



The Latticework:
Health & Nutrition



What I noted since the really big ideas carry 95% of the freight, it wasn't at all hard for me to pick up all the big ideas from all the big disciplines and make them a standard part of my mental routines. Once you have the ideas, of course, they are no good if you don't practice – if you don't practice you lose it. So, I went through life constantly practicing this model of the multidisciplinary approach. Well, I can't tell you what that's done for me. It's made life more fun, it's made me more constructive, it's made me more helpful to others, it's made me enormously rich, you name it, that attitude really helps...



...It doesn't help you just to know them enough just so you can give them back on an exam and get an A. You have to learn these things in such a way that they're in a mental latticework in your head and you automatically use them for the rest of your life.

– Charlie Munger,

[2007 USC Gould School of Law Commencement Speech](#)



Health & Nutrition

Health is life's fountainhead. Nothing else matters if you don't get this right, so don't let others' short-term sacrifices deter you from making your health a high priority (if not your highest priority). Understand that the body isn't magic – that if you have the right inputs, you'll get the right outputs. Find a way to balance diet, nutrition, aerobic/anaerobic exercise, strength, mobility, flexibility, sleep, meditation & mindfulness, and whatever else you enjoy that gets you moving, in flow, and out in nature. If we first and foremost take care of our health, it will allow us to pursue and deepen life's other dimensions.

A helpful place to start is figuring out what your main Health & Nutrition priorities are and then work your schedule around that. What would you have to do to get to sleep at the time you want so you can get enough sleep? What time do you need to wind down at the end of the day? Can you do things the night before, so you don't have to worry



about them in the morning? What time are you at your best? How can you maximize the amount of time and energy you have during this window? What time and how often do you want to work out? Similar to the apocryphal story about first getting the [big stones, then pebbles, then sand, and then water into a container](#), you must first fit the big things into your life or else the small things will crowd them out. This is [Gresham's Law](#) at play, where the bad drives out the good.

When it comes to your health, take this simple idea seriously: 50% of the results do *not* come from 50% of the effort. [Power laws](#) are at play in Health & Nutrition and it is up to you to figure out your own “minimum effective dose” that helps you optimize for your own health, happiness, and longevity. We hope these [1-page summaries](#) help you better know where to start and how to spend your precious time and energy to achieve the results you want.

To keep the body in good health is a duty... Otherwise, we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear. – Buddha



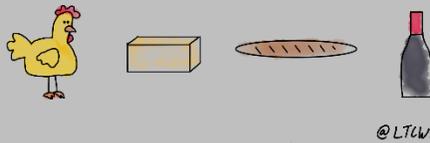
The Big Ideas of Health & Nutrition:

1. [Sleep](#)



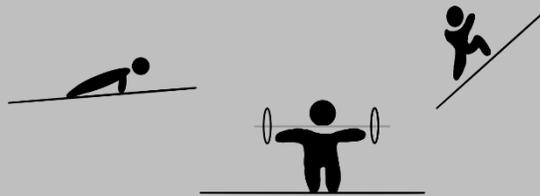
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2. [Diet](#)



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3. [Exercise](#)



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4. [Meditation & Mindfulness](#)



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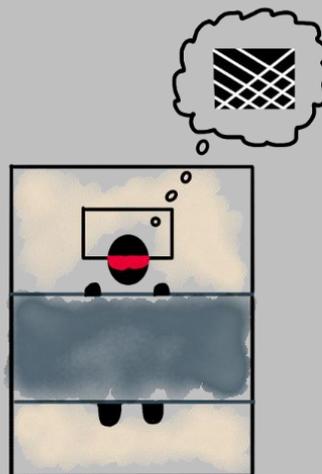


Sleep

Evolution is a natural culling machine. What puts organisms in danger and killed doesn't get furthered. And, after 3.7 billion years, we still have sleep – spending nearly one third of our lives in this state. This may not technically be scientifically sound reasoning, but if all animals we know of sleep and nature hasn't done away with it, that is enough evidence for me that this is an important process that we should take very seriously. We are playing with fire when we reduce the amount we sleep by 20% like we have done these past couple of decades.

If you buy into the above, getting high quality sleep is one of the most important variables in improving your brain function, longevity, and performance in all aspects of life. There seems to be no viable replacement for proper sleep – not caffeine, not willpower, not brief naps.

So, what can we do to better understand sleep and how to improve it? Check out Matthew Walker's [Why We Sleep](#) as well as our [full write-up](#) on this important topic, but some key habits include keeping a consistent schedule, exercising, avoiding big dinners and alcohol, keeping a dark and cold bedroom, and limiting caffeine. Easy to say, hard in practice.



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Sleep is the interest we have to pay on the capital which is called in at death; and the higher the rate of interest and the more regularly it is paid, the further the date of redemption is postponed.

– Arthur Schopenhauer

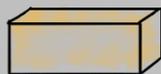


Diet

A diet is simply the sum of food an organism eats, but it has become used in relation to the type of diet you follow (anything goes, vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian, keto, paleo, intermittent fasting, etc...)

Peter Attia has become a trusted source for many when it comes to health, diet, nutrition, and longevity. Much of what he discusses on his podcast gets quite technical, but he does an enviable job of doing the work so that he can understand and explain the details. His [nutritional framework](#) is an excellent high-level overview of how to think about diet:

Nutrition is such a loaded topic – almost a religious or political one – so I’m always looking for ways to explain it that are as free from that baggage as possible. So far (and this is constantly evolving, so look for this to get better over time) the framework I use to explain eating is based on modifying three parameters or “pulling 3 levers” in various combinations. A few months ago I posted a [short video](#) explaining this way to think about nutrition. It comes down to three forms of restriction. Whether it’s what you eat or don’t eat (i.e., dietary restriction or DR), how much you eat (i.e., caloric restriction or CR), or when you eat and don’t eat (i.e., time restriction or TR), virtually all of the dietary schemes you can think of can be distilled into these three elements in some combination. One thing is for certain: if you want to be sick, don’t do any of these things. Eat as much as you want (no CR), of anything you want (no DR), whenever you want (no TR). This is called the “standard American diet.” The further you can get away from this pattern of eating, the better. As I say in the video, always pull one of the levers; often pull two; sometimes pull all three.



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Any malady that can be treated by a change in diet should be treated in no other way.

– Moses Maimonides

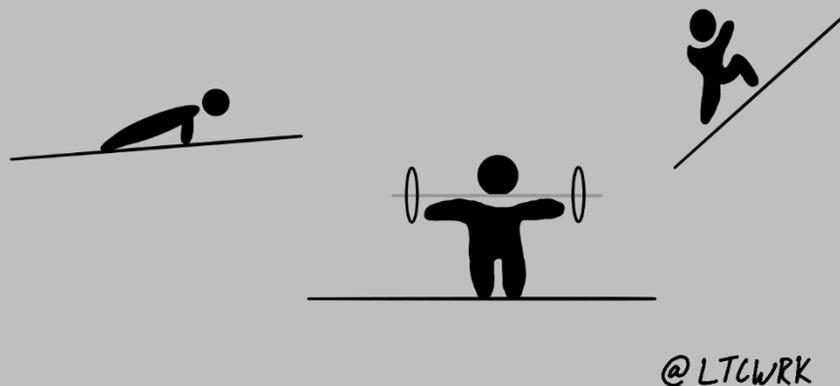


Exercise

Exercise is any movement that maintains physical and mental wellness, flexibility, robustness, and longevity. If we look at that list and what many people consider exercise, they don't resonate. So, if we were to start with first principles of exercise, what would be some of the goals?

- Goal #1 – avoid injury
- Goal #2 – build muscle mass (especially as you age)
- Goal #3 – be able to do the activities you enjoy doing whenever you want and at any age
- Goal #4 – Feel and look good, having consistent energy and stable moods

Following a “minimum effective dose” program can help us achieve the above without needing to spend hours in the gym. HIIT has become more mainstream these last several years, but the idea is to do short bursts of high intensity activity for relatively short periods of time. For example, run as fast as you can for 15-60 seconds, rest for 45-120 seconds. Do this for a total of 8-20 reps, a total of only 15-25 minutes, 1-2x per week. The point is to get your muscles close to failure, with >90% HR max achieved. [Body by Science](#) also outlines a beautifully simple lifting protocol that might be helpful in this quest for lifelong health.



Body and mind are not two separate entities. What happens in the body will have an effect on the mind and vice versa. Mind relies on the body to manifest, and body relies on mind in order to be alive, in order to be possible.

– Thich Nhat Hanh



Meditation & Mindfulness

One of the better definitions of mindfulness I heard is from Jon Kabat-Zinn: “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” This, at the end of the day, is what meditation helps foster – mindfulness, awareness, detachment, focus, calm, patience, perspective, and so much more. However, mindfulness and attention are not the end goals of most meditation traditions. Rather, the true end goal is *insight*. The greatest benefit of cultivating this power of sustained attention is to be able to develop insights into our mind, feelings, emotions, desires. The idea is to train attention to create a quality of mind that is calm and clear at the same time. That quality of mind forms the foundation for emotional intelligence.

There are so many varying beliefs and dogmas around meditation – how to best practice it, when, mantra/no mantra, it is the solution to everything, it is a total waste of time, etc.... However, if we try to take it down to the foundation, to [first principles](#), meditation is all about increasing our awareness and decreasing the amount of control our conscious, thinking mind has over our lives. As the axiom goes, the mind is a great servant but a terrible master. Meditation helps ensure the mind serves your purpose and not the other way around. Importantly, acceptance and awareness is not passivity and meditation is not about feeling a certain way, it’s about being mindful of what you are feeling. The basic building block for most forms of meditation is to simply focus on your breathing. It is amazing how difficult this is at the start. Simply trying to still your mind and focus on one thing is frustratingly difficult, but that’s the point of the whole practice. It’s like doing a rep in the gym. You don’t get frustrated when you simply keep training and, can’t do another rep, you over time, you improve. The whole practice is about catching yourself when your mind wanders your attention back to deeper than that, of and lovingly bringing your breath. It is much course, but that is a pretty good place to start.



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Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation.

– Viktor Frankl



As the African proverb goes, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

[Thank you for choosing to go together.](#)

