

The Hormone Optimization Lifestyle

Practical Tips for a Better Mindset, Diet,
Workout Routine and Sleep



PAZONA MD

A man and a woman in athletic wear are stretching outdoors. The woman is on the left, wearing a yellow shirt and grey leggings, and the man is on the right, wearing a teal long-sleeve shirt and black leggings. They are both smiling and looking at each other.

Introducing: The Hormone Optimization Lifestyle

Hormone optimization is a powerful tool which can lead you to a better version of yourself. However, all the testosterone and/or estrogen in the world will not transform your life alone. You must adopt healthier mental and physical habits.

I can already hear your doubting inner voice:

“I’ve tried eating better BUT I just can’t stick with it.”

“I hardly eat anything BUT I can’t lose weight.”

“I need to start exercising BUT I’m too busy.”

“I’m taking all of these medications BUT I still feel stressed.”

“BUT I don’t need as much sleep as other people”

But, but, but. You’re focusing on the wrong butt. Let’s talk about how to get your rear-end moving in a better direction (while making it a little bit tighter in the process).

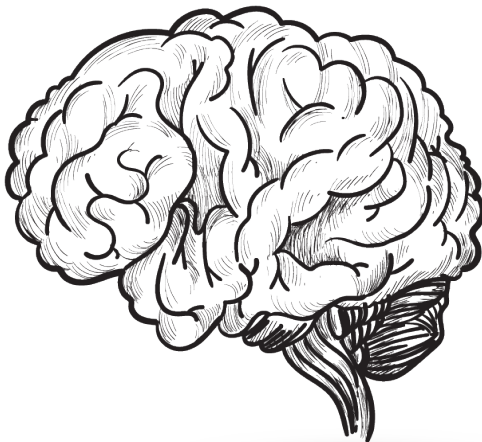
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1

Positive Compassionate Mindset



First, let's address the biggest barrier to a better you.

Your mindset.

Your mindset may be your #1 enemy. This isn't some hippie-dippie BS. If you don't change your inner dialogue to a positive, loving conversation with yourself then nothing else matters.

With some simple tricks, let's turn your inner voice into your biggest asset. Here are my **top 5 mantras** which will transform you from an "I can't" to an "I will" person:

1. "IT'S OK" - SELF-COMPASSION

Be kind to yourself. I bet you're a bit like me and kind to all those around you. But when it comes time to cut yourself a break, you're overly harsh and judgemental. This mindset is self destructive.

One of the greatest secrets of successful people is that they FAIL. In fact they FAIL MORE OFTEN than less successful people. The difference is that when successful people fall down, they brush the dirt off and get back up without letting the moment destroy their confidence.

If you overindulge on a meal . . . "It's OK!". If you miss a workout . . . "It's OK!" This is a marathon, not a sprint. What you accomplish 80% of the time is more important than the 20% of the time you don't hit a goal.

Instead of falling off the wagon because you think "I'm a failure, I might as well give up", remind yourself that "It's OK!" and do better tomorrow.

Tip:

Temptations often go away with time. “Yes, but not now” gives you permission to enjoy that treat at a later time (more on treat days later).



2. “MAYBE LATER” - DELAY GRATIFICATION

Another common myth amongst folks is that they don’t have enough “will power.” There’s no such thing as will power. There I said it!

Successful people have the same amount of “will power” as everybody else. The difference is they adopt routines and practices which limit the number of times they succumb to a temptation.

We all indulge at some point. Anyone who denies this is lying. But the most successful people are better at delaying gratification. How you may ask?

The next time you’re tempted to open the pint (or gallon) of ice cream, tell yourself, “Maybe later.” It’s not a “NO!” or a “NEVER AGAIN!” (who wants to go through life never eating ice cream again?).

Utilize a delay tactic.

3. LIMIT NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

The corollary to self-compassion is avoidance of negative self-talk. I like to call negative self-talk the “a-hole roommate in my head.” Throw him out.

Negative self-talk is where pain can turn into suffering. You slipped up in your better lifestyle plan and now you’re convincing yourself that you are the worst human being in the world (don’t worry, there’s a long list of people ahead of you).

Next time you feel the spiral of negative self-talk beginning because you ate the whole bag of Cheetos (and who can blame you . . . they are delicious), instead say “that was interesting.” Reflect on the behaviors that led to this moment.

Were you tired? Did you make a bad choice at the grocery store? Were you starving and didn’t plan to have a healthy snack around the house?

Turn the negative experience into a learning experience. One bag of Cheetos didn’t cause you to gain 20 pounds. It was the 50 bags of Cheetos you’ve eaten over the course of the year because you didn’t bring a healthy snack to work.

4. “IT’S NOT A DIET” - NEW LIFESTYLE

It should come as no surprise, but in case you weren’t sure . . . DIETS DON’T WORK!!!! There are 2.3 million diet plans for a reason. None of them work over the long-term.

So how do you eat healthier?

A subtle change in your perspective can cause a massive change in your waistline . . . “It’s not a diet. It’s a lifestyle.” It’s your new way of eating.

Believe it or not, I’ve struggled with my weight my entire life. The major change for me occurred when I made a conscious decision to care about what I put in my body.

I choose to eat healthy, delicious foods on a consistent basis. When I want to enjoy something different (freshly made pasta bolognese with a glass of red wine of course), then I enjoy my “treat” and the next day, I return to my healthy lifestyle.

This mindset shift does not need to occur overnight. I’ve been on a 9 year journey and my lifestyle continues to improve.

5. "I HAVE TIME" - PRIORITIZE WHAT'S IMPORTANT

We all have 24 hours in a day. Certainly some of us have more on our plate than others (both literally and figuratively). However the most common excuse I hear is, "I don't have time to work out."

You don't have the time? I call BS. You CHOOSE to prioritize other, less important activities (aka sitting on the couch).

Want some sympathy? Sorry, you're not getting any here. I'd be happy to introduce you to some of my patients who are up at 3:30 am to hit the gym so they can workout, go to work and then come home to spend time with their spouse and kids every night.

There are 168 hours in a week. Don't tell me that isn't a way to carve out 2-3 of those hours for some physical activity. You have time.

This is your health and without it nothing else matters. I'm going to help you rediscover that missing time in your day and get your body moving. You've got this!

Not a morning person? No problem.

Try some of these tips:

- Bring a healthy lunch to work and use your lunch hour to hit the local gym or take a walk.
- Wake up 20 minutes earlier than usual and bang out 100 squats and 100 push-ups. Repeat when you get home from work.
- Take an evening walk with the family after dinner.



2

You Can't Outrun a Bad Diet

Now that you're well versed in the importance of a positive mindset, let's shift gears and tackle the #1 obstacle to a better version of yourself . . . your dietary habits.

You might be saying to yourself:

"Dr. P, that whole 'it's a lifestyle thing' doesn't make any sense to me. I need some practical help with my diet."

Fair enough. Let's discuss some actionable steps to help you adopt a healthier diet.

First things first. I'm not going to pretend to be an expert in the ketogenic diet vs. Atkins diet vs. eat 8 small meals a day diet. If you're doing something that works then fantastic. For everyone else who's still looking to achieve sustainable results here are my best pieces of advice:

DON'T DRINK CALORIES

If you ask most nutritionists to name the most unhealthy food, the #1 answer will be SUGARY DRINKS. Nothing has such little nutritional value and such potential harm as sugary drinks.

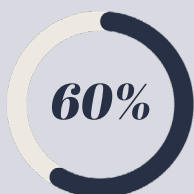
What's so bad about soda, juice and caramel mocha frappuccinos?

1. Sugar in liquid form causes your blood sugar and insulin levels to spike more than any other food choice. More on this later.
2. Sugar drinks have **ZERO** nutritional value. We must debunk this idea that juice is "healthy". It isn't!
3. Sugar drinks don't fill you up and in fact cause you to eat more.

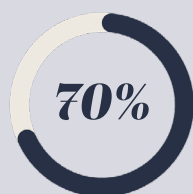
Believe it or not I've had patients lose 10-20 pounds in less than 2 months by simply eliminating sugar bomb beverages. All things considered, this is an easy win that anyone can achieve.

Diet or zero calorie drinks are not ideal (they also cause your body to release insulin and make you hungrier) but I'll take it over the real sugar. The goal should be no sodas or juices of any sort.

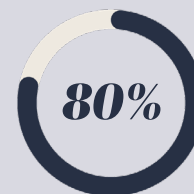
Why is water so important?



60% of our body is water.



The brain contains over 70% water.



Muscles are almost 80% water.

1. Our bodies are made of it! It is no surprise then that when you are dehydrated you may make poor decisions or have difficulty building muscle. All of our organs rely on water. You CANNOT optimize your health without optimizing water intake.
2. Water keeps your stomach full so you can't stuff it with chalupas, fries and pretzels. One of the easiest weight loss tactics is to drink a 20 oz glass of water before a meal

So what should you drink?

Water, water and water.

I know you're sick of hearing this. To be honest, I'm sick of hearing grown adults whine that they "don't like water." Deal with it (sorry not sorry for the tough love . . . you asked for help).

Sorry again but tea, coffee, milk, soda, and juice DO NOT COUNT. These beverages do not hydrate your body as well as water. Water is the key to health, my friends. Get on board.

If you are struggling with water intake, here are two helpful techniques:

1. Chug a glass of water when you wake up and before every meal. If you do this four times a day you'll at least be getting 64-80 oz of water a day.
2. Carry around a water bottle with you everywhere you go. I love the Cactaki water bottle because it labels water intake goals for different times of the day. Drink two bottles and again you're at 64 oz a day (disclosure: if you choose to order the water bottle through the link I provided then I might make \$0.05. I wanted to be transparent about my not-so-brilliant additional income stream).



SUGAR, NOT FAT, IS THE ENEMY

I grew up in the 80's when everything was low fat. Low fat pound cake, low fat ice cream, low fat milk, low fat pasta. Little did all the experts know that the low fat food was causing a mo' fat belly.

In order to understand the reasoning behind this let's learn about nutrition, carbohydrates and our biochemistry:

Carbohydrates come in 3 flavors: **sugars**, **starches** and **fiber**. Sugars are called "simple carbs" and starches/fiber are "complex carbs."

When we ingest carbohydrates, they are broken down into energy through the following process.

- 01.** Starches and sugars are broken down into glucose.
- Simple carbs turn into glucose with little effort (bad)
 - Complex carbs turn into glucose with more effort (good)
 - Fiber is mostly not absorbed and does not turn into glucose.



02.
In response to blood glucose levels raising, your **pancreas secretes insulin**. This hormone is responsible for transporting and storing glucose.



03.
Your **brain** and **muscles** are the first ones to **receive glucose** (explains why you are starving after an intellectual challenge and supports why exercise is important).



04.
Next insulin takes any excess carbohydrate and stores this as **glycogen in your liver**.

Glycogen is depleted with exercise or fasting. When glycogen levels are full, then the carbohydrates become stored as FAT.

In other words, when your energy levels are full (e.g. sitting on the couch while eating) then your body has no choice but to turn carbohydrates into FAT. This is not to say that carbohydrates are BAD. But rather, when you are already overweight, consuming more carbohydrates makes it more challenging to shed those extra pounds.

Your brain, muscles and other cells need glucose. They can't utilize protein or fat. The idea behind "low-carb diets" is to trick your body into thinking you haven't eaten anything.

High-fat, high protein diets don't raise your insulin levels as much so your body goes from "fat-storage" mode to "fat-burning" mode. This is the reason why Atkins and ketogenic diets are so effective at causing weight loss.

The problem with these plans is that they are **REALLY DIFFICULT** for most people to stick with over the long-term. Bacon and eggs sound great. Until all you eat are . . . bacon and eggs.

These "low-carb" diets also ignore the potential benefits of other healthful foods (fruits, legumes) and the downsides of excess meat (hello constipation and colon cancer).

What do I recommend? Most meals should contain $\frac{2}{3}$ vegetables and $\frac{1}{3}$ protein. We don't need pasta, rice, bread, potatoes as a side dish.



Tip :
Aim to fill 2/3rds of your plate with vegetables at almost every meal.

SUPERCARGE RESULTS WITH TIME-RESTRICTED EATING

Incorrectly called intermittent fasting, time-restricted eating reduces the window of caloric consumption (fasting technically refers to zero calories for at least 24 hours . . . no thanks).

Why does time-restricted eating work? Let's first review a typical American day of eating:

01.	02.	03.	04.	05.
Breakfast:	Snack:	Lunch:	Dinner:	Dessert:
Coffee with sugar, a bowl of cereal or a Pop Tart.	Mary brought in a box of Krispy Kremes because the "Hot" sign was flashing.	Pretty soon you're ducking out for a fast food lunch and an afternoon food coma.	You're exhausted and throw a ready-made noodle casserole into the oven.	A bowl of ice cream as your "treat" in bed then repeat in the morning.

Sound familiar? You spent 16 hours eating. Your body never got a chance to burn calories because you consumed food . . . the . . . entire . . . day.

Do you know what else happened? Your pancreas spent the entire day producing insulin. If you do this day after day, the cells in your body will get tired of high insulin levels and develop insulin RESISTANCE. Insulin resistance is the primary cause of type 2 diabetes.

Let's contrast this with a day of time-restricted eating.

- Wake up. Have a glass of water followed by coffee, tea or hot water with no sugar.
- Skip breakfast and drink water throughout the morning.
- 11 am lunch: large salad with chicken, tomatoes, avocado, walnuts, pickled onions and homemade vinaigrette dressing (I'll give you the recipe don't worry).
- 6 pm dinner: pork chop (or salmon or steak), roasted brussel sprouts/cauliflower
- No calories from 7 pm until 11 am next day

So what happened during the time-restricted eating scenario? Your body, starved of calories, entered "fat-burning" mode for 16 hours. Remember your organs need glucose. If you don't provide the glucose with fries and doughnuts, then your body produces glucose by burning fat.

The best part of a time-restricted eating schedule is the ease of long-term adherence compared to other healthy eating plans. Rather than worry so much about **WHAT YOU EAT** you are focusing on **WHEN YOU EAT**. Indiscretions such as treats have less of a negative impact if eaten during a shortened time window.

SPEAKING OF TREATS . . .

Have a treat day.

I love food. A life without pasta, a well constructed sandwich or curry and rice is a life not worth living. Kale salads are great. Kale salads 7 days a week? Lord, help me.

We all have temptations. Diets don't work because they're restrictive. Battling constant urges to "cheat" (as if you've done something "illegal" by having a slice of pizza) is a recipe for failure.

Remember It's what we do 80-90% of the time that will lead to big changes in our life. Now don't go and blow it out with a whole cheese pizza every Saturday. However, allow yourself a reasonable portion of something you're craving.

If you're really worried about losing some of the terrific gains you've been achieving, then utilize a time-restricted schedule for treat day as well.

The real key is to truly enjoy every bite of the treat. Then, have healthy meals planned the next day so treat day doesn't turn into treat week.

The more you practice the above habits, the better your relationship with food will become. Before you know it, saying "No" to the box of Krispy Kremes in the office will be a piece of cake (couldn't help the pun).

"It's what we do 80-90% of the time that will lead to big changes in our life."





**80% of your results
depend on what you eat
on a day-to-day basis .**



3

Pumping Iron

You might be wondering, “What about exercise, doc? I thought exercising is the most important thing?”

The truth is you can eat through any amount of exercise. **I truly believe weight loss is 80% diet.** I shake my head every time an overweight person starts to say “I need to start exercising,” knowing that the primary reason for their extra weight is consistently poor dietary choices.

Despite the importance of diet, exercise is a key component of becoming the best version of yourself. Why is exercise so important?

1. EXERCISE INCREASES YOUR METABOLISM

Think of an increased metabolism like an interest-bearing savings account. You’re doing nothing but gains are being made. Obviously exercise burns calories and creates a caloric deficit. Unfortunately most people just eat more which negates any benefit.

However, regular exercise also increases your basal metabolic rate (BMR) so you’re burning more calories throughout the rest of the day. When you follow our previous dietary habits as well, the efficiency of fat-burning increases dramatically.



A big benefit to exercise is that increasing muscle mass will raise your testosterone levels.



2. EXERCISE RAISES YOUR TESTOSTERONE LEVELS

I understand that if you have low testosterone levels you don't feel like doing much. It's a vicious cycle. The less you move your body, the lower your testosterone levels dip, and the less you want to get off the couch and exercise.

You have to fight through this inertia to start feeling better. Luckily you've probably chosen hormone replacement therapy, so hitting the gym will be easier with optimized hormone levels.

3. EXERCISE LEADS TO STRESS REDUCTION AND BETTER SLEEP

Any parent can tell you the effectiveness of running your kid around outside and watching him/her crash for an early bedtime. Adults are big kids. Run us around and we'll sleep better too.

I challenge anyone to tell me of a time that they had a killer workout and didn't sleep like a baby that evening. The restorative power of sleep is underrated. Sleep deprivation as we will soon discover can lower testosterone levels.

Personally, I work out for the psychological benefits. I go from Bruce Banner to the Hulk if it's been more than a day or two between workouts. Exercise provides a healthy outlet for stress relief. Take your frustrations out on the dumbbell. Let your mind wander on a run or bike ride.

WHAT EXERCISE PLAN SHOULD I DO?

There are so many choices.

Similar to diets, the exercise world is inundated with different programs all claiming to be the best. The exercise plan you should stick to is the one that:

01.

Is something you enjoy doing.

02.

Doesn't lead to injuries.

03.

Is easily incorporated into your daily routine/schedule.

In other words: if you hate it . . . if it causes pain . . . if it's difficult to incorporate into your daily life . . . then you won't do it. If it doesn't meet the 3 criteria above, there's not much hope for continuing the program.

But there are some caveats:

- If you're out of shape, then you may not initially enjoy ANY workout. Toughen up buttercup.
- An injury is a recurring joint or muscle pain that prevents proper techniques. Pain is pain and there's no way to avoid it (no pain no gain has some truth to it).
- Lastly if your daily schedule is to wake up at 8:15 am, rush to work by 9 am, sit at your desk all day, crash on the couch by 5:30 pm, then . . . your routine has to change.

An effective exercise routine also varies based on your baseline fitness level.

For people who are sedentary, getting in 10,000 steps a day is a big win! Trying to join a CrossFit gym when you're 75 lbs overweight is a recipe for failure.

Are you already "working out?" Hate to say it, but I see what you're doing at the gym and that is NOT a workout. You spent more time socializing, looking at your phone and drinking a 400 calorie shake than you did burning fat.

If you really do workout and have hit a plateau, here are some booster techniques:

HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING

Ever wonder why everyone is headed to a CrossFit gym or Orange Theory? It's because they work. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) involves performing a series of exercises with minimal to no breaks.

The idea is that by moving from exercise to exercise quickly, your heart rate stays elevated and your body enters fat-burning mode more quickly and efficiently. Most workouts involve total body or large muscle group movements to avoid muscle fatigue. Don't worry, you're not going to perform 250 shoulder exercises in a row.

HIIT is in direct contrast to the dude who strolls over to the weight machine, performs 10 reps and then talks to his buddy for 5 minutes. It's not helping you my friend.

HIIT is also more effective than jumping on the hamster wheel (aka the elliptical machine) at a light pace while watching Netflix for 45 minutes. Sorry, you didn't burn any fat while watching Joe Exotic.

The beauty of a HIIT workout is that you can make serious gains in only 20-30 minutes. Because the routines are intense, you'll need a day of rest to recover.

Which of the following weekly options sounds better?

1. Three 30 minute workouts (90 minutes total) with actual fitness improvements **OR**
2. Five 45 minute elliptical rides (almost 4 hours total) with zero fitness improvement

I choose option number 1. Now, I'm not suggesting that you sit on the couch during your rest days. A walk around the neighborhood, light bike ride, or a hike will do just fine.



EXCUSE #972 “BUT I DON’T HAVE ANY GYM EQUIPMENT!”

Nice try. Here is of my favorite HIIT workouts that requires no weights and no gym:

10 rounds for time of:



10 BURPEES



10 AIR-SQUATS



10 SIT-UPS



10 PUSH-UPS

If you can do this under 30 minutes that’s fantastic (if not “It’s OK!”) Done in under 20 minutes? Beast mode. It looks like the hormone optimization is working.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Although HIIT routines will definitely make you stronger, dedicated strength training is essential as well. The good news is that you don’t need to be Schwarzenegger to properly strength train.

Exercising the largest muscle groups will provide the most benefit. You’ll increase muscle mass, testosterone levels and confidence. Target your back, chest and leg muscles. We’re not sculpting guns here with 1000 bicep curls.

Start simple with body weight exercises:

- Squats
- Lunges
- Push-ups (on your knees is fine!)
- Rows or pull-ups

If you don’t have access to a gym or equipment, then TRX suspension straps are a fantastic investment. You can literally workout every muscle in your body, take up minimal to no room in your home and they last forever.

On the other hand if you are a member of a gym, make sure to consult with a trainer or experienced weight lifter. Great form and a spotter are essential as you start pushing heavier weights. When given the choice, pick free weights over machines.

Trust me. Work the big muscle groups at least twice a week and watch the fat melt. As a bonus, watch your testosterone levels grow alongside your pecs, lats and glutes.



The Power of Sleep

I used to believe that diet and exercise were the two most important components of a healthy lifestyle. After some eye-opening content consumption, I would now argue that diet and SLEEP are the most important elements of an optimal life.

“Yeah whatever doc . . . you’re a kook.” Trust me when I say that I didn’t come to this conclusion without great consideration. Keep an open mind while I review the power of sleep.

DANGERS OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Since you’re likely a skeptic about the power of sleep, I’m going to start with an attempt to scare you straight. Chronic sleep deprivation is associated with:

- Obesity
- Hormone deficiency
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Diabetes

There’s a longer laundry list of diseases associated with sleep deprivation, including early death, but let’s start there. How can you stay in a positive mindset, maintain a healthy weight and healthy hormone balance if you don’t sleep? The answer is, you can’t.


Sleep deprivation causes poor decision-making and increased stress. In this state of mind you are more likely to succumb to unhealthy food cravings. The positive mindset techniques we worked on earlier will be tossed out the window. The jerk inside your head is more likely to appear with his/her negative self-talk.

Obviously if you’re exhausted from staying up all night binge-watching *The Office*, then the likelihood of exercising decreases exponentially. Without exercise, you unfortunately also lose the benefit of improved sleep quality.

Sleep is a restorative process. When you don’t allow your body and mind time to heal, it is impossible for your tissues and organs to perform at an optimal level. Additionally you allow disease processes the opportunity to enter your life.

Think that you can power through with minimal sleep? Studies show that just one week of sleep deprivation in healthy young men led to testosterone levels of men 10 to 15 years older.





As we age, our sleep needs don't decrease. Unfortunately our ability to stay asleep decreases and likely contributes to aging and memory loss.

SLEEP FACTS

Still not convinced that sleep is important? Here are some sleep facts from renowned sleep expert Matthew Walker's book *Why We Sleep* that you may find surprising:

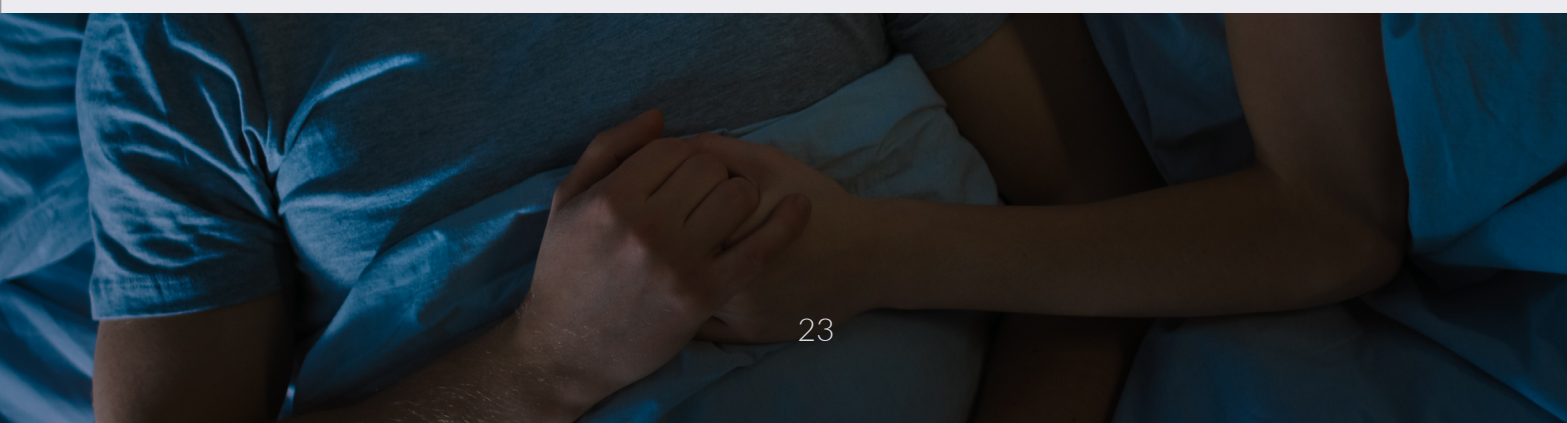
- <1% of the population has a genetic mutation (gene BHLHE41) that allows them to survive on <6 hours of sleep. It's probably not you. You have a higher likelihood of being struck by lightning.
- One study showed that one week of sleep deprivation (5 hours a night max) in healthy young men led to testosterone levels of men 10 to 15 years older (yikes).
- Unconsciousness does not equal sleep. Drugging yourself with booze or sleeping pills is neither restorative nor healthy. Speaking of drugs . . .
- Most melatonin supplements contain TOO MUCH melatonin. The actual dosage you are receiving is very inaccurate compared to the dosage written on the bottle.
- Caffeine has a half life of 5-7 hours. That means 5-7 hours after your last cup of coffee there's still 50% of the caffeine in your body. What about decaf?
- Decaffeinated coffee still contains $\frac{1}{3}$ of the caffeine of full strength coffee. Yes it counts.

SLEEP HYGIENE

So how much sleep should we be getting? The National Sleep Foundation recommends a 7 to 9 hour window of sleep opportunity. This doesn't mean you're sleeping the whole time. It just accounts for the time you give yourself to try and fall asleep.

Here are the top 12 tips from National Sleep Foundation and NIH for a great night's sleep:

01. Stick to a sleep schedule: Adults need sleep routines as well as kids.
02. Exercise, but not too late: Exercise is fantastic as we've learned but too close to bedtime throws off your circadian rhythm.
03. Avoid caffeine and nicotine: I love my coffee so I'll compromise, finish it by 10 am. Don't forget chocolate has caffeine. I don't have to remind you that smoking is bad.
04. Avoid alcohol before bed: This one can be tough but alcohol prevents REM sleep.
05. Avoid late meals and drinks: It's hard to sleep with heartburn and trips to the potty.
06. Avoid medications that disturb sleep: Perform a medication inventory and make changes if necessary with your prescribing doctor.
07. Don't nap after 3 pm: Good luck falling asleep if you've rested this late in the day.
08. Relax before bed: A good book or music will get you in the mood for some zzz's.
09. Take a hot bath before bed: Further relaxation + drop in body temperature after getting out will help you feel sleepy.
10. Dark, cold, device-free bedroom: Enough said.
11. Adequate sunlight exposure: Early morning sun for at least 30 minutes.



12. Don't lie in bed awake: If you're still awake after 20 minutes. Get out of bed, grab a book and head to the couch to read. Any anxiety only worsens lying in bed for longer.

I'll add a few of my personal sleeps tips as well:

- Meditation: If you practice calming your mind every day then the late night anxieties become less frequent.
- Magnesium supplements: Magnesium is a testosterone booster and a great deep sleep aid. 200-400 mg a night one hour before bed is safe and natural alternative to sleeping pills.
- chiliPAD: Hands down this is one of my top 3 self care purchases (Peloton cycle and Vitamix blender being the other two). The chiliPAD cools your bedsheets and pillow so you'll want to snuggle up with your comforter and sleep like a baby. Don't doubt the chiliPAD. Just buy it and you'll have no regrets.

Closing Thoughts - Hormone Optimization

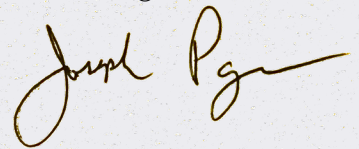
I truly hope that you've found this information useful. The right mindset, dietary choices, exercise routine and sleep hygiene are all essential for healthy living.

I'm passionate about improving the lives of my patients. I don't want to only prescribe hormone replacement therapy and say "Good luck!" The right lifestyle choices are vital as well.

If you're not yet a patient and think that we might be a good fit for each other, please send us an email or give us a call.

I'd welcome the opportunity to further help you become the best version of yourself.

Warm regards,



JP | PAZONA MD

Joseph Pazona MD
hello@pazonamd.com
(615) 527-4700



Dr. Joseph Pazona is a board-certified urologist who specializes in hormone optimization for both men and women. He founded Pazona MD, a private urology practice, in Nashville, TN in 2020.

He loves his Peloton, chiliPAD, Vitamix, children and his forever girlfriend Catherine. Once upon a time, Catherine did not love the Peloton or chiliPAD but she has come around. She still thinks the Vitamix is "just a blender," bless her heart.

Dr. Joe's Favorite Healthy Recipes

Blueberry, Peanut Butter, Banana Protein Shake



This reminds me of a PB&J milkshake but much healthier. I honestly eyeball the ingredients most of the time. If it's too thin add a few ice cubes. Add fiber powder depending upon your overall fiber intake. For the best results use a Vitamix blender. Any other blender won't give you the same smooth texture.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ frozen banana
- ¼ cup of blueberries
- 1 ½ tablespoons of natural peanut butter
- 1 scoop of chocolate whey protein powder (Optimum Nutrition from Costco)
- 1 cup of almond milk, unsweetened
- Fiber powder as needed
- Ice cubes as needed

HOW TO PREPARE

Combine all ingredients. Blend on frozen smoothie setting on Vitamix or until all components are mixed and desired thickness is obtained.

Roasted Cauliflower Tacos with Caramelized Onion, Guacamole and Red Cabbage Curry Slaw

I was inspired by a delicious cauliflower taco I had in Franklin, TN. They deep fried their cauliflower but I wanted a healthier, easier, home version. Again I eyeball a lot of the spices and oils and you can do the same to your liking. Look for low net carb tortillas (5-6 g net carbs) like La Banderita Carb Counter or Tumaró's Carb Wise Ancient Grain.

Lastly you can cook brussel sprouts or broccoli following this same recipe as a great side dish for any protein. Dress up with a pesto, diced avocado, or salsa verde.



ROASTED CAULIFLOWER

- 1 head of cauliflower cut into small florets
- Garlic powder
- Salt
- 2 tablespoons of Olive oil

HOW TO PREPARE

Preheat oven to 425 degrees with two large baking sheets in the oven. Mix cut cauliflower, garlic powder, salt and olive oil in a large mixing bowl. Place cauliflower on hot baking sheets (do not over crowd the sheets or your cauliflower will not brown properly). Cook for 20 minutes. Flip cauliflower and cook another 5-7 minutes until golden brown and crispy in some spots.

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

- One large sweet onions sliced
- Garlic powder
- Salt
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil

HOW TO PREPARE

Place onion slices, garlic powder, salt and olive oil in a large saute or cast iron pan over medium heat. Cook for 15-25 minutes until desired caramelization. Turn off heat and let onions sit.

RED CABBAGE SLAW

½ large red cabbage sliced thin
½ cup of Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons of red wine vinegar (apple cider, sherry or white vinegar work as well)
Curry powder to taste
Salt and pepper

HOW TO PREPARE

Mix yogurt, vinegar, curry powder, salt and pepper in a medium mixing bowl. Add sliced red cabbage and toss. Let sit for 20 minutes.

GUACAMOLE

2-3 ripe avocados, halved and pitted
Juice from ¼ to ½ lime
Salt and pepper
1 teaspoon of olive oil

HOW TO PREPARE

Add all ingredients to a bowl and mash. Stir in cilantro, chopped tomatoes if desired.

TACO ASSEMBLY:

Heat tortilla in a hot skillet for 15 seconds per side. Stuff with guacamole, slaw, onions and cauliflower. Top with your favorite hot sauce and/or cilantro. Take two “Beano’s” due to the extreme fiber content and enjoy.



Shrimp Tacos with Pickled Red Onions

This is a delicious variant that substitutes shrimp for cauliflower and pickled red onions for caramelized onions. Don't have paprika? No problem. You can substitute any favorite spice (chili powder, cumin). You'll use the same slaw, tortillas and guacamole

INGREDIENTS

1-1.5 lbs uncooked medium (20 count) shrimp
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons paprika
2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 small red onion
Vinegar (white, apple cider or red wine)
Sugar substitute (e.g. Splenda)
Salt

HOW TO PREPARE

1 small red onion
Vinegar (white, apple cider or red wine)
Sugar substitute (e.g. Splenda)
Salt

Peel shrimp. Mix in medium bowl with paprika, garlic powder, salt and olive oil. Let sit 30 minutes. Heat olive oil in non-stick skillet over medium high heat and cook 2-3 minutes per side until no longer translucent.

Thinly slice red onion and place in bowl with $\frac{1}{2}$ vinegar $\frac{1}{2}$ water to cover onions. Add generous amount of sugar substitute and salt. Stir. Let sit at least 30 minutes. Remove from pickling liquid to serve. Excess can be saved for up to 1 week in the refrigerator.

Reverse Sear Steak



This method is pretty fool-proof for a delicious steak at home. Once you try it you'll never go back to your old ways. This doesn't work well for thin cuts so get at least a 1 inch thick steak. You will also need a meat thermometer. I have an inexpensive one from ThermoPro that works great.

INGREDIENTS

- Your favorite thick-cut steak (I'm a ribeye and NY strip fan myself)
- Kosher salt
- Cast iron skillet
- Vegetable oil or extra beef fat
- Meat thermometer

HOW TO PREPARE

Buy the steak at least 24 hours ahead of time. Pat dry, generously salt both sides with kosher salt and place on plate in refrigerator.

Remove steak from refrigerator 2 hours before planned mealtime. Pat dry and remove excess moisture. Place thermometer in middle of steak away from a bone (make certain the tip is only halfway into the meat).

Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Place steak with temperature probe into oven and remove when temperature reaches 133 degrees for a thick-cut medium rare rib eye or strip steak. Take out at 122-127 degrees for a rare to medium rare filet. Don't leave in beyond a 144 degrees or you'll have cardboard.

Preheat a cast iron skillet on high until smoking. Brush steak with vegetable oil or beef fat. Sear 30 seconds per side, on all sides until golden brown crust.

Enjoy with a large salad or your favorite roasted vegetable. Substitute thick cut, bone-in pork chops and cook to 140 degrees for a more economical or non-beef option.

