



30 Tips
For

30 Days
To a

Healthier, Happier Life!


Adam Bates

30 Tips For 30 Days To a Healthier, Happier Life!

Brought to you by one of the worlds leading online physique and lifestyle coaches this book is designed to give you a series of steps you can take over the course of 30 days to improve your health, physique and also mindset! You will learn some easy to implement habits, training techniques and nutrition pointers that will not just allow you to improve on the outside but on the inside too! Adam Bates is world renown for his incredible client transformations, but also for helping them to improve all aspects of their lives! Now, you can make your own start to living a healthier, happier life!

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Day 1

Change your Breakfast!

Let's start with the first meal of the day! Despite the knowledge we have today when it comes to diet and nutrition, this is one area where not only do most people make bad breakfast choices, but even when they attempt to be conscious of making better choices those typical "healthy" breakfast options are far from healthy or ideal for their physique!

We live in a world where what is considered normal by society easily allows us to fall into a trap of thinking certain foods are "breakfast foods" and others are not. For example, it is acceptable to have boxes of cereal in the cupboard, it is acceptable to have toast, bacon or even crumpets for breakfast but the thought of cooking a steak or fillet of fish for breakfast to most would just be odd! Of course, that isn't to

say that some foods may be more appealing at different times of the day than others. Whilst a steak with grilled vegetables and sweet potato may be appealing in the evening or at lunch time it isn't something I would insist on you doing for that first meal of the day! But, does that mean we ignore the principles of how certain foods will affect our mood, health and our body composition?

When you were a child you probably woke up to the smell of toast or cooked bacon with your parents shouting up the stairs telling you it's time to get up for school! So, from a very early age, we are picking up these same habits and beliefs over what is acceptable to eat for breakfast. This is ingrained further by society and the media, our friends at school, the adverts we see in newspapers and magazines, and these will all strengthen those beliefs around what types of foods we will eat for breakfast. Even the things we notice sub-consciously, walking past a café and seeing people eat, seeing a restaurant's menu board or just watching a TV show where someone is eating breakfast – we won't even register this when they are eating a breakfast of bacon, eggs and toast but we would notice if it was something unusual to us.

One thing I quickly implement with clients is a change in their belief system around what types of foods should be consumed as the first meal. What may seem unusual to us at first can quickly become a new habit and when we notice the positive effects of that change it becomes a habit we are more likely to continue.

So what usually happens when you decide it's time to introduce a healthier lifestyle and eating habits? Well, when it comes to breakfast, for many this would mean we try to avoid the fried breakfasts and cereals and instead opt for what the media and society may have led us to believe are healthy breakfasts – maybe porridge or some fruit.

Now I won't continue without first emphasising that I would say switching to fruit is an unhealthy option! Having some fruit in your diet at the right times and in moderate amounts will provide you with many vitamins and minerals that are not so abundant in other foods. However, when it comes to the energy content, fructose is a type of sugar and like the other common “healthy” choices the issue here is carbohydrates.

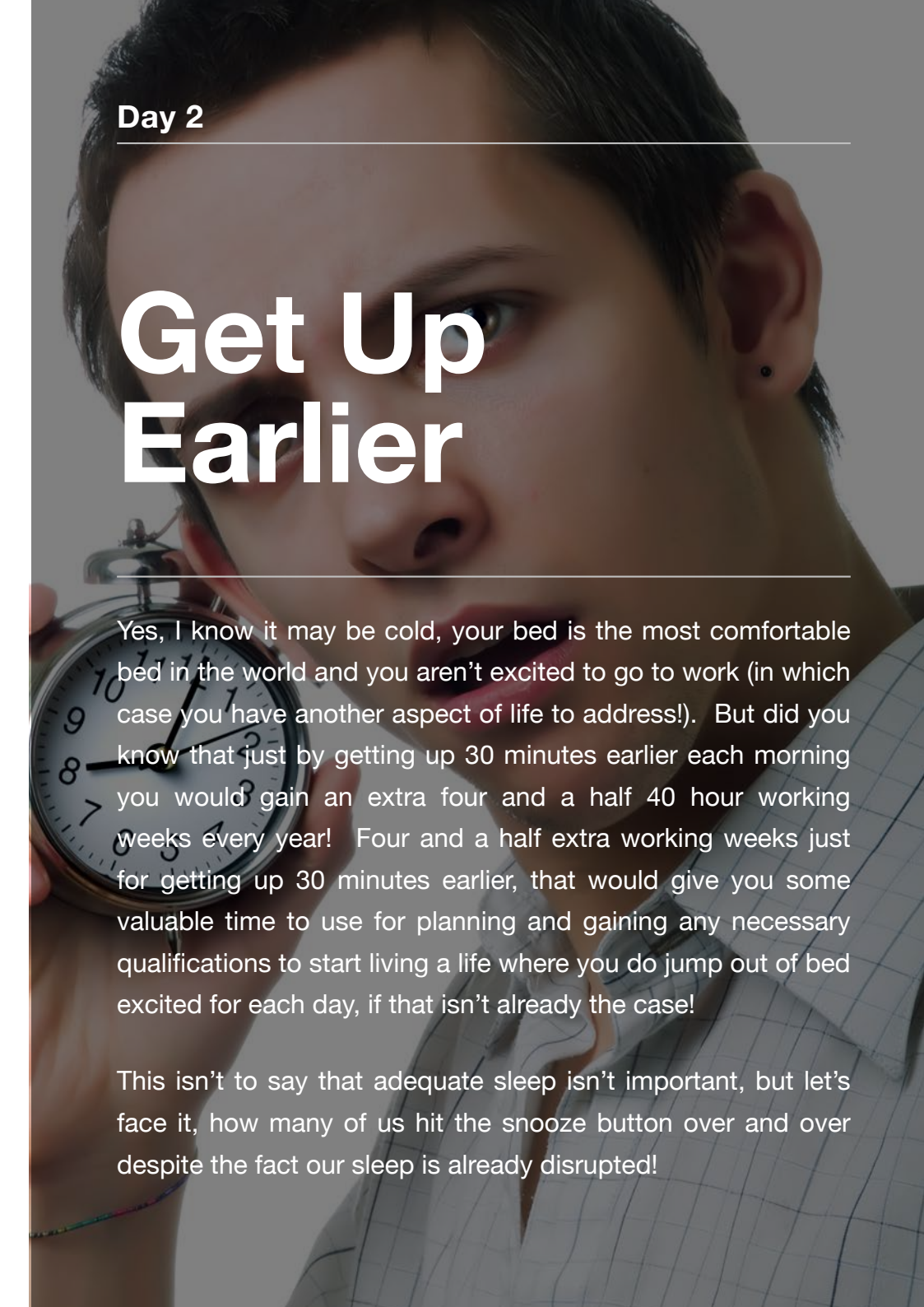
When we wake after our 6-8 hour fast, the cells of the body are extremely sensitive to the effects of insulin as a result of the prolonged period without nutrient uptake. Coupled with this, the reduction in blood sugar levels whilst we sleep ensures that our body has shifted to a state that will utilise fat to a greater degree for energy and to keep vital processes going. OK, but what does all this mean as far as my breakfast choices are concerned? Well, if we then go and feast on a breakfast high in carbohydrates, and particularly refined carbohydrates, the body will instantly start to utilise those for energy which is ideal if you are about to leave the house and go for a 5k run! However, considering the bodies state of heightened insulin sensitivity, we are primed for fat storage!

So, if we are not burning off those carbohydrates, chances are that a greater proportion of them will be stored as body fat. To make this a double-edged sword, once we consume that first carbohydrate meal, we switch from that state of having a greater preference towards burning fat for energy as previously mentioned, to now utilising carbohydrates. What's more, if we are consuming a meal with a low protein content we are increasing the speed of digestion, resulting in a greater insulin spike and more fat storage as well as reducing the energy expended by the body in digesting the food.

The answer is to opt for a breakfast that is high in protein and one that also contains some fat. Research has shown that if we start the day this way we actually encourage the body to continue to use fat as the preferred energy source!

Some of the options I like to give clients will include eggs, a fatty meat option (smoked salmon, lean mince beef, low fat sausages or continental meats) and some veg items like spinach, mushrooms, tomatoes. Low carb cheeses, Icelandic yogurt and coconut oil for cooking, are also great to include! In making your breakfast low in carbohydrates and high in protein and fat you are not only eating healthier, reducing chances of diseases like diabetes and improving cholesterol levels, but it is only going to help with regards to your body composition goals too!

N.B. If you choose to do your weight training early in the morning, your first meal of the day, before you head to the gym, is one of the most important meals of the day and therefore the inclusion of carbohydrates here is an important consideration”



Day 2

Get Up Earlier

Yes, I know it may be cold, your bed is the most comfortable bed in the world and you aren't excited to go to work (in which case you have another aspect of life to address!). But did you know that just by getting up 30 minutes earlier each morning you would gain an extra four and a half 40 hour working weeks every year! Four and a half extra working weeks just for getting up 30 minutes earlier, that would give you some valuable time to use for planning and gaining any necessary qualifications to start living a life where you do jump out of bed excited for each day, if that isn't already the case!

This isn't to say that adequate sleep isn't important, but let's face it, how many of us hit the snooze button over and over despite the fact our sleep is already disrupted!

Or, how many of us spend an hour or so watching TV or similar activities late at night when we could go to bed that half an hour or even an hour earlier.

That extra half an hour can also become the most important half an hour of your day, it would give a chance to establish some new habits - be it a gratitude diary, reading or even a quick run that will ensure we are starting the day with some positive thoughts and energy that can lay the foundations for the rest of the day. Think about this...you arrive at work at 9am, you have rushed to get there on time (probably ignoring the day 1 change in the process) and are dreading the day ahead with a mind full of worries and stress. You are in an emotional state that is the basis for a day filled with more stress, lower enthusiasm, less energy and poorer results in the workplace! But, say you started your day with something that evokes positive emotions, you will arrive at work in a positive emotional state, with more energy, enthusiasm and no doubt better results in the workplace! Now, think which of the above is going to allow you to feel happier and more fulfilled throughout the day!

It is no secret that many of the happiest and most successful people in the world get up early. I, myself, certainly find that my most productive work happens in the mornings and, therefore, that time is well worth taking advantage of!

Day 3

Go To Bed Earlier

So, following on from day 2, a good way to ensure that you are able to get up earlier is to start going to sleep earlier too! Consider what I said at the end of day 2 with regards to the productivity in the mornings, well why not take even more advantage of habit 2 and get up even earlier!

Did you know that in the UK the average person spends three and a half hours every evening watching TV or on social media! That is 32 working weeks every year spent watching TV, which, as staggering as it sounds, is how the average person chooses to live their life!

I am not saying that you should never allow yourself time to switch off and relax, which is important too, but 3.5 hours a night and no doubt most filled with watching things that will serve no greater purpose to our lives, is quite a substantial amount of time! It is funny to consider how many times I hear “I don’t have time to exercise” when you consider this statistic. Why do we choose to live like this? Maybe it is all we want to do after a tough and dull day at work? Maybe we don’t have the money to entertain ourselves any other way? Well you have just found another 32 working weeks every year which you can dedicate to putting yourself in a position where you do love going to work each day and will have the money to switch off the TV and partake in more interesting endeavours.

In those 3.5 hours you can cook a healthy dinner for you and your family, enjoy that time with them, go to the gym for an hour and you can still get to bed an hour and a half earlier, so, in the morning, you are ready to get up an hour and a half earlier too.

Day 4

Do You Really Want to Lose that Weight?

You may think this sounds like an odd question – “Adam, I am 40% body fat, of course I want to lose it!”

There is a difference between feeling we should do something, even knowing that we should for our health and for other personal benefits compared to really wanting to achieve something. If you have struggled to lose weight in the past, or perhaps you had lost weight in the past but then quickly added it back on, then I want you to start to examine yourself in a different way else you will more than likely continue to fail. Here, I want you to look at the psychological aspect and really delve deep into yourself to ensure that improving your physique is not going to evoke other insecurities or fears that, subconsciously, are likely to hold you back. If you do indeed find some of those insecurities in this process, then you will need to address those first in order to succeed!

For me, personally, there is a set of insecurities from my past that would encourage the opposite, hence I had no psychological issues that would hold me back from adding muscle and losing body fat. Those insecurities would come from looking back to my childhood, being a popular kid in those early years of school but then, in my early teens, seeing my parents go through a long, drawn out divorce was something I didn't take to very well. This led to me becoming somewhat withdrawn, but at the same time deciding to pay a lot more attention to my studies. I guess it may have been the feeling of wanting to make my mother proud and perhaps feeling it would be down to me to look after the family to an extent. This meant a change in friendship groups and moving from the back of the class to the front. It was the age where it was “cool” to start hanging out after school smoking and drinking. Instead I focused on other activities, swimming at a national level and the same with playing pool. This time coincided with some serious bouts of acne and within the space of a year one of the most popular kids in school had become one of the least. It meant no-longer was I attractive to any of the girls in my class, something that continued in my early years of college. I then compensated around the age of 18 by going a little off-the-rails, quitting my A-levels to pursue music and, again, starting to mess around in class seeking that respect and popularity from other students. Sure, there were some fun times, but I can recall being hurt a few times and at that age those month or two relationships seemed like

the end of the world when they came to an end! It was around that time I also noticed the most attractive girls dating older guys and, more to the point, guys who looked good and most of these guys had something we call muscles!

So that is where it began and as a result my insecurity would be losing muscle and feeling small in that aspect, which I would not realise the cause of until much later in life. But, in realising this now, I can happily walk around 10lb lighter than when my entire life would revolve around my own physique.

Let me give some hypothetical examples, though, for someone who would consider themselves over-weight due to higher levels of body fat. It may stem from family, maybe there is a need to feel accepted and loved and that need becomes fulfilled by participating in the same eating habits as them. Therefore, as you start to tidy up your eating habits, you feel as though you are distancing yourself from your family - the same can be said with friends in social situations. Likewise, the same can often be applied to alcohol and that need to feel accepted in social situations.

Maybe you had been closer to your ideal body fat levels in the past and attracted a partner that later left you, leaving you feeling hurt and depressed. Subconsciously you may associate looking as good as possible with that hurt and, therefore, there is going to be an inner-conflict when you attempt to lose weight again and that conflict hinders or prevents your progress.

There could be any number of reasons for a psychological barrier against progressing your physique but once you do start to examine yourself and find these barriers you can then start to address them in other ways and start to list the psychological positives that you will gain from the weight loss instead.



Day 5

Your New Exercise Regime

Now, we may all be at different points with this one and whilst I can't provide the perfect routine for you here, I can give some general pointers to help you on your way!

Firstly – don't over do it! It is far too common to go all out from day 1, only to be completely burnt out and never want to step foot in a gym again a few weeks later. We can only burn so much body fat each week and if you are completely new to training then just stepping foot in the gym and changing your eating habits will still be a huge improvement on what you were doing the previous week.

So don't procrastinate, get in the gym, chat to the receptionist, sign-up, walk on the treadmill for 10 minutes, sit on that one machine you do know how to use for 5 minutes and you've done more than you did yesterday! When the time comes, seek professional help to get a programme that works for you, but first, just get started!

Whilst aerobic fitness is key for health and may play a larger role in the routine of some people than others, if you want to see sustained progress when it comes to your physique then always prioritise the weight training in your routine. Regardless of whether the goal is to build muscle or to burn fat, always prioritise the weight training! The process of tearing down and repairing muscle tissue (even if we are just repairing and not growing) is extremely energy inefficient, meaning you will burn more calories outside of the gym than you would otherwise. So, whilst we may burn more calories in 45 minutes running on the treadmill than we would in a 45 minute weight training session, once we get off the treadmill our calorie expenditure quickly falls back down to normal levels. But, following a weight training session, that repair process will continue after the session resulting in a far greater number of calories being burnt at rest than you would do otherwise, a process that can continue for as long as 48 hours after that weight training session has been completed.

Supplement your weight training with some cardio, but if you are completing both in the same session, then make sure you complete your weight training before your cardio. Let's say you have a carbohydrate meal before training to give energy for the training session. If you do your cardio first you will simply be burning off the glucose in the bloodstream following that meal so there is no need for the body to tap into its fat stores. This would also mean that when you come to the weight training session, that important aspect of your training will suffer due to the pre-fatigue from the cardio as well as not having those nutrients available to fuel the workout.

“But surely if we have utilised those nutrients for energy whilst completing cardio we can burn fat for energy during weight training?”

Well, unfortunately, when training at higher intensities the body can not utilise fat for energy as it can not be released, transported and broken down quickly enough. But when you complete the weights session first, you not only improve that aspect, as you have more energy (resulting in a greater need for repair and thus more energy expended after training too), but you will start to release some body fat from the cells if energy is in demand and during the following cardio, with the lower intensity of the activity, those fatty acids will be transported and utilised for energy!

For full sample training and diet plans take a look at my members area at www.AB-fit.com/members-area where you can sign-up for a free trial

Day 6

Learn to Manage Your Physique Based Goals

Goal setting is key to keep you on course to achieve anything in life that is of importance to you and it is a topic that could be given a whole book all of its own. So here, I am going to talk about the principles of goal setting that will relate directly to your physique progress.

Firstly, when it comes to losing body fat, I suggest you set a weekly target to lose around 1% of your body weight per week but with the caveat that the scales are just a guide. When I work with a client I always emphasize that weight is just a guide and serves as a better judge of progress over longer time-frames.

Let's say you weight 200lb and are 30% body fat then 2lb per week on average is a great target to aim for! But, as an example, you may lose 3lb in week 1, none in week 2, 3lb in week 3 and 2lb in week 4. Now, in this example, it is easy to feel great with that week 1 result but only to feel disappointed after week 2 even if you have nailed your training and diet in both weeks. There are two key points I want you to understand here, the first of which relates to what we are actually measuring. The scales will measure lean mass, fat mass and changes in your water levels. In this example it is highly likely that you have lost the same amount of body fat in week 1 and 2! But you may have dropped more water in week 1, particularly with the adjustments the body will make due to your new eating habits, and when we lose a lot of water weight the body usually super-compensates by beginning to hold on to water. So, we may have lost the same amount of body fat in week 2 as we have in week 1 week but in week 1 we also dropped a lot of water and then held more water in week 2 before things have balanced out by week 3. Therefore, and this is the second key point here – never ever allow the scales to dictate your happiness! If you have not strayed from your diet in those weeks and smashed your workouts, that is what you should reflect on otherwise you will have many weeks you feel great for your adherence to your diet only to feel disappointment when you step on the scales – even if you look better in the mirror too!

But we can use this same example to see that over a 4 week period we are 8lb down hence over longer timeframes weight can be a good guide to set goals by.

Of course though, we may add some muscle in this process which in turn will keep your weight up. But, I would always still advise using the same guide when the goal is to reduce body fat. When we talk about adding muscle it is extremely rare that anyone will add amounts that will noticeably impact their scale weight when the focus is predominantly on reducing body fat. It may be possible to add 10lb and, in some cases, as much as 20lb of muscle over the course of a year. The higher end of this scale, though, is reserved for those who are new to training, young males with higher testosterone levels and of course nail their diet and training for that whole year. The further we are from that description the harder it becomes to add muscle and if I relate to myself here after 15 years of training if I am able to add 1-2lb of lean mass over a 12 month period then that has been a successful year of training (also note that 1-2lb of lean mass on someone with low body fat levels looks a lot more than it sounds!). But, for the purposes of this example, let's go with a higher amount of muscle gain and say you do add 15lb over the course of a year even whilst focusing more on reducing body fat. Over the course of a week that equates to 0.29lb of muscle per week, the upper end of what you can expect and therefore the gains in lean mass should not affect the weight loss targets you have set yourself. This is a subject I go into more detail on in the

ABfit Members Area where I have videos discussing the monitoring of progress and also what to expect when you reach the body fat levels you are happy with and switch that focus to adding muscle mass instead

Day 7

Set Yourself Training Goals

So we have covered your progress goals based on your weight measurement, but what about in the gym?

This is something even many experienced trainees often let slide without realising how much it can affect their progress, particularly when it comes to adding muscle and, remember, the greater the need for muscle repair the more effective your body will become at burning body fat too!

If you have trained for a while, perhaps you have thought this yourself, or certainly will have heard someone else in the gym say “It’s all in my head” when it comes to considering the weights they use for a particular exercise.

If that is the case let me explain how much that can be hindering your continued progress! The main focus I have with my clients in the gym is to strengthen, and keep improving on, their mind-muscle connection. A better connection with the muscle will result in it receiving a greater stimulus and thus more growth. Following on from that, though, it is key to track your progress on certain lifts and make sure that, week-in-week-out, you are making small improvements.

When I say certain lifts I mean the major lifts, those where you are shifting the most weight and where the focus needs to be on progressive overload. So I am not referring to your crunches or lateral raises, but lifts like presses, squats, deadlifts, rows etc. In these exercises, which you will often do at the start of the routine when you have more energy, always aim to improve the final sets on what you did the previous week. Let’s think of it like this, if you start out with a bench press of 60kg for 8 reps and over an 8 week training phase you are able to take that to 80kg for the same number of reps (even less than that for more experienced trainees) then your chest will grow providing the weight increase is not at the expense of the connection with the muscle.

So, whether it is with a pen and paper or noting down lifts using your phone, make sure every week you are logging the weight, reps and any other details for that final set! If you are looking for 8 reps in an exercise and you hit it say with that 60kg on the bench press, then the following week you can refer back to that and aim for 62.5kg. Then, say that with the 62.5kg you fall just short of your desired rep count, the following week stick with the 62.5 kg but hit the rep count. As you can see we are just chasing those small increments of progress but over the course of time those small increments will add up! Now, when you apply that to all of the heavier lifts in each workout, you are never going to remember everything, hence the importance of noting this down. Also, when you are performing an exercise with the same sets and reps as you have done say 6 months ago you can refer back through the log book to ensure that you have progressed from then.



Day 8

Don't Punish Yourself!

Let's face it, we have all strayed on our diets at some point, I cannot think of one client I have worked with who has never done so! But don't punish yourself further by thinking that you may as well give up on that week because of one bad meal! One bad meal will not cause significant harm to your progress, neither, in fact, will one bad day. But let that day slip into a bad week and before you know it all the hard work you have put in over the previous month can be wasted.

How many of you would slash all your car tyres because of one puncture? It doesn't make sense! So having one bad meal and letting that become an entire week of poor nutrition will only make matters worse!

We can feel guilty after that one slip, but then use that guilt to drive you to success as you do not want to experience that feeling again. If you let the downward spiral continue then those negative emotions will only become stronger leading to constant guilt and disappointment as well, of course, as taking you further from your physique goals.

The key here is to manage your emotions and do what you need to do to change them! So, embrace that feeling of guilt and rather than indulge in the activity that induced it in the first place, use it to motivate you to get things back on track so, at the end of the day, you can feel great for doing so. If, instead, we change that emotion by seeking another short-term dopamine spike from food we will only continue that cycle as that spike will be followed by more guilt, another dopamine kick needed and so on.

Beating yourself up about one slip will only mean that, once again, you are feeling those negative emotions again and the comfort eating continues as a short-term fix to change them but, in reality, it only makes them worse in the long-term! Just realise that we all make mistakes and the key is what we do following those mistakes!

Day 9

Don't Restrict Yourself Too Much!

Now, we have discussed the general principles with regards to balancing your weight training programme with adequate cardio, as well as a guide for you to follow with an average weekly weight-loss target, let's look at the other element here that controls the fat loss progress – your diet!

One of the biggest mistakes people make when attempting to lose body fat is to go too low on their total calories when they start their new diet. I actually like to go the opposite way and shoot for as high a calorie intake as possible that will not cause them to gain weight in those first few weeks. The reason for this is linked to human evolution and our internal starvation response process that is designed for the body to conserve energy in times where food is scarce.

Whatever we give the body calorie wise, it will quickly adapt to and that will soon become its maintenance level. So let's say we start out with much less food than you had previously been consuming, for a few weeks you will most likely see some great progress on the scales! But the body will realise that we are not consuming much energy and, therefore, it will start to adapt to that by lowering your metabolism, i.e. it will attempt to hold on to its energy stores, such as body fat, because it thinks food is scarce and, therefore, that energy may be needed at a later date.

So, after those first few weeks, that progress will quickly slow and then plateau. At this point you need to create a calorie deficit again which can be achieved with a reduction in the calories you consume, or by increasing cardio further.

If we were already eating very little to start with though, it will be very difficult to eat less! From a cardio perspective we may have room to do more, but if we continue this process we will soon be doing as much cardio as we physically can with the time we have available and suffering with hunger more and more as we keep reducing those calories.

But if we can force the body to adapt the opposite way, i.e. adapting to a higher calorie input, so that in your first few weeks it is instead a struggle to consume all the food, then we are actually going to increase the metabolism and cause an adaptation to higher calories. In this case, you will still likely see some progress on the scales in the first few weeks, but even if not, just know that this stage of the process is primarily about setting the body up for what is to come. In getting the body to adapt to say 2500 calories in those first few weeks as opposed to 1400 calories we have much more room to keep taking away calories when we do reach plateaus and are, therefore, able to sustain our progress over a longer time frame.

So shoot high with your initial calorie level – with good nutritious food! If you do not lose weight in week 1, don't worry, your body will adapt to those higher calories and only if you see no progress still following week 2 would I then look to bring the calories down a little.



Day 10

Mind-Muscle Connection

When it comes to weight training, which is the foundation of your new training routine, be it with a goal to focus on burning body fat or building muscle, the primary focus, especially early on, should be in feeling the target muscle working during an exercise.

Technique is key, and the visual aspect of course you can learn from a qualified Personal Trainer, or even from the videos in my own members area. But, once the exercise is being performed safely, just because your technique looks good from a visual perspective does not necessarily mean the work you are doing is effective. For example, I can watch two people performing the exact same exercise and the visual aspect may look exactly the same but one is feeling the target muscle work and the other is not.

Mind-muscle connection simply relates to your own ability to connect as effectively as possible with the muscle that is performing the exercise and I have noticed a huge correlation over the years with people who have a great connection to a stronger body part similarly having weaker connections to their less developed body parts.

The somatic nervous system is the term given to the “voluntary” nervous system which means the connections that we are consciously in control of – i.e. you use your somatic nervous system to create the actions that your arm and wrist undertake when you wave at someone.

In each muscle there will be a series of motor units. A motor unit consists of a motor neuron attached to a series of muscle fibres which that neuron alone controls.

So, when a motor neuron is activated, all of its corresponding muscle fibres will maximally contract. Each muscle in the body will consist of many of these motor units and the more of them that are activated, the greater the force that will be applied by that muscle. So, the more you improve that link from the brain to these motor units, the more motor units you will be able to activate during a particular movement and that will result in a greater number of muscle fibres being activated which, in turn, results in more strength and more growth!

A good way to look at the connection with the muscle is a comparison between your stronger and weaker hand. If you are right-handed then your connection with the right hand is stronger than your connection with the left. You will, therefore, be able to write better with your right hand, but if you continue to practice writing with your left hand you will improve that connection and improve your hand writing with the left hand.

The same applies to training, a weaker body part can be down to genetics (although even then we can still improve), but what most people do not realise is that, in most cases, it is simply that the connection with that muscle is relatively poor. Instead they will tend to train it more frequently, add more sets and different exercises. But if that connection is poor then they are effectively just wasting more of their time as it is the quality not the quantity that needs to improve!

For example, my chest was a weak point for many years. I tried everything, training it once a week, then twice a week, even three times a week and going up to 40 sets in a workout. However, it was when I competed in my first show that things finally started to click for me and that was largely as a result of practicing the standard bodybuilding poses. When you pose and tense a particular muscle you are effectively encouraging every single muscle fibre in that muscle to contract maximally and, therefore, this is a great way to improve the connection too! Initially though, this made me realise my connection with the pecs was quite poor, so I started to really focus on improving it, reduced the volume to less than 12 total sets a week and my progress really took off!

In every session, that mind-muscle connection should always be your main focus during a set, combine that with the application of progressive overload (improving your final set lifts) and you will quickly see improvements in a particular muscle group.

Day 11

Balance Your Autonomic Nervous System

To maximise your physique progress and to an even greater degree for optimal health and vitality, it is important to appreciate the body as a whole; a series of systems that interlink and work in harmony with one another. An imbalance in one of these systems will lead to implications throughout the body as other systems adapt in an attempt to realign with one another. Therefore, optimal physique progress and optimal health are dependant upon the optimal performance of each of these systems.

The nervous system is of great importance as it is what dictates the adaptations made to other systems to ensure they are all working in harmony. Think of it as the master system or the bodies control centre, controlling and linking all systems and bodily functions together by signalling instructions throughout the body to make adaptations based on the information it is receiving. This could range from the response to lifting a weight or where to partition the nutrients we consume, to key health aspects such as brain function and the immune system.

The autonomic nervous system is the what controls the automatic responses in the body and can be broken down into two sections; the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system.

The sympathetic nervous system is what controls our bodies response in times of heightened stress or excitement, it is the system that controls what is commonly referred to as the flight or fight response, i.e. to alert us to danger. It is the response that causes the heart rate to increase due to a greater demand for oxygen in the cells and an increased turnover of ATP (energy) production. Whilst in hunter/gather times this would give a safety mechanism to protect us from danger, the same response today will also be activated with excitement or in times of stress.

It will be activated when we are faced with an unexpected challenge, a deadline we may struggle to meet, when we hear a noise behind us on a dark walk home, when on a rollercoaster or when we are about to ask out a person we are attracted to. A key take home point here with regards to your health is that in today's society we are activating the sympathetic nervous system with a far greater frequency than it was designed for! As opposed to the infrequent spikes to protect us say from predators, our lives are consistently presented with numerous different events that cause a stress response and as a result of our emotions to those events such as worry, fear, anxiety etc we often encourage that activation to continue for lengthy time periods.

The parasympathetic nervous system is activated in times of relaxation, when we sleep, have a massage or when we listen to soothing music etc. It is also activated when we digest food which is the reason why we may feel sleepy after a large meal. Here lies one benefit of consuming smaller more frequent meals - those who eat 3 large meals a day will see their parasympathetic nervous system highly activated following those meals and therefore feel more tired in comparison to the steadier activation of the system following smaller meals.

Imbalances through the nervous system are one of the leading causes of health issues throughout the rest of the body and the responses of each of these parts of the nervous system will largely be dictated by the individuals signalling from the brain. So the characteristics of the individual such as their stress levels and emotional state will have a serious implication on the function of other bodily systems and hence their health.

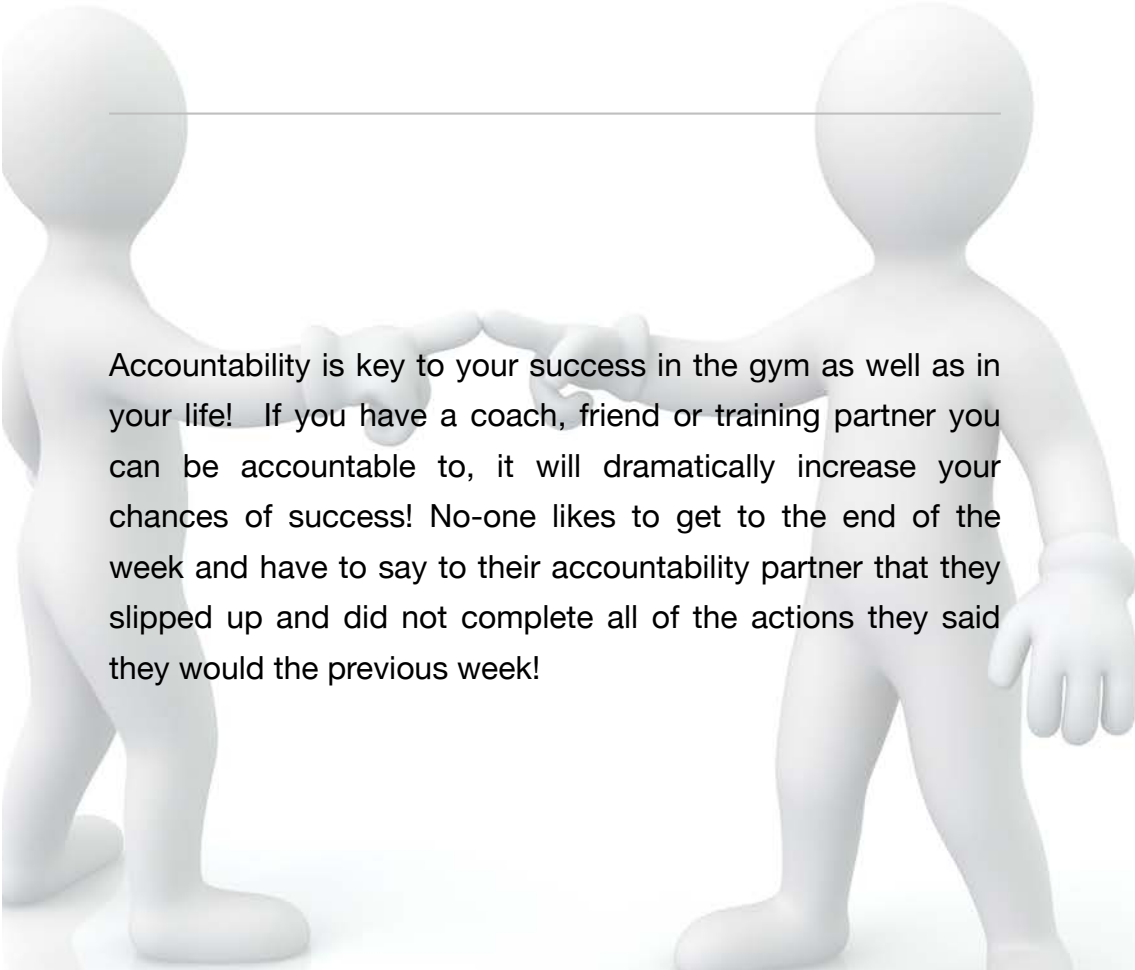
If you tend to be driven, energetic or always on edge then you must ensure that you also make time to switch off and relax, otherwise the over-activation of the sympathetic nervous system over time will ultimately lead to stress and burnout and therefore an inability to function at your highest potential. There is also a link here to blood sugar (which we will come to on in more detail on day 16), in that these responses stimulate a higher release of glucose into the bloodstream and therefore cause an increased insulin response.

On the flip side, a parasympathetic nervous system that is activated with a greater frequency is what can lead to consistent tiredness, lack of energy and laziness. Whilst that cycle can be hard to break, it is important to find things in life that excite and motivate you so you can increase the activation of the sympathetic nervous system. From a blood sugar perspective an over dependence on the parasympathetic nervous system can lead to hypoglycaemia and the affects mentioned.

Exercise can be a great mechanism to help balance both systems by giving more activation to the sympathetic nervous system before and during activity and then an activation of the parasympathetic nervous system following intense activity particularly when you eat following training.

But the most important factor here is learning to handle your emotional state and minimise negative emotions as well as the spikes that some positive emotions can generate. Learning to appreciate that the universe is always working in a perfect balance and that all events that happen in your life are there to serve you is key. Consider this – if all events are balanced with an equal positive and negative and will always serve the greater good then you minimise a need for feelings of stress, anxiety, fear etc. Whilst a complete understanding of this and the way you can see both sides to the events in your own life is beyond the scope of this book, learning to feel consistent love and gratitude for all that is in your life is the key to maintaining a balanced nervous system.

Be Accountable!



Accountability is key to your success in the gym as well as in your life! If you have a coach, friend or training partner you can be accountable to, it will dramatically increase your chances of success! No-one likes to get to the end of the week and have to say to their accountability partner that they slipped up and did not complete all of the actions they said they would the previous week!

Each week make sure you have a plan of action, a list of steps that you need to complete in order to step closer to your longer-term goal. You can, of course, do this alone and still succeed but if you have someone who will make sure that you have completed these actions at the end of the week and, if not, will ask why, in those moments of weakness that 2% difference can be all the difference you need to stay on track!

Outside the gym too, accountability is key to progressing in any aspect of life. Give up on blame, it will never allow you to backtrack and have that moment again! You must learn to hold yourself accountable for everything that happens to you in life as only then will you learn from mistakes, grow and turn any situation into a positive.

That girl or guy who cheated on you, would be a perfect example of a situation where it would be very hard to not point blame. How can you make yourself accountable for that and why should you?

Well, if you want to move on from the situation, the negative emotions and actually grow as a person yourself from it, then blaming will not allow this!

As hard as some things may be to take, you need to accept accountability and even if you feel you treated them perfectly, supported their values and you honestly can't think of a single reason why you would deserve to be treated that way by that person let me ask you a question...

“Were you forced to be with them at the time that happened?”

You chose to be in that relationship, whether it was down to your mis-judgment of someone, being blinded by love or seeking to fill gaps in your own life. They would not have been able to cheat on you in the first place if you were not in a relationship with them.

Once you have accepted the accountability, once you have learnt to forgive and leave the hatred behind – be grateful! That situation is going to be something you can draw on to help others, even one day maybe your own children because of the strength and life experience you have gained from it! Everything happens for a reason, we just don't always see the reason at the time!

Day 13

Can I have fruit?

So, as I touched on earlier, fruit can give benefits as far as being healthy is concerned but can also hinder our goals when it comes to burning body fat. So a little knowledge here can go a long way! The energy contained in fruit comes primarily from fructose, which is a type of simple sugar, but, unlike other forms of sugar, fructose cannot be converted into glycogen.

When we consume starchy carbohydrates such as rice, pasta or potatoes the body will first take what it needs for immediate energy and then store the rest. Glycogen can be stored in muscle tissue when there is a need. Think of the muscles like a balloon with the rubber being the fibre and the air would consist of stored glycogen and water - of course the bigger your muscles are, the greater the size of this storage site, which is one reason why that 200lb bodybuilder can stay lean

with an amount of carbs that would cause an average person to gain body fat. The liver is another storage site for glycogen and, depending on how full both of those storage sites are, as well as the state of the body at the time, the excess will be converted into fat triglycerides and therefore stored as body fat.

So, knowing that fructose cannot be converted into glycogen, this means that what is not burnt following consumption will be stored as body fat. The result of which is one of the most common errors people make when trying to lose weight and switching to a healthy lifestyle.

This, however, does not mean that fruit should be avoided! Berries, in particular, contain a lot of fibre relative to the amount of fructose they contain and are, therefore, much harder to eat with the result being an over consumption of fructose - of course, everything in moderation here! Berries also contain a large number of antioxidants and therefore exceed the health benefits even of most other fruits.

I often add grapefruit into client plans for a few reasons, firstly in that it is extremely dense in vitamins and minerals and also as the body will expend an amount of calories in the digestion process that is close to the total amount of calories the grapefruit contains, it will not give the same amount of spare energy as other fruits.

As for the other fruits that are higher in fructose, apples, bananas etc. - the time to consume those is in a pre-workout meal, so we take the storage issues out of the equation by burning the energy in the workout following consumption.

Day 14

Don't Forget Your Essential Fats

In relation to nutrition, when we call something essential it means that the body cannot produce these itself or synthesise them from other nutrients. There are many amino acids that are essential but, for most, adequate intake of these to keep the body functioning optimally (physique progress is a little more detailed) is easy. If you eat any complete protein source – chicken, eggs, fish, whey etc, then you will be consuming the essential amino acids. But the essential fatty acids; Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) not only are very easy to omit from your diet, without being aware of them, but they play some extremely important roles when it comes to your health and your physique.

Just some of the roles that these fatty acids play in the body include: optimal neurological function, immune system function, retina function, cognitive function, aid in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases as well as ensuring a healthy metabolism. For pregnant females they also play a role in proper foetal development. Oh, and shall we add to that the fact there is now also research that suggests these fatty acids help with building muscle too!

So, aside from the reduced risk of serious diseases such as Alzheimer's and Coronary Heart Disease, just ensuring your intake is at an optimal level is key with the amount of systems in the body that these fatty acids play a role in supporting. Brain health being a prime example here in that improved neurological function and cognitive function will lead to a clearer thought process, a more alert mind and an improved memory.

Ok, so now I have emphasised the benefits and explained that we need to ensure we consume these fatty acids through our diet, how do we do so?

You may have read, particularly if you have become or have ever considered becoming vegan, that you can get these fatty acids through plant sources such as flaxseed.

Flaxseed oil will give the easiest method to consume a large amount of alpha-linolenic acid (which does give some health benefits in itself) which is the precursor to EPA and DHA however, the body will only be able to convert between 3-10% of the alpha-linolenic acid we consume into EPA and DHA. Therefore, we are unlikely to be able to get an optimal intake when relying on plant-based sources alone.

Through the process of conversion, starting with alpha-linolenic acid in plankton at the bottom of the food chain in the sea, by the time we get to the fatty fish closer to the top of the food chain – salmon and mackerel, for example, the fish contain large amounts of readily available EPA and DHA. This is why I will always try to encourage the consumption of some fatty fish in the diet even if just a few times a week, combined with supplementation of a quality fish oil. Most clients I work with will take 4-6g fish oil a day as well as eating fatty fish at least two times a week. If you really do not like fatty fish at all then supplementation with fish oils and ideally 4-6g daily becomes even more important as otherwise, not only will you not reap the rewards of optimal brain function on a daily basis but you increase the risk of serious diseases later in life.

One final point on this is to ensure that you do opt for a higher quality fish oil supplement, one from a major brand that will be more likely to have gone through independent testing. The reason for this is that the cheaper products are likely to come

from contaminated fish and have actually been shown, as a result, to increase the inflammation markers they are supposed to reduce.

Day 15

Eat your Greens!

Now, this is one habit that previous generations will have attempted to pass down to us that is well worth sticking to! Of course, their view point would stem from information provided by the media, i.e. the health benefits of ensuring that we have adequate vitamins and minerals in our diet to live long and prosperous lives! Which is a good enough reason in itself! But there are other reasons too.

Vegetables are a great source of fibre and fibre plays many important roles in the digestion of food. It has been shown that a low fibre intake can be a cause for cancers in the colon. When we add fibre to our meals we not only help to ensure that we have the necessary vitamins and minerals for the body to utilise that food in the way it needs to, but we also add bulk to the food which will slow down the digestion process.

It is the lack of fibre in refined carbohydrates that means their consumption results in a more rapid transportation of glucose into the bloodstream. A rapid build up of glucose in the bloodstream in turn leads to larger spikes in insulin released by the pancreas. In the short term this will encourage fat gain and in the long-term it will increase the risk of obesity and type II diabetes.

The rate at which our food is digested plays a major role when it comes to your physique too. If we are causing frequent insulin spikes due to both the amount and the speed of glucose build up in the bloodstream, then, as I mentioned previously when talking about fructose, this will increase the chances of these nutrients being stored as body fat. The result of which is due to the fact that we are not burning off all that glucose and we are limited in the amount we can store in the muscle tissue and the liver. On the flip side, if we consume fibre with our carbohydrate meals then we can slow that digestion speed to cause a steadier release of glucose into the bloodstream. This steadier glucose release over a longer timeframe means the glucose is far more likely to be utilised as energy rather than stored as body fat.

Stabilise your Blood Sugar Levels

Be it for your overall health or to optimise your physique progress, control of your blood sugar levels is something that we should all give a lot of attention to!

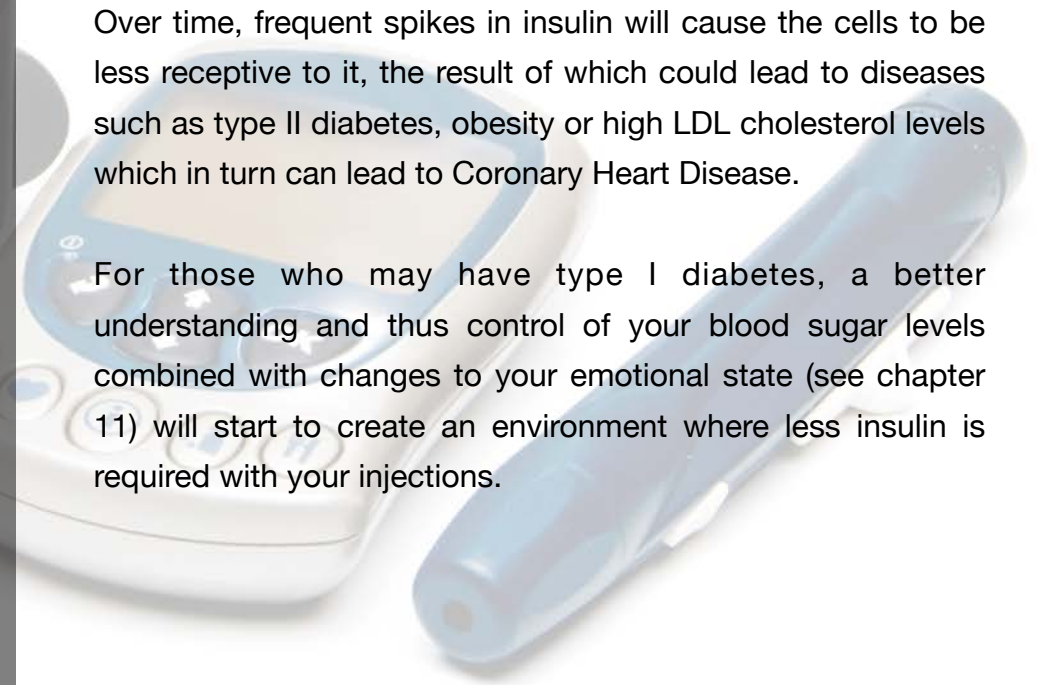
As touched on with yesterday's tip, the food choices we make will play a vital role in the digestion speed of the food we consume and can therefore create either rapidly changing or more steady blood sugar levels.

Consumption of a diet that is high in refined carbohydrates will lead to more frequent and larger spikes in insulin release. Over time this approach will negatively impact our health and can lead to diseases such as type II diabetes.

As insulin is the hormone released by the pancreas in order to drive blood sugar (in the form of glucose) to the cells, frequent spikes to the level of glucose in the blood result in corresponding large and frequent spikes in insulin release. When those spikes occur and the need for glycogen in the muscle or liver storage sites is lower it will lead to a greater storage as fat tissue. If we have a steadier release of glucose into the bloodstream we will have a steadier insulin release and therefore increase the chances of using that glucose for energy demands or storage in the tissues where it will not have a negative impact such as muscle tissue and the liver. The less frequent and lower levels of insulin release will also mean there is less strain on the pancreas.

Over time, frequent spikes in insulin will cause the cells to be less receptive to it, the result of which could lead to diseases such as type II diabetes, obesity or high LDL cholesterol levels which in turn can lead to Coronary Heart Disease.

For those who may have type I diabetes, a better understanding and thus control of your blood sugar levels combined with changes to your emotional state (see chapter 11) will start to create an environment where less insulin is required with your injections.



That isn't to say that for physique purposes those rapid insulin spikes and the faster digesting carbohydrates that cause them can not be useful! Particularly if you are already in shape and are focusing on adding muscle, we can manipulate these spikes to be used to our advantage, such as after training when the muscle tissue is more sensitive to the response of insulin. It is for that reason that I would advise the largest of your carbohydrate meals to be the meal that you consume following your workout.

Whilst those higher blood sugar levels and the resultant increases in insulin production will predominantly boil down to the type of carbohydrates we consume, there is also consideration needed when it comes to the total amount of carbohydrates. Even if we have a diet that is high in fibre combined with a tendency to opt for those slower digesting carbohydrate sources (long grain rice's, sweet potatoes etc.), if we are frequently over-consuming them we are still encouraging higher blood sugar levels and a greater need for insulin. As with frequent spikes in insulin release, the higher total amount released will also result in the cells becoming less responsive to the effects of insulin over time. However, it is much harder to overeat carbohydrates when we are predominantly consuming carbohydrate sources that are high in fibre than it is to overeat refined carbohydrates.

It follows then that my advice here would be to not over-eat carbohydrates in the first place but also to opt for slower digesting carbohydrates most of the time. Even when you are

focused on growth and therefore may be consuming a larger number of total carbohydrates, it is important to ensure you still have adequate breaks from those higher levels of carbohydrates. In doing so we can take some strain off the pancreas as well as re-sensitise the muscle tissue to insulin. These breaks can be short 1-2 week periods consisting of a much lower total carbohydrate consumption and/or consuming a diet lower in carbohydrates but higher in fat on your non-training days.

However, remember that your diet is not the only aspect when it comes to controlling your blood sugar levels, as previously discussed in day 11.

Drink Up!

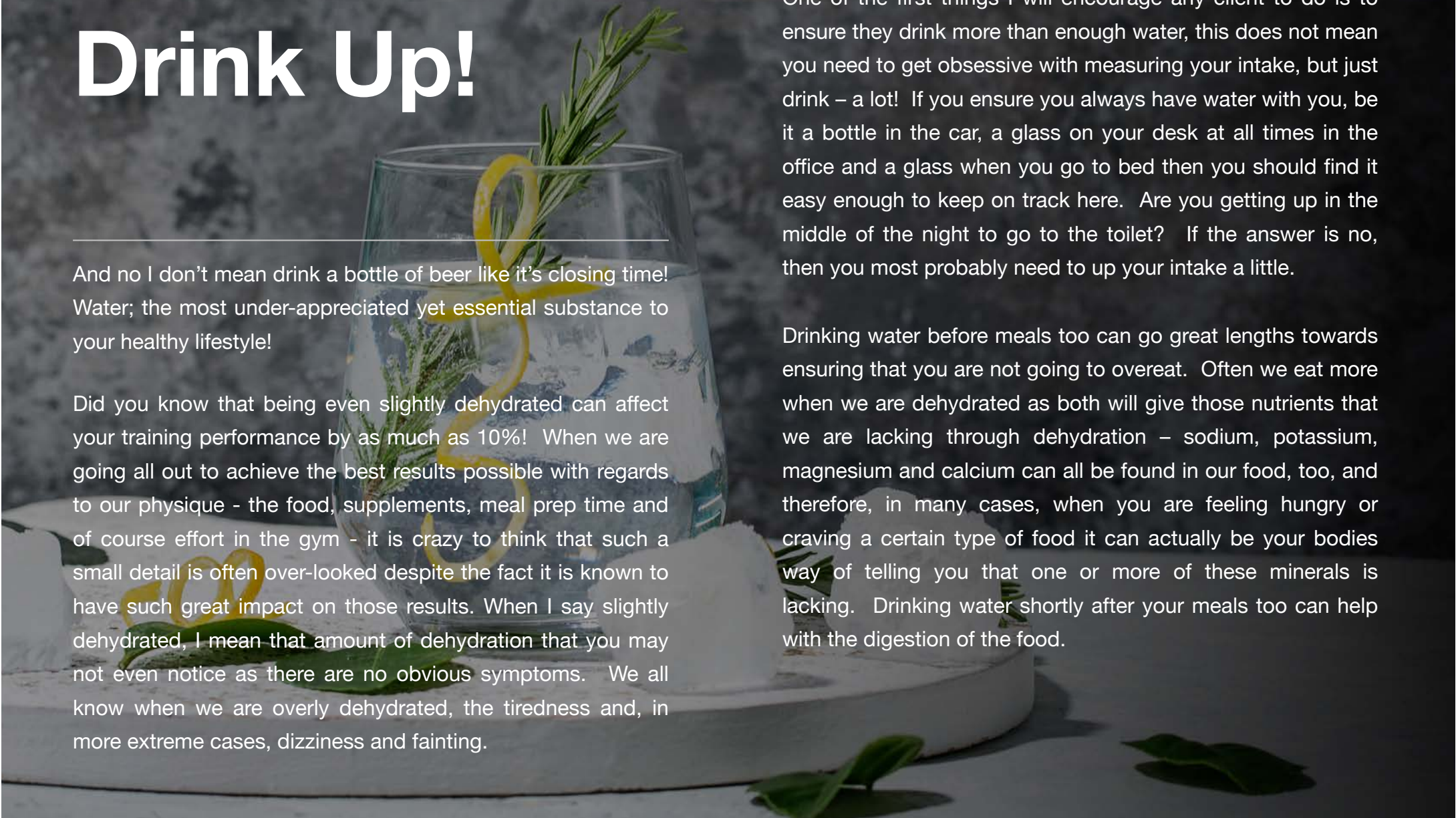
And no I don't mean drink a bottle of beer like it's closing time! Water; the most under-appreciated yet essential substance to your healthy lifestyle!

Did you know that being even slightly dehydrated can affect your training performance by as much as 10%! When we are going all out to achieve the best results possible with regards to our physique - the food, supplements, meal prep time and of course effort in the gym - it is crazy to think that such a small detail is often over-looked despite the fact it is known to have such great impact on those results. When I say slightly dehydrated, I mean that amount of dehydration that you may not even notice as there are no obvious symptoms. We all know when we are overly dehydrated, the tiredness and, in more extreme cases, dizziness and fainting.

But we won't always notice very slight dehydration that in turn will affect our workouts, therefore your progress, as well as many other health factors.

One of the first things I will encourage any client to do is to ensure they drink more than enough water, this does not mean you need to get obsessive with measuring your intake, but just drink – a lot! If you ensure you always have water with you, be it a bottle in the car, a glass on your desk at all times in the office and a glass when you go to bed then you should find it easy enough to keep on track here. Are you getting up in the middle of the night to go to the toilet? If the answer is no, then you most probably need to up your intake a little.

Drinking water before meals too can go great lengths towards ensuring that you are not going to overeat. Often we eat more when we are dehydrated as both will give those nutrients that we are lacking through dehydration – sodium, potassium, magnesium and calcium can all be found in our food, too, and therefore, in many cases, when you are feeling hungry or craving a certain type of food it can actually be your bodies way of telling you that one or more of these minerals is lacking. Drinking water shortly after your meals too can help with the digestion of the food.



Now if this isn't enough, your brain is composed of 75% water. Of course, the body is adapted to prioritise nutrient delivery to the areas that need them the most, but again slight dehydration will affect your mood, alertness and all round brain function. The blood is composed of 83% water - what happens when these levels are consistently lower? Well, we have thicker blood that is less able to transport nutrients freely around the body as well as increasing the chances of blood clots.

Yes, there is more - optimal function of your nervous system, which you now know the importance of. Water also aids in the protection of joints too so if you wish to minimise the risk of injury or joint issues in later life then make sure you drink up!

Do Your Meal Prep

Whether you are following a diet consisting of meals measured to provide a specific macronutrient content (a specific amount of protein, fat and carbohydrates in each meal), or if you are just consuming a more balanced healthy diet for now you dramatically increase your chances of adhering to it if you prepare your meals in advance.

Think about it, it only takes a split decision for you to slip off track and often that small slip can lead to the floodgates opening (see day 8) where it can throw you off your diet for the rest of the day or worse still, the rest of the week.

It could be that moment when you get called into work at the last minute, if you have your meals prepped in advance you just need to grab those Tupperware boxes before you head out the door. It is easy to give yourself excuses after an event and to say it was “unavoidable” when in reality, you are responsible for giving yourself the opportunity for that excuse to be needed. In preparing your meals in advance you have eliminated that excuse no matter how short a notice you are given before having to leave the house.

There have, no doubt, been evenings in the past where you get home late and all you want to do is eat your dinner, switch off and then head to bed. We have all been faced with this situation in the past and I am sure most of the time it has resulted in a takeaway or unhealthy microwave meal. Of course it is nice to be able to cook some of our meals fresh, but if you had that meal prepared in advance and all that was required was to take a Tupperware box out of the fridge and reheat if needed, you will have taken away that internal battle between spending time cooking something or straying from your diet. You have made the healthy option the easy option!

When it comes to prepping your meals, find a routine that works for you! Many of my clients will prepare all their meals for the week on a Sunday and freeze the later half of the week's meals or even all other than the next days so each night you take out the following days meals to defrost.

You may prefer to stick to a routine where you prepare most of your meals for the week aside from one or two meals a day such as breakfast. Or, you may find that preparing half of the week's meals at a time works better for you, the key is to experiment and find what works best for you and your routine.

In this day and age, we are lucky to have easy access to specific meal prep companies too, such as Nutribox meals, who I personally use to prepare most of my meals for me. If you live a busy lifestyle, companies like Nutribox can be a real godsend in that they prepare the meals specifically to your requirements and deliver fresh meals to your door twice a week so there isn't even a need to freeze!

Another great range of products that can help us keep on track with our diet are fitness orientated cool bags which are designed to keep a number of meals in their Tupperware boxes cool throughout the day. These are great for anyone who does not have access to a fridge throughout the day or who travels on a frequent basis.

If you are in the UK visit www.Nutriboxmeals.com where you will find ready made healthy eating options or the ability to request meals tailored to your specific meal plan. You can also receive 15% off the price of your first order by entering the code `adzfitness_new` at the checkout.

Day 19

Cheat Days

There will of course be times where we wish to plan a meal that is not what we would normally consider part of our healthy diet, maybe enjoying a pizza with your family or going for a greasy burger with friends. But, remember this is a cheat meal – not a cheat day! If you wish to have a cheat day and that day consists of not just what would still be considered as healthy food that is just off the plan, but a day of eating processed food that is extremely high in calories then you will not see any progress in your physique long-term. In fact, my usual advice is to have a cheat meal no more than every 2 weeks for most people but, of course, that will depend to an extent on the person, their total calorie intake and how important their progress is. Balance here is key and it should always be a balance that makes you happy. But for most, having one extremely large cheat meal every week can be

enough to wipe out their calorie deficit and eliminate any progress that week.

Remember also why we are doing this in the first place – a cheat meal can just be an off-plan healthy meal which will allow you to still eat out at a social event, opting say for a steak with sauce and potatoes, which will cause far less harm to your progress than having a starter, curry, rice, naan bread and dessert! By sticking to a healthy cheat too, you are less likely to revoke cravings for certain foods that had started to fade since you started eating a healthier diet as well as avoiding the guilt and tiredness that often comes in conjunction with these unhealthy meals.

This leads us nicely into day 20 where I will talk about rewarding yourself the right way!

Day 20

Reward yourself!

Photo courtesy of @g_mai3

Rewarding yourself can really help you stay on track and keep motivated, providing you do so in the correct way.

There are two things we have to consider when it comes to using rewards to motivate us; when we should reward ourselves and how we should reward ourselves.

When it comes to the best times to reward yourself, it is key to think of the times we may need a little more motivation.

You may think the best time here is after that first week or two weeks. I mean you have gone all week without cheating on your diet, getting those workouts in, you feel great – time for a reward! Well, think what a reward actually does, it is inducing those feelings of excitement and happiness which, in turn, would motivate you for more as you want to experience more of those emotions. But, after that first week or two, you are feeling great anyway just from keeping on track, feeling more energetic and healthy thanks to your diet changes and you have most likely noticed a positive result in the mirror and/or the scales. Well, each of those in itself is already a reward, you have already induced those emotions so there is no need for a material reward to do so.

A great time to reward yourself to me would actually be those times where you are not likely to be experiencing those emotions. Take your first day, it is too quick to feel and see those positive changes, but you are tired from your workouts, may be fighting cravings due to the big changes in your diet and your body is aching all over! Those feelings are not likely to have you feeling extremely excited for day 2! However, give yourself a reward at the end of day one and you induce those same emotions that will ensure you are more excited to continue on day 2!

Another example may be when you do slip or have a bad day. Tell yourself that you will ensure that is just a temporary slip and that you will get back on track the following day, promise yourself a reward that following day if you do so!

So with this in mind what is a good way to reward ourselves? Well, we need something that will stimulate that same chemical release in the brain, something that brings those same emotions. Good ideas here would be something like a new pair of gym trainers - you'll be excited to use them the following day!

What I do not see as a good reward, though, is food! A cheat meal therefore should not be used as a reward as you are then rewarding yourself by having the exact thing that you are attempting to give up in the first place! I mean would you reward an alcoholic with a bottle of whisky? Yes, it may give a temporary feeling of pleasure, due to that short dopamine spike, which will then be quickly followed by a sudden drop and feelings of guilt. Reward yourself with things that excite you that are not of a lower value than the higher value goal you are on your way to achieving!

Day 21

Learn from Those Who Inspire You!

When I started training, like anyone, I had those I would look up to, initially because I wanted to have a physique like theirs. I wanted to have Arnolds muscle mass, Rob Riches' abs and then I wanted to be Greg Plitt. When I say "be" it was because of the whole package, the physique, but also the aura and confidence he portrayed. He also had what, at the time, were incredible videos that would come across extremely motivational and inspirational. Something that was extremely new in this industry 10 years or so ago. But looking back now it was mainly his personality, an endearing, caring yet fun loving guy, he was successful, hardworking, oh..and always on the cover of every fitness magazine.

Initially, I would of course also copy the diet and training plans of those I looked up to, even though those plans were not right for me, they did still give me a base whilst I started to

even though those plans were not right for me, they did still give me a base whilst I started to gather my own knowledge. But when I look back now the real value that those mentioned added to my life was their personal qualities. All were extremely hardworking, wanted to help others and would obsess over their passion's day-in-day-out in order to become successful.

Use others who have been successful in their journey that you look up to but not for their diet and training plans, they may have extremely different genetics to you! But model their behaviours such as the following:

What allowed them to stick to those plans day-in-day-out?

What is their morning routine like?

What books have they read?

What does a day in their life look like?

What are their personal qualities that have helped them get to where they are?

What time do they go to bed?

What time do they get up?

Do they tend to moan, complain or like to belittle others?

Or do they seem always positive, happy and support others, ignoring those who direct hate their way?

Think of it this way, we can watch the 100m Olympic final and attempt to run with the same style as Usain Bolt, but that style may not be right for us to become the best sprinter we could be. What would help though is modelling the actions and

work that he implements every single day in-order to perform as he does when it matters most!

Day 22

Show Gratitude

This book is not about my personal story, but there were events that happened in my life years ago that made me really start to look at life in new ways. The things I would take for granted before, I started to become extremely grateful for through the experience of seeing how the events that initially seemed like the worst moments actually created the greatest things in my life. This set me on a path of research into human behaviour and psychology that has since become a prominent part of my work. When you see that everything in life works as part of the divine perfection of the universe and that all events serve the greater good you will start to experience consistent feelings of love and gratitude. The result of which is not just a happier life, but one full of inspiration and greatly improved health!

Now, I can honestly say that those toughest challenges in life that I have faced I am extremely grateful for as it is those moments that were quickly followed by the best moments and dictated the direction my life has taken. When the challenging events are viewed with a balanced perspective by seeing how they serve you, you will experience gratitude for them as opposed to holding them in a negative context which will always impede on your overall happiness as well as optimal performance in all aspects of life. When you express gratitude, you will see more things enter your life to be grateful for.

One of the habits I have instilled in my morning routine as mentioned previously, is to write a gratitude diary and complete it every morning by listing three things that I feel grateful for at that time. When you love life, love what you do for a living and the people in your life showing gratitude is easy, but sometimes we have to show gratitude to the small things where we may not always notice their beauty but in doing so we are attracting more things in our life to be grateful for. Now think who may be living the happier life; the person who is grateful for everything that they have, or the person who sees only what is lacking in their life

When you can feel genuinely grateful for all events and the world around you, you will have unlocked the most important factor in creating an optimally functioning nervous system and

therefore optimal physical health and wellbeing! I am grateful for everything that has happened in my life, good or bad as it is the combination of all these events that have created the life I have today! Be grateful for the beauty of who you are and the wonderful world around you too!

Day 23

Deload/ Recovery Weeks

One key element to any successful training programme and progressing the physique over time is the proper implementation of “deload” or recovery weeks. This is something I have had to learn the value of the hard way as I would always believe that the more we do, the better! When it comes to training and progressing your physique, however, this is not the case, we need our recovery time otherwise we will see our results plateau and, in the worst cases – go backwards!

The reason for this is down to the impact of training on the Central Nervous System. When we train intensely with weights it takes time for the CNS to recover and the more frequently we apply this stress to it, the greater that need for recovery becomes. Outside stresses also take their toll, be it issues in your personal or work life, or otherwise, those stresses also impact your CNS and, therefore, a balance in all aspects that will add stress is extremely important. Take a person who normally does great with deloads no more than every 12 weeks, but they go through a period of working longer hours due to a more intense workload and, at the same time, are having issues in their relationship with their partner - now their circumstances are quite different with more factors applying stress to the CNS and therefore they may need to implement a deload week more frequently.

Finding your own balance is key but also learn to listen to the signals your body may give you that a deload week is needed. If you ignore these, you may quickly become over-trained or worse still, suffer from exhaustion. If you find a drop in energy or motivation, or struggling to sleep at night, struggling to progress in the gym or a higher frequency of minor illnesses then it may be time to take a recovery week.

When we see the above symptoms starting to infiltrate our lives then it is time to take that recovery week. It may be hard at first to accept that less is more as I notice with many clients who initially would have that same belief system I once had whereby time out of the gym would be time wasted! But, in each case, following their first deload week they will see the benefits the following week, with sleep being back to normal, progress seen in the gym once more and as a result, looking better than ever after those first few sessions back the following week!

The reasons for this are down to the impact of an overly taxed CNS on your hormone levels where the body will respond with a drop in testosterone levels, spikes in endorphin levels rather than a steadier release and also a rapid increase in levels of the stress hormone – cortisol. Over time, these will result in possible muscle loss as well as finding it much harder to continue to lose body fat.

The frequency of deload weeks will depend on many factors as mentioned. Changes in outside stresses aside, we will usually notice more frequent need for deloads as we get older but also as our training experience INCREASES. Contrary to what many may say, when you are newer to training those recovery weeks are not likely to be needed as frequently as with someone who has trained all their life. When you have trained longer, have more muscle mass and strength the intensity of your workouts will be

higher, therefore there is that greater stress on the CNS following each workout.

There are a few strategies for a successful deload week, the first being simply to take a week off. I prefer this approach as I can then use the extra time that week for other productive endeavours, but if you are one of those who struggles to stay out of the gym, then I would advise greatly reducing the volume and intensity of your workouts that week. An easy way to reduce volume is to take out one or two exercises from each session. Intensity should be reduced by only using 60-70% of the weight you would normally use on a particular set so that even your final sets are a good 5 reps short of failure! Remember, less is more in those recovery weeks and if you have that mind-set of needing to push yourself every time you are in the gym then the complete week off would be a better option for you!

Day 24

Give Yourself Time to Relax

Whilst we use deload weeks with our training as a means to allow the CNS to recover, it is also important from a general health and vitality perspective to ensure that you allow your mind time to switch off too!

We live in a fast-paced world where, if you are anything like me, you always seem to be on the go. When you are doing something you love day-in-day-out, in particular, we may not see the need to have an evening a week or 30 minutes a day where we do completely switch off. But I can speak from my own past experiences as well as seeing it with other driven and hardworking people that if we do not take care of ourselves and give that recovery our performance will drop and in the worst case scenarios suffer exhaustion or burnout.

We do not always see the signals here either, they may include struggling to sleep, forcing yourself to do the things that you usually enjoy or simply getting a cold or flu when you are not normally one to get ill on a frequent basis.

On that note I believe illness is usually a manifestation of an imbalance on the inside, where our mind and body are not working perfectly in sync with each other.

Make sure you give yourself time to completely switch off, be it a massage, visit to a spa, a film or date night, vacations etc. You will notice the benefits in having more energy, jumping out of bed again in the mornings and keeping that motivation and drive going in your daily tasks and goals.

Day 25

Manage Your Thoughts and You Can Manage Your Emotions

You are what you think, you think how you feel and you feel how you think...

In understanding how the brain works with regards to the emotions we experience we can start to harness its power to our advantage and create a life of fulfilment! We can use it to experience more positive emotions like love and gratitude whilst also learning the signals negative emotions may be giving us in order to act on those signals and course correct if needed.

Any thought that we have will evoke a certain emotion by causing a particular chemical release in the brain, in turn a neural pathway is created that will link that thought to that emotion. The more times we think that same thought, or a thought on the same path, the more we stimulate that same chemical release and each time we do so we strengthen the link between that thought and the emotion.

In strengthening that link, the chemical response that is stimulating us to feel that emotion will in turn cause us to continue to think similar thoughts. As we can only experience one emotion at any one time, if for example, we are thinking something that makes us feel the emotion of sadness any subsequent thoughts we have whilst in that same state are likely to be of things we associate with sadness too. This is why it can be key to spot the signals that any negative emotions are trying to tell us – not to just ignore them and try to “think positive!” Maybe we need to address something in our lives or to understand how an event is also serving us in order to see both the negative and positive aspects to it. As mentioned previously, all events and experiences in life will carry an equal balance of both positives and negatives and we often need to find the positives that result from that event to be able to see that balance. Once we have seen both sides the event is viewed with feelings love and gratitude as opposed to feeling negative emotions towards it.

Do you ever wonder how a particular life event can happen to one person and as a result their entire life seems to start to spiral downwards, yet the same event occurring to someone else can be a stimulus for them to start improving themselves and their life? This is simply down to the individual's thoughts around the event and the actions that follow as a result. The first person may start to blame the world and their luck, wondering why it has happened to them and what will go wrong next. As they fail to see how the event is serving them they encourage more events that can trigger those negative emotions. However, the second person will get excited about what they can do as a result of that event (seeing the positives as well as the negatives) and will feel inspired by the path that follows. They then start to notice more of what they are looking for – things to feel grateful for!

Day 26

Why Smaller More Frequent Meals?

One, often repeated, theory you would find over the internet and in books, until a few years ago anyway, was that you can improve your fat loss results by breaking down your total daily calorie intake into smaller, more frequent meals with the reason being that this will elevate your metabolism.

Whilst more recently there has been a great deal of research to suggest this is not true, most of which is correct, I still believe there are factors other than your metabolism to consider which do show the advantages of eating smaller meals more frequently.

But firstly, let's look at this idea that they raise your metabolism. In this industry, in particular, there does always seem to be a cluster of people who set-out to prove wrong concepts that have worked well for many for years, and they are right, you cannot argue with science! But, research is applicable in the environment that it was created, i.e. what applies to a non-trained 80-year-old male may not apply to those in their 20's who have spent a few years in the weights room. The science is correct in saying, 'if your total daily nutrition intake is the same then it would make no difference if you consume all meals in one sitting or over 8 sittings'. But when you have seen something work for so long and with so many people then there are always going to be things you can think about to counteract that and my belief is still firmly on the side of more frequent smaller meals being highly beneficially for fat loss.

If we are consuming 3 large meals a day, in comparison to those same calories split into 6 meals, we will find it harder to consume all that food in each sitting which will likely result in us adding less fibre to the meal in the way of vegetables or salad items. Fibre, as mentioned previously, is a key component of the digestion speed of our meals in that fibre will slow down digestion as well as keeping us feeling fuller.

When we split those same calories into 6 smaller meals, then we are likely to add more vegetables to those meals in order to add more to our plate. The result, therefore, will be additional food to break down (despite the calories being equal) and therefore an increase in calorie expenditure.

Another advantage here is that slower digestion speed, partly due to the fibre, but also as we are adding a more frequent, but smaller stream of nutrients into the blood stream rather than that bulk input of nutrients 3 times a day. Which, as you now already know, will lead to greater spikes in insulin and therefore less likelihood that all those nutrients will be needed for energy at that time or partitioned towards muscle tissue resulting in a possible increase in fat storage.

Another benefit of the smaller more frequent meals would be that we have less time to wait between meals! If we are only eating every 5-6 hours, the chances are we will be far more tempted to snack between meals than if we only have to wait 2-3 hours between our meals.

There is another benefit too, relating to the more frequent stimulus of the mTOR molecule which ignites protein synthesis. The rate of protein synthesis will drop off at a greater rate 2-3 hours following stimulation, so if we consume a protein source with a meal then the leucine in that protein source will increase the rate of protein synthesis again.

Day 27

Give Back!



Whether it is through financial help, acts of kindness or simply using skills you have that can help improve the lives of others in any way, learn to give!

This is something, the benefits of so doing, you only really start to see and feel once you start to act. This does not mean putting others before yourself, it does not mean doing things for friends/family and expecting anything in return. It means helping because you can, because you have gone through and experienced things that have allowed you to help others and have also given you the ability to draw on your own memories of those emotions they may be feeling.

. I know with myself, it is those memories and feelings that drive me to do anything I can so that others do not have to go through some of the experiences that I have in the past. Or, when they are already suffering, to help them get through it by using that experience and knowledge of life, your thoughts and your actions to ensure that they find the best way through.

Everyday I will see on social media people complaining that they always do things for someone who never gives anything in return. I often can't help but comment because the short-sightedness is always going to cause them to suffer emotionally or worse, stop giving completely! The fact is there are certain laws in life that give a balance, a positive must have a negative etc. and you do attract what you put out. We should always give simply because we want to give and personally, for me, I get more pleasure out of seeing how a conversation with someone can make them feel better, giving money to charity or how random acts of kindness can affect someone than anything materialistic that individual could ever give back.

Of course, I do what I do for a living and that is because of the value that my knowledge can add to peoples lives.

But, whether it is working with a client, buying meals for someone less fortunate or an hour long phone conversation with a stranger who may be feeling suicidal and you know you can help, seeing the gratitude from someone when you do touch their lives is one of the greatest feelings you can experience and to me that is the reward in itself.

What does this mean with regards to your own personal health and happiness? Well, you start to notice things happen to you too, people reach out to help when you would not expect it. Or, when facing any challenges yourself, let's say a missing link in the knowledge you have relating to your business, when you give in general, you will see these people start to appear into your life at the right time. What's more, you feel good for it and life is about feeling great and being happy, those feelings are enhanced when you do what you can to help others.

Day 28

Eliminate Hatred and Learn to Forgive

That person who hurt you, did things to you that you will never understand, they caused so much pain and suffering and you can't comprehend the reasons why – let it go!

When you hold onto negative emotions you can never perform at your best, I have already talked about how you can only feel one emotion at a time and holding onto any kind of negative emotion directed towards anyone is only going to cause you more pain and suffering.

The fact is you can't be completely happy when you hold onto those emotions, when you are feeling negative emotions you will not only feel bad but encourage more negative thoughts to be induced. The energy you are omitting to the world will not be one of that happy confident person that you need to be in order to thrive in any aspect of life.

Instead you simply attract more negative thoughts, more negative emotions and therefore you start to miss out on all the beautiful things you have in your life. You fail to notice them and start to instead focus more on the negative things you see around you.

It does not matter how bad you have been treated, how little you feel you deserved the suffering that someone may have caused you, they have made you suffer once, do not let them continue to do so!

The world is created with finite balance with there always being an opposite and equal reaction to any action. Do not continue to suffer, that person will have their equal reaction and instead of hoping to see them suffer, be grateful that it happened to you rather than to someone else because you are strong enough to cope with it. Hope that instead of suffering, that they go through something themselves that will result in them becoming a better person from it.

Learn to forgive even in the darkest of moments and you will start to move towards the light, you will lose those feelings of sadness, pain and suffering and they will be replaced with the excitement of the future. That event will make you stronger, that event happened to you because life has greater, more important challenges in store for you that require you to have that extra strength and life experience. You may have suffered,

but you have done so for a greater good!

Managing Your Training & Diet Through Illness

I hope this is something that you will need to follow with decreasing frequency the more you continue to apply the other habits and actions you have learnt from this book!

However, illness will happen at some point and it is a very easy excuse to let things slide, or the opposite in trying to be strong and power through. In reality, though, neither of these will be the best for your progress or recovery!

If you just have a slight cold or minor symptoms then I would train if you feel up to it, but remember what I have said previously about training and recovery – do not feel bad if you need time off! If your appetite is very low and you are struggling to eat then I would always take that as a sign not to train as it will be counterproductive anyway, without having the

adequate nutrients in place to help your recovery from training.

If you have the flu or another virus, I would always advise not training until you are feeling fully recovered. The reason for this is that training does give a hit to our immune system so in doing so we are not only going to be less able to recover from training but also hinder our recovery from the virus.

It can be hard for many people to accept this, a bit like I mentioned with reference to deload weeks, where it is easy to think that we will hinder our progress by taking time off. Especially when you are lean and looking to add muscle, in the mirror you will look much smaller and it is easy to mistake this for muscle loss. But, when we do not have that same training stimulus (let alone a possible lowered calorific intake) the body will start to drop your muscle glycogen stores. This will make the muscle look smaller but unless we are looking at a pro-longed period off from training you will not lose the actual muscle fibres. Like with deload weeks therefore, after your first few sessions back in the gym you may look better than ever! This is not because you lost muscle and regained it in the space of a few days, but rather dropped the stored glycogen which the food and training stimulus quickly replenished once you returned to the gym.

So when you are ill and do not feel like training – do not force

yourself! You will only do more harm than good!



Day 30

Now Love Yourself!

Over the last 29 days you have made an incredible start to experiencing a healthier and happier life! But, this is just the start! Establishing new habits through consistency of application as well as building on that knowledge will allow you to continue on a path of increasing fulfilment, happiness and optimum health! It is time to build on these foundations by re-reading the content of this eBook and continue to apply the pointers day in day out to establish these as new habits and part of your life!

After this initial 30 days you will no doubt be seeing some progress visually, feeling more energetic as well as starting to feel happier and more confident in yourself. Now, it is time to really love yourself!

Be proud of who you are and the journey you are on as no matter what may have happened in the past; the mistakes, failures and successes have all served you and helped to create the beautiful person you are! Just remember that you are one of a kind and are focusing on being the best version of you – that is truly admirable!

It is not selfish to focus on you nor is it arrogant to love who you are! The fact is without becoming a person that you are proud to be, a person who loves who they are and the path they are on, you cannot expect others to love you either! But when you truly love yourself and you become happy with all aspects of your life, you do not need to hide your floors, or mistakes from your past – as they all played a role in creating that person you love today and therefore be proud of them! In reality therefore there were no mistakes – simply a series of steps on a beautiful journey! Love yourself!

Each day when you show gratitude and are receiving gratitude, give love and feel love you will no-longer go through life with envy, guilt or a lack of self-belief. You will start to thrive in all aspects of life and wake up everyday with energy, vigour, happiness and a love for everything in the world around you!