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Adaptation

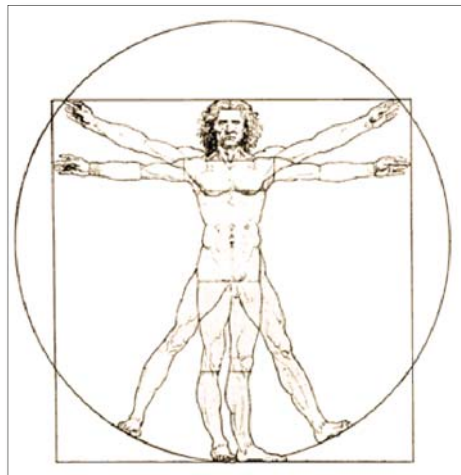
By Johnny Nguyen

The human body is a highly evolved machine, biologically complex in mysterious and wonderful ways. Evolution has produced features that make us who we are - our intellect, our values, our tools, our bodies, and our amazing physical abilities. Through millions of years of tests and strains on our species, our survival luck can be reasonably compared to that of a delicate dandelion in a storm. History was a tempest through which we have survived. Congratulations to us.

Our species survival depended on the natural adaptation to the environment - chromosomal changes through thousands of generations, as well as changes to our belief systems over hundreds of years, changes to our societal structures over countless wars, and changes to even our bodies over a short period of environmental stimulus - in order to reproduce and

sometimes in order to simply survive an acute and catastrophic event. Our adaptation is, quite literally, a gift of life. We, living in modern society with all its perks, comfort, and orderly systems, are the fruits of our ancestral survival, history's fittest.

With luck (and with social consciousness), our adaptation will continue in the hands of evolution. But, evolutionary adaptation occurs much too slowly that we generally don't concern ourselves with it and most of us simply leave it to the scientists and the science fiction writers to predict its outcome. But another kind of adaptation is immediate, and it is well within our control: Physical adaptation.



It's amazing how quickly we adapt to our environment. I have a wonderful client who, as a result of an automobile accident, lost most of the muscles in her right hip and leg, and also lost her left leg below the knee. She nearly lost her life, and her doctors had said that, if she were to survive, she would never walk again. Through years of painful and hardworking physical rehabilitation, she is now walking again with the use of a cane. I've worked with her for nearly three years and she continues to surprise herself and, frankly, me. She can walk for a short distance without the cane, she can do pushups from her toes, and she can ride a bicycle. One afternoon she and I stood in front of an anatomy chart trying to figure out hopelessly what muscles were lost in her right hip and leg; there were too many. And it didn't matter. Her body had figured out a way to adapt. The physical adaptation observed was not evolutionary, wasn't really a natural course, and you can say it wasn't even genetic entitlement. She had earned every step she now takes. She could have settled for the wheelchair five years ago, something the doctors had imagined was her destiny. But she exercised, exercised, and exercised. Physical adaptation was well within her control.



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The body is like that: It adapts. If you pick up a heavy weight often enough, your body adapts to it. If you push the body faster, harder and longer, it adapts. You have to do it intelligently, of course, but you have to do it. And once the body adapts, you must make the exercises harder so that the body further adapts. It really shouldn't get any easier – because if it does, then you've ceased to adapt. And that's OK, too, as long as you're comfortable where you are physically, and that you don't lose it because you're simply slacking.

Lessons Taught by Bacon

By Scott Kolasinski

Several months ago, I mentioned in a newsletter article that I would be prepared to show six-pack abs by the time summer arrived. Well, summer is not here, but I am on my way to achieving my goal. So, in terms of how I am trying to achieve my goal, I am just trying to practice what I preach.

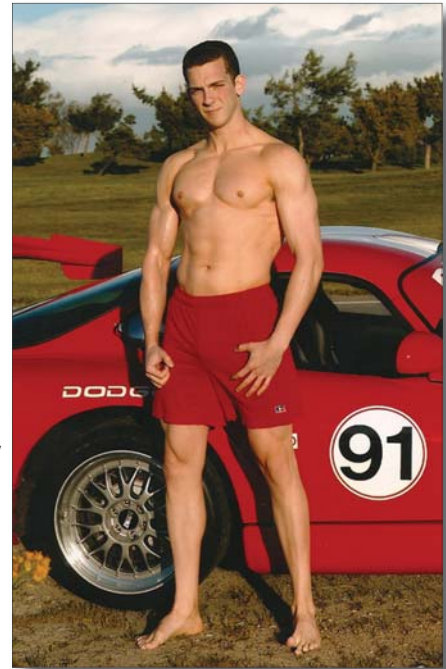
Whenever I advise clients who want to change their lifestyle, I try to impress upon them that they need to have an indulgence meal – a meal that they would thoroughly enjoy, outside their normal healthy eating regimen. I enjoyed a meal like that this past Memorial Day.

Anybody who knows me could testify that I enjoy barbecuing. Come rain or shine, monsoon or blizzard, clothed or naked (see your FIT 2006 Calendar for an explanation) you can find me at the grill. This past Memorial Day, I had an adventure in barbecuing that I had been craving for about 6 months: I barbecued the Bacon Explosion (<http://www.bbqaddicts.com/blog/recipes/bacon-explosion/>). The Bacon Explosion consists of four ingredients:

- 2 pounds of bacon
- 2 pounds of pork sausage
- 1 jar of pork rub
- 1 bottle of your favorite BBQ sauce

That is it. It comes out as a loaf of pork sausage, crisp bacon and barbecue sauce wrapped in a bacon-weave and brushed with barbeque sauce. From the ingredients I used, I calculated the stats of the Bacon Explosion to be:

- Total Calories = 9988
- Total Fat Grams = 878g, saturated fat = 300g
- Total Carbohydrate Grams = 112g (all from a half-cup of barbecue sauce)
- Total Protein Grams = 412g
- Total Sodium = 26,080mg



What is your reaction when you see those ingredients? “Yuck”? “Disgusting”? “So unhealthy!”? My reaction: Yummy!

The Bacon Explosion is awesome! I loved it! For those that could care less because it is a “grilled cardiac arrest”, I want to let you know that you can eat this and still be “healthy, slim and trim”. To give you an idea of how much I ate that evening, it was: half of the entire loaf, 2.5 grilled green, yellow and red peppers and 3 cups of salad drenched in Udo’s DHA oil and strawberry vinaigrette (because I was concerned about ingesting too many calories). Why did I eat so much? Like I said, it was my indulgence meal and I had been craving it for 6 months. Ever let a craving go for 6 months? Anyway, by the time I was done, I felt like a million bucks - no drowsiness or eating coma, and, amazingly, no guilt.

I weighed myself Memorial Day morning and by Tuesday morning I was up one pound. By Wednesday, I had lost that same pound I had gained. Because I may have eaten almost 12 grams of salt, I can expect to retain a lot of water. I drank a pint of Red Label Chimay beer (my “Barbeque Sidekick”) that would cause some water weight. I was rather thirsty for water the rest of the evening.

There are a couple of points I want to make by telling you this story: Most of the public needs to understand that fat is not as much of the unhealthy enemy as the public health organizations have tried to impress upon us.

1) You do not need to deny yourself fun food while maintaining a healthy eating lifestyle. Did I eat a lot of calories? Absolutely. Do I eat that at every meal? Hardly. However, this was an indulgence meal I had desired for a while. I was curious how it tasted, as well as how it would impact the scale. All I needed was a slice of it – the same size of slice that most people have of their mother’s meatloaf (which comes out to approximately 908 calories per slice, but it was actually less than this because the fat melts off the bacon and sausage while cooking) – but that’s not how I roll when having new indulgence meals. For some versions of meatloaf, the number of calories of this meal was no worse, especially if you include mashed potatoes and green beans in butter.

Enjoy yourself in the form of a little indulgence every once in a while. The psychological benefits can be tremendous, especially for those who are on a strict weight loss plan.

2) I ate one meal like this, not a full day, or I do not eat like this once per day every day. It takes 3500 calories to equal one pound of fat. If my weight gain by the next morning consisted of all fat, then that would have meant I ate 3500 calories above the calories I eat to maintain my physique (i.e. my basal metabolic rate, BMR). Because my weight decreased so quickly the following morning, I know my weight gain on Tuesday was all a result of water retention.

One meal out of a full week of healthy eating does not ruin your health or waistline. Consistent unhealthy eating does ruin your health. If you want bad health results, keep eating in an unhealthy manner. If you want good health results, consistently eat healthy.

3) The fat content in the Bacon Explosion is not enough to pose a health problem, especially for one meal. Eating too many calories (even healthy calories) is our problem as a society. The book Johnny recommends for this month, Good Calories Bad Calories, has a wonderful explanation of how too many calories in our diet are the problem for most of our health issues in society, and it is not saturated fat, cholesterol, or a number of the popular reasons we hear about in the media. Again, an intake of such a high fat content in one meal does not equal a stroke, aneurysm, or death by morning. If anything, if you have been avoiding fat in your diet (one of the worst mistakes of the health food industry of the 1980’s), it could benefit your health on a number of levels, too many for me to list here, but I have written about it previously in our archives.

In short, the Bacon Explosion was great. I would recommend it for any barbecue addict like myself. But after you have tried, do not forget to get back on your healthy eating horse to maintain or obtain a fit physique and healthy lifestyle.

Until next time...

Are You Your Own Cause?

By: Analisa Naldi

Cause (vt): to make something happen or be the reason something happens. Synonyms include foundation, reason, source, etc.

How many of us are our own cause? How many of us take actions each day that directly make something better within our own lives? Why will we often donate a dollar at the grocery checkout towards cancer research for somebody else, but neglect to take the simple steps towards preparing snacks for the next day to help our own health? When does our own health and wellbeing become our own cause?

We are going to go back to the basics of living and discuss five ingredients that we are in control of, that we are all capable of making happen within our daily lives. They are exercise, nutrition, sleep, stress, and consistency.

Most of us have to move multiple times daily to get places and complete mundane tasks. But how many of us move for pleasure? How many of us make a conscious effort to exercise, improving our total body strength, cardiovascular health, and psychological wellbeing? Movement improves function of both the body and the brain. Finding different ways to move is childlike and can be filled with curiosity and fun...if we allow ourselves to look at it as something we want to do, not something we have to do. Whatever it is, in the water, on a bike, on a trampoline, or running up a hill, movement forces us to challenge ourselves and explore our surroundings. Our own functionality becomes the cause. The results vary from improvements in our ability to execute daily tasks, to positive behavior changes, disease prevention, and increased happiness within ourselves. The United States Department of Health and Human Services, along with the Center for Disease Control suggests that the average American adult completes 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week along with strength training for all major muscle groups at least twice per week. Spread exercise over at least three days per week to allow the body to rest along with creating a more habitual program. In conjunction with a targeted exercise program, it is essential to execute these movements doing physical activities that are enjoyable. You are directly in control of how much you exercise and move during your daily life, which is the foundation of your health, and in turn, you becoming your own cause.

In order to move, the body needs fuel. Nutrition fuels the body and the brain, providing energy and hydration, while replenishing what is utilized in daily function. Balanced nutrition choices include food preparation, planning for upcoming meals, and cooking. It is also imperative to know the types of foods and nutrients that you are eating, in order to make healthy choices. Understanding what one serving of a fruit, vegetables, lean meats, or nuts looks like is a start. Choosing to consume the appropriate amount of portions of food within your day is the next step. Nutrition is about awareness, choices, and taking the time to enjoy what you use as your fuel. Choosing the appropriate nutrition to fuel your day is another action that you can make happen, directly contributing to your health, your cause.

In conjunction with exercise and nutrition, the body needs to rest. Sleep is a highly overlooked component of the basics of a healthy lifestyle. It is not necessarily a learned practice, and eventually, we all have to do it. Allowing the body to sleep improves physical and cognitive performance. Steady sleep for greater than 6 hours has been found to decrease the risk of obesity and increase the strength of the immune system. It also increases the amount of information retained, and can improve your ability to focus and make decisions. While the amount and quality of sleep we get can appear harder to control, setting sleep at the top of the priority list is an essential to working towards your health, your cause.

The American Institute of Stress and The American Psychological Association have found that stress and anxiety levels are found to negatively affect well over 19 million Americans. Stress levels are deeply affected by work in approximately 62% of Americans, with 100%+ of those surveyed strongly in favor of getting help in dealing with

stress in their lives. Exercise has been found to reduce the “stress” hormones within the body, (i.e. cortisol) and encourages the release of endorphins, which give the body a natural positive boost and aid in stress relief. Healthy nutrition choices impact stress levels by helping control blood sugar (insulin) levels as well as “stress” hormone levels. It is a grand ripple effect that exercise creates. It begins with a positive feeling, fueled by healthy food and drink, enhancing performance, leading to fatigue, allowing the body to sleep, and stress levels being reduced. Therefore, by choosing to start with one ingredient, you increase your chances to make positive things happen towards your health, your cause.

The final basic ingredient is consistency. Consistency has been referred to as the harmony of practice or conduct, encouraging a behavior that is regular and positive. If there is a harmonious existence of the four basics (movement, nutrition, sleep, and stress), then consistency becomes a natural closer. Consistency is a combination of clarity of objectives, (ie. how much movement should I do each day?), the decision to include those objectives in daily living (ie. I will prepare lunch and dinner every day that I am working this week), and the identification of the need to include these healthier objectives within life (ie. I need to sleep in order to reduce my stress levels and live a balanced day tomorrow).

These ingredients; exercise, nutrition, sleep, stress, and consistency may seem fundamental and simple, but they are the foundation, the building blocks to a healthy, balanced lifestyle. More importantly, they are the source of you becoming your own cause. What is the reason that things happen in your life? What makes things happen in your body, your performance, and your health? When do you become your own cause?

Are you your own cause? (answer the following questions and email your answers to Analisa@focusedtrainers.com please)

Exercise:

1. Do you make a conscious effort to include at least 30 minutes of continuous activity in your daily life?
2. Do you approach your exercise with an “I want to” or an “I have to” attitude?

Nutrition:

1. How many times per week do you eat something out of a box?
2. How many items in your kitchen right now were at some point in time alive?

Sleep:

1. How many nights per week do you get more than 6 hours of uninterrupted sleep?
2. What in your bedroom distracts you from sleep?

Stress:

1. Do you identify the source of your stress? Verbally? Visually?
2. Which of the following ways do you deal with your stress most frequently:
 - a. I eat
 - b. I workout
 - c. I sleep
 - d. I drink alcohol
 - e. I smoke
 - f. I spend time with friends or family

Consistency:

1. How many days in a row have your good choices outweighed your bad choices in the following areas:
 - a. Movement
 - b. Nutrition
 - c. Sleep
 - d. Stress triggers and relievers
2. How many days in a row have you prepared for the following days activities and meals?

FIT Client of the Month – June 09

Our FIT Father of the Month

Name: Peter G. Bodine

Age: 46 for another month (Happy Birthday in June!)

FIT Age: 3-4-08

Original Goals at FIT: To strengthen my core to reduce back pain and to replace running with a gym workout.

Current Results, Celebrations, and Accomplishments: Getting my shoulder pain free, continuing to lose weight and improve my overall fitness level so I can stay active with my kids.

Current Goal(s): Do 5 unaided pull-ups by this time next year.

I am most proud of: "...that I am still getting up at 530 am to come to FIT and train after a year!"

Top three favorite exercises: Ball slams, back squats and Clean & Jerks (after I finish).

Top three least favorite exercises: Actually the rope is not in the top three any more. Prone physioball walkouts forward and back, ring rows and inchworms are all at top of the list!

What are the keys to your success? Why do you workout as hard as you do? In order to keep up with 4 kids I need to be in decent shape. Because of my back deterioration and having to give up running, I needed to find something new and working out seems to be it.

From the coaches at FIT: Pete is consistent and just flat out works hard. He may not always like what the workout is, (which is always an adventure because he finds a random moment between breaths to tell us!) but he is dedicated, challenges himself, and approaches each session with an open mind. This is a challenge at 600am! Another more unique element of Pete's success is his motivation. He is driven by the desire to be a healthy active part of his kids' lives and is setting an example for a balanced, active lifestyle, while enjoying his time with them. There are few things more inspiring than a father who works as hard as he can to lead by example. We are proud to have you as a part of our FIT family Pete. Thank you for your open mind and endless effort.



FIT Book of the Month:

Good Calories, Bad Calories
By Gary Taubes

<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9781400040780>

FIT Summer Fitness Camp

One-Week sessions

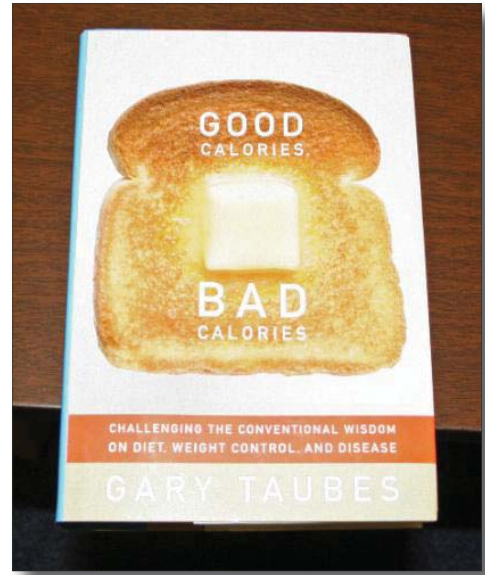
Jul-6-9, 13-17, 20-24, 27-31

Ages 7-15

10:00am-2:00pm

For more info contact:

frank@focusedtrainers.com
or
jimmy@focusedtrainers.com



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650-947-9831