams of fiber per day.
7. Eat unsaturated fat (necessary part of a healthy diet).
8. Eat protein (mandatory for building muscle).
9. Eat enough to lose weight in a healthy manner.
10. Make changes that will last the rest of your life.

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HOW I think

I’ve been motivated for over 20 years. It all started when a friend invited me to a bodybuilding contest. I was amazed at all the women competing, but one in particular really got my attention because she was 44, had 4 children and a perfect body! I couldn’t believe my eyes. She was twice my age and had twice as many children, and she was standing on stage in a bodybuilding contest. That was the day I told myself, “If she can do it, I can do it too!” I’ll never forget that day. It was May 10, 1984.

Two days later, I picked up my first dumbbell, and I’ve never stopped since. At the time, I knew nothing about weight training, so I asked a few guys in the gym for help. I bought magazines, books, tapes, and anything else I could get my hands on to learn about bodybuilding. One year later, I competed in three shows, taking 1st place in all three.

Today I am 45 years young, married with four children and I still compete. When total strangers come up to me and ask if I’m a bodybuilder, I can’t
explain the awesome feeling I get inside. My husband works out with me, which helps keep me motivated. Women often approach me and tell me they don’t believe it’s possible to get back into their pre-pregnancy shape. They become speechless when I tell them I have four children! Obviously, having children is just their excuse. Those women could all get in great shape; they just have to believe in themselves and get started.

The more people tell me that having babies and getting older takes a toll on your body, the more it motivates me to go to the gym and the more I improve!

**HOW I train**

I’ve tried many different types of workout routines. Some were more effective than others, but I learned something from all of them. Currently, I use a 5 day split routine.

On Mondays I train shoulders. I usually start with 4 sets of Smith machine presses. I do 3 sets of front lateral raises, 3 sets of side lateral raises and 3 sets on the rear delt machine.

Tuesdays I work back. I begin with 3 sets of 10 wide grip pull-ups. I go straight to the T-Bar row next for 4 sets of 10, then it’s lat-pull downs for 4 sets of 10, and I finish off with “lawn mower pulls” for 3 sets of 10.

Wednesday I work arms. Biceps are my favorite and I’m very proud of mine. I do 3 sets of 10 dumbbell curls, increasing the weight with each set. Then it’s standing EZ-curl bar for 3 sets of 10, and I usually finish with 3 sets of concentration curls. For triceps I do cable rope push downs or V-bar push downs for 3 sets of 10. Then lying EZ-curl bar extensions at a 45 degree angle followed by dumbbell tricep extensions one arm at a time.

Thursday is chest. I’ve just started doing bench presses again and pushed 200 lbs a few days ago! From there I do 3 sets of 10 on the pec-deck and the vertical fly machine.

Friday is leg day. Recently I stopped doing squats because my lower body gets overdeveloped easily, but squats are the ultimate exercise for legs. My current routine is 3 sets of 10 leg extensions, 3 sets of 10 leg curls, and 3 sets of 10 lunges. I also do 3 sets of 10 for calves. I occasionally substitute a new exercise in place of my regular movements, but for the most part my routine stays the same.

**HOW I eat**

I eat healthy on a day-to-day basis, all year round. I eat six small meals a day, with the majority of my calories from protein. My carbohydrate and fat intake is moderate. My husband eats the same and that makes it easier when preparing meals. My kids have to eat what I fix because I don’t fix separate meals for them. I want my children to know which foods are healthy and what benefits they’ll get from them. Of course, they get their occasional McDonald’s Happy Meal, so they’re not “deprived!”

At about 7:00 am I have old-fashioned oatmeal with a scoop of vanilla protein powder, a tsp. of nuts, 1/4 cup of skim milk and 5 egg whites scrambled. At 10:00 am I eat 6 egg whites. Lunch is a 5 oz. grilled chicken breast with green beans. At 3:00 pm I usually have a protein drink, and dinner is grilled chicken, tuna or baked fish and salad. I almost never cheat on my diet, but if I do, I just get right back on track quickly.

I plan to compete again next year. I haven’t been as ripped as I know I could be so my goal is to get my body fat down to around 8 or 9 percent. I prefer to compete locally because it’s easier to make arrangements for my two children. Pre-contest diet is by far the hardest part for me and with kids it’s definitely a challenge. As I get older I always continue learning more and work on fine-tuning my nutrition. I’ll never stop bodybuilding! It’s a lifestyle and it’s in my blood! 

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HOW I think

I was a college athlete in the 80’s and swore that after my playing days were over, I would never run another step or lift another weight. For 15 years I kept my promise.

On my 35th birthday, I found myself weighing 253 lbs. with 36% body fat, and a cholesterol level over 250. I realized that at this rate, I was half way to death if I didn’t change my ways. The very next day I started with a five-minute workout on the stair master and have not slowed down since.

My prime motivation is the knowledge that I am solely responsible for my outcome. I believe that if you can see it in your “minds eye” you can achieve it. The most important thing you can do is change your mind. Your body cannot go where your mind has not been first. Every day, picture yourself achieving your goals and you will.

My wife, Jolene was the most critical component to reaching my goals. She is a certified NLP Master Practitioner and was able to use NLP to help align
my beliefs and behaviors with my goals and teach me
techniques for overcoming the inevitable roadblocks
associated with competitive bodybuilding.

One of my greatest sources of motivation, in addition to
my wife, is being a student of the fitness game. I read
non-stop on all topics related to fitness. If you want to
be great at anything you must immerse yourself in your
topic. I also believe that balance is of supreme impor-
tance: health, energy, family, children, financial, career.

HOW I train
After dropping from 36% body fat to 20% during a 2-year
period, my transformation accelerated when I decided
to compete in bodybuilding. The competition required
that I transform my body from 20% body fat to 6%.
I immersed myself in the topic, hired trainers and
nutritionists and proved that I could do it.

My trainer and I vary my routine almost daily. We focus
on muscular contraction over all else. My workouts are
short and sweet with great intensity. It’s not uncommon
for a workout to last 15 minutes or less, as our only goal
is to safely take the target muscle to where it has never
been. I record all lifts in my PDA and refer to it as a start-
ing point for the next time. Rarely do I fail to increase
reps or poundage as I realize this is the only way to stim-
ulate new muscle growth.

I look at my weekly work and travel calendar for “train-
ing holes” to fit in four training sessions every seven days.
My training partner and I coordinate calendars.
Typically, we get at least three sessions per week toget-
er and one by ourselves. If I’m getting ready for summer,
I add two “dry land” training days plus some cardio.

I use various techniques like static holds, negatives,
supersets, tri-sets, stripping, power lifting movements
like bands and pauses from the power rack. I rarely do
the same workout more than once per month.

Here’s a typical workout:
Chest: hammer Incline 3 warm up sets; hammer Incline
fail at 8-12 reps with a 4 down, 2 up cadence; bench press
on Smith machine; 30 second static hold 6” off chest;
chest machine, 10-15 negatives to failure; push-ups with
tension band across my back to failure.

Biceps: one set of “suicide curls” where my partner and I
alternate by passing the bar between us for reps from 1 -
12 up and then back again to one. For example, I do one
rep and hand him the bar, he then
does two reps and returns it to
me for three reps and so on. Total
time: 18-20 min-
utes for both of
us!

I do similar work-
outs for legs,
back, shoulders
and arms. I only
do abs when my
body fat is in sin-
gle digits and
then only three
times a week. I do

cardio or dry land training in the three months prior to
summer. I take a full week off every eight weeks, and I’m
careful to lower my calorie intake to compensate for the
reduction in calories being burned.

HOW I eat
I follow a “cyclical” diet that limits carbohydrates and
calories below maintenance levels for four consecutive
days, then increases calories and carbohydrates for three
days. I eat six meals a day, and balance my calories per
meal evenly throughout the day with most of the carbs
being consumed before 3:00 pm. I always cook more
food at dinner than the family will eat so I can incorpo-
rate the leftovers into the next day. My friends and fam-
ily are supportive of my needs and requirements. They
ensure that every few hours there is a break for food. I
get 8-9 hours of sleep every night and do not drink,
except for a few beers on cheat day once per week.

Email: jay@kokopellispa.com
I was tired of being tired and looking bad. I was up and down like a yo-yo, from 125 lbs to 180 lbs, never consistent, and sometimes out of control. I had no concept of nutrition. I was extremely high in body fat with tons of cellulite on my legs, butt, arms, waist and mid section. I felt awful, looked awful and wanted a quick fix, so I starved myself. My entire life, my weight fluctuated depending on how much I was starving myself.

By April 2001, I had enough, so I joined a gym, got a personal trainer and started working out. I was never so sore, yet so gratified in my entire life. I didn’t want to grow old being obese and feeling awful about myself. Knowing that I want to stay happy with my body and my health keeps me motivated. There are so many people who are like I was; fed up and wanting to do something about it. Unfortunately, not all are willing to make the necessary changes and sacrifices.

My energy level is my top priority. If I don’t have energy, then I can’t do the things that I want to do.
in my life. Eating right and exercising keeps up my energy level as well as my happiness. Training makes me feel better about myself, and that makes me happy. If I am not happy, the rest the household is not happy. I also want to be an influence on my son’s life so that hopefully it will inspire him to stay fit naturally and keep him from all the nastiness of the world. I am fortunate because my husband is so supportive. He had me quit work so I could train for competition! He knew how happy it made me to be able to do this.

Am I obsessed? Yes—but in a healthy way! I look and feel better now than I did at the age of 31. I struggle with the lifestyle sometimes, but nothing worthwhile comes easily. I love it. It’s a life commitment to your health, physically and mentally.

HOW I train
Obviously, whatever I was doing previously wasn’t working, so I knew hiring a professional trainer was the answer. I do 90 minutes of weight training in the morning, 6 days a week, and then increase that to seven days, one month before competition. Off-season, four of those workouts each week are with my trainer, our schedules permitting. I do 1 hour of cardio one day and 90 minutes of cardio every other day 7 days a week in the afternoon. My cardio program is everyday for 45 min to one hour on the treadmill at level 6, changing the incline from 0 to 5 now and again. I also go running and change it up with the bike, Stairmaster or kickboxing. I always take a day off for recovery—usually Saturday or Sunday, sometimes both.

HOW I eat
Before I started training to compete, I was eating 4 to 5 meals a day and all in moderation: Lots of chicken, salads, oatmeal, and protein shakes, plus supplements. Once in competition training, the diet was more difficult: 4 to 5 egg whites for breakfast, 1 cup of oatmeal or protein shake for mid-morning snack, small salad for lunch with 5 oz of chicken or tuna, a protein shake for mid afternoon snack, 5 oz of chicken, fish or tuna for dinner with lots of dark green veggies and sometimes another protein shake for late snack.

Carbs “stick to me” so I try to avoid them except the oatmeal or cream of wheat. I also eat almonds for essential fats. I have one cheat day a week which is usually a tsp. of natural peanut butter on a piece of whole wheat toast, or if really need it, one Hershey Kiss with an almond (none for three months before competition).

I never used to prepare my food, but I realized very quickly that advanced planning is the key to not cheating. If the proper food is prepared ahead of time, there’s no reason to cheat. It’s not always easy to find the time to do this. I love food and do cheat sometimes, so it’s a constant struggle. However, if I eat more or less the same every day and if it’s all prepared ahead of time, then I don’t have to think about food so much. If I have to think about food constantly, I usually won’t eat as well. Having structure and a routine works well for me.

I am a believer in Eat Right For Your Blood Type. In 4 weeks, I lost 8 lbs without bloating or water retention. I believe in detoxifying when needed. A big part of weight gain and struggle with weight loss is because we have so many toxins in our bodies. Toxins can make you sluggish, fatigued, hinder recovery time and demotivate you from training. One of the worst toxins is yeast. I get my blood checked a few times a year and detoxify according to findings; a few drops of blood will tell about what you are eating. Every time I do a detox, I feel energized, the bloating goes away, and diminishes cellulite! Detoxifying alone will not get rid of cellulite, but with exercise and lots of water I believe there’s a benefit.

Email: dcburcht4701@rogers.com
HOW I think
Excruciating pain shot through my body. It was the last thing I remember before losing consciousness. When I woke up, I was face down in a hospital bed with massive internal and external injuries. The grain elevator explosion left 10 of my co-workers dead and hurled me 300 feet through the air onto a concrete parking lot, where I was found bent over at the chest like most people bend at the waist.

Informed I was paralyzed from the chest down, I fell into a massive depression, stripped of my pride and personal dignity, and left alone to wallow in self-pity.

I rose from those depths to become a world champion athlete and world record holder.

“America is letting the media and the grocery store do its shopping. You alone are responsible for your health!”

www.KevinSaunders.com

Editor’s Note:
Kevin Saunders will be pushing his racing wheelchair through key portions of key cities in all 50 states during 2004 and 2005.

Kevin has already pushed his wheelchair from Canada to Mexico!

For Kevin’s full story, too detailed to cover here in full, please visit his website today.
I became the first person with a disability appointed to the President’s Council on Physical Fitness, and I am an inspirational, motivational speaker today, lecturing all across America.

It took awhile to turn my attitude around. When I first became paralyzed, I was told it was okay to be depressed, to take it easy and let others take care of me. I found I could only get things done as fast as the people helping me. I remember saying to myself, “The hell with it! I’ll probably never have a life anything close to what I had before!”

But I had a dream. As a youngster, I dreamt of becoming an Olympian. Deep inside me, that dream still lived and a small voice said, “Don’t give up…find a way.” After months of agonizing hardships, I was well enough to start working out and doing things for myself. I had to relearn how to do everything. Every simple task I conquered was a major accomplishment. I could have easily given up, but I didn’t. I learned, it’s not what happens to you, it’s how you respond that makes the difference.

HOW I train

When I hit 40, I realized more than ever that my strength, flexibility, joint health, and posture were extremely important. I started focusing on exercises that strengthened my core and decreased my risk for injury. If I injure myself putting unnecessary stress on my body (for example, by seeing how much weight I can lift for ego’s sake), I might not be able to work out at all.

My workouts include aerobic endurance, anaerobic strength, polymeric and flexibility training. I train one to two hours a day, twice a day, six days a week. I do aerobic and flexibility work in the morning and strength, polymeric and more flexibility training in the late afternoon. Before each session, I stretch and warm up, and after each session, I stretch and cool down. During my aerobic endurance training, I am constantly challenging myself by going at a faster pace, increasing distance, etc.

I start my strength training workouts with a light weight that allows 20 reps per set, then steadily increase the resistance to the point where I can only do 4 to 8 reps under control with a maximum effort. I move slowly, keeping the weight and muscle tension always under control.

I also do some boxing workouts with the heavy bag and some speed punching with a training partner who holds and moves the target mitts. Regardless of the type of training, I always make sure the workouts are fun, (at least most of the time). I swim, play basketball, play tennis, and throw the softball, baseball, football, or even a javelin. There are many fun things to do, so I try as many of them as I can, whenever I get the chance.

HOW I eat

Now that I’m over 40, I realize that the weight doesn’t fall off as quickly as it did when I was younger. I eat four to six small meals a day consisting of unprocessed food, such as fresh vegetables, fruits, lean meats, egg whites, and whole grains. The types and amounts of foods I choose depend on the type of training I’m going to do. For example, when I pushed my wheelchair across America — over 2,000 miles—I ate more carbohydrates to help provide my body with the energy I needed. America is letting the media and the grocery story do its shopping. We need to educate ourselves so we can make better decisions. You have to know how to read labels and choose the best foods. We alone are responsible for making the right choices. If I make bad choices, I will be the one who has to pay the price tomorrow.

To read more about my personal story and the health crisis in America, check out my newest book: A Nation at War: A Battle Plan to Win The War on Obesity and Unhealthy Living. ::

Email: info@kevinsaunders.com
HOW I think

I am motivated by the desire to become the best natural bodybuilder I can be. The excitement of competing in national and world championships against the best in the country and the best in the world is very inspiring to me. I have also developed the drive to win these competitions, which pushes me past the barriers that many others hit.

After training for only two years, I won the World Natural Sports Organization (WNSO) 2003 Overall Women’s Canadian National Championship. This turned out to be the largest bodybuilding competition ever held in Canada with over forty women competitors. Four months later, I placed 2nd in the Musclemania World Championships in Los Angeles. These were the first two bodybuilding competitions I had ever entered. Encouraged by this success, I set my sights on the Musclemania SuperBody Championships in Miami in June 2004. Again I won the Overall Women’s Championship. Most recently I returned to California to compete at the Musclemania World Championships and won.

Think muscle can’t be ‘feminine’? Just take a look at Maria Cortes!

www.mariacortes.com

“I accomplished all of this at the age of 42...while raising four children and teaching school.”
the World Light Weight title and finished second in the Open Class. I accomplished all of this at the age of 42 while at the same time raising four children and teaching high school.

Other people’s reactions to me have been incredibly inspiring. Women and men continue to seek me out for advice on nutrition and training techniques that will help them improve and make better progress towards their own goals. I find this to be possibly the most rewarding part of my experience as a natural bodybuilder. I love to speak with people about their fitness goals, and because I am a teacher it seems only natural for me to want to help others in any way I can.

Every day I set specific goals for my workouts that I need to accomplish in order to achieve my long-term fitness and competition goals. As I reach each small goal one by one, it brings me closer to achieving my long-term goals, which in turn keeps me continually motivated and forever inspires me to raise the bar.

**HOW I train**

My competition training schedule requires me to be in the gym three times a day, six days week. Although my program increases in intensity ten weeks out from a competition, my overall training plan doesn’t vary all that much from the following schedule:

At 5:30 am every morning, I do 30 minutes of cardio using either an elliptical machine or a stair climbing machine. At 3:30 pm, I do a weight training session that usually lasts for 60 to 90 minutes. Then at 7:00 pm, I do a second session of cardio for 30 minutes. I generally get to bed around 10:00 pm and then repeat this schedule for the remainder of the week.

My weight training program is set up on a four day split: On day one, I work my chest and back. On day two, I train my shoulders, biceps and triceps. Day three is dedicated to legs (quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, and calves). Day four is an “off day,” but I do train my abs, so technically I really don’t have any days completely off. This completes the four day cycle and then I pick up on day five and repeat the cycle all over again. I vary the intensity of my leg workouts and every other leg day is a “killer” high intensity leg day.

**HOW I eat**

In order to achieve my desired level of fitness at this age, I have had to change my diet substantially and give up a lot of things I used to love to eat. I no longer eat any of the following: sugar of any kind, salt, dairy products, alcohol or fruits. The last one was particularly tough for me, having been raised in Cuba where fruit was a staple of everyday life. Although fruits are a very healthy food source that most people could easily include in their diets, I find that in order to maintain the extremely low body fat percentage that I want, I need to eliminate even the natural sugars that are found in fruit.

There are certain foods I eat on a regular basis nearly every day. These include lean proteins - usually from boiled chicken, tuna or egg whites. I also supplement my whole food proteins with protein shakes most days. I also take essential fatty acid supplements such as Udo’s Choice essential oil blend. I eat carbohydrates, but usually only before noon. The carbs I use the most include plain oatmeal, yams and green vegetables.

I take a number of nutritional supplements. On a daily basis I take a Multivitamin, Vitamin E, Vitamin C, Coral Calcium, Magnesium and Glutamine. The types of supplements I take change as I get closer to competition. Prior to competition, I also take all natural (herbal) diuretics and potassium. In my final week of training I manipulate my diet and water intake to get that totally ripped look I need to win.

Email: mariacortes@sympatico.ca
HOW I think

I've always been athletically inclined, enjoyed sports and liked feeling invigorated after exercise. In my forties, I began to realize my physical condition was declining. What I saw in the mirror disgusted me. “How did I get so fat?” Simple tasks became complicated and tiring. My attitude had deteriorated. I no longer had the drive and desire for life I had in my younger years. No words could describe the hatred I had for my condition.

While reading a fitness magazine, I saw several advertisements from supplement companies. The one ad that caught my eye was a body transformation challenge. A flame ignited inside me, and I remember saying aloud, “I want to do this. I want to look like them. If they can do it, why can’t I?” I entered the contest. The company was offering many prizes, but I was focused on a personal goal: To get in the best shape in my life.

I purchased the book Body for Life by Bill Phillips and read it that evening. The next day was the beginning of my new life, my new journey.
My approach was one hour at a time, one day at a time, doing what I was supposed to according to my plan. I believed that if I continued applying the principles of a sound program, I would eventually succeed.

My motivation increased as my weight and body fat percentage declined. Each week I had new motivation with new results. My attitude was positive. I was happier with myself. I had a new sense of accomplishment. I recognized how to apply the same principles of discipline in other areas of my life. By the end of my twelfth week I had lost 27 pounds and over 12% body fat! My pant size reduced from 40 inches to 32 inches. Over the following five months I maintained a weight of 185-189 pounds.

One of my key motivational factors is remembering where I was, where I am now, and most importantly, how I got here. Taking photographs and comparing progress with body fat analysis and measurements keep me on track. Goal setting is critical. Making short term goals gets me through those times when a natural tendency sets in to take some time off. Whether it is nutrition, lifting or cardio, I’ll make a game of it. The overall experience of my transformation is by far the greatest motivation and I would encourage every individual to embrace such a program, today!

The rewards have not just been physical: enthusiasm, discipline, desire, passion for life, a peaceful state of well-being, a new way of life, and the continuing journey are the real rewards.

HOW I train
Many articles and books have been written about the need to change routines to “fool” your body into continuous growth. When training, I always consider my body’s changes and responses to my workouts because there are times when certain exercise routines are not producing the results I want. Here are two workout plans that I exchange every six to eight weeks:


I mix cardio with weight training depending on my work schedule during the winter months. During the summer months, I ride bicycle or run early mornings and do most lifting late afternoon.

HOW I eat
My diet consists of roughly 180 to 210 grams of protein per day. I eat about the same amount of “good” carbohydrates. Every 5th or 6th day I’ll increase the carbohydrate count to around 300 grams, then return to my “normal” range. My fat consumption ranges between 30 to 45 grams per day. My typical daily calorie consumption is between 1800 to 2100 calories per day. At a maintenance level, my body’s daily caloric intake is about 2600. During the summer months, my calorie intake increases by 300 per day. I want to cut body fat without sacrificing muscle, so I eat 5 times per day. Creatine and whey protein are considered meals on workout days. I take vitamins and omega 3s. Some of the protein sources include chicken breasts, lean pork, turkey, tuna, salmon, lean steak and shrimp. For carbohydrates I eat Ezekiel bread (no flour/organic sprout bread), steamed brown, wild rice or a small baked potato. I believe it’s important to balance each meal with protein, carbohydrates, and vegetables.

Email: swartzy@frontiernet.net
I began weight training when I was in high school as a way to prepare myself for football. My body responded immediately, and I was able to make some good gains the first couple years that I lifted. I have always been a very passionate competitor. After high school, I knew I needed something to keep the competitive fire burning. I decided at that time to try competitive bodybuilding and now, the rest is history. I fell in love with the sport and can honestly say I’ve never grown tired of it. I’ve been training for 25 years and have earned numerous regional and national titles in a total of 88 events since 1979.

Bodybuilding has afforded me the opportunity to meet some wonderful people, travel to some exciting places and improve my physique and overall health at the same time. My goal is to continue to compete in both national natural and national non-tested events. Even at 43 years of age, I feel that I’m still improving and have yet to reach my full potential.

You’re looking at a guy who has competed in 88 bodybuilding shows! Now that is dedication! Mark is a humble man with a great work ethic and a true love for fitness.

www.FitOver40.com
I think it’s imperative we try to be the best that we can be. A person’s health is one of their greatest assets. While not everyone can be a competitive bodybuilder, most everyone can improve their overall health and physical appearance. It takes a lot of determination, some sacrifices and lifestyle changes, but the reward is a healthier, happier you.

I am motivated by the fact that the good Lord has given me this body to take care of. I can choose to maintain and improve it or I can choose to let it go. I choose to make the best of what I’ve been blessed with. I have a wife and two sons that depend on me. In order to provide for them, I need to be at my best. Looking back at my success, I figure that all the sacrifices and hard work have been well worth it.

**HOW I train**

I have an off-season routine as well as a pre-contest routine. My basic training philosophy has always been to utilize a “push/pull” system. In the off-season, I work out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I train legs on Mondays, chest, shoulders and triceps on Wednesdays and back and biceps on Fridays. I normally use four exercises per body part and keep the rep range between 8 to 10. As I transition into my pre-contest phase I will train on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. I work one major body part per day and alternate abs and calves every other training day. The number of exercises per body part stays the same, but I increase my rep range to 12 to 15. I do 30 minutes cardio with each workout session. I alternate between the stairclimber, treadmill and stationary bike. I try to use moderate to heavy weights and still maintain strict form. I firmly believe that consistency in your training is more important than the set and repetition scheme or how much weight you use.

**HOW I eat**

I closely monitor my diet both off-season and pre-contest. In the off-season, I make sure I keep my protein intake at about 1 gram per pound of bodyweight and I take in about 1.5 grams of carbs per pound of body-weight. My philosophy on off-season dieting has changed over the years. I used to gain a lot of extra weight during the off-season, due to a combination of excessive calories or calorie dense foods. At the same time, I neglected to take in adequate amounts of protein. Now I closely monitor my caloric intake all year long, and I make sure I take in good fats such as flax seed oil, Udo’s oil and almonds.

When I transition into the pre-contest phase of my dieting, I break it up into four phases over a sixteen week period. I usually start the first four weeks with about a 50% protein, 40% carbs, 10% fat ratio. Weeks 5 - 8 I go to 55%-35%-15%. Weeks 9 - 12 is 60%-25%-15%. The last four weeks leading up to the contest I monitor my condition and manipulate the carbs and proteins as needed. During the pre-contest phase, protein is 1.5 to 2.0 grams with carbs fluctuating between 1.0 to 0.5 grams per lb. of bodyweight.

**Water intake is critical and I try to consume at least a gallon a day.** As my condition improves and I get leaner, I will increase my water to approx 1.5 to 2 gallons per day. I’m a firm believer in supplementation and have had good results with creatine and glutamine powders. I also use a good meal replacement powder, along with whey powder and 25 grams of soy protein daily. I also use a daily multi vitamin and 1 gram of “C” along with vitamin “E” and a calcium/magnesium supplement.

My body seems to respond better with lower carbohydrates (low glycemic sources) and higher protein intake. As I get older, I have to make adjustments to my diet. It helps if I maintain 8-10% body fat in the off-season.

Email: mbteasley@netscape.net
HOW I think

Getting fit is a lifestyle change and it doesn’t happen overnight. The key is to incorporate healthy habits one at a time and do the internal work to make sure you resolve any issues that may keep you from your fitness goals. In time you will be physically, emotionally and spiritually fit!

Once you’ve experienced the emotions that come from achieving your fitness goals, you can’t imagine life any other way! You become determined to do what it takes, happy, confident that you can do anything, and proud to be in your own skin. You become strong, physically and emotionally—and sexy, inside and out!

HOW I train

I didn’t give much thought to what I ate. I didn’t even weigh regularly—until I stepped on the scale one day and saw that I had gained 10 pounds. I then realized that I was suffering the classic weight gain that most women in their thirties experience as they age.

I had participated in aerobic classes and weight lifting on and off throughout my twenties so I had
some general knowledge about health and fitness. *When I gained 10 pounds I knew it was now or never; I needed to nip the weight gain in the bud or it would continue.*

I played with the idea of becoming a certified fitness instructor because I felt if I was teaching the class instead of just taking it, I would have to be there - no excuses! So that’s exactly what I did. I also made the commitment to becoming a fitness professional because I knew that if I was always learning something new, it would keep me motivated. I have now been a certified fitness instructor and personal trainer for six years, and I’m currently attending school to become a Whole Health Educator.

I like to do a variety of cardiovascular work four days a week: aerobics, step, cycling, hiking, etc. The variety keeps my body from adapting and it helps to avoid the overuse of any particular muscles or joints, something very important to consider as you age.

I work at different levels of intensity depending on how I’m feeling. Sometimes I maintain a steady target heart rate for 30-60 minutes to increase my cardiovascular endurance, and other times I do interval work, switching the intensity in and out of my heart rate zone for 45 minutes. This improves my cardiovascular strength and also boosts my metabolism.

I believe it’s important to do some cardiovascular work no matter how I feel. If I feel tired on a particular day, I’ll still workout. I’ll simply do a less intense “recovery session” where I work at the low end of my heart rate zone for thirty minutes, or I’ll just take a walk.

I lift weights twice a week using a variety of methods. I may do body sculpting with light weights, high repetitions and several sets for endurance. During “light” workouts, I try to find a weight that challenges me at 12 repetitions with perfect form.

I also lift with heavier free weights to increase muscle size and strength. During “heavier” workouts, I try to find a weight that really challenges me at 8 repetitions with perfect form. When lifting to increase strength, it’s important to remember that it’s going to be hard work. I change my routine every time I work out with weights, varying the amount of the weight, number of repetitions, number of sets, etc. I also incorporate Pilates twice a week to increase my core strength and mix it up with some Yoga for a good stretch.

I believe that when you are scheduled to go to the gym, you should go, no matter how you feel. You don’t have to knock yourself out every time, just listen to your body and pick the routine that you’re “up for” that day.

**HOW I eat**

I’ve discovered that for me it’s best to focus on the quality of the food I’m eating as opposed to worrying about the exact amounts of carbohydrate, protein or fat.

If you simply focus on eating whole, natural foods, you’ll feel more satiated, and the nutrient rich environment you provide for your body will facilitate weight loss and muscle growth. A basic understanding of nutrition and a determination to treat your body well will carry you a long way in your journey towards whole health.

I only get about 10% of my protein from animal products, and usually it’s free-range meat only or organic dairy products. I rely on soy products and beans for the remainder. There are so many products available now to people interested in meat alternatives; it’s easier than you might think. With today’s methods of factory farming and the health problems it creates, I feel better about choosing natural and organic foods.

Research has shown that organically grown fruits and vegetables have significantly higher levels of vitamins and minerals, so I buy as much organic produce as possible. Without the use of pesticides, it’s better for the environment, and my body doesn’t have to work to rid itself of the toxins.

Email: mariebaker@unfranchise.com
**clark bartram**

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Services include Personal training, modeling, online consultation, speaking, personal appearances, books, DVD’s

You recognize the face... now for the story!

www.clarkbartram.com

**HOW I think**

I want to positively and powerfully affect everyone I come in contact with. *I am always thinking, “How might I be a positive influence on whomever I meet?”* The reason I do this is because I have seen people NOT being positive—how they might treat a waitress in a restaurant, a clerk in a store, or a stranger on the street. I think, “How might that person be feeling today? Would I want to be treated in that manner, if I was doing their job or living their life?” We never really know what’s going on in someone’s heart. Everyone should be treated with the utmost. I believe we should give our best to everyone.

Balance is the key word! My duty is to my family first and foremost, along with my Creator. Fortunately, fitness is my business so I must stay in top physical condition year round. I do not allow stress, negative people or surroundings, or a busy schedule to get in the way of what needs to be done. I have two kids, a wife, career, and many irons in the fire. *Anyone who is serious about health and fitness must make time to fit it in.*
I’m up at 4:15 a.m., I eat, have a coffee, train, go back home, eat, do whatever business needs to be done, answer e-mails, mail out orders, train 2-3 clients, eat, hang with the family, and eat dinner. Kids’ bedtime is at 8:00 pm. Anita and I are asleep by 9:00 p.m. ourselves. Then I do it again the next day.

I don’t think there is any real “secret” to fitness. It’s all pretty simple and straightforward. Eat right, train consistently, keep a positive mental attitude, drink plenty of water and sleep! I think too many so-called “experts” claim to have “the secret” to a healthier body and it’s all bogus as far as I’m concerned. There’s always a “secret” to those people—to get someone to buy their book until people realize that there is no secret. There is no “Clark Bartram protocol” which anyone cannot do on their own!

HOW I train

As far as training is concerned, I gather knowledge from whomever and wherever I can. My routine consists of one body part per day (Chest, back, legs, shoulders, and arms), followed by 45-60 minutes of cardio. I alternate calves and abs. I constantly mix up the program. No two workouts are ever the same. However, I always keep a 3/1/3 tempo on each repetition; nothing is rushed. No rocking, or throwing the weight up like so many people do. I can cut the weights in half and still get an effective workout by doing very slow or full range contractions. For example, on bicep curls, I contract my bicep before curling, then continue “squeezing” the muscle as I go into the curl. I also do drop sets to recruit more muscle fibers.

For recovery, sometimes I need to do something mindless that requires nothing from me; physically, mentally, or emotionally. The other day I actually watched TV. I had to force myself to sit down and not do anything—it was lazy and relaxing and gave me some mental leeway. However, I found another relaxation technique—I actually cried the other day. That’s right! It was the best release! My skin looked better, my body felt cleansed, my hair even felt better! A good cry is occasionally needed for women and men.

HOW I eat

I have left my nutrition in the capable hands of others: I believe in going to professionals for extra planning, especially when I am planning so many things as well! I started with Intrafitt (nutrition programming) in 1997 for an EAS ad; I had to get fat for the ad. Then, to get back into shape, I went to Intrafitt. They planned everything for me, and I developed a relationship with Billy Smith, who has continued to guide my nutrition since that time. My recommendation is to get on a plan that is based on metabolic need. Everyone is metabolically different, and I am no exception.

My eating is based on metabolic typing; there is a long assessment process, taking into account my activity level, body fat percentages, food allergies, etc. The computer program creates the perfect balanced eating plan for my body’s needs.

I believe in long term lifestyle planning. Too many people are getting into only “12 weeks’ dieting,” without understanding the principles of nutrition for life. I cook each meal individually—freezing nothing.

My own macronutrient program is 50% carbs, 30% protein, 20% fat. My carbs are high quality, low glycemic carbs. I eat every 3 hrs as long as I am awake. My protein intake is about 40-50 grams per meal, although I suggest to my clients only .8 -1.0 gram of lean body weight. The closer I adhere to my recommended 50/30/20 ratios, the leaner I get. I also feel less sluggish, more energy, never really hungry and always satisfied!

Email: Clark@clarkbartram.com
HOW I think

I’m a recovering alcoholic; sober for 5 years. I drank and drugged for 33 years with intermittent periods of sobriety. I have done every drug you can name and was pronounced dead on three different occasions due to intravenous drug overdoses. I was a seven day a week drunk, “self-medicating,” abusing myself, and living in the streets. Some people said I would never recover. At times, I would tell myself I would stop; and I would, but with varying degrees of success. Sometimes it would last a year, at other times, not even a full day. Within these periods of sobriety I ate well, returned to the gym, and took care of myself. I survived when other addicts had succumbed.

I attended AA meetings for two years. Now my training and competitions keep me focused. I have the constant support and encouragement of my wife, along with good friends and family who believed in me and stood by me regardless. It all comes down to whether you want to live or die. Surrounding yourself with positive people is one of the main things I did to stay busy and stay

“\textit{I have done every drug you can name and was pronounced dead on three different occasions...}”

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Services include bodybuilding website, online personal training and nutritional counseling

http://geocities.com/timbuktuweights/
sober. Good friends and a good support system go a long way.

I never gave up, regardless of how low I went. I was finally able to quit because I had reached bottom and refused to go any lower. Getting sober was the toughest thing I ever did except for living the hellish existence of being a daily blackout drinker. I sometimes crave a drink, but it passes and I thank God daily for my new lease on life.

I have also been diagnosed with chronic depression and an extreme anxiety disorder, but training and a proper diet help me more than any medication I have ever taken. In 1993, I moved to Florida. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I vowed to start training again and compete as a masters (over-40) bodybuilder. I am now looking to place in the over-50 category of 2005 Masters Nationals in Pittsburgh.

HOW I train
I have always trained with weights and was a competitive powerlifter in the 70's. I'm now a competitive bodybuilder. I train 5-6 days per week and prefer higher sets: 12-16 sets for large muscles, 8-10 for smaller muscles. I train each part in pyramid fashion, but not to failure. I train each body part once per week. I keep the basics constant and acute.

My 5 day training split is: Legs, chest, back, delts, arms, off on the weekends. I train lighter if my body isn’t feeling up to par, and all-out otherwise. I incorporate a wide variety of repetition schemes in my training according to my goals. Usually it’s 5-15 reps before contests, but if I’m looking to add mass, I do a lot of heavy 3 - 5 rep sets in addition to the higher rep sets. For legs, it’s squats “to the floor” with higher reps, full range of motion. I sometimes go as high as 50/40/30/20 reps on leg presses.

No two workouts are ever exactly alike. For cardio, I do HIIT (high-intensity interval training); I go all-out for 1 minute, slow down until recovered, then go again. I don’t time it, but it’s about 15-30 minutes except for leg days.

I train at a college campus gym on the campus of St. Lawrence University in Canton NY. It’s a small town and this is the only gym here. I would prefer to have more bodybuilders around me as I am the only one in town; however, I’m highly motivated and my inspiration and intensity come from within.

HOW I eat
Diet is key; I don’t believe in cheat days. I remain consistent until I’m lean! I occasionally take a cheat meal, but only after I’m lean. I cycle my carbs: 200, 150, 100, 50, 150, 200 grams. On my fat burning plateaus, I have zero carbs for 2-3 days, then 300 grams of carbs. I don’t go by glycemic index, but I choose natural carbs such as brown rice, yams, potatoes and oats. Also, I don’t include veggies in my carb counts unless I’m on a zero carb day. I only eat bread and fruit in the off-season. No dairy. I eat carbs after training, when the body is in a catabolic state. I also have a whey protein shake mixed with water and dextrose after workouts. My protein is 200-300 grams daily. I keep my fats low as a general rule.

A typical pre-competition diet is as follows:

Meal#1: 10 egg whites scrambled in Pam cooking spray, 1/2 cup of oatmeal (no milk), water.
Meal#2: 1 can water packed tuna, salad (fat-free, low-sugar dressing), baked potato (plain) water.
Meal#3: 8oz. skinless chicken breast, 1/2 cup of brown rice, 1 cup of veggies, water.
Meal#4: 6oz. lean steak, large sweet potato or yam, salad (same as above), water.
Meal#5: 8oz. chicken breast, water.
Meal#6: 1 can of tuna, water.

Email: twescott2003@yahoo.com
HOW I think
I believe in passion in all things living life to the fullest, embracing the joy of living, and exploring the brave new world of the planet we live on. “Do it big or stay in bed,” an opera producer once said. Not a commandment, but a plea—a plea that we pursue a life that matches the beauty of an opera.

The entire world revolves around “connection,” one to another, groups intermingling, the synergy of bonding. The moment we step out of ourselves to seek the vitality of shared-experience, we create an even larger masterpiece; one which ebbs and flows with electricity. I love seeing my life and others’ renew and vibrate through relationships.

“I finally discovered that I wasn’t “old,” which I was feeling!”

“...to grow. I can actually feel inside when I have been stretched beyond my capacity, and can feel the layers that I am newly growing. For only in “being wrong” can those new tiers happen in grander depth. This can be considered “an edge” - that which we step to another side.

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lauren muney

Category Fitness enthusiast
Age Range 40-49
Weight 120 lbs
Occupation Fitness trainer, lifestyle coach, and entertainer

Services include fitness website, motivational website, personal training, custom programs, nutrition evaluation, phone consultations, lifestyle coaching and fitness coaching

www.PhysicalMind.com
How are these subjects in relationship to fitness? Passion in training, passion in seeking health, being “in relationship” with my body, with food, and even taking the chance in being wrong. *Everything is adventure, and it’s our privilege to be able to experiment!*

In my late thirties, I discovered that I didn’t have to live with daily headaches, stomach aches, gastric upsets, lethargy, and body pain, which had been plaguing me for many years. I finally discovered that I wasn’t “old,” which I was feeling! I discovered the freedom from such physiological pain when I started learning about holistic (whole body) fitness and nutrition. I started on whole-food eating, supplementation, extra protein, and ignoring anything which said “non-fat.” In short, I started eating for health! *Energy returned, and my weight decreased dramatically.*

**HOW I train**

I have varied in my training thoughts during my brief fitness career. I currently keep a physique that I call “fitness within reach,” that any woman can achieve with clean eating, passion, and good intensity. Presently, I do most of my own training in a custom-created home gym, which includes an Ultimate Bowflex, stability ball, hanging ab straps, free weights, and an elliptical machine.

My training protocol varies; I will try almost anything for a while, to test its results. I am a real sponge for efficient and serious training. Right now I am doing a variation of Vince Gironda’s 8 x 8 protocol, training 5-6 days a week, 1-2 body parts a day with a cardio-only day thrown in. I also had great results with Body-For-Life (pyramiding plus high-intensity-interval cardio) which I was teaching to clients. I have also been finishing off some training days with 20 min of medium-intensity cardio on my elliptical. Training rarely goes over an hour, cardio included. I prefer mid-morning training, after a light carb/protein-glutamine meal, and I follow up with the same meal. Sometimes I may do nighttime cardio.

I teach and use proper biomechanical techniques; I give focus to the complete abdominal set—not only the “six pack”, but the transverse abs (“core”) which is the foundation of all other training exercises for the body.

**HOW I eat**

The most important thing to remember is eating for true health. Being “slim” comes secondary, but fitness is the natural by-product of true health! I don’t count any calories and I don’t deprive myself, but I can’t eat sugar much at all. My body had gotten used to “good” food - I now get a sugar-hangover!

When I was first learning about nutrition, lifecoach and food guru Jon Benson told me, “If it has a label, it’s not that good for you.” I have stuck to that theory ever since: I eat “real” food, period. I am allergic to both dairy and wheat; I am forced to reduce these food groups, which may pack on extra weight. Only recently have I added oatmeal back onto my regimen to reduce cortisol output; for a long time I removed all gluten and most starches entirely. If the body goes too low-carb, the stress hormone cortisol is increased.

Currently, I eat 5-6 meals a day, and I never miss breakfast. Egg-protein shakes with glutamine are a staple of 1-2 meals per day. I always have pre-cooked meat with vegetables in a plastic container in the fridge, available for fast, nutritious, whole-food meals any time. I will eat red meat, ground chicken, ground turkey, whole chicken and salmon. I love eggs, and sometimes make them with veggies—even as a dinner. Because I eat every 3 hours, I carry protein bars, but only the most nutritious brands I can find; currently I eat KetoSlim bars or Bear Valley pemmican bars, which are whole-food bars. I do use olive oil and real butter (no margarine - it’s a “plastic” food), but sparingly. I also make my own meat pemmican, and have the recipe on my website. This is a nutritionally-complete whole food snack available anytime, and it’s homemade—no “plastic” ingredients.

Email: lauren@physicalmind.com
HOW I think

What motivates me to get up at 4:35 a.m. in the morning every day, go downstairs to my dirty, cold basement, and begin my training? 20 to 30 minutes, high intensity interval training cardio workout—all while the rest of the world is still snuggled under their warm covers? What could possibly possess me, after working twelve to fourteen hours at a hot, physically-demanding job, to forego the lure of an ice cold beer (by rather persuasive co-workers), and instead, replace it with cold iron and weights pressed against my newly acquired calluses within minutes after I get home? What does it take to make me weigh every ounce of food I eat and record the totals daily?

I believe the answer to these questions revolves around my philosophy that anyone can be ordinary, but it takes guts to be extraordinary. Over the course of the last six years, I’ve developed a passion for bodybuilding, nutrition and training. I’ve learned that if you want to be the best that you can be, then you must go the extra mile in order to achieve your goal.

“What motivates me to get up at 4:35 a.m. while the rest of the world is still underneath their warm covers?”
This past year I turned my training up a notch after the birth of my first child, Charlie. I want to make sure I’m around to see him grow and develop. He is now my most fulfilling source of motivation and inspiration. However, I have a lot to prove. Many people didn’t believe in me and doubted that I could achieve my goals. Right or wrong, it motivated me to train that much harder.

**HOW I train**

I usually do cardio 4-5 days a week in the early morning on an empty stomach to achieve maximum fat burning. Most days I incorporate high intensity interval training for 20-30 minutes with the speed rope. I wait an hour before my first meal to obtain all of the fat-burning effects since my metabolism is still racing.

I practice a split-routine, and I’m a firm advocate of progressive resistance training. I don’t work out to “maintain,” I work out with one purpose—to improve. Even if it means just one more rep on one body part, that’s better than not moving forward at all. I record sets, reps, weight, rest periods, workout length, exercises, and so on in order to properly assess where I’ve been and where I want to go next.

I limit my rest periods to one minute on smaller body parts and one and a half to two minutes on larger body parts to make the workout burn more fat. I change my routine regularly in order to keep the muscles guessing. Usually I change my workout once every month, even sooner if I think that my muscles “guessed right.”

**HOW I eat**

I eat six times a day, and every meal incorporates lean proteins, complex carbs and essential fats, such as flaxseeds that I grind up in the coffee grinder and sprinkle on my oatmeal in the morning or on my salad later in the evening.

I usually try to separate my meals from each other by about three hours in order to make sure the food has been properly digested and burned. If I decide to have a snack between meals it usually consists of cottage cheese mixed with fat-free sugar free yogurt, or a quarter cup of almonds, which seems to provide satiety. I take a multi-vitamin to fill in any nutrient gaps that may have occurred, once with breakfast, and another with my evening meal.

A typical day of eating during a maintenance phase starts at 6:00 am with an omelette containing 1 yolk, 6 egg whites, chopped vegetables and a tbsp. of fat-free cheese. For carbs, it’s 3/4 cup oatmeal with cinnamon and stevia (sweetener), and 1/2 grapefruit. I eat my second of six meals around 9:00 am—usually a tuna fish sandwich on whole wheat or whole grain bread with lettuce and tomato. I eat meal three around noon: 2 grilled chicken breasts, 1 small red potato, 1 large salad with chopped vegetables and 2 tbsp. Of olive oil and vinegar fat free dressing.

At 3:00 pm I eat a mid-afternoon snack such as a homemade chocolate peanut butter protein bar or 1 cup cottage cheese mixed with one fat-free sugar-free yogurt (blueberry). After my workout, I quickly get some food in my system—something quick like a banana and a cup of skim milk. Dinner varies, but is typically 8-12oz. broiled salmon, 1 cup basmati rice and 1/2 cup mixed vegetables. I top off my day with an evening whey protein shake with 1 cup skim milk and 2 homemade oatmeal cookies.

When I’m focusing on getting really lean, I trade my starchy carbs from meals 5 and 6 with more fibrous carbs (green veggies), and boost up my protein to prevent muscle catabolism. Every third day, I return to one day on the maintenance menu to convince my metabolism that it’s not starving and to continue burning fat for fuel instead of hard earned muscle. Tom’s *Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle* (BFFM) program walked me through many of these tricks of the trade.

Along with Jon Benson and Tom Venuto, I am a firm advocate of natural bodybuilding, and prefer to get my nutrition from whole food sources, with the exception of a good whey protein and occasional meal replacement powder when situations arise and no other alternative is available.

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HOW I think

It is in the “think tank” that I find my greatest and truest success story. I have never been more than 15 lbs. over my ideal weight, yet I was never satisfied with my body no matter how hard I worked. I was always “not quite perfect.” I taught health and fitness classes at a local gym—always needing to be the skinniest and best instructor. I took a break from teaching and began to set strength and definition goals.

No longer in the spotlight, I felt like I was making progress. I was introduced to the idea of stating my goals with happiness and gratitude and as if they were already a reality. Stating my physical goals that way was easy. It was a challenge to write the one goal I was most afraid of—accepting myself and seeing myself as “good enough.” What if I accepted myself but others saw something different? With much trepidation I wrote my ultimate goal, including: “I continue to satisfy the ‘mental me.’” I recited my goals each morning and evening, reprogramming my old hard-driven thoughts and ideas. As if by magic I began to see

“With much trepidation I wrote my ultimate goal, including: “I continue to satisfy the ‘mental me.’”
what others really saw: a fit, likeable, lovely person. I have since set another 12-week series of goals. I remain thankful, ecstatic, humbled, pleased, grateful, delighted and thrilled with my progress. I continue to achieve my best just as my goals state. My whole life I have not measured up to my own expectations. I now have the tools and the patience to be kind to myself and accept that my best is my best. This is truly my greatest success and motivation.

Key Points
— Write your goals as if they were a reality
— Express thankfulness and gratitude
— Set physical, mental and spiritual goals
— Read and recite or write your goals day and night
— Be consistent and patient
— Love yourself

HOW I train
Using consistency and variety is the foundation of my training program. I may set goals to improve my strength for 12 weeks and then reduce body fat the next 12. I recently did a 10-week challenge of just yoga and found I had increased range of motion when I returned to the gym. My base workout consists of 20-30 minutes each of interval cardio training, strength training and yoga. Interval cardio sessions consist of bursts of cardio followed by a recovery period. One of my favorite routines is a 1-minute burst followed by a 2-minute recovery.

As whole foods are the key to super nutrition, free weights are the key to superior strength training. I use a split routine utilizing free weights as much as possible. This not only builds my core strength, but also challenges my balance. Using drop sets has really boosted my muscle size and strength. I love this method because I am able to maintain precise form while still-fatiguing my muscles and getting a superior “pump.”

My yoga practice has brought a balance to everything I do. I get up early and have my workouts done before breakfast. This is a great way to inspire healthy food choices. I look for ways to share with others what I have learned and keep myself open to new ideas.

Key Points
— Use free weights
— Try drop sets to “pump-up” your workout
— Try Yoga for a new challenge
— Use interval cardio to get out of your comfort zone
— Variety, variety, variety

HOW I eat
I have gratefully developed the habit of preparing nutritious meals for home with leftovers for lunches and quick snacks. Sunday is my usual big cooking day when I prepare and freeze “meals to go.” I feel secure knowing I have my healthy food choices ready when I’m ready. I eat a balanced small meal every 4 hours.

I have tried multiple macronutrient food combinations including: low carbohydrate, low fat, high protein, and any combination of these food groups. I have found what works for me is balance. I set my goals for making healthy food choices consisting of whole foods, as “close to nature” as I can get. I balance my ratios with 40% protein, 40% carbohydrates and 20% fat.

When I am on a fat loss regimen I cut back or cycle my carbohydrates, not dropping below 50 grams a day. This method has brought me lasting results. I have learned to use spices to add flavor to my recipes. I stay away from refined, nutrient-robbed foods and focus on adding color and texture to my food. I do make occasional less than nutritious food choices. I have found if I don’t allow for those choices, I set myself up for binge eating periods. I am kind to myself when I don’t choose the best foods. I know how to eat to feel my best, and I ultimately come back to what makes me happy and grateful—a healthy diet, strong body and sound mind.

Key Points
— Use natural, whole foods in each meal
— Pack healthy lunches and snacks
— Eat a balance of protein, carbohydrates and fat
— Use spices, color and texture to add flare
— Allow for “free” meals and occasional sweets

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ramsey rodriguez

Category: Bodybuilder  
Age Range: 40-49  
Weight: 200 lbs off-season  
178 lbs contest  
Occupation: Personal trainer

Services include personal training, supplements, strength and conditioning training for athletics

www.Tribustol.com

HOW I think

I’m an athlete at heart. I’ve been involved in athletics since I was a kid—from football to track, and now competitive bodybuilding. I’m motivated by the drive to better myself and to prove what can be done in the world of drug-free competition. However, I’m human too, so compliments from people encourage me. Everyone loves to be told they look great—there’s nothing wrong with that.

What motivates me most is contest training. Knowing that I can still make improvements in my body from year to year and feel physically superb at 40 is remarkable. Also, helping a client transform keeps my motivation sky-high. Seeing another person change, becoming happier and stronger, gives me great satisfaction.

Working out improves quality of life—you cannot buy that in a bottle. As we age, the first physical factor that diminishes is flexibility, along with an increase in weight. Then the posture starts to wane, which in turn affects our mental outlook. Start training now! My parents are a good

“I benched 417 pounds without a bench shirt, under 200 pounds—40 years old and completely natural.”
example of the benefits exercise. They are in good health—and it shows. They are more motivated about everything they do in their lives.

My clients come to me because they are tired of looking the way they do, and because they don’t feel well. They feel old. My motivation for training really increases when I start to see the goals I set for my clients realized.

Part of my training method is to educate first, then train. *I then help people set realistic goals.* For body fat, I find eight weeks and a reduction of 5-7% body fat reasonable. Then we establish workout guidelines. Once the client starts to see results, usually in just a few weeks, motivation soars! If you want the same results, you must focus on “why” progress happens, and continually educate yourself (by a qualified trainer or reading). This degree of personalization will instill long-term, lasting motivation. It’s worked for me for over 20 years.

Your health should be a prime motivator. Whether it be physical or emotional, I remind them how important it is to workout to reduce blood pressure, cholesterol and even depression. I give them specific information on how it can help their ailments and to what extent. This motivates my clients and myself to literally jump into the gym! More energy, a better sex life, less stress, performing better under pressure—you name it!

**HOW I train**

I train on a periodization program. I will change my workout program every 8 weeks. I have also created 3-4 week microcycles within this eight-week macrocycle to maximize the benefits of getting stronger and bigger. I focus on lifting heavier weights and lower repetitions, and change the exercise selection every 3-4 weeks. This allows greater stimulation for growth.

My training was greatly influenced by Dr. Angel Spassov, the famed Bulgarian weightlifting coach. He introduced me to high-rep back and arm training (up to 30 reps!) and varying rep schemes within an exercise. An example of this would be bench presses. I’ll warm-up, then alternate between 8 reps and 4 reps every other set. Higher rep variations are included as well.

I believe in the basics—this nonsense about “core training” doesn’t appeal to me. *Squat with a barbell—you’ll learn core balance really fast!* I love to squat, bench, row and complement these exercises with a variety of synergistic movements. I benched 417 pounds without a bench shirt at under 200 pounds, completely natural.

I train a lot, as I recuperate quickly. I’ll hit 2 sessions a day and sometimes train for more than a week without a day off. When I feel the need, I rest. I get my cardio by running with my two boxers, Luna and Cosmo. They’re the best workout partners I have!

During contest training, I use this same format, but I don’t go as heavy. I may go to 6 reps (80% intensity), at my heaviest cycle of 3 weeks. It is important to train heavy during this cycle in order to maintain muscle mass. I will go lighter and do more reps during most workouts.

**HOW I eat**

You must adopt an eating strategy for life, not for 12 weeks—one that is compatible with how you live and the foods you like. The profile of my diet is based on Dr. Sears 40-30-30 “Zone” diet, so my calories are comprised of 40% carbohydrate, 30% protein, 30% Fat.

I believe in centering my nutrition around the foods that are compatible with my blood type. I really benefited from ‘Eat Right 4 Your Blood Type’. Since I am a Type O, I primarily eat lean beef, fish, chicken and fowl for proteins. My starches consist of pinto or black beans, red potatoes and rice. I also find that spelt is a good choice for pastas, pancakes and breads.

As for fats, I like to cook with olive oil. I take an EPA/DHA (essential fatty acid) supplement formulated by Dr. Sears for recovery and energy, *Of course, I use my supplement, developed in collaboration with Dr. Angel Spassov called Tribustol.* It’s quite amazing. I’ve increased my testosterone levels and lowers body fat without stimulants, drugs or harmful substances. There’s just no way I can justify the drug abuse in bodybuilding. Staying natural has been crucial to me for over 20 years.

Email: ramsey@Tribustol.com
I’m no Lazarus. The story of my transformation lacks drama and is offered in the same spirit as the widow’s coins (Mark 12:41-44).

At 28 I had a good job, good friends, a good place to live, and a mounting sense of frustration. All of a sudden I found myself with a passion for theology and desire for some form of ministerial vocation. Although I was single and without a family, work and other commitments put theological studies out of reach. In my funk I lost interest in lifting weights, which I’d enjoyed since high school, and turned to junk food, which I’d not particularly enjoyed before. In record time, I ballooned from 200 to 230 pounds.

The road back to health of mind and body began with a long night’s talk with a friend. I made a decision to put aside the self-pity and accept the responsibility to change. But that decision led to more than just theological studies; it also led to transformations of my physique, training methods, and concepts of ministry.

“I feel better and achieve great results through bodyweight training—no weights!”
After being accepted to Harvard Divinity School, I started a bodyweight exercise routine because I wanted to get back in shape but didn’t want to worry about finding time to go to the gym. I’d expected to find bodyweight training a poor substitute for weights and to return to weight training someday, but after several months of a simple routine of push-ups, handstand push-ups, crunches, and stadium sprinting I found that I could maintain more muscle mass than I had expected. I also felt better than I had when I lifted weights with improved functional strength, endurance, and flexibility.

Requests for help with diet and exercise eventually led me to consider pursuing health and fitness training as a form of ministry. Although not what I’d had in mind, it presented the opportunity to help others in refreshingly tangible ways, a point driven home when I first trained a health-challenged person. Then my wonderful wife Rachel entered the picture. With her support and encouragement I became a certified personal trainer and, to work with the health-challenged, a clinical exercise specialist. I then founded Second Mile Fitness, a health and fitness consulting company.

My personal training goals are to achieve a balance between good health, functional strength and endurance, and physical development. I also plan to explore the boundaries of physique development using only bodyweight exercises and create a program for others seeking an alternative to weight training. (Although I haven’t returned to weights for my own training, I don’t hesitate to recommend it to clients when it best suits their goals and/or preferences.) Along the way I’ve found useful insights into bodyweight exercise in old books and programs. My goal is to combine the best of the past with the latest thinking in exercise science, nutrition, and lifestyle change.

**HOW I train**

My training consists of bodyweight exercises on a three-day split routine. Day one includes push-ups with various combinations of hands on chairs, feet elevated, and a Power Pushup 2, followed by handstand push-ups, and an ab routine of crunches and the bicycle maneuver. Day two consists of pull-ups, chin-ups, and one-legged calf raises. Day three begins with a set of 100 squats for a pump and strength-endurance, followed by assisted one-legged squats and unassisted one-legged squats. In general I do 3 to 5 sets per exercise (1 set for abs.) To freshen the routine I change sets, reps, tempo, hand position, resistance, and exercise combinations.

*Cardio training for the past year has been low-impact only: a 3 mile walk at a target pace of 4.5 mph.* Weight loss cycles feature daily cardio training and near-daily resistance training with off days not scheduled but taken as needed. Maintenance and weight gain cycles feature cardio training 3 to 5 days a week and resistance training 5 to 7 days a week; off days may be regularly scheduled or taken as needed. Weight gain cycles may focus on improving one exercise or bodypart.

**HOW I eat**

My basic eating pattern consists of small meals of lean protein and complex carbohydrates eaten every three to four hours with a calorie taper (the first one or two meals are larger, the last smaller).

My target nutrient ratio is about 50-55% carbohydrate, 30% protein, 15-20% fat. Even though I don’t train to maximize muscle mass, I (literally) weighed the RDA protein recommendation in the balance and found it wanting.

My staple foods include fresh vegetables and fruits, lean proteins (mostly chicken, turkey, tuna and other fish), beans, brown rice, white and sweet potatoes, and Ezekiel bread. I try to eat within an hour after workouts to assist recovery.

My results improved after a trial period weighing and measuring portions; I still weigh and measure intermittently, more frequently during weight loss cycles. Overall I try to maintain stable, consistent eating habits; for weight loss cycles I only adjust calorie levels and substitute vegetables for some fruit servings. ::

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HOW I think

I have been very lucky to be inspired by the example set forth by my mother, Kelly Nelson. Without her insight and wisdom none of what I have accomplished or who I am as a person would ever have been possible.

In general I am a self motivated and competitive person. To see the changes that take place through discipline and commitment to my exercise and nutrition program are what keep me going. I also believe people must have goals. These goals do not have to be the same for all of us. For me I have gauged my progress through the sport of competitive bodybuilding. Comfort zones are great at times, but I have to get out of that cozy place and really push myself. If I didn’t, I would become a very unhappy marshmallow! If women are afraid to try weight training because of all the myths associated with getting “big and bulky”, I would just say, give yourself 2 to 3 months.
of honest hard work, and see how much harder, leaner and more athletic you will look!

HOW I train

I use a split routine that works each muscle once a week. As a natural bodybuilder, I believe I need that much time for recovery. A typical schedule is Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. If I’m getting ready for a contest, I add an extra leg workout, which makes it five days per week. I believe women need more sets or a greater variety of exercises for their legs.

I do three or four sets of each exercise, not counting warm ups. For the sake of joints and tendons, I warm up first with just the bar or a very light weight. Then I start my four sets, working up to heavier weights in the eight rep range. I finish with a pump set of about 15-20 reps. Example: 10-8-8-20 reps. If it’s a large area, like legs or back, I may do more than four exercises. For smaller muscles like biceps I may do as few as two exercises. I like supersets so much that I almost always use them, even when I’m lifting heavy. Supersets get you finished quicker, and I like the intensity. I never do the same workout twice in a row. I change my routines depending on what my priorities are for that week.

Before contests, I do cardio twice a day for 45 minutes, six days a week. Obviously, I do much less in the off-season. My cardio is usually running, step-mill, spinning or cycling and it’s usually intense.

Every person is different, so a “cookie cutter” approach to exercise won’t work. We need to find the type of training that works best for our body, our metabolism and our goals. One thing that I would tell everyone is that you have to do weight training to get a harder, leaner, more athletic look to your body—especially if you’re a woman!

HOW I eat

My mom is a vegetarian, but I am not. I like a lean steak now and then. I eat lean proteins like fish, chicken, turkey and egg whites with a yolk or two thrown in. I’m all for hormone-free, pesticide free meat such as grass-fed beef and organic cage-free eggs, if possible. The main thing is to stay away from refined food. I eat carbs, but only unrefined sources like potatoes, rice, squash, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

I eat five or six meals per day and I throw in a couple of snacks during the day like an energy bar or a protein drink. However, I don’t depend on them. I’m a firm believer in real food. You get a higher thermogenic effect with real food, plus it’s much more satisfying.

My meals are very balanced: a little bit of protein, carbs, and fiber at every meal. My macronutrient breakdown is approximately 40% carbs, 40% protein and 20% fat. Sometimes the carbs are closer to 50%. With the intensity of my training and cardio, I need those carbs!

Unless I’m getting ready for a contest, I allow myself one day where I go out and eat something that’s normally considered “forbidden.” I don’t believe in an entire “cheat day,” because it’s too easy to get carried away. Everybody needs to relax their diet a little and enjoy a nice dinner, and have a dessert if you want to at least once a week. Food is an important part of life, and you can’t deny yourself all the time.

Email: fisherfit@bainbridge.net
HOW I think

For the majority of the last ten years, I have been morbidly obese. In less than one year, I transformed from a 340-pound couch potato in bad health to a fitness addict racing up the steps of skyscrapers!

I have competed in runs up the Sears tower, the AUL building in Indianapolis and the Aon Center (3rd tallest building in the US) where I finished in the top 8% of the field.

I had given up hope—resigned to being fat for life. I had tried many diets and lost weight, but then gained it back with interest. I also realized that if I didn’t do something I would not live to see my grandchildren and the remainder of my life would hardly be worth living. I had a 60-inch waist, sleep apnea, very high blood pressure and a chronically sore back.

“My main motivation to begin my journey was that I wanted to live!”
My message to everyone who will listen is that with God’s help you can make changes in your life. Many people tell themselves continually they can’t do this or that. The difference between “I can” and “I can’t” is in your mind. If you believe you can do something and develop an achievable plan, with patience and determination, you’ll make it happen. The difference between doing it and not doing it is changing your mindset.

A mental key for me was shifting my focus from weight reduction to becoming fit. I was encouraged by the improvements in my workouts, tightening my belt, improving my eating habits, and the feeling of not being so tied to the scale for results.

HOW I train
My typical stair-climbing workout consists of running up and down between 6,000 and 15,000 steps (200 to 500 times up and down 30 steps) 3 days a week (1 to 3 hours). I gradually worked up to this as my body became better at going up and down stairs. I began climbing stairs to challenge myself aerobically and to prepare for a race up the Sears Tower. The tower races are a great motivator for me because they are a celebration of being fit!

On the days of the week when I’m not stair climbing, I enjoy a variety of other exercises, alternating between a Nordic Track, step aerobics, and resistance training (1 to 2 hours a day).

My training time is precious to me. I’m usually alone and enjoy the peace of focusing on my training. I often get my best ideas for the rest of the day during my workouts, and it’s a great time to worship and meditate on what life is about.

When do I find time for exercise? I have a demanding job, wife and 4 kids, church activities, house, dogs and vehicles to take care of. My solution is getting up early in the morning to exercise. I began getting up a half hour earlier than normal, though now I’m generally up at 3:30 am or earlier. I remember what my dad told me about time: “You have time for everything you want to do.”

HOW I eat
Another key to my success was coming up with my own eating plan, conceived, designed and perfected by the person who knows me best (me). You can only stay on someone else’s eating plan so long and then you ditch it because it doesn’t fit you. Who is going to tell you what to eat the rest of your life? You will! I developed my plan around the foods that are excellent sources of nutrition and that I like. I continue to research and fine-tune my nutrition plan to continuously improve it.

I became very aware of keeping a balance between sustainability and making satisfactory progress. Keeping the journey sustainable is very important. As long as you are making progress and feel OK, time is on your side.

I began early in my journey to eat six or seven small meals a day. Eating frequently is important to stay satisfied and keep your metabolism up. And always remember —don’t skip meals! I count my calories to make sure I am not getting too much or not enough food energy. I plan my meals in advance and reward myself with satisfaction for eating within my daily plan.

I generally get 50 percent of my calories from unrefined carbohydrates such as brown rice, potatoes, oatmeal, fruits, vegetables, or beans. 35-40 percent of my calories come from lean complete proteins including egg whites, chicken, fish, non-fat cottage cheese, or soy products. Finally, 10-15 percent of my calories from fats such as salmon, oatmeal and protein sources.

Email: jon@waswayfat.com
I often hear my peers (women my age or older) saying they have decided that their bodies are going downhill and there is nothing they can do about it. I do NOT believe this at all, and I’m doing everything I can to prove otherwise. I feel fitter and healthier now than I did when I was in my 20’s. I certainly know more about my body than I ever did before. You can grow old or you can “age to perfection.” I choose the latter!

Amazingly enough, I didn’t get a grip on what I should be doing to maintain fitness until I was 42 years old. When I crossed the 40-year mark, what used to be an effort to simply look good,
ultimately evolved into an effort to attain optimum health. I haven’t just changed my looks, I have also changed how I view life.

After transforming my own body, I went on to become certified by the National Council of Strength & Fitness (NCSF) as a personal trainer. I’ve also become nutrition consultant, which enables me to show others how to eat in order to achieve their fitness and weight management goals. I never dreamed that I would be coaching people and teaching this to others after having struggled for so long with excess weight myself.

I plan to grow old with style and with as much mobility and flexibility as I can, so that I’m able to make a difference in the world for as long as I can.

HOW I train
I work out with weights about five days per week on average. I split up my workouts to the point where I’m training two body parts per session, except for leg day when I only do one body part, which allows time for optimal muscle recovery. I usually rotate these workouts with days off on the weekends.

This is my four day split routine:
- Back & Biceps
- Chest & Shoulders
- Triceps & Abs
- Legs

The amount of cardio I do varies depending on where I am in the dieting process. When I’m maintaining or trying to put on muscle, I eat more and do less cardio, which has me at around three to four 30-minute cardios per week at my target heart rate. If I want to get leaner, I gradually add cardio into the mix and as my body adapts during diet phases, I add more intensity or more time. I sometimes even do double-split cardios so that I’m doing a morning and an evening cardio session.

HOW I eat
I eat six meals per day, each spaced approximately two to three hours apart. I have a portion of protein with each meal and try to achieve a balanced mix between protein and carbs with each meal. I steer away from refined foods for the most part and get my carbs from whole grains, fresh fibrous vegetables and fruit, unless I’m on a free day (“cheat” day).

My protein comes mostly from free-range chicken, turkey, lean beef, egg whites as well as whey protein to maintain a protein count of around 140 grams per day. I do not let myself go more than three hours without food for fear of slowing my metabolism down. When trying to maintain my weight I eat around 2100 calories per day. During diet phases when I want to drop body fat, I rotate my calories up and down to prevent my metabolism from “stalling out.”

Food no longer controls me. It’s more like I control my food. I can eat plenty of it too, because I know that eating many small meals and eating the right combinations of the right types of foods drastically changes how my body metabolizes food. I have also become acutely aware of the affects of sugar and sodium. Before I started this transformation, I was eating more than 250% of the recommended 2400 milligrams of sodium daily. Now I’m well within my limits on both sodium & sugar. My belief is that if you want to control your weight, the key is to know what you are eating and how each element affects your body. I’ll never stop reading nutrition labels. Breaking it down to carbs, fats, protein, sugar & sodium ranges has lead me on a journey of discovery, and the things I’ve learned will always be with me. ::

Email: francestreat@direcway.com
HOW I think

Success in within you. Your ability to achieve is only limited by yourself. I have a strong belief that there’s a purpose in what life brings you, and in making the most out of every situation, however bad or impossible it may seem. The harder each step in life appears, the tougher we will become after we take it. We come across walls blocking our path in order to make us work towards appreciating life, and the world around us. With determination and hard work, I believe that anyone can achieve and succeed in whatever they desire.

I loved being a police officer; I loved investigating things. It might seem like a quiet day, and then all of a sudden, I could be facing an armed robber, running through the streets chasing someone, engaging in a car pursuit, or finding a lost child and returning her to her mum. It was hard, scary, stressful, and dangerous. Sometimes there were times of great sadness, horror and disgust, but they were made up by the times of great joy, fun and personal reward I received just knowing I helped someone.

“Dreaming is wonderful, but living your dreams is phenomenal.”

sandra lee jose

Category Bodybuilder
Age Range 40-49
Weight 143 lbs
Occupation Retired detective with Australia State Police, now personal trainer

Services include personal training, custom programs

www.sandraleejose.com
Bodybuilding has taught me that I can achieve anything I want. It gives you strength, confidence, and control - physically, mentally, and emotionally. I am totally aware of my body, my health and my fitness level. At times when I have been struck down with injury and illness, I have learned to stay positive, believe in tomorrow and have faith that I can get through it. In 2004, after being confronted with a serious illness, bodybuilding gave me the courage, commitment and focus to face my fears, forge onward and overcome them.

Embracing these beliefs, I fulfilled a personal dream by winning an Australian bodybuilding title at the age of 43, and then I went on to represent Australia at the Universe competition in England. I also work with the Australian edition of Muscle and Fitness and Flex magazines writing athlete profiles and gym, book and DVD reviews. Even upon turning 45 this year, I know I can hold my head up high and mix it up with the best of them in competition.

Training has given me the opportunity to pass on my knowledge and encourage others. I get so much pleasure from seeing my clients succeed; the smiles, the joy, the satisfaction they get from achieving their goals. Each year I improve more, I learn more, and appreciate more what the sport of bodybuilding has given me. That’s why retirement is the furthest thing from my mind. **Dreaming is wonderful, but living your dreams is phenomenal.**

**HOW I train**

Every morning I get up at 5.30 am, walk my dog along the beach, return for breakfast, and then two hours later, it’s off to the gym. My morning workout consists of one body part per day. I train legs, chest, back, shoulders, and arms on individual days. When I prepare for a competition, I return to the gym later in the afternoon for abs, calves and bike riding.

In the off-season, or when I think I need a rest, I just take a day off whenever I need it. For this year’s contest preparation, I forced myself to take regular days off: Three days on and then one day off.

I believe in strict form and heavy weights; never over training, but always pushing to the limits. Reps are usually around ten, except on biceps and shoulders where the reps can go as low as five. I do four exercises for chest, shoulders and back, five for legs, three each for biceps and triceps. I believe in stretching between every set, and posing trained muscles prior to a contest.

**HOW I eat**

I have tried many different diet combinations over the years, and realized that anyone who seeks proper nutrition has to find out what works best for him or herself. I found that high protein, low fat, and varying carbohydrates works for me. I change the carb amounts every day, which helps to keep the body guessing; the body never falls into that state where it starts to break down muscle (catabolism). I remove bad fats but keep in good oils, which naturally occur in the food.

I have a black coffee, plus an aspirin and ephedrine capsule as a “thermogenic stack” in the morning before I walk. Other supplements I use include branched chain amino acids (BCAA), L-glutamine, HMB and Vitamin C before and after weight training.

I don’t measure my foods; since I’ve been doing this so long, I know the right amounts just by looking at them. In the beginning, I did measure, and I encourage all my clients to measure their food. However, in the last week prior the competition, details are everything, so all my food is measured and weighed.

My meals are scheduled in advance and certain foods are eaten before and after training to get the most out of the carb and protein reactions.

**Meal 1:** 6 egg omelette, 2 whole eggs, cottage cheese and flax seed oil.
**Meal 2:** After training - rolled oats with protein powder and flax seed oil.
**Meal 3:** Either chicken and vegetables or steak and vegetables, sometimes rice.
**Meal 4:** Tuna and vegetables.
**Meal 5:** Chicken with broccoli and cauliflower.
**Meal 6:** Protein shakes and sometimes diet jelly.

Email: sandraleejose@hotmail.com
HOW I think

I’m a 41-year-old station officer with an Australian rescue firefighting service, of which fitness and strength are prerequisites. However, due to the shift work and the nature of the job, we must be on constant guard against bad diet and sedentary lifestyle, which can cause weight gain that sneaks up on you with age.

About two years ago I decided to clean up my act, my diet, and my attitude towards exercise. I bought Tom Venuto’s book *Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle*, and this is when I truly started to grasp how the body really works and how to lose fat.

I particularly enjoyed the sensible and down to earth advice about having a “gentle discipline,” which allows for those moments when you give yourself a break and take one night off a week. This is important to me because serious dieting and ridiculous discipline can alienate you.

I now live the fitness lifestyle. *I’ve been so successful, I did my first firefighter calendar with*
**all the proceeds going to charity.** After an invitation and a lot of coaxing, my firefighter friends and I took it one step further and performed a comedy dance routine for a local charity event. They wanted the sex appeal of firefighters with a little humor. It involved showing the world our newfound bodies, and it was a huge success.

Two years later, our performances are still in demand. Our show has helped raise over $250,000 for various charities and community functions. Thanks to our new lifestyles, we are known as “The Hot Firies.”

I believe that training, eating, positive mental attitude and lifestyle must all come together “as one.” When you have them all together, this affects your interaction with the rest of the world because you start to exude a certain positive energy—an “X-factor”—and people who want to change their lives are drawn towards you.

*This X-factor attitude is what makes people leaders, successes and at times, even fireballs of positive energy.* When you have this attitude, you’re on the path to become a messenger to educate and direct other people with a gentle discipline towards a better way to live.

**HOW I train**

Training five days a week, working one body part per day works best for me because it allows my muscles the necessary amount of recovery. Usually, I do six to ten reps per set with six to eight sets for smaller body parts and eight to twelve sets for the larger muscles. I always do warm-up sets before going to the heavier work sets. I train steadily for ten to twelve weeks and then take seven to ten days for recovery. Then I start a new routine on the same schedule with the same sets and reps, but using different exercises.


I do aerobic work at least four times per week, with two of those sessions early in the morning before breakfast. My cardio varies between football drills (not playing), running and walking. I always attempt to stay in the target fat burning zone or above, although the intensity varies depending on how I feel each day. Each session lasts at least thirty minutes.

**HOW I eat**

When I’m trying to get leaner, I eat fewer calories as the day goes on and I avoid excessive carbs after 7 pm. I gradually make the diet stricter by stopping the carbs earlier in the day until I reach my desired goal. I always keep my water intake high. I have two or three protein shakes spread throughout the day between food meals. I eat lean proteins and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables but very little bread. The diet is sometimes challenging when you’re cooking for and eating with children. I relax the “rules” one night a week for the family’s sanity! My typical day is: Morning; a glass of water as soon as I wake up, Weetabix or oats, espresso coffee. Midmorning: protein drink (low fat and low carb), fruit, coffee. Lunch: large can of tuna, salad or vegetables, diet drink. Midday: protein drink (low fat and carb), nuts or nut bar, another piece of fruit (if hungry). Dinner: large portion of lean protein (chicken, red meat, fish), salad or veggies. Late evening: protein drink (if I’m still hungry).

**Email Dean Hawkins**
The personal characteristic that I believe is most important for staying fit and healthy, especially after age 40, is positive thinking. With every obstacle you encounter, you must have the ability to turn negatives into positives. Without confidence, faith and positive mental attitude you’re defeated before you’ve even begun. Once I made a conscious decision that I would achieve my bodybuilding goal at age 45, I built up a burning desire to succeed and achieve it. I think, eat, and sleep bodybuilding all year round in order to do this.

My best attribute is persistence—I never, ever quit! I know that if I persist I can’t fail. Furthermore, if I “fail,” it’s not really failure because I learn, grow and simply change gears. Without persistence, passion and going the extra mile, I never would have made it to the stage.

Bodybuilding at any age is not easy and starting at age 44 was even more difficult. It had always been
a dream of mine, but I never had the courage to follow through. It wasn’t until I reached my 40’s that I finally decided to go for everything that I always wanted in life but had been afraid to attempt.

When I run into what others perceive as dead ends, I simply look for coaches and mentors for the help and support I need. I stick with positive people who will encourage me and support my dreams. I also turn to my Higher Power for help and direction – I pray and sometimes meditate to relax.

HOW I train

Someone has always been placed in my life to help me overcome obstacles and give me direction when I needed it. Most recently, Jon Benson was that someone. Through his knowledge of training, nutrition and life coaching, I’ve achieved amazing results and I’m now preparing for another bodybuilding contest.

I change my workout programs regularly. The variety is important to prevent your muscles from adapting. I often experiment with new and unique training methods to keep the muscle growth coming. **With Jon’s help, I recently started using a special program called Power 7.**

My routine is set up on a four day split which has me working chest and triceps on Monday, back, calves and abs on Tuesday, shoulders, biceps, and abs on Thursday, and legs and calves on Fridays. I do no weight training on weekends, only cardio. I use a double split routine, which means I work one body part in the morning and another in the evening. (For example, chest in the a.m., and triceps in the p.m.) Every muscle is trained once per week.

I do two or three exercises per muscle group for eight sets of eight repetitions each. The rest periods between each set are only 15-20 seconds. The routine is almost non-stop, like circuit training, only it’s more demanding than circuit training because I’m concentrating on one muscle at a time. The result is that I can gain muscle and burn fat. This type of “fast”, high volume training also produces high levels of lactic acid (which causes “the burn”). **Exercise scientists have proven that lactic acid training makes you release more of your own natural growth hormone** —a good thing for those of us over 40!

Although I do a lot of sets on the 8 X 8 program, the weights are moderate, and due to the short rest intervals and the double split, the workouts are extremely brief – only 20-30 minutes per session. After each morning weight training session, I finish up with 30 minutes of moderately intense cardio on a treadmill or elliptical machine. After the evening workout, I do a second session of cardio – usually a less intense 20-30 minute walk. I wouldn’t train like this all year round, and this type of program is too “intense” for beginners, but for me, the results are great and well worth the effort.

HOW I eat

I am very consistent with my diet and I eat mostly the same foods all year round. For protein, my staples are egg whites (1 yolk), chicken breast, tuna fish, and lean steak like eye of round. My carb sources include fruits (esp. strawberries and granny smith apples), natural oatmeal, yams, brown rice, salads, and all kinds of veggies. My fat intake stays low, although I do use a some egg yolks, extra virgin olive oil, and even a tiny bit of mayo. I sometimes use whey protein shakes and I also take L-glutamine in water with three of my meals.

My nutrition varies depending on whether it’s a strength training day or a rest day, but here is a typical daily menu for me:

**Pre-meal snack:** 1/2 Granny Smith Apple

**Meal 1:** Protein drink mixed in water with 1 tbsp. half-n-half

**Meal 2:** 1 cup natural oatmeal, sweetened with Stevia or Splenda

**Meal 3:** 4 oz albacore tuna, 1 tsp mayo, 1 tsp olive oil, on a large bed of lettuce.

**Meal 4:** 1 medium yam, 1 cup mixed veggies

**Meal 5:** 4 oz eye of round, 1 large salad with cooked veggies and low-fat ranch dressing with 1 tsp. olive oil

**Meal 6:** Protein Drink mixed in water

**Email:** UNITASJ@aol.com
The path of precept is long, that of example short and effectual.

Seneca
Section 2
PART 2 OF 4

Role Models: Age 50-59

Elaine Sharrock
Anthony Ianiero
Jay Robb
Sophie Taggart
Bruce Cronander
Deborah Jackson
Anders Olsson
Pete Nehr
Spice Williams
Ken Babich
Maxine Johnson
Bill Grant
Melanie Granada
Steve Holt
Jill Langham
Tom House
What motivates me is the pursuit of excellence and constant, never-ending improvement in all areas of my life, particularly fitness, body image and well being. I like the challenge of seeing my body change in amazing ways through training hard, eating right and taking care of my body. I like the challenge of competition. I like having self-control and knowing I have the willpower to say no to alcohol, drugs and excess food.

I've been a member of my gym for 16 years and have enjoyed weight training as well as all the aerobic “fads” that have come and gone. After training for so many years, I felt I needed more direction, purpose and focus to my training regimen. The answer was bodybuilding competition!

First I decided that I needed to watch a competition to see what it was all about. As soon as the physique girls stepped out on stage, I was hooked! I read everything I could get my hands on about bodybuilding, training and competition dieting.
When I stepped out on stage for my first competition, I loved every minute of the experience and took home a third place trophy. I knew I could do better and was determined to compete again and come in bigger and stronger the next time. That’s what kept me going to the gym at 5:30 every morning and training hard.

When I competed the second time, I achieved my goal and came in bigger, harder and totally ripped with a body fat percentage of 7%. I won first place and became “Ms Senior Natural Physique” 2003 (over 50 division). WOW! I competed again in October of 2004 at the Queensland State championships, taking first place. Two weeks later I represented Queensland for the National title in Melbourne where I came in second place! Now what keeps me going to the gym at 5:30 am is seeing how much more I can improve this year!

**HOW I train**

I have a personal trainer who is also a competitive bodybuilder, and I follow his advice to the letter. I find his passion for the sport infectious and motivating.

In general, my training is a four-day split where I work two body parts per workout, so that each muscle group gets worked once a week.

I change my program every 4 - 6 weeks. Recently I used the Hypertrophy Specific Training (HST) program where I did full body workouts three times per week. I enjoyed the change as well as the intensity, although I realize that it’s not something I would continue using long-term.

I like to train hard and heavy and keep my reps in the lower range, but find my legs respond better to high rep training. Every other week during a 4 - 6 week program, I change the order of exercises in each workout.

I use a variety of intensity techniques, including supersets, giant-sets, drop sets, ascending drop sets, shorter rest breaks, eccentric loading and so on. I also like to vary hand positions and arcs of motion.

I do cardio 2 - 3 times per week, but as a classic ectomorph body type with a fast metabolism and difficulty putting on muscle mass, I try to keep cardio to a minimum (which is hard because I enjoy aerobics so much).

I enjoy “Boot Camp” class once a week, mainly for the challenge of doing something different—and I love it! After I finish the “Boot Camp” program, then I will be focusing on training harder, eating more and doing less cardio in preparation for another bodybuilding show.

**HOW I eat**

My daily nutrition strategy is 5 - 6 meals a day, each spaced 2.5 - 3 hours apart, aiming for a total of 1800 - 2000 calories per day. All my meals are a combination of protein, carbs and essential fatty acids (EFA’s) such as:

- **Lean protein:** Chicken, tuna, fish, egg whites, cottage cheese, whey protein.
- **Starchy carbs:** Basmati rice, brown rice, potato, sweet potato, wholemeal and grain breads.
- **Fibrous carbs:** Broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, cabbage, salad vegetables.
- **EFA’s:** Udo’s choice oil blend, flaxseed oil, almonds, peanut butter.

Within an hour of training, I always have a post-workout shake of whey protein, dextrose, L-Glutamine, HMB and a multivitamin/mineral supplement, followed by my first meal which is usually an egg white omelette with spinach & tomato, porridge, flaxseed oil and fruit.

During the off-season, I allow myself more fruit, whole grains, breads, dairy, and a “treat day” on Sunday. I have a protein shake before bed and always drink 3 - 4 liters of filtered water per day.

During the “cutting up” competition phase, my meals are mostly the same every day:

- **Meal 1:** Egg white omelette, porridge and flaxseed oil
- **Meal 2:** 1 cup rice, protein shake (Whey protein isolate)
- **Meal 3:** Chicken breast, 1 cup rice, fibrous vegetable
- **Meal 4:** Tuna, 1 cup rice/sweet potato, fibrous veggie
- **Meal 5:** Chicken or fish and salad.

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**Email Elaine**
HOW I think

It takes real dedication to be this fit. I am very goal-oriented and disciplined. I was brought up in a strict environment and forced to be someone I wasn’t. I had to break out of that mold and seek my own life where I could “own” something, so I sought to be a percussionist. Armed with my newfound freedom, the desire to be the best that I could be, and that “survivor” intensity, I became extremely good at whatever I attempted. Activities became “something I had to do,” and I learned to set goals.

I developed strength and determination. There was a lot of goal-reaching to prove a point to myself. Now older and wiser, I seek to be the best I can be, rather than trying to prove a point. The intensity is still there, but now it’s from love. That attitude created a life more under control, and the intent is better. This approach allowed me to keep my body fat at 5-6% year round.

I have scoliosis (curvature of the spine). I had never considered training for bodybuilding shows...
because I considered this a flaw in my body. One day I went to a competition to watch a client compete and I met a man backstage who told me what a good physique I had. He encouraged me to enter a contest. After hearing I was concerned about my spine-curvature, he said, “There are 14 poses, you can win 13 of them.” I was impressed at how someone could see the benefits and not the drawbacks. *This man said to me, “Nothing in your life is going to change unless YOU change.”*

I believe things happen for a reason. I go places for a reason. I meet certain people for a reason. I believe my higher power sent me to that show to meet that man. One thing led to another and in 1999, I won the Masters national title. In the fall of 2004, I won the NABF Light Heavyweight class against all other age groups, including men half my age!

**HOW I train**

The training methods I use for myself and my clients are the same. I follow Charles Poliquin’s “German Body Comp” system of training. I conduct a complete assessment for balance in the body, and then a customized program is created for each client. It’s specifically designed around each client’s strengths and weaknesses. The goals include improving posture, promoting better balance, correcting physical deformities, strengthening weaknesses and making strengths even stronger.

Charles Poliquin is my teacher and a great fitness coach. He taught me a Chinese concept called “The gathering method.” You “gather” small amounts, which eventually build up to very large amounts. This principle is embodied in my training by increasing my poundages in tiny increments using magnetic half pound weights called “Plate Mates.” By progressively adding weight in small increments, I train my body to accept new challenges. This principle can easily be applied to any facet of life.

I train five times per week using this method to increase strength, hitting the same body parts two times every five days. I also use the push-pull system of complementary exercises, (such as chest paired with back), for six weeks. I start my clients out on German Body Comp training (this book can be found on Poliquin’s website) working the whole body either three times per week or upper body Mondays and Fridays with lower body on Wednesday and the opposite the following week.

Cardio is never done before or after legs. Cardio may be done the same day as legs, but only 4-6 hours after training. Recovery is key. I do interval training (sprints) for cardio to preserve muscle. I do cardio twice a week on non-weight training days or on shoulder and arm training days in 20 minutes intervals: 8 minutes on the Versaclimber, 8 minutes on the recumbent bike, followed by 4 minutes on the rowing machine.

**HOW I eat**

I eat 7 times day to keep metabolism up and body fat down. I create my energy system from carbohydrates. I keep processed sugar out of my diet completely except for an “off day” every six days where I allow myself two “free meals.” I eat very little fruit. I use 30% fats as an added energy system to protect the proteins in my body, so they can work to generate muscle. Polyunsaturated fats cannot be stored as long as I am active. I eat 30% carbs, 30% fats and 40% protein.

I believe in lots of healthy fats: Fish oil, Krill oil, flax seeds (3-4 g, ground as I need them), and Smart Blend by Poliquin (contains CLA, GLA, EPA, DHA). I eat 15 grams per day of healthy oils, and increase them frequently.

I also eat sweet potatoes, cream of rice, oatmeal, fish, steak, chicken and turkey. I don’t eat many salads - but I love asparagus (a natural diuretic), mushrooms, and spinach. I allow myself a treat meal every 6 days: usually pasta with garlic, and extra virgin olive oil and a salad with parmesan cheese and fresh bread. ::

Email: Wgttrain@aol.com
In 1978, I mentally and physically collapsed. I was suffering from a pre-diabetic condition that exhausted my adrenal glands. It left me half-dead, depressed, anxiety-ridden, and devoid of hope. I was heavily involved in bodybuilding at the time, training two hours a day, six days a week. When I collapsed, I ended up laying flat on my back on my living room floor watching the room spin. Tears streamed from my eyes, and I was scared. I thought I was having a nervous breakdown. Somehow I managed to put my hands together and start praying...

“...I thought I was having a nervous breakdown. Somehow I managed to put my hands together and start praying...”

To make a long story short, my prayer was heard, and I was able to sit up and get on my feet again.
I knew at that moment I had a life-changing experience, and my destiny was sealed. I was on a mission from that day forward. God did his part by showing me the dietary secrets needed to completely regain my health, and since 1978, I have spent my life sharing these secrets with the world. He showed me how to burn fat by cutting carbs, and the entire program he revealed to me is in my top selling book, *The Fat Burning Diet*.

What motivates me? Doing God’s will. Doing “my will” landed me on the floor and in poor health. His will, to serve others and not “myself,” has made all the difference in the world and keeps me focused on my mission and purpose in life. His will, His way...all the way!

**HOW I train**

My training program is quite simple and instinctual. *My Fat Burning Diet program keeps my body fat below 8% year round, with or without exercise.* I don’t exercise to stay lean; I eat to stay lean and healthy. I love surfing, so it is my first choice for cardiovascular training. When the waves are “thumpin’” I paddle out for a 1-2 hour session, 3-4 days a week. When there are no waves, I choose to run for 30-45 minutes in the early morning hours, 3-4 days a week (always wearing a heart-rate monitor).

For weight training, I love to mix it up. I train different today at age 50 than I did at age 25. Currently I train my entire body two times per week. If I desire to split my routine, I simply train upper body on day one, then lower body on day two, then I take 2-4 days off and repeat the cycle. *My training philosophy is to do a routine now that I can do the day I turn 100 years of age.* This stops the abusive style of training I used to do in my younger days: “More weight! One more rep!”

**HOW I eat**

My diet is very simple and is in accordance with my Fat Burning Diet principles. Contrary to most diet book authors, *I actually practice what I preach and have the abs to prove it!* In general, I eat one day of low carb, high-protein and fat meals, then the next day I eat all high-carb, moderate fat and protein meals, then I repeat the cycle. If I am training for a contest, or to get “shredded,” I eat low-carbs for two days followed by one very high-carb day, then repeat the cycle. This pattern of eating keeps my glycogen levels in check to stop the fat storing cycle. Low-carb days deplete glycogen, and high-carb days replenish it. If high-carbs were to be continued, I would get fat because glycogen stores would become full, and excess glucose would convert to triglyceride (body fat). If I continued to cut carbs more than a day or two, I would deplete glycogen too far and run the risk of metabolic slowing or shutdown. The human body does not like to be low on glycogen for very long, and it reacts to this state with metabolic slowing to avoid starvation (ketosis is a form of starvation and survival).

My diet is easy to follow. I avoid all starches and sweet fruits/juices on low-carb days, and I eat plenty of starches on high carb days (mostly from yams, sweet potatoes, “YAMMIT!” dried sweet potato nuggets, winter squash, potatoes, and brown rice).

Each day I try to consume a salad that contains 4-5 cups of salad greens and raw veggies. I usually have a large protein drink, made with *Jay Robb’s Whey Protein*, each day as one of my meals (I eat only three meals per day and currently avoid snacks). I add our “YAMMIT!” sweet potato powder or nuggets to my daily protein drink on high-carb days.

Email: info@jayrobb.com
HOW I think

Just waking up each day and being alive is a motivating factor for me! Not only do I have a responsibility to the life that is manifested in me, I also have a responsibility to other people. If I don’t “show up” and be positive, I understand that this negative attitude can directly affect others. That negativity spills back onto me. If I reach out and give, it always comes back to me, because giving and receiving are really the same.

To change your life, the initial step is to recognize if you are unhappy and to realize that it doesn’t have to stay that way - being unhappy, being overweight, or going to Krispy Kreme Doughnuts. Once the truth hits you, you have the possibility to choose differently. The power of “choice” gives you enormous possibilities, but certain choices come with sacrifices. As soon as your “intention” is to change rather than stay the same, you’re going to have to give up Krispy Kremes and all that goes with it. But as soon as you give up the old, new things begin to come to you, and it starts molding a new life for you automatically. If you

sophie taggart

Category Fitness enthusiast
Age Range 50-59
Weight 142 lbs/5’ 10”
Occupation Nurse practitioner/
health educator

Services include website, nutritional
products, and training center

Sophie is a former Ms. Universe, Ms.
World, Ms. America, yoga instructor,
medical professional—and, if that isn’t
enough, she has swum to Alcatraz!

www.BodyForTheAges.com

“...it’s very difficult to get the “bulky” muscles that so many women are afraid of!”
can simply interrupt a negative cycle—at any point—then you have the possibility for change.

*When you realize what a precious gift this life is, that realization makes you ready to start committing.* Train your mind to think positively and not negatively. Start to choose more positive thoughts. Gather around you whatever supports you. This gives you more motivation and strength, and then health and fitness feeds itself.

**HOW I train**
A woman can’t get as “big as a house” without taking steroids. The average woman is not taking steroids, so it’s very difficult to get the “bulky” muscles that so many women are afraid of! *If you want to shape your body and be “toned”, the fastest way to do it is with weight training.* A woman may lean towards a stockier body type, but weight training won’t make her muscles look “bulky”; it will tone them, giving her strength and confidence. I have very muscular arms, but unless I flex them with a bicep pose, you only see shapely arms.

Many women are afraid of pushing themselves. Some women don’t even want to make noise when they are contracting to have a baby! They are embarrassed by the sounds that come out of their own bodies. When a woman is training in a gym, I encourage her that it’s okay to make a sound. The sound can mean that she is “pushing to the edge” and expressing herself and the power of who she is. The older women still struggle with questions like: “Is it okay to show my strength?” “Is it okay to become powerful?”

I love training, and if I can keep my body going like a Ferrari, why would I want to be built like a VW bus? I am not afraid to lift heavy as well as push to the last rep. I also have a partner who motivates me to that last level. I don’t think I knew it was okay to do that until I met my husband, Pax Beale. Pushing to the last rep makes your body stronger and leaner; *to this day, we go hard at the Body for the Ages Health Center.* “Today’s maximum is tomorrow’s minimum.” In order to transform your body, you have to train consistently. At one time, I was starting to look like most women—with my waist “sliding down into my butt and my upper thighs.” To pull it back up is a challenge, and you must train hard to make that happen!

In addition to my weight training, everyday I wake up, meditate, and then a brief yoga practice, just as I’ve done for over 25 years—it’s an enormously important part of my life. This brief yoga practice sets my mood for the day; when I miss it, I totally notice the difference.

I enjoy testing myself like swimming from Alcatraz, but without weight training, I would not have the body I have today. What women are looking for is not in a pill; it’s good education, good coaching, and good priorities. Some of my yoga friends have a lot of cellulite, despite the fact that they are “thin.” You have to do squats and hamstring curls not to get cellulite! Fat doesn’t shape the body; *muscle is the only thing that shapes the body.* After age 35, you start losing muscle and gaining fat unless you work against it.

**HOW I eat**
I struggled more with food during my earlier bodybuilding competitions, and sometimes I even slide to this day. I’m a human being, not Wonder Woman any more than you are! I might be at a party and I’ll take one slice of chocolate cake, and think, “Wow, that’s so good, I want a little bit more!” We are not gods and goddesses; we are not perfect, at least not this time around. However, my daily diet is basic and healthy. I eat 4-5 meals per day. I love lean protein including Body for the Ages Cardiosoy protein supplement in vanilla and chocolate (delicious!), salads, plenty of veggies and some starches; brown rice and yams. I cherish my Body for the Ages Lifestyle! ::

Email: sophie@bodyfortheages.com
 HOW I think

I feel like a 25-year-old in a 58-year old body. I don’t want to be trapped in a body that doesn’t reflect who I am internally. I’m not trying to regain my youth—just trying to keep my body in sync with how I feel about the world. I am currently a professional actor in Los Angeles, doing theatre and TV. I was a lawyer in San Francisco, and people thought it was “brave” to move to LA to be an actor. It’s not a big deal to make big life changes because I don’t think I am old. I see the physical form as pliable and able to change at any age, if the heart wants to lead.

I have no heroes or mentors. I set my own goals. My older brother was mentally challenged, so my siblings and I learned only to compete against ourselves and not against others. A little voice inside always says, “Yes, I won, but could I have done better?” It likes to inspire me and gets me to push myself. I don’t read motivational books nor do I like the idea of them! It’s pretty funny that I am in a book on inspiring others, when my advice is to seek inspiration within yourself.

bruce cronander

Category Fitness enthusiast
Age Range 50-59
Weight 188 lbs
Occupation Actor

This was the only large shot we had of Bruce—and that was enough for us. If you can look that good watering the yard, you’re a winner in our book!

www.FitOver40.com

“I feel like a 25-year-old in a 58-year old body.”
I have a flexible schedule, depending on my audition or shooting schedule. This helps me create a life of self-pacing, which allows me to push myself (or rest) as I see fit. I love to be challenged and love to relax after the challenge.

HOW I train
Training is a challenge because both of my shoulders have been completely replaced (ball and socket), due to a loss of cartilage. Prior to the operation, one shoulder had dislocated and had literally ground out a new socket! Today, one shoulder is fine, but the other is only 25% of full strength. I do train my shoulders, but I use light weights and high reps. I can’t do any over the head exercises and I can’t do exercises that force my shoulders back. That means no pushups or bench presses. However, I have maintained my shoulder size despite the challenge of not having cartilage! I also stay away from squats because of my knees and shoulders.

I chose my gym (Gold’s Gym in Hollywood) because it has a wider selection of equipment that my shoulder can tolerate. It’s very important to consider your entire body’s needs. My workout routine is very flexible due to my schedule, but I do get to train most days with my training partner David Marlow.

Training is “focus point” because I enjoy Dave's company, and it’s the most “structured” part of my day. I have almost always had a trainer or training partner - it forces discipline, and I’m really bored by training alone. Training is a chore, but I do it because I have to. I’m less serious than David, but I use David’s discipline to keep me motivated. We create our workouts jointly, and vary training routines to reduce boredom.

I do 20 minutes walking on the treadmill as a warm-up, but only when David and I are training together. I used to run, but my knees can’t do it anymore; I haven’t run since age 48. We do 15 minutes of stretching, which we started three months ago, after Dave took a Pilates class.

We train three or four days on, one day off. I always leave Saturday off. We train two muscle groups per workout and in the course of the training days, we cover every muscle group. We generally do sets of four, pyramiding, with a drop-set to failure on the last set. My favorite body part is biceps because I see immediate results!

I love recovery time. I have a Jacuzzi attached to the pool in my back yard - sometimes I even take a cocktail out there with me. I hit the Jacuzzi every day on weekends and two to three times during the week. I get 8 hours of sleep. I believe it’s a myth that “The older you get, the less sleep you need.” Rest and recovery are important.

HOW I eat
I shop for food almost every day; I don’t buy for the week. I have never been one to plan out a full week of meals. This is the same for the rest of my schedule; most of my day revolves around my work schedule and various business needs.

My schedule starts with coffee and newspaper at 7:30 am, and business phone calls around breakfast. Afterwards, I have auditions, workshops, and classes until lunchtime around 1:00 pm.

Lunch is “the healthy meal of the day”: I have a large can of tuna with olive oil, low fat cottage cheese, toast with “I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter”. The meal is high protein, semi-low carb. At 3:00 pm, I work out with Dave, my training partner, unless one of us has an appointment. I have an Isopure protein drink after training. At 8:00 pm, I have dinner. I believe dinner should be enjoyed, so it’s less strict than lunch.

Email:  Swedemeet@aol.com
HOW I think

Genetics can play a very large role in whether a person becomes obese or not. However, the way you see yourself and what you’re willing to do to make a change are even more important. Obviously, I never consciously wanted to be fat, but after being there, I vowed never to be fat again. Even when I was overweight, I never hated my body and I thought I looked good and wore it well. In my opinion, how you feel about yourself is more than half the battle.

When I hear the word, “senior,” I think of my grandmother! You really can be as young as you feel. I feel better today than when I was in my twenties. People are amazed when I tell them about my grandson, Darion. Often, they think he’s my son!

I trained on and off for many years, and if you visit my website, www.deborah-jackson.com, you can follow my progress, and you’ll see that my success has taken time. Although we live in a day and age of instant gratification, it takes time to achieve a
quality level of fitness, and the body is always a “W.I.P.,” work in progress. I am inspired by my reflection in the mirror on a daily basis to continue what I do, and preparing for bodybuilding competitions pushes me to improve my appearance and level of fitness even further.

I like to look glamorous, in the gym, in the office, in the supermarket and wherever I go. I love being a woman. I never really thought of my achievements as “successes” until now, but I guess you appreciate it more when you look at the level of obesity which plagues the world today. I’m also inspired by the women and men who come up to me in the street, in restaurants, and on the beach, who compliment me on my appearance, but I do this more for myself than any other reason.

Women stop me all the time and ask me how can they look like me, what kind of workout they should do or how they should eat. It’s wonderful, and I’m happy to give them whatever information I can. In my opinion, the key to “healthy longevity” is the proper combination of nutrition, exercise and mindset.

HOW I train
I don’t train extremely heavy. Reason being, I have always had “muscle size,” but it was covered in fat for so long. Now that I’ve lost the weight by doing tremendous amounts of cardio, my definition is finally peeking through.

In the so-called “off season,” I train 4-5 times per week. My workouts are basic: chest and triceps, back and biceps, legs and shoulders with abs trained every other day. I have turned into a cardio fanatic. Although I don’t love cardio, I love the way it enhances my physique. I do cardio every day—sometimes twice a day. I discovered spin classes at my sports club, and I’m usually there every day after work, definitely before contests.

During the pre-contest season, I’m heavily dependent on my evening spin class because that’s the time of day I really don’t feel like doing cardio. I’m usually tired from the limited amount of food I’m eating, but during this pre-contest period cardio is really critical because that’s how I lean out. I’ve learned through trial and error what works for me. I was resistant to doing cardio, but I finally had to give in and proclaim cardio as “king,” at least for me. I don’t mean twenty minutes here and there either - I’m talking about a minimum of 30 minutes every day in the morning and more often, 45 minutes to an hour, morning and evening. This of course, depends on how much body fat I have to lose. It’s not a picnic training twice a day. However, the reward is great, and no one can limit you but yourself.

HOW I eat
I love this question. The “wake up call” is that the food you eat in the so-called “off season” (I say so-called because there really is no ‘off-season’), is the same food you should eat all year round, except in different proportions. I have become a Parrillo Performance convert proudly! I plan to eat the Parrillo way for the rest of my life. It makes sense, and you can “live with it.”

My diet consists of high protein, moderate carbs and very low fat - nothing new. Eating this way will allow me to gain quality muscle in the building season while gaining only a little body fat, which has to happen in order to gain quality muscle size. My skin is tighter this season, particularly in my midsection, an area which has always been a concern for me.

I am getting chills writing about this now because it really is such a wonderful way to approach contest preparation. A typical breakfast for me is egg whites and oatmeal or sweet potato. Lunch is grilled fish and vegetables or salad. For dinner it’s chicken breast and steamed vegetables, and for the two in-between meals, I might have a shake or more vegetables or salad and a lean protein. I weigh all of my protein pre-contest. ::

Email:  Rockdoggl6@aol.com
HOW I think

I have exercised my entire life, starting with soccer at age 5 and continuing until I was 28. I began with weight training in combination with cardio when I was 28. I have been a fitness enthusiast for 22 years, training almost every day. I can’t live without it. I hope to be training when I am 80! I’m motivated by the pleasure I feel after training, and also by my desire to keep my body fat at 8 - 9%.

Making fitness a lifestyle is the priority. The key to having a fit lifestyle is planning. Something must be very important to cause me to skip a training session. It’s not easy to train as much as I do, but with some planning (and an understanding wife), you can do it. I have my own company, which means I often work six days a week. The main reason I can train so often is because I have a home gym with all the equipment I need; I made this investment 18 years ago and it was one of the best things I have ever done.

“I think my children are proud to have a 51-year old fit father. Sometimes I train with my 18-year-old son.”
My family supports my lifestyle. After 20 years, they’re used to it. My wife is like most people; she trains some months and then stops, but that’s better than nothing. I think my children are proud to have a 51-year old fit father. Sometimes I train with my 18-year-old son. It’s great to train with him. I like to train legs and chest because he can spot me so I can go heavier, and at the same time I can teach him to train properly.

My highest priority right now is to start training my 16-year-old son. We nearly lost him in a diving accident last summer. He spent almost two months in a hospital with serious injuries and he lost a lot of weight. Now the doctors say we can start carefully building up his body, so training will be a family event.

HOW I train
I do four cardio sessions and five weight training sessions per week. I train more intensively in the spring and summer because of Sweden’s weather. In the autumn, I do three cardio sessions and four weight training sessions per week.

I take out my racing bicycle early in the morning for 1 to 2.5 hours. When doing cardio, I shift between low/medium cardio and hard cardio to avoid overtraining. When I do low/medium workouts, my heart rate is about 65 - 75% of maximum heart rate and on hard workout days it’s about 75 - 88%. I always do my cardio in the morning, and I have a protein drink and some glutamine beforehand. If I bicycle more then 1-1.5 hours, I have some fast carbohydrates.

I do about 10 sets for large muscles and 7 sets for smaller muscles. I often train with low reps between 4 and 8, but sometimes to avoid overtraining and injury, I go for higher reps of 8 - 12. I always train to failure. For variety, I use supersets. I try to concentrate on feeling the muscle.

My Training Schedule
Monday morning 6:30 am
Chest: 10 sets, 4 - 8 reps, Abs: 6 sets, 8 - 12 reps.

Tuesday morning 6:30 am
Shoulders: 10 sets, 4 - 8 reps, Trapezius: 4 sets, 4 - 8 reps.

Wednesday morning 6:30 am
Cardio biking outdoors 45 min (Intensive).

Thursday morning 6:30 am
Biceps 7 sets, 4 - 8 reps, Triceps 7 sets, 4 - 8 reps.

Friday morning 6:30 am
Back 10 sets, 4 - 8 reps.

Saturday morning 7:00 am
Cardio outdoor bicycling 45 min (intensive), Afternoon 3:00 pm Legs 12 sets, 4 - 8 reps.

Sunday morning 8:00 am
Cardio outdoor bicycling 45 min (medium intensity)

HOW I eat
My eating habits are the same year round: I eat chicken, mackerel, rice, potatoes, pasta, oatmeal, eggs, lowfat milk, and lowfat cheese. I eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. My fat sources are mostly fish oil. Eating this way is a simple matter of planning. On Sundays I prepare the chicken for the whole week and freeze it. I buy foods for an entire week at a time. All our friends are also used to it and when we are invited to dinner parties, there is always healthy food on the table.

I eat between 2500 - 2700 calories a day. Saturday is my cheat day. I eat around 3000 calories. If I want my body fat to drop to 5%, or if I want to get leaner for a photo, then I eat around 2000 - 2400 calories. I eat 40% protein 40% carbohydrates 20% good fats. My last meal is at 9:30 pm and I try to avoid carbohydrates. This type of diet allows me to stay fit all year and never go over 10% of body fat. A typical day’s diet would be: 6:00 am: oatmeal + protein drink; 7:30 am: oatmeal + protein drink + 1 tablespoon Udo’s Choice oil; 11:00 am: mackerel + brown rice + vegetables; 3:00 pm: Chicken breast + brown rice + vegetables; 4:00 pm: apple; 6:00 pm: chicken breast + brown rice + vegetables; 8:00 pm: 5 egg whites + brown rice + vegetables; 9:30 pm: protein drink + glutamine.

Email: optiker.olsson@swipnet.se
I am a 51-year old diabetic whose blood chemistry was at one time completely out of control. My average daily blood sugar was over 200, which is dangerously high. My cholesterol was over 230 and my triglycerides were over 700. I was a walking heart attack waiting to happen. I was also starting to lose some sensation in my toes, which is a side effect of diabetes, and I certainly didn’t want to lose any body parts due to poor circulation! I was about 30% body-fat with a 37-inch waist and I could barely tie my own shoes. My main motivation to get in shape was when my doctor told me that if I didn’t change my lifestyle and do something about my health, that I probably wouldn’t live long enough to enjoy my grandchildren. As a father of three grown boys, I also realized I was setting a bad example for my children who also had the hereditary possibility of getting diabetes: My brother and father also had the disease. My dad died at the age of 60 and
his brother died at 61 due to heart problems. I had to do something.

I decided to change my life and set an example for all the people my age and also all the diabetics who had, like myself at one point, given up hope for good health. I had believed that nothing could be done to reverse what I had already done to my body. Boy was I wrong! I bought a few books about fitness and nutrition and I also read *Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle* by Tom Venuto and the results have been excellent.

I went from taking 9 prescription pills everyday to only 3, and I’m working on reducing that to NONE! A positive side benefit to all this is that I save over $250.00 per month on medications.

**HOW I train**

I work out six days a week and take Sundays off to rest. Mondays I do chest, biceps and triceps. Three sets of two different exercises for each body part works well for me. I strive to break personal records every time I work out. Sometimes it’s adding a little more weight and sometimes it’s just doing an extra rep or two.

Tuesdays is back, shoulders and abs - based on the same principles, and Wednesday is leg day. Thursday, I work the same muscle groups as Monday, but I use different exercises. For example, instead of barbell presses for chest, I do dumbbell presses or I do incline presses. Sometimes, I even do body weight exercises like dips or pushups. The idea is to mix it up so my body doesn’t adapt too quickly and I can make continuous gains without plateaus. Friday and Saturday are similar to Thursday. This allows me to work my whole body twice a week and still rest each muscle group for at least 2 days before working it again.

I do cardio almost everyday after my weight lifting to reduce my body fat and to increase the strength of my heart. I am not saying everyone needs to do cardio every single day like I do, but it works for me.

**HOW I eat**

I have learned it is better to eat 6 small meals a day rather than 3 large ones. Not only is it better for me, but I don’t feel as bloated, and I’m never hungry. Four of my meals consist of lean beef or baked chicken, with low glycemic-index carbs and a vegetable. The two remaining meals are protein drinks or meal replacement packages. Mostly the drinks are for convenience. I don’t always have time to cook properly since I’m also the City Commissioner. At the type of functions I have to attend, I don’t always have the opportunity to eat the best food all the time.

If I get carried away and eat too much, or if I eat the wrong foods, I don’t beat myself up or give up on the day, I simply acknowledge what I did, and do an extra cardio session that evening to make up for my indiscretion. I also allow myself two “cheat meals” every week, which helps to avoid any cravings I might get if I didn’t allow myself any treats.

My body fat is now down to 11%, from a previous high of 30%, and my goal is to get it all the way down to 7%! My waistline has gone down to 32 inches and my blood sugar is within normal limits. My cholesterol fell to 87 and my triglycerides are down to about 150.

*I feel better than I ever did in my entire life—even when I was younger!*

Anyone can do this if they want to bad enough. I would like to be an example to as many people as I can. I am living proof that this can be done at any age. ::

Email: pnehr@tampabay.rr.com
HOW I think
At 52, I have a gorgeous husband, a 9 year-old son, and a successful career as an actress, stuntwoman, nutritional author and producer. I train six days a week in the gym and I enjoy wearing spandex pants and tank tops. I was kickboxing and lifting weights the day my water broke, and my life is filled with positive energy. I am a food-combining vegan and I hold a black belt in Arjukanpo, Masters in Fitness Science, pursuing my PhD in Holistic Nutrition and love to play the piano, and oil paint. I can either look at my life as being half over or just beginning.

I cringe when I hear people say, “Act your age!”

I wasn’t always possessed of such positive energy. Several members of my family committed suicide. I experienced sexual abuse from outsiders. Abuse and trauma victims go along thinking that “life is normal” until these little demons finally rear their ugly heads. At 18, while working as a treatment nurse, I experienced a near fatal car accident, where I “saw the light” and returned, just like in the stories. From death to a coma, then short-term paralysis, I then spent the next 2 years trying to rehabilitate myself. However, my medicinal drugs eventually turned recreational.
At age 26, I overdosed 3 times. I hit my knees on the third overdose and swore that if God helped me turn my life around, I’d become an image that would help change the world! I was tired of being a victim of misinformation, and believe that educated people make educated decisions. So, I began my studies. As my body became healthy and strong again, my image began to take shape as well. I was getting roles as female superheros! I love to be interviewed so that I can share my experiences.

We need to begin to peel away the false layers of conditioned behavior that cover the real us. As young women, it seems we are allowed to soar, but when we hit a certain age we are supposed to slow down or “cut our hair.” We are suddenly forced to fit into a mold that is somewhat suppressive.

But what happens when we hit the big 50 and we still feel 18? What if we want to go to the gym, wear a sexy bathing suit, wear short skirts, or maybe even have a baby? I don’t live inside society’s box. I believe most people are afraid to live. If they were afraid of dying, they wouldn’t eat what they eat!


**HOW I train**

I used to squat 315 lbs, 4 to the floor. I never had a knee problem until my ACL got injured while kick-boxing. So, I stay light, now, with only 135lbs. My max bench was 225 lbs, but after I tore my AC joint in a stunt, I reduced down to 135 to 155lbs. At night I’m a Martial Artist in Arjukanpo. (5 combatant styles: Kickbox, Judo, Eskrima, Jujitsu, Grappling.) In other words, I train my butt off!

While I do regularly train in the gym or dojo, I take any workout I can get. If I’m on location, I’ll do weight training with almost any resistance object I can find. Once, I was on a film in the heart of Mexico, and I found out that filling up water bottles to do curls, tricep kickbacks, lunge walks, etc, worked great! Push-ups, sit-ups, kicks, spins and shadow boxing is always good in a hotel room.

HOW I **eat**

I’m a vegan, which means I consume no animal products whatsoever. I eat low glycemic, and I eat every three hours. I can look at the clock and my body just tells me when it’s time to eat. My whole family is food-combining vegans. In fact, I was world’s first vegan bodybuilder.

I obviously don’t have a typical day like other people. I get up very early in the morning. I begin with my fruits and supplements, then it’s study time and training. But auditions and work are priorities. Because I’m a vegan, I usually bring my own food with me. I lift in the morning and take martial arts at night. When I travel, I bring my studies and food with me. It’s a chore to balance my career needs, my health needs, and the family I’m so blessed to have. Yes, it’s work, but the pay off is heaven!

I start my day with large bowl of organic tropical fruit (flushing or scrubbing fruits.) The next meal is organic complex carbohydrates—grains with soy milk—like quinoa, kamut, amaranth, brown rice, wild rice, wahnini and black wild rice. I always have vegan protein bars in my purse for a quick snack. Next meal is protein—a veggie “meat” meal, plus some kind of greens with an essential fatty acid (EFA) oil or hemp seed oil, and lots of garlic. Three hours later, I have a mid afternoon snack—whole grain sprouted bread with almond butter or cashews and almonds. I then repeat my protein meal for dinner and my fruit meal before bed. We juice organic veggies every night before dinner.

I take supplements including glyconutrients, phytoneutritional, phytonutrients, phytosterol, EFAs, amino acids, and herbs. I take 12-18 supplement pills, 3x/day plus powders. I use products from different but highly reputable companies. ::

Email: SpiceOfLife@earthlink.net
HOW I think

Forty years ago, when I became interested in fitness, kids were still wearing black high top Keds and lifting coffee cans filled with cement. The only protein powder you could find made you belch for hours and tasted worse than you can imagine. Gyms were dark, dingy places and knowledge was hard to come by. Today, things are different. Bodybuilding and fitness have become entire industries with companies of all sizes vying for their piece of a billion dollar market.

I developed my website, www.quadfather.com to supply up to date information about natural bodybuilding and fitness. This includes everything from contest coverage of drug free athletes to the latest concepts in personal training. I’ve dedicated my site to men and women who seek success in bodybuilding or just trying to stay in shape.

I believe that anyone who attempts to change their body naturally through good nutrition and daily exercise is “bodybuilding.” I believe that in...

“Exerting yourself in some small way every day insures you will leave this earth a better place...”
strength, there is honor. I also believe that first and foremost, you must be true to yourself.

I learned years ago that all men and women are created equal “until the point of exertion.” Exerting yourself in some small way every day ensures you will leave this earth a better place than when you arrived.

I have been training since 1967 and now, 34 years later, I can proudly say I have never touched a drug. I try to set an example for the youth of my community and inspire men and women my age. If my teachings can inspire a person to get in shape or even get on stage and “ strut their stuff,” then I have made this world a better place.

HOW I train
I train four days per week. At age 53, I’ve found that proper rest time away from the gym is just as important as the time working out in the gym. I train hard and fast just like I was taught by one of the old time masters of fitness, Vince Gironda. It’s a fact that multiple sets increase the production of testosterone and growth hormone—both necessary for maximum muscle growth.

I train with a seasonal approach (called “periodization”), with a keen focus on staying lean in the off season. I feel sorry for those guys who think that putting on body fat off season helps them put on muscle. They end up with 30 pounds to lose—I’m 12 pounds from contest shape year-round!

I never sit down during my workout. I keep some muscle working the entire hour and a half. For example, I will do one set on an exercise for a major muscle group, making it a point to stay in my set for 30 seconds to get the most out of it. Then, instead of resting, I do an abdominal exercise. This fires your metabolic rate through the roof! I change routines and reps ranges every four weeks.

I am also a firm believer in “feeling” the muscle you’re working. For example, with back training: on lat pull downs, if you over-stretch and extend your arms completely, your shoulders will lift. When this happens, your biceps and forearms will have to do most of the work to bring the weight back into motion when you pull the bar down (concentric direction). By keeping a slight bend in your arms, you keep your lats contracted and your arms and shoulders won’t take over. If you use a thumbless grip (thumbs on top of the bar) this decreases bicep involvement so you can feel it in your back even more.

I also recommend using two grips on the pull down: Wide grip first, then switch to a shoulder-width grip for the next set. On almost every body part, I use multiple variations of grip and vary the range of motion to hit the muscles from a variety of angles.

HOW I eat
I’m a low carb, high protein guy. The biggest challenge with is that 90% of proteins require preparation time and need to be cooked. Some of us guys are “lazy!” Since 90% of carbs can be grabbed and eaten without cooking, that can be bad for the lazy guy!

I get my dietary fat mostly from flaxseed oil because it’s good for the hair, joints and skin. I eat lean proteins, but adhere to the common sense approach that you “feed the lean body mass” you have—at least one gram per pound. You don’t just slam down mass amounts of protein for no reason.

I use protein shakes and I drink them slowly; they are better absorbed that way. I don’t eat bread, and I stay away from high glycemic meals that bump my insulin. Pre and post workout are your top priority feedings. I don’t eat any starch after 5:00 p.m.—ever. Clean eating is a way of life for me and that’s how I stay within just a few pounds of contest weight all year round.

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I believe that our bodies are houses or “temples” that our spirits live in. I also believe that we are created in the image of God and that each of us is a rare creation—uniquely capable of impacting our world like no one else. I have found that in order for me to impact my world positively, I need to be a positive person. So I live a life of love connections with God, myself, and others. I refuse to harbor anger, unforgiveness, or bitterness. I have found those emotions to be nothing but poison to my soul.

I discovered female bodybuilding about 14 years ago as I was thumbing through a fitness magazine and happened across an article and pictures of Rachel McLish. She was stunning. I had never seen muscular feminine beauty before and I was instantly hooked. So, at 36 years old, and after having had 3 children, I launched myself into a beginners weight-training program. I drug my husband’s dumbbells out of the garage and started lifting, using the pictures and brief instructions
I found in the magazine. Before too long I joined a new women’s gym that had opened in my neighborhood and bought books: *Now Or Never* by Joyce Vedral, *Superflex* by Cory Everson, and *Body Flex, Body Magic* by Anja Langer. These books became my instructors over the next several years, enabling me to shrink from a very out of shape size 10 to a very fit size 6 in the first 2 years. Then I became a certified aerobics instructor and continued to lift and teach for another 2 years. **By the time I was 40 years old, I was in the best shape of my life.**

However, personal issues occurring in my marriage and work caused me to put an end to my classes, and I backed off of the intense weight training. **Sad to say, I became lost—I had no future goal for my fitness and soon work took over my time.** That continued for about 8 years.

Then, on May 1, 2000, my sister suddenly died. In the months following, my 21 year marriage fell apart. Within a year, my life as I had known it ended and I found myself at 50 years old having to discover who I was. I put myself in counseling, became more active in my church, New Horizon Christian Center, and got back into the gym. In counseling and in church I made wonderful love connections with other people.

**In the gym, I developed a love connection with myself and gained a sense of power and control over my world.** In the gym it’s simple—just me and that dumbbell, or me and that barbell—beating my previous best, and reminding myself how strong and capable I am. I started thinking about competing again. It had been a buried dream for years. Now, resurrected, competing became a goal and I started talking to trainers to learn how to train and eat. **Until then, I was scarcely getting 1000 calories a day.**

October 2004, at age 53, I entered my first competition. I missed a trophy by 2 points, but the experience was awesome and whet my appetite for more! I will be doing 2 shows this year, perhaps 3! I am also opening my own business, which, through my past experiences, will help others. I thank God for all He has restored in my life and I know this is just the beginning of an exciting future. He has given me beauty for ashes and a spirit of peace and joy in place of sorrow. This is my dream come true.

**HOW I train**

Off season I do a 4-day split routine varying it every 6 weeks or so with a 2-on, 1-off split. I add cardio sessions 3 or 4 days a week as well. I usually train alone unless I am preparing for competition and then I hire a good trainer. When I am training for competition, I start about 12 weeks out keeping food diaries and evaluating my physical aesthetic goals. Currently, I have been building and developing mass in my legs. My current competition training is a modified 3-on, 1-off routine that works my legs twice a week. I have added additional morning cardio about 4 days a week and I expect to start leaning down in about 3-4 weeks.

**HOW I eat**

My diet stays pretty clean all year. I have given up red meat, except for lamb once in awhile. I eat egg whites, turkey, chicken, soy, albacore tuna, cod, and salmon. I keep my carbs simple and nutritious: black beans, yams, red potatoes, oatmeal, salad vegetables, broccoli, brown rice, authentic corn tortillas. Now and then I do splurge—I love chocolate! I also love peanuts and peanut butter. Sometimes I hit the bulk food section and make my own trail mix: roasted peanuts, dark raisins, and chocolate chips—and I am a happy girl. Once in a great while I treat myself to homemade nachos and a good red wine.

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HOW I think

When I was in high school, I only weighed 110 pounds! I was so small, they wouldn’t let me play football (they didn’t even have a uniform small enough to fit me)! After seeing Steve Reeves pull the pillars down in the movie Hercules, that was it! I was motivated! I even tried to pull down some fake pillars myself!

Today, my enthusiasm and motivation come from walking the streets and looking at people my age. I’m terrified of getting old, but in a good way—it motivates me to keep doing this. I’ve been training since I was 14. I love the gym. I recently hurt my shoulder and couldn’t train. I went bananas!

However, there’s no such thing as always giving 100%. Everyone needs some time off to recharge. Some people take this too seriously!

HOW I train

Back in the Southern California Gold’s Gym “Mecca” days, I trained at 10:00 in the morning
with many legends of bodybuilding. Back then, we were all friends, one big happy family. Today, the camaraderie in the sport of bodybuilding has been lost. A great site for information about the golden era of bodybuilding is www.ironage.us.

For a long time, my training was four times per week, even for a contest. My weekly schedule was Mon/Tue/Thur/Fri on a two day split: day one was chest, back and shoulders. Day two was arms and legs. Three exercises per body part, four sets each.

At one time, I tried training twice a day, six days a week to gain muscle, and I actually lost 5 pounds! I've done three day per week "abbreviated" programs too: Dips, chins and squats super-setted with pullovers (20 reps for squats and pullovers). I was done in an hour. I gained 25 pounds of muscle in four months on that program!

Today I only train two times per week. Your recovery is not as good when you get older, so it's important to avoid overtraining. The amazing thing is that I'm making progress just as well on two days per week today as I did on four days per week years ago. I train upper body one day, lower body the next. I choose two exercises per muscle group and do three sets per exercise.

Today at 57 years old, I weigh 187 lbs. at 5’ 9”. My body fat is around 10%, which is very lean for me—and I still don’t do cardio! My cardiovascular health is important to me, but all my blood work is perfect.

HOW I eat

Nutrition has changed so much since the 1970's when I won the Mr. America and Mr. World. There weren't many supplements available back then. Rheo Blair's protein was great! Dieting for bodybuilding was more relaxed in those days. We’d “chill out” in the off-season. Then twelve weeks out, we'd kick it in to get ready for the contest. The standard diet for getting ripped was six meals a day, high protein and fat with no carbs—and this was before Atkins.

Believe it or not, I never counted calories or grams of anything. What mattered was how I looked in the mirror. I got in the best shape of my life eating low carbs for 3 days and carbing up for one day. It made the diet very manageable. The only difference I'd make today is not to eat so many saturated fats and replace them with healthier fats, but I'd still keep the protein high with low carbs for 2-3 days, then high carbs for one day.

Now I add some supplements. The foods are not as clean today, and the soil has been depleted, making supplements important. I take liver, vitamins, Creatine and many others. My nutrient profile is 40% carbs, 30% protein, 30% fat.

Here’s a typical day for me:

Meal 1: Bowl of oats, yogurt, Creatine cocktail, 10 aminos; Meal 2: Protein drink; Meal 3: Rice and beans (sometimes with eggs); Meal 4: Filet mignon and yam, Meal 5: Protein, slice of bread (maybe).

The foundation of a good nutrition program is eating quality proteins such as tuna, chicken breast (skinless), cod, egg whites, turkey breast (skinless), non-fat yogurt, non-fat milk, and non-fat cottage cheese.

Complex and high-fiber carbohydrates round out your food intake and include oatmeal, rice, squash, potatoes, whole grains (bagels & breads), and pasta. Also included in this category are legumes such as various beans and peas. High-fiber carbohydrates include asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, mushrooms, onions, peppers, spinach, and zucchini.

Every Friday night is pizza night, and I allow myself to go off my diet occasionally. Good nutrition doesn’t mean you can’t eat your favorite foods. The trick is learning moderation and balance. Anyone can do it!

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HOW I think

I am the only female in the streetlight department of the Niagra Mohawk Power Corporation in Buffalo, New York. I install new lights, change old ones and make repairs while in the bucket of a truck—outdoors, 365 days a year, including the long, cold Buffalo winters. Sometimes I’m too busy to get out of the bucket of the truck at all, even in the dead of winter. I stay up there even when my toes are frozen stiff in steel-toed boots.

Despite my extremely high activity level, I ate very badly and lived an unhealthy life, and it started to take its toll. I didn’t start getting healthier until I had a bout of Hepatitis C, which was triggered by the trauma of my father’s heart attack. **They say there’s a benefit in every adversity and my bout with Hepatitis is what made me finally start thinking seriously about my health.** Who knows what would have happened otherwise?

If you’re not ready to make a change, you won’t do it. I became ready when I realized that I was overweight and unhealthy and I decided I never wanted to be in that place again. I had been eating very

“! I was 230 pounds when I first started working out. I lost almost 100 pounds....”
badly, including lots of junk food, pizza and McDonald's. I met trainer Julie Gregoire, former NPC middleweight champion, and asked her to work with me, I had nothing to lose by following her advice. I knew that I wanted to look like her, and since she became a success by following her own advice, I figured that I was going to follow it to the letter! I was 230 pounds when I started working out. I lost 100 pounds, and I now compete at 124 pounds.

Everyone should have a trainer or a mentor. A trainer is someone to talk to and someone who will “keep you in line.” Without a trainer’s motivation, your workouts might not be nearly as productive. A trainer can push you beyond the threshold where you would normally give in to the pain.

Friends at the gym help motivate me too, and motivating them motivates me! I recently received certifications as a personal trainer and also in sports nutrition. I work at Gold’s Gym on the weekends behind the counter, providing information, demonstrating exercises and generally helping members any way I can. I love being supportive and giving back to others. All the guys in the street-light department knew what I was going through with my weight loss. They came and cheered me on at my first show. They supported me, and now I support them.

An important part of my mindset is that I know if I cheat or go off my diet, it doesn’t mean I’m a loser. Nothing is ever a failure, it’s just a minor and temporary setback. Tomorrow is another day!

HOW I train
Immediately after work, I spend one hour, between 4:00 and 5:00 pm weight training with my trainer Julie. Then I go to Gold’s Gym for 45 minutes of cardio.

Julie writes all my diet plans, choreographs my posing routines, guides me through my workouts and encourages me when I don’t feel like training. If I’m having a “really bad health day,” she’ll even encourage me to go home and rest (as if I might!)

I also have a training partner who is a 38-year-old rower. We make a little competition out of our workouts, always trying to keep up with each other and motivate each other.

Day one is legs, day two is shoulders with arms, and day three is chest with back. I vary my training quite a bit. Sometimes only 3 - 4 sets, sometimes 6 - 7 sets. Sometimes 12, 10, 8 reps, sometimes all 3 sets of 12 reps. Sometimes heavy weight, sometimes moderate weight. I also do supersets and tri-sets, making a weight training workout into a “cardio workout.”

HOW I eat
I have a very busy day, and my schedule is very regimented in order to make my food preparation, eating and training fit into my day. With a thyroid and liver problem I have to weigh and pre-pack all my food. I do all the cooking on the weekends, even though I also work every weekend. I cook my chicken and veggies separately and then measure, weigh and freeze them. I pack all my food, ready to go.

At 5:00am every day I eat breakfast including 5 egg whites, 1 whole egg, cup of oats, cinnamon, and splenda as a giant pancake. The rest of my day looks like this:

9:00am: Snack of fruit or Trioplex bar: (Chef Jay’s, whole grain, nothing hydrogenated)
12:00: 1 cup rice, 4 oz chicken and veggies
3:00pm: 1 bar or banana
7:00pm: Arrive home, make dinner or grab a Myoplex light shake if I won’t be home for a while
8:30pm: 7oz yarn, 5 oz fish and veggies ::

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HOW I think

I never was much of an athlete when I was young. It was the 1960s, and girls didn’t like guys who played sports. I never entered a gym until I was over 40. I wasn’t obese, but I had a commendable belly and small limbs. When I did finally check out the health club that my office buddies frequented, I felt intimidated. It took many months until I was willing to use a personal trainer, and a long time after that until I found a good one.

A good trainer made the difference between “going to the gym” and training my body. I was gradually inducted into the tradition of natural bodybuilding. The remarkable thing about this process was how I could learn theory, and then put it into practice in my own body. It was fascinating to watch my ordinary form change. Like a moth into a butterfly, my physique transformed before my eyes. My arms became big and defined. My deltoids took shape. Striations began to appear in my ever-expanding chest. Grooves began to show themselves in my thighs. All of this was the result of learning proper training.
techniques and applying them, as well as eating differently.

I first became a vegetarian for very specific reasons. I had enrolled in a meditation and yoga course, and the vegetarian diet was one of the suggestions for optimal results. It was 1981 and I was 27 years old. Over the years the meditation and yoga would come and go, but the vegetarian diet remained. As I grew older I became more conscious and respectful of life around me, and it seemed unconscionable for me to kill anything unnecessarily. This perception was further strengthened as I watched the food industry strive to greater levels of efficiency and productivity. I was firm in my personal decision not to participate as a consumer. I also became more aware, as most aging folks do, of the health risks associated with meat-based eating, and health benefits of a vegetarian diet.

When I got into bodybuilding, my situation was not conducive to great achievement in that area. I had no prior experience in strength training, nor any training for that matter. I was in my forties and I was vegetarian.

I was told that my results would be sub-par so long as I continued to adhere to a vegetarian diet. Great bodybuilders and trainers, eloquent books and prestigious research studies, professionals and regular folks all told me that I needed to eat big meat in order to grow big muscle. But my personal, ethical, and health-oriented beliefs precluded anything of the kind.

Being the single-minded (some might say pig-headed) fellow that I am, I persevered anyway.

Today I am pleased with my physique. My muscle size and density is respectable. My body fat level is also respectable. I entered my first bodybuilding competition in March 2000. In April 2000 I placed 5th in the Masters class (age 35+) at an ANBC competition in Pennsylvania. More recently in July 2004 I competed at the Ontario National Qualifier in Toronto and placed 1st in the Grand Masters class (age 50+) and 3rd in the Masters class (40+). This qualified me to compete at the CBBF World Qualifier where I placed 3rd in the Grand Masters class.

I have eaten no meat or fish since 1981. I guess the consensus was wrong. I am actually in better shape today than I was when I was a younger man.

HOW I train

My training is high in intensity. The body attempts to catch up (grow) when training intensity is high, but merely maintains itself when intensity is moderate. Intensity is a dynamic parameter which must be weighed against the risk of overtraining, the great adversary of every bodybuilder. Overtraining causes suppression of the immune system, illness, fatigue, insomnia, emotional darkness, and—perhaps the most dreaded—catabolism.

During the mass building phase, I use various split routines. I train 4-5 days per week, with little cardio. After proper warm-ups, I train close to failure. I believe muscles grow to accommodate heavier loads. I employ lots of variation, which prevents adaptation and plateaus. During the cutting phase, I tend to use a 3-way split routine followed by a full body workout. The load is reduced but the intensity is not. Outdoor cardio is added to enhance the impact to the hypo-caloric diet.

HOW I eat

My diet is similar to a meat-eating bodybuilder. During the off-season, basically the colder months, I eat to gain muscle mass, and in the process I add a bit of body fat. In the late winter or early spring I switch to a cutting pre-competition diet, designed to shed body fat and maintain muscle mass. If I’m not planning on competing that year, I might extend the mass growing phase. As a vegetarian, my protein sources include eggs, dairy, soy products, beans and legumes, wheat gluten, and supplements like whey protein. In addition, I add supplemental B12, zinc, and iron, as these are three key nutrients that are difficult to maintain as a vegetarian athlete.

If there is one criterion that is common throughout everything I do, both in training and in diet, it is consistency. Consistency is why my physique looks the way it does. Consistency is what make my body change. When my consistency slacks off, so does my progress.

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I have always been very body-conscious. At times in my life I have taken this body consciousness to an extreme: I had anorexia and bulimia in my teens and twenties, and I became a competitive bodybuilder in my forties. My parents, who are in their eighties, are natural athletes who have set standards for me since I began skiing at age four. To this day, they ski double black diamonds and play golf all year round. I am inspired by them and by my husband, who is 62 and started competitive bodybuilding on a challenge at age 50. They are my heroes.

I am now a 50-year-old bodybuilder who just went through menopause. I began competing at age 44 and I won the New Mexico women’s novice, lightweight and overall titles, as well as second place in the women’s masters my first time on stage. Flex Magazine was in the audience and put a photo of me in the March 2001 issue!

When I reached menopause, I was depressed, sleep deprived, hypothyroid and grew a beard!
Menopause was not a result of overeating and overwhelming life events, such as empty nest, but was the result of decreased female and male hormones. It wasn’t until I balanced my hormones, adjusted my thyroid and added certain minerals that I dropped the weight, slept better, was not depressed and felt ready to compete again. **For one year I carried 12 extra pounds that I could not shake regardless of diet, weight lifting or aerobics.**

I now specialize in training peri-menopausal and menopausal women. I call my business “Interiors & Exteriors,” and I created a web-site called [www.fittestfemaleatfifty.com](http://www.fittestfemaleatfifty.com). By having tests done and rebalancing hormones, we women can once again feel healthy, strong, and happy! It is never too early to think about menopause.

I came out the other end of “the change” ready to go back to competing. In September 2004, I won three first place awards in the Mid-USA competition. In 2005, I have aspirations of winning the Master’s Women’s competition for women 50 and over! I think I have what it takes to do that.

**HOW I train**

I have been lifting for 29 years. I have always done lots of aerobics and cross training. For years I was one of the only women in any gym I went to, but it wasn’t until my husband starting training me in 2000 that I began to compete and win! We met in the gym, and our relationship began when he asked me if I wanted him as a training partner. When we first met, I quoted him a line I’ve heard from every woman I’ve coached or trained: I said, “I just don’t want to get too big, or look too muscular.”

**It’s almost impossible to get “too big” or “too muscular” without steroids.** Even then, it’s an uphill battle every step of the way for women to put on muscle mass and keep it. I do aerobics twice a day, first thing in the morning on an empty stomach and again at 5:30, before my last meal of the day. Lately I have been doing the treadmill for 30-45 minutes each session at a level 5 incline and a 3.9 m.p.h. speed. I lift weights 5 days a week, for 60-75 minutes. I train no more than 2 body parts a day, usually opposing muscles. I train quads one day, and back and hamstrings on another. I work abdominals and calves three times a week, and I dance each weekend for 3-5 hours at clubs, for recreation and excellent leg shaping benefits!

**HOW I eat**

I have been eating 5-6 meals a day for the last 4 1/2 years. My first meal is after my aerobics and consists of oatmeal and a no-carb whey protein shake. I add two tablespoons of peanut butter at this meal as well. My next meal is 3 hours later, after my workout, and is usually a chicken breast with a 4 oz. baked potato, or if I’m in a growth period, a lean hamburger or steak. Three hours later, my next meal is the same as the second, but I usually switch over to 1/2 cup of rice rather than the potato. The meal after that is again the same as meal 3, and my last meal, which I eat after my second round of aerobics, is a 100% whey protein shake with no carbs. This is the diet I follow when I’m training for a contest. During the off season I will add some bread about three times a week and a dessert once a week. When I dance, I usually have one drink as a treat. Because the dancing is so aerobic and lasts for so long, I usually go out afterwards for pancakes or waffles, with butter and real maple syrup because I’ve found that if I don’t, I begin to go catabolic and will lose muscle very quickly.

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I have been very fortunate to have met some incredible people in my two year association with the sport of natural bodybuilding. From the promoters who so graciously give of their efforts to provide us with a natural venue (often with little monetary reward), to some of the most dedicated human beings alive that have honored me to share the stage with them. These individuals are not just fellow competitors, but friends and acquaintances that share a similar passion in life—to display what can be accomplished at any age with a goal, a commitment, and discipline.

Despite the accomplishments of my peers, I still draw some of my strongest inspiration from many people that society would not consider “motivational.” I never cease to be amazed at the commitment and level of achievement of many “physically challenged” individuals who work so incredibly hard just to do the simple day-to-day functions that most of us take for granted. Their sheer excitement of taking a few excruciating steps successfully, or going beyond what was ever
predicted they would accomplish, to not only function within society, but also contribute to it and help others along the way. I realized a long time ago, that inspiration may come from many outside sources, but motivation must come from within. No one knows my potential and my journey towards achieving it, except me. *I am responsible to conjure up whatever inspiration is needed for each day’s motivation.*

**HOW I train**

My training philosophy is very simple. I incorporate multi-joint, compound movements as the basis for every workout. Especially as we age, we must take into consideration the stresses applied to our joints and connective tissues from the various movements we incorporate into our program. There are many exercises and training principles that may be desirable to use, especially in our attempt to present a contest-quality physique. However, as we age, we must learn to recognize our limitations, and learn to train smarter so we can keep training for the rest of our lives.

*I train with resistance 3 or 4 days a week, never more, and never more than 2 days in row without a day of rest.* As contest time approaches, I will usually alternate one week with three training sessions (Mon, Wed, Fri), and the second week with four training sessions (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri). The fourth day is often a second light leg day.

Off season training is always three days a week, with a day of rest following each. Body parts are usually broken up into a “Push/Pull” format, where off-season consists of chest/shoulders/triceps on one day, legs the middle day, and back/ biceps/ forearms on the final day.

As contests approach, I work antagonistic muscle groups in each session to increase the intensity. I minimize the rest between consecutive sets, but I am still able to maximize rest between subsequent sets for each body part. An example of this principle would be training chest and back together on one day, doing a set for back immediately followed by a set for chest and then resting. The same format is followed for the other muscles groups.

Stretching and posing (isometric movements) are also an integral part of my training. Both are incorporated into the workout, as well as separate sessions of their own, which increase in frequency as the contest date nears. Cardiovascular activities are performed as needed to shed the last of the body fat stores before a competition, and usually of a HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) variety of no more than 20-minute duration. Cardio conditioning is accomplished by walking, which I enjoy and also use as a form of stress reduction.

**HOW I eat**

Nutrition is at least 75-80% of the successful fitness package. However, it’s usually the most overlooked and misunderstood. Poor nutrition is more responsible for poor results than any other reason. I eat 5-7 meals a day, never more than four hours apart, each consisting of a quality protein, either a complex carb, a low glycemic veggie/fruit source, and/or an essential fatty acid (EFA) source. I consume 1.5 to 2 grams of protein daily for each pound of bodyweight from a variety of sources including lean beef, chicken, turkey, eggs, fish or protein powders.

My total caloric intake is 18-20 times bodyweight during the off season (beyond 16 weeks out from a competition) and will drop down to 10-12 times bodyweight in the weeks just prior to a contest. Water intake MUST be considered part of a nutrition program. I manage to consume anywhere from 1 to 2 gallons a day, sometimes even more as body fat reduction becomes the greater priority. I structure my program to allow little variance (or thought). The body really does learn to crave what we supply it, and as a result I have learned to appreciate food in a much simpler state of preparation. ::

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Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.

Albert Schweitzer
Section 2
PART 3 OF 4

Role Models:
Age 60–69

Nancy Clayton
Tom Schwald
David Marlow
Dave Draper
Marty Webb
Steve Langam
Logan Franklin
HOW I think
“Takes a lickin but goes on tickin”
(An old tag line from the Timex Watch people)

Born with a defect in my heart valve, I was unable to participate in any physical activities for much of my life. Then at the age of 38, after experiencing a life threatening illness, I underwent open-heart surgery to repair my aortic valve. The surgery offered me a second chance at living, and I became very active. As a result, I pursued a variety of sports—from scuba diving and skiing to biking and working out—and I loved them all. I became seriously dedicated to weight training and although it’s been a tough road, I am still weight training and will celebrate my 62nd birthday in March.

By the way, I’m a 5-foot, 100-pound grandmother of two.

In 2001, I was told my valve was in very poor shape and that I needed to undergo major reconstructive surgery. I live in New York City, and thought it...
was smart to have the surgery before the winter season. *I chose September 11, 2001 as my surgery date.* The surgeon assured me that following this surgery I would be able to resume my full level of activity. I was terrified of the procedure but I knew I had no choice. Thus on September 11th the entire world changed as did mine.

After surgery, I left the hospital with a new mechanical valve and a pacemaker. I knew it would be a long, hard road back. At first I felt discouraged, but I reminded myself that if I were diligent I’d get there eventually.

Perseverance has always been one of my strengths. Perseverance plus conditioning equals success. Although I didn’t always have good days, it was through my perseverance and ability to “mentally” keep going that I started to feel like my old self. It’s not easy to always stay motivated. But even when I experienced a slump, I knew the only way to get better was to keep moving. Even if I did half a workout or fewer reps, it was still a workout.

My advice to anyone who is just starting to train at an older age or going through a medical procedure is to have courage and perseverance. You really can have a great quality of life, and training can help you achieve it. You don’t have to be a body builder to start a routine. Your determination is more important than any routine. Once you believe in your ability to get started, the rest will come.

*Many people lost their lives on 9/11, but I was lucky enough to regain mine.*

**HOW I train**

Even though it was second nature to me prior to my surgery, stepping on the treadmill for the first time in cardiac rehab was very scary. But when the cardiac specialist hooked me up to a monitor, I felt secure with the rehab team watching over me. Soon after, my surgeon gave me the green light to start training again with my personal trainer. The surgeon’s respect for my lifestyle was all-important. He encouraged me to return to my exercise regimen, while most physicians don’t understand how important working out is to a fitness fanatic. I truly believe one of the reasons I recovered so rapidly was because of so much encouragement and understanding.

Upon my return to weight training, my trainer understood my limitations—and so did my body. When I went to lift the bar that was normally my easy “warm-up,” I found it too heavy to lift. Slowly, my strength and stamina returned with steady cardiovascular and weight training. I wore a heart rate monitor, but my pacemaker also let me know when I was working too hard.

For my training routine, I like to stick to the basics. I train with weights four times a week on a three way split routine of: (1) chest and triceps, (2) shoulders and biceps, (3) back and legs. I work on basic movements such as bench presses, upright rows, bicep curls, squats, etc. I incorporated swimming into my cardio routine and practice gyrotronics weekly. Gyrotronics is often referred to as yoga with resistance. I recently added gyrotronics to my routine to keep my balance strong as I age.

**HOW I eat**

When I left the hospital I was told I must always be on a blood thinner to alleviate the risk of stroke. Leafy green vegetables counteracted the blood thinner and thus I was forced to change some of my eating habits. So I had to cut out lettuce, broccoli and brussel sprouts, the mainstay of good eating.

Years ago I spent time with Tom Venuto who wrote *Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle* and he taught me good clean eating. One of my favorite breakfasts is oatmeal pancakes. Oatmeal, egg whites and protein powder. Cook them just like regular pancakes. The best thing about them - they’re portable. They can go to meetings, to the office, or as a take along snack.

I try to eat protein and some complex carbohydrate for each meal. I manage some vegetables like string beans, cauliflower, etc. I eat small meals four to five times a day. People look at me and are quite surprised I eat so much food, but I always try to explain it’s what I eat, not how much. ::

Email: nanclayt@aol.com
HOW I think

I was once an alcoholic and prone to depression. At age 40, I was looking at the face of death in the mirror. As Tim Robbins says in the movie, *The Shawshank Redemption*, “You have to get busy living, or get busy dying.” I decided to live, so I took up weightlifting.

Working out was a means to an end that took on a life of its own. The pills stopped and the depression lessened as my self-esteem started to soar. Then, in 1998, I was diagnosed with arthritis in my knees, hips and spine. I changed my routine to compensate, and I’m convinced that bodybuilding saved me from suffering from this crippling disease. The discipline I acquired from years of strength training is what allowed me to get through this.

I literally went from contemplating suicide to contemplating competition!

The competitions are really only a small part of my motivation. No matter how long I live, those
demons will still be inside of me, and the gym is my weapon against them. It’s really that simple. Even though there are days I get up and hurt all over, I go to the gym anyway, and life returns to normal. Believe me, there’s hope for a life free from addiction and depression. It takes a lot of work and a lot of desire, but if I can do it, anyone can do it.

I pattern a lot of my thinking after three-time Mr. Olympia Frank Zane. I listen to my body, but I actually want to get up at 4:00 am and train. The alternative is not an option, and life is just too short. By the way, my wife is 16 years younger than I am, so that’s another great reason to stay mobile!

HOW I train
For a long time, my routine was a three-day split (three days on, one day off). After years and years of training in my garage, I learned about innovation, and my workouts evolved over time as my needs changed. Today, I train one body part a day and work out every other day. I enjoy doing a lot of exercise, so the one body part per day routine suits me well. This schedule allows me 10 days of rest between larger body parts, but I consider that much rest necessary because I’m hitting each body part with 20 sets or more! I don’t train with excessively heavy weight, so I respond well to this type of high volume training.

My current training routine is a five-day split with chest on day one, upper and lower back on day two, shoulders and trapezius on day three, arms on day four and legs on day five.

There’s a day off between each workout. Because I have a naturally high metabolism, I haven’t needed a lot of cardio to stay lean. I only rest about one minute between sets and that seems to do the trick. The only time I do cardio is prior to a contest. During the pre-competition phase, I hit 45 minutes on the bike or treadmill at the end of each workout. I worked six days on and one day off during contest training, but I look as good today with fewer workouts each week as I did then with more frequent competition training! I think my new approach to training every other day is better for my joints, and considering that I don’t lift extremely heavy weights any longer, the extra volume is really paying off, as are the results.

HOW I eat
I eat five meals a day with mostly the same foods every day. I mix it up at dinner for variety. I’m a construction worker, so I have to carry a lot of food with me. I drink a protein shake (without carbs) first thing in the morning before my workout. I work out on a nearly empty stomach, as I tend to get nauseous if I train with food in my gut. Afterwards, I have a Met-RX meal replacement drink with some fruit in it. A turkey breast sandwich follows that, then another Met-RX drink. I’ll snack on some rice or fruit during the afternoon. I back off on the carbs later in the day, so I’ll have either steak or chicken with veggies at night.

My protein is about 200 grams per day at 2,000 calories at a bodyweight of 165. I eat 150 grams of carbs and the rest is fat. I take no supplements at all. Once a week I eat whatever I want.

The reason I decided to be in Fit Over 40 is because I don’t know a better way to reach people my age (or younger) to let them know the “real deal” about fitness. Many people believe that you have to “live in the gym” and “give up your life” to look and feel as good as I do. My diet and training is a lifestyle is not overly time-consuming. I believe that by living the fitness lifestyle, you don’t “give up your life,” you gain a greater life! :)

Email: TSCHWALD@aol.com
HOW I think

I started bodybuilding at 16 and have remained active ever since. In addition to pumping iron, I spent a number of years surfing, skiing and doing gymnastics. I always felt that I swam in the “lucky gene pool” because I inherited my father’s build.

I had an epiphany at the age of 55: While biking to the gym, I got hit by a car and broke two bones in my left leg. When surgeons attached permanent pins for the bones to grow around, they said that if I walked again, I might have a limp for the rest of my life. I refused to accept their diagnosis, and vowed to emerge from the accident bigger, stronger and in better shape than before the collision. So, I doubled my training efforts. Two weeks after my surgery, and still on crutches, I was back in the gym. In time, I got bigger and stronger, my leg healed completely, and my orthopedic surgeon complimented me, saying, “If only every patient would be this proactive.”

My next goal: By the time I was 60, I was determined to be in the best shape of my life, not the

David Marlow is a true renaissance man. Author, bodybuilder, and culturalist, David shows that the body can—and should—match the mind.

Davidmarlow

Category Fitness enthusiast
Age Range 60-69
Weight 182 lbs
Occupation Novelist

Click here to visit David’s website

“When surgeons attached the pins, they said that if I walked again I might limp for the rest of my life...”
worst shape of my life. I saw so many men at 60 who were way out of shape. However, by applying myself and sticking with the training, I achieved my goal. I now feel like I have a new lease on life. At 61, I stay in training as a lifestyle. I realize I can't stop the aging process, but I can at least do my best to slow it down. So far as I can tell, bodybuilding is the closest thing we've found thus far to a fountain of youth! I love the validation, self-confidence, and self-assurance that the training gives me.

I wake up every morning and tell myself, “For 61, this is pretty darn good!” I do use testosterone cream, a hormone replacement which has helped to cut the fat, add muscle, and boost my libido.

HOW I train
I train 3 days on, 1 day off. Very rarely do I break training, but when I do, I always feel guilty and resolve to get right back to my strict regimen! Rest is very important. I try to sleep 7-8 hours a night; I don’t say, “I'm going to sleep,” I say, “I'm getting my muscle rest.”

At 3:00 pm on training days, I go to Gold’s Gym in Hollywood to work out with my training partner, Bruce Cronander. I bring a pad and pen with me, in the event I think of a plot point for my novel. My mind gets stimulated by the training, so I am exercising both my mind and my body at the same time!

We work two body parts a day; mixing it up as much as possible, trying not to do the same exercises too often. We are always switching the routines and the order of exercises; always stimulating the body, and “shocking” the muscles. There are so many people in the gym doing the same stale routines over and over - with no results! We created our own training program, often with the help of discussions with other bodybuilding friends.

My cardio consists of a 20 minute fast-walk warm-up on the treadmill. It gets my heart and circulation going. With every step, I crunch my abs together as if they were an accordion, which helps to define my six pack.

My two secrets to bodybuilding success are simple: Patience and consistency. Balance is important too.

However, once you commit to staying fit as a lifestyle, that balance just comes naturally. The information you need is out there - you just have to get off the couch, get into the gym, and stay with it.

HOW I eat
I eat 5 meals a day, emphasizing protein intake and the elimination of certain foods like sweets. My half-serious motto has always been ‘White Sugar, White Death.” Food is often just fuel. I can sacrifice a fancy, fat-laden meal for one with proper fuel. I try to avoid complex carbs after noon. I’m working on my fifth novel, so I write every day until 3:00 pm, and eat around my writing schedule.

A typical day of eating for me is:

7:30 am: I eat breakfast at my computer. It consists of a 6-egg-white-and-1-yolk frittata with a sliced banana, almonds, raisins, a cup of oats, and non fat yogurt.

11:00 am: A whey protein drink, made with soy milk, a banana, non-fat yogurt, plus 10 grams of glutamine.

1:00 pm or so: A light meal of chicken, non-fat cottage cheese, or nuts and raisins. Something small, yet useful.

2:30 pm: A cup of coffee before the gym for energy. I take a banana with me on the way to Gold’s Gym for an immediate post-pump hit of potassium.

4:30 pm: Another whey protein shake.

7:00 pm: Beef, fish, or chicken, plus veggies. Email: BodnMind@aol.com
I cringe at the question, as it implies I have a familiarity with the illusive merit. I know it only from a distance. Survival, for starters: If I don’t aim for excellence regularly, my arrows land in the thicket. My two big motivators are the dread of diminishing and the fear of mediocrity. I’d rather be more tomorrow than I am today, not less. Whether one plays with marbles, rockets or weights, this is a full-time mission and has its tiresome moments.

Certainly there are more motivators: the company of the characters I meet along the way and the hope of a glimpse of the superior quality should I approach it. Reaching for excellence, the stretching and the striving, feels good in the limbs, the mind and the soul. It’s an invigorating experience, unlike solitaire or Friday nights at the.

“My inspiration comes with every positive blow I land on the negative forces that would otherwise hold me down.”
I’m motivated by the challenge and the fulfillment of a day well-lived, or you might say, a workout that “ripped.”

*Inspiration can be found in the shadows.*

I seldom wake up to inspiration. It’s there, yet I miss it at first light. My immediate task is to right my body and fight off the demons. The fight is a good one and the demons don’t have a chance. As they topple, I stand taller and thank God for the strength. Herein lies my inspiration. It’s not so much the good I might achieve; it’s the bad I ably discard—the aches, the doubts, the procrastinations, the guilt, the stress—those familiar bedfellows. It’s a tough world, a struggle, and resistance is encountered at every turn. My inspiration comes with every positive blow I land on the negative forces that would otherwise hold me down. The junk, the debris and the clutter under my feet and in my mind must be removed lest they become insurmountable obstacles.

Finally I get to the gym and there it is: the refuge, a hard-earned peace, the promise of tranquility in a set and in a rep, the familiar sounds of metal meeting metal, the sure grasp of the bar and the positioning of the body and the sudden and determined thrust of muscle against steel. *There’s order in weight lifting.* Chaos reduces me to a cross-eyed fool while the abrupt but tidy regulation of lifting restores my sanity and good spirit. In 90 minutes, or whatever it takes, I will be whole, fulfilled and grateful—inspired, maybe inspiring, if only to myself.

*HOW I train*

My training has basically been the same since my Muscle Beach “dungeon days” back in the ’60s. It has wandered over the years, but not far. After 50, I reduced my daily gym input from six days to five days a week, and after 60, I condensed my workouts to four intense two-hour sessions a week. I am a *volume* trainer. Within the four-day schedule I am able to hit each muscle group sufficiently twice a week. I apply the basic big movements (squats, deadlifts and presses, standing barbell curls, bent-over rows, pull-downs and their cousins), with rep variations where and when needed. Throughout the month I’ll challenge myself with one-rep powerlifting in the squat and deadlift and go heavy with other choice exercises where and when I can (overload and injuries are determining factors). I train to seek maximum intensity within each set while keeping a wise eye on overtraining and injury.

*HOW I eat*

An interesting note: My eating, too, has been basically the same since my “dungeon days.” *What was true then is true now. Surprise!* I eat six meals regularly, every three hours throughout the day. I start with a protein shake of low-fat milk, two raw fertile eggs, three scoops of Bomber Blend protein, banana and a glob of peanut butter. There’s, of course, the cup of coffee, a bran muffin and the vitamins and minerals. I manage to gulp my two tablespoons of EFAs and Body Ammo’s Joint Connection mix. The water bottle follows me everywhere I go.

The day is interrupted twice with eight-ounce portions of skirt steak, 12 ounces of low-fat milk, a scoop of cottage cheese, some sliced vegetables and baked red potato. Often cans of tuna are opened at mealtime and eaten like a hog with lots of water and more vegetables. Low-fat cottage cheese is always around to complement these merciless stuffings. Baked chicken is an evening meal when one more skirt steak is one too many. Salad, broccoli, beans and spinach are included.

Thrown in prior to my mid-day workout and upon its completion are 16 ounces of super-duty protein shake with L-glutamine and creatine. Before bed it’s a full-fat yogurt with mixed nuts and my dose of Super Spectrtrim vitamins and minerals ::

*Email: dave@davedraper.com*
How I think

As a very active kid, I was always called “skinny.” I could eat pretty much whatever I wanted without gaining weight. What a strange twist it was in my 30’s, when I had to work to maintain the slim figure I’d always taken for granted. I started to run, loved it, and continued with regularity the next couple of decades, logging 20-35 miles per week. In my early 50’s, I began to have trouble with my knees and right hip, and my running suffered.

Although I found multiple methods to hide my rolls of fat, the truth is that I was not only embarrassed about my body; I hated it. My daughter Kristen was at local gymnastics academy with her little boy for a birthday party when I saw a poster for a morning exercise program being held there. The before and after pictures were all the proof I needed. We both signed up.

In April of 2002, I weighed 155 lbs. and was 43% body fat. By April of 2003, after a year’s worth of

Some people believe they’re too old to change. Well, take a look at Marty Webb. She didn’t even ‘begin’ training until she was 59 years old, and started in a state of obesity. Now she has a body anyone would envy!

www.monarchschool.org

Marty Webb

Category: Bodybuilder
Age Range: 60-69
Weight: 124 lbs
Occupation: Educator

“Now when my husband says, ‘I love your body’, I can honestly reply, ‘Me too!’”
clean eating, diligent aerobic exercise, daily weightlifting and thousands of abdominal exercises, I weighed 115 lbs. with 13% body fat. At age 60, I competed in the all natural (no steroids) Lone Star Classic bodybuilding competition and won first place in the Master’s (over 35) division. When I competed in my second bodybuilding contest in June 2003, I was 109 lbs. and 9% body fat. The trophy on our mantel is lovely, but not nearly as lovely as looking in the mirror and finding “the real me” again. Literally for the first time in my life, I love my body and how I look. Now when my husband says, “I love your body”, I can honestly reply, “Me too!”

I love that I am responsible for my own motivation. I love that I can choose how I will act (eat and work out) by what I think. I love how I feel when I eat healthy, and I especially enjoy shopping for and wearing cute size 2 clothes. As weird as it may seem, I actually look forward to that alarm going off at 3:25 am. I get up extra early so my husband and I can always have breakfast together.

What a blessing this new life is! I want to claim it fully, and with God’s grace, march proudly through my 60s into my 70s and 80s. If I’m able to inspire just one person to a healthier lifestyle, I’m thrilled!

HOW I train
The exercise class I enrolled in combined cardiovascular fitness, a sensible nutrition plan, weightlifting and leadership accountability training. Meeting from 4:15 - 5:45 am daily, the group of 20-30 (mostly women) was led in floor aerobics, step and kickboxing. Rock climbing, river canoeing, ropes courses, or obstacle courses added variety and fun. Course requirements included weekly food journals, weigh-ins, another hour of cardio daily, weights, pushups and sit-ups. Since the bodybuilding competitions, I’ve discontinued participation in the morning course because I needed to learn to live this new lifestyle and all its components independently.

I train six days per week early in the morning. Monday, Wednesday and Friday I work upper body and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday I work lower body. A typical upper body workout is 3 sets of 12 repetitions on bent over rows, upright rows, military press, lateral raises, bicep curls and tricep extensions. Lower body workouts are also 3 sets of 12 repetitions on exercises such as squats, lunges, and leg curls. Every workout I also do 60 pushups, 100 crunches, 150 oblique crunches, and other assorted ab exercises. Cardio is usually a 3-6 mile run outdoors or one hour indoors on a treadmill, stairmill, elliptical trainer, or row machine. One or two days per week, I do an easy second cardio workout. Sunday is “recovery day,” and I get to sleep in!

HOW I eat
I keep a food journal of everything I eat, every day! I eat 5-6 times a day, with 3 hours between each meal. Who knew that to lose weight, you need to eat more often?

For protein I use 5-6 oz. of lean protein, such as egg whites, skinless chicken breast, tuna, fish or extra lean ground turkey at each meal and 3 oz. of lean protein at each snack. I eat one cup of carbohydrates for main meals, half that amount for snacks. (For example, one package of grits, one serving of oatmeal, one cup of brown rice or one 8 oz. yam or potato). I do not have carbohydrates after the mid-afternoon snack. I include unlimited vegetables at any meal/snack time, excluding rice, beans, rice or potatoes. I drink one gallon of water per day. Everything I eat has 20% or less of its calories from fat and I eat no more than 40 grams of sugars per day. When I’m at my desired 124 lbs., I allow myself a “treat meal,” usually on Saturday night. This might include wine with dinner or a dessert.

Email: martywebb@houston.rr.com
HOW I think

First, I think that anything worth doing in life is worth doing to excess. If it’s not worth doing to excess, why do it at all? You must be passionate about your endeavors to truly enjoy a sense of accomplishment. I began lifting weights consistently when I was 40, but didn’t get “hard-core” until I was 50. I engaged the services of a nutritionist friend to “get me in the best shape he could for my 50th birthday.” He challenged me to compete in my first bodybuilding competition, to which I retorted, “You mean get on stage in my ‘panties’ in front of 1,000 people, and act like Arnold Schwarzenegger? Are you nuts?”

I took the challenge, and 13 weeks later, after losing 8% body fat, I was on stage in my “panties” in front of 1,000 people. At age 50, I placed 2nd in the Masters (over 40 division) in my first competition. I won it the next two
years at 51 and 52. I placed third in the NPC National Masters over 50 in my third year of competition. After a six-year absence, I returned to competition at 58 years old. I have competed eight times since then, and in September, 2004, won the New Mexico Masters Men over 50. I have 20 trophies from 14 contests.

Although I am “athletic,” my athleticism consists mostly of gym activity. I am not into hiking, cycling, running, etc.; I simply don’t have time. I am committed to the gym 4 or 5 days per week, but if it’s not my scheduled day to go to the gym, you couldn’t pay me to go there! *I go for a specific reason and purpose, not because I am “addicted to exercise.”*

The bottom line is, I think any of us can do anything we set our minds to if we want it bad enough, and are willing to do whatever it takes. I am very goal oriented. It’s hard for someone to tell me they are too old, when I started at 50, made my best changes at 62, and will compete nationally at 63. *Chronological age is nothing more than a number. I have made more improvements this year at 62 than I ever made in my life.* I will make more next year while training for the NPC National Masters competition in July, with one of the top professional trainers in the world. To do this, I will go to California and train the entire body over several days every five or six weeks. No matter how much knowledge we have, we can all benefit from a trainer. Make certain the trainer looks the way you want to look. He has to be able to walk the walk, and not just talk the talk. I see very few trainers who I think are competent, especially when their clients look the same year after year.

**HOW I train**

When I moved into “hard-core” training at 50 years old, I hired a young man who is now one of the top 20 professional bodybuilders in the world. His looks told me he knew how to train for bodybuilding. He pushed me hard and although I gained only 10% more knowledge, I achieved over 50% more results. I still follow his methods. I now train with a six-day split, but only four days per week. I find that at my age, it’s easy to over train and therefore, I limit my training sessions to no more than one and one half hours per day for those four days, training one major body part plus abs and calves on alternate days. I train as heavy as I can without injury.

**Growth occurs during rest.** Rest is equally as critical as training intensity and technique. I think more people tend to over-train than under-train. During the upcoming year, I will be training for the National Masters competition in July, with one of the top professional trainers in the world. To do this, I will go to California and train the entire body over several days every five or six weeks. No matter how much knowledge we have, we can all benefit from a trainer. Make certain the trainer looks the way you want to look. He has to be able to walk the walk, and not just talk the talk. I see very few trainers who I think are competent, especially when their clients look the same year after year.

**HOW I eat**

Having been challenged by a nutritionist to compete at 50, I obviously had great help with my diet. During that initial 13 week training cycle, I weighed and measured six meals per day and ultimately cheated on only four meals during the entire 13 weeks. Thankfully, I learned how to plan my own diet and I stick to a very rigorous pre-contest diet consisting primarily of whey protein, egg whites, chicken, steak, rice, potatoes and vegetables.

I adhere to my diet all year round, but I certainly get a bit liberal with it when I’m not competing. I find I can do this and simply tweak it a bit to tighten up for vanity or competition. In the off-season, I eat 70% correct and by doing that, I can live with a body fat of around 7% or 8%. If it creeps higher, I simply tighten up my diet and maybe add some aerobics. ::

**Email:** FITCOACHX@aol.com
HOW I think

Training has never been something I had to force upon myself. I love working out, being fit and looking fit. As a kid, I read Bob Hoffman’s Strength & Health magazine, and at age 14, I got a York barbell set as a gift. At 16, I joined the famous Yarick’s Gym in Oakland, California. Ed Yarick had trained Steve Reeves and other bodybuilding superstars. It was an exciting place. One night I saw Doug Hepburn, the great Canadian lifter, in an impromptu demonstration, blow into a hot water bottle until it exploded. Wow! I was hooked on muscle and fitness and it stuck.

Now, I’m 68 years young. Nobody lasts forever and there are no guarantees on how or when you leave the scene. What I do know is that the odds of staying healthy and remaining interested in life right to the very end greatly favor those who stay mentally and physically active. I don’t pretend that I’m capable of doing everything I could do 20 or 30 years ago, but I think I am in very good shape and honestly, I have never felt better than I do right now.

“I’m 68 years young...honestly, I have never felt better than I do right now.”

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www.grayironfitness.com
Besides weight training, my wife and I also lead cardio-kickboxing classes two nights a week at a health club. Some of our students have made amazing physical improvements that have enriched their lives. Knowing we played a role in that gives me tremendous personal satisfaction. These are the things that motivate and inspire me daily. I should add that my wife says I look great in jeans, too!

**HOW I train**

I workout five days a week. Two days are strictly weight training, two are cardio-kickboxing classes, which I lead, and one is usually a hike through steep hills in open space near our home. My workouts don’t go more than one hour. I have friends at the gym but I don’t talk to them beyond saying hello when I’m training.

Supersetting opposing muscle groups is the common denominator in nearly all of my workouts. Supersets provide more actual time under the weights than any other method. I vary my exercises, sets and reps from month-to-month. I prefer compound movements. At my age, I’m certainly not trying to gain more in size or strength, but I’m able to handle about the same poundage in most exercises today as five years ago.

The cardio-kickboxing classes are full body workouts with an emphasis on cardiovascular and muscle endurance. We teach a program called “Crush Kick,” which blends western boxing movements with Thai kickboxing (Muay Thai). Bracketed by warm-up and cool down periods, the class has two parts: a cardio section consisting of bobbing, weaving, kicking, punching, elbows and knees; followed by “floor work,” pushups, sit-ups, bodyweight squats, etc. Each person controls his or her own intensity, allowing beginners to workout in the same class as well-conditioned regulars. Those who put full effort into the workout say it deserves its reputation as a “butt-kicker.”

*At least one day per week is reserved for a hike in the hills.* Our home is next to open space, steep hills and trails offering cardio alternatives to treadmills and stationary bikes. Rain or shine, my wife and our dog, Tyra, and I are out there.

**HOW I eat**

I am 5’ 9” and 161 pounds. My body fat percentage is in the 10% to 12% range. When I was younger, (and also an inch-and-a-half taller), I weighed as much as 199, in muscular condition. My weight and lean body mass of today provide the balance of muscle strength and endurance that I want to maintain.

Athletes and trainers debate over the best ratio of macronutrients. I am not precise but stay close to the 40-30-30 range (carbs - protein- fat) in Dr. Barry Sears’s book *The Zone.* I think macronutrient ratios can be adjusted up or down somewhat and still be healthy and effective. *I believe controlling portion sizes is the most important factor when it comes to controlling bodyweight.*

I eat 5 or 6 times daily. Each time, I include lean protein, carbohydrates and a little fat. The meals are small but I never feel “starved” because I don’t go over 3 hours without a small meal or healthy snack. I don’t eat sugar or sugar-laden foods. The dairy I eat is nonfat; the meats are lean. I like salmon and have it often. I make shakes with soy milk and whey protein powder. I eat a variety of fruit and vegetables (mix the colors). Generally, I have a glass of wine or beer with dinner, not more than two. I always drink water when I eat and sip water when I workout.

I take a multiple vitamin-mineral supplement that emphasizes C, E and other anti-oxidants and the B vitamins; it minimally covers the rest of the broad range. I take Glucosamine-Chondroitin tablets and use whey protein powder for shakes or, for convenience, I sometimes have a meal replacement drink.

Email: grayiron@grayironfitness.com
The test of true intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.

One should, for example, be able to see things that are impossible, and yet be determined to make them otherwise.

Anthony Robbins (based on F. Scott Fitzgerald)
Section 2
PART 4 OF 4

Role Models:
Age 70+

Kelly Nelson
Don Tucker
Jackie Lee
Pax Beale
Dr. Len Schwartz
HOW I think

I recall the 1940’s when I never heard of a woman exercising. I am sure it was thought by the general population that exercise would kill a woman, so instead we resorted to rubber girdles that made our butts two sizes smaller and also made our eyes bug out of our heads. My mother’s era never heard of exercise per se; trenching a cornfield was an expected way of life and it served the purpose of pride and survival.

Pride in yourself is the best motivator. My motivation comes from within. I am motivated to be the best that I can be, and that’s what enables me to make gains in strength and muscle. I see and feel the physical and emotional benefits. I feel healthy and vibrant and I’m proud of the way I look in the mirror. Training is a spirit lifter that gives me control over my life. If I have a problem, the answer usually becomes clear as I work out. Exercise puts my life in perspective. I’ve become a person who keeps trying and taking pride in what I do every day. My family and my daughter inspires me to the max.

“Training is a spirit lifter that gives me control over my life.”

Kelly Nelson is a marvel. Her physique would be envious to anyone at any age. At 77, she continues to improve!

www.agelesstraining.com
HOW I train

I work out on a ten day cycle. I do 4 sets of 12 reps for most muscle groups. On day one I train chest, shoulders and triceps. For shoulders I do seated barbell presses to the front, barbell presses behind the neck, standing side laterals, and bent over laterals. Triceps are next. I enjoy overhead dumbbell extensions, high cable extensions, tricep dips facing backwards on the “Gravitron” machine, close grip barbell presses in the Smith machine or dips.

I superset and have the equipment ready so I only have to pause to change the weight. I finish with 15 minutes of yoga postures. The entire workout takes one hour, forty-five minutes. If I didn’t ride my bike to the gym, I will do a 10-mile loop. I keep my bike on my car rack and start my ride as soon as I finish my workout.

Day two is back, biceps, abs and calves, including pull-downs to the front, low cable rows, dumbbell rows, and back extensions. Bicep exercises include dumbbell preacher curls, alternate incline curls, lying flat bench dumbbell curls and body drag reverse curls. I do a four-exercise circuit “giant set” for abs: Crunches, reverse crunches, hanging twists and hanging knee-ups. I do two exercise for calves: seated and standing calf raises.

Day three is legs, abs and calves. For legs I do seated leg curls, lying leg curls, leg extensions, front smith machine squats, squats standing backwards on the hack machine. Calves and abs are the same as day two. I finish with the yoga postures for stretching. No workout on day four.

On day five, it’s back to chest, shoulders and triceps again, same exercises, only three sets per muscle part and I increase the weight, doing eight reps. Day six is back, biceps, and legs for 3 sets of 8 reps. Day seven is a day off. Day eight is power day, and I enjoy the big lifts including deadlifts, standing overhead presses and front squats for 3 sets of 8, 5, 5 reps. Then I superset pull ups and push-ups to failure.

I don’t work out on days nine and ten, although I may do an easy bike ride, sauntering for ten miles. I start over on day eleven.

HOW I eat

I started keeping a training diary since I first read of its importance some twenty years ago in one of Vince Gironda’s articles. Writing down the sets, reps and poundages that I use gives me a tremendous frame of reference and allows me to see my progress.

I have developed a preparation ritual. I visualize how I am going to execute my work out and I see the physique I will acquire from each set. The purpose of my workouts is to serve my body, not vice versa. I always have a long-term goal.

Email: kelly1954@charter.net
HOW I think

I'm 5' 7", 151 pounds, and 75 years young. I'm a personal trainer at World Gym. I wouldn't be honest if I didn't admit that it feels great to have people walk up and ask me, “What's your secret?” My clients and members at the gym often tell me that they hope they'll be as strong, and look as good as I do when (or if) they reach my age. It really does feel good and that's one of the things that motivates me to keep after it.

I also enjoy looking in the mirror and seeing a body that matches my mind because I certainly don't feel or think as most who are my chronological age. Being able to do the things I did at 50 is extremely important to me.

My long-term goal is to become a healthy centenarian with the right combination of muscle and strength. My initial motivation stemmed from a situation similar to many: I was the typical skinny, sickly kid who caught every cold, flu, and germ that came down the pike.

“Don Tucker’s mind is incredibly sharp. In fact, it’s the key to his plan to hit the 100 mark fit and healthy!”

www.DonTucker.com

don tucker

Category                  Bodybuilder
Age Range                70 +
Weight                   151 lbs
Occupation               Personal Trainer,
                         Master Trainer
Certification

Services include personal training
I’ve had many role models over the years including John Grimek, Larry Scott, Steve Reeves, Dave Draper and of course, Arnold. My first role model was a friend who stopped by to see me when I was just 16. I was in the hospital having my tonsils removed. He gave me a copy of *Strength and Health* magazine and said I should start working out with him when I got home. *Strength and Health* inspired me so much, that with the first money I ever earned, I went out and bought cream cheese, dates, and nuts (Bob Hoffman, the magazine’s publisher, said they were healthy!)

When I was 18, I read an article written by Bob in *Strength and Health* He wrote, “Get 8 hours rest, eat nutritious food, exercise, and maintain a tranquil mind.” I believed him, and I’ve tried to live by those rules ever since.

Bob hit on a point that’s very easily overlooked in one’s quest for health—the “tranquil mind.” Health is similar to wealth - it’s difficult to enjoy if your mind is in turmoil. I think of health & fitness as a pyramid. The base of the health/fitness pyramid is a tranquil mind. The base supports the two sides—exercise and nutrition. I’m not trying to turn this into a diatribe on esoteric Eastern mysticism—it’s just common sense. It’s difficult to support the sides of the pyramid (or any other aspect of your life) if the base is not stable. In other words, if your head isn’t right.

This brings me to a point that I can’t stress enough: If you have a strong enough “why,” you’ll figure out the “how.” A strong enough “why” provides the drive and self-discipline to follow through with your plan consistently.

What works for me is rather mundane and somewhat less than revelatory. My strategy simply consists of monitoring my self-talk, not finishing a negative thought, (stopping it before it takes root), reinforcing the “why,” reviewing my goals daily, bringing the future into the present by affirming, “I am health,” “I am strength”, and by reading or listening to motivational material daily.

I also maintain a journal—it’s how I “keep score” with my training and my life.

These are the things that help keep me motivated, “keep my head right,” and my thinking on track.

**HOW I train**

My current workout schedule: CHEST: flyes: 3 sets, 8 - 15 reps, dumbbell press: 3 sets, 6-12 reps, hammer bench press: 3 sets 5 - 12 reps, cable crossovers: 3 sets, 8-15 reps, and dips: 3 sets, 15 reps. BACK: Hammer behind neck pulldowns: 3 sets, 8-12 reps, hammer low row: 3 sets, 6-12 reps, cable row: 3 sets, 6-12 reps, and dumbbell shrugs: 3 sets, 6-12 reps. LEGS: leg press: 3 sets 8-15 reps, leg curl: 3 sets, 8-12 reps, and seated calf raises: 3 sets 10-25 reps. DELTS: dumbbell press: 3 sets, 8 - 15 reps, dumbbell lateral raise: 3 sets 8-15 reps, and barbell upright rows: 3 sets, 8-15 reps. ARMS: lying tricep extensions: 3 sets, 8-12 reps, close grip bench press: 3 sets, 4-12 reps, two hand French press: 3 sets, 6-12 reps, preacher bench curl: 3 sets, 5-12 reps, concentration curl: 3 sets, 4-12 reps, and EZ bar curl: 3 sets, 5-12 reps.

This is my present program:

Mon/Chest; Tue/Off;  Wed/Back; Thu/Delts & Legs; Fri/Off; Sat/Arms, Sun/Off. Along with my primary workout, I do abs and forearms 3 to 4 days a week and 30 to 45 minutes of cardio 6 days per week.

**HOW I eat**

A typical day’s menu is: Breakfast: 5-8 egg whites, oatmeal, veggie sausage patty, grapefruit, black coffee and a multiple vitamin/mineral. Morning snack: 1 oz. protein powder, 8oz. low fat milk. Lunch: 6-8 oz. skinless broiled chicken, plain baked yam and a large salad. Afternoon snack: 1 cup low fat cottage cheese and a cup of fruit and a few nuts. Dinner: 4 oz. salmon, 1 cup broccoli, and 1 baked sweet potato. Evening snack: 1 oz. protein powder in 8 oz. of low fat milk.

I drink 8 to 10 glasses of water a day and take a multi-vitamin/mineral, psyllium and essential fatty acids (EFAs) or flaxseed oil.

**Email:** don@DonTucker.com
As a child, I lived on a farm in a remote area. Due to health problems, I was skinny, sickly and had low self-esteem. At the age of ten, I decided that I wasn’t going to live like this and began to do sit-ups and pushups to strengthen my muscles. Due to pernicious anemia and low thyroid, I wanted to sleep a lot, but there was no time for that—it was a busy life with a farm to take care of.

My parents were my role models. My father was the strongest man I ever knew, keeping himself in shape by building fences the old-fashioned way. My mother was very flexible, able to bend over and touch her toes at any time. Somehow I knew this heritage was going to work for me, if I could just find a way. I began running whenever and wherever I could, ate fresh vegetables from the garden and drank fresh goat milk.

Even though I was one of the three shortest girls in our ninth grade class of 150, I won the high jump at our field day competition, much to the surprise of the taller, more athletic-looking girls! This taste...
of success pushed me to try out for the gymnastic team later in college.

**You are always strong enough to overcome any adversity. Just look at me.** You are never too old to begin and it is never too late, no matter what handicaps you start out with. Never accept mediocrity in any part of your life; you deserve better. No matter what happens to you, keep your dream in sight and always dream big. Set short-term and long-term goals and be flexible enough to modify them whenever necessary.

**HOW I train**

I usually work out at the gym five or six days a week, both morning and evening before a contest. I have long this limbs and long thighs, so I find training legs three days per week works well for me. *I wasn't cut out to be a bodybuilder, so I work for definition rather than muscle mass.* I work upper body on alternate days. Some days I concentrate on arms and back, other days on chest and shoulders. In addition to the elliptical trainer as a warm-up, I jog or racewalk twice a day with my dog, who can run faster than me and sets a good pace.

Modifications are beneficial if I’m overstressed or tired, as this is a time when injuries can occur. I approach each workout as something that’s going to make me a better, more capable person and never consider it a chore. This is the key to longevity and the quality life to which I believe everyone is entitled. *This is the natural fountain of youth.*

Twice each week, I teach a Hatha yoga class which helps me to remain flexible and allows me to meditate. I demonstrate the postures as I teach. Since I am also an acrobatic dancer, I practice the balances, cartwheels and headstands which constitute my dance program whenever possible.

I’m not only an athlete but also an actor. My acting class performs at least twice each year at a convalescent home as well as for the public and has won awards. I am also a published, award-winning poetess. I am an artist, painting designs on clothing and designing my own greeting cards. I am a soloist as well as part of an award-winning choir which will be performing at Carnegie Hall. *I have also competed in the Ms. Senior America of California Pageants.* These other interests only enhance my athletic achievements, which include competing at least five times each year in bodybuilding contests.

**HOW I eat**

Due to my early life on the farm and my tendency to tame and name each animal, it became impossible for me to continue to eat meat (who could “eat their friends?”) So I became a vegetarian, with a large salad becoming a mainstay and plenty of fresh or steamed veggies as well. I am not a big dessert person. *I watched a wonderful grandfather battle lifelong diabetes,* to which he lost half a leg, and I have no desire to follow in his footsteps. But I do believe that honey has wonderful properties and eat raw, unheated honey nearly every day on a piece of bread or muffin. My tofu chili is to die for and I include tofu in many dishes. Raw goat yogurt and goat milk as well as raw organic nut butters and soy cheese provide sufficient protein in my diet. I begin each day with a protein drink, which includes fruit juice, berries, Brewers’ yeast, soy protein powder, aloe vera juice and one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar. *I take vitamins and eschew any drugs or medications, instead treating my thyroid disorder with kelp capsules and amino acids.* All prescriptions have side effects and I can’t afford to have them infringing on my lifestyle! If you take any medications, check with a doctor to see what other options you have. ::

Email: bodysbyjackie@earthlink.net

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**Jackie Lee—72, or 52? 72!**

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HOW I think

I am 100 percent in agreement with thinking coming first on the list—it all begins on the inside! My mindset started developing in my youth with the philosophy: always be the best you can be. I didn’t set out to beat my opponent, but simply to perform to the very best of my ability. My athletic career started in high school with the shot put and I soon became the best shot-putter in Northern California.

You must put forth effort. You either go forward or backward. I use this expression: “Go hard or go home!” I do this not only on a personal level, but socially, in business and in the gym. You get more reward out of life this way.

I believe in substituting additions—positive for negative. Nature abhors a vacuum. For example, when I owned a series of hospitals, I installed an

Emulate those who succeed. Who knows more about losing fat and gaining muscle than doctors or clinics? Bodybuilders!”

pax beale

Category: Bodybuilder
Age Range: 70 +
Weight: 225 lbs
Occupation: Entrepreneur, Fitness Icon, US Patent Holder, Author

Services include motivational website, heart seminars, public speaking, books, Body for the Ages Health Center

Pax’s story—and physique—defy the odds. As an ex-heart cripple, with 25% max heart efficiency, an enlarged heart and ischemic (dead) tissue, Pax reversed his heart disease and became a champion!

www.BodyfortheAges.com
alcohol recovery program and I built a running trail around the hospital. Every alcoholic ran EVERY DAY! Endorphins would flow and the addictions would decrease. In bodybuilding, it’s training to failure that increases those endorphins.

There are two ingredients to my physical motivation: intensity/recovery and value. Practice being intense, then purposefully go into a relaxed recovery phase. Most Type A’s are intense all the time and end up with heart problems. People need balance. You can be super intense, but then a programmed recovery must follow. I’m not into meditation or yoga, but they are crucial for many, many people. I recover naturally by getting my mind to relax as well as my body. Having a routine is another way I recover. I plan everything ahead of time; it eases stress when it comes to scheduling.

The other ingredient is value. Without a great value attached to your goals, you’ll never succeed. You must attribute a huge value to what you’re doing. It must mean something to the core of your being.

**HOW I train**

I have many commitments. I’m **one of the busiest guys you’ll ever meet**. My schedule is always much larger than what I can do. If I can make time to train, anyone can.

I train each muscle once every five days. If I want to emphasize a certain muscle, I’ll hit it twice in a week. I hit the muscle groups at different angles as well. For example, I’ll change foot positions and leg angles for more complete lower body development.

**I train by the clock. I believe in training faster rather than adding more sets.** I do 10-12 sets for smaller muscles, 16 sets for larger muscles. If I do 16 sets, I divide them into 4 different exercises and I’ll rest only 30 seconds between each of the 4 sets. I do 8-12 reps per set. Six reps were not enough for me—it increased my strength, but didn’t work for my bodybuilding goals.

**It only takes about 16 minutes of actual exercise to get a major body part done.** My workouts of 28 sets take less than 30-40 minutes total. Sometimes I even workout seven days a week! (God gave me the ability to go to the max!) I’ve run over 30 marathons, so 20-30 minutes of cardio comes easy to me. At our Body for the Ages Health Center in San Francisco (**BodyfortheAges.com**), we create a custom anaerobic weight program for the heart, just like prescribing a drug. This is cutting edge, it saved my life, and it helped me become a national bodybuilding champion—**and Mr. USA!**

**HOW I eat**

First, I think Atkins is crazy. However, what he says does have a thread of validity to it. He should be saying, “Don’t eat so many simple carbs, and if you don’t get results, then don’t eat so many starches.” **If you want to decrease carbs, increase protein, not fat—like in my CardioSoy or Human Muscle Protein!** The name of the game is to emulate those who have succeeded. Who knows more about losing fat and gaining muscle than doctors or clinics? **Bodybuilders!** Despite what the mainstream may say, I **know** what works because I live it. I don’t care if you never went to college or can’t speak English, if someone is a bodybuilder who works hard at being lean, then listen. Jack LaLanne was the person I emulated. He was a bodybuilder long before bodybuilding was “cool.”

My diet is low in fat. I do believe in controlling insulin. You can eat more carbs if you meter them in with small, frequent meals throughout the day. This keeps insulin low. I don’t use a gram scale or look at my fist for portions. I don’t believe in off-days either. You work at it every day. You may take a meal off here or there, but don’t plan for it. I never add fat to the diet, period. You have to have some fat, but you can get that in chicken and oatmeal. You don’t have to worry about adding it!

**I started bodybuilding in my 50s.** I ate 5 times per day. Each meal had protein. These were not “banquets,” they were small meals. At 65, my metabolism changed. At 75, I found that I had to eat less to stay as lean, so I eat only three times per day now—low calories with high protein, medium carbs and low fat. I never drank very much, but after my heart surgery I decided that I would drink a bit of red wine every day for heart health.

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I have always cherished the notion that my abiding interest in exercise is tightly wed to my idiosyncratic thought patterns. Call that being “weird”, if you will! These thought patterns led me to develop my own system and theories of exercise, to which I remain an eager guinea pig to this very day.

Several aspects of my life keep me motivated. One of the primary sources of inspiration for me is simply the results—in myself and in others. I love hearing about how men and women have benefited from my particular methods, all of which pushes me forward.

I recently did a workout just a few days after minor surgery. I told the doc that I wanted to “test his stitches”—I’m that committed to it! Once you’re hooked, you’re hooked. I intend to exercise until the day I die, and very few things distract me from my workout sessions. However, I don’t sweat it if I miss one of my daily sessions. I usually perform multiple, short workouts, up to 6 times per...
day, for about 10 minutes. I just look at it as part of my life, and I know I’ll make it up later. You cannot control life’s circumstances, but you can remain committed to making exercise a regular part of your daily routine.

It seems once you’ve declared yourself a lifetime member of the exerciser clan, you can vary things to your heart’s content without risking a disconnect from exercise’s various positive addictions. The positive addiction of exercise, especially when its been personal-ized to match your needs, is a huge part of my strategy for lifelong fitness.

HOW I train

Seems I’ve always pushed for a pattern that may resemble multitasking—a means of making more happen during any given moment. Heavyhands, one of my systems aimed at something resembling total fitness, was conceived to facilitate the simultaneous processing of many valuable exercise options. Strength, muscle and cardiac endurance, flexibility, and agility are all called-on, and each improved.

I consider strength and endurance the most spectacular of these couplings. Fitness seekers have tended to pursue strength and cardio separately. The movements and equipment for each is decidedly different. However, the whole-body choreographies of Heavyhands training make such isolations unnecessary. I’ve dubbed this strategy Longstrength; it improves multiple fitness factors simultaneously—especially strength and endurance.

A quarter of a century ago, after my year-long experience with running, I decided to try incorporating this concept of whole-body Longstrength into my workouts. The result—my long-stubborn resting heart rate was cut in half, and I’ve maintained my muscle and fitness level now into my 80s!

My research at the University of Pittsburgh discovered a new sort of fitness choreography that made it useful to include many things at once—large muscle groups, a variety of fitness factors; lots of inventive freedom and motor skills. The simultaneity and “free-wheeling” movements didn’t jeopardize gains. In fact, just the opposite!

Armed with this principle, I can do many things almost to the point that every day’s workout is kind of a new adventure. I can pick and chose between a long format, which might go as long as 90 minutes or more. Or, I can do 6 or more 10-minute 4-limb-plus-trunk frolics. This covers all of the things I want exercise to do for me—except convert me to a behemoth, which never was in the cards anyway. It grants me aerobic strength and flexibility, physique control, good cardio, movement adventure and not least, skill enhancement.

My total weekly exercise time is anything I want it to be—it’s literally a matter of whim. For years I kept monitoring of my radial pulses dutifully to see if these weekly changes in exercise volume altered my cardiac output. I was gratified to learn that my exercise minimums proved more than enough to keep my training gains stable. The extra work, I presume, went mostly to caloric needs.

HOW I eat

I view exercise as the most important element in my overall health and fitness crusade. Yes, nutrition is an important issue, and must in some way help determine the specific impact of the exercise we choose. I suppose my reluctance to place greater emphasis on diet could be a laziness of the spirit, or perhaps the fact that I have never been grossly overweight. That leaves me somewhat more blasé than I should be when it comes to dietary matters. Good scientific literature and reading product labels keep me sufficiently informed about proteins, saturated fats, my choice of carbohydrates, etc. I have a large appetite for a little guy. I eat well, but I chose to leave nutritional concerns in the hands of those who it best serves. Exercise remains my favorite single means of controlling my energy balance.

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Section 3

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Begin And Believe

Chapter 10
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Chapter 17
Final Thoughts—
The Excellence Mindset
I’m Tom Venuto, author of *Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle*, and proud co-author of *Fit Over 40*. Jon has laid some groundwork by telling you his amazing story of recovering his life with the power of role modeling, nutrition, and exercise. You’ve also seen over fifty examples of people who live the fitness lifestyle at any age. I’d like to finish off these last chapters with one overriding theme—*you can do the very same thing*.

It all starts with the mind, as Jon discussed in “Mind Matters.” Before you can make a move in any direction, you must *believe in the outcome*. We’ve called this “The Law of Certainty,” and *belief* is at the very heart of it all.

Over the past sixteen years, I have been involved in the health and fitness industry as a trainer, health club manager, personal coach, writer, and publisher. I have heard the same doubtful, disbelieving, desperate cries for help thousands of times. Do these questions ring a bell?

“I’m 40 and overweight. Is this what I have to look forward to—more of the same?”

“I’m in menopause and my hormones are a mess. Is there anything I can do?”

“I’m 67 and my body is really going downhill—is there any hope for me?”

This book was written to *prove* to you that beyond a doubt there is hope.

Frailty and disease need not be a part of the normal aging process. *Normal* aging and *pathological* aging are not the same thing. Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and osteoporosis should not be “expected.” They are *aberrations*—primarily the result of inactivity and poor lifestyle choices. They are almost always preventable. That’s right—several of our top killers, including the number one of all,
heart disease, are preventable conditions. This involves nutrition and exercise of course, but you must first believe it’s possible. Here’s some compelling research to help you do just that.

Countless studies have proven that you can become fit at any age, and that it’s never too late to start. Dr. William Evans of Tufts University has conducted seminal strength training research on nursing home residents over seventy years old. In one 1990 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Evans and associates studied frail adults with an average age of 90. They discovered that eight weeks of strength training resulted in average muscle strength gains of 174% with increases in muscle girth of nearly 10%. In his book, Biomarkers: The 10 Keys To Prolonging Vitality, Evans declares that the muscles of older people are just as responsive to weight training as those of younger people. He also points out that his findings were not deviations—they were the norm.

In a study by Devries published the Journal of Gerontology, 112 males, age 51 to 87 were recruited from a retirement community in Los Angeles and put on a training regimen three days per week that included running or walking, static stretching and calisthenic or body weight resistance exercises. The researchers concluded that older men can respond to physical training and that the response does not depend on their having trained vigorously in their youth. Also, a 2001 study published in the Journal of Circulation revealed how six months of endurance training led to a 100% percent reversal of age-related declines in aerobic power in middle-aged men who had previously been sedentary. Subjects improved their cardiovascular fitness even after three decades of inactivity.

So why do we, as a society, believe that age is so debilitating? Hypnosis.

**The Hypnosis of Social Conditioning**

We are programmed from a very early age to expect our bodies to wear out and break down as time passes by. You grow up watching other people become old and unable to do the things they used to. You develop a mental picture of what “grandma” and “grandpa” should look like. Consequently, your expectation becomes your reality. This phenomenon has often been referred to as the hypnosis of social conditioning.

Since countless studies have not changed the minds of most Americans, something more than scientific proof is needed for a paradigm shift to occur. This is one of the missions of *Fit Over 40*, and the strategies of role modeling we discuss. Boring studies mean little to most people, but seeing a great grandfather with the body and energy of a 30-year-old? Well, that’s a different story!
If you feel hopeless and full of doubt, you have been role modeling the wrong people. The minority, those who enjoy health, fitness and energy into their senior years, have been doing specific things that the unhealthy masses have not. If you want to enjoy the same benefits, then you must stop looking at people who are sick, unhealthy and out of shape and start to role model the exact opposite!

The role models in this book represent “the opposite.” Due to society’s cynicism, you may tend to dismiss their achievements and consider them rare exceptions. You may attribute something special to them—perhaps they inherited superior genes, or maybe they aren’t as busy as the ‘rest of us.’ Health and longevity are partly genetic, but genetics are not the governing factor. Beyond the initial throw of the “genetic dice,” health and longevity have absolutely nothing to do with luck. We live in a universe governed by cause and effect, not by random chance. We also have the same 24-hour watch that everyone else on the planet has. Time is not something we make—it’s something we chose to manage.

Nearly a century ago, Thomas Edison predicted that the future of health care would radically change. Identification and treatment of causes would be paramount, not the administration of drugs that only treat effects. “The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease,” wrote Edison. Today, the causes of health and fitness are no longer a mystery. In fact, they are practiced by our Fit Over 40 role models and many others just like them. The effects are right there for the world to see, and because the causes are known, the effects can be duplicated.

Health at any age is the birthright of every human being. However, you must first grasp the timeless truth that thoughts and beliefs are causes—just as diet and exercise are causes. You must choose the right role models and use their examples to inspire you to doubt your limits and alter your old thoughts, beliefs and behaviors.

Whose example have you been following?

**Believe to 100?**

Dr. Walter Bortz wrote a simple but brilliant book about living a long and healthy life called *D.A.R.E. To Be 100*. Bortz’s book outlined a plan containing 99 steps to the century mark. His list included advice in four major categories, Diet, Attitude, Renewal, and Exercise, making up the D.A.R.E. acronym. Out of all 99 tips to live a long and healthy life, Bortz said, “I would nominate ‘Believe in 100’ as the most important. To make 100, you must first believe. Do that, and the rest follows.”
Among longevity researchers, there is almost unanimous agreement that thoughts, attitudes and beliefs are the key to healthy aging. In the book *Defy Aging*, Michael Brickey, PhD., says, “The primary distinguishing factor for centenarians is right between their ears. If you are physically active, eat reasonably, and are not terribly overweight, mental factors are far more important to longevity than finding the perfect pill, diet, or workout.”

I find it disappointing that most books on anti-aging contain endless chapters about expensive drug therapies and supplements and only a passing mention of exercise, nutrition and belief. In our quick-fix society, the search for a magic pill or potion to enhance and prolong life seems to have captured all the glory.

**Belief and Medicine**

It’s been said, “Belief creates biology.” Your beliefs are so powerfully and inseparably intertwined with your body that they can actually create physiological changes, as the placebo effect so clearly demonstrates. All new drugs are tested against placebos, and in a large percentage of cases, the placebo works as well as the drug.

In an interview with motivational guru Anthony Robbins, Norman Cousins, author of *Anatomy of an Illness*, described an experiment where half the subjects took a blue “super tranquilizer” and the other half took a red “super stimulant”…or so they were told. The researchers actually switched the pills so the group who thought they were taking stimulants was taking tranquilizers and vice-versa. Fifty percent of the subjects in each group reported effects consistent with their beliefs and expectations about the type of pill they were taking. Cousins concluded, “The mind is more powerful than medicine. Our bodies are our own apothecaries, and we convert our expectations into chemical reality.”

In *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, motivational author Deepak Chopra described a similar account of the power of placebo:

> All the side effects of chemotherapy, including hair loss and nausea, can be induced by giving cancer patients a sugar pill while assuring them that it is a powerful anticancer drug. There have also been instances where injections of sterile saline solution have actually led to remissions of advanced malignancy. Since the same inert pill can lead to such totally different responses, we must conclude that the body is capable of producing any biochemical response once the mind has been given the appropriate suggestion. The pill itself is meaningless; the power that activates the placebo effect is the power of suggestion.
There are hundreds of stories about the power of belief as it relates to physiology. A man froze to death in a refrigerated boxcar that wasn't even turned on. A woman with multiple personality disorder had her blood chemistry change to that of a diabetic when she adopted the personality of a diabetic. During a clinic on hypnosis, an ice cube burned a man after being told (under hypnosis) it was a red-hot poker. Students in a school in Washington accidentally had their I.Q. scores mixed up with locker numbers—and each student's grades matched their belief that their locker number was in fact their I.Q.

I believe that in the not too-distant future, researchers will begin to identify the exact mechanisms responsible for the incredible phenomena of belief and placebo. Until then, it is up to each of us to understand that the possibility exists for us to “bypass the deception of the sugar pill” and make our own personal explorations of intentionally tapping into this amazing power.

Belief Defined
What exactly is a belief? Beliefs are not facts, reality or even truths—they are value judgments or interpretations of the facts as you see them through your filters of experience. A belief is a form of subconscious programming that governs your behavior. You will fit everything you see and hear into your personal model of the world. Beliefs are the meaning you attach to things, events, people, and experiences. Beliefs about aging are particularly pervasive because they have been culturally programmed into every fiber of our being since early childhood, and these beliefs can actually affect the physical cells in our bodies.

Once you’ve accepted certain beliefs about aging on a subconscious level, your body will respond to and act on them. You will also defend them, right or wrong. You will look for information to support disempowering beliefs, while rejecting information that might help you change your current condition. You must make a conscious decision to break out of this motionless state. That’s why the first step in the process of change is to take an inventory of your current beliefs and begin to recognize and change any that are limiting you. This takes some deep introspection and analysis, because the beliefs that hold us back the most are usually the ones that we are least aware of on a conscious level.

The challenge then becomes to believe it before you see it. This is why we chose to spotlight examples of real people who have already achieved success rather than write an entire book that is merely one person’s opinion. When you see with your own eyes that many other people your age have done it, some despite seemingly insurmountable odds, then your excuses are shown the exit sign. You begin to believe that you can do it, too. One example is often all it takes to shatter a self-limiting belief.
Lifespan versus Health Span

Sure, there are changes due to aging that are real, measurable, and significant. But when contrasted with the changes due to disuse, they are unimportant to overall function. As a long-distance runner, I identify easily that I am slower than thirty years ago. But turn me loose against any unfit 30-year-old, and I will leave him or her panting in my wake. Fitness compensates, even overcompensates, for age losses.

— Dr. Walter Bortz

Belief and positive expectancy are important for a long and healthy life, but realistic expectations are important as well. Although life expectancies are increasing, and most aging experts believe true human lifespan is as high as 150, we will all feel the effects of the passing years. The question is how many of your years will be healthy, active and productive? This time period is known as your “health span,” and it is separate and distinct from your life span. Life span is how long you live. Health span is how long you live with health, fitness and the ability to do what you want to do without limitation or restriction.

You can increase your life span and your health span with the proper approach towards eating, training and thinking. You are the food you eat, the exercise you get and the thoughts you think. You can’t separate these three components. A perfect diet and training program with a negative, fearful, and hopeless mind will always cause failure and self-sabotage. A positive, expectant, cheerful mind will get you nowhere if you spend your days parked in a recliner eating fast food. Exercise, nutrition and mental attitude form a powerful triad, arguably even more important than heredity.

Heredity, Belief and Lifestyle

For decades, gerontologists and anti-aging researchers have been studying the factors responsible for the dramatic differences in the rate of aging experienced among various individuals. What they’ve discovered is that your lifestyle choices have a much greater impact than most people previously believed.

Cellular biologist Leonard Hayflick was one of the first to propose that aging is genetic and that there is an upper limit to cell longevity programmed into our DNA’s memory. However, the very same research also revealed that aging is not 100% genetic. Humans do not live in the confines of a test tube. We are complex spiritual and physical beings influenced by thinking, emotions, environment, and lifestyle.
Today, many scientists agree that the rate and speed you experience aging depends approximately 30% on genetic factors which are out of your control, leaving 70%—all of which you can manage by lifestyle and environmental factors! This is incredibly empowering to all who will accept it as fact. Armed with this knowledge and the renewed optimism that it brings, you can begin to realize that slowing down the aging process begins the instant you make a decision to change your lifestyle.

The common denominator among our role models who were once unhealthy or out of shape is that they all reached an emotional turning point. They had an epiphany or realization that they had to change, often brought on by a life or death situation or by hitting rock bottom. That was a moment of decision. They said, “That’s it—I’m not living like this another minute!” The emotion was so strong that the change was virtually instantaneous.

Reading and re-reading the success stories in this book is a perfect way to inspire and motivate you to make a decision to change without having to go through the hardships that so many of these people did.

They were able to take full advantage of that 70%—and so can you. ::
Like wine, you should be able to improve with age. Nothing in medical science says the body falls apart after 40.

Jack LaLanne
Before we cover fitness concerns of the post-40 trainer, let’s take a closer look at some of the effects that commonly occur with age. Unless you take action to prevent it, the effects of aging on your muscular, skeletal, cardiovascular and hormonal markers of biological age (also known as biomarkers) may include the following:

- Lean body mass decreases
- Muscular strength decreases
- Fast twitch muscle fiber decreases
- Basal metabolic rate decreases
- Body fat percentage increases
- Maximal oxygen uptake (aerobic capacity) decreases
- Glucose (blood sugar) tolerance decreases
- Total cholesterol & total HDL ratio increases
- Resting & exercise blood pressure increases
- Bone mass (Bone density) decreases
- Body temperature regulation decreases
- Vital capacity decreases
- Reaction time increases
- Flexibility decreases
- Insulin sensitivity decreases
- Recovery time increases
- Maximal heart rate decreases
- Maximum cardiac output decreases

Fortunately, how soon and how fast these declines take place varies enormously from person to person. Even better is the fact that virtually all of these biomarkers can actually be reversed, no matter your present age.
The most significant of the physiological declines that occur with aging is the loss of lean body mass. It’s very important that this is recognized as vital. Muscle loss causes a cascade effect, which in turn affects many other systems. For example, as lean body mass decreases, your metabolic rate decreases, which reduces energy needs and contributes to increases in body fat. The increase in body fat leads to further deterioration and development of obesity-related diseases. This progressive muscle loss with age is so insidious that it has been given a name: sarcopenia.

People who don’t maintain their lean body mass through strength training will lose up to 40% of their muscle mass by age 65. The average inactive person loses as much as five pounds of muscle every decade after age twenty if they don’t exercise. For every pound of muscle you lose, you burn anywhere from ten to fifty calories less each day. Just a decrease in caloric expenditure of thirty calories a day will increase your body fat by over three pounds per year. That’s 32 pounds in ten years—every ten years!

Muscle loss also causes strength loss. By age 65, people who haven’t exercised regularly can show a decrease in muscular strength of as much as 80%. According to Dr. Patrick O’Shea, professor emeritus of exercise and sports science at Oregon State University, 28% of men and 66% of women over age 75 cannot lift an object heavier than fifteen pounds. Imagine not being able to lift a small child, carry your suitcase, or take out a full garbage can!

This is pathological rather than normal aging. Muscle loss is not caused by aging—aging is caused by muscle loss, and muscle loss is caused by inactivity. Belief is crucial—if you simply assume this is normal, then that’s how you and the world around you will act toward it. A change of lifestyle and beliefs are necessary. For example, strength training with weights or other forms of progressive resistance can prevent these losses in muscle mass. Unfortunately, many people over forty have a belief that weight training is dangerous and inappropriate for them and they should simply “act their age.” That’s the old belief system and social conditioning talking. Nearly all the physiological changes that occur with aging can happen within a matter of days—even in young people—if they are forced to be sedentary or stay in bed.

What Happens if I Do Nothing?
In the 1960’s, Swedish physiologist Bengt Saltin studied a group of young men who were required to stay in bed twenty-four hours a day for three weeks. At the end of the study, regardless of the subject’s previous condition, they suffered a decrease in aerobic capacity equal to twenty years of aging! Dr. Bortz calls aging “The Disuse Syndrome.” I have never heard of a better definition.
It’s a similar story with bone loss. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, ten million Americans have osteoporosis, and 44 million are at high risk of developing the disease. Four out of five victims are women and 90% of women over age 75 are affected. An additional 34 million people over age fifty (55% of adults) have low bone mass, a condition called ostopenia. There are 250,000 hip fractures per year in America. One out of three women and one out of six men will suffer a hip fracture by age 80.

Despite these grim statistics, ostopenia and osteoporosis should not be seen as a normal part of aging. Bone loss parallels muscle loss—it is primarily a disease of disuse. Drinking milk and taking calcium supplements is not enough. Bones not challenged to bear weight will become soft and brittle. If you are inactive, your bone mineral density will gradually begin to decline at around age 35 and this decline will accelerate after you turn fifty.

Most people’s aerobic fitness decreases with age. Exercise scientists tell us that unless you do something about it, you can expect your aerobic capacity at 65 to be as much as 40% lower than in young adulthood. You will experience lower cardiac output, lower maximum oxygen consumption, lower maximum heart rate, reduced oxidative capacity of the muscles, diminished capillary density, and a reduction in heart size.

You begin to lose aerobic capacity within just days after you stop exercising. With less than two weeks of inactivity, your cardiac output, blood volume and maximum oxygen consumption all drop by 15%. Your heart and lungs will slowly deteriorate to the point where walking up a single flight of stairs will leave you breathless and gasping for air. Again, exercise, not age, is the key factor.

**From Thinking to Action**

Now you know the truth about normal versus pathological aging, you’re already beginning to change your beliefs. You understand that most of the effects you used think were due to normal aging are actually brought on by poor lifestyle and inactivity. You also know that you can prevent muscle loss and all of the degenerative diseases that result from it by starting a program of strength training and supporting it with good nutrition. The only question now is one of specifics and strategy for past-40 training.

First, don’t panic and don’t worry. As scientific studies and our real world examples have proven, it’s never too late. Both men and women can achieve tremendous improvement at any age. However, if you’re over 40 and you’ve been leading a sedentary, undisciplined life, there are some things you need to do differently. Caution, common sense and smart training are necessary. If over-enthusi-
asm or over-training result in injury, then you’re no better off than before you started. On the other hand, I’d like to advise you not to set limits on yourself. Remember, belief is a powerful force.

The question, “What should I do differently after forty?” is one that’s frequently asked. It’s also one of the primary reasons this book was created. However, it can be a loaded question. Contained within it is the presupposition that after age forty (or whatever arbitrary number you choose) your physiology is necessarily different. You may believe you’re far less responsive than someone younger, and that calls for a completely different approach. This is not necessarily the case—although strategy past 40 becomes much more essential. You’re wiser, so you better train wisely!

According to the American College of Sports Medicine’s (ACSM) manual, Guidelines For Exercise Testing and Prescription, “Physiological aging does not occur uniformly across the population; therefore, it’s not wise to define “elderly” by any specific chronological age or set of ages. While the aging process is inevitable, both the pace and potential reversibility of this process is amenable to intervention.”

I’ve seen people who were horribly unhealthy, unfit, overweight and prematurely aged at 36. I’ve seen others healthy, fit, lean and youthful at 76. You can’t define “old” with a specific number because there can be such a huge difference between chronological and biological age. Most experts agree that a 15-20 year decrease in biological age is achievable with simple exercise and lifestyle changes. Some more progressive thinkers believe you can turn back the aging clock even further! You must not limit yourself by a chronological number. What if you had amnesia and you didn’t know how old you were?

How to personalize a fitness program is more dependent on your goals and your current level of fitness (biological age) than your chronological age. If you’ve received your doctor’s clearance to start exercising, then your training and nutrition will be almost the same as it would for any other beginner of any age.

People who have been working out their entire lives have a head start, but that doesn’t mean you can’t become fit as a late bloomer. Just look at Fit Over 40 role model Kelly Nelson—she didn’t pick up a weight until she was in her 50s! Now at 77, she has a body that any woman of any age would envy.

**Ten Tips for Starting After Forty**

There are ten steps you must take to keep an exercise program healthy and safe after forty. These things are not unimportant for a 20-year-old; they’re simply
more important as you get older. Younger people often appear to get away without emphasizing stretching, warm up and recovery time, but the effects accrue, unnoticed, and eventually reach critical mass. As you get older, you must pay attention to things that younger people “blow off.”

1: Get Medical Clearance

Many health, medical and exercise organizations, such as the ACSM, have detailed risk stratification and pre-exercise screening guidelines. These include such things as whether you should get a physician’s clearance or take a graded exercise test before starting an exercise program. You can contact the ACSM and refer to their guidelines if you’d like, but I simply suggest that you receive medical clearance before making any changes to your diet or starting to exercise. Your doctor, after giving you a complete physical and checking your blood work, can then advise you on any need for further testing and the intensity of exercise you can perform.

What if your doctor tells you that you have a medical or orthopedic problem? What if you believe that you’re so out of shape, you can’t do anything? Try reframing what your situation means. A health problem or orthopedic condition usually means get clearance from your doctor, carefully evaluate your situation, customize your program, start slowly, and go at your own pace. The odds are actually very high that the more out of shape you are, the more likely your doctor will tell you to get your butt in the gym!

Fitness is not an all-or-none proposition. This all-or-none belief causes many people a lot of trouble. One slip on their diet and they figure, “Well I blew it, that didn’t work. I might as well quit.” Or they say, “I have a bad knee, so I can’t exercise at all.” Well, maybe you can’t squat heavy or do wind sprints, but what stops you from altering your diet, walking, doing upper body work, or abdominal training? Most people focus too much on the problem. Shift your focus to what you can do, not what you can’t.

2: Evaluate your Fitness Age and Biological Age

A 50-year-old could easily have the muscular, skeletal, cardiorespiratory and hormonal characteristics of a 30-year-old, and vice versa. Because of this difference between biological and chronological age, it’s most important to know where you are biologically speaking.

Biological age can easily be assessed through testing. Some of these tests can only be conducted in a clinical setting, while a personal trainer can perform others. You can even do a few by yourself in the privacy of your own home. Your
personal trainer can test your body composition (body fat and lean body mass),
local muscular endurance, flexibility and cardiorespiratory fitness. He or she can
assess your posture and do a variety of tests to locate imbalances or weaknesses
that might lead to future injuries or dysfunctions.

When it comes to getting assessments performed, a good personal trainer is
worth his or her weight in gold. Even if you don’t want to work with a trainer on
an ongoing basis, getting your initial evaluations from an experienced trainer is a
very good idea. There is no price on better health and quality of life. Don’t mess
around. Get a trainer!

Here’s what to expect from your physician and a trainer’s evaluation:

**General physical**
Basic physical exam
Blood pressure
Maximal aerobic exercise test or Balke Stress Test (upon physician’s approval)
Bone density (on physician’s recommendation)

**Blood tests recommended**
Fasting insulin
Fasting glucose
Glucose tolerance
Thyroid (Free T3/T4, TSH)
Free and total testosterone
Cortisol (for adrenal function)
HDL/LDL/total cholesterol (especially LDL Density—as your doctor about this
test)
Triglycerides
Fibrinogen (high levels of fibrinogen has been linked to cardiovascular disease)
Homocysteine (elevated Homocysteine is thought to cause narrowing of the
arteries)
LP(a) (an inflammatory marker now used as a ‘red flag’ for cardiovascular disease)
HsCRP (another inflammatory marker for cardiovascular disease)
*Other tests may be suggested upon examination.*

**Fitness tests** (can be given by a personal trainer):
Body composition tests (skinfold caliper, impedance, underwater weighing, etc.)
Strength test (one rep max tests, multi repetition tests, grippers)
Local muscular endurance test (push ups or sit ups/curl ups)
Flexibility tests (sit and reach, etc.)
Postural tests
Submaximal aerobic fitness tests
In your own home

Weight

Body fat (skinfold tests such as Acc-measure, impedance analysis body fat scale)

Waist measurement (There is a positive correlation between waist circumference and abdominal body fat. Waist measurement greater than 40 inches (102 cm) in men and 35 inches (88 cm) in women is a positive risk factor for type II diabetes, dyslipidemia, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Ideally, your waist should be less than half your height in inches.)

3: Seek Personal Improvement above all Else

Not everyone will achieve the development of someone who has been training and eating well their entire lives (although it can be done, as you can see from the stories in this book). That should never be the issue, even when role modeling. Compete with yourself for constant improvement—that is a goal that anyone can achieve at any age. Become better than the you of yesterday. As basketball coaching great John Wooden used to say, “Success isn’t beating someone else. Success is the self-satisfaction that comes from knowing you did the best you could with what you have.”

4: Warm-Up Thoroughly

A thorough warm-up should be part of every exercise program at any age. Many older athletes and body builders are only now beginning to suffer from joint pain and other ill effects from twenty years of overtraining, sloppy form, and insufficient warm-ups.

Some of the numerous benefits of warming up include:

— A gradual transition from a resting metabolic state to a working metabolic state (gradually increase heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and neural arousal)
— Improvement in workout performance due to nervous system preparation
— Opening of the capillaries to stimulate blood flow to the muscles
— A decreased likelihood of injury due to higher body temperature and blood saturation in the muscles
— Becoming mentally prepared for your workout
— Raising body temperature, allowing your muscles to contract more forcefully and relax more quickly, enhancing speed and strength during exercise
— Increase in joint flexibility and range of motion
— Lower muscle, tendon and ligament viscosity
— Increase in synovial fluid in the joints (less inflammation)
There are two kinds of warm-ups—*general* and *specific*. The general warm-up usually consists of 5-10 minutes of aerobic activity such as cycling or walking in order to raise overall body temperature. A specific warm-up involves the muscle groups or movements patterns that you’ll be targeting during your workout.

The most common specific warm-up prior to weight training is to perform one or more light sets before jumping up to your regular workout poundage. Specific warm-up becomes more important as you get stronger. The heavier the weights you’ll be using during your workout, the more warm-up sets you need prior to your heavy sets. One to two light warm-up sets are typical, but if you’re going heavy, then you may need as many as three or four before your heavy work begins. The popular “pyramid” method of adding weight and decreasing reps with each set provides a built-in warm-up before progressing to the heaviest sets.

5: **Emphasize Flexibility and Full Range of Motion**

Stretching and warming up are not one in the same. Warm-ups should always come before stretching. A warm muscle is more pliable and elastic, allowing you to stretch more safely and effectively. Stretching can be done after a general warm-up before strength training, or it can be done after strength training or even in between sets of weight lifting exercises. It’s smart to stretch your whole body, but be sure to emphasize the areas that are the tightest. Flexibility is so important that it is one of the five pillars of the *Fit Over 40* Program, covered in the upcoming chapters.

6: **Emphasize Form and Technique**

Every young lifter wants to find out “how much can I bench press.” We veterans in the lifting game trained this way when we were younger—all-out, sometimes at every workout. That is not smart training—it’s *ego training*. Progression in your training is important, as is intensity. You have to get out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself, and you do have to work hard. However, trying to increase your weights at the expense of good form, or training with very heavy weights all the time without using periodization (cycles of light to moderate work between the heavy work) is a recipe for disaster for the over 40-trainee.

Although there are many over-40 powerlifters whose sole priority is to constantly lift more weight, you are not likely to find many of them who haven’t struggled with serious injuries. The body simply cannot take non-stop pounding year after year. Long-term cumulative stress sneaks up on you, and often hits you suddenly. As you get older, you must become a form fanatic and let the amount of weight take a back seat.
Being a form fanatic means:
— Perform slow, controlled deliberate repetitions
— Avoid bouncing, heaving, swinging or ballistic movements
— Emphasize the eccentric portion of the rep (lower the weight slowly)
— Concentrate and feel the muscle you are working
— Increase weight as you get stronger, but only to the degree to which you can maintain good form
— Check your ego at the door

7: Pay Special Attention to Recovery
Out of all the training variables, frequency and recovery time differ the most from person to person. Some people can tolerate five or six strength training workouts per week and recover fully, while others fare better with as few as two or three. One thing we know for sure is that demand for recovery time increases with age. Research at the National Institute on Aging has clearly demonstrated that older cells repair themselves much less efficiently than younger ones. Weight training literally tears down muscle tissue at the cellular level. If you fail to allow sufficient recovery time, you continue to cause muscle damage that your body cannot repair. The result is muscle loss, injury, and weak immunity.

Although you may find the occasional senior athlete or bodybuilder who does intense exercise or resistance training almost every day, it tends to be rare. You’re a lot more likely to find healthy, pain-free athletes, bodybuilders and fitness enthusiasts who train less often because they instinctively understand their body’s unique recovery needs.

8: Start Slowly, Build up Gradually
Many seniors have a belief that strength training or vigorous aerobic exercise is dangerous or inappropriate at their age. Even a casual skimming through the profiles in this book will prove that this is a completely false and self-limiting idea. In fact, the exact opposite is true. No matter what kind of shape you’re in now, remaining sedentary can only make your condition worse. However, do not push yourself into vigorous exercise unless you are healthy and prepared for it. Start gently and slowly, but START!

To reach the level of development necessary for bodybuilding or fitness competition may require much more vigorous and intense training, but to improve your health and lose weight does not require Herculean effort. Make a point to ask your role model(s) how they started. Take into account where you are now, and build up slowly and safely.
9: Have Fun!
Your workouts have to be enjoyable in order for you to sustain them for life. One reason that many people start training but ultimately quit is because they're holding two conflicting beliefs about exercise. One belief is that they should exercise to stay healthy and have the type of body they want. The other belief tells them that working out means pain, discipline, sacrifice, bland food, hours in the gym and no social life. Do you see how this could lead to self-sabotaging behaviors?

To succeed long term, you must believe that fitness can be fun, enjoyable and social. Fitness can even become a positive addiction. When you’re out of shape and you first begin an exercise program, it can seem like a chore. If you’re not good at something, you tend not to enjoy it. However, most things are difficult at first, and you must persist during this initial period when you’ve stepped out of your old comfort zone. If you persist, you’ll see that the better you get at it, the more fun it becomes.

Include the essentials, but also pick exercises you enjoy. Some of our role models enjoy getting outdoors and jogging, hiking or cycling. Others like yoga or kickboxing. Some, like Dr. Len Schwartz, invented their own exercise system—Heavyhands®. There’s always a way to enjoy working out if you’re committed.

10: Define what Fitness Means to You
Many of the success stories in *Fit Over 40* show transformations from one extreme to the other. Obstacles vary—from obesity, heart surgery, alcoholism, drug addiction, and even being paralyzed. Others did not have to overcome major hurdles, but they took their physiques all the way to the pinnacle of conditioning. Some people suggested that these extremely muscular role models would be intimidating to the average *Fit Over 40* reader. However, we decided to include as wide a range of examples as possible. This type of diversity shows the magnitude of condition and transformation that is possible at any age and for a variety of different fitness goals. The type of transformation you want is completely up to you.

Most people don’t want to be bodybuilders—they just want to be lean, toned and healthy. You don’t have to try to duplicate any of the success stories highlighted in this book. You can be inspired by all of them, but pursue what you really want. Figure out what’s most important to you and then go for it. Just find a role model or two that you can relate to in order to make massive changes in record time!

For some people, fitness might mean being able to play with their grandchildren and enjoy hikes in the hills or a good game of golf or tennis with no aches or
pains. To Jack LaLanne, fitness is “Waking up in the morning with no aches or pains, a song in my heart, and a smile on my face. To be able to work all day and still have the energy to do the things my mind wants to, when I want to.”

Fitness is personal. It’s your body and your life. There’s no right on wrong answer—just make it a point to discover your own definition of what *fit over 40* means to you.
If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

Henry David Thoreau
The Five Pillars of Anti-Aging

We’ve discussed the foundation of thought—the belief structures and Core values that you must have in order to succeed at anything in life, including fitness. We believe that the power of the mind is the foundation from which all great things are built. Like any foundation, we must repair the ‘cracks’ in order to maintain its integrity.

Before I give you an overview of the Five Pillars of Anti-Aging, I’d like to share one of the principles that will empower you even further in your journey to mental certainty. This is a mental tool that can be applied to all aspects of your life. We have applied it to many of the words in Fit Over 40, and in the very concepts that inspired its authorship. The tool of choice is called Neuro Linguistic Programming, or NLP. This is a branch of psychology and counseling invented in the 1970’s by Richard Bandler and John Grinder. NLP teaches a process for discovering patterns of human excellence and then duplicating them. That process is called modeling. “Role modeling” and “modeling” are, in essence, the same thing.

Model Behavior
The major premise of modeling with NLP is that all humans have the same neurology—in other words, everyone’s mind and body is essentially “wired” the same way. If one person can achieve a particular result, any other human being can achieve it as well. Simply find a group of people who already have what you want, find out how they did it, duplicate what they did, and you’ll achieve the same results yourself. While these results may vary in scale, they will be essentially the same, especially if you have chosen your role models carefully. According to NLP trainer Robert Dilts, “Modeling involves observing and mapping the successful processes which underlie an exceptional performance and breaking it into small enough chunks so that it can be recapitulated and reproduced by anyone.”
Modeling has been used to identify the intelligence strategies of Albert Einstein, the creativity strategies of Walt Disney, the persuasion strategies of star salespeople, the investment strategies of financial geniuses, the leadership strategies of winning coaches, and the peak performance strategies of medal-winning athletes. Modeling can be used to unravel the mechanics of a world-class golf swing, to reverse engineer the performances of virtuoso musicians, or to discover and duplicate the health and fitness strategies of men and women who have conquered aging and disease.

Opponents of modeling would say that this oversimplifies the subject of achieving excellence because it doesn’t account for genetics and “natural talent.” That argument is absolutely valid. For example, depending on your bone structure and muscle fiber-type makeup, you may never have the potential to become world class at sprinting or jumping events. But that doesn’t invalidate the concept of modeling. If you were to study the world’s greatest sprinters and jumpers of all time, you would discover patterns in their training, diets, thinking, and lifestyles. Simply duplicating these patterns yourself is not a guarantee that you’ll duplicate their skill level. However, it would guarantee that you’d become as good a sprinter as you could become, as quickly as possible, given your genetic potential.

When attempting to build a model for excellence, I believe that studying a group of exemplars is much more revealing than simply studying one person who excels in his or her field. Studying a group allows you to identify what that group has in common. The commonalities revealed are essential. If you were to study only one exemplar, you would have a model of how that individual achieved excellence, but the model would include what is essential, mixed in with what was uniquely theirs.

Once you’ve uncovered what factors are absolutely essential, then you discard what is unique to someone else, keeping only the essentials. Through a process of experimentation and feedback, you can customize and personalize what is uniquely yours. This is the most powerful approach to modeling excellence that I have ever used. Jon Benson’s transformation is proof of how powerful this approach can be.

Writing out step-by-step exercise and diet programs is beyond the scope and space limitations for this book. It would also be redundant, as there are already over fifty examples of nutrition and training programs from our Fit Over 40 role models from which you can draw ideas and inspiration. Besides, there is no one diet or training formula that works for everyone. Instead, I want to offer you the five Pillars (or essentials) that all youth-extending lifestyles have in common. This gives you the framework from which to build your own personal exercise and nutrition program. Once you have the essentials, you can (and must) customize
the rest to accommodate your uniqueness. Who better to do that than yourself? Trainers, coaches and role models can be indispensable during the initial learning stages, but ultimately, *no one will ever know your body like you do.*

**The Five Pillars**

Total fitness goes much deeper than having muscles and low body fat. That's why we like the phrase *total transformation.* This means endurance, cardio fitness, strong and functional muscles, flexibility, and the ability to do and enjoy all the things you want to do in life—golf, hike, bike, swim, scuba, travel or anything else your heart desires. There's also a mental, emotional and even spiritual aspect to health and fitness. Without implementing them, your transformation cannot be considered “total.”

Reams of research, along with real world success stories, provide proof that there are five common denominators of optimal health and fitness at any age. I call them *Pillars* because they literally support your health and fitness success. Without all of them working in concert, you’ll find yourself in a precarious position where a total collapse could be caused by the slightest crack.
The foundation of these pillars is the mind—your beliefs and Core values. From there, you support your goals, whatever they may be, with the following five Pillars:

**Weight/Strength Training**
**Aerobic Training**
**Flexibility Training**
**Balanced Nutrition (natural, unprocessed foods)**
**Recovery and Renewal**

We will now discuss each of these Pillars in detail, as they are your keys to developing and maintaining an anti-aging lifestyle.
The miraculous, youth-restoring properties of muscle

Exercise icon Jack LaLanne has always been fond of saying, “Exercise is king and nutrition is queen. Put the two together and you have a kingdom.” When Jack says exercise is king, aerobics is often the type of exercise that first comes to mind. You might even believe that the older you get, the more dangerous and inappropriate weight lifting becomes—unless you’ve read the chapters on the mind in Fit Over 40. You should now clearly understand and accept that weight training is an essential element to your lifetime goals of fitness and health, and that refusing to undertake it is much more dangerous than proceeding forth.

If there is such a thing as a fountain of youth, then the source of the spring is muscle. It’s not a coincidence that many of the role models in Fit Over 40 are bodybuilders. Strength training is also the single most important factor in the prevention of osteoporosis. Muscle is more responsible for the functioning of your entire physiological system than most people will ever realize.

Some of the benefits of developing muscle through strength training include:

- Increased strength
- Increased lean body mass
- Increased basal metabolic rate
- Improved insulin sensitivity
- Reduced risk of developing diabetes
- Increased HDL cholesterol
- Increased bone density
- Increased natural growth hormone
- Increased natural testosterone

Building muscle also helps you discard unwanted body fat. If you’re overweight,
severe dieting is the wrong prescription. What you need is more muscle, which increases your metabolic rate and makes you burn more calories even at rest. Muscle is developed from resistance training combined with a supportive, balanced nutrition program based on natural foods—not a diet. The combination works wonders. Low-calorie dieting can ruin your metabolism, wreak havoc with your hormones, and drastically increase the chance for long-term failure. Statistically speaking, 95% of all diets ‘fail’—in fact, dieting can actually make you fatter! There is a way around this vicious circle, which is often called “yo-yo dieting,” and it begins in the weight room.

**Weight Training versus “Resistance” Training**

“Resistance training” is merely exercising with some form of resistance against the muscles you are working. Obviously, this includes training with weights. Although weight lifting is the resistance training method of choice, many older men and women get good results with body weight exercises such as push ups, pull ups, dips, handstand pushups and abdominal exercises. Although this is not the same as weight training, it is resistance training because you’re lifting the weight of your own body.

Whatever the method, resistance training is not optional; it is an essential component of any anti-aging health and fitness program. Every one of our Fit Over 40 role models use resistance training of some kind in their exercise programs, and fifty of them use weight training as their primary weapon against aging and body fat. This should tell you something! As motivational speaker Anthony Robbins says, “Success leaves clues.” We’ve left you over fifty!

**Training Frequency**

As you read through the “How I train” sections for each of our exemplars, one thing you may notice is that their workout frequency varies from as few as two days per week to as many as six days per week. This may leave you asking, “How am I supposed to ‘model’ that? Which frequency is best?” The answer is the frequency that’s best for you. If you role model someone close to you genetically and physically, chances are their training protocols will work well for you right off the bat. Still, you will need to personalize them eventually, and that includes the frequency of your gym sessions. Training frequency is one of the most variable components of strength training due to each person’s unique differences in their ability to recover from the demands of exercise.

For fitness enthusiasts, we generally recommend three workouts a week, and for bodybuilders, four sessions a week of resistance training. Advanced trainees with exceptionally good recovery abilities may benefit from as many as five days per week.
week, although this is the exception rather than the rule. Higher frequencies call for split routines rather than full body workouts as to avoid working the same muscle groups consecutively and provide plenty of recovery time. To maximize recovery, it’s usually best not to strength train more than two days in a row. If you think your recovery ability is below average, then strength training every other day is even better. Jon achieved tremendous results training only 2-3 days per week, and still trains no more than four. Others will either require or simply enjoy more frequent sessions.

There are many examples throughout the *Fit Over 40* success stories of split routine training systems. You can model these routines, but it’s very important to consider your body’s unique needs when you’re choosing a training program. If you’re in doubt, you really can’t go wrong by strength training three days per week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday schedule and setting up your split routine so you work each muscle group once every 4-7 days.

*It is absolutely imperative that you allow enough time between each workout for your muscular, nervous and endocrine systems to recover.* When it comes to weight training, more is not better; smarter is better. Overtraining results in joint and soft tissue injuries, suppressed immunity, and increased release of the catabolic hormone cortisol. Cortisol not only tears down valuable muscle tissue, it also increases anxiety and contributes to fat storage.

You can probably maintain your strength and physique with only two workouts per week, but don’t expect huge improvements. It’s easier to maintain fitness than to achieve it. Several of our role models train less today than they did years ago when they were under forty. Bill Grant, for example, maintains incredible muscularity at age 57 with only two days a week of weight training. He had already built the foundation, and he found less frequent workouts maintained his condition while allowing his body the recovery time it needed to stay healthy and injury-free. Even in his competitive days, Bill never trained more than four days per week! *You don’t have to live in the gym to get in shape, or stay in shape!*

**How Much Resistance?**

In the sports training world, it’s very common to calculate training poundages by testing your one repetition maximum in each lift, then training with a specific percentage of that one repetition maximum (1RM). For example, most trainers suggest at least 85% of your 1RM for maximal strength, and 70%- 80% for maximal hypertrophy (muscle size).

For the past-40 trainee, I recommend a simple and easy method that requires no math and no “maxing out.” Choose a *repetition range* and then let your reps
dictate your weight. According to the National Strength & Conditioning Association, the ideal repetition range for the older trainee is between eight and fifteen repetitions. To choose the correct weight, simply find a poundage that you can lift at least eight times with perfect form. Once you’re strong enough to perform fifteen reps in perfect form, then it’s time to increase the weight.

If you’ve selected the proper resistance, then the last few reps are challenging and you can begin to feel the burn from the lactic acid in the muscles. This is the “good pain” associated with muscle growth and growth hormone release, not to be confused with the “bad pain” of strains, pulls, or tears in muscles or connective tissues.

How Many Repetitions?
Beginners can start with very light loads that allow many repetitions. Although this will lower the stimulus for strength development, reps as high as 15-20 will lower the risk of injury, particularly for those just starting out or people with joint troubles. Advanced trainees who understand their limits can perform fewer repetitions with higher resistance in order to more successfully develop strength and activate the higher threshold muscle fibers. Reps ranging from four to seven can increase the strength stimulus, but there is a higher risk for injury. The ideal recommended repetition range for seniors is 8 to 15.

The Sets Controversy
One of the biggest debates in strength training for many years has been over the “one set versus multiple sets” issue. Supporters of both sides often provide compelling arguments. A person in favor of one set taken to failure on each exercise can easily drop an armful of scientific studies in your lap and say, “There’s the proof!” But so can a proponent of multiple sets. By far, the majority of trainees opt for multiple sets. Jon has shown that fewer sets taken to “momentary completion” works, yet he also trains using high volume routines with equal success. It comes down to personal preference, temperament and what you enjoy. Legendary bodybuilder Bill Pearl has trained at 4:00 a.m. for the past thirty years, six days per week for two hours! Now almost 70, Bill looks as good as he did twenty-five years ago. However, Bill is quick to point out that he would look even better with less training. So, why does he do it? He claims a psychological need for the routine and frequency. Take that need away, and no matter the ‘results’, his training would suffer. You must train according to the principles that create the most pleasure and comfort in order to stick to your routine!

So, what does the research say? Numerous studies in scientific journals, including the ACSM’s prestigious Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, show that
previously untrained men and women who do single-set routines make strength gains in the beginning, but they flat line at around three months. Lifters who do multiple sets made steady gains in strength and muscle growth after that point. Other studies, comparing the effect of single set versus multiple set programs on hormonal responses, discovered that multiple sets had a more profound increase in growth hormone and testosterone secretion. This provides a more favorable hormonal environment for muscle growth and fat loss.

Other research points to the fact that single set training can stimulate strength and muscle equal to that of multiple set training in certain individuals. This may leave you guessing as to which approach to take. Here are some considerations when making your decision.

This new research suggests that beginners can make good progress on one set per exercise, and advanced trainees can maintain on one set per exercise, but for maximum improvement, multiple sets (usually three of each exercise) are probably ideal most of the time for most people. There are people who continue to grow on single-set training, like Jon, or professional bodybuilder Dorian Yates, but most find multiple-set training more enjoyable and profitable over the long haul. Also, many HIT enthusiasts perform multiple warm-up sets, which are not counted in their one-set routines, while volume trainers count these sets as part of the whole.

Modeling can often provide you with answers on these issues that the various experts and scientific community can’t agree on. The smartest strategy of all is to consider what the research has to say, but also model people who have already achieved great results in “the real world.” The majority of our Fit Over 40 exemplars use multiple sets on multiple exercises, but many people get excellent results with abbreviated routines and a low number of sets. The truth of the matter is, ultimately, you should always adjust your set volume according to what works best for you.

Your goal is to select the exercises that give you the most bang for your buck.

The Best Exercises to Choose

Weight training does a lot more than build muscle and make you stronger. Lifting weights is a powerful anabolic stimulus to release muscle-building, fat-burning, youth-restoring hormones of the best kind—your own! However, the effect of each particular exercise on hormones and muscular growth can vary. Your goal is to select the exercises that give you the most bang for your buck. Ironically, the exercises that will give you the greatest benefits are usually the ones that are avoided the most. Why? Because they are the most challenging! The path of least resistance is often taken, and minor gains the result.
A typical beginner will usually gravitate to a machine exercise, such as the leg extension. All exercise is good exercise, so leg extensions are fine and well. However, because the leg extension is a single joint isolation exercise that doesn’t involve a great area of muscle mass, it gives you a much lower return on investment for your time in the gym. The exercises that exert the strongest physiological effect on the body are *compound exercises that involve multiple joints and the greatest area of muscle mass*. This includes exercises such as squats, lunges, chin-ups, rows, deadlifts, shoulder presses, presses and dips.

To describe or photographically demonstrate all the common weight training exercises would take up another complete book. I recommend Bill Pearl’s *Keys To The Inner Universe*, which is a literal encyclopedia of exercise variations. Pearl’s massive volume contains over a thousand exercises you can do with barbells and dumbbells. Also consider *Strength Training Anatomy* by Frederick Delavier. Delavier’s book is an excellent illustrated guide to muscle function and exercise technique on the most popular exercises, although not as comprehensive as Pearl’s book.

**Rest Intervals**

As a general guideline, you should rest approximately one minute between each set. You might need slightly longer (90 to 120 seconds) for large muscle groups such as legs and back in order to recover and catch your breath.

Rest intervals can vary depending on your goals. If you’re training for general fitness, you can’t go wrong with 60 – 90 seconds rest between sets. If you’re training for strength and power, you can increase your rest intervals to two to four minutes. If your goal is to decrease body fat, it may be beneficial to gradually reduce your rest intervals to as little as 20-45 seconds—this also gets you out of the gym faster!

**The Perfect Lifting Tempo**

The general guideline for rep speed is to take about two seconds to raise the weight and about three seconds to lower it. For safety as well as the best results, every repetition should be performed slowly and under control. Never use a rapid, jerky, or uncontrolled movement. Raising or lowering the weight too quickly uses momentum and takes the stress off the muscle you’re trying to develop. It also increases your chances of getting injured. Some athletes train explosively for sports-specific conditioning, but bodybuilding and fitness enthusiasts should make it a general rule to keep the rep speed controlled.
Another method is to slow down your repetition speed. By its very nature, a slow repetition is a stricter and more difficult repetition. When you perform a repetition more slowly, you are increasing your muscle’s time under tension (sometimes referred to as “TUL”, or “time under load”). The result is an overloading of your muscles without adding additional weight. Placing emphasis on slowing the concentric portion of the rep (where you lower the weight) is particularly effective.

**Muscle Confusion: The Secret to Continual Progress**

It’s possible to improve yourself on a weekly basis, but it requires the right strategy. One reason that many people hit a progress plateau is because their bodies have adapted to the same routine, which has been repeated over and over again for weeks or even months. Muscle development occurs as a response to new physical stressors that are applied to the body.

For example, when you lift more weight than you’ve ever lifted before, or perform more reps, or do an exercise or routine you’ve never used before, your body is “shocked” because it wasn’t expecting that workload. As a result, your muscles grow stronger and larger so that it’s not surprised the next time you make similar demands. This is the reason why you get so sore when you do a new workout—and why a new workout routine always seems to give you the best results. It’s not that the new workout was necessarily better than the old one—your body simply adapted.

If your muscles could talk, they would say, “Did that, done that, been there…no need to get bigger or stronger today.” As strength coach Charles Poliquin likes to say, “Any training program is only as good as the time it takes to adapt to it.” Stated differently, *every training program works, but no training program works for long.*

You don’t necessarily have to change your entire routine. You might just change one exercise, or switch from high reps to low reps, straight sets to supersets, normal speed reps to slow reps, and so forth. Yet some new stimulus must be injected into your program or you’re not likely to make further progress. Changing workouts frequently also helps prevent you from getting bored and losing motivation. On the other hand, if you change your routines too often (like every time you work out), you may get results, but you fail to provide any continuity. Jon discovered this when he tried Super Infrequent HIT. It’s usually more efficient to milk each routine for all it’s worth and then change, than it is to change every workout at random.

How do you know when to change? Advanced bodybuilders may begin to adapt to a training routine in as little as three to five workouts. Beginners can often
continue to get results for months on the same program. A suggested guideline for most people is to change something in your training program every four to twelve weeks.

**The One Absolute Law**

If your goal is to stay the same (maintain strength, muscle and fitness), all you need to do is continue repeating the same workout. If you want to improve, then you must challenge yourself to lift more weight, do more reps, increase the volume, lift the same amount of reps and weight in less time, or perform some type of workout or exercise you’ve never done before. This is called the *progressive overload principle*—and it is the single most important part of any weight training program.

The biggest roadblocks to progression for most people are impatience, and not keeping a training journal. Progression must be approached in a slow and steady fashion and this takes time and patience. Progression occurs very slowly and is often done only one rep at a time or just a few pounds at a time. Without the use of a training log to compare one workout to the next, you may think you’re doing more work than you actually are. Jon swears by his training diary, and so do I.

Fit over 40 exemplar Anthony Ianiero understands that slow and steady progression wins the race, so he uses principle called *the gathering method*, also known as “micro-loading.” “This principle is embodied in my training by using half-pound magnetic weights called ‘plate-mates,’” says Anthony. “Progressively adding weight in small increments, *eventually* builds up to very large amounts.”

Intelligent progression does not involve personal record attempts at every workout. It’s a succession of small daily goals that keep you motivated towards constant improvement. Remember that little improvements every day add up to huge improvements over time. Always go into the gym knowing exactly what must be done each day in order to move ahead that one small step. Never wing it. Use the visualization principle and see yourself doing it *mentally* first, then do it in the gym. The difference between visualizing and knowing your workouts prior, and flying by the seat of your pants, is staggering.

Although progressive overload is essential for progress, constantly pushing yourself to lift heavier weights may be an invitation to eventual injury. Heavy training should be alternated with more moderate training (know as “periodization” or “heavy and light days”). There are many alternatives to adding weight to the bar, which can provide progressive overload, make your workouts more challenging, spare your joints from the stress of repeated heavy loads, and provide new stimuli to shock complacent muscles into new growth.
The Hormone Secret

The duration of your workouts is a very important factor to consider when structuring your training program. Most people undertrain in intensity and overtrain in duration. One of the fantastic benefits of strength training is the release of growth hormone and testosterone that occurs during the workout. However, the spike that occurs in hormone levels rapidly declines if your workouts are too long. At the same time, there is a sharp increase in cortisol (a catabolic stress hormone that breaks down muscle).

The ideal length for each of your strength training workouts is between 30 and 60 minutes. If you find that your workouts exceed an hour, then you should change your split routine, decrease your volume (number of sets, number of exercises) or decrease your rest intervals between sets. Most people can get excellent results with as little as 30-45 minutes of weight training per session. Even if you do your cardio and weights together (rather than separately), your total workout time for the entire session can still be kept under 60 to 75 minutes. Now, compare that to the time most people watch television and you’ll see why the “I don’t have the time” excuse is just that—an excuse!

Training to “Failure”

The amount of effort you put into your training is also known as intensity. If you’ve selected the proper weight, and you’re training hard enough, the last two or three reps in your set should be challenging. You will often feel the pain of lactic acid buildup, or “burn.” This is normal, and not to be confused with the pain of injury. If you complete a set of approximately 12 reps and it feels easy, meaning there was no burn or fatigue, then the weight was too light. Most people train in this fashion, especially women who fear that intense training will build too much muscle. In reality, they’re not building muscle at all. As Fit Over 40 role model Sophie Taggart says, “You must not be afraid to train as hard as you can!”

In any given set, you will approach a point where your muscles become so fatigued that they literally give out and you can’t complete another full repetition. This point is known as reaching muscular failure, or what we prefer to call “momentary completion” (as failure is a self-limiting word). Whether you should intentionally push yourself to this point is another topic of great controversy. Some people say momentary completion is essential, some claim it is counter-productive.

Training to momentary completion can definitely stimulate great progress, but only to the degree to which your body can recover from the stress of such intense training. Training to momentary completion 100% of the time will often lead to overtraining, especially when done in the context of a higher volume
training program. It is probably a technique best used periodically if at all, and certainly not continuously. Progressive overload is still the most vital aspect of weight training. Momentary completion is not essential to your progress. Although helpful at times, it can lead to injury and overtraining.

Joint and Injury-Friendly Training
At the age of fifty years young, Fit Over 40 role model Jay Robb says, “My training philosophy is to do a routine now that I can do the day I turn 100 years of age.” That is a fantastic philosophy! When you look at your program, it’s wise to ask yourself, “Is this something I’ll be able to continue doing for the rest of my life?”

The training programs many of our exemplars use today are not the same as the ones they used when they were younger. Their programs evolved over time and most likely will continue to evolve as they get older. However, one thing will always be true throughout your years of training—if you push your body with overtraining, under-recovery or abusive training practices, you may be cutting your training “career” short. If you’re forced to become sedentary due to injury, then you will suffer from the same fate as those who remain sedentary by choice.

One of the most common complaints given by over-40 trainees is joint pain. Sometimes faulty training induces it, while other times it’s unrelated to exercise. In either case, it’s necessary to adapt by training smarter, not harder and heavier! Just listen to Fit Over 40 role model Tom Shwald: “In 1998, I was diagnosed with arthritis in my knees, hips and spine. I changed my routine to compensate, and I’m convinced that bodybuilding saved me from suffering from this crippling disease.”

If you suffer from osteoarthritis, you can still work out with weights. However, you should use low resistance and high repetition programs (12-20 reps) because this minimizes the load on the joint surfaces. It all boils down to adapting and customizing your program according to the presence of pain and your tolerance to exercise. Cardio activities with limited weight bearing stress are good choices, including cycling, elliptical machines, swimming, and stair climbing. Aquatic exercises are also recommended.

If you have rheumatoid arthritis, resistance training with light to moderate weights is fine, and so is vigorous aerobic exercise. In fact, a review of the research by the National Strength & Conditioning Association revealed that high intensity exercise might be anti-inflammatory, thus pain-relieving. Commonly affected areas such as the neck, shoulders and wrist require some modifications. Neck stretching and strengthening exercises may need to be avoided. Exercises that place the shoulders in an impingement prone position should also be
avoided (for example, upright rows, behind the neck press, behind the neck pull-downs). Be sure to include exercises for grip strength such as wrist curls, wrist roller or hand grippers. During periods of pain and exacerbation, you should adjust your activity accordingly. If a joint is inflamed, let it rest. Be aware of the signals your body is giving you and don’t push through bad pain.

If you’ve sustained a previous orthopedic injury, that doesn’t necessarily mean you can’t exercise at all; it simply means you must adapt and customize as many of our Fit Over 40 role models describe in their bios. Joint support supplements such as glucosamine, chondroitin, MSM or a combination product may also be a helpful addition to your joint-friendly training program.

**High Density Training—The Ultimate Post-40 Training Technique**

Many people believe that the only way to apply the progressive overload principle is to increase the weight. That’s known as progressive resistance, but this is only one of many possible ways to achieve progressive overload. Increasing density is a method of progressive overload that has many unique benefits that can’t be duplicated with any other form of training.

The general definition of high-density training (HDT) is performing more work in less time, thereby achieving increased intensity and progressive overload without necessarily increasing the weight. This includes numerous techniques, including any resistance training with rest intervals less than the usual 60 seconds, or performing multiple exercises back-to-back without rest (referred to as supersets.) Jon’s **7 Minute Muscle** is another excellent example of HDT.

HDT has many benefits for the past-40 trainee. One of them is time efficiency—you’re in and out of the gym in no time at all. Another is that HDT can stimulate an increased release of growth hormone, which is a powerful anabolic hormone that burns fat and builds muscle. HDT also allows you to work around sore joints and injuries. If you’re suffering from an acute injury, or any serious injury, you should follow the advice of your physician and avoid stressing the injured area at all. If you’re experiencing minor joint or muscle pain that prevents you from training heavy, then don’t train heavy! You can achieve enormous gains with much lighter weights by making them feel heavier using a variety of HDT techniques. Let’s take a look at four ways to implement HDT into your training.

**Basic HDT**

The easiest way to use HDT is to begin to decrease your rest periods between sets in a gradual fashion each workout until you’re down to 30 seconds or less. In some cases the rest intervals may go as low as 15-20 seconds.
There are two ways you can approach this reduction in your rest intervals. One method is to maintain the amount of weight you’re currently using and gradually shave a little time off your rest intervals with each successive workout. This will make each workout more and more difficult as you’re condensing the same workload into a shorter period of time (your workouts will get shorter, but harder).

A second method is to simply cut your rest intervals all the way to 15-30 seconds in one fell swoop, rather than gradually over time. If you choose this method, you will also have to reduce your weights substantially (as much as 40-50%). Regardless of which option you use, it will help to have a sports watch with a seconds display so you can keep your pace on target. It’s also a good idea to time the entire workout and strive to complete each session in a slightly shorter period of time. Alternately, you can strive to increase the volume and condense more work into the same amount of time.

**Supersets**

One of the most common and well-known methods of HDT is supersetting. Conventional weight training is done using “straight sets,” which consist of a series of nonstop repetitions, usually between eight and twelve, followed by a brief rest interval of about 60 to 90 seconds or more. By contrast, a superset is an advanced technique where you perform two exercises in a row with virtually no rest in between.

For example, if you’re training arms, you can perform a set of dumbbell curls, then without rest (except for the time it takes to change equipment), go into a set of barbell curls. Once you finish the set of barbell curls, you have completed one superset. At this point, you rest for about one minute, then repeat the superset one or two more times, or for your desired number of sets. This is known as *same muscle group supersetting*. You can also superset opposing muscle groups such as biceps and triceps, quads and hamstrings, or chest and back. For example, you could do a set of dumbbell curls supersetted with tricep extensions. This is known as an *antagonistic supersetting*. An advanced variation on the superset is the *triset* and *quadset*, which is three or four exercises, respectively, performed back-to-back without rest. These are also known as “mini circuits.”

The use of supersets, trisets and quadsets is not only a highly effective and joint-friendly way to train—it’s also time-efficient.

**Staggered Sets**

A staggered set is a type of HDT, similar to supersetting, where you pair a major muscle group exercise with one for a minor muscle group exercise. This
technique is most commonly used for abs and calves. For example, you could throw in a set of abs after every set of thighs. Instead of resting and doing nothing in between sets of thighs, you are doing something productive—working your abs. This keeps your heart rate up and helps to burn calories. It also saves time, and spares you the monotony that many people feel from doing these small body parts by themselves.

*Fit over 40* exemplar and natural masters bodybuilding champion Ken Babich says that the “old-time bodybuilders” had a special name for this. Ken states, “I never sit down during my workout and I keep some muscle working the whole time. For example, I will do one set on an exercise for a major muscle group. Then, instead of resting, I immediately do an abdominal exercise. The ‘old-timers’ called this “in-flux training,” meaning that some muscle is being worked during the entire workout. This fires your metabolic rate through the roof; hence you can eat well but stay lean.”

**8x8 and Power 7**

Jon covered Vince Gironda’s legendary HDT system known as 8x8 in chapter 3. It is perhaps the most effective of all HDT programs. Jon’s personalization of the 8x8 system, *Power7 Training*, is an incredible method for employing HDT and other conventional forms of training in the same workout.

Whatever principle you decide to use, do so with caution and patience. The rewards include less body fat, more muscle and more time in your day.
Age to me means nothing. I can’t get old; I’m working. I was old when I was twenty-one and out of work.

George Burns
Aerobic Training

*The heart of fat loss*

Most people experience a dramatic drop in aerobic fitness as they age. Cardiac output decreases, maximal oxygen consumption plummets, the muscle’s oxidative capacity falls, capillary density drops and maximal exercise heart rate is lower. Like the age-related decline in muscle and bone density, *most of these cardio respiratory declines are due to a sedentary lifestyle and can be avoided with exercise.*

Benefits of aerobic training include:

- Increased calorie utilization
- Improved cardio-respiratory fitness
- Decreased body weight/body fat
- Reduced risk of high blood pressure
- Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduced risk of stroke
- Reduced risk of type II diabetes
- Reduced risk of osteoporosis
- Reduced risk of certain types of cancer
- Reduced psychological stress
- Improved blood lipid profile
- Improved sleep
- Improved digestion & elimination

For all these reasons, aerobic training should be a part of every post-40 fitness program. Weight training alone can provide great benefits, including cardiovascular benefits similar to those provided by aerobics, but there is great synergy between aerobic and strength training together, especially when fat loss is the goal. However, when strength and mass are the primary goals, aerobics must be approached with caution. Excessive aerobic training can be counterproductive to
the development of strength and muscle mass. Because of this, it's very important to customize your aerobic program according to your own unique goals.

**Exercise for Health versus Exercise for Physique**

It's important to understand that all activity can be beneficial to your health, but not all activity will lead to maximum fat loss and muscle growth. The American College of Sports Medicine, American Heart Association, and the Centers for Disease Control all agree that an accumulated total of thirty minutes of moderate activity daily—even activities like gardening or raking leaves—benefit your health. However, these activities certainly won't make you look like the role models in this book, and it's probably not enough to stimulate maximum fat loss. Look at it this way—how many overweight construction workers do you see? It's a far more common site than the lean stereotype. Just think—they're outside doing hard labor all day!

**The Best Types of Aerobic Exercise**

Fred Eisele, one of our *Fit Over 40* role models, found himself weighing 305 pounds at the age of 42. By Fred's own account, he got winded climbing a single flight of stairs and could hardly even get out of his easy chair. He asked himself, “How am I supposed to start an exercise program in my condition?” The answer he came up with was walking.

When Fred weighed over 300 pounds, his first workout was a ten-minute walk at the turtle-slow pace of two miles per hour. But it wasn't long before he was doing 45 minutes at four miles per hour. Within months, he was jogging and within a year, he had lost 82 pounds of fat and gained eleven pounds of muscle. If you're in doubt about how to start the aerobic component of your exercise program, don’t sit around being caught up in paralysis by analysis - just start walking – it’s as simple as that. Like Fred, the better your condition becomes, the more you’ll be able to do.

Why is walking so great for people who are beginners, overweight or over forty? For starters, you do not require any special equipment. Walking can also be done almost anywhere, it’s low impact and easy on the joints, safe—and you already know how to do it! Walking also happens to be an extremely social activity.

As time goes by, you’ll need to challenge yourself and advance to higher levels of exercise intensity to reach higher levels of fitness. That doesn’t mean you have to abandon walking, but if you decide to keep walking as your primary aerobic exercise, a leisurely stroll will no longer do. For an experienced exerciser, casual walking is more a method of locomotion than a serious workout. Once you
already have a base of aerobic fitness, you'll need to push yourself a little more to continue getting the same benefits from walking as Jon does in his own routine. For example, walking briskly uphill or on an inclined treadmill increases intensity enough to make it an excellent fat-burning workout for nearly anyone.

Other forms of aerobic exercise you may want to consider are elliptical machines, jogging, cycling, stair climbing machines, rowing machines, aerobic classes, kickboxing, or swimming. Swimming is fantastic for seniors and anyone who experiences joint troubles, but always be certain to include strength training and other types of weight bearing exercises to build muscle and maintain your bone density.

**Frequency**
As for structured aerobic training in your target heart zone (“formal exercise”), the American College of Sports Medicine (ASCM) recommends three to five days a week. The ASCM also states that training less than three days per week is not a sufficient stimulus for increasing fitness. Beginners should start with three days per week and build up the frequency gradually. Many advanced exercisers may benefit from more than five days per week, provided they don’t experience any symptoms of overtraining or overuse injury.

One very effective way to choose an aerobic exercise frequency is on the basis of whether your goal is weight maintenance or weight loss. If your goal is weight loss, then more frequent sessions are very beneficial because this allows you to burn more calories and body fat. You could literally burn twice as many calories each week during exercise by increasing your aerobic exercise frequency from three to six days per week, or splitting your sessions into two parts. One session in the morning and one in the evening works very well to get rid of that so-called stubborn fat.

**Duration**
The ACSM recommends 20 to 60 minutes of aerobic activity per session. Beyond 60 minutes there is a point of diminishing returns and increased chance of overuse injury or overtraining. As with frequency, an effective way to choose your aerobic training duration is on the basis of whether your goal is weight maintenance or weight loss. If your goal is maintenance, then 20-30 minutes is sufficient. If your goal is weight loss, you may benefit from longer sessions and or more frequent sessions. Naturally, you should build up your duration gradually. If you are very out of shape, even 10 minutes is a fine start. There’s never an excuse not to get started. If the best you can do is walk to your mailbox, that’s fine—go do it! Next time, walk to your mailbox twice. Before you know it, you’ll be walking
around the block, then around the whole neighborhood, and eventually for miles and miles!

**Intensity**
The intensity level of aerobic exercise is most commonly quantified by using target heart rates. Age-predicted maximal heart rate is commonly estimated using the 220 minus your age formula. So, if you're 40 years old, your estimated maximal heart rate is $220 - 40 = 180$ beats per minute. The age-predicted method is only an estimate however, and the error range can be 10-15 beats per minute in either direction—occasionally even more for the advanced trainee. The only way to determine your true maximal heart rate is with a graded exercise test (the Balke test that Jon mentions in chapter 3 is preferred) that continues to increase in difficulty until you reach your maximum heart rate. For safety, such tests often require the presence of a physician.

Once you know your estimated maximum heart rate, you can select an appropriate training zone range, which is usually 70% to 85% of the age-predicted maximum for healthy adults. So, if your estimated maximum heart rate is 180, then 70-85% of that is 126 to 152 beats per minute. Depending on your medical history and your current level of fitness, a lower heart rate range of 60% to 65% may be more appropriate. Some prefer this “LILD” (Low Intensity, Long Duration) method to traditional cardio for other reasons, such as improved recovery between workouts. Once you understand the concept of target heart rate, you may want to narrow down your target heart range goal to a 5% window such as 75-80%. Generally, 60-65% is considered “easy,” 70-75% “moderate” and 80-85% “moderately hard.”

Even though estimated maximum heart rates are lower for older adults, the relative intensity should still be the same at any age. Relative intensity can be estimated subjectively by rating your level of “perceived exertion” on a scale of one to ten. This scale was not designed to correlate directly with heart rates; rather, it indicates how stressful you perceive the workout to be. A rating of 1-2 on the scale represents very light, 2-3 light, 4-5 moderate, 6-7 hard, 8-9 very hard and 10 extremely hard (maximum). A moderate to moderately-hard perceived exertion rating of 4-6 is usually considered the most efficient intensity level for increasing fitness and decreasing body fat.

Another subjective method for determining proper exercise intensity is the talk test. If you can speak comfortably in sentences during aerobic exercise without getting short of breath, then you are probably exercising at the right intensity in your target zone for fitness and body composition improvements.
**High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)**

*Interval training* refers to a cardiovascular workout that alternates periods of high intensity activity with periods of low intensity activity. During the high intensity bursts, the intensity level exceeds where you would normally train during a continuous steady state cardio (as high as 90-100%). Normally, you would not be able to sustain this level of exertion more than a few seconds to a few minutes, but by alternating these bursts of high intensity work with periods of lower intensity work, you can recover enough so you don’t reach complete fatigue. You can then continue to repeat multiple intervals for the duration of your workout.

Interval training is an extremely effective method for increasing cardio respiratory fitness. It is also highly effective for fat loss because a large number of calories can be burned in a short period of time. Due to the *after-burn effect*, the condition in which your metabolism remains elevated long after an intense workout, you continue to burn calories at an elevated rate. Some research has shown that interval training is an effective way to release growth hormone naturally. Shorter workouts are also possible due to the fact that more work is being condensed into a shorter period of time.

Generally, the work-to-rest ratio during interval training ranges from 1:1 to 1:3. For example, you could alternate periods of one-minute bursts at high intensity with two- minute recovery intervals. As you become more conditioned, you can increase the intensity of the work and/or recovery intervals, or decrease the duration of the recovery intervals. There are many ways to apply interval training. You can alternate periods of walking with jogging, or jogging with running. You can use this method on any cardiovascular machine by adjusting the speed, incline or resistance levels up and down throughout your workout.

Interval training can also include very brief maximum exertion activities such as 6–15 second wind sprints separated by recovery intervals such as walking. Sprints can be performed on a track, football field or any flat running surface, as well as on hills or stadium steps for an added challenge.

Interval training is an advanced technique, not appropriate for beginners or those with any known cardiovascular problems. You need to develop a solid aerobic base before moving up to more advanced interval training methods. Because of the stressful nature of pushing your cardiovascular system near its maximal limits, you should never attempt to do high intensity interval training without your physician’s approval.
Whatever is flexible and living will tend to grow; whatever is rigid and blocked will wither and die.

Lao Tzu
Learning To Be Flexible

Losing flexibility and normal range of motion is one of those things that can sneak up on you. By age 70, most people are not only tight in many muscle groups, but they have lost so much range of motion that they have a noticeably strained and restricted walking stride. Disuse causes a decrease in the size, strength and flexibility of muscles, tendons and ligaments. If you don’t move your body and your muscles through their full range of motion, you may even lose the strength and flexibility to perform mundane household chores that involve twisting, squatting, bending or extending.

In general, older people tend to be less flexible than younger people. Older people experience a process called fibrosis, where fibrous connective tissue replaces atrophying muscle fibers. It’s the same story you’ve heard repeated over and over in this book—use it or lose it. There’s a slight loss of flexibility you get from natural aging and a massive loss experienced from pathological aging. The good news is that you can improve flexibility at any age. Sounds familiar by now, doesn’t it?

Degrees of Flexibility
You don’t need to develop the extreme flexibility of a dancer or martial artist to decrease injury risk and enhance range of motion. Flexibility training should be based on your personal needs. If you’re involved in sports or physically demanding recreation, you may need a more regimented stretching routine in order to develop flexibility corresponding with the needs of the sport. You need only the amount of flexibility necessary to do the things you want to do, to move comfortably and fluidly through life’s daily activities, and to avoid injuries. Although the research data is mixed as to whether stretching decreases injury risk in athletes, simple common sense would say that it does just that.
One of the most common problems in people over forty who have poor flexibility is lower back pain. According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, four out of five Americans will suffer from back pain at some time in their lives. Muscle tightness in the quadriceps, hip flexors, and lower back muscles is a common contributor to back pain and this is often compounded by weak abdominals, weak lower back muscles, poor form, bad posture and inadequate warm-ups.

**Be Specific**

Another important point about flexibility training is that it’s joint specific. You can be tight in one muscle group and have normal range of motion in another. It’s not a bad idea to stretch every major muscle group in your body, but focus the most on the areas that are the tightest. You should stretch a minimum of two to three days a week to maintain your flexibility, and up to seven days per week for maximum results.

Stretches should be performed to the point of mild discomfort, but never to the point of pain. Hold each static stretch for thirty seconds and, optionally, repeat each stretch a second time before moving on. Working with a partner (preferably a personal trainer) can enhance your flexibility even further by helping you stretch beyond your normal active range of motion.

Ballistic stretching is not recommended. Ballistic stretches are those that involve quick movements using jerks, pulls or bounces. This is different than dynamic stretching, which can be incorporated safely into a warm-up, and includes movements such as walking lunges, sumo squats and arm circles.

To learn more about static stretching, a classic, non-scientific book on the subject is *Stretching* by Bob Anderson.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Lifelong Nutrition

The balanced lifestyle

Balance is an important theme in *Fit Over 40*, and mentioned often throughout the role models’ bios. Although there are high carb vegetarian eaters as well as low carb, high protein eaters, the consensus seems to be that balance is the common denominator. That means just enough carbs, just enough protein and just enough fat—not an excess of one while completely removing one or both of the others. No diet program based on nutritional extremes is maintainable. You could consume a diet consisting of meat, green vegetables and water, and lose a lot of weight, but how long do you think you could keep that up? Balanced nutrition is not the same thing as “going on a diet”—it’s something you practice your entire life.

Just as with training, if you look closely at our role models’ nutritional programs, you will see common threads woven throughout the diversity. These are the essentials—the habits you must adopt if you want the same type of results. They form the core of this Pillar—the outline for fat-burning, muscle-building, and age-defying results.

**Caloric Consciousness**

Calories do count! It’s a simple law of mathematics and bio-energetics: if you eat more calories than your body can use, you will store the excess as fat. To lose body fat you must eat fewer calories than you burn. To maintain your weight, your calorie intake must balance your calorie output. To gain lean body weight, you must eat slightly more calories than you burn in conjunction with a program of progressive resistance weight training.

When it comes to weight loss, however, there’s a catch to the calorie equation. Because your body can’t tell the difference between dieting and starvation, your
metabolism will slow down if you decrease your calories too much. Initially, on a low calorie diet, you may see a large weight loss. However, as soon as your body senses a large calorie shortage, it goes into “starvation mode.” Your metabolic rate slows down and you actually start burning fewer calories in order to conserve energy. It’s the ultimate nutritional paradox: eat less, burn less—eat more, burn more!

Worst of all, when you’re starvation dieting, your body will hoard the last remaining fat reserves and burn up muscle tissue for energy. With less muscle, you enter a self-perpetuating cycle of “lose and gain,” and your metabolism gets even slower. That’s why it often seems so difficult to lose those last ten pounds.

Here’s the secret. When you want to lose fat, reduce your calories—but only by a small margin; about 15-20% less than your maintenance level. Then, instead of “starving” off the fat, you can burn off the fat by increasing your activity level.

As you get older, you require fewer calories to maintain your weight than when you were younger. Your daily calorie needs depend on a variety of factors including your activity level, lean body mass, height, weight, age and sex. One popular formula for calculating your calorie maintenance level is called the “Harris Benedict Equation”:

Men: Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)  
66 + (13.7 X wt in kg) + (5 X ht in cm) - (6.8 X age in years)

Women: Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)  
655 + (9.6 X wt in kg) + (1.8 X ht in cm) - (4.7 X age in years)

(Note: 1 inch = 2.54 centimeters, 1 kilogram = 2.2 lbs.)

Once you know your BMR, which is the amount of calories you need to keep you alive at rest, you can calculate your maintenance level by multiplying your BMR by your activity factor:

**Activity factor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Level</th>
<th>Activity Factor</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary</td>
<td>BMR X 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightly active</td>
<td>BMR X 1.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod. active</td>
<td>BMR X 1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very active</td>
<td>BMR X 1.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extr. Active</td>
<td>BMR X 1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For simplicity, let me offer you the average calorie requirements for men and women. You can use these as starting points, and then adjust according to your results. (Note: the older you are, the more likely you are to be at the lower end of these ranges):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fat Loss</td>
<td>1400 - 1800</td>
<td>2100 - 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>2000 - 2300</td>
<td>2600 - 2900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Gain</td>
<td>2200 - 2500+</td>
<td>3100 - 3500+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some people claim that they don’t bother counting calories, they just pay attention to portions. They may even get excellent results doing so. However, this does not mean that calories don’t count. Whether you guess at your calories or count them, as long as you’re consuming less than you burn, the results are the same. When you are in the beginner stage of learning about nutrition, it is better not to guess but rather do the math, and know exactly what you are doing.

Keep a food journal long enough that you gain a familiarity with the calorie amounts in various foods. As an alternative, you can create at least one or two sample menus for yourself and crunch the numbers using an Excel™ spreadsheet or with nutrition software. (Jon and I will be releasing some incredible meal planning software in the near future.) Then instead of counting calories, you simply refer to your pre-printed menu plans and use them as daily guidelines.

By creating menus or keeping a food journal for a period of at least one to three months, you’ll gain a strong familiarity with the calorie counts of the foods you eat on a regular basis. At that point you’ll be able to make a more educated estimate in the future, and counting calories in the literal sense will no longer be necessary.

An average portion of food is about the size of your fist and contains about 100 to 150 calories. A protein portion would be about 3-5 ounces of fish or lean meat (about the size of a deck of cards), and a carbohydrate portion would be one medium potato or yam, one cup of cooked rice, ? cup of cooked cereal or one cup of cold cereal.

**Nibbling is Better than Gorging**

In the mainstream health media, you often hear the gloom and doom prediction, “Your metabolism slows down as you get older.” It’s been repeated so often that you may have been brainwashed into believing it without even realizing where
your belief came from! I’d encourage you to change that old belief to this new one: “My metabolism will slow down as I get older—unless I do something about it!” Your metabolism will slow down with age if you vegetate on the couch and eat junk food, but there are many strategies you can use to accelerate your metabolic rate. This will improve sugar metabolism and increase your energy at the same time.

The number one strategy for a fast metabolism is to eat five or six small meals per day. Eating small, frequent meals is an essential strategy for staying fit after forty. I’m sure you noticed that virtually all of our role models consume small, frequent meals throughout the day—one feeding approximately every three to four hours. As Fit Over 40’s Marty Webb says, “Who knew that to lose weight, you need to eat more often?” It sure worked for her—even at age 60!

Low calorie dieting or skipping meals slows down your metabolic fire. By nibbling instead of gorging, you get an immediate metabolic advantage due to the thermogenic effect of digestion. Because a calorie is simply a unit of heat, think of your body as a fuel-burning, heat-producing furnace. If you continuously put fuel on the fire, it burns hotter. If you allow too much time to pass before feeding the fire again, it starts to dwindle. If you dump a huge log on a dwindling fire, what happens? That’s what a huge meal looks like to your body!

Frequent eating also gives you a permanent increase in metabolic rate by supporting the maintenance and growth of lean body mass, far more effectively than two or three small meals ever will. The key is to keep the meals small at about 300-500 calories per meal. Even if your goal is to increase muscular weight, you still shouldn’t shovel too much food down at once.

Many people say they can’t eat every three or four hours because it’s not convenient and they’re too busy. One solution is to eat your three regular meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and have snacks or mini meals in between. The snacks could be as simple as a piece of fruit, cottage cheese, a handful of nuts or a low fat yogurt. This meets the five to six small meals per day guideline, and it’s feasible for anyone no matter how hectic your schedule is. Another alternative is to use a meal replacement product (MRP). Instead of having a whole-food meal, you simply substitute one or two food meals with a fast and convenient shake.

Balance Nutrients and Avoid Extremes
Although low carb, high protein diets can have many advantages for getting the “ripped” look, as a general rule, a diet that removes most or all carbs is not balanced. On the other extreme, high carb, low fat diets are unequally balanced. Any diet that leans towards nutritional extremes will not be one you can stick to
For life. You simply must begin to think “Nutrition for LIFE”! However, there are people who thrive on a higher fat diet or a diet very high in carbs. Some may require specialized diets for metabolic disease or other health reasons. Jon’s diet is higher in fat than most of our role models, but he is healthier because of it. Still, Jon balances his nutrition with frequent carb feedings—healthy grains and fruits—and lowers the fat on these days.

For the vast majority of us, a properly balanced diet means:
— Your diet contains a wide variety of foods, including lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, natural starches and 100% whole grains, and low-fat or non-fat dairy products.
— Your diet does not eliminate any entire food groups (unless you’re allergic or intolerant; i.e. gluten or lactose, etc.).
— Your diet does not depend excessively on a single food or food group.
— Your diet contains a balance of protein and carbs.
— Your diet does not eliminate all or most fats (unless medically necessary).
— Your diet does not eliminate all or most carbs (unless medically necessary).

Each of your meals should be balanced with protein and carbs. Eating lean protein together with natural carbohydrates and fiber slows the digestion and absorption of the carbohydrates into the bloodstream. This helps to stabilize your blood sugar and insulin levels, avoiding the energy crash most people experience after eating junk food. Eating carbs alone, particularly simple and refined carbohydrates, can cause a surge in blood sugar and insulin, which can promote fat storage and prevent stored fat from being released.

**Carb Sensibility**

One of the most controversial topics in nutrition today is the carbohydrate issue. Impassioned sides battle it out over which method is the best—low carb or high carb. The blanketeted statement, “Carbs make you fat,” is probably the most pervasive and damaging myth about weight control ever told. The same is true of the thought that “fat makes you fat.” It has caused tremendous confusion and frustration to already confused and frustrated dieters. The truth is, neither low carb nor high carb is the answer.

Fat loss is more a matter of calories in versus calories out than it is how many carbohydrates you eat. Focusing primarily on any macronutrient (protein, carbs or fat) or macronutrient ratio should be secondary to energy balance. What makes you fat is eating too many calories and too many refined foods. However, it’s very important to recognize that all carbohydrates are not the same—and that each individual’s response to carbohydrates is not the same, either.
Carbohydrates cannot be lumped together into one category. You can’t generalize and blame all carbs as a group for why obesity has reached its highest level in history. What type of carbohydrates are we talking about? For most people, there are good carbs and bad carbs. The bad carbs are the refined ones—white flour and sugar products like white bread, white pasta, sugar-sweetened cereals, candy and soft drinks.

To avoid confusion, I would suggest qualifying the word carbohydrate by putting the adjective “refined” or “natural” in front of it. A healthy, maintainable fat-burning diet should be centered on natural foods, and for most people that includes natural carbs in moderation. Although reduced carbohydrate diets may be appropriate at certain times for some people (bodybuilding contest diets and carb intolerant people, for example), most nutrition experts agree that a substantial portion of your calories, ranging from 40-55%, should come from unrefined, natural carbohydrates.

Despite the wide variations in Fit Over 40 nutrition profiles, you will see two commonalities repeated over and over again—decreased refined carbs and a focus on natural carbs (in moderation) such as vegetables, salads, fruits, oatmeal, yams, sweet potatoes, brown or wild rice, potatoes, beans, and 100% whole grains.

You may also notice that many of our role models decrease all concentrated carbs (even natural carbs) when they want to decrease body fat or prepare for a competition, and reintroduce them for maintenance. In all of their diets, plenty of vegetables remain a steady year-round carb choice. Some of our exemplars also utilize a “carbohydrate cycling approach,” where carbs are rotated at different levels over the course of several days rather than staying on low carbs or high carbs all the time. Programs such as my own Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle and Jay Robb’s Fat Burning Diet utilize this high carb day/low carb day approach. It’s extremely effective and makes a lower-carb approach more maintainable.

Again, it’s very important to recognize that individuals differ widely in their ability to metabolize sugar. The real issue here is not whether carbohydrates are fattening. The issue is, are you carbohydrate tolerant or intolerant, and how can you tell? Some experts use “metabolic typing” as a method to determine the answer. I believe the metabolic typing theory has validity, but I say that with some reservation because the questionnaires used to determine your metabolic type have room for error and I have not found them to match up to real-world results on many occasions. Jon has discovered the same in his practice, and has recently abandoned metabolic typing altogether.

You can get a strong indication of your carb tolerance by looking for symptoms of metabolic syndrome. This is a cluster of five major risk factors for developing
diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These risk factors include: (1) abdominal obesity, characterized by a waist circumference greater than 40” in men and greater than 35” in women, (2) high triglycerides, greater than 150 mg/dl, (3) reduced HDL cholesterol, less than 40 mg/dl in men and less than 50 mg/dl in women, (4) elevated blood pressure, greater than 130/85, and (5) elevated fasting glucose, greater than 110 mg/dl.

If you have three or more of these risk factors, you are classified as having metabolic syndrome. Abdominal obesity, high triglycerides and high fasting glucose, in particular, are often a good indication that your carbohydrate metabolism is abnormal and you may benefit from a lower carb approach for weight reduction. This is why Jon chose a moderate carbohydrate plan, and eventually a relatively low carb diet—his blood chemistry dictated it. Equally important, it becomes critical that you take up a program of resistance and aerobic exercise along with a proper diet when diagnosed with metabolic syndrome. These symptoms are strong predictors of pending disease, and you must act on them with the help of a doctor and/or clinical nutritionist.

According to the National Institutes of Health, the overall prevalence of metabolic syndrome is 22% of the population. However, the incidence of metabolic syndrome increases with age and with obesity. For older men and women who are obese, there is a much higher chance that they have metabolic syndrome, which not only exposes them to major health risks, but also might make a high carb diet less than wise. A moderate carb diet with very carefully selected natural carbohydrates would be a better alternative. Those with severe carb intolerance may need to reduce carbs further (even natural carbs like potatoes and whole grain bread) until the excess body fat is lost.

Another way to estimate your tolerance to carbs is simply through trial and error. Most people already know what happens to their body when they jack up their carb intake. Some people, despite their best honest efforts, have difficulty losing body fat without a substantial decrease in carbs and an increase in fat and protein. Although it may seem like a long, tedious chore to figure your carb sensitivity through trial and error, it’s really quite simple because there is only one factor that you will be testing—the amount of starch, grain and other concentrated carbohydrate your metabolism can handle. Everything else remains in place: the lean proteins, the veggies, the good fats, and the small frequent meals. Once you’ve personalized your meal plan, you’re on your way.

When it comes to carbs, a one-size-fits-all approach is clearly not possible. You must understand your body type and then personalize! Always check with your physician or registered dietician before making any changes to your diet, particularly those that call for a very low carb or very high protein/fat intake.
Consume Lean Protein at Every Meal

Protein is the construction material for your body, just like bricks are for a building. Body structures made from protein include skin, hair, nails, bones, connective tissue and skeletal muscle. Eating enough quality protein is absolutely essential for muscle growth and maintenance. Without the right quality and quantity of protein, your physique will tend to be soft and flabby, even if your body weight is in the normal range (also known as being a “skinny fat person.”).

Protein is actually a combination of amino acids. Out of the twenty amino acids required by the human body for growth, your body can make eleven of them. These are called non-essential amino acids. The other nine are called essential amino acids, as they can’t be manufactured by your body and must come from food. Foods that contain all the essential amino acids in the exact amounts required for growth are called complete proteins. All the essential amino acids must be available in order for the body to build muscle tissue. Therefore, your ideal goal is to eat a complete protein food with every meal.

Complete proteins are found primarily in animal products such as chicken, turkey, lean red meat, fish, shellfish, eggs and dairy products. Protein is also found in vegetables, beans, legumes and grains. However, the protein from vegetable sources is not considered complete because it lacks certain essential amino acids. That’s why vegetarians need to combine incomplete vegetable protein sources to provide all the essential amino acids.

One thing you may notice about the diets of bodybuilders, especially prior to competitions, is that they include extremely high amounts of protein—sometimes as high as 50% of their total calories. These amounts are not necessary for health or muscle growth. The reason some bodybuilders eat so much protein is primarily for fat loss purposes. Protein has a highly thermogenic effect that accelerates the metabolism. About 25% of each calorie of protein is used in its digestion. Carbs and fats are much lower on the TEF (Thermogenic Effect of Food) scale. Too much protein can be turned into fat just like too much of anything else, but it's the least likely if calories are balanced. In any case, your body uses protein most efficiently if you spread it out evenly in five to six small servings throughout the day.

The recommended daily allowance (RDA) for protein is only .36 grams per pound of body weight. However, this figure is based on the minimum for a sedentary person to maintain their health. Exercise, especially vigorous exercise and weight training, increases your protein needs. Research has proven that the ideal protein intake for people who exercise regularly is .8 grams per pound of body weight, with some research dictating up to 1.25 grams per pound. This equates to about 25-40% of total calories as compared to 15% recommended by the RDA.
One concern about eating large amounts of protein is the effect on the kidneys. This is due to the fact that when kidney disease patients are fed a high protein diet, their condition usually worsens. There is no evidence that high protein intakes are dangerous for healthy individuals with no known kidney disease. Excess protein will either be burned for energy (in a caloric deficit) or stored as fat (in a caloric surplus).

However, with age, the kidneys tend to become less efficient at removing wastes from the blood. Data from the National Center for Health Statistics reveal that only 0.6% of 18 to 24-year-olds have kidney disease, while 5.5% of adults over age 85 have kidney disease. According to Dr. William Evans, a large number of men and women over age 65 may have reduced renal function or undiagnosed chronic renal failure; therefore a very high protein intake may worsen their renal function. For these reasons, very high protein diets are not recommend for older adults (over age 65), or for those with known kidney disease. The effect of high protein diets on bone mass is similar—little evidence exists proving high protein diets will cause bone loss in healthy adults. However, caution may be warranted for men or women with existing osteoporosis or for postmenopausal women, who are at greater risk for developing osteoporosis.

Get the Skinny on Fat

Ever since the fat phobia era of the late 80's and early 90's, dietary fat has gotten a bad rap. According to the “experts,” all dietary fats were not only unhealthy, artery-clogging disease creators, but they would also turn into lumps of ugly body fat no sooner than you had digested them. The truth of the matter is a lot like the situation with carbohydrates. Fats, like carbs, have been lumped together into one category and demonized as a group when in fact there are various types of fats with different properties; some good, some bad.

There are “fats that heal and fats that kill,” as the title of the book by Udo Erasmus proclaims. Eating the wrong kind of fats can increase your blood cholesterol, clog your arteries, increase fat storage and wreak total havoc in your body. Eating the right kind of fats can increase your energy, increase fat burning, increase muscle-building hormones, increase your strength, improve insulin function, improve your skin texture and strengthen your joints.

As with “good carbs, bad carbs,” you need to learn some important distinctions about good fats and bad fats in order stay healthy and get good results from your fitness efforts. The fats and oils that should be avoided the most are man-made, refined, and processed fats. Oils by nature are extremely unstable substances that go rancid very quickly upon exposure to light and air. Hydrogenation and partial hydrogenation are processes that food manufacturers use to prolong the shelf
life of their products and to make cheap products such as margarine. Dr. Udo Erasmus calls hydrogenated oils “a manufacturer’s dream: an unspoilable substance that lasts forever.” Partial hydrogenation is what turns oils into spreadable margarines and makes them more stable. They also make baked goods moist and flaky. Hydrogenated oils are processed fats the same way that white flour and white sugar are processed carbohydrates.

Partially hydrogenated oils contain large amounts of chemically altered fats known as trans fatty acids. Some nutritionists like to call them “frankenfoods” because they are strictly man-made creations which do not appear in nature. They’re to be avoided like the plague. Hydrogenated oils and trans fatty acids are most commonly found in margarines and spreads, baked goods and fried foods.

Trans fats are often used in cookies, crackers, biscuits, frostings, pies, pastries, doughnuts, corn chips, taco shells, shortening, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, certain margarines, salad dressings and many other places you'd never even think to look. Many people switched from butter to margarine thinking they were doing good by avoiding the saturated fat in the butter. What they missed was that the margarine was full of trans fats! Real butter is by far the healthier choice.

Trans fatty acids are very dangerous. They contribute to numerous health problems including heart disease and possibly even cancer. They certainly don’t help you get any leaner, and may hinder the fat-burning process in more ways than one. The trans fatty acids in hydrogenated oil are believed to elevate LDL cholesterol. Dr. Erasmus once said, “If you see the “H” word on the label, get the “H” out of there!” Other destructive effects of trans fats can include decreased insulin sensitivity, decreased immunity, lowered HDL cholesterol, increased blood triglycerides, and interference with essential fatty acid functions.

The good type of fats that you want more of are the essential fatty acids (EFAs), which include a proper balance of Omega 6 (linoleic acid or LA) and Omega 3 (alpha linolenic acid or LNA). These convert in the body to gamma linoleic acid (GLA) and ultimately to prostaglandins, hormone-like molecules that help regulate inflammation and blood pressure as well as heart, gastrointestinal, and kidney functions. Like other essential nutrients such as essential amino acids, an essential fatty acid is one that the body cannot make and must be supplied through the diet. Vegetable fats are mostly poly- or mono-unsaturated, but you should never cook with vegetable oil as it converts to a trans fat at heat. Naturally occurring polyunsaturated fats include the fat in fish, walnuts, pecans, almonds, and flax seed. Monounsaturated fats, high in Omega 3’s, include avocados, cashews, peanuts, pecans, natural peanut butter, olives, and olive oil.

Most people don’t get optimal amounts of Omega 3 fats. Omega 3’s can be provided through your food or with an EFA supplement such as fish oil, flaxseed
oil or an essential oil blend. EFAs improve insulin sensitivity, are required for absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, improve joint health, increase energy production and oxygen transfer, maintain cell membrane integrity, suppress cortisol production, improve skin texture (dry skin is a classic symptom of EFA deficiency), promote growth, increase metabolic rate and help burn body fat. That’s one healthy fat!

Traditionally, saturated fats have been labeled as the most harmful, thought to increase levels of cholesterol in the blood. However, the research on this is changing every day, and many studies are now touting the benefits of saturated fats in moderation. According to trans fat pioneer and biochemist Dr. Mary Enig, the composition of plaque in the arteries may tell the story—only 26% of the fat is composed of saturated fat. For any fat to become dangerous, it must first be oxidized. Antioxidants such as vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin E, and CoQ-10, all play a vital role in fatty acid metabolism. Saturated fatty acids constitute at least 50% of the cell membranes. They promote cellular integrity. They play a vital role in the health of our bones. And, they lower LP(a) in the bloodstream—a known causative factor in heart disease. There’s even an osteoporosis connection—for calcium to be effectively incorporated into the skeletal structure, saturated fats are critical. This is not however to suggest that you douse your food with butter! Calories from fat are still over twice as high per gram as those from protein and carbs.

The greater distinction to make when choosing fats is that the processed trans fatty acids are the most harmful of all. Including enough EFAs in your diet can offset any of the harmful effects of saturated fat, as can ample amounts of naturally-occurring antioxidants from fruits and vegetables. A diet high in saturated fat is not recommended, but cutting out all saturated fat is not necessary. You may safely consume saturates in the form of the small amount in your chicken breasts and poultry, your dairy products and the small amounts you’ll get in the occasional cut of lean red meat and whole, free-range eggs. The fats in our beef, poultry and eggs in today’s industrialized world are not the same as they were thousands of years ago. Over the past 100 years alone, the ratio of ω-3/ω-6 (Omega 3’s and 6’s) has skyrocketed from 1:2-1:4 all the way to 1:50-1:100! Choosing foods such as grass-fed beef will give you a much more favorable profile of healthy versus unhealthy fats due to the fact that the animals are not fed grain. Cows eat grass—you’d think that would be common knowledge!

As a general guideline, your daily fat intake should not drop below 15% of your total calories, and for most people, the optimal amount of dietary fat is usually in the range of 20-30% of total daily calories. What’s more important than getting caught up in the number of fat grams or the percentage of calories from fat is focusing on the type of fat you eat. Good fat is where it’s at!
Satisfy Yourself

There are many diets that work, but almost none of them work for long. Why? Because they’re “diets.” When you go on a diet, the underlying assumption is that at some point you have to go off of it. By definition, a diet is a temporary and often drastic change in eating behaviors and/or a severe restriction of calories, which is ultimately not maintainable. If you reach your goal, the diet is officially over and you simply return to the way you used to eat.

Health and fitness is not temporary; it’s not a diet or a twelve-week program, but something you do every day for the rest of your life. To get results in a healthy fashion—results that last—you must adopt a lifetime perspective when it comes to your eating habits. *If you can’t maintain it, then you shouldn’t be doing it.*

All successful people in every field always share the trait of lifetime perspective. Some of the most successful Japanese technology and manufacturing companies have 100-year and even 250-year business plans! When it comes to nutrition, start thinking one year, ten years, even fifty years! You must also consider what the long-term consequences might be as a result of using any radical diet, training method or ergogenic aid.

There are times when your diet may need to become ultra-strict (Jon uses the term “Spartan”!) in order to reach a goal by a certain deadline. However, it’s important to realize that the more restrictive your diet becomes, the more difficult it will be to stay on and the more difficult it will be to maintain any progress that is achieved. The sensible, lifelong way to take off and keep off unwanted body fat is to eat consistently year-round. Using this method, when you want to lose body fat, no dramatic change is necessary. You then don’t need to eat totally different foods—it’s a simple matter of eating less of those same healthy foods and exercising more.

Give yourself a little room to wiggle too! The majority of our exemplars all say that they allow themselves occasional treats or “cheat days.” Most people would do very well to adopt a 90-10 rule: Establish a nutrition plan and stick with it 90% of the time and you’ll not only get great results, but you’ll have a plan you can be satisfied with for life.

Water—It’s Actually What’s in You

As you get older, your sense of thirst is diminished and your body’s ability to regulate temperature decreases. Heat stroke and heat exhaustion are very common among men and women over 65. You’ve heard the recommendations to drink plenty of water many times, but after you turn 40 it’s more important than ever to pay attention to that advice.
Plain water is quite simply the most important nutrient in and for the body. Your blood is 90% water. Your muscles are 70% water. Even your bones, the “driest” part of your body, are 20% water. Water is necessary for nearly every function in the human body, including excretion, digestion, circulation, respiration, absorption, lubrication, tissue construction, nutrient transportation, body temperature regulation, and of course, burning body fat. Just like the planet we live on, your body is over 75% water. Think you should drink some? You bet.

Water is so important that without it you would die in a matter of days. Even a small decrease in your body’s hydration level can adversely affect your performance. As you become dehydrated, your body’s core temperature increases. This adversely affects your cardiovascular function and reduces your capacity for physical work. These effects become more and more pronounced with age. Studies have shown that even mild dehydration—a mere 3% of body weight—can decrease contractile strength by 10%. When 4%-5% or more of total body weight is lost in water, large decreases in muscular and aerobic endurance occur. If more than 10-12% of your total body weight is lost as water, you will die.

A common guideline for water intake is eight to ten eight-ounce glasses per day (64-80 oz per day). That may not be enough if you’re highly active. It would be more accurate to personalize it by taking into account your body weight and/or activity level. The more active you are and the more you exercise, the more you should drink, especially in hot weather. The National Research Council provides a recommendation of 1.0 to 1.5 ml per kcal expended per day. Because your calorie expenditure is related to both activity and body weight, this formula is more customized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories expended</th>
<th>Water required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000 calories</td>
<td>66 – 100 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2500 calories</td>
<td>83 – 124 oz</td>
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<tr>
<td>3000 calories</td>
<td>100 – 149 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000 calories</td>
<td>116 – 174 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 calories</td>
<td>132 – 199 oz</td>
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</tbody>
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Using this formula, a typical 172-pound man with a daily caloric expenditure of approximately 2800 calories per day would need 93-139 ounces of water per day (there are 128 ounces in one gallon). If in doubt, drink more, not less. Give yourself cues for when to drink your water—first thing in the morning when you wake up, during your workouts, and after your workouts. Continue drinking at regular intervals even when you’re not thirsty, especially when it’s hot and you’re sweating heavily.
It Came from Planet Earth

If you could only make one change to your diet, the single strategy that would have the greatest impact on your heath, body composition, energy, and longevity would be to get man-made and processed foods out of your diet. Eat only natural foods at least 90% of the time. Jack LaLanne, who was born in 1914 and still works out two hours a day, has always said, “If man makes it, don’t eat it.” Natural foods usually have only one ingredient. Take a look at the labels in the grocery on the processed foods. If you can’t pronounce an ingredient the first time, don’t put it in your body!

Here’s another definition of natural food—if it walked, flew or swam, or came from the ground, then it’s natural! (Vegetarians, you can use the latter!) This rules out almost everything found in a can, box, wrapper or package. If it wasn’t on this planet several thousand years ago, then it probably isn’t something you should eat as a staple in your daily diet.

Although the finger is often pointed at carbs or fats, processed foods are the real problem. All of them can be lumped into one category—JUNK! Processed foods, combined with a decrease in activity that has been brought on by a modern, technologically dependent society, are the common links that have paralleled the rise in disease and obesity in the 20th and 21st centuries. Heart disease, cancer and diabetes were rare, even unheard of, only a few hundred years ago, yet statistics are clear. According to the Mega Foundation, people who are above 70 years of age only live about six month longer than they did 100 years ago.

If you’re worried because I just eliminated 90% of what you eat, take a deep breath and relax. The variety of natural foods you can eat is practically endless—most fruits, all vegetables, lean proteins, dairy products, naturally occurring fats, nuts, seeds, natural oils, natural starches such as brown rice, oats, barley, potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, beans and 100% whole grains such as wheat, rye, amaranth, and quinoa. This is not even an all-inclusive list!

Meats, fish and dairy products are considered natural foods, but today they’re not what they were thousands of years ago. Mercury, PCBs, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, hormones and antibiotics have contaminated our food supply. It’s important to become educated about exactly where your meat and fish are coming from and what they contain. Some solutions include organic, grass-fed lean meats and wild (not farm-raised) fish. You would also be wise to avoid fish high on the food chain as they may be contaminated with mercury. This includes shark, swordfish and tilefish.

Choose the foods you eat every day very carefully. Moderation or infrequent consumption of refined or man-made foods will probably be harmless, while
overindulgence will certainly be destructive. What you put in your body daily over a long period of time is much more important than what you eat occasionally. Because your daily eating and drinking behaviors are so habitual and often unconscious, this calls for some serious analysis of what’s been going into your body every day.

Intelligent Supplementation
Because of the huge influence that magazine and television advertising has on our culture today, the use of supplements has all too often been presented as a miracle cure or magic bullet for slowing the aging process, improving health, losing weight, or building muscle. The push for supplements is so great today, that it’s often implied that you have no hope of succeeding without taking handfuls of pills and bucketfuls of powders on a daily basis. Unfortunately, as a result, we now have millions of people self-medicating themselves with substances they know little or nothing about, which they take strictly on someone else’s word (who usually has a financial interest) or on the advice of an advertisement alone. This is not an intelligent or an educated way to make decisions.

I highly urge you to not only protect yourself from the frauds and rip-offs which are almost everywhere in the supplement industry today, but also to have great respect for the potential effects any vitamin, mineral, herbal or other supplemental products may have on your body. Quite simply, if you don’t know exactly what you are taking and why, then you have no business using it all.

There are a handful of basic supplements that are recommended and scientifically supported so universally, that you can usually feel confident and comfortable taking them on your own. These may include multi vitamin/minerals, essential fatty acid supplements (such as fish oil, flaxseed oil, or oil blends), protein powder or meal replacements, and creatine. Jon discusses others in chapter four. Beyond these bare basics, I strongly recommend that you consult a registered or licensed dietician or a clinical nutritionist to make more educated decisions about supplements. The fact is, you are probably not an expert on supplements, but they are. After consulting with a professional, you may be shocked to discover that many products you believed to be essential (via popular opinion and the advertising media) are actually completely worthless and possibly even dangerous. The next time you read an ad about the “latest supplement breakthrough,” put your wallet away until after you’ve done your homework. Make educated, not emotional decisions.
Turn your midlife crisis to your own advantage by making it a time for renewal of your body and mind, rather than stand by helplessly and watch them decline.

Jane E. Brody
In his books *Stress for Success* and *The Power of Full Engagement*, author and sports researcher Jim Loehr points out that stress is not bad—it’s essential to growth and to life itself. Having no stress or stimulation will cause you to deteriorate just as quickly as having too much stress. When you experience a stressor and adapt to it, that’s part of the growth process; it’s how your muscles become stronger and how your fitness level gets higher. Growth of any nature requires some degree of healthy stress.

When you’re placed under continuous stress with no time for recovery and renewal built in, that’s when your body begins to break down, and injury or disease occurs. The presence of stress in your life does not necessarily correlate with disease and accelerated aging. The amount of stress is not nearly as important as your ability to cope with and recovery from it, which requires some recovery and stress reduction techniques.

Generally, as you age, your ability to withstand stress and to recover from stress decreases. But stress does not automatically lead to a physiological stress response such as the release of adrenaline and cortisol. There’s an intermediate step at the mental level before the physiological response occurs—your interpretation of the stress. The way you interpret a stress is affected the most by whether the stress is (a) predictable, (b) manageable, (c) whether there are outlets to release the stress, and (d) whether you have periods of recovery between the stressors.

How you perceive stress appears to be the key. The same situation can produce varying levels of stress in different people. One person might feel unbearable anxiety and hopelessness, while another person might feel a sense of challenge, viewing the situation as an opportunity to rise to the occasion. A Gallup poll of Fortune 500 executives found that 60 percent of them said stress was exhilarating, but this stress must be counter-balanced with renewal.
If you increase your ability to “renew yourself,” cope with stress and reframe it in a positive light, you decrease the physiological response your body has to stress. Good coping skills come from being able to put things in perspective. Events such as being caught in traffic can be reframed as a “minor inconvenience” or even an opportunity to reflect, meditate or listen to audio material rather than allowing it to trigger a stress response.

Our Fit Over 40 role models use a variety of methods to handle stress including walking, rhythmic exercise like walking or jogging, relaxing, meditating, yoga, or prayer. They know how to “turn it on” and “turn it off”; they work hard and they play hard. They avoid type A behavior and know how and when to take a vacation and enjoy it.

*Fit Over 40* exemplar Clark Bartam is an incredibly busy and successful model, bodybuilder, entrepreneur, husband, and father. Despite his hectic schedule, he knows he must take time to slow down. “For recovery, sometimes I need to do something mindless that requires nothing from me physically, mentally or emotionally,” says Clark. “The other day I actually watched TV! I had to *force myself* to sit down and not do anything.”

Just how important are these periods of recovery and renewal? Jim Loehr says, “Knowing how and when to recover may prove to be the most important skill in your life.” Relaxation improves circulation, repairs damaged muscle tissue, lowers blood pressure (in several studies, equal to that of medication), and provides the centering each of us requires. It’s often the most “blown-off” element of the Five Pillars. Despite this short chapter, renewal is a huge and vital component to longevity and happiness.

For more information, please refer to Jim Loehr’s *The Power of Full Engagement*, or *Slow Down: Five-Minute Meditations to De-Stress Your Days* by Joseph M. Champlin.
Final Thoughts: The Excellence Mindset

In India, elephant trainers secure a baby elephant by shackling one of its legs to a massive, unbreakable chain. They take the other end of the chain and attach it to a giant metal spike, which they hammer deep into the ground. The young elephant tries to escape by tugging, pulling, and straining against the colossal chain, but to no avail. Eventually the young animal gives up and resigns itself to its captive fate.

When the elephant finally stops struggling, the trainers remove the bulky chain and replace it with a small piece of rope and a flimsy wooden stake. The elephant, now a full grown massive bull weighing eight tons, could easily rip the rope out of the ground and run away to freedom. But it doesn’t. It still believes it can’t escape because it has tried and tried so many times in the past and it knows from experience that it cannot possibly pull that massive “chain” from the ground.

Like the elephant, most people after age forty are held down by belief systems that are nothing more than tiny little strings merely perceived as massive chains. You are either a prisoner of your own beliefs or you are liberated by them. To liberate yourself from limiting beliefs, you must understand your mind-body connection and change your mindset. Once you accomplish this, you can then adopt The Excellence Mindset.

More on The Mind-Body Connection
The mind and the body cannot be separated. Every thought or feeling causes a corresponding chemical reaction and physical change within your body. Recalling a stressful situation can release the same catabolic hormones as the actual experience. Anger and hatred can increase blood pressure and cause ulcers. It’s been said that resentment can cause cancer. An ancient proverb says, “Hatred is like acid, it causes more damage to the vessel it is stored in than that which it is poured upon.”
In the past such thinking was criticized by the left-brained and scientific-minded as “new age” or “Pollyanna.” However, science is now beginning to confirm what many mind-body experts, philosophers, and metaphysicians have been saying all along—negative thoughts and emotions of almost any kind can cause illness and shorten life.

In a December 2004 study, researchers from the University of California at San Francisco found proof of the first direct link between emotional stress and cellular changes associated with premature aging. In a group of stressed women who were frantically taking care of a chronically ill child, the women showed signs of premature aging including higher oxidative stress and damage to structures on their chromosomes called telomeres. The high stress group also showed the equivalent of ten years of extra aging in cells of their immune systems. Although the researchers admitted that many of the biochemical links between stress and sickness are still unknown, the study validates previous research, which theorized that emotional stress might have serious medical consequences.

Another December 2004 study in the journal Neurology found that anger and other negative emotions increased the risk of stroke. Two hundred stroke patients with an average age of 68 were interviewed within several days after having a stroke. A large percentage of them reported exposure to extreme anger, fear, irritability, or nervousness immediately prior to the stroke.

A large and important study, spanning 52 countries, was published in the journal Lancet in 2004. It showed a direct link between stress and heart disease. People who experienced stress from major life events, stress at home, stress at work, or financial stress had a 250% greater risk of heart attack—that’s almost as high-risk as smoking cigarettes. If stress and a boiling temper can make you sick, is it such a stretch to believe that any positive thought or emotion can be beneficial to your health—even age-reducing?

In Ageless Body, Timeless Mind, mind-body expert Deepak Chopra writes, “Wherever a thought goes, a chemical goes with it. Distressed mental states get converted into the biochemicals that create disease. A bout of depression can wreak havoc with the immune system; falling in love can boost it. Despair and hopelessness raise the risk of heart attacks and cancer, thereby shortening life. Joy and fulfillment keep us healthy and extend life. Because the mind influences every cell in the body, human aging is fluid and changeable; it can speed up, slow down, stop for a time, or even reverse itself.”

Pessimism, hatred, resentment, worry, jealousy, doubt, anxiety, fear, uncontrolled passions, and other emotions of all kinds manifest themselves physically as disease and premature aging. Positive thoughts keep you young and healthy.
Your Mental Blueprint

Quantum physicists have proven that 98% of the atoms in your body are replaced within one year. In three months your body produces an entirely new skeleton. Every six weeks, all the cells have been replaced in your liver. You have a new stomach lining every five days. You are continually replacing old blood cells with new ones. Every month you produce an entirely new skin as dead cells are shed and new cells grow underneath. The proteins in your muscles are continually turned over as amino acids are broken down and new muscle tissue is synthesized.

You are perpetually becoming younger! Every cell in your body is constantly being turned over as old cells die and new cells replace them. If nature creates a new body for you every year, and if the trillions of cells in your body are perpetually renewed and the oldest cells in your body are not more than a year old, then how is it possible that your cells should ever appear old?

Orison Swett Marden, in his 1909 book *Why Grow Old*, answers like this:

> The impression of old age is made up on new cells. This impression is the thought. If the thought is old, the age impression appears upon the cells. If the spirit of youth dominates the thought, the impression upon the cells is youthful.

> Putting old thoughts into a new set of cells is like putting new wine into old bottles. They don’t agree; they are natural enemies. The result is that two-year-old cells are made to look like fifty, sixty, or more years old, according to the thought.

> There is not a single cell in our bodies that can possibly become old; the body is constantly being made through cell renewal, the cells of those parts of it that are most active being renewed oftenest. If must follow that the age producing process is largely artificial and unnatural.

How’s that for a paradigm shift! As radical as it may sound, there is truth in the fact that we think ourselves old. Your body is engineered to be perpetually renewed. Your new physical cells are constantly regenerated and poured into the mold of your mental blueprint. Only by pouring new cellular material into an old mental blueprint, or by pouring old-age thoughts into new cells do you accelerate pathological aging.

Aging should be a natural and graceful maturing process. To keep from aging unnaturally, you must hold youthful thoughts, pictures, and ideals in your mind. The blueprint for the body is in your mind, and you can only change your body by changing your mental blueprint.
The Excellence Mindset: Mental Patterns of the Fit and Ageless

Why did we interview over fifty people past the age of forty and ask “How do you think?” instead of just settling for diet and training information? Why so much emphasis on mindset? Isn’t fitness mostly physical? Oddly enough, healthy aging is as much mental as it is physical, and depending on your perspective, maybe more so. The mind and the body cannot be separated, so a book on total health and fitness transformation cannot be written only about physical aspects.

You can model excellence in others. If you study people with long health spans and life spans and do what they do, you increase the odds of your also enjoying the same. However, mere imitation of workout programs or diets is not enough. For your role modeling to be complete, you must model the belief systems, thinking, and attitudes of those you want to emulate as well as the behaviors and actions.

The Fit Over 40 Excellence Mindset includes an entire group of beliefs and attitudes towards life and the behaviors they create. Many researchers including gerontologists, sociologists, and psychologists, have examined the attitudes and mindsets of the long lived, and in every study, patterns and similarities emerge.

I have written these excellence habits and mindsets in the first person so that as you read them, you’ll be able to easily identify with them—as if they are already part of your mental patterns.

“I maintain a youthful and positive self-image.”

Most people have a mental picture of what a person is supposed to look like as they get older. If I ask you, “What does a 70-year-old look like?” a picture instantly pops into your mind. As sure as the sun will rise in the east tomorrow, you will become at seventy what you visualize and imagine a 70-year-old is supposed to look like today.

At an early age, I was fortunate to have an unusually positive image placed in my mind of what an older person should look like. I began attending bodybuilding contests as a spectator at age fifteen. At age twenty, I competed in my first body-building competition. At every show, there was always a masters division, with age groups ranging from 35-40 and up. Grand masters can range from sixty and up! These were my first role models for aging.

After many years of seeing these physiques, I simply accepted that it was completely natural and normal to be able to continue bodybuilding and to stay strong, lean and healthy my entire life. The evidence was right there in front of me; how could I deny it? So I’ve grown up with a belief installed in my brain that
I’m simply going to keep getting better—as long as I keep training and taking care of myself.

Unfortunately, that’s not the predominant belief system in our culture today. Just as I watched the masters bodybuilders onstage and said to myself, “That’s what I’m going to look like that when I get older,” most people look at the aging, frail, and decrepit masses and say the same thing. To make matters worse, they fear the negative effects of growing old, and the intense emotion of fear becomes a force of attraction all its own.

When you close your eyes and imagine yourself ten, twenty, forty years from now, what do you see? If you don’t like what you see, change the picture! After all, it’s your brain. Your right to choose your own thoughts is the one thing you will always control—and, it represents your ultimate freedom. No one can make you think a thought you don’t want to think. But if you don’t monitor your thinking and consciously develop your own beliefs and a positive self-image, you will be influenced by and at the mercy of the mass belief systems of society.

Before the outer you can change, the inner you must change first. You are what you eat, for sure, but “You are what you think” is an undeniable spiritual and psychological law. You are as old as you think you are and not a day older. Picture it, believe it, expect it, affirm it and take action that backs it up, and you will become your picture.

“I transform negatives into positives.”
A common denominator among the agelessly fit is that they have become consciously aware of their thoughts and emotions. They’re aware of the effect negative mental states have on their body. They know how to stop negative thoughts and emotions in their tracks and turn them into positives. They look for the hidden benefit in every adversity.

Listen to Fit Over 40 role model Georgette Pann: “The personal characteristic most important for staying fit and healthy, especially after age forty, is positive thinking. With every obstacle you encounter, you must have the ability to turn negatives into positives.” Role model Sophie Taggart says, “If you can simply interrupt a negative cycle—at any point—then you have the possibly for change.” Bodybuilding legend Dave Draper adds, “My inspiration comes with every positive blow I land on the negative forces that would hold me down.”

Many people say that trying to think positively all the time is exasperating at best and impossible at worst. Of course that’s absolutely true. We live in a world of polarity. For positive to exist, there must be a negative. Completely eliminating
negatives is not the goal. The goal is to avoid *dwelling* on negative thoughts, mulling over them, expanding them or allowing them to fester and gain strength.

When you become aware of negative thoughts and emotional states, you can begin to use them as pivot points to flip you into positive states. The instant a negative thought or negative emotion pops into your conscious awareness, that’s your signal to immediately *break the pattern* by thinking of the polar opposite and dwelling on the new thought instead. Change your focus to what you want, not what you want to avoid. *Pivots word* such as “switch” or “next” can help.

Repeatedly breaking this pattern will weaken the old thought patterns to the point where they cannot “play” properly, as if you scratched a record so the needle can’t stay in the grooves anymore. Eventually, your habitual thought patterns begin to form new mental grooves, putting a “new tune” in its place and the negatives pop up less and less. This simple exercise has created many miracles in people’s lives.

Filling your mind with positive thoughts, positive emotions, and lofty ideals is quite possibly more youth restoring than any other anti-aging practice. It may even be more powerful than drugs, because it causes your body to tap into its own “natural pharmacy” and produce whatever chemicals are needed in the precise amounts needed—without side effects, and free of charge!

“*I associate with and “replay” fond memories.*”
People who stay healthy and fit after forty tend to think about, talk about and “replay” fond memories and good times. When describing them, they are fully associated and reliving these mental movies with big and bright pictures. They use *creative amnesia* to forget disagreeable things. They shrink their mental pictures of past negative experiences, push them off in the distance or behind them and they make them dim, dark, and fuzzy. People who do not stay fit after forty tend to dissociate from good memories, and associate with the bad ones. They tend to mull over, dwell upon and replay bad experiences and emotional traumas over and over again (as if once wasn’t enough).

“*I laugh a lot and I have a great sense of humor.*”
People who are fit over forty maintain a wonderful sense of humor and they never take things too seriously. In fact, they consider seriousness a disease. Someone once said, “You don’t stop laughing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop laughing.” Norman Cousins said that laughter was like “internal jogging.”
“I am a lifelong learner and I stay active mentally.”
In the many studies of centenarians, one characteristic that virtually all of them had in common is that they continue to learn, be creative, and stay mentally active. They read, write and engage in a wide variety of mentally stimulating and challenging work or hobbies. They realize that the maxim “use it or lose it” applies equally to body and brain. That’s why they have a childlike state of intense curiosity and are devoted lifelong learners. In Why Grow Old, Orison Sweet Marden wrote, “No one can remain youthful who does not continue to grow, and no one can continue growing who does not keep alive his interest in the great world about him. It is a lamentable fact that multitudes of men seem incapable of receiving or accepting new ideas after they have reached middle age.”

“I am cheerful and optimistic.”
Mind/body experts tell us that being cheerful causes a flood of beneficial chemicals to be released into our bodies and enhances the immune system. People who are healthy and fit over forty are habitually cheerful, and it’s also a part of their self-image. These people are always able to look at the bright side. As W. Clement Stone described in his classic book, The Success System That Never Fails, they have the ability to always find the “seed of a greater or equivalent benefit” in every adversity.

“I never have to go to work because I make my living doing what I love the most —retirement is not a possibility!”
People who are fit over forty do not stop working. In fact, they never started working because they do what they love and love what they do. Many say that they never worked a day in their lives. To these people, retirement is equal to death. Even if they retire in the traditional sense, they stay busy and engaged in doing something that they love which brings them great satisfaction, which is often dedicated to the service of others.

The late George Burns, who “worked” right up to his death at the age of 100, is perhaps the best example. George once said, “As long as you’re working, you stay young. When I’m in front of an audience, all that love and vitality sweeps over me and I forget my age. Retirement at sixty-five is ridiculous. When I was sixty-five I still had pimples.”

“I listen to my body, pay attention to my feelings, and trust my intuition.”
People who are fit over forty have finely tuned their intuition and use this and
their feelings as a guidance mechanism. If you have an instinctively bad feeling about something you’re doing, you can rest assured that you’re moving away from your mission, purpose and goals. If you feel good about something, it’s a good indication that you’re aligned with your purpose and values. You must realize that trusting your inner voice will help you make better decisions, choose more appropriate actions and learn exactly what works.

“I am independent, autonomous, and self reliant.”
Another characteristic that always pops up in studies of the healthy and long-lived is independence and self-reliance. Although the healthy and fit after forty have rich social relationships, they also have a strong sense of independence. Deepak Chopra writes, “A strong sense of personal freedom, coupled with personal happiness, is critical to surviving in good health to a ripe old age.” This type of independence gives people a sense of personal control. It makes them feel as if they are in charge of their lives rather than their lives being at the mercy or others and the environment.

“I accept responsibility for everything that happens to me in my life.”
Steve Siebold wrote a great book called 177 Mental Toughness Secrets of the World Class: The Thought Processes, Habits and Philosophies of the Great Ones. Although Steve’s book is not about anti-aging or senior fitness, it’s very similar to Fit Over 40 because it’s a book of models. It lists all the traits and characteristics of peak performers in all areas of life. Secret number 105 in Steve’s book is, “The great ones take responsibility.” Great people believe that they create their own reality. However, if you accept responsibility for creating your success you must also accept responsibility for every other result, condition, and circumstance you’re now experiencing in your life— because you created it! Unsuccessful people want credit for their successes, but not the blame for their failures.

“I value and enjoy good friendships, and I will continue making new friends.”
As people get older, they often tend to restrict their circle of friends to a smaller group of people. They also make fewer new friends, unless they change their values about the importance of friendship. In the many studies of centenarians that have been conducted over the past half a century, almost one hundred percent of the long-lived and healthy were married, had children and enjoyed wonderful friendships. Without a doubt, your physical health has a lot to do with your social health. Those who are devoted to live with great health to 100 and beyond are okay with the fact that they will probably outlive most of their friends and families, so they make new friends all the time. They also choose their friends wisely, as they know that their friends will influence them.
“I am grateful for everything in my life.”
A thankful mindset keeps you connected to your spiritual “source of supply.” An attitude of gratitude is an affirmation of already having received. Gratitude keeps you focused on what you have and brings your blessings into conscious awareness. When you’re aware of how much you already have, it makes you feel good rather than focusing on what’s missing in your life, which makes you feel bad. Simply being grateful can completely change your emotional state and as you now know, your emotions affect your health.

If you only have a little, gratitude can make you feel appreciative that you have anything at all. When you ask, “What am I thankful for?” it makes you scan your mind and your experience until it finds things you have that you can be grateful about, either tangible or intangible. Inspirational author Wayne Dyer says, “What we think about expands. If your thoughts are centered on ‘what’s missing,’ then ‘what’s missing,’ by definition, will have to expand.” Focusing on what you lack becomes a point of attraction and you simply attract more lack into your life. This is the explanation for the biblical expression, “To him that hath, more shall be given. To him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.” That’s why you should give thanks and express gratitude daily for everything you have, especially your body and your health.

“I cope well with stress.”
Having stress in your life doesn’t mean you’re more likely to succumb to disease and accelerated aging. The amount of stress in your life is not as important as your ability to cope with it and recover from it. Those who are fit over forty use mental and physical strategies to cope with stress. Mentally, they use “reframing” as a way of changing their perspective. A classic example: “I had the blues because I had no shoes, then upon the street I saw a man with no feet.” With a different perspective on your situation, often a comparison with someone a lot worse off than you, feelings and emotions can change.

“I have a peaceful, calm, and tranquil mind.”
In his wonderful book As a Man Thinketh, James Allen says, “Calmness is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom. It is the result of long and patient effort in self-control. Its presence is an indication of ripened experience, and of a more than ordinary knowledge of the laws and operations of thought.” 70+ fitness exemplar Don Tucker says that a tranquil mind is one point that is very often overlooked in the quest for health and fitness. “Health is similar to wealth,” says Don. “It’s difficult to enjoy if your mind is in turmoil.” To achieve tranquility of mind, Fit over 40 role models use many of the same strategies they use to cope with stress—meditation, yoga, balance and a mind that can reframe and dwell on the positive.
“I let go of resentments and forgive everyone for everything.”

Holding resentments and grudges against others is quite possibly one of the most disease-promoting and life-shortening mental states. For selfish reasons, if for no other, forgiving everyone for everything is something you must do if you wish to live a long, healthy, and happy life. Inspirational author Louise Hay believes that cancer is a disease of deep resentment that is held for so long that it literally eats away at the body. She should know—she suffered from and survived it without surgery. She said, “If I had an operation to get rid of the cancer and I did not clear the mental pattern that created it, then the doctors would just keep cutting Louise until there was no more Louise to cut. If cancer or any other illness returns, I do not believe it is because they did not ‘get it all out,’ but rather, that the patient has made no mental change.”

“I have consciously set a goal to live a long, healthy life, and improve with age.”

In a 1999 American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) survey, 2,032 adults were asked how long they wanted to live. Sixty-three percent of them cited an age less than 100. A healthy, fit, long life will only be enjoyed by those who have the courage to reach out, and expect it. The goals you set for your longevity are limited more by your beliefs than any other factor. Now, consider where your beliefs have come from: many people’s beliefs about longevity are based on the past rather than thinking about what the future may bring.

In the year after Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile, which the experts thought was physiologically impossible, 37 other runners also ran a mile in under four minutes. Today high school students run a mile in under four minutes. The “experts” were wrong. You cannot hit what you do not aim at, and you won’t aim at a target you believe is impossible to hit. Look at how many people who set the goal to be a centenarian pass away within months, weeks or even days after their 100th birthdays. What does that tell you about the power of the will to live? Only when more people in our generation set the goal of being the “Roger Bannisters of longevity,” will we begin to see more and more people living with health and quality of life to 125, 130—or even 150!

“I have a mission and a strong sense of purpose and meaning in my life.”

It’s not a coincidence that the median age of death in America is 75. This is logical and predictable—death follows disengagement. Death is nature’s way of saying, “When the meaning of your life is lost, life is over.” For those who remain aware and connected to their purpose and the reason why they’re here, the will to live remains strong. It’s a verifiable fact that death rates from cancer and heart disease are lower among people who have a strong sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. In the words of master success coach Bob Proctor, “Becoming aware
of your purpose helps you connect with the higher side of your life and uncaps a fountain of inspiration. With a definite purpose, loneliness and separation fade away and disappear. You become a necessary part of something much larger.”

The Beginning—Not “The End”
As you’ve clearly begun to see by now, youthfulness does not just come from exercise and nutrition. No diet, workout program or supplement in isolation will ever increase the quality or quantity of human life. Human beings are much more complex than flesh and blood. We are spiritual beings having a physical experience. To focus on only part of the mind/body/spirit combination is to experience only a fraction of your true being. You must work on the mental and physical plane for total transformation to take place. Adopt these mindsets and behaviors of excellence, and miracles can happen in your life—just as they have for countless others, including our Fit Over 40 role models.

Age forty could be the beginning of the healthiest, fittest, richest period of your life, or it could be the beginning of the end, depending on how you look at it. If you just turned forty or fifty, why not think about the years you’ve lived so far, and think about your most recent birthday as a beginning of something new. Even if you’re sixty or seventy, why not play with the idea that you’ve only reached the halfway point and that you have another entire lifetime ahead of you—and that you can enjoy those years with perfect health, supreme fitness, a great body, and an amazing quality of life.

Take that belief and try it on for size. You might just like it. ::
About The Authors

Jon Benson
Jon Benson is an internationally recognized transformation life coach, specializing in nutrition and physical fitness. His 48-week total transformation program M-Power has won him critical acclaim in publications such as Shawn Phillips’ Real Solutions, Master Trainer and in Olympian and motivational speaker Kevin Saunders’ A Nation At War. M-Power boasts an amazing 98% success ratio and is now international in scope. Jon is also the publisher of the free monthly e-zine AllYourStrength and co-owner of BeVo, LLC.

Jon is a graduate from MIT’s School of Music and Abilene Christian University, degree in Human Communications and Philosophy Studies. Jon studied nutrition at The Cooper Clinic, and is currently working on completing his masters degree in nutritional sciences. He is also the author of the new e-book, 7 Minute Muscle.

Tom Venuto
Tom Venuto is a certified strength & conditioning specialist (CSCS), certified personal trainer (CPT), lifetime natural bodybuilder, freelance writer, success coach and author of the #1 best-selling fitness and weight loss e-book in the world, Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle (BFFM): Fat Burning Secrets of the World’s Best Bodybuilders and Fitness Models.

Tom has written over 170 articles and has been featured in Ironman Magazine, Natural Bodybuilding, Muscular Development, Muscle-Zine, Olympian’s News (in Italian), Exercise for Men and Men’s Exercise. He is also co-owner of BeVo, LLC, a joint venture fitness enterprise.

For more information on M-Power and to subscribe to his free newsletter, click here.

For more information on Tom’s book Burn The Fat, click here.

To subscribe to Tom’s free e-zine, click here.
Recommended Reading

**Biomarkers**
- Dare to be 100
- Defy Aging
- As a Man Thinketh
- Ageless Body Timeless Mind
- The Power of Full Engagement
- 7-Minute Muscle
- Master Trainer (www.Ageless-Athletes.com)
- Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle
- Keys To The Inner Universe
- Unleashing The Wild Physique
- Challenge Yourself at Any Age
- Body For The Ages
- The Fat Burning Diet
- A Nation At War
- Magical Mind, Magical Body
- Revitalize Your Life
- Fabulously Fit Forever
- Lean For Life
- Ripped I, II & III
- ABSolution
- Body For Life
- The Fat Burning Diet Cookbook
- There's Always a Way
- Stress for Success
- You Can Heal Your Life
- The Power is Within You
- Psycho Cybernetics
- Introducing NLP
- Awaken the Giant Within
- Unlimited Power
- Personal Power
- Powertalk

*William Evans*
*Walter Bortz*
*Dr. Michael Brickey*
*James Allen*
*Deepak Chopra*
*Jim Loehr*
*Jon Benson*
*Dr. Richard Winett*
*Tom Venuto*
*Bill Pearl*
*Vince Gironda*
*Clarence Bass*
*Pax Beale*
*by Jay Robb*
*Kevin Saunders*
*Deepak Chopra*
*Jack LaLanne*
*Frank Zane*
*Clarence Bass*
*Clarence Bass*
*Shawn Phillips*
*Bill Phillips*
*Jay Robb*
*Kevin Saunders*
*Jim Loehr*
*Louise Hay*
*Louise Hay*
*Maxwell Maltz*
*Joseph O'Connor and Jane Seymour*
*Anthony Robbins*
*Anthony Robbins*
*Anthony Robbins (audio)*
*Anthony Robbins (audio)*

Research

- American College of Sports Medicine
- National Strength and Conditioning Association
- Institute on Active Aging

* Highly Recommended
New From The Authors of *Fit Over 40!*

Now you can make it easier on yourself with “The Easiest Diet In The World”! The world is screaming out for “the” diet when there is no such thing. Any diet can work, but most diets fail. What I discovered is why and how each diet works and how to make it easier. Eventually it is not a diet at all — it is just “how you eat.”

Jon Benson will show you what so many have called *The Easiest Diet In The World*—*Simply Eat!*

In fact, that was almost the title of my book, but in truth my book is NOT a diet. Rather, this is **five simple steps to make any diet more effective**. From vegans to Atkins to anything in-between, *Simply Eat!* makes for the ideal companion to your personal meal plan.

*Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle* by Tom Venuto is the #1 ranked diet e-book and fitness ebook in the world. Finally, someone has exposed the truth about fat loss that the magazines and supplement companies don’t want you to know about! The sheer amount of testimonials and positive feedback that continue to pour in about this “fat loss bible” is testament to the effectiveness of these methods for **getting rid of body fat fast**. Tom has helped thousands of people to turbo-charge their metabolism, gain muscle, burn off body fat and develop unstoppable motivation. Best of all, *Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle* is incredibly honest and straightforward without all the hype you see in the magazines and infomercials these days. **Even if you’ve never succeeded at losing weight before, this is the fat loss system you’ve been looking for!**

You’ve read about *7 Minute Muscle* in *Fit Over 40*—now you can experience this breakthrough in rapid muscle growth and fat loss yourself! Jon’s newest e-book details his *Power7 Density Training System*, a powerful way for **anyone**—from bodybuilder to recreational lifter—to get in and out of the gym FAST! Most of us don’t have hours a day to work out. Even if we did, those crazy magazine-type workouts are for hard-core athletes or steroid users. Jon originally developed Power7™ for his clients who only have MINUTES a day to train. However, by altering just a few components, even super-conditioned hard-core bodybuilders like *Fit Over 40’s* Georgette Pann and Jay Raulerson were able to make **incredible gains**. The ONLY DIFFERENCE between a bodybuilder and a recreational lifter when it comes to *Power7* is the specific system you choose—and all **three Power7 systems are covered in detail! It’s one of the most effective methods of training for anyone, for any goal!”