

The ACE Diet and Lifestyle Guide

Welcome to the Gut Brain Body ACE Diet and Lifestyle Guide, where you can learn how to optimize your health goals by following the steps of this educational guide. This guide will be your reference point for how to eat, exercise, and maintain your lifestyle throughout working with me and onwards throughout your life. Together we can work on creating goals based on this guide, and navigating the challenges of behavior change as you work on implementing them. Should you have any questions please feel free to message me in the group chat via your portal.

Now, allow me to remind you why you are here in the first place.

Feeling truly healthy is an amazing experience, and it offers numerous benefits beyond just aesthetics. By nurturing your well-being, you can significantly improve your overall health and reduce inflammation. You'll likely experience **increased energy levels**, **better sleep**, and an **enhanced mood**. Plus, you'll be taking important steps to lower your risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer. Focusing on your health can also improve joint comfort, hormonal balance, and help you maintain a more vibrant life long-term.

So take a moment to reflect. What is your vision of perfect health?

This vision is your destiny, and you can achieve it!

This guide offers a holistic approach to fostering a healthier, more vibrant you by focusing on sustainable lifestyle changes that reduce inflammation and enhance overall well-being. By embracing the principles within the Gut Brain Body Protocol—from personalized nutrition and fitness to mindful stress management and improved sleep—you're not just adopting a temporary fix, you're investing in your health destiny. Take this opportunity to transform your daily habits into a powerful foundation for lasting health and vitality.

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Section 1: The ACE Diet Protocol

The ACE Diet Protocol offers a new approach to improving overall health through diet and lifestyle. Designed to harness the power of nutritional science, this plan was named after its focus on increasing the consumption of antioxidant-rich, high-fiber foods, dense in vitamins A,C, and E. These three antioxidants are not only some of the most common deficiencies that I see, but are also unique in that they are insanely powerful for overall health. See below:

Vitamin A: The Cellular Guardian

This nutrient plays a vital role in maintaining your overall health at a cellular level. **Vitamin A** from foods can help regulate blood sugar levels, contributing to stable energy throughout the day. Plus, it supports **healthy skin, eyes, immunity**, healthy growth, and **hormonal balance**, all crucial for a body that functions optimally and combats inflammation.

Vitamin C: The Wellness Booster

Adequate **Vitamin C** levels are associated with enhanced physical vitality. It plays a key role in numerous bodily functions, including its essential contribution to building **collagen**, which supports joint health and the integrity of your tissues. It also helps to maintain a vibrant, healthy complexion and is a powerful antioxidant, helping to reduce oxidative stress and inflammation.

Vitamin E: The Metabolic Supporter

Vitamin E is a crucial nutrient for supporting healthy metabolic processes. It aids your body in utilizing energy efficiently and helps regulate sugar metabolism, contributing to overall well-being and stable energy levels. This vitamin also plays a role in reducing inflammation, and preventing the buildup of unhealthy cholesterol, which is important for cardiovascular health. Additionally, it helps support healthy skin, further contributing to your overall radiance and comfort.

In addition to these direct benefits, the foods that contain these vital nutrients are also rich in other helpful compounds, such as **polyphenols, B vitamins, beneficial minerals, healthy fats, gut-friendly fibers**, and so much more. By focusing on these simple nutrients, you can indirectly consume an abundance of nutritional benefits that collectively support reduced inflammation and enhanced health.

Therefore, I highly recommend you read each chapter in this guide, as each chapter offers new and important insights into how to choose the healthiest foods, build balanced meals, and how to create a lifestyle that is sustainable, healthy, and unstoppable.

Chapter 1: Learn The ACE Diet Allowed Foods

Part 1: Food Quality

First we will explore the benefits of eating a clean diet and what that looks like. Eating clean is no easy task given our environment largely plays against us. Our agricultural methods in the US are often cutting corners for financial gain that have long term implications on our food quality and ultimately our health. Being informed is the first step to making smarter decisions with your food purchases and can make or break the nutritional benefits you gain from your food.

Why Eat Organic?

Fresh food starts with healthy farming. Organic agriculture prioritizes soil health and avoids harmful pesticides and chemicals, ensuring cleaner produce. Additionally, organic livestock are raised without antibiotics or growth hormones, resulting in healthier meat and dairy products.

Organic foods offer potential nutritional benefits. Studies suggest they may contain higher levels of antioxidants and other essential nutrients. Moreover, by choosing organic, you're supporting sustainable farming practices and reducing your exposure to genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Beyond personal health, organic agriculture contributes to a healthier planet. It promotes biodiversity, reduces soil erosion, and minimizes water pollution. By supporting organic farmers, you're helping to build a more sustainable food system and protect the environment for future generations.

References: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3791249/>

Why Avoid Food Additives and Other Harmful Chemicals?

The allure of the organic label often overshadows the importance of whole, unprocessed foods. While organic standards prohibit the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, they don't necessarily guarantee the absence of additives. Many processed foods, even those marketed as organic, may contain artificial flavors, sweeteners, preservatives, or other unnecessary ingredients. These additives can contribute to various health concerns.

Prioritizing minimally processed foods with simple ingredient lists is key to a healthier diet. By choosing whole, natural foods, you're reducing your exposure to potentially harmful additives and maximizing nutrient intake. Remember, the closer a food is to its natural state, the better it is for your body.

Reading food labels is essential, even for organic products. Understanding the ingredients in your food empowers you to make informed choices. Look for foods with minimal processing and recognizable ingredients. By being a mindful consumer, you can create a diet that nourishes your body and supports overall well-being.

Why Does Food Storage Matter?

Proper food storage is crucial for maintaining both food safety and nutritional value. Improper storage can lead to the rapid growth of harmful bacteria, increasing the risk of foodborne illness. Additionally, exposure to light, air, and fluctuating temperatures can accelerate the breakdown of essential nutrients, such as vitamins and antioxidants, diminishing the overall quality of the food.

Another critical aspect of food storage is preventing the formation of histamine. Certain foods, like fish and aged cheeses, can develop high levels of histamine when improperly stored, leading to allergic-like reactions in susceptible individuals. This condition, known as histamine intolerance, can cause symptoms such as headaches, digestive upset, and skin reactions.

Ultimately, effective food storage helps to protect your health, maximize the nutritional value of your food, and prevent waste. By understanding the best storage practices for different types of foods, you can enjoy fresher, safer, and more nutritious meals.

Part 2: Proteins

Next we will explore the factors involved in choose healthy protein dense foods to supply ample nutrition for your muscles, and metabolism. Proteins are the building blocks of our health.

Why It's Essential to Eat a Variety:

Eating a variety of proteins is important for ensuring a complete amino acid profile and obtaining a diverse range of nutrients. Different protein sources provide different combinations of essential amino acids, the building blocks of proteins that the body cannot produce on its own. Consuming a variety of proteins, such as meat, fish, dairy, legumes, and plant-based sources ensures your body gets all the essential amino acids it needs for muscle repair, immune function, and overall health.

Various protein sources also offer a wide array of vital nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats. For example, fish provides omega-3 fatty acids, red meat offers iron and vitamin B12, and legumes are rich in fiber and folate. This diversity in nutrient intake supports overall well-being and helps prevent nutritional deficiencies.

Why Sustainably Farmed over wild caught?

Norwegian farmed salmon has fewer toxins than wild-caught salmon because of the tightly regulated aquaculture industry in Norway. They follow stringent protocols to monitor the feed intake of plant-based ingredients, fish oils, and protein, limiting potential contaminants such as heavy metals, dioxins, or PCBS (polychlorinated biphenyls). Wild caught on the contrary have a higher susceptibility to contamination because of their diet and potential exposure to polluted waters. As such, Norwegian farmed salmon is a safer choice to reduce toxic exposure which is important to set your gut up for success.

References:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33352671/>

Why Eat Pasture Raised?

Eating pasture-raised products is beneficial because they contain healthier dietary fats, including higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids. This healthier fat profile can support heart health and reduce inflammation.

Animals raised on pasture are also exposed to sunlight, which increases their natural production of vitamin D. Pasture-raised meat, eggs, or dairy therefore can provide higher levels of this essential vitamin, which is crucial for bone health and immune function.

In addition, pasture-raised products tend to often have higher levels of other important nutrients like vitamin E, beta-carotene, and antioxidants.

Pasture-based farming practices additionally promote soil health, reduce the need for chemical fertilizers, and enhance the ecosystem by maintaining natural grasslands.

Lastly, these animals are allowed to exhibit more natural behaviors contributing to better overall welfare and reducing the stress associated with confinement. As such, they are more humanely and ethically treated as well.

References:

<https://chriskresser.com/why-pasture-raised/>

<https://appa.org/The-Nutrition-of-Pasture-Raised-Chicken-and-Meats>

Why Organic Meats Always?

Eating organic food is important because it reduces your exposure to harmful pesticides and chemicals. Organic animal products are also produced without the routine use of antibiotics and hormones, which helps to reduce the risk of antibiotic resistance and exposure to hormone residues.

Organic farming also avoids GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms), which can create negative health effects. This approach also promotes environmental sustainability and the more humane treatment of animals. In addition, choosing organic supports local and small-scale farmers.

References: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3791249/>

High Yield Protein Foods:

- Organic Grass-fed or grass-finished beef, lamb (3 oz is 25 G protein)
- Organic pasture-raised chicken/ turkey (3-4 oz = 25 G protein)
- Organic pasture raised eggs (3 egg = 21 G protein)
- Norwegian farmed salmon
- Sardines canned in water or olive oil
- Wild caught shrimp (5 oz = 25 G protein)
- Organic sausages free of nitrates, nitrites, and ideally celery powder as well
- Organic protein powders - usually each serving is about 10-20 g, so 1-2 servings
 - Grass fed organic whey protein (only if you are not sensitive to dairy)
 - Pea/ rice combo
 - Hemp
 - Collagen - (beef, fish)
 - Egg protein
 - Spirulina - see the label for portioning out

Plant protein portions that equal 25g

- Organic extra firm tofu - 1/2 cup
- Sweet Peas - 3 cups
- Soybean sprouts - 2 cups
- Lentils/ beans/ split peas - 1.5 cup
- Pumpkin or sunflower seeds - 3 oz
- Almond or peanut - 4 oz
- Organic spinach or collard greens - 4 cups
- Quinoa - 3 cups
- Oatmeal - 4 cups

25 g combo examples:

- 2 oz chicken, 1 C peas
- 1/4 c tofu, 1/2 C beans, 1/2 C peas
- 3 oz fish, 1 oz almond, 1 C organic spinach
- 1.5 oz chicken, 1/2 c quinoa, 1 c organic spinach, 1/3 oz pumpkin seeds
- 1/2 c lentils, 1 c quinoa, 1 c organic spinach, 1/2 oz sunflower seeds
- 2 eggs and 1/2 c beans

Make Your Own Combos!

Pro Tip: Avoid grilling or broiling, which can increase something called AGEs, a very inflammatory chemical created from using high heat on proteins and carbs.

Part 3: Starch

Next we will discuss starches, the providers of energy and cellular power. These foods, if chosen wisely, can give you the energy and power you need to perform optimally at the gym. Plus, carbs are necessary to burn the fat cells your body uses when your sweating hard at the gym. So don't be skimping out on these highly important foods.

What Are High Yield Starchy Foods?

High-yield starchy foods are a nutritional powerhouse, offering a concentrated source of energy and essential nutrients. These plants have been carefully cultivated to maximize their starch content, providing a foundation for many diets worldwide. Beyond carbohydrates, they often pack a punch of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. For instance, sweet potatoes are rich in vitamin A, while quinoa offers a good dose of B vitamins and magnesium. These foods not only sustain us but also contribute to overall health and well-being when consumed as part of a balanced diet.

The term "high-yield" in this context refers to the abundant nutrient content per serving rather than simply the quantity produced. These foods offer exceptional nutritional value, making them cornerstone staples in many cultures. By incorporating a variety of high-yield starchy foods into your meals, you can ensure a steady supply of energy and vital nutrients to support your body's functions.

While high-yield starchy foods are nutrient-dense, it's essential to consume them in moderation and alongside other food groups for optimal health. Balancing these foods with lean proteins, healthy fats, and plenty of fruits and vegetables creates a well-rounded diet that supports overall well-being.

References: <https://www.proquest.com/openview/3cfbe28c0308853e67a03d337443851a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=32528>

Why Soak legumes and Grains and Cook them at High Pressure or High Heat?

Soaking legumes and grains before cooking is a traditional method that offers several benefits. The process helps to reduce the amount of phytic acid, an anti-nutrient that can hinder the absorption of minerals like iron and zinc. Soaking also softens the legumes and grains, reducing cooking time and making them more digestible. Additionally, it can help to remove unwanted compounds that may cause flatulence.

Cooking legumes and grains at high pressure or high heat is essential for several reasons. High temperatures effectively eliminate harmful bacteria and other microorganisms that may be present. Additionally, this method helps to break down complex carbohydrates and starches, making them more digestible and easier for the body to absorb nutrients. Pressure cooking, in particular, can significantly reduce lectins that can cause digestive and inflammatory issues.

References:

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/00346650810920187/full/html>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1466856422003241>

High Yield Starchy Foods:

Veggies:

- Medium starchy - Carrots roasted, roasted beets, winter squash (butternut, pumpkin, spaghetti squash, acorn squash), green peas
- Very Starchy - Sweet potato, purple sweet potato

Legumes - Great northern beans, black beans, lima beans, cannellini beans, fava beans, pinto beans, lentils, split peas

- How to prepare legumes:
 - Canned goods must be purchased as low sodium, BPA free, and organic. They must also be well rinsed in a strainer and soaked for 1 hr prior to consuming.
 - Dry beans should be soaked over night 8 hrs minimum changing the water 3-4 times, then boiled for 60 min or until soft, then discard the water and rinse.
 - Lentils should be rinsed well (until water comes out clean), soaked for an hour, the pressure cooked which reduces the lectin content.
 - Avoid lentil or bean pastas (still high in lectins).

Whole Grains - Quinoa, amaranth, Teff, buckwheat, brown rice

- How to prepare grains:
 - These are less inflammatory if they are rinsed well (until water comes out clean), soaked for an hour, then pressure cooked which reduces the lectin content.

Pro Tip: Grains can be cooked and then cooled in the refrigerator before eating to optimize resistant starch content, which is a necessary prebiotic.

Part 4: Fruits and Non-Starchy Vegetables

Next, we discuss the foods that provide us with the most nutritional benefits from any of the foods we consume. Dense with fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial compounds, fruits and vegetables enable our body to function at its highest capacity. Without them, our gut health shifts to a more inflammatory state, and our nutritional status begins to lean towards deficiencies, all causing our metabolism to slow down and fat burning to come to a screeching halt.

References:

<https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/12/7/1919>

Why Include a Variety of Colorful Fruits and Veggies?

Eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables is essential for optimal health due to the diverse array of phytonutrients they provide. Each color represents a unique combination of beneficial compounds, including polyphenols and flavonoids. These powerful antioxidants help protect your cells from damage caused by free radicals, reducing your risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and inflammation. For example, red fruits and vegetables are rich in lycopene, which supports heart health, while green produce contains chlorophyll, linked to liver detoxification. Blueberries and blackberries boast high levels of anthocyanins, which have been shown to improve brain function.

Consuming a rainbow of fruits and vegetables is also essential for promoting gut health, thanks to their abundance of polyphenols and fibers. Polyphenols are potent compounds that act as prebiotics, nourishing the beneficial bacteria in your gut microbiome. A diverse range of polyphenols found in different colored produce supports a thriving gut ecosystem. Additionally, the variety of fibers in different fruits and vegetables provides a diverse food source for gut bacteria, fostering a balanced and robust microbiome. A healthy gut microbiome is crucial for digestion, immune function, and overall well-being. By incorporating a colorful array of fruits and vegetables into your diet, you invest in long-term gut health and optimize your body's ability to absorb nutrients.

References:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1155/2019/2125070>

<https://www.mdpi.com/1420-3049/27/13/4061>

Colorful fruits and vegetables are also excellent for good health due to their unique combination of benefits:

1. **Low Calorie Density:** Green vegetables (like spinach, kale, and broccoli) or orange vegetables (like carrots, sweet potatoes, and butternut squash) are low in calories while providing a significant volume of food, helping you feel full and satisfied without consuming excess calories.
2. **High Fiber Content:** High-fiber foods promote help you to feel full, reducing calorie intake and preventing overeating. Fiber also aids in digestion and regulates blood sugar levels to keep your insulin off the sugar rollercoaster.
3. **Rich in Nutrients:** Green and orange veggies are packed with essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants like vitamins, A, C, K, and beta-carotene which support immune function and reduce inflammation which improves metabolic health
4. **Hydration:** Lots of green and orange vegetables have high water content, keeping you hydrated and contributing to fullness
5. **Low Glycemic Index:** Green and orange vegetables typically have a low glycemic index, which prevents insulin spikes and crashes, which can lead to increased hunger and cravings

6. **Detoxification:** Cruciferous vegetables contain compounds that support liver function and detoxification.

Pro Tip: Try to count your plant based foods every week. A good goal to shoot for is 30 plant varieties including fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

Non Starchy Veggies and Fruits

Green:

- Leafy Veggies: organic spinach, beet greens, kale, arugula, dark green lettuces
- Hardy Veggies: broccoli, brussel sprouts, asparagus, zucchini, green bell pepper
- Fruit: kiwi

Yellow:

- Non Starchy Veggies: yellow bell peppers, yellow squash, yellow tomatoes, yellow carrots,
- Fruit: banana, lemon, pineapple

Orange/Red:

- Non Starchy Veggies: Orange yellow or red bell peppers, carrots, tomatoes,
- Fruit: strawberry, raspberries, cherries, cantaloupe, oranges, red apples, pomegranates

Blue/ Purple:

- Veggies: purple cabbage, purple sweet, potato, purple carrots
- Fruit: blueberries, blackberries, plums, acai berries, grapes

Part 5: Healthy Fats

Next, we discuss the powerful fatty foods that provide energy, flavor, and satiety. These healthy fats are necessary for long-term energy demands as we go about our day-to-day lives. They also provide the structure to each one of our cells and are essential for recovery and optimal hormone function.

Why sprout our nuts and seeds?

Sprouting nuts and seeds significantly enhances their nutritional profile. This process reduces phytic acid, an anti-nutrient that hinders mineral absorption. Additionally, sprouting activates enzymes that improve digestibility and unlock a wider range of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This transformation results in a food that is not only more nutritious but also easier for the body to process, making it a valuable addition to a healthy diet.

References:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nbu.12549>

Why choose cold-pressed refined oils for cooking?

Cold-pressed refined oils are preferred for cooking due to their high smoke point. This means they can withstand high temperatures without breaking down and producing harmful compounds. Their neutral flavor makes them versatile for various culinary applications. Refining processes remove impurities and extend shelf life, ensuring consistent quality. However, choosing refined oils from reputable sources is essential to minimize potential contaminants.

References:

<https://saaer.org.in/journals/index.php/jae/article/view/275/199>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308814609011303>

Why choose cold-pressed virgin oils for dressing?

Cold-pressed virgin oils offer superior flavor and nutritional value compared to their refined counterparts. The process of cold-pressing helps to preserve the nutritional integrity and natural oil aroma. These oils are rich with bioactive compounds (free fatty acids, phenolics, tocopherols, sterols, stonals, phospholipids) which help to reduce risk of disease and improve overall health. They are best enjoyed raw in dressings, marinades, or as a finishing touch to add a layer of complexity to a dish. While they may have a lower smoke point, the nutritional value make them the preferred choice.

References:

<https://natsci.upit.ro/media/2009/012mihai-et-al.pdf>

High Yield Fats

- Sprouted organic seeds - pumpkin seed, sunflower seed, flaxseed, chia seed, hemp seed
- Sprouted organic nuts or nut butters - almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, pine nuts
- Oils -
 - Refined - avocado oil
 - Virgin - olive oil, coconut oil
- Fruit - whole avocados, or low sodium olives

Pro Tip: Add in moderation for cooking, flavor, and to increase satiety

Recommended Per Meal or Snack:

- 1 - 2 tbs of oil or /butter
- 1 oz max whole nuts and seeds

Part 6: Probiotics

Next we discuss the gut health promoting foods that our ancestors have been eating since the beginning of time. As a beautiful collaboration between human and bacteria, these foods enable our gut health to thrive. Without them we may not have the diversity we need in our microbiome to offer ample protection, nutrient production, and intestinal health.

Why Add Probiotic Foods to Your Meal Plan?

Probiotic foods promote a healthy gut and well-being, helping you to be biochemically sound. Improved gut health, facilitated by beneficial bacteria, is essential for efficient digestion and absorption, preventing discomfort such as bloating, constipation, and inflammation. Probiotics can also reduce inflammation in the gut and improve metabolic health. Additionally, they enhance the absorption of essential nutrients by supporting a solid gut, contributing to overall health and well-being.

Incorporating probiotic-rich foods into your diet can also be delicious! Non-dairy yogurt or kefir, for instance, not only provide a creamy and satisfying snack but also help balance your gut bacteria, which is crucial for digestion and metabolism. Synergy Kombucha offers a refreshing and fizzy way to enjoy probiotics, supporting your gut health while also giving you a little energy boost. Kimchi and sauerkraut, with their tangy and spicy flavors, add a punch to your meals and are packed with beneficial bacteria that aid digestion and reduce bloating. Organic miso and tempeh, staples in many Asian dishes, are not only rich in probiotics but also offer a hearty dose of protein and nutrients helping you feel full and satisfied. By adding these tasty options to your diet, you can support your gut health journey in a delicious and natural way.

High-Yield Probiotic Foods

- Non-dairy yogurt and kefir (coconut, cashew, almond)
- Synergy kombucha
- Kimchi, sauerkraut, or other fermented veggies
- Organic miso soup
- Organic tempeh

Pro Tip: Try to eat at least 1 serving per day to optimize gut health

References:

<https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/13/10/3627?ref=healthdecider>

<https://analyticalsciencejournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/elsc.201100179>

<https://academic.oup.com/jambio/article/100/6/1171/6718353?login=false>

Part 7: Beverages

What are High-Yield Beverages?

High-yield beverages pack a nutritional punch, offering a concentrated source of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. These drinks go beyond mere hydration, providing essential nutrients that contribute to overall health and well-being. Examples include freshly squeezed fruit and vegetable juices, infused waters with added fruits or herbs, and plant-based milk alternatives fortified with vitamins and minerals. Incorporating high-yield beverages into your daily routine can enhance your nutrient intake and support optimal bodily functions.

High Yield Beverages:

- Spring water from glass containers
- Reverse osmosis water with trace minerals and/or electrolytes added back in - see product recommendations
- Lemon water
- Herbal teas for reducing inflammation
 - ginger tea, detox tea, green tea, or other rich-colored teas
- Moderate intake of high-quality mold-free organic coffee (1 cup per day)
- Fresh, cold-pressed fruit or vegetable juices
 - Orange, tomato, cranberry (watered down), carrot
- Alternative milk - organic, unsweetened, enriched with calcium and other nutrients (ideally free of gums)
 - Be careful with oat milk - it may not be gluten-free if it isn't labeled, and is also higher in carbohydrates - see recommended brands on last page
 - The best options are almond, macadamia nut, pecan, pistachio, hazelnut, or coconut
 - Homemade is always best (see milk machine)
- High protein bone broths

What is hydration important?

- **Appetite Control:**
 - Often, people mistake thirst for hunger. Drinking water before meals can help control appetite, leading to reduced calorie intake. Cold ice water can also knock a sugar craving
- **Boosts Metabolism:**
 - Drinking water, especially cold water, can temporarily boost metabolism by requiring the body to expend energy to heat it up.
- **Promotes Fat Burning:**
 - Adequate hydration is necessary for the body to burn fat efficiently. During the process of lipolysis (the breakdown of fat for energy), water is required for fat molecules to be metabolized.
- **Detoxification:**
 - Water helps your kidneys filter out waste products and toxins through urine, keeping your body clean and functioning properly.

- **Skin Health:**
 - Hydration keeps skin healthy and glowing. Dehydration can lead to dry skin and an aged appearance.

How Much Water Should You Drink for Optimal Health?

The general guideline is **8 cups (64 ounces)** of water a day, but this varies based on factors like body size, activity level, and climate. A more tailored approach is:

- **For Women:** About **2.7 liters (91 ounces)** per day (includes all beverages and water from food).
- **For Men:** About **3.7 liters (125 ounces)** per day.

Signs of Proper Hydration:

- Light yellow or clear urine.
- Regular, easy bowel movements.
- Consistent energy levels throughout the day.

Tips to drink more water:

- 40 oz flask that fits in your car
 - Buy multiple for your house and work
 - Ideally clear glass

References:

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/322296#:~:text=Water%20is%20necessary%20to%20burn.create%20glycerol%20and%20fatty%20acids.>

Part 8: What Not to Eat

What is food toxicity?

Food toxicity refers to the harmful effects that certain substances in food can have on the body. These substances can be categorized into several groups. Chemical toxins, such as pesticides, heavy metals, and additives, can accumulate in food and disrupt bodily functions. Food allergens, like gluten, dairy, or shellfish, can trigger immune responses in sensitive individuals. Additionally, excessive consumption of certain nutrients, such as sodium or sugar, can lead to imbalances and negative health consequences.

The impact of food toxicity is multifaceted. These harmful substances can induce inflammation, a chronic condition linked to numerous diseases. They can also disrupt metabolic processes, affecting how the body converts food into energy and utilizes nutrients. Furthermore, food toxicity can deplete essential nutrients, impairing overall health and well-being.

References:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Prachi-Bhargava-3/publication/325260555_Health_Issues_and_Heavy_Metals/links/5b740b0892851ca650621a4a/Health-Issues-and-Heavy-Metals.pdf

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0041008X13000549>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4247328/>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/obr.12040>

What are food sensitivities?

Food sensitivities, also known as food intolerances, occur when the body has difficulty digesting or processing certain foods and the immune system becomes reactive to it. Unlike food allergies, which involve the immune system, food sensitivities cause a multitude of symptoms from digestive issues to brain fog and others, without triggering an immediate allergic reaction.

The most common food sensitivities include gluten, yeast, dairy, and eggs. These substances are often modified and slow digesting causing an increase in adverse food reactions. While not life-threatening like food allergies, food sensitivities can significantly impact quality of life and may increase bodily inflammation and reduce ones ability to obtain good outcomes in a health optimization protocol.

References:

<https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/eliminating-immunologically-reactive-foods-from-the-diet-and-its-effect-on-body-composition-and-quality-of-life-in-overweight-persons-2165-7904.1000112.php?aid=3994>

How does the ACE Diet Protocol approach food sensitivities?

Through my clinical practice I have seen that the vast majority of clients that cut out gluten and dairy are significantly healthier and also have higher quality of life. Moreover, from running 100's of food sensitivity tests, I have seen that these are the most common food triggers amongst a few other foods.

In an ideal world you would run a food sensitivity test and receive a personalized meal plan based on my expert interpretation of the test.

I must say, taking aggressive approaches and cutting out multiple food groups is not always necessary and is often more harmful in the long run. However, everyone is different. Most people only need to cut out a few food triggers to feel optimal, where others may need to be more strict. The goal is to reduce the inflammatory burden to the point of feeling healthier and to test the reactivity of your body against foods over time so as to include as many foods as possible. Thus the ACE diet

protocol removes the two most common triggers, gluten and dairy, in hopes that it will offer the most comprehensive benefits to people in this program. Additionally, it includes a number of healthy alternatives to help you maintain optimal nutritional intake, if not more than is recommended.

Plus, many gluten and dairy products are processed and contain high amounts of calories, sugar, and unhealthy fats, which are inflammatory. As described below, inflammation leads to bloating, digestive issues, and weight gain, making it harder to stay optimally health. By cutting out gluten and dairy, you can set a solid stage for lower levels of inflammation, improved digestion, and a boosted metabolism.

References:

<https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/eliminating-immunologically-reactive-foods-from-the-diet-and-its-effect-on-body-composition-and-quality-of-life-in-overweight-persons-2165-7904.1000112.php?aid=3994>

What are inflammatory foods and why are they so bad for you?

Inflammatory foods can be food high in sugar, fried foods, high salt foods, ultra processed foods, alcohol, GMO foods, highly heated foods, and any foods you may be reactive too. These foods can wreak havoc on your body by causing inflammation, which makes it harder for your body to function properly. Plus, these foods are often high in empty calories, meaning they add to your calorie intake without providing any real nutritional value. They can also mess with your blood sugar levels, leading to cravings and overeating. So, cutting back on these inflammatory foods can help reduce inflammation, stabilize your metabolism, and make it easier to achieve your health goals. It's all about making your body a friendlier place for burning fat and feeling awesome!

- Highly inflammatory foods
 - Alcohol
 - ultra refined meats/ carbs/ oils
 - sugary drinks
 - sugary snacks
 - fried foods
 - trans fats
 - high sodium foods
 - inorganic foods
- Known food allergies or foods that don't feel good when you eat them - based on food symptom analysis and journaling
- High reactive foods on IgG/IgA or IgE test - ask me to explain this if we haven't covered this for you yet

Helpful Tools:

Grocery guide apps that can help you choose healthy products - you can scan in products to see if they are healthy choices

- EWG Healthy Living - great for learning about toxic ingredients
- Yuka - great for learning about toxic ingredients

- Bobby Approved - great for overall advice
- Seed Oil Scout - great for finding restaurants that don't use refined seed oils

References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK597377/>

Chapter 2: Foods By Nutrient

Why is it important to know which foods are high in essential nutrients?

Understanding the nutrient density of different foods is crucial for optimizing your diet and achieving optimal health. By knowing which foods are particularly rich in specific vitamins, minerals, or antioxidants, you can make informed choices when shopping at the grocery store, and spend your dollars more intentionally. Below is a list of the primary antioxidants our bodies need to function optimally. You can see that the foods near the top of the list have the highest density per calorie and are the basis of what I call "high yield foods."

Foods By Nutrient:

Vitamin A - Each of these is 100% of your recommended daily intake: 2/3 C carrots, 3/4 C of butternut squash, 1/2 C pumpkin, 3/4 C baked sweet potato, 1 C organic spinach/ kale/ mustard greens, 3 C cantaloup, 4 C lettuce, 4 C red bell peppers

Vitamin C Each of these is 100% of your recommended daily intake :- 1/2 bell pepper, 1.25 C broccoli/ brussel sprouts/ cauliflower/ cabbage, 1 C strawberries, 1.25 C kiwi, 2 C tomato, 3 C swiss chard, 4 C kale, 5 C organic spinach, 1 C orange juice/ 1.25 oranges

Vitamin E - Each of these is 100% of your recommended daily intake: 1 C açai berry, 3 C broccoli rabe, 4 C organic spinach, 5 C asparagus/Swiss chard, 5 C butternut squash, 3 tbsp almond butter, 1/2 C Almond meal (pancakes, paleo bread), 1/3 C sunflower seeds, 1/3 C almonds, 3 avocado, 2 C green olives

Zinc - Each of these is 100% RDI: 1 oz Oyster, 7 oz crab, 1.25 C pumpkin or squash seeds, 4 C of lentils, 9 oz beef, 9 oz lamb, 5 C oatmeal, 5 C shiitake mushrooms, 1.25 C hemp seeds, 1.25 C cashews, 3 C of firm tofu, 12 oz bacon/pork,

Selenium - Each of these is 100% RDI: 3-5 brazil nuts, 2.5 oz of sunflower seeds, 3 oz of chia seeds, 2 oz tuna, 4 oz tilapia/ snapper, salmon, 2 oz oysters, 10 clams/ mussels, 3 oz lobster, 15 shrimp, 4 oz pork chop, 6 oz skirt steak, 6 oz lean chicken breast/ turkey, 1 chicken egg, 1.25 C of firm tofu, 3 C navy beans, 2 C shiitake or portabella mushroom, 3 C white button mushrooms

Magnesium Each of these is 100% RDI: - 2.3 oz of pumpkin seeds, 2.5 C spinach, 2.5 C Swiss chard, 5.5 tbsp hemp seeds, 3.5 C sunflower seeds, 1 C almonds, 0.5 C chia seeds, 4.6 C buckwheat, 4 C quinoa 6.5 oz of dark chocolate, 7 avocado, 5 oz cashews, 3.5 C black beans/ great northern beans, 10 C butternut squash

Potassium Each of these is 100% RDI: 3.5 C beet greens, 5 C Swiss chard, 24 oz Salmon, 5 C white beans, 5 avocados, 5 baked potatoes, 5 C acorn squash, 5.5 C spinach, 7 C plantain, 8 C butternut squash or sweet potato, 9 C tomato juice. 9.5 C of orange juice, 10 banana, 11 Grapefruits, 47 oz of meat

The All-Star List Cheat Sheet:

High Nutrient All stars:

- Veggies - Bell pepper, broccoli, broccoli rabe, carrots
- Greens - spinach, beet greens, chard
- Fruit - strawberries, kiwi, acai
- Nuts/ seeds - almonds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds
- Legumes - great northern beans, lima beans, lentils
- Carbs - quinoa, sweet potato, butternut squash
- Protein - oyster, liver, tuna, salmon

References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8936507/>

Chapter 3: The ACE Meal Template

A balanced meal is essential for maintaining overall health and well-being because it ensures the body receives a variety of nutrients in the right proportions.

One of the primary benefits of a balanced meal is its role in stabilizing blood sugar levels. By including a mix of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, the body can manage glucose more effectively, preventing the sharp spikes and crashes often associated with consuming high-sugar or high-refined-carb foods. This stabilization helps maintain energy levels throughout the day and reduces the risk of developing conditions such as type 2 diabetes.

Additionally, a balanced meal provides optimal nutrient intake by offering a diverse array of all the essential amino acids, omegas, fibers, vitamins and minerals necessary for various bodily functions. Complete proteins are crucial for muscle repair and immune function, while omega 3 and 6 fats support brain health and hormone production. Furthermore, incorporating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds ensures that you receive fiber, antioxidants, and essential fatty acids, which contribute to heart health, digestive efficiency, cognitive power, and overall vitality.

What does a balanced meal look like?

The template below is a great starting point and is meant to help you build meals on your own if you still choose to steer away from the meal plan.

- 25 grams or more of quality protein
- 1 part some combination of starchy foods (legumes, starchy vegetables, or whole grains)
- 2 parts non-starchy veggies, fruits, or probiotic veggies (depending on the meal)
- 1-2 tbsp healthy fat (may add as flavoring or sauce, or may come as part of the protein as with eggs or fatty fish)
- Add anti-inflammatory spices and sauces as needed
- Filtered water or a high yield beverage

Chapter 4: Choosing the Right Meal Plan

In this protocol we offer a variety of meal plans designed to meet your caloric needs. Your caloric needs are determined by overall energy usage including the energy burned to keep you alive and the energy burned to keep you moving. In order to calculate this, you can simply plug your info into a calculator online and learn what your estimated caloric needs are. This amount would be the amount to keep you at the weight you currently are. That said, in order to lose weight you will need to consume less, or if the goal is to gain weight you would need to eat more. Fat loss happens when you are both in a caloric deficit but also when you are eating enough. Thus you will need to keep in mind that the bare minimum intake is around 1600 calories. I do not recommend eating any less, unless you are a very small person. If you think this is too much please message me via the portal and we can get you set up with a free evaluation.

[Click here to calculate your total caloric expenditure:](#)

Now subtract anywhere from 250-1000 calories depending on whether you want to lose 2-8 lbs per month. This will be your goal calorie intake. Choose a meal plan that is the closest to this number. Remember, if you calculate a number less than 1600 then you will need to stick with the 1600 calorie meal plan and adjust your activity levels to burn the extra calories as desired.

*If you currently use an activity monitor like Fitbit or Apple Watch, you can use your average active energy expenditure to replace your estimated activity levels in the calculator. Just add this number to your BMR for your total energy expenditure.

Chapter 5: Meal Planning Tips

My personalized meal plans will cover the basics of choosing foods and how to prep them, however, sometimes following the meal plan isn't always possible. In this chapter I discuss a few topics related to choosing foods/meals when the meal plan is out of the question.

On a budget? Choose foods from the list below to maximize savings:

High-nutrient dollar foods:

- Eggs
- Romaine Lettuce
- Kale
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Beans
- Peanuts
- Organic spinach
- Butternut Squash
- Jalapeno Peppers
- Lentils
- Canned Tomatoes

Low-nutrient dollar foods:

- Out of Season/Location Fresh Foods
- Energy Drinks
- Alcoholic Drinks (sorry not a ton of nutrition in beer + wine)
- Brand name apples
- Fast food/processed food

References: <https://efficiencyiseverything.com/food-nutrition-per-dollar/>

Traveling a lot? Here's some good foods to consider for traveling or busy lifestyles:

- Snack bars or protein bars - see product recommendations below
- Trail mix or nut/seeds mixtures - ideally low sugar
- Ready made veggie trays w/ hummus - for in the hotel room if you have a fridge
- Packages of pre-cooked tuna, salmon, chicken, etc.
- Bags of pre-made salads that come with dressing, so you can pour the dressing in the bag and shake it and eat it without a bowl.
 - Add tuna/salmon/chicken packets or even avocado as desired
- Canned or boxed meals with no can opener needed - chicken soup, chili, Indian cuisines, etc.
- Protein powders for making protein shakes
- Oatmeal or healthy cereal - see below
- Nut butter packets to add to oatmeal or shakes

Needing to outsource the grocery shopping or cooking? Here are some vetted options:

Hire a chef:

- Hire a personal chef using www.meetachef.com, provide them with the groceries and have them cook for you for an hourly rate.

Invest in meal delivery (These are companies that will deliver premade meals to your door):

- Trifecta nutrition
- Factor 1 meals
- Petes Paleo
- Fresh n Lean
- Sunbasket
- Thistle (Vegan)
- Daily harvest (Vegan)

Invest in meal prep delivery (These are companies where they ship the ingredients, and you cook the meals yourself):

- Hungry Root
- Blue apron
- Hello fresh
- Green Chef

Invest in grocery delivery (Outsource groceries by ordering online):

- Amazon market
- Thrive Market

Eat out often? Here's some tips to keep you on track:

First off, choose a restaurant carefully that has healthy options or allergen friendly menus, you can use apps from the list below to help you find good ones in your area.

Scan menus for high quality proteins like grilled chicken, fish, or tofu, paired with whole grains and/or different vegetables that are raw, steamed, baked, or grilled. In addition, avoid dishes described as "creamy," "crispy," "smothered," or "fried," as these often indicate higher calorie and fat content. This is usually made easier at dinner time and with restaurants that offer entrees and extra sides.

Whenever possible, salads typically offer a great variety of nutrients, just ask for the cheese on the side and ask for avocado, hummus, or oil and vinegar dressing to avoid sneaky additives.

All in all, you can always be cautious of portion size and cut it back if you can't find something ideal. Don't be shy to ask for a half-portion or share a meal with your friend. You can also ask for a to-go container before you eat, placing half the meal in it for later which both saves on cost and prevents overeating. For a drink, opt for water and skip on the sugary beverages and alcohol. Drinking more can help offset your appetite and the desire for appetizers or desert.

App Suggestions:

- Find Me Gluten Free - helps to locate restaurants that adhere
- HappyCow - vegan food restaurants
- Seed Oil Scout - find seed-oil free restaurants

Chapter 5: Meal Prep Tips

Meal prep takes commitment and be an ongoing challenge. Especially when it comes to staying consistent every week. So in this chapter we discuss some of the common barriers people run into with meal prepping and how to move around them. Next we'll discuss the basics of meal prep and how to ensure you are ready to tackle the meal plan.

Remember, small steps can make a big difference. Start by identifying the main barrier and implementing one or two solutions. Gradually build on your success and adjust your approach as needed.

Overcoming Barriers to Meal Prep

When your family isn't on board:

- **Involve them in the process:** Let family members choose a few meals they like or help with grocery shopping.
- **Start small:** Begin with one meal a week that everyone enjoys, and gradually increase the number.
- **Offer alternatives:** Provide healthy options to replace family favorites.
- **Educate about benefits:** Explain the health and financial advantages of meal prepping.

When your kitchen is small:

- **Utilize every space:** Use the oven, stovetop, and microwave efficiently.
- **Invest in versatile cookware:** Look for pots and pans with multiple uses.
- **Prep in batches:** Cook large quantities of grains, proteins, and vegetables.
- **Get creative with storage:** Use mason jars, airtight containers, and the fridge door.

When you don't have the time:

- **Simplify your meals:** Opt for quick and easy recipes.
- **Prep on weekends:** Dedicate a few hours to chopping, marinating, or cooking.
- **Involve the whole family:** Assign tasks to everyone to save time.
- **Double or triple recipes:** Cook extra for leftovers or freezing.

When you're always driving around:

- **Prep portable meals:** Choose foods that are easy to eat on the go (salads, sandwiches, wraps).
- **Pack snacks:** Keep healthy snacks in your car for emergencies.
- **Plan ahead:** Check your schedule and pack meals accordingly.
- **Utilize slow cookers or Instant Pots:** Prepare meals in advance and reheat later.

When you can't afford it:

- **Create a budget:** Allocate funds for groceries and meal prep.
- **Buy in bulk:** Purchase non-perishable items in larger quantities.
- **Look for sales and coupons:** Save money on groceries.
- **Cook from scratch:** Avoid processed foods, which are often more expensive.
- **Consider cheaper protein sources:** Beans, lentils, and eggs are affordable options.

When you live far away from the grocery store:

- **Stock up when you go:** Buy non-perishable items in bulk.
- **Online grocery shopping:** Many stores offer delivery or pickup options.
- **Grow your own food:** Consider herbs or vegetables if you have space.
- **Plan meals around what you have:** Be creative with ingredients.

When you have an injury or disability:

- **Seek assistance:** Ask friends, family, or hire help for grocery shopping or meal prep.
- **Adapt recipes:** Modify recipes to accommodate your needs.
- **Use kitchen tools:** Invest in tools that make cooking easier, such as electric can openers or jar openers.
- **Prepare one-pot meals:** These require minimal prep and cleanup.
- **Consider meal delivery services:** Explore options that fit your budget and dietary needs.

The 4 Appliance Method

Before you start:

1. Consult with whoever cooks and/or eats your food in your household, if not just yourself, and ensure they are on the same page as you with your meal plan.
2. Make sure you have all the tools you need to store food (ie. glass containers (large, med, and small))
3. Make sure you have appliances to make it easier to cook more things at once (crock pot, pressure cooker, air fryer, etc.)
4. Choose a day on your calendar when you have 1-2 hours to meal prep - write it down on your calendar
5. Purchase all groceries before and when you have a chance, wash what needs to be washed, and then store your food properly and safely

On the selected day and time, start prepping the longer cooking foods first and work your way to the ingredients that have shorter cooking times

I recommend the 4 appliance method using an air fryer, pressure cooker, oven, and stove top.

1. Pre heat the oven as needed - use for baked chicken, salmon, lamb, or other baked recipes
2. Pressure cooker - use for anything wet like rice, quinoa, greens, chili, broth, etc.
3. Air fryer - use for roasting squash, sweet potato, brussel sprouts, etc
4. Stove top - use for frying eggs, sautéed veggies, stir fries, etc.

As you finish cooking, store your cooked foods in larger glass storage containers for later. If desired, create pre-prepped meals using smaller meal-size glass containers. When you are ready to heat, just heat up the leftovers and enjoy :)

Food Safety and Prevention of Foodborne Illness

Meal prepping can be a fantastic way to save time and eat healthy, but it's essential to prioritize food safety to avoid foodborne illnesses. Here are some key guidelines:

Remember the acronym "**Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill**":

- **Clean:** Wash hands, surfaces, and produce thoroughly. Use hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Separate:** Keep raw and cooked foods separate to avoid cross-contamination. Use different cutting boards and utensils.
- **Cook:** Cook foods to the proper internal temperature. Use a food thermometer.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate perishable foods promptly. Divide large quantities into smaller containers for quicker cooling.

Additional tips:

- **Thaw foods safely:** Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, cold water, or the microwave. Never thaw on the counter.
- **Marinate safely:** Reserve a portion of the marinade for serving and bring the rest to a boil before using it on cooked food.
- **Proper storage:** Use airtight containers for meal prep storage. Label containers with the contents and date.
- **Leftover guidelines:** Consume leftovers within 3-4 days. Reheat leftovers thoroughly to 165°F.
- **Danger zone:** Avoid leaving food in the "danger zone" (40°F to 140°F) for more than two hours.

Specific food safety concerns:

- **Meat and poultry:** Cook to the recommended internal temperature (use a food thermometer).
- **Eggs:** Cook until yolks and whites are firm.
- **Produce:** Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before consumption.
- **Dairy:** Store dairy products at or below 40°F.

Here are the safe cooking temperatures for different types of meat

- Poultry (Chicken, Turkey, Duck)
 - Whole or ground: 165°F (74°C)
- Ground Meats (Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb)

- Ground beef, pork, veal, lamb: 160°F (71°C)
- Beef, Pork, Veal, and Lamb (Steaks, Chops, Roasts)
 - Medium rare: 145°F (63°C) followed by a three-minute rest
 - Medium: 160°F (71°C)
- Pork:
 - Fresh pork (steaks, chops, roasts): 145°F (63°C) followed by a three-minute rest
 - Ground pork: 160°F (71°C)
- Fish and Shellfish
 - Fish: 145°F (63°C)
 - Shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crabs): Cook until flesh is opaque
 - Scallops: Cook until flesh is milky white or opaque and firm
- Egg Dishes
 - Eggs and egg dishes: 160°F (71°C)
- Leftovers and Casseroles
 - Reheated leftovers and casseroles: 165°F (74°C)

Chapter 6: Eat Your Food In a Health Way

Why is it important to think about the way we eat our food, versus just what we are eating?

How we eat can be a major determinant how we extract the nutrients from our food. It can also be the reason a healthy food suddenly becomes a toxic food. Thus how we eat is crucial. There's a lot of fad diets out there capitalizing on this fact such as intermittent fasting and time restricted eating diets. While they may help many for various reasons, following the basics has been the most effective method of getting all necessary nutrients in the healthiest way for my clients over the years.

The basic rules of healthy eating patterns:

- Eat slowly, chew well, and take your time. I recommend 35-40 chews per bite and taking 15-20 min or more to eat a meal. The slower the better.
- Allow for 3 or more hours between meals or snacks to optimize gut health and blood sugar stabilization.
- Avoid eating 2-3 hours before bed, avoid eating before a workout to optimize digestion.
- Aim to eat till you are 80% full. This way you will prevent yourself from overeating. If you feel hungry within 2 hours you are not eating enough.
- Eat food you enjoy! Learn how to flavor your food to optimize it to your preferences - eating food should be fun! Try new things, and get creative/ resourceful using online recipes or asking friends how they cook food.
- Have food intolerances? Keep a journal! Pay attention to any foods that might cause discomfort and record what you ate and what you felt. After a few weeks review your journal and see if there are any patterns. Avoid the ones you notice correlate the most and see if you feel better.

Fasting recommendations:

- Do not practice intermittent fasting every day to the point where you are largely restricting your caloric intake. This fasting is meant to restrict the time in which you eat, not your caloric intake.
- Skipping breakfast every day can be problematic for most people, I recommend skipping dinner, or eating a smaller one if you had to choose a meal to skip.
- Longer term fasting that does reduce caloric intake should be a cyclical practice, such as fasting 1 week per month or every other month. This prevents metabolic dysfunction from developing.
- The best fasting I've seen is to fast 24 hrs 1-2 d/w, on non-consecutive days, or to fast for 3 days straight a few times per year - this may require some practice or slowly building up to longer fasts as you prepare your body for longer periods without food. For example, you might start by skipping breakfast or dinner a few days a week, then skip one full day, then two the next week, then try going all the way up to 3.

What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating is the practice of paying full attention to your experience both preparing and consuming food. This strategy can help you invite more presence and attention toward your eating patterns to develop a healthier relationship with food. Mindful eating also enhances your enjoyment and gratitude for the nourishing foods, and trains your body to signal when you are full before eating too much. Prior to going for seconds or reaching for a snack, ask yourself if you are truly hungry or eating due to a habit, stress, or boredom

Excercise:

- Start by noticing your body's hunger and satiation cues, any emotional triggers that arise causing you to eat, and the pace at which you chew. It is helpful to eliminate distractions like watching TV, working, or being on your phone to allow yourself to be fully present.
- Consuming small amounts, chewing slowly, and even putting your fork down between bites helps you to focus on the act of eating to savor the flavors, textures, and aromas.

Chapter 7: Choosing Health Food Brands

In this chapter we explore this importance of becoming conscious consumers. With every dollar, we have the power to support the brands that keep us healthy, or on the other hand, to discourage the use of unhealthy agricultural practices. With the right knowledge we can make educated decisions on how we spend our money and how we support our community as a whole, not to mention the benefit it has on our own health.

Why is it important to consider the sources of the foods we purchase?

Understanding the origin of our food is crucial for several reasons. First and foremost, it directly impacts our health. Foods grown in nutrient-rich soil and raised in humane, conditions tend to be more nutritious and free from harmful residues. Additionally, supporting local farmers and producers contributes to a healthier ecosystem and reduces the environmental impact associated with long-distance transportation.

Moreover, knowing where our food comes from allows us to make more informed choices about what we consume. By supporting sustainable and ethical practices, we can help protect animal welfare, preserve biodiversity, and reduce our carbon footprint. Ultimately, considering the sources of our food empowers us to make conscious decisions that benefit both ourselves and the planet.

How can we find good quality brands with well sourced ingredients?

In today's day and age we have access to a number of resources online that can help point us in the right directions. We can find farms that offer boxes of local produce shipped right to our door, and we can find products that align with more health-conscious values. Check out the list below of some good quality resources:

- Yuca App - provides health information for scanned products to understand their impact on your health
- CTA boxes or Farmer's Markets - supports local farmers and fresh produce in season
- Simply Local - find local farms & ranches
- MisFits Market App - Organic grocery delivery
- Fig - personalized product recommendations based on the foods or ingredients you avoid
- Bobby Approved - healthy products by category
 - <https://www.tiktok.com/@bobbyparrish/video/7143325929132018986>

Some restaurants will offer information about the sources of their produce and meats and will often be displayed on their website or even in store. Here are a few that I know of:

- Truefood
- Sweetgreen

Grocery shopping can be overwhelming when seeking out high-quality, ethically sourced products. Here are some tips to help you find brands that align with your values:

- **Read labels carefully:** Look for terms like "organic," "grass-fed," "free-range," and "sustainably sourced." These labels provide clues about the quality and origin of ingredients.
- **Research brands:** Many companies now provide detailed information about their sourcing practices on their websites. Look for transparency and commitment to sustainability.
- **Support local farmers and producers:** When possible, purchase directly from farmers' markets or local grocery stores that prioritize local products.
- **Ask questions:** Don't hesitate to contact the company directly to inquire about their sourcing practices.

What about all the food certifications?

There are countless food certifications available, each focusing on specific aspects of food production, quality, or ethical standards. Here are some of the most common and well-recognized certifications:

Safety and Quality Certifications

- **USDA Organic:** Ensures products are produced without the use of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, or genetically engineered organisms.
- **Kosher:** Certifies food as adhering to Jewish dietary laws.
- **Halal:** Certifies food as permissible according to Islamic dietary laws.
- **BRC Global Standard:** A global food safety standard recognized by major retailers.
- **IFS Food Standard:** An international food safety standard recognized by major retailers and food manufacturers.
- **SQF (Safe Quality Food):** A food safety management system recognized by major retailers and food manufacturers.
- **Non-GMO Project Verified:** Indicates that the product contains no genetically engineered ingredients.
- **Gluten-Free Certified:** Ensures the product contains less than 20 parts per million of gluten.
- **Fairtrade:** Certifies that the product was produced under fair trade conditions, ensuring farmers and workers receive a fair price for their products.

Sustainability and Ethical Certifications

- **Rainforest Alliance Certified:** Ensures that products are produced in a way that protects the environment and supports the well-being of workers and communities.
- **Fairtrade:** See above.
- **Organic:** See above.
- **B Corporation:** Certifies that a company meets high standards of social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability.
- **Sustainable Seafood:** Ensures that seafood is caught or farmed using sustainable practices.

Other Certifications

- **Vegan:** Indicates that the product contains no animal ingredients or byproducts.
- **Vegetarian:** Indicates that the product contains no meat, but may contain other animal products.
- **Keto-Friendly:** Indicates that the product is suitable for the ketogenic diet.
- **Paleo-Friendly:** Indicates that the product is suitable for the paleo diet.

Which foods most often fall under these types of labels?

Safety and Quality Certifications

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Bonus: My Favorite Food Products:

BEVERAGES

Ready to drink protein shakes:

- OWYN Drinks - 32 g <https://amzn.to/3EVDoe7>, 20 g <https://amzn.to/3EZjdMe>
- Huel Shake

Meal Replacement powders

- Kachava - <https://amzn.to/3rnF0du>
- Raw Organic - see fullscript
- Orgain Perfect Meal - <https://amzn.to/3EUju37>

Caffeinated drinks:

- Rasa mushroom coffee - <https://amzn.to/3rqBUW6>
- Organic Matcha tea - <https://amzn.to/46wfBwV>
- Coffee:

- Vita Cup Perfect Coffee, or Clean Coffee Co - mold free, organic, low acid - <https://amzn.to/3Qu22HR>, <https://amzn.to/3sn8oRx>
 - Also - Clean Coffee and Lifeboost are good but more expensive
- Lucy Joe's Coffee - half calf - <https://amzn.to/3QQsGw2>

Greens Powders:

- Organic greens powder - <https://amzn.to/48t7vqN>

High Protein Broth

- Kettle and fire - <https://amzn.to/48xbPFr>

Kombucha

- GTs Synergy

Electrolytes

- Ultima - mod high in potassium, good for most people <https://amzn.to/40cdlsE>
- Vita Coco - very high in potassium, for those with constipation or sodium induced inflammation
<https://www.costco.com/vita-coco-hydration-drink-mix%2C-36-individual-serving-stick-packs-in-resealable-pouch.product.100748963.html>
 - Does contain small amounts of cane sugar
- Liquid IV - moderate high in sodium, for after a workout <https://amzn.to/3Q8GTmu>
- LMNT - very high in sodium, for athletes or people on Keto <https://amzn.to/3Mkslck>

GLUTEN-FREE

Katz brand - lots of products

Pasta

- Jovial - <https://amzn.to/3RHKBWM>
- Banza - <https://amzn.to/3tgsIEg>
- Ancient Harvest
- Konjac noodles - low calorie, low carb, mod fiber - <https://amzn.to/3PAQjyD>

Tortilla's

- La Fe tortilleria - <https://amzn.to/3ZC5PHm>
- Carbonaut gluten free - <https://amzn.to/46A15V7>
- Siete - <https://amzn.to/46dKWoo>

Gluten Free Bread

- Three bakers (7 ancient grains) gluten free breads.

- Carbonaut gluten free - high fiber - <https://amzn.to/3F4zmQl>
- Cooks gluten free sourdough bread - <https://amzn.to/3PDDmfH>
- Schar gluten free bread - <https://amzn.to/46c742p>

Chips/tortilla

- Siete cassava chips
- Simple mills - almond crackers
- Cauliflower tortilla chips
- Jackson's sweet potato chips
- Brussels sprout chips - need brand
- Kale chips - need brand

DAIRY FREE

Milks

- Malk - oat or almond - <https://amzn.to/3ZDbMUv>, <https://amzn.to/48xbbYx>,
- This PKN - pecan milk - <https://amzn.to/3rxIEBr>
- Pea milk powder - <https://amzn.to/3tjgpH0>
- Milkadamia - <https://amzn.to/45bVRxu>
- Make your own milk machine - <https://amzn.to/46q9V8h>

Alternatives for nutella

- ChocZero brand organic hazelnut spread - <https://amzn.to/3RG6k13>
- Chocolate almond butter (Barney's brand) - <https://amzn.to/3ZAgLFg>

Yogurt

- Siggie's - <https://amzn.to/46A0ld7>
- So delicious - <https://amzn.to/3tbpNN0>

Cheese

- Weggmans brand
- VioLife Cheese - <https://amzn.to/3RF0Djs>
- Daiya cheese products - does contain canola oil or safflower oil (may be sensitive)
- Whole Foods plant based Gouda - 365 Brand - <https://amzn.to/48cbyGY>

BEST GROCERY

Sauces/ dips/ dressing

- Kevins Simmer Sauce - <https://amzn.to/3ZDJ2Lf>
- San J orange sauce, general tso's sauce - <https://amzn.to/45hfgx4>
- Primal kitchen sauces, mayo, dressing - <https://amzn.to/3PATyD7>
- Majestic Raw hummus - <https://amzn.to/48z4nJS>

Beans

- Eden brand - <https://amzn.to/3LFcjzi>
- Jovial - <https://amzn.to/3QBeO8E>

Nuts/Seeds

- Sprouted Almonds - <https://amzn.to/3ruOcwB>
- Spouted Cashews - <https://amzn.to/3ZyOSh3>, <https://amzn.to/458SDe9>
- Sprouted Pecans - <https://amzn.to/3PG5gro>
- Sprouted pumpkin, sunflower, and watermelon seeds - <https://amzn.to/48t6TS1>
- Sprouted pumpkin seeds - <https://amzn.to/3PFKYyt>
- Organic Peanut butter w/ no trans fats - MaraNatha - <https://amzn.to/45cYAa5>

Granola

- One Degree - sprouted granola - <https://amzn.to/46yyyPJ>
- GO Raw - <https://amzn.to/3tb2Uct>

Meat:

Consider butcher box:

https://www.butcherbox.com/lander/choose-your-offer-u/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Search_Brand_All_All_tCPA&utm_content=661474609168&keyword=%2Bbutcher%20%2Bblock&matchtype=b&gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw69moBhBgEiwAUFCx2PkKQonHRG9AYzfX9W-dAbC-6Qb02BthmBhrQNEdglInmfTYmT8qdhoCNmMQAvD_BwE

Nitrate Free Bacon/sausage brands

- Pedersons
- Applegate
- Uncurled The Butcher Shop

Canned Salmon

- Look for products with 20% calcium per serving or as close to it as possible

Eggs

- Vital farms pasture raised - <https://amzn.to/3tgOyaD>

Pancake mix

- Birch Benders - paleo mix
- Bobs Red mill - gluten free mix

Deserts

- Dark chocolate covered bananas - Trader Joes, Sprouts
- Nat's Rawline - <https://www.natsrawline.com>

Cookie mix

- BHU Cookie dough - <https://amzn.to/3tfoYTv>
- Lakanto cookie mix - <https://amzn.to/3ZzcS3z>
- Sweet Lorens cookie dough - <https://amzn.to/3PAu6c9>

Healthy chocolate brands:

- Choc Zero brand - <https://amzn.to/3tfopsR>
- Lily's brand - <https://amzn.to/45kAJ8A>

Section 2: The ACE Fitness Protocol

The “ACE” in our fitness protocol stands for active, committed, and excelling.

Chapter 1: The basic recommendations of activity

A balanced workout routine includes cardiovascular, strength and flexibility training. Including all three of these will help you achieve optimal health. It also is essential to balance your workouts with flexibility to prevent injury and to encourage musculoskeletal balance. So how much should you be getting of each type?

- Cardiovascular exercises like running, cycling, or swimming improves heart and lung capacity which boost your endurance and burn calories. For optimal heart health, 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous cardio per week is recommended.
- Strength training such as with weights, resistance or body weight are crucial to build and maintain muscle mass as well as boost metabolism and support joint health. Incorporating this into your routine two to three times per week hitting all of the major muscle groups is recommended.
- Flexibility exercises like stretching or yoga can improve your range of motion, reduce injury, and enhance overall movement efficiency. Post workout when your muscles are warm can help with recovery and body agility.

What are some other benefits of exercise?

- Cardiovascular, strength training, and flexibility practices also play a significant role in enhancing mental well-being. Cardiovascular exercise is known to release endorphins, the "feel-good" hormone which reduces symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, while also stimulating your overall mood and mental clarity.
- Strength training builds a sense of accomplishment and boosts self-esteem as you see your physical capabilities grow and hit certain goals. The mental focus needed during these workouts can also stimulate mindfulness, limiting distracting or negative thoughts.
- Flexibility exercises are effective to promote relaxation and reduce tension in the body. They also encourage breathwork and mindfulness which effectively aid to reduce stress and improve mental resilience. Together, these synergistic exercises not only strengthen the body but also nurture the mind, body, spirit connection contributing to a more balanced, healthier, and positive life.

References:

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults#:~:text=Get%20at%20least%20150%20minutes,least%202%20days%20per%20week.>

Chapter 2: Barriers to Exercise, and Staying Committed to Fitness

There are a million reasons that could make it difficult to work out such as injury, chronic pain, fatigue, lack of motivation, and living far from a gym. Any of these can make it difficult to stay committed toward your goals.

- If you are dealing with pain start small with easy, low-impact exercises such as walking, swimming, cycling or yoga which are gentle on your joints. Always consult with a physical therapist for recommendations on how to navigate fitness with specific limitations.
- If you're feeling unmotivated or tired, try to get your workout in first thing in the morning or whenever your energy level is the highest. Asking a friend to be your accountable buddy or attending a workout class can boost motivation and enjoyment.
- If distance or not having enough time is a factor, download workout apps or find a YouTube series. You can also create an at home-gym environment, investing in basic equipment or getting creative with common household items. Other ideas like always taking the stairs or taking small breaks to do bodyweight exercises throughout the day can also be helpful.

Staying committed requires consistency, planning, and motivation. Start by defining small, obtainable goals, breaking down down into even smaller milestones such as tying your shoes or setting out your workout clothes the night before. Schedule workouts into your calendar to treat

exercise like any other important meeting or appointment. Have fun and try different styles of work outs to keep it interesting and avoid burnout. This also provides benefits by challenging different muscle groups. An accountability buddy or joining a studio can be huge to encourage you on the days when your motivation wanes. Additionally, tracking your progress, whether through a fitness app, calendar, or journal can help inspire you to keep going

Chapter 3: How to excel at fitness: Taking it to the next level with strength and conditioning principles.

Chapter 1: Optimizing Your Fitness Routine

To achieve your fitness goals, it's essential to have a well-structured and effective workout plan. The FITT principle, along with careful muscle selection, program creation, and potential professional guidance, can help you optimize your fitness journey.

Understanding the FITT Principle

The FITT principle is a widely used framework for designing exercise programs. It stands for:

- **Frequency:** How often you exercise.
- **Intensity:** How hard you work during your workouts.
- **Time:** How long your workouts last.
- **Type:** The kind of exercise you do.

By carefully considering these factors, you can tailor your workouts to meet your specific fitness goals. For example, if your goal is to build muscle, you might increase the frequency and intensity of your strength training sessions.

Choosing Your Focus Muscle

Identifying your focus muscle is crucial for effective training. This will help you prioritize exercises that target specific muscle groups. For instance, if you want to improve upper body strength, you might focus on exercises like bench presses, pull-ups, and overhead presses.

When selecting your focus muscle, consider your overall fitness goals, any imbalances in your strength, and any injuries or limitations.

Creating Your Fitness Program

Once you've determined your focus muscle and understood the FITT principle, you can start creating your fitness program. Here are some key steps to consider:

1. **Set clear goals:** Define what you want to achieve with your workouts.
2. **Choose exercises:** Select exercises that target your focus muscle and complement your overall fitness goals.

3. **Determine frequency and intensity:** Decide how often you'll work out and how hard you'll push yourself during your sessions.
4. **Plan your workouts:** Create a detailed workout schedule that includes rest days.
5. **Track your progress:** Monitor your progress to stay motivated and make adjustments as needed.

Remember to listen to your body and avoid overtraining. Rest and recovery are essential for optimal fitness.

Hiring Help

If you're unsure about how to create a fitness program or need personalized guidance, consider hiring a certified personal trainer or fitness professional. They can provide expert advice, create tailored workout plans, and help you stay motivated.

When choosing a fitness professional, look for someone with experience in your desired area of fitness, such as strength training, health optimization, or endurance sports.

By following the FITT principle, choosing your focus muscle, creating effective programs, and seeking professional help when needed, you can optimize your fitness routine and achieve your goals.

BONUS: 4-Day Sample Workout Routine: Burn 500 Calories Per Day:

These workouts offer flexibility in terms of time and effort, allowing you to adjust based on how much walking you can do each day. Incorporating a mix of cardio, strength, and flexibility will not only help burn calories but also improve overall fitness and well-being.

By following this varied workout routine, you can effectively burn 500 calories a day while keeping your workouts interesting and aligned with your lifestyle. These exercises not only help in burning calories but also improve strength, flexibility, and overall fitness, making health optimization sustainable and enjoyable.

Day 1: Cardio & Lower Body Strength

Goal: 500 calories

Option 1: High Walking (10,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 10,000 steps** (~400 calories burned)
2. **Lower Body Strength Routine:** (~100 calories burned)
 - **Squats:** 3 sets of 15 reps
 - **Lunges:** 3 sets of 10 reps per leg
 - **Glute Bridges:** 3 sets of 15 reps
 - **Calf Raises:** 3 sets of 20 reps

Option 2: Moderate Walking (5,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 5,000 steps** (~200 calories burned)
2. **Lower Body Strength Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Squats:** 4 sets of 15 reps
 - **Lunges:** 4 sets of 12 reps per leg
 - **Glute Bridges:** 4 sets of 20 reps
 - **Calf Raises:** 4 sets of 25 reps
3. **Cardio Burst: High Knees:** 3 sets of 1 minute (~100 calories burned)

Option 3: Low Walking (2,500 steps)

1. **Walk: 2,500 steps** (~100 calories burned)
2. **Lower Body Strength Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Squats:** 4 sets of 15 reps
 - **Lunges:** 4 sets of 12 reps per leg
 - **Glute Bridges:** 4 sets of 20 reps
 - **Calf Raises:** 4 sets of 25 reps
3. **Cardio Burst: High Knees:** 3 sets of 1 minute (~100 calories burned)
4. **Jumping Jacks:** 3 sets of 1 minute (~100 calories burned)

Day 2: Upper Body & Core Strength

Goal: 500 calories

Option 1: High Walking (10,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 10,000 steps** (~400 calories burned)
2. **Upper Body & Core Routine:** (~100 calories burned)
 - **Push-Ups:** 3 sets of 10 reps
 - **Plank:** 3 sets of 30 seconds
 - **Bicycle Crunches:** 3 sets of 15 reps per side
 - **Tricep Dips (using a chair):** 3 sets of 12 reps

Option 2: Moderate Walking (5,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 5,000 steps** (~200 calories burned)
2. **Upper Body & Core Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Push-Ups:** 4 sets of 10 reps
 - **Plank:** 4 sets of 30 seconds
 - **Bicycle Crunches:** 4 sets of 20 reps per side
 - **Tricep Dips (using a chair):** 4 sets of 15 reps
3. **Cardio Burst: Burpees:** 3 sets of 10 reps (~100 calories burned)

Option 3: Low Walking (2,500 steps)

1. **Walk: 2,500 steps** (~100 calories burned)
2. **Upper Body & Core Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Push-Ups:** 4 sets of 12 reps
 - **Plank:** 4 sets of 40 seconds
 - **Bicycle Crunches:** 4 sets of 25 reps per side
 - **Tricep Dips (using a chair):** 4 sets of 15 reps
3. **Cardio Burst: Burpees:** 4 sets of 10 reps (~150 calories burned)
4. **Mountain Climbers:** 3 sets of 1 minute (~50 calories burned)

Day 3: Flexibility & Active Recovery

Goal: 500 calories

Option 1: High Walking (10,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 10,000 steps** (~400 calories burned)
2. **Flexibility Routine:** (~100 calories burned)
 - **Yoga Poses (e.g., Downward Dog, Child's Pose, Cat, Cow, Cobra):** 15 minutes

Option 2: Moderate Walking (5,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 5,000 steps** (~200 calories burned)
2. **Flexibility Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Yoga Poses:** 30 minutes
3. **Gentle Cardio: Marching in Place or Light Jogging:** 10 minutes (~100 calories burned)

Option 3: Low Walking (2,500 steps)

1. **Walk: 2,500 steps** (~100 calories burned)
2. **Flexibility Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Yoga Poses:** 30 minutes
3. **Gentle Cardio: Marching in Place or Light Jogging:** 20 minutes (~200 calories burned)

Day 4: Full Body Workout & Cardio

Goal: 500 calories

Option 1: High Walking (10,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 10,000 steps** (~400 calories burned)
2. **Full Body Routine:** (~100 calories burned)
 - **Squats:** 3 sets of 15 reps
 - **Push-Ups:** 3 sets of 10 reps

- **Plank:** 3 sets of 30 seconds
- **Bicycle Crunches:** 3 sets of 15 reps per side

Option 2: Moderate Walking (5,000 steps)

1. **Walk: 5,000 steps** (~200 calories burned)
2. **Full Body Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Squats:** 4 sets of 15 reps
 - **Push-Ups:** 4 sets of 10 reps
 - **Plank:** 4 sets of 30 seconds
 - **Bicycle Crunches:** 4 sets of 20 reps per side
3. **Cardio Burst: Jumping Jacks:** 3 sets of 1 minute (~100 calories burned)

Option 3: Low Walking (2,500 steps)

1. **Walk: 2,500 steps** (~100 calories burned)
2. **Full Body Routine:** (~200 calories burned)
 - **Squats:** 4 sets of 15 reps
 - **Push-Ups:** 4 sets of 12 reps
 - **Plank:** 4 sets of 40 seconds
 - **Bicycle Crunches:** 4 sets of 25 reps per side
3. **Cardio Burst: Jumping Jacks:** 4 sets of 1 minute (~150 calories burned)
4. **High Knees:** 3 sets of 1 minute (~50 calories burned)

YouTube Video Inspiration:

1. **Bodyweight Workout:**
 - [MadFit](#)
 - [Caroline Girvan](#)
2. **Yoga for Flexibility:**
 - [Yoga With Adriene](#)
 - [Boho Beautiful](#)
3. **High-Intensity Cardio:**
 - [FitnessBlender Cardio](#)
 - [Growing Gannanas](#)

Tips for Success:

1. **Consistency is Key:** Stick to the routine and aim for at least four days a week to see results.
2. **Mix and Match:** Feel free to mix up the activities based on your preferences and how your body feels.
3. **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water before, during, and after workouts to stay hydrated and support your health.
4. **Listen to Your Body:** Pay attention to how your body feels and adjust intensity levels to prevent overtraining and injury.

5. **Track Your Progress:** Use a fitness tracker or app to monitor your calorie burn and step count. This can help keep you motivated and on track.

Section 3: The ACE Lifestyle Protocol

The ACE in our lifestyle protocol stands for aligned, clean, and elevated.

Chapter 1: Aligning your circadian rhythms

In this chapter we discuss the importance of a balanced routine. Not only is this essential for our own mental health, but it also helps our bodies function most optimally. In science, we refer to this bodily routine as our circadian rhythms. Our bodies use chemical memory to anticipate when we should sleep, eat, mate, and even feel emotion. Thus, programming this effectively makes a huge difference on our health.

Optimizing your sleep-wake circadian rhythms:

Maintaining a healthy circadian rhythm means staying consistent with the schedules of your sleeping, eating, and overall lifestyle, which affects the body's internal clock and contributes to various physiological processes. These rhythms are maintained by chemical reactions that happen as we are exposed to certain stimuli throughout the day and are stored as memory. For example, our sleep wake cycle is largely affected by sunlight. Exposing your eyes to natural sunlight every morning can help our bodies learn to wake up at that time naturally. Likewise, avoiding excess light exposure at night and going to bed at the same time every night can help the body release melatonin more easily, ensuring a more predictable sleepy schedule.

An optimized circadian rhythm is essential for overall health and well-being. Here are some of the key benefits:

Improved Sleep Quality

- **Consistent sleep-wake cycles:** Your body knows when to fall asleep and wake up, leading to more restful sleep.
- **Reduced insomnia:** A well-regulated circadian rhythm can alleviate symptoms of insomnia and improve sleep quality.

Enhanced Cognitive Function

- **Improved memory and learning:** A synchronized circadian rhythm supports cognitive processes like memory consolidation and learning.
- **Increased focus and concentration:** A well-functioning circadian rhythm helps you stay alert and focused throughout the day.

Better Mood and Emotional Well-being

- **Reduced stress and anxiety:** A balanced circadian rhythm can help regulate stress hormones, leading to improved mood and reduced anxiety.
- **Enhanced emotional resilience:** A well-functioning biological clock supports emotional stability and resilience.

Improved Physical Health

- **Optimized hormone production:** A synchronized circadian rhythm helps regulate the production of hormones that affect metabolism, growth, and reproduction.
- **Enhanced immune function:** A well-regulated biological clock can support a healthy immune system.

Increased Energy and Vitality

- **Reduced fatigue:** A balanced circadian rhythm helps prevent excessive daytime sleepiness and fatigue.
- **Increased energy levels:** A well-functioning biological clock can enhance your overall energy levels and vitality.

By optimizing your circadian rhythm, you can experience these benefits and improve your overall health and well-being.

References:

- **National Institutes of Health (NIH):** Provides comprehensive information on circadian rhythm disorders, including treatment options and lifestyle tips.
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/circadian-rhythm-disorders/living-with>
- **Sleep Foundation:** Offers practical advice on improving sleep quality and regulating your circadian rhythm.
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/circadian-rhythm/can-you-change-your-circadian-rhythm>
- **Harvard Health Publishing:** Provides informative articles on sleep, circadian rhythms, and their impact on health.
<https://sleep.hms.harvard.edu/education-training/public-education/sleep-and-health-education-program/sleep-health-education-51>

What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene refers to the habits and practices that promote healthy sleep. It encompasses a variety of factors that can significantly impact your sleep quality, including your sleep environment, daily routine, and bedtime habits.

Why is Sleep Hygiene Important?

Good sleep hygiene is essential for overall health and well-being. It can:

- **Improve sleep quality:** By following good sleep hygiene practices, you can reduce sleep disturbances and enjoy more restful sleep.
- **Enhance cognitive function:** Sufficient sleep is crucial for memory, concentration, and problem-solving.
- **Boost mood:** Sleep deprivation can contribute to feelings of anxiety, depression, and irritability.
- **Support physical health:** Adequate sleep is essential for boosting the immune system, and regulating hormones.

Optimizing Your Sleep Environment

- **Create a dark, quiet, and cool space:** Ensure your bedroom is free from distractions and conducive to sleep.
- **Invest in comfortable bedding:** A good mattress and pillows can significantly improve sleep quality.
- **Minimize noise:** Use earplugs or a white noise machine to block out external sounds.
- **Control the temperature:** Keep your bedroom cool, as a slightly cooler environment can promote better sleep.

Reducing Stimulation and Increasing Sleep Drive

- **Limit screen time before bed:** The blue light emitted from electronic devices can disrupt your sleep-wake cycle.

- **Avoid caffeine and alcohol:** These substances can interfere with sleep, especially when consumed close to bedtime.
- **Manage stress:** Practice relaxation techniques like meditation, deep breathing, or yoga to reduce stress and promote better sleep.
- **Establish a consistent sleep schedule:** Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day helps regulate your body's internal clock.
- **Avoid heavy meals before bed:** Eating a large meal close to bedtime can disrupt sleep.
- **Limit naps:** While short naps can be beneficial, excessive napping can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- **Create a relaxing bedtime routine:** Engage in calming activities before bed, such as reading or taking a warm bath.

Optimizing your eating rhythms:

It's important to start eating your meals and roughly the same times each day. When you eat at regular times, your body's internal clock, or circadian rhythm, is better able to anticipate and prepare for mealtimes. This synchronization leads to several beneficial changes in your body's chemistry:

- **Hormone regulation:** Your body produces hormones like ghrelin (hunger hormone) and leptin (satiety hormone) in response to mealtimes. When you eat at regular intervals, these hormones are released more predictably, helping to regulate your appetite and prevent overeating.
- **Improved digestion:** Consistent mealtimes allow your digestive system to work more efficiently. Your body can anticipate the incoming food and produce the necessary enzymes and acids to break it down properly.
- **Stable blood sugar levels:** Eating at regular intervals helps prevent spikes and crashes in blood sugar levels, which can lead to fatigue, irritability, and other health problems.
- **Enhanced metabolism:** A regular eating schedule can help boost your metabolism by providing your body with a steady supply of energy.
- **Reduced cravings:** Consistent mealtimes can help reduce cravings for unhealthy foods by preventing extreme hunger and ensuring your body is well-nourished.

By maintaining regular eating times, you can optimize your body's chemistry, leading to improved digestion, better blood sugar control, and overall enhanced health.

Chapter 2: Optimizing Your Routines

Routines are established patterns of behavior that we follow on a regular basis. Planning routines is important because they can increase efficiency, reduce stress, improve productivity, manage time better, and enhance well-being. When you have a routine, you can streamline your tasks, stay focused, prioritize effectively, and create a healthier lifestyle.

Morning routines:

A solid morning routine is essential for successful health optimization because it sets the tone for your entire day, helping you make healthier choices and stay on track. A good morning routine might include starting your day with a glass of water to kickstart your metabolism, engaging in light exercise or stretching to loosen up your body and mind, and preparing a balanced breakfast rich in protein and fiber to keep you full and satisfied. Planning out your day with goals and tasks can make it easier to think ahead and feel prepared.

Weekly routines:

Planning out your week ahead also plays a crucial role in health optimization. By setting aside time each week to create a schedule, including meal prep, workouts, and time for self-care, you create a structured environment where it's easier to stay committed to your goals. Calendar blocking your week allows you to visually prioritize activities that support your health optimization journey, reducing the chance of falling into unhealthy habits.

Weekends are perfect for meal prepping, planning workouts, and engaging in activities that reduce stress, such as yoga or hiking. This minimizes the chances of impulsive food decisions and skipping exercise throughout your busy week.

A Sample Weekly Routine:

1. **Monday:** Start the week with a workout or a relaxing activity like yoga. Plan out your meals for the week.
2. **Tuesday:** Focus on work tasks and deadlines. Take a short break to stretch or meditate.
3. **Wednesday:** Schedule a social activity or hobby. If possible, go for a walk or spend time in nature.
4. **Thursday:** Continue working on your tasks and deadlines. Take a break to read a book or listen to music.
5. **Friday:** Enjoy a relaxing evening with friends or family. Plan activities for the weekend.
6. **Saturday:** Spend the day doing something you enjoy, such as hiking, exploring a new place, or volunteering.
7. **Sunday:** Rest, relax, and recharge for the upcoming week. Do some meal prep or planning for the week ahead.

Monthly routines

Monthly routines include setting aside time to reflect on your progress, adjusting your goals, and planning ahead for upcoming events or challenges that might disrupt your routine. This regular reflection helps maintain motivation and ensures that your health optimization strategy evolves to accommodate life happenings.

A Sample Monthly Routine:

1. **First week:** Review your goals and make adjustments as needed. Schedule a check-in with your mentor or coach.
2. **Second week:** Focus on personal development activities, such as reading a book, taking a class, or attending a workshop.

3. **Third week:** Plan a social outing or event with friends or family. Explore new hobbies or interests.
4. **Fourth week:** Reflect on the month and assess your progress toward your goals. Set new goals for the upcoming month.

Annual routines:

Annual routines, like scheduling regular health check-ups, vacations, financial goals, career milestones, and/or setting long-term goals, provide a broader perspective, allowing you to celebrate achievements and reassess your overall health over the course of the year.

Example of an Annual Routine:

January:

- **Health:** Schedule a comprehensive physical exam with your doctor.
- **Career:** Set new career goals for the year.
- **Finance:** Review your budget and set financial goals for the year.

February:

- **Vacation:** Plan a weekend getaway or short vacation.
- **Health:** Schedule a dental cleaning and eye exam.
- **Career:** Attend industry conferences or networking events.

March:

- **Health:** Start a spring cleaning routine to declutter your home and reduce stress.
- **Career:** Review your resume and update your LinkedIn profile.
- **Finance:** Consider contributing to a retirement savings account or investing in stocks.

April:

- **Health:** Start a new fitness routine or join a gym.
- **Vacation:** Plan a summer vacation.
- **Career:** Explore opportunities for professional development, such as taking a course or attending a workshop.

May:

- **Health:** Schedule a skin check with a dermatologist.
- **Career:** Review your performance goals and make adjustments as needed.
- **Finance:** Create a budget for your summer vacation.

June:

- **Vacation:** Enjoy your summer vacation and relax.
- **Health:** Stay hydrated and protect yourself from the sun.
- **Career:** Network with colleagues and industry professionals.

July:

- **Health:** Schedule a physical exam to check on your progress.
- **Vacation:** Plan a weekend getaway or staycation.
- **Career:** Set goals for the second half of the year.

August:

- **Health:** Start a new fitness routine or continue your current one.
- **Career:** Evaluate your progress towards your career goals.
- **Finance:** Review your budget and make adjustments if necessary.

September:

- **Health:** Schedule a flu shot.
- **Career:** Set goals for the upcoming year.
- **Finance:** Start planning for the holiday season.

October:

- **Health:** Enjoy fall activities and spend time in nature.
- **Vacation:** Plan a fall getaway.
- **Career:** Attend industry events or conferences.

November:

- **Health:** Schedule a dental cleaning and eye exam.
- **Career:** Review your performance goals for the year.
- **Finance:** Create a budget for the holiday season.

December:

- **Health:** Schedule a physical exam to assess your overall health.
- **Vacation:** Enjoy the holiday season with family and friends.
- **Career:** Reflect on your accomplishments and set goals for the upcoming year.

This annual routine provides a framework for maintaining your health, career, and overall well-being throughout the year. By scheduling regular check-ups, setting goals, and taking time for vacations and relaxation, you can celebrate your achievements and make progress towards your long-term objectives.

Chapter 3: Cleaning up your habits and your environment

What are habits and how do you make new ones stick?

Habits are the small, repeated behaviors we do automatically, and they are crucial for achieving long-term goals, including health optimization, because they shape our daily actions and decisions. A great method for getting new habits to stick is incorporating habit stacking—linking a new habit to an existing one. For

example, if you already have a habit of making coffee every morning, you can stack a new habit like drinking a glass of water or doing a quick five-minute stretch while the coffee brews. Over time, these small, consistent actions build up, making it easier to achieve your health optimization goals.

The importance of personal hygiene:

Incorporating personal hygiene into your daily routine not only keeps you healthy but also enhances your confidence, reinforces discipline, and fosters a positive mindset, all of which are essential for leading a fulfilling and successful life.

1. **Safety:** Good hygiene practices, such as regular hand washing, bathing, and oral care, significantly reduce the risk of infections and diseases. By maintaining proper hygiene, you protect yourself and others from harmful bacteria and viruses, creating a safer environment at home, work, and in public spaces.
2. **Confidence:** Maintaining personal hygiene boosts your self-confidence and self-esteem. When you feel clean and fresh, you're more likely to feel comfortable in social situations, improving your interactions and how others perceive you. Confidence can lead to better personal and professional relationships, as well as a more positive self-image.
3. **Discipline:** Practicing personal hygiene is an act of self-discipline. Establishing a daily routine of hygiene practices, like showering, brushing your teeth, and grooming, instills a sense of responsibility and self-care. This discipline can spill over into other areas of life, helping you develop habits that contribute to personal and professional success.
4. **Mindset:** Good hygiene positively impacts your mindset, creating a feeling of well-being and reducing stress. A clean body and environment can improve focus and mental clarity, making it easier to tackle daily challenges. Additionally, the act of caring for oneself through hygiene routines reinforces a mindset of self-respect and care, promoting overall mental and emotional health.

Avoid Household Toxins:

Avoiding exposure to household toxins is crucial for protecting health and well-being. Many toxins found in common household products can disrupt the endocrine system, weaken the immune system, and contribute to chronic diseases such as cancer, asthma, and neurological disorders. By reducing exposure to these harmful substances, you can decrease the risk of developing health problems, improve indoor air quality, and create a safer, healthier environment for yourself and your family.

Choosing non-toxic alternatives and making conscious decisions about the products you bring into your home not only benefits your immediate health but also contributes to a cleaner and safer environment, enhancing your quality of life and preventing long-term health issues.

- Choose Non-Toxic Cleaning Products:
 - **Read Labels Carefully:** Look for cleaning products labeled as non-toxic, biodegradable, or free from harmful chemicals like ammonia, bleach, and phthalates. These chemicals can cause respiratory issues, skin irritation, and other health problems.

- **Use Natural Alternatives:** Opt for natural cleaning agents such as vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice, and essential oils. These are effective cleaners and disinfectants without the harmful side effects.
- **Avoid Air Fresheners:** Many air fresheners contain chemicals like phthalates and formaldehyde, which can affect indoor air quality and respiratory health. Instead, use natural methods like essential oils, baking soda, or houseplants to freshen the air.
- Reduce Exposure to Personal Care Toxins:
 - **Check Ingredients:** Personal care products like shampoos, lotions, and cosmetics can contain harmful ingredients such as parabens, sulfates, and synthetic fragrances. Choose products that are labeled as organic, natural, or free from these chemicals.
 - Use Apps like Think Dirty to analyze the safety of products
 - **Simplify Your Routine:** The fewer products you use, the less exposure you have to potential toxins. Opt for multipurpose products that can perform multiple functions.
 - Use Apps
- Be Mindful of Plastic Use:
 - **Avoid Plastic Containers:** Many plastics contain chemicals like BPA and phthalates that can leach into food and beverages. Use glass, stainless steel, or BPA-free containers for food storage.
 - **Avoid Heating Plastics:** Do not microwave food in plastic containers, as heat can increase the release of toxic chemicals. Use microwave-safe glass or ceramic dishes instead.
- Limit Exposure to Pesticides:
 - **Choose Organic Produce:** Organic fruits and vegetables are grown without synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, reducing your exposure to these toxins.
 - **Wash Produce Thoroughly:** Even if you buy conventional produce, washing it thoroughly can help remove some pesticide residues.
- Reduce Wear of Synthetic Materials:
 - **Choose Natural Fabrics:** Use natural fabrics such as cotton, linen, and wool instead of synthetic materials like polyester and nylon, which can off-gas chemicals.
 - **Avoid Flame Retardants:** Furniture, mattresses, and carpets treated with flame retardants can release toxic chemicals into the air. Choose items labeled as free from flame retardants or use covers to reduce exposure.
- Avoid Smoking & Alcohol:
 - **Quit Smoking:** Tobacco smoke contains thousands of chemicals, many of which are toxic and can cause cancer, heart disease, and respiratory issues. Quitting smoking significantly improves health and air quality.
 - **Moderate Alcohol Consumption:** Excessive alcohol intake can lead to liver damage, addiction, and other serious health issues. Limiting alcohol consumption reduces these risks.

Keep Clean:

A clean home is not just visually appealing—it supports better health by minimizing exposure to allergens, reducing stress, and creating a hygienic space. By incorporating regular cleaning practices, you protect your physical and mental well-being, promoting a healthier, happier life.

- **Establish a Cleaning Schedule:** Regularly scheduled cleaning prevents dirt and dust buildup, making each cleaning session less time-consuming. Consider dividing tasks into daily, weekly, and monthly routines to cover all areas.
- **Vacuum Frequently:** Carpets and rugs can trap dust, pet dander, and allergens. Vacuuming at least once a week helps keep these particles under control, especially in high-traffic areas. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to capture the finest particles.
- **Focus on High-Touch Surfaces:** Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched, such as doorknobs, light switches, remote controls, and countertops. This is especially important for preventing the spread of germs and viruses.
- **Use Natural Cleaning Products:** Opt for natural, non-toxic cleaning products to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals that can affect your respiratory health and skin. Ingredients like vinegar, baking soda, and lemon can be effective alternatives.
- **Control Clutter:** Clutter can accumulate dust and create hiding spots for pests. Keep surfaces clear and organized to make cleaning easier and reduce stress.
- **Proper Ventilation:** Regularly open windows to allow fresh air to circulate, which helps reduce indoor air pollutants. Use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens to remove moisture and odors.
- **Deep Clean Periodically:** Schedule deep cleaning tasks, such as washing curtains, cleaning behind appliances, and scrubbing grout, a few times a year to maintain a truly clean home.
- **Pay Attention to Soft Furnishings:** Regularly wash bedding, pillow covers, and curtains, and clean or vacuum upholstery. These items can harbor allergens and dust mites.

Manage Pests:

Maintaining a clean and pest-free home is crucial for protecting your health. Pests such as mold, mice, ticks, and insects can introduce allergens, bacteria, and other pathogens that may lead to respiratory issues, skin irritations, and even serious diseases. Mold spores, for instance, can trigger asthma attacks and allergic reactions, while rodents can spread diseases like hantavirus. Insects like ticks are known carriers of Lyme disease, and mosquitoes can spread viruses such as West Nile and Zika.

By keeping your home clean and addressing potential pest problems promptly, you create a safer living environment that supports both physical and mental well-being. A clean, organized space also reduces stress, allowing you to relax and enjoy your home without the worry of pests compromising your health.

- Prevent Mold Growth:
 - **Control Humidity:** Keep indoor humidity levels below 50% using dehumidifiers, especially in basements and bathrooms. Proper ventilation is also key, so use exhaust fans and open windows to reduce moisture.
 - **Fix Leaks:** Repair any leaks in roofs, walls, or plumbing immediately to prevent water accumulation, which can lead to mold growth.
 - **Clean and Dry:** Regularly clean surfaces prone to moisture, like shower walls and windowsills. Dry wet areas promptly to avoid mold spores from taking hold.
- Keep Mice Out:
 - **Seal Entry Points:** Inspect your home for cracks, gaps, or holes, especially around doors, windows, and the foundation. Use caulk, steel wool, or wire mesh to seal these entry points.
 - **Store Food Properly:** Keep food in airtight containers and clean up crumbs or spills immediately. Mice are attracted to food sources, so maintaining a tidy kitchen is essential.
 - **Use Traps and Repellents:** Set traps or use natural repellents like peppermint oil around areas where mice are commonly seen or suspected.

- **Project Against Ticks:**
 - **Landscape Maintenance:** Keep your lawn trimmed and remove tall grass, weeds, and brush where ticks can hide. Creating a barrier of gravel or wood chips between wooded areas and your yard can also help.
 - **Use Tick Repellents:** Apply tick repellents on clothing and exposed skin when spending time outdoors. Wearing light-colored clothing can also make it easier to spot ticks.
 - **Check Pets:** Regularly check pets for ticks, especially after they've been outside. Use tick prevention products recommended by your veterinarian.
- **Control Insects:**
 - **Remove Standing Water:** Eliminate standing water in birdbaths, gutters, and planters where mosquitoes can breed. Repair leaky faucets and ensure good drainage.
 - **Clean Regularly:** Keep the kitchen and dining areas clean, storing food in sealed containers. Regularly dispose of garbage and use sealed trash bins.
 - **Use Natural Deterrents:** Herbs like basil, mint, and lavender can repel certain insects. Placing these plants near windows and doors can help keep bugs at bay.

Manage Noise:

A calm, quiet environment is essential for a healthy nervous system. Constant exposure to noise can activate the body's stress response, leading to increased levels of cortisol and adrenaline. Over time, chronic noise exposure can contribute to anxiety, high blood pressure, and impaired cognitive function. A peaceful environment allows the nervous system to rest and recuperate, promoting relaxation and better sleep, which are critical for physical and mental health.

By managing noise effectively and creating a tranquil living space, you support the parasympathetic nervous system—the "rest and digest" system—which helps reduce stress, enhances focus, and improves overall well-being.

- **Use Soundproofing Materials:**
 - **Install Carpets or Rugs:** Soft furnishings like carpets, rugs, and curtains can absorb sound and reduce noise levels. Thicker materials will be more effective at soundproofing.
 - **Seal Windows and Doors:** Use weather stripping or door sweeps to seal gaps around doors and windows, which can help block out external noise. Heavy curtains can also minimize noise from outside.
 - **Soundproofing Panels:** Consider adding acoustic panels or foam to walls, especially in rooms where noise is most disruptive, like bedrooms and home offices.
- **Create Quiet Zones:**
 - **Designate Quiet Areas:** Set up quiet zones in your home, such as a reading nook or meditation space, where noise is minimized. Make these areas off-limits to loud activities.
 - **Use White Noise Machines:** White noise machines or apps can mask disruptive sounds, making it easier to concentrate or sleep. Natural sounds like ocean waves or rainfall can also create a calming atmosphere.
- **Minimize Indoor Noise:**
 - **Choose Quiet Appliances:** When buying new appliances, opt for models labeled as quiet or low-noise. This is especially important for dishwashers, washing machines, and HVAC systems.

- **Maintain Equipment:** Regular maintenance of household appliances and HVAC systems can prevent them from becoming excessively noisy. Fix rattling parts or consider relocating noisy equipment away from living areas.
- **Lower the Volume:** Be mindful of the volume on TVs, radios, and other electronic devices. Encourage the use of headphones for personal listening to keep the overall noise level down.
- **Manage External Noise:**
 - **Plant Trees or Shrubs:** Landscaping with dense foliage can act as a natural sound barrier, reducing noise from outside. Plants can also improve air quality and provide a visual sense of tranquility.
 - **Install Fencing:** Solid fences can help block street noise. Choose materials like wood or vinyl, which are effective at dampening sound.

Set the Mood:

A calm and peaceful environment is crucial for maintaining a healthy nervous system. The nervous system is sensitive to environmental stimuli, and constant exposure to stressors such as harsh lighting, noise, and clutter can trigger the body's stress response. This can lead to increased levels of cortisol and adrenaline, which, over time, can contribute to anxiety, insomnia, and other health issues. A serene environment also helps improve focus, creativity, and emotional well-being, making it easier to unwind and enjoy your home as a space of refuge and comfort.

- **Lighting:**
 - **Use Soft, Warm Lighting:** Opt for soft, warm light bulbs instead of harsh, bright lights. Warm lighting creates a cozy and relaxing atmosphere, which is gentler on the eyes and helps signal the body to unwind.
 - **Dimmer Switches:** Install dimmer switches to control the brightness of lights. This allows you to adjust the lighting based on your mood or the time of day, creating a more soothing environment.
 - **Natural Light:** Maximize natural light during the day by opening curtains and blinds. Natural light boosts mood and supports the body's natural circadian rhythms, promoting better sleep and reducing stress.
 - **Use Lamps and Candles:** Instead of relying solely on overhead lights, use table lamps, floor lamps, or candles to create a softer, more inviting ambiance.
- **Decor:**
 - **Choose Calming Colors:** Use a color palette that promotes calmness and relaxation, such as soft blues, greens, neutral tones, and pastels. These colors have been shown to have a soothing effect on the mind.
 - **Incorporate Natural Elements:** Decorate with natural elements like plants, wood, stone, and water features. These elements bring a sense of tranquility and connection to nature, which can help reduce stress.
 - **Keep It Simple:** Avoid clutter and overly busy patterns. A minimalist approach to decor can help create a sense of order and peace, making the space feel more spacious and less overwhelming.
- **Ambiance:**
 - **Create Relaxing Spaces:** Designate specific areas in your home for relaxation, such as a reading nook, meditation corner, or a space for yoga. Furnish these areas with comfortable seating and calming decor.

- **Play Soothing Music or Sounds:** Use soft, calming music, or nature sounds like ocean waves or birdsong to create a peaceful ambiance. This can help mask distracting noises and promote relaxation.
- **Aromatherapy:** Use essential oils or scented candles with calming scents like lavender, chamomile, or eucalyptus. Aromatherapy can enhance relaxation and improve mood.
- **Texture:**
 - **Incorporate Soft Textures:** Use soft furnishings like plush rugs, cushions, and throws to create a cozy and inviting atmosphere. Soft textures can provide comfort and a sense of safety, which is soothing to the nervous system.
 - **Layer Fabrics:** Layering different fabrics, such as cotton, wool, and silk, can add depth and warmth to a room. These tactile elements can have a comforting and grounding effect.
 - **Natural Textiles:** Choose natural textiles like linen, cotton, and wool, which feel gentle on the skin and create a calming, earthy vibe.

EMF Management:

Reducing exposure to EMFs and radiation is important for maintaining optimal health. While the long-term effects of EMF exposure are still being studied, some research suggests that high or prolonged exposure may affect sleep quality, increase stress levels, and impact overall well-being. EMFs can disrupt the body's natural electromagnetic fields, potentially interfering with the nervous system and hormonal balance.

Creating a low-EMF environment can help promote better sleep, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve overall health and well-being. By taking simple steps to minimize EMF exposure, you create a safer, healthier living environment that supports both physical and mental health. As technology continues to play a large role in our lives, being mindful of its potential impact on our health becomes increasingly important.

- **Minimize Wireless Device Use:**
 - **Turn Off Wi-Fi at Night:** Switch off your Wi-Fi router during the night or when not in use. This simple step can significantly reduce your exposure to EMFs, especially in bedrooms.
 - **Use Wired Connections:** Whenever possible, use wired connections (Ethernet cables) instead of Wi-Fi for internet access. This reduces wireless radiation in the home.
 - **Limit Bluetooth Use:** Turn off Bluetooth and other wireless features on devices when they are not needed. This includes smartwatches, fitness trackers, and wireless headphones.
- **Keep Distance from EMF Sources:**
 - **Place Router Away from Living Areas:** Keep Wi-Fi routers and other wireless devices in less frequented areas of the home, such as hallways or spare rooms, and away from bedrooms or high-traffic living spaces.
 - **Avoid Proximity to EMF Sources:** Keep electronic devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops, at a distance when not in use. For example, use a headset or speakerphone for calls instead of holding the phone to your ear.
- **Reduce Device Radiation:**
 - **Use Airplane Mode:** When not actively using mobile devices, switch them to airplane mode to eliminate radiation emissions. This is especially important while sleeping.

- **Lower Power Settings:** Adjust the power settings on devices to reduce EMF output. Many devices have low-power modes that decrease the amount of radiation emitted.
- Create Low-EMF Zones:
 - **EMF Shielding Products:** Consider using EMF shielding paint, curtains, or window films in areas where you want to minimize exposure, such as bedrooms or home offices.
 - **Designate Tech-Free Zones:** Establish certain areas of your home, like bedrooms or relaxation spaces, as tech-free zones to reduce overall EMF exposure.
- Be Mindful of Appliances:
 - **Use Appliances Wisely:** Keep a safe distance from appliances when they are in use, as they can emit high levels of EMFs. This includes microwaves, electric stoves, and other electronic devices.
 - **Unplug Devices:** When not in use, unplug electronic devices and appliances to prevent unnecessary EMF emissions. This is also a good practice for energy conservation.

Do Your Part:

Sustainable lifestyle choices contribute to a healthier environment, which directly impacts human health. Reducing waste helps maintain clean air and water, reducing exposure to harmful chemicals and toxins that can cause respiratory problems, allergies, and other health issues. By conserving resources we help mitigate the effects of climate change, which can also have health implications such as heat-related illnesses and increased spread of diseases.

Moreover, using natural and non-toxic products in the home reduces exposure to potentially harmful chemicals found in conventional cleaning supplies and personal care products. This can decrease the risk of skin irritations, allergies, and respiratory problems.

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:
 - **Reduce Consumption:** Buy only what you need and opt for products with minimal packaging. This reduces waste and conserves resources. Choosing high-quality, durable items that last longer can also minimize the need for frequent replacements.
 - **Reuse Items:** Before throwing something away, consider if it can be reused. Repurpose jars, containers, and bags, and choose reusable items like cloth bags, water bottles, and coffee cups instead of single-use plastics.
 - **Recycle Properly:** Follow local recycling guidelines to ensure materials like paper, glass, metal, and certain plastics are recycled correctly. Recycling helps reduce landfill waste and conserves raw materials.
- Minimize Food Waste:
 - **Plan Meals:** Plan your meals and create shopping lists to avoid overbuying food. This reduces the chance of food spoiling and being wasted.
 - **Compost Food Scraps:** Start a compost bin for food scraps and organic waste. Composting enriches soil, reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, and keeps waste out of landfills.
 - **Store Food Correctly:** Use proper storage techniques to keep food fresh longer, such as using airtight containers and freezing items before they go bad.
- Conserve Energy and Water:
 - **Use Energy-Efficient Appliances:** Choose appliances with energy-efficient ratings (such as ENERGY STAR). They use less energy and can save you money on utility bills.

- **Turn Off Lights and Electronics:** Turn off lights, unplug electronics, and switch off appliances when they are not in use to save energy.
- **Install Low-Flow Fixtures:** Use low-flow showerheads and faucets to reduce water consumption. Fix any leaks promptly to avoid water wastage.
- Choose Eco-Friendly Products:
 - **Use Natural Cleaning Products:** Opt for cleaning products made from natural, non-toxic ingredients to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals and minimize environmental impact.
 - **Buy Sustainable Materials:** Choose products made from sustainable materials, such as bamboo, recycled materials, or organic cotton. These materials have a lower environmental footprint.
 - **Support Eco-Friendly Brands:** Purchase from companies that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices. This supports a market shift towards more responsible production.

Chapter 4: Elevate your spirit and vibration

Stress 101: the good vs the bad

Stress is a natural response that can be both helpful and harmful, especially when it comes to health optimization. **Good stress**, also known as eustress, can motivate you to achieve your goals, like pushing through a tough workout or sticking to a healthy eating plan. It can give you a boost of energy and focus, helping you stay on track. However, **bad stress**, or chronic stress, can have the opposite effect. It triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone that can lead to increased appetite, cravings for unhealthy foods, and the storage of abdominal fat. Over time, chronic stress can sabotage your health optimization efforts by making it harder to maintain a balanced diet and regular exercise routine.

Manage mental and emotional well-being:

- **Reduce Stress and Increase Resilience:** Chronic stress can lead to chronic release of cortisol, a hormone that increases appetite, shoots up blood sugar, and can promote fat storage particularly around the abdomen. By reducing stress and building resilience, you minimize these negative effects, making it easier to stick to healthy eating and exercise routines.
- **Say No and Do Less:** Overcommitting can lead to burnout, which often results in poor food choices and skipped workouts. Learning to say no and doing less helps you conserve energy and focus on what truly matters, such as your health and well-being. This prioritization allows for more consistent progress towards health optimization goals.
- **Manage Expectations:** Setting realistic and achievable goals is key to staying motivated. Expectation management helps you avoid the frustration and disappointment that can come from unrealistic standards. By understanding that health optimization is a gradual process, you can celebrate small victories and maintain a positive mindset, which is crucial for long-term success.
- **Make Time for Breaks:** Taking regular breaks helps prevent mental and physical exhaustion. Short breaks throughout the day can improve focus and productivity, making it easier to make mindful food choices and stay active. Breaks also help reset your stress levels, reducing the likelihood of stress-induced eating.

- **Deep Breath and Meditate:** Incorporating deep breathing and meditation into your routine can lower stress levels, improve emotional regulation, and reduce cravings. These techniques promote a calm state of mind, which supports better decision-making around food and helps manage emotional eating.
- **Manage Anger and Communicate Well:** Unmanaged anger can lead to emotional eating and unhealthy coping mechanisms. Learning to manage anger and communicate effectively reduces the likelihood of turning to food for comfort. Healthy communication also strengthens relationships, providing a support system that can encourage you to stay on track with your health optimization goals.

Life is fun:

- **Make Time for Joy:** Joyful activities release endorphins and reduce stress, which can help regulate appetite and prevent emotional eating. When you make time for things that bring you happiness, you're less likely to seek comfort in unhealthy foods. Joy also boosts motivation and energy levels, making it easier to stay active and committed to your health optimization goals.
- **Schedule Fun Plans:** Planning fun activities gives you something to look forward to, which can improve your mood and reduce stress. Whether it's a weekend hike, a cooking class, or a dance session, these activities provide positive reinforcement and distraction from cravings or emotional eating. Fun plans also encourage you to be active, which naturally supports health optimization efforts.
- **Self-Expression and Getting Creative:** Engaging in creative activities like art, fashion, cooking, writing, or music allows for emotional expression and stress relief, which can prevent turning to food as a coping mechanism. Creativity taps into a sense of fulfillment and purpose, offering an alternative to the quick but fleeting satisfaction of unhealthy eating. Additionally, experimenting with healthy recipes or enjoying fashion and style can make the journey of self-care and health optimization feel enjoyable and rewarding.

Know Thy Self:

- **Know Your Values and Preferences:** Understanding what matters most to you helps align your health optimization journey with your core values, making it more meaningful and sustainable. When your goals reflect your personal values and preferences, you are more likely to enjoy the process and stay committed. For example, if you value health and vitality, focusing on whole foods and regular exercise becomes a natural choice, rather than a chore.
- **Tune Into Your Purpose:** Having a clear sense of purpose gives your health optimization journey deeper meaning beyond just physical appearance. When you know your purpose, whether it's to live a long, healthy life, be more active with loved ones, or feel more confident, it motivates you to stay committed. This sense of purpose helps you push through challenges, stay consistent with healthy habits, and make choices that align with your long-term goals.

Prioritize You:

- **Your Duty to Yourself:** Prioritizing your health is a fundamental duty to yourself. Taking care of your body through proper nutrition and regular exercise is an act of self-respect and self-love. Fulfilling this duty means making choices that support your well-being, leading to increased energy, better mental health, and a higher quality of life. Recognizing this duty empowers you to

make healthier decisions, stay focused on your goals, and not settle for less than what you deserve.

- **Your Duty to Others:** When you take care of yourself, you are better equipped to care for and support others. Whether it's family, friends, or your community, your well-being directly impacts those around you. By staying healthy and strong, you set a positive example and inspire others to prioritize their health. Your energy and presence are more positive and uplifting, which can strengthen relationships and improve the quality of interactions with those you care about.
- **Your Duty to Nature and the World:** Taking care of your health also reflects a broader responsibility to nature and the world. Choosing whole, unprocessed foods, exercising in natural settings, and living sustainably can reduce your environmental footprint. By eating healthier, you often support sustainable farming practices and reduce waste, contributing to a healthier planet. Recognizing your duty to nature and the world can motivate you to make choices that benefit not just your body but also the environment, creating a ripple effect of positive change.