Mel Robbins Keypoints — Health, Fitness & Nutrition

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Episodes in this pack: 40

A Doctor’s Gut Reset: 4-Part Protocol to Stop Bloating, Boost Energy, & Feel Better Now

Guest: Dr. Rajsree Nambudripad
Date: 2026-08-31 · Duration: 1:16:43
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQXdyL8GEC4

KEYPOINTS

- **Your gut works like a garden with four systems, and symptoms show up when any one of them fails.**
  Dr. Rajsree's model: (1) irrigation, or motility, the 'cleaning waves' that move food and bacteria along; (2) pollinators, meaning stomach acid, pancreatic enzymes and bile; (3) the garden bed, the integrity of the gut lining; (4) plants and weeds, the microbiome. Her approach is to work out which system needs support rather than chase one symptom.
- **The gut affects far more than digestion.**
  She says the gut talks to the brain (her gut patients often have anxiety, brain fog or insomnia). About 70% of immune cells sit under the gut lining, and the skin mirrors the gut. She reports acne, eczema and psoriasis improving with gut healing, which are clinical observations, not guarantees.
- **Bloating has three main causes, and constipation is the first thing to rule out.**
  Her first question is about bowel movements. Going every 3–4 days means backed-up stool alone can cause bloating, and her target is every day. The other causes are poor digestion (weak 'pollinators') and bacteria in the wrong place. Lying down and unbuttoning your pants keeps everything stagnant. Even a walk or a flight of stairs gets motility going.
- **Her two starting moves for almost everyone: magnesium plus a prokinetic at bedtime, and digestive enzymes with meals.**
  She uses a blend of magnesium citrate, glycinate and malate, usually 250–500 mg at bedtime, adjusted to bowel response. The citrate acts as a gentle osmotic laxative. A prokinetic isn't a laxative. It activates the cleaning waves. Ginger is a natural one, and she uses a ginger-artichoke formula overnight. High-potency enzymes taken before or after meals help break down protein, fat and carbs.
- **IBS is a label for symptoms, not a cause.**
  IBS affects an estimated 10–15% of people. The criteria are abdominal pain or discomfort, changed bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea or both), and relief after a bowel movement. She says about 70% of IBS is actually caused by SIBO, so a diagnosis should start the investigation, not end it.
- **SIBO is diagnosed with a breath test and treated in four phases, with killing bacteria saved for last.**
  You drink lactulose, a sugar you can't absorb, then collect breath samples every 20–30 minutes for 3 hours to measure the gas bacteria produce. Her phases: (1) motility: magnesium plus the ginger-artichoke prokinetic; (2) digestion: enzymes, plus betaine and pepsin for those with low stomach acid; (3) calm inflammation with a spore probiotic containing immunoglobulins; (4) herbal antimicrobials: berberine, oregano oil and allicin from garlic. She says conventional antibiotic treatment has high failure and relapse rates. Without a prevention plan, about 50% of patients relapse within 9 months.
- **Leaky gut means gaps between the lining cells, and repairing them takes 3–6 months.**
  She demonstrated with yoga blocks as the cells (enterocytes). With gaps between them, the immune system gets confused and overreacts. Her protocol: remove alcohol, gluten, dairy and processed foods (additives, emulsifiers) while healing, then try reintroducing them. Add L-glutamine powder, an amino acid that feeds the lining cells, and dairy-free immunoglobulins (IgG), which work like colostrum without the dairy proteins.
- **There's no single best gut diet. Common triggers are individual and usually temporary.**
  Some people thrive on a high-fiber vegan diet, while others get bloated on it. Her usual suspects for people with SIBO or bloating: beans and legumes, dairy (lactose or the proteins casein and whey), whole grains like quinoa, brown rice and oatmeal, and garlic and onions. The goal is always to heal and then reintroduce these foods.
- **How and when you eat matter as much as what you eat.**
  Her five habits: space meals 4–5 hours apart with no snacking, so the cleaning waves can run; eat mindfully without devices, taking a few breaths to shift into 'rest and digest' and engage the vagus nerve; eat only when truly hungry; walk or move after meals; and limit water at meals so you don't dilute stomach acid. She saves most of her water for about 45 minutes later.
- **Most 'reflux' she sees is actually the opposite problem.**
  She says that of 10 people who report reflux, about 7 have non-acid reflux from low stomach acid. Undigested food trickles up, causing phlegm and throat-clearing after meals with no burning. True acid reflux burns in the stomach or chest. The difference matters because acid-blockers can't fix too little acid.
- **Insulin resistance can show up years before blood sugar does, so ask for a fasting insulin test.**
  She says about half of Americans are insulin resistant, and fasting glucose and A1C can look normal while fasting insulin is high. Her three levers: a diet that stabilizes blood sugar (cut simple sugars, refined carbs and alcohol, keep some carbs like berries and yams), 30–45 minutes of cardio a day plus strength training 2–3 times a week, and supplements such as berberine, cinnamon and chromium.

EXAMPLES

- **Her own SIBO**
  Seven or eight years ago she had sharp evening abdominal pain and pressure that made it hard to breathe deeply and left her anxious. Herbal antimicrobials made her nauseous. Antibiotics didn't help, and her repeat breath test 'looked identical.' Her turning points were the prokinetic (she was finally passing trapped gas) and betaine and pepsin.
- **John and the 'histamine bucket'**
  A patient's 'healthy' day: sourdough with avocado and tomato, a sardine salad, then wine, sushi and soy sauce, all high in histamine. That night: headache, anxiety, no sleep, itchy skin. Six months earlier the same foods were fine. Testing showed SIBO and leaky gut. Overgrown bacteria were producing histamine and using up DAO, the enzyme that breaks it down. Fermented

foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha and bone broth can make this worse.

• Three leaky-gut patients in one day

A woman with a rash that didn't respond to a skin biopsy and steroid creams, whose skin cleared after gut healing. A 55-year-old with flaring rheumatoid arthritis. A 45-year-old man with near-daily migraines and sudden brain fog whose migraines 'reduced significantly' after treatment. All had leaky gut, according to her.

• A1C from 13 to 5.7 without medication

A vegetarian patient with an A1C of 13 (fasting glucose over 300) and fasting insulin around 35 refused medication. By following the diet, exercise and supplement plan for six months, she lost over 30 lb, her A1C reached 5.7 and her insulin 8. Dr. Rajsree calls it one of the most striking cases of her career, and it's a single case.

• The thyroid link

Hypothyroidism slows motility and lowers stomach acid, so constipated patients get thyroid labs, and hypothyroid patients are tested for SIBO.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Ask for the tests

A lactulose SIBO breath test, a stool microbiome test and a fasting insulin level. She warns some patients get antibiotics for SIBO without any testing. You want to know what you're treating. An integrative or functional doctor familiar with SIBO may help.

• Red flags that need a doctor now

Consistent blood in the stool (not a one-time spot after straining), persistent vomiting, or unexplained weight loss of more than 10 lb that won't stabilize.

• Quick bloating relief she suggests

One or two digestive enzymes (she says you should feel relief in 30–60 minutes), the ginger-artichoke prokinetic, and a short walk. Check with your own clinician before starting supplements.

MIT Longevity Expert: Do These 3 Things Now to Stay Young, Live Longer, & Keep Your Freedom

Guest: Dr. Joseph Coughlin
Date: 2026-07-30 · Duration: 1:18:44
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gstI93tsafM

KEYPOINTS

• Retirement isn't a short coda; it's another 8,000 days, a third of adult life

Coughlin, founder of the MIT AgeLab, splits life into 8,000-day blocks: birth to 21, 21 to about 46 ('midlife crisis'), 46 to 65, and 65 to about 85. People over 85 are the fastest-growing group worldwide. Set childhood aside, and the years after 65 are a full third of adult life, not a trip to Disney with the grandkids. He says about half of children born today are expected to live to 100, and that being unprepared isn't a personal failing: 'old age is quite new' and there's no map.

• Three questions to plan your later life around

(1) How will you get an ice cream cone, meaning the small, spur-of-the-moment things that make you smile? 70% of Americans over 50 live where not driving means not getting out. (2) What will you do on a Tuesday at 10:30, once work and caregiving no longer give your days structure? COVID showed that hobbies get boring fast and spouses tire of each other around the clock. (3) Who will change your light bulbs, meaning someone you trust in your mother's home, someone she'll accept, someone who checks on you?

• Build a social portfolio, because friends naturally fall away

Most people have only one to three friends who'd show up at 2 a.m. Death, illness, moving away and even grandchildren (who take over Friday nights) thin that circle, which is why Coughlin recommends always having 'friends under development.' He cites Julianne Holt-Lunstad's research linking loneliness and isolation to a health impact comparable to smoking 11–15 cigarettes a day, including higher risk of hypertension and depression.

• Aging means diminishing capacity, not counting birthdays

Coughlin defines aging as 'capacity diminishing over time.' Strength training, nutrition, learning and social connection add capacity and 'push out the clock.' The AGNES suit (Age Gain Now Empathy System) simulates the conditions that tend to come with age, such as arthritis, diabetes and vision loss. It's not your fate.

• Friction, fatigue and frustration explain a lot of 'cranky' older behaviour

Small resistance in every chair, stair and jacket adds up to fatigue. Frustration follows because people remember when it was easy, and Mel adds a fourth F, feeling frail. Slow shoppers often aren't slow; they're unsure of their footing. Pride matters too: people skip a Friday dinner rather than be seen struggling to get through a door.

• When the world gets harder to move through, it shrinks

If stairs feel daunting, you skip making tea downstairs and stay in bed watching TV. Coughlin cautions against removing all friction (a one-floor home isn't automatically better), because stairs are also exercise that preserves muscle. Use the railing at any age.

• Hard-to-use tech is bad design, not user failure

Phones are built for young eyes and fingers, and thinner bottles with smaller caps (better for the environment) are harder to open with weak grip. Grip strength is a key marker of aging. Tech is 'the only industry that dares to accuse the consumer of not being competent.' When it's hard, people quietly opt out and lose connection.

• Most people plan for retirement but don't prepare for it

A plan is like a grocery list; preparing means paying attention and acting, so the food actually ends up on the plate. The roughly 30 years of life expectancy gained since 1900 are 'a dividend to be cashed in.' Preparing is 'an act of love' for yourself and the people who will depend on you.

• The most important number in old age is your zip code

Neighbouring zip codes can differ by 9–13 years in life expectancy. Coughlin, who teaches urban planning, judges a place on intensity (things to do and services), density (close enough to reach without driving) and accessibility (physical and financial). Mel realizes her remote Vermont home works only while she can drive.

• Caregiving is where people are least prepared

The AgeLab and John Hancock built a longevity preparedness index with eight dimensions, including health, finance, home, community, life transitions, social life and caregiving. Caregiving scored lowest, at 42. About 70% expect a spouse or adult child to care for them, but only about 30% have discussed it. The care usually falls to a spouse, then the eldest daughter, which Coughlin attributes to social roles, not biology.

EXAMPLES

• Mel in the AGNES suit

The suit added a weighted vest (lost muscle), a bungee harness that restricts stride, ankle weights, foam-soled 'wobbly' Crocs (balance, neuropathy), a neck brace (neck rotation starts declining in your 30s, which is why older drivers say they 'can't see out of the car'), vision goggles, a helmet and arthritis gloves. Picking up socks meant bracing on her knee. Stairs felt 'like I'm injured.' She spilled a water bottle, held her phone 2 inches from her face to text Chris, and couldn't remove 2-lb weights.

• The low chair

Weeks earlier, Mel had urged her mother to try a comfy, low furniture-store chair. Her mother said she couldn't get out of it. In the suit, getting up felt like 'the 12th rep of a squat,' and Mel says she now feels 'like a jerk.' The same goes for low toilets and getting into cars.

• The 'panini generation'

People in their 60s care for parents in their 80s and 90s, while 40-somethings worry about both. One in four US families provides 25–29 hours of care a week, rising to one in three for those over 50. Women may leave jobs or turn down promotions to provide care, and they tend to outlive partners by 7–8 years, so they often reach their own old age underprepared.

- **Caregivers' top three challenges**
  First, health complexity: often seven medications a day, and a parent who says 'I'm fine' at the doctor's. Second, money: families talk about it less than health, and fraud more often comes from people close to the person. Third, transportation, which Coughlin calls 'the glue' of life and the third-biggest retirement cost for couples over 65, after health care in second place.
- **The hip-fracture timeline**
  Fall and break a hip on Friday, surgery by Sunday, and by Monday the hospital says 'Mom's coming home.' Without earlier conversations, families scramble.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Hold the care conversation in pieces: who, where, what, how**
  Who provides hands-on care, and who makes decisions if they can't? Where should care happen: at home, with family or in senior living? What are they willing to put up with to maintain or extend life? How will it be paid for? Have the conversation repeatedly. Ask caregivers 'How are you doing?', because nobody does.
- **Handle driving with patterns and alternatives, not Thanksgiving ambushes**
  Health and medications matter more than age. Coughlin would rather ride with a fit 80-year-old than a 30-year-old on allergy medication. Look for patterns rather than one knocked-over mailbox; mixing up the pedals is a clear stop. Line up rides and try ride-share before it's necessary.
- **Three levers for independence**
  Rebuild capacity through strength training and nutrition, rearrange the home to cut friction, and ask for help. Use AARP's Livability Index to score a zip code.
- **Structure your Tuesdays now**
  Couples over 65 average 4–5 hours of TV a day. Plan purpose, routine and lunches with friends before retiring.

Change Your Body at Any Age: The Diet & Exercise Plan For a Longer Life

Guest: Dr. Rhonda Patrick
Date: 2026-06-25 · Duration: 1:26:50
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPZBIzf39M0

KEYPOINTS

• Swap '10,000 steps' for '10 breathless minutes' a day.
Dr. Rhonda Patrick, a biomedical scientist, says the 10,000-step target came from a 1960s Japanese marketing campaign to sell pedometers, not from medical research. Walking beats sitting, but she argues intensity is where the big returns are. If you're time-strapped, 10 minutes of vigorous effort is more achievable than walking about 5 miles.

• Use the talk test to judge intensity.
Light: you could sing. Moderate: you can talk but you're breathy, like brisk walking. Vigorous: you can only get out a few words, like jogging, running, fast stair climbing or a hard set of squats. Vigorous effort is the zone she wants you in for those 10 minutes.

• One vigorous minute equals about 4 moderate minutes or 53 light ones.
She cites large studies that measured movement with wrist accelerometers. For the same drop in all-cause mortality (deaths from cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, and other non-accidental causes), one minute of vigorous activity matched roughly 4 minutes of brisk walking or about 53 minutes of gentle walking. She calls the benefit of vigorous movement 'exponential' compared with moderate.

• Three 3-minute bursts of everyday vigorous activity add up.
In the research she describes, people who said they didn't exercise but did about 3 minutes of breathless everyday activity three times a day (about 9 minutes total) had roughly 40% lower all-cause and cancer mortality and 50% lower cardiovascular mortality. Examples: walk fast up the stairs, bike or jog a few blocks instead of driving, play tag with grandkids, chase a new puppy. These are observational findings as she reports them.

• 'Exercise snacks' are short structured bursts you can do anywhere.
One minute of bodyweight squats, jumping jacks, high knees or burpees, hard enough that you can only say a few words. Start with 1 minute a day for a week, then 2. It should get easier, and that's the point: your body is adapting to handle stress better.

• Hard effort trains your blood vessels.
Vigorous exercise makes your heart pump harder, creating 'shear stress' on the lining of your arteries and veins. She compares a calm river to a hurricane: 'You want the hurricane.' The endothelial cells sense that force and adapt. She adds that the discomfort of hard exercise sets off neurochemical changes and engages brain regions she links to resilience and possibly protection against neurodegenerative disease, with the caveat that she isn't a neuroscientist.

• Visceral fat is the dangerous kind, and it's also among the first to go.
Unlike fat under the skin, visceral fat wraps around organs like the liver and kidneys. She says it acts like an endocrine organ, pumping out inflammatory molecules, is associated with double the mortality risk, and is linked to higher cancer incidence. Excess calories, processed low-fiber food and refined sugar build it up. A calorie deficit and high-intensity or vigorous exercise are among the most reliable ways to lose it.

• If you're 'doing everything' and nothing changes, check your sleep with five questions.
Are you actually sleeping 7.5–9 hours, not just lying in bed? Do you get 15–30 minutes of bright light within 30 minutes of waking? (She says light resets your master body clock, the suprachiasmatic nucleus.) Do you wake at the same time every day? How close to bed do you eat? Do you drink at night? Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it disrupts REM sleep and causes more awakenings.

• Lifestyle, not genes, drives most of how long and how well you live.
She estimates about 80% is lifestyle and 20–25% genetics. She cites a Harvard study of five factors: a healthy diet pattern, not smoking, 3.5 hours a week of moderate or vigorous exercise, limited alcohol (fewer than one drink a day for women, about one or fewer for men), and a healthy BMI. Starting at 50, women who did all five lived about 14 years longer (around 93 vs. 79) and men about 12 years longer, with more of those years free of disease.

• Her food priorities come from a 'healthy eating index.'
Two 4-oz servings of fatty fish (salmon, mackerel) a week, or an omega-3 supplement. Whole grains like oats, barley, quinoa, brown rice and farro, about 70 g a day for women and 90 g for men (she adds that 98% of people don't get enough fiber). Red meat at about 12–18 oz a week, and almost no processed meat (under one serving a week: lunch meat, hot dogs, bacon), which she links to colon cancer. Sodium no higher than about 2,300 mg a day, ideally lower.

EXAMPLES

• The one-minute squat test on set
Patrick led Mel, who was in dress pants and heels, plus the whole crew through a minute of bodyweight squats. Mel 'already can't talk' within seconds. Afterward she admitted feeling confronted by how out of shape she felt on camera. Patrick's point: a minute is much longer than it sounds, and that breathless state is the goal.

• Her daily longevity smoothie
Kale, blueberries, avocado, protein and a barley beta-glucan powder. Mel notes it has five ingredients, which she ties to the five lifestyle factors. Patrick says she drinks one daily as an easy way to cover several of her food priorities.

• Creatine dosing
Patrick takes 10 g a day, 5 g before and 5 g after a workout. She goes up to 20–25 g when traveling or sleep-deprived, citing research on brain benefits under stress. She says muscles take about 4 weeks at 5 g or more a day to saturate, so 'it's not magic juice.'

• Everyday moments that count

People in the studies said 'no' when asked if they exercised, because they didn't count racing up stairs to work or playing tag with grandkids. Patrick says those bursts absolutely count.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Her five supplements

Omega-3 (about 2 g a day to move from a low to a high omega-3 index), a multivitamin, vitamin D (about 4,000 IU a day; she says 70% of people are low), magnesium (she takes 250 mg at night and aims for about 350 mg total), and creatine. Check doses with your doctor.

• The #1 habit

Asked for a single action, she says 10 minutes of breathless, vigorous exercise a day, which can be split into snacks, done 'like you brush your teeth.'

• Sleep audit

Rate yourself on hours asleep, morning light, consistent wake time, late eating and evening alcohol, then fix the weakest one first.

The Hidden Reason You Feel Exhausted & How to Feel Better Now

Guest: Dr. Brennan Spiegel
Date: 2026-06-08 · Duration: 0:54:27
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwQkIWf7rhE

KEYPOINTS

• Many everyday complaints may be forms of 'gravity intolerance'

Dr. Brennan Spiegel, a gastroenterologist and director of health services research at Cedars-Sinai, argues that gravity was here long before life and that every body is constantly managing its compressing force. When that management breaks down, he links it to fatigue, IBS, back pain, swollen ankles, anxiety and faster ageing. This is his framework from his book Pull, not settled medical consensus, and he repeatedly says to see a doctor for symptoms.

• The idea began with his mother-in-law lying in bed all day

In assisted living with cognitive decline, she was lying flat most of the day. Around the same time she developed slow digestion, stomach pain and depression, with no change in diet or medication. Spiegel's read was that she was 'giving in to gravity' and needed to get up and walk. He then wrote a paper called 'Gravity in the Gut', which he expected to be career suicide; colleagues told him it made sense.

• Your gut hangs like a sack of potatoes on suspension 'strings'

When you stand upright the gut hangs and opens up; slumping in a chair or over a phone pushes the shoulders and chest forward, drops the diaphragm and compresses the abdomen. Sitting all day, he says, is not a natural position. Mel admits catching herself slouching several times during the conversation.

• Stretchy joints may mean stretchy internal supports, and more gut trouble

His self-check: pull your pinky back, or bend your thumb to touch your forearm, or touch the floor easily without bending your knees. If you're 'stretchy on the outside, you're probably stretchy on the inside', so the gut's suspension sags and you may get bacterial overgrowth, gas and IBS-type symptoms. He frames it like a marionette whose strings are too elastic, and says it's a reason to talk to a doctor, not a diagnosis.

• About 95% of the body's serotonin is made in the gut

Spiegel calls serotonin a 'gravity management substance', not just a mood chemical. Gut microbes turn tryptophan from food into serotonin, which he says helps muscles, blood vessels and the lymphatic system pump fluid back up from the ankles. Babies, he notes, have little serotonin because their gut isn't colonised yet. The evolutionary story (the microbiome helping life leave the ocean) is his hypothesis.

• Gut feelings and some anxiety may be a built-in fear of falling

He describes the gut as having a kind of accelerometer. A roller-coaster drop feels thrilling because you're 'practising your death', while many people with IBS hate roller coasters and grip the bar because they already feel like they're falling. He suggests anxiety may partly be a 'neurovisceral fear of falling', a brain signal that is sometimes misfiring.

• Balance and grip are simple windows into whole-body health

Standing on one leg tests your inner ear, strength, tendons and sense of where you are in space. Grip strength, he says, has been validated in research as a marker of overall strength and even cardiovascular fitness. If you struggle, don't panic: work on yoga, strength and balance, or see a physical therapist.

• Exercise means constantly changing your relationship with gravity

He says randomised trials show exercise (strength training, swimming, running) is the most effective therapy we have for these problems, while stressing it isn't a cure-all. As we age gravity doesn't change but we get weaker, more bent and carry more weight, including emotional weight, so strength, balance, diet and hydration matter more every decade.

• Sleep is when gravity stops working against your brain

Lying down lets about five litres of blood shift toward the brain, which he says helps flush out amyloid. He lists dehydration, high sodium, short sleep and lack of exercise as all associated with cognitive decline, and floats the idea that Alzheimer's may partly be a consequence of them, a speculation rather than proven cause.

• It's not your fault, and you were built for this planet

For people who've blamed themselves for feeling off, his message is empowerment rather than blame. Babies learning to walk fall about 17 times an hour and keep getting up. You only compare yourself to yourself, so start where you are and build.

EXAMPLES

• Mel's staff thumb test

When the team tried the thumb-to-forearm test, more than half of the women among about 50 employees could do it, and the same people could easily touch the floor with straight knees.

• Live grip-strength test on a dynamometer

Spiegel squeezed 125 with his dominant hand; Mel, 'thinking of somebody I hate', hit 70. He says rough healthy marks are over 35 for men and 20–25 for women, varying by age (check an age table online). Mel credits hanging, heavy weights and farmer's carries for her score.

• The dead hang record

Hanging one minute makes you a 'gravity master'. He cites Japan's Kenta Adachi with a Guinness record of about 1 hour 20 minutes, up from a previous 16 minutes. Mel can hang about 30 seconds; the team installed a pull-up bar in the studio to try it after taping.

• Weighted vest and 20-lb ankle weights at work

Spiegel wears a roughly 12-lb weighted vest most of the workday at a standing desk ('practising life on a bigger planet'), which forces him to squeeze between the shoulder blades and open the diaphragm. He also wears 20-lb ankle weights, doing knee lifts and donkey kicks on Zoom calls, as a marathon runner who won't train by sitting.

• The 1960s 'visual cliff' baby studies

Babies asked to crawl to a parent across glass over an apparent drop refused, even before they had ever fallen, which he takes as evidence of an inborn sense that dangerous falls must be avoided.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **STACK 10 foods for tryptophan**
  Rotate a variety each week: S salmon, T turkey, A avocado, C chicken and chickpeas, K kidney beans, then T tempeh and tofu, E eggs, N nuts. Pair with exercise, sleep and sunlight, which he says also boosts serotonin.
- **10-second one-leg stand**
  Aim to stand at least 10 seconds on each leg. He says research ties this to survival, particularly in older adults.
- **Water target: 10–13 glasses a day**
  About 60% of body weight is fluid moved up and down by 'pumps and tubes', so he says low fluids make the brain tired. Drink enough to avoid light-headedness, but don't overdo it.
- **Gravitational breathing reset**
  Sit up without tensing, shoulders slightly back. Feel your body sink into the chair, then flip it: imagine the chair pushing you up (physicists describe gravity as upward acceleration). Then slow your breathing, which he says calms the vagus nerve and moves you from fight-or-flight to rest-and-digest.
- **Posture check whenever you sit**
  Notice the pressure of the seat, pull your shoulders back a little and engage the muscles between your shoulder blades so your belly isn't crunched.

Do THIS for 8 Weeks and Look & Feel 10 Years Younger: Dr. Vonda Wright's Proven Protocol

Guest: Dr. Vonda Wright
Date: 2026-05-18 · Duration: 1:15:35
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQO-lL6gJSQ

KEYPOINTS

- **The biggest lie about aging is that you can't do anything about it**
  Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Vonda Wright (100,000+ patients, 44 research papers, author of Unbreakable) says the body keeps its regenerative capacity at any age if you use it. Her warning: 'we will age like our mothers if we don't step in front of it.' She wants people in their 20s and 30s to start caring about their future body, not just midlife women.
- **You can get stronger at any age, even starting from zero**
  She points to early studies of 90-year-old men in a nursing home who did chair exercises with tiny hand weights and improved function by 150%. Her own University of Pittsburgh research on active older adults found people retaining bone and muscle and, in a five-year study, executive brain function. Her line: there's never an age or skill level when you can't get stronger.
- **A hip fracture is a life-altering event for frail women**
  Per Dr. Wright, roughly 30% of frail, sedentary women who break a hip may die within the first year, and about 50% of survivors never return to their pre-fall function. That can mean a nursing home, moving in with your kids or full-time care, so it becomes a family burden too. Most of these breaks come from 'low-energy' falls (tripping from standing height) on weakened bone, not dramatic accidents.
- **Bone peaks around age 30, then perimenopause speeds up the loss**
  Peak bone density is built between puberty and about 25–30 through jumping, adequate food, and regular periods with enough estrogen. She notes she didn't get periods as a dancer and thought it was fine. After the peak, men and women lose about 1% a year, but when estrogen drops women can lose an estimated 15–20% in 5–7 years. Talk to your daughters about bone in their 20s.
- **The four-step plan: walk, lift, balance, heart rate**
  Start with walking only, ideally after your biggest meal. Then lift, beginning with body weight and progressing to light weights. Train balance by standing on one leg during everyday tasks. Finally, push your heart rate near max in short bursts: kettlebell swings, a rower, or running between lampposts. Don't think of it as four separate jobs; the sprints can tack onto your walk.
- **Begin with a 7-day walking streak, not the gym**
  For 'adult-onset exercisers' leaving the couch after years, she says don't lift tomorrow, just walk every day for seven days. Daily practice is what runners call a streak, and once you've built one you won't want to break it on day eight. That first win also shows you that you're worth the effort.
- **Strength progresses over months and then needs only two sessions a week**
  Starting with body weight and light weights, she says you can be lifting with a bar on your shoulders within 6–9 months. Once you've built strength, two total-body workouts a week will maintain it. Heavier, more specialized lifting comes later, not on day one.
- **Cardio isn't optional: heart disease is the number one killer of women**
  When Mel admits she dislikes sprinting, Dr. Wright insists: the plan is about 30-second bursts, about four times, getting your heart rate up, with recovery of roughly 2–3 minutes between them.
- **Muscle matters mostly for metabolism; looks are the bonus**
  Muscle burns more energy than fat. Her example: a 120-lb person at 50% body fat burns far fewer calories just living than a 120-lb person at 25% body fat. Muscle also helps blood sugar and nearly every organ system, and she links it to longevity.
- **The 'critical decades': inflection points at 44 and 60**
  She cites a recent paper finding biological aging speeds up around ages 44 and 60. From that she frames 35–45, while you still have all your hormones, as the decade to set your standards, and 45 to the early 50s, during perimenopause, as a time of faster aging. After that it's never too late, just harder. You get the fastest return by acting inside these windows.
- **Hormone therapy: decide from facts, not fear**
  Asked about HRT, she says it's each woman's choice, but it should be informed by the current data. If you don't want to read the studies, follow medical society guidelines such as those from the Menopause Society, which she says are clear and written in plain language. Discuss it with your own clinician.

EXAMPLES

- **Her 86-year-old mother curling Campbell's soup cans**
  Her mother, from a generation where 'women didn't sweat', had little physiological reserve. She became very frail after a serious illness during COVID. Living with her daughter and hearing all this advice, she started doing biceps curls with soup cans by the pool, and Dr. Wright uses her recovery as proof that it's never too late. Her 86-year-old father, a lifelong endurance athlete, never stopped training.
- **The answer to 'I don't have time'**
  Own your excuse. Sometimes you're truly that busy. But often you can't find an hour because you won't let anyone else do things your way. Her challenge: if you value yourself more than how clean the dishes are, step back and hand some of it off.
- **Balance training while brushing your teeth**
  Mel asks whether standing on one leg while brushing counts. Yes: one to two minutes, twice a day, adds up to real training, and so does working at your desk or doing kitchen tasks on one leg.
- **Alzheimer's and women**
  She cites that 70% of Alzheimer's cases occur in women, one reason she wants women thinking about brain health early and

not assuming they'll stay as they were in their 20s and 30s.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Protein target: 0.8–1 g per pound of ideal body weight**
  Her recommendation for building muscle and supporting metabolism, using your ideal weight rather than your current one. She calls about 100 g a day the bare minimum muscle scientists cite. Choose high-quality protein containing the essential amino acids, especially leucine, which she calls the most powerful trigger for muscle growth. No, it won't make you bulky.
- **The challenge: start your 7-day streak today**
  Her closing ask is simple: walk today and keep going for seven days. If you're already active, do something harder than you've done before, because the body adapts to challenge.
- **Book: Unbreakable by Dr. Vonda Wright**
  Chapter 10, 'Unbreakable Nourishment', covers protein and includes recipes.

Stanford Nutrition Researcher: Eat THIS to Transform Your Health, Stay Young, and Live Longer

Guest: Dr. Lucia Aronica
Date: 2026-04-30 · Duration: 1:03:46
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVTEBaEJ46I

KEYPOINTS

• Food is information that changes how your genes behave, not just fuel

Dr. Lucia Aronica, an epigenetics scientist at Stanford School of Medicine, describes epigenetics as the 'software' that switches genes on and off, while your DNA is the 'hardware.' Her central image is that food is 'the pencil that rewrites your genetic instructions.' Every meal sends signals that affect energy, metabolism, inflammation and how fast you age, which is why she says your fork can matter more than your family history.

• Genetic risk is written in pencil, and you hold the eraser

She pushes back on fatalism ('genes load the gun, lifestyle pulls the trigger') by noting that not all genetic variants carry equal weight. In the 2016 New England Journal of Medicine study she cites, people at high genetic risk for heart disease cut their risk roughly in half with a healthy lifestyle: good food, regular exercise, no smoking. Meanwhile, people with favorable genes but poor habits still developed heart disease.

• Your body needs building blocks plus 'signals'

Beyond protein and other basics, she says the body needs 'epi-bioactives': compounds, mostly from plant foods plus omega-3s from fatty fish, that act as instructions to your genes. That's the science behind 'eat the rainbow.' Each color sends a different signal, so variety protects your genes from all angles.

• Broccoli's sulforaphane runs your body's own antioxidant system

Sulforaphane isn't an antioxidant itself. She calls it 'the boss of your body's antioxidant army' because it flips a master switch called NRF2, activating more than 200 genes involved in detox, inflammation and antioxidant defense. Vitamin C is gone within hours, but she says sulforaphane keeps those genes on for up to three days, so cruciferous vegetables two to three times a week is enough. The catch: cooking kills the enzyme (myrosinase) that makes it.

• Crush garlic and let it sit before cooking

Crushing or chopping garlic breaks the cell walls so its compounds mix and form allicin. Crushing the whole clove flat with a knife or spoon breaks more cells than chopping, so it produces more. Wait five minutes before it hits the heat so the reaction can finish.

• Choline is a forgotten essential nutrient most people lack

She says about 90% of people are deficient without knowing it. The target is roughly 450 mg a day, about four eggs' worth. You can mix sources: two eggs, 3 oz of salmon (the richest fish source), or just 1 oz of liver. She links choline to brain health.

• For most people, eggs don't meaningfully raise blood cholesterol

Per Dr. Aronica, only about 25% of people are 'high responders' whose blood cholesterol rises with dietary cholesterol, because of genetic and metabolic differences. For the other 75%, eggs don't significantly raise it. She describes Stanford research in which people on a weight-loss diet tripled their cholesterol intake and ate more saturated fat, yet their blood lipids improved: 'The problem wasn't the cholesterol. It was the donuts.' If you have lipid concerns, check with your doctor.

• Collagen declines with age; favor collagen-rich foods

She says collagen, the body's most abundant protein and its 'scaffolding' in skin and tendons, declines about 1% a year from age 25, and the loss roughly doubles after menopause. Rather than leading with supplements, she favors eating 'nose to tail': chicken and fish with the skin on, canned fish with bones (salmon, sardines), slow-cooked meats like short ribs or lamb, and bone broth (about 10 g of collagen per cup). Prioritize total protein first.

• Plant omega-3s convert too poorly to rely on

Flax, chia and walnuts provide ALA, which the body converts to EPA and DHA only 5–8% of the time in young women and 0.5–4% in men, and less with age, stress or inflammation. Reaching the roughly 2 g a day used in clinical trials would take a cup of flax or chia, or 2 lb of walnuts (about 2,000+ calories), daily: 'nutritional fantasy.' Eat fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, herring) three to four times a week; she personally adds a quality omega-3 supplement.

• Fermented foods supply the 'three musketeers' of gut health

Prebiotics (fiber that feeds bacteria), probiotics (the bacteria themselves) and postbiotics (bacterial products such as the short-chain fatty acid butyrate, which signals to your genes). She cites research where fermented foods lowered inflammatory markers regardless of people's starting microbiome and increased microbial diversity, because they bring in new species rather than just feeding existing ones.

EXAMPLES

• The queen bee: same genes, different software

Queen and worker bees are genetically identical, yet the queen lives about 20 times longer, is larger and is fertile, while workers are sterile. The difference is diet: the queen larva eats royal jelly. Dr. Aronica uses this as her favorite illustration of nutrition shaping how genes are expressed.

• Her father and her mother

Her father, a dedicated physician, died when she was 14, which led her into science to support lifestyle medicine. Her mother, at 84, is her model of longevity: not a biohacker with complicated protocols, but someone who follows simple advice like getting protein at every meal.

• The glow-stick broccoli demo

On set she used a glow stick to show how breaking broccoli's cells mixes the precursor with the enzyme to make sulforaphane, the same thing chewing does. Mel immediately planned to chop the broccoli, set it aside, and then cook tomatoes in olive oil.

- **Tomatoes as internal sun protection**
  She claims red foods like tomatoes can boost your skin's SPF by about 40%. Cooking them in olive oil was part of the kitchen sequence she and Mel walked through. Treat this as a supplement to sunscreen, not a replacement.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Three broccoli tricks**
  Fresh: chop it, ideally about 40 minutes before cooking (even 10 minutes helps; smaller pieces make more). Frozen: the enzyme is already gone, so stir in about 1 tsp mustard powder or 1 tbsp prepared mustard per 3 oz of cooked broccoli, since mustard is cruciferous and supplies the enzyme.
- **Daily choline formula**
  Aim for about 450 mg, for example two eggs plus 3 oz salmon, or a small (1 oz) serving of liver.
- **What to expect in 30 days**
  She says a month isn't enough to rewrite epigenetic 'memories,' but you may notice steadier energy as blood sugar stabilizes, better sleep and skin as inflammation drops, and better digestion as your microbiome adjusts.
- **Simple starting rules**
  Protein at every meal, attention to omega-3s and collagen, a rainbow of plants, fermented foods, and slowing down to enjoy meals: 'channel your inner Italian.'

Doctor Mike: The Health Lies That Are Keeping You Sick (and What to Do Instead)

Guest: Dr. Mike Varshavski
Date: 2026-04-16 · Duration: 1:24:06
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNWa7zJIsko

KEYPOINTS

• The health system fails busy people the most.
Doctor Mike, a family physician who still sees patients at a community health center, says the people with jobs, several kids or aging parents to care for are the ones the system leaves behind. That includes passive patients without an advocate, and he notes minorities and people with less money face more barriers. He contrasts this with colleagues who move into concierge care once they're well known.

• Argue every medical bill.
'Argue everything. Argue every bill. You will get reductions.' Many patients assume a bill is final and pay it, sometimes heading toward bankruptcy, without knowing about underused financial aid programs. He hates adding 'fight the billing department' to strained patients' to-do lists, but says not doing it can be worse.

• A primary care doctor who knows you can catch what urgent care can't.
Relying on urgent care, ERs or minute clinics, or seeing a doctor 'once every 5 years' for a Z-Pak, means no one knows your history or notices when something is off. Mel points out we often blame doctors when we haven't given them a chance to know us.

• Distrust overconfidence. 'I don't know' from a doctor is often a good sign.
His main red flag is overconfidence. Good clinicians keep a 'differential,' a list of other conditions that could look the same, because people aren't identical, so they hedge. When a doctor says 'I don't know, we need to investigate further,' that's honesty and humility, and 'they're not interested in slimming your wallet.' Beware online claims like 'Headaches? You need pink Himalayan sea salt.'

• Fear sells, and chemophobia is a big part of it.
He criticizes videos where someone flips over a grocery product, reads the ingredients, then holds up something from a hardware store with a matching ingredient. 'This is basic chemistry.' Water and air are chemicals. He acknowledges real concerns like forever chemicals and corporate pollution, and says they deserve research funding, but warns against fearing every chemical. He calls fights over ingredients like titanium dioxide in Skittles 'PR wins,' not real health care progress.

• Longevity hype treats aging as a disease and sells preliminary science.
His two objections: aging isn't a pathology, and healthy aging is possible without that framing. And early research that should only offer 'hope on the horizon' ends up in headlines and online stores. He jokes that nearly every doctor is a longevity doctor, the one exception being palliative care.

• Good science tries to disprove its own theories.
He says misinformation sellers collect evidence to support their idea, while real science challenges a theory over and over. A theory that keeps surviving those challenges is a good one. In his practice, he sees parents refusing vaccines like hepatitis B despite strong population outcome data. Mel credits him for being clear that isolated risks exist without the benefit going away.

• To change a loved one's mind, lead with connection, and expect it to take time.
Don't 'put a stone' between you. Explain why the person matters to you and why you care. That's often more persuasive than the recommendation itself. Aim for 'truth-seeking together' and be open to learning something yourself. Beliefs tied to identity change in stages, like grief, not in one conversation.

• Nicotine hits the teenage brain harder.
Because the teen brain is still forming and pruning connections, he says nicotine affects attention, reaction time, decision-making and impulse control. Tolerance and dependence (withdrawal) develop faster than in adults. 'That is not to fear-monger. That is simply to tell the truth.' Doctors should ask teens specifically about vaping and nicotine pouches, not just smoking.

• Action comes before motivation, so pick the smallest one.
For anyone in grief: make the bed, take a shower, put on your shoes. He knows that when combing your hair is hard, even shoes aren't easy. He also notes that therapy and antidepressants aren't meant to stop you from feeling. They give you enough control to notice a rut and take steps out of it. 'Allow yourself to feel' bad when things are bad.

EXAMPLES

• The $100 heart attack bill
A healthy runner and teacher in Texas with good insurance had a heart attack and was taken to an out-of-network hospital. He was billed hundreds of thousands of dollars. After he took his story to the media, the bill dropped to about $100. Doctor Mike calls it proof of 'predatory' billing that you have to fight.

• Back pain that was really a heart problem
A patient came in for back pain and mentioned in passing an odd symptom from a few nights earlier. He dropped the back conversation and sent her to her cardiologist the next day. She'd had a heart attack, had severe blockages, and needed a stent. She now urges women to take chest pain seriously.

• The caregiver's pitcher of blue water
He poured 'effort' into cups for work, kids, aging parents, a spouse, hobbies, cooking, cleaning and laundry, leaving only a few drops for the caregiver's own sleep, joy and health. He added that in reality the cups are cracked and always need refilling, so if you don't refill your own, you can't keep helping anyone else.

• Putting on his shoes
After his mother died of CLL (a type of leukemia) during his first year of medical school, his small step was putting on his

shoes. That got him to the dog park, then a boxing class, and 10 years later to a professional fight on Showtime pay-per-view. His parents had immigrated in their 40s. His mother, who held a math PhD in Russia, walked 2 miles to work here to save bus fare.

- **'Surrounded' with 20 vaccine skeptics**
  On a Jubilee-style debate show, one participant said nothing could change her mind 'because I actually read and study.' He says that mindset makes you 'more immune to facts' than to disease.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Bill checklist**
  Don't pay on first sight. Call billing, dispute charges, ask about financial aid or assistance programs, and check network status.
- **Red-flag filter for health content**
  Be wary of certainty, one-cause-fits-all answers, fear about 'chemicals,' and a product link attached to preliminary research.
- **Refill your cup**
  Write down three good things at the end of each day, protect your sleep, and acknowledge that 'this situation does suck' rather than judging yourself harshly.
- **Ask teens the right question**
  Ask 'Do you vape or use nicotine pouches?', not just 'Do you smoke?' Then explain the brain effects calmly.

Reset Your Gut: A Harvard Doctor’s Step-by-Step Protocol to Transform Your Health

Guest: Dr. Trisha Pasricha
Date: 2026-03-30 · Duration: 1:32:01
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2p6vKQWvFs

KEYPOINTS

• Gut problems are a hidden, widespread crisis
Dr. Trisha Pasricha, a Harvard gastroenterologist who directs the Institute for Gut-Brain Research at Beth Israel Deaconess, cites these figures: 40% of Americans say their bowels disrupt daily life, 15% have IBS, three in four can't poop in a public restroom, one in three struggle on vacation, and one in ten have unexplained pain every time they eat. In her lab, about a quarter of college students spent more than 10 minutes per attempt. Most of these people wouldn't call themselves sick.

• Your gut is also an immune organ and a 'brain'
Food usually leaves the stomach within about four hours (sometimes 30 minutes for soft foods like eggs), but the full trip can take days. About 70% of the immune system lives in the gut. Her field, neurogastroenterology, took shape in the 1980s–90s when researchers realized roughly 80% of vagus nerve signals travel from gut to brain, not the other way. That raised the question of whether gut dysfunction contributes to anxiety, depression and neurodegenerative disease.

• Daily isn't the standard; comfort and speed are
A Beth Israel study of Americans who considered their habits normal found anywhere from three times a day to once every three days is within the normal range. What matters is comfort: a bowel movement should take under five minutes, ideally under one, 'an in-and-out job.' Going daily but straining for 20–30 minutes isn't normal.

• Leave the phone outside the bathroom
In her study of people coming in for screening colonoscopies, those who took smartphones to the toilet were more than five times as likely to spend over 5 minutes there and had a 46% higher risk of hemorrhoids, which the doctors could see directly. Her rule: if nothing is happening, pull up your pants and come back later.

• Holding it in makes the next one harder
While stool waits in the colon, more water gets absorbed, so tomorrow's will be harder than today's would have been. She points this at people who clench all day at work because they won't go outside their own bathroom.

• Four symptoms of colorectal cancer to take seriously at any age
Abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, iron-deficiency anemia, and a lasting change in your bowel pattern (for example, new diarrhea or very thin stools). She cites a study finding that people with three or four of these had a sixfold higher likelihood of colorectal cancer. Anemia-driven fatigue in women is often blamed on periods, so push for an answer. If something new sticks around for about a week, see a doctor.

• Early-onset colorectal cancer is rising, and diet may be part of why
She calls the rise in cancer before age 50 one of today's most important scientific problems. Possible contributors she discusses include the spread of ultra-processed foods worldwide and Nurses' Health Study findings that people who drank more sugar-sweetened beverages as children and teens were more likely to develop early-onset colorectal cancer. She frames it as probably a combination of factors.

• Blood in stool is never something to ignore
Blood can look bright red (usually lower down), maroon (higher in the colon) or black. Unless you and your doctor have already identified a known cause like hemorrhoids, she treats any blood as urgent. Everyone gets an oddly colored stool now and then; a caramel-brown is the ideal.

• Two social-media gut myths: 'leaky gut' and universal probiotics
Increased intestinal permeability is real science, but she sees patients who self-treated 'leaky gut' with supplement regimens for a year while missing the real problem. Ask instead what in your lifestyle might be increasing permeability. On probiotics, she notes the American Gastroenterological Association does not recommend them for most medical conditions, despite marketing that implies every gastroenterologist does.

• Fiber targets, and her own shortcut
Women over 50 need about 21 g a day and under 50 about 25 g. Meeting them helps keep you in the comfortable range. The one thing she stopped doing was 'pretending' she'd reach that through food alone: with two kids and three jobs, the colorful lunches didn't happen every day, so she uses a fiber supplement.

EXAMPLES

• The knees-above-waist fix
For pelvic floor dysfunction, biofeedback physical therapy over 8–12 weeks helps 80–90% of people in studies. Quick fix: one study found that for about one in six people with apparent pelvic floor dysfunction, raising their knees above the waist with a stool, a stack of books or 'a pair of nice stilettos' solved the whole problem.

• Play-Doh poop and Pantone color cards
Mel's team built Play-Doh models of stool shapes. The smooth sausage is sometimes called the 'wipeless wonder,' though she says a fluffier stool from more fiber is fine too. Mel flashed Pantone cards of colors patients have reported; apple green looked like a breastfed baby's stool, and caramel was 'a thing of beauty.'

• Colleagues who never go at work
Mel mentions two colleagues who admitted they never have a bowel movement at work, despite 8–12-hour days, and friends who go seven days without one while traveling.

• Skip the expensive stool tests
Rather than buying third-party microbiome tests, she says your own observations are valuable data: shape and consistency

(how fast stool moved through), color, and how you felt before, during and after.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Bathroom rules**
  No phone; aim for under five minutes; don't strain; if nothing happens, leave and return later; raise your knees with a footstool; go when you feel the urge instead of holding it.
- **When to see a doctor**
  Any blood, or a cluster of abdominal pain, anemia and a changed bowel pattern lasting about a week or more, at any age.
- **Fiber plan**
  21–25 g a day by age; combine food with a fiber supplement if diet alone falls short. She also suggests pairing a supplement with other constipation measures.
- **Book**
  You've Been Pooping All Wrong by Dr. Trisha Pasricha.

NYU Psychologist: The Truth About Why You Can't Stop Eating (and What Actually Works)

Guest: Dr. Rachel Goldman
Date: 2026-03-09 · Duration: 1:17:36
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHxhceutGZg

KEYPOINTS

• Emotional eating is about the pause, not willpower
Dr. Rachel Goldman, a clinical psychologist, NYU professor and eating-behaviour specialist, defines emotional eating as turning to food to soothe any emotion: boredom, stress, sadness, anger, even happiness. It is impulsive and reactive. She compares it to a child's tantrum, where a timeout simply creates a pause; adults need an 'adult timeout' to tune inward before acting.

• Physical hunger and emotional hunger behave differently
Physiological hunger means your body needs fuel, so you grab whatever is there, like the fruit in the fridge, and go. Opening and closing cabinets after dinner signals you're searching for something specific that probably isn't in the kitchen. Food in that moment is 'a distraction, but not a solution'.

• Diet culture taught us to tie our worth to our bodies
Goldman says we've all absorbed messages that we 'should' be thin, shouldn't be hungry, or shouldn't eat certain foods. As a result many people link their self-worth to body size, shape and eating behaviour. That shame is what keeps people stuck, and her approach is deliberately shame-free.

• Restricting drives the binge cycle
'I was bad yesterday, so today I'll be good' means restricting, which leaves you so hungry that you later eat impulsively or overeat. Restriction also keeps your brain fixated on food, which she links to what people call 'food noise'. Many clients say 'I barely eat and can't lose weight', and she says that is part of the problem: cortisol keeps the body in survival mode.

• After a binge, eat something in the morning anyway
Evening binges leave you bloated, maybe with reflux, and not hungry on waking, so you're tempted to skip food to make up for it. The key, she says, is to eat something small, which breaks the overeat-then-restrict loop instead of restarting it.

• Watch for three warning signs of disordered eating
First, thoughts about food or your body are consuming your day (hating your reflection, comparing sizes). Second, rigid food rules, such as 'I can't eat before 10am'. Third, it affects daily functioning or causes distress, such as isolating, being late or skipping meetings with food. Any of these is a sign to seek professional help, and she says there's nothing wrong with you for needing it.

• Healthy habits can tip into orthorexia
Orthorexia, a term introduced in 1996, is when healthy eating becomes an obsession. She says it has surged with social media and wellness culture. The test is the thought behind the behaviour: 'I'm skipping wine because I want dessert later' is balance; 'I can't have this because I ate it yesterday' is rigid. Obsessive distress over a missed gym day, or weighing yourself repeatedly in a day, suggests it has crossed over.

• Eating regularly is part of treatment
Many people avoid help because they fear treatment will make them gain weight. Goldman says regular eating is often what stabilises things, and the shame keeps people from asking.

• Breakfast is a self-care signal, not just a meal
She frames sitting down to nourish yourself as setting up a positive cycle for the day. Running on caffeine and an empty stomach leaves you distracted by food until lunch. She would rather people celebrate 'I took time for myself and had breakfast' than 'I had the willpower to skip eating'.

• GLP-1 drugs are a real tool for obesity, but not a crash diet
For people with obesity or diabetes, she says these drugs level the playing field, because their weight didn't respond biologically to the same healthy choices others made. Using them to drop 5–10 pounds before a wedding, or via mail-order microdosing, is a diet in her view and not sustainable. Lifestyle changes, a dietitian and mindset work with a psychologist still matter. She rejects the idea that being body-positive means you can't change your body.

EXAMPLES

• The opening breathing exercise
She starts the episode with diaphragmatic breathing: in through the nose as the belly expands, then out through the mouth as if through a straw. On each breath they repeat 'I am confident', 'I am in control' and 'I can do this'.

• Mel's late-night work week
After working until 10:30pm, a decade ago Mel would have slept late and raced in on coffee. This time she went to bed, ate something before exercising, then had eggs, avocado and bacon. Hours into taping she says she hadn't thought about food once, and wishes she'd known this 40 years ago.

• The gym-day test
Someone who exercises daily misses one session for a work event and spends the whole day obsessing about it. Goldman uses this to show when a 'healthy' habit has become distressing.

• Chips in front of the TV
Mel's examples of mindless M&Ms and potato chips during TV illustrate eating that serves an emotional purpose, filling something in the moment, rather than hunger.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **The three kitchen questions**
  When you catch yourself searching the fridge, pause and ask: When did I last eat? Was it satisfying, or did I restrict? What's going on right now, and what am I actually looking for (stress, a hard call, loneliness)?
- **The 10-minute buffer**
  Get out of the kitchen and do something else for about 10 minutes, such as reading or walking. If you still want the food afterwards, have it mindfully. You probably won't beat yourself up, because it wasn't automatic.
- **Build your own coping toolbox**
  Have the breathing exercise (three breaths) plus at least two other tools that fit your life, for example a 10-minute walk outside. Have several, because a run isn't available in every stressful moment and no single tool works every time.
- **Slow-eating method**
  Take a bite, put the utensil down, and chew until nothing is left before picking it up again. Fullness signals take about 10–20 minutes to register.
- **How to raise concerns with someone you love**
  Don't lead with food. Use 'I' statements and open questions: 'I've noticed you've been cancelling on our dinners. I'm concerned about you. Is everything okay?'

4 Small Decisions That Change Your Body, Energy, and Life

Date: 2026-03-02 · Duration: 0:55:49
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UftzI17LB2A

KEYPOINTS

• Four tiny, mostly automatic decisions shape how your day feels.
In this solo episode, Mel lays out four micro choices: what you reach for first in the morning, whether you decide it'll be a good day or a bad one, whether you run on fuel or fumes, and whether you scroll or sleep at night. Her point is that when you're worn out you don't need a 'fix your life' plan, just better defaults at these moments.

• Micro choice #1: what you reach for first, which is usually the phone.
Before you've even figured out what day it is, you grab the phone by your bed. Mel says reading the news isn't the problem. Doing it in bed before anything else is, 'mainlining it like it's your coffee or your vodka.' Her rule: no news in pajamas unless it's a Sunday after 11 a.m., after breakfast and coffee, and she has decided to lounge.

• Morning scrolling spends motivation you need later.
Mel draws on Harvard-trained psychiatrist Dr. Alok Kanojia ('Dr. K' of HealthyGamer). As she relays it, you wake up with a supply of dopamine, the brain's motivation-and-reward fuel that helps you do hard things and feel good when you follow through. Spending it on something 'dumb and easy and cheap' like your phone leaves less for the day's real work.

• Micro choice #2: good day or bad day. 'The story you tell yourself becomes the day you have.'
Decide it's a bad day and your brain looks for proof. You see traffic and think 'of course,' grip the wheel, and tense up when a coworker asks 'Do you have a second?' Mel cites Stanford's Dr. Alia Crum, a past guest whose research shows mindsets change what you feel and expect, what you're motivated to do, and how your body prepares and responds. 'These aren't just words. These are settings.'

• Choosing a good day isn't denial.
It doesn't mean pretending life is easy or the news isn't frightening. It means deciding, 'It's going to be a good day because I'm going to make something good happen,' and taking responsibility for the mood you bring to work and home.

• Micro choice #3: fuel or fumes. A lot of irritability is really hunger.
Mel cites Cornell's Dr. Karl Pillemer, whose Legacy Project has spent 22 years gathering advice from people in their 80s, 90s and 100s ('the elders'). One lesson: if you keep having the same serious arguments, 'the cure might be a sandwich.' He and his wife used to fight bitterly while traveling (who picked the bad hotel, why they missed the museum) until they realized they were hungry. He says research supports not arguing when you're hungry.

• Protein early may steady your mood.
Mel shares a post by psychologist Dr. Nicole LePera: cortisol peaks in the first 30 minutes after waking, which can leave you irritable without knowing why, and eating protein early helps regulate blood sugar and, with it, emotions. Mel says health is her top goal and protein first has been 'a huge shift' for her. This is her experience plus an expert's guidance, not a prescription.

• Micro choice #4: scroll or sleep. Night scrolling tells your brain to stay on guard.
After a day spent on everyone else, scrolling feels like reclaiming your time. Researchers call it 'revenge bedtime procrastination.' But headlines, disturbing videos and comment fights (some of the arguers are bots, she notes) signal 'stay alert, keep scanning.' Mel cites a PNAS study led by Dr. Anne-Marie Chang at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School: reading on a light-emitting device before bed delayed the body clock and suppressed melatonin.

• You can train your bedtime cues.
If you reach for the phone even after a middle-of-the-night bathroom trip, you've taught yourself that scrolling is how you fall asleep. Replace it with cues your body will link to sleep: a hot Epsom-salt bath (Mel's choice), a book or relaxing audiobook, 2 minutes of stretching, a candle, fluffed pillows, dimmer lights.

EXAMPLES

• The sweatsuit bought in bed
Staying somewhere with the charger next to the bed, Mel reached for her phone first thing, opened Instagram, and bought a gray cropped-hoodie sweatsuit she didn't need ('really cute on the model') before even getting up.

• Skinning up the ski mountain at 6:30 a.m.
Instead of her phone, Mel reached for her skis, put on climbing skins and hiked up the local ski mountain for an hour with her husband. Other options she suggests: open the blinds, step outside even in pajamas, drink a glass of water, grab your gym bag or sneakers.

• 'When's the last time you ate?'
Mel admits her family asks her this when she starts bickering over 'something just so stupid.' Usually it's been five or six hours. Pillemer's suggestion: try a cup of tea and a biscuit before continuing the argument.

• The bad-day spiral
Mel walks through a day framed as bad from the start: traffic proves it, a coworker's 'Do you have a second?' feels like an attack, you smile and say 'Sure' while 'inside you're dying,' and then blame yourself for not having it together.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Phone out of reach overnight
Charge it away from the bed so it isn't the first thing you grab. Decide your first reach the night before: water, blinds, shoes.

• A one-line morning decision
Say out loud: 'Today is going to be a good day because I'm going to make something good happen.'

• Fight check
Before a tense conversation, ask yourself (or them), 'When did we last eat?' Have a snack first.

- **Wind-down routine**
  Pick two cues (bath, book, stretching, dim lights) and do them nightly so your brain starts linking them with sleep instead of scrolling.

#1 Dermatologist: The Ultimate Skincare Routine for Amazing Skin

Guest: Dr. Shereene Idriss
Date: 2026-02-26 · Duration: 1:16:21
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVIdfSLFfSM

KEYPOINTS

• Skin is your biggest organ, not a vanity project

Board-certified dermatologist Dr. Shereene Idriss, who sees nearly 100 patients a week, says skin is the first visible feedback on your health and stress, and it carries real emotional weight. If your skin feels out of control, her first step is to calm it down before trying to treat the specific problem.

• Sleep, movement and diet do work no product can

She treats sleep like compound interest: one good night won't fix your face, but consistent sleep lets skin repair over time. Simple movement like walking gets lymphatic fluid and blood moving to the skin. Diet supports everything, though eating carrots won't replicate a topical retinoid. In her words, skincare on 'the crappiest diet' is a band-aid.

• Nobody needs a 12-step routine; consistency beats everything

As a mom of two running several businesses, she says the first point of failure is a routine you can't keep up. Her framework has three categories: a gentle cleanser that doesn't strip your skin (Vanicream is her drugstore example), a moisturizer to support your skin barrier, and daily sunscreen for protection and long-term change. She says she isn't paid by any brand she shows.

• Wash at night and often just use water in the morning

Cleanse at night to get the day off your face. She calls it 'the smallest act of kindness' you can do for yourself. In the morning, water is usually enough. Skip hot water: like hot water on a greasy pan, it strips your skin's oils, and adding cleanser on top over-strips.

• Read moisturizer labels skeptically

She holds up a moisturizer with 'collagen' in its name and says it's simply hydrating. Applying collagen to your skin doesn't replace the collagen you lose. Judge a moisturizer by texture and how hydrated your skin feels afterward. Sunscreen can double as moisturizer, so oily skin in a humid place like Florida may not need both.

• Sunscreen must be broad spectrum, and there's no such thing as a safe tan

UVB mainly burns, while UVA breaks down collagen. Both contribute to skin cancer, and a sunscreen that isn't broad spectrum misses UVA. SPF roughly multiplies how long you can stay out before burning: if you'd burn in 10 minutes, SPF 30 stretches that to about 300 in theory. Any tan, even a freckle, is a sign of DNA damage, so a 'base tan' only means damage has already happened.

• Most 'sensitive skin' is reactive skin

She says seven in 10 people describe their skin as sensitive, but only about one in 10 have true sensitivities, like an intolerance to a specific ingredient. Most are in a reactive state, often caused by over-stripping or overdoing products. That's why calming the skin comes first.

• With retinoids, consistency beats intensity

Retinol is the 'crown jewel' of active ingredients: the over-the-counter, inactive form of vitamin A, while prescription tretinoin is the active form. It builds thicker skin, boosts collagen and regulates cell turnover. People go 'wrong and strong,' burn their skin and quit. She'd rather you use the lightest over-the-counter strength five nights a week. Vitamin C helps with tone and brown spots and is needed for collagen, but check you're buying the active form (ascorbic acid).

• Adult acne comes from hormone swings plus slower skin renewal

She sees many women in their 30s and 40s with acne. Of four subtypes, hormonal acne shows up as deep cysts along the jawline, tied to sensitivity to testosterone-like hormones, and comedonal acne means blackheads and whiteheads. Skin cells turn over about every 28 days when young, and she says each decade adds about 10 days (38 in your 30s, 48 in your 40s). Oily hair products are a sneaky trigger.

• Faces change in two noticeable steps, and jowls aren't a skincare failure

Collagen starts falling about 1% a year from the mid-to-late 20s, which shows up as a vague flattening at the sides of the face. A second, sharper shift comes later, when the bone and structure underneath thin. Idriss noticed her own jowls suddenly at 38, after babies and breastfeeding.

EXAMPLES

• Products she'd skip

Makeup wipes as a daily remover just smear foundation into your pores, she says. Nose strips give satisfying but temporary results. Natural loofahs used on the face are too harsh for its thin skin. Sheet masks with actives like retinol under occlusion are 'a recipe for chaos.' A sheet mask should just hydrate.

• Mel's 'lizard' face

Mel admits she's 'a wrong and strong gal.' She over-applied tretinoin, looked like 'a lizard that had red skin' within a week, and quit entirely, which is exactly the pattern Idriss warns about.

• Melasma and a cousin's 'What happened to your face?'

At 34 or 35, after having a baby, Idriss's melasma flared. A younger cousin's reaction hit her 'like a dagger,' and she wanted to hide her face. Treatment usually means prescription hydroquinone with breaks. Oral tranexamic acid can help deeper melasma but isn't for anyone prone to blood clots.

• Mel's jowls at 57

When Mel says she hates her jowls, Idriss notes that the complaint is rarely the real issue. Mel admits sagging makes her feel old and scared about how much life is behind her.

• Sleeping in makeup after 40

Idriss says skipping a night's face-wash in your 20s and 30s isn't a big deal, but after 40 you 'look like the Crypt Keeper' the next day because skin can't bounce back as fast.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Three ways to support collagen

Eat a balanced diet with enough protein. Collagen supplements won't hurt but aren't the answer and can be expensive. Use topical skincare consistently, like retinol plus daily sunscreen. In-office procedures are the third option.

• Her three moves for this week

Simplify your routine, even to just washing your face. Throw out your magnifying mirror, because 'nobody is looking at you under a 10x zoom.' Do one thing that makes you feel put together, like mascara, a red lip or the jeans you love.

• Injectables, conservatively

Botox isn't meant to freeze your face. She's skeptical of 'preventative' Botox and says to start when lines genuinely bother you. Fillers should keep your proportions intact, not add new volume.

• Her one takeaway

'Your skin is not a problem to solve. It is a relationship to build.' Confidence comes from changing that relationship first.

Strong, Fit and Healthy: How to Get Your Best Body & Increase Your Energy in 3 Days

Guest: Dr. Amy Shah
Date: 2026-02-05 · Duration: 1:16:46
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2pepdvBPiU

KEYPOINTS

• The 30/30/3 framework: 30 g protein at your first meal, 30 g fiber across the day, three probiotic foods daily.
Dr. Amy Shah, a double board-certified physician in internal medicine and immunology with a nutrition background, built this as a framework for getting stronger and more energized, not a weight-loss diet. She argues women have been handed diets and weight-loss plans but never a simple rule they can remember on a busy day. She suggests mastering the order: protein first, then fiber, then probiotics.

• Protein does far more than build muscle.
Shah describes protein as amino acids, the raw material for muscle, hair, skin, nails, gut lining and neurotransmitters such as dopamine (motivation, focus) and serotonin. Mel admits she thought protein was only about muscle mass. In Shah's account, a protein-heavy breakfast also raises fullness signals she names as GLP-1 and neuropeptide Y, so you have fewer cravings later.

• Women need more protein as estrogen falls.
Shah says that from roughly 35 and into perimenopause, declining estrogen blunts the stimulus for muscle growth, so women need a stronger signal (more protein plus strength work) to keep the same muscle. She frames muscle as a longevity issue: in your 80s or 90s, a fall without the muscle to catch yourself and bones to absorb impact can be life-ending.

• Front-load protein instead of skipping breakfast.
Shah, who says she loves intermittent fasting, reports seeing 'study after study' in which people who skip meals and eat late in the day had worse health outcomes. People who eat protein early are, by her account, more likely to hit their daily protein goal, make healthier choices all day and have fewer cravings. Mel compares it to never sending her kids to school without breakfast. These are Shah's readings of the research, not individual medical advice.

• Daily protein target: roughly 0.7–1 g per pound, well above the RDA.
Shah calls 0.7 to 1 gram per pound of body weight the range for a high-protein diet, and suggested 0.8 g/lb for Mel because she is trying to build muscle. For a 150-pound person that works out to 120–150 g a day. That's why 30 g at each meal matters: two eggs alone won't get you there.

• Calorie-dense 'protein' foods can work against you.
Nuts are healthy but low-density for protein: Shah says you'd need about 800 calories of nuts to reach 30 g. Mel realized that still left about 90 g to go. Smoothie-shop drinks and many bars marketed as high protein are ultra-processed or loaded with calories, so you can be 'filling the protein gap' while working against yourself.

• Read labels for added sugar, trans fat and serving size.
Some smoothies, Shah says, have as much sugar as a can of Coke. You wouldn't drink a Coke first thing in the morning, but you'd happily order the smoothie. Fruit sugar still counts toward your daily total. After protein, she checks added sugars, total calories and fat, especially trans fats, which she calls the most dangerous kind.

• Fiber feeds your gut ecosystem, and most people get less than half of what they need.
Shah says fewer than 5% of Americans reach 30 g a day and the average is about 12 g. Fiber isn't just for constipation: it is the main food for gut organisms. She claims modern diets have left us with about 50% of the gut bacteria our ancestors had, and that these bacteria help regulate hormone levels and talk to the brain, so low fiber shows up as hormonal and GI problems.

• Each extra 10 g of fiber is linked to about 10% better longevity, by Shah's figure.
Mel had Shah repeat the stat: every additional 10 grams of fiber improves longevity by 10%. Going from the typical 12 g to 22 g, she says, can change someone's life, and a couple of tablespoons of chia gets you there. She cites it as an association from the research, not a guarantee.

• Probiotic foods lower inflammation and may lift mood.
Fermented foods existed in every culture as a way to preserve food before refrigeration. Shah says the immune system lets bacteria through when they arrive inside foods like kimchi, probiotic cottage cheese or yogurt. She points to an emerging field called psychobiotics, which studies whether improving gut health can help mental health conditions. She presents it as a promising area, not settled treatment.

• Blend, don't juice.
Frozen berries thrown into a smoothie keep their fiber; juicing strips it out. Shah's practical rule is to add fiber on top of foods you already eat, such as berries or chia on Greek yogurt or cottage cheese, rather than planning separate 'fiber meals'.

EXAMPLES

• Two eggs is only 12 grams
Mel's usual breakfast was two eggs. Shah pointed out that's 6 g per egg, too little, and suggested an egg scramble with one or two yolks, extra whites and veggies, with cottage cheese or Greek yogurt on the side to reach 30 g.

• The 'add a zero' label hack
Take the protein grams, add a zero and compare that number to the calories. A drink with 23 g of protein becomes 230, which is more than its 100 calories, so it counts as high-protein. Shah says it isn't perfect, but her 18-year-old son now uses it constantly to see through 'high protein' marketing.

• Cottage cheese and chicken benchmarks
A little over a cup of cottage cheese gives about 30 g of protein (half a cup is about 14 g). A deck-of-cards-sized chicken breast gives roughly 26–30 g, a visual Mel loved for lunch or dinner.

• The fiber table

A pear has 6–7 g of fiber, about double an apple (eat the peel). Raspberries have about 8 g per serving and are one of the highest-fiber foods. One tablespoon of chia seeds adds 5 g. Hummus, pistachios, carrots and kiwi were also on the table as easy add-ins.

- **Kefir in Greek yogurt**

  Shah's trick, which she credits to a gut-health researcher: Greek yogurt can taste dry, so stir in some kefir (more sour than yogurt) for a better texture and a double probiotic hit. Kimchi was the third probiotic she showed, which she admits is an acquired taste.

- **A sample 30/30/3 day**

  Breakfast: egg scramble with veggies plus cottage cheese or Greek yogurt. Lunch: a salad with black beans and another protein such as tofu or chicken. Add berries and chia for fiber, plus yogurt, kefir or kimchi for probiotics. Shah's challenge is to try it for 7 days.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Your protein math**

  Multiply your body weight in pounds by 0.7–1.0 and split it across meals with at least 30 g at the first one. At 150 lb and 0.8 g/lb, that's 120 g a day. If you have kidney issues or other conditions, check with your doctor first.

- **Fast fiber add-ons**

  1–2 tablespoons of chia (5 g each), a cup of raspberries (8 g) or a pear (6–7 g). Any two of these covers the 10 g that Shah links to the longevity benefit.

- **Label scan order**

  Protein (add a zero and compare to calories), added sugar, serving size, calories, then trans fats.

- **Book**

  Hormone Havoc by Dr. Amy Shah lays out the 30/30/3 plan with exact meals for those who want a full plan.

Your Body Reset: The Proven Protocol to Get Stronger, Lose Fat, & Take Control of Your Health

Guest: Dr. Betsy Grunch
Date: 2026-01-01 · Duration: 1:20:53
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnFWrAA2oxM

KEYPOINTS

• Your spine is held up mostly by muscle

Dr. Betsy Grunch, a neurosurgeon and spine surgeon known online as 'Lady Spine Doc,' stresses that your back isn't just bones, discs, joints and ligaments. It's largely supported by your muscles, so strength and movement are your best protection. She says about 80% of people will have back pain at some point, including young people, and most of it can be managed at home.

• Four things she avoids to protect her back

First, no nicotine, which she calls one of the biggest accelerators of degenerative disc disease. Second, no sedentary lifestyle: move every day, even a 15-minute lunchtime walk. Third, no careless lifting: bend your knees and lift with your legs, even for an Amazon box at the curb. Fourth, no bad sleep posture, since we spend about a third of our lives in bed.

• Sleep on your back or side, not your stomach

The goal is keeping the spine's natural curves in neutral. On your back, put a pillow under your knees to take stress off your pelvis and lower back. On your side, keep a pillow between your knees so your pelvis doesn't twist. She was a lifelong stomach sleeper until pregnancy forced her to stop.

• Sitting still all day sets you up for failure

If you sit 10 hours without moving, your support muscles switch off. Get up every 30–60 minutes. She suggests an affordable desktop converter or a phone timer to remind you to stand, which keeps joints lubricated, blood moving and different muscles engaged. Sit with both feet on the floor, shoulders back and neck back. Crossing your legs is okay if you keep changing position.

• 'Tech neck' multiplies the load on your spine

Your head weighs about 10–15 pounds when upright. Lean forward to look at a phone and the force on your neck rises to as much as 60 pounds. Raise your phone to eye level and prop your monitor up, even on a box, so you look straight ahead. She worries about what years of slumping will do to today's kids.

• Extra weight means extra stress on the spine, hips and knees

Carrying 250 pounds instead of 150 adds load with every step. That's part of why she treats weight loss as spine care, alongside strength.

• Build your core, especially your glutes

Her top exercise is the glute bridge: lie on your back with knees bent and feet on the floor, then lift your hips. Strong glutes support your back. She also recommends the bird dog. Look up videos for form, and consider a session or two with a physical therapist. She sees one herself as a 'healthy 45-year-old.'

• Protein protects muscle

If you don't eat enough protein, she says, your body breaks down muscle to get it. Her target is about 0.8–1 gram per pound of body weight, so roughly 150 grams for a 150-pound person, which she admits most people don't get. That's her recommendation, so check what's right for you with your own clinician.

• Sustainable beats extreme

Crash diets, 30-day challenges and quick transformations aren't realistic. Her change came from habits she could keep forever, and setbacks are part of it. After four weeks off workouts, she ate Waffle House every day and then kept going. She stopped forcing morning workouts because she isn't a morning person.

EXAMPLES

• Her mother's crash

Her mother, one of the town's female police officers, was shot at by gang members on a 2 a.m. call. She swerved, hit a tree, broke her neck and lay undiscovered for about 15 minutes. The neurosurgeon told the family 'she's never going to walk again' and walked away. Now 65 and paralyzed for 30 years, her mom is her 'biggest social media fan' and her inspiration.

• 'A smart fat girl'

With the family focused on her mom, nobody asked how teenage Betsy was doing. She came home to Mountain Dew and Reese's cups, wasn't asked to prom, but was asked for homework help. She became everyone's helper and no one's priority, reaching 260 pounds at her heaviest.

• A postpartum disc injury

After a C-section with a nearly 10-pound baby, overweight and with her core 'destroyed,' she injured a disc and imagined a lifetime of surgeries. She called her doctor, took anti-inflammatories and rested a few days, and it healed on its own, as most disc injuries do. That was her turning point: 'Why wasn't I doing what I tell my patients?'

• The Peloton in the basement

Aiming to lose 100 pounds, she bought a Peloton and found an online community that made her feel less alone. Realizing 'doctors know nothing about nutrition,' she taught herself through books and podcasts. She lost more than 85 pounds.

• Mel's six months of not using the hotel gym

Mel admits she stayed at the same hotel for six months of tapings before trying its gym, then felt too intimidated by the equipment. Grunch's advice: front-desk staff will show you around, most gyms offer a free training session, and once you know your way around, welcome the next nervous newcomer.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Her typical day

Coffee, then eggs and oatmeal with blueberries for antioxidants. Protein and a vegetable at lunch and dinner. A protein shake or bar between surgeries. She preps meals ahead, because 'if I'm left to my own means it's dangerous.'

• Red-flag back symptoms

Bowel or bladder problems or numbness 'down there' mean the ER. Pain shooting down an arm or leg, weakness or numbness means seeing a doctor. She had triceps weakness from a herniated disc in her neck. See someone too if pain isn't improving with home care.

• If a doctor dismisses you

She sees medical gaslighting especially with young women ('you're too young for back pain'). If you feel dismissed, 'you're in the wrong office.' Find someone who listens.

Mayo Clinic Cancer Doctor: 5 Foods That Heal the Body, Starve Cancer, & Prevent Disease

Guest: Dr. Dawn Mussallem
Date: 2025-10-23 · Duration: 1:44:15
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlxbVMfvir8

KEYPOINTS

• Dr. Mussallem treats food, movement, sleep and love as part of cancer care, alongside standard treatment.
She's a double board-certified Mayo Clinic physician, an integrative oncologist and a stage 4 cancer survivor. She stresses she followed her doctors' medical advice. What she added was 'tripling down' on the healthy parts of her life instead of fixating on the diagnosis. Her message isn't 'go vegan' or skip treatment. She wants people eating whole foods, mostly plants.

• Most people, including cancer patients, aren't eating nearly enough vegetables and fruit.
She says about 90% of Americans miss the recommended servings. When she studied her own Mayo cancer center, 95% of patients fell short. She checked for food insecurity and says it wasn't driving the gap. Busy lives and not making time were. In the research she cites, people eating five servings a day had a 10% lower risk of dying from cancer and 12% lower from heart disease.

• Exercise is her 'number one' for cancer patients, even during chemo.
She kept exercising through chemotherapy and felt better as the tumor shrank. She says exercise burns off stress hormones (her caveman versus saber-tooth tiger comparison), lifts mood and may improve how well treatment works. She cites breast cancer research showing outcomes improved by 'almost 50%'. You don't need a gym: 'five minutes counts,' even walking around the kitchen or dancing.

• Berries are an easy, cheap cancer-fighting food.
She cites the Nurses' Health Study: for breast cancer survivors, every two servings of berries a week was linked to a 25% lower risk of dying from breast cancer. Mel double-checks it's two servings a week, not a day. Frozen berries count, which keeps it affordable.

• Eat at least some cruciferous vegetables raw to get more benefit.
Broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, arugula and cabbage contain an enzyme, myrosinase, that she says helps you absorb their protective compounds. Cooking cuts it back. Her fixes: nibble a little raw before cooking, add a raw arugula salad alongside cooked broccoli, or sprinkle dry mustard seed on top. If your gut can't handle one (some people can't tolerate broccoli), pick another from the family.

• Fiber is 'magic,' and protein hype is crowding it out.
She cites a recent umbrella review covering 17 million person-years. She calls it 'class one' evidence that fiber lowers the risk of dying from any cause, from heart disease and from pancreatic cancer. Another review linked fiber to a 22% lower cancer risk. Over 90% of people don't get enough, and fiber only comes from plants. To limit gas, start beans slowly and use simple swaps rather than adding beans to every meal.

• Soy is protective for breast cancer survivors, not dangerous.
Many survivors avoid soy. She points to the American Cancer Society's 2022 nutrition update, which covered soy safety, and a meta-analysis showing a 25% drop in breast cancer coming back. The benefit was strongest in estrogen receptor-negative cancer, but receptor-positive patients benefited too. She also uses edamame for menopausal hot flashes, citing Neal Barnard's research with half a cup a day plus a plant-based diet.

• Ultra-processed food is the first thing she'd cut, and the label tells you what you need to know.
She says processed meat (pepperoni, sausage, bacon, chicken nuggets, lunch meat) is a class one carcinogen. In the aisles, read the ingredient list. If there are words you don't recognize, put it back. 'Vegan' doesn't mean healthy. She told one patient to swap her weekly vegan ice cream for regular ice cream rather than eat 'the fake stuff.'

• Skip artificial sweeteners and go easy on sugar alcohols.
She describes a study in which sucralose (found in sugar-free drinks) seemed to reduce how well immunotherapy worked, possibly by disrupting the gut microbiome. She calls this suggestive. She thinks fears about erythritol are exaggerated but still on the watch list for making platelets stickier. Ingredients ending in '-ol' often cause bloating. Her green lights: dates, honey, maple syrup, stevia or monk fruit without additives.

• Sleep is medicine: 7–9 hours lets the brain 'take a bath.'
She says the brain clears toxins during sleep and the body regenerates. She links shift work to higher cancer risk and blames blue light after sundown for trouble staying asleep. Her 'three things' for every cancer patient are love (yourself and others), move and food. She notes that without self-love you won't show up for the other two.

• It's never too late, and perfect isn't required.
She cites research suggesting that eating better from age 20 could add about 11 healthy years for women and 13 for men. Starting at 60 adds about eight, and starting at 80 about 3.4. About 75% of healthy aging is modifiable. Nurses' Health Study data showed women who improved their diet after a breast cancer diagnosis also did better. Her 'speed limit' comparison: going 67 in a 65 zone won't get you a ticket if you're doing everything else right.

EXAMPLES

• Misdiagnosed for months in medical school
She was an athlete who climbed Camelback Mountain twice a day. One doctor said asthma, a second said use the inhaler more, and a third called it psychosomatic. It turned out to be stage 4 cancer: three months to live without treatment, 20 months with it. She says she met the diagnosis with acceptance, not a fight.

• Losing her husband, then needing a new heart
In 2007 her health crashed again. Shortly after, her husband died unexpectedly in his sleep, and their daughter Sophia was the one asking where Dad was. Later she spent over 12 months on the heart transplant list without a match. She says about

3,900 people wait for hearts and roughly one dies each day. On New Year's Eve 2021 she was hospitalized, and weeks later she received a 29-year-old woman's heart.

• The kiwi fix for constipation

She estimates 90% of the women she sees are constipated, some going 10 days. She says waste sitting in the gut leads to reabsorbing chemicals. Two kiwis a day for a week or two often helps, thanks to their soluble fibers. She adds that kiwi is also rich in protective compounds at the level of DNA.

• Hidden additives in a 'healthy' wrap

Mono- and diglycerides help wraps roll. She cites a French study of about 92,000 people followed for roughly seven years, which linked them to 24% higher breast cancer risk and 46% higher prostate cancer risk. Carrageenans, once common in plant milks, were linked to 32% higher breast cancer risk. A UK study tied every 10-point rise in ultra-processed food to 16% higher breast cancer mortality and 30% higher ovarian cancer mortality.

• Charcuterie without guilt

Mel worries about parties. Dr. Mussallem says she'd happily eat a couple of salami slices, alongside avocado, olives and whole-grain crackers. Don't throw away the whole meal over one item.

OTHER RELEVANT

• The five foods to lean into

Berries (frozen is fine), raw or partly raw cruciferous vegetables, high-fiber beans and whole grains, soy such as edamame, and kiwi. Ask a free AI chatbot for a list of cruciferous vegetables if you're stuck.

• Label rule

Shop the perimeter. In the aisles, put back anything listing mono- and diglycerides, carrageenan, artificial colors, or words you can't identify.

• Movement minimum

Five minutes counts. Walk, dance in the kitchen. Movement also burns off stress hormones that keep you wired at night.

• Caveat

These are her readings of observational and review studies, mostly about risk. Talk with your own oncologist before changing anything during treatment.

Feel Better Now: Neurosurgeon Reveals the New Science of Healing Your Body & Stopping Pain Today

Guest: Dr. Sanjay Gupta
Date: 2025-10-16 · Duration: 1:08:16
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcGGsCWNWM0

KEYPOINTS

• Chronic pain is common and isn't just an old person's problem.
Neurosurgeon and CNN chief medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta says one in five to one in four people in the U.S., more than 50 million adults, live with chronic pain. It includes migraines and other headaches, facial pain such as trigeminal neuralgia and TMJ, joints from shoulders to ankles, and especially the back and neck.

• Acute pain is an alarm; chronic pain is the alarm that won't switch off.
Touch a hot pan and you pull away: that's acute pain doing its job. Chronic pain persists after there's no ongoing injury. Gupta calls pain the most mysterious sensation humans have and says it must be treated that way.

• All pain is in the brain, and that doesn't mean it's imaginary.
Gupta stresses this isn't minimizing: 'If your brain doesn't decide you have pain, then you don't have pain.' In a split second the brain weighs the signal against context: has this happened before, how much did it hurt last time, is there depression or anxiety? That's why the same injury can hurt very differently on a Tuesday versus another day, and why patients can suddenly cringe in his office when nothing has happened to them.

• Your body is one integrated system, so 'baggage' turns up the volume.
Nociceptors (pain receptors), nerves, spinal cord and conscious processing are all connected. Stress, poor sleep, depression and anxiety (which he describes as 'baggage', not as a judgment) feed into how much it hurts. Gupta says the science is heading toward treating chronic pain holistically rather than just at the site.

• Neuroplasticity is neutral, so hyper-focus on pain can wire it in.
He cites the 1940s idea from Donald Hebb: 'neurons that fire together wire together.' The brain will do whatever you train it to. If you're hyper-focused on pain, that circuit strengthens. There's growing evidence the brain can rewire pain circuitry and reduce its intensity or duration, even for old pain. Mel was struck that this means old injuries aren't necessarily permanent sentences.

• Opioids crowded out older, effective tools for 25 years.
Kidney stones, dental work and hip fractures were all treated with opioids, so other methods got 'short shrift.' Gupta describes ERs now giving nerve blocks for hip fractures: about 10 minutes of numbing around the hip, pain scores dropping to zero and often no opioids needed afterward.

• Meditation measurably changes the brain and reduces pain.
Gupta calls himself a former skeptic ('I'm the guy who opens the head'). He says meditation causes measurable thickening in brain areas that help reduce chronic pain. His advice is to look at the data, without overselling or underselling brain training.

• Old injuries can be prolonged by everything that piles on top.
His friend Rich Roll, an ultra-endurance athlete, had front-and-back spine surgery and was shocked how long recovery took. Gupta says Roll's acute pain from 2012 had become wrapped in 13 years of accumulated baggage, which slowed healing.

• If a doctor says it's safe, movement is medicine.
Unless the injury is acute or a licensed professional has identified a structural problem, Mel summarizes, 'your back is your back but the pain center is in your mind.' Being afraid to move can keep you stuck. Gupta adds that surgery is right in some cases, but probably not about 90% of the time for many problems, and he's a surgeon saying it.

• You are the most reliable narrator of your pain.
Saying 'I'm in pain' to a doctor isn't enough. Get to know it: trace it, find hot spots, use as many adjectives as possible, even draw it. Track what makes it better or worse. Good pain doctors treat patients as active partners.

EXAMPLES

• Heat filaments and the MORE protocol
Eric Garland's team at UCSD placed heating filaments on the arm, hot enough that you'd drop a plate, and measured pain before and during a guided Mindfulness-Oriented Recovery Enhancement meditation. Gupta's own pain score dropped from 7.4 to 2, and unpleasantness from 5 to 1.8. The researchers compare that relief to about 5 mg of OxyContin.

• VR at Maimonides
At this Brooklyn level-one trauma center, where 120 languages are spoken, ERs are 'opioid optimized': opioids are a last resort, not a first one. A 76-year-old woman with severe knee pain wore VR goggles for 20 minutes on a virtual Indonesian beach, and her pain dropped from about 8 to 3. Gupta thinks it's partly distraction and partly lower stress across the integrated system.

• The rubber hand
A dummy hand is stroked in sync with your hidden real hand until it feels like yours. When someone smashes it with a hammer, people yank their real hand back and yell. It shows the brain decides what hurts. Mel flinched just hearing it described.

• Ceramic vase versus Tupperware
The same-sized object landing on your foot registers very differently depending on whether your brain reads it as pottery or plastic, which shows pain as a judgment about threat.

• Mel's TMJ
She had jaw surgery 20 years ago and wears a bite guard. She realized she grinds less when she prioritizes sleep, movement and stress management, which she had never thought of as chronic-pain care.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Pain journal**
  For a few weeks, log intensity, location, descriptors and context: sleep, stress, conversations, movement. Gupta's first step is finding triggers, like noticing your back hurts after certain calls.
- **Try a brain-training tool**
  Guided mindfulness meditation, or immersive VR if you have access, used regularly rather than only in a flare-up. Gupta says these work alongside medical care, not instead of it, so check with your doctor before stopping any treatment or starting a new exercise plan for a known injury.
- **Ask about alternatives**
  For acute injuries or ER visits, ask whether nerve blocks or non-opioid options fit your situation.
- **Book**
  It Doesn't Have to Hurt by Dr. Sanjay Gupta.

How to Use Your Mind to Heal Your Body With the #1 Harvard Psychologist

Guest: Dr. Ellen Langer
Date: 2025-10-02 · Duration: 1:21:20
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZYFrWZz6lM

KEYPOINTS

• Mindfulness is noticing, not meditating

Dr. Ellen Langer, a Harvard psychologist with about 50 years of research, says meditation is a practice that may lead to mindfulness, but mindfulness itself is 'a way of being.' It means actively noticing new things, grounded in an appreciation that things are uncertain and could be otherwise. You can do anything mindfully or mindlessly: a podcast, tennis, caring for a child.

• Most of us are mindless almost all the time and don't know it

'When you're mindless, you're not aware that you're not there.' Rules we absorbed when young keep running us later, so your 15-year-old self ends up dictating your 30-year-old's life. Her example: 'Do horses eat meat?' feels like an obvious no, yet in some contexts horses do eat meat.

• Mind and body are one system

Langer prefers 'mind-body unity' to 'connection.' Wherever you put your mind, your body follows. She calls the placebo 'our most effective medicine': you take nothing, believe it's something, and it acts like something. Placebos get a bad reputation because people treat 'it was all in your head' as if the head weren't part of the body.

• Your beliefs about aging and ability are often rigged against you

She notes that forgetting is treated as decline at 70 but ignored at 20. When she asks Harvard students on Thursday what she said on Tuesday, nobody knows. Tests can be designed to make anyone look good or bad, so she urges people not to accept limits passively. One of her book's working titles was 'Who Says So?'

• Words carry expectations

'Try' builds in failure: you don't try to eat an ice cream cone, you eat it. In her study, people told to 'do' a task outperformed people told to 'try.' 'Hope' also implies doubt. She doesn't hope there's coffee in the kitchen, she expects it. She suggests saying 'cured' rather than 'in remission,' because she says remission keeps people braced and stressed for years. That one is her opinion, not a tested finding.

• Stress comes from predictions, not events

Stress requires predicting something awful, and prediction is an illusion. She argues stress is 'our major killer.' She believes, without the data yet (a planned study of hundreds of cancer patients in China was derailed by COVID), that stress levels will predict the course of disease beyond genetics, nutrition and treatment. She's careful to label this as belief, separate from her research.

• Paying attention to variability helps with chronic illness

In her studies of people with multiple sclerosis, chronic pain, arthritis, Parkinson's and stroke, participants were simply phoned and asked: how is the symptom now, is it better or worse than last time, and why? Noticing that symptoms vary ('nobody is anything all the time') gives people a sense of control and helped 'across the board,' she reports.

• Don't agonize over decisions, make them right

You can never test the road not taken, so you can't know the alternative would have been better. Flip a coin or go with your first thought, then make the choice work by looking for how it helps you grow. Langer calls regret 'mindless,' because it assumes the other option would have turned out better.

• Things aren't good or bad in themselves

This isn't toxic positivity or even optimism, she says. Once you see that events are neutral until you interpret them, you're less overwhelmed and more open to possibilities. Michael Jordan would beat her at 100 free throws, but in a single shot, anything can happen.

EXAMPLES

• The 'counterclockwise' retreat

Langer had men around 80, some so frail she wondered if they'd make it through the day, live for under a week at a retreat retrofitted to 20 years earlier, acting as their younger selves. Their vision, hearing, memory and strength improved, and they looked noticeably younger, all without medical intervention. The study was even referenced on The Simpsons.

• Hotel housekeepers

Women cleaning rooms all day said they got no exercise, because exercise was something you did after work. Half were taught that their work was exercise ('making a bed is like the machine at the gym'). With no change in diet or effort, that group lost weight, improved waist-to-hip ratio and BMI, and lowered their blood pressure.

• Rigged clocks

People with type 2 diabetes played games while watching a clock running at double, half or real speed. Their blood sugar tracked perceived time, not actual time. In a newer study with a minor inflicted wound, wounds healed according to the clock's time: faster when it ran fast.

• The eye chart flipped

People expect to struggle about two-thirds of the way down an eye chart. When her team started the chart with smaller letters at the top, people read letters they 'couldn't' see before.

• Honeymoon pancreas and lifting the armoire

In Paris, Langer thought she was eating pancreas, felt sick and vomited. It was chicken, which she loves. More recently in Mexico, a giant armoire fell on her partner, who hit her head on the concrete floor. Langer lifted the armoire, which weighed twice what she does, enough for her to escape. She rejects the 'it was adrenaline' explanation: 'it's all one thing.'

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Notice three new things**
  Next time you're with your spouse or best friend, notice three new things about them. Do the same on a route you take daily. You'll find you didn't know them as well as you thought.
- **Tragedy or inconvenience?**
  When stressed, ask which it is. A spoiled meal, a missed appointment or a dented car is almost never a tragedy. Then ask how it might actually be a good thing. A delayed surgery means someone else handles your meals and you get no phone calls.
- **Rewrite the recipe**
  A recipe is just someone's idea. Make it your own. If things always turned out as expected, it would be 'like a hole in one every shot,' with nothing there.
- **Treat health claims as her views**
  Some of her stronger claims, like stress outweighing treatment in cancer, are beliefs she has not yet tested. Use these ideas alongside medical care, not instead of it.

#1 Longevity Doctor: 7 Toxic Products Destroying Your Health

Guest: Dr. Eric Topol
Date: 2025-09-15 · Duration: 0:44:16
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaaUpw6JZmI

KEYPOINTS

• Topol adds the environment to the usual lifestyle factors

Dr. Eric Topol, author of Super Agers, calls his approach 'lifestyle plus': on top of diet, exercise and sleep, you have to account for air pollution, microplastics and nanoplastics, and forever chemicals. He believes these have had far too little attention given how strong the evidence is becoming. He describes them as speeding up aging and inflammation in the body.

• Forever chemicals (PFAS) don't break down, and almost everyone already has them in their blood

Topol says there are more than 10,000 PFAS chemicals. They share a fluorine–carbon bond that makes them non-degradable, which is why they're called 'forever' chemicals. He says 97% of people have detectable levels in their blood, and that some of these chemicals are used to make plastics. We take them in through food, air and water, and they build up in the body.

• Microplastics have been found in arteries and the brain, with inflammation around them

Topol calls an Italian study of neck (carotid) artery plaque one of the most important plastics studies in years (details under Examples). Under the microscope, researchers saw plastics such as polyvinyl chloride surrounded by 'profound inflammation.' Separate studies of the brains of people who had died found plastics throughout, with marked inflammation wherever plastic sat. His conclusion: 'you can't say that this is innocuous.'

• He suspects a link to cancer in young people and falling fertility, but says it isn't proven

Topol has seen people in their 20s and 30s with colon and breast cancer and no genetic risk. He also points to falling fertility in both men and women while these particles reach the testes and ovaries. He admits critics are right that cause and effect hasn't been proven. His case is that the chemicals inflame tissue and can cause mutations, and that the trend keeps getting worse. He calls it a 'flashing yellow light,' not settled science.

• How long food sits in plastic matters, and heat makes it much worse

Topol's main kitchen rule is to cut 'dwell time' in plastic, or skip plastic altogether. Food sitting in plastic absorbs more of it. Microwaving in plastic is a 'double whammy' because heat releases far more nanoplastics into the food. His swap is glass instead of plastic containers.

• Non-stick pans and plastic utensils get into your food

Topol says Teflon and other non-stick coatings shed microscopic amounts into food, more the longer you use the pan. Mel adds that heating a coated pan while stirring with a plastic utensil is the same problem as microwaving plastic containers, and he agrees that heat increases how much ends up in your body.

• Personal care products and scented items can carry forever chemicals

Going through Mel's bathroom products, Topol's rule is to look for anything fluorinated, meaning ingredients that combine fluorine and carbon. A hairspray listing a hydrofluorocarbon was 'horrible,' because you're 'spraying forever chemicals on your head.' Products with no ingredient list at all worry him even more.

• Clean air is part of protecting your health

The tiniest air pollution particles (PM2.5) are the most toxic and travel through the body causing inflammation. Topol recommends good filtration, such as HEPA filters, and plenty of fresh-air exchange, and points to MERV 11–13 filtration in workplaces. He notes the CDC announced a move toward 'healthy buildings' but says little has actually been done.

• Topol's three biggest steps: awareness, cutting your exposure, and pressure on industry

Asked for the three things that matter most, Topol said: first, accept that air pollution, forever chemicals and micro/nanoplastics are very likely harming us. Second, cut exposure where you can as an individual and a family. Third, push industry and government to stop using these ingredients and to label them.

• Kids have been exposed their whole lives, which is why Topol thinks the timing matters

Mel, 56, figures she had little microplastic exposure for her first 20–25 years, while her children (26, 24 and 20) have had it all their lives. Topol says how long you're exposed over a lifetime matters, and that waiting another 10 years for proof of cause and effect is 'much too long.'

EXAMPLES

• Italian carotid artery study: four-fold risk

Topol says more than half the people studied had plastics in their artery plaque. That group had over four times the risk of heart attack and stroke.

• A 'spoonful' of plastic in the brain

Topol describes studies of brains from people who had died that found plastic throughout, which he and Mel describe as a spoonful's worth, with local inflammation wherever it appeared.

• Going through Mel's cabinets with Topol

Tupperware: avoid plastic containers. Hairspray listing hydrofluorocarbon 152A: out. A bright blue 'ocean mist' scented candle with no ingredients listed, which Mel could smell unlit: troubling, because it may be releasing chemicals into the air you breathe, and the color may signal artificial ingredients. Deodorant and perfume: check for fluorinated ingredients and prefer brands that list what's in them. A non-stick 'titanium' pan: food picks up the coating.

• The 3M forever-chemicals exposé

Topol points to a New Yorker article in which a 3M insider blew the whistle, saying the company knew these chemicals were harmful and did nothing. He uses it to argue that companies relying on forever chemicals, like the ultra-processed food industry, aren't fixing the problem on their own.

• Menstrual products and diapers

When Mel asks about menstrual products and baby diapers, Topol says a large review found many menstrual products had

significant forever-chemical exposure. Some manufacturers use safer components, but most don't.

- **A plastic-free school lunch field trip**
  On a marine biology field trip with his 11-year-old grandson, Topol noticed many parents had packed lunches with no plastic at all. He took it as a sign that 'some people are getting the memo.'

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Kitchen swaps**
  Store and reheat food in glass. Never microwave in plastic. Skip plastic water bottles. Unwrap produce instead of leaving it in plastic bags in the fridge for weeks. Use cloth or paper bags.
- **Label check: fluorine plus carbon**
  On cosmetics, sprays, deodorant and perfume, avoid fluorinated ingredients and be cautious with products that list no ingredients. Topol prefers simpler or organic options.
- **Home air**
  Use HEPA filtration and good ventilation. Topol says better filtration cuts both fine-particle pollution and the spread of respiratory viruses.
- **Keep perspective**
  Topol says you don't need to throw out your whole kitchen. Reduce what you can, and keep doing the proven basics in Super Agers: sleep, exercise, less processed food and staying socially connected. Much of the plastics evidence shows links, not proven cause and effect.

Do THIS to Boost Your Metabolism, Lose Fat, & Feel Better Now With Dr. William Li

Guest: Dr. William Li
Date: 2025-08-21 · Duration: 0:46:32
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjwaE0WozfE

KEYPOINTS

• Metabolism is simply how your body takes in fuel and burns it

Dr. Li skips the textbook 'sum of all chemical reactions' definition and uses a car: food is the fuel, calories are just the unit of measure (like gallons or liters), and body fat is the fuel tank. Like driving, you mostly don't think about fuel until the gauge drops and you go looking for a 'filling station' — the dinner table, delivery, or the chip drawer. That moment of choice is where he says metabolism gets derailed or supported.

• Fuel quality matters over time, not on any single day

Filling up with cheap gas once won't hurt a car, he says, but doing it every fill-up, week after week, means the car won't run as well or as long. The same applies to food: an occasional low-quality meal is not the issue, the daily pattern is. He adds that people who choose better fuel tend to take better care of the 'car' in general, too.

• Myth one: we don't have different metabolisms

Dr. Li argues everyone is born with the same metabolic 'operating system', the way two identical laptops boot the same out of the box — just as we're born with the same kidneys and brain function. What changes is what happens afterwards. He tells listeners to stop comparing themselves to a sibling or friend who 'can eat anything' and compare themselves only to themselves.

• Myths two and three: teenagers don't have sky-high metabolisms, and middle age doesn't automatically slow you down

Mel admits she repeated her mother's warning to her own kids ('enjoy that hamburger now'). According to the research Dr. Li cites, metabolism actually declines from age one to 20, and holds flat from 20 to 60 once excess body fat is accounted for. He calls that flat line the 'mic drop' finding: on hardwiring alone, '60 can be the new 20'.

• Myth four: body fat slows metabolism, not the reverse

The common story is that a slow metabolism makes you gain fat. Dr. Li flips it: carrying excess body fat is what slows the metabolism down. That reframing underpins his whole message that the engine itself is intact and can be brought back toward its baseline.

• Fat is a vital organ that forms around your blood vessels

In the embryo, he explains, blood vessels form first, then nerves, then body fat — before you have a face or a waist. Fat wraps around vessels like bubble wrap because it is the fuel tank and should sit next to where fuel arrives. Fat cells can stretch about 300%, three times their normal size, as they fill with energy from food.

• Weight gain starts with hidden visceral fat — first in the tongue

Before the 'muffin top', fat accumulates inside the body. Dr. Li says the back third of the tongue is already a pillow of fat to help swallowed food slide down, and it is one of the first places new fat appears, even in thin people (he cites Scandinavian research). A fatter tongue relaxes during sleep and partly blocks the airway, so new snoring or startled waking is his 'warning bell'.

• Chronic stress quietly blocks fat burning

A brief fight-or-flight jolt (an intruder, a near-miss in the car) actually burns fat. But stress hormones that stay high all the time interfere with burning body fat, which Dr. Li links to depression, PTSD and chronic stress. He believes this — plus less time for exercise in your 40s and 50s — explains why people gain weight even though their hardwired metabolism is stable. Addressing stress is one of the most powerful resets he names.

• Alcohol and poor sleep compound each other

Alcohol is carbs, changes body chemistry and hormones, makes you less eager to exercise the next day, and degrades sleep. Dr. Li says you need deep, good-quality sleep to reach the 'real fat-burning part' of the night. Mel, who says she used to drink to take the edge off stress, jokes that stress eating is the fallback — and he notes all these factors conspire together.

• Counting calories can backfire because it adds stress

Calories are only a unit of fuel and amounts do matter, but Dr. Li discourages tracking calories, macros or hourly blood sugar because the constant calculation is stressful, which works against fat loss. He declines to give Mel a target number, saying any figure might not fit the listener and could leave them feeling like a failure. If you overeat one day, simply eat less the next.

EXAMPLES

• Herman Pontzer's lifespan metabolism study

Dr. Li describes a study led by Herman Pontzer at Duke with about 90 researchers across 20 countries, measuring roughly 6,000 people from 2 days old to 90+. Participants drank water with tagged hydrogen and oxygen, so breath, blood, urine and sweat revealed energy use. Raw results looked 'all over the map' until researchers adjusted for body size and excess fat — 'like pulling the cloak off the statue of David'.

• The four phases of metabolism

Per that study as Dr. Li presents it: 0–1 years, metabolism runs about 50% above adult levels (so what babies are exposed to, from microplastics to pacifiers, matters); 1–20, it declines toward adult levels; 20–60, it is flat; 60–90, it slows by only about 17%.

• Mel's daughter Sawyer

Mel shares (with permission, as it appears in The Let Them Theory) that Sawyer has long felt it was unfair that her younger sister could eat anything while she struggled. Dr. Li's answer: everyone's underlying metabolism is the same and can be reactivated, so measure your own progress, not someone else's body.

• Three foods plus a bonus

Beans cooked in extra virgin olive oil, which feed the gut microbiome he calls '39 trillion trainers'; tomatoes, for lycopene, which he says burns harmful fat; and onions, rich in quercetin, which he says activates brown fat to burn white fat — caramelize them in olive oil if raw onion is too strong. Capers, hand-picked Mediterranean flower buds sold in jars, are his favorite quercetin 'bombs'.

• Even fidgeting counts

Dr. Li says studies show leg-shaking and tapping burn some energy, as do laundry, making the bed and scrolling. Still, nothing replaces real motion: a 30-minute walk, a run if your knees allow, swimming (easy on bones and muscles) or dancing.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Use your overnight fast

Dr. Li's first step is intermittent fasting, which he frames as the natural fast that happens while you sleep — periods of not eating let the body switch to burning stored fat. Protecting good sleep strengthens it.

• Quit the clean plate club

You don't have to finish what's served; eating half the plate is fine and guilt-free. Not putting the extra fuel in is, in his words, 'the easy way', since otherwise you carry it for years.

• Walk with a friend, and picture something that makes you content

Walking with someone adds social bonding, which lowers stress. He also suggests deliberately focusing on one thing that makes you happy, since even imagining it can lower stress that otherwise blocks fat burning.

• Be patient and skeptical of rapid-loss promises

Fat accumulated over years — 'extra gas cans on your pickup truck' — takes time to burn. Claims of losing a set number of pounds in 10 days or two weeks aren't sustainable, he warns. If you want numbers, he suggests even a one-off consult with a nutritionist who tailors them to your height, weight, activity and health conditions.

Try It For 1 Week: 3 Small Habits That Change Your Body, Energy, And Life

Date: 2025-07-21 · Duration: 1:08:50
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXZo0u_6ies

KEYPOINTS

• Three habits came up most across 53 expert conversations

To cut through 'wellness whiplash' (keto one day, carnivore the next, cold plunges, supplements), Mel and her team reviewed 53 past episodes with doctors, scientists and psychologists. The three habits that came up most were moving your body, getting off your phone, and prioritizing relationships. She points out that sleep, water, diet and supplements didn't make the top three, and that none of the three require buying anything. The episode revisits clips from four of those experts.

• Habit 1: Exercise, framed as the main anti-aging tool

Mel says 18 medical guests named exercise the number-one habit. Cardiologist Dr. Eric Topol, founder of Scripps Research and author of Super Agers, says it's 'the only thing we know that lowers our biological age'. He adds that cancer, heart disease and dementia take more than 20 years to take hold, which leaves time to prevent them, especially for people at high risk. Mel stresses this isn't about weight loss or a perfect body.

• Topol's minimum: 30 minutes of continuous movement, five days a week

His prescription is at least 30 minutes of 'constant motion' that raises your heart rate, five days a week and ideally daily. Add cheap resistance bands for strength and stand on one leg for a minute at a time on each side for balance. With patients, he works out the practical details first: what time of day, at a gym, at home or outside. He says within weeks people notice better fitness, posture and balance.

• Your body is built to move

Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Vonda Wright, who has treated more than 100,000 patients at the University of Pittsburgh, says if we were meant to sit we'd be built like a mushroom or Jabba the Hutt. Instead our strongest muscles are below the belly button. Mel adds that if you use a wheelchair, you have arms to roll yourself. Wright's core message is that getting older doesn't have to mean getting weaker.

• Wright's plan: brisk walks, lifting twice a week, daily balance

Walk at least three hours a week, split into about four 45-minute sessions, briskly but not so fast you can't talk. Lift at least twice a week, starting with your own body weight and working up to 'heavy', which she says is individual. Practice balance every day, for example while brushing your teeth. She says there's no age limit and cites women who started in their 60s.

• Habit 2: Put the phone down

Mel cites NYU researcher Dr. Adam Alter's estimate that the average person will spend about 20 years of their life scrolling. She also cites Pew data that 31% of Americans are online almost constantly. She describes a recent peer-reviewed study in which restricting smartphone access for 72 hours changed activity in brain areas tied to impulse control and cravings, and she says it reset dopamine and serotonin systems. She calls herself a recovering phone addict. The habit is about removing something, not adding one.

• Kids copy what you do, not what you say about phones

Clinical psychologist Dr. Shefali argues that teenagers aren't equipped for the scrutiny and cruelty strangers bring through social media. Handing it over without limits, she says, is like letting an eight-year-old travel the world alone. Instead of lecturing or confiscating, parents should show up with genuine curiosity and full attention. 'You have to become the energy greater than the phone.' Children, she says, 'will blossom under your gaze.'

• Habit 3: Relationships may matter most for long-term health

Dr. Robert Waldinger directs the Harvard Study of Adult Development, which began in 1938. The finding Mel highlights: how satisfied people were with their relationships at 50 predicted who would be healthiest at 80, without anyone measuring cholesterol, steps or BMI. She says warm relationships help regulate stress and lower the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. She calls loneliness 'a signal, like hunger', not a personal flaw.

EXAMPLES

• Wright's 'Start' class

For nine years in Pittsburgh, Wright ran a twice-weekly class for beginners who started with about 51% body fat and couldn't hold a plank or walk around the track. After three months of weight-bearing exercise they completed a 3.2-mile walk-run and held a two-minute plank.

• The 11 push-up challenge

Wright says every woman should work toward 11 regular push-ups, because upper-body strength is critical for women. Mel says about 60,000 people posted videos trying it. Mel managed only four on her knees at first, though she could do 11 against the wall, and she's now up to 11 on her knees. Her tip: set an alarm for 11:11.

• Mel's phone rule

Mel doesn't keep her phone on her and leaves it in a corner of the kitchen. People complain they can't reach her, but she says she's far more present and less stressed, and calls it as life-changing as exercise. She and Chris also take a 12-minute walk down the driveway and back every day.

• Strangers on the train

Yale's Dr. Laurie Santos describes University of Chicago researcher Nick Epley paying commuters a $5 Starbucks gift card to talk to a stranger on the L train. People expected it to feel awkward, but those who chatted felt more positive, energized and less lonely than those who sat alone. Introverts got the same happiness boost as extroverts; they just predicted it would go worse.

• Making friends in a town of 3,000

After moving in her early 50s from the place she'd lived for 26 years to a tiny town where she knew no one her age, Mel rebuilt her social life by complimenting people, asking questions and greeting everyone. She compares warmth to popcorn: once you're 'popped', it spreads and comes back to you.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Make exercise simple**

  Walk whenever you can: when you're overwhelmed, after dinner, when you're frustrated with your partner. Start push-ups against a wall or on your knees, even just one. Balance on one foot while you brush your teeth or wash dishes. Mel quotes the familiar line that you never regret moving your body. With the average person sitting about 10.4 hours a day, she says, even 15 minutes between meetings helps.

- **Start with one phone-free hour**

  Put the phone in a drawer, basket, purse or car, keep it off the table at meals and morning coffee, and set an alarm as a reminder. Alter calls the payoff 'time dilation': fully present moments with people you love feel much longer.

- **Be the one who waves first**

  Epley's line, via Santos: 'Nobody waves, but everybody waves back.' Compliment people, ask what they're reading or ordering, smile and say hello, and make the plan instead of waiting for an invitation. Mel adds that some of your favorite people may be ones you haven't met yet.

Don’t Learn This Too Late: 5 Things Top Heart Surgeon Says You Must Avoid to Live Longer

Guest: Dr. Jeremy London
Date: 2025-07-07 · Duration: 1:11:49
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMmYWoKv_PM

KEYPOINTS

• Heartburn that eases when you rest can be a heart warning sign.
Heart surgeon Dr. Jeremy London, with 25 years of experience, ignored his own symptoms for that reason. It felt like reflux or spicy food disagreeing with him, and it settled when he stopped moving. Mel said she would have assumed the opposite. London's point: chest discomfort that comes with exertion and goes away with rest is a classic red flag, not reassurance.

• Heart attacks often don't look like the 'TV heart attack.'
London says symptoms can be an upset stomach, jaw or elbow pain, slight shortness of breath or getting tired easily, not just crushing chest pain down the arm. Pain at rest or pain that keeps getting worse is a 911 call. He says women's symptoms in particular are often atypical, and the medical research has had a male bias for years. As he put it, 'women are not little men.'

• Smoking is the single most damaging habit, and nicotine of any kind adds risk.
London says he can't name anything that harms every organ as much as cigarettes. He includes vaping, and says nicotine pouches like Zyn, while likely less harmful and free of the cancer risk from tobacco, still constrict blood vessels and can cause mouth problems. He admitted to having used them himself.

• Don't drink red wine for your heart.
London calls alcohol toxic to every cell and recommends limiting or avoiding it. Red grape skins do contain resveratrol, a polyphenol that may make blood cells 'slippery' and widen blood vessels. But he says the amount of wine you'd need for any effect is far beyond what's healthy. Some early human studies on concentrated resveratrol supplements show a possible benefit. His rule: drink red wine if you enjoy it, not because you think it's medicine.

• Alcohol-based mouthwash may be an overlooked risk.
London says the gut microbiome starts in the mouth, and harsh alcohol mouthwashes wipe out its bacteria. Mel, who uses mouthwash morning and night and had never checked the label, was surprised. He suggests alcohol-free versions, which he says work just as well.

• About 80–90% of what we take in from the outside world comes through the mouth, so start with a food journal.
London says writing down everything you eat shows the easy wins, like 'filler' snacks, empty calories and soft drinks. Mel added that research links food journaling to weight loss. He's realistic: about 80% whole foods and 20% processed counts as a win, and holidays happen.

• 'The longer the shelf life, the shorter your life.'
His shopping rule is to stick to the outside edges of the store and avoid the aisles of canned and jarred goods, which often hide preservatives, coloring and sugar. When you do buy packaged food, read the label and pick the best option.

• What London eats
He skips breakfast when he isn't hungry, because he doesn't like eating when his body isn't asking for food. Lunch is greens with protein, 'colorful.' Before a midday workout he has fruit and a handful of nuts, or a smoothie. Dinner is protein front and center with more greens, kept light because he sleeps better that way. He uses intermittent fasting as a tool, not a strict rule.

• Heart disease is mostly a plumbing problem in three territories.
The heart is a pump that needs its own oxygen and fuel, delivered by blood vessels on its front, side and back surfaces. Blockages in those vessels are coronary artery disease, the most common problem he still operates on. His own blockage was 99% in the artery at the back of his heart.

• You can't outrun your genes, but you can move the needle.
For people whose parents had heart attacks or high blood pressure, London says inherited risk is real and some people are born with high cholesterol or blood pressure. Lifestyle and treatment can still meaningfully change those numbers, which is why he pushes people to know their numbers rather than give up.

EXAMPLES

• London's own heart attack
At the family cabin, his wife Tracy said he 'didn't look right.' On a dog walk on December 4th in 30-degree weather, the 'reflux' came back and he was sweating and peeling off layers. That evening he was deer hunting with his 15-year-old son, a quarter mile from the truck with no cell service, when crushing chest pain dropped him to his knees. He thought, 'He's going to find me dead in this field.'

• He told no one, then it came back
Once home, he took an aspirin and a beta blocker, went to bed and said nothing. The pain returned the next morning on the stairs. Tracy called it 'the most selfish thing you have ever done to me and the boys,' and he agreed. A cardiologist friend said 'there's no way.' Within minutes of arriving, London was taken to the cath lab, where they found the 99% blockage.

• His priorities changed overnight
He woke up grateful, and things that mattered 24 hours earlier 'didn't even make the list.' Only family, friends and the people who care about him remained. He says he now truly understands patients who describe crushing chest pain.

• 'Clear my browser history first'
When he posted his home-alone heart attack checklist, the most popular joke reply was about clearing browser history before calling 911. London's response: 'Are you kidding me?'

OTHER RELEVANT

• If you think you're having a heart attack alone

1) Call 911. 2) At night, turn on the porch light. 3) Unlock or open the front door so EMS can get in if you pass out. 4) Lie down, ideally with your feet raised, or sit, so a faint doesn't cause a head injury. 5) Call family or a friend. Chew a 325 mg aspirin unless you have bleeding risks such as GI bleeding problems.

• Two-week reality check

Keep a food journal, check your mouthwash label, and count your weekly drinks and nicotine use. These are the easy changes London says most people overlook.

• Caveat

This is general advice from one surgeon. Symptoms, aspirin use and blood pressure care should be decided with your own doctor.

Advice From the #1 Longevity Doctor: Add 10 Years to Your Life With 3 Simple Habits

Guest: Dr. Eric Topol
Date: 2025-05-01 · Duration: 1:05:26
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ54wma-JQA

KEYPOINTS

• Aim for healthspan, not just lifespan

Dr. Eric Topol is a cardiologist who practiced for nearly four decades, founded the Scripps Research Translational Institute, and wrote Super Agers. He says the goal is more years of healthy living. Across study after study, following the full set of lifestyle factors is associated with an extra 7 to 10 years of healthy aging. He says no magic pill is needed.

• The big three diseases take more than 20 years to develop

Cancer, cardiovascular disease and neurodegenerative disease (mainly Alzheimer's and Parkinson's) develop over two decades or more. That leaves a long window to prevent or delay them. Mel cites the book's figure that 95% of Americans aged 60 and older have a chronic disease. Topol says that if those people had started at 50, many would have avoided disease or developed it at 75 or 80 instead of 60. He's clear he isn't talking about cancers and diseases that strike the young.

• It's never too late, or too early

Starting in your 20s gives you more healthy years, but Topol says people who begin at 70 or 80 still benefit. He describes a 98-year-old woman in the book, Mrs. L.R., who is mentally sharp, does jigsaw puzzles and oil paintings, and stays socially active, even though her parents died in their 50s. He says lifestyle can override, or work independently of, bad genes. Aging is inevitable, but becoming frail and weak isn't.

• 'Lifestyle plus' goes beyond diet, exercise and sleep

The three big gaps Topol sees are poor diet heavy in ultra-processed food, too little aerobic and resistance exercise, and too little sleep, especially deep sleep, which he ties to brain health. The 'plus' covers social isolation, environmental exposures like air pollution, microplastics and 'forever chemicals,' and time outdoors in nature.

• Screening should match your risk, not just your age

Topol calls age-based screening outdated. He says most cancers aren't found by screening, and about 88–89% of women will never get breast cancer. He favors polygenic risk scores for breast, colon, prostate and lung cancer, which cost about $50, are offered by around 10 companies, and can be done with saliva. Combined with family history and blood work, they can tell someone whether they need a mammogram every 10 years, never, or often.

• Skip full-body MRIs and blood cancer tests unless you're at high risk

Multi-cancer blood tests like Grail's (Mel's husband had ordered one for about $700) flag maybe 4–5 people per thousand, and about half of those already have advanced cancer. Full-body MRIs aren't validated and often produce false positives. Topol says he wouldn't take one even for free. They can make sense for people at significant risk, such as a strong family history of pancreatic cancer.

• No anti-aging product has been proven in humans

Topol quotes his own description of a 'longevity circus': 800-plus US longevity clinics, some charging up to $50,000 a week. Rapamycin suppresses the immune system. NAD+ supplements have no human data. Senolytic drugs aren't selective. Young-plasma infusions and IV vitamin drips have nothing behind them. Yamanaka-factor reprogramming made old mice look young down to the organ level, but caused tumors, because the hallmarks of aging overlap heavily with those of cancer.

• Exercise is the only thing known to lower biological age

Epigenetic clocks, based on methyl groups on DNA, estimate biological age. Topol says exercise is the only intervention shown to widen the gap between your real age and your biological age. He used to focus on cardio. Now he says the data on resistance training is just as solid, and that it also improves balance. He says nothing beats exercise for slowing whole-body aging.

• Chronic stress and loneliness speed up aging through inflammation

Many physicians don't accept it, Topol says, but the data linking stress to cancer, heart disease and neurodegeneration is strong. Chronic stress ages the immune system and fuels inflammation. Adaptive stress, the kind that pushes you to exercise, is fine. Social isolation is critical: time spent alone rises sharply with age. Nature and music help mental health, and he says AI will never replace the human bond.

EXAMPLES

• Chris van Tulleken's ultra-processed experiment

Topol describes the UK physician and author of Ultra-Processed People, who ate a mostly ultra-processed diet for 30 days, Super Size Me–style. He gained about 10 kilos, and his brain scans and inflammatory markers 'went off the track.' Topol links ultra-processed food to overeating, inflammation, type 2 diabetes, atherosclerosis, brain inflammation and cancer risk. He says it makes up 60–70% of the typical diet and should be cut back, not necessarily eliminated.

• The Finnish risk-score study

In a Finnish study Topol cites, people told they had a high polygenic risk for heart disease went on to change their lifestyles. People rarely change while healthy, but specific personal risk motivates them.

• Rapid-fire food verdicts

Cut refined sugar and sugary drinks, and avoid high-fructose corn syrup. Swap regular salt for a potassium chloride substitute, especially since most sodium comes from processed food. Sugar substitutes are uncertain, so avoid them if you can. Coffee is the rare good news: two to four cups a day is linked to less chronic disease and inflammation.

• Supplements 'enrich your urine'

His book says there's little to no hard evidence for vitamins or supplements, especially in people who already eat well. He describes patients nervous to show him their long supplement lists. If they feel better, he won't argue, but he tells them it's likely

a placebo effect and that some supplements carry risks.

- **A blood test for Alzheimer's risk**

  Topol says the p-tau217 blood test is as good as a PET scan at showing Alzheimer's risk. He predicts AI will combine many layers of a person's data to estimate not just whether, but roughly when, someone might develop mild cognitive impairment. Mass General Brigham already gives patients polygenic risk scores.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Topol's exercise prescription**

  Do at least 30 minutes of continuous movement that raises your heart rate five days a week, ideally every day. Add resistance work a few times a week (cheap bands are fine) and balance practice, like standing on one leg for a minute and switching. Decide when and where you'll do it, whether that's the gym, home equipment or a walk outside.

- **Eat more protein as you age**

  The standard recommendation is 0.8 g per kilogram of body weight, about 70 g for a 70 kg (roughly 150 lb) person. Older adults may need 1–1.2 g/kg to counter muscle loss. That's around 70–90 g a day, not 150–160.

- **Ask your doctor about personalized risk**

  If cancer, heart disease or Alzheimer's runs in your family, ask about polygenic risk scores alongside family history and routine labs, rather than paying for unvalidated whole-body scans.

- **Turn outward**

  Topol's advice is to get outside, make and see friends, and build social contact into your life, especially as time alone naturally increases with age.

#1 Weight Loss Doctor: The Truth About Obesity, Ozempic, Dieting, & How to Feel Better Now

Guest: Dr. Rocio Salas-Whalen
Date: 2025-04-17 · Duration: 1:17:47
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57OyIDnHZAk

KEYPOINTS

• Obesity is a chronic, multifactorial disease, not a personal failing

Dr. Rocio Salas-Whalen, triple board-certified in endocrinology, obesity medicine and internal medicine and the founder of New York Endocrinology, opens with an apology on behalf of doctors: 'We failed you.' She says obesity is not self-inflicted, and that weight loss should not be a full-time job that consumes your life. She has seen grown men cry in her office on hearing for the first time that it isn't their fault.

• Five causes, and you control roughly one

Her framework: lifestyle (diet, exercise, sitting); genetics, including research she cites suggesting parents' weight before conception affects their child; hormonal changes such as hypothyroidism, PCOS, perimenopause and menopause; aging, with muscle loss and more fat storage; and environment. Environment includes processed food, places where walking isn't practical, remote work, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals like BPA and pesticides that mimic hormones. Some antidepressants and blood-pressure drugs can also promote weight gain.

• She says obesity raises cancer risk more than many people realize

Salas-Whalen says obesity increases mortality and is the biggest risk factor for more than 15 cancers. She claims it's a bigger breast-cancer risk than alcohol, hormone therapy or genetics, and the top risk for pancreatic, colon, prostate and thyroid cancers. She argues it should be treated like type 2 diabetes or hypertension: lifestyle support plus medication, with lifestyle not replacing treatment.

• GLP-1s are 20 years old and began with a lizard

The first FDA-approved GLP-1, Byetta from Eli Lilly, arrived in 2005 as a twice-daily injection for type 2 diabetes. Salas-Whalen says Dr. John Eng, an endocrinologist researching at the Bronx VA, isolated the compound from Gila monster venom, which causes pancreatitis in its prey. Saxenda (daily) was approved for weight loss in 2012, Ozempic for diabetes in 2017, and the same drug was approved for weight loss in 2021 as Wegovy, partly for insurance reasons. She has prescribed GLP-1s for weight since 2010 and compares newer versions to iPhone upgrades.

• They target both reasons we eat: fuel and reward

GLP-1s suppress hunger hormones and raise satiety hormones, so people feel full on a third to a half of their usual portion; for many that means two small meals a day. They also act on receptors in the brain's reward area for food and alcohol, so an anticipated meal or drink no longer delivers the same pull. She says they only stimulate insulin when glucose is above normal, which is why they can be used without diabetes.

• Thin doesn't mean healthy, so get a body-composition scan

Salas-Whalen measures body composition at every visit, using bioimpedance (InBody) for accessibility, DEXA as an option, or MRI as the gold standard. She uses obesity thresholds of 32% body fat and up, against normal ranges of 18–28% for women and 10–20% for men. Some slim patients are 'skinny fat' (sarcopenic obesity), and people who think they need to lose 5–10 pounds may actually need to lose 20–25 because they're under-muscled.

• Who is a candidate, and who isn't

Her intake covers when a patient first became weight-conscious (often age nine or ten), medications, two generations of family weight history, and gynecological status. The only absolute contraindication she names is a personal or first-degree family history of medullary thyroid carcinoma; other thyroid cancers don't count. They're not recommended during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

• Many people will need them long term, but not everyone

Chronic diseases are controlled, not cured, she says, and stopping doesn't remove genetics, hormones, aging or environment. Lifelong obesity usually means long-term use. Someone who never struggled until gaining 30 pounds after pregnancy may not need it long term.

• Muscle is the make-or-break factor

Eating less can cost muscle indirectly, and she calls muscle your biggest metabolic organ, burning calories and pulling sugar from the blood when it contracts (Mel connects this to post-meal walks). She sees fat drop rapidly in patients who keep or gain muscle. Her targets: about 90–100 grams of protein a day and strength training twice a week, upper and lower body, with protein first. She attributes 'Ozempic face,' hair loss and loose skin to losing weight too fast without enough protein.

EXAMPLES

• How weight loss was discovered by accident

Early GLP-1s were hard sells: they were twice-daily injections with heavy nausea, and diabetes patients linked injections with insulin and 'failure.' Then patients came back to follow-ups with better glucose and lower weight. Salas-Whalen says that was unheard of, because most diabetes drugs, insulin included, promote weight gain.

• The doctor's own six months on a GLP-1

Salas-Whalen lifted weights from her early 20s and never struggled with weight. After having kids at 38 and 39 and entering perimenopause (her mother had early menopause), she couldn't lose 30 pounds. At 42 she used a GLP-1 for six months, returned to her weight and hasn't needed it since. She felt no shame and says it made her a more empathetic doctor. She tells new mothers to give themselves one to two years before worrying about weight.

• 'Three pounds, half of it muscle'

Patients pleased with a three-pound loss often see on the scan that half was muscle. She says that's when they start lifting and eating more protein. Midway through treatment she sees a 'switch' from an external focus on looks to liking how strong they

feel.

• Mel's ad feed

While researching the episode, Mel was flooded with ads for mail-order GLP-1s. She mentions friends who complained of indigestion and one warned about suicidal ideation. Salas-Whalen says she has never had to stop the drug for those symptoms and stresses that safety depends on the prescriber's expertise.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Avoid med spas and compounded versions

Medical offices don't sell FDA-approved GLP-1s in the office; they send prescriptions to a pharmacy. Compounded versions sold by med spas, telehealth or mail order are unregulated and may contain fillers. Salas-Whalen cites studies showing most hospital visits for severe side effects come from compounded drugs and overdosing, whereas FDA versions come in pre-dosed pens. 'Safety should not be jeopardized by cost.'

• Skip microdosing

She says sub-therapeutic doses lack evidence, rely on compounded products, and aren't needed if you're already metabolically healthy. She notes Eli Lilly's tirzepatide vial as one lower-dose option for maintenance.

• Insist on real supervision

Look for an obesity-medicine doctor, NP or PA, with follow-up every 8–10 weeks to adjust the dose and check muscle. Expect the conversation to take far longer than a 15-minute slot.

Look, Feel, & Stay Young Forever: #1 Orthopedic Surgeon’s Proven Protocol | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Vonda Wright
Date: 2025-03-06 · Duration: 1:22:42
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO_x3gnXBzg

KEYPOINTS

• 'We don't get old because we age; we get old because we stop moving'

Dr. Vonda Wright, a double board-certified orthopedic surgeon who was turning 58 at the time, argues that decline into frailty is a myth rooted in inactivity. Our strongest muscles sit below the belly button, and walking is the first independent skill we learn. Otherwise, she jokes, we'd be built like a mushroom or Jabba the Hutt. She estimates 50 to 70% of people do no intentional movement daily and spend about 20 hours a day sitting or lying down.

• Aging isn't a problem to solve; how you age is what matters

Dr. Wright objects that aging men get 'longevity' and 'distinguished' while women get 'anti-aging.' She points out that midlife is roughly 37 for men, given US male life expectancy of 76.4, and about 40 for women. Her core belief: there is never an age or skill level at which you can't change the trajectory of your health.

• Healthspan, not just lifespan

US life expectancy is about 81 for women and 76.4 for men, but healthy, active years often end far earlier. Many people spend their last 20 years in steady decline and frequent doctor visits. She cites 'sedentary death syndrome', a set of about 33 chronic conditions including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and dementia, and argues movement is the one 'pill' that helps them all. She acknowledges some cellular aging is beyond our control, but says lifestyle influences mitochondria, senescent ('zombie') cells and inflammation.

• Standard aging studies mostly show how sedentary people age

Population studies like Health ABC, which followed 70-year-olds, found people slowed down, gained fat and lost muscle. Most of them didn't exercise. Dr. Wright's research group, PRIMA, studied recreational 'masters' athletes from their 30s up to age 103. She reports they kept muscle mass, bone density and frontal-lobe cognitive function, and produced longevity proteins.

• 35 to 45 is 'the critical decade', but it's never too late

By your mid-30s you have some life figured out but still have 'youthful vigor' and youngish stem cells. Around 45, perimenopause makes it 'a different game' for women. Building movement, lifting and nutrition habits beforehand softens the shock. For anyone older, even 92, she says improvement is possible. Start by walking, even around the kitchen table.

• Bone and muscle are communication organs

Dr. Wright describes bone as the body's 'master communicator.' It releases osteocalcin, which she says signals the brain to produce BDNF for new neurons, helps muscle and the pancreas regulate glucose, and supports testosterone production in men. She notes that people with osteoporosis have more dementia. Contracting muscle releases irisin, which helps build bone, and klotho, which she calls a longevity protein. She notes that in animal studies, mice unable to make klotho die young.

• FACE your future: Flexibility, Aerobic, Carry a load, Equilibrium

F is flexibility and mobility, moving joints through full range of motion (Pilates and yoga count), because tendons tighten with time. A is aerobic training at the two extremes. C is carrying a load, meaning lifting heavy. E is equilibrium and foot speed, since brain-to-muscle pathways degrade from about age 20 and falls are what break bones.

• Train aerobically at the extremes, not the middle

Dr. Wright says mid-intensity HIIT classes are 'a good way to get injured and see me in my office on Mondays.' Her prescription is mostly low-heart-rate walking or easy cycling, plus all-out 30-second sprints twice a week. Sprinting is about heart rate, not speed: go as hard as you can on a rower, treadmill or bike, fully recover, and repeat four times.

• Lift heavy, especially women in midlife

When the ovaries 'retire' around 50, estrogen no longer stimulates muscle growth. She says one in three women ends up frail or with a broken hip. Her target: every woman should work up to 11 push-ups and then lift heavy, defined as a weight you can manage four to six times in upper-body push and pull exercises (bench press, pull-up) and lower-body ones (squat, deadlift). It may take six to nine months. She suggests a few lessons from an expert rather than years of training, and says to drop the 'pastel' light weights.

• Movement feeds joints, and arthritis needs a whole-person approach

Cartilage is pressure-sensitive, but joints are nourished by fluid pressure from movement. For a former pro tennis player with knee arthritis, Dr. Wright cut inflammatory foods, especially added sugar, which she recalls Americans eat at about 16 pounds a month. She also increased protein and fiber, got her lifting again so muscles absorb shock, and added pool mobility work. Cortisone, she says, lasts about three weeks and doesn't fix the root cause. She uses platelet-rich plasma, made from the patient's own blood, and says multiple studies show it reduces inflammation.

EXAMPLES

• The thigh MRI images

Her widely shared 2011-era MRI images compare thigh cross-sections. A 40-year-old recreational athlete's looks like lean flank steak. A sedentary 74-year-old's looks like heavily marbled Kobe beef or 'cottage cheese.' An active 70-year-old's looks nearly identical to the 40-year-old's.

• Active 70-somethings beat sedentary 35-year-olds on klotho

Her group measured circulating klotho: active people over 70 had more than sedentary people around 35, and active midlife people had the most.

• 'Aunt Mary' with a broken hip

Choking up, Dr. Wright describes on-call hip fractures. A woman in pain and lying in urine from untreated menopause-related urinary problems, often with heart issues that complicate clearance for a 45-minute surgery, and often with dementia, tells her

daughter, 'I've not always been like this… don't get old.' Dr. Wright says about 30% of women die after breaking a hip.

• From cancer nurse to surgeon

At 23, Dr. Wright gave overnight chemotherapy on a cancer floor at Rush University in Chicago, spending six years with women fighting for their lives, sometimes browsing the Home Shopping Network together to feel normal. She says it shaped her whole-person approach. In 2022 only 7.4% of orthopedic surgeons were women, up from about 3% when she trained.

• The START class

For nine years in Pittsburgh she ran a twice-weekly class for beginners who started around 51% body fat, couldn't hold a plank, and couldn't walk around the track. After three months they completed a 3.2-mile walk-run and held a two-minute plank.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Her weekly prescription

Walk briskly at least 3 hours a week, in about four 45-minute sessions (she walks at a 4–5 incline at about 4 mph). Lift heavy at least twice a week. Add four 30-second sprints with full recovery twice a week. Practice balance daily by brushing your teeth on one foot and alternating legs. Add impact like skipping or jumping, because bones need it.

• Get past 'temporal disconnect'

Like retirement saving, it's hard to invest for a future self you can't picture. So focus on feeling great today. Mel suggests listening to podcasts while walking instead of sitting.

• No more excuses

If walking hurts, try walking in a heated pool at the local Y. If dishes are waiting, 'there is no such thing as the dishes police.' Dr. Wright herself gained 30 pounds in menopause and worked to reverse it.

Change Your Body & Your Life in 1 Month: 4 Small Habits That Actually Work

Guest: Dr. Rangan Chatterjee
Date: 2025-02-20 · Duration: 1:43:45
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMHNvy9pFj0

KEYPOINTS

• Most modern illness is tied to how we live

British physician Dr. Rangan Chatterjee, author of Make Change That Lasts, says medicine was built for acute problems like a cough and fever: a 15-minute visit, a pill, done in seven days. Today, he estimates, 80–90% of what doctors see is in some way linked to modern lifestyles and stress. He stresses this isn't blame; genetics matter too, but many people never chose how they live intentionally.

• Four pillars: food, movement, sleep, relaxation

Changes in these four areas, he says, can affect energy, weight, mood and more. Lifestyle isn't only prevention; it can be part of treatment alongside medical care, including for someone under an oncologist. His key question: which pillar needs the most work? Pushing a diet from 85% to 90% won't move the needle if you sleep five hours a night.

• Food: favor one-ingredient foods

There's no single right diet, but the core principle is minimally processed food — things like an avocado or an apple that have no ingredient list. He explains that a sugary cereal at 7 a.m. spikes blood sugar, which then falls; around 9:30 or 10 you feel desperate for a snack because a rapid drop triggers stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. Mel was shocked to find 32 grams of sugar in a bowl of cereal she'd thought of as healthy.

• Treat diets as experiments and become your own expert

When well-credentialed experts contradict each other on plant-based versus keto, he suggests trying one for three to four weeks while tracking energy, sleep, focus, digestion and bloating, then trying the other. That's long enough for taste buds to adapt and for withdrawal to pass. On fasting, the right question is "for whom, and in what context": potentially game-changing for someone with type 2 diabetes or excess weight, a poor fit for someone underweight or with an eating disorder. When a diet fails, people blame themselves rather than the diet.

• Use "feel, feed, find" for cravings

Before the 9 p.m. ice cream, pause. Feel: is this physical or emotional hunger? Feed: how does the food feed that feeling — less stress, less loneliness, a treat for yourself? Find: what else could meet that need, like 10 minutes of YouTube yoga, calling a friend or a bath? He says the first step is 80–90% of the work, and that it works for alcohol, social media and pornography too. He also keeps foods he doesn't want to eat out of the house, since willpower gets tested enough outside.

• Movement: a five-minute keystone habit

He wakes around 5 a.m., starts his French press, sets a five-minute timer and does a strength circuit in his kitchen in pajamas — press-ups, squats, calf raises, sometimes kettlebell swings or curls — before he gets to drink the coffee. He's done it for over five years, including in his Boston hotel room. Like brushing your teeth, it doesn't need variety. The real payoff is evidence that he can trust and rely on himself.

• Sleep starts in the morning

Bright morning light helps set your body clock; if it's dark, turn on bright lights or buy a light box, or get outside on a 10 a.m. coffee break. He cites a study finding people who slept 5.5 hours instead of 7.5 ate about 22% more calories the next day. Even an extra 20–30 minutes helps. His wind-down starts one hour before bed: laptop closed, no money or household talk, and phones charging in the kitchen.

• Relaxation: chronic stress changes how you see the world

The stress response — rising blood sugar and blood pressure, faster clotting, an alert amygdala — was built for predators but now fires at inboxes and headlines. Over time, he says, it can contribute to weight gain, fatigue and type 2 diabetes. He cites recent studies suggesting up to 80% of Americans are chronically stressed. A stressed nervous system reads the same email differently on Friday than after a restful weekend.

• Practice daily solitude

He calls daily solitude the most important practice for anyone in 2025: a walk with nothing in your ears, journaling, breathwork or coffee without scrolling. Your thoughts and actions are downstream of what you consume. Solitude also lets you notice body signals; for him, tightness in his right upper back warns that stress is building.

EXAMPLES

• Dinner for breakfast

A pescatarian patient in his early 40s with belly weight, low mood and constant hunger ate sugary cereal every morning. Chatterjee suggested eating leftover salmon and roasted vegetables for breakfast as a week-long experiment. He returned feeling like a different person: more focused and not hungry until 2 p.m.

• From zero gym visits to 70 minutes a week

A 48-year-old patient agreed to 45-minute gym sessions three times a week and came back four weeks later having gone zero times. Chatterjee took off his jacket, taught him modified body-weight moves on the office floor and asked for five minutes twice a week. Four weeks later the man was doing 10 minutes every evening while dinner cooked, then started lunchtime walks, cooking better and prioritizing bedtime; years later he meditates daily.

• Results on TV

On his BBC series Doctor in the House, he says he used the four pillars to put a woman's type 2 diabetes into remission in 30 days, cut another's panic attacks by 80% in six weeks and greatly reduce menopausal symptoms for a woman who didn't want hormones.

• Caregiving as identity

When his father, a hospital consultant who for 30 years slept only three nights a week, developed lupus and spent 15 years

on dialysis, Chatterjee believed every need was his to meet. At the 2013 cremation, years of right-sided back tightness vanished. Caring for his mother now, he accepts he can't always be there and that she may be disappointed — and says he cares for her better as a result.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Pick one five-minute action for seven days**
  Journaling, yoga, star jumps — anything; make it one minute if five feels too much. Do it at the same time daily and attach it to something you already do.
- **Try the 3-4-5 breath**
  Inhale for three, hold for four, exhale for five. One breath takes 12 seconds; five take a minute. A longer exhale helps switch on the relaxation side of the nervous system — useful before a tense meeting or argument.
- **Caregivers: oxygen mask first**
  Five minutes a day for yourself makes you a better carer. Notice where stress shows up in your body and ask what it's telling you.

Eat THIS to Lose Fat, Prevent Disease, & Feel Better Now With Dr. William Li

Guest: Dr. William Li
Date: 2025-01-02 · Duration: 1:32:43
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSBVq3Wj7Lg

KEYPOINTS

• The fat that matters for health is the visceral fat you can't see

Dr. Li, a physician-scientist who founded the Angiogenesis Foundation and wrote Eat to Beat Disease and Eat to Beat Your Diet, says the scale and the mirror are crude measures. The harmful fat is visceral fat, which wraps around your organs 'like a baseball glove' inside the tube of your body and pushes your waistline out. A growing belt size is the more telling sign.

• Body fat is an organ, and healthy fat helps insulin work

Fat produces hormones, including adiponectin, which he says partners with insulin to pull glucose into muscles. By his account it circulates at about 1,000 times the level of any other hormone. When fat cells get overstuffed and inflamed, that hormone system breaks down and metabolic problems follow, which is why overeating low-quality food is so damaging.

• Humans have no 'click' that stops the fuel tank overfilling

His analogy: a gas pump clicks off when the tank is full, but people keep eating. Fat cells can swell to about 300% of their size, and when they run out, stem cells make new ones. Eventually fat leaks out and gets trapped in the liver. He calls non-alcoholic fatty liver disease a silent epidemic now driving liver failure, while stressing that all of it is reversible with better choices, even after decades.

• A 12-hour overnight fast is enough, and it's built around sleep

He 'debunks' strict 16:8 fasting as hard for busy people. Finish dinner at 8, with nothing but calorie-free drinks after the dishes are put away, sleep 11 to 7, and wait an hour after waking (he walks or reads email first). That gives 12 hours in fat-burning mode, which he says clinical studies show is plenty to lose weight over time.

• Eating fast and distracted makes you miss fullness signals

In a gap year before medical school, living with an Italian host family, he noticed Mediterranean meals were never eaten alone or rushed. People talked about the food with gratitude and weren't over-served. Americans, he says, shovel food down while scrolling, eating alone or complaining.

• Stop when you're satisfied, not full

He invokes the Japanese principle hara hachi bu, stopping at about 80% full. If you need to unbutton your pants, you've gone too far, like hearing the scrape when you hit the parking block. Eat slowly until you'd say 'that was pretty good, I'm good,' not 'I'm full.'

• Brown fat burns white fat, and cold or certain foods switch it on

Brown fat sits deep around the neck, breastbone and shoulder blades. When activated it works like lighting a gas burner, burning white fat for heat. Cold triggers it, so try a cool shower for about 10 minutes, stopping when it gets uncomfortable. He insists you talk to a doctor before cold plunges if you have high blood pressure or heart rhythm problems.

• He names four things to avoid: soda, 'nuclear' packaged health foods, processed meat and plastic bottles

A regular soda has 7 to 9 teaspoons of sugar. He says diet soda drinkers also gain weight, citing recent research that artificial sweeteners harm gut bacteria. Read labels on airport bars and 'barbecue' nuts for emulsifiers, dyes and artificial flavours. He notes the WHO classifies processed meats as a Group 1 carcinogen, especially for colon cancer, while calling himself a 'reasonableist' about the occasional bologna sandwich.

• Microplastics are the newest concern, and he flags what is unknown

He says we swallow about a credit card's worth of plastic each week. An Italian study found plastic in plaque removed from neck arteries, and people with it had about four times the risk of fatal heart attack or stroke. Plastic has also been found in brains, blood and testicles. He says he doesn't yet have enough data to confirm hormone disruption.

EXAMPLES

• One tomato before lunch

He cites a Portuguese study in which healthy, normal-weight female graduate students ate one ripe tomato an hour before lunch for a month, with no other changes, and lost about a pound. He credits lycopene, and says simmering tomatoes at about 190°F for 20 minutes boosts it by 250%. He also cites Tufts research showing lycopene collects in body fat.

• A can of beans five times a week

University of Toronto research on people with metabolic syndrome, in his telling, found that roughly a can of beans five days a week shrank waistlines by about an inch in a month, thanks to fibre feeding the gut. His favourite is white navy beans stewed with rosemary, olive oil and shallots.

• Pomegranate, Akkermansia and GLP-1

He describes pomegranate's ellagitannins as encouraging gut mucus that feeds Akkermansia muciniphila, a bacterium with a newly discovered fragment, P9, that he says prompts the body to make its own GLP-1, the target of drugs like Ozempic. Drink about a cup of pure juice and check that it isn't apple juice with colouring, or better, eat the seeds.

• The USDA inspector's dissolving boots

A retired meat inspector told Dr. Li he had to replace his rubber boots every four months because fluid on processed-meat plant floors dissolved them. He also cites the podcast Science Vs on meat glue binding scraps into deli cylinders.

• No coffee or tea on planes

He skips onboard hot drinks because he says the water tanks are cleaned only once or twice a year, and brings his own metal or glass thermos filled after security.

• His pantry pasta

When he misses dinner: boil pasta, warm olive oil in a stainless pan, add chopped tinned mackerel, sardines, mussels or squid, and a squirt of double-concentrated tomato paste. For lunch he has sourdough with a tin of conservas and pickles.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **His four-week approach: diary, swap in, fast, two-thirds plate**

  Keep a food diary for two weeks with no guilt, then swap in healthy foods you already love (his book lists 200). Add the 12-hour fast, then serve two-thirds of what your eyes want and skip seconds.

- **Foods he says activate brown fat**

  Apples and coffee (chlorogenic acid), greens like bok choy (sulforaphane), extra-virgin olive oil, tomatoes, kiwi (vitamin C and fibre that he says shifts gut bacteria within 24 hours, with the skin blended into smoothies), matcha (whole-leaf, with Japanese research showing waist loss), dark chocolate of 80% cacao or more with coffee as a 'mocha', and edamame.

- **His top three starting rules**

  Drink only water, coffee or tea, without dairy, which he says binds the beneficial compounds; nut milk is fine. Cut back on ultra-processed food with 20-plus unpronounceable ingredients. Eat slowly and stop at 'I'm good.' Add walking or any movement.

- **Shop the produce entrance and the middle aisles**

  Local, seasonal produce is fresher. Don't skip the middle aisles: olive oil, lentils, canned beans, dried fruit and tinned seafood are there. Replace plastic bottles, leftover containers and cups with glass, ceramic or metal, and never microwave food under plastic.

Pull Yourself Together: The Best Expert Advice to Make You Feel Incredible

Guest: Patrick McKeown, Dr. Shane O'Mara, Dr. Gina Poe, Dr. Neha Sangwan
Date: 2024-08-19 · Duration: 1:02:36
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlmccJomcek

KEYPOINTS

• Mel boils roughly 200 episodes down to three pillars: breathing, walking and sleeping

She sets relationships aside and asks what you would focus on if you looked in the mirror with limited time. Her answer is not gluten-free diets, infrared masks or supplements, but three things you already do daily and, she argues, mostly do wrong. Nail them and you've covered '80% of your life.'

• Mouth breathing pushes your body toward fight or flight

Breathing coach Patrick McKeown has Mel notice that a mouth breath is faster and sits high in the chest, which he says activates more fight-or-flight. He recommends nose breathing at rest and during exercise. He says it raises blood oxygen uptake by nearly 10%, and that slightly higher carbon dioxide helps red blood cells release oxygen to muscles, organs and the brain.

• Everyday breathing feeds stress, not just the other way around

McKeown says dysfunctional breathing (faster, upper-chest, irregular) shows up in at least 10% of people but up to 75% of people with anxiety and panic disorder. He argues habitual poor breathing keeps stress high, not just the reverse, and that changing the breath works even when your mind is too busy for mindfulness. A stuffy nose, he adds, makes snoring and sleep apnea two to three times more likely.

• Walking challenges the brain, not just the legs

Neuroscientist Dr. Shane O'Mara of Trinity College Dublin breaks down a trip to the shop: standing up, balancing, orienting, building a mental map, pacing yourself on a hill, carrying bags home. Each is a small challenge that wakes up brain rhythms that stay quiet while you sit. His analogy: a new bike left in the garage for a year.

• Being sedentary is linked to personality change and memory decline

O'Mara says people who become more sedentary, even in midlife, grow less social and open and report more negative emotion. He cites a Chicago-area study of people in their late 60s and early 70s: walking a couple of miles three times a week grew memory-related brain regions and improved memory, while the inactive group declined more.

• Small bursts of walking spread across the day beat one big session

You don't need a 30- or 40-minute block. O'Mara favors lots of low-level activity with rests, like two minutes of walking every half hour, and warns that one workout won't 'zero out' a day of sitting. For heart benefits, walk fast enough that talking gets hard.

• 10,000 steps is made up, but adding 5,000 steps a day is a useful target

O'Mara calls 10,000 invented, his favorite origin story being a mistranslation from a 1960s Japanese company. The average US adult walks about 4,000 steps, so adding about 5,000 gets most people close. He says all-cause mortality falls by something like 30 to 40% somewhere between about 4,500 and 7,500 steps a day.

• Morning light sets the clock that runs your sleep

UCLA sleep researcher Dr. Gina Poe, 30 years in the field, explains that every cell's clock is synced to a master clock, the suprachiasmatic nucleus, which light through the eyes resets daily. Morning light, even on a cloudy day, marks 'time zero.' Bright or blue light at night tells the system it's morning and pushes you later.

• Deep sleep is when the brain cleans itself

Poe describes a roughly 90-minute cycle through N1, N2 and N3, the deep slow-wave stage. In N3 the brain clears the day's 'junk', such as unfolded proteins. Skip it and you wake with a 'junky brain.' Mel adds that you're wired to sleep well, so stop calling yourself bad at it.

• Stress ties all three pillars together

Mel closes with physician Dr. Neha Sangwan, who says stress causes or worsens more than 80% of illness. When she asked colleagues why they didn't ask patients about the roots of their stress, they told her not to ask a question you can't handle the answer to. Mel's point: poor breathing, too few steps and bad sleep all add stress.

EXAMPLES

• The five-second nose-pinch breath hold

Take a normal breath in and out through the nose, pinch it, hold for five, then breathe normally through the nose for three or four breaths, and repeat. McKeown says the hold stimulates the vagus nerve to slow the heart, and carries pooled nasal nitric oxide into the lungs. Mel felt built-up pressure drop right away.

• Nodding breath hold to clear a stuffy nose

After a normal exhale, pinch your nose and nod while holding, working up to about 30 seconds, five or six times. McKeown says skip it if you're prone to panic or anxiety, pregnant or have heart problems. His 26-person Limerick pilot showed a 70% drop in rhinitis symptoms at three months, but was only published as an abstract and never followed up.

• Mel's 2,800 steps versus Shane's 9,785

Mid-interview Mel finds 2,800 steps on her phone; O'Mara shows 9,785. He points to the Hadza in Africa, who walk 10,000 to 20,000 steps a day and on average lack diabetes and excess fat. His first instruction: check what you actually walk.

• Judy Robbins and the Wednesday walking group

Mel's mother-in-law Judy walks at least five miles a day at 86, and her parents Bob and Marsha, 75 and 80, walk every morning. Mel's 6:30 a.m. Wednesday walking group in Southern Vermont gets her out even at 20 degrees in the dark. She suggests singles try a walking group instead of apps, and changing routes like her husband Chris.

• Dr. Sangwan's five-question 'awareness prescription'

Sangwan asked patients: Why this part of your body? Why now? What clues make sense in hindsight? What else needs healing? If you spoke from the heart, what would you say? She says patients later reported needing half their migraine medication or a third of their anxiety medication.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Pillar one: close your mouth**

  Breathe low and slow through your nose all day, including during exercise, and go back to the five-second pinch-and-hold whenever you notice racing thoughts. Do the decongesting version only if none of McKeown's warnings apply to you, and stop at whatever level feels comfortable.

- **Pillar two: add 5,000 steps to your own baseline**

  Check your phone's step count first, then add about 5,000, which O'Mara puts at roughly 4 to 5 kilometers. Spread it out: two-minute walks between sitting stretches, walking errands, a group walk. On some walks, go fast enough that talking is hard.

- **Pillar three: Dr. Poe's four sleep habits**

  Get outside light first thing, even two minutes helps and 20 minutes is plenty, ideally while walking. Exercise during the day hard enough to get your heart pounding. Take a warm bath at night, which warms your hands and feet and helps your core cool by about half a degree. Keep caffeine low and screens dim or blue-light-filtered in the evening.

8 Realistic Healthy Habits That Make a Huge Difference

Guest: Dr. Aditi Nerurkar
Date: 2024-08-17 · Duration: 0:45:57
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kd7I6GrdGM

KEYPOINTS

• Shop the perimeter of the grocery store
Dr. Aditi Nerurkar, a Harvard physician and stress expert, tells patients to stay on the outer ring of the store. That's where the produce, dairy, whole grains and lean proteins are, while the center aisles in the US are mostly processed and ultra-processed foods. Fruits and vegetables, plus fermented foods like yogurt, kombucha and kefir, support what she calls the gut–brain connection.

• The Mediterranean diet is a way of life, not a diet
She calls it the gold standard: mostly plants, fresh produce, minimally processed foods, whole grains, beans, nuts and olive oil, with less dairy and red meat. She is clear this isn't about living like a monk. Food is pleasure, and a slice of chocolate cake under stress is 'good for your soul.' The problem is when it becomes a nightly habit, like her patient's 11 p.m. cake that started to affect his cholesterol.

• Small swaps add up for the microbiome
Rather than a lifestyle overhaul, she suggests a few forkfuls of sauerkraut on your lunch sandwich or an extra helping of vegetables at dinner. Adding prebiotics and probiotics bit by bit, even if not every meal, strengthens the microbiome over time.

• Lifestyle comes before supplements
Patients bring her bags of supplements. She records them in the chart as she would medications, and she stresses that she believes in conventional medicine. But when someone sleeping four hours and drinking four to eight cups of coffee a day asks for the best burnout supplement, she answers that sleep is a therapeutic intervention: cut the caffeine and move a little. Mel adds that the bigger the problem, often the smaller the solution.

• You are never too old to change
She invokes neuroplasticity, calling the brain a muscle that responds to outside input, and says she has had 80-year-old patients whose behavior changes made all the difference in their stress and burnout. She suggests 'parenting yourself' back to health with the basics you'd give a child: a bedtime, less screen time, good food and daily movement.

• Sitting is harmful in its own right
Beyond the benefits of exercise, she says prolonged sitting itself raises anxiety, stress and burnout. The mechanisms aren't entirely clear; one idea is that you 'stew in your own emotions.' There's no set dose for how often to stand. After a two-hour meeting, get up instead of turning straight to Slack and email.

• Fake your commute so your brain can switch modes
About 85% of employees favor hybrid work, but the old commute did a psychological job: it moved you out of home mode into work mode, and the brain 'loves compartments.' Her fix takes 2–5 minutes. Set up your workstation, get out of pajamas, walk outside, grab a coffee, review the day's meetings and to-dos, then come back and start. If you can, bookend the day the same way instead of rushing straight to daycare or dinner.

• Multitasking is task switching, so monotask with time blocks
She says only about 2% of brains can truly multitask. For everyone else, constant switching weakens memory, productivity and the prefrontal cortex's ability to solve complex problems. Her workaround for four tasks in an hour: spend 5–15 minutes on each with short breaks between, so you make headway on all of them without the switching cost.

• Habits take about eight weeks, but you'll feel it sooner
She gives people a solid three months because they may slip, but says many feel a difference within a week. She encourages a concrete goal framed around your future self, such as 'I want to sleep through the night.' Being fed up is valid motivation too. And because even positive change is a stressor, big overhauls backfire when you're already stressed.

• Chase eudaimonic happiness, not just hedonic
Hedonic happiness, like Netflix binges, fancy cars and designer bags, is a real and needed 'Band-Aid.' But the hedonic treadmill pulls you back to a set point, as with lottery winners. Eudaimonic happiness, built on meaning, purpose and contentment, is the kind she says science links to cellular and genetic changes that hedonic pleasure doesn't produce.

EXAMPLES

• The 800-person sitting study
She cites a study in which the people who sat most had a 112% higher risk of diabetes, 147% higher risk of heart disease, 90% higher risk of death from heart disease and 50% higher risk of death overall. She uses it to back the pop-culture line 'sitting is the new smoking.'

• Ultra-short bursts of activity and cancer risk
She cites research on 1–2 minute bursts: taking the stairs, parking far from the store entrance, running for the bus. She says these were associated with a 40% lower risk of dying from cancer. That's why a hallway or staircase walk still counts.

• Her own burnout and the techno gym
As a resident working 80 hours a week, trained under the motto 'pressure makes diamonds', her 'diamond cracked.' A doctor told her to get a massage and relax, which didn't help. She had a state-of-the-art gym in her basement, but the mirrors, machines and blasting techno made her turn around and never go back. Instead she walked the scenic route home after 30-hour shifts in Philadelphia, starting at 2 minutes and building up.

• Zoom dysmorphia and the camera-off ask
During the pandemic, constantly seeing your own face fed what's been called Zoom dysmorphia, and she says Zoom fatigue is real. Her rule: showing up is enough. When she asks 'do you mind if I turn my camera off?', people often say yes with relief, or suggest a phone call.

- **The guitar-playing colleague**
  Early in her career, a doctor told her on a Thursday that he could only play guitar on weekends, and he hadn't played at all the week before. That conversation inspired her prescription to 'live a lifetime in a day.'
- **A study on 10-minute breaks**
  She describes brain-scan research comparing workers who took no breaks with those who took incremental 10-minute breaks. The break group ended the day with lower stress and better memory, attention and engagement. The researchers called the breaks a reset from cumulative stress.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Walk 10 minutes a day instead of scrolling**
  She walks daily rather than planning three hour-long gym classes, because a daily habit avoids decision fatigue and the self-efficacy crash of missing sessions. She frames it as mental fitness, not cosmetic abs, which she says has never motivated a stressed patient. Five minutes is fine, and 20 is great.
- **Try walking meditation**
  She hated sitting meditation at first. Walking while focusing on your feet, which have about 30 bones and 100 muscles, gets you out of your head and into your body. Mel, married to a daily sit-down meditator, said it was a relief to hear that walking counts.
- **Live a lifetime in a day**
  Even 2 minutes each: childhood (play and wonder for no reward), work (anything meaningful, paid or not), vacation (let your mind wander), community (a text or quick call, since she says loneliness equals smoking 15 cigarettes a day), solitude (for creativity), and retirement (reflect on what you got done before bed).
- **Add strength and balance as you age**
  She now aims for 30 minutes most days, including resistance training. After nearly falling off a balance board two months ago, she now stands on a wooden one during calls.

How To Stop Waking Up Feeling Tired: 7 Tips From a Harvard Researcher

Guest: Dr. Rebecca Robbins
Date: 2024-06-10 · Duration: 1:18:47
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wsslt3ynA-E

KEYPOINTS

• Most people aren't getting restorative sleep

Dr. Robbins, a sleep scientist at Harvard, says two in three Americans don't consistently get the sleep they biologically need. Between 20% and 50% struggle to fall asleep or to get back to sleep after waking at 2 or 3 a.m. In her lab's research, fewer than three in ten say they wake feeling restored. She notes doctors get only about 20 to 25 minutes of sleep training in a typical medical curriculum.

• Behaviour change beats sleep medication over time

In clinical trials comparing sleeping pills with behavioural strategies for insomnia, she says the behavioural changes win out over time once people actually put them in place. There's a time and place for medication, but small, free changes add up.

• Sleep is when the brain files and prunes memories

During sleep the brain rehearses the day, decides where memories belong and lets go of what isn't needed. Researchers increasingly think dreaming is part of this, the brain 'throwing spaghetti against a wall' to see where new events fit. Mel's library analogy (books reshelved at night, unpopular ones sent to a sister library) landed with her. All-nighters backfire: rested people get the same work done in a fraction of the time.

• Consistency is king, even above total hours

Humans aren't built for 'yo-yo' schedules. Her 'dirty secret': someone who can manage only five or six hours but keeps them consistent will do better than someone getting eight or nine on erratic schedules. She still pushes toward seven or more, but for shift workers or single parents with two jobs, protecting a fixed window comes first.

• Set your wake time first, then count back nine hours

Pick the earliest time you have to be up in a typical week and use that alarm seven days a week, sleeping in no more than about an hour. Daylight saving time shows how much one hour throws us off. Count back nine hours to set when you start getting ready for bed. Sleep need is partly genetic: children of two long sleepers may need eight to nine hours, and others closer to seven.

• Light sets your clock: get it by day, avoid it at night

The suprachiasmatic nucleus, just behind the eyes, is your circadian pacemaker. It shuts off melatonin when daylight hits your eyes and releases it in darkness. Even cloudy daylight works, and afternoon light matters as much as morning light. Screens mimic the sun and engage the planning brain, so start with five screen-free minutes before bed and build to 15 or 30.

• Healthy sleepers take 15 to 20 minutes to fall asleep

Sleep is a process, not a switch. Falling asleep the moment your head hits the pillow, like Mel's husband Chris on planes, is usually a sign of sleep deprivation, the way gorging signals starvation. The same 15 to 20 minutes applies to getting back to sleep after waking in the night.

• Lying awake in bed trains your brain to link bed with stress

If the 'not again' voice starts, get up and keep the lights low. Do a breathing exercise cross-legged on the floor or in an armchair, read under a sleep-friendly bulb, or fold socks, anything boring. Don't pick up your phone. Motion-sensor night lights in the hallway, even on the toilet rim, save you from using your phone as a flashlight. Change the story from 'I'm a bad sleeper' to 'I've got this.'

• Alcohol and caffeine both quietly wreck sleep

Alcohol helps you fall asleep but disrupts sleep architecture, which is why people wake at night and feel unrested even after nine hours. Try dry weekdays, for example Monday to Wednesday. Caffeine has a half-life of about six to nine hours, and a second cup stacks on the first. She notes FDA guidance of about 200 mg, roughly a small coffee, and uses a firm 'no coffee after lunch' rule herself.

• See a doctor if a solid week of good habits doesn't help

If, after really committing to these strategies, you still take 20 to 40 minutes to fall asleep every night, wake wired every night, or suspect you're waking repeatedly, that may be a sleep disorder that behaviour change alone won't fix.

EXAMPLES

• Her own wind-down ritual

Once her boys are in bed at 8:30, she tidies a little, dims the lights, turns off her phone, washes her face and showers. Then she sits cross-legged and does 4-7-8 breathing (in for four, hold for seven, out through pursed lips for eight) for five to seven rounds. She writes down intrusive thoughts, reads a few pages, does progressive muscle relaxation from the toes up, and says a prayer.

• Mel's 2:14 a.m. bathroom scroll

Mel used to wake at 2:14, use her phone as a flashlight, and end up on social media or texts on the toilet, which is exactly the habit Dr. Robbins says keeps the waking going.

• A 'sleep marriage', not a 'sleep divorce'

She calls sleep a social behaviour and supports couples sleeping apart if snoring or shift work disrupts it: cuddle, then go to separate rooms. Without a spare room, try a pillow wall, earplugs rated for 60 dB or more, and white noise to mask intermittent sounds.

• Mel's 22-year-old mattress and 5:30 dinner

Mel and Chris had just replaced a mattress they'd slept on for 22 years. She also moved family dinner to 5:30, after their son kept raiding the fridge after practice, and noticed her sleep improved.

• Blue daylight lamps for early risers and shift workers

For the more than 25 million Americans on shift schedules, or anyone up before sunrise, a blue daylight-spectrum lamp at work can mimic sunrise. Some are strong enough to treat seasonal affective disorder. Don't stare into it.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Design the bedroom**
  Keep it at 65 to 68°F, cooler (65 or below) and with more airflow during menopause. Make it pitch black by taping over charger and cable-box lights, since eyelids are very thin. Clear out anything stressful, like laundry piles or a hated alarm clock. Replace pillows and mattresses that cause neck pain.
- **Keep a stack of note cards by the bed**
  Write down the dry cleaning, 'call Mom', the vet appointment. The cards become tomorrow's to-do list, and your brain learns 'not now.'
- **Eat early and light**
  Follow 'breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, dinner like a pauper', with at least two hours and ideally three between dinner and bed. A smoothie works as a busy-night dinner. Couples can connect over tea, cribbage or a puzzle instead of a late meal.
- **Nap if you're a healthy sleeper**
  The afternoon slump comes from a natural dip in core temperature plus lunch. Five to ten minutes of sleep helps, but skip naps if you're dealing with insomnia so sleep pressure builds. Use a warm-screen tool like f.lux if you must work late.

Master Class on How To Fix Your Digestive Issues & Gut Health (With a Renowned GI Doctor)

Guest: Dr. Robynne Chutkan
Date: 2024-06-06 · Duration: 1:24:25
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEYcfcJ0p1o

KEYPOINTS

• Gut problems are common and often kept quiet

Gastroenterologist Dr. Robynne Chutkan, who has practiced at Georgetown for 27 years, cites an MDVIP study finding that two-thirds of Americans have gut issues, rising to 73% of 18-to-44-year-olds. She points to ultra-processed food, busy lives and stress, along with greater awareness. An American Gastroenterological Association survey found 40% said GI issues interfered with socializing, errands, exercise or sex, and one in three won't bring it up unless their doctor asks.

• Your microbiome responds quickly to what you eat

Chutkan contrasts the gut with your genes: you're stuck with your genetic hand, but your gut keeps changing. She cites a 2014 Nature study in which switching people from a high-animal-protein, high-fat diet to a plant-focused one changed their gut bacteria and which bacterial genes were active within about 30 hours.

• The key number is 30 different plants a week

According to the American Gut Project, which Chutkan describes as more than 10,000 people in 40 countries, labels like vegan, omnivore or carnivore didn't predict a healthy microbiome. What did was eating 30 or more different plant foods a week. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, beans and whole grains all count. Variety and eating seasonally matter more than amount, and a handful of berries is plenty. She says some animal protein is fine if plants make up most of the plate.

• Probiotic supplements are a lot like multivitamins

Chutkan says there's no clear evidence that a probiotic helps the average healthy person. Products are lightly regulated, the bacteria may be dead, and the ones that survive may only stay for under an hour. Worse, high-dose blends could compete with your own native microbes. The exception is medical-food probiotics backed by 100-plus studies for conditions like Crohn's and ulcerative colitis. Her biggest worry is people using a pill instead of changing how they eat.

• Feed the bacteria you already have

Prebiotics are the fibrous foods your bacteria eat. Chutkan's examples include stringy fibers like asparagus, celery, oats and dandelion greens. Probiotics are the bacteria themselves. She calls fermented foods like kimchi and sauerkraut a 'powerhouse,' citing Stanford research suggesting even a tablespoon of sauerkraut a day delivers multiple species and useful metabolites. She adds that a locally, organically grown apple can carry millions of microbes.

• Her three foundations: water, movement and fiber

Movement triggers nitric oxide and the gut's wave-like contractions. When things stall, you get bloating, constipation and bacterial overgrowth. She notes that nursing-home residents have the worst GI problems because they don't move, not because they're old. Hydration is the plumbing: once she started measuring and drinking 100 ounces a day, her own bowel movements improved dramatically. She estimates about half the constipated, bloated patients she sees improve with proper hydration alone.

• Early germ exposure helps train the immune system

Chutkan explains the hygiene hypothesis developed by British epidemiologist David Strachan. In a large study following children from birth into adulthood, kids in big, germ-filled households had lower rates of autoimmune disease than kids raised very clean. She says maps today still show higher autoimmune rates in countries with more sanitation and chemicals and less contact with soil and animals.

• Go once a day, without straining

The textbook says three bowel movements a week is normal, but she calls that arbitrary. Elimination should happen daily. Mel's routine (once a day, in the morning, feet on a Squatty Potty, formed and soft, quick in and out) earns Chutkan's 'stool nirvana' label. You can still be constipated with daily or twice-daily movements if emptying is incomplete. She compares that to waking at night: you go, but there's still 'something on the launch pad,' often shown by a smeary wipe.

• Women's anatomy makes bloating and constipation more likely

Women's colons average 3 to 5 inches longer, she says, which lets them reabsorb more water to maintain amniotic fluid during pregnancy. The extra length means more twists and loops, sometimes called a redundant or tortuous colon. Women also have a deeper, wider pelvis shared with the uterus, ovaries and bladder, and lower testosterone, which means looser abdominal muscles. She calls these features 'not a design flaw,' and says they're why colonoscopies take longer in women.

• Stress pulls resources away from digestion

In fight-or-flight mode, blood flow shifts to the brain and big muscles, and digestive enzymes and acid decrease. Chutkan describes a study of college students during finals in which some harmful gut bacteria multiplied dramatically. For irritable bowel syndrome, she says stress is rarely the whole cause but can be a major contributor.

EXAMPLES

• A gastroenterologist's typical day of eating

Breakfast is a green smoothie of collards, kale, spinach, celery, parsley, mint, green apple and lemon on unsweetened coconut water, sometimes followed by smoked salmon, eggs or a sweet-potato-kale hash. Lunch is usually soup, like split pea, lentil, or leeks, onion, garlic and scallion blended with broth. Dinner is protein, starch, vegetables and salad. She also has dark chocolate daily and admits to the occasional bag of Doritos on a road trip.

• The medication table and the trash can

Chutkan has patients bring every prescription, over-the-counter drug and supplement and lays them out, with a wastebasket nearby. She never stops a prescription she didn't write and sends those questions to the prescriber. She warns that the top cause of emergency GI bleeding is too much ibuprofen and similar drugs, and recalls ICU weekends spent stopping serious bleeds.

- **Morning-and-night tape measure test**

To tell bloat from belly fat, measure around your belly button morning and night for about a week. Big swings suggest bloating. Fat usually varies by less than an inch. She notes many patients send photos showing them flat in the morning and swollen by evening.

- **Yogurt as a surprise bloater**

She says 60% to 70% of people worldwide are lactose intolerant, and many lose the ability to digest lactose over time or after an infection. Many of her patients eat yogurt or cottage cheese daily to boost protein, and cutting dairy often helps. Salt, alcohol (which irritates the gut and causes fluid shifts) and sitting too long, which slows lymph drainage, also add to bloating.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Two-day reset after an indulgent trip**

For a healthy person who comes back from vacation backed up, she suggests two days of clear liquids (broth, tea, green juice rather than smoothies) plus about a quarter bottle of liquid magnesium citrate at night. Check first for kidney disease and stay near a bathroom. She prefers this to stimulant laxatives like senna, which she says the colon can become dependent on.

- **See a gastroenterologist quickly for red flags**

Get seen promptly for blood in the stool, weight loss, vomiting, real abdominal pain or nausea that won't let up.

- **The 10-day Gut Bliss method: remove, replace, restore**

Remove ultra-processed food, alcohol, NSAIDs, unnecessary antibiotics and rushed bathroom habits, which she compares to putting the stopper in a bathtub before filling it. Replace by adding healthy bacteria mainly through high-fiber and fermented foods. Restore with time outside, mind-body practices, quiet, less stress and plenty of water.

Live a Healthier, Happier, and Longer Life: The Secrets to Feeling Young Forever

Guest: Judy Robbins
Date: 2024-05-20 · Duration: 0:51:47
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T13rQENVeQ

KEYPOINTS

• Mel's 4-foot-1 mother-in-law returns to answer listener questions at 86

Judy Robbins, turning 87 in September, went skydiving for the first time at 80 and got her first tattoo at 85. Her first appearance drew so many questions that Mel brought her back. Mel calls her an expert in longevity 'with lived experience,' a counterpoint to doctors and researchers.

• She's walked daily for decades: four miles minimum

Judy started running at 33 or 34 in the early 1970s to keep up with her husband Ken, who is 6'2". Today she walks four miles a day, tracked on her Apple Watch: 'it can be five but it can't be less,' or she feels guilty and walks somewhere else to make it up. She adds yoga or Pilates once or twice a week. Mel has watched her head out in Vermont winters in a snowsuit and spiked shoes.

• Exercise creates energy rather than draining it

Judy's pitch to older people who say 'why start now?': you're less tired. Many assume a walk will exhaust them, but she says endorphins build and you come home wanting to do something rather than nap. She also notes that most friends her age, especially men, don't walk, and that anything, a walk or a nightly glass of wine, becomes a habit you miss.

• She's no health purist, and enjoys herself

Judy drinks coffee as soon as she gets up, skips breakfast and admits she drinks 'not enough' water, counting kombucha, apple cider vinegar and a fresh orange. After exercise she has a smoothie: a full packet of vanilla MET-Rx, a bodybuilder protein mix, ice, kale, sprouts, blueberries, strawberries and coconut water, with at least four Nabisco ginger snaps. Mel jokes that this is not a health episode.

• Appetite naturally shrinks with age

Lunch is grazing, like eating chicken salad standing at the fridge, unlike her partner John, who eats three square meals with a napkin on his lap. Dinner is usually chicken or fish; she's moved away from meat out of thinking about animals. Judy says older people often simply aren't as hungry, and she and John often split a main course. When she wondered about quitting wine, her son Chris told her not to bother at 86.

• Social connection now comes first for longevity

Judy says what she reads about longevity used to put the Mediterranean diet and exercise first, but now ranks social connection first, because loneliness brings depression and self-doubt. You can't wait for people to call. If nothing is going on, she creates a dinner party. Six guests is her ideal number because everyone talks together.

• A retirement community gave her security and activity

A self-described FOMO, she decided to move the morning after a friend said she was going. On her second day a neighbor named Mary walked over with orchids. If Judy doesn't emerge for four or five hours, someone checks on her, unlike her old 25-acre property or her Florida community, where 'I could have been flat out for a couple days.' There's even pickleball on grass.

• After losing her husband, she built a life through adventure and volunteering

Ken died about 19 years ago, around 2006. She rented a New York apartment for three months, found it lonely and signed up for Art Students League classes. Then came a solo bike trip to New Zealand. After a Cambodia bike trip, in her late 70s she went back for winters, arranged to tutor English at an elementary school without being a teacher, and got involved with the NGO Cambodian Living Arts.

• A hard childhood gave her courage

With only two years of college and no money for more, at 19 she moved to Chicago, answered phones at American Airlines, became a receptionist at a top ad agency, went to secretarial school and then moved to San Francisco. In high school she started the first girl cheerleaders at New Trier after 100 years of boys only.

• Lessons at 86: listen more, care less what people think

Judy says she used to want to be the center of attention and barely let people finish; now she's patient and interested in listening. As a child she was 'an incredible liar,' telling tales so people would like her. Now 'the package is done and wrapped up.' She still won't go to the grocery store without SPF 50 CC cream from Ulta.

EXAMPLES

• The star tattoo

Visiting a dying close friend, Diana, in Florida, Judy asked if she believed in life after death. Diana said she'd become a star. Judy got a tiny tattoo of a planet with three stars: Ken, Diana at the top, and John, 'who will be the last star.' Granddaughter Sawyer, then Kendall and the rest of the family got star tattoos too.

• Bungee jumping and skydiving

On the New Zealand bike trip, her grandson Heath bungee jumped, so she did too, and loved it. She likes things that scare her, though not things that make her dizzy. Skydiving at 80 followed in a similar spirit.

• An MDMA-guided session at 85

In a therapeutic setting with Chris, Mel, Sawyer and Kendall, Judy says she learned how much her granddaughters loved her. It reinforced who she was and that she isn't alone.

• The 'Robbins Gang' group chat

Judy started a multigenerational family chat with 18 people. When she posts a picture, maybe two people heart it. She doesn't take it personally, since everyone's busy; it's her way of saying 'don't forget about me, I'm still around.' She also recently called high school friends from her class of 1955.

• Mel's friend Jody and the bass fishing contest

Jody moved from Santa Barbara back to Michigan to be near her parents, then signed herself and her dad up to judge a bass fishing competition, despite knowing nothing about it. Mel offers it as a model of doing things with aging parents rather than prodding them.

OTHER RELEVANT

• How to start moving later in life

If you're social, find a gym class and see what others are doing, like yoga or a barre-style class. If not, just walk on nice days. Judy's motivation trick from the cassette era: listen to an audiobook only while walking, so you want to get out the door for the next chapter. She always has two books going: one to listen to, one to read.

• Reach out, and keep something on the calendar

After Ken died, Mel told Judy to call someone so she had something on her calendar; Judy calls it great advice. Her single most important tip: stay connected. If you're lonely, call a friend, cry if you need to and ask to come over. Volunteering, with kids or in hospice, takes you out of yourself.

• For anyone who feels their best days are behind them

Judy's morning gratitude: 'I'm so grateful my eyes opened, that I can swallow, get out of bed and brush my teeth,' even if you need a cane or walker. You don't need a hobby, just a reason to get up. Her parting words: stay in love with yourself, your friends and your life.

What Alcohol Does to Your Body: Harvard’s Dr. Sarah Wakeman With the Medical Facts You Need to Know

Guest: Dr. Sarah Wakeman
Date: 2024-03-14 · Duration: 0:53:53
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tXoJN8-H6k

KEYPOINTS

• Your cocktail contains the same molecule as rubbing alcohol

Dr. Sarah Wakeman, senior medical director for substance use disorder at Mass General Brigham and associate professor at Harvard Medical School, explains that drinking alcohol is made by fermenting sugars or starches. It's the same molecule found in hand sanitizer, mouthwash and rubbing alcohol. Some of her patients with the most severe alcohol use disorder drink those products when they can't get alcohol, which shows the power of addiction.

• The 'red wine is healthy' research had a flaw

Early studies compared moderate drinkers with non-drinkers, but many non-drinkers abstain because of chronic illness or past alcohol use disorder, which raises their mortality. Newer studies use infrequent drinkers as the comparison. Wakeman describes a large recent study of hundreds of thousands of people surveyed from the 1990s to the mid-2010s that controlled for lifestyle and chronic conditions. It found a slight mortality decrease for low-risk drinking, but not for cancer.

• Any amount of alcohol raises cancer risk

Breast cancer is strongly associated with alcohol, possibly through hormone effects, which is still being researched; liver and gut cancers also make sense given alcohol's path through the body. Wakeman says this matters especially if you have a personal or family history of cancer. She won't frame drinking as health-promoting, though she notes zero-risk living would also mean never driving, skiing or eating bacon.

• Liver damage can reverse until it can't

Heavy drinking inflames the liver, leading to fatty liver, which can reverse if you stop; the liver can regenerate even after 80% is removed. Past a threshold, scarring becomes cirrhosis. Wakeman now sees people in their early 30s with cirrhosis, sometimes dying during that hospital stay, when transplant is the only option. She cites a significant rise in alcohol-related liver failure from 2010 to 2020, especially among women and younger people, and roughly a 25% rise in alcohol-related deaths after COVID began.

• Alcohol dehydrates you by blocking a hormone, and harms your gut

You pee more because alcohol makes your kidneys less sensitive to antidiuretic hormone, not because of the volume you drink. In the gut, it can make the intestinal wall more porous ('leaky gut') and alter the microbiome, as a high-fat, high-sugar Western diet can.

• Higher-risk drinking thresholds

Per Wakeman, for women or anyone over 65, higher-risk drinking means more than about 10 ounces of hard alcohol or 35 ounces of wine per week. Above that, risks rise for dementia, liver and digestive problems. Mel notes home cocktails are often three shots poured in one 'glug,' and admits she's lied to her doctor about how much she drinks. Wakeman says she lies to her dentist about flossing and sees earning patients' trust as her job.

• The warning-sign checklist

Wakeman asks: Are you drinking more than you intend? Have you tried to cut back and failed? Do you keep drinking despite worried loved ones, work problems, or worsening anxiety or health? Do you have cravings? Physical signs include tolerance (needing four drinks for the effect one or two used to give) and feeling sick when you stop. The core of alcohol use disorder: loss of control, compulsive use and use despite consequences.

• Alcohol quietly disrupts sleep, mood and menopause symptoms

It helps you fall asleep faster but disrupts sleep architecture, so you may wake at 2 a.m. or feel unrested. It relaxes the valve that keeps stomach acid down, worsening heartburn. Because it dilates blood vessels, Wakeman says any amount can worsen hot flashes. Heavy use can cause a substance-induced mood disorder that looks like depression.

• Hangovers aren't mild withdrawal

Wakeman says hangovers are now thought to come mainly from dehydration plus toxic byproducts, including other compounds in some drinks, which is why dark liquors tend to cause worse hangovers than clear ones. Over time the brain adapts to regular drinking by changing receptors, dopamine and stress hormones, which drives tolerance and leaves you shaky and anxious when you stop.

• Never mix alcohol with sedating anxiety medications

Combining alcohol with benzodiazepines such as Xanax, Klonopin or Ativan can slow breathing, cause impairment sooner and risk overdose. Wakeman also notes that people drinking to ease anxiety or depression may be working against their own treatment.

• Alcohol use disorder is common and treatable

Wakeman says about 15% of people will have alcohol use disorder at some point, and most will get well with care. It's a health condition like depression, diabetes or high blood pressure, not a moral or willpower failing. If someone isn't meeting their goals, she says the treatment isn't enough yet; the person isn't failing.

EXAMPLES

• Young patients nobody warned

Wakeman's most heartbreaking cases are people in their late 20s and early 30s in liver failure, whose friends drank the same way, and who had seen doctors along the way without anyone explaining the risks or what lower-risk drinking looks like.

• What heavy drinking looks like on a brain scan

Wakeman says chronic heavy drinkers show brain volume loss on CT or MRI, so a 50-year-old's brain can look much older. In rare extreme cases, the part of the brain that forms new memories is so damaged that people develop an amnesia syndrome:

they remember the past but can't make new memories.

- **The marathon 'why'**

  Her example of a specific goal: 'I'm training for a marathon and can't get up for long runs when I drink, so I'll only drink on this day and keep it to this amount.' She advises making goals specific, measurable and time-bound, like a three-week trial then reassess, rather than vowing never to drink again after a wedding.

- **Mel's end-of-day ritual**

  Mel describes eating well, exercising and taking supplements, then washing it all down with a High Noon, glass of wine or gin as her signal that work is over, and calls that 'kind of dumb' in context.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **If you want to cut back**

  Keep a drinking diary of when, why and how much, like a food journal. Then plan: schedule non-drinking social activities, hold a club soda the minute you walk in, enlist a friend who knows your goal. Tell people your goal and how they can help without criticizing their drinking. Quick wins can include better sleep, weight loss, more exercise capacity, better mood and skin.

- **Helping someone you're worried about**

  Wakeman calls tough love, 'enabling' and 'hitting bottom' fallacies; nobody makes hard changes when threatened. Say: I love you, I'm worried, I'm here, treatment works, here's how I can help. Explore their goals, for example connecting sick days with the promotion they want. Families may still need boundaries for their own safety, but that isn't a treatment.

- **Talking to teens and college kids**

  Skip scare tactics; she notes kids may use more after DARE-style messaging. Ask what they've seen and what worries them, and focus on relevant risks: unsafe situations, sexual vulnerability, missing class. Make it safe to come to you about small things so they'll come about big ones.

Reset Your Gut in 5 Days: A Medical Doctor’s Step-by-Step Protocol to Transform Your Health

Guest: Dr. Amy Shah
Date: 2023-11-30 · Duration: 0:41:53
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qHhU7Qpmbo

KEYPOINTS

• Chronic stress shuts down digestion

Dr. Amy Shah says stress puts you in survival mode, as if a tiger is chasing you. Blood flow shifts away from the gut toward the brain and big muscles, so digestion, hormone balance and repair get deprioritized. She says news, email and social media are designed to trigger that response, so it falls to you to deliberately get back into 'rest and digest.' Constipation and sudden acid reflux are among the results she lists.

• Gut health is tied to far more than bloating

Shah describes a brain–gut axis that modulates hormones and the immune system. She says research is linking the gut microbiome to breast cancer and other cancers, heart disease and depression. She frames the goal as 'successful aging' rather than anti-aging, which depends on keeping gut bacteria 'happy' and signaling to the brain that things are going well.

• Bloating is common and most people underfeed their gut bacteria

Shah cites a study finding that one in seven people feel bloated at least once a week. She also says 98% of Americans don't eat enough fiber, the food gut bacteria need, and that lack of exercise compounds the problem. From part one, Mel recaps that bloating comes from unhappy gut bacteria and can be triggered by stress, hormones, cruciferous vegetables, sparkling drinks, gum, ibuprofen and holiday overeating.

• Choose gentle, non-bloating fiber when you're recovering

Shah means whole-food fiber, not a supplement brand. Her de-bloating list: spinach and leafy greens, berries, asparagus, cucumbers, celery, parsley and cilantro, and spices like turmeric and ginger that act like prebiotics. For fruit she recommends bananas and avocado, plus pineapple and papaya, which contain natural digestive enzymes. If you tolerate bread, she says sourdough has fewer gas-causing sugars, so avocado sourdough toast with fruit makes a good breakfast.

• The daily base is her '3F' morning routine

Every morning, reset or not, Shah does fasting (12 hours before the first meal), fitness, and fiber plus fermented foods. Her own favorite is probiotic yogurt and cottage cheese, even though she can't tolerate much other dairy. Mel jokes that it's really five Fs.

• The five-day reset adds one 'E' each day

Day 1: exercise. Any movement counts, but walking twice a day, yoga twists to release gas and fluid, and weight training are favored; Shah notes women lose about 1–3% of muscle mass per decade, accelerating in menopause. Day 2: eliminate dairy, gluten and white sugar, or other suspected triggers like nuts, shellfish or corn. Day 3: eat foods your gut bacteria love. Day 4: enjoy. Day 5: do all of it together.

• Whole protein is gentler than processed protein

For protein during the reset, Shah suggests eggs, fish, soaked black beans, tofu, probiotic yogurt, cottage cheese and some nuts. She says shakes, bars and 'fake meats' tend to bloat people, herself included. On meat she is openly uncertain: the bulk of research still suggests red and especially processed red meat may be inflammatory, but newer data suggest the type of meat (fast food versus locally raised) may matter. 'The meat story remains to be pieced out.'

• Enjoyment and connection are part of the protocol

Shah says people return from vacations and punish themselves with crash diets and cleanses, which keeps them stressed and makes things worse. Day four is about spending time with people who are good for your mental health, dancing, or doing what lights you up. 'Bonding is a love language for your gut bacteria.'

• Probiotic foods beat probiotic pills, for now

Shah compares the gut to the Amazon jungle, with hundreds to thousands of species. A pill with a few hundred strains is like throwing seeds from a plane onto land you know nothing about. Bacteria in yogurt, cottage cheese, kimchi or sauerkraut arrive in a food matrix that the body seems more likely to incorporate. Her ranking is pills a C, fermented foods a B, and bacteria from another human an A.

EXAMPLES

• Mel's red pants

After a week-long work road trip, Mel's favorite red pants went from fitting to unbuttonable, and she says she looked 'in my second trimester.' She wondered if it was menopause, stress or travel, and Shah says it's probably all of them. Mel admits that after Thanksgiving she eats four or five helpings plus her family's cranberry Jello, then tries extreme fixes that don't work.

• The three-day study

Shah describes a study that rapidly switched people from a processed, fast-food diet to a gut-friendly one. Researchers expected the microbiome to transform in two weeks and saw it in three days. She says you may feel better mood, less bloating and fewer cravings by day three, and be markedly better by two weeks.

• Fecal transplants and the schizophrenia mouse study

Shah explains that stool from a healthy donor can be placed in the colon via colonoscopy. She calls it curative for some diseases and possibly promising for depression, ADHD and cancer, though those uses are speculative. She references research in which gut bacteria from people with schizophrenia were transferred into germ-free mice, which then showed mental-health changes.

• You share a microbiome with your partner

Shah says identical twins separated at birth end up with microbiomes closer to the people they live with or their partners than to each other. That's why she tells Mel she is likely more like her husband Chris, microbially, than she would be like an identical

twin.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **A model 'day five'**
  Wait 12 hours before eating, then exercise. Have a veggie scramble with yogurt, berries and ginger tea, followed by yoga or stretching later. Eat whole foods all day with no artificially sweetened snacks or fast food, and finish with a walk or coffee with a friend, time with your dog, or creative writing.
- **Run elimination long enough to learn something**
  Shah says the microbiome may not respond for a few days. Keep eliminating for at least a week, and for up to three weeks to identify true sensitivities.
- **Don't sabotage the reset**
  Mel's own read: no heavy drinking ('a bottle of Jim Beam') and no Advil first thing in the morning during the fast. She says to decide what fits your health and lifestyle.

The Science of Your Gut: 3 Easy Steps to Reduce Bloating, Improve Digestion, and Feel Better Today

Guest: Dr. Amy Shah
Date: 2023-11-27 · Duration: 0:48:49
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7xUT5ln7Qk

KEYPOINTS

• Bloating has many causes, not just gas

Dr. Amy Shah, a double board-certified physician in allergy, immunology and internal medicine, defines bloating as the belly being pushed out from the inside, or 'distension'. That can be caused by gas, stool when you're constipated, water retention, hormones (before your period and especially in menopause), medications, or a swollen intestinal wall. It all feels similar, which is why it's hard to tell what's going on.

• After a big week, you may be dealing with three things at once

After a holiday or trip, Shah says you're often retaining water from travel, alcohol and salt, your gut microbiome is upset and producing gas, and you've eaten extra calories. You won't know how much of each until you reset. Water weight goes quickly, constipation should clear, and then any real weight change shows on the scale. Mel points out that nobody gains 7 to 10 pounds of fat in five days.

• Bloating can show up in surprising ways

Signs include frequent burping, gas, constipation (gas can make it harder to pass stool), and fluid retention elsewhere: rings that won't fit, tight bracelets or shoes. Shah says what's happening in your intestines can be happening throughout your body. Mel realised that her swollen hands overnight and feet half a size bigger by evening might be related.

• Healthy raw cruciferous vegetables can make bloating worse

Broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and cabbage have sulphur compounds Shah calls powerhouses for reducing inflammation and cancer risk. But raw, they're full of hard-to-digest insoluble fiber. Suddenly eating lots gives gut bacteria too much work at once and creates gas, so when you're already bloated, skip the raw vegetable platter. Softer, well-cooked options like baby spinach are easier. She compares building fiber tolerance to marathon training: work up to it.

• Gum, sparkling drinks and eating fast add air and irritation

Shah says chewing gum and fizzy drinks make you swallow air, and the sugar substitutes in most modern gum and diet sodas irritate gut bacteria. The digestive tract is 'one tube' from mouth to anus, so rushing meals and not chewing enough can start bloating before food reaches your stomach.

• Ibuprofen and other NSAIDs can cause bloating

Ibuprofen, Motrin, naproxen and aspirin all belong to the NSAID family and share bloating as a side effect. Shah describes the 'perfect storm': a raw vegetable platter, several painkillers the morning after a party, and the week before your period, then waking up looking six months pregnant. Mel admits painkillers were her usual morning-after routine.

• Common triggers vary from person to person

Shah's list includes artificial sweeteners, carbonation, dairy, gluten and a lot of sugar. She says about 68% of people worldwide are lactose intolerant. With gluten, preparation may matter: some people handle sourdough but not pizza. Her own triggers were gluten, dairy and sugar; others react to only one or two.

• An elimination diet is the gold standard, not food sensitivity tests

Shah says that, as of 2023, there's no validated food sensitivity test. Allergy tests, such as for peanut anaphylaxis, are valid, but nothing beats removing suspect foods for one to four weeks and reintroducing them. A big reaction when a food comes back is your answer. Mel, who drinks whole milk and eats cottage cheese and skyr daily, realised she has no idea whether dairy affects her.

• Your gut needs rest overnight

Shah says most Americans eat over about 16 hours a day. Citing the Nobel Prize-winning research on circadian rhythms and her figure that about 80% of body functions follow them, she recommends stopping food two to three hours before bed and fasting about 12 hours, such as 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Late meals and late drinks disrupt sleep, overnight repair and the gut, so if you drink, do it earlier.

• Exercise and sunlight may be the 'best probiotic'

Shah says gut bacteria respond to movement and morning light by producing short-chain fatty acids, which calm inflammation and support mood. She says it's what people try to get from pills. She also links the gut-brain connection to low mood, fatigue and odd cravings, noting that few doctors check gut health when patients report depression or anxiety.

EXAMPLES

• Mel's red polyester pants

Mel travels with one stage outfit: stretchy red pants and a black shirt, steamed clean in hotel showers. Over a week of speeches including Nashville, Chicago and Orlando, the pants fit Monday to Thursday. By Friday she couldn't button them and the button was hanging by one thread. She looked 'six to seven months pregnant' despite sleeping well and not drinking heavily.

• Kendall's burping

In high school, Mel's daughter Kendall burped loudly and kept saying 'I feel so fat' despite being thin. Mel worried about body dysmorphia and took her to a therapist, who recommended a gut test instead. Mel says the test showed Kendall was missing beneficial gut bacteria, so food sat in her gut and caused painful pressure. A microbiome reset cleared the symptoms.

• Shah's 3F morning routine

Fasting: has it been 12 hours since your last meal? If you ate pizza at 11 p.m., wait until about 11 a.m. Fitness: about 30 minutes of movement in daylight, so a morning walk covers both. Food: a breakfast with fermented food and fiber.

• A gut-friendly breakfast

Shah suggests about 30 grams of protein, fiber from vegetables, and something fermented. Ideas: yogurt with nuts and berries; a tofu or egg scramble with vegetables; probiotic cottage cheese; a spoonful of sauerkraut; or water with raw apple cider vinegar. Ginger or peppermint tea also helps. She calls the first meal of the day your best chance to support gut and hormone health.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Wear stretchy pants when you travel**

  Shah's first tip: changing air pressure and not being able to go to the bathroom for a couple of days make travel days prime for bloating, so leave fitted waistbands at home.

- **When you're already bloated, ease off rather than 'cleaning up'**

  Avoid raw cruciferous vegetables, gum, fizzy and diet drinks, and painkillers if you can. Eat slowly, chew well, stop eating two to three hours before bed, and walk outside.

- **Find your triggers properly**

  Remove gluten, dairy and refined sugar for at least a week, ideally up to four, then reintroduce them one at a time. Skip food sensitivity test kits.

Dr. Gina Poe: How To Get Better Sleep And Boost Your Learning, Memory & Energy | Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Gina Poe
Date: 2023-11-02 · Duration: 0:41:39
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0FHxJLe9Ns

KEYPOINTS

• Sleep is active work time for the brain, not laziness.
Dr. Gina Poe, a UCLA neuroscientist who has studied sleep for about 30 years, says researchers have been trying to answer why we sleep for 50 to 70 years or more. The difficulty is that so much happens only during sleep: it supports the immune system, thinking, emotional health, and growth and repair. She suggests thinking of sleep as a different, pleasant kind of work time. That makes it easier to justify, and to schedule, in a workaholic culture.

• Falling asleep changes the brain's chemistry.
When we fall asleep, the mix of neurotransmitters changes. Acetylcholine, which keeps us attentive to our surroundings, switches off in non-REM sleep. Poe notes that some animals sleep one brain hemisphere at a time, and the sleeping half is the one that turns acetylcholine off.

• A 10-year-old's sleep is the benchmark.
Children around 10 have well-tuned homeostatic sleep pressure and circadian timing, which is why Poe says not to wake one if you can help it. Teens still need about 8 to 10 hours but naturally fall asleep and wake later. Sleep tends to stay good until about 40 or 50, then becomes less efficient, varying from person to person.

• Adults need about 7.5 to 8 hours, give or take an hour.
Some people need nine hours, while others feel fine on six for a while. Poe says your body tells you, especially through how sleepy you feel during the day. Ideally you wake with daylight, so work backwards from your wake-up time to set your bedtime.

• The stages run from dozing to deep sleep to REM.
N1 is two to five minutes of dozing, which is why you forget the last bit of a book or podcast. Between N1 and N2 come hypnagogic hallucinations, which can be as mild as the jolt of falling off a step or as frightening as a monster on your chest. N2 brings short, vivid dream fragments. N3, or slow-wave sleep, lasts roughly 20 to 30 minutes per cycle. It's deep and hard to wake from, and people woken from it report no dreams.

• Deep sleep cleans the brain.
In N3, synchronised waves sweep through the brain from front to back, about one per second. They push waste such as misfolded proteins into the cerebrospinal fluid and restore the energy used during the day. Without this stage, Poe says, you wake up with a 'junky' brain and handle the day less well.

• REM sleep is where learning gets organised.
REM is called paradoxical sleep because brain activity looks like waking, but the chemistry differs. Norepinephrine (noradrenaline) and serotonin, which tune you to new information from outside, are switched off. The brain turns inward and sorts the day's learning into schemas, which Poe compares to boxes of Lego pieces. You gather the pieces while awake and assemble them while asleep. Mel's summary is that habits are made in the bedroom. About 90% of people woken from REM report a dream, even those who say they never dream.

• Order matters, and you need about five 90-minute cycles.
A cycle runs N1, N2, N3, N2, then REM, averaging 90 minutes, and around five a night is ideal. Removing any one stage makes the whole process work less well. Cut REM and memories don't consolidate; cut N3 and the brain doesn't get cleaned.

• Your body knows the clock time, so staying up late costs you deep sleep.
Mel assumed that sleep starts at 'hour zero' whenever you nod off. Poe corrects her: your body knows 9pm from 2am. Most N3 cleaning happens in the first half of the night relative to your body clock. If you go to bed three hours later than usual, you still get REM but lose much of the deep sleep. People who are chronically late sleepers shift their clock, which aligns most strongly with daily light exposure.

• Second-half REM helps take the sting out of painful memories.
Poe's lab, working with others, is investigating how REM separates the factual memory of a painful event from the physical and emotional pain attached to it. In people with insomnia, noradrenaline stays too active during sleep because they are anxious, and that separation doesn't happen. This is ongoing research, but she says good sleep isn't just helpful for healing; it's necessary.

• A consistent bedtime boosts growth hormone tenfold.
When you fall asleep in step with your body clock, the combination of melatonin and sleep releases about ten times more growth hormone than you get while awake. Growth hormone repairs muscle, builds proteins and helps consolidate memories. If you push sleep past your melatonin surge, the growth hormone surge is much smaller.

EXAMPLES

• Melatonin supplements: unknown benefit, unreliable doses
Asked whether melatonin supplements boost this effect, Poe says nobody knows, and she doubts it, because much more than melatonin is happening at sleep onset. She adds that supplements aren't really regulated by the FDA, so a pill might contain no melatonin or ten times what you need.

• Why a warm bath helps
Mel takes a bath every night. Poe explains that warming your hands and feet widens the blood vessels there, which helps your core cool by about half a degree as you fall asleep. People sleep best with warm hands and feet exposed to the air.

• The sleep scientist's own routine
Poe's best bedtime is around 10:30 to 11pm, and she tries to stop working an hour before. She showers, then prays, relaxes

and breathes deeply, or plays an easy number game called Threes on a dimmed phone with blue light turned off and Do Not Disturb on. She is usually asleep within 10 minutes. She admits it's better to keep the phone out of the bedroom, and suggests a book as an alternative.

- **Mel's kids' bedtime routine as a model**
  Mel describes the routine she used with her three young children: same bedtime, toys away, bath, story, pyjamas, song and a kiss goodnight. Poe agrees that adults need the same predictable wind-down.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Get bright light in the morning**
  Get outside around sunrise; even a cloudy or rainy day is brighter than indoor light. Twenty minutes is plenty, ideally while walking, and even two minutes helps. Poe also suggests getting daylight around lunch and dinner.
- **Avoid bright and blue light at night**
  Screens in the evening tell your clock it's morning and shift you later. Use blue-light settings or blockers, and dim lights as bedtime approaches.
- **Poe's five free basics**
  Bright morning light, a consistent bedtime, a warm bath or shower before bed, vigorous exercise during the day (she isn't sure why it helps; adenosine build-up and repair signals are possible reasons), and not too much caffeine too late.
- **Pick three and stick with them**
  Mel's three: morning light whatever the weather, going to bed earlier (she notices she's happier and more successful when she does), and a nightly bath or shower as a wind-down cue.

Simple Steps To Losing Weight & Feeling Better: The Science of Lifting Weights | Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Gabrielle Lyon
Date: 2023-10-30 · Duration: 1:15:29
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4jxN4v50iI

KEYPOINTS

• Skeletal muscle is an organ, not a look

Dr. Gabrielle Lyon, a physician fellowship-trained in nutritional science and geriatrics, says skeletal muscle makes up about 40% of body weight and should be treated as the 'organ of longevity.' Mel admits she had only ever judged muscle by whether it showed.

• Contracting muscle releases signaling molecules and clears blood sugar

When you contract muscle, even in a bicep curl or climbing stairs, Lyon says it secretes myokines that travel through the body and support bone health, brain health and nutrient use. Working muscle also pulls glucose out of the bloodstream into the cells, which is why she ties muscle so tightly to insulin resistance and the obesity epidemic.

• Lyon's reframe: people are under-muscled, not just overfat

Running a weight-management clinic while also caring for geriatric and Alzheimer's patients, Lyon concluded that the common thread was unhealthy muscle rather than excess fat. She argues that conditions like cardiovascular disease, hypertension and Alzheimer's are in large part 'diseases of skeletal muscle' that begin decades earlier, while acknowledging obesity itself is very complex. If 50 years of fighting fat hasn't worked, she says, we may be fixing the wrong problem. She cites research showing 'healthy' sedentary 18-year-olds already had signs of unhealthy muscle.

• Aim to gain muscle instead of losing pounds

Chasing weight loss through repeated diets strips away muscle, and it gets harder to rebuild as you age. Lyon finds the 'what I have to lose' framing demotivating and suggests targets like putting on five pounds of muscle. She calls muscle the one currency of health you cannot buy or sell, only earn, and says earning it builds confidence and a can-do attitude. Her line: you can't exercise your liver, but you can exercise muscle.

• Protein helps with fullness and is hard to overeat

Protein is made of 20 amino acids, which Lyon compares to the grains of sand in a sandcastle. Her hunger test: sit down with a chicken breast instead of a bag of chips. Because protein is essential, she says it's hard to gain fat eating a lot of it.

• Target about 1 gram of protein per pound of ideal body weight

Lyon says the average woman eats roughly 60 to 68 grams a day. For Mel, at an ideal body weight of 138 pounds, she prescribes at least 100 grams and up to 120 to 130 grams. Mel's honest reaction is fear of becoming a 'Weeble Wobble.' Lyon answers that 100 grams is only about 400 calories, that up to around 20% of that energy can go into digesting it, and that overfeeding studies show body composition improving. She adds that calories still have to be controlled.

• Older muscle gets worse at sensing protein, but more protein compensates

Muscle is a nutrient-sensing organ, and that sensitivity drops with age. That shows up as sarcopenia, or frailty. Lyon says raising protein intake can make older muscle respond more like muscle in your 20s. She also calls healthy muscle your 'metabolic sink' for blood sugar and triglycerides, and your reserve during illness. She notes that cancer patients often die of cachexia, a state that wastes muscle.

• Resistance training is the one non-negotiable form of exercise

Lyon says all movement helps, but for muscle health resistance training is non-negotiable: any movement against a load, whether body weight, push-ups, bands, machines or free weights. Yoga and Pilates are a fine starting point but not ideal over time. The general guideline is 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity a week. Her minimum is two days of full-body lifting built on multi-joint moves, such as a machine squat or leg press for beginners.

• Train to real fatigue; heavy weights are optional

Lyon used to believe women had to lift heavy, and she still prefers it, but says the evidence suggests what matters is genuinely taxing the muscle: not being on your phone, and working until you can't do another rep. Some evidence or speculation suggests women may need more volume, but she warns against getting lost in the weeds. Beginners improve fastest. Expect visible change in about 6 to 8 weeks, though energy, blood sugar and triglyceride markers respond right away.

EXAMPLES

• 'Betty,' the patient who sparked muscle-centric medicine

Lyon describes a woman in her mid-50s, a mother of three, who had been told for years to lose the same 10 to 20 pounds she gained after her first baby. Each round of cutting calories and adding cardio destroyed more of her muscle. Seeing this pattern across many patients led Lyon to conclude the problem was being under-muscled.

• The postmenopausal breakfast study

Lyon describes research where both groups of postmenopausal women ate 1,600 calories a day. One group's first meal had about 40 grams of protein. The other had a typical breakfast she recalls as roughly 50 grams of carbs and 13 grams of protein. The protein group had better body composition, even though calories were identical.

• Beef patty vs. six cups of quinoa

To get about 2.5 grams of leucine, the amino acid that switches on muscle building, you need 3 to 4 ounces of lean beef or roughly six cups of quinoa. Lyon jokes that the quinoa route is 'carbicide.' Vegans and vegetarians can use blended plant protein powders, which are balanced for amino acids. Someone eating only whole plant foods may need about 35% more total protein.

• Mel's collagen surprise

Mel had been counting collagen in her smoothie as another 10 to 20 grams of protein. Lyon says collagen scores essentially zero for muscle health. It may be good for hair and nails, but it shouldn't count toward your protein target.

• Vicki's workaholic 24-year-old daughter

A mother writes in about her perfectionist, anxious daughter, who has gained about 25 pounds, sleeps little and pushes back on health advice. Lyon's suggestion is to frame training around the daughter's own goal of success, so the discipline she already shows at work turns into discipline about her health. Mel adds that helping caregivers take care of themselves also helps their kids.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Lyon's three-meal protein template

First meal: 30 to 50 grams of protein (a whey or pea shake is fine) with no more than about 30 grams of carbs. Middle meal: a smaller one, around 20 grams of protein and 20 grams of carbs, such as three eggs. Last meal: another 30 to 50 grams before the overnight fast. She calls these broad generalizations, not exact rules.

• A 20-minute weekly interval session

Lyon adds one high-intensity session a week for women. That means all-out efforts of 45 seconds to a minute on an Assault bike or rower, or doing as many air squats as you can, followed by rest. Repeat for about 20 minutes. With true 80 to 90% effort, she says even a few minutes can count.

• 'Muscle magic' snacks during the day

Do 10 to 20 air squats every hour, stand at your desk, take brisk walks to the bathroom or water fountain about 10 times a day, and keep a resistance band at your desk for quick sets of 10. Lyon says 1-pound wrist weights help, though they aren't optimal.

• Menopause belly is not inevitable

Lyon pushes back on the idea that every woman gains about 30 pounds at menopause. Shifting hormones affect body composition, partly because women tend to move less. Resistance training against an external load plus enough protein is how she says midlife women can manage it.

How to Lose Weight, Boost Energy, & Live Longer with Intermittent Fasting | Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Mindy Pelz
Date: 2023-09-18 · Duration: 1:09:22
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRlywtji5ZU

KEYPOINTS

• Fasting as a healing state switched on by low blood sugar

Dr. Mindy Pelz, author of Fast Like a Girl, describes fasting as a state the body reaches only by going without food long enough for blood sugar to drop. In her account, that triggers repair responses: burning fat, sharpening the brain, quieting hunger, improving sleep, easing pain and slowing aging. Mel frames this first episode of a two-part series as the science; part two covers how-to and protocols for women.

• Two energy systems, like a hybrid car

Pelz describes a "sugar burner" system that runs on food and a "fat burner" system that kicks in when blood sugar falls, usually 8 to 12 hours after eating. Moving between the two is called metabolic switching. She says people with poor metabolic health stay stuck burning sugar and never reach the repair processes, and cites a figure that only about 12% of Americans are metabolically fit. Her evolutionary explanation is feast-famine cycling: early humans had no fridge or DoorDash.

• It's about when you eat, not what

Pelz says fasting isn't a diet because you can keep any eating style and simply compress it into a window. She cites research suggesting that eating within 8 to 10 hours a day can reverse metabolic damage, even from fast food. On "keto" products, her advice is to skip the label debate and eat "nature's carbs," meaning vegetables, fruit and foods that grow from the earth, over anything made in a factory.

• Why cravings fade, according to her

Pelz gives three reasons. Fast-food blood-sugar spikes crash low and trigger hunger every few hours, and longer gaps break that cycle. Ketones made while burning fat travel to the brain and switch off hunger. Fasting also shifts the gut microbiome, and she says organisms like candida drive sugar cravings. She adds that ketones raise GABA, a calming neurotransmitter, and describes landing after an 18- to 19-hour flight fast feeling calm and not hungry.

• How the research is characterized

Mel says a 2019 New England Journal of Medicine review of more than 85 studies recommended intermittent fasting as a "first line" intervention for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, neurodegeneration and cancer, with anti-aging effects. That's how she and Pelz summarize the paper. Pelz also says much fasting research comes from people observing Ramadan, notes Hippocrates wrote about fasting, and argues that the media amplifies negative stories because no industry profits from fasting.

• Who shouldn't fast, and when to involve a doctor

Pelz says fasting is not for pregnant women. Nursing mothers should keep fasts under 15 hours because detox byproducts may pass into breast milk. It's also not for anyone with an eating disorder or whose food challenges it could trigger. People with diabetes or heart disease should fast only with their doctor involved, and Mel adds that anyone on psychiatric or ADHD medication should check with their doctor.

• The clock starts with your last bite or sip

Wine counts, and sleep counts toward the fast. Black coffee is fine as long as nothing in it spikes blood sugar, so creamer and sugar are out, and a Frappuccino definitely doesn't count. Full-fat cream usually works, she says, because fat stabilizes blood sugar.

• The six fasting lengths, as she describes them

12–16 hours: glucose and inflammation fall and growth hormone, which she says declines after 30, rises. 17 hours: autophagy, cells clearing out damaged parts, with Pelz saying it can eliminate rogue cells. 24 hours: a "gut reset," citing MIT work on intestinal stem cells. 36 hours: a "fat burner" reset aimed at stored belly fat. 48 hours: a "dopamine reset" with more receptor sites and lower anxiety. 72 hours: an "immune reset" based on Valter Longo's research at USC.

• Start small and give it 90 days

Fasting gets easier with practice. Pelz compares it to marathon training, so don't open with a 36-hour fast. For belly fat, she says to do 12 to 15 hours consistently and give it about 90 days. Many in her community use 17-hour fasts after a vacation of overindulging. Longer claims, like happiness rising for weeks after a 48-hour fast, come from stories her community shares rather than controlled trials.

EXAMPLES

• Todd and the 12 sodas

At a retreat, a man of about 300 pounds who called himself food-addicted told Pelz he wanted to stay alive for his wife and kids. He was drinking about 12 sodas a day. She didn't change his food at all, only compressed it into a 12-hour window. He lost around 25 to 30 pounds the first month while still having wings and soda. After a year he'd lost close to 120 pounds, quit soda and eaten better, and his goal is to feel proud in the family Christmas card photo.

• Her own start at 43

After reading about Yoshinori Ohsumi's 2016 Nobel Prize-winning work on autophagy, Pelz tried a 13-hour fast and found the first day miserable. Within three or four days, her 3 p.m. crash, brain fog and creeping perimenopausal belly fat had eased. She points out that ketones can supply roughly half the brain's fuel.

• The teachers who couldn't afford "healthy"

During the pandemic, a teacher told Pelz the peanut butter with better oils cost $8 more, money he didn't have. Another said she worked shifts that started at 4:30 a.m. or 3 p.m. and relied on the McDonald's drive-through. That's what convinced Pelz that people need a free tool that works for everyone.

• Studies Pelz cites

She describes a study of breast cancer survivors in which a 13-hour nightly fast was linked to 64% less recurrence. Another protocol of 36 hours fasting and 12 hours eating, repeated over 30 days, notably reduced belly fat. She also claims viruses can't replicate in cells undergoing autophagy, and suggests a 17-hour fast when you feel a cold coming on. These are her characterizations of the research, not consensus medical advice.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **A simple first protocol**

  Stop eating at 9 p.m. Around 5 a.m., after eight hours, you start switching into fat burning. Have your first food between 9 a.m. and noon for a 12- to 15-hour fast. Shift the window to suit you: stop at 7 p.m. and eat earlier the next day.

- **Keep coffee "clean"**

  Drink coffee black or with full-fat cream. Skip creamers, syrups and sweetened drinks if you want to stay in the fasted state.

- **Treat bold claims with care**

  The longer fasts come with dramatic claims about cancer cells, stem cells and immune reboots. Build up gradually, avoid fasting if you're in an excluded group, and involve your doctor if you have a chronic condition or take medication. Part two covers how women should adjust fasting around their hormonal cycle.

Improve Your Breathing for Better Health From #1 Breath Expert In The World | Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Patrick McKeown
Date: 2023-08-24 · Duration: 0:57:13
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vcj61HKHKuc

KEYPOINTS

• Healthy breathing is quiet, light, slow, through the nose and barely noticeable

McKeown, founder of Oxygen Advantage and author of ten books on breathing including The Breathing Cure, puts the ideal as 'the perfect person breathes as if they do not breathe', so softly the hairs in your nostrils don't move. Mouth breathing tends to be faster and higher in the chest, which he says feeds the fight-or-flight response. Mel, who calls herself a mouth breather, noticed her breath stuck 'just under my boobs.'

• Stress, talking, desk jobs and congestion slowly wear down how we breathe

Breathing is delicate and easily changed by diet, lifestyle, trauma, stress, a lot of talking and sitting all day. Poor patterns become habits. A stuffy nose pushes you to breathe through your mouth, and mouth breathing makes the nose stuffier, a vicious circle. The more you breathe through your nose, the better it works.

• Nose breathing improves how oxygen reaches your tissues

He cites a 1988 finding that continuous nasal breathing raises blood oxygen uptake by nearly 10%. During exercise it keeps carbon dioxide higher, which, through an effect described in 1904, helps red blood cells release oxygen to tissues. The nose also carries nitric oxide into the lungs, which he describes as antiviral, antibacterial and a bronchodilator, relevant to asthma, bronchitis and COPD.

• Faulty everyday breathing feeds anxiety, not just the reverse

Fast, upper-chest, irregular breathing shows up in at least 10% of the general population but up to 75% of people with anxiety and panic disorders, by his account. Poor oxygen delivery can make brain cells more excitable. He links poorer breathing to fatigue and cold hands and feet. Mel admitted she wears socks to bed because her husband complains about her cold feet.

• The exhale controls relaxation, and mouth exhales are too fast

Relaxation is 'all in the exhalation.' A fast breath out signals stress, and the mouth is a bigger exit than the nostrils, so it speeds the exhale. At rest the exhale should last about one and a half to two times the inhale. Mouth breathing also loses about 42% more water, which affects hydration, gums, breath and lips. Mel tied this to a Stanford finding of neurons that monitor breathing and tell the brain when something's wrong.

• Bigger breaths don't bring more oxygen

At rest, 12 to 14 breaths a minute is typical, but volume matters as much as rate. Over-breathing blows off carbon dioxide, which narrows blood vessels and makes red cells hold on to oxygen, so less of it reaches the body. 'Deep' should mean low, driven by the diaphragm, not big. The diaphragm is also connected to calm and to the upper-airway muscles.

• About six breaths a minute brings body and mind into balance

For deliberate relaxation he gives 4.5 to 6.5 breaths per minute, for example in for five, out for five. Italian researcher Luciano Bernardi found, in a study he dates to around 2000, that both reciting the rosary and repeating mantras brought breathing down to about six breaths a minute. Someone breathing 20 times a minute shouldn't drop straight to six; slow down gradually, for example in for three, out for five.

• Mouth breathing is tied to snoring, poorer sleep and sleep apnoea

A stuffy nose makes you two to three times more likely to have a sleep problem, snore or have obstructive sleep apnoea, he says. Nasal breathers sleep more deeply in the studies he cites. Fast breathing at night can wake you and fuel 3 a.m. rumination. He puts insomnia at about 30% of people, 10% chronically. You can't mouth-snore with your lips closed, and soft nasal breathing reduces nasal snoring.

• Mouth tape helps, but with real caveats for sleep apnoea

He uses an elastic tape stretched 30 to 40% that draws the lips together, as a daytime reminder for kids and adults and at night once nose breathing is comfortable. In mild obstructive sleep apnoea, keeping the mouth closed cut the AHI severity score by 33%. People with moderate to severe apnoea, and some with obesity, need to 'mouth puff', so tape that seals the lips fully, like the micropore tape he used before, can make apnoea worse.

EXAMPLES

• 11,000 British children

He cites research by Karen Bonuck following UK children from six months to 57 months: those who snored, had apnoea or breathed through their mouths and went untreated had about a 40% higher risk of special educational needs. He says 25 to 50% of studied children mouth-breathe.

• The Limerick decongestion pilot

In a 26-person hospital pilot in Limerick, Ireland, rhinitis symptoms dropped by 70% at three months with his breath-hold nose-unblocking exercise. He notes it was only published as an abstract and the larger follow-up study never happened.

• Mel's 'Tootsie Roll' nostrils and packing tape

With allergies kicking in, Mel felt her nose clear after the second breath hold. She tried mouth taping the night before with packing tape ('I think I gave my upper lip a wax') and found she mostly sleeps with her mouth closed. Her husband snores, and she says one billion people worldwide have obstructive sleep apnoea.

• Breath-hold sprints for athletes

With well-warmed-up athletes he uses deliberate stress: 40-metre sprints holding the breath with 30 seconds rest, or 400-metre runners holding the breath for the final 40 metres. He doesn't teach hyperventilation and wants everyday breathing fixed first.

- **His own pre-meeting reset**
  Before an intense meeting he takes a soft breath in through the nose and a slow, gentle breath out, untimed and invisible to anyone, to tell his brain everything is fine and move attention out of his head.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Small breath holds for a racing mind**
  Breathe normally in and out through the nose, pinch it and hold for five seconds, then breathe normally for three or four breaths. Repeat about five times. He says this stimulates the vagus nerve and slows the heart. People with panic disorder should be careful, because focusing on the breath can trigger them.
- **Nose-unblocking exercise, with warnings**
  Exhale normally, pinch your nose, nod your head while holding, ideally working up to about 30 seconds, then breathe in through the nose. Repeat five or six times. Skip it if you have anxiety or panic disorder, are pregnant, or have heart problems.
- **Breathe 'sideways', low and slow**
  Cup your lower ribs and guide them outward on the inhale and inward on the exhale, rather than pushing your belly in and out. Mel realised her yoga belly breathing had been vertical, not horizontal.
- **Exercise only as fast as you can nose-breathe**
  Expect some breathlessness at first. Slow down, or try a nasal dilator on hills, and your body adapts to doing more with less air.
- **Breathe about 30% less before bed**
  For 10 to 15 minutes before sleep, take softer, smaller breaths with slow exhales until you feel slight air hunger. More saliva in your mouth is a sign you've shifted into rest-and-digest. Combine it with a cool, dark room and blue-light glasses.

Neuroscientist Reveals The Shocking Science & Benefits of Taking a Simple Walk | Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Shane O'Mara
Date: 2023-07-31 · Duration: 1:05:09
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MltZxgejfKI

KEYPOINTS

• Walking is a deeply social act, not just a way to get from A to B

O'Mara, professor of experimental brain research at Trinity College Dublin and author of In Praise of Walking, says the most surprising thing he found was how social walking is. Humans left Africa on foot 80,000–130,000 years ago in groups that had to watch out for one another. He uses the term "effervescent assembly" for the sense of self and other dissolving when people walk together for a shared cause. He says no other species marches together like this.

• Inactivity is linked to personality and brain changes over time

He describes a US panel study tracking personality against activity. People who became more sedentary, even in midlife, tended to become less sociable, less open to experience and more prone to negative emotion. He stresses this was about inactivity, not simply age.

• Walking challenges the brain more than you notice

Standing up, keeping your balance, orienting yourself, building a mental map, adjusting your pace on a hill and carrying shopping home are all small demands on the brain. Brain rhythms that are quiet while you sit become active. He compares the body to a new bike left in a garage for a year: chain silted, tyres flat, brakes unresponsive. Bodies and brains need repeated challenge.

• We have designed movement out of our environment

Our bodies evolved to conserve energy, yet we now live with a calorie surplus. O'Mara argues that environments should make walking the easy default. He doesn't want to blame individuals, because poor footpaths, bad lighting, fear of crime and buildings built around elevators decide a lot of how much people move.

• Walking reliably boosts mood, even for people who dislike it

He calls the mood boost one of the most certain findings in this field. In lab studies, people who walked 10–15 minutes to rate campus buildings felt better than those who rated photos, including people who say they hate walking. Walking in nature adds a further boost on top of the walk itself.

• Be careful with neurochemical claims

O'Mara warns that most studies that mention dopamine never measured it, because you can't measure it in a living person's brain without invasive procedures. Cortisol can be measured in blood or saliva. What the evidence mostly shows is correlation, not cause. He describes the benefit as several things working together: falling stress hormones, the sense of motion as scenery moves past ("optic flow"), a break from rumination, and time in nature.

• Creativity needs time away from the problem, and walking provides it

Staring at a hard problem is the worst way to solve it. Creative thinking moves between preparation and incubation, and between big picture and detail, like seeing the forest and the trees at once. In studies, people who walked before problem-solving produced substantially more creative ideas than people who sat; Mel mentions roughly double. O'Mara says the science of walking and creativity is still at an early stage, with no definitive recipe.

• Mild physical engagement may bring buried ideas to the surface

He calls the state "mindlessness": unlike mindfulness, you aren't watching your thoughts; you're out of your own head. His idea is that a slightly more active brain "tickles" ideas just below awareness so they rise to the surface. Slumped in a chair, nothing comes. He presents this as his own working idea, not a settled finding.

• Small, frequent bouts of walking beat one big session

Non-industrialised groups move at a low level all day with rest in between, rather than in one burst. Getting up for two minutes every half hour is good advice, and one workout won't cancel out a day of sitting.

• Match your pace to your purpose

For heart health, walk fast enough that talking is hard, which he says beats slow jogging. For thinking, walk more slowly. He demonstrates by asking Mel to subtract 17s from 1,000. The mental load shows how fast walking would leave no capacity for thinking.

EXAMPLES

• Older adults' brains grew with walking

In a Chicago-area study of people in their late 60s and early 70s, participants walked a couple of miles three times a week with a partner and a physiotherapist. Memory-related brain regions increased in volume and memory improved. Sedentary peers declined more than they needed to.

• An Australian study on depression

Tracking people who weren't depressed at the start over seven to eight years, the study found those who moved least were most likely to develop major depression. Risk fell as movement rose, then levelled off.

• Step counts and mortality

The average US adult walks about 4,000 steps a day, while a child learning to walk takes about 1,200 an hour. Japan walks the most, thanks to car-hostile cities. All-cause mortality falls substantially, something like 30–40%, at about 4,500–7,500 steps. O'Mara calls 10,000 "made up" and says one story is that it came from a Japanese marketing campaign in the 1960s, though he isn't sure that's true. Mel was at 2,800 steps; he was at 9,785.

• The Hadza walk 10,000–20,000 steps

These traditional African hunter-gatherers average 10,000–20,000 steps a day depending on sex, and on average don't get

diabetes, carry much body fat or have heart problems.

• His dictaphone method and his stairless building

O'Mara wrote much of his first draft by walking with bullet-point notes and a dictaphone, never a phone, so he isn't tempted by alerts. In contrast, his office building puts the elevator right at the entrance but makes you go through four fire doors to reach the stairs. In his medieval Dublin suburb, pandemic outdoor dining widened three-foot footpaths and made walking the default.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Check your step count, then add about 5,000

Most people don't know their baseline. Adding about 5,000 steps, roughly 4.5–5 km, brings most people close to 10,000. Spread it through the day.

• Use different walks for different jobs

Walk briskly for your heart. Walk slowly, without your phone, to think. Either let your mind go completely blank or think loosely about a problem to find unexpected connections.

• Choose green routes over busy roads

Walking beside fast, noisy traffic is stressful, and people stuck in harsh urban environments are more prone to psychiatric disorders. Parks and tree-lined streets offer more benefit.

• Expect quick adaptation and lasting gains

If you've been sedentary, the first days may feel hard, but within days you'll feel better and miss walking when you skip it. He also suggests a walk for a stiff back from sitting before reaching for pills, because movement produces natural anti-inflammatories.

Harvard Doctor Reveals Why You Have Cravings and How to Stop Them | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Amy Shah
Date: 2023-06-22 · Duration: 1:25:47
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPextTZy5C4

KEYPOINTS

• Hunger and cravings run on separate systems

Dr. Amy Shah, a double-board-certified physician trained at Cornell, Harvard and Columbia, describes hunger as the body's need for nutrients, signalled by hormones such as ghrelin, which rises on a daily timer. Cravings travel the dopamine pathway, the same one alcohol, drugs and sugar use. Ordering dessert when you're already full is a craving, not hunger.

• Ask whether you'd eat a bowl of vegetables

Shah's quick test: if you wouldn't eat plain vegetables right now, you're not hungry. Next, drink a glass of water (sparkling with lemon or lime is fine) and check again in 15 minutes, because the brain easily confuses thirst with hunger. She calls the 64- or 80-ounce targets estimates rather than science.

• Ultra-processed food hijacks dopamine the way a first trip to Miami does

Shah calls it the 'Miami phenomenon': South Beach feels thrilling on day one, and by day three you need the club to feel anything. Foods that don't exist in nature pack sugar without the fiber, water and nutrients of an apple, producing a dopamine spike she compares to cocaine, then a drop that leaves you irritable and wanting more. Her definition of ultra-processed: something you couldn't make in any kitchen, even with every ingredient in the world.

• Many poor food choices aren't simply a willpower failure

Shah argues food companies design products to trigger the craving pathway. She cites findings that people eating the most ultra-processed food have 80% more poor mental-health days than those eating the least, and says over 70% of kids' diets are now ultra-processed. Her goal isn't zero, but cutting adults from roughly 60% to 30–40% so your own signals become audible again.

• Food and exercise may rival medication for depression

Shah cites a South Australian analysis finding diet and exercise about 1.5 times more effective for depression than leading treatments, with medication and therapy grouped together, and says the authors recommended lifestyle change as first-line therapy. Mel frames it as hopeful rather than a reason to drop treatment, and the show's disclaimer says it doesn't replace a physician.

• Some foods support dopamine and serotonin

Tyrosine-rich protein (dairy, soy, nuts, cherries) feeds dopamine production, so Shah favours a 'high-dopamine breakfast' such as cottage cheese with fruit and nuts. Tryptophan sources such as eggs, turkey, dairy, lean meat and fish, paired with a complex carb like sweet potato, squash or quinoa, support calming serotonin in the evening, which she says can help people who wake at night.

• Sleep, omega-3s and protein strengthen fullness signals

Leptin, the fullness hormone, is about 33% lower after a bad night, Shah says, which is why you wake up starving. Omega-3s from salmon, algae oil or walnuts also help. GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy amplify a natural fullness hormone, and she says nuts, sleep and exercise raise it naturally. Protein also tells hunger hormones to stop.

• The gut and brain talk in both directions

Gut bacteria produce dopamine and serotonin and signal the brain in at least four ways, including nerves, hormones and short-chain fatty acids. Shah describes a mouse study where researchers could tell which animals had received gut microbes from a person with schizophrenia just from their behaviour. She links the gut to anxiety, depression, ADHD, autism and Parkinson's, an area still being researched.

• Fermented foods beat probiotic pills, and exercise beats both

Results for supplements like lactobacillus and Prevotella are inconsistent, Shah says, partly because the body attacks free bacteria. Bacteria inside the food matrix of yogurt, kimchi, kombucha, sauerkraut or raw apple cider vinegar survive better, and one study found four to six servings a day raised 'happy' bacteria most. Her 'number one probiotic' is exercise, which boosts anti-inflammatory short-chain fatty acids.

• Delay coffee and food for 45 minutes and eat in daylight

Morning grogginess is largely adenosine, which clears in 30 to 40 minutes. Coffee only blocks its receptors, so drinking it immediately sets up a crash and a second or third cup. Shah argues intermittent fasting is often done backwards: eat during daylight and stop late-night eating, since the body processes sugar poorly once melatonin rises two to three hours before bed. Habitually skipping meals, she says, is linked to worse outcomes.

EXAMPLES

• Mel's 2 p.m. truffle-chip habit

Mel opens holding a bag of the black truffle potato chips her kids introduced her to, which she craves every day around 2 p.m. and can finish in one sitting. She adds that a colleague's dark chocolate stash now has her hunting for candy at the same hour.

• The 3-2-1 intermittent reward method

To replace a Snickers with dark chocolate: on three random days a week (picked from a fishbowl, by a colleague, or by a random phone alarm), spend two minutes telling yourself why it's a better choice, then one minute savouring it. Do this for two weeks. Shah says random rewards hook dopamine hardest, the same mechanism behind gambling and on-off toxic relationships.

• Gut bacteria shifted in three days

In a study Shah attributes to the journal Nature, participants in a clinical centre switched from processed meat, sugar and soda to a mostly plant-based whole-food diet. Stool samples showed marked changes in gut bacteria within three days and drastic change by two weeks, without special probiotics.

• Store-bought orange juice belongs with soda

Shah says heat pasteurisation destroys vitamins and filtering removes fiber, leaving mostly water and sugar that rivals soda. She ranks high-fructose corn syrup and soda as the worst items, followed by processed meats such as hot dogs and nitrate-laden bacon.

• Shah's own peppermint-mocha cycle

As a physician, she rewarded good days with Starbucks peppermint mochas until it became daily, then twice a day, before she recognised the pattern in herself.

OTHER RELEVANT

• A sample hormone-friendly day

Start with 'sky before screens' (two to 10 minutes outside in bright light), coffee after 45 minutes, and breakfast an hour or two after waking. Lunch is a salad with protein plus a fermented food, with carbs like sweet potato or quinoa at dinner and protein snacks such as yogurt or cheese.

• Pair a slip with a positive action

After eating something you're cutting back on, go straight for a sunny walk. Shah says this replacement behaviour gradually retrains the pathway.

• Test gluten rather than banning it

Go gluten-free for three to four weeks, then reintroduce small unprocessed amounts like bulgur or good sourdough instead of cookies and pizza. Shah says true gluten allergy is rare, and processed gluten-free products are often less healthy.

• Find your sleep need without an alarm

Note how long you sleep unprompted and which recent days felt best. Shah says under six hours is linked to higher mortality, lower mood and more hunger; she sleeps nine or 10.

Reset Your Health: Stop Feeling Like Crap with Dr. Mark Hyman MD | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Mark Hyman
Date: 2023-03-23 · Duration: 1:23:08
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA1evuRjdHo

KEYPOINTS

• Functional medicine's formula: take out the bad stuff, put in the good stuff

Dr. Hyman says he doesn't really 'treat disease'; he removes what impairs the body and supplies what it needs, then lets its self-healing systems work — the same way a cut on your hand heals without a prescription. He argues most people never connect how they feel to what they eat, their toxin exposure, stress, sleep or movement, and so don't realize how close they are to feeling better.

• Food is information, not just calories

Every bite, he says, carries 'informational molecules' that switch gene expression, hormones, brain chemistry, the immune system and the microbiome up or down in real time. He also cites a comparison of genetically identical pasture-raised and feedlot bison whose meat differed across some 1,500 metabolites — you are what you eat, and what your food ate.

• Your gut talks constantly to your brain

Mel notes the gut and brain form from the same embryonic tissue and stay connected. Dr. Hyman says there are more neurotransmitters in the gut than the brain, and that a scientist growing the gut bacterium Akkermansia for a probiotic found its byproducts contained GABA, the calming neurotransmitter Valium acts on. He also mentions Harvard research on treating depression through the microbiome.

• Hidden inflammation drives many 'Western' diseases

A sore throat or a swollen sprained knee is visible inflammation. Inside, he explains, it is silent: an inflamed brain doesn't go red but can show up as depression, attention problems, anxiety or insomnia. He calls inflammation a hallmark of ageing and says about 70% of the immune system sits in the gut, where a damaged lining ('leaky gut') lets food proteins and bacteria trigger immune reactions.

• Five things knock the body out of balance

His list: bad food (he says about 60% of the American diet is ultra-processed), stress, toxins such as heavy metals and pesticides, bad bugs or an unhealthy microbiome, and allergens or sensitivities. He defines stress as the perception of a real or imagined threat to your body or ego — the same gun produces different reactions in Woody Allen and James Bond.

• The ingredients for health are broader than diet

He lists whole-food nutrition, key nutrients (often omega-3s, vitamin D, B vitamins, iron, zinc, magnesium), balanced hormones, light at the right times, clean air and water, movement, active relaxation, seven to eight hours of sleep, and connection, love, meaning and purpose. In his book he writes that curing loneliness could extend life by seven years or more, versus five to seven for eliminating heart disease and cancer.

• Anxiety and ADHD are symptoms, so look for the cause

Saying 'I have anxiety' is like saying 'I have a headache', he argues — it could come from life stress, trauma, toxins, the microbiome or blood sugar. He says diagnostic manuals list some 155,000 diseases, most of which describe symptoms rather than causes. He is openly critical of antidepressants and anxiety drugs, though he says he still uses medication when needed.

• Blaming people for their weight is 'a big fat lie'

He rejects the calories-in, calories-out and 'moderation' narrative as shaming and letting the food industry off the hook, arguing processed food is biologically addictive. If you're mentally bargaining for artificial sweeteners or stevia, he says, that's a sign of sugar addiction. He cites a figure that only 6.8% of Americans are metabolically healthy.

• Women's hormones shift every decade

He describes the hypothalamus as the command center for sex, stress, thyroid and growth hormones. For women in their 30s and 40s, he names four that tend to fall out of balance: sex hormones, thyroid (often underdiagnosed), cortisol and insulin — the last tied to belly fat. Fixing lifestyle basics often resets them without treating each directly, though symptoms like severe hot flashes may need specific treatment.

EXAMPLES

• Producer Donna's recovery

About 12–14 years earlier, Donna had severe back pain, bad asthma and had been diagnosed with 43 allergies at age 8. As a single mom, she replayed Dr. Hyman's audiobook on CDs in the car, gave up sugar and soda, ate greens and started exercising. Today she has no back pain, no inhaler, no meds, has run 27 5Ks, climbed Mount Washington twice and biked 75 miles in a weekend four times.

• The 12-year-old with ADHD

A boy expelled from kindergarten while on Adderall was, at 12, on seven medications for ADHD, asthma, gut and mood problems. He lived on junk food and was deficient in magnesium, zinc and B vitamins. With a whole-food elimination diet, a multivitamin, fish oil, magnesium, vitamin D and probiotics, his mother reported two months later that his ADHD, migraines, asthma, skin and gut problems were gone and his handwriting had become legible.

• Mel's son Oakley

Diagnosed with severe dyslexia and dysgraphia in fourth grade and medicated for ADHD, Oakley refused the meds by eighth grade. His school cafeteria served only salad bar, soup and protein. By ninth grade he was focused, his handwriting had changed and he'd been off meds for three years. Mel says she suspects diet is a major part of it, having watched him go from mac and cheese and nuggets to vegetables.

• The panic attacks a can of Coke fixed

A patient with a big belly had palpitations, sweating and breathlessness that went away when he drank a Coke. Dr. Hyman

recognized crashing blood sugar (hypoglycemia) and notes that panic can have many causes, but big blood-sugar swings are a common one.

• Two pounds versus four ounces

Researcher Denis Burkitt found that genetically similar African city dwellers had heart disease, diabetes and autoimmune conditions that hunter-gatherers lacked — and passed about 4 ounces of stool a day versus 2 pounds, which Dr. Hyman attributes to plant fiber feeding good gut bacteria.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Try a 10-day reset as a dare

Cut gluten, dairy, sugar, alcohol and packaged food (canned sardines or salmon are fine); briefly drop grains and beans too, since some people react to them. Eat protein, vegetables, nuts, seeds, berries and good fats. Sample day: eggs with tomato and avocado; a big colorful salad with wild salmon and pumpkin seeds; fish or chicken with three-quarters of the plate vegetables, including cruciferous ones daily.

• 'Take Five' breathing

Five times a day — before meals and bed — breathe in through the nose for five seconds and out for five, five times. He says moving the diaphragm engages the vagus nerve and lowers adrenaline and cortisol.

• His baseline supplements, with caveats

A clean multivitamin; vitamin D3 taken with food (he suggests 1,000–5,000 IU, noting official guidance calls up to 4,000 safe); fish oil, since he says over 90% of people lack omega-3s; and magnesium if you have 'twitchy' signs like anxiety, palpitations, constipation, muscle or toe cramps, or eye twitches. Soda, caffeine, alcohol and stress all drain magnesium.

• Feed the gut before buying probiotics

A probiotic won't rescue a diet of sugary cereal, nuggets and takeout. Eat fiber, fermented foods (sauerkraut, kimchi, miso), prebiotics (asparagus, artichoke, jicama) and colorful polyphenol-rich foods — he says Akkermansia likes green tea, pomegranate and cranberry — and be mindful that antibiotics, acid blockers and NSAIDs like Advil can disrupt the microbiome.

• Sleep basics

Keep fixed sleep and wake times, get about 20 minutes of morning light even when cloudy, avoid screens two to three hours before bed or wear blue blockers, and keep the bedroom dark and at 68°F or cooler. He likes a 20-minute hot Epsom-salt bath with lavender before bed.