

FIT FOR LIFE

BUILD YOUR PERSONAL BLUEPRINT
TO LIFELONG, OPTIMAL FITNESS
AND HEALTH

DANIEL FREEMAN

Fit for Life

**Build Your Personal
Blueprint to Lifelong,
Optimal Fitness and Health**

**By Daniel
Freeman**

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Disclaimer: The author respects that everyone's circumstances are different and unique. This book is not medical advice and gives only general information. Nothing in this book should be considered medical advice.

Before starting any diet or exercise change, it is advisable to see a medical professional.

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Preface

I was sitting on my couch reading a book on a Sunday afternoon. As I sat there, I noticed my heart beating fast. It was beating harder and faster than normal that was for sure, but I was sitting down comfortably reading. This continued for the rest of the day and I felt throughout the whole time nervous, anxious and jittery. I had a large coffee at lunch which may have caused it, but more than likely it was the stress I had put myself under and not managed as effectively as I should (even though I coach others to do the exact same everyday!).

I was working out probably too intensely, up to 20 hours a week. I was at times not sleeping more than 5-6 hours a night. I was running a business that took 60-80 hours a week to run. I was writing this book. I was dedicated to both of the fire brigades I was a part of and had regular training days, running training days and incidents to attend. I was reading a large book or two each week. I was trying to support friends and family with any help they needed. I was travelling place to place to fit in all the things I had to get done each week and every single day weekday or weekend was a 5am-9pm day mostly filled with something!

All in all, I was pushing my body as hard as a body could be pushed. I had done this for the past 5 years with no more than a few weeks of time off in the period. Can the human body do it? Yes, but it is not optimal. I had developed and implemented ways to deal with stress in my life and for the most part I was keeping on top of it. My diet contained everything I needed, my exercise whilst stressful on the body was also a relaxing time for me.

My mental health had always been a problem and one that I refused and hated to accept. For a man, like many men, the acceptance of any form of 'weakness' was and is still completely

unacceptable. I knew I was stressed for a long time but rarely did I have many physical symptoms. This Sunday afternoon though it struck me that I needed to start taking it as seriously as my food, exercise and sleep.

It also struck me that not having those aspects of my life in place I cannot imagine how poor my physical health would be! If I had been eating junk food all day, drinking heavily, not exercising and so on I imagine the stress would have destroyed me completely and I simply wouldn't have been able to keep up that pace.

I continue to do all the things I mention but with an increased emphasis on listening to the signs of stress and fatigue and managing my body so that it does not implode. This book is an illustration of this big problem in the modern health and fitness landscape. Just as I mention in this book about 'no good or bad foods, only good or bad diets' the same goes for overall health and fitness.

You need to address health and fitness with a holistic approach. I was perfectly healthy physically. I was eating well and exercising and sleeping, yet my mental health was suffering. For some, the opposite may be true. They may have a handle on the mental side of things yet they are suffering physically. This book is written to bring fitness into the forefront of overall health and well-being, not simply exercising!

What do you think when you hear the word fitness? For some it is happiness, enjoyment and fulfillment. For others it is anger, resentment and a lifetime of poor interactions with what has become an enormous industry. Whatever your personal thoughts the industry of fitness is only growing and becoming more influential.

This book is my contribution to do what I can to steer the ship in what I consider the best direction possible. It is not the be all and

end all of nutrition, exercise or science around fitness. It is a guide to the fundamental principles needed to truly change your health and fitness for the better. There are people out there who know far more than me about the intricacies of protein synthesis, the different insertion lengths of bicep muscles or the VO2 Max readings of athletes. It is not intended to be a scientific reference book.

This book is designed to guide you towards your fitness and become the best you can be, not to rigidly box you into one principle. Never before has there been such an enormous industry around this idea of 'fitness'. Gyms are on every corner. Gyms have been around since the ancient days of Rome. The idea of physical fitness is not new by any means and this resurgence in physical fitness is not a surprise.

What is surprising though is how this is happening at a time when the world, taken overall, is at its most unhealthy. Obesity rates are still increasing in a lot of countries. The level of ability of our bodies is decreasing. We have been lucky. This rise in poor health has been accompanied by an ever faster rise in technology, making our lives easier and safer. The state of our health feels good because so many public health measures have been improved. It is rare for a child or the mother to die during pregnancy or labour, unlike even 100 years ago where this was a major cause of death.

Infectious diseases, once the literal plague of mankind, have almost vanished after decades of work by the medical industry, especially in the developed world. Now the idea of dying from a disease is almost unheard of. Instead this has been replaced by a long, slow, painful decline in health and an increase in morbidity.

We have added years to our lives, but far too often not added a lot of life to our years. Every day in my job I see first hand the

pain and suffering that is caused by a neglect of health and fitness in the body. The emotional toll it causes, the physical pain that is felt each day, the financial pain of having to pay for surgery after surgery and pill packet after pill packet.

The only thing that stands before this bulldozer of poor health is the fitness industry. As I will outline in a bit more detail in a later chapter, the medical industry is unable to impact our fitness and health the way we think and hope that it can (maybe someday it will!). This leaves most fitness issues to the fate of the fitness industry and the ‘personal trainers’ that inhabit it.

I am one of them. Part of the several hundred thousand people in the world who work in the profession called ‘Personal Training’. I have trained and helped roughly 500 people to improve their lives directly through several gyms I have owned through the methods outlined in this book. I have seen and witnessed some incredible transformations in the last few years. Throughout the book, you will read about some of these stories in detail and read about the incredible improvement in quality of life these individuals have attained through their commitment to the methods I have taught them.

I was hesitant to write yet another book on health and fitness. I did not want to merely clog up the shelves with another book filled with information that would prove all but useless to most of its readers. As you read this book, keep in mind that the foundations of what I am going to teach you only work if they are applied! It is great to know about all these issues but the most important section in the book is the final section as this is the one that will make sure you ACT!

In the first part of this book I will be taking you through a brief overview of the problem we are facing, not just as individuals but as a culture. The issues we face with health and fitness are a true public health crisis. I will also cover what my definition of

true fitness is. I will then look at the current approach that is being taken to obesity, weight loss and the whole fitness world. I will outline what the current approach is trying to do and why it continues to fail for so many people. To summarise, I will outline the foundations of the methodology I use with my clients and the reasons why this approach works so well before moving into Part Two of the book.

In Part Two, you will get an insight into each of the different areas of fitness and health that need to be addressed in your life to make true change in the long term and to achieve what I define as fitness. In each of these cases, you will be given actionable ways to improve these areas. Everybody is different, and you will find that you will differ from other people in what you struggle with the most. This is normal and identifying your weaknesses is the best way to start.

In Part Three I will take you through putting all of this methodology together into a solid plan of attack. I want you to take this book and use it to make a real impact in your life or the life of someone you love. If you have been struggling with your fitness and health for too long, then this section is a crucial part of changing your situation. You will be asked some hard questions and given some hard truths, but the outcome will be a clear, decisive plan of action to turn your fitness dreams into a reality!

I look forward to taking you on this journey through how we got to where we are and what we can do to change it. The fitness industry is only as good as the people in it. So, I implore those who have a true passion in this area to work on their own health and fitness and to do what they can to improve that of the culture around them. To make the real impact that the world needs it will take more than just one person!

**Part One –
How We Got
Here**

Chapter 1: Introduction

The story of fitness and physical health is really the story of humanity. To understand how we are in the position we are in means we must go back a long way. By looking at where and how the human body originated we can better understand why we struggle with these problems today and how to approach them. You may have heard part of this story. If not, it is a crucial part of understanding why you still struggle with weight today!

Where do we begin the story of the human body? We can go quite a long way back to the beginning of humanity. Hominids of varying types have been around for a long time. In fact, human-like animals have been in existence for millions of years. The modern homo-sapiens has been around for several hundred thousand years.

In the last several hundred thousand years, the genetic makeup of the homo sapiens has changed, but only slightly. Fundamentally we are still genetically very similar to the first humans that lived all those generations ago.

Roughly 10,000 years ago something far more drastic changed. Our environment. Before the advent of civilization and agriculture, humans were hunter gatherers. In some places in the world we still have existing hunter gatherer tribes and seeing the health of these tribes today is a great insight into the differences modern humans face.

For the most part though, modern humans have thoroughly embraced mass agriculture. This has given humans ‘progress’ because instead of having almost everybody involved in food production, we can have 2% of the population make all the food while the other 98% focus on other pursuits.

This has brought the technological revolution and freed humans from toiling day and night in the fields to get food. Food for most of us has become almost a non-thought. Rarely do we need to think about how the food is produced as it is overflowing in the supermarkets and presented to us everywhere we go!

Throughout these many thousands of years, the human body at its core has not changed. We still have the same drives, the same base physiology and same nutritional needs as we did back then. We are ancient creatures living in a modern age.

Almost all the physical maladies that plague modern humans, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and the endless list of chronic health problems all come back to one issue: abundance. Humans are animals that evolved in scarcity and now live in abundance. This fundamental problem can be found at the root of most of our issues with food.

When we are faced with a seemingly endless supply of food our natural mechanisms cannot stop us! Add in the modern environmental influences, like lack of sleep from working too much and too much stress at work, and our ability to maintain a healthy body declines rapidly. Our new 'normal' is a body struggling to adapt to an environment that has changed so drastically in such a short time frame that our bodies have not kept up!

It is not just the sheer amount of food that has changed but also the type of food. Historically we were far closer to the original source of food. This isn't to say that a 'natural' food is inherently 'better' than a modern food, but in most cases, this is true. This is because a natural food tends to be more self-limiting. It is lower in energy, higher in nutrients and more satisfying than a highly processed food item today.

Our hunter gatherer genetics are used to feast and famine. When food is scarce, the logical thing to do is gather as much as you

can when it IS available as you may never have that food source again! When eating we are rewarded with dopamine that makes us feel good. Our brain and bodies want us to gorge and make the most of the available food.

Now this is a perfectly logical strategy in a scarce environment but not in a modern environment where we can access highly processed food calories 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That is a recipe for disaster and the health problems that you see around you! There has never been a time of such sheer abundance in food energy for such a large percentage of the population.

Simultaneously, we required less and less physical movement to live our daily lives. Many of my office worker clients were doing almost no movement throughout the week. They woke up, got into the car, drove to work and then sat at a desk all day. They got home, sat on the couch and watched TV. The whole eay of life required almost no physical exertion!

When we repeat this pattern for years, or even decades, the inevitable result is obesity and health problems. It takes a concerted effort to ensure these things do not happen. We cannot leave it to chance and assume our bodies will make the best choice for us. Our natural drives once primed us for survival. Now, faced with our modern environment, these same drives are often the ones killing us!

So, what exactly is the problem with not caring about our fitness? In the next chapter I will delve into the reasons why we don't care that much about fitness, but for now we will look at what the physical and mental effects are.

Physically we are living longer lives, but length of life gives little indication of QUALITY of life. When clients come to me I am concerned more about their quality of life than anything else initially. Years ago I had a client in his early 90's named Grant. Grant had come to me asking to build some strength and stamina

so that he could continue to live his life as he had for decades before. His quality of life had been reduced due to a lack of physical exercise which he used to participate in. After a few months of training he was feeling better than he had in decades!

So, when you look around and think about your own life what physical issues are you suffering with? Do you have chronic health problems that are a constant irritation to your life? Do you have a constant sore knee, a sore back, a headache? Feel tired, out of energy, stressed, sleep deprived? The daily quality of life you are living is most likely being reduced by a lack of focus on your fitness and health!

The mental aspect of fitness is the biggest one that is overlooked. Many people still consider there to be a mind-body dichotomy, as if one can thrive without the other. The reality is a health mind can ONLY exist with the body to support it. Go ahead and try and talk to somebody without a heartbeat and vice versa!

A healthy brain needs a healthy body. With the added stresses of modern life, having a healthy body can be the difference between somebody coping with their stress and succumbing to it. In my gym I train many guys with stressful corporate roles and the efforts they put into training are immediately noticed by their families and colleagues.

They feel better, are more positive, and have less down times due to a heavy focus on keeping their body in top shape. The growing mental illness rates can be partially attributed to a lack of effort in keeping ourselves in good physical fitness. I will dedicate a chapter later in this book to mental health and its interrelation with physical health.

The good news is that we can successfully overcome all these problems. If you have achieved anything in life then you have the skills necessary to become healthier and achieve your fitness goals. The same skills required to achieve anything, when placed

on the goal of fitness and health, will get you the results you are looking for.

In my gym I train many guys who have achieved success in their careers. Once they apply towards their fitness the same mindset and drive they have always applied to their careers, the pieces all fall into place!

One great example is Tushar. Tushar came to me almost a year ago wanting to get his fitness on track, lose a little bit of weight and feel better overall. A dentist for over 10 years and with 4 young children you can safely say he was busier than most. He had committed a lot to get to the position he is in now and those same skills served him well when deciding to come and train with me.

The same dedication, persistence, discipline and ability to delay gratification that would have taken him through the hard years of Dental study, raising 4 children and moving from another country to Australia, were applied to his efforts in the gym. As a result, he is now fitter than he has ever been. Think about what you have achieved in the past. Those same skills and methods you used then can be applied in the exact same way to the process of getting fitter and healthier.

This first section of the book is dedicated mainly to working through the many mental blocks that stop us from achieving the fitness that we want. You can have all the knowledge in the world about how to get fit and healthy, but if you can't get to the bottom of your mental blocks then you will be unlikely to succeed.

As you read through the following chapters take note of whether any of these things trigger you. Maybe you recognize yourself or somebody you know in them. Maybe you get a flash of ah ha! when reading through these common mental blocks.

Understanding your brain is the first step in understanding and overcoming the challenges you will face with your body.

Chapter 2: Why don't we care enough?

How much do you care about fitness? Do you care about your health? It is much easier to care about something NOW than it is about a possibility in 10 years, or even a year away. So, if I tell you that your bad habit will make you die in 10 years it is hard to really see so far away in your mind and it is common to keep going with the bad habit until such point as it makes your CURRENT reality a problem!

This is another one of those human brain problems. Again, history plays a role here. Historically it made less sense to worry about 5 years away if you needed to make a decision that would be the difference between eating tonight or not eating tonight. The immediate is right in our hands, right NOW and its value in our mind is much higher. Time is very subjective; 5 minutes right now is not the same as 5 minutes in a distance future.

So, what does this mean when you are setting goals and getting into shape? Well we do have a logical brain and it is helpful along the way to know where we are headed on this fitness journey. We still want to have a clear vision of where we are headed. But we don't want to forget about the shorter term. When making a good plan we will set out a year ahead but also look at checkpoints along the way to ensure we are on the right track.

A shorter-term benefit could be simply the nice feeling you get from a workout. It could be the benefit of not smelling like smoke when quitting smoking. It could be the nice feeling of enjoyment after eating a healthy home-cooked meal.

The logical brain can be accessed to see the logical outcome of poor daily choices played out over an extended period of time. What will your life look like in a year's time, or 5 years' time if you keep doing things exactly the same way you do today? What about in 20 years?

If you keep smoking a pack a day the chances are you will be struggling to breathe in the future. If you are eating heavily processed food every day and never moving your body then you are likely to be struggling with your weight and health in the future.

We don't care enough about our fitness and health because we don't take into account the reality of where the choices we make are leading us and we don't focus enough on the present benefits it will give us. We always think WE will be the exception to the rule.

"I knew a guy who smoked until he was 90". This doesn't mean you will be able to. If research finds 90% of people will have issues with something then it is blind luck to think you will be in the 10% that won't!

We don't care enough because it allows us to put off action until another day. Tomorrow becomes next week, becomes next month and before you know it you are 40! (I have had so many clients over 40 say something almost identical to this). Life is short, and time comes up quickly!

To make fitness a reality you must accept that it has to happen RIGHT NOW! This means today you start making the healthy choices. This means when you put down this book for a reading break you are making the healthy choice. Every time you delay you are making it more likely that it will never happen!

Chapter 3: The obesogenic environment

One of the most telling words in the modern lexicon is the word 'obesogenic'. This essentially means that the environment around us is conducive to us becoming obese. Is this even a surprise if you take an honest look around? If the average person only needs 2000 calories a day of food to survive and the country is producing enough for 3000 a day, then there is a very high chance that a lot of people will gain weight!

When I worked in an office I would sit down to eat the lunch I brought into work and then I would be called into the break room to take part in a birthday celebration. As I came in on this often more-than-weekly occasion I would see an enormous cake, soft drink, biscuits and sometimes other junk food to go around. All of this was consumed rapidly before everybody went to sit back at their desks.

Perhaps 500-1000 calories, more than half the necessary daily intake for many, was consumed in a matter of minutes at one birthday celebration. Then lunch would come and snacks were brought in. Another 4 coffees a day (200 calories) each. After the junk breakfast and then a nice big dinner when returning home you could be topping 4000 calories a lot of days without even trying!

Such an abundance of food is very new. It is only in the last century that such an extreme abundance of food and especially junk food has arrived. Before that, even if you wanted to eat endlessly and had a massive appetite, it was simply impossible for most people to ever have access to enough food. Now, it is no more than a smartphone touch away!

We have an environment where being sedentary is the norm for most people. The only people who must move are those engaged in some sort of physical job. The rest can get away with a walk to the car and back and maybe to the coffee shop at lunch.

It is not just the physical environment that is the cause of this. The CULTURAL environment also has an impact. Now, culture as a term has been co-opted by many interested parties in recent decades but the reality is that it is more like the personality of a country. A lot of people say Western countries have 'less culture'. This is not necessarily true, it is not about an amount but about the distinctions between how things are done.

In Japan, and for that matter in several Asian countries, obesity is culturally frowned upon. In the West, it is MUCH more acceptable for a person to be overweight. I am not making a judgement call as to whether we should accept or not accept it, but the fact of the matter is if the people around you accept something then it becomes culturally acceptable. We reached the point long ago where the majority of people were overweight, which means it is totally NORMAL to be that way!

When both the physical situation of a country and the culture are pushing you towards obesity, you MUST work at holding back the tide. It is not a matter of simply sitting around and waiting. The western world will make you unhealthy and overweight without you having to make any effort to do so.

This idea of environmental influence is a factor that I discuss in Part Three as one of the areas to address when trying to change your fitness situation. In this section I also look at the effects of stress and sleep. Stress is high and sleep is low in the modern era. These two things are more contributing factors to the obesogenic culture that you are a part of.

One of the biggest changes over the years is the continued acceptance of mediocrity in the obesogenic culture. This is true

in several aspects of life, but it can be seen especially when it comes to the physical. It is perfectly OK to be heavily overweight, riddled with lifestyle issues and completely physical incapable. Now, there are obvious cases where this is due to unfortunate circumstances or a true medical condition.

In the clear majority of cases though? It is self-inflicted. It has become so bad due to neglect and an acceptance that mediocrity is all right. If you want to be this way, then that is fully your choice. In talking with people about these issues and within this book itself, I am talking to those who are unhappy with their current situation. To those who are happy, content and comfortable being heavily overweight and out of shape then more power to you! This is for the people who are fed up with this being their normal and want to change!

To change, you must refuse acceptance of mediocrity in yourself. You cannot allow yourself to think it is OK to be so out of shape. You must view this as an unacceptable life for you. Now, this doesn't mean you judge yourself unnecessarily. It is about having the self-awareness to know when you are doing the wrong thing and start correcting it!

We all make mistakes. I have let myself become less fit at times but each time I catch it quicker and realise it is simply excuses and laziness stopping me from moving forward. Continued self-reflection is needed to catch it quickly as you can rapidly build an impenetrable fortress of excuses and lie to yourself about why you can't get fit!

Chapter 4: What is the cost of not acting?

When people ask about gyms or healthy food, one of the first questions is what will it cost me to do this? There is indeed a cost associated with joining a gym, getting that pre-emptive checkup at the doctor, or going for the organic food. The question that often isn't asked is, what will it cost me to not pay for healthy lifestyle choices in the first place?

Several years ago, I came into the gym I owned at the time, bright and early at 6am as I had every other day. A few of the regulars came in and as we were chatting a new member arrived for her first training session. This woman had been struggling with her weight for many years and was wanting to lose the weight to reduce her chances of health issues and feel better.

In the first few minutes of her first workout she collapsed off the exercise bike she was sitting on and onto the floor. Immediately I and two other members in the gym at the time began the CPR process. I had a fellow member call the emergency services and we began CPR. 20 minutes passed before paramedics arrived and luckily due to the immediacy of treatment she made a full recovery.

Now this was traumatic for her family emotionally but also financially. At the time we obviously don't worry about medical costs in an emergency as we are treating to survive. But the full cost of this situation ended up being \$120,000 for a pace maker and all the surgeries! There is also the uncountable cost of the emotional effects on the family. What is the real cost of that junk food, of that gym membership?

The trouble with avoiding paying for things or spending money on our health is avoiding what is a cost-benefit scenario. By avoiding paying for things, you are often incurring far greater costs in the long run! The short story is you are not 'saving' any money by buying cheap food and avoiding spending money on your health.

Cost is not only about money. When cost is mentioned there is often a deeper meaning to it. The cost comes down to time and energy invested. When people ask what is the cost of getting fit and healthy, they are often also referring to how many hours they will have to exercise. How many hours will they need to cook food. How much energy will they have to put into this whole fitness and health thing.

The cost-benefit ratio scenario is the same here as it is for money. 2 hours of exercise a week will save you more than 2 hours a week in productivity gained. 2 hours of preparing meals one day a week will save you hours through the week and allow you more time to relax. Being fit and healthy will allow you to be healthier, more energized, and do more with each and every day.

Don't consider health and fitness a zero-sum game. The time, energy and money that you will spend on fitness and health efforts will add to both the quality AND quantity of your life ahead! You will never incur a greater financial, physical and emotional cost than the one that neglects your health until it is too late!

I hope you enjoyed this preview of the full book!

Book is available both in paperback here:

www.freemansfitness.com.au/fitforlife

and ebook here:

<https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B07HK1HBK6>