

Chapter 12

Managing the Body and Physical Stress

*"To keep the body in good health is a duty ...
otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind
strong and clear."*

~ Buddha, founder of Buddhism

A young lady walked into my office one day presenting symptoms of burnout, insomnia, low energy, and overall depression. I recognized right away that her symptoms were stemming from a deeper problem connected to adrenal fatigue, which is often a result of poor rest/recovery cycles. She is a workaholic with strong perfectionistic traits that place a tremendous amount of undue pressure on her everyday life and work. I first started her on a healthy nutrition program, replete with fruits and vegetables. I also instructed her to eat small meals and snacks every three hours to regulate blood sugar; this would help her to improve her energy levels, overall.

Her habits around sleep also needed to change. She would often work on the computer right up to bedtime, which prevented her from getting quality sleep. I coached her on creating a "shut-down" protocol, which included restful, non-technology-related activities. This protocol would begin the process of inducing rest, which would then help her fall asleep and acquire as much

recovery as possible each night. (What she didn't understand was that her mind needed time to "unwind" before her body could rest adequately.) We agreed that she would engage in this protocol before bed each night.

After several weeks of coaching, and accountability with me and her loving husband, she began to show signs of increased energy and sleep quality. But, it took her nearly half a year to correct the presenting symptoms and to return to her normal pre-fatigue condition.

When the mind and body experience a long enough period of time without proper recovery, breakdown is inevitable. Our bodies are like any machine: they require proper fuel and operating conditions, as well as regular and ongoing maintenance.

As I travel the country, speaking and coaching, I see that many people are dealing with ailments such as adrenal fatigue, or its closely related cousin - chronic fatigue. Most of us are running fast, every day, without regular and sufficient recovery. This will only lead to burnout as well as other physical illness and disease. Small modifications to diet and lifestyle, including rest/recovery periods, will not reverse adrenal fatigue; a wholesale life change is needed.

Stress Manifestations: Immunity, Inflammation, and Infection

Unprocessed stress of any kind eventually manifests in physical symptoms. These symptoms generally present in one or more of three primary areas: immunity, inflammation, and infection - the three "I's."

Prolonged stress without relief and recovery releases toxins into the cells of our body. When the toxicity of our body reaches a certain level of concentration, our immune system becomes compromised, and germs break through our physical force field of protection. This can result in inflammation that targets previously weakened bodily organs or systems.

Prolonged inflammation can lead to infection in the body that, if not treated properly, can lead to serious and debilitating health problems and even death. Simply treating the infection

with antibiotics is not enough. The symptoms might go away for a while, but unless we first detoxify our body from the harmful stress that caused the original problem, the infection will eventually return, often stronger than before. Eliminating harmful toxic build-up in the body brought on by negative stress is key to avoiding a compromised immune system, thus preventing everything from inflammation to infection and the common cold,¹¹ which can cripple our health, happiness, and productivity.

We live in an over-medicated society. Medical science as a whole has been a great boon to humanity, but our modern society has become too dependent on medicine. We think we can fix every health problem with a pill or surgery. A better solution for preventing health problems is to ensure that we get adequate nutrition, exercise, hydration, and rest and participate in recovery cycles and other practices for mastery over stress on a daily basis.

Adequate Nutrition

In spite of all the advances in modern medicine and health knowledge, Americans today are more overweight and less healthy than at any other time in our history. How can this be? Because we don't know what or how to eat!

Every week a new study exposes the dangers of eating a certain kind of food. The very next week another study comes out contradicting the first one. Add to this all the experts touting new miracle diets or pills, and the result is general confusion regarding healthy eating. And even when we know what and how to eat properly, many of us don't do it because we either don't have the time or the money. Life is too fast. Eating on the run is a guaranteed stress builder and a certain recipe for nutritional and physical health disasters.

As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, our society has programmed us to adopt eating habits that impede optimal health. How many meals

¹¹ Cohen, Sheldon, and Williamson "Stress and infectious disease in humans." *Psychological Bulletin* 109 (1991): 5-24. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.109.1.5.

do you think you should eat every day: two, three, four, or more? If you are like most people, you probably answered three, because that is what our society has taught us. But that is wrong.

What if I told you that we should eat five or six times a day? That it is optimal for nutritional health. Why? Because eating five or six times a day (or approximately every three hours) coincides with our body's cycle for regulating blood sugar levels. Glycemic levels oscillate in three-hour cycles, so food consumption should be compatible with this. Our long digestive tract is better designed to handle five or six small meals and snacks throughout the day, rather than two or three large meals consumed at longer intervals.

Digestion raises the level of blood sugar, the body's fuel and energy source. In response to this rise in the sugar level, the pancreas releases insulin, which aids in the transfer of glucose and amino acids from the bloodstream into muscles and other tissues. As this transfer takes place, our blood sugar level decreases again. The entire process normally takes three hours. Every three hours, our bodies are ready to receive another supply of fuel. It is like throwing logs on a fire at regular intervals to keep it burning.

This is why people with diabetes must take care to eat something every three hours. Their system is already out of whack because their pancreas either does not produce enough insulin, or, in the case of type 2 diabetes, the cells do not respond to the insulin to regulate their glucose levels properly. For these people, a controlled diet and eating schedule assumes even greater importance. But all of us have a three-hour glycolic oscillation cycle. We all need to eat at three-hour intervals for maximum health, alertness, and performance.

If our eating schedule is out of phase with our glycolic cycle, our bodies and our minds will be less efficient. Our mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical capacities will be affected. Our minds will wander, and we will find it hard to concentrate on the task at hand. Emotionally, we will become apathetic. Spiritually, we will lose sight of our purpose. And physically, we will lack the energy to do the things we need to do.

Common sense tells us that if we increase the frequency of our eating, we should then decrease the size of our meals. Eating

smaller portions is good advice no matter how often we eat. Most people who eat only two or three meals a day eat more than they should at each meal. Eating large portions three times a day does not compensate for smaller portions six times a day.

Our glycolic cycle does not work that way. Remember, the main purpose for eating is to keep our bodies fueled for maximum efficiency during every three-hour cycle. Consuming more food than we can process during each cycle simply drains our energy and adds to our waistline. Our bodies basically shut down to focus all their energy on digestion. Why do you think you feel sleepy after a big meal?

Peak performers in every field know better than to eat a heavy meal before a game, a performance, or a meeting. If they do, their efficiency and performance suffers. It's the same way for all of us: heavy meals limit our performance, no matter what we are doing.

The ideal arrangement would be three small meals a day interspersed with three light snacks. By "small" I mean 500- to 800-calorie meals (depending on how many calories are needed to sustain your ideal body weight) that balance complex carbohydrates and proteins. This is for an average person; athletes typically require more. A light snack would be around 200-250 calories. Be careful not to fall into the calorie-counting trap. Calories do make a difference, but the point here is to change our eating habits to eat smaller quantities more often.

Eating lighter and more often helps us be light and lean and full of energy throughout the day. It keeps our metabolism burning faster, even when we are asleep. Our metabolism naturally slows down as we age, but eating smaller portions more frequently will speed it up again. And speeding up our metabolism burns fat.

One key to good nutrition is eating a good breakfast. Many people skip breakfast because they feel they don't have the time or they don't like to eat early in the day. They are cheating themselves out of high energy levels and the opportunity for peak performance. Conclusive studies have shown that children who eat breakfast every day consistently perform better in school than children who do not eat breakfast. Studies also show that peak levels of brain function occur in morning hours; so skipping breakfast actually hurts our performance.

Eating a good breakfast every day is also more important for adults because of our naturally slower metabolism. Because we are literally “breaking fast” after a night with no food, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. So, whatever you do, don’t skip breakfast! Get some fuel into your system first thing in the morning.

Another way to improve our general nutrition is to reduce our consumption of unhealthy fats and simple sugars. The irony is that during the 1990s, health-conscious Americans went on the no-fat or low-fat diet frenzy in an effort to lose weight. During that same decade, the per capita obesity rate for Americans actually increased by 15-20%!

What happened? Food companies provided low-fat and no-fat food to meet the public demand, but to restore the taste lost by removing the fat, they doubled or even tripled the sugar content of those foods. It was a trade-off that benefited no one except the food companies and those in the medical and pharmaceutical industries that now have to attend to the myriad of diseases caused by this unskillful move.

Many Americans reduced their fat intake significantly, but increased their consumption of simple sugars by as much as 300%! Our bodies store any unused carbohydrates (sugars) as fat. It is no surprise, then, that so many Americans got fatter eating fat-free foods. But our bodies need healthy fats, such as those found in avocado, nuts, and seeds; so eliminating ALL fats is *not* the way to go. They also need other critical components, which we will take a look at now.

Eating for Energy and Nutrient Balance

My wife, Marsha Pitt Lyles, is a fitness trainer; she has been dancing for nearly her entire life. She has appeared in movies and commercials and was crowned *Miss Black Ontario*, *Miss Dance of Canada*, and was runner up for *Miss Dance America*. She also won the coveted Canadian *Harry Jerome Award for the Arts* and was then invited to Parliament for recognition. Professionally, Marsha cheered for the NBA Toronto Raptors basketball team and the CFL Hamilton Tiger-Cats Football team. She was also an original cast member in

Disney's "The Lion King" in Toronto, and became the stand-in for Halle Barry in *X-Men*. She later created a *Topology* series featured in the *New York Times* "Arts and Leisure" section. Her latest work, *My Dance Body "Ballet Mechanics,"* was spun out of years of personal training and time as a certified nutrition coach.

Marsha is not only my wife, but an amazing person, and you can see she has plenty of experience in fitness and nutrition. So when she talks, I listen! Because of her expertise, I asked her to contribute additional vital energy related to food, nutrition, and exercise here. I urge you to pay attention closely to this section. As I travel the nation delivering programs, my observation is that Americans sorely underestimate the importance of food, nutrition, and exercise as it relates to both performance and stress. With nearly 70% of all American adults overweight,¹² we have collectively created heavy gravity for ourselves in this area, and are in great need of inspired change. You've got to know that you *cannot* thrive in life or crack the stress code without giving your body all that it needs, which is why we are dedicating an entire chapter to this topic. These bodies we are walking around in are the only ones we've got; take a moment to reflect on its importance to you so that you can regain your inspiration to make the changes that are needed.

The upcoming discussion on nutrition, heart rate value (HRV), and exercise, including practical fitness, are Marsha speaking; I thought you should have the information directly from her. I have edited her commentary to relate this topic to the key topic at hand of cracking the stress code. To support you, Marsha has also contributed a complete 7-Day *My Dance Body* meal plan in Appendix A of this book, as well as some sample recipes in Appendix B, and suggestions from her about the best food choices when your only choice is a fast food restaurant. For more information on her work, visit www.mydancebody.com.

¹² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: *National Health Interview Survey*, 2010. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Vital and Health Statistics 10 (2012). Accessed from: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_252.pdf

Everything in life needs energy to survive; cars need gas, plants need sunlight, humans need macronutrients – carbohydrates, proteins, and fats – and micronutrients – vitamins and minerals. If we are careless with the foods that we take in to nourish our body, it will naturally have a great effect on us, our mood, our energy, and our performance as a whole. I'm going to limit my discussion for this book to *macronutrients*, as when we achieve the proper amounts of macronutrients through a whole-food, predominantly plant-based diet, we are likely to get all the micronutrients we need. Macronutrients were named this because we need these nutrients in *large* amounts in order to properly function. Let's take a look at each one individually.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates should comprise the largest part of our diet, about 65%, but you have to eat the *right* kind of carbohydrates – *complex carbohydrates*. Stay away from what's called simple carbohydrates like refined white sugar, cookies, cakes, and white breads. Simple "carbs" elevate blood sugar, which increases blood glucose levels and causes the body to produce excess amounts of insulin, which will cause you to store fat. Simple carbs also only provide short-term bursts of energy – only to rapidly drop energy levels, which can result in a slump that can negatively affect your mood.

Instead, eat complex carbohydrates like whole grains, beans, legumes, and vegetables. These forms of carbohydrates are high in fiber, which will keep you fuller for longer. While fruits are considered a simple carbohydrate, they are full of fiber as well as contain vast amounts of vitamins that are excellent for your health, so these are recommended. Stay away from fruit juices and dried fruit, which are concentrated forms of sugar; they also can contain added sugar. Furthermore, since all the water has been taken out of the dried varieties of fruit, one cup of raisins will contain much more sugar than one cup of grapes, due to the water content.

Milk is also a simple carbohydrate. Some people have the enzyme in their body that can digest lactose (milk) called lactase and some people don't. The ones who can't digest milk are then

lactose intolerant. If you love milk, limit it to two cups of skim milk per day. There are many tasty milk substitutes like almond milk, if you do have a tolerance issue. Deprivation is what we strive to stay away from; otherwise, it can cause you to binge eat, leading to weight gain. If you don't like milk in any form, you can get plenty of calcium from dark green leafy vegetables, other vegetables such as broccoli rabe, sardines, sesame seeds, and soybeans, as well as fruits like kiwis, oranges, and tangerines.

Since food affect moods, it is helpful to mention some key mood aspects for carbohydrates. For example, carbohydrates affect the release of serotonin, the brain chemical most associated with mood elevation. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology website, serotonin acts as a natural tranquilizer and reduces irritability.¹³ In another study by researchers from Arizona State University, a very low carbohydrate diet was found to enhance fatigue and reduce the desire to exercise in overweight adults, after just two weeks.¹⁴ If that's not enough to convince you to eat more complex carbohydrates, I don't know what is.

Proteins

Protein is another macronutrient that is important to the body. Where carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy, proteins are its building blocks. Protein is important for almost every cell function, and it is needed to build strong and lean muscle mass. Muscle mass is important to our body, because for every pound of lean muscle mass, the body burns 30 to 50 calories *extra* each day. So, if you have 100 pounds of lean muscle, your body will burn an extra 300-

¹³ Thomson, Elizabeth A. MIT News, "Carbs are essential for effective dieting and good mood, Wurtman says." Feb 20, 2004. Accessed August 1, 2015 from <http://newsoffice.mit.edu/2004/carbs>

¹⁴ White, Andrea M., et al. "Blood ketones are directly related to fatigue and perceived effort during exercise in overweight adults adhering to low-carbohydrate diets for weight loss: a pilot study." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 107 (2007): 1792-1796. doi: 10.1016/j.jada.2007.07.009.

500 calories each day! If you're lacking in protein intake, your body will respond with reduced muscle mass, which gives the body a flabby, saggy appearance. It also results in a lowered metabolism that leads to weight gain.

A lack of protein will also result in a "foggy" brain, since protein intake helps slow down the time release of carbohydrates, which are the body's main source of energy.¹⁵ Protein allows the brain to get a steady stream of energy. Plus, if the body doesn't have protein to help the time release of carbohydrates, blood sugar will slide up too quickly and then crash, leaving you feeling weak and craving sweets. The repeated rise and fall of blood sugar causes both weight gain and any number of diseases.

Sources of protein are meat, fish, poultry, cheese, eggs, yogurt, and milk, as well as grains, vegetables, nuts, and beans. Animal sources are considered the best sources of protein by the majority of nutritionists because they contain *all* nine essential amino acids. (There are 20 amino acids that the body must have to function, of which nine cannot be synthesized by the body on its own. Therefore, these nine are called essential amino acids, as they must be obtained from our diet.)

Animal protein has all nine of the essential amino acids, whereas plant proteins like vegetables, grains, nuts, beans, seeds, peas, and corn do not. Therefore, vegetarians must get a wide range of plant proteins in order to meet their protein requirement. This is not difficult for healthy vegetarians. However, they improve their chances for adequate protein levels by utilizing certain food combinations. For example, when they eat grains with legumes, such as rice with beans, or a peanut butter sandwich on whole wheat bread, or a spinach salad with sesame seeds and almond salad dressing, they will be getting a complete protein in that meal.

While animal proteins may still be considered the best sources of protein, there are vast problems to be considered related to

¹⁵ Gannon, Mary C., et al. "The insulin and glucose responses to meals of glucose plus various proteins in type II diabetic subjects." *Metabolism* 37 (1988): 1081-1088. doi: 10.1016/0026-0495(88)90072-8.

the consumption of animals: Animal products have more fat, and they are more difficult to digest than plant-based foods because the human body does not contain all of the necessary enzymes to process these foods. This results in undigested proteins entering the bloodstream, which can lead to atherosclerosis and other heart-related issues. Numerous studies also demonstrate that the overconsumption of meat and dairy products is linked to weight gain, as well as all lifestyle diseases, including heart and kidney disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, and more.

There are many other issues related to animal consumption that are deleterious to humans and the planet at large, including pathogens such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, and others, noxious additives, such as dyes, hormones, antibiotics, and pesticides, as well as unsanitary processing conditions. Plus, meat production contributes more to global warming than automobiles!¹⁶ If you're going to eat meat, it is necessary only to consume small amounts of organic products. This does not eliminate the above noted problems, but ensures fewer additives.

As an additional note, in February of this year (2015), the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee forwarded a report stating that a predominantly vegetarian diet (it included fish) was the only healthy and sustainable diet based on all evaluated factors, including health, nutrition, and environmental impact.¹⁷ They noted that a significant reduction or elimination of meat and dairy products is imperative to address America's growing problem with the development of lifestyle diseases, and the enormous

¹⁶ "Livestock's long shadow: Environmental issues and options." UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2006. Accessed on March 3, 2015 from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM>

¹⁷ US Department of Health and Human Services and US Department of Agriculture (HHS/USDA). *Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee*. February 2015. Accessed from <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/pdfs/scientific-report-of-the-2015-dietary-guidelines-advisory-committee.pdf>

pollution associated with animal agriculture. The American Dietetic Association now says that a sound vegetarian diet with a wide variety of foods provides all the nutrients needed by the body.¹⁸ Unlike animal foods, our bodies are fully able to digest plant foods, while receiving all the important nutrients. The bottom line - it is wise on many levels, health and performance included, that our diet be predominantly plant-based.

Fats

The last macronutrient that the body needs for survival is fat. Like carbohydrates, fats are another food group that often gets eliminated from our diets only to cause you to binge eat. Fats are what keep you satiated. They are also what give you that "finger-licking good feeling," and create - along with a number of other factors - what they call "mouth feel," which is just that - how good that food tastes and feels when it's in your mouth.

When manufacturers substitute fats with chemicals, including preservatives, to achieve "reduced fat" products, you end up with a "food" that leaves you feeling hungry and unsatisfied. Remember, the more processed the "food" is, the less it is an actual food. Chemicals and preservatives are just bad for your general health; they are not foods. So, in general, it is best to eat a whole foods diet.

However, you have to eat the good fat. So what is *good* fat and what is *bad* fat? Well there are four major categories of fats - monounsaturated fat, polyunsaturated fat, saturated fat, and trans fat. The first two fats, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, are the good fats. Good fats, like those in avocado, fish, nuts, and eggs, are important as they actually help our body to burn fat. Fats also provide energy, protect the organs, maintain cell membranes, and help the body absorb and process nutrients. A lack of fat in

¹⁸ "Vegetarian Diets Can Help Prevent Chronic Diseases, American Dietetic Association Says," *Science Daily*.(Jul 3, 2009). Accessed on March 14, 2015 from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/07/090701103002.htm>

the diet can leave you with dry hair and skin. And studies have shown that a lack of omega-3 fatty acids like those found in salmon, mackerel, and sardines is associated with depression and impulsive behavior, which can lead to suicide, violence, and accidents.¹⁹

Examples of monounsaturated fats are olive, peanut, canola, sesame, and sunflower oils; macadamia nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios, and Brazil nuts, almonds and almond butter, peanuts and peanut butter, as well as cashew butter; seeds like pumpkin, flaxseed, sesame, and sunflower; fish like herring, salmon, and halibut, and cheeses like parmesan, cream cheese, Roquefort, Muenster, and Monterey Jack. Other terrific sources are avocados and black and green olives.

For polyunsaturated fats, there are two types: Omega-3 and Omega-6. Omega-3 examples (there are three types of omega-3): ALA (found in plant oils like flaxseed oil, hemp oil, and walnuts), EPA, and DHA found in marine oils (like fish oil and egg oil), black beans, Brussels sprouts, canola oil, cauliflower, flaxseeds, herring, kidney beans, pasture-raised meats, salmon, sardines, shrimp, soybean oil, soybeans, tofu, trout, walnuts, wild rice, and winter squash.

Examples of omega-6 polyunsaturated fats are: acai berries, avocado, blackcurrant seed oil, borage oil, canola oil, cashews, cereals, coconut, corn oil, cottonseed oil, durum wheat, eggs, evening primrose oil, flax, hemp oil, linseed oil, nuts, pecans, pine nuts, poultry, pumpkin seeds, rapeseed, safflower oil, soybean oil, spirulina, sunflower seed oil, walnuts, and whole-grain breads.

The last two fats are the bad fats. Examples of saturated fats are: high-fat cuts of meat (beef, lamb, pork), chicken with skin, whole-fat dairy products (milk and cream), butter, cheese, ice cream, palm and coconut oil, and lard. Examples of trans fats are: cookies, pastries, donuts, packaged snack foods (microwave popcorn,

¹⁹ Conklin, Sarah M., et al. "Serum omega-3 fatty acids are associated with variation in mood, personality and behavior in hypercholesterolemic community volunteers." *Psychiatry Research* 152 (2007):1-10. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2006.10.006.

crackers, chips), vegetable shortening, fried foods (French fries, fried chicken, chicken nuggets, breaded fish), and candy bars.

There have been some studies that say that the consumption of saturated fats doesn't increase the incidence of cardiovascular disease compared to people who eat less.²⁰ I don't believe that saturated fats are bad, but I do believe that if you eat a diet high in saturated fat and high in refined carbohydrates, you will be at risk for obesity and lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes.

I believe that you should eat real, organic butter, where the ingredients say organic cream and or salt. You will enjoy that one piece of whole wheat toast much more with full-fat butter, because you will feel satisfied and you will end up using less full-fat butter than you would the "reduced-fat" butter, which will leave you hungry. The majority of your fats should be unsaturated.

Avoid all fried foods like French fries, doughnuts, deep-fried fast foods, margarine, vegetable shortening, as well as baked goods like cookies, cakes, and pastries, and processed snack foods like crackers and microwave popcorn. Of course, you can have them every once in a (rare) while, but when you eat a well-balanced diet without leaving out any of the food groups, you will be less inclined to crave these foods.

While it is ideal to avoid fast-food restaurants and their foods at all costs, it may not be easy, especially if you do a lot of traveling for your work. Many grocery stores today have deli counters with pre-made foods, and take-out fare with healthier choices than fast-food restaurants. In fact, some stores like Fresh Market and Whole Foods even have salad bars. So consider these first. If you must eat at a fast-food restaurant out of necessity, there are some better

²⁰ Siri-Tarino, Patty W., et al. "Meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies evaluating the association of saturated fat with cardiovascular disease." *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 91 (2010): 535-546. doi: 10.3945/ajcn.2009.27725.

Chowdhury, R., et al. "Association of Dietary, Circulating, and Supplement Fatty Acids With Coronary Risk: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 160 (2014): 398-406. doi: 10.7326/M13-1788.

choices compared to the standard fare that they offer. As a part of my *My Dance Body* program, I provide a menu of best choices from all of the major restaurants. You will find them in Appendix C in the back of the book.

Eat mostly whole foods, and in moderation. When you do that, you will have more energy to exercise, your mood will be better, and you will be less prone to cheat your new healthy eating habits as badly, because there's no deprivation.

The Correct Formula for Getting the Results You Want

On occasion, a person can eat well, exercise three to five times a week, and be completely disappointed at the end of each month with either weight gain or no weight loss. Then, the person might start to wonder: "Is it my time of the month?" (ladies) "Is it because I'm gaining muscle and it's heavier than fat?" "Maybe my muscles are retaining water from being torn down, so I'm not losing any weight?"

Managing your stress levels, which are directly linked to hormone levels, is the key to your weight loss success. Let's say that you want to lose 20 pounds. Where do you start? You know what you want to accomplish, but do you know how to go about accomplishing it, and where does the motivation come from? Many times people suggest that you start with a "cleanse." I don't have a problem, in general, with cleansing, but there is one challenge they do present.

You've been living your life, perhaps with a lot of caffeine, sugar, white flour, and saturated fats. Then you decide to do a cleanse, which cuts out all of what I just mentioned as well as half of the food groups (no dairy, no starches, etc.). Your stress level heightens, for sure. Additionally, you are typically advised not to work out while on the cleanse, because your food intake has been limited so severely that you wouldn't necessarily have the energy to work out. If you do manage to finish the cleanse, you will have dropped some water weight and likely expelled a few toxins. That can be a motivator. But you can't live on a cleanse for any length of

time, so now what do you do? Well, if you're like most people, you just start eating whatever you want, because you've been hungry from eating so little, and feeling emotionally deprived. Then you gain back every pound of water weight that you just lost. So there is even more stress: You think you've failed, you feel disappointed, exhausted, bloated, and you're heavier than when you first started! No wonder cleanses, like dieting, are heavy forms of gravity.

What I suggest to people is to get off that vicious yo-yo dieting and/or cleansing cycle, and just make a commitment to eat well. When you start feeding your body what it truly needs - fresh, organic whole foods, with plenty of vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and grains - and eliminating all the processed foods (which are all junk foods), your body will naturally return to its normal weight. Then, there is no more fighting over a diet, or fighting the stress of one. As we know now, when you shift gravity into inspired change, as Terry has described previously, you are on the high road to success. So how can we create a positive change in our body?

Step 1: Assessment

First, you need to know what is currently happening in your body. Besides knowing where your heart rate rests, your body mass index (BMI), your body fat percentage, how many calories you are taking in, and how many you expend on a daily basis, you must measure your work/rest cycles, meaning how much and how hard you work/workout and how well you sufficiently recover. Important to this is how many hours you sleep and how well you recover during sleep. As Terry presented earlier in the book, sleep and rest are two entirely different matters; sleep is physical recovery, rest is spiritual recovery - both are necessary for weight management. How many times have you slept all night and woke up tired? Or how many times have you taken a cat nap and felt like you slept all night? That's the difference between sleep and rest recovery.

Also, identify *all* of the factors that you believe have prevented you from staying with a previous plan or reaching your weight loss goal - whether work or relationship stress, addiction, etc. Identifying *all* of the factors that influence what you eat and when is essential for creating a plan that will work.

Step 2: Diagnosis

Diagnosis is the step where we identify the specific challenges that you are facing and where the stress leakage may originate. Once you've answered all the questions in Step 1, it is recommended that you sit with a nutritionist to get a sense of the realities of your current eating plan.

If you need to, keep a sleep and rest log for a week with notes about your energy levels. Ideally, it will include the foods you ate and when. It is very easy to determine where diet-related stress may be occurring when we keep a record of results. If you eat a heavy meal later in the day, which is not recommended, your sleep will be affected and you will wake up sluggish. Note this, so that when you sit down at the end of the week you will be prepared to develop a specific action plan for yourself. Until you know how physically stressed you are - for example, if you are "crashing" when you sleep - as opposed to actually recovering when you sleep, etc., you won't know what to change.

Lastly, if you have identified an eating disorder, or have other mental and emotional challenges linked to food, you will benefit from support from a therapist or coach.

Step 3: Prescription

Once you've completed steps 1 and 2, you are ready to create and implement a plan of action that will address a portion or all of the points you noted in Step 2. Now you are closer to being on the path to achieving your goal, whether it's weight loss, increased energy, healthier eating, better rest, or less stress. Then, as Terry will explain in the upcoming chapter, to actually reach the goal, you've got to consistently practice MESP alignment. Alignment helps you convert stress, which results in energy leakage, into new rituals through conscious action.

As Terry noted at the beginning of this section, I have provided additional menu information, which is presented in the Appendices. Please take a look at these suggestions, as they will support you in your nutritional goals, or visit mydancebody.com.

Measuring Stress Recovery

How do you measure your stress and recovery activity levels? The only true way to prove whether you are really recovering is to look inside your body to measure your activity blood pressure rate, otherwise known as your *heart rate variability* (HRV). HRV is a measurement system that can be used to determine overall health and performance. Terry and I see this as being used eventually by insurance companies to monitor and predict overall health and wellness, and the impact on costs, treatment, and prevention.

HRV refers to the beat-by-beat changes in the heart. When it's measured while performing daily activities, whether at work or at home, it is an accurate way to define how well you are processing stress. When you combine this stress information, then, with a sound nutrition and exercise program, you have the answer to weight loss, or rather weight maintenance, success.

I train athletes to relate to their mind/body capacities like they would a machine; I call this human engineering. Why do athletes and celebrities stay so fit? Are their bodies just different than ours? No, they just have access to cutting-edge technologies that electronically tell them where their *personal* "sweet spot" is. All they have to do then is to work with a personal trainer to apply the workouts that match it.

Yes, these technologies are pricey. But what if you could have access to them without the hefty price tag? Well, you actually do; it's the Heart Rate Variability (HRV) measurement that I spoke about above, which tells you the psychological and physiological stress (and fatigue) that you are experiencing during times of rest, work, exercise, and leisure.

Why is this important, and how can HRV help you with your health goals? You see, stress and fatigue are two of the key factors why people cannot lose weight, regardless of how sound their diet and exercise plan is. The HRV gives you accurate information about your stress/recovery response, as well as the intensity of specific activities, regardless of the activity. For example, it will let you know how *well* you are exercising, aerobically, or how well you are resting, when you say you are resting. The results will indicate if you are

overreaching or expending too much effort in your workouts; it will also tell you if you are highly improving, improving, or maintaining fitness levels, or simply recovering, which also means no gain in terms of fitness level. Essentially, it will let you know if your perceptions of your physical efforts, whether work or rest, match the realities of it. This is called the Training Effect (TE). With HRV, there is no more mystery around the rest/recovery cycle.

You can begin to see how this information is essential for an athlete to reach superior fitness levels, but also for the average American who is struggling with energy. Not only can HR help you lose weight and keep it off for good, it can help you assess all your activities and show you where adjustments need to be made. Terry said earlier in the book that cracking the stress code is comprised of two umbrella issues: 1 - You've got to learn how to see stress as good. 2 - You've got to master alignment, which means you need all 4 aspects - mental, emotional, spiritual, *and* physical firing all pistons, so to speak. You can more easily reach your weight loss goal, or any goal for this matter, in a less stressed way with awareness of HRV, since HRV will tell you where you are experiencing stress and not recovering properly. There is more information about HRV and how it can help you create greater health and fitness on my website, www.mydancebody.com.

Accelerator and Brake Pedal

Smart and healthy nutrition boils down to striking the proper balance between good sources of proteins, carbohydrates, and good fats, the three basic categories of nutrients. Nutrients from these foods link up with specific chemicals in our blood, which then are carried to the brain to perform their specific tasks. Proteins speed up our brain, and carbohydrates slow it down, as do accelerator and brake pedals in an automobile. Since our brain chemistry affects every dimension of our being, it is critically important that our diet consists of the best ratio of protein, carbohydrate, and fat intake in such a way as to ensure optimal brain function.

Protein, the "accelerator," gives us alertness by speeding up brain transmission. During digestion, chains of amino acids

that comprise proteins are extracted from our food and passed into the bloodstream. Tyrosine, a specific amino acid in the blood, is converted into the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine, stimulants that bring alertness to the brain. Alertness is important for proper brain function, but too much alertness is unhealthy. Dopamine and norepinephrine in excess amounts can cause distractibility, hyperactivity, anxiety, and sometimes paranoia. People with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have a defect in their dopamine transporters, which can cause them to overproduce these chemicals.

How do people with abnormally high levels of these chemicals bring them under control naturally? One way is by abstaining from high levels of protein consumption while increasing consumption of complex carbohydrates. This means moderating or restricting one's intake of high-protein foods such as meat, fish, nuts, cheese, and eggs. Additionally, people who suffer from ADD or ADHD - and all of us for this matter - should get plenty of exercise, which regulates hormone production.

Complex carbohydrates decelerate the brain; they are the brain's "brake pedal." It's important to distinguish between complex ("good") carbohydrates and simple ("bad") carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates consist of fruits and vegetables, whole grain and multi-grain breads such as wheat, rye, and pumpernickel, "dark" rice such as wild or long-grain brown rice, and alternative pastas such as buckwheat noodles and bulgur wheat.

Simple carbohydrates include all sugars, potato chips, ice cream, candy, pastry, cookies, pies, cakes, fried foods, as well as "white" bread, rice, or pasta. These are less nutritious because they convert rapidly to sugar in the blood, significantly increasing the glycemic index. In any healthy diet, simple carbohydrates should be consumed infrequently, as they offer little to no nutritional value and lead to cravings and excessive food consumption.

Complex carbohydrates, on the other hand, are the kind we need continually and in abundance for body fuel, good nutrition, and to balance out the protein "accelerator." When carbohydrates pass into our bloodstream, an amino acid called tryptophan

converts them to serotonin, a brain chemical that helps us feel relaxed, calm, and peaceful. One cause of depression is insufficient levels of serotonin. Antidepressant drugs, or serotonin reuptake inhibitors, increase serotonin levels in the brain, but like all drugs they have side effects. Best then to use "nature's antidepressants" – complex carbohydrates!

The diet of the average American is too high in simple carbohydrates and too low in complex carbohydrates. This is probably the single greatest factor in the obesity epidemic in our country today. Our body craves complex carbohydrates; it is how our system is designed. If we try to satisfy that craving with simple carbohydrates, all we succeed in doing is tricking our body into feeling satisfied without giving it the nourishment it needs.

Consider chocolate, for example. Many people, especially women, insist that they have a chocolate craving or even a chocolate addiction. While this may seem very real to them, it is a deception. Chocolate seems to satisfy because, as a simple carbohydrate, it is metabolized rapidly and gives a quick "high." Chocolate, therefore, easily becomes a comfort food.

I often advise clients that if they feel they must eat chocolate, then eat dark chocolate, and in moderation. Dark chocolate contains flavonoids that help strengthen the immune system. Satisfy the body's need with a complex carbohydrate, such as a piece of fruit, and then, as a treat, enjoy a little bit of chocolate.

In all things nutritional, as with chocolate, moderation is the key! A proper ratio of complex carbohydrates, protein, and fat is essential. Consult a nutritionist or dietitian to determine the best program for you. For best results, eat protein in the early part of the day; proteins help us be alert and run on all cylinders. At the same time, we should balance our protein intake with complex carbohydrates throughout the day, to keep those alertness chemicals from shifting our system into "afterburner" mode until we "flame out."

For this same reason, we should avoid eating protein just before bedtime. Even if we fall right to sleep, the protein will keep our brain active, preventing us from resting as completely as we should. Eating complex carbohydrates, on the other hand, will slow

our brain down, calm us, and help us prepare for a good night's sleep. Even then, we should not eat immediately before going to bed, but allow 60-90 minutes for digestion.

Dieting with the Eyes

Isn't it ironic that over the past few decades Americans have been on a diet craze, and yet we have grown fatter as a people? Some diets fail because they are bogus; they simply do not work. Others fail because they are unsustainable. Either they are too restrictive regarding what the dieter can and cannot eat, or they are too complicated to follow. Busy people are not going to count calories or measure food portions.

More importantly, diets don't work because they are approached as only a short-term solution. Most people begin a diet with an end date in mind - a date by which they expect to lose a determined amount of inches or weight. So the perspective from the beginning of the diet is: Eating this way is painful, but it's not forever. No wonder diets fail! Eating well and the health that goes along with it is a lifelong endeavor. Finding the inspiration for eating well comes down to caring enough for ourselves and our bodies to make the necessary lifestyle adjustments that are both healthy and sustainable.

Eating for Life

Complex carbohydrates calm us down, but they are also important because they give us energy. While we obtain energy from fats, proteins, and carbohydrates, it is most quickly accomplished by eating carbohydrates, whether simple or complex, with the latter preferred. This is why we never see spectators at marathon races offering runners barbecued ribs or fried chicken. Instead they hand out fast-absorbing sugars (i.e., simple sugars) such as fruit, fruit juices, or isotonic sports drinks to provide the runners with the energy they need to finish the race.

High-protein, low-carb (complex or simple carb) diets are unhealthy and ineffective for long-term weight stabilization. They

can also lead to rapid energy loss. The excess protein and fat can only be burned off with high amounts of exercise. Moreover, these diets often lead to other types of health and nutritional problems.

There is an easier, more common sense way to balance the proteins and complex carbohydrates that we need in the correct proportions. It does not involve measuring portions or counting calories. Better yet, there are no foods that are totally off limits. Again, moderation is the key, along with intention: eating with an eye to fueling our body only for what it will need for the next three hours until the next pit stop. The success of this approach depends also upon the frequency and size of our meals. This method is so effective that I use it myself and prescribe it for my performance clients. In a way, you could call it dieting with the eyes. I usually refer to it simply as the "eyeball method."

Success with the eyeball method involves three basic understandings. First, understanding the difference between proteins, simple and complex carbohydrates, and the details of these categories will help you know what foods to choose. Second, understanding how each food will affect our system - whether it will act as an accelerator or as a brake during the three-hour cycle - is critical for determining what to eat at certain times of the day. Third, understanding how each food will affect our performance during that same period, for the same reason as before. With this knowledge, we will be able to make informed and intentional decisions regarding what we eat and when.

In principle, the eyeball method is simple. The biggest challenge in making this approach work is learning to think differently about food. Most of us select the food we eat based primarily on taste. With the eyeball method, we choose foods and combinations of foods based on how they function in the body, either as an accelerator or a brake. It is a matter of thinking ahead to what is needed in the next few hours while always keeping in mind the necessary balance between proteins and carbohydrates.

Imagine that you are standing in a buffet line. The first thing to do is to locate the protein foods and the carbohydrate foods to see what choices are available in each category. Next, separate the simple carbohydrates from the complex carbohydrates.

Finally, make your food selections carefully to ensure the proper ratio between proteins and carbohydrates, and to reflect an understanding of the amount of energy you plan on expending in the next few hours. As a general rule, buffets are best for lunchtime when we have a better chance of utilizing the energy from that food and, therefore, not storing fat. Eating at a buffet for dinner can be a dangerous choice, especially if you are planning a leisurely night at home.

The optimum ratio will vary from person to person, because we all have different metabolisms. Finding the right mix for you may take some time and experimentation. Tune in to your body; it will tell you when something works for you and not. If you find that you can barely keep your eyes open after a meal, then take notice and make adjustments.

Following the eyeball method, you may go through the buffet line and choose a chicken breast or some lean roast beef for your protein source. For balance on the carbohydrate side, you might choose a couple of vegetables, such as green beans and carrots. If you want some bread, check first to see whether it is white bread or whole or multi-grain bread. If it is white bread, you may choose to pass on it, particularly if you plan to eat dessert, which will most likely also be a simple carbohydrate. If your vegetables and “dark” bread makes your plate a little heavy on the carbohydrate side, you may choose an additional protein source, such as a little bit of cheese, to bring everything into balance.

Once you become comfortable with this approach, it will quickly become second nature. One significant benefit to the eyeball method is that it places no foods off-limits. Enjoy all the foods you like, but focus on moderation and balance. And remember to keep the portions small: You will be eating again in three hours.

Exercise Matters ... and it Works, Too!

Note: *This section was also contributed by my wife, Marsha Pitt-Lyles; visit www.mydancebody.com for more information on her work.*

We all know the importance of exercise, because a body in motion will stay in motion. Muscles atrophy when not in use. Exercise goes hand in hand with proper nutrition in controlling obesity, improving overall health, and enabling us to convert bad stress into good stress. Diet alone is not enough. It is the combination of diet and regular physical activity that makes the real difference for our long-term good health and our ability to process stress successfully.

Think of exercise as meditation in motion. Exercise will improve your mood, because it allows the brain to release endorphins. Endorphins are chemicals released by your pituitary gland that make you feel happy and block out pain; the same chemicals are released during sex and eating chocolate. According to the Mayo Clinic, regular exercise can increase self-confidence and lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety.²¹ Exercise also can improve your sleep, which is often disrupted by stress, depression, and anxiety. All this can ease your stress levels and give you a sense of command over your body and your life.

There are two forms of exercise, one is cardiovascular or aerobic exercise; this type of exercise will help burn stored fat on the body. The other form of exercise is resistance or anaerobic exercise; this type will help build lean muscle on the body. Lean muscle is important to a healthy body, because without it the body will have the appearance of being saggy and flabby. As I said before, it will also help the body burn calories, because for every pound of muscle the body has, it will burn 30-50 extra calories each day.

Cardiopulmonary exercise, or aerobic exercise, stretches and conditions the heart and lungs. A healthy cardiopulmonary system increases our capacity to handle stress. Making exercise a consistent and regular part of life is absolutely critical for cracking the stress code.

²¹ Mayoclinic.org. "Depression and anxiety: Exercise eases symptoms - Mayo Clinic." Oct 10, 2014. Accessed August 1, 2015 from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-depth/depression-and-exercise/art-20046495>.

Aerobic exercise doesn't have to involve hours and hours in the gym or pounding pavement. Three or four 25- to 40-minute sessions a week are sufficient. That is less than three hours a week that can help add years to our lifespan as well as enhance the quality of our life. Cardiopulmonary exercise is any physical activity that elevates the heart and respiratory rates: brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, etc.

The most effective method of cardiopulmonary training is oscillatory or interval training. Linear training involves exercising at a high intensity for a sustained period. Interval training begins with a slow warm-up followed by a cycle of fast-slow, fast-slow, or stress-recovery, stress-recovery. Interval training is easier and more fun than linear training, and it achieves results more quickly.

In addition to cardiopulmonary training, stretching, and abdominal crunches, I also recommend a regular regimen of resistance training, preferably 3-4 times a week, 30-40 minutes a session. The exercise doesn't have to be pumping heavy weights in a gym. The exercises, for example, in my *My Dance Body* series are all low impact, so it's easy on the ankles and knees; it builds lean healthy muscle, and it will improve your balance and flexibility without the use of any props or leaving the privacy of your home.

You also might include push-ups, curls, weightlifting, Nautilus machines, etc. Your personal program can be as simple or as elaborate as your inclination and budget dictate. Use professional bodybuilding equipment or just work with the weight resistance of your own body, at home or the gym. The choice is yours. A simple inexpensive elastic "dyna-band" or exercise band brings excellent results. Versatile and easy to store and carry, it can work your biceps, triceps, chest, back, and even your legs. Most importantly, get input from a trained professional on proper form; poor form leads to injuries and is counterproductive.

One point that I make frequently about weight lifting that is a commonly perceived error is this: lean muscle on women can create shape without looking muscular. If we were to take measurements of a swimsuit model, for example, we would find that her body fat percentage is low, while her lean muscle mass is high in conjunction to her weight. If she loses some lean muscle and lowers her calories

to stay the same weight as before, visually she would look heavier than before. This is because she would have lost muscle and gained fat. So, some form of resistance is necessary for a lean look.

Practical Fitness

In addition to deliberate exercise, we can incorporate healthy physical activity into our daily routine in ways that don't even seem like exercise. When shopping or running errands, avoid parking close to the entrance; walking is excellent exercise. Whenever possible, take stairs instead of elevators or escalators. At work, stand up every couple of hours and take a stretch break or go for a short walk - anything to inject extra movement into the day's routine. Every little bit helps. Some activity is better than none, and often the best way to make a large change in our life is to begin with small steps.

Terry's eighty-year-old father never "exercised" a day in his life, but was in excellent condition for a person his age. For 30 years, he worked a job that had him on his feet moving all day long. Even though he is no longer with us, he always enjoyed the positive benefits of a lifetime spent being physically active.

Another important aspect of an exercise program is regular stretching. Many people who begin an exercise regimen quit after a short time, because the pain becomes too intense. One common reason for this pain is their failure to begin their workout with stretching exercises to develop flexibility.

Unconditioned muscles and tendons will indeed rebel if forced into sudden vigorous activity. A mild warm up with stretching helps prepare them more gradually for higher intensity demands. Stretching is light cardiopulmonary activity that generates sweat if done vigorously. Yoga-type stretching of our legs, arms, and backs and rotating our midsection are all positive activities conducive to building physical flexibility. They stimulate our muscles and help prevent stiffness, thereby reducing the risk of injury during workouts.

Lower back pain causes many people to drop out of an exercise program. Strengthening and conditioning the abdominal muscles,

which help support the lower back, can alleviate this pain. The most effective way of conditioning these muscles is through a daily routine of abdominal crunches. Our abdominals act as “shock absorbers” when we walk or run, and the stronger they are, the better they work. If they are weak, they cannot absorb the shock of repeated impacts with the ground, and this stress is passed to other parts of the body, such as the lower back. For this reason, it is important to take up regular abdominal conditioning at the same time we begin cardiopulmonary exercise. While other muscle groups require 24–36 hours to recover after a workout, our abdominals recover in only 12 hours, which means we can exercise them every day.

The abdominal crunch strengthens the stomach by “crunching” together the associated muscles in the abdomen. To perform this exercise, lie flat on your back with your legs bent and your feet flat on the floor. This takes the pressure off of your lower back. Place your hands behind your head and bend slightly at the waist in a series of controlled curls, crunching the abdominal muscles together. These are small movements. Your shoulder blades should not even leave the floor. Don’t pull yourself up; let your abdominals do the work. Start slowly with 20 to 30 a day with the goal of working up to 100 a day. You should notice a difference almost immediately.

Whatever workout regimen you choose, be consistent. Consistency is the key to success. You’ll be amazed at how quickly you will feel better physically and have more energy and mental sharpness. And at how much better equipped you will be for quickly converting harmful stress into Good Stress, and cracking the stress code.

I have appreciated the opportunity to contribute what I’ve learned over the years about improving health and its direct effect on stress. Now, Terry will take over and tell you about a few other key items related to cracking the stress code. For more information on what I’ve presented here, visit www.mydancebody.com.

Adequate Rest and Hydration

America is a land of plenty, yet two chronic deficiencies afflict many Americans regardless of region, race, gender or socio-economic

status: inadequate rest and inadequate hydration. Most of us do not get enough sleep or drink enough water. Sleep deprivation is an ongoing problem for millions of us. It adversely affects our physical stamina, mental acuity, emotional equilibrium, and spiritual sensitivity. We may become so accustomed to our sleep pattern and schedule that we don't even recognize sleep deprivation as one of the causes of our problems. Because it weakens us in every dimension, sleep deprivation also hinders our ability to process stress successfully. When we are deprived of sleep, we will likely turn to caffeine or sugary foods to satisfy our need for energy, when what we really need is rest.

Compounding our sleep deprivation is our failure to take frequent rest and recovery breaks throughout the day. The truth is that we simply cannot function at peak performance and efficiency without allowing times throughout the day for recharging our batteries. We cannot achieve peak performance without adequate rest and recovery.

Remember, your body operates on 90-minute oscillatory cycles. Every 90-120 minutes, you need a little bit of R&R. Take a walk. Grab a power nap. Get a drink of water. Listen to music. Eat, if you are hungry. Two to five minutes is sufficient for most breaks – just enough to get a change of pace and reset your mental faculties for the next cycle. Longer breaks may be needed, depending on the demands of the activities on hand. I know that I've already mentioned this any number of times, but reminding you is actually part of cracking the stress code, which is happening as you read this book. In truth, the more you hear about oscillation, the better chance you have for implementing this number one tool for success.

Including time for regular recovery breaks during the day is easy once you are committed to it. Solving chronic sleep deprivation is more complicated and requires much greater determination and effort. Part of the secret is learning to work with your built-in internal body clock, not against it. Sleep deprivation can occur when our sleep cycle and habits run counter to our body's natural rhythm. The result is chronic fatigue, reduced stamina, impaired mental acuity, and even a compromised immune system, leaving us more vulnerable to illness.

Because of the natural rhythms of our body, it responds well to routines, particularly sleep routines. Visit Chapter 4 for more tips on sleep.

As I noted in that chapter, inadequate rest is one common deficiency among Americans; inadequate hydration is another. Our nation is hooked on sugary sodas, as well as coffee and diet sodas with caffeine that could dehydrate the body. Dehydration affects our ability to perform in every area. In addition to balanced nutrition, we need to drink plenty of water throughout the day - anywhere from 32 to 48 ounces, depending on your size. It's okay to drink other things as well; but, if you do drink caffeinated beverages, you must be sure to consume even more water to counteract their negative effects.

Unsurprisingly, a healthy, well-conditioned and rested body is essential for cracking the stress code. It is also a key component to living younger longer, and for converting gravity into Good Stress. I cannot stress enough (pun intended) the importance of mastering these basic physical practices. They are invaluable on a thriving journey.

Code Reset for Chapter 12 ...

Commit to making one permanent shift in the area of food, exercise, or sleep. Determine what it is you want to do and the actions required. Prepare for this change by anticipating challenges and putting a system in place for success. Remember that something becomes a habit in a very short time when we are inspired and prepared. Just see it for yourself, and fall forward into the success that you envision, while creating and maintaining higher and higher levels of physical energy.