

UNLEASH

YOUR INNER GREATNESS



8 things you must know
to achieve peak
health & mental clarity

8 things you must know to achieve *peak* *health & mental clarity*

You know you're not quite firing on all cylinders. Your energy is low. You're losing focus. Your drive has packed up and gone. And the stamina you once had is lacking.



Today's fast-paced life demands more than you feel you might have inside you right now. Perhaps you're thinking, 'I'm not actually sick, so there's nothing to do here.' You might have learnt to manage the situation – and any negative symptoms you experience.

It's pretty much the perfect storm where lack of time meets poor food choices and collides with a shortage of sleep and too much stress. There is only so long you can hang in caretaking the situation before it gets worse. BOOM! Do not wait to burn out. You owe it to yourself to take action now to regain your edge. Today, I want to share with you the eight things you **MUST** master so you can return to form and engage properly in those areas that matter most to you.

1 Take full *ownership* of your health

It is a sometimes-uncomfortable truth that you are responsible for everything that you do (or don't do) in the area of your health and happiness. If you don't like something and want to change it, you can. Often, people don't take the same kind of approach to managing their personal lives as they do their professional lives. They allow the actions of others or even outside events to influence their health, their life and their happiness.



Whatever your role in life, it's time to start relating to yourself as the CEO of your health. There is no bigger or more important position. Any CEO worth their salt knows that you cannot ignore an entire aspect of the business and expect the company as a whole to thrive. It's the same with your health and happiness. You cannot just take the view that there is no time for eating well, working out or relaxing and hoping for the best.

2 Be clear on what *isn't working*

It's easy to think 'there's nothing really wrong' and to plod on regardless, managing any annoying health symptoms that come along. In truth, things could be so much better. The first step is to really get present to how many symptoms you are experiencing on a regular basis to understand the degree to which your health is under pressure.



Complete the health and energy review to get an overview of your health. When you work with a nutrition and lifestyle coach on a one-to-one basis, they are able to help you prioritise what's most important in terms of health and match this up to the results you want to achieve. Importantly, they will also support and motivate you to make changes in a way that fits with your unique personal challenges, because the knowledge of what to do does not always have you take action where there is no accountability.

What's your health score?

Use this questionnaire to rate your current health, with 1 being you strongly disagree with the statement and 5 being you strongly agree.

Tired most of the time

1 2 3 4 5

Overweight

1 2 3 4 5

Difficulty sleeping

1 2 3 4 5

Low or depressed

1 2 3 4 5

Suffering from poor memory or concentration

1 2 3 4 5

Very dry skin in need of daily moisturisers

1 2 3 4 5

Often feeling anxious or stressed

1 2 3 4 5

Prone to indigestion or bloating after food

1 2 3 4 5

Often constipated (you don't go every day)

1 2 3 4 5

I am gaining weight and/or finding it harder to lose weight

1 2 3 4 5

What's your health score?

Target: 16 or less

What's your *energy* & *blood sugar* score?

Use this questionnaire to rate your current energy levels, with 1 being you strongly disagree with the statement and 5 being you strongly agree.

I often feel too tired to exercise

1 2 3 4 5

I often over-react to stress

1 2 3 4 5

I have less energy than I used to

1 2 3 4 5

I still feel tired 20 minutes after getting up

1 2 3 4 5

I need tea, coffee, a cigarette or something sweet to get me going in the morning

1 2 3 4 5

I often crave chocolate, sweet foods, bread, cereal or pasta

1 2 3 4 5

I often have energy slumps during the day or after meals

1 2 3 4 5

I often crave something sweet or coffee after meals

1 2 3 4 5

I often have mood swings or difficulty concentrating

1 2 3 4 5

I get dizzy or irritable if I go 4-6 hrs without food

1 2 3 4 5

I am gaining weight and/or finding it harder to lose weight

1 2 3 4 5

What's your *energy* & *blood sugar* score?

Target: 16 or less

3 It's okay to ask for help

Research shows that men don't like to ask for help. Whether you're making flatpack shelves or you have questions about health symptoms, you're determined to go it alone. Maybe you're telling yourself the old story that, in order to live up to the identity society created for you, you must be self-sufficient and, therefore, asking for help is a sign of weakness.

Ditch the lone-wolf ethos. It doesn't work.

Asking for help when you need it helps make you a better man. Perhaps that makes you feel vulnerable? Vulnerability is something you've been programmed to avoid after years modelling cultural norms. 'Real men' – you were told – do not acknowledge or communicate feelings. You must stop this. Research shows that men are far less likely to visit their doctor than women. Let me give you two good reasons why this is a bad decision.



3 It's okay to *ask* *for help*

More women than men suffer from depression, but women are more likely to talk about their issues and seek help. Men tend to bottle up their problems and negative feelings – until they can no longer cope. Suicide is the main cause of death for men and boys between the ages of 5 and 49 – a shocking and desperately sad statistic. Similarly, more women are diagnosed with skin cancer, but more men die from it because they tend to ask for help much later when the prognosis is worse.

So NOT asking for help is terrible news for both your mental and physical health. There is no judgement about your manliness in asking for help in the 2020s. In fact, the success and happiness in your life will be in proportion to how much you are able to reach out for help.



4 Fixing your diet *helps everything*

Making changes to what you eat can have a big impact on how you experience your life. Simply: it is the game changer you have been looking for. It doesn't matter if you have low energy, brain fog, lack of motivation or you're dealing with a more specific health issue like digestive problems, anxiety or depression. Change your diet, and things will start working out better for you. As a nutritionist, I know from working with clients that making strategic changes to what you eat can help you:

Feel more energised and vital

Regain your mental power

Rediscover your physical strength

Sleep better

Lose belly fat

And more...



4 Fixing your diet *helps everything*

The best thing you can do for your body is to stop worrying about shovelling in the branched-chain amino acids and start eating real food. Ultra-processed foods have been linked to cardiovascular disease, cancer, non-alcoholic liver disease, and neurodegenerative diseases – which is code for Alzheimer’s and dementia. Humans are not cut out to subsist on man-made food.

We evolved to eat natural foods: meat, fish, seafood, eggs, vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds, herbs and spices. There is very little humans can do to improve on nature – except perhaps cooking (which allowed us to develop a bigger brain) and fermenting (which is not just a handy way to preserve food but it also supports the gut).



5 Follow 3 basic rules

A diet that balances your blood sugar is the best way to get back in the game. The same old sandwich at your desk doesn't work. By getting the wrong lunch, you starve your brain of the key nutrients needed to function at peak level.

1. Eat regularly

2. ALWAYS eat protein at every meal/snack

3. Be selective about the amount and type of starchy carbohydrates

When you start to focus on eating real food, you'll find a lot of sugar and refined carbohydrates leave your life.



5 Follow 3 basic rules

Sugar is detrimental, and all starchy carbohydrates (think bread, rice, pasta, potatoes) ultimately turn into sugar in the process of digestion. How fast that happens and how much they will make your blood glucose rise depends on how processed they are. The more starchy carbs you eat, the more glucose in your blood, the more insulin your body has to make and, consequently, the more belly fat you'll store.

Men tend to see especially good results in energy and weight loss when they focus on going low carb. The only way they know how great you'll feel is to try it for a week. If you must have bread, pasta, and rice, go for the whole grain versions (swapping white bread for wholemeal, regular long grain rice for basmati, normal pasta for wholemeal pasta, and so on). Depending on your health goals, you might consider scaling right back on all starchy carbs because, while there are essential fats and essential amino acids (the building blocks of protein), there are no essential carbohydrates. If you never eat pasta again, you'll live. Probably a longer and healthier life to boot.



6 Reduce caffeine

There's nothing inherently wrong with caffeine. However, caffeine is a stimulant, and it's addictive. It's found in coffee, tea, cola, chocolate and energy drinks. Although it may promise instant energy, it just makes the energy problem worse. The more caffeine you consume, the more your body and brain become insensitive to their own natural stimulants, dopamine and adrenalin. You then need more stimulants just to feel normal, pushing your body to produce more dopamine and adrenalin.

The result is adrenal exhaustion, leading to apathy, lethargy and an inability to cope. Caffeine also has a big impact on the quality of your sleep. The half-life of caffeine (the time taken for the body to eliminate one-half of the caffeine in your system) can be up to eight hours. The remaining caffeine can stay in your system a lot longer. Drinking a late afternoon cup of coffee or tea will still be having an impact many hours later. It's easy to create a vicious circle where too much caffeine interrupts sleep, making you feel more tired the next day, which drives you to drink more coffee.



Quick Win

Limit yourself to two or three cups a day and enjoy these ideally before lunch, giving your body time to get rid of the caffeine in your system before you wind down in the evening.

Instead, opt for decaf versions or consider herbal tea or water. You'll be surprised how much better you will feel simply by cutting back.

7 Review how much you're *drinking*

Socially, drinking is one of the main ways we enjoy being with friends or unwind after a long day. The trouble is, it's easy for the units to mount up and, over time, this can have a detrimental effect on your health, mood, energy levels, and weight. It also increases the risk for a range of cancers. Unless you're making the alcohol in your shed, alcoholic drinks are often sugary, and even beers are very carb-heavy. Not good for energy levels or the waistline.



Booze has, in fact, a confusing effect on blood sugar levels. It stops the liver from making glucose when the body is in a fasted state, so it's easy to have very low blood sugar levels after a night on the sauce. You might find this is lurking behind your early-hours waking and ravenous hunger the following day. The recommended guidelines for alcohol are no more than 14 units a week, with at least 2 alcohol-free days per week. A typical bottle of wine will contain 10 units. It's easy to get through a bottle with three generous glasses in a night. Let's face it, whoever pours a small glass? If you want to cut back, you need to change your mindset around alcohol. So, instead of focussing on the 'benefits' of drinking, consider the disadvantages of alcohol and what you'll gain through giving up or cutting back.

8 Focus on getting a good night's *sleep*

Sleep matters big time. Not getting enough is sabotaging your health and killing your focus and productivity. Lack of sleep also messes with stress hormones, and stress messes with your sleep. It's another vicious circle and one particularly good reason why it is so important to take the time to unwind before hitting the sack. Researchers reckon most people need about seven hours of sleep on a regular basis. Just knowing the information, however, is not going to give you the restful night's sleep you are looking for. The only thing that counts is action. If you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that lack of sleep is at the root of much of what isn't working for you right now, I invite you to put getting more and/or better sleep at the top of your to-do list this week to see what a difference it can make.



Quick Win

Figure out how much sleep you actually get on a daily basis. For one week, do whatever it takes to ensure that, on more nights than not, you get seven hours. Adjust your bedtime accordingly and do all those things you know to do to wind down before going to bed – no screen time for an hour before bed, dark room, even a 10-minute guided meditation app to wind down.

Make it happen

I know from working with clients that eating well and living well gets results fast. But healthy habits don't just happen overnight. They need time and persistence.

Studies have shown it takes time for a new habit to become the default choice.

Keep in mind the 3 / 6 / 36 rule:

3 weeks to break a habit.

6 weeks to create a new habit.

36 weeks for the new habit to become a default habit.

The good news is that, since habits are just a series of repetitive actions you practically do on autopilot, you can teach yourself – over time - to do something else instead. The first job is to become aware of what needs to change. That might be too many snacks, not enough water, too many beers sneaking into the week. Instead of bowing in with 'I need to change everything immediately', often what can help is making a micro-commitment. These are healthy commitments so tiny that you literally cannot fail at doing it. Like drinking three glasses of water or having an extra two veggies at dinner.



Make it happen

Just start with one and repeat over and over. These micro-commitments, although small, have a huge impact over time because of psychology. The way the brain works is it loves winning at this one thing, and that encourages you to make another micro-commitment, and then another.

Do you notice how quickly time goes by?



In a few months, by stealth, you will have built up a bank of successes that will move your health forward. Breaking the bigger, really ingrained habits and having them release their grip on you takes time, persistence and the accountability to change. If you need some help, you know where I am. In the meantime, use a healthy habits tracker - there are tonnes of apps available - and track a habit or two that you are most keen to keep up.

Monthly healthy habit tracker

HABIT

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30		

GOAL

REWARD

HABIT

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30		

GOAL

REWARD