

New Horizon Fitness

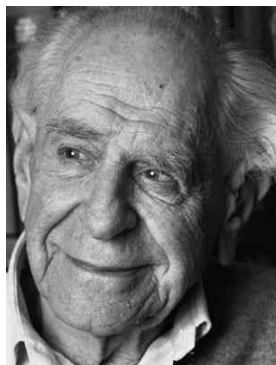
What Is The Best Diet?



Is the “best” diet low fat, low carb, high protein, low saturated fat, high fiber or some combination of these? I would say specifically, none of the above. There are three major reasons why the subject of a healthy diet is so confusing and often contradictory:

1. There is no single best diet that works equally well for everyone. Epidemiological studies have revealed people thriving on a whole range of levels of the macronutrients protein, fat and carbohydrates. Pick your culture and you can find the results you want. However, we do know that certain diets, like the Standard American Diet (SAD), are fattening and unhealthy.

2. Individual circumstances and tastes must be considered when designing a lifelong diet. It would be great if we could all eat carefully prepared, organically grown, hormone free, pasture fed, free range, locally obtained etc. foods. Economic and time constraints make it difficult if not impossible for most people to obtain the “perfect” diet. Your present state of health should be considered. Better to aim for a healthier, obtainable and sustainable diet than perfection.



Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve”
Karl Popper

3. Using a singular reductionist approach to diet is doomed to failure. Since the first nutritionists discovered the macronutrients protein, fat and carbohydrate, there has been an ongoing effort to break food down into all its component parts (macronutrients, vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytochemicals, etc) to discover what constitutes the perfect healthy diet. They isolate a component of a food and label that food bad or good. Later discoveries find other bad or good components in the same food. A food that was good or bad becomes bad or good again.

Depending upon the expert and when you ask, margarine, butter, wine, fish, beef, animal fats, vegetable oils, etc. have all been bad and good foods. The problem is the interaction between foods and humans is a complex reaction not fully explained by a reductionist approach. No wonder so many people just give up and eat the processed convenience foods that are so harmful to health.

ANSWER - THE BEST DIET IS:

The general characteristics of a healthy diet include natural whole foods approach prepared and consumed in a wholesome manner. Natural whole foods are those foods you still recognize in their natural state: meats, vegetables and fruits. They have not been modified in a food factory and transformed with copious amounts of salt, sweeteners and other artificial ingredients to trick our bodies into over consumption. The right whole foods provide a **high degree of satiation** for the calories they contain. “A calorie is a calorie is a calorie” is a phrase most often repeated by idiots.

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We can identify SOME of the healthy components of these whole foods using the reductionist approach. However, the entire benefit usually comes from eating the whole food. Even the simplest of natural foods can have a hundred separate chemical compounds that make up its structure. That broccoli on your plate is a regular chemical stew. Isolating a single compound from broccoli may yield a substance that in vitro looks beneficial. But in vivo, minus all the other compounds, it fails to produce the desired result.



A good example is the Vitamin E that is most often sold in just one form, alpha-tocopherol. Alpha-tocopherol E is an incomplete vitamin, missing the other seven tocopherols/tocotrienols forms of E. It is not surprising then that some recent studies have shown that Vitamin E supplementation is not helpful. Yet they only used the alpha form of Vitamin E, even though E gamma tocopherol is a synergist. This is but another example of half baked research from the main stream nutritionists.

The wonderful thing about human genome has become perfectly adapted to eating and thriving on a variety of whole natural foods. We know many of these foods have a very beneficial effect on human health. The best diet builds on a variety of these natural whole foods. If you clearly can't get enough of a particular nutrient from your diet, a vitamin, mineral or food extract can be of value. Commercial farming techniques have diminished the nutrient value of even the best whole foods. As we age, absorption of other nutrients becomes diminished.

In the past 50 years, the fast food and processed food industry has replaced whole foods for the sake of convenience. The SAD is almost guaranteed to make you obese and unhealthy. It is dominated by processed food laden with refined carbohydrates, unhealthy fats, excess salt and addictive sugars and sweeteners. Prepared and fast foods are carefully constructed using the lowest quality shelf stable ingredients and engineered with excess salt and sweeteners to make you overeat. Roller coaster diets just make a bad situation worse as few people can stay with overly restrictive regimen.



Compounding the problems with food quality is that we have lost the healthy cultural habits associated with food consumption. As a nation we eat too quickly causing further distress and the release of harmful hormones. Instead of a relaxing social activity, too often eating has become another chore to be quickly finished.



The French Paradox, diets high in saturated fat but low heart disease, was initially attributed to red wine consumption. While there is little doubt the resveratrol in red wine helps cardiovascular health, much more is in play. **Moderate** alcohol consumption of any amount, appears to be cardio-protective. And the common, simplistic and erroneous assumption that all saturated fat is bad also confuses the issue. But what we do know is that in general, the French eat slower and have much smaller portion sizes. Since the very act of digesting food is a stressful event, the way the French eat is intrinsically healthier.

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The New Horizon Fitness lifelong eating approach emphasizes the healthiest meats, vegetables and fruits based upon careful study and your tastes. It is not an unrealistic cook by the numbers approach where you count carbs, calories, fat grams, etc. Successful diets must abandon the American all you can eat (fast) approach. You must look at the nutritional value of the whole food and make appropriate choices. There are countless processed foods comprised of the worst of ingredients that are labeled “healthy” because they add back one single healthy ingredient – nonsense!



Lifelong Habits Not Short term Fixes

I encourage my clients to slow down and make meals a time of enjoyment and reflection. Of course a time-efficient exercise program is another component. I have a collection of eating suggestions that will help you gradually shed some weight if that is your goal. I don't advocate temporary diet approaches, just fundamental lifestyle changes. I can provide you with a wealth of starter recipes based upon your food preferences. But my client focus is more on teaching healthy cooking strategies that open up an infinite variety of ways to prepare food. Cooking quickly, cooking healthy and cooking for life is the New Horizon Fitness approach.

When time constraints require you to eat outside prepared foods, you must become an informed label and menu reader so you can pick out the best available. The quality of prepared food differs a great deal and you can compensate for some negative aspects with the rest of your diet. Eating healthy most of the time can insulate you from occasional less than ideal choices. Learn how to make the healthiest choices when dining out. I enjoy my times eating out with family and friends; do it with pleasure knowing the social aspects are a benefit in itself.



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