



This year be the best you've ever been

Welcome to 2007. Who would have thought that we would have been here so soon?

This year I am going to challenge you to take whatever it is that you're doing to the next level. Let's not leave "good enough" alone, let's make it better. I am going to challenge you to strive to get fitter, stronger, faster.

If you're just beginning fitness, why not strive for a certain level of proficiency by the end of the year. If you're an avid exerciser, why not challenge yourself to take what you're doing to a new level.

And if you're a competitive athlete, why not strive for mastery. Not mastery over others, but mastery over yourself ... body, mind and spirit. Let's make this the year for you to be the best you've ever been.

Just a couple of months ago when I turned 40 I seriously asked myself, 'How did this happen?' I don't look like a 40 year old and I definitely don't feel like one. So how did I get here to this place where I not only look and feel better than I was 10 years ago, but I'm also faster, stronger and can certainly outlast anyone I know 10 years my junior?

It's very simple. Each year I set a goal to get fitter, stronger and better. And that doesn't just mean to look good. I mean better in every way ... physically, mentally and spiritually. This is what I mean by striving to be the best you've ever been.

So in this article I will share with you my three-phase nutrition plan that I use with myself and my private clients, that will hopefully assist in taking you to a new level of mastery; self-mastery that is.

But remember, that is only a small part of the overall plan. You must strive for balance, meaning you cannot focus entirely on the physical. If you do you will never attain self-mastery.

The thing I love most about my martial arts practice is that it enables me to work the physical while at the same time allow-

ing me to calm my mind and get in touch with my spirit. I could write pages about getting in touch with your spirit through physical practice, but I'm afraid that's a topic for another article. For now, may I suggest picking up a copy of my first book, *Dancing with God: How you Can Make Exercise a Playful Adventure of Body and Soul*.

There are many disciplines that embody a body-mind-spirit approach; you may want to incorporate one of them into your regular regime. These include: tai chi, yoga, meditation and improvisational dance, just to name a few. Taking a walk on the beach or in the woods (yes, we have plenty of woods in L.A.) every once in a while could be a wonderful way of calming your mind and remembering your spirit.

My favorite thing is to practice tai chi on the beach to the sound of the waves crashing into the shore. These are just a few ideas, I'm sure if you put your mind to it you'll come up with something that works for you.

THREE-PHASE NUTRITION PLAN

If you're going to be the best you've ever been, let's face it; you need a great fitness and nutrition regime. Here's my personal three-phase nutrition plan. It works for my clients, I'm sure it will work for you too.

Phase One: 21-Day Detox/Cleanse

For the first 21 days of my clients' program, I have them cut out ALL alcohol, refined sugars, processed and baked foods and nutrition bars. They eat ONLY natural whole foods (oatmeal, brown rice, yam or sweet potato, egg whites, chicken breast, white fish, tofu, tuna, fresh fruits and vegetables and use JuicePlus fruit and vegetable capsules and Total EFA essential fatty acid supplement) to help cleanse and detoxify the body.

I encourage my clients to eat four to six small meals a day, with a combination of carbohydrates, protein and fat at every meal. They also drink 10 to 16 glasses of water every day. To be successful, I encourage them to always plan their meals ahead of time.

Phase Two: Muscle Building/Fitness Phase

After your first 21 days of exercising and following my cleansing nutrition guidelines, you're now ready for more serious work. To build muscle and change your fitness level, your nutrition program MUST complement your training regime; otherwise you will not gain any significant amounts of new muscle tissue.

By the same token, to lose fat and not muscle tissue, you must follow a few simple nutrition and exercise principles. These are principles that have been used by elite bodybuilders and other physique athletes, including myself, to get ripped, and I do mean, *ripped*, for competition. Now they can work for you too.

Forget Dieting

As a former drug-free competitive bodybuilder, I can honestly tell you from experience that dieting to lose fat does not work. However, having a nutrition program designed specifically for fat loss is the single most essential element of any program. To be most effective, it is best to alternate between a "muscle building" training phase and a "fat-loss" training phase. Here's what that would look like.

Your Muscle-Building Phase

It is impossible to lose fat without also losing muscle tissue. Therefore, if you want to get lean, your first objective should be to build lean muscle. I would recommend two to four weeks of heavy weight training accompanied by five to six daily meals. The

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published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* journal reported that subjects taking the JuicePlus fruit and vegetable capsules had a significant reduction in the breakdown of protein due to the stress caused by exercise. This is very significant whether you're trying to build a better body or participating in an endurance sport. Not only will you perform better, but you'll also build a better body, faster.

Glutamine is another worthwhile supplement that also helps to minimize muscle catabolism (breakdown). I don't want to make it seem like I'm pushing my book, but *Simply DELicious* contains an objective review of some of the most popular fat-loss and muscle building supplements on the market today. If this is of interest to you, take a look.

You've Got to Eat Fat to Lose Fat

One of the most important things you can do to lose fat is to start eating more good fats like olive oil, flax seed oil, primrose oil, avocado and peanut butter. The problem with restricting the good fats is that they also contain Essential Fatty Acids (EFA) that is necessary for thousands of biological functions throughout the body. Since the body cannot manufacture them, they must be provided by your diet.

EFA's not only help to increase testosterone production, they also aid in the prevention of muscle breakdown, help to increase your HDL level (good cholesterol) and assist in hormone production. For this reason, I recommend using an essential fatty acid supplement daily; try the Total EFA brand, it has a good balance of both omega-3 and omega-6.

Endurance Athletes

Athletes have very specific nutritional needs. In particular, endurance athletes have very different nutritional needs than others. Endurance sports (cycling, triathlon, marathon, running, etc.) place severe stress on the body.

The body's preferred fuel for any endurance sport is muscle glycogen. Glycogen is the body's storage form of carbohydrate. If muscle glycogen breakdown exceeds its replacement, glycogen stores become depleted. The result is fatigue and inability to maintain training and racing intensity.

In order to replenish and maintain glycogen stores, the endurance athlete's diet needs to be carbohydrate-rich. As much as 60 to 70 percent of your daily calories should come from complex carbohydrates. Protein and fat should be 15 to 20 percent each of your TDEE.

THE BOTTOM LINE

As you embark upon your new journey to be the best you've ever been this year, feel free to email me for guidance. As a matter of fact, I would recommend going to my web site and joining my email list in order to receive my free monthly nutrition newsletter.

Also feel free to request (by email) a free copy of my new CD, "The best you've ever been." Forget about New Year's resolutions; instead, start thinking about the rest of your life. If you make the commitment right now to end each year fitter, stronger and better than you were at the beginning of the year, not only will you look and feel your best at all times, but you will definitely be on the path to self-mastery. <<

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