THE SECRETS OF
BODY TRANSFORMATION

ALCOHOL, OVEREATING, INJURIES, AND MORE

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LESSON #4
ALCOHOL, OVEREATING, INJURIES, AND MORE

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WOULD I BE HEALTHIER IF I QUIT DRINKING?

My quest to understand the real tradeoffs of alcohol consumption.

By Camille DePutter

The after-work gin and tonic. The bottle of wine over dinner. A few beers on the weekend. Before long, the alcohol adds up. Is that a problem? Can drinking stand in the way of your health and fitness? Do you need to quit drinking to change your body? Or could it actually be good for you? In this article we explore the question in a personal way.

“Should I take a break from booze?”

Have you ever asked yourself this question?

I’ve asked it, as have many of our Precision Nutrition Coaching clients.

At the same time, like many of our clients, I’ve never really felt like I *needed* to quit drinking. My consumption is normal by most accounts, as is theirs. It’s “moderate.”

But boozy beverages seem to show up a lot in my life — and I know I’m not alone in that.

Maybe we like having a beer to mark the end of a work day. Maybe on Friday we get fancy with a cocktail.

Something to celebrate? Pour a little champagne. Crappy day? That Chardonnay or Cabernet will soften the edges a little bit.

The drinks can start to add up.

If we consider ourselves healthy people, alcohol is easy to justify. We exercise. We try to eat nutritious food. If we’re getting coaching, we know we’re working on our stuff.

But still. Some of us wonder...

Are we OK?

Are we justifying something we shouldn’t?

Are we ignoring the elephant in the room who’s currently dancing with a lampshade on its head and laughing a little too loud while telling off-

color jokes?

Are we pretending craft beer or red wine is a health food because it's artisanal or full of antioxidant something-something?

If we want to be healthy, fit, and functional, how does alcohol factor in?

As I discovered, the answer isn't straightforward. (It rarely is.)

For one thing:

You may have heard that drinking is actually good for you.

Moderate alcohol intake is associated with a lower risk of diabetes, gallstones, and coronary heart disease.

Light to moderate drinking seems to be good for the heart and circulatory system, helping reduce your risk of cardiac arrest and clot-caused stroke by 25 to 40 percent.

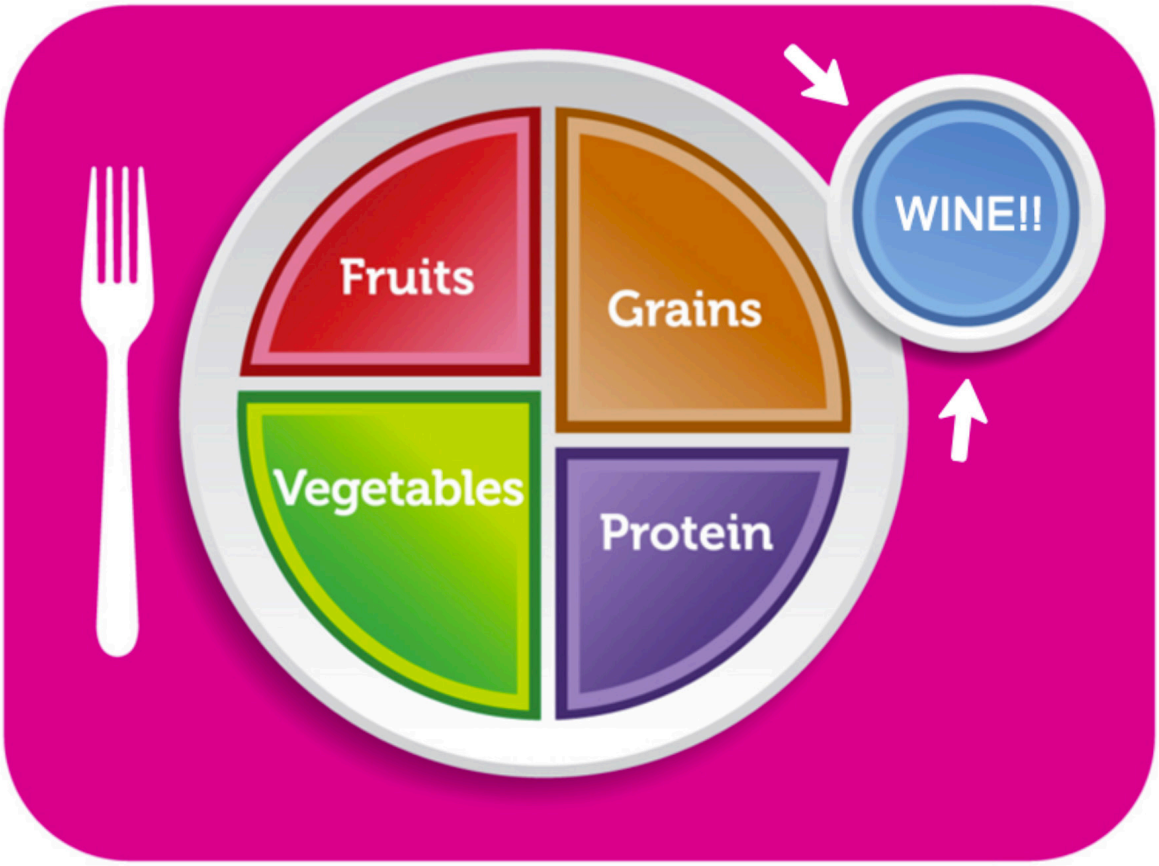
And there have been several studies indicating that drinkers — even heavy drinkers — actually outlive people who don't drink.

We see headlines like this every time a new study comes out, which seems fairly often, judging by my newsfeed.

An important point that seems to get buried:

If you don't already drink, health experts recommend you don't start.

Wait, what? If drinking is so good for you, then why not add that antioxidant-rich red wine to MyPlate — a nice goblet right where the milk used to be?



Because no one knows if any amount of alcohol is *actually* good for all of us.

Don't worry, I'm not going to tell you not to drink.

That's not what this article is about.

But, despite all the headlines and pro-drinking studies:

Most of the research on alcohol's potential health benefits are large, long-term epidemiological studies.

This type of research never proves anything.

Rather than showing that X causes Y, it simply says that X s*eems to be correlated with* Y.

So even though many studies suggest that light to moderate drinkers have lower rates of the above-mentioned health problems than non-drinkers, that doesn't mean drinking *causes* those benefits.

Sure, it could be that alcohol consumption raises HDL ("good") cholesterol. Or it could be that moderate drinking reduces stress.

Or it could be that drinking doesn't *cause* any health benefit.

Rather, it could be that people who drink a light to moderate amount also have something else going on in their lives, unrelated to alcohol consumption, that keeps them healthier, such as:

- robust and resilient genes
- a lower-stress personality
- a particular lifestyle
- good social connections and support

We just don't know for sure.

Any physiological effects would vary from person to person.

The amount of alcohol that may help your heart health might harm your friend's — for instance, if they have a history of high blood pressure.

And most of the research indicates that you'd have to be a light to

moderate drinker with no heavy drinking episodes (even isolated ones) to see a heart benefit.

OK, given that...

What is "moderation", anyway?

Definitions vary around the world, but according to the United States Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, "moderate drinking" means, on average:

- **For women:** up to seven drinks per week, with no more than three drinks on any single day.
- **For men:** up to 14 drinks per week, with no more than four drinks on any single day.

And here's a guide to health-agency classified "drinks":

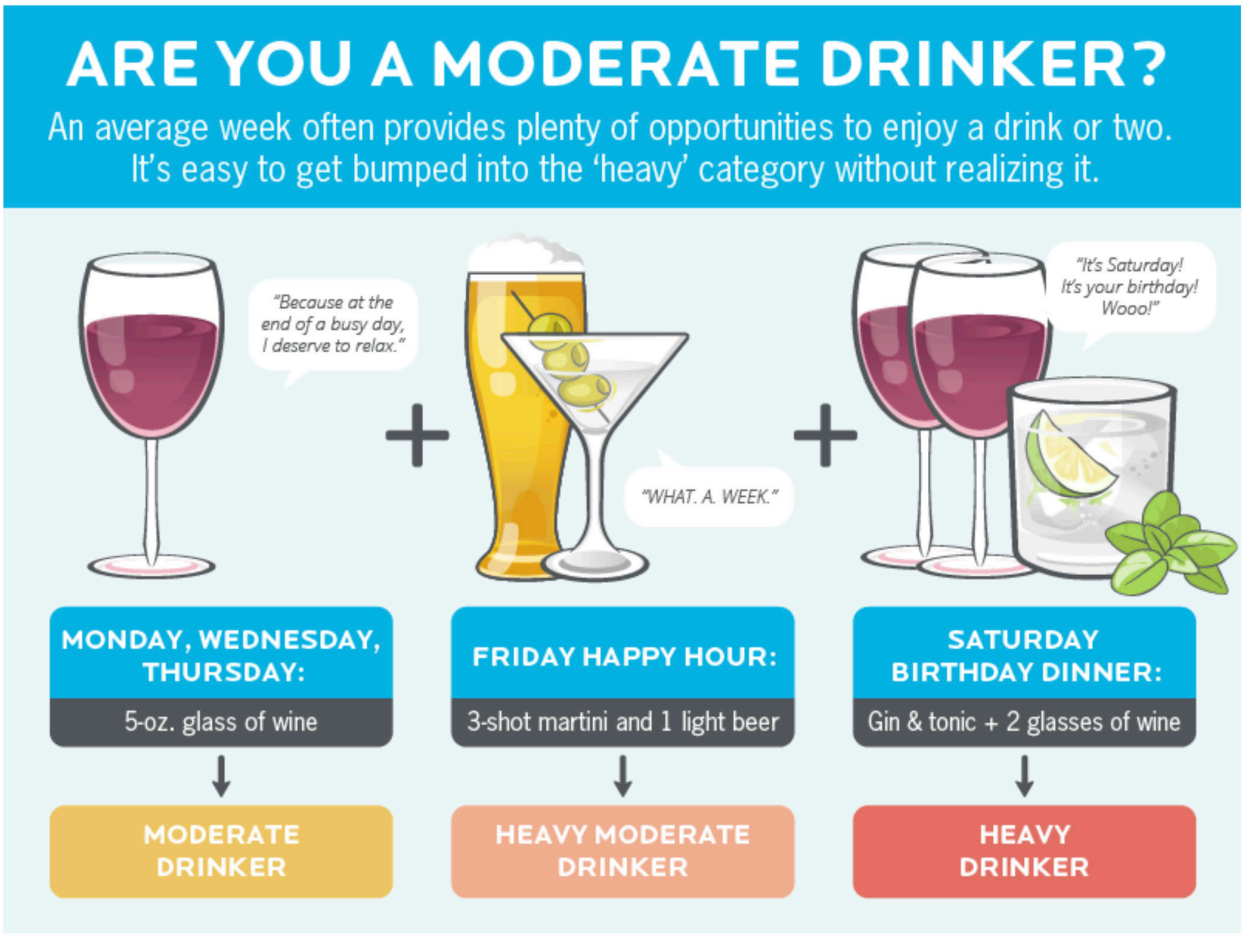
Sure, you might know you're not a binge drinker (that's five or more drinks for men, or upwards of four for women, within two hours).

But when was the last time you poured wine in a measuring cup, or tallied your total number of drinks at the end of the week, or calculated your weekly average in a given month, or adjusted your tally to account for that sky-high 9.9% ABV Strong Ale you love?

Studies show that people routinely, sometimes drastically, underestimate their alcohol consumption.

It's easy to edge into the "heavy" category without realizing it.

For example, if you're a woman:



That's a big problem, since heavy drinking comes with a much higher risk of major health problems.

Risks associated with moderate and heavy alcohol consumption

	Moderate	Heavy
Heart		Arrhythmias High blood pressure Kidney disease Heart disease Stroke
Brain	Disinhibition Altered judgement Poor coordination Sleep disruption Alcoholism*	Chemical dependence Depression Alcoholism Neurological damage Epilepsy Dementia Damage to developing brains
Immunity		Infection / illness / lowered immune response Cancer (mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, breast) Damaged intestinal barrier Increased inflammation / flare-ups of autoimmune disorders
Hormones	Breast cancer	Hormone disruption Impaired sexual function Impaired reproductive function Thyroid disease
Liver	Worsening of existing conditions such as hepatitis	Fatty liver Alcoholic hepatitis Fibrosis / cirrhosis Hepatocellular disease Liver cancer

Metabolism	Weight gain or stalled weight loss** Interference with some medications	Loss of bone density Bone fractures Osteoporosis Anemia Pancreatitis Changes to fat metabolism Muscle damage

***Particularly if there's alcoholism in your family**

****If drinking causes you to eat more food or opt for energy-dense meals**

In young males especially, even moderate drinking increases the risk of accidental injury or death, due to the "Hey y'all, hold my beer and watch this!" effect, or simply the dangerous equation of youthful exuberance combined with less impulse control, combined with more peer pressure, combined with things like motor vehicles and machinery.

All alcohol consumption comes with potential health effects.

After all, alcohol is technically a kind of poison that our bodies must convert to less-harmful substances for us to enjoy a good buzz relatively safely.

Through a series of chemical pathways using the enzymes alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH) and aldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH), we convert ethanol to acetaldehyde, then to acetate. The body breaks acetate down into carbon dioxide and water.

A second system for processing alcohol, the microsomal ethanol oxidizing system (MEOS), involves cytochrome P450 (CYP), an enzyme group that chemically affects potentially toxic molecules (such as medications) so they can be safely excreted.

In light to moderate drinkers, only about 10 percent of ethanol processing is done by the MEOS. But in heavy drinkers, this system kicks in more strongly. That means the MEOS may be less available to process other toxins. Oxidative cell damage, and harm from high alcohol intake, then goes up.

The biochemistry doesn't matter as much as the core concepts:

1. **We have to change alcohol to tolerate it.**

2. **Our ability to process alcohol depends on many factors, such as:**

    - our natural individual genetic tolerance
    - our ethnicity and genetic background (for instance, many people of East Asian ancestry have a genetically-linked aldehyde dehydrogenase enzyme deficiency, which affects their ability to properly metabolize alcohol)
    - our age
    - our body size
    - our biological sex
    - our individual combinations of conversion enzymes
    - Etc.

3. **Dose matters.** But all alcohol requires some processing by the body.

So what's the "sweet spot"?

What amount of alcohol balances enjoyment (and your jokes becoming funnier) with your body's ability to respond and recover from processing something slightly poisonous?

The moderate-vs-heavy guidelines are the experts' best guess at the amount of alcohol that can be consumed with statistically minimal risk, while still accounting for what a lot of people are probably going to do anyway: drink.

It doesn't mean that moderate drinking is risk-free.

But drinking is fun. (There, I said it.)

In North America, we tend to separate physical well-being from our emotional state. In reality, quality of life, enjoyment, and social connections are important parts of health.

So let me say it:
I enjoy drinking.

So do a lot of other people.

In the U.S., for example, 65 percent of people say they consume alcohol. Of those drinkers, at least three quarters enjoy alcohol one or more times per week.

The wine flows at lunchtime in continental Europe (for Scandinavians, it's the light beer *lättöl*). Hitting a pub or two after work is standard procedure in the UK and Japan. Northern Europeans swear by their *brennivin, glögg, or akvavit* (not to mention vodka). South America and South Africa alike are renowned for their red wines.

Thus, for much of the world's population, alcohol — whether beer, wine or spirits — is something of a life staple.

And if you're doing it right — meaning tasteful New Year's Eve champagne toasts are more common in your life than shot-fueled bar dances to "Hotline Bling" — there are some undeniable benefits to be gained:

- **Pleasure:** Assuming you've graduated from wine coolers and cheap tequila shots, alcoholic beverages usually taste pretty darn delicious.
- **Leisure:** A bit of alcohol in your bloodstream does help you feel relaxed. And like a good meal, a good glass of wine should offer the opportunity to slow down for a minute.
- **Creativity:** There's evidence that when you're tipsy, you may be more successful at problem-solving thanks to increased out-of-the-box thinking.
- **Social connection:** Drinking may contribute to social bonding through what researchers call "golden moments" — when you all smile and laugh together over the same joke. This sense of community, belonging, and joy can contribute to your health and longevity.

If you're going to drink, drink because you genuinely enjoy it.

Drink if it truly adds value and pleasure to your life.

Not because:

- you're stressed

- it's a habit
- other people around you don't want to drink alone; or
- it's "good for you".

With confusing alcohol consumption categories and contradictory news headlines, many people give up trying to decide whether drinking is healthy or not.

A new study shows alcohol may be harmful? Whatever.

Or:

Drinkers live longer? I'll hop on that horse and ride it straight to the bar!

So forget about the potential health benefits of alcohol.

There are plenty of (probably better) ways to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease — like eating well, exercising, and not smoking.

Wanting the enjoyment of a perfect Old Fashioned or a rare sake is a legitimate — probably the best — reason to drink.

As with what you eat, what you drink should be purposeful and mindful. And delicious.

Drinking or not drinking isn't about "healthy vs. not". It's about *tradeoffs*.

Alcohol is just one factor among many that affect physical

performance, health, and fitness.

Whether to keep drinking or cut back depends on how much you drink, what your goals are, and how you want to prioritize those things.

Only *you* know what you are, or aren't, willing to trade.

It may be a simple "yes" or "no".

- Saying "yes" to six-pack abs might mean saying "no" to a few drinks at the bar.
- Saying "yes" to Friday happy hour might mean saying "no" to your Saturday morning workout.
- Saying "yes" to marathon training might mean saying "no" to boozy Sunday brunches.
- Saying "yes" to better sleep (and focus, and mood) might mean saying "no" to your daily wine with dinner.
- Saying "yes" to moderate alcohol consumption might mean finding a way to say "no" to stress triggers (or human triggers) that make you want to drink more.

Or it may be where you're willing to move along the continuum.

- Maybe you're willing to practice drinking more slowly and mindfully, but you're not willing to decrease your total alcohol intake.
- Maybe you're trying to lose weight, so you'd consider drinking a little less. Like 2 beers instead of 3, but not 0.
- Or, maybe you're willing to stay sober during most social situations, but you're not willing to endure your partner's office party without a G&T on hand.

Maybe there is a “best” answer for how much alcohol is okay for everyone. But we don’t know what it is yet.

At least not for certain.

That’s OK.

You can write your own “Owner’s Manual” for YOU as a unique individual.

Guidelines for drinking don’t tell us who YOU are or what effects alcohol has on YOU.

So let’s forget about “expert” advice for just a moment.

Instead, let’s try letting your body lead.

Read its cues. Observe yourself carefully, gather data, and see how alcohol is — or isn’t — working for you.

Here’s how.

What to do next

1. Observe your drinking habits.

Keep track of all the alcohol you drink for a week or two. Here’s a worksheet to help you.

Drinking Journal

Precision Nutrition

Tracking your behaviors is an important way to learn about yourself and your habits.

It's up to you to choose what you think a healthy lifestyle goal is for YOU.

Right now, my healthy lifestyle goal is:

Date	Drink Choices What did you drink, and how much?	Notes Did you notice or want to remember anything else?	CONSISTENCY Check "yes" if you think this choice met your healthy lifestyle goal above
Friday Feb 12	1 pint light beer	Enjoyed slowly with friends while over for dinner	☒ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No
			○ Yes ○ No

You don't need to share it with anyone or feel like you need to change anything. Just collect the info.

Next, review the data. Ask:

- **Am I drinking more than I thought?** Maybe you hadn't been taking the couple of casual beers with Sunday NFL into account.
- **Is my drinking urgent, mindless, or rushed?** Slamming drinks back without stopping to savor them can be a sign that drinking is habitual, not purposeful.
- **Are there themes or patterns in my drinking?** Perhaps you habitually over-drink on Friday because your job is really stressful.
- **Is alcohol helping me enjoy life, or is it stressing me out?** If you're not sleeping well or feeling worried about the drinking, the cost can outweigh the benefit.
- **Does alcohol bring any unwanted friends to the party?** Binge eating, drug use, texting your ex?

If any of the answers to these questions raise red flags for you, consider cutting back and seeing how you feel.

2. Notice how alcohol affects your body.

Use Precision Nutrition's "how's that working for you?" litmus test. Ask:

- **Do I generally feel good?** Simple, but telling.
- **Am I recovering?** How's my physical performance after drinking? If I were to hit the gym on Saturday morning after a Friday night social, how would I feel and perform?

- **What happens afterwards?** Do I get a hangover, upset stomach, poor sleep, puffiness/bloating and/or other discomfort?
- **How does the extra energy intake work for my goals?** Is alcohol adding some calories that I don't want? Am I trying to lose weight, for instance?
- **What do my other physiological indicators say?** What did my latest medical tests suggest? How's my blood work? My blood pressure? Any other physiological indicators that I'm watching?

If you're unsure about whether your alcohol use is helping or hurting you, talk to your doctor and get a read on your overall health.

3. Notice how alcohol affects your thoughts, emotions, assumptions, and general perspective on life.

Again: How's that working for you?

- **Do you feel in control of your drinking?** Are you choosing, deliberately and purposefully... or "finding yourself" drinking?
- **What kind of person are you when you are drinking?** Are you a *bon vivant*, just slightly wittier and more relaxed, savoring a craft beer with friends? Or are you thinking, *Let's make that crap circus of a workday go away*, as you pound back the liquid emotional anesthetic through gritted teeth?
- **If you had to stop drinking for a week, what would that be like?** No big deal? Or did you feel mild panic when you read that question?

4. Play "Let's Make a Deal".

To pinpoint which goals and activities in your life are the most

important to you, ask yourself:

- What am I currently saying “yes” to?
- What am I currently saying “no” to?
- What am I willing to say “yes” to?
- What am I willing to say “no” to?
- What am I prepared to say “yes” and “no” to? Why?

There are no right or wrong answers.

Just choices and compromises.

You’re a grown-up who can think long-term and weigh options rationally. Whether you drink or not is your call.

5. Disrupt the autopilot.

One of the keys to behavior change is moving from unconscious, automatic reactions to conscious, deliberate decisions.

To experiment with decreasing your alcohol intake, try these strategies:

- **Delay your next drink.** Just for 10 minutes, to see if you still want it.
- **Look for ways to circumvent your patterns.** If you usually hit the bar after work, try booking an alcohol-free activity (like a movie date or a yoga class) with a friend instead. If you stock up on beer at the grocery store, skip that aisle altogether and pick up some quality teas or sparkling water instead.

- **Savor your drink.** Tune into the sensations in front of you. Here's an idea: try tasting wine like a sommelier. Look at it, swirl it, sniff it, taste it.
- **Swap quantity for quality.** Drink less, but when you do drink, treat yourself to the good stuff.

6. Call on the experts.

Change almost always works better with support. It's hard to change alone.

- **Talk to your doctor** about your drinking patterns and your health.
- **Consider genetic testing.** Many commercial genetic testing services can tell you about your alcohol tolerance, or your risk of other chronic diseases (such as breast cancer) that are linked to alcohol intake.
- **Get nutrition coaching.** Precision Nutrition coaches specialize in helping clients optimize diet and lifestyle patterns for good.

7. If you choose to drink, enjoy it.

Savor it. Enjoy it mindfully, ideally among good company.

HOW I QUIT WEEKEND OVEREATING.

5 surprising strategies that helped me ditch the bingeing, the guilt, and the extra weight.

By Krista Scott-Dixon

In my world, weekend overeating (and over-boozing) was 'just what people did'. It felt good to let loose...until I got sick of the regret, guilt, bloating, and extra pounds. That's when I discovered the surprising *real* reason behind my Friday-to-Sunday gorging. Here are the 5 strategies I used to ditch the habit (and the weight) for good.

I used to overeat like a boss.

True story.

Sure, I was *"good"* all week.

But weekend overeating? That was my jam.

Every Friday around 5pm, as I waited for the bus after work, I'd start to salivate. The end of the work week meant red wine, pizza, a giant bag of chips, and bad movies. It was a Friday ritual.

Sometimes I'd call my husband while waiting. *What should we get on the pizza? They do that really good pesto sauce with goat cheese. What about extra sausage?*

Friday night, when I got to eat whatever I wanted, was the highlight of my week.

My job was stressful. The commute was long. Coming home, dumping my stuff, and crushing some fast food and booze was my way of unwinding.

However...

Friday became a gateway drug to the rest of the weekend.

I ate big breakfasts on Saturdays before I went to the gym, and big lunches afterwards. I went out on Saturday nights for drinks and a heavy meal. Or stayed home for more takeout and movies on the couch.

Then came Sunday brunches, of course. And picking up some of *those amazing cookies at that little coffee shop* on Sunday walks. And, naturally, you close weekends with a big Sunday roast... because it's Sunday.

Because it's Friday. Because it's Saturday. Because it's Sunday.

Which bled into: *Because it's Thursday night.* Technically close enough to Friday. Friday-adjacent, and good enough.

In my head, the weekend was a time where "normal rules" didn't apply. It was a time to relax, put my feet up, and let the soothing crunching and chewing take me away.

I'm not talking about compulsive bingeing here. That's where you have episodes of eating without thinking, almost like you're on autopilot.

(People with binge eating disorder feel disassociated while overeating and that can be hard to break without help from a doctor or therapist.)

But for me, it wasn't that. Rather, mine was the kind of overeating where you're all-in: a convenient, stress-fueled, often social, *habit*.

My social circle was happy to support it. I had binge buddies and pizza

pals. As far as I was concerned, going hog wild was *just what people did* on weekends.

Looking back, I *also* know that in the face of a stressful job and overwhelming responsibilities my overeating ritual made me feel sane and human.

After a while, though, weekend overeating started to suck.

As every overeater knows, the joy of runaway indulgence comes with consequences.

You feel physically uncomfortable, bloated, perhaps even sick to your stomach. Mentally, you feel crappy. Guilty. Regretful. Maybe angry at yourself. Or just angry in general.

And while weight fluctuation is inevitable when you're trying to get in shape, if you want to stay healthy and fit, or make fitness and health a permanent part of your lifestyle, then weekend overeating can sabotage your goals.

Aside from the obvious extra body fat or stalled performance, there's other unwanted stuff.

Like your joints hurt because of inflammation from last night's junk food. Or you're too full to run properly. Or you lie awake in bed with meat sweats, huffing in small breaths around the food-baby in your belly.

Yet the cycle can be hard to break.

I tried to get it under control.

I started cutting deals with myself, such as, if it's "real food" then it's okay to overeat. (Cue jars of almond butter, spinach pizzas, and all-you-can-eat sushi.)

During the week, I trained harder. Ate less. Tracked low and high calories in a spreadsheet. But every starvation attempt was inevitably followed by an even bigger blowout on the weekend.

The cycle continued; my health and fitness goals remained elusive.

Then I made a surprising discovery.

How did I finally break free of my weekend overeating cycle?

Maybe not how you think.

I didn't use "one weird trick", or biological manipulation, or reverse psychology.

With some help from a nutrition coach, I realized that my eating habits on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday weren't the only challenge. There were some questionable weekday habits, too. Habits that were perhaps even more crucial to the whole picture.

Once I identified my work-week eating patterns, and how they were affecting my weekend behavior, I developed a healthier relationship with food... and myself.

Here are the 5 strategies that helped me turn things around.

Strategy #1:
I aimed for “good enough” instead of “perfect”.

I’ve seen it in so many Precision Nutrition Coaching clients.

They want to follow the “perfect” diet.

So they adhere to strict meal plans (to the last measured teaspoon) Monday to Friday. And, the whole week, they worry incessantly about screwing things up.

By the weekend, though, the willpower gives out. They’re so sick of restrictive eating and can’t wait to eat food they actually enjoy. Bring on the weekend binge!

For most of them, there are only two options: perfect or crap.

So the logic follows:

“It’s Saturday, I’m out to lunch with my family, and I can’t have my perfect pre-portioned kale salad like I usually do, so instead I’ll just overeat a giant bacon cheeseburger and a huge heap of fries.”

If you take “perfect” off the table, things change. You feel empowered because there are now other options. Instead of kale salad vs. five servings of fries, there’s:

“I’m actually in the mood for a salad with my burger because I had fries at that work lunch on Thursday.”

Therefore, my solution: Always aim for “good enough”.

Throughout the work week and the weekend, I started to consider

my health and fitness goals, what I was in the mood for, what was available, etc. I came up with a definition of "good enough", and aimed for that.

Remember: The decent method you follow is better than the "perfect" one you quit.

Strategy #2:
I let go of my food rules.

If perfectionism is the Wicked Witch of overeating, then food rules are the flying monkeys.

Food rules tell you:

- *what* you can and can't eat,
- *when* you can or can't eat it,
- *how* you can or can't eat it, and/or
- *how much* you can or can't have.

Spreadsheet time!

These rules take up an awful lot of mental real estate. They also set you up for disinhibition... aka "the F*** It Effect".

Here's how the F*** It Effect works.

Let's say your #1 food rule is Don't Eat Carbs. No croutons on the salad; won't touch a sandwich; no potatoes with your omelette. Thanks.

But this Friday night, you find yourself out with friends, and everyone's

having beer and pizza. You hold out for a bit. Finally, you give in and grab a slice.

That means f*** it, you've "blown your diet", so you might as well keep eating. Cue the binge and uncomfortable after effects.

Of course, if you have one food rule, you probably have several. That means there are lots of ways to "mess up" (and disinhibit). Maybe all night. *Maybe all weekend.*

Eating by the rules almost always leads to overeating crap, because once you deviate, there's nothing left to guide you.

My solution: I ditched the rules and let hunger be my guide.

Non-dieters (or so-called "normal eaters") eat when they're physically hungry and stop when they're physically full, no matter if it's Wednesday or Saturday, morning or evening, work lunch or happy hour.

Start by paying attention to your own food rules and responses.

When, where, and how are you likely to say, "F*** it?" What might happen if you let go of that rule and really tuned in to your physical hunger and fullness cues instead?

Strategy #3:
I gave up on "Cheat Days".

Monday through Saturday is all about being faithful to your diet. But Sunday... That's Cheat Day.

Oh, Cheat Day. The happiest day of your week.

You wake up on Cheat Day morning like a kid at Christmas. Go hog wild all day long, eating all the stuff you didn't permit yourself during the week.

As evening nears, you start to freak out. So you eat (and maybe drink) even more. Because tomorrow, it's back to reality. Back to fidelity and compliance. And no fun.

Sure, some people find the idea of a weekly Cheat Day useful both mentally and physically. If this is you, and it works for you, then by all means continue.

But for most of the people I've coached, having one Cheat Day means the rest of the week is food purgatory.

My solution: I quit the Cheat Day routine, and gave myself permission to choose what I wanted all week long.

Like the F*** It Effect, Cheat Day depends on scarcity.

Scarcity makes us feel anxious, needy, and greedy. The counter to a scarcity mindset? Abundance.

For you and most people around you, food is abundant — not something to be hoarded or feared. (If that's true in your life, be grateful. It's a privilege.)

You don't need to "cheat" because there's nothing, and no one, to "cheat" on. Maybe you enjoy some dessert on a Tuesday night because you're in the mood for it, or maybe you don't because you're satisfied from dinner.

What and when you eat is up to you — and your hunger and fullness cues. No matter what day of the week it is.

Strategy #4:
I owned my choices (Really. Owned them.)

Do you ever barter with yourself? Make deals, trades or swaps related to food?

"Okay, self, I'll turn down dessert today... but I'm gonna collect on the weekend and you better pony up the whole damn pie."

In this mindset, one "good deed" gives you license to "sin" elsewhere. These trades rarely pay off — they usually just amount to a lot of mental gymnastics that help you avoid making tough decisions and help you justify overeating.

Look, we're all adults here. Trading off "good" and "bad" is for little kids and convicts. There is no "good" and "bad". There's no prison warden holding the keys.

Mind games like this undermine your health goals — and your authority over your decisions.

My solution: I started owning my choices, and letting my adult values and deeper principles guide me when I sat down to eat.

I started making food decisions by acknowledging the outcome I would expect, based on my experience. For example:

"I'm choosing to eat this tub of ice cream on Saturday night. I'll probably feel nauseated and anxious afterwards. In this instance, I'm fine with it."

In the end, own your choices: Don't moralize them. You're free to eat and drink anything you want. You choose *your* behavior.

Just remember that different choices produce different outcomes.

It's your call.

Strategy #5:
I stopped rationalizing.

Weekends present all sorts of comfortable justifications for eating a bunch of non-nutritious foods.

It could be anything:

- You were busy. Or maybe you had nothing going on.
- You were traveling. Or maybe you were at home.
- You had to work. Or you had no work to do.
- You had family/social meals. Or maybe you ate alone.

Any excuse will do. Powerless victim of circumstance!

But busyness, boredom, travel, work, or family dinners don't inherently cause overeating. People eat or drink too much in lots of different situations. Their explanation simply matches whatever happens to be going on at the time.

Rationalizations are a convenient script. They help us make sense of — and perpetuate — our overeating or other unhelpful behaviors.

My solution: I stopped rationalizing and asked myself why I was really overeating.

Sometimes, you'll want to eat crap. And too much of it. That's normal.

But instead of falling back on the tired victim-of-circumstance narrative, take the opportunity to ask yourself what's really going on.

Are you bored? Stressed? Sad? Happy?

Do this over and over and over, and you'll start to see some patterns. That's your pot of gold. That's your opportunity to change overeating behavior — and do something else to address those emotions instead of bingeing.

What to do next

There is no "perfect time" to eat better. Not tomorrow; not on Monday. Life is always a little nuts.

All we can do is our best with what we've got. Right here, right now.

Here's where to start.

Ask yourself: How's that weekend overeating working for you?

If you're loving your Cheat Day, Friday junk-food bonanzas, or gut-punching Sunday brunches, and you're happy with the results, keep doing it.

But if you're conflicted, it could be time to investigate further. Ask yourself: What does weekend overeating do for you? What is it a path to? What does it enable you to get or feel? How does it solve a problem or have a purpose for you?

In my case, weekend overeating was self-medication for stress, stimulation and novelty, and a way to connect with other people.

To rearrange your mindset and break the cycle of weekend overeating, try:

- aiming for “good enough” instead of “perfect”,
- letting go of your food rules,
- giving up the Cheat Days,
- owning your choices, and/or
- quitting the rationalizations.

If you feel urgency or compulsion when you overeat, consider talking to your doctor or a trained professional about binge eating disorder.

Apply the Precision Nutrition “clean slate” method.

In Precision Nutrition Coaching, the clean slate approach means that after any and every “screw-up”, you get to start fresh.

Overate Friday night? No problem, wake up Saturday morning and start again. Don’t try to compensate. Just get on with things as normal.

You don’t “pay back” the damage in the gym, nor do you kamikaze your way through a jar of peanut butter. You just pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and go back to doing your best.

Put someone else in control for a while.

Yes, you are the boss of you, and you should own your choices. But changing a deep-seated habit — even one that on the surface may seem silly and harmless, like overeating on the weekend — is challenging. Really challenging.

And just like weight loss, the process of changing your habits will have ups and downs. It helps to team up with someone who will support and encourage you.

Find a friend, a partner, a trainer, or a coach, who will listen to you and keep you accountable. For many clients, relinquishing control is a choice they're glad to own.

INJURIES AND PAIN:

How to get in great shape, even after an injury.

By John Berardi, Ph.D.

For most people, an injury means skipping the gym for months at a time. Sometimes, they retire their workout clothes for good. But here's the good news: there's always a way to work around an injury and build the body you want. This post will show you how.

When I hit the loose gravel, I knew I was in trouble.

That's when I did the very thing you're *not* supposed to do during a motorcycle skid: I put my left foot down.

The good news is that the bike didn't drop; I made it through the roundabout on two wheels.

The bad news is that knee ligaments, even strong ones like mine, aren't meant to withstand massive torque.

Screw it! What's a little knee pain?

I knew something felt weird and a little "off", but there wasn't much pain.

It might have been the distraction of trying to keep the bike upright. Or maybe the fight or flight hormones kicking in.

But since I was on my way to the gym when it happened, I didn't think twice about it. I put the near accident behind me, drove to the gym, and prepared to work my legs.

With my liniment, knee wraps, and heavy metal music, everything felt fine in the squat rack. Okay, the knee felt a little shaky.

"But what's a little knee pain?" I thought. "**If I work through it, it'll go away in a few weeks."**

I was sure of it.

When I considered getting help

You can probably see where this is going: my knee pain didn't go away.

In fact, it got worse. Much worse.

Of course, I was big, muscular, and — I thought — invincible. So I kept training the only way I knew how: with heavy lifts and low reps.

I continued to squat, deadlift, row, and bench press, the way I had been taught by all the serious workout articles and magazines, written by intelligent experts.

Within 6 months, my left knee was ruined.

And not only was the left out of commission, my right knee was in rough shape too. Plus, my shoulders and lower back were also bugging me.

Just a few months prior I had been squatting over 400 pounds for reps. Now, I couldn't even squat an empty bar. And even that caused serious pain.

I considered getting help. But my ego got in the way. So I didn't. I waited another 6 months until I could barely walk up a flight of stairs.

Advice from the doc

Finally, a chiropractor friend of mine forced me to see a top orthopedic surgeon. And after a full examination, I got a diagnosis. I had partial tears in 3 of the ligaments in my left knee. And osteoarthritis in my right knee.

Oh, and the shoulder and back pain? They were a result of the compensations my body was making for all the stress I put on my damaged knees. Go figure.

With my diagnosis, I also got a prognosis. “JB, if you keep training like this, you won’t be able to walk in 10 years.”

At the time, I was 29 years old.

“So, what should I do, doc?”

She put it as gently as she could: “Uh, stop squatting, you dummy!”

Sure, she gave me other recommendations too. Specifically, she gave me a treatment plan that included lots of manual therapy and a host of rehab exercises. **But her most strenuous urging was to seriously reconsider the way I was training.**

Either do that, or quit training altogether.

The injury crossroad

Looking back, I now realize I was at a crossroad, the exact same one many people find themselves when sidelined with their first serious injury or suffering from chronic pain.

What do most people do at that point? **They quit working out.**

To a lifelong exerciser — or someone with training in strength and conditioning — this may seem like a strange and unnecessary choice.

But, if you think about it, it’s not really that strange. In fact, considering how much (or how little) the average person knows about training with injuries, it’s the logical one.

If you can’t do what you’ve always done, and don’t know any other way of doing things, you’re lost.

And, I'll be honest here. I was lost.

After the orthopedic doc told me I'd have to rethink the way I trained, I was also mad.

I was 29 and had been pretty much training the same way for 13 years. I *liked* the way I worked out. And, if I'm really being honest here, **I didn't really know how to do anything else, even if I wanted to change my approach.**

What happens when you get help

Only one thing saved me from self-pity and giving up entirely on training.

I found a way to ask for help.

For most people, this is one of the hardest things to do, which also makes it one of the bravest. To reach out and say "Hey, I don't know what I'm doing here. Can I get some help?" **For many men and women, that's an act of courage.**

Even with my Masters training in Exercise Science, I bit the bullet and hired a coach to help me get back into shape. To teach me how to stay lean, strong, and healthy with my new limitations.

And it was one of the best investments I ever made.

He helped me re-write my previous training "rules". He taught me that *my way* of training wasn't the *only* way to do it. In fact, it wasn't even the *best way* to do it.

He showed me how to modify exercises to take the strain off my

injured body parts. He taught me how to space out my workouts to allow for optimal joint recovery between sessions. He helped me find the ideal training volume at which I could still improve without aggravating my injuries.

Through the process, I also learned how to eat and supplement for injury recovery. And how to adjust my food intake to accommodate my new training demands.

A year later, I was in as good a shape as I'd ever been in. I was lean, strong, and probably more conditioned than ever before. **And my training was totally and completely different.**

The most important lesson of all

While it was great that I learned how to strengthen my knee and get in great shape while working around the injury, that wasn't the most important thing I learned from my coach.

No, the lesson that I'll take with me forever is this one:

No matter what injury, setback, competing time demand, or other distraction might come my way, with a little coaching and support, I can still be my best. In the gym and out.

Now that I have four kids, a growing business, and my fair share of nagging injuries, that advice has served me well.

Getting the help you need

So what's holding you back? Is it an injury? Chronic pain? A busy lifestyle? Lots of competing time demands?

No matter what it is, here's what I have to say: You can still drop fat, get healthy, and get into the best shape of your life.

I know because I've been there myself. I also know because every day we help thousands of men and women in the same situation in our Precision Nutrition Coaching program.

Keep in mind, many of these folks have serious health or time limitations when they start the program. And they've considered giving up too.

But 30, 40, 50 pounds of body fat later, they're transformed.

If this story resonates with you, we'd be happy to work with you too. Our next coaching group kicks off soon and we'd love to have you in the program.

But whether you choose Precision Nutrition Coaching or not isn't important. **What's important is that you get the help you need.**

Because the difference between where you are today, and where you'll be in a year, is the quality of the coaching, the mentorship, and the support you get along the way.

OVERSTRESSED AND OVEREATING:

How to solve the two biggest health and fitness problems many women face.

By Krista Scott-Dixon

Feeling overworked and underappreciated? Having trouble staying consistent with your nutrition or exercise plan because you're overstressed and overeating? This article is for you.

Putting others' needs before your own? Just part of the job for lots of women.

Whether you're a high-powered professional, a mother, a caregiver, a partner, a worker, a daughter, a friend, or all of the above and more....

...if you're a woman, you're asked to do a lot.

Many of us spend our days putting out fires, handling to-do lists, wiping little noses, meeting deadlines, and making sure other people are fed, safe, and happy.

Here's the thing...

We've gotten to know a lot of women through our Precision Nutrition Coaching program. And we've learned that most of them enjoy — and thrive on — that impossible list above.

They like rising to the challenge of supporting others and getting stuff done.

That is, until their energy runs out and they realize they don't have any left over for themselves.

And slowly, after months or years of putting other people first, multi-tasking, and wrangling that epic to-do list:

- They're drained mentally and emotionally.
- The time they used to invest in self-care has disappeared.
- The clothes that used to fit... feel a little (or a lot) tighter.
- The sugar and junk food cravings seem much stronger.

- The exercise classes/workouts are postponed, then canceled.
- The bathroom mirror and scale are avoided. (Along with the bed.)
- The stress of yo-yo dieting starts up again.

With putting so much time into caring for others, and juggling all their responsibilities, women end up neglecting themselves.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

You *can* feel healthy, fit, and good in your own skin.

You *can* regain control of your schedule and your body.

You *can* overcome emotional eating and cravings.

You *can* show love and appreciation to others while still taking care of yourself.

We'll show you how.

In this article, you'll learn:

- **The two biggest obstacles in many women's way when it comes to getting healthy and staying in shape.**
- **How to overcome these obstacles to get the body — and life — you want.**

***Oh sure*, you think.**

Maybe some women might find this helpful.

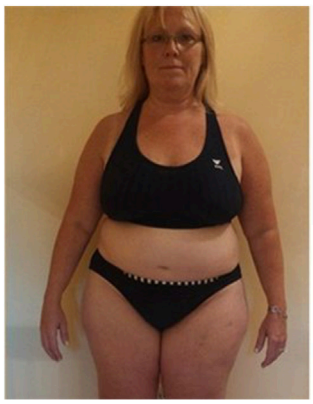
But my life is different. My body is different.

That's exactly what tens of thousands of other women thought before they started our Precision Nutrition Coaching program.

They also felt frustrated, lost, and confused, struggling to manage their eating, health, and bodies. They knew they wanted to feel better, and they were trying hard, but they weren't sure how to make it all work.

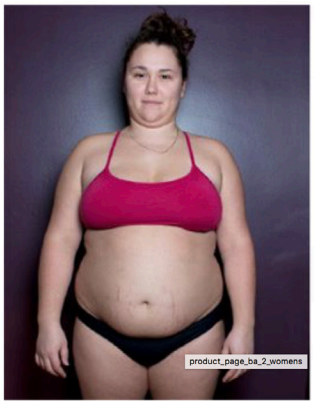
That was them before they started.

And here's how they ended up... after a year of simple, do-able, progressive habits. The difference is astounding.



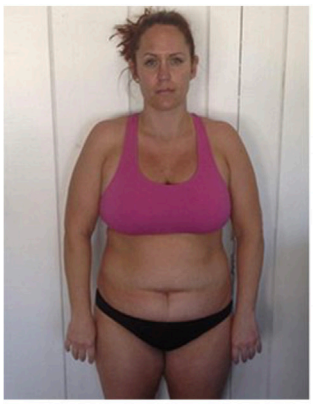
Cindy, 50, lost 70 lbs

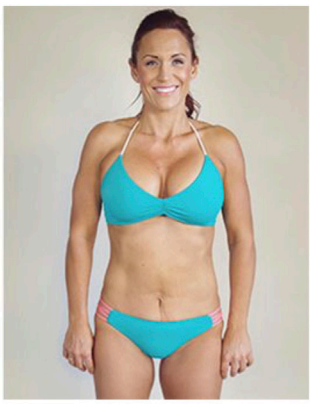
"I was a chronic yo-yo dieter always looking for an answer. Precision Nutrition is the first and only plan to ever help me in 40 years of dieting life. I am off all medicine and no longer have to use my CPAP machine. Precision Nutrition helped me win back my health."



Jill, 25, Lost 55 lbs

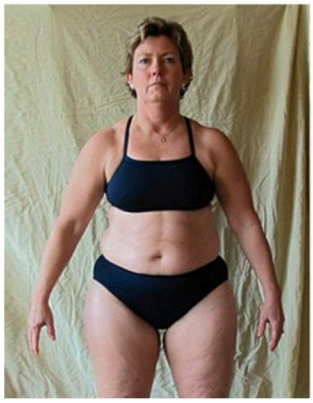
"I used to be an emotional eater. I never expected to become a person who could release my stress through exercise. I don't regret one day of this last year. It was exactly what I needed to get myself back on my feet and feel fulfilled again. Not just because I lost weight. But because I now have the confidence to feel like I'm worth it."

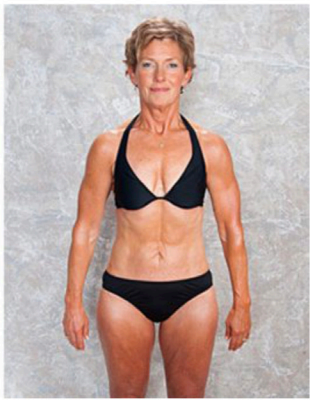




Jodie, 34, lost 51 lbs

"I didn't use to take time to appreciate my body, and the last 15 years my weight has been up and down. I knew when I started Precision Nutrition that it would be the last thing I tried. I feel like I'm at my best right now—it was a year of fun, excitement, change, and triumph."





Laurie, 56, lost 51 lbs

"I love that I can wear a two-piece swimsuit. I love eating right and not wanting to kick myself for overeating unhealthy food. I love that I'm buying size 6 instead of 14. And I especially love running into people I haven't seen in a while and hearing 'Wow! You look great! And so much younger!'"

At one point, many of these women felt like you do right now. But they discovered...

The kind of change you want is possible.

No matter where you're starting.

No matter how you're feeling right now.

No matter how much stuff is on your plate.

It's *possible*.

Here's what women are often wishing for when they start working with us, and some ways you can get started right now.

Wish #1:
"Help me have a more positive relationship with food."

At some point in their lives, many women struggle with overeating and emotional eating. We love our wine, chocolate, sugar, or whatever our "I-deserve-this" or "I-need-a-freaking-break" treats are... but they don't always love us back.

Once the "food rush" wears off, we're left with the very same stress and problems we started with — plus now we feel guilty, ashamed, and maybe even out of control.

The cycle often looks like this.

- Feel stressed, anxious, upset, etc.
- Overeat.
- Feel guilty and ashamed for overeating.
- Feel more stressed, anxious, upset, etc.
- Vow to "do better".
- White-knuckle a new diet, and/or make rigid "rules".
- Feel stressed, anxious, upset, etc.
- Overeat.
- Repeat the cycle.

(Believe me, I've been there.)

Here's a simple tool you can start using right away.

We call this exercise "Break the Chain".

You simply notice, observe, and record what happened leading up to any food cravings, emotional eating, overeating, and/or any other times that feel "out of control" with food and eating.

Because here's a secret:

Those feelings and behaviors didn't come out of nowhere. They aren't random. Something led to them.

Now you get to be a detective and figure out all the links in the chain.

1. Start with any recent food or eating-related episode that troubled you.

(For instance, eating too much, eating foods you didn't want, feeling out of control, etc.).

2. Write down all the stuff that was happening around you just before that episode happened.

For instance:

- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- What were you thinking?
- What were you feeling?
- Who was with you?

3. Now see if you can go back even further.

Maybe a few hours. Once again:

- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- What were you thinking?
- What were you feeling?
- Who was with you?

Try to capture as much detail as possible.

4. Now look at your data. Are there any patterns?

If you don't see any connections right away, no worries.

Try this exercise a few times, and then start looking for links between what was happening in the days or hours before you had a serious food craving or emotional eating episode.

5. If and when you find patterns, be curious about them.

Don't worry about fixing them right away. Just notice them.

"Hm, that's interesting. Every time my mom calls me, afterwards I want to hit the chocolate."

"You know, I actually feel fine most of the month, but the week before my period hits — watch out."

"It's been a long, stressful week at work. Give me that wine before I stab someone."

6. You might notice solutions right away.

"OK, I'm going to go for a workout after I talk to mom, to get some of that energy out."

"I'm going to mark my PMS days on the calendar so I know about them in advance."

"I'm going to walk home on Fridays, to unwind."

Or you might not notice solutions. You might feel stuck at step #5, noticing the patterns but not sure how to change.

Either way, that's OK.

The important thing is: *Now you're aware of what's happening.*

Wish #2: "Help me be consistent with my diet, exercise, or healthy lifestyle habits."

If you're like most women, you've probably tried at least some stuff to get and stay in shape.

Here's what most women have tried before getting results with us:

- Weight Watchers
- MyFitnessPal and other calorie counters
- Jenny Craig and Curves
- Crossfit and other group workouts
- Popular diets like Paleo, juice fasts, cleanses, and low-carb
- Workout books and magazine articles

Of course, these aren't "bad" options. They end up working for some people.

But most folks tell us they have a hard time staying consistent. They mean well, and work hard, but struggle to stay on track.

In part, this is because other plans don't account for your life.

They don't offer meaningful, step-by-step change that you can actually do in your real life. You know, the real life with a job and kids and a commute and going to school and all that stuff. The one that actual human people have.

And, in part, most other plans don't offer support, care, and accountability like coaching does.

Solution #1: Make yourself accountable to a program... that really works.

Ideally, you want a program that:

- Focuses on all the things that are *right* with you, and all the strengths and skills you *already* have.
- Gives you proven solutions that start to work *right now.*
- Has been tested with lots of people (so you know it actually works).
- You can customize to *your* lifestyle (so you can stay consistent and do it even when you're busy).
- You actually enjoy doing (and isn't just another chore).
- Makes you feel positive, hopeful, and supported all the way through.
- Lasts. Like, for life.
- Gives you a big goal to shoot for, if you want.

On that last point, some folks like big goals.

That's why we give away $250,000 every year in the Precision Nutrition Coaching Program.

Winning the money isn't the point. It's just something extra to push for. Something to look forward to. (That is, if you're a goal kinda person. If you're not, that's cool too.)

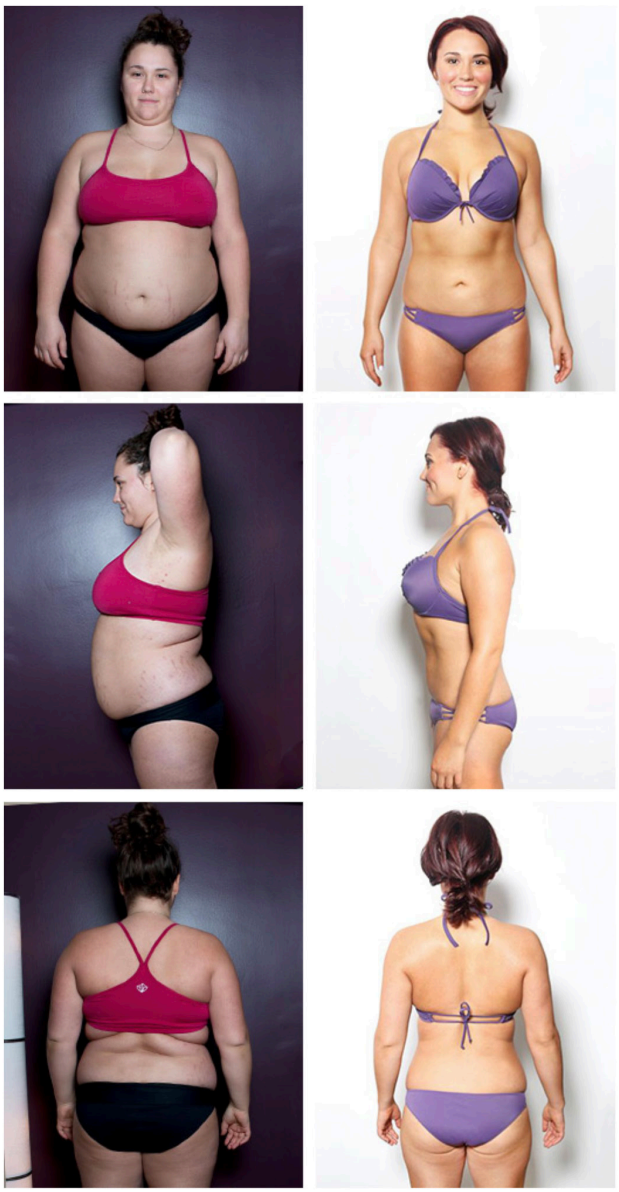
Jill lost 55 pounds in Precision Nutrition Coaching; we surprised her with $25,000.

So how do you know if a certain program will help keep you accountable?

After 15+ years in the fitness industry, and over 100,000 clients, here's what we've found works best:

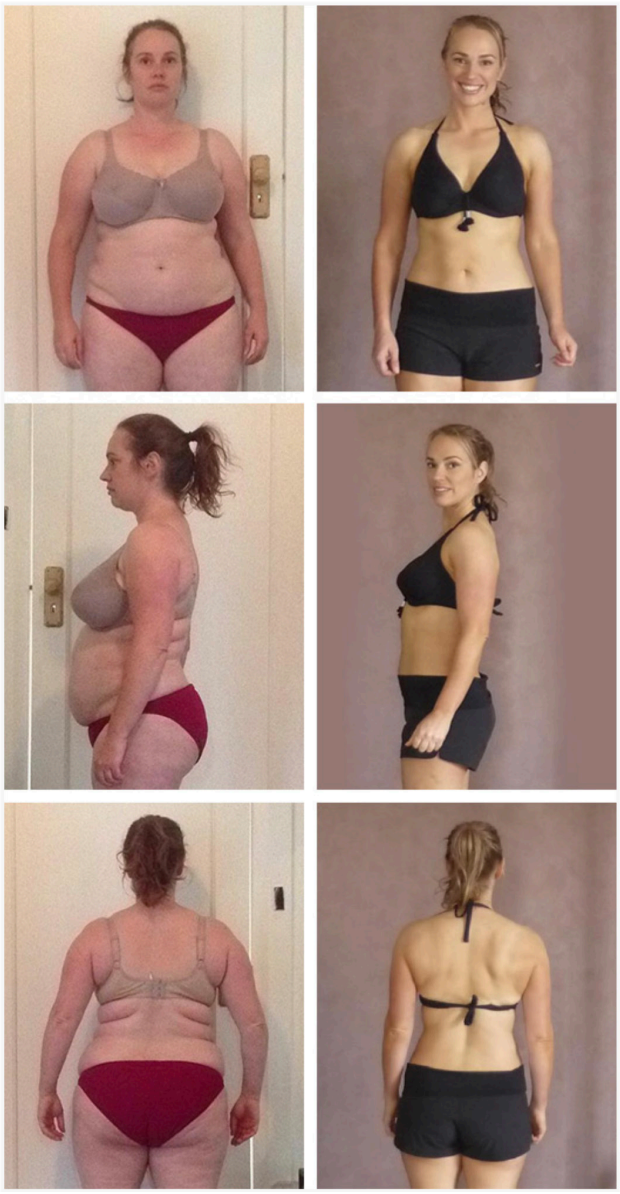
- **Having a plan that provides both structure *and* flexibility.**
- **The ability to customize the plan based on your skill levels, goals, and how much time you have available.**
- **Getting a daily reminder to practice whichever nutrition, exercise, or lifestyle habit you're currently working on.**
- **Measuring your progress at regular intervals.**

That's what helped our clients achieve results like this:



Jill: Age 25, lost 55 pounds.

Jenn: Age 44, lost 49 pounds.



Esther: Age 39, lost 40 pounds.

Cindy: Age 50, lost 70 pounds.

Solution #2:
Make yourself accountable to a person... who really cares.

As we like to say here at Precision Nutrition, nothing worth doing can be done alone.

Social support — whether that's a friend, a workout partner, your spouse, your kid, your dog, a co-worker who walks with you at lunch, a personal trainer at your local gym, whatever — is crucial.

Don't try to do this all alone.

Independence is great, but for a project like this, you need a team and a tribe of like-minded people helping and supporting you.

Social support plus accountability and lots of caring coaching is our specialty.

We're in this business because we want to help you feel, look, and perform better... whatever body or goals you have.

If you want to join our next nutrition coaching program, we'd love to help you.

If that's not a great fit for you, no problem. Just find one or more people who can support you, guide you, help you, and maybe give you the occasional loving boot in the butt when you need it.

The important thing is that you make yourself accountable to somebody and get the help you need. You have a lot on your plate already; why not let someone else show you the way?

STRESSED AND OUT OF SHAPE:

How to solve the two biggest health and fitness problems many guys face.

By John Berardi, Ph.D.

Work stressing you out? Life in general?
Having trouble staying consistent with your exercise and nutrition plan?
If so, this article is for you.

Why do most guys tend to get weaker, fatter, and less healthy when they get into their 30's, 40's, and 50's? Chalk it up to increased stress, increased responsibilities and decreased time and energy.

We know we need to eat better. We know we need to take better care of ourselves. But most guys simply have a hard time staying consistent with their nutrition and exercise plans.

After working with thousands of guys in our Precision Nutrition Coaching Program, we've seen it all—and we know there's a solution.

You *can* take control of your own health and fitness. You can reverse the downward spiral of stress, and start building a healthy body you can be proud of.

And you can do it all in an hour or two per week.

Seriously.

In this article, you'll learn:

- **the two biggest fitness-related problems that hold men back from getting and staying in shape, and**
- **how to overcome these obstacles to get the body — and life — you want.**

Problem #1: Your life is busier than it's ever been

Some interesting things start to happen as we exit our 20's and enter our 30's, 40's, and 50's:

- We tend to get less sleep and wake up tired and sore.
- Our sex hormones peak… and then start their slow decline.
- Our crackling ankles, knees, and wrists remind us that we're getting older.
- We tend to snack and overeat more often, especially in the evenings.
- We do less binge drinking, but more *consistent* drinking. Polishing off a bottle of wine or drinking a few beers each night becomes an ordinary routine.

Of course it's not all negative. Lots of positive things start happening too:

- If we're lucky, we get a good career that's challenging and rewarding.
- We make more money than when we were younger.
- We develop long-lasting relationships with people we love.
- We start building and nurturing a family.
- We become (presumably) smarter and more experienced.

While every guy's life experience is different, there are a few things that remain consistent no matter who you are. For most guys, getting older usually means:

- increased responsibilities at home
- increased stress from work
- less time to take care of themselves

This is how we end up with a gym membership we rarely use, a healthy cookbook we rarely open, and a body we're not particularly proud of.

Sure, we want to drop some fat and look more muscular and fit... but we just don't have the time or energy. Someday, we tell ourselves, we're finally going to get our ass in gear.

The only problem? "Someday" keeps getting postponed.

According to our research, lots of guys are so stressed out with work and family obligations, that they don't feel like they have the time or energy to "really commit" to a nutrition or exercise plan.

But what if you didn't have to dedicate a huge portion of your life to getting in shape?

What most guys do when they feel busy and stressed:

- Let their busy schedule overtake their health.
- Set huge fitness goals they don't have a miracle of hitting.
- Continue to add body fat and beat themselves up for not making a change.

What you can do to be successful:

- Embrace exercise minimalism.
- Identify the biggest gap in your nutrition and work on fixing it (while ignoring everything else).

Embrace exercise minimalism.

You don't have to spend hours in the gym to get in better shape.

That's why in the Precision Nutrition Coaching program, we give our clients four workout options:

- Full workout
- At-home workout (minimal equipment)
- Quick workout (don't have much time)
- Do your own workout

We also give them the ability to modify their workouts, with more difficult or less difficult exercises, depending on how they're feeling that day. That way they're always doing *something* rather than *nothing*. (Because let's face it: the gym is the first thing to go when we get busy and stressed at work.)

So how do you embrace exercise minimalism on your own?

If you're looking for something to try this week, here's a plan I wrote for a good friend of mine who was struggling to find time to exercise. It's a simple, strategic way for busy guys to get their weekly exercise in without stressing out about missing the gym.

And the whole thing takes *less than an hour per week*.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
15 minutes	**6 minutes**	**15 minutes**	**15 minutes**
Pushups x 10 reps	2 minute walk	Pushups x 10 reps	Pedal 3 miles on an Airdyne / other exercise bike
Inverted rows x 10 reps	15 second sprint on the treadmill at 8 mph & 10% incline	Reverse crunches x 10 reps	Maintain steady breathing through your nose
Kettlebell swings x 10 reps	Rest 15 seconds (straddling treadmill)	Goblet squats with dumbbell x 10 reps	
Rest 1 minute	Repeat 5x	Rest 1 minute	
Repeat 5x	2 minute walk	Repeat 5x	

To make continual progress, it's important to do one thing to make each workout more challenging every time you do it.

For strength workouts, this means doing additional repetitions or reducing the rest time between rounds. For the sprinting workout, this means increasing the incline, the speed, or the number of repeated sprints. And for the 3-mile bike ride you can try to do it faster than the time before, or you can go a little longer (like 3.1 miles).
It doesn't matter what you choose, as long as you do one thing more than the last time.

Identify the biggest gap in your nutrition and work on fixing it (while ignoring everything else).

According to our research, most guys we've polled know how important nutrition is for looking and feeling better. And they know they need to follow some sort of nutrition plan. However, they don't know where to start. (Or they start a new diet and try to change everything at once, which usually fails.)

Instead of trying to change everything about the way you eat right now—which will just add to your stress levels—we encourage you to follow the advice we give to our clients:

Pick one thing about the way you eat—the thing you think will make the biggest improvement to your nutrition—and focus on it exclusively for a couple of weeks.

Once you've been consistent for 14-21 days, *then* **you can pick another thing to try. The goal is to practice simple, strategic actions that build over time.**

So how do you know what thing to pick? Easy. Just ask yourself this question:

"What's the one thing I could do right now to feel better about my nutrition?"

Chances are you have a good idea on what you need to do. Here's a short list of what some of our clients have focused on:

Goal: Drink less beer and alcohol.

Action: Instead of drinking two beers every night, have one beer.

Goal: Eat less junk food / fast food.

Action: Instead of stopping in for a burger or taco for lunch, go to a grocery store and get a pre-made salad with chicken on it.

Goal: Reduce carbohydrates.

Action: Instead of ordering fries at dinner, get a salad. Instead of having a breakfast sandwich, order scrambled eggs.

The idea here is to pick the one nutrition practice that will make the biggest impact on your body and health *right now.*

If you need help deciding what that is—or if you just want to follow a proven nutrition plan—well, that's what we do best. A good first step would be to learn more about Precision Nutrition Coaching.

Problem #2:
You know what to do... but you're just not consistent.

This is the motherlode of all problems. According to our research, roughly 65 percent of guys (and likely a lot more) report that they struggle with staying consistent.

And it's not like they're complete exercise beginners. Here's what most guys have tried before getting results with us:

- P90X, Insanity, and other workout DVDs
- CrossFit and other group workouts
- Fitbit, Apple Watch and other wearable fitness technology
- Popular diets like intermittent fasting, paleo, and low-carb
- Workout books and magazine articles

Of course, these aren't "bad" options. They end up working for some people. But eventually most of these methods and tools begin to break down and fail over time.

Why is that?

It's because they're *surface solutions*. They help solve a surface-level problem.

- Don't have a gym to train at? Now you do.
- Want to track how many calories you eat? Here's an app.
- Want to know how many steps you're taking? Wear this bracelet thing.

The only problem with surface-level solutions? They only work for a little while.

They don't account for the ups and downs of everyday life. They don't adapt to your life. And because of that, they don't help you stay consistent.

What most guys do when they fail to be consistent.

- Pick another surface solution to follow.

What you can do to be successful:

- Make yourself accountable to a program.
- Make yourself accountable to a person.

Make yourself accountable to a program.

Ideally, you want a program that covers a few bases:

- It's been tested with lots of people (so you know it actually works).
- It's customizable to your lifestyle (so you can stay consistent and do it even when you're busy).
- It's something you actually enjoy doing (who's going to exercise if it's not fun?).
- There's something big and positive to shoot for (a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow).

The first three are incredibly important; they're the cornerstone of a solid exercise and nutrition program. But the fourth one—having something big and positive to shoot for—is often overlooked.

In fact, most programs do the opposite: They make you feel guilty and bad for "slacking" or for not being a paragon of health and fitness. But we don't need any more negativity in our lives, and we're sure you don't either.

That's why we give away $250,000 every year in the Precision Nutrition Coaching program. It's just something extra to push for, something to look forward to, something to inspire a little internal competition.

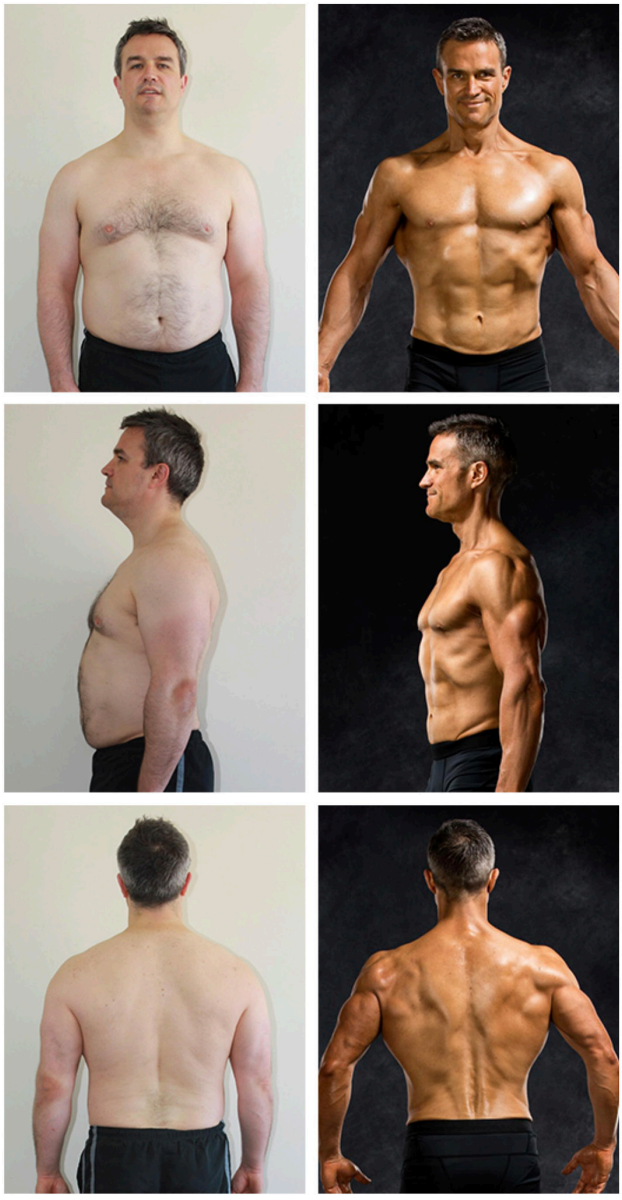
Adam lost 40 pounds in Precision Nutrition Coaching; we surprised him with $25,000.

So how do you know if a certain program will help keep you accountable?

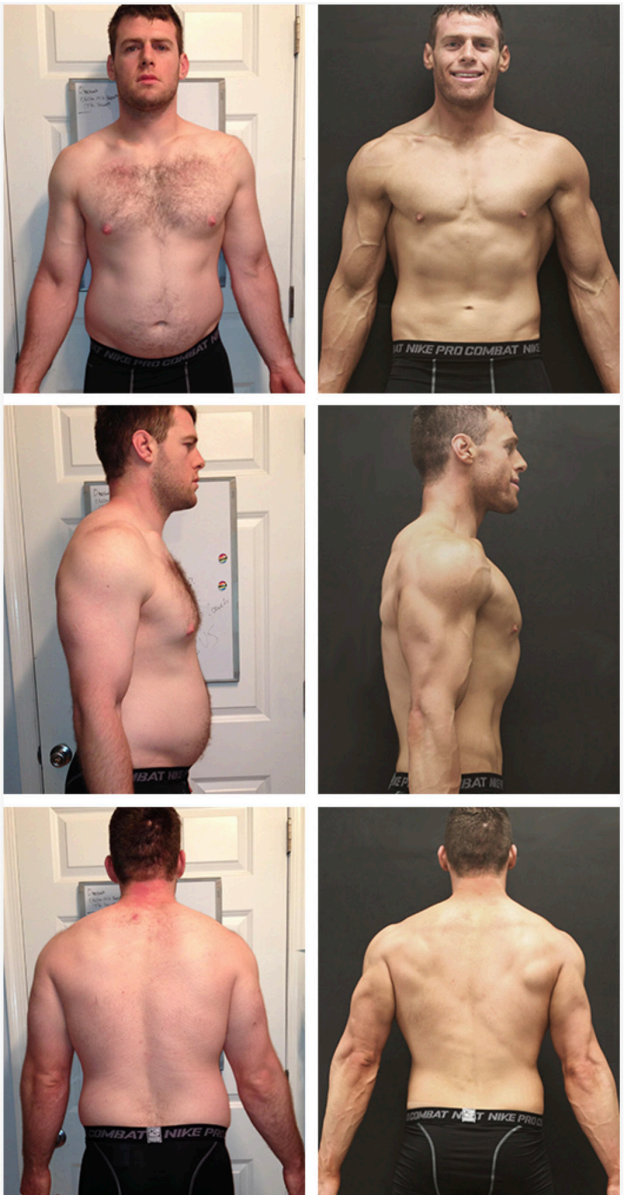
After 15+ years in the fitness industry, we've determined that the following four things are of the utmost importance:

- You need a way to measure your progress and track it on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.
- You need to follow a structured plan, but still have room to move at your own speed when needed.
- You need a daily reminder to practice whichever nutrition, exercise, or lifestyle habit you're currently working on.
- You need it to be customizable to your skill levels, goals, and how much time you have available.

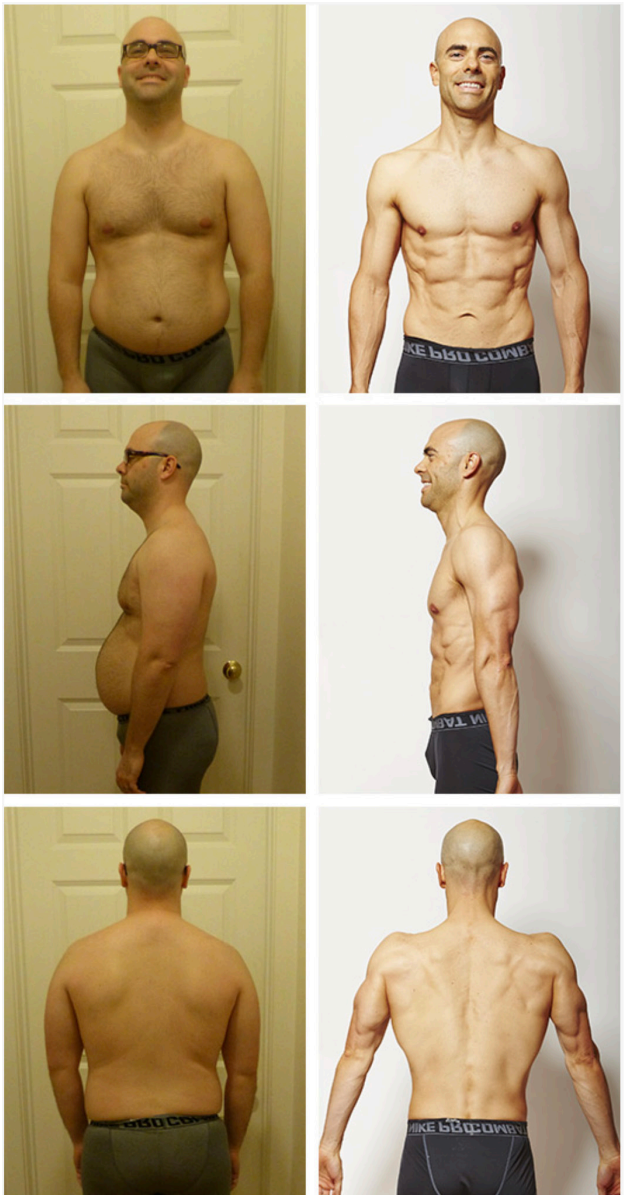
That's what helped our clients achieve results like this:



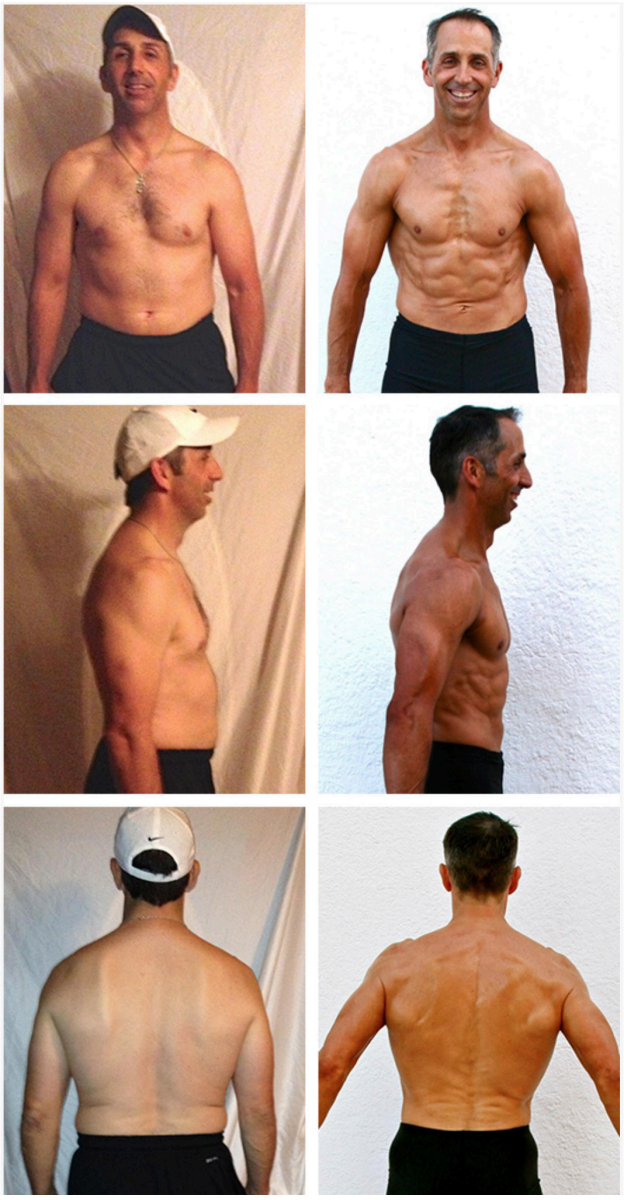
Andrew: Age 43, lost 51 pounds.



Adam: Age 28, lost 40 pounds.



Aaron: Age 37, lost 50 pounds.



Colin: Age 45, lost 24 pounds.

Make yourself accountable to a person.

This tip isn't for everyone but it can often make the difference between consistently getting great results or falling off the wagon.

Personal accountability is more important than personal motivation for one simple reason: no one *always* feels motivated to go to the gym or make healthy eating choices.

But if we have someone who's checking up on us to see how things are going, we'll likely do better because a) we don't want to disappoint the person who's helping us and b) we don't want to look or feel lazy.

If we're accountable to another person, we'll actually do the workouts and eat the food we need to look and feel great. And we'll do it over and over again, even when the going gets tough.

That's why the most successful guys become accountable to another person. It could be a friend or workout partner. It could be your spouse. It could be a local personal trainer or fitness expert.

Or if you want to join our next coaching program, we can help you too.

The important thing is that you make yourself accountable to *somebody*.

Want help becoming the healthiest, fittest, strongest version of you?

Most people know that regular movement, eating well, sleep, and stress management are important for looking and feeling better.

Yet they need help applying that knowledge in the context of their busy, sometimes stressful lives.

That's why we work closely with Precision Nutrition Coaching clients to help them lose fat, get stronger, and improve their health… no matter what challenges they're dealing with.

It's also why we work with health and fitness professionals (through our Level 1 and Level 2 Certification programs) to teach them how to coach their own clients through the same challenges.

For more information on Precision Nutrition Coaching: http://get.pn/coaching