HOW TO:

# LOOK GOOD, FEEL GOOD, MOVE GOOD

## A MINIMALIST, HOLISTIC APPROACH TO A HEALTHIER BODY

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# INTRODUCTION

## HEALTH AND FITNESS DOESN'T NEED TO BE COMPLICATED.

**Why Am I Writing?**

There are a lot of things I wish I could go back and tell myself when I first started lifting weights 6 or 7 years ago. I used to spend hours digging deep into any information I could find to create the most "optimal" training protocol; the perfect training split paired with the perfect diet. I had a maximalist approach to every detail. I realized maybe a little too late into coaching, this just isn't practical for most people. So the goal here is to pair down everything I have learned into a fitness and nutrition protocol that is simple and effective for everyone, not just the people who want to spend 2-3 hours in the gym everyday. A 2017 meta analysis of 9 different studies showed that 81% of strength and hypertrophy gains made in the gym come from only 1/4 of the training volume that I used to do. This just goes to show how low the bar really is. A little goes a very long way.

My goal with this paper is also to provide a basic understanding of all the tools you can use in your own fitness protocol to achieve the title of this book. In my experience working with clients, everyone has some kind of combination of these 3 goals: to look good, feel good, and move good(bad grammar, I know). So let's look at how to get there, and why it works.

**Why Does It Get Complicated?**

Fitness and health really is simple. Everything I have to write here could simply be condensed down to the following sentence. For optimal health and aesthetics, you should lift heavy weights 3-6 times per a week, eat more protein with minimally processed food, walk 5,000-12,000 steps a day, and get 8 hours of sleep most nights. That may sound too simple to be true, but hopefully I can convince you that it really is that easy.

So why does it get so complicated? There is so much free information out on the internet. You would think this is a good thing, but if you were to just dive right into all of the content with #healthandfitness or #weightloss on Instagram, it would be an absolute mess. There are so many "Fitfluencers", "Doctors" and "Health Gurus", all

of whom seemingly contradicting each other, overcomplicating what should be simple. When looking at the current landscape of online health and fitness advice, it's important to look at a couple incentives these creators share. Firstly we have to look at the fact that content creators are first and foremost content creators. Their job is to get your attention. And the simple stuff doesn't make for good content. It's not very attention grabbing to talk about the importance of protein and dietary fiber. The simple stuff is also so well known in these communities that it doesn't make great content to talk about it over and over again. So instead, creators like to take deeper dives into some of the more interesting topics that most people probably don't need to worry about.

The other part of this is the financial incentive a creator, coach or guru would have to overcomplicate what works. It is not hard to see why overcomplicating and gatekeeping health and fitness would be in a coaches best interest. It is in the best interest of anyone selling any kind of health product or service. All of the easy simple stuff is free. So if a supplement company can cloud the narrative, you are more likely to buy their solution to a problem that you could fix on your own with cost-free lifestyle interventions. I don't know how much of this is explicitly intentional. Many of the big charlatans might actually believe a lot of the bullshit they spread. It's very hard to change your mind on a subject when your finances depend on you not changing your mind.

**Consistency > Everything**

I will go on to talk about this a lot in this book, but I would like to introduce the idea here. The biggest thing you can do for your goals is actually just the little things. Doing the little things over and over and over and over and over again. All of the consistency is compounding. It may not feel like the progress you are making is fast enough, but when you spread it out over a year or 5 years, you won't even recognize yourself. There are not shortcuts, there is no quick fix. Sustainable success comes down to the daily work that you put into yourself, just showing up for yourself day in and day out. And all of this work on yourself affects every other aspect of your life. When you get fitter your energy is better, you are more confident, you can love yourself better, which makes you more able to give to others. This is the only time I will bring my faith into this, but there is a passage in the bible where Jesus says something like, "how can you expect to take the speck out of your brothers eye, when you can't remove the beam from your own? First remove the beam from your own eye so that you can better take out the speck." How can you show up for others in your life when you don't show up for yourself? So show up for yourself, and do it consistently. When you miss a day or two, get back on the wagon and keep going.

# CHAPTER I

# WHAT WOULD THIS BE LIKE IF IT WERE EASIER - HABIT FORMATION AND IDENTIFYING THE LONGEST LEVERS

**The "Biggest Loser" Problem**
Researchers from the National Institute of Health(NIH) did a study where they checked in on contestants from the show "Biggest Loser"(a show where morbidly obese contestants, often upwards of 600lbs, go through intense weight loss protocols) 6 years after the show. On average, the contestants had gained back 70% of the weight they had lost, with many of the subjects actually weighing more after the 6 years than before they started the show. I believe this is a common phenomenon for the majority of people. Most every client I have had, and pretty much everyone I know, has done some fad weight loss diet. And they have all worked. But they only work for as long as the diet lasts. A quick Google search shows 90% of people who have lost weight, regain just about all of it back.

I remember back to my first year working as a coach at an Anytime Fitness in our city. I had a married couple I worked with in their early 50s-mid 60s. They were trying to lose some weight for a family wedding they had coming up. So they decided they were going to just work with a trainer, and then do Optivia, a subscription based meal/diet plan that had the 170lb husband eating only 1200 calories a day, for a short period leading up to the wedding. We started talking about it and apparently they had used this plan before and lost something like 20 lbs each. But as soon as they stopped using using it, the weight just came right back. This time even more weight came with it.

**Lasting health and fitness is an identity that you have to adopt, not an acute problem you have to fix.**
If we go back to the "Biggest Loser" study, and there are many other studies like it, we can learn a lot from the people who didn't regain the weight. There are a lot of effective avenues to fat loss. But the thing that is consistent with all of the people who

keep it off, is an emphasis on sustainability and long term success. instead of quick fixes. There has to be a change in your identity. This applies to all aspects of fitness. You can't expect to take on some crazy diet and exercise plan, and then once you reach your goals, go back to eating horribly and never exercising, magically expecting to not go back to where you were. A huge part of health depends on sustainability, adopting minor lifestyle changes and habits that fundamentally change who you are long term.

**Make It Easy**

This is an idea I am stealing from Chris Williamson, the host of the podcast "Modern Wisdom". I assume you know how torque works but just in case you don't, I'll explain it. If you have ever used a wrench to loosen a very tight bolt, you'll know that the further away you get from the bolt on the handle, the less force you need to apply to turn the wrench. It's a basic law of physics, the longer the lever, the less force required to do work.

I would imagine that pretty much everyone on the planet has some combination of the following goals when it comes to their body. They want to look good, feel good, and move well. As a side note, that is actually the basis for our company's name, "Aesthetics, Functionality and Longevity". So what are the longest levers, the easiest habits, that everyone can pull to achieve those 3 things? Here is my simplified list of minimal cost, easy habits and protocols I think everyone should adopt. Then in the following chapters I will go into a little more depth on how and why to implement them.

- Resistance training at least 3 times a week for 30-90 min.
- Eat more protein, specifically 0.8g/lb of bodyweight/day.
- Consume 80% of calories from minimally processed food sources.
- Walk 2-3 times a day, ideally upwards of 8,000 steps daily.
- Have a consistent wake, and more important, bed time.
- Get at least 7 but ideally 8 or 9 hours of sleep consistently.

The most important thing with all of those is to just keep showing up. It's cliche, but consistency is key here. There will be off weeks with travel, crying babies keeping you up, and all sorts of obstacles in your life. But the important thing is to just keep up with it day after day. It's more important to have 5 months where you are 80% adherent than 1 month with 100% adherence. Something is always better than nothing. The little things compound. It is easy to get into an "all or nothing" mindset with fitness, but 15 minutes of push-ups, sit-ups and body-weight squats is way better than skipping the gym altogether; Going for a 5 minute walk is always better than no walk at all.

# CHAPTER II

# RESISTANCE TRAINING

**Why We Lift Weights - Muscle Protein Synthesis and Muscle Protein Breakdown**

Our bodies are constantly breaking down and being replaced. Cells are dying and new ones need to take their place. This is the case for pretty much every cell in our body aside from neurons and nerve cells. Other than maybe the skin, our skeletal muscle has one of the fastest rates of turnover in the entire body. So we are in this constant battle between muscle protein synthesis(MPS), or building muscle, and muscle protein breakdown. We use resistance exercise(and dietary protein but that is a later chapter) to signal to our body that we want to use our resources to create muscle, tipping the scale in favor of muscle gain, not loss

The more skeletal muscle we can have, the better. Skeletal muscle is crucial for maintaining full mobility and movement as we age. But it is also important for regulating insulin resistance, balancing hormones, and optimizing our metabolism/hunger signals. There is a direct link between an increase in muscle strength/size, and a decrease in all-cause mortality. So as you gain muscle and hold onto it, your chance of dying from any cause goes down. This inverse relationship between mortality and muscle mass only gets more important with age.

I think there is a misconception that gaining muscle mass is purely for aesthetic purposes, looking good. And when we think of “muscle”, it is easy to conjure up images of gigantic bodybuilders; Arnold Schwarzenegger and the like. But that is not what a natural, muscular body actually looks like. Remember that most, if not all, professional bodybuilders are heavily using anabolic steroids.

Now is as good a time as ever to address the biggest concern we always hear around resistance training, primarily from women but also from men: “I just don’t want to get too bulky” or “I don’t want to get too big.” This is always a little bit frustrating because I think people misunderstand how hard that actually is. Like you will pick up a dumbbell only to look in the mirror and have biceps like Dwayne Johnson. The term people always use when they describe their ideal aesthetic, is “toned”. But the only way to actually

achieve a “toned” physique is to lift heavy weights, building muscle. And then you pair that muscle gain with a loss of body fat. Muscle does not “tone” or “tighten”, it just shrinks and grows. This is good news though, because it means we can be intentional about where we gain muscle size, so the way we look is not entirely just up to our genetics, but in our hands.

**Joints, Bones and Mobility**

Resistance training doesn’t just build muscle though. There are noticeable benefits to your bones and connective tissue when you lift weights properly. Ligaments can also go through hypertrophy(growth).The growth adaptation to a ligament is slower than that of a muscle however, so it is important to properly signal the need for adaptation with full ranges of motion, so no half reps.

As we age, we lose density in our bones. Osteoporosis is especially prevalent in post-menopausal women due to the major shift in hormones that occurs. About 50% of women over the age of 60 will experience a fracture due to osteoporosis. And a third of adults over the age of 50, will die within 12 months of suffering a hip fracture. Resistance training, when paired with a well rounded, high protein diet, has positive effects on increasing bone density and reversing osteoporosis.

Everything is a signal in our body. If we become more sedentary, we are saying to our body, “hey don’t waste precious resources on bone density or joint health because we don’t really need it”. We adapted and evolved over millions of years so our bodies ability to adapt to a stimulus is incredible. So if you don’t use it, you’ll lose it.

**Training Concepts**

Hopefully by now I have convinced you to start lifting weights. Let’s get into some practical things to know.

**Training Frequency**

- The basic rule of thumb for training frequency is to train a muscle as many times in a week as you can, without hindering recovery. Most muscles take 1-2 days to fully recover. Ideally we want to shoot for hitting each major muscle group at least twice per week. When we lift weights we are sending a signal to adapt with strength and size increase. The more often we can send that signal without hindering repair/recovery, the better.

**Training Volume(sets and rep ranges)**

- Training volume is the amount of working(difficult) sets per week, per muscle group. The optimal volume would be 10-20 sets per week. Let’s say we want to grow our quads. We could do 6 sets on Monday, rest a few days, then hit 6 sets on Thursday for a total of 12 sets which would be right in that optimal range. Even as low 1-3 sets per a week can produce growth though. Anything over 20 is just too

- many sets to optimally recover from without the use of anabolic steroids. So any extra sets above 20 would just be considered “junk volume”. I would not go over 15-20 working sets for all muscle groups for a whole workout. By that point, if your intensity is high enough, your energy is drained and any extra sets are just ineffective.

**Intensity**

- I mentioned “working sets” in the last point which directly relates to intensity, or how hard we are training. We want to train within 1-3 reps of muscular failure for each set. Muscular failure simply when we could no longer complete the set with good technique. This means training hard enough that we have to fight for the last couple reps. A really easy way to self-automate our progress is to use a rep range. For example, I’m bench pressing, and I have a rep range of 5-8 reps. I load some weight on the bar and I bench press 8 reps with 3 more reps in the tank. That’s my cue to increase the weight to a point where I can only do 5 reps. Then I’ll stay at that weight, adding a rep or two a week, until I can easily do 8 again, then rinse and repeat. We want to add weight and/or reps every week. This is progressive overload. We have to be actively trying to get better each week so we can signal our body to keep adapting. Progression isn’t just adding weights or reps though. You could be squatting the same weight for 4 weeks, but each week your form is getting better. That is still progression.

**Compound and Isolation**

- A compound exercise is any exercise where multiple joints are trained at once. In a squat, our hips and knees go through a range of motion, or in a bench press, we move at the shoulder joint and at the elbow. Compound exercises are the best for muscle and strength gain as they involve multiple muscle groups working synergistically (at the same time) to move the weight. This means more strength and muscle adaptation for less time in the gym. The 5 major compound movement types are:
  - Push(i.e. Bench Press, Push Up, Machine Press, Dips)
  - Pull(i.e. DB Row, Pull-up, Lat Pulldown)
  - Press(i.e. DB/Barbell Overhead Press, Jerk, Push Press)
  - Squat(i.e. Barbell Squat, Lunge, Leg Press)
  - Hinge(i.e. Hip Thrust, Deadlift, RDL, Goodmorning)
- Isolation exercises on the other hand, only work on one joint and usually only one muscle group at a time. Like a curl, lateral raise or leg extension. For efficiency, 80-90% of our training should be on compound exercises, with the other 10-20% as isolation to catch up any imbalances or lagging muscles.

Here is a fairly simple training program that I have actually used myself and that I use with clients all the time. There is always room to sub out exercises for alternatives that work better for you and the equipment you have available. This is designed to be done in any major gym with minimal equipment, barbells, dumbbells, and a couple of machines.

An important thing to note is the use of antagonist/unrelated muscle supersets. Basically this just means we do one exercise, and then without rest, immediately do another exercise that either performs the opposite joint action, or just uses a completely unrelated muscle group. This is super helpful when we are on a time limit as it allows us to rest one muscle while working another one, then have a full rest period afterwards. This essentially doubles the amount of volume we can get in and will keep each workout to under an hour.

At the end of each workout there is also a “clients choice” section which is basically just a place to pick 1-3 exercises for muscle groups that you specifically want to grow or that might be a weak point for you. This is a great place to put curls, cable kick backs, lat raises, etc. On the following page, I will put a table with every major muscle group and some exercises that I have found to be really effective at growing those muscle groups.

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|---|---|---|
| **Barbell Back Squat**<br>4 Sets 5-8 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**A1: Barbell Bench Press**<br>**A2: DB Tripod Row**<br>3 Sets 8-12 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**B1: DB RDL**<br>**B2: Lying Straight Leg Raise**<br>3 Sets 8-12 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**Client Choice**<br>1-3 Exercises for 1-3 Sets<br>10-15 Reps<br>60 Sec Rest | **Barbell Standing Overhead Press**<br>4 Sets 5-8 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**A1: Lat Pulldown**<br>**A2: Cable Tricep Rope Pushdown**<br>3 Sets 8-12 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**B1: DB Goblet Squat**<br>**B2: Seated Calf Raise**<br>3 Sets 8-12 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**Client Choice**<br>1-3 Exercises for 1-3 Sets<br>10-15 Reps<br>60 Sec Rest | **Barbell RDL**<br>3 Sets 5-8 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**DB Walking Lunges**<br>3 Sets 8-10 Reps(each)<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**A1: DB Incline Bench Press**<br>**A2: DB Bicep Incline Curl**<br>3 Sets 8-12 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**B1: Seated Wide Grip Cable Row**<br>**B2: DB Lateral Raise**<br>3 Sets 8-12 Reps<br>90 Sec Rest<br>**Client Choice**<br>1-2 exercises for 1-3 sets<br>10-15 Reps |

This is by no means a complete list of exercises, but is simply a list of the exercises that I think are best for each muscle group. For each I will show several compound and isolation exercises that hit the target group very effectively.

**Quadriceps(Front of Thigh)**
Compound
- Squats(any modality)
- Leg Press
- all single leg variations of above

Isolation
- Leg Extensions

**Hamstrings(Back of Thigh)**
Compound
- Romanian Deadlifts(RDL)
- Hyperextensions
- Deadlifts
- All single leg variations of above

Isolation
- Seated leg curls
- lying leg curls

**Glutes(Butt)**
Compound
- Hip Thrusts
- Romanian Deadlifts
- Hyperextensions
- Squats
- Single Leg Squats

Isolation
- Cable Kick Backs
- Machine Hip Abduction

**Calves**
Isolation
- Standing Calf Raise
- Seated Calf Raise

**Core**
- Hanging Leg Raises
- Cable Crunches

**Pecs(Chest)**
Compounds
- Bench Press (BB or DB)
- Incline Bench Press
- Parallel Bar Dips
- Push-ups
- Machine Chest Presses

Isolation
- Cable Chest Flys
  - High to Low
  - Low to High
- DB Chest Fly
- Cable Chest Fly

**Rhomboids and Traps(Upper Back)**
Compound
- Bent Over Rows (BB or DB)
- Cable Rows(wider grip)
- Rope Cable Face Pulls
- Chest Supported Rows
- Pull-ups

Isolation
- Shrugs
- Kelso Shrugs

**Lats(Mid Back)**
Compound
- Pull-ups
- Lat Pulldowns
- Unilateral DB/Cable Rows
- BB Rows

Isolation
- Cable Lat Pullovers

**Erector Spinae(Low Back)**
- Deadlifts
- Hyperextensions

**Deltoids(Shoulders)**
Compound
- BB/DB Standing OHP
- BB/DB Seated OHP
- Cable/BB upright Rows
- Cable Face Pulls

Isolation
- DB Front Raise(Front Delt)
- DB Lat Raise(Mid Delt)
- Rear Delt Fly(Rear Delt)

**Biceps(Upper Arm Front)**
Compound
- Chin Ups
- Underhand Lat Pulldowns
- Underhand Rows

Isolation
- DB Incline Curls
- DB/BB Curls
- Cable Curls

**Triceps(Upper Arm Back)**
Compound
- Parallel Bar Dips
- Close Grip Bench Press

Isolation
- Tricep Cable Pushdowns
- DB/BB Skull Crushers
- Tricep Cable Overhead Extensions

**Forearms**
Compound
- Any movement that involves grip strength especially hinging and pulling movements

Isolations
- DB/BB Reverse Grip Curls

# CHAPTER III

# ALL THINGS NUTRITION

I will start this chapter with the caveat that I am by no means a registered dietitian. So everything I write about nutrition applies very broadly to the general public as a whole. An important thing to acknowledge is the beautiful adaptability of the human body. Everyone is different, everyone has different things that work best for their specific needs, goals and lifestyles. Hopefully this information, taken from my own experience with clients as well as my own read of the current scientific literature, will help provide some framework for how you approach what you eat.

**Blue Zones**

There is no perfect way of eating. Anyone who makes a claim that their specific way of eating is the only way humans should eat, is probably selling something. There is no better illustration of this, than by looking at the worlds "Blue Zones" (areas where people regularly live to over 100). Seemingly, the local cuisine of these areas couldn't be more different, there isn't one fancy food that they all share that fixes all their problems, or one specific diet. When we look at our personal approaches to nutrition, there are many roads that lead to the same outcomes. There are however, some commonalities that exist between all of the world's healthiest diets.

**Calories In Vs Calories Out**

Most of the negative health outcomes that we see related to nutrition can be attributed energy toxicity, or excess calories. Calories are the measurement of energy existing within the bonds of a macronutrient(Fat, Carbs, Protein). Every person has a specific daily calorie need that varies depending on weight, height and activity level. We are in a constant state of calorie burn just to stay alive, even at rest. Most of the calories we burn in a day are burned outside of activity. All of the body's automatic functions: breathing, digesting food, releasing hormones, the stuff that keeps us alive, require energy. Pair this with our activity and movement in a day and you have our TDEE or Total Daily Energy Expenditure. If we do not eat enough calories in a day to meet our TDEE, the body will compensate by pulling from our energy stores in the body: Fat, Glycogen, and Muscle.

So in order to lose weight, we have to eat less than our daily maintenance calories. If we eat more than our daily caloric needs, our body will store that energy as fat, causing weight gain.

**Prehistoric Man and Modern Abundance**

For millions of years humans lived in an unpredictable food landscape. We may have had a good hunt one day and then nothing for 3 or 4 days. Our bodies developed this really amazing ability to prepare for scarcity by storing any extra energy as fat. Fat storage and overeating is not a bug in our software, it is a feature. And a feature that has allowed us, and many other animals like us, to survive millions of famines.

If you fast forward to the environment that we are in today though... you can see the issue. For most people in the western world, calories are abundant. We never developed a great way to moderate our intake. Not to mention that the food we consume today is so novel and devoid of nutrients that would help us signal satiety. Food is engineered to be the best tasting, most binge-worthy thing possible. There is a clear financial incentive to creating binge-worthy, addictive food. So we are in an environment of caloric abundance, but nutrient scarcity. This is where we suggest that across the board there needs to be an emphasis on consuming your calories from minimally processed, whole sources. Foods that have not been engineered to create issues with overconsumption. This is not to demonize any food, as I do no think there are “bad” foods. But for everyone, there are better or worse choices that can be made. I absolutely love a nice decadent donut, but I know that if I tried to keep a dozen in the house, they would not last very long. A donut can have it’s place in a well rounded “healthy diet”. But there has to be moderation and intentionality about making that choice. “Is a donut the best use of my calories for today?” and sometimes the answer is yes. But in order to achieve overall health in someones diet, most of the time, the answer to that question is no. Due to the hyper-palatability of modern food, some kind of restriction is needed.

Let’s look at 3 types of effective dietary restriction you can implement to illicit fat loss or maintain a lean body. All of these work mechanistically the same. They limit the amount of calories we consume so that we are consuming less than or equal to our maintenance. There are upsides and downsides to each of the following, so experiment and see what works for you. The goal is lifetime sustainability.

**Time Restricted Eating** - Also known as intermittent fasting. This involves splitting up a day into a fasting window, typically 18 hours, and an eating window, maybe 6 hours. There is

nothing special about the actual fasting window itself. The reason this can work is due to it being hard to consume too much in such a short window. Some downsides to consider: 1) Some people can really put down food in their feeding window. You can end up so hungry from skipping a meal that you overcompensate. 2) Some people just get hungrier throughout the day and trying to make it to lunch with nothing but a black coffee can make the quality of life for the first half of the day really low. 3) It is really hard to get adequate protein intake when you only have 2ish meals in the day. We will talk about the importance of dietary protein later in this chapter, but unless you want to lose all of your muscle mass as well as fat, it's important to optimize protein.

**Food Group Restriction -** There are lots of different ways to restrict food. One way that comes to mind is something like a keto diet, where carbs are omitted. This can be effective if you find yourself regularly over eating that kind of food. I want to give the caveat that there is nothing special about keto that makes fat just fall off. Keto is simply effective because most of the foods people struggle with overeating are high carb foods.

My wife has actually had to do a form of food restriction with gluten and lactose recently for digestive intolerances she has. Cutting out gluten and dairy means that the only things she has left to eat are fruits, veggies, oatmeal, rice and meat. All of which are things that are very satiating and nutrient dense. The two downsides here are: 1) A possibility for a lack of nutrient diversity. If you are keto or carnivore, chances are, you aren't getting enough (if any) fiber. There may be other gaps in micronutrients that you would have to fill with supplementation. 2) It is still very easy to find things that you can eat that are binge-able. Even with her restrictions, Adelaide can eat all of the dates, dark chocolate, and peanut butter in the world, all of which are very high in calories and not very satiating.

**Calorie Tracking** - This is one that is scary for a lot of people but this is the most effective in my experience. It can be a huge pain in the ass though. So if you can do one of the other forms of restriction and have it work longterm, i.e. the weight is going down on the scale and you look and feel good, then by all means keep doing what you are doing. But if not, this is the most effective way to lose weight and keep it off. Calorie tracking is pretty much exactly what it sounds like. Using some kind of app on your phone, you log all of the food you eat, with the goal of not going over your set calories for the day. Any and all of the apps for this are essentially the same. Two that I like are Myfitnesspal and Macrofactor. Both of which also track protein.

I would also like to add, no matter the

modality you use for your diet, you should very diligently track everything you eat for at least a week. You would be shocked at the amount of extra calories you are eating in random things. People often order salads as the low calorie option, but usually a salad has the same calories as everything else on a menu because of the dressing. When you start to learn about the little things, it becomes really easy to make sizable leaps in progress. It just takes simple substitutions. No mayo on a burger, a coke zero instead of regular, and that is already a 350 calorie difference that you barely notice it. So take some time to diligently track so you can see where your daily "calorie budget" is really going.

There are definitely setbacks here though: 1) Accuracy. It is really easy to overestimate/underestimate when tracking, you might track 2 tbsp of peanut butter when you really added 3(a 100 cal difference). 2) Tracking is also just a hassle, it is a full extra step that you have to add into each meal. 3) For a small number of people prone to eating disorders, tracking is an easy way to create a very unhealthy relationship with food.

Long term adherence is the most important thing to remember. So allow room for moderation. If a way of eating makes you miserable, you wont be able to sustain it long term.

**Macronutrients**

We've talked a good bit around the systems of how you eat, so now let's look at what the components of food actually are and what they actually do for our bodies. Food is made up of 3 macronutrients: Protein, Carbs and Fat. Everything that we consume with calories(other than alcohol) has to have at least one of these 3 forms in order for us to break that energy down.

**Carbohydrates**

Carbs are the only macronutrient that is non-essential, meaning if we didn't eat them we would still be fine. Carbs are the easiest macronutrient for our bodies to digest and are the most readily available source of energy. This is where carbs can be really useful for performance, as carbohydrates are the preferred energy source for the brain and the body. Anytime we do any form of activity that is anaerobic(think weightlifting, sprinting, HIIT) our body uses carbs stored in the bloodstream as glycogen. This is why I suggest most people should be eating carbs, especially around training. We want to eat carbs before exercise to top off glycogen stores, and then following exercise to replenish the those stores so that we don't have to spend the rest of the day feeling exhausted and absolutely beat.

**Fat**

Fat was demonized for a long time in the 90s because of a correlation

between dietary fat and heart disease. This has since been looked at further and what we see instead is a correlation between excess calorie consumption and heart disease. Eating fat does not mean more fat. Eating too many calories means more fat. Where fat can be dangerous is that, of the 3 macronutrients, it is the highest calorie nutrient by weight. For every 1 gram of fat that you consume, you are consuming 9 calories. Where as for every 1 gram of protein or carbs, you are only consuming 4 calories. This is where it is easy to overeat fat and gain weight. The difference between cooking with 1 tbsp and 2 tbsp of oil is 120 calories. That's the difference between eating 4 oz of chicken breast vs 8 oz. Fat is important though. Unlike carbs, it is an essential nutrient. If we don't eat enough of it, we have problems. Bringing fat too low results in really bad regulation of hormone production, as lipids(fats) are the building blocks of hormones. This is where we get a common phenomenon in female bodybuilders skipping their period when they get too lean, or males getting erectile dysfunction and low libido in their early 20s. So eat your fat!

**Protein**

Saving what I would say is the most important macronutrient for last. I'm sure this makes me sound like a complete gym bro, but I will proudly say that the gym bros were right on this one. Protein is awesome for so many reasons. The most important thing I think I can say on this, is that you need to be eating more.

The current RDA(recommended dietary allowance) in the US is 0.36 g of protein per 1 lb of bodyweight every day. So for the average man that is 72 g, and for the average woman that is only 61.2 g a day. I am using the CDC averages of bodyweight in the USA, with males weighing 200lbs and females at 170lbs. If you know anything about muscle gain, you know that those numbers are laughably low for daily protein intake. 0.36 is the bare minimum needed for the body to just barely maintain the lean tissue. A 2017 meta analysis from Dr. Menno Henselman found that the ideal protein intake for optimal muscle protein synthesis and bodily function is more like 0.8-1.0 g per lb of bodyweight per a day. If you remember from our section on resistance training, we want to maximize muscle gain as much as we can for all of the benefits it has on functionality, aesthetics and metabolic/insulin regulation. Muscle mass is critical to weight control. One of the easiest ways to increase muscle is to simply increase dietary protein.

When you consume over a certain amount of protein, anywhere from 20-40 g in a meal, we see an increase of mTOR(the thing responsible for cell growth and homeostasis), resulting in a huge spike in MPS. That effect is from

consumption of dietary protein on its own. When you pair that consumption with intentional resistance training, that spike is even higher and lasts longer. The more often we can spike MPS, the better. Remember, our muscle is in this constant battle between atrophy(loss) and hypertrophy(gain). We want to do what we can to tip the scales towards gain, especially if our calories are lower.

A high protein diet also has a positive effect on fat-loss for two other reasons. If you look back to the "fat" section, I mentioned that fat has 9 calories per a gram, and carbs and protein only have 4. This is only half true. Protein has 4 calories per a gram, but protein is also a hard macronutrient to digest and actually takes energy to digest fully. Some estimates say that 20%-30% of the calories in the protein are just used to break it down. So if you were to eat 100 calories of egg whites(one of the purest protein sources), the net calories would actually only be about 70-80. There are some caveats and individual differences, so I wouldn't suggest you take that into consideration while tracking. But as I have been saying, the little things make a big difference longterm.

The other reason dietary protein is so helpful is because of the effect it has on hunger and satiety. Eating more protein just makes you feel fuller for longer. I don't know of many people who can eat 2 servings of chicken breast(240 calories worth) and still have room to eat much more food after. I also don't know many people who can eat 200 calories of pasta(about 1 cups worth) and be satisfied for more than 30 seconds. We talked about all the different ways to restrict calories and lose weight, but a really simple place I think most people could start with is just simply making sure that every meal has 30-50 g of protein. You would be surprised how much fuller you will feel after a meal and how much easier it is to auto regulate. This is especially true if you have historically been eating a very low protein diet.

**Micronutrients and Fiber**

I am just going to touch on this briefly as this is very individual and the type of diet you consume dictates these needs. But simply I can say this: your parents didn't lie when they said to eat more fruits and vegetables. Diversity in your diet is so important to make sure that you are not creating any gaps when it comes to micronutrients (i.e. the vitamins and minerals) in your diet.

Fiber is another thing that we are not eating enough of. I think we have this false idea that fiber is just related to bowel movements, but it is so much more than that. It's worth putting emphasis on eating more, as fiber has the same satiety effects that protein has, keeping you full for less calories. It is also crucially important for promoting a healthier gut microbiome.

# CHAPTER IV

# MOVEMENT AS MEDICINE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ADEQUATE SLEEP

If I could only give one piece of advice and it had to be as simple as I could possibly make it, I would simply say "move more." This is the most underrated hack to just feeling good all the time and balancing energy. From day one of the business, this has been our mission statement: "movement as medicine." I always thought of this in the context of being in the gym or doing some kind of planned daily exercise, but it is more than that. Don't get me wrong, I think those things are amazing, but planned exercise is only 0.5-2 hours out of the 16 hours we are awake everyday. Humans were built to move throughout the entirety of the day.

I mentioned before the "Blue Zones." One of the interesting things about those areas is that the people there don't really have any kind of organized exercise. And I'm sure if you talked to one of the centenarians in those places they would laugh at the idea of having planned exercise. A really big commonality between all of them is just how active their daily lives are. They walk everywhere, they work with their hands, they ride bikes, they garden. In some of the asian countries, they eat all of their meals sitting on the floor, so they are getting up and down off of the floor all of the time. They just move more than we do.

**10,000 Steps**

I find the science of human evolution and prehistoric man really interesting. Prehistoric man were really good hunters. And it's not for the reasons you would think. Yes we had posable thumbs, which meant that we could make and wield weapons. But when you look at the biology and physical attributes of humans, we kind of suck. We can't run very fast, we aren't the strongest, we don't have amazing senses of sight, hearing or smell. But what we have always had that gave us an amazing advantage, is our crazy endurance. When hunting a wild beast on the African planes, man could simply just keep walking. We get close to the animal, it uses all it's speed to

sprint away, then then we simply just walk, or lightly jog, until we catch up to it again. Do this over and over again until the animal has tired itself out, and the antelope or whatever it is, is simply exhausted. See, there is something unique about human walking that makes it super energy efficient, when we walk we are actually just "falling with style" to quote Toy Story. So we evolved to walk all of the time.

I have been saying to "move more", but what that means practically for most people, is to simply walk more. This idea of 10,000 steps a day was made popular a few years back. I think 10,000 is a great goal but really any goal that is just moving more than what you do now, is a good one. Even just adding an extra 2,000 steps(one 15 minute walk) into your day, has such a huge impact on your insulin regulation, keeping your energy from spiking and crashing. I think we all have that experience where we have sat all day, but we end the day just simply feeling exhausted.

A super practical way to implement more steps into your life is to just simply walk for 10-15 minutes after every meal you eat. Some other things you can try: take your work calls while you are walking. do all of your boring administrative work(emails and such) while you walk at a slow pace on a treadmill, make a conscious decision to park a little bit further away from your destination. The little things like that, when stacked across a week, a month or a year, have a huge ROI in terms of how you look and feel. And all with very little need for willpower or struggle. It just takes mindfulness and the activation energy to get up and go.

**Active Hobbies**

Everyone should try and have at least one, non-gym, active hobby that they do 1-2 times a week. I've gotten really into pickle-ball recently and it is the perfect example for this kind of thing. There is a social component to it since you can't play alone, it gets me outside so I can get sunlight and fresh air, and it's just fun; things things that bring energy into my bucket vs taking energy out of me. It doesn't have to be pickle-ball though. I think organized rec leagues, run clubs and cycling groups are great for this. Our city always has some kind of free outdoor yoga once or twice a week downtown. Really just anything to get you outside, with other people, moving. And I know this is a hard one for a lot of people because all of these activities can be scary to start if you are new to them. If you haven't done them before, you are going to be bad at it. And then for the next 3 months you are going to suck, so there is a very understandable fear of trying. A fear of doing a new thing because being bad at things really kinda sucks. But how can we expect to get good at anything if we can't be bad at it for a little while?

You may think there is judgement. But at some point everyone was where you are. Everyone had to start somewhere, so most people in those spaces are just happy to see you try.

**Sleep**

It wouldn't be a very good health and wellness book if I didn't do a little bit of a dive into sleep. Much like with movement, protein and fiber, you aren't getting enough. You need to be sleeping more. This is very broadly speaking obviously and I'm sure there are some outliers reading this, but I cannot stress enough how important adequate sleep is, both in quality and duration. Sleep isn't just about how long you are in bed. You might be in your bed for 8 hours, but you are on your phone for the first 30 minutes, and then you might take 60 minutes to fall asleep, and when you fall asleep you are only really getting good quality sleep for 4 hours or so because you had coffee at 4 pm and it didn't clear your system fully. So even though you are in bed for the full 8 hours, you are really only getting like 3 or 4 hours of good sleep.

**Sleep Protocol**

Here are some rules that I think everyone should follow for the best sleep they can get. All of this information comes from Dr. Matt Walker who is a great resource for all things sleep.

1) **Screens off 1-2 hours before bed.** - The blue light from your screens can really disrupt your circadian rhythm and activate a cortisol response, keeping you up. There is also something about being "plugged in" to the internet that can put us into a lasting, heightened state of alertness.

2) **Caffeine cutoff 10 hours before bedtime.** - Caffeine is an awesome supplement. It has so many positive effects and very few downsides when dosed properly. The one major downside caffeine does have is the negative effect it has on sleep. Caffeine doesn't actually give you energy. Instead, it works as a blocker for adenosine, a molecule that builds up as you get tired. Then when we sleep we clear out that adenosine. Adenosine is really important as it signals the body to fall into deep sleep. So even if you might be able to fall asleep after a cup of coffee, the depth of that sleep is diminished. Caffeine takes about 8-12 hours to clear our system. This is why, for optimal sleep, we want to cut off any caffeine at least 10 hours before we actually go to bed. If not, it's very easy to get into a cycle of poor sleep, followed by over caffeination, resulting in more poor sleep. This is a common cycle for most working adults.

3) **Regular waking and sleeping times.** - Get up at the same time every morning, and go to bed at the same

time every night. I would experiment with what works best for you; everyone has a different circadian clock that regulates their optimal sleep and wake times.

9 out of every 10 nights, you should be climbing into bed within the same 15 minute window. Then getting up 8-9 hours after that. Ideally waking without an alarm, but obviously we all have different work and life situations. There are definitely exceptions to be made, parties to go to; things to stay up for. Those are all the great things that are worth losing a little sleep over. It is about balance. But I would wager a guess that the things that are really worth missing sleep for, are few and far between. Most nights we just lose track of time. It may sound silly, but I think a bedtime alarm is really helpful. It's something to tell you, "hey we need to go to bed in an hour, turn off your screen and start getting ready."

4) **Limit alcohol.** - There are a lot of reasons for this. Alcohol is quite literally a poison for your body. But I think the negative effects on sleep is the most damning reason to drink less. You are probably thinking, "a glass of wine before bed always makes me sleepy and helps me take the edge off." But the issue is that alcohol is a sedative, not a sleep aid. So it doesn't make you fall asleep, it knocks you out. And those might sound like the same thing, but when we are sedated our body doesn't go through deep wave or REM sleep, so we don't actually wake up recovered and rested. This is part of why you get a hangover.

If that isn't enough, alcohol is also cancer causing. It is in the same group of carcinogens as cigarettes and gamma radiation. So probably worth skipping the night cap.

**Am I Sleeping Enough?**

There is a lot of new fancy tech for sleep tracking. I think even Apple watches have this feature now. But so much of sleep need is based on the individual. So the easiest way to tell if you are sleeping enough, is simply to look at how you feel when you wake up. Are you well rested, recovered and energized? If not, it is something that is worth looking into. Again, the little adjustments here and there make a big difference. It is all about compounding the easy things. So maybe just put your phone down an hour earlier or get a decaf coffee instead of a regular coffee in the afternoon. If you can take on the whole sleep protocol, that is awesome. But maybe just start by prioritizing implementing the little things that you know you can sustain. Then, as those just become routine, try and tackle some new thing.

# CONCLUSION

**Fear of Starting**

I want to circle back to something I talked about earlier about the fear around getting started with something that is new. A mindset that I think a lot of people share. Planet Fitness has created their entire marketing plan around that exact fear. A fear of being judged. The fear that you are going to walk into a gym as an overweight person and everyone there will be looking at you, judging you. And I think that fear is completely valid to feel, but the reality couldn't be any further from the truth. As a "gym bro" who knows lots of "gym bros", I can attest that the reality is one of two things. Either no one even notices you (Gyms are usually pretty big and there are lots of people there) or, more likely, people see you and have respect for you because you are working on yourself; because you are doing something about a problem that you have. I opened the book this way, so I will end it the same. Just do it. If you are already doing it, then great. Keep it up. If you aren't, just start. It will be hard and you will mess up, but the important thing is to do something.

**What Would This Be Like If It Were Easier?**

Hopefully this is a thought I was able to get across as I wrote this. The goal is to make it easier, to simplify, to pull the longest levers. The hardest part is always just going to be starting. That is the part that keeps people from doing many things. I just went on for 20 something pages getting real technical. And that is helpful to know, but in practice it is about keeping it simple. You will still have to lift hard in the gym and make difficult nutrition choices. You will have to say "no" to your impulses and base desires. So don't waste any more energy on overcomplicating and stressing over this diet vs. that one or "should I be taking this supplement?". Just keep it simple. Lift heavy, eat well, sleep, and move your body. Everything can be summed up in these opening habits:

- Resistance train at least 3 times a week.
- Eat more protein, specifically 0.8g/lb of bodyweight/day.
- Consume 80% of calories from minimally processed food.
- Walk 2-3x daily, ideally upwards of 7,000 steps a day.
- Have a consistent wake bed time.
- Get at least 7 but ideally 8 or 9 hours of sleep consistently.

Expand your horizons a little bit. I cannot hammer home any more how important the little things are for long-term transformation.