

The Magic Pill - Sample Content

The Magic Pill

Your Prescription for a Longer, Healthier, and Happier Life

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Introduction

The Magic Pill

Imagine for a minute I was your personal doctor and during a routine check-up I told you there was a pill with seemingly magical powers now available to everyone and I was incredibly excited (bouncing off the walls, jumping up and down, shouting from the mountain tops) to tell you about it. So excited, in fact, I believe the whole world should be taking it, every doctor should prescribe it to their patients and it is now up to me and a few select others in the know, to get the word out starting with you right now!

I'm telling you as sure as you are now reading these words, this pill does exist. Some doctors have already branded it the true "Fountain of Youth." This magic pill has been scientifically proven to lengthen your natural lifespan, improve your self-esteem, increase your energy level, decrease your body fat, improve your skin tone, increase the natural production of your body's youthful hormones, improve your sex drive, increase your bone density, and improve your memory.

At this point you're probably thinking out loud "Wow 'Doc' that's truly amazing! There's really a pill for that?"

Yes there is, but this pill does so much more. Taken just once a day, it significantly reduces high blood pressure, improves the flow of blood throughout the body, lowers your bad cholesterol and also raises your good cholesterol. The magic pill can reduce your risk of getting cancer by 55%, reduce your risk of having a heart attack by 50%, and reduce your risk of having a stroke by over 40%. Scientific research has also discovered it can help prevent type 2 diabetes because it controls blood sugar, decreases insulin resistance and improves metabolism.

"Okay, okay already," you say, "what is this 'magic pill,' where can I get it, and how much is it going to cost me?"

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All excellent questions, but before I tell you, I must let you know about some of the side effects. But because this truly is a magic pill, the side effects are good, not bad. When you start taking it, you may notice it will improve your posture, increase your strength and muscle tone, improve your mood, improve the quality of your sleep, release the tension in your body, decrease your appetite, and even reduce your anxiety.

“Come on now, you’re killing me! Let the cat out of the bag so I can get my hands on this pill. It sounds like a true miracle... the elusive Magic Pill.”

Alright, it may surprise you to learn this pill does exist, is already available to everyone and at the most, might cost you one to two dollars a day. The Magic Pill which we should all be taking is a daily dose of exercise, pure and simple. Thousands upon thousands of scientific studies have proven the undeniable and almost countless benefits of exercise and we are learning about more and more benefits each day as new studies are conducted and published. Exercise is the ultimate preventive medicine because it will improve your overall health, fitness, and well-being, while also helping to prevent or decrease the probability of getting many illnesses, reduce your likelihood of getting sick, and likely keep you out of the hospital during most of the days of your life.

Every successful journey begins with a single step

Congratulations! If you are reading this now, you have taken the first step on your journey to a healthier and happier life. You have made a decision to make your life better. My job is to illuminate your journey with helpful signs to guide you in the right direction. These signs will motivate, educate, and inspire you to take positive action, eliminate your fears, and forget about any guilt from past failures.

All of our time on earth is priceless. Time is hearing the emotion-provoking sounds of beautiful music, seeing the majesty of an eagle in flight, tasting the savory flavor of your favorite foods, and feeling the warmth and security of true love. Time is the precious moments we have with our family, loved ones, and closest friends. I want to

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give you more of this time and all it takes is a little effort on your part. We are going to take this walk together and our destination is a younger, healthier, and happier you.

Over the past twenty years, I have had the great fortune to be mentored by some of the best exercise, nutrition, and self-help gurus. I've attended hundreds of scientific lectures, read almost every current book published on diet and exercise, and reviewed thousands of scientific studies related to health, nutrition, exercise, and nutritional supplementation. Like Tony Robbins would say: I tell you this not to impress you, but to impress upon you the validity and credibility of the information I will present to you. While I may not have completely captured all of the information and research I reviewed for this book, please be assured that I tried my best to summarize the essence of it throughout the book. For more information on selected topics, I have included a references list in the appendices.



In *The Magic Pill*, I hope to educate you on the substantial benefits of exercise, inform you on the latest research and guidelines on cardiovascular and resistance training, and motivate you to begin and maintain a consistent exercise program that meets the current exercise guidelines recommended by the US Department of Health and Human Services, the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. I will help you with goal setting, recommend useful tools for accountability, take you through my systematic approach to designing a progressive exercise program, and teach you about nutrition and supplementation. Most importantly and above all else, I want you to attain the lasting health, energy, and self-worth you deserve.

***The mediocre teacher yells.
The good teacher explains.
The superior teacher demonstrates.
The great teacher inspires.***

William Arthur Ward

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Inspiration is a powerful force that can launch us closer to our hopes and dreams. The Merriam-Webster's online dictionary defines the word inspiration as "a divine influence or action on a person believed to qualify him or her to communicate sacred revelation." Nothing inspires me more than helping people achieve their goals. Everyday I get to share in the joy and sense of accomplishment my clients and friends feel as they experience all the benefits exercise has to offer. I've been fortunate enough to see people lose 40, 50, 60, and even 100 pounds in less than 12 months with consistent effort. These are real people with real jobs, real kids and real problems, living in the real world.

I have worked with people of all ages, race, ethnicity, and any other demographic you can think of which is why I call exercise the universal law of health. Besides the visibly obvious cosmetic benefits of exercise, the changes that happen on the inside, in the heart, soul, and spirit are even more beautiful to see. When you see someone regain their sense of hope, self-confidence and self-esteem after living without it for years, it can move you emotionally. Quite frankly, this highly rewarding aspect of my profession keeps my motivational flame burning and served as the inspiration for writing this book. I want you to be inspired too. So throughout this book I have included the stories, results, and photos of everyday people who incorporated *The Magic Pill* prescription into their lives. For many people "seeing is believing" so I hope their testimonies will serve as convincing evidence to inspire you whenever you need it.

Your commitment, discipline, and achievement will motivate others to follow in your footsteps too! People tend to model the behaviors and attributes of the people they are around the most. I have had many clients whose success inspired others to make positive changes in their own lives. The secret to accomplishing this is by focusing on you. Let your results be the beacon of light that illuminates the pathway to success. Others will follow. If you have children, parents, friends, brothers, sisters, or anyone you care about, keep this in mind. Your actions (not your words, best intentions, suggestions, or nagging) will always be the best example of positive leadership.

I wish you good luck on your journey, but I have a feeling you will not need luck. You have asked for the *Magic Pill* and that decision, coupled with your desire and determination, will steer you in the right direction. You are already on your way!

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CHAPTER ONE: *The Fountain of Youth*

“Exercise is the closest thing we have to the fountain of youth.”

Dr Linn Goldberg and Dr Diane Elliot
(Authors of *The Healing Power of Exercise*)

Can We Really Turn Back the Clock on Aging?

Thousands of studies have illustrated the countless benefits and biological clock-reversing power of exercise. Even with all the advances in medicine, bioengineering of superfoods, and high-tech supplements, nothing surpasses exercise in its ability to keep us young and help us live longer. Gerontologists who research and study aging have come up with dozens of theories and four schools of thought on what causes aging, but have universally concluded that exercise is the closest thing we have to an anti-aging pill. By revitalizing the biological processes involved in aging, exercise increases lifespan and dramatically improves the quality of life during our later years. We cannot overlook the impact of science and medicine in giving us vaccines, antibiotics, trauma surgery, drug therapies, psychotherapies, and life saving treatments, all which have contributed to our significantly longer life spans. In spite of all the medical breakthroughs though, and the fact that the average human lifespan has increased by 50 years during the past two centuries, many health experts agree that *children being born today have a shorter expected life span than their parents.*

AVERAGE LIFE SPANS

1796	25 Years
1896	48 Years
1996	80 Years

Why is this? Simple answer: Because of the ever-increasing prevalence of sedentary lifestyles and poor nutritional habits. Now more than ever, American adults and their children are sitting on their collective butts and eating surplus calories from highly processed, low nutrient foods. We are at the golden age of medicine as biomedical information doubles every three and half years, genes are being decoded, and scientific research unmask the microscopic processes which make life possible. Allopathic

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medicine will gladly continue to research and develop more and more drugs to treat the symptoms and discomforts resulting from our poor choices. *Exercise treats the underlying cause!* I ask you this: Is it better to treat the symptoms or cure the disease itself? Exercise is like a vaccine to old age.

It is amazing to look back just over 100 years ago and see that the three leading causes of death were influenza, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Today's leading causes of death are heart disease, cancer, and stroke. But the tide is turning again as diabetes and downstream diseases related to obesity are working their way to the top. Medicine helps us live longer, but exercise helps us live longer *and* better. As I've been advocating for the past 15 years to anyone willing to listen, exercise is the best preventive medicine there is and the true fountain of youth. You can quote me on this! *An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure!*

We can reform health care with prevention

According to the Budget of the US Government (Fiscal Year 2009), our government spent over 600 billion dollars on health care in 2008 and the US Department of Health and Human Services projects health care expenditures to double over the next 20 years. In his first State of the Union address to Congress, President Barack Obama declared health care is "one of the largest and fastest-growing parts of our budget." In a 2009 public address on health care reform, President Obama said the United States spends one dollar out of every six on health care. The true cost of our poor health is close to 700 billion dollars when you factor in lost wages, impact to our gross domestic product (GDP) from lost productivity, uninsured medical expenses covered by hospitals nationwide, and all government-backed programs related to the treatment and prevention of disease.

The best impact on health care costs we can make collectively as Americans is to focus on prevention. In fact, I don't think it is appropriate to consider aging normal anymore because for 98% of the people in our country, the rate of aging and probability of developing most diseases are a choice. Scientific research has conclusively proven the ability of exercise to dramatically slow the aging process and to significantly reduce the risk of getting almost every disease. With that in mind, I want to coin the term "*sedentary*

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aging” to differentiate the rate of inactive aging from “healthy aging.” The difference between the two can be profound. Over 250 thousand deaths each year are attributable to a sedentary lifestyle. With 48 million Americans currently being classified as sedentary, something must be done to get America moving again.

How we age is a choice!

It is never too late to start exercising. Granted, the benefits are more pronounced the earlier you start, but studies have proven the anti-aging benefits of exercise even in ninety-six-year-olds. Studies involving feeble, elderly nursing home residents proved that this fast-growing segment of our population could park their wheelchairs, ditch their walkers, and drop their canes with the addition of a little strength training exercise. Other studies have shown we have the ability to restore 75 percent of the muscle mass lost from decades of inactivity with just twelve weeks of training. Like I said, it is never too late to get started and you can see and feel the benefits almost immediately.

When I turn 85 later down the road of life, I want to be more than alive and kicking. I want to be able to “chuck the rock” and hit grounders with my future great grandkids in the backyard. I want to continue traveling without special accommodations or any limitations on when or where I can go. I want to be able to go for a run on the beach and dive into the cool ocean waves. I want to be able to go to the gym and knock out some reps of squats with 200 pounds on my back. Science and history says I can. Look at Jack LaLanne, arguably the “Godfather of Fitness,” who in his seventies and eighties was performing incredible feats of strength and endurance. Do you remember him at 70 years of age towing 70 boats loaded with 70 people for one and a half miles in the murky waters of San Francisco Bay while shackled and handcuffed? I sure do. I had the pleasure of meeting Jack last year and at 94 years young, he looked fantastic and still had the passion for exercise.

We have a young lady running around our gym named Ellen. At 93, she can run through our agility ladder, balance on one foot and simultaneously lift a five pound dumbbell over her head, stand on a balance board and still crack a decent joke. She credits her health and vigor to a lifetime of physical activity. Speaking of health and vigor, Chuck is another living testimony to the benefits of daily exercise. At 94 years of

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age, he drives himself to the gym six days out of each week to complete his two hour routine that includes walking on the treadmill, lifting weights, and stretching. If you stop him to say hi you better be prepared to avoid his shadow-boxing hands and obligatory pat on the butt when to turn to leave. We have another member at our health club named Mildred who just celebrated her 101st birthday. Thanks to decades of her daily exercise routine, she looks like she is 70 and she still has all her faculties, competently drives her own car, plays golf, and does volunteer work. Ellen, Chuck, and Mildred are all wonderful testimonies to the benefits of exercise and for some of you I hope their example will help you believe in the anti-aging power of exercise. *Seeing is believing!*

Do you want to lose weight to look great? Whether we like it or not, we live in a very cosmetic society. Television, magazines, billboards, internet spam, and popular culture have filled our heads with idealistic images (and often digitally enhanced) of what we are supposed to look like. The constant barrage of attractive celebrities and skinny ðsupermodelsö we are exposed to every day has driven into our DNA the desire to look good. In my personal training business, nine out of ten people I work with were initially motivated to exercise because they wanted to look better. As my client Kate put it when she started: ðI just want to fit in my clothes.ö While I am not promising you will be the next movie star or fashion model, I can promise you that regular, consistent exercise (paired up with a calorie-correct nutrition program) will help you lose your extra (unnecessary) weight and then help you maintain your new healthy weight.

Exercise helps the body lose excess weight by utilizing the calories we eat and raising the metabolic rate. Think of the muscles you have as an engine like the one in your car. The faster and further you go, the more fuel you burn right? Sitting on the couch is like leaving your car in the driveway idling. A tank of fuel will last a long, long time. The body is the same. If you want to lose weight, you have to get the car out of the driveway everyday and take it for a good spin around town. Keep in mind, the faster and farther you go, the more fuel you will burn.

Like the fuel in your car, the calories we eat supply the body with the energy necessary to move, think, and breathe. The body needs a minimum supply of energy to maintain itself in idle. Idle for the body would be considered a sedentary lifestyle,

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meaning there is very little activity other than sleeping, eating, and sitting around the house. For most people, it only takes about 800 to 1,400 calories to maintain the body in idle. This is called the basal metabolic rate (BMR). Weight gain occurs when we consume more calories than we collectively burn with our BMR and daily activity. Since Americans are becoming more and more sedentary, the daily activity calories burned aren't much. This is a problem we can do something about.

If you are trying to lose weight, the basic formula is simple: $C_{out} > C_{in}$. If you're like me and not good with math or formulas, this simply means: *Move more and Eat less!* Calories out (C_{out}), the calories you burn through metabolism and daily activity must be greater than ($>$) Calories in (C_{in}), the calories from the food and beverages you put in your mouth and swallow. This book is going to help you do both and show you how to increase your BMR too!

By following a progressive strength training program, you can essentially build a bigger engine by increasing the amount of lean muscle tissue you have. A six cylinder car burns more gas (typically) than a four cylinder model, right? This is one example where bigger *is* better. Later in the book, I will show you how to build a bigger engine and also help you determine the appropriate amount of calories to take in to help you feel great and get to a healthy weight.

When compared to the rest, Exercise is best!

Exercise along with a healthy diet will help you recapture your youthful vitality by slowing or reversing the physiological changes associated with aging. Thousands of studies have confirmed the protective role of exercise. In a 2002 landmark study of 6,200 men published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers concluded that physical fitness was a more important longevity factor than high blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and even smoking. Physical activity has a greater impact on your mortality risk (risk of death) than all risk factors for heart disease. Confused? Let me translate the results of this study with a few examples:

- A smoker who exercises regularly will live longer than a non-smoker who doesn't exercise.

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- Two people have high blood pressure ó one exercises regularly and one doesn't. The person who exercised during the study had a 50% less risk of death than the non-exerciser.
- A physically fit person with high cholesterol can expect to live longer than a sedentary person with normal cholesterol levels.
- During the study, the participants who did not exercise were four times more likely to die than the fit participants.

Get me on a treadmill quick! The evidence is simply overwhelming and conclusive and it only takes about twelve weeks of regular exercise to become fit and begin enjoying the anti-aging benefits. But the immediate (acute) benefits of exercise start with your first brisk walk. Studies have shown a six to eight hour blood-pressure-lowering effect from each bout of exercise. Blood sugar and triglycerides are immediately lowered from each exercise session, as well. As you consistently exercise day after day, the chronic benefits of exercise kick in: lower LDL (bad) and higher HDL (good) cholesterol levels; increased insulin sensitivity; mood improvement; strength, flexibility, and balance improvement; sleep improvement in quality and length; improvement in creativity; immune function improvement and many, many more.

The Magic Pill at Work

These benefits and others collectively represent what I call preventive medicine and it is the title and subject of the next chapter. But before you read on, let's look at a real world example of exercise working to turn back the clock on one of my clients. Dennis came to me in June of 2005 to shed a few pounds to impress a beautiful lady he was dating at the time.

Dennis' story

Dennis is in his 60s and has an intense work schedule. While interviewing him about his health history, he told me his last two annual physicals had revealed an elevated blood pressure. During the most recent check-up, his doctor warned him to get his blood pressure down or she would put him on blood pressure medication. She gave him two months.

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Dennis had no desire to start taking prescriptions and he believed if he conceded to taking one, an avalanche of others would soon follow. He asked me if there was anything he could do to get his blood pressure down naturally. After hitting him on the head with a tack hammer (not literally people), I assured Dennis that in addition to the strength training we would do and a little dietary intervention (no more fries and chips), 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise, three times a week would help serve this purpose. He followed this plan with vigilance and he was rewarded for his efforts. Within six weeks, his blood pressure (a ten measurement average) dropped from 170 over 105 to 137 over 76! Dennis was like a kid in a candy store. With his new average in hand, he went to his follow-up appointment with his doctor. She told him he was in the clear and to keep the exercise program going. Dennis also lost ten pounds in the process and gained tremendous energy to get through his hectic days managing a large construction project.

I can't claim the credit, but I firmly believe and know in my heart Dennis's transformation and newfound confidence helped him successfully land a senior VP position as Director of Construction with an international hotel chain. It never fails, when you change the body with exercise and willpower, you change the mind, and when you change the mind, you change the spirit. When you change the spirit, your confidence, self-esteem, and positive energy shines bright for all to see. I will never forget when he took me out to celebrate his reclaimed health and work promotion. Dennis said: "Look what you did for me. I can't believe it." To which I replied: "No, you did it! You are the captain of your ship. I am just the navigator helping you get to where you want to go."

"Matt has been a great inspiration for me and has helped me both mentally and physically. He has taught me to eat right, exercise right, and sleep right. In just a couple of months, I was able to lose 14 pounds of bodyfat, gain four pounds of lean muscle, and most importantly, lower my blood pressure by over 30 points. I have more energy now than ever and I have more focus on the job. Who would have known that exercising just three days a week could have such a dramatic impact. Everything has improved in my life!"

- Dennis Jones

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CHAPTER THREE:

Better than Prozac

“Opportunities are like sunrises – if you wait too long, you miss them.”

William Arthur Ward

Improve your Mood and Alleviate Anxiety

As the Bobby McFerrin song goes, “Don’t worry, be happy!” Exercise helps lift your spirits and relieve the tension that life can dish out. It is estimated that over 17 million Americans are “depressed” and that estimate came out before the current economic crisis. Life can be like quicksand, slowly sucking us down into the restrictive muck of our daily routine and habits. We start sinking under the weight of responsibilities, parenthood, spousal demands, unanswered emails, unpaid bills and unless we recognize what’s happening, eventually we are buried, suffocate, and die a premature, painful death.

Starting an exercise program is the lifeline you can grab onto and pull yourself out of the quicksand and establishing an exercise routine is the lifeboat that will keep you afloat. It gives you the freedom to move, express yourself, and experience the joy that is true life. Exercise helps you feel better, increases your sense of well-being, and boosts your self-esteem. Exercise, like therapeutic drugs, works best when you are consistent and the longer you are on an exercise program, the better the results – all without unwanted side effects.

At the time of this writing, there have been over 35 studies conducted which have proven that exercise reverses mild to moderate depression at least as well as medications and psychotherapy, and sometimes better. Technically, depression is defined as having feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in pleasurable activities for more than two weeks and can manifest itself with symptoms including: loss of appetite, insomnia, fatigue, feelings of guilt, poor concentration, reduced sex drive, and suicidal thoughts. Personally, I have suffered from depression in the past and it is no joy ride, let me tell

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you. Fortunately, I was able to pull myself out of the doldrums with my exercise lifeline and get myself back on track.

While researching and writing this book, I spent countless hours in the Starbucks around my hometown. People-watching is one of my favorite pastimes and I tend to be a fairly observant person. Thus, when my nose wasn't buried into a research text or my fingers weren't pounding on the keyboard of my laptop, I casually observed the cynical and selfish attitudes, behaviors, and comments of passersby and customers waiting for their coffee drinks. Though this is hardly scientific research and even accounting for the probability these individuals were caffeine-deprived and waiting for their fix, I deduced through this random sampling of Americana that a lot of people grumble, complain, and seem unhappy. This led me to wonder: are people seemingly miserable with life and all people, places, and things around them because of genuine unfortunate circumstances or are they really just unhappy with themselves?

Psychologists call this transference; when we take an internal negative emotion and transfer it to something external. Maybe you had a bad day at work because you forgot to do something and got yelled at by your boss. Then you come home and yell at your kids for not keeping their room picked up. You effectively transferred your internal feelings of failure to an external cause of anger. While this is a common, everyday occurrence leading to unnecessary bitterness, anger, and lots of sulking children locked in their bedrooms, exercise can provide an effective treatment to counteract a negative internal dialogue.

Exercise floods our brain with positive, mood-altering chemicals called endorphins. Endorphins are naturally occurring morphine-like chemicals that act just like morphine in regulating pain. The word endorphin is actually short for endogenous morphine, meaning morphine produced by the body. I'm sure you have probably heard about the "runner's high." The good news is you don't have to be a marathon runner to experience it. You are only one workout away from feeling better.

Any type of vigorous exercise can stimulate production of endorphins. Exercise has also been proven to increase production of the pleasure chemicals serotonin and dopamine much like antidepressant medications do. Together with endorphins, they significantly improve pain-regulation, feelings of well-being and can noticeably improve

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your outlook on life. People who exercise regularly are less prone to depression and are able to better cope with daily stress.

Besides feeling better, this exercised-induced "pleasure cocktail" of endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin could be the healthy cure for obesity. Research conducted by the US Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory and published in *The Lancet* in 2001 identified a definitive link between dopamine receptors and obesity. Scientists in the study found obese people have fewer receptors for dopamine in their brain and may eat more food volume and eat more often to stimulate the dopamine "pleasure circuits" much like a drug addict trying to get their fix. In the case of obesity, food is the drug and overeating is the fix. Since drugs that alter dopamine levels are often highly addictive, they concluded that exercise was a more viable alternative to stimulating pleasure and satisfaction via this dopamine pathway. If more people would learn to produce dopamine and other feel good chemicals with exercise, we would not only be happier and more productive, but also a lot thinner too!

Some people suffer from seasonal affective disorder which is appropriately abbreviated as SAD. SAD is a form of depression that typically occurs during the dark winter months or when you are buried in a basement office with no windows like I was early in my career in hospital administration. People who don't get to see the light of day often sleep a lot, crave sweet foods (causing weight gain), and become socially withdrawn. According to the Mayo Clinic staff and the American Medical Association, exercise and light therapy can be prescribed as a treatment for SAD and other forms of depression. While medical science hasn't officially called exercise a cure for depression, they admit it will remarkably improve its symptoms.

Here's the deal with me. If I don't exercise, I am not the same person. In fact, I recently went five days without working out because I rationalized that this book should take precedence and I needed to devote every free second I had to writing it. What I found out was I couldn't write at all, I lost the efficiency of my thought process, and I became extremely frustrated with myself. I started beating myself up a little bit (not literally) because I felt I wasted my time. Then it dawned on me that I hadn't exercised and it began to make sense. In fact, as I am writing these very words right now, I just finished a good workout and low and behold, the words are back. Maybe it's not Pulitzer

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Prize winning material, but at least it's the accurate expression of my thoughts and I'm thankful for what is flowing through my fingertips onto these pages. The point is this: time spent exercising makes us feel better and will make us *more* productive, not less (as we can easily convince ourselves sometimes). The time you spend exercising will easily be recouped when you accomplish tasks more efficiently and have more stamina to work longer, if necessary.

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CHAPTER FIVE: *Exert Yourself*

“There are only two options regarding commitment; you’re either in or you’re out. There’s no such thing as life in-between.”

Pat Riley

Commit Yourself to Exercise

Personally I believe this is the most important chapter in the book. This is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, and you will learn how to obtain all the numerous benefits we discussed previously. Exercise is the most efficient and effective method of keeping you young, preventing disease, keeping you sane, and propelling you to more success in life. You are going to learn the current exercise guidelines and key concepts like heart rate monitoring, rating of perceived exertion, the F.I.T.T. principle, cardio and weight training, and exercise principles like specificity, progression, and variation. This chapter is Fitness 101 and will give you most of the fundamental knowledge of exercise you will need.

Because of the diluted amount of information and self-proclaimed expertise that exists today, it is very easy to be confused about what and how to do anything, particularly when it pertains to diet and exercise. It is unfortunate that some people can manipulate scientific information and sensationalize results to prey upon people’s hopes and fears in order to sell the “latest and greatest” program, book, or DVD. My goal is to help you minimize the exercise clutter that’s out there and learn the basic and timeless principles of exercise which you can use for the rest of your life. For the purpose and duration of this book, I use the term exercise interchangeably with physical activity. I would define exercise as any sustained and purposeful activity which elevates your heart rate, uses the large muscles of the body, expends energy, and causes you to break a sweat.

People often ask me: “What is the best way to exercise?” and they look at me like there is a one sentence answer. This question is like asking a litigation attorney: “How

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can I win an injury case against a major drug company? or asking an auto mechanic: "How do I overhaul an engine?" There are no "one size fits all" solutions when it comes to exercise and what might be right for one person might be completely wrong for someone else. I have spent the better part of 20 years studying exercise science and I'm still learning each day.

Learning to exercise is a lot like learning a foreign language - it is best to learn with a teacher and it takes years to speak fluently. The best proven way to learn a language is through immersion; where you live, eat, read, walk, and talk in the native country whose language you're trying to learn. This is the method our government uses to train agents and emissaries to become language specialists. One of my good friends spent 18 months in Argentina - immersed in this type of learning and became extremely proficient in the official language of Spanish and even a little of Argentina's other indigenous languages like Quechua and Guarani. For most of us however, packing up our stuff and moving to Beijing to learn Mandarin Chinese is an unrealistic possibility. Most people would therefore enlist the help of a school, teacher, or a language learning system to assist them in the process.

Similarly, immersing yourself by living in a gym or health club 24/7 wouldn't be realistic either. You're not going to learn all there is to know about fitness overnight and I highly recommend you hire a personal trainer to serve as your initial coach, teacher, and mentor. Don't get me wrong, there are many self-starters out there that can use the resources provided in this book and other books, magazines, web sites, and instructional DVDs to get phenomenal results on their own. But reality for most people is that a helpful hand will expedite their results. You be the judge and do what works best for you. In any case, I recommend you join a health club which has established training protocols, group fitness classes, and instructional programs to help you learn the fitness language.

It never ceases to amaze me when I get asked: "Hey, you got a minute? How should I get in shape?" To which I reply with a lot of patience: "That's gonna take more than a minute, you have a lifetime?" The point is this: it takes time and constant exposure to technique and program knowledge to become proficient. Would you attempt to complete a complicated 1040 income tax return without the help of a good accountant? If you aren't familiar with exercise science, strength training, and cardio programming, do

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yourself a favor and at a minimum, find a decent personal trainer or fitness specialist to help get you started. Keep them on your personal staff of professionals like your attorney, accountant, doctor, and therapist to periodically adjust your program, monitor your progress, and ensure some form of accountability for your training and results. (For more information, details and suggestions about hiring a personal trainer see Chapter 11.)

And for you ðbeen there, done thatö know-it-alls out there, I have a few words of advice for youí You havenø and you didnø! Exercise science and training programs are constantly evolving, improving, and yielding better, faster, and more scientifically-based results. Donø ever think you are on top of it. I live it, breath it, try to stay current on all of the exercise and nutritional research, attend countless seminars and workshops each year, and even so, I am not too proud or naïve to think Iøm too good for someone elseøø opinion or assistance. I invest thousands of dollars each year learning from other people in my field. A new approach can be beneficial to anyone. If for no other reason, doing things in a new way will be novel to the body and provoke some type of adaptation. Even changing something as simple as your repetition speed can lead to improved results. So check your ego at the door and get a fresh opinion. Not only will people think youøre more intelligent for being smart enough to hire an expert, but your body will most likely break out of the perpetual rut itø been stuck in the past few years.

Getting Started

To get you started, I want to give you some basic information, kind of like learning how to say: ðYes, No, Whereøø the Bathroom, and May I have a beer please in German (*Ein bier bitte*). I have included a basic walking program you can use almost anywhere and my menu-based system for designing a resistance-based exercise program which will help you learn how to construct your own workouts. These are tools to help simplify the process of exercise program design as long as youøre working out, which hopefully will be for the rest of your life. With this knowledge, you should be able to go to any health club (or your own home gym if you are that fortunate) and get started with an effective program.

There are fundamentally two types of exercise or ðexertionö you need to know and understand: aerobic and anaerobic. You are probably familiar with the more popular

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terms "cardio" and "lifting weights." In the next section, we will take a quick look at muscle physiology and anatomy. You will learn the difference between the aerobic and anaerobic exercise and why both are equally essential to your ultimate health.

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CHAPTER SIX: *Motivate Yourself*

*“When you work you fulfill a part of earth’s furthest dream,
Assigned to you when the dream was born,
And in keeping yourself with labor
You are in truth loving life,
And to love life through labor is to be
intimate with life’s inmost secret.”*

Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*, circa 1923

Are you lost in love or in love to be lost?

Just last weekend I traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina to visit a really great friend of mine and we definitely had a blast. While I was enroute I had to change planes in Atlanta and had a little time to kill. Since Hartsfield is such a busy airport, I decided to make some observations about the people I saw walking by and put the dismal statistics on overweight and obese Americans to the test. Since the numbers lead us to believe that two out of every three people are overweight in our country, I expected to see herds of cattle-size humans meandering by on their way to the feeding trough of fast food restaurants in the food court. Fortunately, this was not what I saw in the thousands of people I observed that day. Maybe we’re not as bad off as the media, actuaries, and research scientists have made us out to be; or maybe overweight people don’t fly; or maybe we have learned to better disguise our weight; or maybe all the heavy people were hitching rides in those golf cart sky cabs with the annoying horns barking at you from behind. Whatever the case was, my little experiment didn’t corroborate the scientific data! but then again, my observations were hardly scientific.

Once I arrived back in Tampa, I did finally see what I was looking for but it led me to an unexpected conclusion. On the tram ride back to the main terminal, I saw a couple in their late 50’s or early 60’s who were talking to each other in that easy and familiar husband and wife kind of way. The wife was thin and unassumingly attractive, put together well, and had an air of calm about her. The husband lumbered painfully in

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his khaki slacks and the green short-sleeve golf shirt he had stretched over about 150 excess pounds of good living. His face was red, his breathing was labored, and he seemed anxious and uncomfortable. During my half hour drive home, my thoughts kept drifting back to this man and his wife. I knew that if he didn't change the course he was on, he was on his way to an early grave, no doubt about it. I thought to myself: *Is she prepared to lose this man? What's going to happen when his apparent lack of self-control takes its inevitable toll? Is he even aware that he is trading many future years with his wife for the temporary pleasures of today?*

Despite having a wonderful weekend, I was suddenly upset. I was visualizing a future of pain, suffering and loss. Granted, I can't see into the future, but the prognosis for this man's condition is pretty grim. Either he immediately make some serious lifestyle changes or the consequences of his excess weight will make them for him; except instead of being positive, quality and quantity of life improving changes, they would be changes which involved hospital stays, emergency surgery, cardiac rehabilitation, nutritional intervention, and moving around with dependency on a wheelchair and a caring, but suffering, spouse.

So I ask you now: Do you have a spouse or someone you care about who is on their own self-made path to destruction? Are you on your own ruinous path towards health complications or burdensome dependency on someone else? Are you prepared to live without the person you spend your life with? Are they prepared to live without you? *Are you in love to be lost or are you lost in love and want to do something about it?* If you aren't selfish enough to exercise for yourself, please be selfless enough to do it for the ones you love.

My experience in dealing with these situations over the past 12 plus years has taught me that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink. Like putting on excess weight is an individual decision, taking it off must be an individual decision too. That doesn't mean you can't help them. Drug addicts and alcoholics often need a family intervention to get them to take the necessary steps to institute change in their lives. Likewise, it may take your love, patience and understanding, along with a strong loving nudge in the right direction to get someone you care about to change. I think the best approach is to put yourself in the frame of mind of what your life would be like

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without this person. Could you manage? I know we all have our fleeting moments when we think we'd be better off without our spouses, family, friends, or significant others, but this is hardly realistic. Think about all the things you would miss about them -- their smile, their laugh, their trusting love, their sweet caresses, their quiet presence by your side, their fireside conversations, their reliable companionship, and all the qualities that make them so unique. Then take the time to write them down in a love letter. You can start the first paragraph with the sentence: "This is what I love about you." Then start the second paragraph with the sentence: "This is what I'm going to miss about you." Let them know how many people are touched by their life and how they would be affected if something happened. Let them know you truly care and you want to offer your help and support. And especially, lead by example. Make sure you are taking care of yourself too. I have written this chapter to help facilitate the motivation to start and continue exercising. Whether it's for you the reader, a friend, or someone you love or care about, I hope it helps.

A Labor of Love

The next step to success may prove to be the most difficult for you, but you absolutely, positively must take action and for most people that means getting rid of the excuses that have held you back in the past. In Napoleon Hill's revolutionary book *Think and Grow Rich* he outlines 30 reasons why people fail. He calls two of these reasons, procrastination and indecision, "twin brothers" because they are so similar in their impact to our lives. Don't put off the decision to start exercising for any reason, because the earlier you start the more lasting and substantial the benefits will be. In fact, ignoring the logical voice in your head telling you to exercise could be detrimental to your immediate health. Some people are just a day or two away from a catastrophic, life-changing health event which can be prevented or delayed with exercise. Remember, the benefits of exercise are immediate and for some people, life saving.

I have heard all the excuses for not exercising (trust me) and I have even fallen victim to these evil demons myself from time to time. "I'm too busy. I don't have the time. I have kids. I have better things to do. I can't afford it. I don't have the energy. It's

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too cold out. It's too warm out. I don't know what to do. I can't do it alone. My spouse won't do it. It's too late for me to start. I am too sore. My feet hurt. My back hurts. I have a headache. My favorite TV show is on." And I could go on and on, but we must learn to change our internal dialogue to a more empowering one. One of my goals in this book is to show you how.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: *Nourish Yourself*

“One’s philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And, the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.”

Eleanor Roosevelt
1884-1962, American First Lady

Do you *Eat to Live* or *Live to Eat*?

Personally, I am definitely a *Live to Eat* personality type, but I practice an *Eat to Live* philosophy by exercising good nutritional judgment most of the time. Which are you? Do you constantly think about food or do you sometimes forget to eat? If you have trouble making food decisions or feel like you could go without eating, you are an *Eat to Live* type. If you could gnaw off your own arm when you haven’t eaten for two hours, you are a *Live to Eat* type. My wife likes to joke that she is already thinking about dinner when she is eating her breakfast. She is a strong *Live to Eat* type and when she gets cranky, I know I better get her something to eat *on the double before there is trouble* (before she chews on me).

A Tufts University study of volunteers over the age of 56 who performed weight training exercises for 30 minutes, three times per week, were able to eat 300 more calories per day without gaining weight! This is great news for us *Live to Eat* types and one of the countless reasons I exercise personally. In this and the next chapter, I will discuss nutrition for nourishment and weight loss in great detail. But suffice it to say that if you like to eat like I do, than exercise can be your constant companion to prevent some of the negative consequences of eating too much. That being said, how you eat and what you eat can be just as important to your waistline and overall happiness as exercise is. So let’s spend some quality time discussing nutrition.

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The Nutritional Road Map to Dietary Success

Waiting to eat until you feel hungry is like waiting to breathe until you feel your lungs burn from a lack of oxygen. I assume you don't go around holding your breath and then suddenly take in a big gulp of air. Likewise, don't hold your meals or take big gulps of food either. This is the logic with eating small, frequent meals. Like respiration allows your lungs to constantly supply the cells of your body with oxygen via the bloodstream, frequently eating nutritious, portion-controlled meals allows the digestive system to supply the body's cells with vital nutrients via the bloodstream, as well. These nutrients are essential for tissue repair, hormone function, growth, and energy production. Without them constantly available, the body doesn't perform efficiently or heal properly and we start to feel bad.

In this chapter, I want to present you with a general nutritional philosophy on what and how we should eat and drink. After 20 years of personal experimentation with different eating plans, diets, nutritional protocols, or whatever else you want to call them, as well as extrapolating useful information from countless books and scientific articles on nutrition, I have come up with the fundamental "meat and potatoes" of sound nutrition. I also reviewed the documented dietary habits of long-lived cultures like the Okinawans, Sardinians, and the Nicoyans. I took all that I've learned and boiled it down, reducing it to a simple sauce to complete this informational meal. If you read, understand, and incorporate the nutritional principles discussed in this chapter into your life, you will feel and look better, sleep better, have more energy, and ultimately decrease your risk of most disease. This will synergistically compliment any exercise plan you follow and lead to even better health outcomes. Bon appétit!

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CHAPTER EIGHT: *Reduce Yourself*

“People who are unable to motivate themselves must be content with mediocrity, no matter how impressive their other talents.”

Andrew Carnegie

The time tested strategies of losing weight

Since the year 2000 Americans have spent more than 119 billion dollars (yes billion) annually on obesity-related medical costs. Each year over 40 billion dollars are spent by the weight loss industry on marketing. At last count, there are over 25,000 books related to weight loss and many of them offer contradictory information. Google the word “diet” and you will get over 160 million responses. There are so many books, clinics, and programs available, yet less than 10 percent of the people trying to lose weight have long-term success on any diet plan. As a fitness professional, I have been my own guinea pig and personally tried many of the popular diet plans myself. I have a fairly regimented dietary protocol so it is always interesting to see how a particular eating plan or nutritional philosophy will affect me (my weight, energy levels, mood, productivity, etc.). As a personal trainer over the past 12 years, I have witnessed my clients try every conceivable weight loss program – The South Beach Diet, Atkins, Jenny Craig, Weight Watchers, medical weight loss programs, even something called the “Cookie Diet.” You name it and chances are, I’ve tried it or have seen someone try it and monitored the results.

The bottom line from my personal experience and that of my clients is this: to lose weight you must have an effective system for governing caloric intake, you must have a daily nutritional plan, and you must increase your physical activity. I don’t care if it is eating high fiber cookies all day or having microwaveable meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the people who lose weight exercise and know how many calories they are eating and it always works. In a nutshell: *move more and eat less*. Simple rules. Incredible results!

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But you don't have to take my word for it. In 1994 the National Weight Control Registry was established by Rena Wing, Ph.D. and James O. Hill, Ph.D. to monitor people who are successful at long-term weight loss. Over 5,000 people are being followed who have lost an average of 66 pounds and kept it off for at least five years. Researchers have investigated the behaviors of these individuals and found that 78% eat breakfast, 75% weigh themselves at least once per week, 62% watch less than 10 hours of television per week, and a whopping 90% exercise for at least an hour a day. They say imitation is the ultimate form of flattery and if you are trying to lose weight, I would highly encourage you to imitate the habits of the many people who have been successful at losing weight and more importantly, successful at keeping the weight off. The following list provides a summary of the most common behaviors identified by the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) for weight loss and weight maintenance.

Secrets to successful weight loss and maintenance (from NWCR website)

- Consumption of a low calorie, low-fat diet
 - 1,300-1,680 calories per day (25% fat)
- Consistent food intake each day
- Eat 4 to 5 times per day
- Consistent consumption of breakfast
- Physical Activity for 60-90 minutes per day (on avg)
- TV viewing was less than 10 hours per week
- Weekly or daily weigh-ins
- Immediate corrective action taken with even a small amount of weight regain

If losing weight is one of your goals, benchmark these practices and incorporate them into your own life. Everybody has the ability to lose weight. Have you ever watched the CBS show Survivor? Every single person without regard to race, body type, nationality, or gender all lose weight while participating on the show. Why? During the show, they are in a highly active environment and eat a reduced amount of calories (of mostly unpleasant foods). You may be thinking: "I exercise and watch what I eat, but my body stays the same." Your genes and your parents aren't to blame. Genes can certainly influence your appetite, basal metabolism, rate of caloric burn during exercise, speed of weight loss or gain, and your set point range, but they won't prevent you from losing weight. The reality is anyone can lose weight and if you have some extra pounds hanging

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around, hopefully you will find this information useful. The program outlined in this chapter, coupled with the exercise advocated throughout this book will help you maximize your metabolism, lose weight successfully, and keep it off reliably and comfortably without starving yourself.

Why is America Fat and getting even fatter?

The average American female during the 1800s could eat a whopping 3,800 calories each day and not gain any weight. Today, women can gain weight eating a miniscule 1,800 calories a day. Why? Thanks to the industrial revolution and modern technology, our foods take less energy to prepare and digest and more importantly, we are much less active than we used to be. Technology makes things easier on us physically, financially, and mentally. Instead of plowing the fields, planting, and then harvesting our own food or at least trekking over to our neighbor's house a couple miles down the trail to borrow some molasses or a couple of eggs, now our food comes to us by delivery or we sit down in our cars and go to it. And the foods we do eat are so highly processed that even our digestive systems have to do less work now too. With the increasing urbanization of our country, we are now confined to smaller and smaller areas. If you now have a quarter acre patch of land you call home, consider yourself lucky. Urbanization, industrialization, mechanization and the sedentary lifestyle all contribute to the surplus calories being stored on the collective waistlines of America.

Fast food restaurants have become permanent fixtures on real estate near highly traveled intersections in almost every town in America (and now across the globe too). They lure us in like fish, baiting us with their neon signs, 24-hour drive-thru windows, and super value menus. Many of us are now "hooked" on the fast food lifestyle and unless we cut the line by changing our food selection habits, we will continue to be reeled in. Like our genes and last names, poor nutritional habits are passed along from generation to generation. This is why obese parents are now passing on their habits to their children and we are seeing childhood obesity and all of its health consequences on an epidemic rise. If you fall into this category, you have been a product of a bad environment and you must do something about it - for yourself and for your children.

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Be wary of the false allure of a low-fat lifestyle. Studies with hogs show that when high carbohydrate, low fat, low protein feed is constantly available to them, hogs will eat until their stomachs almost explode, pass out for 90 minutes, then wake-up and eat again; repeating the cycle over and over. Farmers have known this for centuries and it is common practice for fattening hogs for slaughter. Interestingly enough, experiments found that when fat was added to the feed, the rate of eating and the total amount of calories the hogs ate, went down. When the feed was 45% fat by calorie content, the hogs actually stopped gaining weight.

I think it would be safe to say Americans are also fattening themselves for slaughter with the only difference being the method of death (heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity and all related complications). In our age of convenience, we have food constantly available and for most of us, it is the wrong foods; foods which are highly processed and calorie-dense with fat, flour, corn, potatoes, salt, and sugar heading the ingredients list (much like donuts, pastries, fries, pizza, chips, and cookies). The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) found the top three food categories where Americans get the majority of their calories are:

1. White bread, rolls, crackers
2. Doughnuts, bagels, cookies, and cake
3. Alcoholic beverages

Hopefully we can work together and find a simple solution that will help you on your weight-loss journey. The secret to weight loss or maintaining a healthy weight is learning to avoid the blood-sugar rollercoaster ride by eating the right balance of nutrient-dense, high fiber, calorie-portioned foods and it really is not as hard as you may think. In addition to the *Ten Commandments of Nutrition* I covered in the previous chapter, I have devised a system to help you plan your meals each day. The more you plan ahead, the more successful you will be. Research has proven this over and over. Go into any restaurant without a clue of what you are going to eat and before you know it you're slamming a huge fried onion down your throat and that's just to kill the time before you're 20 ounce side of beef arrives. The bottom line: Don't plan and you will be much more likely to order something with way more calories than you need. Plan what you are going to have beforehand and you will make much better food decisions when confronted

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with the inevitable temptations on the menu. I advise my clients to decide what they are going to order before they even get to a restaurant or see its menu. Remember, you have to get rid of the excuses and take ownership of your eating.

At the very end of this chapter, I will share with you the system I have used to help people lose thousands of pounds of unwanted bodyfat. If you are currently struggling to lose weight, you are not alone and I hope you will read this chapter and use the tools I give you. Weight loss is never easy and can be even more challenging for some, but you have to believe it is possible - beliefs create reality. If a lifelong smoker can quit cold turkey, you can immediately change your food habits too. Like nicotine patches can help a smoker quit, you will need the support of your friends and family to help you quit the foods and beverages that have caused you to gain weight.

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CHAPTER NINE: *Supplement Yourself*

“You don't have to put an age limit on your dreams.”

Dara Torres

2008 Olympic Champion

Live Longer and Perform Better

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on their website at www.fda.gov, a dietary supplement is defined as: “a product taken by mouth that contains a “dietary ingredient” intended to supplement the diet. The “dietary ingredients” in these products may include: vitamins, minerals, herbs or other botanicals, amino acids, and substances such as enzymes, organ tissues, glandulars, and metabolites. Dietary supplements can also be extracts or concentrates, and may be found in many forms such as tablets, capsules, softgels, gelcaps, liquids, or powders.” Are supplements right for you? Can they help you live longer, feel better, and lose weight? Are they a waste of money? These are the questions I will attempt to answer in this chapter and I hope to alleviate some of the confusion that I know exists in most people’s minds. I will present you with some research-backed conclusions about which supplements can help you with your general health and some that can help you with weight loss and some that can improve your performance on the track, in the water, on your bike, or even in the gym.

The use of supplements is arguably a highly controversial subject. If you ever want to stimulate a great debate, or more realistically a one-sided lecture, just ask almost any physician what they think about nutritional supplements. I tried this with my personal doctor and he simply said: “If you eat a balanced diet, they probably are a waste of money. But then again, they probably won’t hurt you either.” With such convincing advice (insert sarcastic tone here), what’s someone to do?

The reality of the matter with regard to nutritional supplements is that due to conflicting reports in the media and lackluster support from the medical profession, most people are rightfully confused. Recently I attended a nutritional medicine lecture

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presented by Dr Ray D. Strand (author of 7 books on nutritional medicine including *What Your Doctor Doesn't Know About Nutritional Medicine May Be Killing You*). He pointed out that physicians are disease and drug oriented because of the educational emphasis placed on the diagnosis and treatment of disease during medical school. Dr Strand said: "Very little time in medical school is devoted to disease prevention or nutrition." With that in mind and considering the billion-dollar marketing power of the large drug manufacturers, he concludes doctors are generally biased against nutritional supplementation. When it comes to the media, whether it is the 5 o'clock news, newspaper and magazine articles, or radio "breaking news" reports, you have to realize that pharmaceutical companies represent a significant portion of the advertising dollars for these "for-profit" companies. Thus, knowingly and unknowingly, they may be quick to point out the "bad" or inconclusive studies regarding nutritional supplements and hesitate to report the "good" or positive ones.

Personally I believe the tide is finally turning as more definitive research on the health benefits of specific supplements is now available. Many successful doctors are adding nutritional medicine to their practices and finding the results are beneficial for their patients and their businesses. Even some of the large drug manufacturers are getting into the supplement business by developing prescription formulations of natural products and acquiring some of the more successful supplement companies. I guess they figured: "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

For the past 18 years or so, I have followed the latest scientific developments dealing with supplements both as an athlete and as a former owner of a sports nutrition business. Personally, I have always looked for natural ways to improve my strength, conditioning, and athletic performance, but more importantly, I have always wanted to know what I can do to live a long, high-quality life. When it comes to nutritional supplementation, these are two different animals. Performance-enhancing supplements are called ergogenic aids and life-extending, health-promoting supplements are often called nutraceuticals because of their medicinal effects on the body. I have always used the results of double-blind, placebo-controlled studies to guide my decisions on what supplements to take and will share some of what I've learned with you.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Empower Yourself

Your body can do it if your mind will allow it!

We so often are self-limiting in our beliefs and our attitudes which inevitably become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you learn to convert this *stinking thinking* to positive expectation, you will unlock your true potential. A classic illustration of self-limiting thinking on a global scale was the four minute mile. Dating back to the 19th century and halfway through the 20th century, thousands of runners tried to run the mile in under four minutes but not one succeeded. Why? At that time it was popularly believed to be physiologically impossible for a human being to run a mile in under four minutes.

Then in 1954, along came a medical student and athlete named Roger Bannister who made it his goal to achieve the impossible. After months of intense training and with a clearly defined goal pushing him to achieve it, he officially clocked the mile in 3 minutes and 59 seconds. He did it! It was an amazing feat for sure, but what is even more enlightening is the effect it had on the minds of other runners. Suddenly, a seemingly impossible barrier was lifted and despite no one doing it for centuries, many other runners went on to accomplish the milestone in the same year, and one, an Australian named John Landy, did it the very next month. Seeing is believing! Once these athletes realized it could be done, they lifted their own self-limiting beliefs, and their bodies produced the physical capacity and tolerated the pain necessary to achieve their own sub-four minute mile.

Like the runners before Roger Bannister, self-limiting thinking is pervasive in the gym and in life too. All too often we let our internal voice use defeating words like *can't*, *shouldn't*, *won't*, and *couldn't* instead of empowering words like *must*, *will*, and *can*. If you tell yourself you *can't* do something then guess what? You *can't*. Your mind can be your own worst enemy and you have to learn to recognize *stinking thinking* and stop it in its neuro-synaptic tracks. By learning how to stretch yourself, you will accomplish so much more.

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Let me give you a classic example of self-limiting thinking at work in the gym. I had a client named Anne, but her name should have been "Can't" because that's all she would say when it came to exercise. Anne was an attractive woman in her mid-forties who wanted to lose about 30 pounds. She had no functional problems or physical ailments, other than her attitude. When we were doing her first warm-up on the treadmill, she told me "I can't do this for more than three minutes." I wanted to tell her she had enough stored energy on her body to walk for three months straight, but being the consummate professional, I bit my tongue. When we were mapping out her exercise program to accomplish the ambitious goals she had, she told me "I can't exercise more than three times a week." Yet she revealed to me during our initial assessment she had plenty of time for other less beneficial uses of her time like watching TV and bowling a few nights a week. When we were using a leg press machine with a ridiculously light weight, I told her to do 20 repetitions as a warm-up and she stopped at 15 and said "I just can't do anymore."

Now when I say this was ridiculously light, I'm not speaking in macho trainer talk. A child's birthday balloon could have lifted this weight. I felt it was time to teach Anne a lesson about her self-limiting thinking. I asked her "Are you absolutely positive you can't do anymore than 15?" She replied "Yes." I wanted to tell her that my three year old daughter could lift it more than 20 times, but again, being the consummate professional and because I don't have a three year old daughter, I again bit my tongue. Anne loved to talk and pontificate about her extensive opinion on uninteresting subjects (and not workout), so I decided to use her gift of gab as my ally in said lesson.

At the beginning of the next set (at the same weight as before) I asked Anne a good, open-ended "What do you think about?" question to which Anne went on an almost three minute diatribe while she unknowingly performed 47 perfect repetitions with the weight she was "absolutely positive" she could only do 15 times. Again, I will say: Your body can do it if your mind will allow it. I pointed out to Anne her amazing feat of strength and we began to crack the self-limiting shell she was encased in and we had fewer problems with "can't" in our future workouts together.

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Beyond the Comfort Zone

By short-circuiting her self-limiting belief system with my question, Anne learned she was much more capable than she thought herself to be. Many of us find ourselves trapped by the confines of our own thoughts. Are you in the same sinking boat as Anne? If you answered yes, it's time to jump out of that boat and swim to a new way of thinking. Too many people slide into the comfort zone of mediocrity. It's time to move beyond the comfort zone! Working out at a high intensity is way beyond most people's comfort zone. I've had mothers tell me high-intensity training is "worse than child birth." Several of my clients tell me I'm sadomasochistic. I consider this a compliment because if I didn't teach them that this level of exertion was in their realm of possibility, they would never get there. The reality is that most people enjoy the process of stretching themselves to achieve new heights of fitness and strength by pushing through the pain that limited them in the past.

Knowing how to push people to their physical limits and pain threshold helps my clients achieve better results, but more importantly, teaches them they are capable of stretching the boundaries in other areas of their lives too. Maybe it's starting their own company, pursuing a childhood dream, or asking out someone who makes their heart flutter. Maybe it's confronting problem areas in their life or problem relationships. The only way to achieve more is to stretch ourselves beyond our comfort zone.

Where are you now? Are you firmly planted on the metaphorical couch of comfort and in survival mode? Or are you out there exploring new possibilities, learning new skills, and challenging yourself? Like Chuck Yeager who broke the sound barrier by literally pushing the aerodynamic limits of his Bell X-1 aircraft, you too can discover your true potential and capabilities by stretching your own limits. This is what makes America so great and is the secret to our nation's success: Bill Gates walking away from his Harvard education to pursue his crazy ambition in starting Microsoft; Jim Simplot gambling \$400 borrowed dollars to start a potato farm, then going on to become the chief supplier of potatoes for McDonalds and other fast food companies with the beloved French fry; and Lance Armstrong propelling himself through his ordeal with cancer and back onto the bike, going on to win a record seven Tour de France victories, pushing

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human capabilities to new heights. Is there something you can achieve by stepping out of your comfort zone? I believe there is but what *you* believe is far more important.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Direct Yourself

“The gateway to lasting success does not swing outward, it opens inward.”

Robin Sharma

Author of *Discover your Destiny* series

Action Leads the Way to Your Destiny

So far in this book, I hope you have discovered the motivational benefits of exercise; learned the educational tenets of exercise, nutrition, and supplementation; and been inspired by some people just like you who have earned the outward and inward rewards of exercise. In the previous chapter, we empowered your mind for positive outcomes and expectations and learned how to harvest the bounty of setting goals. Now it's time to take action and direct ourselves toward getting results. All the knowledge in the world is useless without action. If you are already vigilant about exercise but want to refresh your passion or sharpen your exercise sword a bit, this will still be very useful information. Action, not words, determines your destiny in life.

Thus I ask my glorious readers: Do you want a healthier, happier, longer, and better life? If you answered yes, then simply *decide* you want it! Success in any endeavor starts always with a decision. D.E.C.I.D.E. is my acronym for achieving a lifetime of positive results. Whether it is losing weight, gaining cardiovascular stamina, increasing functional strength, or improving any other area of your life (in addition to your health of course), you must *decide* it is important and take action. Don't let another day go by without taking at least one step, no matter how big or small, in the direction of your hopes and dreams. One of the many hopes I have for this book is that by the end of this chapter, you will have a lifetime resource to help take you wherever you want to go. Are you ready to decide?