

Episode 045:

Healthy Living Part 3:

EXACTLY What You Need To Do

and HOW To Do It - Putting Healthy Living Into Action

This is the TD Fitness Podcast with Coach T, episode number 45.

Welcome to the TD Fitness Podcast, giving you ways to live a healthy lifestyle without giving up the things that make life worth living, and now your host certified health coach, and personal trainer, Coach T.

Hey guys it's Coach T, welcome back to your TD Fitness channel, this is episode number 45, and we are talking about exactly what you need to do and how. When it comes to putting healthy living into action, okay. This is the final episode of our 3-part healthy living series, and in the past two episodes we started the journey to healthy living.

First by describing the changes or the stages of change I should say in episode number 43. And then we went a little bit deeper into more detail into some of the considerations along your path to living healthier in episode number 44. So in this episode I am going to take you across the proverbial finish line if you will. By showing you exactly what you need to do, and how you need to do that. And I'm gonna do that by highlighting three big nutrition habits that are key to focus on. And by addressing some of the fitness considerations as well.

Now maybe the best way to describe this episode is like this: If someone told me that I had only 20 or 30 minutes with an individual to explain exactly what they needed to do to live healthier, and that I'd never see them again. What I'm about to lay out here in this episode is exactly what I'd tell them. Now hopefully I will see or hear from or get to talk to you guys again, but I'm just using that as an example because I think that the things that I'm gonna lay out here, are the most important things to consider when it comes to actually putting healthy habits and actions into practice.

Now obviously I'm talking just about nutrition and fitness here. Right, there are so many other things that are important for healthy living as a whole. And for me I think about my faith, my family, a sense of community, a sense of purpose, all those things kinda come to mind for me. But this being the TD Fitness podcast, I'm gonna keep it focused on nutrition and fitness. Deal? All right. So take this as practical advice from your health coach and personal trainer.

This is your step-by-step approach, and this is kinda your one-stop shopping for many of the concepts that I try to touch on in a number of different episodes. Now obviously I can't hit every concept in detail here in this episode, otherwise we'd be here for hours, which is why I have to limit it to what I think is the most important information from my view point. So that goes from mindset to eating habits, and exercise habits, all of those things go into healthy living.

And this is an abbreviated version of what I teach and help folks put into practice in my fit-life program. So you'll kinda get a little peek under the hood with that as well. Now, what type of trainer or coach would I be if I didn't at least acknowledge the fact that general advice is not really good for any one individual in particular. I get that, right. So let me tell you who I had in mind when I came up with this idea.

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So number one, if you're busy, then I think this will be helpful to you because I want to prioritize and tell you where you'll get the most healthy living bang for your efforts. We make thousands of decisions every day. So let me help you with where to start. Number two, if you have trouble maintaining healthy habits, then this is where I give you the tools you need to literally make that change effortless. And then number three, if you're confused by all of the information out there ...

I mean this describes many of us right? You are not alone, and we hear it all the time “Eat this, not that” or “Hey, have you tried intermittent fasting?” Or “Hey, you have to watch that show What the Hell. Though didn't you hear meat is bad for you, oh wait carbs are bad for you, or is it the sugar?” And somebody else will say “Hey, forget all that, high intensity interval training is where it's at.” I get it guys, there is a lot of information out there. The Internet, the TV, you name it, there's so much coming at us. Some of it's good, some of it's not so good. Some of it is partially true, some of it is not true at all. So let me help clarify and filter out some of that bad advice, okay. That's what I hope to do here.

And then finally, and maybe the most important thing to understand about the type of person that I had in mind with this episode, and the type of person that I feel like I'm talking to a lot. If you are someone who understand that drastic change does not occur overnight, but that small changes add up to bigger changes, and that healthy living is really a matter of doing just a little bit better each day. Then I feel like I'm talking to you. And if you've listened to more than about two minutes of any TD Fitness podcast episode or if you've read any of my work online. I would think that it's clear that I'm not about quick fixes or fads. I am about giving you what you need to know to improve your health.

So, now that you know who this is for, let me also tell you who should not try to implement these steps, at least not yet. So first, if you are overly stressed right now, then I just want you to stop, okay. You can not add other stressful things to your life, and expect to be successful at them all. And trying to change your life for the better from a health standpoint and trying to implement healthy habits. Those are other stressors that will contribute to stress that you already have, okay.

Now I'm not talking about these small day-to-day stresses like being at work on time. I'm talking about the really stressful periods in your life. It's a fact that psychologists believe that for each person, self-control or willpower is a limited resource. And coping with stress requires a certain level of self-control because the emotional energy that would otherwise be used to exert self-control in a given situation. That gets used up when you're dealing with stress.

So if you know that you're in a stressful period and that it's gonna pass soon, and I think of things like final exams, or if you're in the middle of a move, or it's just a temporarily busy time at work. Then just wait for that period to pass, and then try to start with these, or other healthy habits. Science backs up the fact that we only have a limited amount of bandwidth when it comes to dealing with stress, and making changes in our lives. So if you try to do too many things at once. You won't be successful at doing any of them well.

And the next thing to remember ... I'm assuming that if you're listening to this then you're past the pre-contemplation phase of wanting to make a change. And if you listened to the first two episodes of this series than you know exactly what I'm talking about. So you're probably either thinking about healthier living, or you're preparing to live healthier, or actually about to take action. And if any of those things are true, then you are in the right place.

Final thing before we dive in. There are a couple of ways to implement these habits. So you can choose one habit at a time, and you can continue to improve on that one habit until you get to where you think you need to stay for a long period of time, or where you get to your goal in that habit. I call this “Going deeper,” okay. Another thing you could do is you can make small improvements on one habit, kinda make that a regular occurrence, and then move to another habit and continue to do the same thing, and on, and on, and on. And I call this not going deeper, but “Going wider” because you're spreading out the wealth a little bit. Or you can use a combination of the two. You can go deep on a couple of habits and spread the love on the other, it's up to you. I'll give you techniques for each.

So, let's get to it. Quick refresher, we talked about motivation, we talked about mindset, we talked about belief, we talked about goal setting, and planning in the last episode, episode number 44. Those things are so important and they are so often overlooked. So before you jump into your first habit, I want you to be sure to consider tapping into those intrinsic motivators. Working hard or working toward a can do mindset and a can do belief. Believing that you can, setting smart goals and putting a plan in place to set yourself up for success. These things don't happen overnight, right? But once that foundation is laid, the habits then become a lot easier. I could spend hours talking about all that goes into those things I just mentioned. Hopefully the last episode set you in a pretty good ...

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Goes into those things I just mentioned. Hopefully the last episode set you on a pretty good path. If you want to go deeper and personalize that though, I'll refer you to the Fit Life Program and there'll be more information on that at the end of this episode. So knowing all of that, where do we start? Big question. Which is more important, nutrition or fitness? Well, I know there are many of you listening out there so I have to give you my best advice based really on just my 11 years of training and coaching experience and the research that I do week to week and I will tell you that nutrition, nutrition, nutrition is where you need to focus first. Now, let me say this. If you roll through this prioritized list that I'm giving you and you've already got great habits in, you know the first few, then move on down and pick up where you need to focus.

For example, if you've already got your nutrition dialed in, but you're struggling with finding time to exercise or making fitness a regular part of your healthy living lifestyle, then focus on the fitness part. Don't spend time on the nutrition. Don't waste time trying to improve on something that you're already doing well in other words. Remember, perfect is the enemy of good, so don't try to be perfect, just be better and be better consistently. Okay? I want you to remember that through all of this.

So what's the first thing in the nutrition category that you can do? All together now, drink water, drink water, drink water. Not juices, not flavored water, although if that's your steppingstone to regular water, then have at it. Not sodas, not coffee or tea with more sugar than anything else. Nothing replaces water, okay? Except maybe for ice, but water is a quick win. For the amount of effort it takes to increase your number of sips per day, you get improved hydration, you get efficient body function. Did you know that 60% of the human body, of the adult body is water. The brain and the heart are composed of 73% water and about 83% of the lungs are water. Water provides for more efficient bodily function and it helps you move better. Yes, that's right. It helps you move better when you're properly hydrated, your muscles are more pliable, your joints are less stiff, and that means less pain, and another reason why I prescribe this as one of the first habits with people that I work with,

is that water can help you drop pounds almost immediately. Not only does it fill your stomach and possibly replace some of the unhealthy beverages or foods that you may be eating, but drinking water helps you remove excess water weight, and that's the weight that we lose right away. Okay? The more water you drink, the less water your body retains, so you lose weight.

Remember, the body's smart, it knows that it doesn't have to hold onto water because it's getting water regularly now. So water makes the body function better and it makes you feel better, period. If you walk around dehydrated all the time, you're missing out, okay? You do not know what you're missing. You could feel so much better. Drink more water. Question comes up all the time, how much water should I drink? Here's the thing and this principle applies to all of the habits. Okay? It doesn't matter how much, as long as it's better than you're doing right now. So if you're not drinking any water, then start with one of those small eight ounce bottles, just one of those a day and do that for awhile and then maybe make it one regular size, 16 ounce bottle per day. Make that a habit and then just keep building on that.

That's going deeper. That's what I'm talking about when I say you can go deep with a habit. You focus on one habit and continue to get better and better at it, and if you get to the point where you're like, I am so tired of this water thing, then that's understandable. Okay? Just try to maintain the level you're at or maybe even back it off a little bit. Give yourself a little reprieve and then move on to another habit. Worst case, now you're drinking more water on a regular basis. Now I know that no matter how much I say, just do better than you're doing right now, a lot of you are still wondering, no, seriously, how much water should I drink? The answer to that question is as much as it takes to hydrate you. How do you tell? Well, when your pee is clear, it's that simple. A ballpark estimate though, is anywhere between 60 and 100 ounces of water per day, depending on your size and weight. So if 60 ounces is about four bottles of water, okay? Now I want to stress though that that should not be the initial goal to drink, you know, 60 or 100 ounces of water per day. Our goal is simply to do better than we're doing right now.

So the goal is to make the habit effortless, right, and you do that by making very small changes that you can maintain because getting those small wins is so important. It's more important than making drastic changes, especially early on. It's a large psychological component to that. Alright, so drink water.

The next thing, the second as a rack and stack these, the second on the priority list, adding vegetables and fruits to your diet, and I've talked before about nutrient dense foods and calorie dense foods. So nutrient dense foods provide a larger amount, or a greater amount of nutrients per serving and calorie dense foods give you the calories but less of the nutrients. A simple example is like comparing some baked turkey or maybe fish to some other or some other lean protein to you know, an unhealthy protein, something like sausage. So the lean meat is going to provide more of that nutrient protein than the sausage does, which provides more fat and more calories. So therefore the turkey or the fish is more nutrient dense and the sausage is more calorie dense.

Simply put though, just start to swap less healthy foods with healthier foods. It's that simple. Okay and generally speaking, we know what's more healthy and what's less healthy. So just trust yourself on this one. Vegetables and fruits also have fiber. Fruit juices do not, but fiber helps to fill you up faster. It keeps you regular, it helps to cut down on some of those bad cholesterols. So how would you implement this? Well, if you're not eating any vegetables or fruits at the moment, then just start with one serving per day or maybe five total servings a week. If you're not there, then maybe three servings a week. Remember, just do better than you're doing right now and make that a habit and then build on it and then you can go deep in

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that habit, or you can improve just a little. Make sure you're consistent at it and then move on and start another habit while maintaining your health, your vegetable and your fruit habits. So that's, again, not going deeper but going wider. So meet like a minimum threshold of where you want to be and then move on to another habit, but continue to maintain the fruit and vegetable habit as well, if that makes sense.

Now notice that those first two habits, the water, adding fruits and vegetables, those are things that I want you to add to your diet, not take away, and this is typically the approach that I will try to use first from a health coaching perspective, because from a psychological perspective, it's easier to focus on adding or swapping things than it is to take something away. If I tell you, hey, the first thing I want you to do is not eat any of this. That just doesn't click or trigger a positive connotations in our mind. It's easier to implement when we can add healthy things or swap, add healthy things and take away some less healthy things. Okay, so add water, add fruits and vegetables.

Now the next habit does focus on cutting back though and this habit is calorie control. So many times we're just eating too much, either in portion sizes or maybe we're just eating too many times a day and that includes snacks. So what I want you to focus on here is being deliberate about your eating habits. Are you just eating out of habit or are you eating because you're truly hungry and are you hungry, or do you just feel like eating because there's a difference there. For example, the smell of freshly baked cookies or maybe some meat on a grill can make you feel like eating, but that doesn't necessarily mean you're hungry. So before you eat, just take a minute, take a minute to think about this meal. Think about the next meal, do a little bit of planning. Think about the last meal. How long ago was it? Do you really need the double helping of mashed potatoes or will one scoop suffice? Think before you eat. Things that can help with this are eating slowly, being conscious

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... Can help with this are eating slowly, being conscious about eating slowly, not eating at your desk at work, maybe getting out, going into the cafeteria or better yet go outside and eat something. Make mealtime deliberate, not mindless. A good goal or habit to shoot for could be cutting out one regular unhealthy snack a day or maybe if it's not every day just maybe a few times a week. Let me say this though. When it comes to calorie control, severely limiting calories is not, it's not what I'm talking about. That is not a sustainable approach.

You could risk getting too few calories, which is not enough energy, too little energy, and that's often the case and it leaves you feeling lethargic, leaves you feeling hungry, and it leaves you feeling frustrated. Not only that, when you cut back severely like that the body kicks into kind of a survival mode and it tends to retain calories for energy. It's kind of like I said earlier with water, the more water you drink the less water your body feels like it has to maintain so it knows that it's getting more in.

The same is true with calorie restriction. When you cut back severely, again, like that the body kicks into survival mode and it wants to hold onto those calories for energy so you're ultimately working against yourself. Remember, small, gradual changes are the ones that stick. Now in the interest of time I'm going to just mention a few remaining diet and nutrition habits. I've laid out the three most important here in the water, the fruits and vegetables, and the calorie control. You'll find that the rest are really extensions of adding better things and reducing some less healthy things.

These include things like adding fiber in the form of whole grains and whole wheat so maybe try replacing white bread with whole wheat bread, maybe white rice with brown rice. Add healthy proteins like lean meats, we talked a little bit about that already. Limit unhealthy fats like trans-fats and saturated fats. Limit added sugars, they're high in calories, they can cause hormonal spikes that cause you to retain weight, and they're often highly addictive so be careful about the added sugars.

You want to limit processed foods. Your body essentially metabolizes processed foods like sugars and they can be high in calories so it's a double whammy. Then you want to make sure you're staying on top of your sodium intake. Excess sodium causes you to retain water. It keeps you bloated, it raises your blood pressure so that's something you want to watch out for. Those are the major nutrition habits that I tend to focus on or at least those are the baseline ones that I start with when I am health coaching.

Then there are a million different deviations from all of these depending on the specific situation, specific needs of the individual but these are a good place to start. Now let's talk a little bit about fitness. Really, there's three things to remember ... Two or three things to remember with fitness, I'll try to keep it simple. Number one, if you're not moving, start moving. Number two, if you are moving, move more. We could stop right there but I'm going to go a little bit deeper.

If you are exercising regularly then I want you to remember these things. The first is that big muscles won't do nearly as much for you as a strong heart will when it comes to living longer so cardio is important. Cardiovascular activity is important. I know, guys, a lot of times we want to go to the gym and build what I call the pretty muscles but as we age what's going to be more important for us is a strong ticker, a strong heart, so remember that, cardio is important.

Number two. In order to move more freely with less pain and with more efficiency, and to reduce the likelihood of injury when you do exercise, you need to have good mobility and flexibility so do not neglect this part of your exercise routine. Then finally, rejuvenation comes from rest. Your sleep habits are more important than you think so be deliberate about getting enough sleep, at least on most nights of the week.

Now when it comes to more of the what I consider personal training aspects of fitness ... So there's the health coaching which I think about as helping people implement healthy habits holistically, all around. Then there's the personal training where we focus more on the fitness side, at least I do. When I think about the in the weeds kind of fitness activity, which you should focus on, again, after you add cardio, after you have your mobility training added, and after you've addressed proper sleep, then you can talk about building strong core and how to incorporate strength training and resistance training.

All of those things are important but there are some things that are more important than others and that's why I try to lay it out that way. That's where I want people to start but if you're truly looking to live healthier then I just want you to make sure some of the key aspects of your diet are squared away first and then devote time and attention to exercise and fitness. I really wish I could talk to each of you in person. There's so much more that goes into the personalization of all this and the critical, behavioral, and mindset aspects that weigh in. Then there's the accountability piece and anticipating and overcoming obstacles. There's so much.

I have to say it again, the beauty of the Three Month Fit Life Program is that it guides you through all of this. Again, a little more on that in a moment but before I close I did want to

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let you know about another opportunity to put these principles and habits into action for free. The freebie for this episode is an invitation to join the 10 Day Healthy Habit Challenge. I want you to go ahead, give it a shot. See how you do with these habits and others as you get a taste of what it feels like to set a small goal, then to accomplish it, and to see how you did through a simple tracking mechanism that we use.

You can head over to tdfitness.net/10habits to join the challenge. That's tdfitness.net/the-number-10habits, tdfitness.net/10habits. There you will enter your first name and your email and I'll add you to the challenge, it's that easy. The show notes for this episode can be found at tdfitness.net/045. Guys, thanks again. I hope that this has been helpful and continues to be helpful to you as you continue to make positive, healthy living changes. It is so important and you really do have to take a comprehensive approach.

It includes mindset, it includes nutrition, and it includes fitness, and really merging those three different areas together. I'm Coach T, I'm signing out. I want you to stay tuned for a quick word about the Fit Life Program.

Why did I create the Fit Life Program? I wanted to [inaudible 00:28:15] something that wasn't just for weight loss, not just for feeling better, not even just for better health. I wanted a more complete solution and I also wanted to make it sustainable. It's not just about starting something or sticking with it for a month or two. Healthy living which includes fitness, nutrition, and a healthy mindset is about practicing healthy habits consistently. Not all the time because no one is perfect but practicing those healthy habits more than you are right now, that's how change begins and that's how healthy living continues.

Find out more at fitlifeprogram.com or tdfitness.net/fitlife.

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