

NOTE: I will provide the URL and focus keyword for each of these articles just below the headline for reference (see example below) and will bold the keyword where it is used within the first 1-2 sentences. As we are choosing top-performing articles to target for the first year, I'd like to **NOT** make changes to the slug or focus keyword unless the SEO team strongly recommends it. Once we get into lower performing content and new content (i.e. the latter half of 2024 and beyond), that's where I think we rely on SEO changes most heavily. Anyway, I digress :)

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4 Ways That Meditation Improves Your Overall Strength

URL: <https://www.spartan.com/blogs/unbreakable-training/benefits-of-meditation>

FOCUS KEYWORD: **benefits of meditation**

SOCIAL SNIPPET: Meditating for as few as five minutes a day is a game-changer, reducing stress, improving sleep and focus, strengthening willpower and protecting you from anxiety and depression – even heart disease. Here are four ways it can also make you stronger.

BY THE SPARTAN EDITORS



DEK: Meditation can decrease your risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, insomnia, and even more serious conditions like heart attacks and strokes – and those are just a few of the proven mind-body benefits.

Adopting a short but consistent meditation practice into your busy life can not only extend your health span, it can also improve your physical strength and help you reach your fitness goals in the gym and during races. Here are four **benefits of meditation**.

4 Benefits of Meditation for Athletes

****REMOVE EXISTING YOUTUBE VIDEO****

1. Meditation Develops Mental Grit

If you've ever completed a Spartan race, a marathon, or any other grueling, endurance-based challenge, you know that mental and physical strength go hand in hand. One undeniable benefit of meditation is building a strong mindset that you can put to work when you're physically exhausted.

A Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports study showed that those who practice Transcendental Meditation techniques are able to develop similar brain-functioning characteristics to world-class athletes: enhanced focus and comprehension, along with broad and proactive planning. Building mental grit through meditation helps you power through physical challenges, so peak performance is not just about physically training your body; it's also – and maybe even more so – about training your brain.

2. Meditation Builds Muscle Memory for Proper Breathing Techniques

Lots of people forget – or don't know how – to breathe properly while exercising, but developing an intentional breath work practice is a key benefit of meditation. This focus on breathing helps your body efficiently deliver oxygen to your cells, allowing them to work harder for your body during strenuous physical activities like lifting heavy and running long distances.

Instead of exhausting yourself with shallow and rapid breathing, sticking to a consistent meditation practice will develop muscle memory for steady rhythmic breathing through your nose and from your diaphragm that prevents overall muscular fatigue so you can prioritize your energy on the physical feat ahead of you.

Related: [Breathe Like This for Improved Performance and Quicker Recovery](#)

3. Meditation Increases Your Pain Tolerance

A *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* study found that mindfulness exercises like those practiced during meditation enable your brain to not only process pain more efficiently, but to actually control it. For some skeptics, the idea that mindfulness meditation can seemingly alleviate pain intensity seems unlikely. However, researchers of another study published in *The Journal of Neuroscience* proved that a “sham mindfulness meditation,” where study participants weren’t using true meditation techniques, was not associated with pain relief.

A higher pain tolerance is a benefit of meditation that gets you through those last excruciating miles of a marathon or an [Ultra](#) (when *everything* hurts), but taking a few minutes to meditate at the end of a busy day can also help relieve post-workout pain and stress, so you can recover faster.

4. Meditation Lowers Cortisol Levels to Improve Recovery

The majority of people in their early 20s – 78% of men and 84% of women – use exercise as a means of stress relief, according to the *International Journal of Exercise Science*. While exercise does help lower stress levels, overtraining without proper recovery can increase levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, to suboptimal levels.

Studies show that meditation decreases the release of cortisol by activating the parasympathetic nervous system. If you want to perform at a physically optimal level, keeping your cortisol levels under control is paramount. Program meditation into a recovery day of your training plan to offset the stress of a heavy training load and a busy life while strengthening your mindset, too.

How to Clear Up Brain Fog While Improving Your Training in the Process

URL: <https://www.spartan.com/blogs/unbreakable-training/how-to-clear-brain-fog>

FOCUS KEYWORD: how to clear brain fog

SOCIAL SNIPPET: Brain fog — a mentally fuzzy, hazy, and forgetful feeling — isn't just something that happens as you age. If you're relatively young, are training regularly, and don't have underlying health conditions, but are still experiencing this common cognitive impairment, here's how to clear brain fog quickly.

BY [COLLEEN TRAVERS](#)



You may think that brain fog — a mentally fuzzy, hazy feeling — get on top of forgetting things — is something that only happens as you age. But subjective memory impairment (SMI), as it's clinically referred to, can happen at any age. In fact, a [UCLA study](#) published in *PLOS One* found that 14% of young adults between the ages of 18-39 and 21% of adults between the ages 40-59 reported instances of SMI, feeling a decline in both memory and cognitive thinking.

Persistent SMI can be caused by an underlying medical issue (particularly as we get older), not to mention the fact that risk factors like smoking, depression, and metabolic issues like diabetes and hypertension can exacerbate those symptoms. But for the average healthy Spartan who doesn't have any health issues brain fog can still occur for a number of reasons.

Learning how to clear brain fog can help you operate (and think) at your best capacity. Here, experts explain why brain fog happens, and how you can keep it from impacting your training and overall health.

Brain Fog: Why You Have It and How to Clear It

REMOVE EXISTING YOUTUBE VIDEO

Cause No. 1: You're Doing Too Much Multitasking

Are you thinking about your next strength training set during your cardio? Or are you cranking out miles on the treadmill while you go over an upcoming meeting you have at work after your lunch break? Thinking about or doing several things at once may seem efficient, but it may also wind up messing with your mind and the ability to think clearly.

“For non-specific cognitive complaints like focusing, word-finding problems, memory loss, or plain old confusion, multi-tasking is often one of the factors,” [Clifford Segil, DO](#), a neurologist at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, CA, says.

Though it can be difficult, stay focused on the task at hand (i.e. crushing those HIIT intervals and *then* drafting that work email in your head) to stay focused and improve your productivity, with your training and your day-to-day life. You're also likely to prevent injury by eliminating multi-tasking, as this will make you more mindful during your workout and lead to proper form that then helps to protect your muscles and joints.

Cause No. 2: You Might Be Overtraining

“One of the most common reasons behind brain fog is dehydration,” [Alex Tauberg, DC, CSCS](#), a board-certified sports chiropractor and owner of The Pittsburgh Chiropractor in Pittsburgh, PA, says. “But brain fog can also indicate the onset of overtraining syndrome.”

When this happens, your body can't keep up with the recovery it needs in response to the stress it's being put through by physical exercise. Other symptoms of overtraining include things like decreased athletic performance while training or racing, chronic injury, extreme fatigue, irritability, insomnia, and an increased perceived effort. (For instance, every rep or run feels way more difficult than it should.)

“Overtraining syndrome can not only derail your progress (and in serious cases cause other health issues) the brain fog that happens on top of these symptoms will make it that more difficult to train,” Tauberg says.

Related: [Are You Training Too Hard? Here's How to Know \(and What to Do About It\)](#)

Consider Evaluating Your Lifestyle Inside *and* Outside of the Gym

There are a few things that you can do to make sure you're not going overboard with your own fitness plan. Keep a training log to record not only your workout frequency, but things like how you felt both during and after each workout. This will help monitor your

overall performance, and point out any red flags that may mean you need to dial it back a bit. Build in at least one rest day a week (and preferably two) to let your body recover properly. This doesn't mean you have to lounge on the couch all day, but you do need to switch up your training and focus on stretching and conditioning those muscles.

And when it comes to shaking off those mental cobwebs, start by taking a look at your lifestyle, not just what you're doing in the gym.

"Increased life stress, poor sleep, alcohol, or CBD/THC use can all cause complaints of brain fog," Segil says.

In most cases, a little self-care goes a long way.

"Getting enough sleep, hydrating, and focusing on your nutrition can really help in clearing up brain fog," Tauberg says.

If you check off all these boxes and still feel like your focus isn't as razor sharp as it should be, make an appointment with your doctor, Segil says. They'll be able to do a physical exam and run some blood tests to make sure there's not a more serious, hidden medical condition behind your brain fog.

10 Quick and Dirty Workouts to Do During the Holidays

2 Quick and Dirty Foundational Workouts to Do During the Holidays

URL:

<https://www.spartan.com/blogs/unbreakable-training/workouts-to-stay-fit-for-the-holidays>

FOCUS KEYWORD: workouts to stay fit for the holidays

SOCIAL SNIPPET: Want to spend some extra time with family and friends without deconditioning during the holidays? These two foundational workouts are a fast mix of functional strength and conditioning to keep you race ready and injury free on a limited time frame.

BY [MIKE SIMONE](#)



Unless you're in the very middle of training for [your next event](#), the holidays are an opportunity to use our extra busy schedules and tighter workout time blocks as a sort of a way to go into maintenance mode, or at least something a little less regimented.

If you're anything like us, your already hectic schedules get even more condensed during the holiday season. But when you're serious about training, being busy isn't an excuse to lose fitness altogether.

The following 10 Spartan workouts are a good mix of functional strength and conditioning to keep your race readiness on point. There are also a couple measurable

tests of fitness if you're looking for a fun challenge. Want to prioritize active recovery? Try the two lower-impact workouts to use this time to scale back a bit.

Related: [The 30 Best Exercises for Functional Strength and Mobility](#)

2 Do These Workouts During the Holidays to Maintain Your Fitness Goals

1. Foundation of Strength: Upper Body by Gabe Snow in Our STRENGTH Series

If you're looking for a Spartan standard for building strength, this is one of them. You can pair this with a lower-body strength day and alternate between the two through a week. You can also work a few runs in or an additional core workout of your choice.

The Workout:

Perform each exercise for 10 repetitions. Complete 3 sets.

1A. Dumbbell Cleans

1B. Single-Arm Push Press

Perform each exercise for 10 repetitions. Complete 3 sets.

2A. Floor Press

2B. Push-Ups

Perform each exercise for 10 repetitions. Complete 3 sets.

3A. Bent-Over Row

3B. Pronated Elbow Plank

Perform each exercise for 10 repetitions. Complete 3 sets.

4A. Seated Single-arm Shoulder Press

4B. Glute Bridge Floor Press

Finisher: Perform the following exercise for 15 repetitions.

5. Renegade Row

MORE: [2 Quick and Dirty Foundational Workouts to Do During the Holidays](#) | [4 Quick and Controlled Core Workouts to Do During the Holidays](#)

2. Foundation of Strength: Lower Body by Gabe Snow in Our STRENGTH Series



This is another Spartan standard for strength, but lower-body focused this time around. Pair this one with the workout above and you've got a no-fail weekly schedule.

The Workout:

Circuit 1: Perform the following exercises for 45 seconds. Rest 45 seconds. Repeat for 3 rounds.

1A. Lunge Complex (Forward, Lateral, Reverse, Transverse)

1B. Eccentric Squat

Circuit 2: Perform the following exercises for 45 seconds. Rest 45 seconds. Repeat for 3 rounds.

2A. Front Squat

2B. Jump Squat

Straight Set 1: Perform the following exercise for 5 repetitions. Rest 30 seconds. Repeat 3 rounds.

— Sumo Squat to Pop Up x 5

Circuit 3: Perform the following exercises for 45 seconds. Rest 45 seconds. Repeat for 3 rounds.

3A. Kickstand Deadlift

3B. Dynamic Split Squats

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4 Quick and Controlled Core Workouts to Do During the Holidays

DATE: **CHRISTMAS WEEK**

URL:

<https://www.spartan.com/blogs/unbreakable-training/core-workouts-for-the-holidays>

FOCUS KEYWORD: quick core workouts to do during the holidays

SOCIAL SNIPPET: These four quick core workouts focus on time under tension during eccentric – or downward or lengthening – motion to increase functional strength through controlled, purposeful movements. Keep these in your training rotation all month to stay strong and injury free on a limited time frame so you can spend time with family and friends without deconditioning during the holidays.

By: The Spartan Editors



Unless you're in the middle of training for [your next event](#), the holidays are an excellent opportunity to devote some extra time to your busy work and social schedules while building a physical foundation for an upcoming training block.

If you're anything like us, your already hectic schedules get even more condensed during the holiday season. But when you're serious about training, being busy isn't an excuse to lose fitness altogether.

These four **quick core workouts** focus on time under tension during eccentric – or downward or lengthening – motion to increase functional strength through controlled, purposeful movements. Keep these in your training rotation all month to stay strong and injury free on a limited time frame so you can spend time with family and friends without deconditioning during the holidays.

MORE: [2 Quick and Dirty Foundational Workouts to Do During the Holidays](#) | [3 High-Intensity, Full-Body Workouts to Do During the Holidays](#)

Core Workouts to Do During the Holidays to Maintain Fitness

1. The Core Shredder with Meg Reardon

Who doesn't like a good core shredder? It can be a full workout on a really light day or a finisher on a normal one. Here's an idea: Do three strength workouts with Meg's shredder at the end, plus two low-intensity runs during the week.

The Workout:

Perform the following two exercises back to back for 20 seconds, followed by 10 seconds of rest for a total of 8 rounds. Rest 1 minute, then complete the 8 rounds again.

— Hollow Hold

— Plank Up Downs

2. The Gut Check with Evan Betts



Like Meg's Core Shredder? Well, Evan Betts has something similar. You can follow that twice per week then add this one into the mix too.

The Workout:

Perform as many repetitions of each exercise in 30 seconds. Rest 90 seconds.

Complete 3 rounds. Your total number of repetitions is your score.

— Elbow Plank Jack

— Superman

— Palm Plank Shoulder Tap

— Leg Lower

3. Low Impact, High Burn with Kristina Centenari

Have you had an aggressive last few months of training and racing? Give those joints a bit of a break with a dose of low-impact work with Kristina.

The Workout:

Circuit 1: Perform the following exercises as a circuit for 30 seconds each, followed by 15 seconds of rest. Complete a total of 3 rounds.

— Banded Sidestep to Backstep

— Tall Kneeling to Standing Knee Drive

- Hip Bridge
- Banded Knees to Elbows

Circuit 2: Perform the following exercises as a circuit for 30 seconds each, followed by 15 seconds of rest. Complete a total of 3 rounds.

- Banded Horizontal Pulls to Vertical Pulls
- Plank Banded Rows
- Half-Kneeling Side Lean
- Supine Opposite Elbow-Knee Crunch
- Oblique Twists

4. Under Control with Gabe Snow

If you train at home and don't have access to heavy weights — or just prefer not to train with them — no problem. Gabe knows how to make light weights heavy. This workout is designed around maximizing time under tension by emphasizing a slower tempo during movements. You could perform this workout multiple days per week on non-consecutive days.

Related: [3 Time Under Tension Techniques to Build More Muscle](#)

The Workout:

Perform the following exercises as a circuit for two rounds. For the first round, perform the following exercises for 30 seconds each. For the second round, perform them for 45 seconds each. Rest 1 minute at the end of each round.

— Goblet Split Squat (3-second eccentric)

— Strict Overhead Press (3-second eccentric)

— Reverse Lunge to Overhead Press

— Goblet Squat (3-second. eccentric)

— Single-Arm Gorilla Row (3-second eccentric)

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3 High-Intensity, Full-Body Workouts to Do During the Holidays

DATE: **NEW YEARS WEEK (12/29/23)**

URL: <https://www.spartan.com/blogs/unbreakable-training/new-years-full-body-workouts>

FOCUS KEYWORD: new years full body workouts

SOCIAL SNIPPET: These three full-body workouts are designed to rapidly increase your heart rate, which can help you burn more calories in a shorter time period, increase your endurance and maximal strength, improve your VO₂ max, and more. As the holidays come to an end over the next few weeks and you begin ramping up your training for race season, these full-body workouts will keep you ready.

By: The Spartan Editors



Unless you're in the middle of training for [your next event](#), the holidays are an excellent opportunity to devote some extra time to your busy work and social schedules while building a physical foundation for an upcoming training block.

If you're anything like us, your already hectic schedules get even more condensed during the holiday season. But when you're serious about training, being busy isn't an excuse to lose fitness altogether.

These three full-body workouts are designed to rapidly increase your heart rate, which can help you burn more calories in a shorter time period, increase your endurance and maximal strength, improve your VO₂ max, and more. As the holidays come to an end and you begin ramping up your training for race season, these full-body workouts will keep you ready.

MORE: [2 Quick and Dirty Foundational Workouts to Do During the Holidays](#) | [4 Quick and Controlled Core Workouts to Do During the Holidays](#)

High-Intensity Workouts to Do During the Holidays to Maintain Fitness

1. The 3X10 by Meg Reardon in Our TEST YOURSELF Series

Speaking of testing yourself: The 3X10 is a perfect workout for going hard without doing anything overly complicated. It's just three moves for 10 rounds as fast as you can. It

might get boring, but you can even do the 3X10 up to four times per week on alternating days.

The Workout:

Complete as many rounds as possible in 10 minutes of the following exercises:

— Burpee x 10 reps

— Squat Jump x 10 reps

— Palm Plank Jack x 10 reps

Note: Meg got 8 rounds.

6. Get Better or Get Beat by Poppy Livers in Our HIIT IT HARD Series

Work hard, move fast. That's the Poppy Livers way all day. This one is full body, functional, and FAST. Want to know more about why we love this workout so much? Check out our full write-up [here](#). You could do this workout up to three days per week on non-consecutive days.

The Workout:

Perform the following exercises for 30 seconds, followed by 15 seconds of rest. Rest 1 minute, then move on to the next grouping.

1A. Reverse Lunge + Overhead Press

1B. Seated ISO Hold Overhead Press

2A. 4-Point Dumbbell Row

2B. Sit-Up + Russian Twists

3A. Lateral Lunge + Knee Drive

3B. Lateral Hops

4A. Dumbbell Single-Arm Floor Press

4B. Dumbbell Pull Through + Push-Up

7. Tough Get Going by Jay Markland in Our TOUGH 25s Series

You might not be doing a race over the holidays, but Jay Markland will keep you in that mindset with a race-inspired workout. You can also follow this one up to three days per week on non-consecutive days.

The Workout:

Perform each exercise for 45 seconds, followed by 15 seconds of rest. Complete 3 rounds with 60 seconds of rest between each. After the final set, move on to the next circuit after 60 seconds of rest.

— Racked Lateral Lunge

— Push-Up to Toe Touch

— Dumbbell Russian Twist

— Lateral Bounding

— Squat Jumps

Perform the following exercises for 8, 6, 4, and 2 repetitions each:

— Devil's Press

— Alternating Side Plank Reach

10. The Will Breaker by Trevor Franklin in Our 3 DAYS OF BELLS Program

This workout is exactly as it sounds: a will breaker.

Trevor will challenge you to push and push through a full-body functional challenge, and you'll need a kettlebell or a dumbbell to do so.

The Workout:

Perform each of the following exercises for 30 seconds, rest 30 seconds, then begin another round in which you perform each exercise for 60 seconds. Complete a total of 5 rounds while adding 15 seconds of work with each round.

— Kettlebell Swing

— Kettlebell Clean

— Kettlebell Squat

— Kettlebell Single-Leg Deadlift

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7 Ways to Live Like a Modern-Day Spartan Soldier

URL: <https://www.spartan.com/blogs/unbreakable-focus/live-like-a-modern-day-spartan>

FOCUS KEYWORD: spartan lifestyle

SOCIAL SNIPPET: Being a Spartan is about more than overcoming obstacles and earning medals. The Spartan lifestyle requires grit, commitment, perseverance, resilience, and determination. Make these seven rules a nonnegotiable habit in your everyday life to reap the physical and mental benefits of the ancient Spartans' way of life.

BY [THE SPARTAN EDITORS](#)



Spartan isn't just a race. It's a mindset and [lifestyle](#). Becoming a Spartan is both a challenge and a rite of passage that involves enormous amounts of grit, perseverance, and determination—on and off the course. Gritty. Resilient. Passionate.

Spartans aren't soft. They overcome [obstacles](#). And yes, Spartans [burpee](#).

Here are nine ways you can start living like a Spartan soldier and begin reaping the physical and mental rewards of greatness.

Spartan Soldier Bootcamp: Learn the Basics

1. Do hard things

You won't remember the easy times. Tough times define you and create your story. And the more difficult your challenges, the more interesting your story.

Sign up for a [Spartan race](#). [Obstacle course](#) races are interesting. And hard.

2. Life is a class: Don't skip

Your [attitude](#), not your aptitude, decides your altitude. If you want to reach the peaks, decide right now to become a lifetime learner. Every day, learn something new that's useful.

You do that by trying new things, especially the stuff you're afraid to do. Learn by doing hard things. Take the long route, the road less traveled. Read everything you can, especially biographies and history. Learn from others. Seek to understand them through empathy.

And above all, strive to know yourself.

The journalist Sydney J. Harris said: "90 percent of the world's woe comes from people not knowing themselves, their abilities, their frailties, and even their real virtues. Most of us go almost all the way through life as complete strangers to ourselves."

Don't allow that to happen.



3. Decide who you want to be

That's right—you get to decide, especially when it gets down to [overcoming adversity](#)! But change is hard. You have to put in the work to recognize your purpose in life, your True North. “Your True North is a fixed point set by your deeply held beliefs and values,” writes Spartan founder Joe De Sena, in [The Spartan Way](#). “Align with it and your True North will act as a high-speed train pulling you through life.”

Not only will you accomplish more than 95 percent of the people on the planet, but having a well-defined purpose to your life will likely help you live longer.

One [study](#) conducted by the University of Rochester Medical Center that followed 6,000 people over the course of 14 years found that those who lived lives of purpose were 15 percent less likely to die than those who were aimless. The protective effect of having a strong life purpose may also extend to brain function.

Another [study](#) conducted by researchers at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago of nearly 1,000 people without dementia found that people who expressed a greater sense of purpose were 2.4 times less likely to develop Alzheimer's, and were much less likely to develop any cognitive problems.

A Spartan soldier paves his or her own way.

4. Embrace discomfort

If you're not tired, you're sleeping too much. If you're not hungry, you're eating too much.

"Life in the First World has become too easy," De Sena says. "It's hard to be happy when you have 'easy' in abundance. You appreciate nothing."

Growth and fulfillment come when you embrace discomfort and adversity and struggle to overcome the tough stuff. Look for opportunities to make life more challenging. Create adversity.

At Spartan Headquarters in Boston, you'll find hand weights at the bottom of each staircase. Employees are encouraged to carry them whenever they go up and down. Why? To make life more challenging—and to build more exercise into the workday.

Ancient Spartan soldiers didn't have to *try* to make life hard, it just was. But we do.

There's another benefit to embracing discomfort: It's invigorating. "The human mind was built to deal with adversity by having a physical reaction to it," De Sena says. "You see a lion, you run. One reason the Spartan race is so popular is because we're looking for that physical excitement in our lives because we don't have lions and tigers chasing us anymore."

5. Don't delude yourself

Success doesn't come naturally. If something is easy, you're not as good at it as you think you are. So, wake up and realize that you can do better. Two things separate average and extraordinary people: sweat and tears. [Stop procrastinating](#) and start sweating.

Stephen King once said, "Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration; the rest of us just get up and go to work."

Get to work, Spartan soldier.

6. Wake up early

Why? It's so simple and it gives you a daily edge over 99.9 percent of your competitors.

In a [study](#) at the University of London, researchers surveyed over 1,000 people about their sleep habits, physical and mental health, diet, exercise, and level of happiness.

The study found that those who rise early in the morning tend to have lower body mass indexes than people who sleep in; they also report being healthier and happier.

- Getting up earlier gives you more time to make breakfast (breakfast eaters tend to be healthier and thinner than non-breakfast eaters, according to many studies), and more time to squeeze in a workout before work.
- A [study](#) in a recent issue of the journal *Cognitive Therapy and Research* demonstrated an association between waking later in the morning and shorter sleep duration, and higher levels of negative thinking and obsessive-compulsive symptoms. Rise earlier and be more optimistic.

- Research by biologists at Harvard University says that while night owls tend to be more creative, morning larks are more productive. Their [study](#) found that early risers are more confident, better problem solvers, they spend more time setting long-term goals for themselves, and they procrastinate less.

How? To get up earlier, you need to establish a regular sleep schedule. So, start going to bed 15 minutes earlier every night and get up at the same time each morning. To make it easier to fall asleep do the following:

- Exercise during the day. It'll increase the quality of your sleep by boosting the production of serotonin in the brain and decrease levels of the stress hormone cortisol.
- Make your bedroom as dark as you can.
- Turn down the heat. Setting your thermostat to a cool temperature, say 60 to 65°F could help because your core temperature cools as you fall asleep.

Try to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night. Studies suggest that quality slumber improves immune system function, reduces cravings for carbohydrates, and boosts metabolism.

Get to sleep, Spartan soldier!

7. Eat healthily

You are what you eat. If you eat crap, you'll look, feel, and perform like crap. If you want to look healthy, feel strong, and perform like a Spartan soldier, focus on your body's fuel. Build the best nutrition into every meal. A few ways to start:

- **Eat eggs for breakfast.** A [study](#) in *Nutrition Research* found that people who ate an egg-based breakfast consumed a lot less calories the rest of the day, compared with people who ate a bagel breakfast of equal calories.
- **Sneak more vegetables into your day.** Toss a handful of spinach into a blender; add almond milk, frozen berries, rolled oats, flaxseeds, and a scoop of whey protein powder. Blend for one minute. You won't even notice the spinach.
- **Eat more fiber.** Few of us get enough. Fiber slows the absorption of sugars into the bloodstream, keeping hunger at bay. Foods high in dietary fiber include fruits and vegetables (eat the skins), beans, lentils, chickpeas, steel-cut oats, and whole-grain bread.
- **Fuel muscle repair with protein.** A study in the *American Journal of Physiology, Endocrinology and Metabolism* found that people who doubled the recommended daily amount of protein (about 112 grams for men and 92 grams for women) improved their ability to build and maintain muscle and boosted their metabolisms.
- **Snack better.** Toss the chips. Snack on popcorn. It contains 15 times the disease-fighting nutrients of tortilla chips. Snack on walnuts, too. They are high in healthy plant-based fats. Eating a half-cup of walnut halves every day can improve blood vessel function, according to Yale researchers.

7. Train daily

This is non-negotiable. It's not what you do; it's who you are. For those times, when you feel you have no time, at least do this:

- 10 arm circles clockwise, 10 arm circles counterclockwise
- 20 bodyweight squats with your arms reaching toward the sky
- 15 push-ups
- 10 lunges, right leg forward, 10 lunges, left leg forward
- 30 burpees

It'll take you less than 5 minutes. Have a little more time? Do it again. You'll feel so much better than if you did no exercise that day.

Related: [5 Best Stretches for Spartan](#)

9. Become harder to kill

In other words, get gritty. Grit is elusive. It is something you have to work on all your life. Therefore, it's the hardest Spartan soldier trait to build and one of the most powerful.

When you face failure after failure and you crawl into a hole to lick your wounds, grit is the tenacity that forces you to crawl back out for more. Get gritty, Spartan.