

The background features a network diagram with white nodes and lines on a light blue and white gradient. Overlaid on this are several large, semi-transparent circles in shades of blue, purple, pink, and yellow. A hand is shown gripping a thick, light-brown rope, with the arm extending from the right side of the frame. The bottom of the image is framed by a thick, curved blue border.

ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE

**HOW TO
QUICKLY BECOME
TOUGH ENOUGH TO
HANDLE ALL LIFE'S
CHALLENGES**

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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Only The Strong Survive

By Carolyn Hansen



Are You Up To The Challenge?

Yes, Life can sometimes seem extraordinarily challenging.

But for the most part we take those challenges in stride.

Fortunately we have evolved in such a way as to not only be able to meet the difficulties that Life presents us, but also to be able to exploit them for our own benefit. We not only manage to survive the hardships of life, we thrive on them!

But some periods have proven to be tougher on us than others.

We have been through world wars, times of global economic depression, and bouts of pandemic suffering such as the one that took us by surprise in 2020.

It would be comforting to be able to say that we always get through these times of chaos and misery. But the reality is that not everyone does.

Sometimes these horrid turns in fortune hasten the deaths of countless numbers of us, sometimes stretching into the millions.

The most recent of these events, the coronavirus pandemic, will surely be responsible for the loss of millions of lives before it is done with us.

One of the unique characteristics of a coronavirus infection is that the disease, COVID-19, preys upon the weak. If you have an underlying medical condition, one that is likely to hamper the functionality of your immune system, then you are at greater risk of experiencing severe complications when you become infected.

If you are middle-aged or older still, and you are witnessing the slow age-related decline of your immune system (which is nothing unusual), your odds of being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19 are far greater than for someone young whose immune system is likely to be much stronger.

Strength in this sense is a measure of resilience to the less pleasant challenges life can send your way.

Immunological strength is a seriously valuable asset during a pandemic!

But it also comes in really handy when you find yourself facing the challenges of aging and of chronic disease, both of which are capable of causing you to suffer needlessly – even die – in the absence of a strong immune system.

But immunological strength is not the only strength that determines how well you will be able to endure the challenges of life.

Physical strength (or lack of frailty) is a great predictor of where your long-term health is headed.

The stronger you are physically, the greater the chance of you living a long and productive life during which you never find your continued survival dependent on the mercy of others (this, for example, is how you avoid being forced to enter a retirement home).

Mental strength is important too.

Even when everything seems to be going well in the world you can still run aground if you are not able to anticipate what lies ahead and take the appropriate actions to ensure your continued smooth sailing.

Of course, your mental fortitude is inextricably bound up with the health of your brain. In order to stay mentally strong you must care for your brain as you would any other organ in your body.

The logical endpoint of a poorly maintained brain, of course, is dementia – where mental strength, and the ability to make the right decisions to ensure your continued survival, tend to be in short supply!

Finally, there is emotional strength. You have to be able to resist with every fiber of your being the direction fate seems to be forcing you to take when it all goes wrong.



It is YOU who has to be able to right your boat, and steer it out of the storm, no matter how hopeless the situation might appear to be. If you expect someone else to do it for you, you might not just be disappointed, you might find yourself disappearing beneath the waves!

These three facets of robust and long-lasting health – physical, mental, and emotional strength – are essentially the Golden Ticket to a better life.

You could have a three-story mansion perched on prime real estate overlooking the ocean. The walls of its rooms could be adorned with priceless works of art, and the keyed deposit boxes at your bank could be filled with gold ingots and precious gems worthy of the finest museums in the world. But if your good health goes away you will be able to enjoy none of it.

True wealth begins with the ability to lock in a quality I will call resilience.

Because that is what it is: resilience in the face of life's challenges. The ability to bounce back from the hardships that might ruin the lives of others – or leave them worse off than that!

So how does one acquire the kind of resilience I am talking about?

Is there something you can do to dramatically improve the amount of physical, mental, and emotional strength needed to become resilient to life's challenges?

It turns out there IS something you can do.

It is ONE action you can take which adds to each of these three strengths.

But before I explain what it is and why it works so well I want to spend a few minutes explaining the nature of the challenges you should expect to be coming your way in the not-so-distant future.

If you can better appreciate the risks you will be assuming if you do NOTHING to improve your resilience then I suspect you will be more open to the idea of doing the ONE thing that might significantly reduce those risks.

Let's look briefly at just FOUR of the big risks you will face (and everyone else will face for that matter) in the not-so-distant future...

RISK #1: Planetary Upheaval

Wait, surely I have mislabeled the first risk. Or at least over-hyped it!

How I would love for that to be true.

But anyone who has followed the news over the past decade or two will be aware that natural catastrophes are becoming more and more common.

Recently we saw Australia catch fire.

For years the continent had been getting increasingly warmer and drier. With each passing summer new temperature records were set and the forests seemed constantly on the verge of igniting into a sea of flames.

Finally in 2019 they did catch fire in a most spectacular fashion, resulting in FIVE times more land burned than in any other fire season to date. More than one billion animals are also believed to have perished in the wildfires.

In China in 2020 so much rain fell for months on end that the country saw more flooding than it has for perhaps a century.



Two distinctly different kinds of natural catastrophe, one borne by fire and the other borne of water, but the cause is the same in both cases.

The world has been steadily warming for the past 50 years and now we have

reached a point where there is simply too much excess heat on the planet for there not to be consequences.

In Australia, in Northern Siberia, and in California, where dry conditions and summer heat have been getting progressive worse, summer wildfire season has been expanding and growing more intense each year.

The flooding in China, which is visited by monsoon rains powered by ocean water evaporation, is a consequence of oceans now so warm that the amount of water being lofted into the atmosphere as summer approaches is mind boggling.

Yet whether you live in desert landscape where water is becoming increasingly scarce, or you live in a lush green forested area served by ever-present rivers, there is no getting away from the nature of the new extremes your environment will be subjecting you to in the coming years.

No matter where you live, it is going to become tougher to get by. The ability to draw upon physical strength is going to distinguish between those who manage to ride out the interruptions to their life and those who do not.

Fresh water and food is going to be subject to periods of shortage even in the developed parts of the world where we are used to taking food and fresh water supplies for granted.

This is all a consequence of climate change and while we cannot predict when and where the turmoil will hit, we do know it will happen with increasing frequency and with greater intensity as temperatures around the world continue to climb.

Disasters will happen, and sooner or later you will be impacted in one way or another, whether it is because of a record-setting hurricane that comes your way, a scorching summer that takes out the crops on which your country depends for its food supply, or the changing temperature profile across the landscape brings a species of insect never before seen in your area (like the locusts in Africa) which descend on the land and strip the vegetation before it can be harvested.

Truly, the warmer world that awaits us all tomorrow is no place for the frail. Physical strength is going to be a welcome commodity in the new world!

Not only that, but you are going to need all the mental and emotional strength you can muster to deal with the constantly materializing threats that come from a warmer world. We cannot anticipate what they all will be, but we can be sure they will test us in ways we never imagined.

RISK #2: Revenge of The Microbial World

It is probably no exaggeration to say that only a handful of people in the world were expecting a novel coronavirus to emerge as a new deadly pathogen which would spread to almost every corner of the globe.

It is possible that experts in bat virology (the source of the coronavirus) might have crossed their fingers and hoped no virus would make the jump between bats and humans.

For the rest of us it was all a complete surprise.

But perhaps it should not have been. We have been losing the war against the microbial world for a long time now.

This may be surprising to some who may only know the general story of antibiotics – how since the early 1930s we have been able to combat bacterial infections by creating drugs that inhibit the growth of specific strains of bacteria.

PENICILLIN,
New
Wonder Drug
from Mold

By IRMIS JOHNSON

A GREENISH BLUE mold like the one that grows on stale bread, or lends aroma and flavor to Roquefort cheese, now promises to be an important ally in helping wounded soldiers fight their way back to health.



Penicillin, which was discovered by accident in 1928, is derived from a mold. Before its usage ushered in the age of antibiotics there were no reliable treatments for common infections like pneumonia and rheumatic fever.

In the decades that followed scores of new and highly successful drugs were extracted from bacteria and fungi. It really looked as though we had conquered the microbial world and life-threatening infections would be a thing of the past.

But that initial spell of success with antibiotics seems to be coming to an end.

Perhaps you have heard rumors of a flesh-eating bacteria against which virtually all of our modern antibiotics are useless.

Well, that's true. But the problem is a lot broader than that. It turns out that we have so abused the privilege afforded us by the development of bacteria-killing antibiotics (by overzealous doctors who prescribe them at every turn) that now ALL bacterial strains are quickly becoming resistant to our drugs.

By the year 2050 more people are expected to die of routine bacterial infections than from cancer. Instead of dreading only colon cancer as you get older you will be as fearful of paper cuts and scratching yourself too hard lest you allow some formerly manageable bacteria to invade your body and outmaneuver any drug your doctor cares to prescribe to take care of the infection.

Yes, we brought this on ourselves and it is going to be up to each one of us to ensure that we have the tools to combat these microbial threats ourselves in the absence of suitable antibiotic drugs.

Luckily we do have such a collection of tools. It is our immune system – provided we keep it in good shape.

And we will need it for more than just the threats of the bacterial world.

Viruses are maintained in animal populations around the planet.

Coronaviruses live happily and harmlessly in bats. The influenza viruses inhabit the bellies of wild ducks. And there are likely to be hundreds of other viruses that live comfortably in reservoirs we typically just never get that close to – but which we might as we continue to push our way into the natural world and attempt to make it serve us.

So there will be more strains of never-before-seen microbes that appear suddenly and challenge the immune system of the human race.

Like the coronavirus pandemic we might find ourselves facing off with an entire new menace. Or it might turn out to be a variant of an old foe – like the strain of influenza which passes from a duck to a chicken and then manages to cross that final threshold to a human host where it spreads in aerosolized form and kills perhaps 30 out of every 100 people who become infected.



That particular scenario has been the constant nightmare of epidemiologists for at least the last two decades. In that sense coronavirus has been a blessing in that it has shown us how defenseless we seem to have become to even a virus that kills less than one of every 100 people it infects.

What would the world look like today if the mortality figure had been 30 times greater?

It seems like an impossible thing to imagine. And yet, as the sleepless epidemiologists know only too well, this is an entirely possible future!

In a world of increasing antibiotic resistance and increasing risk of letting loose on the human race a never before seen animal virus capable of real harm, physical strength in the form of a properly functioning immune system has to be seen as a virtually indispensable asset in the years ahead.

RISK #3: The Always -Victorious Arrow Of Time

No one expects they will live forever.

But what the science of longevity has been telling us in recent years is that the difference in life span enjoyed by “hardy” individuals as compared to the more “frail” among us can be substantial.



Frailty is a term used to describe the overall physical state of a person who is not necessarily ill or diseased, but whose prospects for successfully fending of some form of physical challenge are not good. Such challenges might include taking an unexpected fall or being physically injured some other way, catching an infectious disease, or attempting to weather the emotional turmoil that comes of losing someone close.

We recognize frail individuals by the way they move through their lives – slowly, cautiously, appearing at every moment as though an abrupt shock to their senses could cause their lives to spin out of control.

Aging predisposes us to frailty. Time takes away the physical structures of our bodies that youth had so easily built and maintained.

But that's not the way it has to be. We are not designed to become obsolete after a certain spell of time. There are actions we can take to mitigate against the frailty that strongly escalates our risk of succumbing to an unexpected challenge.

Shortly I'll tell you exactly what you can do to oppose the slow loss of strength in your bones and ligaments and muscles, the very mechanical means by which you are able to express your strength and vitality.

And it will also turn out that this same set of actions can strengthen your immune system by stimulating it to not only grow new immune cells but to function more efficiently and with greater specificity and power. This is the kind of functionality that for some people can be the difference between shrugging off an infection and succumbing to the worse possible outcome (which may include death).

No one has yet figured out a way to escape the arrow of time which marches us forward relentlessly. But there is a huge difference between living the latter part of your life with vitality and the degree of strength needed to make each day you have a blessing, and the alternative life experienced by those who allow frailty to seep into their lives and rule it.

Physical strength, mental strength, and emotional strength will greatly assist you when it comes to enjoying the longest possible and most fulfilling life.

This phrase sums it up nicely: Only the strong survive (to experience the longest possible life!)

RISK #4: Hard Times Ahead For The Dinghy Class

By dinghy class I mean anyone in that huge mass of people who do not own a subscription to Yachting Magazine because, well, those boats (as opposed to small dinghies) cost real money.



If you are more likely to be invited onto a yacht than to ever own one, and especially if you are more likely to find yourself watching a movie in which someone is invited onto a yacht than you are to ever be invited onto one yourself, then this risk category definitely applies to you.

From the end of the second world war up until the present time we have enjoyed fairly prosperous times. Economies have flourished and except for a few periods where the world has experienced short-lived recessions, we have managed to soldier on and build the kind of lives that would not have been possible for most people a century ago.

Unfortunately that run of unstoppable economic momentum might be nearing an end. In markets all across the world there are strong signs that we have squandered the natural resources of the planet much more rapidly than they have been able to replenish themselves.

We have pumped ground water from all the major fresh water reservoirs of the Earth and used them to grow and sell crops as quickly as the hungry population of the world could consume the food.

Now that ground water is almost gone, the rich soils of the Earth have been depleted of their minerals, and within a decade or two we will need to come up with a completely different and sustainable way to grow our crops.

The fish in the shallows of the sea upon which a billion people depend for survival are rapidly disappearing because the oceans are becoming too warm to support the levels of oxygen required to sustain life.

None of this bodes well for a species (we humans) that has seen exponential growth of its numbers for the past century. Sooner or later we come to the point where our competition for survival becomes far more prevalent than the degree to which we strive for the better life.

All of which is to say that unless you are a member of the ultra-wealthy class, there are tough times coming and you will want to be in the best possible physical, mental, and emotional shape to weather their challenges!

And none of us may have as long to prepare ourselves for a possible impending severe economic down turn as we would like. The emergence in 2020 of the coronavirus pandemic seems to have sped up the unraveling of economies around the world as people have been forced to forfeit their jobs in response to a public health threat that has proven to be extraordinarily difficult to shake off.

It may turn out to be the case that the decade stretching from 2020 to 2030 goes into the history books as one of the toughest since the decade of the Great Depression, from 1930 through to 1940.

The rich may make it through this period without managing to spill their martinis, but for the rest of us... Well, we may end up dealing with the hardships of life like never before!

How To Increase Your Resilience To Life's Challenges

Now that I have given you plenty to be concerned about it is time to offer you one of a number of solutions that I have become aware of over the years.

This particular strategy has treated me well and remains at the top of my list of straightforward and proven approaches to building personal strength.

Now it really does not matter whether the instigating cause of stress in your life is due to a strictly personal matter (loss of employment, divorce, a death in the family) or your trauma is a shared one being experienced by everyone you know, as is the case during a war, a famine, a pandemic, or any other wide scale natural disaster. Regardless of the source of the discomfort, all of your senses may feel as though they are under assault.

This is why one of the best strategies you can pursue is one that simultaneously improves your physical, mental, and emotional strength – and thereby increases your resilience to life's challenges.

That one thing you can do is to add strength training to your weekly habits.



I have been doing this for most of my life.

Strength training is simply any form of exercise designed to stimulate growth in body tissues. But especially your muscles and your bones.

Typically this is achieved with weight training.

For example, squatting with a weighted barbell. Or bench pressing the barbell to build upper body strength. Or performing the dead lift with the same piece of equipment to stimulate every part of your body during the movement (this is referred to as a full body movement).

Strength training is not endurance training. Getting out on the road and running for an hour is more likely to cause your muscles to atrophy than to grow.

Nor is strength training aerobic exercise. It is not about jumping up and down to build a sweat and burn off the calories. It is about stressing your body tissues with short intense motions that require strength to pull off the movement. If you are not strong to begin with you will become strong over time.

Your muscles will get larger and your bones will get thicker. In short, you will get physically stronger.

Why is this important?

Because you will be in a far better position to withstand an assault on your body from any of the many types of accident that can befall us. One of the most common accidents is to trip and fall. Nothing to worry too much about when you are young. When your body is packed with muscle and bone you have a certain amount of “bounce” you can depend upon to protect you from injury.

But as you get older... well, that protection tends to go away. Bones thin out and are liable to breakage. Muscles atrophy and provide less in the way of shock-absorbing tissue to blunt the effect of a sudden trauma.

Yet you can get much of this protection back if you incorporate strength training into your weekly schedule.

And perhaps somewhat surprisingly, this protective effect of strength training goes beyond the physical changes it stimulates. Workouts intense enough to stimulate growth in muscle and bone tissue also affect your brain, helping to protect against the effects of cognitive decline.

One of the ways it does this is through an exercise-activated growth factor known as brain derived neurotrophic factor, or BDNF. BDNF is produced in response to intense muscle contraction and stress on the bones.

Inside the brain, where BDNF does its main work, it behaves as a kind of master coordinator of neurological activities, some of which lead to the growth of new brain cells, and others which connect up the new cells so they can be used to lay down new memories or assist in the numerous mental tasks required to get you through the day.

The end result of this is improved mental conditioning and a slowing in the neurodegenerative processes that can destroy a brain over time.

In other words you can literally put the brakes on the hidden processes which drive dementia in your latter years but which tend to get underway long before you ever see the tell tale signs of a deteriorating brain (the memory lapses, mood changes, clumsiness, and personality modifications that tend to precede neurological disease).

Maintaining the health of your brain has another useful effect. It tends to reduce the amount of depressive episodes that come with age, and because of this you are likely to be a lot more able to withstand the everyday irritations, frustrations, and stresses of life. Your emotional stability is improved.

Getting physically strong does something else that you are sure to appreciate if falling ill during the winter months is a concern for you.

That's because strength training stimulates the production in your muscles of an enzyme called extracellular superoxide dismutase (or SOD).

SOD travels to your lungs where it works as a powerful antioxidant to neutralize the toxic mess caused by invading microbes. The result is that infection can be brought under control more easily.

This also means that SOD acts as an anti-inflammatory agent which, in the age of coronavirus with its propensity to severe inflammatory complications in the lungs and other critical organs, is not without its (potentially life-saving) benefits.

And yet those benefits to the functionality of the immune system do not stop with added antioxidant protection.

Master cyclists, who spend a good deal of time building physical strength on their bikes, have been found to have extraordinarily good immune systems.



In particular, the production of immune system T cells, which play an important role in bringing infection under control, normally declines with age. This makes your immune system less robust as you get older. But in the case of the master cyclists, their T cell production is largely maintained. It is as if their bicycles act like immune system-restoring time machines.

Years ago I found my own time machine, not in the form of a bicycle but in the discovery that I could strengthen my body through weight training.

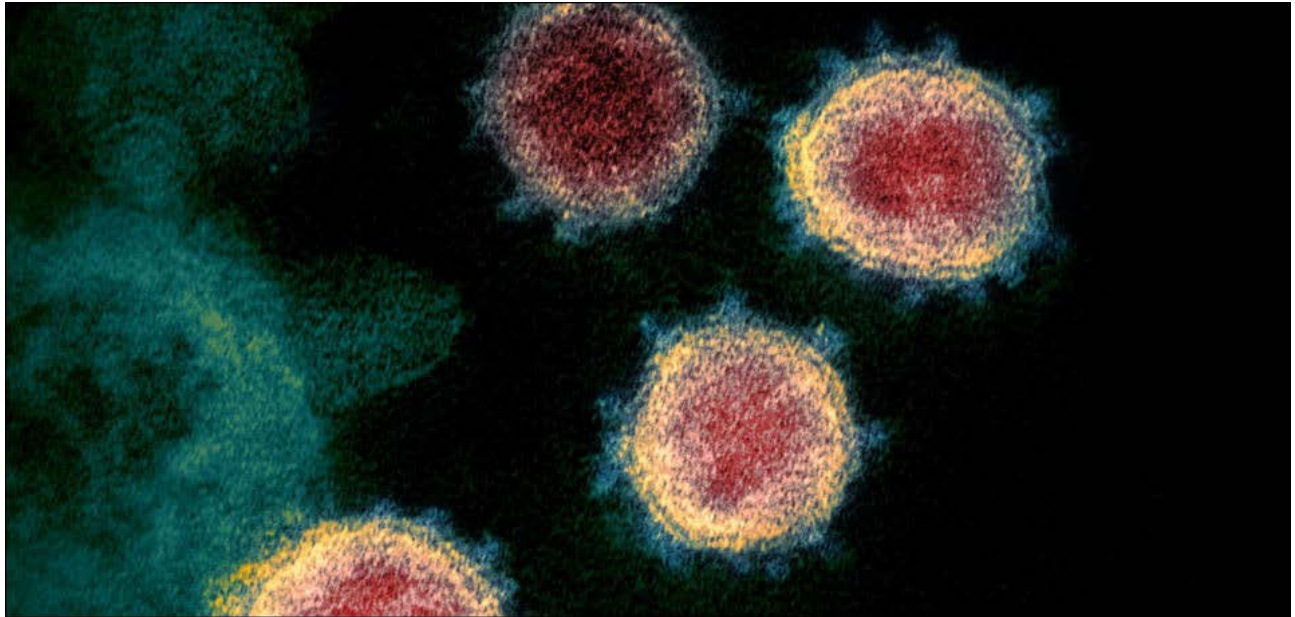
Basically I stumbled into strength training. It was not because I knew anything about the benefits I have tried to impress upon you in this short guide.

I simply believed that if I “pumped iron” I would acquire the kind of physical toughness that in old age might pay off in the form of disease-free living (I’d seen a family member die of cancer in my twenties, so I had a kind of wellness wakeup call early in my life).

All of the beneficial side effects of the work I put in at the gym I only came to appreciate much later in my life when I got more interested in the health aspects of physical training.

And as it turns out, strength training, as useful as it is in helping to improve one's overall health, is NOT the only approach I favor today. But it is my top choice.

Like most people, I suspect, I was surprised by the extent to which all of our lives have been disrupted by the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 pandemic it has perpetuated across the world.



From an epidemiological point of view, maybe it never should have been able to have quite the effect it has. After all, it is not one of the most deadly viruses known to man. And yet, it seems to have had the power to bring our lives almost to a halt.

It makes one wonder. Is it the strength of this viral menace that we ought to be afraid of, or our own inability to easily withstand coming into contact with it?

Have we become in some immunological sense, weak and flabby?

Has the human race found itself knocked off its feet by a pathogen perhaps only a few times more deadly and destructive than seasonal influenza?

To me COVID-19 seems like something of a wakeup call to all of us. The message: Go build your resilience now, before the time comes when you really need it.

This is the kind of thought that might keep me up at night if I was not already doing something about it.

Do You Need Your Own Wellness Wakeup Call?

Imagine the confidence that comes from knowing you are physically, mentally, and immunologically tough enough to handle what life might have to throw at you in the years ahead – those challenges capable of putting others flat on their back.

This is the kind of belief in oneself that helps to maintain the strength-training sessions needed to keep the whole enterprise going.

But for some people, getting started can seem like an uphill struggle. One that is not so easy to overcome on one's own.

To help with this problem I recently created something I call the Wellness Wakeup Call program which you can learn more about here:



<https://wellnesswakeupcall.health>

I designed it for people who realize they could really benefit from adopting the kinds of habits needed to help them “toughen up”, but which might not be so easy to implement without a little assistance from someone like me who has been putting these ideas into practice for decades.

If you would like to begin receiving the same messages others are tapping into to begin their journey to improved physical, mental, and emotional strength – and better adapt yourself to withstanding life’s unexpected challenges – click on the link above and learn more about what my Wellness Wakeup Call program is all about.

To your long-lasting (and highly robust) health,

Carolyn Hansen

<https://WellnessWakeupCall.health>