

to go for my run today?—hurray! You now exercise consistently enough to plan it the moment you wake up. This is a good thing because it proves you established a new habit. The groan is ok. Reluctance is natural because exercise takes effort and maybe you don't love it yet—but you will. Reluctance does not need to keep you from becoming a consistently active person. Only when you push exercise out of your schedule until there is simply no time left in the day, will reluctance make you fail.

Installing new habits applies to food as well as exercise. The next time you pull through the fast food drive-thru and opt for the salad, congratulate yourself on reinforcing your new habit. It takes time and consistency to transition a diet from unbalanced to balanced because our menu choices are largely habit-driven. Fresh salads, whole grains, legumes, fruits, and lean meats taste better after a few weeks of choosing them. Drinking water instead of coffee or soda is a habit. Choosing a turkey sandwich on whole grain bread instead of a burger is as much a habit as is anything else we do.

Eating out at restaurants can derail even the most dedicated. Carefully own your menu choices. When I go to a steakhouse, I don't order a steak unless that is what my body really needs (which only happens during the coldest months of winter and after strenuous physical activity). Most of the time, I order salad, chicken, or fish. Whatever menu item suits my needs becomes my meal. Just as a cool glass of water tastes best when I am thirsty, the supercharged fuel of grilled Portobello mushrooms, zucchini, eggplant, and onions with barbecue sauce, when my body needs it, tastes better than a steak with fries.

I find it is easier to fuel my body correctly when I eat the majority of my meals at home. Eating from home gives me control over portion size and the amount of fat, sugar, and processing in my food. Despite my experience as a chef, at home I enjoy simply-prepared food based on the things my body needs. It is not unusual for me to serve roasted fish, steamed broccoli, and brown rice with a drizzle of soy sauce. Food doesn't need a fancy name or complicated composition to taste wonderful. Food in its purest form fulfills my nutritional needs and tastes good. Homemade granola with skim milk starts my day with serious high-protein fuel. I usually want a salad or sandwich with lean protein for lunch. Yes, I put mayonnaise on my sandwich and loads of creamy dressing on my salads. I enjoy a drizzle of olive oil on my pasta and a pat of butter on my fish. I am not on a diet. I do opt to live healthy, with a healthy

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**Nay-Sayers.** Be cautious of placing too much emphasis on negative influences. People often claim they can't lose weight because of negativity from family members or spouses. Occasionally loved ones will be resistant to our changes. They may be comfortable with the way things are. Change may shake them up a little bit. Regardless, don't pay heed to the critics in your life or put too much investment behind their opinions. They will adapt because you are going to change whether they like it or not. Think about it this way: you are inevitably going to change in a multitude of ways over the course of your life, (gray hair, mellower attitude, new music preferences, etc.), so a healthier lifestyle is just one new aspect to you. Don't put a lot of emphasis on the attitudes of those around you. In truth, their power is only what you give them.

amount of fats. Sure there are the occasional treats and splurges. I enjoy a good onion ring or a brownie as much as the next person. However, it is not our occasional treats that define our bodies—it is our regular food choices that determine how we look and feel.

## Hazards

During this process of creating new habits there are plenty of obstacles to derail us. Becoming aware of these hazards makes it easier to sidestep them. Here are a few you might have encountered—I know I did:

- ✦ Mapping a course in the wrong direction
- ✦ Pay offs reinforcing the unwanted habit instead of the desired goal
- ✦ A negative self-paradigm (low self-esteem)
- ✦ Negative self-talk
- ✦ Poorly managing my time to prevent exercise and healthy eating
- ✦ Impatience with my exercise program—not waiting for my body to learn to use fat for fuel
- ✦ Listening to nay-sayers
- ✦ Habitual Investment (page 59)



## Don't Buy Into the Wrong Ideal

Are you a “chronic” dieter? If not, you probably know someone who is. Chronic dieters are always trying one weight-loss program after another, but they never seem to keep weight off. For many it is an obsession. If you answered “yes,” you are certainly not alone. On a grand societal scale, weight loss has become germane to the collective mentality of most developed countries. Here in the West losing weight appears to have become our national pastime. Even China, formerly comprised of entirely thin people, is experiencing an economic boost from the explosion of weight loss products and marketing. Yes, Chinese people are getting fat from the relatively new inclusion of sugar, greater quantities of meat (and food in general), and processed foods into their diets. These factors combined with the industrialization of jobs has begun to create more sedentary existences similar to those of other developed countries. Ironically, just 200 years ago, a little extra fat was a symbol of success. Throughout history, man's prosperity was recognized by extra girth around his or her middle. Now, with fairly inexpensive food available across all socio-economic lines, the poor have become fat and members of our well-heeled set claim status by becoming dangerously thin. One glance at magazine racks will tell you today's declaration of beauty is a minimal-sized body wearing minimal clothing.

I don't buy into the saying: “You can never be too thin.” Nope. People really do come in all shapes and sizes and, with health, variations on “ideal” are all beautiful. Don't buy into a false premise. Your best self is the healthiest version of you. Period.

My body is a gift to me. If my Higher Power sees fit to bless me with the gift of mortality, I have a responsibility to appreciate it—warts and all, whether or not I am 5-foot-10-inches tall and wear a size 0. Change your ideal from looking like someone else to looking like a healthier version of you, without dieting. At the core of this chapter is the value of permanence.

### Litmus Test

*“Can I consistently maintain any new diet or exercise program until I am 80-years old, or older?”*

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, litmus is a coloring agent derived from lichens that turns red in acid solutions and blue in alkaline—terribly useful in science. Like that unfailing color test, you can hold up any and all diet and exercise programs to the following question: “Can I consistently maintain it until I am 80-years old, or older?” If the answer is yes, it is a lifestyle change. If not, it is a quick fix and should be abandoned (unless you enjoy

losing and re-losing the same fat over and over). I use the arbitrary age of eighty to illustrate the value of long-term behavioral adjustments—you could insert 108-years old if you wish.

As a result of this test, I refuse to begin a low carbohydrate diet because I cannot give up bread until I am eighty. A crusty slice of warm sourdough bread with a generous slather of butter is not something I will live without. Therefore, a bread-free diet is not a permanent lifestyle change and will only result in my feeling deprived and, quite frankly, grumpy.

I can, however, choose primarily whole-grain bread instead of white bread. I can also include one raw vegetable or fruit in each meal. I can replace processed meat like sausage and ham, or fatty meat like hamburger, with lean chicken, turkey, or fish. I can expand my grain intake to include brown rice, oatmeal, and alternative grains like quinoa, barley, and spelt. A smidge of butter or drizzle of good olive oil on top of those grains doesn't hurt my feelings either. Can I enjoy all these foods for the rest of my life? Absolutely! Will these adjustments make me feel deprived of tasty food? Never.

In terms of exercise, boot-camp style workouts lasting hours on-end are not sustainable and, for most people, neither are expensive health club memberships or personal trainers. On the other hand, a good pair of exercise shoes won't set you back too much and using them is free. Choose activities you can maintain for years to come. Cross training with a variety of activities helps work all your muscle groups. Try dancing, swimming, weight training, recreational sports like volleyball and softball, tennis, yoga, hiking, biking, etc.—all of which can be part of an active lifestyle for the rest of your life. Personally, I like to walk four times a week with about 20 minutes of slow running in the middle of the walk. I stretch after my run/walk using yoga breathing techniques. I also enjoy recreational volleyball twice a week along with a Latin-rhythm cardio class once a week. I love hiking, water sports, yoga, and any activity in general. It is not uncommon for me to round up the kids and take the family on a stroll. Sometimes my husband and I will go dancing for a date. I have found I feel better when I am in motion. Some people want to lie by a pool for vacation. My idea of relaxation is to move my body.

Several years ago, a friend invited me to train with her for a big national marathon. I asked her about the training requirements. As I listened to her describe the initial daily mileage of 6-8 miles I thought, “*Although that is double what I normally run, I could possibly do it for a month.*” Then she told me the mileage would need to increase to 10-12 miles a day, followed by three weeks of 16 mile runs. My eyes widened in surprise. As I envisioned myself embarking on this 3-month grueling regimen, I realized that after the race I would probably not feel much like running anymore.

I admire people who compete in marathons and triathlons. I cheer for them at the finish line. But, the training requirements for these sporting events would quite possibly break me of my “moderate” exercise habit. It took effort to establish low-key, consistent exercise and I do not want to shake that up. I don't want to *begin* an exercise habit again;



two days, followed by another day off. An average week contains five exercise days with two days off, spaced when I need it. Read more about muscle recovery in *Should I rest today or am I just being lazy?* in Chapter 7.

### Extremes and Metabolism

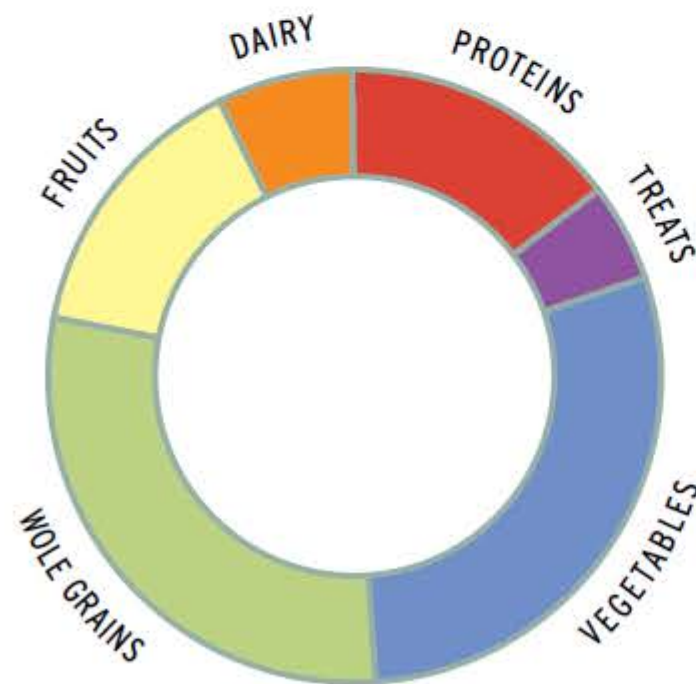
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When I first started becoming healthy, I passed up a litany of tempting extremes such as living on lettuce and tuna fish. Restricting fuel my body needs only slows down my speedy metabolism. But, with a moderate balance of foods, my metabolism starts to work for me. If all required foods are included in a day, I don't feel deprived and, therefore, continue to eat balanced fuel (instead of bingeing on pizza and ice cream).

"But I want the whole pizza," you say? Remember to tune in giving yourself permission to taste and enjoy food. If you remain fully present and taste every single bite, one slice (maybe two) will probably *feel* sufficient. Appropriate portion size is the result of listening to your body and developing a habit of taking "just enough."

Satisfaction also comes from incorporating all the food groups into a meal. A balanced pizza meal would include vegetables and maybe a big green salad. The salad should fulfill over 75% of your total volume of food. Think of splitting your plate in quarters and filling three of those quarters with salad. The fourth quarter is for an appropriate size slice of pizza. It

DAILY FOOD PROPORTIONS



has pepperoni on it? Ok. You want to put creamy dressing on your salad? Ok. Make sure your food tastes worthy of you. It should be delicious enough to savor and, if salad dressing makes that happen, do it. If you balance the pizza with vegetables, it becomes part of a sustainable meal. Now it is time for dessert and you want a little ice cream? Ok. I keep small cups in the house that hold exactly ½ cup. When you want ice cream, use these cups. Eating ½-cup of ice cream will not show up on your thighs. The whole carton...well, I cannot promise anything. The pie chart on the previous page represents general ratios of daily food proportions.

### What is Quality Fuel?

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What is "quality food?" Based on the above chart, a balanced healthy day would be built on a foundation of whole grains and vegetables, with fruit and proteins augmenting the meal. Dairy, fats, and treats are present, but carefully chosen. Not only is balance achieved with correct proportions, but also with correct timing—giving the body what it needs when it needs it. By way of example, after a good workout I usually need some protein along with whole wheat bread. A turkey sandwich is just the thing. I pile it high with lots of vegetables and some good mustard. A squirt of real mayonnaise finishes it off right. If I need more raw vegetables, I will crunch on a carrot or celery along with my sandwich. I wash it all down with a large tumbler of water. Later in the day, I will have a small treat (something with chocolate) but no more than 3-4 bites—just enough to savor and feel satiated. A sensible dinner and a mug of herb tea at bedtime is the perfect end to a balanced day. If I feel hungry at bedtime, I eat a piece of ripe, seasonal fruit or a piece of whole wheat bread. The last three chapters of this book deal more extensively with what we should eat.

I am often asked for a structured eating plan that details exactly what someone should eat to lose weight. I am reluctant to do this because it prevents people from listening to the needs of *their* body. Instead, they would be following mine. I don't follow a pre-formulated plan every day. I listen to my body and adapt my fuel to the needs of that day. I have, however, outlined some sample days to illustrate better what quality fuel looks like. Please refer to the sample menus on page 155 of the *Reference* section and then talk with, or listen to, your body to create your own balanced diet.

### Compensation & Recovery

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The key to balancing your diet is to recognize what you already ate. If you had pastry earlier today, you might want to pass on the rolls at dinner. Tomorrow, after a lunch of peanut butter and jelly with pretzels (primarily bread products), at dinner you might want to include a variety of vegetables and lean proteins. It is not necessary to count calories or carbs, just use



chocolate truffle samples were sitting right there, I didn't need to eat them either. No matter how wonderful the barbecue chicken legs with corn pudding and garlic potato logs may have looked, I didn't have to eat them right at that moment. I could say: "I don't want them because I don't need them." No one was denying me anything I wanted, I was refusing it; and in that liberating act, I had an "ah hah" moment. Food lost its power over me that day. I realized I could choose my food instead of feeding the compulsion I had tended for 30 years. I came to the realization what I needed was what I wanted, instead of the other way around.

When now presented with food, I ask, "Am I hungry and do I really want to eat right now?" instead of, "There's a piece of mushroom pizza in the fridge so, I will put it in my mouth." One empowers me to choose, the other enslaves me.

### Be Wasteful

As you clean up the kitchen, do you eat the last of your kid's sandwich so it doesn't go to waste? At a restaurant, do you get your money's worth by finishing off your plate, even if you felt full during the salad course? If there is only one handful of chips left in the bag, is it too small to put back into the pantry—so you just eat it? Do you add the last three raviolis to your portion so you won't have to bother finding a container for the leftovers?

Let it go and throw it away. My Mom used to say, "Better it go to waste than to your waist." She was right. Shake off guilt for wasting food. If you think wasting food is irresponsible, listen up. You are more irresponsible when you compulsively shove excess food in your body than you are when you choose to scrape it into the sink. Consider your responsibility to your body and to your loved ones. It is nearly impossible to teach healthy habits without modeling them yourself. You are paramount—not those leftover peas. Food is just food. It doesn't have feelings. But you do. Be the master, not the slave.

What I need is  
what I want,  
instead of the  
other way  
around.



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have feelings.  
But you do.



### There Are No Bad Foods

Despite my general avoidance of hydrogenate fats and high-fructose corn syrup, there are no bad foods. Chocolate cake is our friend. Obviously, eating the entire cake in one sitting is not a wise move, but, when you need a treat, sharing a slice of chocolate decadence torte with a friend won't throw you off balance one bit. Preservatives, coloring agents, carbonated beverages, red meat, processed meats like hams or sausages, and pesticide-laden produce are not even bad foods, unless you ingest them with enough frequency to make them a significant part of your regular diet. Once a year, a Twinkie™ won't kill you. What you do most regularly defines you—hence, a diet of fresh veggies, whole grains, and excellent proteins, with an occasional toaster pastry, will define you as a healthy person.

I can eat all the food on the earth,  
just not in one day.

Say this one aloud as you try the *Rule of Halves* in Chapter 3: "I can eat all the food on earth, just not in one day." Truly, you can eat everything you want. Every yummy thing is available. Taking away restrictions is a mighty freedom. It allows us to see food in an impartial way because we are not hanging onto it with a deathlike grip anymore. We have our whole








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**Eat a Brownie with Broccoli.** When you do enjoy a treat, eat it that day in combination with other high value foods. This gives you the nutrition to use up those carbohydrates and fat for fuel.

lives to enjoy the delicious bounty of the world—even those *occasional* foods we simply cannot live without. If your body tells you it does not need a treat, it could mean your meals are already rich with fats, sugar, and salt. So, if you want the nod from your bod to eat a fine chocolate truffle in the afternoon, choose a lighter lunch—think salad.



## KEY

	<p><b>Daily Fuel</b> — This designation is quite arbitrary. But, in general, “daily fuel” recipes contain copious amounts of fruit, vegetables, or whole grains with minimal amounts of animal fats and sugar. These foods can be enjoyed on a daily basis or back-to-back without the need for recovery.</p>
	<p><b>Occasional Treat</b> — consumed judiciously, only as your body indicates.</p>
	<p><b>Quickly Prepared</b> — start-to-finish in under 30 minutes.</p>
	<p><b>Inexpensive</b> — requires inexpensive ingredients or can be made with on-hand items listed in the pantry stock section of this book.</p>
	<p><b>Kid-Friendly and grown-up approved</b> — not too weird, but still good.</p>
	<p><b>Vegetarian</b> — does not contain meat, however it may contain eggs and/or dairy.</p>
	<p><b>Vegetarian-modified</b> — contains meat, but easily modified to be meatless and/or vegan.</p>

# Breakfast



*Tammy's Granola, page 166*