

HOW to FEEL ~~good~~ **FABULOUS!**

A Method For **Feeling Great Again**,
More Effective Than Any Medicine



By Carolyn Hansen

About Carolyn Hansen

Carolyn Hansen is a noted Holistic Health and Wellness Coach who hails from Whangarei, New Zealand where she owns an Anytime Fitness Gym. She has gained a reputation online as an authority on health, exercise and weight loss matters and is the author of several thousand health and fitness articles along with eBooks and programs that can be found [here](#).

She has devoted more than three decades to the fitness industry, both offline and online, teaching people the simple secrets to getting into better shape, losing weight, and improving health.



Her main goal is to change the paradigm of health care from sickness care to wellness care and will be showing people how to live longer, healthier lives while avoiding the many mistaken beliefs and practices that diminish health and longevity.

She will encourage you to become stronger and stay that way through each decade of your life, maintain your health, wellness and vitality and to ensure your “health span” matches your “life span”.

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Table of Contents...

Introduction	...4
Chapter One	
Modern Life And The Pursuit Of Happiness	...5
Chapter Two	
What Is Depression And Why Is It Rising	...9
Chapter Three	
Sedentary Lifestyle: Linked To Depression	...13
Chapter Four	
Exercise More Effective Than Medication To Manage Mental Health	...25
Chapter Five	
How Exercise Increases Happiness	...34
Chapter Six	
Why Making Yourself A Priority Is A Must	...38
Chapter Seven	
Get Your Momentum Engine Going	...43

Introduction

Right now, our world is smack dab in the middle of the Second Great Depression.

Only it's not our economy that's depressed - it's our people.

Depression is a universally understood condition of sadness and low spirits, life has lost its lustre and doom and gloom prevails. This condition tripled in the early 2020 months of the global coronavirus pandemic - jumping from 8.5 percent before the pandemic and has since persisted and worsened, climbing to 32.8 percent affecting 1 in every 3 American adults.

Feeling down in the dumps can come out of nowhere, sometimes with no rhyme or reason, or it can follow a crushing breakup, the loss of someone special, or any other particularly tough time.

It can slowly roll in, like the dark clouds before a storm, or it can hit you suddenly, without any warning. Whatever form it comes in, sadness is something we all experience - and yet it can still be incredibly difficult to get past.



But here's the good news - we are beginning to discover through research the things that contribute to this "loss of happiness", and if you have been locked in a battle with the blues, relieving your depression may be as simple as making one easy permanent change to your lifestyle as I will present to you over the following pages.

Chapter One

Modern Life And The Pursuit Of Happiness

Happy people are most likely to feel useful, in control of their life, valued, and satisfied with their physical, mental and emotional well-being, yet we are living in an era of rising tensions and negative emotions.

The latest World Happiness Report finds that people are feeling worse and negative feelings are rising around the world. The United States is particularly hard-hit with an “epidemic of addictions” and a “sad state of happiness”.

Each year the report measures and analyses how global happiness has changed over time, based on data stretching back to 2005. We have been getting less happy and are experiencing more depression, suicide ideation and self-harm.

One trend is very clear: Negative feelings - worry, anxiety, sadness, and anger have been rising around the world, which likely explains the staggering 400 percent increase in anti-depressant drugs prescribed since 1988. Close to 10 percent of the western world now takes mood-enhancement drugs for a once rare condition that is now very common.

One of the downsides of our “loss of happiness” (which is how people describe the chemical lowering of endorphin levels) is the need to replace what is missing inside with external things such as alcohol or drugs, food and overeating, relationships or material items.

Some of these things may give temporary relief but do not provide long-term happiness, joy, peacefulness or contentment.

For around 20 percent of us humans, mental health disorders such as depression or anxiety may mean that happiness is always just out of reach. These people do not choose to be depressed or anxious; they do not know another way of being.

Many of us are constantly searching for this thing called happiness, as we are brought to believe that this is the holy grail we should be seeking. It's almost a world-wide obsession these days, with self-help shelves of bookstores and online websites laden with offerings that promise to help you find or achieve happiness.

They tell us we should strive for happiness. They tell us we all have the right to happiness. And of course we do, but does this modern version of a happy utopia seem like a virtually unattainable goal?

We could define happiness as simply “feeling good” and being content with our “lot in life”. It does not mean life is perfect but generally we have a sense of direction, purpose and meaning to our life.



When we have an overall sense of satisfaction and contentment we can say we are happy, but when we don't feel like we are achieving this state, we can be left feeling sad and empty like something is missing.

Happiness Is an Inside Job

For many, happiness is hard to obtain. Research is showing evidence of a rising tide of this spirit of unhappiness in most advanced societies. A decline in the number of people who regard themselves as “happy” is being documented and seems to be consistent with the staggering increase in cases of depression in the last decade.

We are part of the aspirational, “have it all” generation, and it's no wonder that it's very easy to lose sight of what true happiness means to each and every one of us as individuals.

Modern society seems to constantly be seeking instant results, always on the lookout to get something for nothing. We often live our lives in a vacuum of personal accountability and responsibility and seem to have abandoned our beliefs and faith in self-discipline and good old fashioned hard work.

We expect benefits without having to put in any effort and expect happiness without any personal sacrifice. When we do not get these things one of the side effects is sadness, unfulfillment and depression and we look to a pill to fix us.

Somehow; we must once again take pride in being in control of our own life, our well-being and our body and the answer is not in doctors and pills - it is inside of each of us.

I regularly hear friends and acquaintances declaring their unhappiness because they have not achieved a defined target, been passed over for promotion, gone through a relationship breakup and a variety of other perceived failures.

Berating oneself will not change the situation, and the raw emotions only serve to compound the current belief in one's worthlessness. Just the other day someone uttered the words, "I just want to be happy". As we talked she further explained, "I don't know what's missing, I just know I want to be happy".

In today's society where so much is available to us at the mere touch of a keyboard, it's quite natural that we turn to more materialistic or self-indulgent solutions for a short term fix, and whilst this provides comfort and a sense of wellbeing in the short term, it leaves us striving for the next fix. Believe me I've done it myself and have the wardrobe disasters to prove it.

Yet when I look back at how my mother lived, she always bought things that meant something, possessions she would cherish for a long time, rather than following current trends, and invested her energies into pursuits that provided lasting enjoyment. She knew who she was and was satisfied with that.

Having, myself, ridden roughshod through the peaks and troughs, credit card in hand, chasing this elusive thing called happiness, what really hit home (apart from the credit card bill) was the word "contentment".

Hearing my mum's voice using it in that context I equated it to the steady, secure, satisfying and indeed quietly "happy" place I'd been searching for. I no longer needed instant euphoric highs to be "happy".

Today, for me, contentment is something far more comforting and long lasting. Now, instead of looking at what I want and desire, I appreciate what I already have, and for the most part I'll happily settle for a life of peaceful contentment.

Everyone has the capacity to be happy and content and it's about getting to the right place mentally to achieve that instead of constantly chasing outside aspirations. Looking within and accepting that the seeds of happiness are already there, you just need to recognise they are there and nurture them.

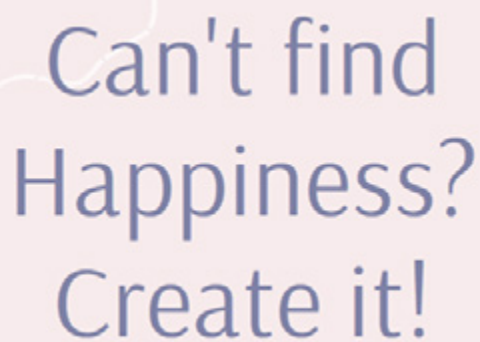
One thing I do know for sure, when my own health and fitness is at the top of the totem pole of priorities in life, it is much easier to feel happy, content and fulfilled. I personally define "fitness" as "I just feel good inside".

Is Happiness a Choice?

It is often said that "happiness is a choice." But then, we may wonder, why aren't more people happy?

In my experience, happiness is complicated. Some people find happiness even in situations that would challenge the most optimistic person; some are unhappy despite having it all. For some, happiness is fleeting and depends on their present circumstances, whereas others seem to be generally happy or generally unhappy no matter what is happening in their lives.

In many cases, it may be true that happiness is a choice. To some extent, we choose our own thoughts and reactions, which impact the way we feel. We can improve our happiness quotient by taking steps to change our thinking (for example, keeping a gratitude journal, staying mindful of the present moment, accepting what is, or developing healthier coping mechanisms like exercising healthy eating and other self-care practices).



Can't find
Happiness?
Create it!

We can view our negative emotions as a gauge, a measure or a signal that some aspect of life needs to change and take action to return to a better state of mind.

If you go through life desperately focusing on the results of trying to acquire material things to achieve happiness, joy and peacefulness, it will likely evade

you. The solution is inside each of us and is easily accessed and we are now going to look deeper into this relatively easy fix....

Chapter Two

What Is Depression And Why Is It Rising?

Everyone has good and bad days. But some people experience more bad days than good. If you experience a period of 2 weeks or longer where you feel sad or lose interest in activities you used to enjoy and have trouble functioning in your daily life, you may be experiencing depression

Depression is one of the world's most common health conditions. It's estimated that one-in-three women and one-in-five men have an episode of major depression by the age of 65.

It difficult to measure the numbers because depression is not a constant condition – people tend to transition in and out of depressive episodes. The chances of ever having an episode of depression are therefore much higher than recorded.

Depressed people don't all shuffle around with a long face, or cry at any provocation. But quietly ticking away inside you are slowly “losing interest in important parts of life”. Symptoms include eating or sleeping too much or too little; pulling away from people and usual activities; having low or no energy; feeling numb or like nothing matters; feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried or scared; and thinking of harming yourself or others.



A visceral description is quoted by the UK campaign group Mind: “It starts as sadness, then I feel myself shutting down, becoming less capable of coping. Eventually, I just feel numb and empty.”

Major depression is the number one psychological (mental) disorder in the western world. It is growing in all age groups and today over 17 million people in the US, which includes 13 percent of teenagers and 3 percent of children under thirteen, are currently on Prozac, the second most commonly prescribed drug.

At any one time it is estimated that more than 300 million people have depression – about 6-10 percent of the world’s population. Women are more likely to be depressed than men.

Depression is a huge problem and the burden on society is incredible with an estimated cost in the US alone of more than \$40 billion dollars per year, and an annual loss of two hundred million work hours. The human cost is high too with suicide being the 8th leading cause of death.

It has surged to epidemic proportions in recent decades, from little-mentioned misery at the margins of society to a phenomenon that is rarely far from the news. It is widespread in workplaces, classrooms, boardrooms and inner cities, farms and suburbs.

Depression is a leading global disability, the second largest killer after heart disease. The link between suicide, the second leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29, and depression is clear. It is a serious problem for us humans.

While rates for depression and other common mental health conditions vary considerably, the US is the “most depressed” country in the world, followed closely by Colombia, Ukraine, the Netherlands and France. At the other end of the scale are Japan, Nigeria and China.

Why are there such wide variations?

The stark contrasts between countries have led some to dub depression as a “first world problem” or a “luxury”. The logic is that if you are staring down the barrel of a gun or you don’t know where the next meal is coming from, you have no time for such introspection.

What causes depression?

There is a part of the brain called the limbic system that acts like a thermostat, controlling various functions of the body – including mood – and restoring equilibrium after the normal ups and downs of life.

The limbic system is a circuit of nerves, transmitting signals to each other via two chemicals, serotonin and noradrenalin, of which people with depression have a deficit. According to this description, depressive illness is predominantly a physical, not mental, illness.

It's a fact, when under stress, weak, vulnerable people give in quickly; strong, resilient people keep going, redouble their efforts, fight any pressure to give up and so push the limbic system to breaking point. However, there is no scientific evidence to support this theory, as it is impossible to experiment on live brains.

Other commonly agreed causes or triggers are past trauma or abuse; a genetic predisposition to depression, which may or may not be the same as a family history; life stresses, including financial problems or bereavement; chronic pain or illness; taking drugs, (over the counter prescription or others including cannabis, ecstasy and heroin), along with a nutrient poor diet and lack of proper physical activity.

Our bodies were simply never designed for the sleep-deprived, poorly nourished, under exercised, frenzied pace of twenty-first century life.

While there are more and more treatments for depression, the problem is rising, not falling. A key reason for the continuing rise in depressive illness is that drugs do not necessarily “cure” the patient and are usually only a band aid with temporary relief. No new antidepressant drugs have been developed in the last 25 years, forcing psychiatrists to look elsewhere for help.

Am I depressed or just sad?

Everyone feels sad sometimes. When you are sadder than usual, you might say you feel “depressed.” But how do you know when extreme sadness crosses over into clinical depression?



If you feel low, sad and upset when faced with difficult times and challenging circumstances... it's certainly no fun, but it's also pretty normal. These feelings usually pass over time and we get back to being ourselves.

Depression is about being sad, sure - but it's more than that, it's a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It affects how you feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. You may have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities, and sometimes you may feel as if life isn't worth living.

If feelings of sadness and low mood go on for a long time, start to effect the way we think and feel, and interfere with our ability to enjoy life, it could be a sign of depression.

Chapter Three

Sedentary Lifestyle: Linked To Depression

You hear a lot about living a sedentary lifestyle these days but what exactly is it and how do you know if you are living one? This term “sedentary lifestyle” is a medical term used to describe a type of lifestyle with a lack of physical exercise, lower levels of physical activity, or activities that require minimal to no body movement.

Doing light activities which result in low energy expenditure for much of the day such as watching television and computer use, this type of lifestyle is typified by long, uninterrupted periods of time or significant portions of the day spent sitting or lying down, with little or no vigorous physical exercise

Living this way is considered sedentarism, and this has emerged recently as a potential indicator of both physical and mental health in adult populations. There is a strong link between sedentary behaviour and mental health issues including depression, anxiety, and self-esteem.



Most people live a sedentary lifestyle, as they cannot meet specific physical activity guidelines. For example, the American guidelines suggest that adults engage in 150 minutes of physical activity each week to be considered active.

Yet only 21 percent of adults meet the necessary guidelines. And, only five percent of people do more than thirty minutes of physical activity per day.

Many people fall into the trap of being sedentary because they have the illusion of being active. They have busy days filled with work and rushing around being “busy” but that doesn’t inherently mean they are active. If you wake up, drive to work, and spend your day sitting at a desk, you are still sedentary. While you might be intellectually active, you aren’t physically active.



A lot of health experts agree on the following guidelines that will help tell you if your lifestyle is indeed sedentary or inactive.

- Your day is spent mostly sitting
- You have a job which requires no physical activity
- You are not doing any muscle strengthening activity at least a couple of times each week
- Do not get regularly your blood pumping and some ‘huff and puff’ happening
- Your leisure time is not spent being active but involves more sedentary activities

It has been estimated by the World Health Organization that up to 85 percent of people lead lives that can be defined as sedentary. A caution has been issued by them that living this type of life is becoming one of the most principal causes of death and disability. A sedentary lifestyle has become so common that the experts are now calling it a disease as it is causing so many preventable health problems and shortening people’s lives.

Not only does a sedentary lifestyle increase the susceptibility of diseases that cause premature death, being inactive influences and speeds up the aging process itself. This is confirmed with the incidents of people that we know (maybe in our own family) that have been taken long before their time leaving us shaking our heads in disbelief wondering what how this could have happened.

This trait is accelerating as our modern world becomes less and less active. One of the main reasons is the loss of muscle tissue that accompanies a sedentary lifestyle. Muscle atrophy (shrinking and weakening) and bone deterioration that accompanies muscle tissue loss downgrades the entire body and its systems and we become more susceptible to disease and physical injury.

Simply put: Our bodies were not made to be stationary for long periods. Historically, if a person was sitting or lying down for hours when not asleep, they would have starved or gotten eaten by something. Nowadays, something is still going to get you - but that something becomes life shortening disease and premature aging that will cause you to become old before your time.



And it doesn't take long for sedentary tendencies to wreak havoc on your health. Research shows it can take just two weeks of inactivity (in young, healthy people) to cause some pretty significant health effects, including reduced muscle mass and metabolic changes.

The human body functions best when it is active, strong, vital and dynamic. Hormones are balanced; blood is circulating around the body efficiently taking nutrients and oxygen to all tissues and cells maintaining their health. Body weight is maintained at a healthy level, mental and emotional health is stable and sleep is of a better quality so the renewal and rejuvenation of the cells is at a maximum to maintain health and wellness.

A helpful indicator to see how active you are: Count the number of hours you sleep, and then subtract that from 24 hours. That number is the number of hours in the day you have to be active and engaged. If you spend more than 50 percent of that time sitting, reclining, and not moving, it's important to find ways to change this.

A Sedentary Lifestyle Can Cause Unhappiness (And How to Fix It)

Have you ever wondered if there are any mental and emotional implications to being sedentary? Have you ever felt like the more you sit around, the worse you feel in all areas of your life? Do you want to know what connection is between a sedentary lifestyle and unhappiness?

With everything going around in the world, people are more sedentary than ever, like people gravitating towards remote jobs. Fewer jobs involve physical effort, and people mostly sit in an office chair from nine to five. There is less and less time in the average individual's life to engage in physical activities. It is hard to find time to schedule a gym session between all your responsibilities.

But this lifestyle is very unhealthy, not only from a physical standpoint but also from a mental one. So, why is sedentarism so bad, and what can you do to avoid being negatively impacted by it?

A Sedentary Lifestyle Places A Strain On Your Physical Health

Many people tend to brush off the risk associated with being sedentary. As long as you have a healthy diet, being a little sedentary can't be that bad, right?

Being passive and sitting around all day long can affect your health in the long term. You have a higher chance of being overweight, developing type 2 diabetes or heart disease, and experiencing depression and anxiety.

Humans are built to stand upright. Your heart and cardiovascular system work more effectively that way. Sitting for long periods can lead to weakening and wasting away of the large leg and gluteal (backside) muscles.

These large muscles are important for walking and for stabilising you. If these muscles are weak you are more likely to injure yourself from falls, and from strains when you do exercise.

When you are physically active, on the other hand, your overall energy levels and endurance improve, and your muscles and bones maintain strength.

Moving and challenging your muscles helps your body digest the fats and sugars you eat. If you spend a lot of time sitting, digestion is not as efficient, so you retain those fats and sugars as fat in your body.

Even if you exercise but spend a large amount of time sitting, you are still risking health problems, such as metabolic syndrome. The latest research suggests you need 60–75 minutes per day of moderate-intensity activity to combat the dangers of excessive sitting.

Just like your legs and gluteals, your hips and back will not support you as well if you sit for long periods. Sitting causes your hip flexor muscles to shorten, which can lead to problems with your hip joints which will affect mobility somewhere down the track.

Sitting for long periods can also cause problems with your back, especially if you consistently sit with poor posture or don't use an ergonomically designed chair or workstation. Poor posture also causes poor spine health such as compression in the discs in your spine, leading to premature degeneration, which can be very painful.

We don't understand all of the links between sitting and mental health as well as we do the links between sitting and physical health yet, but we do know that the risk of both anxiety and depression is higher in people that sit more.

A Sedentary Lifestyle Makes You Feel Unmotivated

It's fascinating that, no matter how much you might want to get moving, you often feel like you can't. Getting out of bed can seem like a daunting task most days. The human brain favours sedentarism over more dynamic behaviours.

The brain feels the need to conserve energy, and passive tasks need little to no energy. On the other hand, active behaviours need a much more considerable amount of energy. The more time you spend being sedentary, the more energy the brain will consume to keep you in that rut. Once you give in to the desire to become a couch potato, that can be detrimental to your motivation to do things. Your brain will fight you, trying to keep you from getting up and consuming energy.

This creates a vicious circle. You are a little sedentary, which makes you unmotivated, which leads you to be even more sedentary, and so on. And losing motivation spreads to all areas of your life. When our bodies feel sluggish and minds seem a bit foggy, any thoughts of increasing physical activity are not appealing.

Leading a sedentary lifestyle is known to contribute to depression. Let us examine what causes this. It turns out, hormones play an important role. Serotonin is a happy hormone released in the brain. It helps us to maintain mood balance which provides us with positive feelings and motivation.

When sadness or depression hits, the release of serotonin is limited. This makes it more difficult to get up off the couch and participate in activity. The more sitting that occurs, the tighter the grip depression has on the mind and body. A vicious cycle soon begins.

Whether depression leads to lack of activity or lack of activity causes depression, it is important to break the cycle. To avoid falling into this rut, you need to make sure your schedule (regardless of how “busy” you are) ALWAYS involves physical activity.

Get yourself a gym membership and start going a few times a week. Force yourself to start doing things. Once you start taking care of your body, your brain will get used to consuming energy, thus allowing you to be motivated once again.

A Sedentary Lifestyle Affects Your Memory

Many people would never associate sitting too long with a decrease in brain health. Most people don't even think about their brain health anyways. But the truth is your brain health can take a toll because of sedentarism.

While dementia and other memory issues are strongly correlated to genetic factors, studies have found that a lack of exercise can have a similar effect. A study was done on more than 16,000 adults over 65, and researchers found that lack of exercise greatly increased the risk of developing dementia.

**So far, the only solution to this issue is increased physical activity.
It is the ONLY way to avoid cognitive decline.**

A Sedentary Lifestyle Keeps You Away From Society

While it might seem like you can stay connected to people from the comfort of your own home, that's not entirely true. The more inactive you are, the less likely you will keep in touch with people.

A sedentary person does the bare minimum daily. Because of this, their interactions are limited to work colleagues, family, and immediate friends. If you stay at home all day, it can be difficult to create new meaningful relationships with people.

The circle of people you know stays the same. You don't have the opportunity to meet new people, and you become isolated. Even the people who are closest to you will drift further and further away. If you never see your friends face to face, your bond will weaken.

To make sure you have enough social interaction, you need to get out in the world. You need to see people face to face; you need to have common activities. The best way to ensure you don't become isolated is to start being active. Try new hobbies, especially if they involve physical activity. Maybe pick up a sport, or get an exercise buddy and go to the gym. By putting yourself out into the world, you also allow yourself the opportunity to meet new people and create new connections.

A Sedentary Lifestyle Increases Stress Levels

While research is limited on this topic, the body of evidence suggests that a sedentary lifestyle is linked to higher stress levels. One of the main reasons for this is the use of technology. On average, more sedentary people spend more time in front of screens. This can induce the feeling of addiction, which is a stressful feeling for all people. Moreover, sedentary people tend to do less with their time.

This can make people spiral as they feel like they are not doing enough. As you sit around, the weight of your responsibilities becomes more and more unbearable. Additionally, the weakness of your body takes a strain on your mental health. As you start to feel weaker, you feel less in control of your life, of your actions, thus increasing the amount of stress you feel.

If you start to become stressed because of the increased levels of sedentarism in your life, chances are you need to get out in the world and start being active. Schedule weekly activities that require physical strength. Once you start getting in better shape, you will feel the levels of stress lowering.

A Sedentary Life Leads To Depression And Anxiety

The main area that is affected by sedentarism is your mental health. Once you become a couch potato, the likelihood of you experiencing depression or anxiety is much higher, in fact, double.

The main reason for this issue is hormones. They play an essential role when it comes to balancing out your mood. The primary hormone involved in this process is serotonin. When it isn't released, it leads to depression and anxiety. So when you lay around all day, the likelihood of your brain releasing serotonin is much lower.

Loneliness: The Silent Epidemic

Loneliness was a growing, global concern well before the coronavirus pandemic disrupted the way we connect with one another. The number of people who report feeling lonely went from one in four pre-virus to one in two amid lockdowns, and increased disconnection and loneliness have continued despite the loosening of restrictions.

Feeling lonely can have a negative impact on your mental health, especially if these feelings have lasted a long time, increasing the risk of certain mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep problems and increased stress.

It's critical we collectively and individually address the issue of loneliness, which is linked to premature death, poor physical and mental health and lower life satisfaction.

People experience loneliness when they lack a sense of connection with others. It can feel like a sense of isolation; other times, it just feels like no one is listening. Loneliness can be caused by mental, emotional, and physical factors, and it can happen even when you are surrounded by other people. The statistics show that ironically, you are not alone in feeling lonely.

Feeling lonely now and then is normal, but can become a bigger problem when it's unaddressed. Working to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships can reduce feelings of loneliness while offering some protection against depression.



Men tend to report higher levels of loneliness than women, with 39 percent of men living alone experiencing loneliness.

Depression Feeds On Withdrawal And Inactivity

When you are inactive and your brain doesn't release serotonin you become sad and depressed. And when people feel anxious or depressed, they are less likely to engage in physical activity because they don't find the strength to do so. This creates a vicious cycle that can only be broken by physical activity.

When you are feeling down, even going for a walk is the last thing you might want to do, but you have to force yourself to do it. Engaging in any form of physical activity will boost your mood.

When you are sad or depressed, you slowly withdraw into yourself. You don't go out and do the things that you did before, you stop reaching out to others, you lose your confidence to try what you might have previously embraced or had the courage to face.

And you slow way down. It's hard to find the energy to do anything, whether that be having a shower, or putting on makeup, or going for a walk, or doing much else than just sitting on the couch watching TV.

It's one thing to be told that you need to get up and force yourself to do small things for yourself, to help you start lifting yourself out of the pit. It's another to be told that giving in to the withdrawal and inactivity is actually feeding the depression, and will make it worse.

It shines a new perspective on the tendency to withdraw, the powerful gravitational pull to just sit on the couch. It shifts the nature of that force from the status of "I'm feeling too low to do anything else, even if I know I should, and this feels somehow comforting" to "Yikes, if I keep sitting on the couch like this day after day, and keep avoiding calls from my friends, it's going to feed the depression and make me worse."

It makes giving in to it dangerous, the withdrawal and sitting around isn't just an unpleasant, passive state – it is very harmful to your health and happiness.

The Role of Stress In Depression

There is clear evidence showing that emotional and social stress can lead to clinical depression. While it may seem intuitive how stress can contribute to symptoms of depression, stress doesn't just make us feel overwhelmed and frazzled: it changes our biology.

Stress can trigger the release of hormones and other chemicals that affect many systems in the body. For example, stress can lead to inflammation, changes in blood sugar and the gut microbiome, and more.

When our bodies are not healthy, this response to stress can become exaggerated, leading to chronic or higher levels of inflammation and other changes. This can set the stage for depression.



The Role Of Biology In Depression: A Whole Body Condition

Research has now proven that when it comes to mental health, it truly isn't all in your head. For depression, mood disorders, and other mental illnesses, we have to consider the health of the body as a whole.

A Sedentary Lifestyle Can Cause Unhappiness

Having a sedentary lifestyle might seem inevitable in the context of today's world. But having such a lifestyle can be harmful and can cause you unhappiness. It takes a toll on your physical health, on your mental health, on your relationships, and just about every area of your life.

It works both ways: If exercise can improve what you have got, lack of exercise can contribute to a mental health downturn. In fact, just 10 days without fitness can cause our brains to start losing cognitive function. When mood is low (or stress is high), motivation to move is often low too - yet if you don't move, your mood could suffer even more.

The Solution

Exercise releases chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that improve your mood. It can also get you out in the world, help to reduce any feelings of loneliness and isolation, and put you in touch with other people.

Get out there. Exercising in groups outside or at the gym can do wonders for your mental health. It's important to remember that loneliness is common and normal – you are not alone. And just a single positive step can help you to reconnect with people around you.

If you are in that zone with depression where you find it hard to do almost anything, but want to get better and want to stop feeding the monster the only way to break out of this rut is to force yourself to become more active, much more active.

Schedule physical activities in your weekly calendar. As well as a couple of structured gym strengthening sessions each week, pick up hobbies that involve exercise as well. Even a simple walk. Once you become more active, you will see improvements in all areas of your life.

Happiness is an overall sense of satisfaction and contentment with life and living, a state of appreciation for all that you have, the understanding that every experience can bring growth, spiritual expansion and inner wealth, a perception of balance and peace, a feeling of being whole and complete within oneself.

We have all heard the saying “happiness comes from within”. We may wonder why our culture does not nurture this?

I personally believe that happiness is one of the key ingredients of health. That is how I define being “fit”. You can't identify it - you just feel really good - inside. It is about inner peace and harmony, an inner awareness that generates happiness from the inside out.



Chapter Four

Exercise More Effective Than Medication To Manage Mental Health

A large new analysis published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, the most comprehensive to date encompassing 97 meta-reviews of 1,039 randomized controlled trials involving 128,119 participants finds that exercise is more beneficial for conditions such as anxiety and depression than standard psychotherapy or medications.

A Worldwide Problem

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that one in every eight people worldwide (a billion people) globally are living with a mental disorder, most typically anxiety issues and depression. Poor mental health costs the world economy approximately \$2.5 trillion each year, a cost projected to rise to \$6 trillion by 2030.

Despite all this bad news, a new study concludes that something as simple as physical activity should be viewed as a first-choice treatment for people living with mental health issues and that essentially all forms of exercise produced significant mental health benefits. Shorter, high intensity exercise programs produced the greatest effect.

Physical activity is 1.5 times more effective at reducing symptoms of depression, psychological stress, and anxiety than medication or cognitive behaviour therapy, according to the study's lead author, Dr. Ben Singh.

He says, “while the value of physical activity for people with depression and anxiety is widely recognized, it is not considered for managing such conditions as often as the study asserts it should be. Physical activity must be prioritised to better manage the growing cases of mental health conditions”.

Treating Without Medication

The standard medical treatment for depression includes anti-depressants. While they can treat the symptoms of depression, they do not address its causes.

Anti-depressants were invented in the 1950s. Since then, researchers have developed several different types of the medication. Today, antidepressants are one of the most frequently prescribed medications in the United States.

These types of drugs are controversial. Some people take them and find a benefit, some people take them and are harmed. They have been linked to road rage, pathological gambling, and complicated acts of fraud. Some make us less sad or neurotic, and others may even shape our social relationships. It turns out many these medications don't just affect our bodies – they change who we are – they can break our brains. We may wonder if there should be warnings on packets.



Anti-depressants work by increasing the amount of “feel-good” chemicals available for the brain to use. They are classified as controlled substances (aka they have a high abuse potential), will immediately alter brain chemistry so there is no “natural happiness” solution there.

It sounds counterintuitive doesn't it? Shouldn't taking psychiatric drugs fix the problem? In fact, we see that psychiatric drugs create a problem.

In addition to poor recovery, the harmful side effects of psychiatric drugs have been well documented with weight gain, vomiting, confusion, irritability, and increased risk of suicide. Long-term consequences of taking psychiatric drugs are even more devastating - studies reveal they shorten life expectancy.

Addictive? Anti-depressants can be addictive but in a very different way than drugs such as heroin or alcohol are addictive. Individuals taking anti-depressants aren't overcome with cravings for the drug because they don't experience a sensation of euphoria when taken, but it does not stop people from becoming dependent upon them.

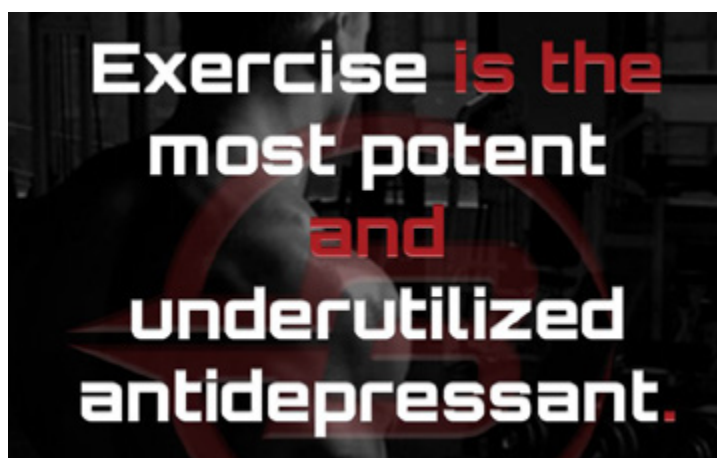
People can develop a physical dependence and if they suddenly stop taking their anti-depressant can experience withdrawal symptoms such as hand tremors and nausea. Additionally, they are very likely to experience feelings of depression or anxiety, so again...no long term "happiness" solution here. Services to help people get off psychiatric drugs are nearly non-existent.

When you weigh up the exercise solution versus the drug solution can you see the difference? Furthermore, exercise has additional benefits compared to medications, such as reduced cost, fewer side effects and offering bonus gains for physical health, such as healthier body weight, improved cardiovascular and bone health, better blood sugar regulation and cognitive benefits and so on.

Natural Happiness That Is Better Than Any Pill

We all want to be happy, and there is plenty you can do to feel happier more often. Or at the very least...you limit the likelihood that you will feel sad and depressed.

It's such good news that research is starting to reveal the incredible connection between our physical actions and our mental health and what you do in the way of physical activity can have a significant impact on how you feel.



Why it works - Exercise impacts positive mental health through multiple pathways, and with short and long-term effects. Immediately after exercise, endorphins and dopamine are released in the brain.

In the short term, this helps boost mood and buffer stress. Long term, the release of neurotransmitters in response to exercise promotes changes in the brain that help with mood and cognition, decrease inflammation and boost immune function, which all influence our brain function and mental health.

Regular exercise can lead to improved sleep, which plays a critical role in depression and anxiety. It also has psychological benefits, such as increased self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment, all of which are beneficial for people struggling with depression.

Happy, Naturally!

We all experience some sadness as part of weathering life's misfortunes and have periods of being down in the dumps. Most people normally recover from such low points and carry on. However, sometimes people don't recover from life's setbacks. It is only recently that people have begun to see the link and the importance between physical activity and mental health with inactive or sedentary people having twice the risk of becoming depressed.

We all know that exercising routinely provides a number of important benefits like promoting cardiovascular (heart/lung) health, lowering blood pressure, keeping bones strong, improving muscle tone and strength, and of course, a proper exercise regimen can energize you and help reduce excess body fat.

But did you know that exercise has yet more benefits that can make your life a whole lot better? As well as the positive effects of exercise on depression and exercise increases self-esteem, improves mood, reduces anxiety levels, increases the ability to handle stress, and improves sleep patterns.

An exercise program provides similar improvements in anxiety and depression as anti-depressant medications but without negative side effects. Endorphin levels (feel good hormones) are increased by more than 60 percent after an exercise session leaving you feeling rejuvenated and even euphoric, keeping your mind trouble-free.

When people suffering from depression participate in a regular exercise program, their self-confidence and self-esteem improve, which has a strong impact on their overall quality of life. If you have never exercised before, learning an exercise program can be considered a new skill. Many people experience a mood boost and increased energy levels when they master a new skill or talent. This can provide a sense of accomplishment and achievement which counters the effect of sadness and depression.

Even a modest exercise program of 30 minutes a day, three days a week is an effective weapon for combating depression and the benefits of such a program are likely to be permanent for individuals who adopt exercise as a regular, ongoing life activity.

Just as you get more energy exercising you also get happier, have a better outlook on life, have more vitality and enjoy life more. You will feel good and have an effective weapon to fight the blues.

If you are one of the many people feeling sad or anxious, don't feel bad about it. Sadness is the emotion we experience when life does not go great or we encounter some kind of loss. It can be a difficult emotion to feel. But the goal should not be to live a life free of sadness, but about *being* with sadness.

It's about allowing yourself to listen to what is causing your sadness and understand why it is making you feel sad, which will help you learn from it and figure out what to do next. To that aim, you need strategies to tolerate the feeling without getting stuck and so we can remain emotionally healthy throughout the process.

Like all emotions, sadness helps us understand our actions, our behaviours, and ourselves. When something negative happens in your life, it can seem like your world is ending. But instead of suppressing or dismissing your emotions - either by distracting yourself or keeping up a good front - you should actually embrace them. All emotions are important to experience and have valuable information for us about our lives.

Instead of beating yourself up for feeling down, try to consider this as an opportunity to learn, grow, and find true healing. Emotions aren't necessarily good or bad, they are just states and signals that allow us to pay more attention to the events that create them. This can either motivate us to create more of a certain experience or less, for example.

Sadness, anger, anxiety, frustration, fear, and other “negative emotions” are not always pleasant to experience and are part of the human experience. But, like most emotions, they exist for a reason and can actually be quite useful to feel even though they can make us feel uncomfortable.

Nobody likes to feel uncomfortable, so it is natural to want to escape these feelings, and the dangers of unmanaged stress are real. There is a feeling that people sometimes have that these emotions will last forever or that the feelings themselves are the problem. They can all lead to stress and are often seen as emotions to be avoided, ignored, or otherwise disavowed, but they can actually be healthy to experience.

But if allowed to continue and progress into serious depression it can become much more complex, nuanced and dark, much more so than unhappiness or sadness - more like an implosion of self.

A better approach is to manage these feelings without denying them, to accept and even embrace our negative states, while also engaging in activities that can counter-balance these uncomfortable emotions in an authentic way.

Any negative emotions provide information and managing them is more about embracing the fact that we are feeling them, determining why we are feeling this way, and allowing ourselves to receive the messages that they are sending us before we release them and move forward.

More often, these feelings are beneficial because they can also send us messages. For example: Sadness and anxiety show that something is missing or something needs to change and that perhaps our well-being has been threatened.

Basically, these feelings are there to alert us that something is not right in the way we are living our life and to motivate us to make that change, rather than let them run unabated to wreak havoc on our life, our health, our relationships, and our stress levels.

Any negative emotional states can create extra stress in your body and your mind which can lead to health issues if the stress continues for long periods, or becomes chronic or overwhelming.

Exercise v Drug Treatment

Mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety aren't easy to treat by conventional medicine. Anti-depressant drugs have a high failure rate (improvement in only 40-60 percent of patients who take them) and may bring nasty side effects (weight gain for example). Talk therapy is time-consuming and expensive. And neither approach is suited to preventing the disorders from developing in the first place.

Many people overlook the exercise option that, when it is used, can be one of the most effective, most healthy, least disruptive and cheapest ways of managing mental health disorders.



It's hardly news that exercise is good for your physical health, and has long been extolled for mental health as well. But researchers are now making progress in understanding how, exactly, exercise works its mental magic.

Exercise, they are learning, has profound effects on brain structure itself, and especially in regions most affected by depression and schizophrenia. It also provides other, more subtle benefits such as focus, a sense of accomplishment and sometimes social stimulation, all of which are therapeutic in their own right. And while more is generally better, even modest levels of physical activity, can pay big dividends for mental health.

Exercise is a valuable tool against depression and offers many advantages. For one thing, antidepressant medications generally take several weeks or months to show their full effect. Exercise can improve mood almost immediately.

Researchers are still figuring out exactly how muscular exertion acts on the brain to improve mental health but they do know that exercise strengthens and boosts the brain as well as the body.

Physical exercise triggers the release of a protein known as brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). BDNF is one of the key molecules that encourage the growth of new brain cells – including in the hippocampus, a brain region important in memory and learning.

Sure enough, studies show that people with depression have lower levels of BDNF and since the hippocampus tends to be smaller or distorted in people with depression, anxiety and schizophrenia, boosting BDNF through exercise is a very important way physical activity can help manage these conditions.

Moving The Body, Engaging The Mind

Changing the structure of the brain isn't the only way physical activity can be beneficial for those suffering from mental health conditions. The habit of exercise can itself be beneficial, by altering people's thought patterns too.

For people feeling down in the dumps, simply doing something – anything - can be helpful in its own right because it occupies their attention and keeps them from focusing on their condition.

Exercise And A Healthy Brain

Exercise has other healthy positive effects on the brain, stimulating the release of endocannabinoids, molecules that are important in modifying the connections between brain cells, the mechanism that underlies learning. Having an enhanced learning capacity enables new coping strategies and skills to be acquired which give someone more control over their own healing process.

Physical activity also moderates the body's response to stress and reduces inflammation, both of which could plausibly help improve brain health in people with mental illness.



Besides just occupying the mind, regular workouts also give exercisers a clear sense of progress as their strength and fitness improves. This sense of accomplishment - which is be especially notable for weight (resistance) training, where people make quick, easily measurable gains - can help offset some of the burden of anxiety and depression.

Chapter Five

How Exercise Increases Happiness

It's true, most of us barely get to even “move a muscle” anymore. We sit on our backsides for around 80 percent of the day and somehow seem to think it does not matter, that our body will just adjust and be okay about this.

The widespread lack of physical activity in our modern technology driven “easy, comfortable” lives means we experience lowered endorphin levels on an ongoing basis.

Endorphins are nature's “feel good” hormones and are manufactured in the brain during intense physical activity. Endorphins lift your mood, calm you; relieve stress AND make you happy. They elevate your mood long after the exercise session has stopped, and help to keep us mentally and emotionally stable.

Many people are missing out on this natural “inner” magic because they think they are too busy, don't have time, are too stressed or that they simply don't need to bother to take time out to exercise. But when you neglect your health and your body all of your life goals are balancing on a shaky platform making being “happy” so much more elusive.



You could say happiness is one of the key ingredients to health. Improving fitness not only improves the body of the outside we can also look at it as improving our “inner sense of wellbeing”. This goes hand in hand with being “fit”. You often cannot put your finger on it or cannot identify it - you just feel really good... inside.

It is an inner awareness, an inner peace and harmony, a feeling of being whole and complete within oneself and from this radiates happiness – all from the inside out. This then leads on to that state of appreciation, sense of satisfaction and contentment with your lot in life and finally a perception of balance and peace.

We may wonder why our culture does not nurture this and prefers to have us popping pills with harmful side effects. No pills can ever match the feelings that physical movement can give us...and.....no prescription required.

Somehow; we must once again take pride in being in control of our own life, our health, our body and our well-being and the answer is not in doctors and pills - it is inside of each of us.

This simple exercise solution is easily accessed for just a little time and effort and if you listen to the messages your body is sending you that something is missing it could be saying “I REALLY need exercise?”

We have all heard the saying “happiness comes from within” and the good news is, this solution is available to all of us, is easily accessed for little cost except a little time and effort.

You could call it “meditation in motion”. After an exercise session, you will often find that you have forgotten the day’s irritations and when you regularly shed your daily tensions through movement and physical activity, the resulting stress relief, energy and optimism boost can help you remain calm and clear in everything that you do. It spills over positively into every aspect of your life.

We have known this for decades, but now recent research has confirmed exercise is the very best tool for chasing away the blues.

It is only recently that people have begun to see the link and the importance between physical activity and mental health with inactive or sedentary people having twice the risk of becoming depressed.

If you are tired of feeling down in the dumps. Move! Stressed about work? Move! Tired of feeling weak throughout your day? Lift! Getting tired going up the stairs? Head to the hills!



It's amazing what exercise can do for your whole life. It's not just about getting into a better mood. It's about making life more joyful! When you are stronger and fitter, it's easier to move, it's easier to do everything you want to do!

Happiness can come when you feel healthy enough to do anything you want to do. When you can engage in play with kids and grandkids, join friends for various sporting activities, and do more things with your significant other, life is amazing. When you don't even have to think about whether you are fit enough for basic activities, that is a great place to be. Life is short; make it fun!

More Benefits Of Exercise

Releases Mood Elevating Hormones

Exercise releases hormones like norepinephrine, which enhance cognitive thinking, facilitate learning, and improve one's mood. However, that isn't the only way exercise helps! The elevated heart rate resulting from exercise has the potential to reverse brain atrophy caused by stress. Physical activity also forces different systems of the body to communicate better, allowing the body to respond better to anxiety and stress.

Improves Confidence Levels

People with obesity happen to be victims of low self-esteem, triggered by the fact that their appearance is different from everyone else's. The inability to perform daily tasks and chores effortlessly when compared to others, takes a toll on their confidence and contributes to depression. Exercise helps in such instances by releasing endorphins, and leads to weight loss, eventually.

Helps People With Medical Conditions Lead Better Lives

One of my clients is a 45-year-old woman whose knees were badly damaged because of a thyroid condition. When I met her, her joint problem had restricted her ability to move around, which left her feeling isolated and depressed.

A year after she began training, she felt much fitter – she even started going on treks with her friends! She also seemed much happier. Exercise even led to a big improvement in her condition, and her doctor was able to reduce her thyroid medication from 150 to 50 mcg.

This is just one example of a client who adopted a fitness routine and went on to lead a healthier and happier life. I've seen how exercise can alleviate a host of problems such as diabetes, hypertension and many other chronic medical conditions and lifestyle diseases.

Makes You Feel More Energetic

In this time and age, most of us lead a sedentary lifestyle, putting us at risk of lifestyle disorders. In addition, the lack of physical activity compromises our ability to handle stress. Regular exercise can help fight stress, dispel negative emotions, and enables one to be more productive during the day; thus, leading to feelings of contentment and joy. You could think of it as a happiness workout!



Makes Life Feels Easier

If you could get through your day in a physically easier way, wouldn't that be nice? If lugging groceries and children, or moving items around the house were easier, wouldn't you be happier? Exercise can do that for you! Increase strength, improve your cardiovascular fitness and life just feels easier!

Chapter Six

Why Making Yourself A Priority Is A Must

Many of us fail to prioritise ourselves - we often place the needs of others before our own, which means when life gets busy, we end up compromising our own beliefs and desires. The saying “you can’t pour from an empty cup” couldn’t be more fitting. More often than not, our wellbeing takes a backseat as we go about our day checking off our to-do lists, prioritising everyone else’s needs over our own.

It is such a great reminder of where we go if we ignore our own needs for too long. When you fly, if you are travelling with someone who you are caring for, you are instructed to put on your own oxygen mask first if needed, before helping them secure theirs. We are no good to anyone passed out on the floor, let alone ourselves.

There are three key areas to consider when practicing, and prioritising, self-care - reducing the negatives, increasing the positives, and building resources for flourishing. Attending to these three areas opens you up to all that life has to offer, you will feel happy and content and your cup will be well and truly full.



Self-care Is Not Selfish

It’s time to shake up the notion that putting yourself first is selfish. After all “too much of a good thing can turn a strength into a weakness”. There is a stark difference between taking care of ourselves and taking from others to feel better. In fact, a little tender loving self-care strengthens us and helps us better support our loved ones.

Be Present

Putting yourself at the top of your priority list starts with self-awareness. No one can take care of you better than you, so acknowledging when you are feeling flat, sad, run down or simply need a break will help making little change to your lifestyle that much easier. “A good place to start is to simply ask ourselves, “If I were my own best friend, how would I take care of myself?”

Life can be all-consuming, so taking time out from the hustle and bustle to explore your feelings can also do a world of good. It might be as simple as noticing the blue sky, hearing the happy chatter of children in the street, smiling at a stranger passing by, remembering something good about your life, or savouring a favourite happy memory.

Implement Some ‘Non-negotiables’

Creating a few day-to-day guidelines to stop you from compromising yourself and your happiness is vital to ensuring your overall physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. These could be as simple as getting to bed early, allowing time to enjoy a healthy breakfast and getting in two or three solid exercise sessions a week.

Ongoing healthy habits like exercising, getting enough sleep, and moderate nutritional eating are healthy and happiness-boosters that are great ways of taking care of ourselves.

Everyone has the capacity to be happy (content) but it’s about getting to the right place mentally instead of constantly chasing outside aspirations. Looking within and accepting that the seeds of happiness are already there, you just need to recognise and nurture them.

Be Your Own Best Friend Instead of Your Own Worst Enemy

Becoming your own Best Friend is one of the best gifts you can give yourself... and makes life so much easier yet we can spend a lifetime taking care of others, throwing ourselves into their needs, happiness and their well-being. We “rise to the occasion” for him, her, them and it ... and yet, somehow, fail to do this for ourselves.

How is it that we can be a good friend to everyone but ourselves? If you can be solid as a rock for others, then course (of course!) you can be that for yourself too.

In fact, you **MUST** be.

Sometimes we have to take a look deep inside ourselves and flush out feelings, thoughts and self-beliefs that can have us standing in our own way, in the way of “our own Success”.

Are you “your own worst enemy”...or “your own best friend”? Do you sabotage “your own actions” or are you firmly committed to “your own health and fitness goals? Do you stay Positive, Focused, are good to your body **AND** yourself?

Do you “OWN IT”?

No matter what age you are, you can be your own best friend. You are in very capable hands. It means you like yourself



It means you look after your body and treat yourself like you would treat your own best friend. You don't keep beating yourself up and continue on doing things that self-sabotage yourself in the areas of healthy eating and exercise. If you are overweight for whatever reason you still know that without doubt that you deserve to have exactly what you want - a strong, fit, slim, healthy body.

You know that if you are overweight or in poor health that certain actions have contributed to that and you do need to make some changes to your lifestyle. Eating the wrong types of foods, too much of them and avoiding exercise is not going to help you get that feel-good, healthy body so once you “get it” that you are heading down the wrong path you can make changes to get back on track.

When you decide to become your own best friend you use tools and techniques to enrich your life. You find out how much physical activity is the optimum for you and how to nourish yourself better, from the inside AND the outside. You take responsibility for yourself, overcome the victim trap and accept yourself, warts and all staying honest with yourself.

The path to achieving your dreams starts from within. Watch what you say to yourself. If you catch your self-talk being negative, immediately counter it with something positive. The more you do this the better you get at it!



Focus on your needs. No matter how busy you get or what stacks up on your to-do list, your health and happiness come first. Taking care of YOU should always be a priority.

Use tough love. It's important to reign yourself in on occasion. Just like you would do for a friend, tell yourself when it's time to give up bad habits and swap them out for things that will lead you to your goals. A bit of tough love never hurt anyone!

Commit to Change, then DO IT!

It's important to understand though, it's not always easy to get this healthy lifestyle thing down! The truth is that it takes serious, conscious effort, and the sooner you embrace that fact, the better. Wishing it was easy will only leave you feeling frustrated and stuck in old habits time and time again.

As the saying goes, the best things in life aren't easy and don't happen without a bit of struggle, trial and error and hard work. After all you don't get the things you wish for, you get the things you work for.

But it's so much easier knowing you will be there for yourself every step of the way and you can be your own best friend by setting yourself up for success in as many ways as possible.

Develop Healthy Habits

How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. Our lives are filled with days, our days are filled with hours, and this present hour is filled with whatever you chose to fill it with. So pursue healthy habits that add value to your hours, days, and lifetime.



Prioritising your own health and wellbeing is one of the best things you can do, not only for yourself but also for your loved ones. We are physically, emotionally and mentally well when we are looking after our own needs, but this needs to be a lifelong habit, not a once in a while thing. It also helps us be better company – better employees, partners, friends and carers - so go for it!

You CAN choose a healthy lifestyle that promotes all the good things in life regardless of past issues or failures. It's time to move forward into better habits and wellbeing and one day at a time is how you will get there. Start today!

Chapter Seven

Get Your Momentum Engine Going

Many people wonder how to find the motivation to exercise and eat healthy. What and where is this special motivation thing you need to get yourself out of bed and out the door to your workouts?

The problem is if we wait for that burst of motivation, when someday we will wake up and finally feel the desire to exercise we may be disappointed. The fact is it's something we create for ourselves, something we build and strengthen not something we wait for.

Physical fitness like everything else doesn't just happen. It is the result of actions taken. And, there is the biggest clue to succeeding with your health and fitness goals. Action.

You can think about your health goals to lift yourself out of a rut, you can envision them in your head and even meditate on them...and you should, but that's only half the equation. Until you take action you will never bring your vision from the world of "imagination" into the world of form. In other words, you must "turn on the spigot if you want the water to flow"...you can't just sit there and think about it.

And, once you do, that's when momentum rises up to meet you. What seemed like an impossible task initially, picks up steam as it builds on its own energy of action. Like a bank account, it compounds what you put into it. It multiplies your energy output.

Momentum is the result of taking action. Just as an avalanche builds on itself as it roars down the mountain so too does momentum. Pairing your actions with momentum is the most efficient way to use energy towards accomplishing your goals. With this energy powerhouse on your side, things get easier and easier.

You suddenly realize it's not about how hard you work at something one day or through one session but about how hard you perform day after day, week after week, month after month and year after year. It's about consistent and persistent effort, about building on each success you experience and using that energy to grow it bigger.

It's about keeping your momentum engine running and that takes focused effort. That effort comes from you...your energy input is what fuels momentum and your energy input comes from the actions you take.



Whatever stops you make along the way to your goals will cause you to lose momentum. Stop too long and your momentum may be completely gone and you will have to start your engine up and build momentum all over again.

This starting and stopping is wearing for most people because starting is the hardest part and to continually put themselves in a situation that requires them begin again over and over is to set themselves up for failure. Eventually they just stop starting and give up altogether.

The quickest and most efficient way to achieve any goal is to keep momentum on your side and make use of this free “compound interest” you are drawing. The only way to do that is to keep it flowing. In other words...allow momentum to do the work for you just as your money works for you and draws interest when invested.

Momentum is one of the strongest tools you can use to reach any goal in life health, fitness and happiness are no exceptions. But you can't benefit from this empowering flow of energy if the faucet is turned off.

Keep your tap turned on. If you stop for any reason on your way to your health/fitness goals get back on track and get that tap flowing as soon as possible. Get whatever momentum you have left in motion again and working for you. Remember, it's much harder to stop the train and start it again then it is to keep it rolling.

Discipline yourself daily and put your share of energy into the equation by taking any action steps required to reach your health and fitness goals (such as going to the gym or working out at home) and watch as momentum kicks in and makes things easier and easier to accomplish and more enjoyable to do.

Set Yourself Up For Success

Set Small Goals

Don't expect too much of yourself. Set yourself up for small wins, it will help you to feel more in charge of your life again and make you feel better about yourself. Self-care is a great place to start. If you have gotten out of the habit of showering, take a shower. Brush your teeth. Wash the dishes. Notice how much better it makes you feel. Then do it again.

Spend Your Energy Within Your Resources

If you are normally a high energy, productive person, depression can be incredibly frustrating and discouraging. It's so much harder to do anything, and you may feel like a failure because of that. Again, be gentle with yourself and realistically assess how much energy you have on a given day. Don't push yourself beyond that, but see if you can use your resources toward doing things that count.

If you are really depleted, you may only be able to get some basic self-care done and that's ok. If you have a little more energy on a particular day, maybe spend a little time on a hobby you used to love. But don't spend energy you don't have, as you will end up feeling worse than before. Make a point of being proud of yourself for everything you do manage to do, no matter how small. It all counts, each positive action is a deposit toward healing and recovery.

Develop Awareness About Your Choices

As already mentioned, depression feeds on withdrawal and inactivity. If you are able to, try to develop an awareness of your choices and where they lead. For example, when mealtime comes around, you can choose to prepare and eat a "real" meal, or a bag of chips that's in the cupboard, or skip eating entirely.

When you come to the moment of making a decision, try to be aware of which choice will move you toward healing (eating real food) and which will feed the depression (eating chips for dinner or skipping meals). Can you make the choice, in that one moment, that positively supports your body and mind and helps you get well?

When you take the time to practice self-care in the form of proper exercise supported by healthy eating (not processed food) it has positive benefits for how you look, how you function, how you feel, how happy you are, and contributes to the quality of your life.

Once your exercise program becomes a habit you will start to notice the benefits, more strength, more fitness, more energy and above all, more happiness. You will soon be experiencing the number one reason why most people regularly go to the gym – “Because it makes me feel good”.

But it doesn't just happen. It does need some input and self-care practices to revive your health and happiness levels and keep it alive otherwise like everything that is neglected it just wastes away.

Yes, there is an inner athlete inside all of us just waiting to be unleashed. Can you see yourself as this fit, energetic, happy person? Your exercise program can gradually become a passion regardless of your current age.

There is no other way to stimulate the release of special hormones like dopamine and serotonin to even out our moods and make us get happier. We will also get to have a better attitude and a more positive outlook on life so we can enjoy our own life more. You will feel so good that if you do not already appreciate all the good things in life then you just might start.

If you feel sad and it is affecting your life negatively you do not need a pill to fix it you just need to get started on a proper exercise program and never stop. Just 2-3 sessions each week with some effort put into it will provide an outlet for you to channel stress, anger, negative moods and relieve anxiety. This is the therapeutic solution for ‘the blues’ – you do not need drugs.

Create your own energy and rejuvenation, your very own improved self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation as you claim back your overall body strength and vitality. The benefits will be immediate and once you experience them you will never want to be without them as they will have such a profound effect on the quality of your life.

Exercise Motivation

Within just 10 minutes of starting an exercise session your brain chemistry changes in a positive way. This unique chemical transaction means dopamine is secreted making you feel fantastic, strong and accomplished. This dopamine release is called a “reward pathway” which means the more you do something to release this feel-good chemical the more you desire to do that thing.

Rewarding yourself with that little surge of dopamine is an important part of a positive, self-perpetuating feedback loop. When you feel good it can be a highly motivating factor when cementing a fitness regime permanently in your life.

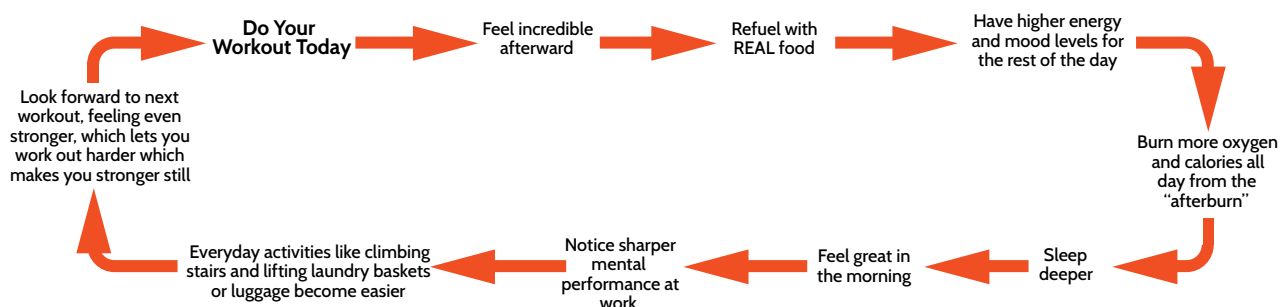
You could think of this concept like receiving compound interest on a deposit in the bank. Around it goes - the better you feel, the more you want to feel better.

And the better you feel, the better choices you also make with your eating, the better you sleep, the better you cope with stress and so on. The cycle continues with one thing supporting the other which in turn creates a positive upward spiral which leads to the best possible life.

Research shows that regular exercise boosts mood and reduces anxiety and depression and can provide all sorts of emotional, spiritual and biochemical benefits that make us feel, think and perform better in our daily lives.

This mental or emotional rejuvenation can also make us more comfortable in our body and lead to greater peace of mind. Or you may find satisfaction from exercising by knowing that you are setting a positive example for your children. Working out with a friend or spouse provides a chance to strengthen your relationship.

The quickest and easiest way to succeed at fitness is to create a positive feedback loop which includes experiencing enough results to continue to motivate you to keep going. So in itself, your fitness program becomes its own reward.



This model is the same as a business that must become profitable to survive. You must create this self-perpetuating feedback loop to stick to a healthy lifestyle. There is no substitute.

If you have previously struggled with maintaining a fitness regimen, it doesn't mean that you are unmotivated or weak-willed. It simply means that the self-perpetuating loop was not in place or there was a break down somewhere in its creation. The perceived outlay of effort, time or money for exercising was too high, not enough rewards accumulated, or progress wasn't measured.

Both life satisfaction and fitness satisfaction are made up of hundreds of small individual steps each one building on the others. It's never just one set of instant happy outcomes. Each time you exercise or eat a healthy meal, you confirm that you are making your personal health and fitness a priority.

Sure, looking great is a terrific bonus for active people. But for many, fitness satisfaction and success is not defined by one's physical appearance. It's not uncommon for those who initially choose to get started simply to look better or lose weight can discover that the real key to satisfaction lies in how they feel about themselves and their fitness regime.

At best, a commitment to exercise, fitness and physical activity is a reflection of your values about self-care, health, and integrity. And like true beauty, fitness satisfaction and happiness radiates from inside.



Movement really is medicine. Both scientific research and anecdotal evidence have shown, time and again, how helpful physical activity can be for mental health, whether as a coping strategy or remedy for those already struggling with mental health symptoms, or as a preventive habit for maintaining mental well-being.

Being active and getting regular exercise can help boost mood, energy, and cognitive health, too, helping to decrease the risk of developing mental health struggles in the future.

Get your mindset right so you learn to love physical activity, make that passion yours so you can claim the inner peace and happiness rightfully yours.

If you want to protect something as precious as your own life you need to take action get yourself started on a proper exercise program that contains mostly strength training exercise and never stop. It is this simple. Lead a physically active life and reap the benefits as opposed living a sedentary life and risk a lower quality of life or even worse a shortened life. We each have a choice what will yours be?

Where To From Here?

More than simply positive mood, happiness is a state of well-being that encompasses living a good life, one with a sense of meaning and deep contentment. One important thing to remember is that happiness isn't a state of constant euphoria. Instead, happiness is an overall sense of experiencing more positive emotions than negative ones.

It all boils down to this: Your body and brain is your number one tool for ensuring both maximum longevity and the highest quality of life. In fact, it's like a Swiss Army Pocket Knife, filled to the brim with powerful, specialized and finely-honed life-preserving components that can be applied to solve virtually any physical or mental health issue that you might run up against.

But ONLY if you keep the tool in good operating condition. That's what my program, the "Wellness Wakeup Call", is all about. And it goes much further than simply addressing what needs to be done to slow the aging process and withstand the onslaught of disease.

Using an ongoing series of “wakeup” calls which I send directly to your email inbox, my goal is to keep you apprised of what truly matters for the preservation of your health and happiness. Because ultimately it is up to YOU to continue to make the right decisions daily when it comes to your well-being.

Let me teach you how to be your own coach and leader, to get yourself going and live life on your terms, without the burden of sadness or unhappiness that can really crimp a life!

Don't wait for tomorrow. Allow this report to be the instigating factor for change in your life and join me in my special “Wellness Wakeup Call” program. The link to register and get started immediately can be found below.



[Click here to learn how my Wellness Wakeup Call works.](#)

For more tools and resources from Carolyn Hansen to assist you in attaining your goals and achieving the success you desire in life,
please visit:

[Carolyn Hansen Fitness](#)