

The Power of Healthy Living

A great friendship connects
clean living with recipes
to thrive on

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Foreword by
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Contents

xv	<i>Foreword</i>	
xvii	<i>Introduction</i>	
1	Chapter 1	Confused or What?
9	Chapter 2	Mindful Eating
27	Chapter 3	The Best Diet for You
65	Chapter 4	What Your Body Needs
87	Chapter 5	A Closer Look at Food Choices
161	Chapter 6	What to Avoid
179	Chapter 7	Super Foods
191	Chapter 8	Speciality Foods
205	Chapter 9	Water
219	Chapter 10	Food Preparation
237	Chapter 11	The Health-Wise Kitchen
251	Chapter 12	It's Not Just about the Food
325	<i>Conclusion</i>	
327	<i>Bibliography</i>	
333	<i>Resources</i>	
347	<i>Biography</i>	

The body is your temple.
Keep it pure and clean for
the soul to reside in.

B.K.S. Iyengar
Yoga: The Path To Holistic Health

Beauty and vitality are gifts
from nature for those who live
by her laws.

Leonardo da Vinci

Chapter 1

Confused or What?



How can you get motivated to eat well and live well? Have you ever asked yourself this question? Perhaps you have been stuck in the fad diet cycle? You know, the one where you are inspired into action with the latest weight-loss craze and after weeks of strict restriction and weird recipes, you find yourself gaining back even more weight as you return to normal eating. Well, the time may well be now to make a lasting change.

Every day it seems as though a new type of nutritional obsession is announced, and each one claims to hold the secret to permanent weight loss and better health. Is it any wonder there's so much confusion? One week you're told to eat soy; the next you're told soy is bad for you. You have been tricked into thinking all no-fat, fat-free, and low-fat foods are healthy. In fact, they are destructive to your health, and they don't fill you up. Companies have actually been replacing fat in foods with sugar, which, as it turns out, is actually the biggest creator of fat. Worst of all, almost all packaged foods now contain sugar. In this book, we have attempted to provide you with information so that you can make more informed decisions regarding your nutritional needs.

Are you getting the correct nutrients, and are you eating enough of the right combinations of healthy food? We've all heard the phrase "you are what you eat," and it really is quite true when it comes to brain health and optimum physical performance. Your body is a strong and vibrant machine that requires fuel, and even the smallest nutritional deficiency can impact your mood, emotions, behavior, and performance.

The fact is, you are unique and what works for other people might not work for you. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Your nutritional approach has to be customized based on a number of factors, including how healthy and fit you are and whether or not you are intolerant of certain foods. A diet heavy in dairy products might actually be causing health issues, especially if you are lactose intolerant. Similarly, a diet heavy in certain grains can cause a cascade of health issues if you are gluten intolerant or have celiac disease. You are a constant work in progress, so just because you were able to tolerate a certain food as a young adult doesn't mean you can

tolerate the same food at a different stage of life. Your body is always changing, and it's important to be mindful of that.

We encourage you to take a proactive approach to your health; it's important that you continue to study and update your diet constantly because the information changes daily. There is a constant flow of new thinking, new research, and new products, so make it part of your health plan to stay on top of the latest information. While it would be nice to believe all of the information out there is factual and well meaning, you do have to consider your sources. Just because something is written does not mean it is based on scientific research or fact; it might just be one person's opinion. Even if you *are* looking at a scientifically researched study, it's important to find out who has funded the study. You might find that a report touting the nutritional benefits of dairy is actually funded by the dairy industry. It's easy enough to make the results of any investigative analysis support your needs.

All of this might be overwhelming yet there are some basic, sound principles you can start with to help you be the very best that you can be. So before we look at specific diets, let's explore the tenets of healthy eating.

The Basics of Healthy Eating

Let's start at the beginning and think about some everyday choices that are simple and can make a big difference. Incorporating the following actions into your nutritional plan will most likely lead to some profoundly positive changes in your physical health and mental wellbeing.

Eat as close to nature as possible: This means eating whole foods, such as organic vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds in their most natural state as possible. Try to avoid precut and prepackaged vegetables. Every time you cut up a fruit or a veggie, nutrition escapes, so the less slicing of fruits and vegetables you do, and the sooner you eat them, the better.

Opt for organic foods: It's a known fact that organic foods have a higher content of phyto-nutrients

and antioxidants. It always cracks me up when I read the odd article on the front page of the newspaper, declaring that it makes no difference if you eat organic or nonorganic foods. I can tell you without a doubt that eating foods that are sprayed with chemicals does make a difference. Even though it might not show up immediately, eventually it will play havoc with your overall health. Andrea Beaman is a nationally recognized TV host, speaker, chef, author, and holistic health counselor. I appreciate her take on it. She says these chemicals kill bugs, and the only difference between us and bugs is size. Eventually they will kill us, too.

Your nutritional approach has to be customized based on a number of factors, including how healthy and fit you are and whether or not you are intolerant of certain foods.

“A Little Girl’s Potato Experiment” is a great video on YouTube that will change the way you think about organic food. In this video, a child’s science experiment becomes a lesson on the toxins in our food supply. If you have any doubt about the importance of eating organic, you really should check this out. In fact, check it out anyway. It’s visually powerful when you see how quickly an organic potato sprouts as opposed to a nonorganic potato. And remember: just because something says it is organic does not mean it’s healthy. You can find all kinds of processed foods that are labeled organic; however, they still contain ingredients you do not want to be eating. So check labels regularly.

Eat locally grown foods, the fresher the better. It’s better to buy food from your own backyard than food imported from a foreign country. This is not only for environmental and economic reasons. Eating local food puts your body in tune with your immediate environment and compensates for the nutritional demands the weather puts on your body. Many small local farms do not use pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Getting that organic label is expensive, so not all of them can do it. Do your research and find out their farming practices. However, don’t get me wrong. If your local farmers are

spraying with pesticides, buying organic from a foreign country is better.

Eat foods that are in season: This creates a relationship with your body and the earth, and it’s the most economical way to eat since these foods are readily available.

Reduce animal protein: There’s plenty of evidence to show that reducing meat on a daily basis is a good choice. There are many pros and cons to this subject from several excellent books which include *The China Study* by T. Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell and *No Happy Cows: Dispatches from the Frontlines of the Food Revolution* by John Robbins. Another excellent source on this topic is Dr. John McDougall, www.drmcDougall.com, a physician and nutritional expert who teaches better health through vegetarian cuisine. Dr. Daniel G. Amen’s book *The Amen Solution* and JJ Virgin’s new book the *Sugar Impact Diet* are also great resources that address many of these health issues. If you can’t live without meat at each meal, start with baby steps and incorporate a few vegetarian meals a week into your diet. When you do eat meat, keep serving sizes to one third the size of your hand and make sure they are organic and from happy, well-fed animals.

Eat tons of vegetables, especially raw: Almost all diets include lots and lots of vegetables and the more raw food the better. Although there are a few vegetables that are better eaten cooked, most vegetables lose nutritional value through cooking. This is outlined in more detail in the *Raw Food Diet* section of this book.

Be color conscious: Eating a rainbow of vegetables and fruits is a simple and fun way to ensure you get the variety of nutrients you need for optimum health.

Include fermented foods, sprouted foods, and fresh green juice in your diet. All of these foods boost nutrition and are excellent for your digestive health.

Supercharge your diet: Add some nutritionally packed superfoods, like aloe vera, coconut, goji berries, blue-green algae and acai into your diet. However, don’t get carried away with them. These need to be eaten in small amounts.

Focus on adding healthy foods to your diet rather than taking things away. Eventually your taste buds will change, and you'll be less inclined to eat foods that aren't good for you.

Keep lots of healthy snacks on hand: Vegetables that are cleaned and ready to grab are one of the best. Whenever I leave my home, I carry a bag of food and a glass bottle filled with healthy filtered water. If I'm going to a movie, I make my own popcorn and grab an apple; my own goji berry and nut mixture, raw chocolates, or whatever is handy. If you don't bring your own food, you might be tempted to make bad food choices, and that food is usually loaded with sugars and additives.

Snack wisely: We used to think eating every few hours was important; however, we now know this might keep your insulin levels high and that means no fat burning. If you are feeling weak or dizzy between meals, snacking is definitely okay. Stabilizing your blood sugar is always key so pay attention. However, don't eat if you're not hungry. If you are used to eating every few hours, try going without snacks to see how you feel. It might just be a habit you've created that can easily be broken. If you do snack, be sure to include protein and fiber.

Find the right percentages: Try the 80/20 and the 90/10 rules. The 80/20 rule is eating until you are only about 80 percent full so you don't overtax your digestive system and allow it to work far more efficiently. The 90/10 rule is eating healthy 90 percent of the time and cutting yourself a little slack 10 percent of the time. If you have to cheat, go for it and suffer no guilt.

Rethink calorie counting: The calories in/calories out theory does not work. The reality is some calories make you fat, and some calories make you thin. It's all about the type of calories you eat. Any food that spikes your blood sugar will produce insulin, and that drives the fuel in your blood from the food you eat into fat. Eat foods that have a low-sugar impact to avoid sugar spikes.

Calm inflammation by slashing the sugar and refined carbohydrates and balancing the fats by increasing omega-3s.

Get rid of the "everything in moderation" idea: Nutrition and fitness expert JJ Virgin, author of *The Virgin Diet*, says "Moderation creates a slippery slope, sets you up for cravings, creates or exacerbates food intolerances and fails to account for the potential long term damage certain foods can do." I totally agree.

Lose weight faster: If you decide to go on a specific diet, there are a couple of new studies, including one from the University of Melbourne, which claim that rapid weight loss is actually better for you than slow weight loss. The lead researcher, Professor Joseph Proietto, indicates that losing quickly is best, and it results in a slower weight regain. Losing weight fast also keeps you motivated. However, be aware that toxins live in fat, and when you eliminate fat, the toxins are left behind in your body. If you lose weight too quickly, it can be a heavy load on your immune system.

What are the things you'd like to change? What foods do you want to eliminate, and what foods do you wish to add into your weekly menu? Food is medicine. Make the right choices for your body to thrive.

Record what you eat: If you are serious about losing weight, research shows that recording what you eat is a very effective tool. You might be shocked at how easy it is to grab little bits of food without realizing it.

Incorporate some fasting into your diet, keeping in mind that digestion takes up a lot of energy. If you shorten the overall length of time you are eating, it gives your body a well-deserved rest to work on regenerating other parts of your body. If you fast long enough, it also allows your body to burn fat for fuel. This is not something you should try if you have blood sugar issues.

Top Ten Foods to Avoid

Now that you know some of the positive steps you can take, let's look at some foods you should eliminate from your diet. At the very least, consume these foods in moderation only.

1. **Avoid gluten and grains whenever possible:** If you don't buy into all the stories of the negative effects gluten has on the body, read *Wheat Belly* by cardiologist Dr. William Davis. He became concerned when he discovered that more than 80 percent of the people he met were prediabetic or diabetic. In an effort to reduce their blood sugar levels, he asked his patients to remove all wheat products from their diet. The results were so remarkable that he devoted himself to educating people about the health hazards of wheat consumption.
2. **Avoid dairy** unless you can find a safe, raw, and unpasteurized source. Besides the fact that not everyone can properly digest dairy, studies have found that countries with the lowest rates of dairy (Africa and Asia) have the lowest rates of osteoporosis. So, contrary to popular wisdom, the less dairy you eat, the better your bones will be. A twelve-year Nurses' Health Study of dairy consumption in women shows eating dairy and taking calcium supplements may increase risk of osteoporotic fractures by 50 percent. That's shocking and hard to believe, I know, yet there are many studies to support this claim which is covered more deeply in *The Best Diet for You* under *What You Might Be Missing on a Plant-Based Diet* section of this book.
3. **Avoid genetically modified foods (GMOs)** at all costs. There have been copious amounts of research done on the damaging effects of GMOs, so don't mess with this. More on this in *Mindful Eating* under the *GMOs* section of this book.
4. **Stay away from artificial sweeteners** and eat all natural sugars in moderation, including fruit. The less sugar or sweeteners you consume the better.
5. **Avoid processed food, junk food, and food with additives and preservatives:** A lot of condiments fall into this category.
6. **Avoid soy products** unless they are fermented because they can actually affect your hormone levels and not in a positive way!
7. **Eliminate foods labeled low fat** because low fat means added sugar. Don't be afraid to eat healthy fats from nuts, seeds, avocados, and healthy oils. Fat makes you feel more satiated.
8. **Avoid foods cooked at high temperatures** with low-smoking-point oils. More on this in the *A Closer Look at Food Choices* under the *Fat* section of this book.
9. **Do not eat anything grown in a factory farm:** There have been plenty of in-depth investigations showing the terrible cruelty to animals practiced on factory farms. This is inhumane and, as food and animal rights activist John Robbins says, the suffering is imbedded in the tissue of these animals. You sure don't want all this negative energy transmitted into your body. Paul McCartney says "If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian." Check out his YouTube video presentation under *Paul McCartney Glass Walls*, and you will be moved to the point of tears.
10. **Avoid hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils:** hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils are either semi-solid or solid at room temperature and are only one molecule away from plastic; plastic does not breakdown. As you can imagine, this oil can create thicker blood with this gummy substance that flows through your blood and can easily lodge in your arteries and build up arterial plaque. It doesn't take anywhere near as much time as you may think for this to occur. Some studies have shown that negative health effects of eating processed foods occurs within only *minutes* of consuming such foods.

So now you know the basics. Adopting even a few of these tips will make a profound difference in your overall health. At this moment, take a second to think about your current eating habits. What are the things you'd like to change? What foods do you want to eliminate, and what foods do you wish to add into your weekly menu? Food is medicine. Make the right choices for your body to thrive.

Food is not just calories. It is information.
It talks to our DNA and tells it what
to do. The most powerful tool to change
your health, environment, and the entire
world is your fork.

Dr. Mark Hyman

Delicious Meets Nutritious

Erin Holm

Foreword by
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Contents

xxiii	<i>Foreword</i>	
xxv	<i>Introduction</i>	
xxvi	<i>Recipe Tips</i>	
xxvii	<i>Menu Planning</i>	
xxviii	<i>Sample Menus</i>	
xxix	<i>Shopping List</i>	
1	Chapter 1	Starting Your Day
30	Chapter 2	Drinks
59	Chapter 3	Salads
127	Chapter 4	Soups
167	Chapter 5	Meat
197	Chapter 6	Fish
223	Chapter 7	Pasta Alternatives
235	Chapter 8	Vegetables
265	Chapter 9	Baking and Desserts
289	Chapter 10	Munchies
311	Chapter 11	Condiments
331	<i>Index</i>	
361	<i>Biography</i>	

Chapter 1

Starting Your Day

What nicer thing can you do for someone
than make them breakfast?

Anthony Bourdain

Quick Breakfasts

*All the recipes in this section
are meant to make busy mornings easier.*

Breakfast in a Jar

Serves 1

These jars are great to take to work or eat after your morning workout! Prepare them the night before.

The procedure is the same for all four of the recipes listed below.

- In a bowl, combine all the ingredients. Spoon into a 2-cup mason jar.
- Cover the jar with the lid and refrigerate overnight.
- In the morning, your breakfast is ready to go. Don't forget your spoon!
- Stir before eating.

Chia Porridge Jar

- 1 cup almond milk (or milk of choice)
- ¼ cup chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon hemp seeds
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon raw honey (or stevia to taste)
- 1 tablespoon almonds, chopped
- ½ cup fresh blueberries, pomegranate seeds, or chopped fresh fruit of choice

Berry Muesli Jar

- 2 tablespoons of old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 tablespoon buckwheat groats
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- ½ cup water
- 1 tablespoon apple juice
- 1 teaspoon raw honey (or stevia to taste)
- ½ tablespoon chopped almonds
- ½ tablespoon sunflower seeds
- 1 tablespoon dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup grated apple
- ¼ cup fresh blueberries
- Garnish with your yogurt of choice

Apple Cinnamon Quinoa Protein Jar

- ½ cup milk of choice: almond, rice, hemp (Greek or coconut yogurts work well too)
- ¼ cup cooked quinoa
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce or half an apple, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon Chia seeds
- 1 teaspoon raw honey (or stevia to taste)
- 1 tablespoon chopped nuts (walnuts, almonds, cashews)

Spiced Ginger Steel-Cut Oat Jar

- ½ cup steel-cut oats
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 1 cup almond milk or milk of choice
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger or ½ teaspoon crystallized ginger, chopped
- Pinch ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch salt
- 1 tablespoon raw honey (or stevia to taste)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon pecans, walnuts, or Brazil nuts, chopped
- 1 tablespoon coconut meat or dried coconut



Chia Porridge Jar

Brain-Smart Breakfast Porridge

Serves 4

Gluten-Free

Note that this porridge needs to soak overnight. This makes it really quick to cook in the morning.

½ cup buckwheat groats

½ cup quinoa

2 tablespoons of chia seeds

1 cup almond milk or milk of choice

2 tablespoons chunky almond butter

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground cardamom

1 teaspoon vanilla

¼ cup raisins

Toasted almonds (optional)

Berries (optional)

Sliced bananas (optional)

1 cup water

- In a medium saucepan, stir together the almond milk, buckwheat groats, quinoa, chia seeds, almond butter, cinnamon, cardamom, vanilla, and raisins.
- Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- In the morning, add the water and bring the mixture to a gentle boil.
- Immediately reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until the milk has been absorbed. Watch the mixture to make sure all the liquid does not evaporate. You can always add in a quarter cup or so of water.
- Turn off the heat and let stand for 5 minutes.
- Serve warm.

Garnish with almonds, berries, and sliced bananas.

Jungle Açai Bowl

Serves 2

Açai berries come from the Amazonian rainforest in northern Brazil. They are extremely high in antioxidant properties. Camu camu is another berry from South America that is very high in vitamin C. This recipe is like an extra-thick smoothie you eat with a spoon. It's just like the Açai Bowls popularized by South American surfers that are popping up on healthy breakfast menus along the West Coast.

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen berries
- 2 tablespoons açai powder or ¼ cup frozen açai concentrate
- 1 tablespoon camu camu berry powder
- 1 cup coconut milk (or milk of choice)
- ½ cup coconut water
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil
- 1 scoop protein powder (optional)
- Stevia or raw honey (optional)
- 2–3 tablespoons healthy granola
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds

- Combine all the ingredients for the açai bowl in a high-speed blender.
- Blend until smooth. Add sweetener to taste.
- Pour into two bowls.

To garnish, sprinkle healthy granola or Chia seeds on top of each bowl. Yummy!

Super Crunch: A Better Granola

Serves 12

Note that this recipe must be made ahead.

3 cups old-fashioned gluten-free oats

2 cups quinoa flakes

1½ cups nuts (almonds or pecans), chopped

¼ cup raw sunflower seeds

¼ cup hemp seeds

¼ cup chia seeds

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

½ cup unsweetened coconut flakes
or shavings

½ cup unsweetened applesauce

2 large egg whites, beaten

¼ cup coconut oil melted

¼ cup raw honey or yacón syrup, warmed

½ teaspoon sea salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 cup dried fruits, chopped into bite-size pieces (cherries, unsweetened cranberries, apricots, apples, or goji berries)

- Preheat the oven to 300° F.
- Combine all the ingredients except the dried fruit in a large bowl, tossing to combine.
- Make sure all the ingredients are well coated with the coconut oil, egg whites, applesauce, and honey.
- Evenly spread the mixture on a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet. Bake the granola for about 30 to 40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes until golden brown and dry.
- Let the mixture cool on the baking sheet.
- Mix in the chopped dried fruit.
- Store in an airtight container.

If you are using the dried cherries, apples, or apricots, roughly chop them into smaller, bite-sized pieces. I like to use a combination of the dried fruits; it adds colour and different sweetness to the granola.

