



History Taking: Nutrition, Exercise, and Sleep

Transcript

The next aspect of our *Functionally Oriented History* is going to be about *Nutrition, Exercise, And Sleep*, and some of the things as far as the person's habits. It is really important that you question people about their habits because what will typically happen is you say to the person, 'how is your diet?' 'Well I eat a really good diet.' That's where they want to leave it. 'Yeah, I eat a really good diet. I eat whole grains and I eat organic food.'

Just because people think they are eating an organic diet, they think they are eating a diet that is healthy for them and a diet that is supporting them. In fact their diet might not be supporting them and they are just thinking, well there is something else going on here. My diet is pretty good. I don't understand why I am having problems. We are going to look at the kinds questions you want to ask and then we will take a look at the actual sample questionnaire.

Before we begin let's make sure that you are aware that any of the information I'm presenting here is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified healthcare professional.

It's also not medical advice and when you are presenting to your clients you need to be really careful and make sure that they are aware that what you are presenting, and what I'm presenting here today, is intended as a sharing of my knowledge, information, clinical research and clinical experience over many years.

I encourage you, and you should encourage your clients, to make their own healthcare decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified healthcare professional. This is especially true for people who are on any medications. I just want to make sure that the things that we talk about in terms of nutrition are not going to interfere with the protocols.

Of course you want to know what foods they generally eat, what do they avoid, and why do they avoid them. You may have somebody who avoids certain foods because of religious beliefs. Maybe they are kosher and they only eat foods that are kosher. Maybe they have particular food preferences and avoid certain foods.



Maybe they avoid foods and if they are going to avoid you need to be looking at how they going to get the nutrients that those foods would normally give them. What foods do they eat? Maybe they are on a gluten-free diet. Maybe say have certain allergies. Maybe it is just a matter of preference. So you have to find out what are they eating and what are they are avoiding. I like to do this with a food frequency list. They are actually a couple of ways that I do this because I feel like if you ask them for this information in many ways you actually get the clear picture. I will start out by just saying, tell me with the typical foods that you eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner are, and I have it separated into breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Get a sense that way. Then I do the food frequency list. I have lists, which I am sharing with you of all the different foods and they get to say whether they eat them frequently or infrequently. We are not leaving it at just that because somebody might say 'oh, I hardly ever drink coffee, only a couple times a week.' We might think that is frequent versus somebody who says I hardly ever eat that and it is less than twice per year. We want to ask that ask that in that way and you will see the form itself.

The third way that you can do it and I don't very often but it is a 24-hour recall. So you say I want you to write down everything that you have eaten in the last 24 hours. Of course the fourth way is the most accurate and that is to have them keep an accurate food journal but when you first see them it is unlikely that they are going to have done that before unless you have given them a form and asked them to do it. It is all up to you how you want to run your practice. If you want to ask them all of these things in advance, giving them lots of questionnaires and having them fill it out. You will get a pretty good picture by the time they come in. You may want to have them do a three-day diet intake.

It depends on what I am looking at and what they are looking for. I may in some cases have been to a three-day diet intake before I talk to them the first time. Other times I do the food frequencies and have them quickly fill out a basic questionnaire just to get a sense of where they are.

Food frequency. Surveys are really, really helpful. Eating habits and environment--do they eat on the run, do they eat at their computer, do they sit down to a nice candlelit dinner and hold hands with their family members and say gratitudes before dinner? What is the situation? What is the environment because that is going to effect how they digest their food. We are looking at not just what they are eating but how they are eating it to determine what is actually getting absorbed and utilized.



It is really important to ask them about their hydration. Not do you drink water, do you drink enough water? How much water do you drink? How many glasses of water do you drink? Get a sense of how many ounces they drink and really help reinforce that they really need to be drinking about half their body weight in fluid ounces. There are few exceptions to that. One of the exceptions is if they are juicing a lot and they are drinking a couple of quarts of vegetable juice per day. They may not need a full half-their-body-weight in fluid ounces if they are drinking that much or if they are eating lots of very juicy foods and not very much in the way of dry foods.

You will modify that based on whatever else you know about them, but the general rule of them is about half their body weight. Again, they are heavily exercising. They live in Arizona in the desert and they are sweating and losing their fluids. Actually people who live in the desert don't actually realize that they are sweating because the sweating evaporates as soon as it hits the surface, but in reality they are. Find out how much exercise they are doing, how much sweating they are doing. If they are going in saunas on a regular basis, you better believe you are going to have to increase their hydration.

These are all of the questions that you will want to find out. Of course you want to find out about their unhealthy habits. How much alcohol do they drink? How much caffeine? How much tobacco? It is not enough to say, no, hardly ever. You want to quantify it. Really ask. That could be through your forms and be clarified in the interview or just ask in the interview. It just depends on the way you really feel comfortable. The more that you do this the more you will get a sense for what feels more comfortable for you. Then you are going to ask them about their exercise habits. We have a whole page on exercise habits and a whole separate questionnaire to really get a sense on the balance of exercise that they are doing. You also want to look at their lifestyle and sleep habits. I have a whole questionnaire on sleep habits and what is their stress level like. Again, a whole questionnaire about what kind of stressors they have been under.

When we look at the adrenal testing module we will talk in a lot more detail about the kinds of stress, or the sources of those stressors and how it affects the body. It is really important to get a sense of where the stressors lie because it could be emotional stress, it could be physiologic stress like an area of pain or inflammation, and it could be dietary stress. We want to find out where those stressors are coming from so we have a sense of how we can help them remove some of those.



We are going to look at the *Diet And Habits Questionnaire*. We have three different forms for you. Actually we have a fourth one. We have a *Nutritional and Lifestyle Habits* online form. That is a thorough history of food habits. This is something that you can fill out and get a sense of what it feels like to fill it out. Get the sense of, is there a way that you want to ask these questions that is different from the way I am asking them because it is more like you. Anything at all, you are welcome to modify this.

As we go through this I will get you a resource for how you can get this online program for actually putting them in. I will just fill some of this stuff out. You can put your email address. So when you fill this out you will get a sense of this form. What you can do if you want to copy some of these questions, all you have to do is do something like this, copy, open up a Word file or word processor that you have, paste it, you may have to do some cleanup, but you will have all of the questions there. Also we have a Word file and a PDF file but they are not exactly identical. If I were just to do this, and we are not filling these out, I'm just put numbers in. Then I say continue.

Where and with whom do you eat? This is an important question, so I give them choices. How often do you eat at home at the table? How often do they eat at their desk? How often do they eat at work or someone else's home? Or at restaurants, alone, at home, with family members, co-workers, or on the run? Give them lots of choices: never, once a month or less, once a week or less, twice a week, three, four, five, six, or daily. You do not have to give all of those choices but I like that because it helps me to really fine tune where their eating habits. They have misconceptions, 'oh I don't eat at my desk that often' but when you figure it all out that is where they are mostly eating.

Then I want to know, what are their daily habits? How many times did they currently eat and at what times? Some of them are going to say, it is different from day to day. That is fine, just know that too. These are the things you want to know. What foods do they typically eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Do you eat between meals? If so, how often do you eat between meals? What time of day? What foods do you typically eat? This is going to be important stuff for you to know especially if the foods that they are eating between meals are very high-glycemic, high in sugars. You are going to be wondering about this person's glucose handling and the fact that they probably have insulin elevated in their bloodstream all day because they are eating sweet fruits, breads, or crackers in between meals, and that keeps their insulin levels high all day which means that if they are coming in and talking about the belly fat that they are trying to get rid of, or they are burned out, insulin resistance could be a possibility so we want to know about that very important half.



Click '*continue*' and now we are going into the section of food choices (see the green '4' at the top). What are your typical food choices and patterns? I love to ask this question. What are the three worst foods you eat during the average week and what are the three healthiest? The answers to this can give you the hugest clues about their diet. When somebody writes that their worst foods of the week are almond butter, quinoa, and sunflower seeds, you are thinking 'whoa, what are the healthiest foods that they eat?'

You are going, whoa, if they think those are the worst foods that they eat, or maybe it is dates or something, or bananas. Compared to the healthiest, they are probably eating a lot of greens and a lot of really good stuff so you look at that. Then somebody who puts that the healthiest foods that they eat during the week are whole-wheat toast, broccoli, and salmon. That is not too bad but that is the healthiest? Where are the greens? Where are the vegetables? Where are the brassicas? Okay, they had the broccoli. You want to get a sense. It really gives you a lot of good information.

The foods that they eat most frequently and that is a clue because sometimes people are allergic to, they develop allergies to the foods that they eat most frequently, so you want to find out what are the foods that they eat most frequently because if you are going to put somebody through an elimination diet at the beginning you are going to eliminate the foods that they eat most frequently until they can prove that food is not causing a problem.

What is your favorite food? If you are designing a diet program for this person you want to include a lot of their favorite foods. If a lot of their favorites are really unhealthy for them, you want to be able to tell them how to make substitutes for their favorite foods that are healthier. What foods do you crave the most? The foods that they crave the most are sometimes related to emotional eating, it could be related to blood sugar balance, it could be related to food allergies. What do you consider binge foods? The foods that they binge on, again, are like the foods they crave only you want to know what they consider binge foods. If they binge on steamed broccoli that is not exactly a binge. If they binge on crackers that is pretty bad. Maybe their binge foods are actually healthy foods but in excess so maybe they binge on almonds. That could be really caloric and not a great idea because it is too high in fat to binge on, but that gives you an idea of at least they are at a point where they replaced unhealthy binge foods with healthy binge foods. Then you have to work with them on not so much changing what they are eating, but the pattern and the emotional stuff behind it.



What are their least favorite foods? You want to design a program that has a lot of arugula in it for a person who hates arugula. You want to have as much compliance as possible. If a lot of the foods on their least favorite food list are very healthy and things that you want them to include, you may try to help them find a way to sneak those in like in a smoothie or in a soup or something like that, maybe in a cracker. What percentage of your dietary intake is raw or living? Uncooked, vegan, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, or sprouted grains.

That is a good thing to know. We don't have to push people towards 100 percent raw all of the time. We want them to have a high percentage of their diet as raw foods. My understanding looking at studies and talking to people that run various clinics like Dr. Clement, he said that he has food studies that show that when you get below 80 percent, 75 or 80 percent of your food is raw, you start to see inflammatory markers increase in the immune system. So that is good to know.

Can we move this person from wherever they are up to that 75 percent raw. It may be easier than you think to do that with a person. If you eat grains, what percentage are whole and refined? People who think they are on a healthy diet think 'oh yeah, I eat a healthy diet' meanwhile they are eating organic white flour products. You really want to know about this and about what percentages are organically grown. It is pretty impossible to get 100 percent organically grown food unless you have your own garden and you eat mostly from it, and you get raw nuts and seeds that are organic. You can do it, it is just pretty challenging, so we look at helping people to go as much organic as possible, but it is good to know if they are not deliberately seeking out organic, then we have some education to do.

The next section is there food frequency and this is the beginning of the food frequency. I have a more detailed food frequency but this is the overview food frequency. If you really want to get into it in major detail I have a whole questionnaire on that. You want to know how often coffee, tea, beer, wine, soft drinks, sugar-free soft drinks, vegetable juice, bottled or canned juice, these are the things that we are looking to see, how often do they have these in their diet? If they have organic poultry and you want to find out is it organic or not when they are eating animal products. Maybe they have it twice a month, not a big deal. Are they having it three times a day? That may be a problem. If they drink coffee how much and what type? If you drink tea how much and what type do you drink? Of course you don't have to ask all of these on paper but you can ask them in person. Look at their food frequency, so how much are you drinking? How often? Jot your notes down in your sidebar. It is up to you how you do this. The more you do it the more you will figure out what they really like.



If you use oils what kind of oils due to use? This is really important because if they are using organic safflower oil from the health food store because they think it is healthy, you've got to educate them. You want to be educating them in terms of the oxidation that occurs in those types of oils. Talk to them about good oils versus not good oils, and you have that and this is not the time to go into that in detail, but these are the things that you either have been trained or are being trained in the certification program.

Our next section is about their commitment. How committed are they to make changes? How committed are they to making changes in their diet. To what extent? It is interesting. I've had people fill this out, to what extent... I am willing to do some things but there is no way I am going vegetarian and I am not going to give up my burgers and blah blah blah. Then they will come in and I will send them some stuff to read and they will come in and say you know what I think I will go vegetarian. That happens sometimes. You have to find out what their commitment is.

Look I just want to make the minimum changes necessary to have a little bit of improvement in my belly fat and to lose this weight. I want them to list all of the foods that would be very hard to stop eating but they are willing to work on if they need to. I want to list all of the foods that they are unwilling to eat no matter what the health advantages are. I have tried it over and over I will not eat arugula. I don't care if it is going to make me look like a movie star and live until 200 I am not going to eat it I just cannot stand it.

Then you have them talk about the foods that they love so much that they are unwilling to give up no matter the cost to their health. You may be thinking wow, is that true, does that happen? Yes it happens. You want to know what those things are. You want to look at their boundaries and meet them where they are at and help them to move to where they really want to be.

Then you want to find out what are the other dietary plans have they tried. If you love putting people on a vegan diet but they tell you, I went vegan, I went raw, I did it two years ago, I felt miserable, nothing helped. That is not where you are going to go with them. You have to find out what they tried, and how it worked. What were the benefits and what was the downside? How did they enjoy it? How were they able to stick with it? It is really helpful to find this information and I really like getting it on paper. It always clarifies things once you are in the interview with them.



Let's take a look at how well equipped they are. If you have somebody who lives in a studio apartment and doesn't even have a kitchen or doesn't even have a sink or doesn't have access to those, you want them to be able to make healthy food but you have to go from where they are at. I just ask them. There is probably some other equipment that I could have included on here but I want to know if they have a blender, whether it is a regular or high powered blender, it is going to determine which recipes I might be encouraging them to try at first because some recipes just do not do well in a regular blender versus others that do really well. I want to know how reasonable it is to get these people on regular smoothies.

Then a dehydrator. If you are looking at gluten-free and looking at helping them to replace their crackers and cookies and we want them to make them and they do not have a dehydrator, it is something you can talk to them about, but you can also suggest alternatives of places where they can purchase some of this equipment. Same with a food processor, juicer, spiral slicer, mandolin; those are more advanced things that you really want to know if they have in their kitchen.

This is a review. You want them to look over what they have done, submit it, and send a thank you message and they will get a copy of that in their inbox and I will get a copy of that as well.

Let's take a look at some of these other nutrition evaluations and then we will go into exercise. We've got the food frequency checklist. Again it repeats the question, list of the worst foods, the healthiest foods, how often do you eat in restaurants, on the run, but then it has a really detailed list. These are questions that you want to ask. I first developed this very detailed food frequency list because we were doing it for the food allergy program and I wanted to be able to be what they were eating and also help them to design what I called the rare foods diets, like the foods that they weren't eating that much. This is a very detailed list. You are welcome to use all or most of it. I ask: never, once a week, once a month or less, etc.

I ask them about their food, any other foods, same kind questions that were on the other ones; really it needs to be merged together when you are asking people, or it is like answering the same questions over and over.

We look at nutrition and lifestyle habits, different kinds of diets that they are eating, very similar questions, but this is the pre-online form. This is just the frequency, this is a little bit less detail because it is harder to get, that you consume a minimum of three days or more each week. What snacks?



Then we talk about tobacco, alcohol, there is a little bit more details on those. You have lots of options for designing your own forms or for using some of the forms as I have given them to you.

Let's take a look at exercise. Here is a form that you can use to keep track of your exercise habits. You can either have them fill this out as part of a new patient packet on a physical piece of paper, you can send them an online form and have them print it and fill it out, you can create an online form from this that they can fill out online and ship it back to you, or you can just sit and ask them these questions as you are doing your interview with them. Maybe you just ask them a little basic stuff about exercise on the main questionnaire and then you can go into details and jot your answers down on this form. However you use it is up to you.

Depending on what kind of clients you usually have, you may be getting more or less into the exercise habits. I think it is a good idea to find out what kinds of exercise they are doing and what balance. How often are they doing it and for how long? What kind of stretching are they doing? Are they doing yoga class for an hour twice a week? Maybe they are doing cardio and aerobics as an exercise; bike or running. You want to find those things out so that you have a sense of what their level of exercise is, activity or inactivity. Also have them rate how motivated they are for exercising. It is really important to know because as you are going through and trying to help them create a really healthy exercise pattern, if they hate exercise you want to know that up front. You want to find really fun things. You want to learn how to make it really fun. If they are a jock who just loves to go out there you can just pile it on.

You want to have them list for you any problems that they have that limit their activity. Perhaps they had surgery on a shoulder or on a knee and that is going to limit what they can do. Maybe they tell you that they have a shoulder that dislocates if they lift weights in the upper body. You want to know all of those sorts of things. You want to find out if they feel unusually fatigued after they exercise. If yes they may be suffering from adrenal fatigue because that is a hallmark sign. They feel good, they go out, they exercise, and they are in bed for the next three days afterwards because they are exhausted from exercise. If that is the case you want to really tailor the quantity of exercise and include things that are going to encourage them to heal rather than drain them even more. You want to know if their muscles cramp during exercise. What might that be? It might be an electrolyte imbalance. Maybe they are low in magnesium or potassium. You want to know that. Do they feel unusually sore between workouts? If there is a buildup of lactic acid during working out and if they feel really sore maybe there are some detoxification issues. Maybe their body is too acid and you want to alkalize them to help clear out the excess lactic acid.



Whatever it is you want to know about it. You want to find out how much recovery time they give themselves because it is not really a good idea to exercise day after day without a break. Knowing what they are doing will help you give them exercise recommendations that makes sense for them.

You want to know how much they sweat. Do they usually sweat? Do they drink water before, during, and after exercise? You also may want to ask them if they are into those sports drinks. Do they drink Gatorade or even the health food store version of Gatorade before, during, and after exercise? It is really not a good idea to do that. You want to drink pure water before, during, and after exercise, not those sugary things. Those things may be okay during something like a marathon when you naturally have to replenish your fuel but if they are going to the gym and working out for a half hour or an hour or even up to two hours you really don't need to replenish during and it actually thwarts the beneficial effects of growth hormone surges if they are doing these kinds of beverages, because that causes an insulin spike and that interferes with their ability to make growth hormone which will then help them to make more lean muscle. You want to find out what they are doing that might be thwarting their exercise attempts and help them and guide them.

All of this information does not have to be collected in one shot. It can be collected over time in multiple sittings. You can start working on their food first. You can look at some other things when you want to get into more details. You just have to play it out and find what works for you. I am giving you all of the things that I feel and have found in my over 20 years of experience what is important to know and you will be able to tailor this to your own needs.

Let's take a quick look at sleep habits. The questionnaire is short and sweet and just one page long. Again, like the exercise, you can incorporate these questions into your interview or you can give them this form to fill out in whatever version or whatever form you like. It is totally up to you. It is always important to find out when do they usually go to bed and when do they usually get up and what kind of exceptions there might be throughout the week. On average what are the number of hours of sleep that they get. Rarely will you see someone who gets greater than 10. You might see somebody getting between eight and 10 but more likely you are going to see people that are getting between six and eight or less than six. If you ask further about that, some of them might admit to getting less than six.

You want to find out if they have trouble falling asleep or trouble staying asleep. If they are having trouble falling asleep that means that there may be some disruption in their melatonin levels or their cortisol levels right at bedtime versus if they have trouble staying asleep.



It may be related to blood sugar imbalance. It could be related to a cortisol spike in the middle of the night. It could be related to old traumas that they had where they had been attacked or molested in the middle of the night. There are lots of things that you want to ask about in terms of sleep. How often do they sleep through the night?

These questions might be better stated as how often do you have trouble falling asleep? How often do you have trouble staying asleep? How often do you sleep through the night or not? How would you rate the quality of your sleep? How do you feel when you wake up? Some folks wake up feeling bright and bushy tailed and other folks wake up feeling miserable even if they get eight hours of sleep, that it is usually related to adrenal fatigue. It could be sleep apnea that is preventing them from having a really deep sleep.

You want to find out about the darkened room. Folks that don't sleep in a darkened room will tend to have problems with melatonin and that may be what is keeping them awake or keeping them from falling asleep or staying asleep. If they watch TV or use the computer before going asleep that could affect the melatonin levels and you want to know that. You want to coach them on at least shutting off that computer and TV an hour to two before they go to sleep, preferably longer. You want to know if they wake up to an alarm clock or do they just wake up naturally. It makes a big difference. Also if they wake up to an alarm clock it is possible that they are waking up in the middle of a sleep cycle.

In the *B4 Be Gone* program we go into a lot more detail about the sleep cycle and how to help to understand that sleep cycle and figure out what your sleep cycle is, what the length is because the length of the sleep cycle could be anywhere from an hour to two hours. The average is one hour and a half but when they are waking up in the middle of the sleep cycle, basically that sleep cycle did not do them any good so we may want to extend their sleep a little bit back, or they may actually want to shorten their sleep a little bit so that they have an even number of sleep cycles.

Insomnia. Have they ever been diagnosed with insomnia? Are they on any medication? Have they ever been told that they snore? Usually people don't know that they snore. It is by a sleep partner telling them that they snore. You want to know if they have sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is a diagnosis that they have been given maybe by going to a doctor or if they have done a sleep study. Has anybody ever told you that you have sleep apnea, or do they use a C-PAP machine, which goes along with the sleep apnea? If they do, how long have they been using it and how effective is it? And anything else they want to tell you about their sleep habits. This gives you a sense of how well they are sleeping.



If lack of sleep is contributing to their health challenges, what are some of the causes that they are just unaware of like the TV or the lights in the room. A lot of things like that. You want to find these things out so you know how you can coach this person and how you can explain to them how their sleep might be affecting their health and how their sleep might be affecting their belly fat and how their energy feels the next day. There is a lot more detail about that in the *B4 Be Gone* program and also in the *Insulin Resistance Practitioner* Program. You would get the *B4 Be Gone* program and study about *Insulin Resistance*, and we go through a lot of detail about how to balance the sleep cycle.

With the exercise and sleep habits let's go back to our slides, we have already gone through this and I will recap what we have talked about on the questionnaires. We want to know how often the exercise, for how long, what is the balance of yoga, core, and cardio; ratio of cardio to resistance, how long it takes them to recover, how sore do they get between workouts, do they have any cramps, and what is their water intake. We went into a lot more detail on the form and then again with sleep habits: typical bedtime, their usual wake-up time, average number of hours they sleep, the quality of their sleep, any difficulties they may have falling asleep or staying asleep, the quality of their sleep, their environment during the sleep whether it is dark or bright or noisy, and how refreshed are they when they awaken. We have reviewed nutrition, exercise, and sleep. Next we will move into the stress piece of it.