

Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS



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Exercise Myths and Facts



Exercise is the closest thing to a magic pill that helps us defy the ravages of aging. But myths surrounding it can prevent you from getting the full benefits or even discourage you from trying. Here's what you need to know.

Imagine a pill that significantly helped to prevent — and, sometimes, reverse — today's common conditions, including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer, depression, dementia, and even premature death. And decades of research, with hundreds of thousands of people, had proved its effectiveness.¹

You would think that people would be lining up for miles to get that pill — especially if there were no adverse effects and the cost was \$0.

You can think of exercise as that magic pill, but not enough people are lining up. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, a minority of Americans are doing the amount of exercise that is recommended for good health, which includes aerobic and strength training.

When researchers take into account all adults age 18 or older, 28 percent of men and 20 percent

of women get the recommended amount of exercise. But fewer people exercise as they get older. After age 65, only 15 percent of men and 10 percent of women get the recommended amount.²

Back on the bright side, exercise produces benefits in the longer term — all the reduced risks of disease and death I mentioned — and in the short term, even from a single workout. Immediate perks can include a better mood, less anxiety, less stress, enhanced self-esteem and confidence, heightened alertness, clearer thinking, and better sleep.

If your physical activity involves other people — taking classes or playing a sport, for example — there's a social benefit, too. And that's another way of enhancing your health and well-being.

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
Brain Health: What You
Need To Know**

Exercise also helps to maintain independence, at any age, by preserving muscle. Without resistance exercise, we start to lose muscle at the rate of 3 to 8 percent per decade after age 30, and even more quickly after age 60.

Loss of muscle contributes to gain of fat, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and osteoporosis. It leads to frailty — the stereotypical appearance of an “old lady” or “old man.” And that makes it difficult to walk normally and do all the daily

tasks we take for granted, such as taking a shower, getting dressed, carrying groceries, and generally keeping house.³

Fortunately, exercise can strengthen and rebuild muscle at any stage of life. Granted, the process works faster in youth, but studies have shown that improvement is always possible.

One study tested the effects of a 12-week weight-training program in a group of 11 adults between the ages of 85 and 97. By the end of the program, participants had gained an average of nearly 10 percent more lean muscle in their quadriceps (the large muscles in the front of the thighs), which are especially important for walking and staying independent.

Such muscle gain is the equivalent of reversing one or two decades of muscle loss. Tests also showed that the quadricep muscles were over 40 percent stronger.⁴ This type of improvement can be life-changing.

Bottom line: exercise can produce amazing results. So, let’s bust some myths that can prevent you from realizing the full gains.

Myth #1: I Just Need To Walk Every Day

When I’ve discussed exercise with patients, they’ve often told me they’re doing what their doctor ordered: “Just walk every day.” And they assumed — incorrectly — that this is enough.

If you’ve been bedridden for a few days or more, walking is the place to start. And it will make a huge difference in the way you feel and function — at first. But once you’ve regained your bearings, or if you weren’t bedridden,

this isn’t enough exercise.

Walking is good: it’s been a natural way to move as long as humans have been around. But it doesn’t provide all the exercise we need. And walking at a steady pace, as most people do when they walk for exercise, is not the most efficient or beneficial way to do it.

To improve your fitness by walking, you need to raise your heart rate to a point where you’re exerting extra effort and breathing harder. This is when your heart muscle is being challenged, and that’s what makes it stronger.

It’s difficult to maintain an intense level of exercise for an extended period of time, and it can lead to overuse injuries. Instead, interval walking — alternating short periods of fast and slow walking — is safe and will produce significantly more benefit than walking at a comfortable, steady pace.

A study of older adults found that compared to walking at a steady pace, interval walking is more effective at lowering blood pressure and improving heart and lung function. And it takes less time.⁵

Another study looked at type 2 diabetics. It found that interval training on a stationary bike increased the number of mitochondria — the energy-generating components of cells — in skeletal muscles. However, cycling at a steady pace did not do this. Both types of exercise helped to reduce blood sugar.⁶

For an exercise sample, see *A 20-Minute Walking Workout* on the next page. You can also do intervals with other types of exercise, such as biking, swimming, or running.

Hiking on hilly trails or walking

Dr. Marlene’s

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up and down hills or staircases in a city makes you work harder in spurts. It has the same effect as interval training. Although the intervals aren't as precisely timed, they're just as beneficial. Playing sports can also make you do spurts of intense exercise.

I also recommend walking whenever you can in the course of day-to-day activities. Walk to run errands, for example, or park at the far end of a parking lot. Many people will drive two blocks; walk instead. While this won't give

you all the benefits of an interval workout, these are good habits.

The “Chronic Cardio” Trap

Some people do what I call “chronic cardio,” meaning somewhat intense exercise on a treadmill, elliptical trainer, or stationary cycle, at a steady pace. You can see them in any gym, coming in often and spending up to an hour on some type of aerobic equipment. And in many cases, they do little or no other exercise.

Even though these regular gym

attendees are putting in a fair amount of time and effort, they aren't getting the full benefits. Spending less time but doing interval training on the aerobic equipment of their choice would be much more effective.

We also need resistance training to maintain muscle and, perhaps, reverse some muscle loss. In addition, we need to do some type of movement that keeps us flexible, and we need to maintain good balance — or improve it.

Myth #2: Weight Training Builds Bulky Muscles

This is typically a worry among women — needlessly so. The female body is not designed to develop bulky muscles. Even in men, bulky muscles are the result of highly disciplined, tough regimens with heavy weights that very few people will ever do.

What does merit attention is lack of exercise that challenges muscles. Regular training that challenges muscles is essential to prevent loss of muscle and to help restore it, and it has an age-reversing effect.

Research in Canada compared muscle biopsies of younger and older adults. It found that in addition to strengthening muscles, a six-month, twice-weekly weight training program reversed age-related genetic changes in older adults.⁷

When muscles are challenged sufficiently, they develop microscopic tears. As they recover from those tears during the next day or so, new muscle tissue is generated. That's why weight training is beneficial. An effective program needs to challenge all the major muscle groups.

A 20-Minute Walking Workout

If you're walking to improve your fitness, alternating between faster and slower walking is the most efficient and beneficial way to accomplish your goal. Here's a 20-minute workout to try, with 5 sets of 1 minute of fast walking alternating with 1 minute of slow walking.

Time	What To Do
5 minutes	Walk at your usual pace to warm up
1 minute	Walk as fast as you can
1 minute	Slow down to a leisurely pace
1 minute	Walk as fast as you can
1 minute	Slow down to a leisurely pace
1 minute	Walk as fast as you can
1 minute	Slow down to a leisurely pace
1 minute	Walk as fast as you can
1 minute	Slow down to a leisurely pace
1 minute	Walk as fast as you can
1 minute	Slow down to a leisurely pace
5 minutes	Walk at your usual pace to cool down



Total time: 20 minutes

You can do this every day or on most days. If you don't want to track time minute by minute, you could do fast walking for one block and slow walking for one block, and repeat that sequence five times.

To track time during my interval workouts, I use an app called Seconds. You can set different interval times and the app will give you a beep or other sound to tell you when to change intensity. You can do this with free versions of the app for Apple and Android phones; paid versions have more features.

For more info about the app, visit www.intervaltimer.com.

If you aren't trained in how to properly do resistance exercise with your own body weight (push-ups, squats, and such), or in lifting free weights, the easiest and safest way to start is with weight machines in a gym.

Many gym memberships today are inexpensive, and some are

included in health plans at no extra cost. Weight machines are designed to use specific groups of muscles, illustrated on each piece of equipment. With a combination of machines, you can get a good workout of all the major muscle groups, which is the goal.

Gym memberships typically include an orientation session with a trainer. Take advantage of this to get familiar with the equipment and develop a routine.

Working with a personal trainer is another alternative — if it's within your budget. Getting help from a trainer is a great way to start an exercise program and learn about weight training, but it costs more than using gym equipment on your own.

Workout on page 3. Weight training will also add considerable benefits.

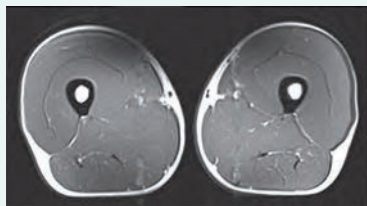
I've seen people who spend hours and hours running or cycling or doing some other form of exercise, only to end up feeling run down. They have lost electrolytes and stressed out their system. Now, I understand some people are long-distance athletes. I used to be one as a cyclist so I know how tough it can be on your body.

Long-distance athletes have their own goals. Some people run marathons for charity, for example, or to challenge themselves. But extreme endurance exercise is not necessary for fitness, and can be counterproductive to healthy aging.

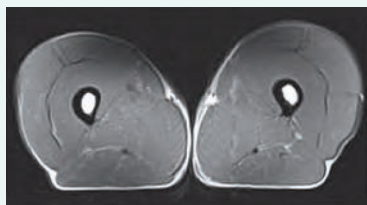
Aging Muscles: With and Without Exercise

Thigh Muscles Compared

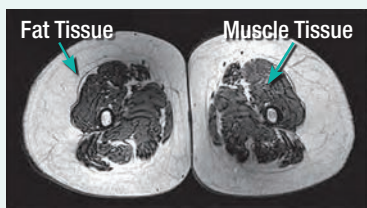
40-year-old triathlete



74-year-old triathlete



74-year-old sedentary man



The pictures above, from a study at the University of Pittsburgh, show that thigh muscles of recreational triathletes, who regularly did extensive exercise throughout their lives, are virtually identical at ages 40 and 74. Much of the muscle of the sedentary 74-year-old has been replaced by fat, which makes that person look flabby, even if they aren't overweight.

Myth #3: More Exercise Is Always Better

If you aren't physically active, any amount of exercise is better. But the exercise becomes more beneficial when it challenges your body more, not because you're doing it for a longer period. For example, if you walk for 30 minutes per day and you feel good, you may think that walking 60 minutes a day will double the benefits, but it doesn't.

If you want to go for longer walks because you enjoy them, by all means do so. Studies show that if you go out in nature, even in a city park, there are extra benefits, including a better mood, less anxiety, stress reduction, improved ability to focus, and enhanced creativity.

As a routine fitness workout, what will increase benefits is walking uphill or doing intervals as I described in *A 20-Minute Walking*

Myth #4: I'm Too Old for My Muscles To Change

On page 2, I described a study of people between the ages of 85 and 97 that showed they gained muscle and strength with a weight-training program. Believe it.

It isn't unusual for people to say, "I'm too old to (fill in the blank)." If an 85-year-old tells me it's too late for her to become a trapeze artist, I believe it. But in most other situations, the excuse doesn't hold water.

One big factor is the people around you. If they hold the view that they're too old to go for a walk or do other things that could help improve their condition, that has a detrimental effect. It makes you feel that you, too, are too old to do new things.

On the other hand, if those around you are getting up and going for a good walk every day, and you're left out, you might be inspired to go walking, too.

Regardless of the community you're part of, the idea of being

too old to start a weight training program, to do walking intervals, or to try any other new activity is just a mindset, not a physical reality. And you can change your own mindset, regardless of what anyone else thinks.

One way to overcome this is to give different activities a try. Go for a walk and try the interval approach I outlined on page 3. Do it for a few days and see how you feel. And try some weight training. If you don't want to join a gym, find a resistance training video online, or see if there are any local community centers that offer classes. You might be surprised at how much better they can make you feel.

Myth #5: I'm Too Unhealthy To Exercise

Some people have physical limitations, but this doesn't mean they can't benefit from exercise. Rather, the exercise needs to be adapted to their personal situation. For example, for those who can't do exercise standing up, there are chair exercises.

If you have a medical condition, exercise is especially important, but do check with your doctor. You aren't looking for an excuse not to exercise. You simply want to know if there are any precautions you should take or if exercise needs to be modified for you. I'm sure your doctor will be delighted that you want to exercise.

Research has shown that exercise among people with cardiovascular disease can make an even bigger difference in reducing risk of premature death than it does among healthy people.⁸

Another study looked at people with chronic kidney disease

who did not require dialysis. It found that a 12-week aerobic and strength-training program reduced fatigue, shortness of breath, impotence, itching, muscle spasms, stiffness, restless legs, and feelings of weakness.⁹

Myth #6: I Used To Be Fit, but Now I Have To Start Over Again

It may feel that way, but it isn't so. We have muscle memory.

Some studies have compared muscle improvement in strength training among people who trained previously but stopped, with those who were training for the first time. They show that among those with previous training, muscles rebound, and the amount of improvement is greater than that of people who are just beginning strength training.¹⁰

In addition, if we learned certain types of movement, we can re-

member it, like riding a bike. People who danced or played tennis when they were young, for example, will be able to restart those activities more easily than those who are beginning from scratch.

I wouldn't expect the same instant level of performance as when you were much younger. But you really aren't starting over.

Myth #7: I'll Lose Weight If I Just Exercise More

Another version of this myth is the idea that you can eat more junk food, or just more food in general, if you start an exercise program. To support exercise, you do need nutritious food — which you should be eating anyway — but exercise isn't a license to throw caution to the wind.

As you may know, I recommend controlling certain carbs, rather than calories. I've found that by following my eating approach,

About Dr. Marlene

Dr. Marlene Merritt's passion for natural medicine is fueled by her drive to help others and by her own experience of overcoming a debilitating heart condition, diagnosed at the age of 20. A competitive cyclist at the time, she suddenly began experiencing severe chest pains. Forced to quit the sport, she suffered from fatigue and chest pain for another 15 years, despite doing everything that conventional, Western medical doctors told her to do.

And then, the tide turned. A physician trained in naturopathic healing recommended a whole-food vitamin E supplement. A week after starting the supplement regimen, her energy began to return, and the pain began to disappear.

Dr. Marlene is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, has a Master's degree and is board-certified in Nutrition, and is board-certified in Functional Medicine. She is certified in the Bredesen MEND Protocol™, a groundbreaking method of addressing Alzheimer's disease, and is a Proficiency Diplomate in the Shoemaker CIRS protocol for treatment of mold-related illness. She is the author of *Smart Blood Sugar* and *The Blood Pressure Solution*, and co-author of *The Perfect Sleep Solution*. After 31 years in private clinical practice, she now focuses on writing and educating health professionals and consumers to reach more people and positively impact their health.



calories generally take care of themselves. But here, I'm going to mention calories for a reason.

There's an old saying that you can't outrun your fork. In other words, if you overeat, it isn't realistic to expect to neutralize all the excess with exercise. In *Donut Calories* below, I've listed approximate numbers of calories to illustrate that point.

The numbers in the chart are very rough estimates of how much exercise it may take to use up the

calories in one donut. The number of calories we burn during different activities varies, depending on body size, lean muscle, overall fitness and health, and individual metabolic rates.

Is there any way in which exercise influences body weight? Yes, but in a different way. In conjunction with the right diet, it can help you lose and manage weight.

You may be familiar with this from my books and earlier newsletters, but I'll recap just in case. Eating too many carbs raises the level of insulin, and insulin promotes fat storage and weight gain. For the same reason, elevated insulin makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to lose weight.

Exercise makes your cells more sensitive to insulin and helps to lower insulin levels. If you're eating a high-carb diet, the exercise will be fighting an uphill battle. However, when combined with my recommended low-carb diet, exercise will help you lose weight and keep it off. Earlier newsletter issues that describe how insulin works and my diet in detail are listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 8.

Myth #8: Achy Joints Must Be Arthritis

When people have joint pain, they may immediately assume it's arthritis. But this isn't necessarily so.

When someone first notices joint pain or discomfort, it's most likely the result of tight muscles that lead to joint misalignment. As the situation continues, people tend to be more careful about how they move and become less active, which makes things worse.

I cover this in detail in an earlier newsletter about flexibility, tight

muscles, misalignment, and joint health, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 8. In that issue, I include at-home tests to detect and exercises to correct misalignment in various joints that can be troublesome as we get older. I also include remedies for muscle spasms or cramps.

Another misconception is that being physically active wears out joints. While extreme exercise or sports that put tremendous stress on joints can cause damage, this isn't the case for most people.

It may sound counterintuitive, but sitting too much and moving too little is a major reason for achy or stiff joints and arthritis. Studies show that osteoarthritis and knee replacements are most prevalent in people who spend a lot of time sitting — watching a lot of television, for example, or spending long periods at a computer. But getting up and moving protects against the disease and can help to reverse it.¹¹

Movement enhances the circulation of blood and other fluids. With good circulation, joints get more lubrication and nutrients, and if you sweat, waste byproducts are more efficiently eliminated. This promotes healthy maintenance and repair of all the tissues that support joints, and prevents deterioration. In short, more movement and less sitting keeps joints healthy.

Even among people who do have osteoarthritis, research also shows that movement is an effective treatment to relieve joint pain. And for those who have a knee replacement, more movement after the surgery improves the results.¹²

If joint pain makes it difficult to stand or walk, exercise that doesn't

Donut Calories



Individual metabolism — the rate at which we burn calories — varies, even among people of the same size, age, and gender. And since there are many varieties of donuts, the calories in one donut also vary, so the numbers below are some *very rough estimates* of how much activity it can take to burn the calories in one regular-sized donut. But they do illustrate the fact that it's unrealistic to expect exercise to compensate for a poor diet.

Exercise	For at least:
Walking at a brisk pace	1 hour
Kickboxing	30 minutes
Cycling with heartrate somewhat elevated	45 minutes
Pilates	90 minutes
Jumping rope	30 minutes
Running	40 minutes

Key point to remember: When you don't eat sugary, starchy foods that are high in carbs, you don't *store* as many calories as body fat.

stress joints, such as swimming or cycling on a stationary recumbent bike, is an option. In such cases, I recommend seeing a physical therapist to get customized exercises that are right for you.

Of course, you then have to do the exercises a physical therapist recommends. And exercise needs to become a lasting part of your routine — it shouldn't stop the minute you experience a little bit of improvement or if you're getting physical therapy and run out of insurance coverage.

Myth #9: If I Haven't Fallen, I Don't Need To Worry About Balance

Falls are a major cause of disability and a major reason for loss of independence among older people. In addition, a more subtle loss of balance can instinctively make you reluctant to move in different ways, which is detrimental.

Without doing something to maintain and improve balance, that ability gradually declines with age. And you may not be aware of how it's affecting you.

You may be moving more slowly than you used to when walking up and down stairs or on an uneven sidewalk. Maybe you no longer feel confident to climb onto a stepladder to replace a light bulb or reach the top of a high shelf. Or maybe you don't feel stable enough to go dancing or play a sport, like you once did.

In short, as we live longer, we need some type of exercise that challenges and improves our balance. But this fact is all too often ignored. When I go to the gym, I use various balance-training equipment, such as a BOSU ball or small, soft

discs. These make it more challenging to stand and move than being on the firm floor.

When I do this, I often have people of all ages come up to me and tell me they're amazed by what I'm doing. Yet, few people use these balance-training tools in my gym.

I covered balance in an earlier newsletter, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 8. That issue includes ways to test your own balance and exercises to improve it, all of which you can do at home.

If you like classes, tai chi is a gentle form of exercise that is especially good for improving balance. It also enhances coordination, flexibility, strength, bone health, mood, and overall health.

Myth #10: No Pain, No Gain

After you challenge muscles, you can feel a bit sore the next day. However, you shouldn't feel pain during a workout. If you do, something is wrong. You may be stressing certain muscles or joints too much or doing a movement incorrectly.

It's also possible for some muscles to have "knots," which are tight spots, and when you work the muscle, the effort causes pain. Or a muscle can have a "trigger point" that causes a spasm.

If this happens, you can get relief by stopping the exercise and working out the knot or spasm. Sometimes, gentle stretching can help. But more often, applying pressure to that point will unlock the tight spot. Pressure with a foam roller can do the trick. In a gym, a trainer can show you how to do this. Using a tennis ball to apply pressure is another technique, which I cover in an earlier issue of

this newsletter on flexibility and joint health, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 8.

There's a difference between exerting effort to challenge yourself and hurting yourself. At the end of a workout, you should feel better than when you started; you shouldn't feel worse.

Myth #11: Sit-ups Will Flatten My Stomach

If you have lax abdominal muscles, sit-ups will tighten them up and may make them look flatter. But the most common reason for a protruding belly is high insulin as a result of eating too many carbs. Switching to a low-carb diet is an

Injury Recovery

Years ago, I broke my left ankle, and until it healed, I couldn't use my left leg as I usually do. As a result, my left leg became weaker, and it still is a bit. If I



do a leg exercise with both legs at the same time, my body naturally "cheats" by doing more work with the right leg and less with the left.

To avoid the "cheating," I work each leg separately, doing the same amount of exercise with each one. This way, my left leg is forced to do the work it's supposed to.

If you have a weaker leg, arm, or shoulder, when doing exercises for those muscles, work each side separately. And if you work with a physical therapist after an injury or surgery, ask for exercises that work each side separately. This way, you can continually strengthen the weaker side while also keeping the stronger side in good shape.

essential step to change that.

Another version of this myth is that exercise can selectively reduce fat in other parts of your body. It can't. But by the mechanism of lowering insulin, in combination with a low-carb diet, exercise does help to reduce overall excess body fat.

Myth #12: It's Best To Exercise in the Morning

Some people find it easier to maintain an exercise regimen by working out in the morning, before unexpected events can interfere with a workout time later in the day. But there isn't any magic benefit to exercising in the morning.

The best time for you to exercise is the time when you will consistently do it. That's how to get maximum benefits.

Myth #13: If I Like My Exercise Routine, I Should Just Keep Doing It

Continually challenging your body is what produces the full, ongoing

gains of exercise. If you just keep doing the same routine over and over, your body adapts to it and is no longer challenged, or it's not challenged enough.

If you like a certain activity, you can certainly continue that type of movement, but make some changes in the way you do it. For example, if you like walking, as well as doing intervals, vary the terrain. If you like a certain type of class, once you find it easy, find a similar type of class that's more challenging.

A Final Word

Even if you exercise regularly, it's still important to avoid long periods of uninterrupted sitting, whether it's in front of a computer or television, or in other situations. Exercise snacks — short breaks to move around — can maintain good circulation and enhance health.

One study looked at 13 middle-aged people with high blood pressure and/or high blood sugar and high cholesterol. It found that getting up

and moving around for 5 minutes every hour, or 10 minutes every 2 hours, lowered blood sugar, blood pressure, and triglycerides, and improved cholesterol.¹³

Moving around often, rather than sitting for too long, can also make you feel better. If you're at home, an exercise snack can be any type of household chore, such as doing dishes or laundry, tidying up, or organizing a shelf in the fridge or kitchen cupboard. Walking around while taking on the phone is another good habit.

I hope that clearing up the exercise myths I've covered helps you to embark on or continue a well-rounded exercise program that keeps you in good shape for a long time to come.


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Related to This Topic

These are some earlier issues of this newsletter that address related topics:

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
A Healthy Diet	7	1	My Low-Carb Diet — Fine-Tuned
Healthy Fats	4	11	Healthy Fats: Deadly Myths and Life-Saving Facts
Healthy Meat	3	2	The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Meat
Healthy Carbs	3	6	The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Carbs
Balance	5	5	How to Improve Balance and Prevent Falls
Flexibility and Joint Health	7	3	Lasting Relief for Achy Joints
Insulin and Weight	8	9	Insulin: The Secret Door to Good Health

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For dinner tonight, you could be eating cheesy chicken and sweet potatoes... and then wake up tomorrow to a savory apple and sausage breakfast scramble... only to pack a scrumptious lunch of Thai turkey meatballs and cauliflower rice.

These meals are **delicious** and **nutritious**, and most important, they're **"perfect"** for healthy blood sugar and healthy blood pressure.

We hired a professional nutrition planner with a degree in culinary arts to create hundreds of complete meal plans. And all of them **adhere to the healthy eating formula** of 65% healthy fats, 25% protein, and 10% carbohydrates.

We call it **Perfect Meal Plans** because it takes the guesswork out of healthy eating.

This inexpensive service provides weekly meal plans that include recipes, shopping lists, and online support. You don't need to be a good cook. You don't need any special tools. Just

follow the weekly meal plan, and you'll soon be losing weight, sleeping better, have more energy and living a healthier life.

Karen L. says:

"Dishes are delicious, they eliminated my cravings, I'm no longer hungry all the time, and better yet, I'm full. I no longer call this a diet. It's simply eating healthy."

And Lewis R. reports:

"Perfect Meal Plans has helped my whole family eat better, and it does away with the insane way people are trying to lose weight and get healthy. The program is great!"

With **Perfect Meal Plans**, it's like having your own nutritionist on call 24/7. So, why eat boring meals, when you can eat like kings and queens—and still get the healthy results you want? And here's the best part! You get tasty, health-improving **Perfect Meal Plans** sent to your email inbox for the low price of just \$9.95. The meals are easy to prepare, they're delicious, and they're perfect for your health. Order today!

Get Perfect Meal Plans for Only \$9.95!

PerfectMealPlans.com/NHC7

For faster service, call 1-888-309-0629
Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST • Saturday-Sunday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

How Many Vegetables Per Day Are Beneficial?

You might remember a campaign to eat “five-a-day,” meaning five fruits and vegetables daily. Well, it turns out more is better, especially in the case of vegetables.

A large Spanish study surveyed the health and diets of nearly 67,000 people, asking them how many times per day they ate vegetables, fruit, and legumes, which include beans, lentils, and peanuts.

Here are some highlights from the study:¹

- Compared to eating fewer than three servings of fruits and vegetables per week, eating at least two servings per day reduced risk of premature death from any cause by 20 percent.
- More servings reduced risk even more, up to ten servings per day of mostly vegetables and some fruit.
- The biggest effect was in reducing risk of death from cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and stroke. There was also some reduction of risk from cancer.
- There was no correlation between eating legumes and risk of premature death.

Most importantly, try to eat more non-starchy vegetables. The only ones that are starchy are potatoes of all colors, including yams and sweet potatoes, corn, and legumes. The rest of the vegetable kingdom offers plenty of non-starchy choices.



How Big Is a Serving?

When studies or dietary guidelines talk about servings of fruits and vegetables, the servings are quite small.

Vegetable	Size of 1 Serving
Raw leafy greens, such as lettuce, kale, and spinach	1 cup
Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables	½ cup
Cooked leafy greens	½ cup
Baby carrots	6
Fruit	
Chopped fresh, frozen, or canned fruit	½ cup
Medium apple, pear, peach, or orange, about the size of a fist	1 fruit
Large banana	½
Grapes	22
Kiwi fruit	2
Strawberries	8

Given that your total daily servings are usually spread among three meals plus snacks, it's quite realistic to eat ten servings daily, or an amount close to that. Here's an example:

For eight daily servings of vegetables:

- 3 cups of raw leafy greens as side dishes or salads (3 servings)
- 2 cups of fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables (4 servings)
- 6 baby carrots (1 serving)

Add two servings of fruit from the chart above, such as one apple, and 8 strawberries, and you will have ten servings in the day.

How Coffee Helps Type 2 Diabetics

A review of nearly 150 studies identified polyphenols in coffee — a family of plant nutrients — to be beneficial for type 2 diabetics and for preventing the disease. These nutrients are separate from caffeine, so both regular and decaf coffee are beneficial.

The polyphenols in coffee help to lower blood sugar, enhance insulin sensitivity, lower inflammation, and reduce oxidative stress (a process akin to internal rusting).²

If you like coffee, enjoy it, with or without caffeine. But don't try to force yourself to drink it if it disagrees with you.

Hypertension

A survey of 1,653 adults, by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center, found that many people have misconceptions about blood pressure.³ More than half mistakenly thought that hypertension likely has symptoms such as dizziness or shortness of breath. Another 20 percent thought that feeling calm and relaxed indicated normal blood pressure. In fact, you can't tell without a blood pressure monitor, because high blood pressure doesn't usually cause symptoms, even though it's causing damage. That's why it's been called a “silent killer.”

1 Martínez-Castañeiras, P., et al. "Intake of fruit, vegetables and pulses, and all-cause, cardiovascular and cancer mortality: Results from a population-based prospective study." *Public Health*. 2025 Feb;239:169-178. 2 Kim, H., et al. "Coffee and Its Major Polyphenols in the Prevention and Management of Type 2 Diabetes: A Comprehensive Review." *Int J Mol Sci*. 2025 Jun 10;26(12):5544. 3 Anderer, S., et al. "Hypertension Survey Finds Many US Adults Lack Key Knowledge of the Condition." *JAMA*. 2025 Aug 15. doi: 10.1001/jama.2025.13589. Online ahead of print.

5 WAYS DUOMEGA 3&7 FISH OIL MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Harvard College
and Cleveland Clinic
confirm it.



#1 Provides missing Omega for a healthier heart

In the 1970s, Danish researcher Dr. Jorn Dyerberg discovered Alaskan Eskimos' hearts were 7 times healthier than his fellow Danes, in spite of mainly eating oily fish. This discovery led to the billion dollar Omega 3 fish oil industry. But what was lost in the original research was Eskimo blood was rich in Omega 3 and Omega 7. And yet, 99% of fish oils sold today don't have Omega 7. **DuOmega 3&7** corrects this error and provides the missing Omega 7 for heart health!

#2 Cleveland Clinic finds Omega 7 vital to heart health

Dr. Michael Roizen, chief Wellness Officer at Cleveland Clinic, conducted a study of Omega 7 on adults at risk for cardiovascular events. After 30 days of taking a purified form of Omega 7 called Provinal®, the subjects showed a 44% reduction in inflammation...an 18% reduction in triglycerides... an 8% reduction in LDL (bad) cholesterol... and a 5% increase in HDL (good) cholesterol.

#3 Harvard study shows lower incidence of blood sugar issues

Research at Harvard School of Public Health showed that people with the highest blood levels of Omega 7 had a 60% lower incidence of blood sugar issues. Study subjects had lower body mass index (BMI), healthier triglycerides, and lower inflammation. Omega 7 also improved glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity. **DuOmega 3&7** contains Provinal®, the purest and best studied of all Omega 7s.

#4 Double Strength Omega 3 promotes normal blood pressure and brain health

DuOmega 3&7 contains MEG-3™ Omega 3 in double the strength of ordinary fish oils. Its high concentration of EPA Omega targets inflammatory conditions, providing superior support for brain, eyes, nerves and joints. Its high concentration of DHA Omega relaxes and opens blood vessels for improved blood pressure.

#5 Fish oil benefits with no fishy taste or burps

Most fish oils are contaminated with toxic chemicals like PCBs. They're susceptible to spoilage. And many are oxidized because of sloppy manufacturing and exposure to heat, light and oxygen. Finally, few fish oils actually meet label claims. **DuOmega 3&7** eliminates these problems with MEG-3™—the finest and purest Omega 3 available today. You get the benefits of Omega 3 with no fishy odor, taste or burps.

Here's what users say*

“I've been taking **DuOmega 3&7** for a couple of years. My cholesterol and triglycerides are perfect now.” — Edward B.

“**DuOmega 3&7** has helped me keep my blood sugar in the normal range.” — D. Campbell

“I've been taking **DuOmega 3&7** for a number of month now, and my triglycerides are back to normal.” — M.C.

“I love **DuOmega 3&7**. Last time I had blood work they called to ask what I was doing for my cholesterol. They were amazed!” — Wayne G

*Individual results may vary.

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Q&A

Q: I take gummies because I hate pills. Is this a good way to take supplements? — May P.

A: It may be. It's vital to take supplements consistently to get the benefits, and if gummies help you do that, they may be a good option. But it's important to recognize that they contain sugar, so they are a source of carbs.

If you're choosing gummies because you have trouble swallowing pills, and aren't likely to stick with a routine with supplement pills, gummies can solve the problem. In that case, I would recommend comparing different products to see how much sugar they contain, and choosing one with less sugar.

Generally, the sugar content of one gummy serving is around 4 or 5 grams. But some products can contain more. I've seen 15 grams of sugar per serving.

If you take one serving of a gummy with 4 or 5 grams of sugar, I don't see a problem. But if you take more than one serving, or more than one gummy product to get different vitamins, the amount of sugar can add up.

Although gummies contain vitamins, sugar is sugar. It has the same effect in your body as it does when you eat regular candy: It raises blood sugar.

In my low-carb diet, I recommend counting carbs from added sugar. This applies to gummies as well as regular candies. So, if you're following my low-carb

eating approach, make sure to count the carbs in your gummies.

Some people don't have a problem taking pills but like gummies for their sweetness. In those cases, I suggest trying to transition to supplement pills. The more you eat sugary foods, the harder it is to control cravings.

Context is also important. A morning routine that includes only coffee with sugar and some gummies leads to a spike and crash in blood sugar. And that promotes cravings for more sugary and starchy food, like a mid-morning donut, and leads to continuing spikes and crashes in blood sugar and energy. And by mid-afternoon, brain fog often triggers cravings for a sweet or starchy snack.

On the other hand, eating a real breakfast, with some healthy fat and protein, will keep blood sugar and energy stable and make it easier to choose healthy foods throughout the day. In that situation, a gummy with breakfast shouldn't be problematic.

Q: The Japanese eat white rice and are thinner and healthier than we are. Why? — Morris A.

A: I've seen how people really eat in Japan, and it's quite different from the way we eat.

White, refined rice is traditional in Asian countries because it is easier to digest. Both white and brown, unrefined rice contain about the same amount of carbs and have the same effect on blood sugar.

Rice is part of most meals in Japan but in a different way than in this country. At Asian restaurants here, in take-out food, and when

we serve rice at home, the rice portions are typically huge: a whole plate or bowl of rice with some meat and vegetables on top, for example.

In Japan, rice is the main carb, with very little other starch, sugar, fruit, or other grain in the diet. But rice portions are small: about the size of one traditional-sized scoop of ice cream. By the way, I know some ice cream scoops are supersized today. A traditional one may hold about 2.5 ounces, or one-third cup, of rice, and contain about 20 grams of carbs.

Unlike the Japanese, we eat multiple sources of carbs in one meal: the bun with a burger plus fries and sweetened ketchup, for example, plus a big soda. One 12-ounce soda can contain about 39 grams of carbs.

In short, the traditional Japanese diet is naturally low in carbs, with white rice making up a small part. When people eat this way throughout their lives, they don't have a problem with blood sugar.

Do you have a question for Dr. Marlene?

Send your health-related questions to drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com. Please include your first name and the initial of your last name. Although she cannot answer each question directly, Dr. Marlene will select a few in each newsletter and will address other questions and concerns in articles in future issues. Answers are intended for educational purposes only and should not be viewed as medical advice. If you need help with your subscription or have questions about Primal Health supplements, email support@primalhealthlp.com or call 877-300-7849.