

NUTRITION AND WEIGHT CONTROL

Are you overweight? For most people the answer is “yes.” If that’s the case then it means you have accumulated excess fat over time. Part of becoming truly physically fit is eliminating the excess fat. We’re not talking about eliminating all the fat, because maintaining a thin layer of fat under your skin happens to be good for you. By *thin* we mean if you can pinch a half inch to an inch on your butt, thigh and abs you’re probably just right. It is also true that a few people are underweight. Most of these folks suffer a shortfall in the amount of muscle they have developed and will benefit from the exercise portions of this program. So tell me, what kind of eater are you? What patterns of eating have resulted in the extra fat? Are you the carnivore who makes a big kill every day and gorges until you are stuffed? Are you the herbivore grazer who nibbles and snacks all day until you don’t really know the total amount because you have eaten eighteen mini meals all day? Do you make a habit of eating the wrong kinds of foods most of the time? Not sure? Well, give it some thought. This is not an exercise in guilt identification. You’re going to need to identify behavior patterns in the process of planning your changes.

Most people who are overweight have been on some form of a diet in the past, had varying degrees of success in terms of weight loss, and then gained the weight back over time. As you already know, there are a million diet plans out there and what we’re going to talk about is **not** another diet plan. There are exotic, absurd, breakthrough and fad diets galore out there. I’m going to tell you right here and now to stay away from all of them. Any diet that tells you to eat copious amounts of fat or no carbohydrates or forty pomegranates a day is a scientifically unproven fad and you are the

guinea pig. They will probably work short term, you may well lose weight, but you aren't likely to spend the rest of your life eating like that. There are long established regimented menu programs that will work if you follow them faithfully. You have to ask yourself a couple of questions. Do I or do I not have the discipline to alter what and how I eat? If the answer is no, then one of the plans like Jenny Craig or Weight Watchers just to name two, is a really good way to go. It's simple. It's varied. The only discipline you need is to not cheat on the plan. Stick to the program.

As you read through this book, we will note there are times in life when complication is a necessity. Fundamental analysis of a stock. Flying to the moon. This is not one of them. You can make things complicated and involved but on the subject of fitness such complication is usually a detriment. Remember, we are always looking for simple. By the way, we are also looking for relatively inexpensive options as well. A simple program, a simpler plan. This makes things easier to follow. Less for you to have to figure out. Less likely to get distracted by options and calculations and costs. You will be less likely to let the subconscious mind divert your effort. Simpler is better. We also do not want costs to be a burden or a deterrent. We also insist on sound medical science. These commercially available diet plans are nutritionally complete. Most of them leave you a little hungry part of the time, which is a good thing. Remember back to our discussion of the history of man. Humans evolved under conditions where being a little hungry most of the time was the norm. In modern times, where food is so abundant and affordable in America, even the poorest segments of society are afflicted with epidemic levels of obesity. As far as the human animal is concerned, being able to eat high calorie food every time you feel a twinge of hunger is not normal. It may seem normal to you since that is very likely what you have known your entire life. As far as your body is concerned, it is not normal. And it is definitely not healthy. When you examine the list of diseases that are directly related or exacerbated by obesity, it is very, very long. As we discuss the feeding of the human animal, we don't intend to make you an expert on nutrition or micronutrients or nutraceuticals or phytonutrients or any of the other big words you've heard. We're going to stick to simple common sense. In all likelihood, at this age, you already have a pretty good idea what good nutrition is. So at this point let's say you've decided to pick a well respected, widely known commercial program and stick to it. Good. You're done. Combine that with the exercise we have for you and you'll do well.

Let's say you've looked at yourself and decided you're not a diet plan person. You believe you have the self discipline it takes to decide for yourself what you're going to eat and keep it within reason. That's good too. That's what I do. In that case we're going to provide you with some very simple and common sense eating guidelines to remind yourself of. Most of this you have already heard at some point. **This time you are listening, you are paying attention and you will get it.**

One of the first concepts to get your head around is embracing a little hunger. I don't mean being so desperately hungry that you get all weak and shaky. I mean not satisfying every twinge of hunger by putting food in your mouth. You will learn to recognize that when you are hungry, your body's enzymatic machinery will go to your fat cells and extract the food you need. Now a drawback to hunger is that your body will also try to consume muscle tissue for energy. Since you will be exercising, you'll push that back the other way. But that feeling of a little hunger is your reminder that things are going in the right direction. Now if the hunger gets strong enough, and it will, where some days you just want rid of it, remember, you can eat a piece of fresh fruit or a vegetable or two. Or even three. Until the craving has passed. You need not ever feel desperately hungry. You can, in a moment of compulsive consumption, eat carrots until you are ready to puke and not ingest very many calories. What you don't do is grab a bag of chips. Or slam a cheeseburger. Again, this is mostly common sense. Most of what we will discuss regarding food you already know. Or sort of know. I know that you have heard it before.

Embracing hunger. At first, a completely unpleasant thought. Until you really think about the consequences that lie in store for those who never grasp the concept of embracing hunger. Again, remember, we're not talking about feeling all weak and shaky from starvation, just a little hungry. Now when you're all in tune with the stretching and range of motion program and you're working the muscular strength and endurance components of the program and you're burning calories training, well guess what? Now it's time to eat! So what do I get to eat? The answer is. Everything! Within reason, of course. So let's start talking about what is reasonable. We already know you are going to spend part of most days feeling a little hungry. So let's start talking about the fun part of the day – the eating! You are going to get to eat one **BIG** meal a day. Not two. And not three. So every day that you have to deal with this feeling of hunger, you also get to experience a full belly. This is important on many levels. Psychologically it is important to know that your self imposed deprivation is temporary and

will be relieved in a few short hours. Additionally, you are in control of the relief you desire. When you are hungry you know you are doing well and when you eat you are absolved of guilt. Now let's talk about eating, 'cause I like to eat everything. One of the great things about exercising all the time is that you get to eat more. Yes there are limits and you will bump up against them here and there, as eating can result in weight gain or interfere with your workout schedule.

Let's say that you are able and inclined to write your own food schedule. I am. What we're going to talk about in the next segment are some very basics of nutrition, assuming you have common sense and common knowledge of nutrition. There will be a strict adherence to sound medical science, simple and easy to follow formulations, nothing fad or grandiose or Hollywood or South Beach.

I am a firm believer in eating a light breakfast. That does not mean that you have to. If you want to make your BIG meal of the day three eggs, sausage, hash browns with cheese, toast and peaches go ahead. For me, it kind of slows me down. Now, I like doing that once every month or two, just not regularly. Especially at fifty-two, I like to start the day with a bowl of high fiber cereal and a piece of fruit. It's light; it makes it easier to keep going with some proper sustenance in you. Now all of you know the difference between oatmeal and fruit loops. There are a couple of cereals that I like to eat on a regular basis in the morning and you will find yours. What you are looking for is high fiber, low fat, etc. Duh! Whether fruit is included in your cereal or not, you will likely be eating a piece of fruit along with your morning cereal. They just go together. Until you come up with a better plan, figure on fruit and cereal in the morning. It is a real hard combo to beat. Let's say you get used to a light breakfast. That is a really good start.

By the time lunch comes around you are already feeling a little hungry and you are into phase two of your eating strategy. Lunch could be your big meal of the day or it could be another light meal. For me the determining factor is what type of workout I intend for that day and when I'll get to it. We will talk about workout schedules in another segment of this book, but I like to alternate a heavy workout one day and a light workout the next. There is no way I'm doing a heavy workout after a big meal. If it's a light workout day I might make lunch my big meal of the day. In which case I'll eat pretty much whatever I want up to the point of feeling slightly full but not so stuffed that I'm immobilized. That way I can still recover for a light

evening workout. If it is a heavy workout day, then I eat something light at lunch. Just enough to take the edge off the hunger. A bowl of beans. A smallish sandwich. A big melon.

I get my major workout in from four to six-thirty. Then I'll eat my big meal that night. By now you are getting the idea. This is, of course, not rocket science. Primarily common sense. I heard a fellow say some years ago, "I used to live to eat, now I eat to live". That is not a bad philosophy. However, I like to shoot for something in the middle. I seldom let my eating or drinking get in the way of my activity schedule. On the other hand, my activity schedule allows me to enjoy eating all kinds of yummy food and drinking beer. We are going to go over a few fundamentals of nutrition next.

Back to our original question. Are you too fat? If you are, then you will suffer a period of relative deprivation until your enhanced workout schedule burns off the fat and you can get to your steady state where your activity level is burning off your consumptive level. So let's say you have achieved your desired weight and you have your workout schedule going. At this point it is important to realize that you now get to vary things up a bit, going up and down five pounds is not a problem. You can take a cruise on a ship and go a little over the top on the eating at those gorgeous spreads of food or have a lazy weekend of pampering at the spa or fishing or whatever without working out. A big part of getting down to a desirable weight is it gives you a little wiggle room as to variety in your regimen. If you get off track a little enjoying life's pleasures and indulgences, you are not far off course. Let's talk a little bit about some basic fundamentals of nutrition. Again, we're going to stick to common sense, simplicity and good science.

You need protein for muscle repair and development as well as enzymatic functions. You only need about four ounces of protein a day. That's not much. Anything above and beyond that gets burned for energy or converted to fat and stored. You need carbohydrates for energy. It is basic fuel. Complex carbohydrates like starches are better than simple carbohydrates like sugars. You need a little bit of fat as there are biochemical processes that are dependent on certain minimal amounts of the right kinds of fats. Most of the fat we eat gets stored as fuel so getting essential fatty acids is pretty easy. If you are eating quality, healthy food, it's in there. I take a daily dose of fish oil to make certain I get my omega-3's. I make sure it is metal free. There is ample evidence that these valuable oils assist

heart, brain, and joint function. You can get them from flax seed oil if you are concerned about a little fishy aftertaste. You need fiber. Fiber is the bulk volume that pushes all the crap through your system and keeps you regular. If you are sticking to a diet of a wide variety of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, seeds, and nuts, you are going to be getting a lot of fiber. Finally, you need myriad vitamins and coenzymes and minerals that are present in all types of healthy foods. If you are eating good food, you will probably get enough of all of them. If you want to be certain, you can take a multivitamin supplement. I do. Most of those vitamins go right through you and down the drain. That's fine. They're cheap and I'm confident I'm getting all my vitamins and minerals and I don't have to calculate anything. I also add a dose of glucosamine and chondroitin for my joints.

So let's get back to what you are going to be eating most of the time and we'll build sort of a food pyramid. You can't beat seeds. Seeds are almost perfect little packages of food. Many foods made from seeds suffer from being processed, so we'll keep our eye on that as we look at food. Beans are seeds. Beans are an incredible little package of complex carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. You just can't beat them. Whole grain breads are made from ground up seeds of wheat and oats and rye. Good stuff. It is the whole grain part that is very important. There are a lot of very yummy bread choices out there that have some portion of the nutritive value removed. Portuguese sweet bread, croissants, tortillas. I'm not saying they are bad for you. Just try to stick to that whole grain label as much as possible.

Nuts are seeds. Same idea. Now, nuts have a little more fat in them than grains so you will keep that in mind as you dive into a can. Still they are full of lots of good stuff. This brings us back to the concept that one type of seed is rich in this micronutrient and another is rich in that so if you are eating different and varied seeds you get a wide variety of micronutrients. Remember the old P&J sandwich? Make it with whole grain bread and real fruit preserves and you got yourself one fine sandwich my friend! You already know that fruit is good for you. Fruit is the package that the plant produced to induce animals to consume and spread the seed of the plant. Now the seed may or may not be an edible part of the fruit. You will eat the peach but not the pit. You eat a banana, seeds and all. As you already know, the fruit has just enough of the natural sugar fructose to make it taste sweet enough to eat. Which is good for you of course because you get a bunch of fiber and a few micronutrients as well as a low calorie filler all in one package. And when you eat a piece of fruit the best thing of all is that

YOU DID NOT EAT A DONUT! Don't get me wrong, I like donuts too. It's just that at fifty- two I get a lot more bananas than éclairs.

Vegetables are a very similar story with less fructose and more vitamins. So as part of your nutritional plan, you are going to try to include as many veggies as will fit. Having a ham sandwich? Pile it to the ceiling with tomato and lettuce. Try replacing the mayo with applesauce, it tastes great. Of course you started with whole grain bread. Most of your bean and soup recipes will have a lot of veggies in them. You can find a plethora of canned or dried soup and bean products in your local supermarket. You will find a lot of really good – and cheap - stuff there. Keep an eye on the sodium content. Some of them will be relatively high in sodium and you might steer away from them. It is not hard to read from the daily allowances label on the back. If you suffer from hypertension your doctor will have advised you to play close attention to your sodium intake. Another advantage to your increased workout schedule is that you can eat a little more sodium as you will be sweating it out. My blood pressure is 120/80 so I don't worry about salt very much. In fact I put salt on my tomatoes and melons.

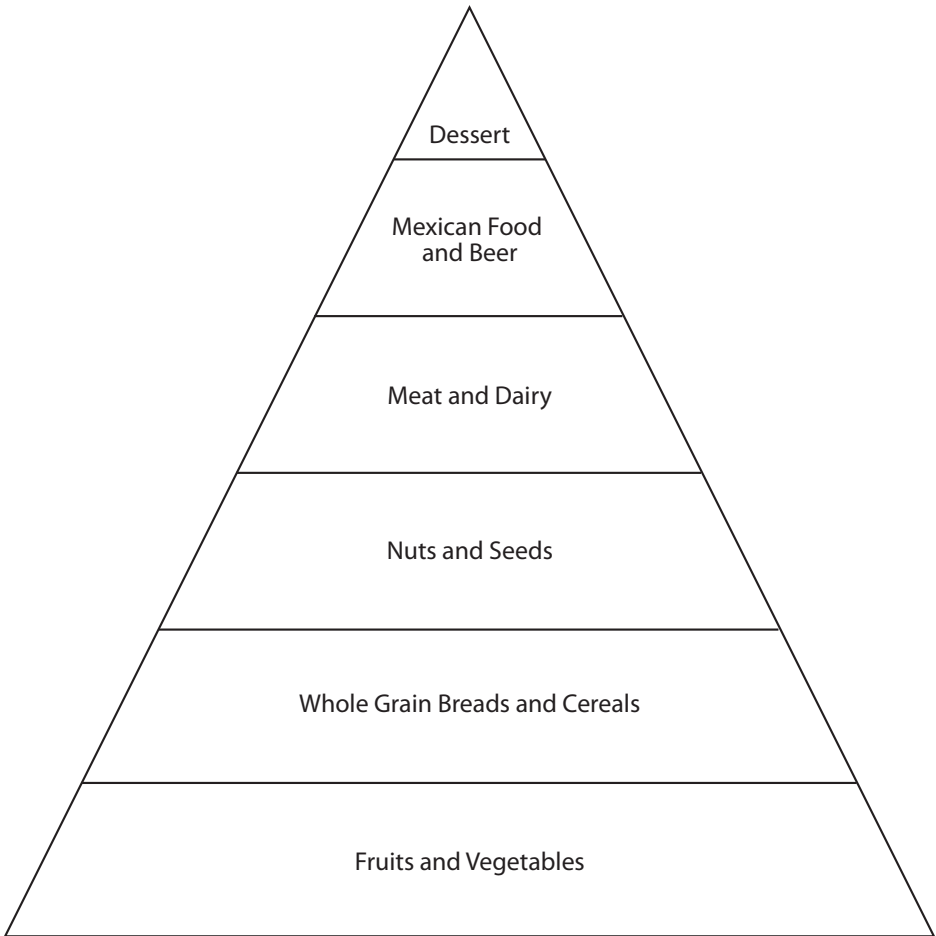
Now, what about dessert? Well, dessert is dessert. Yummy, fun, nutritionally void empty calories probably full of bad cholesterol prone to predisposing humans to obesity and disease and rolls of ugly fat, did I mention yummy and fun? You will decide how much of that pleasure fits into your plan. The same goes for alcohol. Although doctors do assign a few more beneficial attributes to wine and beer than dessert, they are in a similar boat in that they are rewards and pleasures you get to enjoy as a result of your hard work and should be enjoyed in relatively small quantities with absolutely no guilt.

It is worthy of repeating the magnitude and varying ways exercise helps your health. My cholesterol and triglyceride level just recently got on to the scale. I've been below the scale for many years now. Let me say a couple of more things about the science of nutrition. There are some very good sources of genuinely useful knowledge about nutrition. A couple of examples are the You docs, Mehmet Oz and Michael Roizen, both medical doctors. Another excellent source is Andrew Weil, MD. These men have scoured the research, actively practiced their art and science and written several outstanding books that you can dive into and learn a great deal of specifics about the myriad biochemicals that make up the science of nutrition. If you are the type of person who wishes to learn the details

of what you should and should not be eating, these gents are very good sources.

I have studied enough biochemistry to know that when it comes to food, I just don't want to try that hard. Since my training helps keep my lab values in good shape, I don't have to scrutinize every morsel that crosses my lips. I like to stick to a simple common sense approach. I know (as do you) what is healthy food and what is junk food. So I eat healthy food most of the time and I enjoy a little junk food occasionally. Just to say I did, I'm going to give you two lists. The first list is a bunch of good words to find on your food packages and nutraceutical supplement labels: HDL, anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory, turmeric, lycopene, lutein, tocopherols, Co-Q-10, flavonoids, proanthocyanids, alpha-lipoic acid, ginger, DHEA, artichoke, reishi, ginseng, ginkgo biloba, astragalus, silymarin, carotenoids, anthocyanins, omega-3, polyphenols, grass fed meat, extra virgin olive oil, glucosamine, and chondroitin. The list of bad words you want to minimize in your food are trans fat, artificial, LDL, triglycerides, omega-6, partially hydrogenated, grain fed meat, and shortening. So there you are. With all the information there is to glean from this book we've spent maybe five pages on nutrition. It is not because it lacks importance. It is just that it need not be complicated.

You can buy a hundred diet books and spend a thousand hours and confuse yourself into a convoluted knot about nutrition and you will be no farther along than if you follow the basic simple principles outlined here. In all likelihood you would be worse off if you start down the path on some idiot diet plan that compels you to eat all fat or no carbohydrates or some other unsustainable baloney. By this age you know that diets do not work. You may well lose weight, but it does not last. The only unnatural concept you need to embrace and apply your intellect to is the value of self-imposed hunger. Again, there is nothing that bad about mild and temporary periods of hunger. You are going to get really good at that in a short amount of time, similarly to any other strategy you have learned. You are in control, it is not fanatically regimented, and if you miss a few days you just get back on the wagon. Now if I intended to sell you on some complicated and involved program that required that you stick to some regimented schedule of ingesting 86 grams of this and 250mgs of that every fourteen hours and required that you get away from the fundamental precepts of food I could probably write another fifty pages on the subject. But there is no need for that. Most of what you need to do you already know. Some of what you need to change you already know.



Brian's Food Pyramid