Getting Away From Fast Food

Posted by mrkinetic on May 30, 2013

There's a common misconception that fast food costs less than food prepared at home. That's partly because of massive corporate marketing budgets and campaigns from food companies that influence our thinking. Actually, cooking food at home costs less per person than the typical $5.00–$7.00 fast-food “value” meal.

So Why Aren’t People Cooking More?
If healthy home-cooked food costs less than fast food, why isn’t everyone cooking at home? Here are some reasons:

We’re out of practice. One of the big reasons people think fast food is cheaper than slow food is that we’re not cooking as often. The path toward fresh, healthy food being affordable and easy for everyone is cooking. It's getting in the kitchen if you're able to."

We fear it. Cooking is easier than most people think—especially inexperienced cooks. However, in our sedentary culture, we watch so many cooking shows that cooking may seem like something only expert chefs can handle. But cooking is something that’s really simple that people have been doing since the beginning of time and building into their lives. Part of it is just getting over that fear.

We overcommit and under plan. We’re all working more hours, and it’s tough to find the time to cook. It doesn’t take long. Fifteen minutes a day can get you healthy, affordable food. But it takes a little bit of planning—and that’s key. You have to think in terms of “Let me see if I can prepare a big pot of something on Sunday that I can eat throughout the week. What are the things I can freeze?” All of that really helps.”

Educating Yourself

So, if you’d like to cook more frequently, try these ideas:

Get in the kitchen. You have to practice cooking to become proficient. If someone you know is a good home cook and understands how to create a healthy, simple meal, make a cooking date. Select the recipes, shop together, make the food together, then sit down together and eat what you’ve made.

Hire talent to help you. Hire a personal chef or a local culinary school to lead a cooking class for you and some friends. Make it a social event where you not only get to participate in the food preparation (for practice), but also eat the results. Ask the chef to keep things basic, healthy and inexpensive.

Learn to prep and plan meals for the week. Try cooking in bulk at home once per week (Sunday is usually a good choice) and freeze or refrigerate the food for quick reheating during the week. For example, roast a chicken and a large pan of root veggies, bake a handful of sweet potatoes, and make a large pot of chili or soup. Wash, chop and dry all of your produce for the week. With these tasks done, you can have dinner on the table in 15 minutes or less.

Learn basic knife skills and invest in at least one good knife. Nothing makes cooking more pleasurable (or miserable) than a good (or bad) knife. If you’ve never used a professional-grade knife, take a basic knife skills class or search YouTube for videos on the topic.

Every success story was accomplished by executing a thought out plan. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.
Got the craving for something sweet? Something chocolate? After all your efforts of maintaining healthy nutritional habits, all of a sudden it hits you! The dreadful test of willpower to reject your Hershey bar another night and opt out for a protein shake, nut butters, and raw veggies that by now are tasting like
Well how about we try and use that protein powder and see how dynamic we can be with it. Let's crush the sweet crave and march forward with our head help up high and a smile on our face because you are about to make and taste some amazing chocolate protein brownies!

Let's get started!

Dry Ingredients:
- 2 cups quick oats grounded
- 2 scoops protein powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tbsp cocoa

Wet ingredients:
- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 cup Splenda
- 8 oz of berry purée
- 4 oz of water or chocolate almond milk (increases carbs and calories)

Directions:
Pre heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix dry ingredients. Different types of protein powders can change the taste, and nutrient profile. I suggest to use a protein powder that is low calorie, low fat, low sodium, in either vanilla or chocolate. You already been experimenting baking or cooking with protein powder you will find that vanilla is more dynamic. For this recipe I used my usual chocolate protein because it's the best tasting, and one of the cleanest protein powders i can find, and I was satisfied with the outcome. Here's a picture of the protein I use.

After mixing dry ingredients, proceed to mix wet ingredients to a frothy consistency. The berry purée replaces our normal butter and oil and will enhance the chocolate flavor. You can experiment with different types of berry or fruit purée from apple sauces to even baby food. Depending on how moist you like your brownies the additional 4 oz of fluid will moisten the texture. Today I used water because there's no calories, but you can also use almond milk.

Mix dry and wet ingredients and prep your 8×8 glass Pyrex dish with non fat cooking spray. Pour in the magic chocolate concoction and pop in the oven for 25-30 min. When done set aside for 5-10 min to cool and cut into 16 squares. Serve and enjoy the magic!

Nutrient profile:
Serving 2 bars
- 96 calories
- 1.4 grams fat
- 12 grams carbs
- 10 grams protein
Friends’ Impact On Weight Loss

Posted by mrkinetic on May 14, 2013

Friends may have our backs, but their health and fitness habits can literally shape our backsides. How do friends help—or hurt—your healthy habits? Learn more from Martina M. Cartwright, PhD, RD, adjunct faculty member at the University of Arizona, independent biomedical consultant, author and nutrition counselor in Scottsdale, Arizona.

When Dietary Awareness Is Out to Lunch

The desire to copy people close to us is thought to enhance bonding and act as a social superglue (Lakin 2003). When we mimic each other’s eating behaviors, we form positive, subconscious bonds with our dining companions. What people do, rather than what they think, may be why obesity flourishes among friends.

The average person makes over 200 food decisions every day (Wansink 2006). Deciding what and where to eat are just two pieces of the dining puzzle—the other is with whom. Commiserating with pals or engaging in animated conversation over a tasty meal is often good therapy, but it can lead to distracted dining. Focusing on the conversation rather than the food often results in overeating (Hetherington 2006; Wansink 2006). Also, those who eat together subconsciously model each other’s eating styles. Normally light eaters consume more when munching with a group, while heavier eaters eat less when dining with companions (Bell & Pliner 2003). If you want to lose weight, you may find it easier if you hang out with friends who eat healthfully and exercise.

Hitting the Gym With a Friend

Motivating yourself to exercise can be challenging. Did you know that nonexercisers are more likely to get moving and stick with activity programs if supportive friends are involved? As a whole, social influence is positively associated with exercise behaviors, intentions and attitudes. Gabriele et al. (2005) explored social encouragement, which focused on positive reinforcement and statements such as “people important to me encourage me to exercise.” Positive social encouragement like this improved exercise motivation, but social constraint or negative reinforcement reflected in statements like “people will be disappointed in me if I quit exercising” were not helpful. Surrounding yourself with positive pals may keep you moving in the right direction.

SIDEBAR: Workplace Weight Gain

The workplace can be a minefield for people trying to shed pounds. Desktop candy jars and office celebrations provide a steady stream of sugary indulgence that can sabotage the most strident dieter’s efforts.

While coffee breaks and corporate parties can foster camaraderie, they entice mindless eating. Here are a few tips for taming workplace temptation:

Put a lid on goodies. Covering them with foil or a lid will curb mindless munching (Wansink 2006).

View the veggies: Leave these uncovered to promote healthier grazing.

When dining with a co-worker, split large portions.

Socialize and celebrate without food.

Limit happy-hour drinks/alcohol.

Avoid desktop dining.

Limit the “office feeder” influence.

Set an example: Bring in healthier snacks like fresh fruit, and replace the candy with dried fruit or nuts.

Support co-workers who are trying to lose weight.

References


Probiotics

Posted by mrkinetic on May 8, 2013

What to look for or most common beneficial strains

*Lactobacillus acidophilus*. This probiotic strain is important for maintaining the integrity of your intestinal walls so you can enjoy maximum absorption of nutrients, and it supports a healthy immune system.

*Lactobacillus fermentum*. These beneficial bacteria help neutralize some of the toxic products made during digestion and promote a healthy balance of bacteria in the gut.

*Lactobacillus rhamnosus*. Known as the premier “travel probiotic,” this strain of beneficial bacteria has been found to be extremely effective in reducing occurrences of traveler’s diarrhea.

*Bifidobacteria bifidum*. Both your small and large intestine need this probiotic strain for smooth, healthy digestion. It’s especially helpful for proper digestion of dairy products.

*Bifidobacteria longum*. This beneficial bacteria strain helps to crowd out bad bacteria that cause discomfort and helps to neutralize everyday toxins in the gut. It also helps efficiently break down carbohydrates without producing excess gas.

Lose 10 Pounds In 10 Minutes!

Posted by mrkinetic on May 4, 2013
If that sounds too good to be true, how about: Lose 18 Pounds in Four Days! Is this still too hard to believe? Then, you might want to Lose Five Full Inches of Ugly Belly Fat in Just 30 Days! Better yet, simply swallow a Weight Loss Pill Clinically Proven to Melt Belly Fat!

These and many other claims scream at you from all corners. Magazine covers, infomercials, Google searches, and billboards all pitch quick and easy results if you take this pill or follow that diet or buy this new book. The ads are always filled with fit-looking models chosen to sell a product they have, almost certainly, never used or a diet book they have never read. In fact, can you keep a dirty, little secret? They have all added time in the gym and watched their diet extra closely in the weeks prior to the commercial shoot.

That’s their secret.

The secret to permanent weight loss isn’t a secret if you consistently exercise and follow a diet loaded with fruits, vegetables, lean meats, fish, whole grains and nuts and seeds. So why do you have less than a 50/50 shot, according to studies, of maintaining your exercise program beyond six months? Frustration over a perceived lack of results is the number one reason. The hard truth is many of the benefits of exercise are not as easy to spot as Buns of Steel.

**Increased energy:** The right combination of exercise and nutrition creates a hormonal environment conducive to fat loss, increased muscle strength and increased energy. When your body is working at peak efficiency, your energy levels soar. As a result, everyday things become easier to do.

**Increased Self-Esteem:** Choosing to begin and continue a fitness program – even when you don’t feel like it – is an amazing way to increase self-esteem. You look better and are more confident, which empowers you in everything you do. You’ll find the self-discipline required and learned through regular exercise spills over into other areas of your life.

**Increased Mental Focus**

**Decreased Risk of a Heart Attack:** By exercising regularly and making positive changes in your diet, you lower your cholesterol and blood pressure and greatly diminish the chances of having a heart attack. One reason is because the action of your muscles pumping blood back to your heart actually stretches the heart, thereby increasing its efficiency even when you are not working out.

**Decreased Risk of Osteoporosis**

**Reduce the Risk of Breast Cancer:** Estradiol and progesterone, two ovarian hormones linked to breast cancer tumor production, are lowered in the body by exercise. A woman’s body is most susceptible to these hormones during the time between ovulation and menstruation. Habitual exercise can actually delay ovulation until later in the menstrual cycle. This reduces the time she must fight these hormones. Fat has long been known to be a catalyst in the production of estrogen (estradiol). Regular exercise burns body fat and decreases the rate of estrogen production.

**Increased Strength and Stamina:** Your body interprets exercise as stress and adapts to handle that stress with less effort. These adaptations benefit your heart, lungs and central nervous system, while also affecting your muscles. The degree to which adaptations occur is dependent on the type of exercise and the intensity of your workout.

**Reduced Depression:** The production of Endorphins (feel good hormones) is increased through exercise. Nothing improves mood and suppresses depression better than those endorphins. **Decreased Stress Levels:** The worries and stresses of everyday living (commuting, work demands, the candy bowl on your secretary’s desk) can stick with you long after the work day is done. Exercise is the perfect natural therapy that can change your mood. You’ll sleep better too.

These are the obvious results we must praise, and find strength in. If we compel ourselves to defeat
If you flash back to the beginning of 2009, you would have met a very unhappy and unhealthy 325 lb person. Here is the cliff notes version of my lifestyle: My activity was defined by being at work in front of the computer or at home watching my TiVo on my HDTV. Meals were provided by any fast food restaurant for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I was a weight gaining machine and nothing could stop me.

I didn’t just wake up one morning and decide to stop eating and drastically change my lifestyle. If my experience counts for anything, I can tell you that it’s not that easy. And if you were to ask me about when reality smacked me in the face, I’d tell you that I was a masochist because it happened on a daily basis. Of course, there are moments that vividly stand out. Like the time the drive-thru associate knew my name and what I wanted to order, after only hearing my voice... that smack left a bruise. Or the day I caught myself making a decision about where I was going out to eat with a group of friends, by recalling if I could fit in the restaurant’s booth. No! Not one of those defining moments did it for me, but all of them as a whole, helped me to take the first step. For me it was about taking it one step at a time, one foot in front of the other and one small accomplishment after the next. I found victory in not drinking a soda for a whole day, or driving past my regular fast food joint without stopping to order something. Soon, my small steps led me to Michael Collado.

I remember our first conversation. He asked probing questions about my current activity level and my eating habits. It was more than just going through the motions of measurements and data elements. I truly felt like Michael cared and wanted to see me succeed. In fact, it was clear that he believed my success was in direct line with his success; it was no longer a journey on my own, we were in it together. I took my first sigh of relieve.

Who knew that breathing was so important when it comes to exercising? I felt like I heard “Stanley, don’t forget to breath”, “breath in, breath out”, “Stanley, stop holding your breath” from Michael. I also recall gasping for breath at 4:30 in the morning after crying in my car in route to the gym. I had many conversations with myself in the car that went something like this: “You’re already up, don’t turn around. If you call out sick now, he will hear that you’re driving and know you lied.” I learned quickly that I couldn’t even escape my round 2 solo workouts in the afternoon. I can recall holding my breath when Michael called me at 7pm while I was on my way home from work after deciding to skip my 2nd workout. He left a voicemail. Of course I called my voicemail box right away and held my breath while I listened to his message that went something like this: “Stanley, it’s 7pm and you haven’t made it back to the gym. Where are you? You better get back here right now!” Needless to say, I found a way to make a u-turn on 64 West and made it back to the gym. Thankfully, I can look back at those hard times and laugh at myself. It got easier!

I should clarify; the workouts did not get easier! I repeat, did not get easier! Michael made sure I was always challenged. What did get easier was my ability to motivate myself to wake up early or hit the gym for for round 2. It got easier for Michael to know when I was slacking. It also got easier for him to motivate me to work harder because he learned how to push me; He took the time to learn who I am and how I function. But most importantly, it got easier for me to read my own body, to know when to challenge or when to ease off. I discovered more about myself.

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I am not an unhappy and unhealthy 325lb person anymore. Training with Michael, I lost a total of 113.5 lbs in 6 months, for a grand total of 123 since the beginning of 2009. Today I am 22 pounds from my goal weight of 180 lbs. I’m also a cycle instructor now, giving back to those who helped me along the way and to those who need 60 mins of motivation. Training with Michael enabled me. I have gained the knowledge I need to eat healthier, the form I need to become stronger, the experience I need to put together an awesome workout, the determination I need to achieve new milestones and the friends I
A long journey is always easier with friends. I was excited to find a friend in Michael Collado. In search of a personal trainer, I found someone who was completely invested in my health and well-being. Someone who took the time to make a workout plan according to me and not just a cookie cutter format. Michael was never afraid to share his knowledge with me, because that knowledge empowered me to become healthier and stronger. Working with Michael was a completely different personal trainer experience. An experience I think others could hardly replicate.

If you’re reading this, I hope that my story serves as motivation for you to take one more step in your journey towards a healthier you. If you feel you’re standing in my old shoes, understand that you’re not alone. I am still fighting to become healthier and Michael continues to share his talents with people just like us. Consider not waiting for your next defining moment to make a change. Instead, find happiness in taking it one step at a time. Do not dwell on slip ups, or be discouraged by plateaus. Acknowledge them, learn from them and then take another step forward. Set small goals that in turn will help you reach your long-term goals. Then, there will be so much more to celebrate! And a healthy lifestyle is definitely worth celebrating.

My quest to be my best!

Posted by mrkinetic on May 2, 2013

Being in shape, and looking good always has been a priority in my life. So much of a priority I consider it to be the main trait that defies my existence. It was because of this choice I molded myself to have opportunities to play athletics at a high level and continue to play at the age of 32, even now, my aging bang up knees won’t hold me back to remaining as active as I want and need to be.

Being diagnosed with depression the sweat, the burn, the high heart rates, the pump, the adrenalin rush, the endorphin high, and exhaustion has medicated me. My body and mind cries for it everyday, I may have a serious complex evolving here but if wanting to be mentally balanced, fit and healthy and doing it the right way through exercise and nutrition is crazy, then I’m willing to stand in my own bubble all by myself. Who would have think that after watching Hulk Hogan for the first time as a 7-year-old kid, would spark the flame to buying my first set of hulkamania weight lifting set, play basketball with the passion of Michael Jordan, to helping others through my passion in personal training, to wanting to hit the big stage as a physique or bodybuilding competitor.

My quest to be the leanest I’ve ever been has started, I have been experimenting with my body with different approaches to nutrition that forces me to break the rules a bit but over all a healthy approach. I am 4 months in with ways to go but the progress is noticeable. To finish and complete my quest is to grace my presence on stage and compete with other physique competitors. So allow me to run you all up to speed.

This was an awkward stage, where I seemed to let myself go, gained too much fat according to my
standards and reputation, was so self conscious of my body I wore 2 sizes bigger to mask the papa belly. If it wasn’t for my son and loving wife the sadness and grief would of been evident to see in this photo.

Worst I ever looked, felt bad, looked awful and sick because I was awful and sick. Stop taking my meds and went on a long vacation from the gym, my depression was at a all time high. Major events were happening all around me and coping with them was more than challenging, it was impossible, but I made the choice I made thousands of times in my life, to get back on my feet, bury my demons, and march forward with strength and faith.

Back in the gym, putting all my bottled up anger on heavy lifting, got my weight all the way up to 187 lbs heaviest I ever been, managed to gain almost 20 lbs of muscle through heavy training and heavy caloric intakes. Yes I ate carbs and I enjoyed every bit of it, which is why I am smiling so big my ears are getting wet.

Another awkward stage where dieting started, and looking in the mirror was depressing because the final stage wouldn’t come fast enough. Tweaking my diet and mentally preparing myself for the grueling journey ahead, yet hopeful and determined.
By far not even close to where I want to be but amazed by the changes in just 4 weeks of hard work and nutritional dedication. Although I’m smiling in this one, that night I caved in and inhaled a 18 inch cheese pizza, 12 buffalo wings, and 20oz soda all to my self!

Felt the guilt of caving in for the next 3 days, notice the bloat ness of my face. Too much fat, too much sodium, too much carb, threw away a weeks worth of hard work, I again made the same decision, convinced myself I deserved and earned that day, now time to march forward with strength and faith.

My current status! Very proud of myself, still have cave ins, but I am getting mentally stronger everyday, tightening up the diet a bit closer to the neck, with the goal of 6-8 weeks to be at the end.

I can say up to this point this lifestyle is not a favorable one, you must have support from your household when you refuse to have foods that were once shared through love and enjoyment, schedule my workouts so it does not interfere with my job as a father and loving husband. Also had to fight and cry through mental break downs. You want to look like those guys and gals in the magazine?? You have no idea what you are getting you self into, this sucks, but conquering a challenge is always worth celebrating. Stay tuned for updates! Till next time.

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