Dr. Marlene's
NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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Movement Matters More Than You Think — Part One

Ready? Set? Repeat! Or Maybe Not…

The Body Learns What You Teach It

Over the years, I've heard the same story more times than I can count. Someone tells me they walk every day. Or they ride their stationary bike. Or they've been doing the same light strength routine for months. They feel good about being consistent — and consistency absolutely matters. But at some point, they start to notice something frustrating. ***Nothing is really changing.***

Their stamina feels about the same. Their weight stays about the same. Their numbers look about the same. The exercise hasn't stopped — but the results have. That observation is not unusual. It's physiology.

The body is remarkably efficient. When you repeat the same movement pattern at the same pace for the same amount of time, the body gets very good at performing that specific task. The nervous system coordinates the motion more smoothly. Fewer muscle fibers are needed to do the job. The heart doesn't have to work as hard to deliver oxygen at that pace. You burn fewer calories doing it than you did when you first started. ***In other words, the body learns.***

I learned this lesson very clearly when I was sixteen. I spent four weeks cycling through Canada, riding about sixty miles each day. Sixty miles sounds like an enormous amount of movement — and at first, it was. But by the second and third weeks, our teenage bodies had adjusted surprisingly well. We felt strong. We felt capable. We also assumed that riding sixty miles a day meant we could eat whatever we wanted. Entire rolls of Fig Newtons seemed perfectly reasonable. By the end of the trip, several of us had gained weight.

Looking back, what stands out to me now is how quickly our bodies adapted. Much of the terrain was relatively flat. The pace was steady. Day after day, we did essentially the same thing. And our bodies figured out how to to conserve energy while doing it.

From a biological standpoint, that makes perfect sense. The human body evolved in a world where conserving calories improved survival. When a task becomes predictable, the body looks for ways to perform it with less effort.

Efficiency is not something the body resists. It's something it seeks. And that explains a great deal about exercise.

Why the Same Workout Stops Changing You

When you begin a new activity, your body treats it as unfamiliar. Your breathing rises more quickly. Your heart rate climbs. Muscles that haven't been used in a while are called into action. You burn more calories doing that activity in the beginning than you will after several weeks of repetition.

During those early weeks, change can happen quickly. You may feel stronger. Your coordination improves. You recover faster between efforts. That phase is exciting because progress feels noticeable. What's happening underneath is called adaptation.

Inside your muscle cells, mitochondria increase in number and function. These are the structures responsible for producing energy. Capillaries — the tiny blood vessels that deliver oxygen — may expand. Your nervous system becomes more efficient at coordinating movement. All of that is good news.

But here's the part people don't know.

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As your body becomes more efficient, you burn fewer calories doing that same workout. The same thirty-minute walk that once left you breathing hard may now feel comfortable. Your heart rate may stay lower at that pace. Your body has solved the "problem". Which is great — it means you're fitter.

It also means that if you keep doing the exact same thing at the exact same intensity, you will stop changing.

You won't build more muscle. You won't improve stamina further. You'll maintain where you are.

This is why simply extending a predictable workout from thirty minutes to forty-five minutes at the same pace doesn't always create meaningful change. You're asking the body to do more of what it already knows how to do efficiently.

What creates further change is not just repetition. It's challenge.

If I had been riding sixty miles a day in the Rocky Mountains instead of on mostly flat terrain, climbing uphill for hours at a time, my body would never have been able to fully "settle" into that workload. I might have become a little faster at climbing hills, but the hills would always demand effort. The challenge would remain.

And that's the key question when it comes to exercise: ***Is this still challenging me?***

Not exhausting. Not punishing. Just challenging.

When the effort stays the same, the body stays the same. When the challenge increases — even slightly — the body responds again.

Putting This Into Practice: Look at What You're Actually Doing

Before changing anything, take an honest look at your current routine.

Do you walk the same route at the same pace most days? Do you set the treadmill to the same speed every time? Do you use the same weights for the same number of repetitions? Do your workouts look nearly identical from week to week?

There is nothing wrong with routine. In fact, routine helps with consistency. But routine also creates predictability. And predictability allows the body to become efficient.

When your body knows exactly what is coming, it prepares for it. Your nervous system recruits just enough muscle fibers to complete the task — not more. Your heart rate rises only as much as necessary — not beyond that. You burn enough calories to perform the movement — and no more than required. Over time, that efficiency becomes your new normal.

If you've been exercising consistently for months and things feel steady — not improving, not declining — it may simply mean your body has adapted to what you're asking of it. You haven't stopped working. You've just trained your body to handle that exact workload comfortably.

If you're newer to exercise or returning after a break, the situation may look different. Even light movement may feel demanding at first. In that phase, almost any regular movement will create improvement because the body hasn't adapted yet. Heart rate climbs faster. Muscles fatigue sooner. Breathing feels more noticeable. That's not a bad sign — it simply means the system is being challenged.

But over time, that same principle applies: once something becomes familiar, it requires less effort.

This is where many people assume they need to dramatically increase duration or intensity. Often, that's not necessary. Large overhauls can be hard to sustain and sometimes lead to fatigue or injury.

Instead of thinking in terms of doing much more, consider introducing small changes.

That might mean increasing your pace briefly. Adding a modest incline. Using a slightly heavier resistance band. Slowing down a strength movement so your muscles have to work longer during each repetition. You might extend a session by five minutes. Or shorten your rest periods slightly between sets.

These are not dramatic changes. They are small adjustments that require your body to work just a little harder than it did yesterday.

The goal is not exhaustion. The goal is to ask your body a slightly harder question than it answered yesterday.

And then pay attention.

Does your breathing stay elevated a little longer? Do your muscles feel slightly more engaged? Do you notice mild soreness in places that haven't been activated in a while? Those are signs that the body noticed the change.

Even small changes can wake the system back up.

Efficiency is natural. Adaptation is expected. Progress returns when you gently interrupt predictability.

Try This Today: Three Ways to Make the Same Workout Work Again

1. Pick Up the Pace for a Moment

During your usual walk, choose three points where you can increase your pace for about twenty to thirty seconds. Walk fast enough that speaking in full sentences would be an effort. After each brief push, return to your normal pace until your breathing settles. Those short efforts increase the number of calories you burn, recruit more muscle fibers, and challenge your cardiovascular system more than your steady pace does — without requiring a longer workout.

2. Add a Hill or Resistance

If your route is flat, find one modest hill and walk it with intention. If you use a treadmill, increase the incline slightly for a minute or two. If you cycle, turn up the resistance instead of just pedaling faster. Hills and resistance force your muscles to generate more force. That means more work is being done, which means more calories are burned and more muscle is being used.

3. Slow Down Your Strength Work

If you do strength exercises, try lowering yourself slowly for a count of three or four before pushing back up. Even with the same weight, slowing the movement makes your muscles work harder.

Your body notices that difference.

After trying one of these adjustments, pay attention to how you feel later in the day. Do you feel more energized? Slightly more alert? A bit more stable? Those are often signs that your body had to work harder than usual — and that's what creates change.

What's Next?

Part Two of Movement Matters More Than You Think

In Part Two, we'll look more closely at what happens inside muscle cells when that challenge includes brief periods of higher intensity and why even a few minutes of harder effort can change what your muscles do with fuel long after the workout ends.

About Dr. Marlene

Dr. Marlene Merritt's passion for natural medicine is fueled by her drive to help others, and her own experience of overcoming a debilitating heart condition, diagnosed at the age of 20. A competitive cross-country cyclist at the time, she suddenly began experiencing severe chest pains. Forced to quit the sport, she suffered from extreme fatigue and constant 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 in Nutrition, and is an Applied Clinical Nutritionist. She is Board Certified in Bariatric Counseling, and certified in the Bredesen MEND Protocol,™ a groundbreaking method of reversing Alzheimer's disease. She sees patients at the Merritt Wellness Centers in Austin, Texas, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, trains health practitioners nationwide, and is the author of Smart Blood Sugar and The Blood Pressure Solution.

5 Important Reasons to Get Green SUPER FOODS Into Your Diet

Reason #1
You don't eat enough fruits and vegetables.

Eat your broccoli! Can you hear your mother say it? Sure, but do you really want to?

Getting the fresh vegetables you need every day for good health isn't easy, or fun.

Fruits are friendlier, but unless you're eating berries, you're getting too much sugar. Apples, bananas, oranges, grapes and melons are especially high in sugar. And too much sugar impacts your weight, your blood glucose, and your lipid profile.

And yet vegetables and berries are essential to good health. And that's why, today, many people are choosing Primal Labs' **Super Greens** nutrient drink.

This delicious raspberry-flavored powder mixes easily in water, or can be added to a smoothie. It's loaded with nutritious phytonutrients, alkalizing chlorophyll and free-radical-fighting antioxidants.

In less than one minute you get all the green nutrients you need for the day!

Reason #2
You want a healthier body chemistry

Did you know your body's natural pH is 7.4? That's slightly alkaline, which is exactly what your body needs for good health.

But your body's natural pH can come under assault from the typical Western diet, which leans acidic, with a pH between 5 and 6.9.

For example, red meats, deli turkey, sodas, grains and processed foods are all acidic foods. Alcoholic beverages are acidic, too. And even some cheeses are acidic.

It's not hard to choose foods that are almost all acidic, and that can push your natural pH levels down.

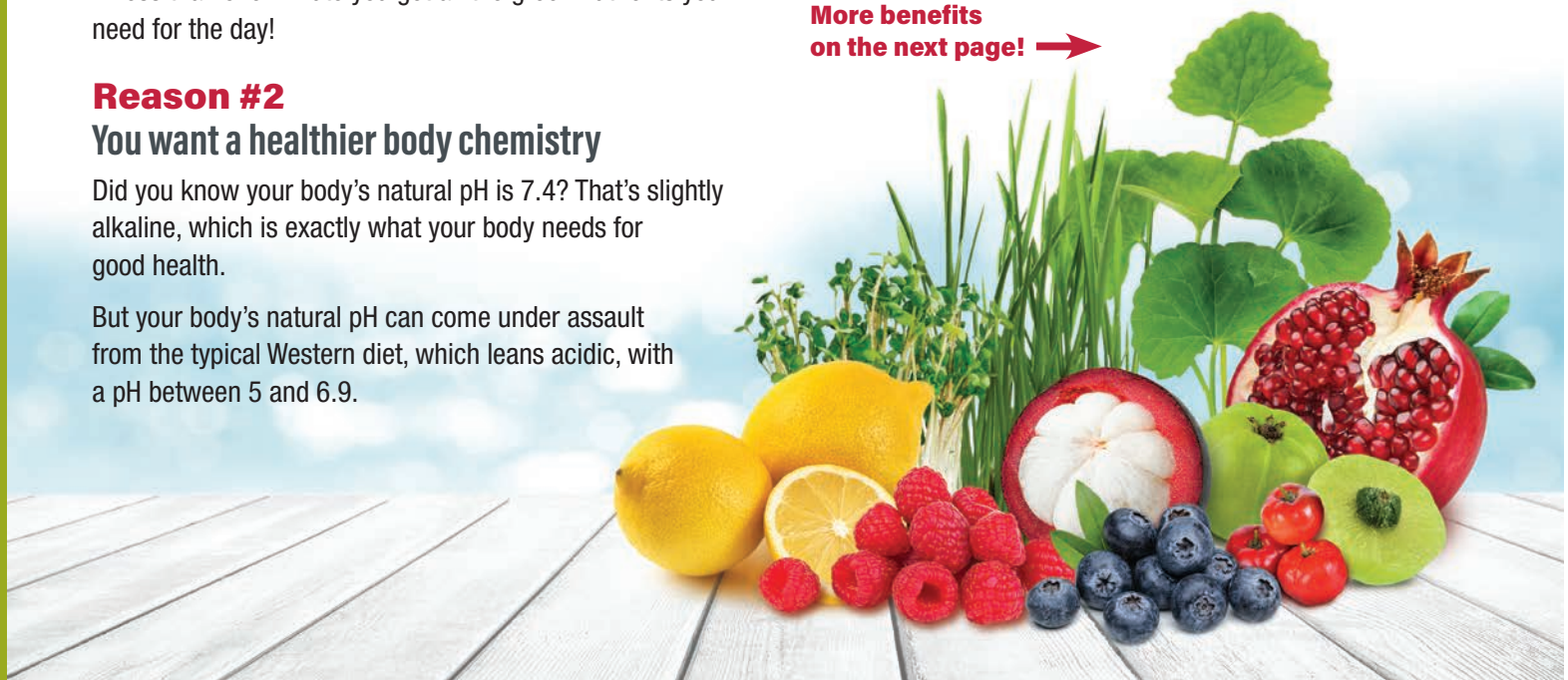
Super Greens nutritional drink comes to the rescue with its concentrated formula of alkalizing superfoods that provide essential phytonutrients, polyphenols, chlorophyll, live enzymes and several bioavailable vitamins and minerals.

All the nutrients in **Super Greens** support good health while maintaining the proper pH.

Reason #3
You want health-promoting Phytonutrients

Fruits and vegetables contain over 25,000 different phytonutrients, and up to 8,000 of them are antioxidants that fight the free radicals that contribute to aging.

More benefits on the next page! →



For Heart Health, Bone Health, Digestive Health and Brain Health – Get **Super Greens**!

Until recently, only a relatively small number of phytonutrients have been studied, but that's changing. And already many of these amazing nutrients are known to…

- **Lift your energy**
- **Boost your immune system**
- **Fight cellular oxidation (aging)**
- **Improve your digestion**
- **Support eye and artery health**

Plus...

- **Promote brain health**
- **Nourish your skin, hair, and nails**
- **And fight food cravings!**

Just a quick glance at these important benefits tells you that getting your phytonutrients is essential to good health. And now they're easy to get with Primal Labs' **Super Greens** nutrient drink.

Reason #4
You want a nutritious "greens drink" that tastes great

Maybe you've tried a greens drink before and found it to be "awful." I know what you mean. Some of them taste like blenderized grass clippings. And many of them are sickeningly over sweetened.

Super Greens is different. It contains a healthy berry blend that tastes like a refreshing raspberry drink. Make a smoothie with a couple of ice cubes and a scoop of your favorite yogurt, and it'll taste like dessert (incidentally, while most dairy is acidic, yogurt is alkaline).

Best of all, because it tastes so good, you'll love making **Super Greens** a regular part of your diet. And you may even want to have it more than once a day. Can you do that?

You sure can, there's no harm, only good.

Use **Super Greens** daily and you won't miss out on the important nutrients you'd get from fresh fruits and vegetables. For many folks, **Super Greens** is a convenient and delicious alternative.

Reason #5
You need to watch your weight

One of the biggest problems many of us have is nagging hunger pangs. That's when we reach for a candy bar. Or a bag of chips. Or a sugar-laden drink.

But that's too much sugar, and too many empty calories.

Here's the solution – mix up a glass of delicious **Super Greens**! It's refreshing. It's filling. It's loaded with green superfoods. And best of all, because it's lightly sweetened with stevia, it has ZERO sugar and only 20 calories per serving.

So, use **Super Greens** to support your heart health, bone health, digestive health and brain health. Use it to keep inflammatory responses normal. And also to support a healthy body chemistry that resists aging.

Considering that it's not always practical to get all the fruits and vegetables you need – **Super Greens** offers a convenient and great-tasting alternative.

Try it and see for yourself how much better you feel. Through this ad, you can get 15% OFF your order. And Primal Labs has an unbeatable 100% money-back guarantee. You must be happy or your money back. Period. So, give it a try on my recommendation. I know you'll be glad you did!

Order **Super Greens** at 15% Off Today Through This Special Link:
www.PrimalSpecials.com/Greens

Q&A

Q: **Is snoring always a sleep apnea issue? — Linda P.**

A: Not always, but it can be. Snoring simply means that airflow is partially restricted during sleep, and that can happen for many reasons — nasal congestion, allergies, weight gain, alcohol before bed, or even just sleeping on your back. Some people naturally have narrower airways and will snore without having true apnea.

That said, persistent or loud snoring shouldn't be dismissed automatically. Sleep apnea occurs when breathing repeatedly stops or significantly slows during sleep, which lowers oxygen levels and forces the nervous system to repeatedly "wake up" just enough to resume breathing. Over time, that disrupted oxygen delivery can affect blood pressure, blood sugar regulation, inflammation, and even heart rhythm.

If snoring is paired with excessive daytime fatigue, morning headaches, dry mouth, brain fog, or reports that you stop breathing at night, it's worth getting evaluated. Sleep apnea is significantly underdiagnosed — especially in women and in people who don't fit the classic profile — and addressing it can dramatically improve energy, metabolic health, and long-term risk factors.

The key isn't to panic over occasional snoring. It's to pay attention to the pattern and the context. When sleep quality improves, many other systems improve with it.

Q: **Why do I get heartburn only at night? — Tony R.**

A: Nighttime reflux is often related to timing. Eating late, having a heavier meal, drinking alcohol, or lying down too soon after eating all increase the likelihood that stomach contents will move upward when you're horizontal. Gravity helps digestion during the day — you lose that advantage at night.

That said, reflux isn't always about "too much acid." In many people, it's actually related to low stomach acid or sluggish digestion, which allows food to sit longer and ferment. That fermentation creates pressure, and pressure pushes contents upward. Add lying flat to that equation, and symptoms become much more noticeable.

If reflux reliably shows up at night, look first at when and how you're eating. Finishing meals earlier, keeping evening meals lighter, limiting alcohol, and allowing at least a couple of hours before lying down can make a significant difference. Supporting digestion — rather than just suppressing acid — is often the missing piece.

Q: **Can food affect sinus congestion? — Jennifer N.**

A: Yes, it can. Dairy is the most commonly blamed food, and for some people it does increase mucus production or thickness. But it's not the only potential trigger. Blood sugar instability can raise overall inflammation, which makes sinus tissues more reactive and swollen. When tissues are already inflamed, even minor irritants can feel amplified.

Some people also notice congestion with gluten, highly processed foods, additives, or foods that are naturally higher in histamine, like aged cheeses, wine, or fermented products. The reaction isn't always dramatic — sometimes it's just a persistent "stuffy" feeling that never fully clears.

If congestion is chronic, frequent, or fluctuates with what you eat, it's worth paying attention to patterns rather than assuming it's purely seasonal allergies. The sinuses are lined with immune tissue, so when the immune system is irritated — whether by environmental triggers or food — they're often one of the first places you'll notice it.

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.