



GUIDE TO REGAINING HEALTH

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this document is NOT for me to build you a plan to achieve better health. It is to help you to learn how to design your own plan to improve and/or regain your own health. This document will help with guidelines, but they are just that, guidelines. How you color in-between is totally up to you. After all, nobody knows you better than you.

'Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' - Unknown

Who is this written for? BEGINNERS. If all the information in this document is old news to you, great, you already know more than most about health. If you're intermediate to advanced on your health journey, and you're feeling stuck and need help, hire a trainer, dietician, or health coach!

The following health program designs will focus on the pillars of health: Diet, Exercise, Sleep, and Stress reduction.

Dr. Levi Merritt DC, CPT, CHC

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Disclosure: *I have orchestrated, organized, and edited the information in this document myself. Writing was done with the help of ChatGTP. I did not find it necessary to cite all the information contained herein, as it would have taken twice as long to complete. I've studied this material using evidence-based textbooks, scientific research articles, practice guidelines, etc... for over 15 years. I of course, can get things wrong, but as of the making of this document, I believe the information to be accurate and I am confident you can find it useful. - Dr. Levi G. Merritt, DC, CPT, CHC*

Medical Disclaimer: *The information provided in this document is for general informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment and before undertaking a new health care regimen, and never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this document.*

What is Health: Health can be defined as a state of physical, mental, and social well-being in which an individual is free from illness, injury, or any other form of impairment. It encompasses the ability to engage in daily activities with vigor and without limitations, and the presence of positive mental and emotional states.

GETTING STARTED

Goals: *"If you don't know exactly where you're going, how will you know when you get there?" - Steve Maraboli*

Goals are an integral part of your success. Goals are the first thing to be determined before setting out on your health journey. Goals are yours and yours alone. They can be anything you want them to be: get healthy, help reverse chronic health condition/s, lose weight, build muscle, get stronger, or look good naked. Whatever the goals, they should be SMART.

Specific: Goals should be clear and unambiguous. Instead of setting a general goal like "lose weight," make it more specific, such as "lose 10 lbs."

Measurable: Goals should have quantifiable criteria to track progress and determine success. Establish concrete metrics or milestones to measure your progress towards the goal. For example, "drop 2 pant sizes." There are various outcome assessment tools (OATs) that can be found online and used measure progress in almost any health pursuit.

Achievable: Goals should be realistic and attainable given the available resources, skills, and time. Consider your limitations and ensure that the goal is challenging yet reachable. Setting unattainable goals can lead to frustration and demotivation.

Relevant: Goals should be aligned with your overall objectives and relevant to your long-term plans. Avoid setting goals that do not contribute to your broader aspirations.

Time-bound: Goals should have a specific timeframe or deadline. Setting a target date helps create a sense of urgency and provides a timeline for planning and implementation. For example, "add 1 inch to my biceps by June."

There are two types of goals: progress goals and process goals. Here's how they differ:

- **Progress Goals:** focus on the desired outcome or end result. They define the ultimate target you aim to achieve. Examples of progress goals include "Lose 20 pounds" or "Build more muscle." These goals provide a clear direction and set the overall objective for your efforts.
- **Process Goals:** focus on the actions, behaviors, or processes that you need to undertake to reach your progress goals. They are about the steps or activities that lead to the desired outcome. Process goals are often more actionable and can be measured by the completion of specific tasks or the consistency of certain behaviors. Examples of process goals include "Exercise for 30 minutes five times a week," or "Eat out only twice a week." These goals help you establish the necessary routines and habits to achieve your progress goals.

Process goals are arguably more important than progress goals, as they are the necessary steps REQUIRED to meet your progress goals. Process goals are more easily met, as they simply necessitate you to complete a task. Checking off process goals as you go helps to build positive momentum, and allows you to stay motivated and on track towards your progress goals.

Once you have established your goals, simply use the information in this document to help you reach those goals.

First and foremost, don't suffer from 'paralysis by analysis.' This means trying to develop the perfect diet, exercise program, or health regimen. I've fallen victim to this, and it's nothing more than a giant time-suck. Hint: there is no perfect exercise program, perfect diet, or health regimen. Even if you happen to stumble upon something close, it will change overtime as you progress anyways.

"Perfect is the enemy of progress." – Winston Churchill

We'll begin building our plan using the pillars of health: Diet, Exercise, Sleep, Stress reduction.

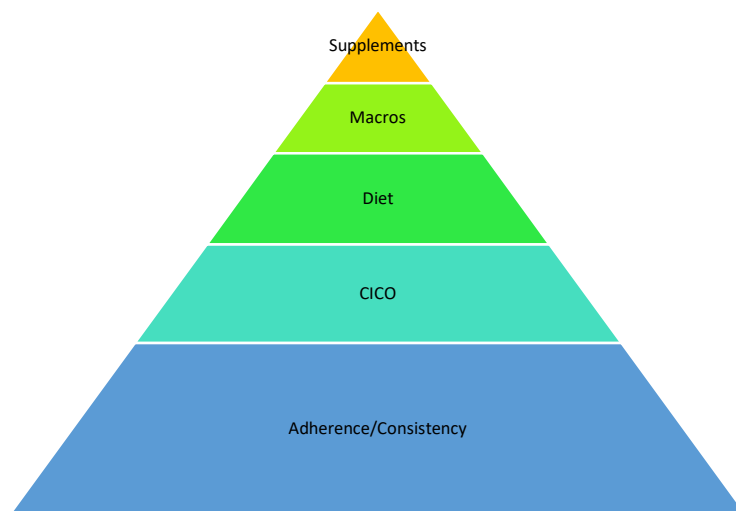
DIET

I've included a helpful diagram that demonstrates the elements of a dietary plan in order of importance.

1. ADHERENCE.

All diets work if you can stick to them. Problem is, most people fall victim to yo-yo dieting. Diet, fall off the wagon, repeat. It's unhealthy, and discouraging, and we've almost all done it. How do we get out this vicious cycle? Find a diet that you can adhere to.

How do I do that?



Improving adherence refers to increasing the likelihood that you will follow through with your plan. Here are some strategies that can help improve adherence:

- Education: Gain clear and concise information about health. What works, what doesn't, what's worth your time and effort and what's not. This document will help with that.
- Keep it simple: Complex regimens can be overwhelming and increase the likelihood of non-adherence. Simplifying the plan can make it easier to follow.
- Personalized Approach: Tailor the plan to your lifestyle, preferences, and capabilities. Keep it fun. If it's fun, you're more likely to stick with it. If you stick with it, you'll reap the rewards of your effort.
- Support Systems: Engaging the support of family members, friends, or caregivers can significantly improve adherence. They can provide reminders, assist with financial support, help free up time, and provide emotional support.
- Monitoring: Regular monitoring of progress can help identify and address adherence issues promptly. Adjustments to the plan or additional support can be utilized as needed.
- Use of Technology: Leveraging technology, such as apps, wearable devices, or telehealth platforms, can facilitate adherence by providing reminders, tracking progress, and offering remote support.

2. CICO (CALORIES IN VS. CALORIES OUT).

A calorie is a unit of measurement used to quantify the amount of energy in food and beverages. Specifically, it represents the amount of energy required to raise the temperature of 1 gram of water by 1 degree Celsius (or 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit).

Calories are the energy content of food. Take in more energy than what you need, it gets stored and you gain weight. Take in less calories than what you need, and you lose weight. It's as simple as that.

The concept of "calories in vs. calories out" is a simplified way of understanding weight management.

Here's a breakdown of each component:

- **Calories In:** This refers to the calories consumed through food and beverages. Different foods have varying calorie content, with macronutrients like carbohydrates, proteins, and fats providing different amounts of energy. For example, carbohydrates and proteins contain roughly 4 calories per gram, while fats provide approximately 9 calories per gram. Total calorie intake is influenced by factors such as portion sizes, food choices, and cooking methods.
- **Calories Out:** This represents the calories burned by the body through various mechanisms, listed in order from greatest affect to least:
 - **Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR):** BMR refers to the energy expended by the body at rest to maintain vital functions like breathing, circulation, and cell production. It accounts for the majority of calories burned daily, usually representing 60-75% of total energy expenditure.
 - **Non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT)** refers to the energy expended through all physical activities that are not considered formal exercise. It includes the energy expended during activities of daily living, such as walking, standing, fidgeting, housework, and other spontaneous movements throughout the day. NEAT can vary significantly among individuals based on occupation, lifestyle, and personal habits. Increasing NEAT can contribute to overall energy expenditure and impact weight management. Small changes in daily habits, such as taking frequent breaks from sitting, incorporating more walking or standing into daily routines, or opting for active transportation whenever possible, can help increase NEAT. Increasing NEAT alone may be sufficient for weight loss or maintenance.
 - **Planned Exercise:** Exercise such as running or weightlifting, Pilates, yoga, swimming, etc..... The intensity and duration of exercise influences the number of calories burned. Time being equal, more vigorous activities burn more calories than less vigorous.
 - **Thermic Effect of Food:** The body requires energy to digest, absorb, and process the nutrients from food. The thermic effect of food represents the calories burned during this process, typically accounting for about 10% of the total energy expenditure. Each macronutrient (carbohydrates, proteins, and fats) requires a different amount of energy to be processed and utilized by the body.
 - **Carbohydrates:** around 5-10% of the total calories consumed. This means that when you consume carbohydrates, your body utilizes approximately 5-10% of the energy obtained from those carbohydrates just to digest and process them.
 - **Proteins:** around 20-30% of the total calories consumed.
 - **Fats:** Fats have the lowest thermic effect among the macronutrients, estimated to be around 0-3% of the total calories consumed.

How many calories do I need to lose or gain weight?

Use a “Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)” calculator. This is easy to find, online and free. Simply punch in some basic information, and it will return a number. That number is your BMR, or simply put, the number of calories you need to stay at your present weight.

Typically, also listed will be caloric requirements based upon activity level. Always choose the “sedentary” number as your baseline before decreasing calories to lose weight. The reason for this is that most people underestimate the number of calories they consume, and overestimate the calories they burn from physical activity and exercise. Choosing the “sedentary” number helps balance these errors and make the equation more accurate.

When aiming to lose or gain weight, either decrease or increase your BMR by 250-500 calories per day, respectively. I would not recommend being more aggressive than this. Dropping calories too low has negative health consequences, makes life miserable, and weight regain is almost assured. Increasing calories for weight gain by more than 500 leads to a disproportionate gain in undesirable fat mass over more desirable lean body mass.

Clinical Pearl: Use technology. Calorie counting can be tedious otherwise. There are plenty of free or low-cost apps available. You can use MyFitnessPal, Macrofactor, etc... I use the free version of MyFitnessPal (no affiliation). It allows me to calculate my BMR, and track calories, macros, bodyweight and bodyfat % all for free.

BMR does not account for individual differences, such as metabolic rate variations and hormonal influences. Other factors, such as genetics, sleep patterns, stress levels, and overall health, can also affect weight the BMR equation. It's not that calorie tracking doesn't work; in fact, it always does. It's just the calculators aren't perfect, and your BMR may need to be adjusted from time to time as you journey to lose, or gain weight.

3. DIET

Doctors may recommend different diets based on an individual's specific health needs, goals, and medical conditions. However, here are some commonly recommended diets that have been shown to improve health.

- **Mediterranean Diet:** The Mediterranean diet is based on the traditional eating patterns of countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. It emphasizes whole, minimally processed foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, fish, and olive oil. It encourages moderate consumption of dairy products, poultry, and eggs, while limiting red meat and processed foods. The Mediterranean diet is associated with numerous health benefits, including reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.
- **The Volumetrics Diet:** an eating plan that focuses on consuming foods that have a low-calorie density while still providing a feeling of fullness. The underlying principle of the Volumetrics Diet is to choose foods that are high in water content and fiber, as these tend to be lower in calories but can help you feel satisfied. The diet emphasizes the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products.
- **DASH Diet:** The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet was initially developed to help lower blood pressure. It focuses on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products while minimizing saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium. The DASH diet is not only beneficial for managing blood pressure but also promotes overall cardiovascular health.

- **Plant-Based or Vegan Diet:** Plant-based diets emphasize whole, plant-derived foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds while excluding or minimizing animal products. Vegan diets, in particular, avoid all animal-derived foods. Plant-based diets can provide essential nutrients while being low in saturated fats and cholesterol. They have been associated with lower risks of heart disease, obesity, and certain types of cancer.
- **Low-Carb or Ketogenic Diet:** Low-carbohydrate diets restrict carbohydrate intake and encourage higher consumption of fats and proteins. The ketogenic diet is an extreme form of low-carb diet that significantly restricts carbohydrates, forcing the body into a state of ketosis where it primarily burns fat for fuel. These diets may be recommended for certain individuals, such as those with type 2 diabetes or epilepsy.

There is plenty of free online content regarding these diets. So, I won't go into depth here. As long as your diet has a healthy mix of macronutrients (protein, carbs, and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, etc...), then you're fine. The thing healthy diets have in common is not so much what you eat, but what you don't eat. Foods to generally limit or avoid include the following:

- **Refined Flours and Grains:** Refined flours and grains are rapidly broken down into sugars in the body and do not contribute to fiber in the diet. Avoid white flour, white rice, refined pastas and gravies. They tend to be highly processed, low in nutrients, and high in calories. Refined grains may increase inflammation in the body.
- **Foods High in Omega-6 Fatty Acids.** Increased consumption of foods containing Omega-6 fatty acid has been linked to increased rates of heart disease, cancer, obesity, depression, insulin resistance, allergies and other autoimmune diseases. Oils to avoid include: corn, safflower, sunflower, cottonseed, sesame, grapeseed, borage and primrose oils.
- **Refined Sugar:** Refined sugars quickly raise blood sugar levels, causing large amounts of insulin to be released. Insulin causes blood sugar to drop rapidly, producing hypoglycemia, which leads to cravings for more sugar. These large rises and falls in blood sugar lead to insulin resistance. This means your body's insulin doesn't work as it should. When your insulin stops working properly, blood sugar (glucose) remains in the blood stream. This leads to metabolic syndrome, pre-diabetes, and/or full-blown diabetes (type II is most common). Refined sugars are in sodas, fruit drinks, sweetened beverages, cereals and almost all processed/junk foods. Look for sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, and dextrose on food labels. Avoiding these foods altogether is a good idea.
- **Artificial Sweeteners:** Acesulfame, Aspartame (Equal) (NutraSweet), Saccharin, Sucralose (Splenda). Artificial sweeteners are chemicals, not food. Side effects include: blurred vision, gastrointestinal problems, seizures, dizziness, migraines, blood sugar increases and weight gain.
- **Foods with Trans-Fat:** Trans-fats are added to foods to increase shelf life and retain flavor in foods. Avoid Trans-fats and any hydrogenated oils when possible. They raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol, increasing your risk for cardiovascular disease. Margarine, frostings, toppings, soup mixes, pre-packaged frozen foods, fast foods, commercial baked goods, snack foods, cereal bars, dips and salad dressings all usually contain Trans-fats.
- **Foods with Added Sodium:** This includes nearly all processed food in which sodium is used as a preservative: canned foods, instant soups, cured meats (bacon, sausage, ham, hot dogs, and lunch meats), chips and crackers. Many processed foods have sodium preservatives such as sodium nitrate and nitrite, which should be avoided. Excess sodium is a common cause of high blood pressure.
- **Unwashed Fruits and Vegetables:** Fruits and vegetables contain pesticides and waxes. You should thoroughly wash them before eating.

It's important to note that dietary recommendations should be tailored to your specific health needs, preferences, and goals. Consulting with a healthcare professional or registered dietitian is crucial to receive personalized advice if you have a medical condition.

4. MACROS (MACRONUTRIENT COMPOSITION OF FOOD)

Macronutrients are the three main types of nutrients required by the human body in relatively large quantities to provide energy and support various physiological functions. The three macronutrients are:

- **Carbohydrates:** Carbohydrates are the body's primary source of energy. They are broken down into glucose, which is used by cells for fuel. Carbohydrates can be further categorized as simple or complex. Simple carbohydrates, such as sugars found in fruits, honey, and processed foods, are quickly digested and provide rapid energy. Complex carbohydrates, like those found in whole grains, legumes, and starchy vegetables, take longer to digest and provide sustained energy. Each gram of carbohydrates provides approximately 4 calories.
- **Proteins:** Proteins are essential for building and repairing tissues, as well as for the production of enzymes, hormones, and antibodies. They are composed of amino acids, which are the building blocks of proteins. There are nine essential amino acids that the body cannot produce on its own and must obtain from dietary sources. Animal-based foods like meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy products are complete protein sources, meaning they contain all essential amino acids. Plant-based sources like legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds can also provide protein but may need to be combined to ensure a complete amino acid profile. Each gram of protein provides approximately 4 calories.
- **Fats:** Fats, also known as lipids, serve as an energy source, provide insulation and protection to organs, aid in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, and help regulate hormones. Fats are classified as saturated, unsaturated, or trans fats based on their chemical structure. Saturated fats, found in animal products and some plant oils, are solid at room temperature and are generally considered less healthy when consumed in excess. Unsaturated fats, including monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, are liquid at room temperature and are found in foods like nuts, seeds, avocados, and oils like olive oil and canola oil. Trans fats, primarily found in processed and fried foods, are artificially created fats and should be avoided. Fats are more calorie-dense, with each gram providing approximately 9 calories.

Does macronutrient composition matter in a diet? Yes, somewhat. I'll explain.

As mentioned, proteins contain essential amino acids. They are termed essential because your body cannot produce them on its own, thus you must obtain them from your diet. Same with fats, they contain essential fatty acids which are necessary for bodily functions. There is no such thing as an essential carbohydrate.

When determining macronutrient requirements, start with protein. Protein should not be calculated as a percentage of your diet, but as an absolute number. Scientists argue on what that number should be but here's an easy rule of thumb. On the lower end, you should consume 1 gram per pound of lean body mass (LBM), or 1 gram per pound of body weight on the higher end.

Example:

A person weighs 200 lbs. Their bodyfat is measured at 20%. Calculate lean body mass as: $200 \text{ lbs.} \times 20\% \text{ body fat} = 160 \text{ lbs. LBM}$. This person should consume somewhere in the neighborhood of 160-200 grams of protein per day.

Carbohydrates and fats can make up the rest of your calories at your discretion. Considering fats contain essential fatty acids, they should make up no less than 20% of your calories, in my opinion.

Here's how this all fits together...

- A person weighs 200 lbs. Their goal is weight loss. BMR is calculated at 2000 calories per day.
- 2000 total calories. Minus 250 for weight loss. = 1750 total calories allotted in the person's diet.
- We know protein contains 4 calories per gram, same as carbohydrates. Fat contains 9 calories per gram.

First, calculate protein requirements. We will use the LBM for protein requirements. So, we know we want...

160 g of protein per day. $160 \text{ g} \times 4 \text{ calories} = 640 \text{ calories}$.

$1750 \text{ total calories} - 640 \text{ protein calories} = 1110 \text{ (calories to allot for carbs and fats)}$.

$1750 \text{ total calories} \times 20\% \text{ calories from fat} = 350 \text{ calories from fat}$.

$1750 \text{ total calories} - 640 \text{ protein calories} - 350 \text{ fat calories} = 760 \text{ (calories to allot for carbs)}$.

$760 \text{ carb calories} / 4 \text{ calories per gram of carbs} = 190 \text{ g of carbs}$.

So, the breakdown is thus:

1750 total calories. 640 from protein, 350 from fat, 760 from carbs.

Equating to 160 g of protein, 39 g of fat, 190 g of carbs.

Percentage wise it would amount to 37% protein, 20% fat, 43% carbs.

This is just an example of a possible macronutrient composition of your diet.

[Here are more examples.](#)

- Isocaloric: 33% protein, 33% fat, 33% carbs
- Higher protein: 40% protein, 40% carbs, 20% fat
- Low carb/ketogenic: 20% protein, 70% fat 10% carbs

This is totally up to you. In my opinion, for health reasons, again I would treat protein as an absolute number based off of LBM or total body weight. Fats, I would consume at a minimum of 20%. How you break everything else down is at your personal preference, based off your needs, and aligned with your goals.

5. SUPPLEMENTS

Don't bother with supplements sold for weight/fat loss. They are ineffective at best, harmful at worst. Supplements that do work, like ephedrine, eventually get pulled due to their harmful side effects. I won't dive into medications for weight loss, they have their place, but this is beyond my fund of knowledge and out of my scope of practice. A valid argument can be made for supplementing with a multivitamin, especially during times when you're attempting to lose weight. Other vitamins and minerals should be taken only if there is a known deficiency, which can be determined by blood tests. Vitamin D and Magnesium deficiencies are relatively common in the U.S.

EXERCISE

1. ADHERENCE

No big surprise here. Adherence wins again. Follow the same recommendations adhering to your exercise plan as you would diet. Make it enjoyable, something you can stick with for a lifetime.

2. EFFORT

Show up consistently, give effort, and you'll achieve 90% of the results you're after.

How much effort is needed?

With regards to exercise, the subjective intensity should be uncomfortable/challenging. This is the state we want to spend most of our time exercising in.

Exercise needs to be challenging enough to produce an adaptation in the body. If effort is too low, the signal sent to the body to make changes never gets received. If effort is sustained at too high a level, on the other hand, injury risk increases and mental and physical burnout becomes more likely.

Exercise should be uncomfortable, never painful, and never so difficult that you couldn't do it again in 48 hours. Remember, consistency is the biggest piece of the pyramid.

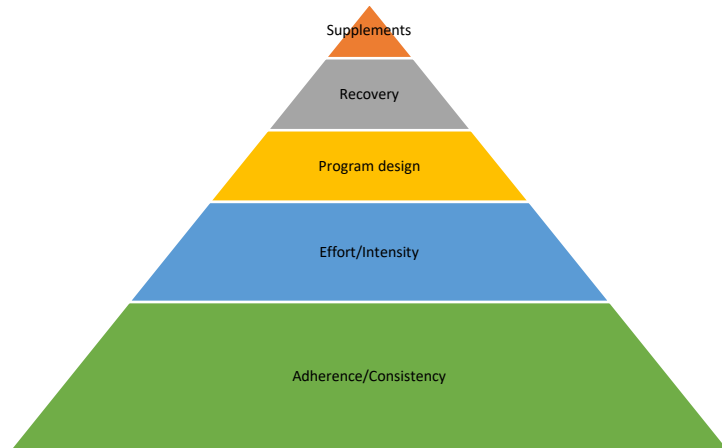
Here's a couple of more specific ways you can judge your effort/intensity for both cardiovascular exercise and resistance exercise.

For cardiovascular exercise, monitor your breathing, and use the talk test.

- Low: no noticeable change in breathing. Walking at a normal pace, on flat ground. You can easily carry on a conversation at this pace. If you're a beginner, or have a health condition that prohibits moderate intensity cardiovascular exercise, then start here, and work your way up.
- Moderate: breathing rate increases. You could talk to a partner while performing moderate intensity exercise, but it wouldn't be easy. You would not be able to sing to them. Brisk walking, light water aerobics, or riding a bike are good examples.
- Vigorous: sometimes termed high-intensity exercise. Breathing rate increases substantially. You would be unlikely able to talk while performing this intensity of exercise. Examples include running or jogging, swimming, jumping rope, or riding a bike at a fast pace or up a hill.

For resistance training, use the Repetitions in Reserve (RIR) Scale.

- The Repetitions in Reserve or RIR scale quantifies the number of repetitions an individual could still perform before reaching muscular failure (muscular failure refers to the point during a set or repetition of an exercise where the targeted muscle or muscle group is no longer able to generate enough force to perform the movement with proper form. It is the point of maximal exhaustion within a set). For example, if someone performs a set of 10 repetitions and has 2 repetitions in reserve, it means they could have completed 2 more repetitions before reaching failure.



Clinical Pearl: Do most of your cardio at a moderate intensity. For resistance training, attempt to leave 2-3 repetitions in reserve, or “in the tank,” for most exercises.

3. PROGRAM DESIGN

Exercise program design is interconnected with effort and recovery. Two important concepts that regulate program design, effort, and recovery are F.I.D.M. and S.A.I.D.

Frequency, Intensity, Duration, and Mode (FIDM) are key variables that play a role in determining the specific adaptations and benefits that can be achieved through exercise. Here's a breakdown of each component:

- Frequency refers to how often you engage in exercise or physical activity. It is typically expressed in terms of the number of sessions or days per week.
- Intensity refers to the level of effort or difficulty of the exercise.
- Duration refers to the length of time spent during each exercise session.
- The mode of exercise refers to the specific type or kind of activity performed. It could include a range of options including cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility training.

How often, how hard, how long, and what type of training you do will determine the effort you can produce and the ability to recover from that effort. If you're constantly exercising in an unrecovered state, your performance will decrease and injury likelihood will increase. Exercise too infrequently or without enough effort, and you'll progress very slowly or not at all.

The SAID principle, also known as the Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands principle, is a fundamental concept in exercise physiology and training. It suggests that the body will specifically adapt to the demands placed upon it during exercise or physical activity. Here are the key points of the SAID principle:

- **Specificity:** The adaptations that occur in response to exercise are specific to the type of exercise or activity performed. For example, if you want to improve your running performance, you need to engage in running-specific training rather than solely focusing on other forms of exercise.
- **Adaptation:** The body responds and adapts to the stress placed upon it during exercise. These adaptations can occur at the muscular, cardiovascular, metabolic, and neural levels, depending on the nature of the exercise.
- **Imposed Demands:** The body adapts to the demands that are imposed upon it. This means that the specific frequency, intensity, duration, and mode of exercise determines the specific adaptations that will occur. For instance, if you want to increase muscle strength, you need to provide a stimulus that challenges the muscles to a sufficient degree.

When the body is exposed to a particular stimulus or stress, it will adapt to that stimulus in order to become more efficient at performing the specific task or activity. If you want a better cardiovascular system, you're going to have to do some cardio. If you want to build muscle, you're going to have to do some resistance training. If you want better flexibility, you're going to need to do some stretching. Incorporating a variety of exercise modes can help enhance overall fitness, prevent boredom, and target different muscle groups or energy systems.

Clinical Pearl – Program design can easily become complicated and overwhelming. This is where people spend, and potentially waste, a lot of their time.

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can” - Arthur Ashe.

Design a program. Try it for a month. Track your results. Adjust as needed. Repeat.

Exercise programs are designed to increase health and fitness. Health and fitness are related concepts but have distinctly different meanings.

Fitness specifically relates to physical fitness or the ability to perform physical activities and tasks efficiently. Fitness often incorporates balance, agility, power, speed, and coordination.

Health refers to a state of overall well-being, encompassing physical, mental, and social aspects. We will focus on the key components of physical health, which are the following:

- Cardiovascular Endurance (cardio): This category focuses on the ability of the heart, lungs, and circulatory system to supply oxygen and nutrients to the muscles during sustained physical activity. It includes activities like running, swimming, cycling, and aerobics.
- Muscular Strength/Endurance: Muscular strength refers to the ability of muscles to exert maximal force against resistance. It involves activities such as weightlifting, powerlifting, and bodyweight exercises that target specific muscle groups. Muscular endurance is the ability of muscles to sustain repeated contractions over an extended period. It involves activities like high-repetition weightlifting, circuit training, and endurance-focused exercises.
- Flexibility: Flexibility is the range of motion around a joint. It includes activities aimed at improving joint mobility and stretching the muscles and connective tissues. Examples include yoga, Pilates, and static stretching exercises.
- Body Composition: Body composition refers to the ratio of lean mass (muscle, bones, organs) to fat mass in the body. It is often assessed by measuring body fat percentage. Activities that promote a healthy body composition include a combination of regular exercise, proper nutrition, and managing caloric intake.

...CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE...

What kind?

Generally speaking, there are two types of cardiovascular exercise you can perform. Steady state and HIIT (high intensity interval training).

- Steady State Cardio: involves maintaining a continuous, moderate-intensity level of exercise for an extended period. It typically involves activities like jogging, cycling, or using cardio machines at a steady pace. The heart rate remains relatively stable throughout the workout. The exercise intensity is sustained at a moderate level, typically around 60-70% of maximum heart rate. Steady state cardio sessions are typically longer, ranging from 30 minutes to several hours, depending on the individual's fitness level and goals.
- High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT): involves alternating between short bursts of high-intensity exercise and brief periods of active recovery or rest. It typically involves exercises like sprinting, jump rope, or bodyweight exercises performed at maximum effort during the intense intervals. HIIT workouts involve short, intense bursts of exercise that push the heart rate to a high level, usually around 80-95% of maximum heart rate. HIIT sessions are usually shorter, typically

ranging from 10 to 30 minutes, as the high intensity makes it challenging to sustain the effort for a prolonged period.

Both steady state cardio and HIIT have their advantages and can be incorporated into a well-rounded fitness routine based on individual goals, preferences, and fitness levels. Some people may prefer the steady, continuous effort of steady state cardio, while others may enjoy the intensity and time efficiency of HIIT workouts.

Clinical Pearl: For weight loss, steady state cardio is more effective at burning calories than HIIT. As it appears the duration, or distance, of cardiovascular exercise effects calorie burn more so than intensity. Do NOT rely on exercise as a sole means of weight loss. Example: It takes about 30 minutes of moderate to intense cardio to burn the 250 calories in a Snickers bar. It's much more time efficient and effective to simply eat something other than the Snickers.

How much?

Cardiorespiratory endurance training should be done for 20-60 mins. 3-5 days per week.

As per American College of Sports Medicine/American Heart Association guidelines: 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity (or a combination of both).

...MUSCULAR STRENGTH/ENDURANCE...

Muscular strength and endurance are accomplished through resistance training. Resistance training, also known as strength training or weight training, is a form of exercise that involves using external resistance to induce muscular contractions, leading to increased strength, endurance, and muscle development. It typically involves working against resistance, such as weights, resistance bands, or bodyweight, to challenge the muscles and stimulate their growth and adaptation.

Before we dive in, it's important to get some definitions out of the way.

Within resistance training, there are macrocycles, mesocycles, and microcycles. These cycles refer to different time periods and structures within a training program. Here's an overview of each cycle:

- A macrocycle is the longest time period within a training program, typically spanning several months to a year or more.
- A mesocycle is the intermediate phase within a training program, typically lasting several weeks to a few months.
- A microcycle is the shortest training cycle within a training program. It consists of a series of individual training sessions within a given week. It is often used to manage the immediate training stress and adaptation process. Beginners should focus on designing a program with regards to the microcycle. As you become more advanced, planning meso/macrocycles becomes important if you want to keep progressing in muscular strength and endurance.

Within an individual workout we have exercise selection, repetitions (reps), and sets.

- Exercise selection: refers to the process of choosing specific exercises to include in a training program. It involves identifying exercises that target specific muscle groups or movement patterns to elicit desired adaptations and improvements in muscular strength and/or endurance.

- There are thousands of exercises to choose from, but there are only 6 basic movement patterns: squat, hinge, horizontal push, horizontal pull, vertical push, vertical pull. Although not technically a movement pattern, core exercises are a good addition to your workout routine. A microcycle should include at least one exercise movement of each pattern. **Examples:**

Squat Pattern	Hinge Pattern	Horizontal Push	Vertical Push	Horizontal Pull	Vertical Pull	Core
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bodyweight Squats - Barbell Back Squats - Goblet Squats - Front Squats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deadlifts - Kettlebell Swings - Hip Thrusts - Bulgarian Split Squats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Push-Ups - Dumbbell or Barbell Bench Press 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overhead Press (dumbbell or barbell) - Push Press 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barbell or Dumbbell Rows - Seated Cable Rows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pull-Ups or Assisted Pull-Ups - Lat Pulldowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Side planks - Crunches - Dead bug exercises - Bird dog exercises

- **Repetition:** the performance of the exercise one time. For example, during a bicep curl, bending and straightening the elbow is one repetition. Repetitions can be anywhere from 3-30. Lower than 3, the intensity is too high, and the risk-to-reward ratio skews towards injury risk. Repetitions above 30 include loads too light to sufficiently improve muscular strength, and begins to resemble more of a cardiovascular exercise than a strength training one.
- **Set:** The performance of all the prescribed repetitions one time. For example, if the exercise needs 10 repetitions of bending the elbow, this would be one set. If instructions say three sets, this means do ten repetitions, rest, and do another ten repetitions, rest, and then another ten repetitions.
 - Sets can be anywhere from 1 to 5 per movement. Ideally, one should perform 8 to 10 sets of a particular movement spread out over the week.
 - 10 to 20 sets per total workout (all exercises in one session) is sufficient for most.

Clinical Pearl: you can certainly pre-plan your exercises, sets, and repetitions per workout session. Personally, I like to plan exercises only, and determine sets and reps based on 'feel.' Either is acceptable and based on your personal preference.

Again, use technology to design your program and track progress. You can create your own program, or use pre-existing templates that a lot of these applications already have. I use the free version of the Strong app (no affiliation). It records the days I've exercised, time, exercise type, sets, reps, and personal records.

What kind?

Your choice. Again, examples of resistance exercise include lifting free weights, using machines, exercise bands, or bodyweight exercises.

How much?

Exercise most major muscle groups of the body, 30-60 minutes, 2-4 days per week.

Once a week is better than nothing. Research has shown that twice a week is certainly better than once. Beyond twice a week, it's up to you. Resistance training two to four times per week is best for most. How frequently you perform resistance training will determine your exercise split.

Exercise splits refer to the way you organize and distribute your workouts throughout the week/microcycle.

Here are a few examples:

- **Full-Body Split:** This split involves working out your entire body in each session. It's typically done two to three times per week, allowing for adequate rest between sessions. A sample full-body split could be:
 - Day 1: Squats, Bench Press, Pull-Ups, Shoulder Press, Planks
 - Day 2: Deadlifts, Lunges, Push-Ups, Rows, Russian Twists
- **Upper/Lower Split:** This split alternates between upper body and lower body workouts. It's usually done three to four times per week, providing enough frequency and recovery. An example of an upper/lower split could be:
 - Day 1: Upper Body (e.g., Bench Press, Rows, Overhead Press, Bicep Curls)
 - Day 2: Lower Body (e.g., Squats, Deadlifts, Lunges, Glute Bridges)
 - Day 3: Rest
 - Day 4: Upper Body
 - Day 5: Lower Body
 - Days 6-7: Rest
- **Push/Pull/Legs Split:** This split divides exercises based on movement patterns. It's typically done three to six times per week and focuses on pushing movements (chest, shoulders, triceps), pulling movements (back, biceps), and leg exercises. An example of a push/pull/legs split could be:
 - Day 1: Push (e.g., Bench Press, Shoulder Press, Tricep Dips)
 - Day 2: Pull (e.g., Pull-Ups, Rows, Bicep Curls)
 - Day 3: Legs (e.g., Squats, Deadlifts, Lunges)
 - Day 4: Rest
 - Days 5-7: Repeat Days 1-3

Remember, these are just examples, and there are many other ways to structure your workouts. The key is to find a split that aligns with your goals, allows for proper recovery, and fits your schedule and preferences.

...FLEXIBILITY...

Flexibility refers to the ability of joints and muscles to move through their full range of motion without experiencing pain or discomfort. It is an important component of physical fitness and is crucial for performing daily activities, sports, and exercise effectively and safely.

Flexibility is influenced by several factors, including: joint structure, muscle elasticity and length, muscle temperature, and neuromuscular Control.

Benefits of flexibility training include: increased flexibility, improved range of motion, enhanced muscle relaxation, reduced muscle tension, and potential relief from muscle soreness. It can also promote better posture and overall body alignment.

What kind?

Static stretching, dynamic stretching, and proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) stretching are common techniques used to improve flexibility. It's important to perform stretching exercises with proper technique, gradually progress over time, and avoid forcing or bouncing movements, which can lead to injury.

Static stretching is likely the safest and most effective type of stretching. It is also the easiest to perform. Static stretching involves holding a stretch in a m

scles lengthened position for an extended period, typically between 30 to 120 seconds for maximum benefit. During static stretching, the muscle is lengthened to its farthest point and then held in that position without any bouncing or dynamic movement.

Here are some key points to understand about static stretching:

- **Technique:** To perform a static stretch, you assume a position that elongates the target muscle group and hold that position for the desired duration. The stretch should be gentle and should not cause pain. It is important to relax and breathe deeply while holding the stretch.
- **Duration:** The recommended duration for holding a static stretch is typically between 30 to 120 seconds. This duration allows the muscles to adapt and gradually lengthen. Typically, only 1-2 repetitions per stretch, per muscle group are needed.
- **Targeted Muscles:** Static stretching can target specific muscle groups or joints, depending on the desired area of focus. It is important to stretch both sides of the body evenly to maintain balance.
- **Timing:** Static stretching is commonly performed after a workout or physical activity when the muscles are warm. This helps improve flexibility while reducing the risk of muscle strains or injuries. It is generally not recommended as a warm-up activity before exercise, as it may temporarily decrease muscle power and performance.

Which stretches?

There are over 600 muscles in the body. You don't need to stretch them all. Most muscles function in synergistic groups, and for 99% of the population, we only need about a dozen stretches or so. These stretches are based upon Vladimir Janda's work on muscle imbalance syndromes, particularly upper and lower cross syndromes.

Upper Crossed Syndrome and Lower Crossed Syndrome are postural imbalances characterized by muscle imbalances and tightness in specific areas of the body. These syndromes are often associated with prolonged poor posture, such as sitting for long periods or repetitive movements.

- **Upper Crossed Syndrome:** Upper Crossed Syndrome primarily affects the upper body, particularly the neck, shoulders, and chest. It is characterized by tightness and overactivity of the muscles in the chest (pectoral muscles), upper trapezius, and levator scapulae, combined with weakness and underactivity of the muscles in the neck flexors, lower trapezius, and serratus anterior. This muscle imbalance leads to a forward head posture, rounded shoulders, and an increased curvature in the upper back. Common symptoms associated with Upper Crossed






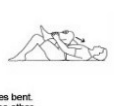
Syndrome include neck pain, headaches, shoulder pain, and limited range of motion in the neck and shoulders.

- **Lower Crossed Syndrome:** Lower Crossed Syndrome primarily affects the lower body, particularly the pelvis and lower back. It is characterized by tightness and overactivity of the muscles in the hip flexors (e.g., iliopsoas) and lower back (erector spinae), combined with weakness and underactivity of the muscles in the glutes (especially gluteus maximus) and abdominal muscles. This muscle imbalance leads to an anterior pelvic tilt, increased lower back curvature (lordosis), and sometimes a protruding abdomen. Common symptoms associated with Lower Crossed Syndrome include lower back pain, hip pain, tightness in the hip flexors, and decreased stability in the core.

Both Upper Crossed Syndrome and Lower Crossed Syndrome can lead to pain, discomfort, and limited range of motion. Treatment typically involves a combination of stretching and strengthening exercises to address the muscle imbalances, as well as improving posture and ergonomics.





Exercise Program For:
Posture Stretches

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<p>Pectoral door stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand in doorway or in corner. • Place arms at chest level on sides of doorway as shown. • Gently step forward, keeping back straight. • Return to start position. <p>Special Instructions: Place both hands at waist level or at head level to stretch different portions of muscle.</p> <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>	<p>Upper Trap stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place right arm behind back. • Grasp arm with left hand as shown. • Bend neck sideways to left as you pull your right arm. • Repeat for other side. <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>
<p>Up and back neck stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand, hold hands behind back. • Lower shoulder, tilt head to opposite side, and slightly upward. • Repeat with other side. <p>Special Instructions: This stretch may also be done while lying on back.</p> <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>	<p>Levator scap stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit on chair • Grasp seat with the hand on the side of the tightness. • Place your other hand on head and gently pull down and diagonally to other side. <p>Special Instructions: Look in the direction you are pulling.</p> <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>
<p>Thoracic rotation stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie on side with hips and knees bent at 90 degrees. • Place arms out in front, palms together. • Slowly lift top arm up and gently lower to floor. • Try to get upper arm, forearm, and hand on floor. • Keep knees on floor. • Return arm back to start position. • Repeat stretch on other side. <p>Special Instructions: When raising arm back up, inhale first and exhale as arm is lifted.</p> <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>	<p>Hook piriformis stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie on back with knees bent. • Cross one leg over the other. • Grasp knee and ankle as shown. • Pull knee across chest to opposite shoulder as shown. • Repeat with other leg. <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>

Exercise Program For:
Posture Stretches

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<p>Standing hamstring stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand with heel propped on low table, knee straight, as shown. • Gently and slowly lean forward at waist. • Repeat with other leg. <p>Special Instructions: Keep the knee straight.</p> <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>	<p>Hip flexor stretch 2</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie on table or firm bench with half of your thighs off table. • Position both knees on chest. • Flatten back against table. • Lower one leg while holding the other leg to chest. • Return to start position. • Repeat with other leg. <p>Special Instructions: Do not allow leg on chest to fall outward.</p> <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>
<p>TFL wall stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand next to wall, about a foot away, involved leg toward wall. • Cross over the uninvolved leg in front, and lean hip into wall, as shown. <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>	<p>Gastroc stretch</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand facing wall, hands on wall. • Step forward with foot of uninvolved leg, leaning hips toward wall. • Keep rear leg straight with heel on floor. <p>Perform 1 set of 2 Repetitions, once a day.</p> <p>Hold exercise for 30 Seconds.</p>

Above is an example of a full body stretching routine.

How often?

Stretch most days of the week.

...BODY COMPOSITION...

Body composition refers to the proportion of different tissues that make up an individual's body, including fat, muscle, bones, and organs. It is a way of describing and quantifying the distribution of these tissues within the body. Body composition analysis provides insight into the relative amounts of fat and lean mass in the body, which is valuable for assessing overall health and fitness.

Traditionally, body composition has been categorized into two main components:

- **Fat Mass:** This refers to the total amount of body fat present. Fat mass includes essential fat, which is necessary for normal physiological function, and nonessential fat, which is stored energy in adipose tissue. Often represented as body fat percentage.
- **Lean Body Mass:** Also known as Fat-free mass, it includes all the tissues in the body that are not fat, such as muscle, bones, organs, and water.

Various methods can be used to assess body composition, ranging from simple and practical techniques to more sophisticated and accurate measurements. Some common methods include: skinfold calipers, bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA), Dual-Energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA), air displacement plethysmography (ADP).

Clinical Pearl: BIA devices are the easiest to use, inexpensive, and fairly accurate. I use the OMRON HBF-306C Body Fat Loss Monitor. Which can be found for around \$50.

Accurate assessment of body composition can be valuable for various purposes, such as monitoring changes in body fat and muscle mass during weight loss or fitness programs, evaluating nutritional status, and assessing overall health and disease risk. It is important to note that ideal body composition may vary depending on factors such as age, sex, and individual goals.

Here's a general guideline for healthy body fat percentage ranges for men and women:

For Men:

- Essential Fat: 2-5%
- Athletes: 6-13%
- Fitness: 14-17%
- Acceptable: 18-24%
- Overweight: 25% and above

For Women:

- Essential Fat: 10-13%
- Athletes: 14-20%
- Fitness: 21-24%
- Acceptable: 25-31%
- Overweight: 32% and above

Other than body composition, anthropometric measurements (numerical measurements of the physical dimensions and characteristics of the human body) can be used to track progress towards your goals. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Obviously, weighing yourself on a scale gives you your total body weight. You can weigh yourself daily, weekly, or bi-weekly. Your weight can, and will, fluctuate day-to-day based on a variety of factors. It's ultimately up to you how often you weigh yourself, just don't get too hung up on the day-to-day fluctuations and pay more attention to the overall trend.
- You can calculate your body mass index (BMI) = $[\text{weight (lbs.)} / \text{height (in.)}^2 \times 703]$. Free calculators are available online. BMI is a bit outdated, and doesn't necessarily do a good job of determining a person's present or future health status.
- **Waist circumference** - To perform, use a flexible tape measure and measure the midway point between the bottom of your ribs, and the top of your hips. This appears to be an important measurement for men's health. You can measure your waist in a couple of different ways. I don't believe one is necessarily better than the other, just be consistent with your measurements each time you record them. Again, many tutorials for free online.
- **Waist-to-hip ratio (WHR)** – WHR is calculated by measuring the smallest circumference of the natural waist dividing by the hip circumference at its widest part. The waist-to-hip ratio may be the most useful body measurement with regard to health. It captures belly fat while simultaneously measuring gluteofemoral mass, both of which are risk factors (belly too big or glutes too small = negative health outcomes).

Program design can get complicated really quick. Let's break it down and make it more digestible.

- Do cardio for 20-60 mins. 3-5 days per week: 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity (or a combination of both).
- Perform resistance training, exercise most major muscle groups of the body, 30-60 minutes, 2-4 days per week.
 - Aim to include the 6 basic movement patterns.
 - Do 10 to 20 sets per exercise session.
 - Per exercise, do 1-5 sets, 3-30 repetitions per set.
 - Split throughout the week, do 8-10 sets per muscle group.
- For Flexibility, stretch most days of the week. Preferably after exercise.
- Body composition can be tracked daily, or every couple of weeks, depending on the measurement being tracked.

...Last Thing...

I would be remised if I didn't mention these last two concepts. Perhaps the two most critical concepts of program design: individualization and autoregulation.

These are important concepts that emphasize the need to tailor exercise programs to individual needs and abilities, and to adjust training variables based on individual responses and feedback.

- Individualization in exercise refers to the customization of training programs to suit the unique characteristics, goals, and capabilities of each individual. This recognizes that people have different starting points, fitness levels, preferences, and limitations. By considering these factors, an exercise program can be designed to be more effective, safe, and enjoyable. When individualizing an exercise program, several factors are taken into account, including:
 - Fitness level: The starting point and current fitness level of an individual determine the appropriate intensity, duration, and progression of the exercise program.
 - Goals: The specific goals of the individual, such as weight loss, muscle gain, or cardiovascular fitness, influence the selection of exercises, training methods, and program design.
 - Health considerations: Any existing health conditions, injuries, or physical limitations need to be considered to ensure the exercise program is safe and suitable.
 - Preferences: Individual preferences for certain types of exercises, activities, or training environments should be taken into account to enhance adherence and enjoyment.
- Autoregulation involves adjusting training variables based on an individual's real-time feedback and responses to exercise. It recognizes that each person responds differently to exercise stimuli and that progress may vary from session to session. Autoregulation allows for flexibility and optimization of training by monitoring and adjusting variables such as frequency, intensity, duration, and mode exercise to match the individual's capabilities and current state. Autoregulation, in sense, is the ability to "turn the volume up or down" based on your state of recovery.

Here's a couple real world examples of how to apply individualization and autoregulation:

Dr. Merritt is utilizing a push/pull/legs resistance training split. He did deadlifts on Wednesday, 5 sets of 5 repetitions, and is scheduled to repeat the same exercise on Sunday. But on Sunday he feels tired, and his low back feels sore and tight. Here's how he could adjust based on FIDM.

- Frequency – he could simply not do the deadlifts on Sunday, and wait until next Wednesday to perform the deadlifts again.

- Intensity – he could do 2 sets of 8 repetitions, with 50-60% of the weight he normally deadlifts.
- Duration – N/A
- Mode – he could choose a different hinge pattern exercise, opting for 2 sets of bodyweight walking lunges for 20 repetitions.

Or, Dr. Merritt has been jogging 30 minutes, moderate pace, 5x/week to improve his cardiorespiratory endurance. He's scheduled to do cardio today, but has come down with a cold, and is short on time due to family obligations.

- Frequency – he could simply take a rest day (passive recovery) from cardio.
- Intensity – he could walk 30 minutes at a low intensity, instead of jogging.
- Duration – he could walk 10 minutes instead of 30.
- Mode – he could opt for 5-10 minutes on the light work on the rowing machine instead of jogging.

All these are fine options. You can also turn the volume up from time to time as well.

Dr. Merritt has been strength training consistently for 3 months. His program calls for doing a bench press, 4 sets, 8-10 repetitions with 2-3 RIR. But Dr. Merritt has been working hard, feels good, and wants to get an idea of what his one repetition maximum is in the bench press. Dr. Merritt could do an extended warm up, and work up to a heavy set of 3 repetitions on the bench press to closely gauge his one rep max.

It's all good. Individualization and autoregulation allow you to adjust program design and effort so you can...you guessed it, adhere!

4. RECOVERY

The ability to consistently exercise is dependent on our body's ability to recover. Exercise recovery refers to the period of time following a physical activity or workout during which the body repairs and adapts to the stresses placed on it. When we exercise, our muscles experience microscopic damage, energy stores are depleted, and various physiological processes are activated. Recovery is essential to allow the body to restore these depleted resources, repair damaged tissues, and adapt to the exercise stimulus, leading to improvements in strength, endurance, and overall health.

Exercise recovery involves several key processes:

- Rest and sleep: Adequate rest and sleep are crucial for recovery. During sleep, the body releases growth hormone, which promotes tissue repair and muscle growth.
- Diet: Consuming a balanced diet that includes carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats is important for replenishing glycogen stores, repairing muscle tissue, and supporting overall recovery. Rehydration is essential to replace fluids lost through sweating during exercise. Proper hydration helps maintain optimal bodily functions and supports muscle recovery.
- Active Recovery: Active recovery refers to engaging in low-intensity exercise or movement following intense physical activity. Instead of complete rest, active recovery involves performing light exercises that stimulate blood flow and help the body recover. Some common examples of active recovery activities include gentle stretching, foam rolling, walking, swimming, or cycling at a relaxed pace. The benefits of active recovery include:
 - Enhanced blood circulation: Engaging in light exercise promotes blood flow, which helps deliver oxygen and nutrients to muscles, aiding in their recovery.
 - Reduced muscle soreness: Active recovery helps alleviate muscle soreness and stiffness by flushing out metabolic waste products, such as lactic acid, that accumulate during intense exercise.
 - Improved joint mobility: Gentle movements during active recovery help maintain joint flexibility and reduce the risk of stiffness.
 - Psychological benefits: Active recovery can have a positive impact on mental well-being, reducing stress and promoting relaxation.
- Passive Recovery: Passive recovery involves taking a complete break from physical activity and allowing the body to rest and repair itself without any additional exercise. It typically involves activities that are more sedentary,

such as resting, sleeping, or engaging in activities that do not require physical exertion. The benefits of passive recovery include:

- Muscle repair and growth: During passive recovery, the body focuses its energy on repairing damaged muscle tissues and adapting to the stress imposed by previous exercise, leading to muscle growth and strength development.
- Restoration of energy stores: Resting allows the body to replenish glycogen stores, which are depleted during intense exercise, providing a fresh supply of energy for future workouts.
- Central nervous system recovery: Intense physical activity can fatigue the central nervous system. Passive recovery gives the nervous system a chance to recover and regain its optimal functioning.
- Mental relaxation: Taking time off from exercise can provide mental relaxation, reducing stress and promoting overall well-being.
- Recovery modalities: Some individuals may incorporate additional recovery modalities such as foam rolling, massage, ice baths, or contrast water therapy to reduce muscle soreness, inflammation, and promote recovery.

Clinical Pearl: Done correctly, active recovery includes the majority of the same benefits as passive recovery. In most instances, active recovery is a better strategy than passive recovery.

The duration and intensity of recovery vary depending on factors such as the duration and intensity of the exercise, individual fitness levels, and overall health. It's important to listen to your body and allow for adequate recovery time between workouts to prevent overtraining and reduce the risk of injury.

Here are some simple ways to measure your recovery:

- Subjective Perception: Listen to your body and pay attention to how you feel. Rate your overall energy levels, muscle soreness, joint discomfort, and general well-being on a subjective scale. If you consistently feel fatigued, excessively sore, or mentally drained, it may indicate inadequate recovery.
- Sleep Quality: Quality and duration of sleep are crucial for recovery. Keep track of your sleep patterns, including the number of hours slept, interruptions, and overall sleep quality. Consistently poor sleep can impede recovery.
- Performance Indicators: Monitor your performance during training sessions. If you notice a consistent decline in strength, endurance, or performance, it could indicate incomplete recovery.
- Perceived Exertion: During exercise sessions, assess your perceived exertion using scales like the Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE). If the same level of effort feels significantly more challenging than usual, it may suggest incomplete recovery.

If you consistently experience prolonged or inadequate recovery despite your efforts, it may be beneficial to consult with a healthcare or fitness professional for a comprehensive assessment and personalized guidance.

5. SUPPLEMENTS

Again. Not much to say here. Outside of pharmacological interventions, which should be prescribed and monitored by a medical professional, supplements aren't of much use as exercise aids. There are a few exceptions, notably creatine, caffeine, and protein.

- Creatine: Creatine is one of the most widely researched supplements for improving high-intensity exercise performance. It can enhance strength, power, and muscle mass. Creatine works by increasing the availability of phosphocreatine, which is used to produce ATP, the primary energy source for muscle contractions.
- Caffeine: Caffeine is a stimulant that can improve endurance performance by reducing fatigue, increasing alertness, and enhancing focus. It can also improve strength and power output. Caffeine acts on the central nervous system and has been shown to positively impact exercise performance across various activities.
- Protein: Protein shakes aren't necessarily a supplement, as they are a convenient way to meet protein requirements when exercising. Protein shakes, which are typically made by mixing protein powder with water or other liquids, can offer several benefits

- Muscle Recovery and Repair: Protein is essential for muscle repair and growth. After a workout or physical activity, consuming protein shakes can help provide the necessary amino acids to support muscle recovery and reduce muscle damage.
- Muscle Building and Strength: Protein is crucial for muscle protein synthesis, which is the process by which new muscle tissue is built. Consuming protein shakes, especially in combination with resistance training, can support muscle building and strength gains.
- Convenience: Protein shakes can be a convenient option for individuals who have busy lifestyles or find it challenging to meet their protein requirements through whole foods alone. They are portable, easy to prepare, and can serve as a quick and convenient source of protein.

SLEEP

Sleep is an often overlooked, and neglected aspect of health. Without sleep, we would literally die. Proper amounts of sleep and a regular routine are vitally important.

Sleep is an essential physiological process that provides numerous benefits for our overall health and well-being. Here are some of the key benefits of getting sufficient and quality sleep:

- Physical Restoration: Sleep allows the body to repair and regenerate tissues, muscles, and cells. It promotes the release of growth hormones that aid in repairing damaged tissues and building muscle mass. Adequate sleep also supports a healthy immune system, helping to fight off infections and diseases. Inadequate sleep is associated with a higher risk of various health conditions, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and weakened immune function. Sufficient sleep, on the other hand, promotes a healthy metabolism, reduces the risk of chronic diseases, and supports overall physical and mental well-being.
- Hormonal Regulation: Sleep plays a vital role in regulating hormones that control appetite and metabolism. Sufficient sleep helps maintain a healthy balance of hormones, reducing the risk of weight gain and obesity. It also supports the regulation of hormones involved in stress response, reproductive health, and growth.
- Mental and Emotional Well-being: Sleep plays a crucial role in maintaining optimal brain function. It enhances cognitive abilities such as attention, concentration, and problem-solving skills. Sufficient sleep also improves memory consolidation, enabling better learning and retention of information. It contributes to emotional stability, helping regulate mood and reducing the risk of mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Sufficient sleep is crucial for emotional regulation. It helps maintain a balance between positive and negative emotions, reducing the risk of mood swings, irritability, and emotional instability. Lack of sleep, on the other hand, can lead to increased stress, irritability, and difficulty managing emotions.
- Enhanced Productivity and Performance: A well-rested mind and body are associated with increased productivity and better performance across various tasks and activities. Adequate sleep improves focus, decision-making, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. It also enhances physical performance, coordination, and reaction time, making it beneficial for athletes and individuals engaged in physical activities.
- Improved Learning and Memory: Sleep is closely linked to learning and memory processes. It helps consolidate and strengthen new information and experiences gathered during the day. During sleep, the brain organizes and stores memories, allowing for better recall and retention. Students who get sufficient sleep often perform better academically and have improved cognitive abilities.
- Improved Concentration and Alertness: A good night's sleep enhances concentration, attention, and alertness during the day. It reduces the likelihood of accidents, errors, and mishaps caused by drowsiness and impaired cognitive function. Sleep deprivation, on the other hand, can lead to reduced alertness, decreased reaction time, and impaired performance.

How much?

It's important to prioritize sleep and aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night. Individual needs may vary. Avoid sleeping less than 6 hours per night, or more than 9. This recommendation is for adults, sleep needs vary based on age. Recommendations are available online for infants, toddlers, teenagers, etc...

Sleep quantity is important, so is sleep quality (often referred to as good sleep hygiene).

Practicing good sleep hygiene involves adopting habits and behaviors that promote healthy and restful sleep. Here are some examples of good sleep hygiene practices:

- **Stick to a Consistent Sleep Schedule:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This helps regulate your body's internal clock and promotes a regular sleep-wake cycle.
- **Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine:** Establish a pre-sleep routine that helps you wind down and signals to your body that it's time to sleep. This may include activities such as reading a book, taking a warm bath, practicing relaxation techniques, or listening to calming music.
- **Create a Comfortable Sleep Environment:** Make sure your bedroom is conducive to sleep. Keep the room cool, quiet, and dark, and use comfortable bedding and pillows. Consider using earplugs, eye shades, or white noise machines if needed.
- **Limit Exposure to Electronic Devices:** Avoid using electronic devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, before bedtime. The blue light emitted by these devices can interfere with the production of melatonin, a hormone that promotes sleep.
- **Avoid Stimulants and Heavy Meals:** Avoid consuming stimulants like caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime, as they can disrupt sleep. Additionally, avoid large, heavy meals close to bedtime, as they can cause discomfort and digestive issues.
- **Engage in Regular Physical Activity:** Regular exercise can help improve sleep quality. However, try to finish exercising at least a few hours before bedtime, as exercising too close to bedtime may make it difficult to fall asleep.
- **Limit Napping:** If you have trouble sleeping at night, it's best to limit daytime napping or avoid it altogether. If you must nap, keep it short (around 20-30 minutes) and avoid napping late in the day.
- **Limit Alcohol and Fluid Intake:** Although alcohol may initially make you feel sleepy, it can disrupt sleep patterns and lead to poor sleep quality. Additionally, limit your fluid intake close to bedtime to avoid disruptions from bathroom trips.
- **Try Melatonin:** Many people use melatonin as a supplement to help with sleep-related issues. The appropriate dosage and timing of melatonin can vary depending on individual factors and the specific sleep issue. It's generally recommended to start with a low dose (typically 0.5-5 mg) about 1-2 hours before desired sleep time. It's important to follow the instructions on the product packaging or consult a healthcare professional for personalized guidance.

Experiment with different practices and routines to establish a sleep hygiene routine that promotes restful and rejuvenating sleep.

STRESS REDUCTION

Emotional stress refers to the psychological and emotional strain experienced when a person feels overwhelmed, pressured, or unable to cope with various challenges or demands in their life. It can arise from a wide range of situations, such as work, relationship problems, financial difficulties, health concerns, or major life changes.

Emotional stress can manifest in various ways and may affect individuals differently. Some common signs and symptoms of emotional stress include:

- **Anxiety and Worry:** Feeling excessively worried or anxious about present or future events, often accompanied by physical symptoms like restlessness, racing heart, and difficulty concentrating.
- **Irritability and Mood Changes:** Becoming easily irritated, having frequent mood swings, feeling overwhelmed, or experiencing emotional instability.
- **Fatigue and Sleep Disturbances:** Feeling constantly tired, having difficulty sleeping, experiencing insomnia, or having disrupted sleep patterns due to racing thoughts or worry.

- **Physical Symptoms:** Emotional stress can contribute to physical symptoms, such as headaches, muscle tension, stomachaches, digestive issues, changes in appetite, or weakened immune system.
- **Cognitive Difficulties:** Difficulty focusing, making decisions, or experiencing memory problems due to the impact of stress on cognitive functioning.
- **Social Withdrawal:** Feeling the need to isolate oneself, avoiding social interactions or commitments, or experiencing a decline in interest or enjoyment in previously pleasurable activities.

It's important to note that emotional stress can have a significant impact on both mental and physical well-being. If emotional stress becomes persistent, overwhelming, or starts interfering with daily functioning, it's advisable to seek support from a mental health professional who can provide guidance, coping strategies, and support to help manage and reduce emotional stress.

Stress reduction techniques can help you manage and alleviate the symptoms of stress. Here are some effective techniques you can try:

- **Deep Breathing:** Practice deep breathing exercises to activate your body's relaxation response. Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose, hold it for a few seconds, and then exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat this several times.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Start by tensing and then releasing each muscle group in your body, one at a time. This technique helps promote relaxation and relieve muscle tension.
- **Exercise:** Engage in regular physical activity, such as walking, jogging, swimming, or yoga. Exercise releases endorphins, which are natural mood boosters and stress relievers.
- **Time Management:** Effective time management can help reduce stress. Prioritize your tasks, set realistic goals, and break them into smaller, manageable steps. Organize your schedule to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- **Social Support:** Reach out to friends, family, or support groups for emotional support. Talking to someone about your stress can provide relief and different perspectives on your situation.
- **Relaxation Techniques:** Experiment with different relaxation techniques, such as listening to calming music, taking a warm bath, practicing aromatherapy, or engaging in a hobby you enjoy.
- **Meditation:** Set aside a few minutes each day for meditation. Find a quiet and comfortable place, close your eyes, and focus your attention on your breath or a specific object. Meditation can help calm your mind and reduce stress.
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, and limiting caffeine and alcohol intake. A healthy body supports a healthy mind.
- **Limit Stressors:** Identify and limit your exposure to stressors when possible. This may include setting boundaries, saying no to extra commitments, and creating a positive and organized environment.
- There are supplements that are commonly used to help manage anxiety and stress. These supplements may have varying levels of scientific evidence supporting their effectiveness, and individual responses can vary. It's essential to use them only as part of a comprehensive approach to managing anxiety and stress. Here are a few examples:
 - **Ashwagandha:** Ashwagandha is an herb used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine. It has adaptogenic properties, which means it may help the body adapt to stress. Some studies suggest that ashwagandha supplementation may reduce stress and anxiety symptoms.
 - **Lemon balm:** Lemon balm is an herb known for its calming effects. It may help reduce anxiety and promote relaxation. Lemon balm can be consumed as a tea or taken as a supplement.
 - **3. Omega-3 fatty acids:** Omega-3 fatty acids, commonly found in fatty fish like salmon and in supplement form (fish oil), have been associated with potential benefits for anxiety and mood disorders. They are thought to have anti-inflammatory properties and support brain health.
 - **Magnesium:** Magnesium is an essential mineral involved in various bodily functions, including the regulation of stress and anxiety. Some evidence suggests that magnesium supplementation may help reduce anxiety symptoms.

- L-theanine: L-theanine is an amino acid found in tea leaves, particularly green tea. It is known for its calming effects and may help reduce stress and anxiety. L-theanine is also available as a standalone supplement.
- Valerian root: Valerian root is an herb commonly used as a sleep aid, but it may also have mild anxiolytic (anti-anxiety) effects. It is often taken as a supplement or consumed as a tea.

Different techniques work for different people, so it's essential to find what works best for you. It's important to monitor your stress levels and seek professional help when necessary. Here are some signs that indicate it may be time to see a professional for stress:

- **Persistent and Overwhelming Stress:** If you find that your stress levels are consistently high and interfering with your daily life, it may be time to seek professional help. This includes feeling overwhelmed, unable to cope, or experiencing excessive worry and anxiety.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Stress can manifest in various physical symptoms, such as headaches, muscle tension, digestive issues, fatigue, or changes in appetite. If these symptoms persist or worsen despite your efforts to manage stress, it's advisable to consult a professional.
- **Emotional Distress:** Stress can take a toll on your emotional well-being. If you're experiencing frequent mood swings, irritability, anger, sadness, or a sense of hopelessness, it may be beneficial to seek professional support.
- **Impact on Relationships:** If your stress is affecting your relationships with family, friends, or colleagues, seeking professional help can be valuable. This includes difficulty communicating, increased conflicts, or social withdrawal.
- **Impaired Functioning:** If stress is interfering with your ability to perform daily tasks, concentrate, or make decisions, it's advisable to consult a professional. This can include experiencing difficulty at work, school, or in personal responsibilities.
- **Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms:** If you find yourself relying on unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress, such as excessive alcohol or drug use, self-isolation, or engaging in self-destructive behaviors, it's crucial to seek professional assistance.
- **Chronic Stress:** If you're experiencing chronic stress, where stressors persist over an extended period, it may be beneficial to consult a professional. Chronic stress can have significant long-term effects on your physical and mental health.

Remember that seeking professional help doesn't indicate weakness, but rather a proactive step towards taking care of your well-being. Mental health professionals, such as psychologists, therapists, or counselors, can provide guidance, support, and tools to help you effectively manage stress and improve your overall quality of life.

Enough already! We've got the tools, we've got the pieces,

LET'S BUILD (EXAMPLE/TEMPLATES).

Remember, this is your plan. Build it the way you want it. Make it enjoyable. Stick with it. Stay somewhat close to the guidelines mentioned thus far. Regain your health!

Choose your goals. Then use what you've learned about diet, exercise, sleep, and stress reduction techniques to reach those goals.

Lay out your plan. And don't let that plan be larger than one or two pages. Why? Because otherwise you might end up writing a 20+ page document, like the one you just read.

I've provided below an example/template of how you can build your program.

Dr. Merritt's Regain Health Plan

Goals (smart)

Progress Goals - Goal 1: Specific (lose 15 lbs) Measurable (with weight scale) Time (in 2 months)

Goal 2: Specific (gain or maintain muscle mass) Measurable (use Omron BIA meter) Time (2 months)

Otr: Specific (decrease fatigue) Measurable (uses Fatigue Severity Scale OAT) Time (measure bi-weekly)

Process Goals - Goal 1: Decrease calories by 250-350 per day

Goal 2: Resistance train 3-4x/wk. Consume 160-200g/ protein per day.

Otr: Cardio exercise, steady state, 30 minutes on days not resistance training. Get 7 1/2 hrs. sleep per night. Be in bed by 11:00 PM

Diet:

Calories: What's my BMR? 2000 ☒ Lose weight (Reduce 250 – 500 Cals). ☐ Gain weight (Increase 250 – 500 Cals).

Diet: ☒ Mediterranean ☐ Volumetrics ☐ Dash ☐ Vegetarian/Vegan ☐ Low carb/Keto ☐ Otr. _____

Macros: What do I want my macronutrient distribution to be?

☐ Isocaloric: 33% protein, 33% fat, 33% carbs ☒ Higher protein: 40% protein, 40% carbs, 20% fat

☐ Low carb: 20% protein, 70% fat 10% carbs ☐ Otr. _____

Supplements: ☒ Otr. Multivitamin, Vit D, Magnesium Glycinate

Exercise:

Effort: ☐ Low (beginners, or those suffering health condition) ☒ Moderate (ideal for long-term compliance) ☐ Vigorous (for trained individuals)

Program design:

Frequency - How many days per week can I exercise? (This will determine intensity, duration, and mode)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☒ 7

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Intensity	Moderate	Moderate	2-3 RIR	Moderate	2-3 RIR	2-3 RIR	2-3 RIR
Duration (mins.)	30 mins.	30 mins.	30 mins.	30 mins.	30 mins.	30 mins.	30 mins.
Mode (type)	Cardio (jump rope)	Cardio (jump rope)	Resistance (weights)	Cardio (jump rope)	Resistance (weights)	Resistance (weights)	Resistance (weights)

Recovery: ☒ Diet, Sleep, Stress reduction ☒ Otr. specific techniques. Foam rolling on days I resistance train.

Supplements: ☒ Caffeine ☐ Creatine ☒ Protein ☐ Otr. _____

Sleep: How much sleep will I need? 7 1/2 hours

How will I improve my sleep hygiene: Be in bed by the same time every night (11:00pm)

Stress reduction: What stress reduction techniques will I use? Otr: _____ Otr: _____

MISC: What tools will I use/need to measure, track, and accomplish my goals?

- Diet: ☒ Calorie counter (app) ☐ Food Scale ☒ Bodyweight scale ☒ Bodyfat % device ☐ Otr: _____
- Exercise: ☒ Cardio equipment: Jump Rope ☒ Resistance training equipment: weight plates, barbell, rack, bench ☒ Progress tracking (app) ☐ Otr. _____
- Sleep and Stress: ☐ Self-help books ☐ Apps such as Calm, Headspace, or ☒ Otr. Magnesium glycinate

_____’s Regain Health Plan

Goals (smart)

Progress Goals - Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Otr: _____

Process Goals - Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Otr: _____

Diet:

Calories: What’s my BMR? _____ ☐Lose weight (Reduce 250 – 500 Cals). ☐Gain weight (Increase 250 – 500 Cals).

Diet: ☐Mediterranean ☐Volumetrics ☐Dash ☐Vegetarian/Vegan ☐Low carb/Keto ☐Otr. _____

Macros: What do I want my macronutrient distribution to be?

☐Isocaloric: 33% protein, 33% fat, 33% carbs ☐Higher protein: 40% protein, 40% carbs, 20% fat

☐Low carb: 20% protein, 70% fat 10% carbs ☐Otr. _____

Supplements: ☐Otr. _____

Exercise:

Effort: ☐Low (beginners, or those suffering health condition) ☐Moderate (ideal for long-term compliance) ☐Vigorous (for trained individuals)

Program design:

Frequency - How many days per week can I exercise? (This will determine intensity, duration, and mode) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<i>Intensity</i>							
<i>Duration (mins.)</i>							
<i>Mode (type)</i>							

Recovery: ☐Diet, Sleep, Stress reduction ☐Otr. specific techniques _____

Supplements: ☐Caffeine ☐Creatine ☐Protein ☐Otr. _____

Sleep: How much sleep will I need? _____

How will I improve my sleep hygiene? _____

Stress reduction: What stress reduction techniques will I use? Otr: _____ Otr: _____

MISC: What tools will I use/need to measure, track, and accomplish my goals?

- Diet: ☐Calorie counter (app) ☐Food Scale ☐Bodyweight scale ☐Bodyfat % device ☐Otr: _____
- Exercise: ☐Cardio equipment: _____ ☐Resistance training equipment: _____ ☐Progress tracking (app) ☐Otr. _____
- Sleep and Stress: ☐Self-help books ☐Apps such as Calm, Headspace, or ☐Otr. _____
- ☐Misc tools _____ ☐Misc tools _____

_____’s Regain Health Plan

Goals (smart)

Progress Goals - Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Otr: _____

Process Goals - Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Otr: _____

Diet:

Calories: What’s my BMR? _____ ☐Lose weight (Reduce 250 – 500 Cals). ☐Gain weight (Increase 250 – 500 Cals).

Diet: ☐Mediterranean ☐Volumetrics ☐Dash ☐Vegetarian/Vegan ☐Low carb/Keto ☐Otr. _____

Macros: What do I want my macronutrient distribution to be?

☐Isocaloric: 33% protein, 33% fat, 33% carbs ☐Higher protein: 40% protein, 40% carbs, 20% fat

☐Low carb: 20% protein, 70% fat 10% carbs ☐Otr. _____

Supplements: ☐Otr. _____

Exercise:

Effort: ☐Low (beginners, or those suffering health condition) ☐Moderate (ideal for long-term compliance) ☐Vigorous (for trained individuals)

Program design:

Frequency - How many days per week can I exercise? (This will determine intensity, duration, and mode) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<i>Intensity</i>							
<i>Duration (mins.)</i>							
<i>Mode (type)</i>							

Recovery: ☐Diet, Sleep, Stress reduction ☐Otr. specific techniques _____

Supplements: ☐Caffeine ☐Creatine ☐Protein ☐Otr. _____

Sleep: How much sleep will I need? _____

How will I improve my sleep hygiene? _____

Stress reduction: What stress reduction techniques will I use? Otr: _____ Otr: _____

MISC: What tools will I use/need to measure, track, and accomplish my goals?

- Diet: ☐Calorie counter (app) ☐Food Scale ☐Bodyweight scale ☐Bodyfat % device ☐Otr: _____
- Exercise: ☐Cardio equipment: _____ ☐Resistance training equipment: _____ ☐Progress tracking (app) ☐Otr. _____
- Sleep and Stress: ☐Self-help books ☐Apps such as Calm, Headspace, or ☐Otr. _____
- ☐Misc tools _____ ☐Misc tools _____

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I hope you find this document useful. Additional resources can be found on my website at www.DocLevi.com.

Finally,

Good luck on your journey to regaining health. If you should have any questions, feel free to contact me.

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