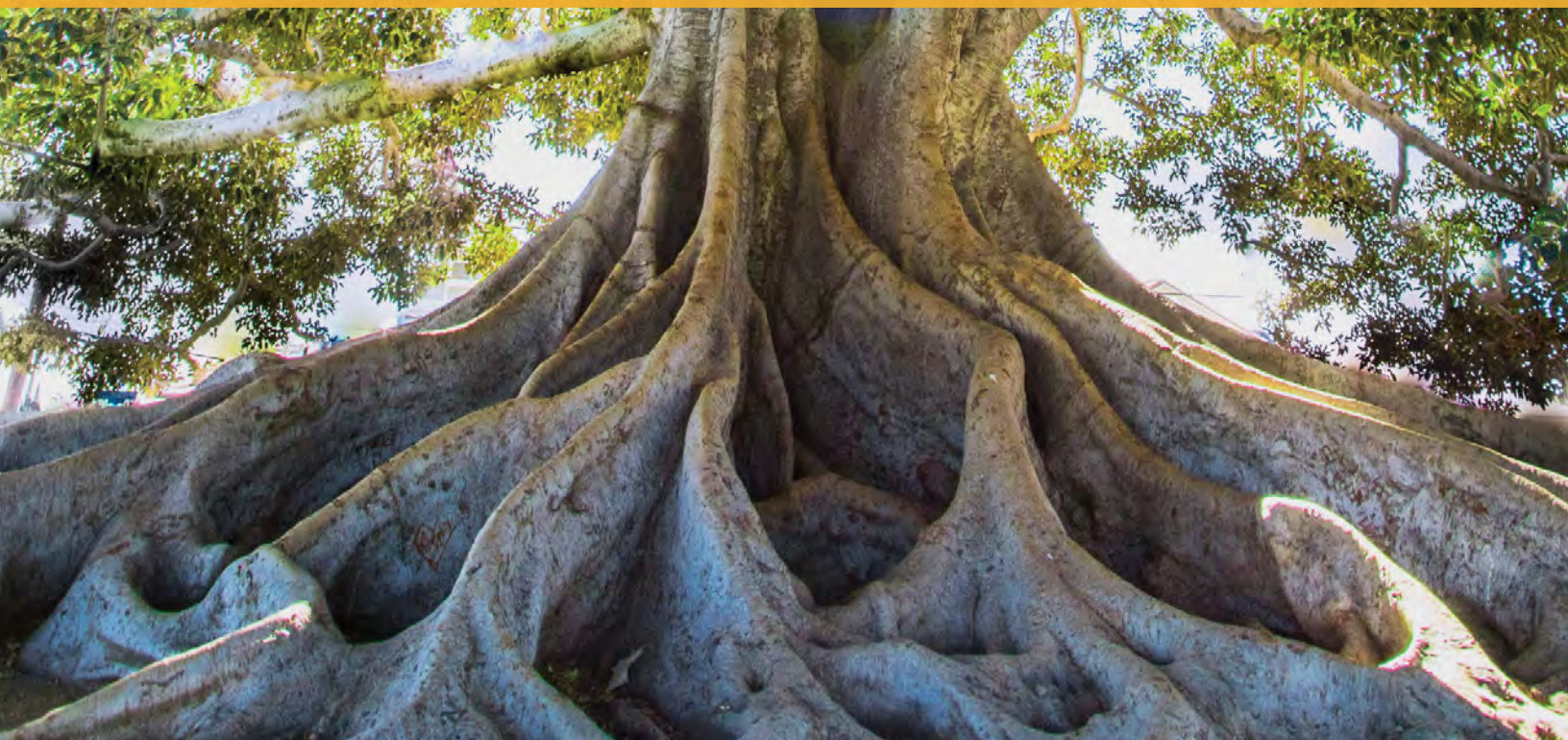




LION'S HEART™

FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN HEALTH

C.Z. POTTER



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BODY

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“Health isn’t everything.
But everything
becomes nothing
without health.”

SOCRATES

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

Foundations of Human Health: Body is the Human Health 101 manual that we didn’t realize we all needed—until now.

Through each chapter, this book illustrates each of the primary categories that make up complete physical health, tied to a practical plan for how to assess and improve ourselves within each category. This book leads both **a method to view your health**, as well as a process to **pursue your health** in a comprehensive yet clear way.

You are invited to follow this path to becoming the healthiest version of yourself.

What do you and don’t you know
about your health?

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

Foundations of Human Health: Body is made for those who wish to get on the front end of their health by understanding the foundational layers of wellness that support and intertwine with their best life.

This book was written for those who value their health as the backbone of everything else in their lives, and who seek clear tools and leadership in helping to view their state of wellness in a holistic and comprehensive way.

If you are one of those people, I hope that you find this book to be an indispensable map and compass to add to your own library.

How interested are you in building and maintaining your health?

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

BUDDHA

“Health is a matter
of choice, not a
matter of chance.”

ARISTOTLE

HOW DO I USE IT?

There are two paths:

1 FOLLOW THE FAST TRACK

Your Action Book will lead the way.

You are eager to pursue a healthier life right now. You are ready to change your life for the better. And you really just need the right steps to be clearly laid out in front of you without the distraction of background information, philosophy or tertiary details. **If this sounds like you, we invite you to follow the Fast Track**—simply begin with the Action Book as your guide, and complete each of the five steps to expedite your journey toward better health.

Open your Action Book now to begin on the Fast Track. Should you need more information on any particular Action, simply refer back to its accompanying chapter within this book.

2 DIVE DEEPER

This book will be your primary guide.

You love to know the Why behind the What. You want to learn more about the simple harmonies of human health in all its facets. You value other perspectives in topics you may know something about, and in topics where you know almost nothing. **If this sounds like you, we invite you to dive in to this book from the beginning.** Learn more about philosophies of health with a goal of deeper understanding—the more you know, the more powerful you can become in your health journey, and the more prepared you will be when you start your Action Book.

Page by page, this book can reframe the way you view and pursue your best health, beginning with the powerful perspective of your very own Why.

WHY DID I COMPOSE THIS BOOK?

With health being the measure of life itself, what more foundational duty do we have as humans beyond understanding and pursuing this core discipline for ourselves and our loved ones?

I believe the health of individuals becomes the building blocks of our collective public health. And if health governs the physical vessel that all acts of love and joy originate from and travel through, then I find it rather important that we invest full attention to it.

Knowing physical health is truly vital to all of our actions places its importance front and center. But if we dare to view a definition of health to include emotional and spiritual health, it would be the foundational center dividing joy from sorrow, war from peace, forgiveness from vengeance...

I believe health IS the first wealth—and therefore, the first science and the first art for mankind to master.

Because of this belief, I fashioned this book—a living document teaching Human Health 101 as a comprehensive yet simple path to viewing and pursuing fully balanced health in your life.

- C.Z. Potter

“The first wealth
is health.”
RALPH WALDO EMERSON



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PREFACE

DEFINING HEALTH

This book is not meant to lead some new discovery of what health is—rather, this book is meant to demonstrate how the long-standing fundamentals of health we have been building upon for decades can be organized into a clearer path for more effective pursuit.

We cannot pursue something fully until we understand what it is. So let’s place a microscope on how the word “health” is currently being defined in today’s culture, and how this perspective shapes us as a collective society.



START AT THE ROOT

ETYMOLOGY OF HEALTH

Old English
hælp “wholeness, a being whole, sound or well”

Proto-Germanic
**hailitho*, from PIE **kailo-* “whole, uninjured, of good omen”

SEEK AUTHORITY

DEFINITION OF HEALTH FROM ACADEMIC & GLOBAL AUTHORITIES

CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY

Definition of Health
The condition of the body or mind and the degree to which it is free from illness, or the state of being well.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Definition of Health
A state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.



THE LION’S HEART DEFINITION OF HEALTH

A continuum of wellness—beyond illness, infirmity and disease—progressing forward in degrees of fortitude and ability, specifically within the categories of:

- MIND
Skills of social and vocational wellness
- BODY
Attributes of physical wellness
- HEART
Emotional or spiritual wellness

PUSHING THE DEFINITION FURTHER

Start with the established definitions of health and restructure their fundamentals into a form more conducive for progression, and you have the Lion’s Heart definition of health. Though we respect and harness the other definitions as-is, **we seek to establish greater clarity in the existence of a wellness continuum to pursue health fortitude**, as well as **seeking to define a practical framework** (Mind, Body, Heart) for effective and memorable communication.

PROGRESSING HEALTH

Communicating clearly that **health is a continuum, not merely a binary position of “healthy” or “sick,”** is imperative

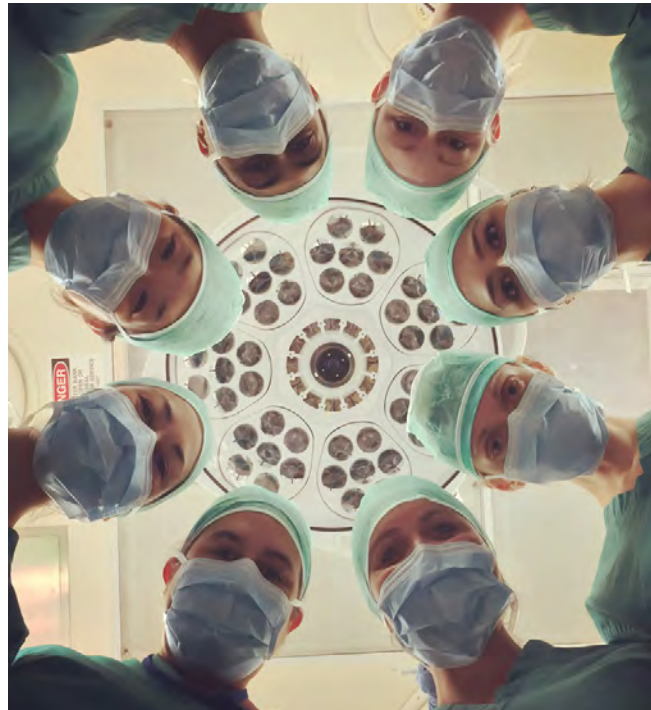
in establishing an axis for individuals to progress upon, instead of believing that **since they are not currently sick, they must be healthy.**

Illustrating that health is comprised of an array of factors and each of these factors has its own continuum between sickness and wellness is equally as important. Creating a framework for these various aspects of health leads to the common sense idea that evaluating each of the many dimensions of health within yourself—at multiple points in your life—would be wise. Lion’s Heart defines health in a manner that, by design, incites self evaluation for the purpose of progress.

DEFINING HEALTH

CONTRASTING TERMINOLOGY

Separately from how the Academics and Institutions are defining health, how is the word *health* being used in today's culture, and how is this perspective shaping us as a society?



HEALTH CARE

(COMMON REFERENCE FOR ALL HEALTH SCIENCES)

When we are sick, we eventually seek to understand our illness and “cure” it with health care systems, services and technology. We have defined certain criteria for what “poor” health is, and how treatment of this illness is pursued.

Ask yourself, then, how much of our health “care” would be better phrased as health “repair.”

ETYMOLOGY: *CARE*

Old English *caru*, *cearu* = sorrow, anxiety, grief, burdens of mind; serious mental attention. Also concern, anxiety caused by apprehension of evil.



HEALTH PROMOTION

(SELDOMLY USED)

The idea that an individual could be proactive with their health, rather than holding a reactionary mindset when issues arise, is the foundation of Lion's Heart. For this pursuit we must define the criteria for the advancement of “good” health.

Ask yourself how a system of health “repair” and health promotion could function in harmony.

ETYMOLOGY: *PROMOTE*

Old French *promocion* = advancement in rank or position, election, promotion

Latin *promotionem* = a moving forward

DEFINING HEALTH

CHANGING COURSE

Beginning to look at health from the Health Promotion perspective **presents the need for change** in our current societal mindset of what health and health “care” is.

Just as there is a path to lesser health, we also have a path to greater health before us, both individually and at the collective level. In this world debate on the necessity of Health Care, let's not forget how powerfully intertwined Health Promotion is to our goals in sharing full and long lives with one another.

What I believe we need to pair with Health Care systems is a clear, categorical approach to Health Promotion, designed for the general public to pursue the applied art and science of advancing their own whole health.

From this belief, the design for the Lion's Heart health system was born—to create a clear map of the general categories of human health and areas of assessment, and to outline a path for improvement in each. This map is meant to connect those who want to improve their health with accompanying health professionals, in a single and united view for success.

Definition is the companion of clarity. Clarity is the guide to your goals.

TONY BUZAN



LION'S HEART

WHOLE HEALTH PROGRAM

MISSION

Our mission is to provide leadership and tools for the world to become healthier within Mind, Body and Heart.

METHOD

We approach this by **establishing a Platform** organizing comprehensive health into three branches for individuals to pursue core competencies along each path, while **leading a Process** in which individuals can systematically **Assess and Address** each major dimension of their health.

ARCHITECTURE & VISION

The DNA of Lion's Heart is the program itself—an evergreen guide to the pursuit of health in all facets—and inspired by the Einstein quote, *“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”* Its structure is a constantly updated and refined media resource for all who seek to become their best self in order to love themselves, one another, and this world with strength and wisdom. Any proven knowledge of health that complements or contradicts this system is welcome in the spirit of the Proverbs of Solomon—*“A fool hates correction but the wise will thank you.”*

The Lion's Heart program is designed to lead the fundamentals well. **My belief is that healthy individuals make up a healthy world**—therefore, to make this world its best, we must make the decision at an individual level to ensure we are living our best. This is the motive that leads my heart's journey. I hope you choose to join me on this path of self-evaluation and improvement.



MIND

FOLLOW YOUR PATH TO A HEALTHIER MIND.

Assess your competency in the life skills central to leading an intentional and successful adult life. Lion's Heart breaks these skills into six categories: Personal Management, Critical Thinking, Survival, Wealth Management, Social Skills and Citizenship.



BODY

FOLLOW YOUR PATH TO A HEALTHIER BODY.

Evaluate your medical vital stats. Screen your anatomical alignment. Learn the basics of nutrition and the importance of a healthy diet. Assess and progress your athletic abilities. Carve a balanced lifestyle in order to let your best physical self thrive.



HEART

FOLLOW YOUR PATH TO A HEALTHIER HEART.

Seek the “why” behind your “what,” as the answer will be the driver in your health journey. Through psychology or spirituality, confront how to love yourself and others with wisdom and courage, accept grace in failures, and experience gratitude for the gifts around you.

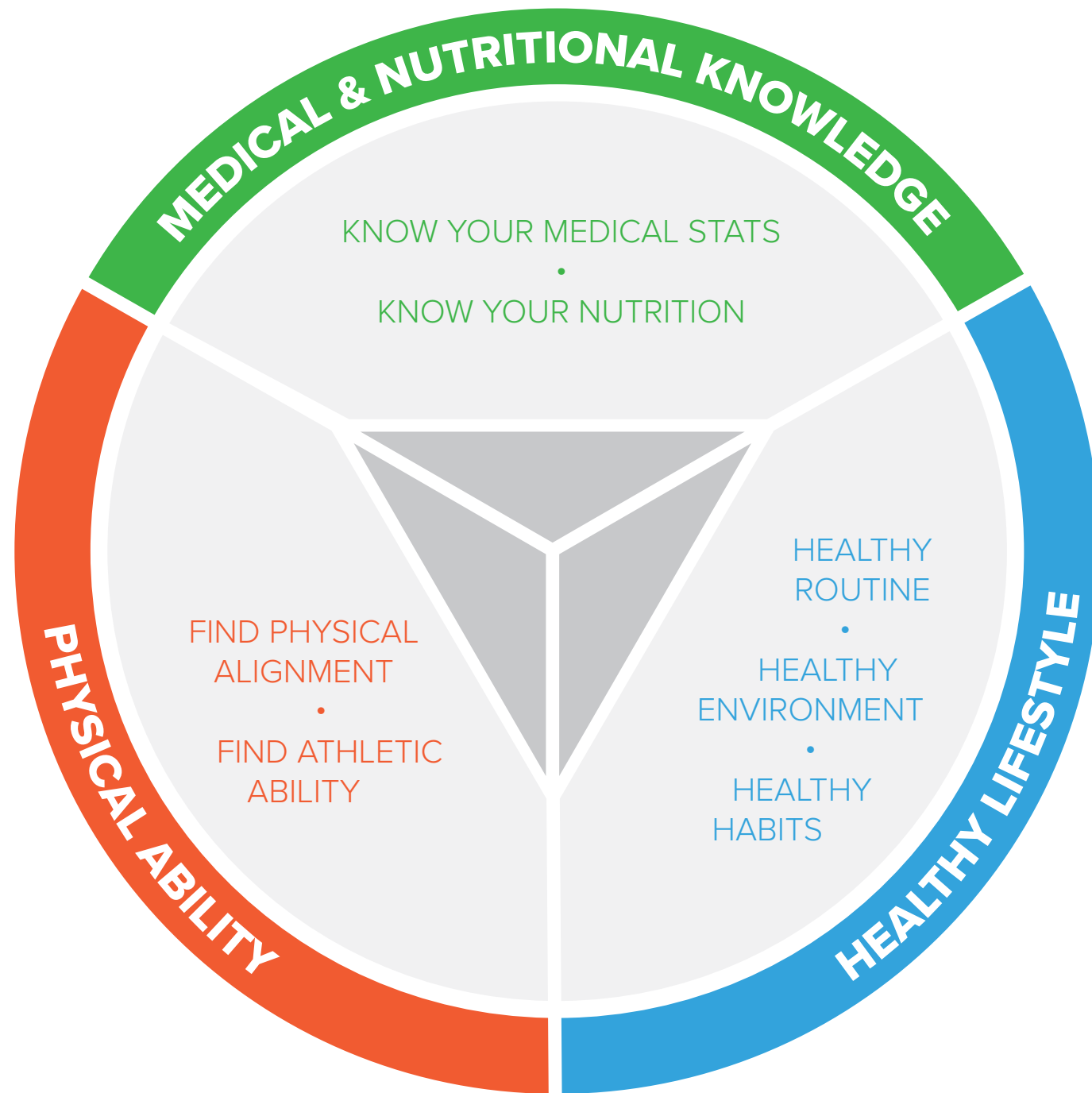


FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN HEALTH:

BODY

FACETS OF WHOLE PHYSICAL HEALTH

To frame our view of whole physical health, our program has three focus categories. Each has a streamlined set of tools to guide you to a greater state of health.



MEDICAL & NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Your vital stats and dietary patterns alone may place you at risk for some of the most deadly diseases. Gain a basic awareness of the building blocks that make up your medical and nutritional health, and learn to develop a plan of care if you are aiming to improve in any given area.

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE Get screened for any major diseases. Discover your vital stats, what they are, and how to course-correct by developing a relationship and a plan with your primary care professional.

NUTRITION Get an introduction to the groups of food that exist and the macronutrients they are composed of. Learn more about common diets and distinguish similarities and differences to build your own diet.



PHYSICAL ABILITY

For an energetic, powerful and pain-free body that feels both open and flexible, we lead you through a full alignment evaluation to find any weak links before going down a path to achieve your best physical fitness.

PHYSICAL ALIGNMENT Evaluate every major joint and posture with a functional movement evaluation before beginning a physical fitness program. Discover any weak points and begin rehabilitation before injury.

PHYSICAL FITNESS Assess how balanced your athletic abilities are within strength, agility and endurance along core functional movement patterns, and learn to design and commit to a program that develops or maintains balanced physical fitness.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Cultivate your health goals by assessing your lifestyle, becoming aware of the environments we surround ourselves with, and the habits we form.

HEALTHY ROUTINE Discover how we can look introspectively to pursue our goals, balanced between work, play and rest in our lives.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT Take a deeper look into some of the key layers of our environment, and learn to engineer them into the best settings for the life we want to live.

HEALTHY HABITS Create and maintain healthy daily habits within posture, breath, nutrition and more.

METHOD OF APPROACH

The Lion's Heart methodology leads an honest and thorough look within. Here, we can Assess and Address ourselves within each major dimension of health.

“A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.”

PROVERB

We as human beings all have one crucial and base-level commonality—all of our hopes, dreams and chances of experiencing them are completely dependent on our level of physical health. If we cannot move because of physical atrophy and pain, or if we are simply too sick and tired, our dreams can slip through our fingers.

When looking at the facets of our whole physical health on the previous page, you can see how many dimensions of health actually exist. But our nature as humans in recent history is to become increasingly specialized in certain roles

or niches, which leads us to hyper-focus on one or two areas of health while forgetting some other areas exist entirely.

So here's a riddle: What's the most important part of a car? Is it the engine? The tires? The steering wheel?

The answer is, all of them. The car cannot function without each piece working in sync. And the body acts the same way. Our body is the vehicle in which we are meant to experience the world. It is the primary office that houses our sense of self. And we only get one.

This is why taking care of ALL facets of our physical health is so important. This is why we must fight our nature to overspecialize in one or two areas of health and instead confront all the bases—especially the ones we knowingly divert our eyes from, as they are often the weak link in the chain that is our physical health. That “check engine” light isn't going to go away on its own.

OUR PRIMARY METHODOLOGY

The Lion's Heart methodology is built to guide you through a series of self-confrontations within each plane of health. When you are ready to look at yourself in this metaphorical (and literal) mirror with genuine intent to see where you are and where you can grow, you will hold the power to illicit change far superior to simply memorizing a selection of health facts or workout routines.



We lead this emotionally-charged personal journey by framing each facet of health into an actionable, measurable self-evaluation so you can not only track real change as you go, but you can make a plan of action moving forward that will guide you down the path of living your best life.

BECOME AWARE

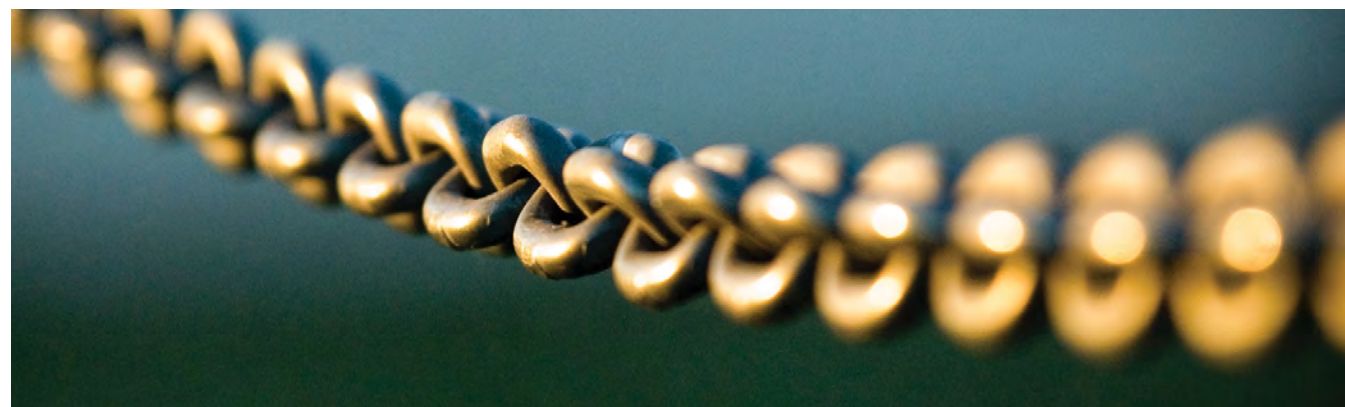
After you have made the commitment in your heart to attain your best health, the next step in pursuing whole health is to become aware of the primary facets of human health and to acknowledge where you might fall on the wellness spectrum within each facet. This is NOT to make you feel bad, or to force you to compare yourself to others—that would, on a psychological plane, be considered unhealthy. Awareness is about being brave and wise in facing reality, which can sometimes be uncomfortable.

We lead a simple step-by-step process to walk you through an evaluation of your whole health. **Each area prompting an awareness and assessment is highlighted at the beginning of every chapter.** We do recommend you work with a professional

when possible, most notably in areas of medical testing, though in most instances we provide the tools for your own assessment. Though this book contains sample assessment sheets for viewing, the *Lion's Heart Foundations Action Book* provides copies of each assessment, prompt, and schedule for your own notes, reference, and progress tracking.

WALK OUT YOUR PLAN OF CARE

Once you have completed the assessment in each area, the time has come to take your health into your own hands and make a master plan of what you can change, how, when, and where, fueled by the power of your deepest and most honest “why.” Though we provide all of the schedules, prompts, charts, blank pages and network of providers, only you can choose to take those next steps to pursue and live your healthiest lifestyle. **We are here alongside you—when you get off track from the goals you have set for yourself, we can call you back to the pride. And as you gain stride in your own health journey, you will then become the voice of leadership and inspiration that can effectively call others back in stride when they need it the most.**



FIVE STEPS ON THE PATH OF HEALTH

Our broad outlook on the definition of human health and our design-based categorization all lead to a simple series of steps to pursue.

If you take each of these steps and take the time to **ASSESS** and **ADDRESS** yourself in each realm, you will have an impactful and positive life transformation.

Reading this book is always a great first step for information, but **true change will only occur** if you can honestly **check off each of these boxes**, either here or in your Action Book. Are you up for the challenge?



3 ASSESS AND ADDRESS YOUR PHYSICAL FITNESS

I have assessed my physical fitness and I know where my weaknesses fall within a balance of strength, agility and endurance.

☐

PAGE 68

I have built a balanced fitness program designed to address my weak points within a balance of strength, agility and endurance, and followed the program for at least 1 month.

☐

PAGE 176



1 COMMIT TO BECOMING THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF

I have made the internal decision and commitment to confront my health and become the best version of myself. I have analyzed my motives for this change, I have rooted myself in these motives for strength and I am ready to begin on my path.

☐

PAGE 18



4 ASSESS AND ADDRESS YOUR NUTRITION

I understand the fundamentals of nutrition, what pieces make up a balanced diet, and have a cursory knowledge of various dietary strategies.

☐

PAGE 28

I have assessed my current diet and created my unique dietary strategy that aligns with my lifestyle and health goals while fueling my body with the nutrients it requires, and followed this strategy for at least 1 month.

☐

PAGE 52



2 GET SCREENED INSIDE AND OUT

I have had my core medical health evaluated by my primary care physician and I am following my individual plan of care to maintain or improve my vital numbers.

☐

PAGE 20

I have had my physical alignment, posture and movement patterns evaluated by my physical therapist or trainer and I am following my individual plan of care to improve any areas of weakness in each category.

☐

PAGE 54



5 ASSESS AND ADDRESS YOUR LIFESTYLE

I have assessed my current goals and routine through a balanced work/play/rest lens and built a plan to adjust my schedule as needed to achieve a healthier balance.

☐

PAGE 198

I have assessed the environments I live within and the habits that I have formed, and I have made a plan to grow where I need and address any negative associations or areas of weakness within each category.

☐

PAGE 204

A photograph of a wooden staircase leading up a mossy forest path. The path is made of wooden planks and steps, surrounded by dense green foliage and tall trees. The scene is misty and serene.

A PASSIONATE ENOUGH WHY CAN CONQUER THE HOW TO ANY WHAT.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PATH...

lies you and your motives. Your motives are literally what will motivate you, and they can be the most powerful force in propelling you further on your journey. Take a moment to connect with them. Ask yourself:

“WHY do I want to take care of my health?”

“Is this just to gain the approval of others?”

*“Do I want to be the best version of myself,
for a real purpose?”*

Some motives run deep and will allow you to get further on the path than others. Health professionals can provide knowledge, tools and encouragement, but nothing more. Allow yourself to understand your motives, soak in them for inspiration, and return to them often to rekindle the fire and passion that drives you.

This is your choice—an internal decision brought forth externally through the strength of your character. This choice of the heart is the most critical and powerful step in your health journey, so be sure to give it the time and focus it deserves. ■



MEDICAL AND NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Chapter 1: Know Your Medical Stats

- Get assessed
- Know your numbers
- Follow your primary care professional

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Dr. Brian P. Sanders, MD

Although having a fitness regime and a general awareness of nutrition can put you in an advantageous position with your physical health, **you may still have underlying medical issues that don't show signs until it's too late.** Having an awareness of key medical health factors such as your blood pressure, cholesterol, A1c, BMI and more allow you to know if you need any medical intervention, and together with your medical professional, you can plan a path to improve certain areas that may need attention.

At this stage, your health could become a life or death situation. By going to a medical professional to get basic numbers checked, you are taking the first step in owning personal responsibility of your health. ■

A VITAL(s) PHILOSOPHY

For the most part, our body runs like a well-oiled machine—but with today’s cultural norms mixed with continuous medical advances, the need to check under the hood continues to rise.

IF YOU REALLY THINK ABOUT IT:

Your life is sustained by a symphony of organ systems working in perfect balance of homeostasis, which is nothing short of a miracle in itself. This system, for the majority, seems to run without any major issues throughout a lifetime. However, for a growing minority of us, a variety of issues can complicate and/or end a full span of vigorous physical health quite prematurely. The progression of our medical science can often intervene successfully, but only if intercepted early enough. This is why we place such an importance on early diagnosis through screenings and basic assessments.

The idea of a **basic health screening** will never change in its core concept (systematically having your organ systems evaluated for function and presence of disease), yet more advanced screenings will most assuredly continue to be developed as our knowledge and technology expands. Even today, there exists a multitude of cutting-edge (and long-standing) techniques that can detect even the subtlest of specific medical anomalies, but they are sometimes inaccessible to the general public because of cost, federal restrictions, or they are just not agreed upon by everyone as an accurate measure. Therefore, we start *Foundations of Human Health* with the **basic health measurements** that medical professionals agree to be some of the vital markers for health concern. We hope to provide practical knowledge that can be actively used in your pursuit of a healthy lifestyle—not barrage you with isolated biology terms.

To begin, we recommend making an appointment with your primary care professional and empower you to start the conversation about pursuing your best health. Though every medical professional will approach their own practice with a unique variation, most will lead you through western medicines’ standard assessment for prevention of the diseases that the majority of humans in our current culture continue to fall to—cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes—and sometimes screening for common communicable diseases. This is why the first priority is to bridge the gap and begin to create a working relationship with your primary care professional—and more importantly, to understand why this step is so necessary.

THE SCREENING

Schedule an appointment with your family doctor, nurse practitioner or other trusted medical professional. Often, primary care providers aren’t used to their patients wanting to get ahead of their health (sadly, most patients are only in their office after a problem has already arisen), so let them know that you need their help in understanding:

- » How your core vital statistics (“Your Numbers”) are tracking compared to previous tests
- » If you are up-to-date with all recommended screenings for all communicable diseases you may be at risk for
- » If you are up-to-date with any specialized appointments and screenings within gender categories (prostate, gynecological), dental, dermatological, etc.
- » Any symptoms you have
- » The status of your immunizations

During this meeting, let your primary care provider lead the process as they do have the experience in the room, but take initiative in asking questions and ensuring you understand the answers you’re given.

The first priority is to bridge the gap and begin to create a working relationship with your primary care professional.

TYPES OF SCREENINGS

To have the most complete and accurate picture of our whole health as possible, it’s important to test multiple areas of our health. Though the list of factors we should test seems virtually limitless, in modern culture we seem to statistically struggle with the same small pool of diseases—cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. Centering our tests around these top three diseases is a great place to start.

The first general measure in screening for your cardiovascular health is to test your **cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure**. The cardiovascular system involves more than just the heart—you are also testing the health of the vascular system leading to the brain (warning signs of a stroke) and peripheral arteries in the body’s extremities.

Having a **Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP)** done, in addition to a **hemoglobin A1c** test, is the simplest way to test your risk for diabetes and to check in with your liver and kidney function. These basic tests are foundational in any physical and the go-to for diagnosing the predominate diseases we face today.

Lastly, **measuring the physical dimensions of the body** can give key insight into your overall physical health. Though specific BMI charts are far from perfect, they can still act as

a general reference point to track the course of your health and be a measurable guide for change, in either direction. There is growing evidence that obesity, lack of exercise and poor diet all contribute to an increased cancer risk, which further highlights the need for screenings in this area.

Keep in mind, your screenings should be viewed in context with your family and personal medical history. Share this information with your primary care provider, as it has the ability to guide conversations toward potentially higher-risk conditions. Though your chosen professional should be your primary guide, the more we take ownership of our health by understanding general concepts and keeping track of our own records, the more we are able to collaborate with our primary care provider to navigate toward a healthier lifestyle while also avoiding the risk of falling in between the cracks from institutional error.

The next page shows generally accepted numerical markers for both cardiovascular and metabolic health. Please note that your primary care provider might run a number of other tests, or have unique reasons why these might not be an accurate marker for your health specifically—but you will no doubt encounter these tests as staples in western medicine, so awareness of each test is still important.



Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP)¹

LIVER

ALKALINE PHOSPHATASE (ALP)	39	117
ALANINE AMINOTRANSFERASE (ALT)	0	44
ASPARTATE AMINOTRANSFERASE (AST)	0	40
BILIRUBIN	0	1.2

ALP, ALT and **AST** are all enzymes made by the liver that can measure liver function and help to highlight damage within the liver.

Bilirubin is a waste product made by the liver as it naturally breaks down red blood cells. Excess bilirubin can be caused by an obstructed or inflamed liver, and can lead to jaundice.

KIDNEYS

BLOOD UREA NITROGEN (BUN)	6	24
CREATININE	0.76	1.27

Blood urea nitrogen and **creatinine** are both waste products removed from the blood by the kidneys. This test helps show how well the kidney are removing waste and excess fluids from the body.

MINERALS & ELECTROLYTES

CALCIUM	8.7	10.2
SODIUM	134	144
POTASSIUM	3.5	5.2
CARBON DIOXIDE	20	29
CHLORIDE	96	106

Calcium plays an important role in nervous, muscular and cardiac system function, and is one of the body's most important minerals.

Sodium, potassium, carbon dioxide and **chloride** are electrolytes—electrically charged minerals—that help control the amount of fluids in the body and keep a pH balance of basic vs. acidity.

PROTEIN

ALBUMIN	4.0	5.0
TOTAL PROTEIN	6.0	8.5

Total Protein measures how much protein—**albumin and globulin—is in the blood.** Albumin tests can measure how well the liver is making the proteins the body needs, and globulin proteins play an important role in the immune system.

GLUCOSE

FASTING (FBG)	65	99
NON-FASTING/RANDOM (RBG)	68-125	126-160 >160

Fasting blood glucose measures the level of glucose in the blood after an 8 to 12-hour fast. Anything under 100 mg/dL is considered a healthy level. **Random blood glucose** shows a picture of glucose levels at that particular point in the day.

Other Common Screenings

GLUCOSE

HbA1c %²	4.8-5.6	5.7-6.4	>6.4
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Also called **A1c** or glycated hemoglobin, this tests evaluates the average amount of glucose in the blood. The higher your A1c level, the higher your risk of developing diabetes or complications. A normal A1c level is below 5.7%.

CARDIOVASCULAR

LIPID PANEL²

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL mg/dL	<200	>200
LDL (BAD) mg/dL	<99	>99
HDL (GOOD) mg/dL	<39	>39
CHOLESTEROL RATIO (HDL/LDL)	men <3.5 >5.0	women <3.0 >4.4
TRIGLYCERIDES mg/dL	<149	>149

A lipid panel measures the level of specific lipids in the blood. The particles measured with a lipid profile are classified by their density into **HDL** (high-density lipoproteins), considered the good cholesterol, and **LDL** (low-density lipoproteins), considered the bad cholesterol. **Cholesterol** and **triglycerides** are also two important lipids for testing—while the body produces the cholesterol needed for proper function, a poor diet can result in a high level of cholesterol in the blood and can lead to diseases like atherosclerosis, heart disease and stroke. A high level of triglycerides is also associated with an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

BLOOD PRESSURE

SYSTOLIC beat pressure	80-120	120-139	>140
DIASTOLIC rest pressure	60-80	80-89	>90

Blood pressure is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Both **systolic pressure** (the pressure your heart exerts while beating) and **diastolic pressure** (the pressure in your arteries between beats) are measured. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is usually characterized with systolic pressure measuring at 140 mm Hg or higher, or diastolic measuring at 90 mm Hg or higher.

PHYSICAL METRICS

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)³	18.5	24.9
WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE⁴	men <40in >40in	women <35in >35in
WAIST TO HIP RATIO⁵	men <0.9 >1.0	women <0.8 >1.0

The body mass index, or **BMI**, is a standardized measure of body fat percentage based on the weight and height of an average male or female. Though the exact metrics remain imperfect due to individual body differences, it can be used as a general reference. **Waist circumference** and **waist to hip ratio** are also not an exact science, but the general range can be a clue to whether type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease are a risk.

² Labcorp Sample Report.

³ NIH.gov. https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm

⁴ NIH.gov. https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmi_dis

⁵ NIH.gov. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh?Db=mesh&Cmd=DetailsSearch&Term=%22Waist-Hip+Ratio%22%5BMeSH+Terms%5D>



You can find your own screening test form in Step 2 of the *Lion's Heart Foundations Action Book*.

Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP)

LIVER

KIDNEYS

MINERALS & ELECTROLYTES

PROTEIN

GLUCOSE

ALKALINE PHOSPHATASE (ALP)

ALANINE AMINO TRANSFERASE (ALT)

ASPARTATE AMINO TRANSFERASE (AST)

BILIRUBIN (BIL)

BLOOD UREA NITROGEN (BUN)

CREATININE (CRE)

CALCIUM (CAL)

SODIUM (SOD)

POTASSIUM (POT)

CARBON DIOXIDE (CO2)

CHLORIDE (CHL)

ALBUMIN (ALB)

TOTAL PROTEIN (TPT)

FASTING (FBG)

NON-FASTING/RANDOM (RNG)

HbA1c %

LIPID PANEL

BLOOD PRESSURE

PHYSICAL METRICS

LION'S HEART™
MY VITAL HEALTH NUMBERS

These numbers can give you a first look at your internal health. Make sure you are screened regularly in order to prevent deadly diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

DATE

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL mg/dL

<200 >200

LDL (BAD) mg/dL

<99 >99

HDL (GOOD) mg/dL

<39 >39

CHOLESTEROL RATIO (HDL/LDL)

men <3.5 >5.0 women <3.0 >4.4

TRIGLYCERIDES mg/dL

<149 >149

SYSTOLIC beat pressure

80-120 120-139 >140

DIASTOLIC rest pressure

60-80 80-89 >90

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)

18.5 24.9

WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE

men <40in >40in women <35in >35in

WAIST TO HIP RATIO

men <0.9 >1.0 women <0.8 >1.0

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HOW TO IMPACT CHANGE

True improvement really comes down to having a plan. Make sure before you leave your primary care provider's office that you have addressed the following questions.

Do I need to schedule more testing?

Do I need to schedule an appointment with any other specialists or a health coach?

Do any of my dietary or lifestyle choices need to shift?

Do I have any weak points that need further focus?

Am I cleared for vigorous exercise?

What is my plan?

TRACKING YOUR NUMBERS

To the left is an example of our record form, found within our Action Book, that you might use as an additional tracking tool. You can see there is room to track each of these vital numbers over the course of four medical visits, in order to see both natural fluctuations and larger changes over time. Although you don't have to use our form as your guide, keeping track of your own records will allow you to connect yourself more consciously to your vital numbers. This form also acts as a backup if there is any loss of records within your doctor's office, or if you change health providers.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Congratulations on making this first foundational step in taking ownership of your health. If you are ready to take another step into medical knowledge and learn how you can continue your medical assessment journey, be sure to research topics such as hormone levels, blood types, immune systems, psychosomatics and bone density. These subjects and more can provide even more context around your own medical health.

27



MEDICAL AND NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Chapter 2: Know Your Basic Nutrition

- Learn building blocks that make up all basic diets
- Assess your current dietary patterns
- Reference various diets and make your own plan

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Anna Huffman, MS, RD, LD

Few would disagree that following a healthy dietary lifestyle is paramount to every person's health. However, in the age of information overload, contradictory opinions, and strings of testimonials for sale, finding a clear path forward can be difficult to do.

Luckily there is a guiding light in the confusion—**most major diets share the same fundamental goals and play with the same nutritional principles.** In this next chapter, we will cover these principles and learn more about popular dietary strategies. With new information as your guide, you can then assess your current dietary lifestyle and take actionable steps to improve any areas of weakness. ■

PHILOSOPHY ON A DIETARY LIFESTYLE

No one would disagree that nutrition plays a massive role in your health. But strangely, in the game of nutritional health success, there seems to be no single answer on exactly what people should be consuming in order to become their healthiest selves.

There are MDs and PhDs on all sides of the Great Diet Debate, each with their own unintentional biases and research to solidify their beliefs. Though some might have financial incentives for speaking out for or against a certain diet, most really do have genuine positive transformation for others as their ultimate goal. Although it might seem disheartening that the scientific community cannot share to the world exactly what all humans should eat without disagreement, there is a strong argument to the possibility that **different people just thrive on different diets**. Humans share many core nutrition needs—however, every individual has genetic, cultural and personal intricacies that dictate their optimal nutrition strategy.

So, what does that mean for you? At the end of the day, **you must be the final judge for which dietary habits work best for your life**. That might sound like an overwhelming task, but don't lose hope—there are some simple guidelines that will lead you to your best dietary lifestyle. Although there are many strategies to discovering exactly what you should be eating, **all diets tend to have the same objective and play with the same general principles that we can learn and apply in many different dietary approaches**. Knowledge of these pieces gives us the power to experiment with various diets and strategies to find our unique nutritional rhythm. Lion's Heart refers to these goals as The Big Four.

In this section you will learn about primary objectives and moving pieces all diets play with, as well as the differences between some of the most prominent diets, the fuels and foods they contain, and how to find your ideal balance: a diet that supports a youthful, disease-free body, makes you feel great, supplies you with natural energy, and is sustainable (emotionally and financially) within your lifestyle.

At the end of the day, you must be the final judge for which dietary habits work best for your life.



1 THE GAME ALL DIETS PLAY

Diets may seem drastically different from the outside, but you will notice a very simple game being played. Excluding short-term diets that are primarily designed for vanity-based weight loss, **all health-focused diets have consistent primary objectives with the same Big Four end goals in play**.



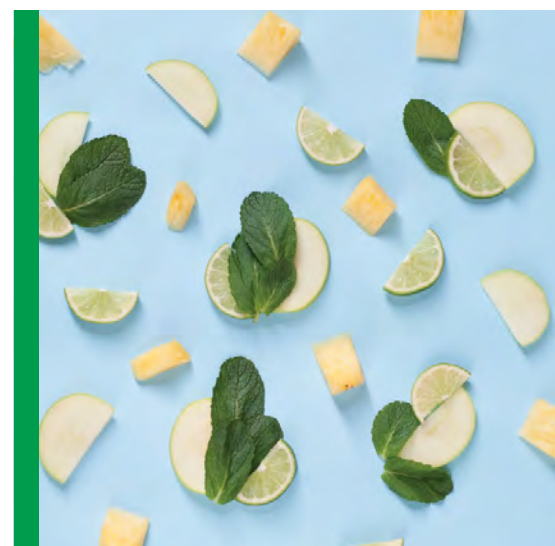
2 THE PIECES ALL DIETS PLAY WITH

In order to understand how to break apart the chaos of contradictory nutrition advice, avoid a constant wheel of fad diets, and build your own dietary lifestyle, **learning more about the core pieces and terms all diets use to communicate their plan** is a crucial first step.



3 DIETARY STRATEGIES

Before attempting to revamp your own dietary strategy, it's wise to view how other diets are structured. Analyze your own behavior patterns and **make note of which diets have elements you could incorporate into your own strategy and rhythm**.



1 THE GAME ALL DIETS PLAY

The Horse and the Cart

Diets may seem drastically different from the outside, but you will notice a very simple game being played. Excluding short-term diets that are primarily designed for vanity-based weight loss, **all health-focused diets have consistent primary objectives with the same Big Four end goals in play.**

THE HORSE



MEDICAL HOMEOSTASIS. *Homeostasis*, stemming from the Greek word meaning “similar” or “the same,” refers to your body’s ability to regulate itself and keep your internal processes just that: similar or constant without much change. A body in homeostasis should have normal lab values, fully functioning organ systems and strong immune defenses; therefore, having the ability to keep its host disease-free.



PAIN-FREE POWER. You’ve got energy! Your diet should support clean, non-crashing energy to carry you throughout your day’s activities, big or small, without indigestion or other pains slowing you down or lowering your abilities.



SUSTAINABILITY. Financially, emotionally, and in your schedule, your dietary lifestyle should be able to stand the test of time. If your lifestyle does not support the meal prep required, if ingredients are more than you can truly afford, if you know the stress or heavy restrictions will bottle up explosive abandonment, or you cannot rationalize the ecological or ethical implications involved, it will not last and may not even be truly healthy for you. Find or methodically grow into a dietary lifestyle for the long term.

THE CART



IDEAL AESTHETIC. Your diet should support YOUR goals of YOUR ideal body weight, muscle mass, and overall physique. Note that ideal aesthetic is personal and varies wildly between individuals, and that is okay!

PLACING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE

In a lot of cases, people might go on a fast-paced diet to fit a certain physical mold mostly driven by a current societal body image fad—to be skinnier, more muscular, more toned, or whatever is “in.” That’s not to say that pursuing health and aesthetics are mutually exclusive, but many individuals fall into the unhealthy cycle of “putting the cart before the horse.” By focusing so much on how others judge their appearance, they are willing to choose a short-term diet and/or drugs that are damaging their long-term health for a fleeting moment of perceived approval from others that will likely never feel truly satisfying.

Though the immediate effects can sometimes appear positive or show impressive physical results, no diet is worth offsetting your internal organ systems’ homeostasis (potentially long-term), feeling constant energy crashes, or living in a world where your diet is wreaking havoc on your wallet and/or emotional state. Any diet that suggests you place the cart before the horse is generally not going to be a positive change for your overall health. **The best diet for you is the one that begins by checking off the first three objectives—after this foundation has been established as a lifestyle, achieving personal aesthetic goals can be a rewarding hobby.**

2 THE PIECES ALL DIETS PLAY WITH

Nutrient Types and Food Groups

In order to understand how to break apart the chaos of contradictory nutrition advice, avoid a constant wheel of fad diets, and build your own dietary lifestyle, **learning more about the core pieces and terms all diets use to communicate their plan** is a crucial first step.

Once you understand how straightforward the end goals are for any diet, it’s time to understand the **primary pieces** all diets strategize with to achieve these goals (or when some of the Big Four are overlooked entirely).

There are two primary game pieces all diets use to meet the previously-outlined objectives. The first game piece covers the different **nutrient types** that every food is composed of, which are clearly (or not so clearly) listed on nutrition labels. The next piece refers to the different **food groups** (you probably remember a version of this from elementary school). These food groups and the nutrient types within them, consumed at varying times and quantities, are the backbone of most every diet. Once we take a look into the food groups and the nutrient types within these major diets, it will become easier to see how some diets could work with your needs more easily than others. But most importantly, you should be able to cut through some of the strict dietary rules and be able to customize your own plan by building on what works and intertwining it with your own unique lifestyle and goals.

PIECE ONE: NUTRIENT TYPES

Within every food, you’ll find three big types of fuel, also known as macronutrients—protein, fat, and carbohydrates—in different amounts and ratios. Macronutrients are the primary nutrients that fuel the raw energy of the body. These components are the building blocks of muscle and organ tissue, fuel for the brain and energy for long workouts. Each nutrient interacts differently with the body, and having an understanding of the various nutrient types is one of the keys to navigating nutritional planning.

Though each individual food can have a wildly different makeup of macronutrients, the foods within the collective food groups generally have similar macronutrient profiles

allowing for easy decisionmaking and substitutions when trying to follow a particular diet. Both understanding and knowing how to identify the macronutrients that fuel our bodies is a vital and foundational game piece we must learn to play with.

PIECE TWO: FOOD GROUPS

When you think back to your elementary-level teaching, you might have been taught about the Food Pyramid, or later in your life seen some other similar bounding shape that categorizes food among different families that interact with our bodies in different ways. Though there are a few artistic variances on how all foods should be categorized, most representations are fairly similar. The next few pages will lay out a level 1 overview of the different families of food we use to create all of our meals.



PIECE ONE: NUTRIENT TYPES

BREAKING DOWN THE LABEL

The first step in becoming a more educated consumer is to **truly understand each piece of a food’s nutrition label**. By doing so, you can avoid some common marketing pitfalls and have faith that you’re picking the right foods every time.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MACRONUTRIENTS

The three macronutrients—fat, carbohydrates, and protein—are the first pieces of focus, and we can use a standard FDA food label to guide us. The format of each major category is an amount total followed by a breakdown of its components (except for protein in this instance). Treat the food label as your guide to understanding what each of your foods contain, and use that information to make educated decisions about your food choices.

You may have noticed that over the years one macronutrient may fall out of favor in the health community while another becomes glorified, only to find that several years later that the roles are reversed. By understanding each component individually and how to incorporate each into a balanced diet, you won’t have to demonize one component and leave out entire food groups ever again.

MACRONUTRIENT 1: FATS

Does fat make you fat? The quick answer is no. Consuming more calories than the body needs is what ultimately leads to fat gain, and no one macronutrient is to blame. While fat is the most calorically-dense macronutrient, weighing in at 9 calories per gram, it is also extremely satiating. Its ability to keep you full for a long period of time is helpful for reducing additional calorie consumption in the form of snacking in between meals. Fat can be found in foods such as oils, nuts, fatty meats, dairy products and butter or margarine spreads. It is also important to distinguish between different types of fat. There are so-called “Healthy Fats” and “Unhealthy Fats,” but what differentiates the two? Healthy fats include unsaturated fatty acids that are mostly found in plant-based foods such as avocados, plant-based oils, nuts, seeds and fatty fish. Unhealthy fats refer to saturated and trans fats which promote plaque buildup in arteries, increasing inflammation and risk for heart disease. Unhealthy fats are primarily found in animal-based foods such as fatty cuts of meat and high-fat dairy products, as well as processed and packaged goods containing hydrogenated oils. Both types of fat contribute calories to your overall diet, but the type of fat you choose can promote or discourage your overall health and longevity.

MACRONUTRIENT 2: CARBOHYDRATES

Another widely-debated macronutrient is the carbohydrate. Carbohydrates are found in foods commonly thought of as starches, such as cereals, pastas, breads and rice, but they are also found in fruits and vegetables. At 4 calories per gram, carbohydrates are a quick source of energy that provide fuel for exercise and daily activities. While their role in fat gain is widely debated, science states that carbohydrates are preferentially used for energy over other macronutrients, and only in an excess of calories will carbohydrates cause fat gain.

On the food label, carbohydrates are broken down into several components. First, **total carbohydrate** content is important to note especially in the context of blood sugar control. While added sugars spike blood sugar the most drastically, all carbohydrates (except fiber) are ultimately broken down into glucose (sugar) in the body. In order to avoid large spikes in blood sugar that later turn into energy crashes, focus on carbohydrates that contain a lot of the next label item: **fiber**. Fiber, which does not break down into glucose, helps to slow down digestion. This allows the glucose from foods to be absorbed and sent to the bloodstream more slowly. This slower digestion and absorption keeps blood sugar more steady, which ultimately contributes to longer feelings of fullness between meals and fewer energy crashes after meals. Fiber can be found in carbohydrate sources such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Most health-focused diets recommend that the majority of your carbohydrate content come from these unrefined, whole food-based carbohydrates.

Finally, the 2019 updates to the food label include a specific designation for **added sugars**. Added sugars refer to sugars that are not naturally occurring. For example, lactose is actually a naturally-occurring sugar in yogurt and milk—however, many yogurts add sugar for additional flavor. In order to get a better idea of how many man-made sugars are being added to products, the “added sugars” designation helps to distinguish this in products that may have some level of naturally-occurring sugars. Most health-focused diets agree that added sugars should be kept to a minimum.

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per 2/3 cup

Calories 230

% DV*

12%	Total Fat 8g
5%	Saturated Fat 1g
	Trans Fat 0g

0%	Cholesterol 0mg
7%	Sodium 160mg

12%	Total Carbs 37g
14%	Dietary Fiber 4g
	Sugars 1g
	Added Sugars 0g

Protein 3g

10%	Vitamin D 2mcg
20%	Calcium 260mg
45%	Iron 8mg
5%	Potassium 235mg

* Footnote on Daily Values (DV) and calories reference to be inserted here.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per 2/3 cup	
Calories	230
% DV*	
12%	Total Fat 8g
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14%	Dietary Fiber 4g
	Sugars 1g
	Added Sugars 0g
	Protein 3g
10%	Vitamin D 2mcg
20%	Calcium 260mg
45%	Iron 8mg
5%	Potassium 235mg
* Footnote on Daily Values (DV) and calories reference to be inserted here.	

MACRONUTRIENT 3: PROTEIN

Protein, sometimes referred to as the “muscle-building macronutrient,” is found in foods such as meat, poultry, eggs and fish. In lesser amounts, it’s also found in peanut butter, cheeses, beans and lentils. Protein, just like carbohydrates, contains 4 calories per gram and is used in body processes such as tissue repair and muscle synthesis. Similar to fat, protein is also extremely satiating and has the ability to keep you full for long periods of time after meals.

While carbohydrates and fat are easily found in many foods, protein is usually harder to come by, especially when dining out. It is important to prioritize protein at each meal in order to promote lean muscle maintenance and growth. Most health-focused diets agree that lean proteins such as fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, and plant-based sources of protein such as beans and lentils are more health-promoting and should be consumed in larger amounts than fattier or processed meat such as hamburgers, hot dogs or deli meat.

CALORIE CONUNDRUM

“Total Calories” is a great first glance at the amount of energy a food contains. As mentioned in the macronutrients section, each macronutrient has a calorie value per gram. Carbohydrates have 4 calories per gram, protein has 4 calories per gram, and fat has 9 calories per gram. These values are added up to give the total calorie number listed on the label.

Keeping an eye on total calories can help you determine whether you are eating more than your body requires, less than your body requires, or just enough. Eat more than your body needs, and you will gain weight. Eat less than your body needs, and you will lose weight. **Once you have an idea of your total calories, breaking down which macronutrients your food contains can help you determine food choices for different goals.** Do you need a quick source of energy? Choose a food that is higher in carbohydrates. Do you need to stay full for a long period of time? Choose a food higher in protein and fat.

CHOLESTEROL⁶

Cholesterol is consistently involved in the dietary debate. There are multitudes of articles condemning or redeeming foods like eggs, which are high in dietary cholesterol. In order to understand whether or not cholesterol can be a part of a healthy diet, we must understand what it does. Cholesterol is

actually involved in hormone and vitamin D production, and it can be broken down into 3 different types. As referenced in the medical knowledge chapter, **HDL** is what we consider “good” cholesterol and **LDL** is considered “bad cholesterol.”

Updated research suggests that **dietary cholesterol** actually isn’t the largest contributor to high cholesterol levels—it’s saturated and trans fats. Proper intake of lean proteins, plant-based foods and fiber can keep cholesterol levels in check. In fact, fiber has actually been shown to lower LDL cholesterol. What if that’s not enough and levels are still high? Many people have genetics that predispose them to higher cholesterol levels. In this case, your doctor will place you on a lipid-lowering medication. While many individuals are hesitant to begin these medications, they are among some of the most widely studied and safest medications on the market and can be an important part of an overall health plan.

SODIUM

Sodium is a mineral that plays an important role in the body. Among many other functions, sodium helps maintain fluid balance in the body. In excess, sodium can lead to increased risk for hypertension and heart disease. However, because sodium exits our body through sweat much faster than other electrolytes, athletes should consult with their dietitian about adjusted daily values or supplementation during training sessions. For most non-athletes, getting blood pressure checked regularly and choosing foods without excess sodium is generally good advice. The FDA considers food under 140mg of sodium per serving a low-sodium food, and recommends no more than 2,300mg over the course of the day.

While it’s easy to think, “I don’t salt my foods,” the majority of salt intake doesn’t come from the shaker. Most salt in the American diet comes from restaurant foods and packaged foods. In general, the more whole foods such as lean protein, fruits and vegetables you eat as opposed to processed and packaged foods such as chips and hot dogs, the less sodium you will consume throughout the day.

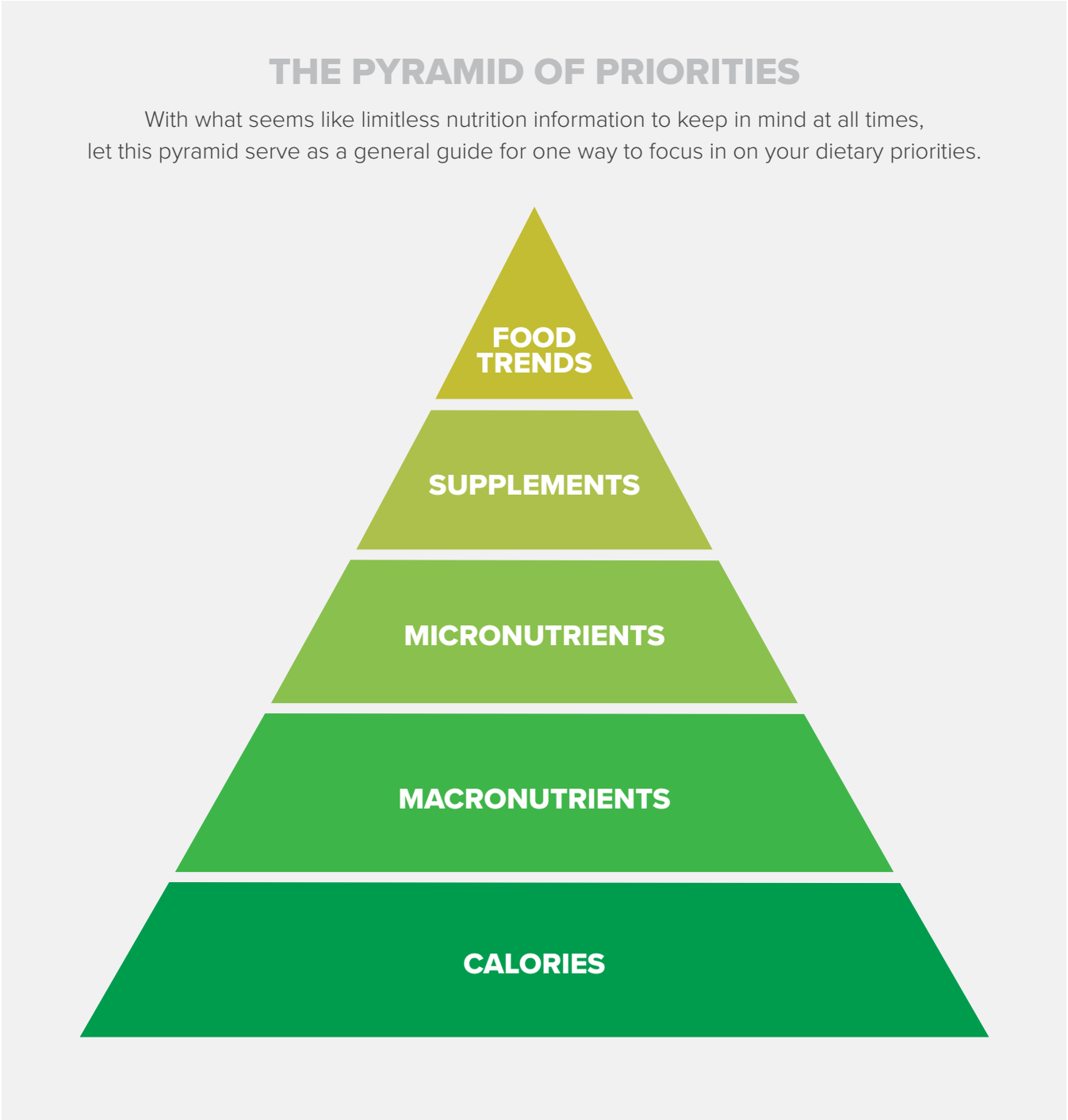
MICRONUTRIENTS⁷

We’ve covered macronutrients, which are the larger components of all foods that contribute to total calories. **Micronutrients** are the smaller components of food that do not contribute to calories, but can add health-promoting benefits when consumed in proper amounts. Micronutrients

⁶ <https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/heart-and-cardiovascular-health/what-is-cholesterol>
⁷ Institute of Medicine (US) Standing Committee on the Scientific Evaluation of Dietary Reference Intakes and its Panel on Folate, Other B Vitamins, and Choline. Dietary Reference Intakes for Thiamin, Riboflavin, Niacin, Vitamin B6, Folate, Vitamin B12, Pantothenic Acid, Biotin, and Choline. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1998. 1, Introduction to Dietary Reference Intakes. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK114332/>

consist of **vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and antioxidants**. Vitamins and minerals are essential for body processes and the amounts needed for daily functioning are defined in the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) which is a set of nutrient reference values consisting of Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA), Adequate Intake (AI), Tolerable Upper Intake Level (UL), and Estimated Average Requirement (EAR). While these could be a book in and of themselves, **a varied diet full of different colors and food groups will cover**

the micronutrient bases of most individuals. A multivitamin can be a helpful addition if you feel like your diet is lacking in some areas—however, it does not replace the benefit provided by eating a wide variety of micronutrient-rich foods such as fruits and vegetables. If you have a condition in which you are more susceptible to micronutrient deficiency, such as some GI conditions, it is important to work with a registered dietitian to identify areas of deficiency and implement foods (and possibly supplements) to reach optimal levels.



CALORIES	In general, if you eat more calories than your body burns, you will gain weight. If you eat fewer calories than your body burns, you will lose weight. If you have trouble maintaining a healthy weight, work with a dietitian to figure out your specific numbers and learn strategies to keep yourself on track.
MACRONUTRIENTS	All foods are made of macronutrients: Protein • Carbohydrates • Fat Figure out what macronutrients—in what ratios—work best for your body by experimenting with different diet styles.
MICRONUTRIENTS	Micronutrients do not contain calories, but they do pack a powerful nutrition punch! They include vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and antioxidants. Focusing on whole foods like fruits, vegetables, lean meats and whole grains will help you reach your daily micronutrient needs.
SUPPLEMENTS	Supplements should be just that—a supplement to a healthy diet. It is paramount that calories, macronutrients and micronutrients are prioritized before stocking up on supplements, as they will not make up for a poor diet.
FOOD TRENDS	Strategically-placed labels such as non-GMO, gluten-free, low-carb, all-natural, etc., are easy ways for product packaging to convince you that they’re healthier than they really are. Eating a whole bag of potato chips listed as “organic” doesn’t change the fact that it’s still a whole bag of potato chips. Calories, macronutrients and micronutrients should be your first focus before trying to utilize any true benefit these labels have.

PIECE TWO: FOOD GROUPS

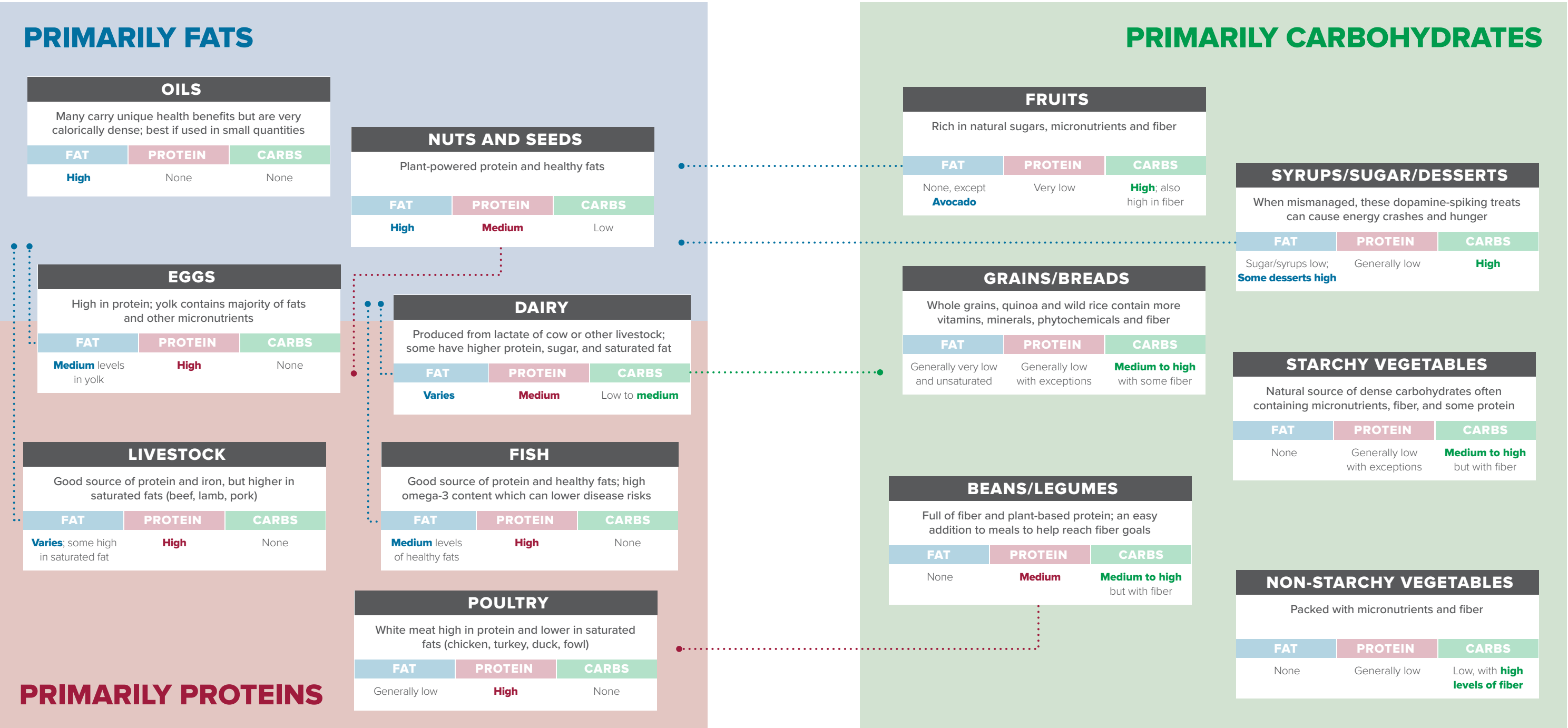
GRAPHING THE GROUPS

Food groups are often organized into a pyramid or similar shape that forms a ratio in which each group should be consumed based on a single strategy. To look at multiple strategies, we must break apart the pyramid to view each food group and its own unique characteristics.

HOW TO USE THIS CHART

Each food group listed below has a brief description and lists its general ratio in terms of fat, protein, and carbohydrate levels. As you learn more about each food group, you will realize that several of them have similar macronutrient profiles. In viewing each of the food groups through a macronutrient lens, you can quickly assess which primary

macronutrient the food group is mainly composed of and spot the individual food groups that would supply (or lack) each macronutrient. Though this is not meant to be a perfectly comprehensive rating (as individual foods within each food group can vary in macronutrient makeup), it can be used as a general guide for your own dietary exploration.



3 DIETARY STRATEGIES

Finding Your Best Diet

Before attempting to revamp your own dietary strategy, it's helpful to review how other diets are structured. **Analyze your own behavior patterns and make note of which diets have elements you could incorporate into your own strategy,** aiming to accomplish Your Best Diet.

THE GOAL | YOUR BEST DIET

This is the pattern you have found that allows you to thrive with the right balance of freedom to enjoy foods you genuinely love and structure to allow you to feel energized and strong. You can keep healthy vital signs without excessive medications, and use your dietary lifestyle to assist in warding off preventable diseases that have been plaguing our nations.

EAT THIS

Your favorite healthy foods in a semi-structured routine that supports health and energy

LIMIT THIS

Limit your vices; don't eat the foods or beverages that have proven themselves to drag you down

MACRONUTRIENTS

Find the range that fits within your own activity levels and allows you to maintain your health and ward off hunger



#1 KILLER IN AMERICA | STANDARD AMERICAN DIET (S.A.D.)

Fast-food heavy, processed, constant sugar, sodas and energy drinks. Drive-thrus, macaroni and cheese, candy bars, and pizza. A sweet treat before bed, maybe a drink or two. Most dietitians agree this is the quickest way to chronic disease and will keep you feeling lethargic all day long.

EAT THIS

Whatever is fast and convenient, usually processed and full of saturated fat, sodium and added sugar

LIMIT THIS

Planned healthy, homemade meals and snacks that prevent last-minute decisions made in states of hunger

MACRONUTRIENTS

Don't pay attention to these—eat until you feel tranquilized



DIETARY STRATEGIES

COMMON STRATEGIES

Let's dive into an elementary overview of common dietary strategies, organized by food groups to eat from and which to limit or exclude entirely, as well as common macronutrient ratios by rough percentage. **Though this is by no means an exhaustive list, it is a great place to start.**

USDA STANDARD DIET

source: usda.gov

As the standard represented by US dietary sciences, the USDA Standard is what dietary recommendations are based on and can be used as a starting point. This diet is a good baseline to compare other diets, as all food labels are evaluated relative to these standards. The average person is recommended to consume 2,000 calories per day on this diet.

EAT THIS

Rice, grains, breads, cereal (6-11 servings/day), vegetables (3-5 servings/day), fruits (2-4 servings/day), milk/yogurt/cheese, meat, poultry, eggs, beans, nuts/legumes (2-3 servings per day)

LIMIT THIS

Avoid fats (especially trans and hydrogenated fats), oils, and sweets

MACRONUTRIENTS

Protein: 15% | **Carbohydrates:** 65% | **Fat:** 20%



MEDITERRANEAN DIET

source: mayoclinic.org

This diet focuses on eating mostly plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts. Olive oil replaces other fats, and herbs and spices replace salt. Red meat is limited, and fish and chicken can be eaten twice per week. This diet is one of the most extensively studied diets to date, with reliable research supporting its increase in quality of life and reduction of disease. It is classified as a heart-healthy diet by both the USDA and the World Health Organization.

EAT THIS

Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts/seeds/legumes, low-fat dairy, fish, poultry, olive oil

LIMIT THIS

Red meat, unhealthy fats, fatty meats, high-fat dairy

MACRONUTRIENTS

Protein: 10-20% | **Carbohydrates:** 40-60% | **Fat:** 20-40%



DASH DIET

source: [nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

The DASH diet was developed specifically to help people lower their high blood pressure and is promoted by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), a sector of the NIH.

This diet has a focus on whole foods such as fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, and lean meats such as fish and poultry. The plan requires cutting back on or eliminating processed foods like sugary drinks and packaged snacks, and limiting red meat consumption, which has been linked to worse cardiovascular health.

EAT THIS

Meat, poultry and fish (6 or less servings), vegetables (4-5 servings), fruit (4-5 servings), low-fat/fat-free dairy (2-3 servings), healthy fats/oils (2-3 servings)

LIMIT THIS

Limiting or eliminating processed foods and packaged snacks, red meat, foods high in sodium

MACRONUTRIENTS

Protein: 18% | Carbohydrates: 55% | Fat: 27%



ORNISH DIET

source: [ornish.com](https://www.ornish.com)

Dean Ornish created the belief popular in the medical community that foods are neither good nor bad, but some are more healthy for you than others—predominantly, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, soy products, nonfat dairy, and egg whites in their natural form, as well as some good fats including Omega-3 fatty acids. These foods are rich in good carbohydrates, healthy fats, lean proteins, and other protective substances. What you include is just as important as what you exclude. Calories are unrestricted unless you are attempting weight loss. A focus on small meals consumed throughout the day helps to keep energy levels consistent and keeps hunger at bay.

EAT THIS

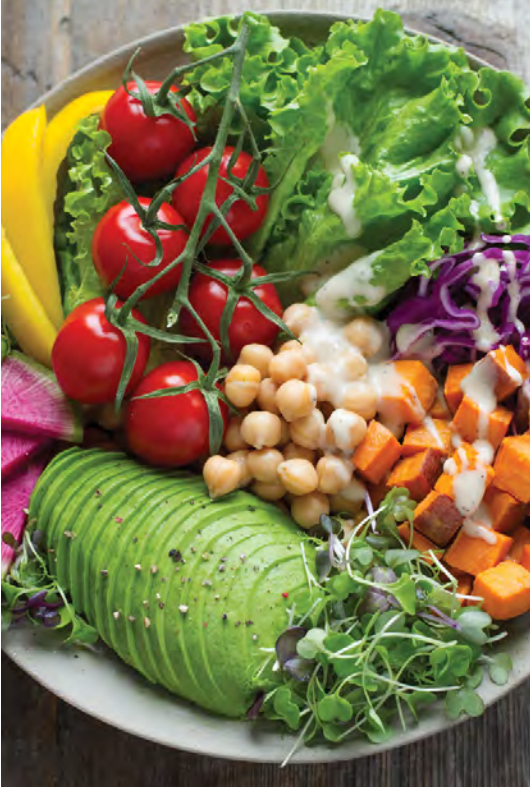
Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, soy products, nonfat dairy, egg whites

LIMIT THIS

Refined carbohydrates, processed foods, concentrated sweeteners, white flour, white rice

MACRONUTRIENTS

No specific guidelines—comparable to the DASH/Mediterranean diets



NUTRITARIAN DIET

source: [drfuhrman.com](https://www.drhuhrman.com)

Focused on intaking high-density nutrients, Dr. Joel Fuhrman created the Nutritarian diet as a plant-based guide to better health. This diet places emphasis on eating whole plant foods that supply an abundant amount of micronutrients. No snacking is allowed on this diet, as food should only be consumed at mealtime. The goal is to eat foods with a relatively high proportion of nutrients to calories. The equation $H=N/C$ (Health = Nutrients/Calories) represents your long term Health being predicted by your Nutrient Intake per Calorie eaten. Dr. Fuhrman has also created a Nutritarian food pyramid based on this formula.

EAT THIS

G-BOMBS: Greens, Beans, Onions, Mushrooms, Berries and Seeds eaten daily. Food pyramid contains vegetables, fruits, beans/legumes, nuts/seeds, and whole grains/potatoes as majority of calorie intake.

LIMIT THIS

Sugar and other sweeteners, eggs, fish, cheeses, dairy, oil, salt, baked processed goods, products made with white flour, commercial meats

MACRONUTRIENTS

No specific guidelines—comparable to the DASH/Mediterranean diets



MAYO CLINIC DIET

source: [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

This diet begins with a two-week period of replacing five specific bad habits with good habits (initial weight loss: 6-10 pounds). The remainder of the program is built on a combination of portion control and exercise (weight loss: 1-2 pounds per week). The program uses a food pyramid that contains vegetables and fruits in its base. Carbohydrates, meat, dairy, fats and sweets are in progressively more limited allowances. The diet emphasizes setting realistic goals, replacing poor health habits with positive habits, and conscious portion control.

EAT THIS

Unlimited fruits and vegetables, whole-grain carbohydrates, lean sources of protein such as legumes, fish and low-fat dairy, and heart-healthy unsaturated fats

LIMIT THIS

Unhealthy fats, sweets, refined or processed carbohydrates

MACRONUTRIENTS

No specific guidelines—comparable to the DASH/Mediterranean diets



ZONE DIET

source: [zonediet.com](https://www.zonediet.com)

Dr. Sears created this diet with a focus on our hormones, keeping them within a range (a.k.a the Zone) so you are never hungry or mentally fatigued. This diet advocates eating five times per day and includes proteins, carbohydrates (lower glycemic index are considered more favorable), and fats (monounsaturated fats are considered more favorable). The hand is used as the mnemonic tool—five fingers for five servings a day, with no more than five hours between meals. The size and thickness of the palm is used to measure protein, while two big fists measure favorable carbohydrates and one fist representing unfavorable carbohydrates.

EAT THIS

Protein (egg whites, fish, poultry, lean beef or low-fat dairy), Carbohydrates (vegetables, legumes, fruit), and Fat (olive oil, avocado, almonds, nut butters)

LIMIT THIS

Fruits high in sugar (bananas, raisins), starchy foods (potatoes, corn, grains), processed or refined sugars

MACRONUTRIENTS

Protein: 30% | **Carbohydrates:** 40% | **Fat:** 30%



PALEOLITHIC DIET

source: [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

In general, the paleo diet is based on what types of foods might have been eaten during the Paleolithic era, which dates from approximately 2.5 million to 10,000 years ago. This diet typically includes lean meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds—foods that, in the past, could have been obtained by hunting and gathering. Foods that became common when farming emerged around 10,000 years ago are limited, such as dairy products, legumes, and grains.

EAT THIS

Grass-fed or organic lean meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, olive oil or walnut oil

LIMIT THIS

Dairy products, legumes and grains, salt, refined sugar, potatoes, processed foods

MACRONUTRIENTS

Protein: 20-40% | **Carbohydrates:** 20-40% | **Fat:** 30-50%



KETOGENIC DIET

source: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)

The ketogenic diet is a high fat diet. Carbohydrate quantities are so low that the body goes into a state of ketosis, where the body's blood sugar is so low that the body begins to use fats and ketones as fuels. This diet is an extreme lifestyle change for most. Originally created as a therapeutic diet for pediatric epilepsy, there is not currently a vast body of long-term research to review the ketogenic diet as a longer-term, sustainable diet.

EAT THIS

Red meats, fatty fish, eggs, grass-fed butter, cheese, nuts/seeds, avocados, healthy oils, low-carb vegetables

LIMIT THIS

Sugary foods, grains or starches, high-sugar fruits, beans or legumes, root vegetables, low-fat products, unhealthy fats, alcohol

MACRONUTRIENTS

Protein: 15-30% | **Carbohydrates:** 5-10% | **Fat:** 60-75%



DIETARY STRATEGIES

SIMPLE RESTRICTION DIETS

These restriction diets can be followed by themselves or used to modify one of the previously highlighted dietary strategies (such as a vegetarian version of the Zone diet).

VEGETARIAN

Vegetarianism is a simple restriction of animal meats. Some choose this path following many studies such as The China Study, which outlines increased health through a reduction of meat. Others choose this path for ethical or ecological reasons. Most vegetarians are lacto-ovo vegetarians, meaning they eat some animal products like eggs, dairy or honey. There are healthy and unhealthy ways to approach vegetarianism—one could eat nothing but french fries all day—but a healthy vegetarian diet would still consist of whole vegetables, fruits and alternate foods rich in protein to make up for the lack of meat.

EAT THIS

Fruits, vegetables, grains, oats, nuts/seeds/legumes, plant-based oils

DON'T EAT THIS

Meat or any meat-based food/broth from any animal



PESCATARIAN

This diet is, at its core, the same as the vegetarian diet. However, the inclusion of fish for its increased protein and health benefits can be consumed.

Wild-caught fish is preferred for its tendency toward higher levels of nutrients due to its more natural diet in the wild.

EAT THIS

Fish, shellfish, fruits, vegetables, grains, oats, nuts/seeds/legumes, fish- or plant-based oils

DON'T EAT THIS

Red meat, poultry, meat or meat-based food/broth from any land animal



VEGAN

A full vegetarian that restricts all meats and animal products such as eggs, milk and other dairy. Whether choosing for health or ethical reasons, this diet should be approached mindfully, as it requires skills to maintain adequate levels of complete proteins. Although biologically, homosapiens are categorized as omnivores due to our dental profiles and digestive systems, many attribute veganism as a source of great health benefits, though others testify negative health experiences.

EAT THIS

Fruits, vegetables, grains, oats, nuts/seeds/legumes, plant-based oils

DON'T EAT THIS

Meat or any meat-based food/broth from any animal, seafood, eggs, or dairy products



DIETARY STRATEGIES

MORE UNORTHODOX PATTERNS

By design, the defining characteristics of these diets sit outside of the food group/food fuel matrix we are focused on establishing at this level. These diets interact primarily within an axis of food timing/glycemic indices, insulin sensitivities, and thermal degradation of nutrient bioavailability. We encourage you to make the fundamentals second-nature before jumping to the more complex.

RAW

A simple restriction to raw foods only. Although this has past origins for our species and the fact that no other animal cooks its food, this diet is not recommended until you have a solid mind/body connection to your dietary needs, as historically, most humans have not eaten this way for many generations.



INTERMITTENT FASTING

Intermittent fasting restricts eating to a certain window of time after a prolonged fast. There are many variations on this eating style that could be used to modify other dietary strategies. Commonly there are 8, 6, or 4-hour eating windows, generally with more liberal caloric consumption. The primary principles involve creating increased insulin sensitivity and inciting atophagy, and detoxifying during the fasting period while the body functions on previously-stored glocogen and ketones for fuel. This is another dietary pattern that is not tame—try mastering the basics first before experimenting with large fasting windows.



DIETARY STRATEGIES

THE NUTRITIONAL AGREEMENTS

Among the chaos of conflicting messages, here are some **fundamentals that most all diets agree with**. Often, starting with these agreements can help make drastic changes in your own nutritional health and serve as a good baseline when building any new dietary strategy.



#1, ABOVE ALL THINGS—LISTEN TO YOUR BODY!

Build a mind-body connection where you can really take note of how each meal makes you feel, and adjust accordingly.



FOCUS ON WHAT TO EAT, MORE THAN WHAT NOT TO EAT.

Psychologically, it's much easier to make good dietary decisions already full with the right foods, than going hungry trying to fight temptations.



WHOLE FOODS, HAPPY STOMACH.

Choose whole foods over highly processed foods with large amounts of ingredients you can't even pronounce.



TRACK YOUR NUMBERS.

For at least one season of your life, track your food intake by type and macros throughout the day to really understand how your diet stacks up numerically.



BUILD A STRUCTURE.

Have a basic dietary structure, but build in room for substitutions and other items in moderation.



PLAN AHEAD.

Plan/prepare your meals in advance, or temptation and convenience will be waiting to derail your progress.



DON'T DRINK YOUR SUGAR.

Stay away from sodas and sugary beverages like sweet tea or fruit juices.



UNSALTED DOESN'T MEAN UNSEASONED.

Use herbs and spices to flavor foods instead of salt, butters, cheeses, and sugars.



IN-SEASON, ON PLATE.

Eat a variety of in-season vegetables and fruits, aiming for as many colors as possible on your plate.



MAKE HYDRATION A HABIT.

Carry water with you to make hydration a habit—drinking half your body weight in ounces is a good place to start when discovering your best ratio.



AIM FOR FOODS DENSE IN MICRONUTRIENTS.

Pick micronutrient-dense foods high in fiber over “empty calorie” alternatives. 100 calories of hummus and vegetables is always a better choice than the same “100 calorie snack pack” of cookies.



KEEP YOUR PANTRY FREE OF TEMPTATION.

Stock your pantry with nutrient-dense snacks and whole foods. Reduce the presence of anything processed or full of trans fats or added sugars. If you have to leave your home to get it, it's much less likely you will consume it.



IN GENERAL, EAT MORE OF THIS.

The typical American diet needs to add more of this: healthy fats, non-starchy vegetables, and whole fruits as opposed to fruit juices.



IN GENERAL, EAT LESS OF THIS.

The typical American diet needs to eat less of this: starches and refined grains, refined sugars in the form of drinks, candy and desserts, processed foods, fatty meats, fried or breaded foods, dairy, and alcohol.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now that you’ve learned about nutrient types that make up our foods, common dietary strategies, and some general guidelines for starting a new dietary lifestyle, **it’s time to start piecing together your own plan.**

As you’ve seen, there are many contradicting opinions on what the “ideal” diet is, but at the end of the day, you are the one deciding which diet (or blend of diets) works best for you. However, one powerful starting point is to look at the areas they all agree on. We have seen, and most specifically on anyone very out of shape, that starting with the Nutritional Agreements on the previous page allows people to feel much healthier and more energetic, while watching pounds shed off their body. Some even testify to a reversal of disease.

While reviewing the Nutritional Agreements, ask yourself some questions that only you can answer:

- » Is my diet more similar to the Nutritional Agreements, or the Standard American Diet (S.A.D.)?
- » Do I feel like I have already achieved the Big Four?

If not, or if you feel like you need improvements in some areas, just remember that continuing on the path you’re on will only lead to more of the same result. It’s time for you to start to play with the dials of your daily nutrition. We always recommend working with a health professional when experimenting with nutrition, if possible. If not, we offer tools and leadership found in the Action Book in Step 4 (and partially previewed on the next page.)

TAKING YOUR HEALTH IN YOUR HANDS

The most effective path to dietary change is to begin with a thorough assessment with genuine intent to grow. If you want to achieve success in your daily life, let’s begin now!

We’ve looked at the goal markers and fundamentals enough for you to have a rough idea of whether or not you are satisfied with your current diet for the long term. If you want serious change in your life, you are invited (either alone or with a professional) to journal your daily nutrition for at least one week, and take a humble look at where you are in order to formulate where you need to go.

We have provided a simple food log in your Action Book as well as an accessible online PDF version. Feel free to use this

if you don’t already have another form of documentation (such as a meal tracking app or another planner).

Begin by following these steps:

- » Log at least one week of current dietary patterns. The more details you can write down, the better.
- » Review the Big Four goals/objectives and where you stand within each.
- » Compare your food journal against the official FDA recommendations and other common diets including the Standard American Diet.
- » Look at the Nutritional Agreements and ask yourself if it’s time to make some adjustments to your daily nutrition habits.
- » If it is, draft out a S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based) plan in your Action Book, and take the next step toward your best life.
- » Reach out to a registered dietitian who can help you identify potential areas of improvement, educate you on the most beneficial strategies for you to implement based on your current lifestyle, and serve as a partner in your wellness journey.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

If you are ready to take another step into nutritional knowledge and learn how you can continue your dietary assessment journey, be sure to further utilize evidence-based resources such as the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (eatright.org) as a starting point.



You can find your own food logs in Step 4 of the *Lion’s Heart Foundations Action Book*.

LION’S HEART™

MY CURRENT MEALS WEEK

Use this chart to document all of your meals for an entire week. Be as detailed as possible in your write-ups, and be sure to include all drinks, snacks, and treats.

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK 1	SNACK 2	DAILY TOTALS
MON	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CARBS FIBER PROTEIN FAT
TUE	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CARBS FIBER PROTEIN FAT
WED	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CARBS FIBER PROTEIN FAT
THU	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CARBS FIBER PROTEIN FAT
FRI	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CARBS FIBER PROTEIN FAT
SAT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CARBS FIBER PROTEIN FAT
SUN	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CB FB PR FT	CARBS FIBER PROTEIN FAT

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PHYSICAL ABILITY

Chapter 3: Assess Your Physical Alignment

- Assess range of motion, integrity and alignment of every major joint, gait patterns and postures
- Make a plan of care with your health professional

The mechanics of our modern vehicles can be very complex—every gear and piston must work in tandem with the others to maintain proper function. If just one part of something mechanical gets out of alignment or damaged, whether it's a belt that gets stretched too loose or an engine mount that erodes, just cranking up the engine to idle can cause wear and tear. Pushing the engine to its max can cause it to rip itself apart.

The same is true of our own biomechanics. As we approach how to increase our physical health through exercising our athletic abilities, it's wise to first check under the hood and see that all of our “gears” are lined up before revving the engine on our own primary life vehicle. After all, there are no trade-ins—this body is the only one we've got. ■



ASSESSING HEALTHY ALIGNMENT

Is your body out of alignment? Would you know how to tell if it was? How can we become fully aware of any issues before beginning a new training program, and **where would we start?**

Physical ability, our next major arena of health, is commonly pursued through “exercising” what we are physically capable of doing. But before we can measure any output of specific athletic abilities, we should first analyze the structural integrity and alignment of the mechanism which would produce an output—our very own musculoskeletal system. This is an important first step because **we must ensure that there are no critical flaws in our alignment and functional movement patterns that would cause an injury or reduce our optimal performance.**

This area of health should be treated just like any other medical issue, and should be assessed by a physical therapist, chiropractor, or other health professional who has a comfortable familiarity with every major joint of the body, the scientific planes they can move along, and their range of motion potential and deficiency levels.

It seems self evident that **having a professional assessment of your movements from head to toe should be a standard piece of whole health care**—this assessment ensures you have no major areas of immobility or dysfunction in any single joint or in compound movements, while also checking for healthy sitting and standing postures. Ideally, the assessment would start when we are young, and we should be reassessed periodically throughout the rest of our lives.

Strangely, this type of assessment is not a standard practice in our health care routine. In our current system, we can unknowingly become vastly misaligned but wait until we have an injury before calling on a physical therapist or other professional. We often then only rehabilitate the injury, neglecting to assess any other compromised areas that are bound to eventually fail, which could have otherwise been assessed and restored to proper integrity. Since most insurance does not instruct on preventative measures for functional alignment, **we must take the initiative ourselves.**

Though a single session could seem expensive, this preventative appointment could save you thousands in future medical bills—while also accelerating your own athletic achievements—by catching a potentially “loose bolt”

early on in your fitness journey. We can easily spend \$100 on alignments of our cars—at least once in your life, it’s important to get the alignment of your body evaluated too. By founding your joints on strong, smart movement patterns and postures, you are placing yourself leaps and bounds closer to physical success, and away from degenerative issues that can leave you injured and broke.

The next few pages contain a quick overview of the areas a well-rounded professional should assess to screen you for any underlying issues, and give you a green light to progress to more vigorous exercise programs. A full Functional Movement Evaluation (FME) can be found in Step 2 of the *Lion’s Heart Foundations Action Book*. For thoroughness, we recommend bringing this FME to your medical professional, physical therapist, or advanced movement coach to ensure you are both aligned in understanding your own body’s abilities. We do disavow the accuracy of anyone not certified by Lion’s Heart to officially administer an FME, but we encourage the use of our tools and believe that most trained physical therapists can competently administer this evaluation with no issues.

After you have been assessed, make sure you understand your results and if any areas require an assisted intervention. Most likely, you will have a few areas that need more focused attention—this is normal. Go over your plan of care and make sure you understand how this plan should fit into your normal schedule.

As you first read through the two alignment stories on the next few pages and then review recommended areas of assessment illustrated thereafter, we hope you become inspired to learn how your own body might perform both now and in the future, and begin looking for a physical therapist, chiropractor, or other health professional in your area to schedule your own assessment.



CARL’S STORY

38-year old Carl has always been somewhat “tight” and never very flexible. He has had a few minor issues in his back, shoulder and knees in the past few years, but decided he needed to get back into a workout routine. Carl was hesitant to complete an assessment at first, but opted to hire a very skilled personal trainer to guide him through the FME.

In this assessment, Carl learned that his musculoskeletal system was out of alignment and functioning poorly, making vigorous exercise a recipe for injury. His hips and hamstrings had become so tight that he was using his lower back excessively to make up for the tension. His left hip was so frozen that his steps were not evenly dissipating through the body, leaving his left knee to take all the force of each step. His somewhat rounded shoulders had weakened his upper back, causing a shoulder impingement every time he would make a pressing motion.

Carl began working with his trainer once weekly who prescribed him corrective exercises integrated into a balanced workout. Two years later, Carl is now pain free and demonstrably stronger and more flexible than in any other time in his life. These preventable measures and corrective exercises have changed the autopilot subtleties of Carl’s daily posture, gait, and general movement patterns. Carl is now set in a trajectory to glide instead of grind with his movements for the rest of his life.

This is a fictitious instructional amalgamation based on actual reoccurring issues and successes we have witnessed in our own clients, as well as typical issues discussed within the larger wellness industry.



JEN’S STORY

31-year old Jen has struggled with anxiety and insecurity since she was young. Whenever she would feel any stressors, her shoulders would instinctively lift up toward her ears and curl inward toward the chest. She never felt athletic so she avoided sports, and felt embarrassed working out at a gym around others. When she tried to work out at home, she never felt confident that she was doing any of the moves correctly.

Because of her anxious shoulder posture, her upper shoulders would always feel stiff and achy, and her upper back and neck always felt out of place. Her moves were more quad-dominant and her hips always tucked inward, disengaging the glutes from the majority of her daily movements and thus rendering the muscles weak and unused.

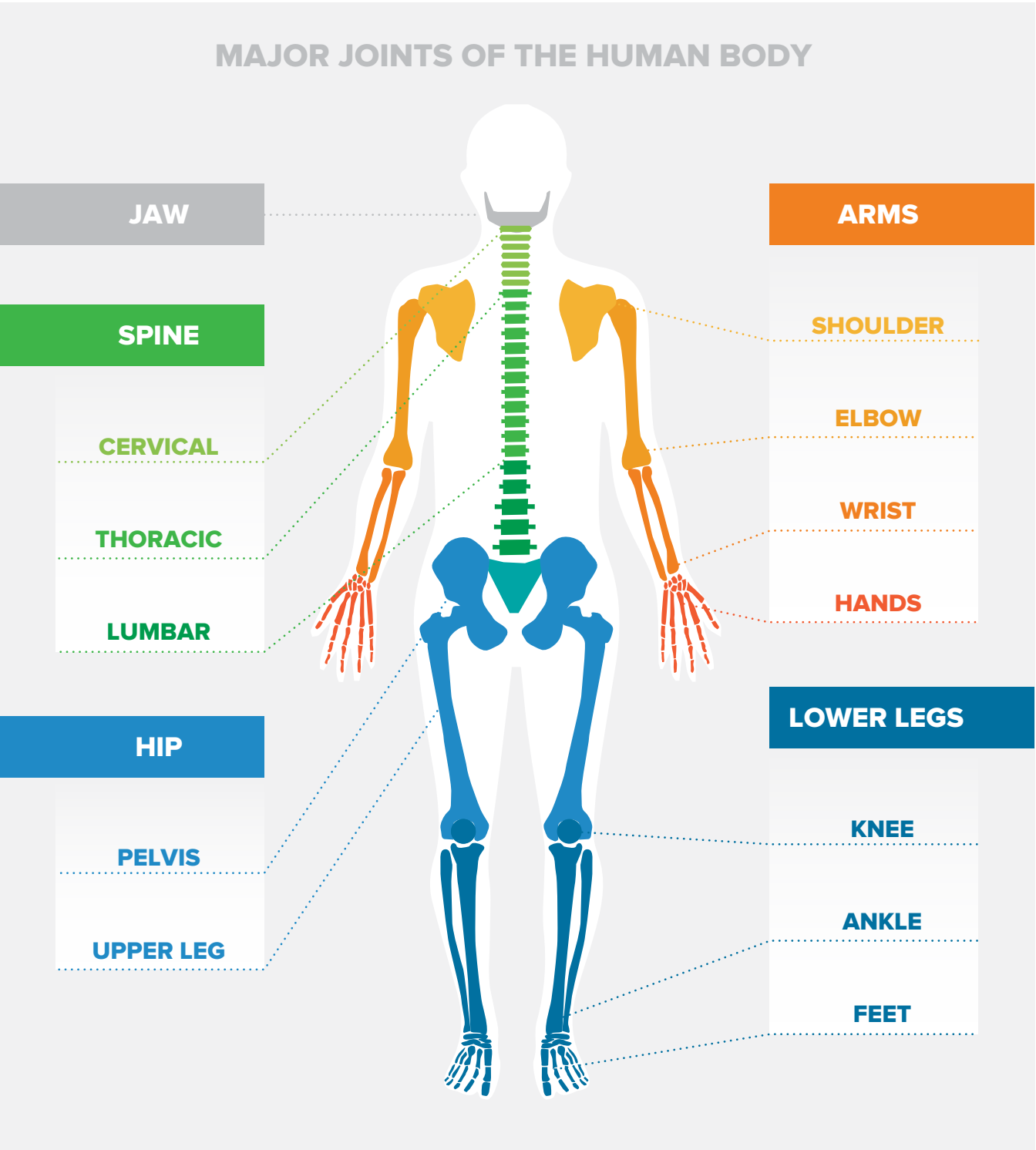
As she entered her 50s, she noticed she was developing a dowager’s hump in her upper back—a preventable condition where mispostured vertebrae fracture into one another creating a hunched shape. Now that she is in her 60s, Jen’s bone density is beginning to drop. Unfortunately, her doctor advised against most traditional exercise because her contorted posture was supported by a now-compromised frame.

Jen can still begin repairing the damage from decades of misaligned movement and imbalanced muscular tension, but this could have been avoided long ago if a professional had diagnosed her postural issues early on and provided a path of restoration.

This is a fictitious instructional amalgamation based on actual reoccurring issues and successes we have witnessed in our own clients, as well as typical issues discussed within the larger wellness industry.

RECOMMENDED AREAS OF ASSESSMENT
EVERY JOINT INDIVIDUALLY

Each one of these major joints should be assessed singularly. Run through each joint individually and check for range of motion, symmetry, stability, conscious control and areas of pain.



RECOMMENDED AREAS OF ASSESSMENT

IN ALL PLANES AND RANGES

Assess each joint in its functional planes (frontal, sagittal, and transverse) as well as within their range of motion (flexion/extension, abduction/adduction, etc.).

THREE PLANES OF THE HUMAN BODY

FRONTAL

SAGITTAL

TRANSVERSE

EXAMPLE RANGES OF MOTION

FLEXION & EXTENSION

ABDUCTION & ADDUCTION

PROTRACTION & RETRACTION

ELEVATION & DEPRESSION

CIRCUMDUCTION

RECOMMENDED AREAS OF ASSESSMENT

EVERY JOINT AS A TEAM

Joints move together as a team in compound movements during athletic exercises or just while moving a coffee table. Make sure to test these connected movements as a united team.

NINE PRIMAL MOVEMENT PATTERNS

LOWER BODY

Squat

Hinge

Lunge

Gait

UPPER BODY

Push

Pull

CORE

Core Rotation

Flexion/ Extension

Lateral Extension

GETTING ASSESSED

As you can see, there are many key areas a professional should be assessing to thoroughly screen an individual for movement issues. There are several types of assessments depending on what type your health professional might be most comfortable with, but the most important factor is that the individual conducting the screening understands all the potential movements of the body we have listed, and takes the time to screen you in each of the dimensions as well as assessing posture and gait.

The Functional Movement Evaluation (FME) found in your Action Book is a **simple yet thorough checklist of all the dimensions your body can move, paired with a numbered evaluation ranking the quality of your movement:**

- 0 - It doesn't move
 - 1 - There is an issue in the move
 - 2 - You move well and are clear for exercise
 - 3 - You have top notch movement and deserve a gold star!
- Let your professional lead, but at the end of the session, you should be able to look at each area of your body on a checklist and know if there IS or IS NOT an issue, as well as a clear path of restoration should an issue exist.

Get them to assess posture as well. We spend all day in postures that shape our alignment, and vice versa. If we are diagnosed with poor posture (most people have several weaknesses and asymmetries), you will have to learn what good posture is, how it feels, and how to become it.

THE POWER OF POSTURE

Is perfect posture rigid or fluid? What does your posture say about your overall health and your emotional state? How can you “unstick” yourself from a long-standing habit of poor posture?



The medical community and the general public agree that good posture is a sign of both health and confidence. If you really think about it, **your posture is the canvas on which you use your body language to communicate how you feel, both physically and emotionally.** Even a child can instinctively demonstrate several postures signaling health and happiness or disease and despair. Ask a youth to impersonate a “really old” person—they will hunch their upper back, stiffen their posture, and lean forward to such an angle that a cane would have to be present to hold them upright. Ask them again to impersonate an Olympic athlete who just won a race and they will puff up their chest and open their arms wide and proud. Then ask them to impersonate a sad or insecure person, and they will curl in their shoulders and hunch forward with the head hanging low toward the ground. If our health and our mood leads us to a certain posture, can assuming certain postures lead to a change in our health or emotions?

On the health-focused side, both physical therapists and chiropractors are in agreement that continuing a wide variety of poor postures will then place a wide variety of toil on your body. Whether looking down and pushing your neck forward to see your phone, hunching over to drive, leaning on just one hip for extended periods of time, or repeated slouching, poor postural habits can all lead to premature deterioration of the vertebrae and disks, as well as muscular tightness across entire chains of the body. The problem is, you can “get stuck” in bad posture as the muscles tighten and lose pliability over time, and vertebrae can start to fracture and fuse which makes it much more difficult to reverse years of poor posture (though not impossible). Making good postural alignment a habit can save you years of pain, medical bills and time by fostering a balanced symmetrical and structural integrity that can defend you against injury. **Growing older and having poor posture are not synonymous.**

On the emotional side, social psychologist, author and speaker Amy Cuddy has claimed that **you can reverse the principle of “emotion-leading posture” and start to control mood through more positive postures.** She has hypothesized through experimentation that holding postures of defeat lead to negative endocrine responses and less confidence. On the contrary, holding postures of victory and success, which she has named “power posing,” raises endocrine levels, which contribute to positive mental and physical health and can increase our professional presence and appearance.

As we understand how linked our posture is to our physical, emotional and social health, we can see the importance of finding our best “home posture” and turning it into a new form of muscle memory.

PERFECT POSTURE

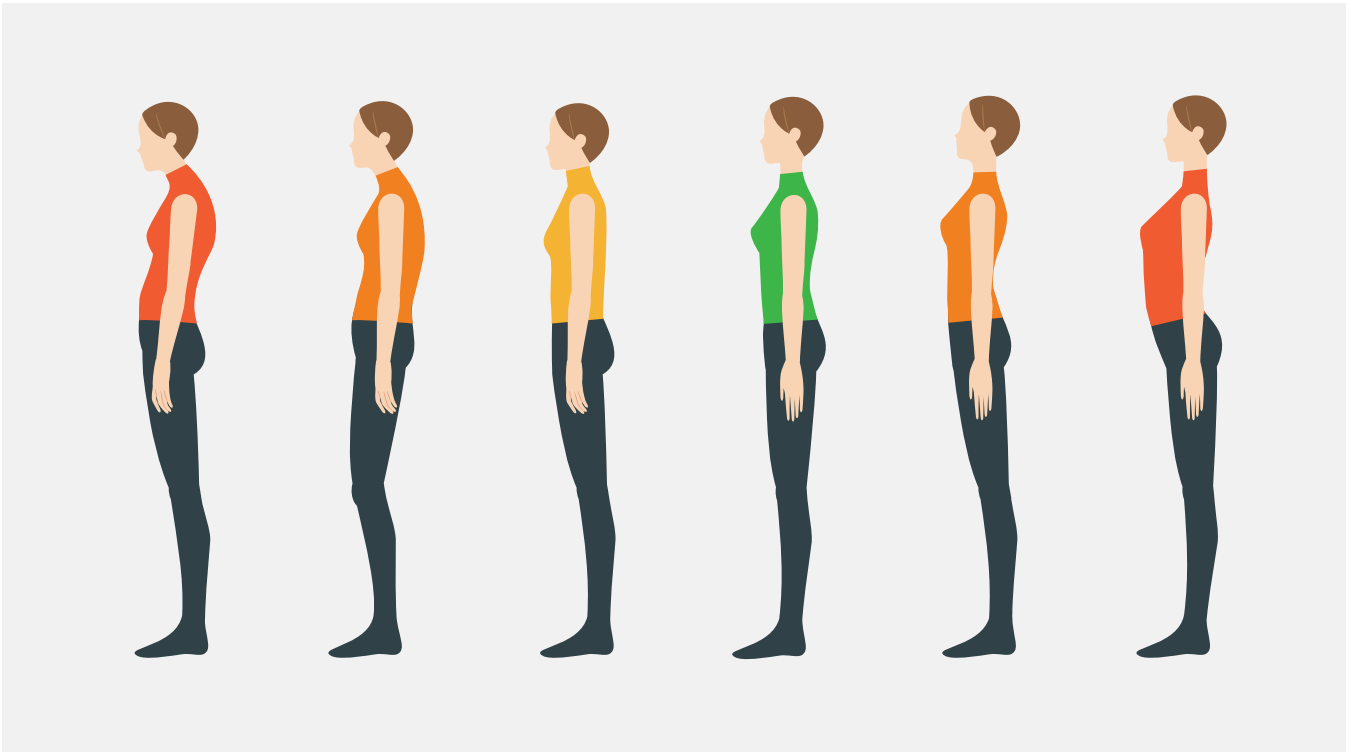
The figure most people picture when they think of posture is the standing posture; however, “posture” really just means “position,” which could refer to the standing, seated (in a chair on on the ground), lying and sleeping postures, while also extending into more kinetic postures and sports-related “stances” such as fighting, batting, goal-keeping, or the prime posture needed to operate a certain tool or piece of machinery. **We like to think of “good posture” as the best positioning of your anatomy, based on the environment**

and anticipated activity, to maintain physiological integrity while optimizing function related to the anticipated activity.

Although it’s important to understand that there is not just one “proper posture,” the neutral standing posture is essentially your body’s alignment on display. This position is a great vantage point to see any underlying structural issues that can transfer over into other activities. Because of this, to start a practical base of understanding good posture, we will cover the standing and seated posture in this book—further nuances like facial postures, sleeping positions, and other atypical postures would be topics for further research.

NEUTRAL STANDING POSTURE

If you were to face a mirror standing in a frontal position, you will see some areas that are much easier to self-analyze and correct. The first element is symmetry—if you were to draw a perfect graph on your mirror, one ear, hip, or shoulder should not be higher than the other; the middle of your body should look straight from the hips to the head with no side leaning. Though it’s tough to see the whole picture of your shoulder and head position from this frontal plane, you can still notice if your shoulders are rounding in heavily, if the heart feels caved in, or if your head is jutting forward. Looking down the body, the feet and knees should both face forward—the feet shouldn’t point inward or outward (pigeon toe/duck feet).



CORRECT

CERVICAL

Reach the top of the head to the sky, lengthening the neck upwards and subtly tucking in the chin under the face with a gentle lordotic curve of the neck.

SHOULDERS

Gently down and always away from the ears, slightly retracted back away from the chest exposing the heart, and externally rotated; floating, not stiff.

UPPER BACK (Thoracic)

As the shoulders slide down and back, use the muscles along the spine to lift the heart upward, straightening the back into a subtle kyphotic curve.

LOWER BACK (Lumbar)

Keep subtle tension evenly around the core, holding the spine in a gentle lordotic curve.

HIPS

Keep subtle tension evenly through the hips, maintaining a neutral position; not tilting the hips backward or inward.

KNEES

Knees should face straight forward, tracking over the feet.

FEET

Facing forward, feet should track in line with the hips and knees.

STANDING POSTURE

INCORRECT

CERVICAL

Commonly pushed forward with compensation in the neck (lordosis) and the head less upright, resulting in decreased overall height.

SHOULDERS

Commonly over-elevated, protracted forward and rounding inward, weighing the chest down and making the shoulder girdle more rigid.

UPPER BACK (Thoracic)

Often in tandem with the shoulders, the upper back caves in, hunching the spine, decreasing overall height and becoming rigid.

LOWER BACK (Lumbar)

The lower back will over-arch (lordosis) or over-tuck (kyphosis), removing the lordotic curve.

HIPS

Following the path of lower back, anterior or posterior tilt occurs in the hips either exaggerating the rear or removing it completely.

KNEES

Knees either cave into one another or are too turned out.

FEET

Feet either turn too far in (pigeon-toed) or out (duck feet).

The side view, or sagittal plane, is usually where you will see most issues relating to the spine.

The side view, or sagittal plane, is usually where you will see most issues relating to the spine (if any). Your body should be stacked in a strong, column-loaded fashion where a line could be drawn from the center of the arch of your foot, to the center of the hip, up to the center of the shoulder, and then to the ear.

The spine naturally has three subtle curves. A healthy posture has one gentle concave arch (lordotic) in the lower back, an opposing convex curve (kyphotic) in the upper back, and returning to a gentle concave curve (lordotic) of the neck. The lordotic curve of the lower back should fall into a neutral hip that does not tuck inward (posterior pelvic tilt—think of the Pink Panther or a dog with its tail between its legs), nor should it arch backward (anterior pelvic tilt—think of Daffy Duck or “twerking”). Keep in mind that spotting a neutral hip can sometimes be difficult, considering large amounts of muscle and/or fat can accumulate in this area which may distort initial perceptions.

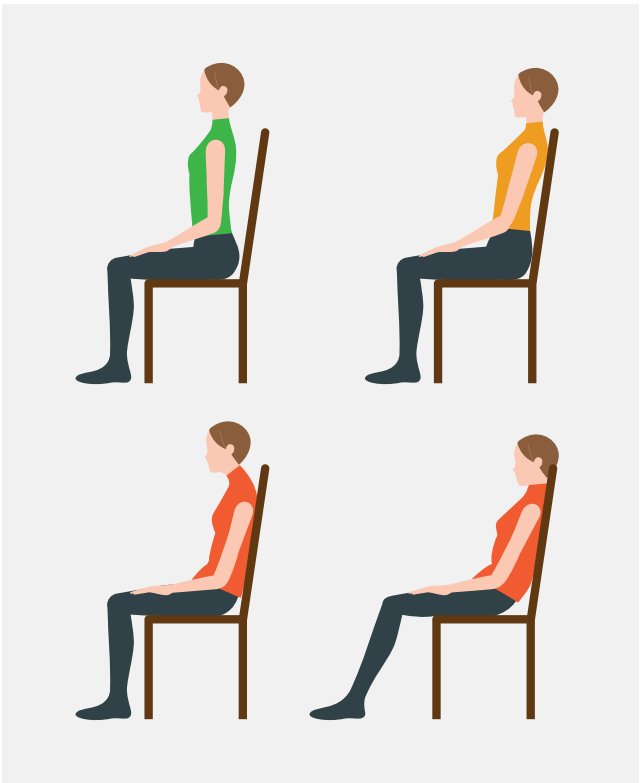
The shoulders, which can float in a variety of positions via the shoulder blades, should be gently down and always away from the ears, slightly retracted back away from the chest exposing the heart, and externally rotated as if you were trying to expose your palm to the wall in front of you.

The crown of your head should reach to the sky, lengthening the neck upwards and subtly tucking the chin under the face without losing the gentle lordotic curve of the neck.

NEUTRAL SEATED POSTURE

There are a multitude of ways to sit, whether you are squatting down, in a cross-legged position on the floor, seated with your legs in front of you, or in various types and heights of chairs and recliners. Luckily, certain fundamentals of posture overlap them all. Each of the elements we covered within standing posture will still apply when seated. Hips should maintain a neutral position or rotate based on the cross of the legs. When the hips, hamstrings and lower body are very stiff, seated positions often pull the hips to tuck under, resulting in a rounding of the lower back and setting off a chain of compensation all the way up the spine. This same misalignment can happen in very flexible individuals as well. If you find yourself melting into a seated position with no structure or support in the spine, the hips will tuck in and result in the lower back taking all the pressure of a seated position.

The key to handling the prolonged seated posture that the modern world demands of us is achieving a balance between having enough lower body flexibility to place the hips in a neutral position, having enough muscular integrity to hold the spine upright, and most importantly, listening to the body by rotating common seated positions and knowing when to get up, stretch out, and return to a neutral position.





POSTURE IN MOTION

Now that we have a basic understanding of posture in standing and seated positions, how do we avoid looking like we are frozen mannequins the rest of the time? What happens when we walk across the room, or if we want to tell someone a story without looking like a robot with limited mobility? **Try to think of “perfect posture” as being fluid in nature.** If we are adhering to the Lion’s Heart definition in which posture is meant to maintain physiological integrity while performing a desired function, being stiff will not help you achieve a function such as catching an apple someone drops near you, or using your body language to communicate openly.

No matter what subtle variation of good posture you resonate with, **you should have an essence of freedom of motion paired with the integrity of the posture.** You should be able to breathe and move freely between several positions. A healthy body should be both an agile and a comfortable vehicle, not a prison. Find your ideal posture, then loosen up and breathe in it.

The truth is, your standing posture and your walking/running gait are very related, as gait is essentially just a

series of postures the body oscillates through, falling from one to another while harnessing the momentum of each of the previous steps. If the upper back is hunched over while standing, the odds are high that your upper back will be hunched while you walk. If your right foot turns out while you’re standing still, you can bet it will show up in your gait.

A proper walking gait maintains an upright head, spine and the hip positions of your standing posture as you take each step. The body should feel pliable, not stiff, allowing the shock to be absorbed evenly throughout the body as your core, hips, shoulders, legs and arms sync into a natural rhythm. For more tips and cues on gait, reference the Flight sections within the Lion’s Heart benchmark workouts.

When you think about it, **most of your life will be spent walking from one place to another to assume a posture, then to walk/run to another place and assume another posture.** You will walk to your car to sit until you get out and stand in line to get a meal, where you sit down to eat, walk back to the car to sit before you get to work where you might sit or stand. This will continue until you walk to your bed and lie in a sleeping position for 8 hours, only to repeat this cycle

again the next day. The postures you form during this majority of your life will in fact form you, and they will have a dramatic impact on your health—physically, socially and emotionally.

CORRECTING POSTURE

So what if you’re one of the many people who doesn’t have a magically perfect posture and fluid gait? What if you do feel stuck in one position and can’t seem to let the body remain in a healthy posture for more than a few seconds, if at all? We strongly recommend having a chiropractor, physical therapist, or high-level trainer evaluate your posture (which is included in the FME within this chapter), and lead your journey in correcting and assimilating the new habit into your lifestyle. **We cannot emphasize enough how impactful good (and bad) posture can be on your health,** considering you spend the majority of your life either walking, sitting, standing or lying down, and the trip to a professional can end up paying for itself with the time you save down the line.

Luckily, most postural issues can be corrected once they are diagnosed. This is usually done by learning (and enacting) exactly where proper posture is with your own anatomy in your sitting, standing, walking and lying gait. Lion’s Heart refers to this as your “home” posture, as it should eventually be where your body wants to return to after a series of fluid movements. If the body is too rigid to assume a healthy home posture, a physical therapist or chiropractor could progressively mobilize the musculoskeletal system to restore a healthy home posture, in most cases.

Once you find your healthy home posture, two major paths emerge to help engrain this posture into the subconscious so the body returns without conscious thought. The first is to build structural integrity around this posture at a neuromuscular level. This is achieved by custom strength training exercises unique to your specific postural deviance.

Fortunately, most individuals have the same postural issues and the exercises needed to correct them tend to be classic exercises (which are the backbone of the Lion’s Heart physical fitness system). For example, slouching or the hunching of the shoulders due to a weak posterior chain can often be reversed with heart-opening workouts such as perfect-form ring rows, supinated deadlifts, and various yoga poses such as the locust pose. **Selecting the right exercises and integrating them into a routine is the first step to restoring posture.**

The next step is to build posture as a habit within your lifestyle. Your new home posture will naturally feel “weird” compared to your previous posture, and because of this, you will have to go through a rigorous season of forging a whole new normal. This will require a persistent use of cues and triggers, and possibly even physical tools, but will eventually become as second nature as your current posture. (In our Lifestyle chapter, we go into greater depth about growing new habits like better posture within your daily routine.) Just know that as your posture improves, you may even find that your mood and confidence might improve along with it.





PHYSICAL ABILITY

Chapter 4: Assess Your Physical Fitness

- Define physical fitness
- Assess your athletic ability

Athletic ability may have a sports connotation, but it measures so much more. It is literally what determines whether you can pick up a fallen family member and carry them to safety; it is the factor that allows you to regain your balance after a slip instead of ending up with a broken bone; it is what allows you to keep running from a real threat coming toward you.

Our overall health is determined by choices, those individual choices build a lifestyle, and our physical health and athletic ability are the byproduct of this lifestyle. If you do nothing to retain or improve your ability, it will most assuredly decline.

Some individuals are bound to finish their years in assisted living facilities simply because their range of motion, balance and strength have deteriorated so much due to atrophy. Placing other medical conditions or serious physical limitations aside, this atrophy can be avoided entirely and even reversed with a regular focus on movement—a **balanced routine involving strength, agility and endurance.** ■

DEFINING FITNESS

Is a marathon runner more fit than a body builder? Is a swimmer more fit than a ballet dancer? It's time to demystify the ever-elusive definition of fitness.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “FIT”?

This question is a lot bigger than most people realize. We all want to be fit, and every program on the market promises it can take us there, but what is “fit” and how does it become a measurable goal? Is it a single endpoint, or more of a spectrum we might all land somewhere within?

Curiously, just like nutrition, there seems to be no unified definition of fitness among the athletic community, as the word “fit” only means “to be made ready or able for”—a painfully vague and subjective description. One could be psychologically fit for a set of stressors, or knowledgeably fit to complete a series of tasks... but what is fit in the physical sense? Fit enough to run a marathon? Fit enough to move a ton of stones barehanded? Fit enough to move every joint in your body with accuracy and fluidity? Though all of these speculations could be considered correct, they are very short-sighted by themselves as a single marker point for fitness.

Fairly agreed upon in the science and sports community is the idea that fitness is not simply a measure of extremely low body fat. Though it's true that athletic performance at

its upper end is correlated with low ranges of body fat, and increasing athletic performance usually does decrease body fat, some people might have genetically low percentages of body fat and still find themselves weak, uncoordinated or sickly. In addition, the competitive bodybuilding community unites in agreement that extreme dieting to reduce body fat percentages will reduce performance. Because the range of processes, genetic differences and formats for reducing body fat can widely vary, **we focus on a performance measure instead of body fat percentage to calculate fitness level.** Regardless, in any way that body fat affects performance and fitness level, it will be accounted for by its direct effect on the measured performance of most bodyweight exercises.

UNDERSTANDING THE BODY’S POTENTIAL

To truly define physical fitness, you have to start with understanding the human body and all of its possibilities for athletic movement. Having this understanding allows us to acknowledge the various areas that could ever be measured in the human body before attempting to calculate where the coveted title of “fit” belongs within each area.

SEE WITH SCIENCE

To discover what physical fitness is and how to achieve it, we must answer these three questions:

- 1

WHAT MOVES?
What are the actual movement types/patterns/mobilities that we would test (pushups, running, toe touching, deadlifts)? What exercises are worth measuring over others?
- 2

WHAT MEASURE?
What dimensions or qualities do we measure for “fitness” (strength, speed, endurance, balance, range of motion)? How do we measure them?
- 3

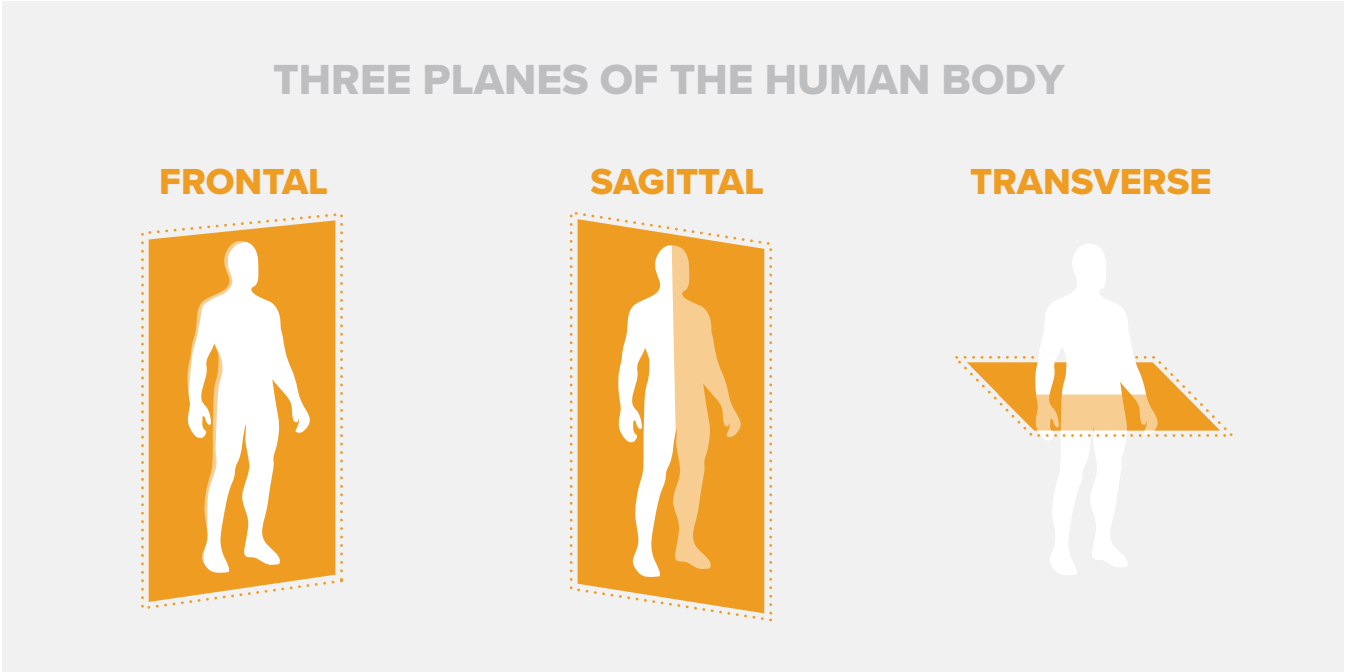
WHAT MARK?
Where is the mark on the fitness spectrum we must achieve to be “fit”? Is it an absolute point? How might someone measure their fitness level relative to the rest of the population?

1

WHAT MOVES?

Three Foundational Planes

The first area of analysis is in observing that ALL movements manifest on a base musculoskeletal system that moves along one (or more) of three planes in space. **No matter what body part you move or in what direction, it will fall under one of the below planes of motion.** A generally “fit” individual should be able to move confidently within all three planes. Though the names for each might seem complex, an easy-to-follow breakdown can be explored below. Do you believe you move fluidly in all three planes?



FRONTAL PLANE (FRONT)

When trying to understand the frontal plane, remember these are the moves that you can see prominently from the front view of the body's silhouette. If you lift your arms out to the side, hop out into a straddle, do jumping jacks etc., you are performing movements within the frontal plane. Abduction and adduction both commonly occur in this plane.

SAGITTAL (SIDE)

When trying to understand the sagittal plane, remember these are the moves that you can see prominently from the side view of the body's silhouette. Hinging, pushing, pulling, and other classic strength and stability moves such as squats, deadlifts, rows and dips can be seen in the sagittal plane. Both flexion and extension commonly occur in this plane.

TRANSVERSE (TOP)

When understanding the transverse plane, remember these are the twisting moves that you can see prominently from the top view of the body's form. Twisting left and right, pirouettes, or other internal or external rotation movements are the foundational power behind punches, throws or golf swings. Pronation and supination commonly occur in this plane.

1 WHAT MOVES?

Nine Foundational Movement Chains

Though we could look at every single joint in the human body and measure the mobility of each beginning with the pinky finger, a far more practical method would be to identify the body’s primary movement “chains”—these chains are made up of the individual joints of the human body working together in unison to perform the larger movement. These include **the lower body—squatting, hinging, lunging, and gait patterns; the upper body—pushing and pulling; and the core—core rotation, core flexion/extension, and core lateral flexion.**

The overwhelming majority of movement patterns we could ever make will rely on a unique combination of these chains, and thus become the underlying paths of power and function in the human body. Which movement chains do you feel the most powerful in, and which feel like weak links in need of strengthening?

LOWER BODY

SQUAT

A squat is a powerful and united effort of the lower body. Every time you sit down or stand up from a seated position, you are squatting. When performing a squat in a fitness environment, the importance of learning proper form is essential to the safety of your joints before adding weight or performing squats in a more explosive manner (jumping into a squat, for instance.)

- Bodyweight Squat
- Overhead Squat
- Jump Squat
- Snatch
- Front Squat
- Malasana
- Volleyball Stance



LOWER BODY

HINGE

The hip hinge is another powerful effort of the lower body. Hinging can be seen as the folding at the hip, most purely exhibited in a forward fold or toe touch, or performed in a deadlift when lifting objects off the ground. Learning proper form is essential to protect the joints and the back from injury.

- Warrior 3
- Forward Fold
- Deadlift
- Hyperextension
- Romanian Deadlift
- Roman Chair
- Bowing
- Kettle Bell Swing



LOWER BODY

LUNGE

The lunge is a unilateral leg movement that has become the foundation of many athletic stances. The lunge is a powerful way to step forward, backward, or to the side with a key in balance. A staple in exercise and physical therapy, the lunge can challenge stability or add a large amount of traction depending on subtleties in positioning.

- High/Low Lunge
- Crescent Pose
- Track 3-Point Stance
- Warrior 1 and 2
- Lizard
- Martial Arts Stance



LOWER BODY

GAIT

Year after year, we put miles on our own two feet. Is each step building us up or breaking us down? Running coaches go into great detail when teaching stride because of the implications of speed and safety. Proper form when practicing various walking or running gaits can align our gears (feet/knees/hips/torso) to help us glide and not grind.

- Walking
- Jogging/Running
- Sprinting



UPPER BODY

PULL

Pulling is an upper body chain primarily relying on the back, shoulders and biceps. Just like the push chain, pulls can be performed vertically, horizontally and everywhere in between. Pulling can counteract the tension in the front of the body, creating a residual posture that holds the back and chest upright. The muscles of the back are often neglected, as pull-based moves usually require external equipment or a bit of creativity.

- Pullup
- Row Machine
- Dumbbell Rows
- Suspension Rows
- Lever
- Hanging Tuck
- Aerial Climbs/Rock Climbing



UPPER BODY

PUSH

The push is one of the upper body chains primarily using the shoulders, triceps and chest. Pushing can be done in multiple directions—vertically, horizontally and every angle in between. Though essential, the push chain is usually overemphasized in several fitness programs when not equally balanced with its opposite (the pull chain), leaving the chest and shoulders tight and pulling the body forward into a hunch, which can be cause for injury and disability later in life.

- Pushup
- Handstand
- Overhead Press
- Dips
- Bench Press



CORE

CORE ROTATION

A move dominated by the spine, hips and shoulders, core rotation is a mark of great mobility and the foundation of many explosive moves from our center. Core rotation can demonstrate grace in dance, allow you to reach something behind you, or load up for a throw or strike. It's often neglected in classic strength training but is still at the heart of most athletic movements, working in tandem with the rest of the body to deliver new levels of athletic output.

- Throw
- Punch
- Revolved Yoga Poses
- Kick
- Pirouette
- Sprint

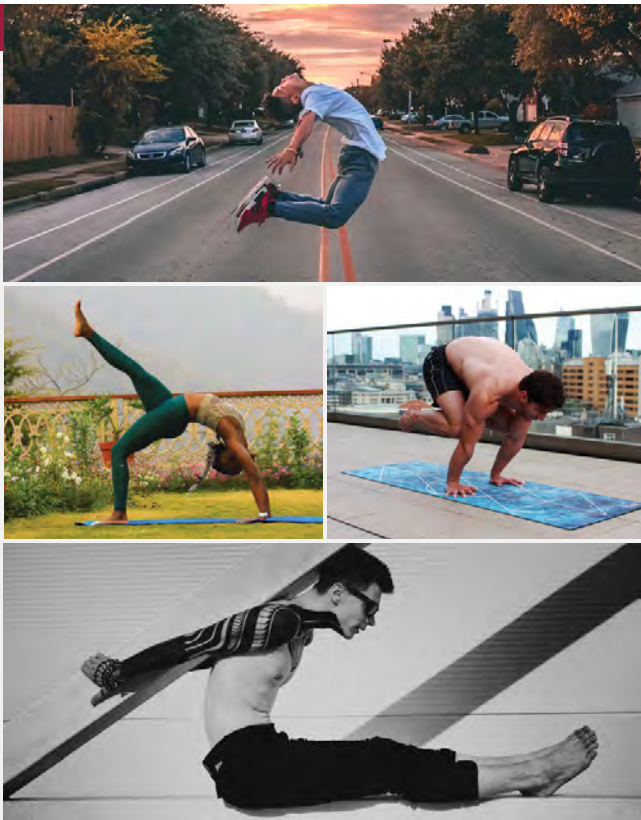


CORE

CORE FLEXION/EXTENSION

The frequently-used chain moving along the spine, core flexion and extension are opposite movement patterns that both round and arch the back—these two spinal directions move within the sagittal plane. These chains primarily assist the other chains in flexing the core forward, extending it backwards, and most commonly contract into each other which creates midline stability as a safe platform for the other chains to move upon.

- Wheel
- Cat/Cow
- Back Bend
- Crunch
- Tuck
- Hollow Body
- Plank



CORE

CORE LATERAL FLEXION

Often paired with abduction and adduction of the arms and legs, lateral movements are a less commonly-used chain of the spine, hips and shoulders. Strength and coordination on this plane bring other dimensions of midline stability, while powering a family of yoga, gymnastics, martial arts and dance moves.

- Side Plank
- Half Moon
- Human Flag
- Side Bend
- Cartwheel



1 WHAT MOVES?
Kinetic Vocabulary: Three Movement Families

Now, let’s look at the totality of all the specific movements possible within these planes, powered by the chains we’ve just covered. This includes activities like swimming, throwing a ball, or dancing, among hundreds of other possibilities. **Let’s refer to these movements as our Kinetic Vocabulary.** Just like our verbal vocabulary which we use to communicate with one another, our kinetic vocabulary is the store of the many movements we know in order to interact physically with our environment. How smoothly we can perform these moves is similar to how well we can articulate our thoughts into words. Just like using the wrong words from our vocabulary bank could potentially damage relationships, using the wrong lifting technique on the wrong object could potentially cause a physical injury.

There are many ways one could categorize Kinetic Vocabulary to measure how “fit” someone is within each area, but **we have found that dividing all types of athletic movement into the three major categories below leads to the most functional and intuitive categorization.**

MOVE SELF

Move and stretch the body in any position with full control and fluidity

MOVE ENTITIES

Lift, throw and wield other objects safely and powerfully

MOVE OVER TERRAIN

Walking, running, swimming, etc., using proper gait patterns of repeated movement

A NOTE ON HYBRIDS: Although some examples in the next pages are pure examples of each of the families above, many sports and movements are hybrids of two or more families. For example, soccer would be a hybrid of Move Entities and Move Over Terrain, parkour would be a hybrid of Move Self and Move Over Terrain, etc.

KINETIC VOCABULARY: MOVEMENT FAMILY 1

MOVE SELF

Movement starts with you. The first way Lion’s Heart approaches kinetic vocabulary is the ability to move yourself. How well you are able to move your body into different positions and stances can greatly determine your performance level, risk of injury, and overall confidence.

Do you feel confident in your own awareness and ability to move yourself?

GYMNASTICS & CALISTHENICS

Gymnastics as well as calisthenics exercises in general are very strength-based systems of moving the body—often, these exercises include hanging or being suspended from above.



POSTURE & STANCES

The first area of kinetic vocabulary is a healthy variety of well-aligned postures and common stances that keep you in the safest, strongest, and (coincidentally) the most aesthetic positions.



DANCE

From hip hop, ballet, jazz, freestyle and beyond, dance is an art that is a part of almost every human (and animal) culture and is rooted in the vast movement capabilities of the human body.



YOGA & STRETCHING

Yoga asana practice, along with a variety of other stretching and alignment activities, is a health exercise and alignment system that centers around movement of self. Mat pilates, when performed without a reformer or other tools, also fits into this category.



MARTIAL ARTS

Although most martial arts are not exclusive in the Move Self category (Tai Chi would be considered an exclusive), movements such as kicks, jumps, or other Katas (movement series) must be memorized and drilled in a wide variety of martial arts studies.



KINETIC VOCABULARY: MOVEMENT FAMILY 2

MOVE ENTITIES

You are the puppet master in an interactive world. The second approach to kinetic vocabulary is the ability to move entities or objects in an environment, both animate and inanimate. No matter how you live your life, you will confront daily obstacles in this category such as lifting an object off the ground, pushing out a coffee table, or catching a pair of keys.

Stepping into this modality, discussions of grip, leverage and momentum will become much more prevalent factors. Do you feel confident moving the environment around you?

TOOL WIELDING

Whether we are holding a tennis racket, a sword, an axe or a hammer, our opposable thumbs and big brains allow for a litany of ways to properly wield multiple tools in life.



DANCE WITH OTHERS

Whether it's ballroom dancing, swing, an acrobatic partner routine or the junior prom, adding a lively partner and attempting to synchronize movements adds another layer of kinetic cognition.



COMBAT WITH OTHERS

Should you aim for the legs? Can you roll out of a potential body slam back onto your feet? How will your kick land when it impacts your target? This mental chess game has been going on since the beginning of time and has been played by all species.



WEIGHTLIFTING

As one of the most common categories of fitness using dumbbells and other free weights, weightlifting can even be as simple as picking up or moving a box off of the floor with proper form.



THROWING & CATCHING

Whether you are the pitcher of your baseball team, tossing a sandbag down into a trench, or just passing a set of keys to a friend, this modality requires fine-tuned motor skills.



KINETIC VOCABULARY: MOVEMENT FAMILY 3

MOVE OVER TERRAIN

How fast and how far can you go? The third approach to kinetic vocabulary is the ability to move over terrain itself. This is viewed specifically in the perspective of the body finding a gait pattern to traverse a distance while measuring time to ascertain speed and endurance.

In this family of movement, harnessing momentum will generally be the training focus. Whether your momentum comes in the form of strides, strokes, or other repeated oscillations propelling you forward, great specificity is taken in finding the most efficient positioning of the body. Do you feel confident moving across the environment around you?

BIKING

With the technology of wheels and gears, our minds have devised a way for us to travel much faster than walking, creating a lower body gait pattern.



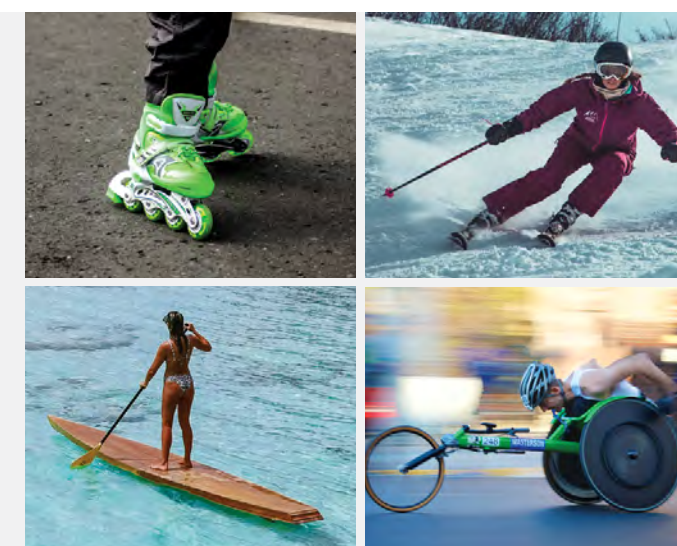
ROWING

Whether alone or as a synchronized team, rowing harnesses the strength, coordination and balance of the upper and lower body to propel us at great speeds across rivers, lakes and oceans.



...AND MANY MORE

Whether skiing, skipping, rollerblading, skating, kayaking, or crawling, there are many ways to cross over terrain that can be both effective and recreational, or measured for sport and fitness goals.



WALKING & RUNNING

Our bipedal standard, the repetition of one of our nine primary movement chains has been the foundation of human navigation. Every step we take is the recital of the gait pattern we have (or maybe haven't) properly trained.



SWIMMING

Take to the sea! We have the capability of being aquatic creatures, with a variety of stroke patterns to choose from, in order to propel ourselves through bodies of water.



2 WHAT MEASURE?

Three Athletic Outputs

Now that we have established the planes, chains and movement families the body can move within, these movements must then be measured in our quest to find where our mark of “fit” really is. Once again, although there is no uncontested table of elements of athletic output, the three dimensions listed below give a great outline to encompass all of human athletic ability.

STRENGTH

Your raw ability to apply increased force, combined with power

AGILITY

The application of coordination, speed, balance, flexibility and accuracy, which allows us to pilot the body fluidly, safely and strongly

ENDURANCE

The ability to continue to exhibit strength and/or agility measured across multiple ranges of time periods



ATHLETIC OUTPUT 1

STRENGTH

How strong are you? To consolidate a view of strength in the measure of athletic ability, we look at strength in two major dimensions. In its most pure dimension, **strength** is simply the ability to apply increased force.

In addition to the basic definition, when speed is added to this force, we derive an entirely new quality of strength called **power**, which throws and smashes in contrast to the potentially slow solo of force alone. Power moves are exercises like the Olympic Snatch, Shotput, and a punch. How well can you transfer your strength into power?

- STRENGTH** the ability to apply increased force
- POWER** the combination of both strength and speed (force + velocity)

OUR DEFINITION OF STRENGTH

A blanket term for both the ability to apply increased force as well as generating explosive power when multiplied by speed (see Agility, next page).



ATHLETIC OUTPUT 2

AGILITY

How agile are you? The term agility is a way to consolidate and view the many factors that unify together as a skill—helping us regain our balance after we trip, easily getting in and out of cars, touching our toes, catching a ball, and generally feeling aligned and fluid in our movements.

There are several athletic abilities that come together to create agility. For example, **flexibility** governs the space you are able to move within, while **accuracy** is the likelihood you will land your optimally visualized move, which is determined by the correct **coordination** of the parts of your body in relation to time, as you **balance** against the forces of gravity. All the while, **speed** measures how long this entire ordeal takes. These pieces can be understood in isolation as well:

SPEED the duration of time it takes to move from point A to point B (velocity)

ACCURACY the likelihood you will end at the determined destination or coordinate

COORDINATION the ability to maneuver multiple joints simultaneously in harmony

BALANCE moving accurately in relation to overall body position against gravity

FLEXIBILITY the range of motion you have the potential to move within

OUR DEFINITION OF AGILITY

The application of coordination, speed, balance, flexibility and accuracy, which allows us to pilot the body fluidly, safely and strongly.



ATHLETIC OUTPUT 3

ENDURANCE

How long can your strength and agility persevere? Endurance can be measured within several modalities and time windows, but in its most basic form, endurance is simply the measure of how long someone can sustain any given athletic endeavor.

Many systems of the human body come together to support endurance, such as the **heart** (the cardiovascular strength of the heartbeat circulates greater blood flow), the **lungs** (the respiratory system's ability to harness oxygen for this blood) and **metabolism** (supporting cellular respiration by processing fats, sugars and beyond into usable energy).

For deeper analysis and measure, these pieces should be viewed in isolation as well, but for our purposes we will watch them in unison by simply measuring one of these two formats:

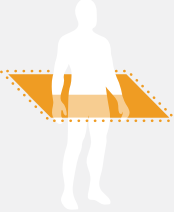
TIME the time that it takes to perform a specified workload

DISTANCE/WORKLOAD the workload one can perform in a specified time

OUR DEFINITION OF ENDURANCE

The ability for the cardiorespiratory system, in tandem with various metabolic energy systems, to support a continued action of athletic endeavors involving strength and/or agility.

1 WHAT MOVES?

THREE FOUNDATIONAL MOVEMENT PLANES	FRONTAL	SAGITTAL	TRANSVERSE
			
NINE FOUNDATIONAL MOVEMENT CHAINS	LOWER BODY:	UPPER BODY:	CORE
	Squat Lunge Hinge Gait	Push Pull	Twist Flexion & Extension Abduction & Adduction
KINETIC VOCABULARY: MOVEMENT FAMILIES	MOVE SELF	MOVE ENTITIES	MOVE OVER TERRAIN
	Posture Yoga Gymnastics Dance Martial Arts	Weightlifting Throwing & Catching Tool Wielding Dance with Others Combat with Others	Walking & Running Swimming Biking Rowing ... and Many More

2 WHAT MEASURE?

ATHLETIC OUTPUTS FOR FITNESS MEASURE	STRENGTH	AGILITY	ENDURANCE
	Strength Power	Speed Accuracy Coordination Balance Flexibility	Time Workload

3 WHAT MARK?

The Lion's Ladder

After defining and measuring our core moves, where is the mark of being “fit”? There are many approaches one could take in assessing individuals for general aptitude in all core movement planes, chains, and families measured within the dimensions of athletic output. This would essentially establish a **spectrum of human capability** that we would call “fitness.”

The most extreme endpoints of this spectrum in each category of performance would be the historical world record at its peaks, and absolute paralysis on the other. Within these extreme points of the spectrum, we can measure ourselves in a variety of perspectives, both relative to the rest of the human population and at an absolute point to see where we might fall on the fitness scale.

Looking at the breadth of possible athletic moves that someone could measure in a variety of dimensions, you might realize that one single marker of fitness for all people may not be accurate or truly encapsulate all categories.

Moreso, the latest fad that is going to “get you fit in 2 weeks” has most assuredly not factored in all of the planes, chains, and movement families outlined in the previous pages. It’s no wonder the task of defining the term “fit” has been avoided for so long.

THE LION’S LADDER
We truly think it’s impossible to mold this science into a practical fitness scale without a little bit of art. So, we have combined all of the previously-defined fitness factors with design thinking, and constructed a practical scale of general physical fitness. **And the Lion’s Ladder was born.**



OUR MARK

FITNESS IS A LADDER

Lion’s Heart leads a universal model of progressive physical fitness through the Lion’s Ladder, allowing us to **clearly measure fitness within ourselves** and improve upon it over time.

To achieve our goal in finding out how “fit” we are without the “paralysis by analysis” associated with breaking down all of the pieces, Lion’s Heart has taken the science and combined it with art and design to create comprehensive fitness spectrum with our guiding principle, *“as simple as possible but no simpler.”*

We began by taking all of the potential of human movement and summarizing it into our three base categories: **Move Self, Move Others, and Move over Terrain**. We broke all the factors of athletic ability down into a more digestible division of **Strength, Agility and Endurance**, where strength is a measure of pure force, agility is the sum of speed, coordination, balance, flexibility and accuracy of that force, and endurance is the maintenance of strength and agility over a period of time.

We then use four long-standing and well-measured primary movement arts to measure these, including **Gymnastics, Weightlifting, Track and Field, and Yoga**. Together, these four movement arts act as the building blocks of a fitness progression ladder that allows you to see your fitness level against the rest of the adult population within a simple beginner/intermediate/advanced format. This ladder is balanced within strength, agility and endurance, as well as the movement of self, other entities, and locomotion, in all major kinetic chains and planes of movement.

All of this is distilled down and housed within a simple design, allowing you (either alone or with a trainer) to quickly see where you might reside on the ladder. **Each level within the**

ladder contains three fitness routines (a Fight, Flight and Flow) to be completed at the specified standard. You begin at the first step of the ladder—as you complete the routines both safely and accurately with good form, you progress up the ladder to the next step (sacrifices in form for more reps or a better time is not rewarded here). The difficulty level of each routine meets you where you are and works with you to take the next step toward mastery—to challenge your abilities safely and methodically, regardless of where you stand on the ladder. This bottom-up method is quite the opposite of other popular fitness methods that start at the top with little to no customization for ability level or experience—as history points out, they usually result in mass injury and bad form.

Our system stands out because of its comprehensive and balanced format, its clear steps for assessment and progression, and the resulting safety in its bottom-up methodology of starting small and progressing upward in a classic beginner, intermediate and advanced spectrum. **This ladder becomes a primary operating system to view, measure, and pursue balanced fitness for all.**

**FIGHT, FLIGHT AND FLOW
YOUR WAY UP THE LADDER**

Within the ladder, we have created a tiered set of qualifying workouts to measure (and improve) physical performance within most modalities in a simple, efficient manner.

A **FIGHT**, which primarily tests strength and endurance simultaneously. A mix of gymnastics and weightlifting is used to complete a numerically-set physical workload within

a set time and with good form. Though this seems obvious, we so often see individuals compromise form and safety to make a score, which is contrary to our goal—the Lion’s Heart benchmark workouts are not a sport to sacrifice your health, but a means to measure, guide and cultivate your health! This category is named “fight” as it most closely mimics the mixed strength and energy drain in a fight for your life.

A **FLIGHT**, which primarily tests endurance and speed. Both a distance and a sprint time are required to take the next step up the ladder, and by learning how to engage a proper gait pattern, you are engraining healthy and safe movement with each step. If injury is present, other movement activities such as rowing, swimming or biking can be substituted, as we encourage all types of movement over terrain, but walking

and running are our primary test as it is our native form of locomotion when all else is stripped away from us.

A **FLOW**, which primarily tests agility and a mind/body connection. You will smoothly perform a series of yoga poses that display competency in range of motion, coordination, balance and accuracy throughout every muscle in the body. Each flow leads you through the poses, as well as a focus on the breath (pranayama) and posture locks (bandhas). To demonstrate competency in each step of the ladder, these poses can be performed in the presented order or as a part of another flow, as long as each pose shows good form. This category will show you and your trainer which muscular chains you have openness and fluidity, and which chains still need to be awoken.

MOVEMENT ARTS:



GYMNASTICS
Body weight strength, powerful core, agility



WEIGHTLIFTING
Move objects, accuracy, explosive power, momentum control



TRACK AND FIELD
Locomotion mechanics, endurance building, gait patterns, speed



YOGA
Internal awareness, advanced mobility, twist/fold/bend

PHYSICAL FITNESS: OUR DEFINITION

A spectrum of one’s ability to perform, relative to the rest of the human population: measuring within a balance of strength, agility and endurance, in moving oneself, other objects, and movement over terrain, within all planes of available human movement.

EACH LEVEL REQUIRES YOU TO MASTER:

FLOW

A yoga asana flow to align the body, mind and breath

FIGHT

A strength challenge to push the body to new limits

FLIGHT

Benchmark run times to test sprints and endurance



THE LION’S LADDER

CLIMB THE LADDER TO PHYSICAL FITNESS.

Each benchmark workout tests the range of your athletic ability in the areas of strength, endurance and agility, and allows you to progress to the next level.

Each level requires you to master:

FLOW	FIGHT	FLIGHT
A yoga asana flow to align the body, mind, and breath	A strength challenge to push the body to new limits	Benchmark run times to test speed and endurance

GLOSSARY		
RC Repeat continuously	HS Handstand	OH Overhead
RI Rest interval	FS Front squat	GTO Ground to overhead
BW Body weight	BS Back squat	HSPU Handstand pushup

	FLOW	FIGHT		FLIGHT
GRIFFIN ADVANCED		GRIFFIN FLOW 3	90° PUSHUP x3 1-ARM SNATCH x3 each side @ 2/3 BW 15:00	100M 0:12 10K 40:00
		GRIFFIN FLOW 2	MUSCLE UP x7 SNATCH x7 @ BW 15:00	100M 0:13 10K 45:00
		GRIFFIN FLOW 1	HSPU x3 PIKE LEVER 15sec BOX JUMP x5 @ .5 height 1 MIN SNATCH x7 @ 3/4 BW CHEST TO BAR x7 7:00 7:00	100M 0:14 10K 50:00
LION INTERMEDIATE		LION FLOW 3	DIP x7 LEVER TUCK x5 BOX JUMP x5 @ .4 height 1 MIN OH SQUAT x7 @ 1/2 BW PULLUP x7 7:00 7:00	100M 0:15 5K 25:00
		LION FLOW 2	PULLUP x5 GTO x7 @ 1/2 BW 1 MIN BOX JUMP x7 @ .3 height WALL HS HOLD 10sec 7:00 7:00	100M 0:16 5K 27:00
		LION FLOW 1	PULLUP x1 PUSHUP x5 FRONT SQUAT x7 @ 1/3 BW 1 MIN DEADLIFT x7 @ 2/3 BW WALL PLANK 10sec @ 45° 6:00 6:00	100M 0:18 5K 30:00
PHOENIX BEGINNER		PHOENIX FLOW 3	PUSHUP x5 HANGING TUCK x5 BACK SQUAT x15 @ 1/3 BW 1 MIN OH PRESS x7 @ 1/4 BW RING ROW x7 @ elbow 5:00 5:00	100M 0:20 1 MILE 10:00
		PHOENIX FLOW 2	KNEE PUSHUP x5 RING ROW x10 @ elbow DEADLIFT x10 @ 1/3 BW 1 MIN OH PRESS x7 @ 1/4 BW SQUAT x12 @ 1/4 BW 4:00 4:00	100M 0:25 1 MILE 12:30
		PHOENIX FLOW 1	RING ROW x10 @ shoulder OH PRESS x10 @ 1/5 BW SQUAT x10 BW 6:00	100M 0:40 1 MILE 15:00
START HERE				



DO I HAVE TO USE THIS PROGRAM?

NO. You don't have to use this specific program to achieve balanced fitness.

There are endless ways to improve your strength, agility and endurance outside of this program. You can also learn fundamental movement patterns and core skills in moving yourself, other objects, and gait patterns from a variety of sources. Regardless of what programs you decide to follow, our goal is the same: **Lion's Heart wants you to understand and follow a balanced, form-focused path of physical improvement** so that your physical body becomes your best, strongest and healthiest asset—not a liability.

Will a “Get Abs in 10 Minutes!” program online, paired with a lifetime supply of supplements, get you the same results? **NO.**

Is a get-fit-quick fitness program better than sitting on a couch and doing nothing? **YES.** But be wary of imbalanced and unsafe attempts at attaining physical “health”—those methods which are rooted in shallow motives of consumerism, greed or imposed self deprecation are not truly there to assist you in becoming your whole, best self.

Learn the principles and fill in the specifics on your own if you would rather do so. Our program is simply one balanced, progressive path to help you improve, should you decide to harness it. ■

PREPARING FOR THE LION'S LADDER

If you are ready to find out where you stand on the Lion's Ladder, follow the steps below in order to **maximize your time and effort** in your assessments.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If you have not already completed the action items from chapter 3, we recommend you do so. Getting a physical and FME completed will give you a more accurate idea of weak points as well as a professional greenlight that you are cleared to move forward with this type of exercise.

To make sure you understand our system and how to properly execute the moves within it, **we strongly recommend that you pair up with a personal trainer or physical therapist to lead you through each step of the Lion's Ladder.** This ensures you are performing each routine safely and with good form to get an accurate measure of each benchmark (if you do not have access or means to pair with a trainer, it's imperative that you do the research on your own and use all of your available resources to learn to perform each move safely).

Whether you are alongside a trainer, just reading the Ladder by yourself, or watching our support videos, make sure you understand the qualifications for each step, what each of the routines involve, and how to progress to higher steps.

STEP 1: FIND YOUR GYM SETUP

Find a nearby gym with all the equipment you need, or set up your own gym space at home. Though we value simplicity, **the Lion's Heart system is a comprehensive approach to balanced fitness, which does require some equipment.** On the next page we explain in further detail about a minimum setup in order to find your ideal gym space.

STEP 2: WORK YOUR WAY UP THE LADDER

Again, we recommend doing so alongside a personal trainer for maximum safety and thoroughness, and start at the bottom to ensure a clear understanding and mastery of form. Proceed to the Phoenix Level 1 starting point for more detailed guidance, and **begin with either a Fight, Flight or Flow—ascend up the Lion's Ladder until you have found your challenge level within each of the three dimensions.** If you are working through injuries, disabilities, or are lacking the equipment needed to perform a certain exercise or movement, you can substitute with a comparable workout or seek the advice of your therapist or trainer.

STEP 3: BE EMPOWERED

Above all things, listen to your body. The Lion's Ladder and all accompanying materials in subsequent chapters are intended to help you in assessing and building on your health, not to hurt you. If you want to experiment with the approach, ordering of workouts, or specific exercises, feel empowered to do so—this is merely a benchmark guide. **YOU** are the driver of your body. Listen to it and learn from your lifetime companion, and make changes if you feel that it's in your best interest.

The Lion's Ladder is intended to help you in assessing and building on your health, not to hurt you.



FINDING YOUR GYM SETUP

This list covers all of the core equipment that Lion’s Heart recommends you use in order to **target all areas of balanced fitness** and to progress up the Lion’s Ladder. If you are a member of a gym, be sure they can accommodate these items, or aim to add them to your home gym.

WHY DO I NEED EQUIPMENT?

It’s true that you can achieve great physical prowess in several planes of fitness with just calisthenics and the ground beneath you. However, in order to target all planes, chains and ranges of complete physical fitness, **some equipment is necessary for your success in all areas.**

If we revisit the categories of Move Self, Move Objects and Move Over Terrain, it is in fact necessary to use an object to test how you move it (in our case, we are using weights). Another primary piece of equipment, such as a pullup bar or a TRX system, is necessary to work the vital muscular Pull chain of movement. Pulling is the balancing kinetic chain to Pushing, which is essentially the backbone of balanced posture and requires some external pieces of equipment beyond our own bodies alone.

FLOW EQUIPMENT

All you need is a **yoga mat** and enough flat ground to practice your flows safely and comfortably. In a pinch, you can just practice directly on the floor without a mat beneath you, but you may quickly find that a yoga mat can help with grip, stability, directional awareness and comfort.

FLIGHT EQUIPMENT

A pair of comfortable and supportive **running shoes** and an open road/trail/track ahead of you will help you go the distance on each of the Flight workouts. You will also want some kind of measuring device or other method to track 40yd, 100m, 1mi, and 5k distances. A treadmill can also be used if your external environment doesn’t adequately allow for outdoor running, though purchasing your own treadmill is certainly not a requirement.



FIGHT EQUIPMENT

This is the largest category of equipment you’ll need in order to test yourself within multiple chains. Look for these essentials at your current/prospective gym, or seek to acquire them for your own setup at home.

Ideally, you will want to have both a **pullup bar** and a set of **gymnastic rings**. When you are just starting out, you will only need rings (TRX is an adequate substitute), but know that you will be conditioning for pullups in the Lion series, and your rings can usually be hung from a pullup bar if the bar is rated strongly and rigged properly in your home.

You will also need access to a **weightlifting bar and accompanying weights**. If you are new to weight training, we recommend you begin your journey with an Olympic 15lb training bar. If you are a more seasoned athlete, you might want to look for a standard Olympic 45lb bar. For individual weights, beginners should start with a pair of steel 2.5lb and 5lb weights as well as a set of rubber 10lb and 15lb bumper plates. As you grow stronger over time, you may celebrate the need for acquiring a set of 25lb weights and beyond to continue your progression.

To pair with your bar and weights, you will also want a **squat rack or stand**. These come in all sizes and styles based on the limitations of the space, and although it’s not necessarily a requirement in the beginning, you will find its presence will vastly increase the exercises you can perform while improving safety and speed. Many squat rack models also include a pullup bar, thus acting as a multi-use apparatus.

A **plyo box** will also be needed once box jumps are introduced in the Ladder, but it is not necessary in beginner stages.

THAT’S IT!

Of course there are handy additions and other accessories you could add later, but this setup is enough to give you a balanced workout within strength, agility and endurance.

Still too complicated? If you just can’t gain access to this equipment, if you are training a group of youths, or just need a simpler approach, reference our Lion’s Heart Bodyweight Ladder simplified series to evaluate your strength, mobility and endurance on a simpler scale. This Bodyweight Ladder can be found in the Appendix.

IDEAL GYM SETUP CHECKLIST

FLOW

- ☐ Yoga mat
- ☐ Flat, open surface

FLIGHT

- ☐ Running shoes
- ☐ Device to measure various distances

FIGHT

- ☐ Pullup bar
- ☐ Gymnastic rings
- ☐ Weightlifting bar
- ☐ Individual weights
 - ☐ 2.5lb, 5lb steel plates
 - ☐ 10lb, 15lb bumper plates
 - ☐ 25lb+ bumper plates (as needed)
- ☐ Squat rack
- ☐ Plyo box

PHOENIX SERIES

BENCHMARKS

The Phoenix Series™, modeled after a mythical creature that rises from its ashes, is a 3-part series of full-body workouts that meets each student at the starting line. During this beginner-level series, students slowly and progressively build mobility, coordination, balance and strength.



PHOENIX SERIES BENCHMARKS

The Phoenix Flows, Flights and Fights on the next several pages will act as your Benchmark workouts on the Lion’s Ladder. Once you safely and successfully complete the Benchmark workout in each category, you can progress to a higher Phoenix level or move onto the Lion series.

A note on form: Starting at Phoenix Level 1 with a trainer is recommended to be thorough and to check proper form, even if you are a more advanced athlete. The majority of individuals exercise without proper form and don’t even know it—they are laying the groundwork for future injuries and premature plateaus.

FLOW
Complete the Phoenix Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries for that level). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed the Flow with no problems, feel free to move onto a higher level.

FIGHT
Follow our gymnastics and weightlifting Phoenix Benchmark Fight, and use the Alternate Bodyweight Index if you need to modify your weights for this level. Check that you have all the equipment you need at your gym or at home. **Make sure you warm up before beginning any Fight session. Form should be your first priority, even if it’s not absolutely perfect.** Record each repetition (rep) as a point, and measure your performance at the end of each timed session. Check your energy levels, and if you are feeling confident in progressing further, challenge yourself with the next level Fight.

FLIGHT
Complete the Phoenix Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto a higher level.

PHOENIX LEVEL ALTERNATE BODYWEIGHT INDEX

A substitution chart for exercises that utilize body weight

HEIGHT	WEIGHT (LBS)	HEIGHT	WEIGHT (LBS)
5’0”	110	5’10”	145
5’2”	115	6’0”	155
5’4”	120	6’2”	165
5’6”	130	6’4”	175
5’8”	135	6’6”	185



PHOENIX FLOW 1

Complete the Phoenix Level 1 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed Phoenix Flow 1 with no problems, feel free to move onto Phoenix Flow 2.

TO QUALIFY	1 Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain. 2 Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots. 3 Gain a basic understanding of the pranayama and bandha skills listed below and perform each in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.
PRANAYAMA (breath control)	2-PART BREATH The ability to calmly breathe independently with belly (diaphragmatic), and chest, as well as in a flow: inhaling from belly to chest and then exhaling from chest to belly.
BANDHA (body lock)	LION’S HEART LOCK: SIMHA BHUJA BANDHA Demonstrate the Lion’s Heart Lock (<i>Simha Bhuja Bandha</i>): a lock of the shoulders retracted back, pulled down away from the ears and externally rotated, with the chest pointed forward and upward.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

The defining moves of Phoenix Flow 1 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

CAT COW Marjaryasana / Bitilasana	WARRIOR 2 Virabhadrasana 2
WRIST STRETCHES	MOUNTAIN Tadasana
FORWARD FOLD Uttanasana	TREE Vrikshasana
LOW SQUAT Malasana	REVERSE PIGEON Supta Kapotasana
BRIDGE Setu Bandha Sarvangasana	HAPPY BABY Ananda Balasana

PHOENIX
FLOW 1

"RISING FROM THE ASHES"

3X EACH SIDE

1 Child's Pose
Balasana

2 Cat Cow
Marjaryasana / Bitilasana

3 Cross Lat Extension

BEGIN

7 Mountain
Tadasana

8 Overhead Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

9 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

REPEAT

13 Extended Side Angle
Utthita Parsvakonasana

14 Peaceful Warrior
Viparita Virabhadrasana

15 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

**PRANAYAMA:
2-PART BREATH**

19 Bridge
Setu Bandha Sarvangasana

20 Happy Baby
Ananda Balasana

21 Corpse Pose
Savasana

4 Wrist Stretches

5 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

6 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

BEGIN

10 Overhead Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

11 Tree Practice
Vrikshasana

12 Warrior 2
Virabhadrasana 2

REPEAT

16 Low Squat
Malasana

17 Reverse Pigeon
Supta Kapotasana

18 Windshield Wiper
Supta Sucirandhrasana



PHOENIX FIGHT 1

Complete the Phoenix Level 1 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order, repeating continuously for 6 minutes. You are welcome to rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. Each repetition counts as 1 point. If a total of 90 points or more is achieved during the 6-minute window, you have passed the Phoenix Fight 1 Benchmark and can then move onto Phoenix Fight 2.

RING ROW x10 @ shoulder	OH PRESS x10 @ 1/5 BW	SQUAT x10 BW	REQUIRED SCORE 90
6:00			

THE EXERCISES

We begin with six minutes of continuous activity to activate two different anaerobic energy systems, taking us from a calm strength to a place where we start to get out of breath. **Phoenix Fight 1 starts with three compound yet simple movements that add up to a full-body response by working with the push, pull, and squat chains.** Though they seem simple, each helps to build a foundation for future more complicated workouts, which is why form is the most important element to focus on during the Fight. If you take this first step with sloppy repetition with too heavy a focus on your final score, you are only bound to injure yourself when these basic moves become more complicated. Routine practice and patience will be the guide to your goals!

HOW IT WORKS

Make sure that you have spent the time to warm up before beginning your first Phoenix Fight. Also check that you

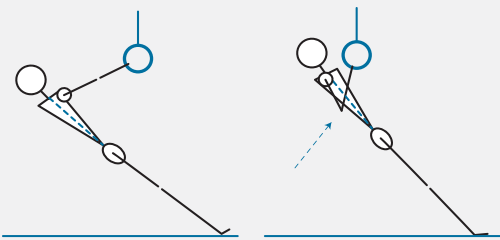
understand the included exercises and the proper form for each, and **be sure you have your rings, weights, and mat set up before the timer starts**—you don’t want to waste time chasing after your equipment if it is not already next to you!

Once the timer starts, you will perform all repetitions of the first exercise (10 ring rows). Feel free to take breaks or rest in between reps, but all 10 must be completed before moving on to the second exercise (10 overhead presses). After the second is complete, move to the third (10 bodyweight squats). Once all three exercises have been completed, start again at the first exercise, and repeat continuously until 6 minutes have passed.

If you have completed all three sets of exercises exactly three times, you would earn 90 points (one point is earned for every repetition completed).

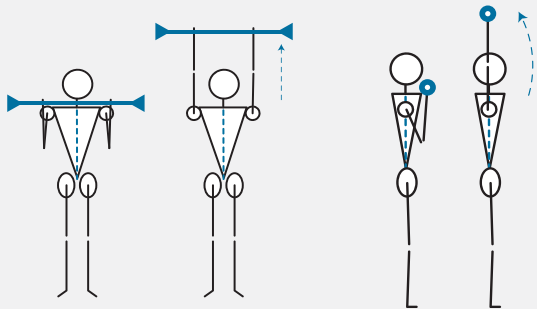
RING ROW
(x10 @ shoulder)

While in a standing position, ensure the rings are aligned with the center of your shoulder. Grip the rings and lean backwards until your elbows are locked out, making a straight line from head to foot. Pull up toward the rings using the back and biceps until the rings touch outside the chest and pull the shoulders back and behind you. Lower yourself back down to a straight line and repeat.



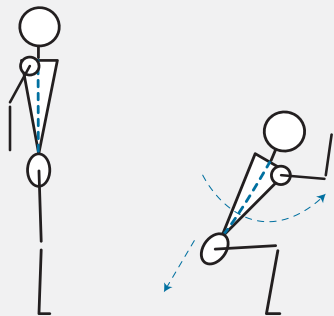
OVERHEAD PRESS
(x10 @ 1/5 bodyweight)

Load a training bar until it is 1/5 of your body weight. Stand with the feet hip-width apart, knees lightly bent, and lower back in neutral position. With a parallel and active grip, keep the bar close to the body with elbows facing down. Tuck the head and chin slightly and lift the bar straight overhead making a light curve around the head. Lower and repeat.



SQUAT
(x10 @ bodyweight)

Stand with feet roughly shoulder-width apart with toes pointed outward at 45°. Keep the torso upright and rigid as the hips slide back and down, lowering into a stable squat. Make sure the knees track parallel to the feet and do not cave inward. Keeping the torso upright, drive the body back to standing, initiating the movement with your hips.





PHOENIX FLIGHT 1

Complete the Phoenix Level 1 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Phoenix Flight 2.

100M 0:40
1 MILE 15:00

ENDURANCE

We start with a single mile run with a 15-minute target time. If this is an area where you are trying to grow, you will most likely have a mile comprised of both running and walking, and that is okay! What's most important here is setting the habit of good form. As you get tired, you may find yourself slumping or dragging. When you notice this behavior, just continue to self-correct—always aim for an upright head and chest with the shoulders free to glide, not locked in place, with feet facing symmetrically forward.

SPRINT

Now is the time to build a strong stride! Yes, the purpose of a sprint is to go fast, but the first priority is to prevent injury. Before timing your best sprint, be sure to warm up with a couple of sprints at 60%, 70%, or even 80% of your full power. Aim for your best 100m sprint to be 40 seconds or less.



CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU HAVE COMPLETED
PHOENIX LEVEL 1.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so finding ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



PHOENIX FLOW 2

Complete the Phoenix Level 2 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed Phoenix Flow 2 with no problems, feel free to move onto Phoenix Flow 3.

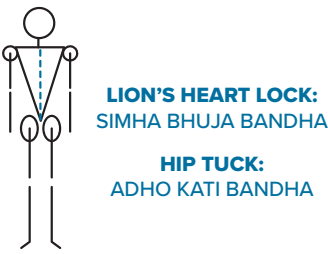
TO QUALIFY	1 Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain. 2 Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots. 3 Gain a basic understanding of the pranayama and bandha skills listed below and perform each in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.
PRANAYAMA (breath control)	UJJAYI BREATHING (VICTORIOUS BREATH) The ability to exhale with the lungs while slightly contracting the throat (glottis), breathing through the nose.
BANDHA (body lock)	HIP TUCK: ADHO KATI Demonstrate the Hip Tuck (<i>Adho Kati</i>): a posterior pelvic tilt engaging the lower core, pulling the navel toward the sphincter, decreasing the lordotic curve of the lumbar to neutral, and maintaining breath control.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

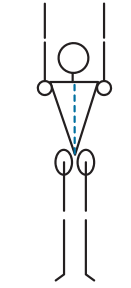
The defining moves of Phoenix Flow 2 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

MOUNTAIN Tadasana	FORWARD FOLD Uttanasana
CROSS LAT EXTENSION	DOWNWARD DOG Adho Mukha Svanasana
LOW LUNGE TWIST Parivrtta Sanchalasana	CRESCENT Anjaneyasana
PIGEON Kapotasana	WARRIOR 3 Virabhadrasana 3
LOW SQUAT Malasana	SUPINE TWIST Supta Matsyendrasana

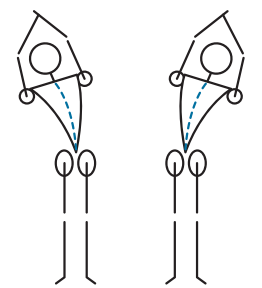
PHOENIX
FLOW 2



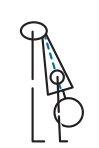
1 Mountain
Tadasana



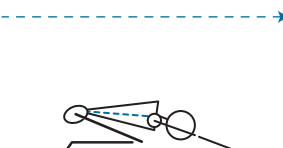
2 OH Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana



3 Overhead
Side Stretch

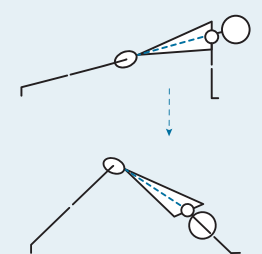


4 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

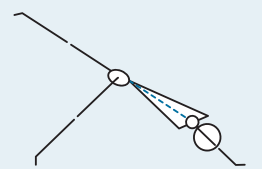


9 Child's Pose
Balasana

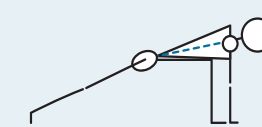
BEGIN



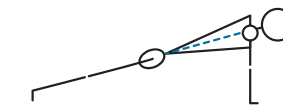
10 High Plank < DD
Adho Mukha Svanasana



11 3-Legged Dog
Eka Pada Adho
Mukha Svansana

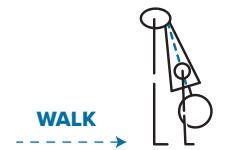


12 Low Lunge
Ashva Sanchalanasana



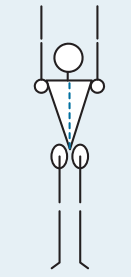
17 High Plank
Utthita Chaturanga
Dandasana

WALK

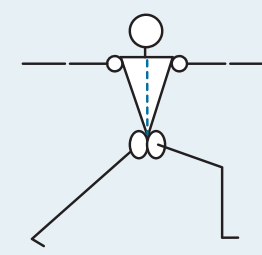


18 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

BEGIN

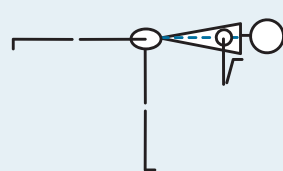


19 OH Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

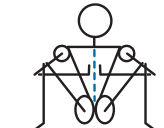


20 Warrior 2
Virabhadrasana 2

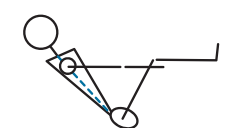
REPEAT



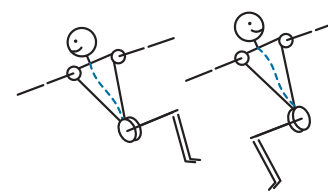
25 Warrior 3
Virabhadrasana 3



26 Low Squat
Malasana



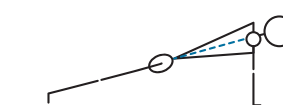
27 Boat
Navasana



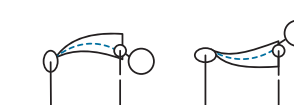
28 Supine Twist
Supta Matsyendrasana

PRANAYAMA:
UJJAYI BREATH

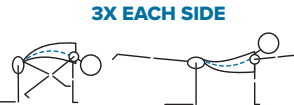
3X EACH SIDE



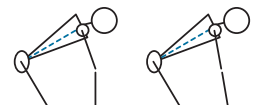
5 High Plank
Utthita Chaturanga
Dandasana



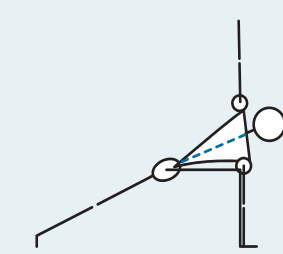
6 Cat Cow
Marjaryasana / Bitilasana



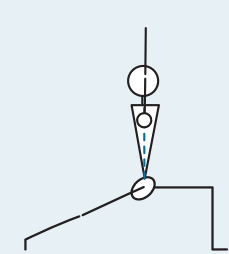
7 Cross Lat
Extension



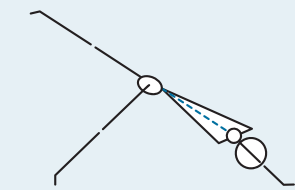
8 Wrist Stretch



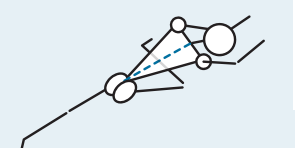
13 Low Lunge Twist
Parivrtta Sanchalanasana



14 Crescent
Anjaneyasana

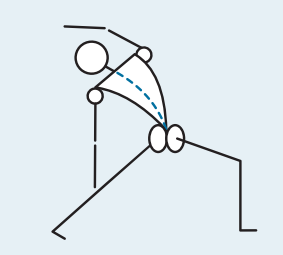


15 3-Legged Dog
Eka Pada Adho
Mukha Svansana

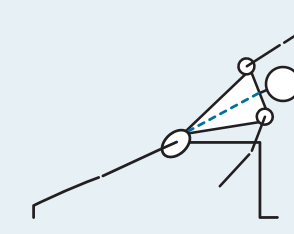


16 Pigeon
Kapotasana

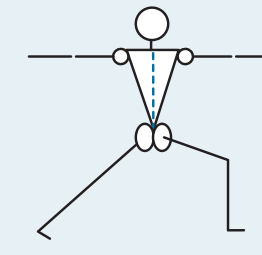
REPEAT



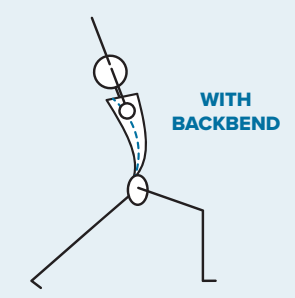
21 Peaceful Warrior
Viparita Virabhadrasana



22 Extended Side Angle
Utthita Parsvakonasana



23 Warrior 2
Virabhadrasana 2



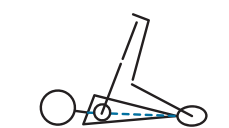
24 Warrior 1
Virabhadrasana 1

WITH BACKBEND

PRANAYAMA:
2-PART BREATH



29 Bridge
Setu Bandha Sarvangasana



30 Happy Baby
Ananda Balasana



31 Corpse Pose
Savasana



PHOENIX FIGHT 2

Complete the Phoenix Level 2 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order. **Repeat the first three moves continuously for 4 minutes, rest for 1 minute, then repeat the last two moves continuously for 4 more minutes.** You are welcome to rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point.** If a total of 110 points or more is achieved during the 8-minute exercise window, you have passed the Phoenix Fight 2 Benchmark and can then move onto Phoenix Fight 3.

KNEE PUSHUP x5	1 MIN	OH PRESS x7 @ 1/4 BW	REQUIRED SCORE 110
RING ROW x10 @ elbow		BACK SQUAT x12 @ 1/4 BW	
DEADLIFT x10 @ 1/3 BW			
4:00		4:00	

THE EXERCISES

The fight has become more furious! We have moved to 5 exercises, testing more aspects of strength while building more foundations. **The addition of a 1-minute rest state will develop new pace and recovery techniques while feeding internal energy and allowing us to maintain proper form.**

Make sure that you have warmed up before beginning. Also check that you understand the exercises and proper form for each, and be sure you have all equipment set up before the timer starts—you don't want to waste time chasing after your equipment if it is not already next to you!

SET 1

KNEE PUSHUP
(x5)

Keeping the shoulders away from the ears and elbows at a 45° angle, the chest, stomach and hips move as one rigid unit with knees as the fulcrum. Lower the torso while looking at the ground until it touches the mat. Press back upward to the start position.

SET 1

RING ROW
(x10 @ elbow)

Ensure the bottom of the rings are aligned with the elbow. Grip rings and lean backward until the elbows lock, creating a straight line from head to foot. Pull up using back and biceps until rings touch outside the chest and pull the shoulders back.

SET 1

DEADLIFT
(x10 @ 1/3 BW)

Approach the bar until shins almost touch bar, legs hip-width apart. Keep chest up and hinge hips back and down, grabbing bar overhand. With straight arms and engaged back, drive weight upward with hips, making sure chest remains forward.

SET 2

OH PRESS
(x7 @ 1/4 BW)

Load a training bar until it is 1/4 of your body weight. Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees lightly bent, with lower back in neutral position. With parallel and active grip, keep bar close to the body with elbows facing down. Tuck head and chin slightly and lift bar straight overhead creating a light curve around head. Lower slowly and repeat.

SET 2

BACK SQUAT
(x12 @ 1/4 BW)

Using the same form from body weight squat, preferably using a squat rack, place barbell on upper back/trapezius (not neck or spine). Squatting with full depth, knees tracking over feet, drive weight upward smoothly with fully engaged feet pressing into the floor.



PHOENIX FLIGHT 2

Complete the Phoenix Level 2 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Phoenix Flight 3.

100M 0:25
1 MILE 12:30

A FEW TIPS

The Phoenix Flight 2 requires you knock two and a half minutes off of your 1-mile time. Though it's possible to achieve with just a very fast walking pace, we recommend phasing jogging into your routine at this stage. Begin by **scheduling 30-second intervals of light jogging every 2 minutes**, and slowly work up to longer jogging intervals.

To get longer strides in your sprint, stay loose through the shoulders and chest, and **begin to use alternating arms bent at the elbow as another propelling source forward.**

Whether you are slowly jogging or working up to a faster sprint, the lighter, more upright and more fluid you can envision your body's movements becoming, the better shock absorption you can achieve—it all starts by **being aware of your movements.**



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED PHOENIX LEVEL 2.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so continuing to find ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



PHOENIX FLOW 3

Complete the Phoenix Level 3 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed Phoenix Flow 3 with no problems, feel free to move onto Lion Flow 1.

TO QUALIFY	1 Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain. 2 Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots. 3 Gain a basic understanding of the pranayama and bandha skills listed below and perform each in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.
PRANAYAMA (breath control)	3-PART BREATH The ability to calmly breathe independently with belly (diaphragmatic), and chest, as well as in a flow: inhaling from the abdomen followed by the chest, and expanding the chest laterally through the expansion of the side ribs and upper back while exhaling in reverse order.
BANDHA (body lock)	NECK TUCK: URDVA JALANDHARA BANDHA Demonstrate the Neck Tuck (<i>Urdva Jalandhara</i>): a corrective forward head posture. Pull the crown of the head up and back while lightly tucking the chin, elongating the neck (cervical spine) and aligning the neck with the upper back (thoracic spine).

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

The defining moves of Phoenix Flow 3 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

FULL MOUNTAIN Tadasana	FORWARD FOLD, TOUCHING TOES Uttanasana
EAGLE Garudasana	WARRIOR 3, ARMS IN FRONT Virabhadrasana 3
TRIPLE KNEE TUCK	CRESCENT Anjaneyasana
PIGEON Kapotasana	LIZARD Utthan Pristhasana
LOW SQUAT Malasana	CHATURANGA Chaturanga Dandasana

PHOENIX
FLOW 3

MAHA SIMHA BANDHA:
LION'S HEART LOCK
SIMHA BHUJA BANDHA
HIP TUCK
ADHO KATI BANDHA
NECK TUCK
URDVA JALANDHARA

1 Mountain
Tadasana

2 OH Mountain > Side Stretch

3 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

4 High Plank
Utthita Chaturanga Dandasana

9 OH Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

10 Eagle Arms
Hasta Garudasana

11 Eagle in Tree
Hasta Garudasana in Vrikshasana

12 Eagle
Garudasana

17 Standing Split
Urdhva Prasrita Eka Padasana

18 Warrior 3
Virabhadrasana 3

19 Warrior 1
Virabhadrasana 1

20 Humble Warrior
Baddha Virabhadrasana

25 Vinyasa Flow
Plank > Chaturanga > Upward Dog > DD

26 Low Lunge
Ashva Sanchalanasana

27 Warrior 2
Virabhadrasana 1

28 Triangle
Utthita Trikonasana

33 Low Squat
Malasana

34 Boat
Navasana

35 Low Boat
Ardha Navasana

36 Shoulder Stand
Salamba Sarvangasana

PRANAYAMA:
UJJAYI BREATH

3X EACH SIDE

5 Cat Cow
Marjaryasana/Bitilasana

6 Cross Lat Extension

7 Wrist Stretch

8 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

13 Vinyasa Flow
Plank > Chaturanga > Upward Dog > DD

14 Low Lunge
Ashva Sanchalanasana

15 Lunge Twist
Parivrtta Anjaneyasana

16 Crescent
Anjaneyasana

21 High Plank > DD
Adho Mukha Svanasana

22 Hip Opener
Eka Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana

23 Triple Knee Tuck

24 Pigeon
Kapotasana

29 Rev. Triangle
Parivrtta Trikonasana

30 Peaceful Warrior
Viparita Virabhadrasana

31 Ext. Side Angle
Utthita Parsvakonasana

32 Lizard
Utthan Pristhasana

37 Supine Twist
Supta Matsyendrasana

38 Bridge
Setu Bandha Sarvangasana

39 Happy Baby
Ananda Balasana

40 Corpse Pose
Savasana

PRANAYAMA:
3-PART BREATH



PHOENIX FIGHT 3

Complete the Phoenix Level 3 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order. **At the end of the first 5-minute set, rest for one full minute before beginning the second 5-minute set.** You can rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point.** If a total of 120 points or more is achieved during the 10-minute exercise window, you have passed the Phoenix Fight 3 Benchmark and can then move onto Lion Fight 1.

PUSHUP x5 HANGING TUCK x5 BACK SQUAT x15 @ 1/3 BW	1 MIN	OH PRESS x7 @ 1/4 BW RING ROW x7 @ elbow	REQUIRED SCORE 120
5:00		5:00	

THE EXERCISES

The fight maintains its structure from Phoenix Level 2, but increases in its intensity and time! We have graduated to full pushups and are preparing for future pullups by including hanging tucks. Find your pace, and make the most out of your 1-minute rest interval.

Make sure that you have warmed up before beginning. Also check that you understand the exercises and proper form for each, and be sure you have all equipment set up before the timer starts—you don't want to waste time chasing after your equipment if it is not already next to you!

SET 1

PUSHUP
(x5)

From plank position, keep shoulders away from ears and the back at a 45° angle. Chest, stomach and hips move as one rigid unit. Lower the torso looking at the ground until torso simultaneously touches mat. Press back up to start position.

SET 1

HANGING TUCK
(x5)

Hang with a firm overhand grip, actively pulling the shoulder blades back and down. Engage the core and pull knees up toward the chest. Tighten core and lower the legs with control, maintaining the actively engaged shoulders.

SET 1

BACK SQUAT
(x15 @ 1/3 BW)

Using the same form from body weight squat, preferably using a squat rack, place barbell on upper back/trapezius (not neck or spine). Squatting with full depth, knees tracking over feet, drive weight upward smoothly with fully engaged feet pressing into the floor.

SET 2

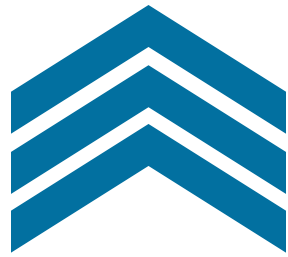
OH PRESS
(x7 @ 1/4 BW)

Load a training bar until it is 1/4 of your body weight. Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees lightly bent, with lower back in neutral position. With parallel and active grip, keep bar close to the body with elbows facing down. Tuck head and chin slightly and lift bar straight overhead creating a light curve around head. Lower slowly and repeat.

SET 2

RING ROW
(x7 @ elbow)

Ensure the bottom of the rings are aligned with the elbow. Grip rings and lean backward until the elbows lock, creating a straight line from head to foot. Pull up using back and biceps until rings touch outside the chest and pull the shoulders back.



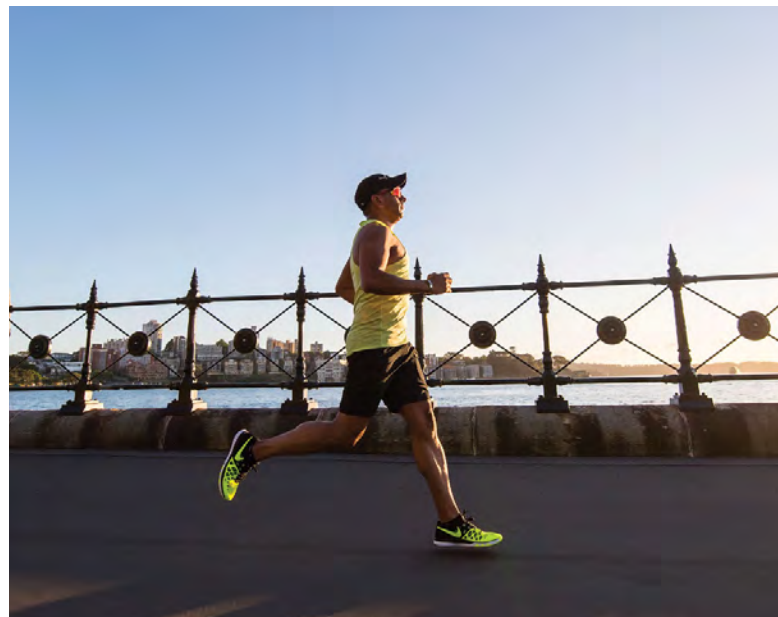
PHOENIX FLIGHT 3

Complete the Phoenix Level 3 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Lion Flight 1.

100M 0:20
1 MILE 10:00

RUNNING TIPS

With your 1-mile pace at 10:00 or below, form becomes more imperative than ever, both for speed and injury prevention. Make sure your feet are both pointed straightforward and you are striking the ground with the middle of the foot (not the heel or toes), grabbing the ground and pulling it back behind you. As soon as each leg has finished striking the ground and propelling you forward, return the leg for another step. Aim to keep your pace at over 170 strikes per minute in a brisk, light rhythm. Maintaining form as you push your limits in speed and endurance will be your highest priority!



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED PHOENIX LEVEL 3.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so continuing to find ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



LION SERIES

BENCHMARKS

The Lion Series™, modeled after the strength and independence of a lion guiding its pride, is a 3-part **intermediate series of full-body workouts and yoga flows** that crafts each student into an agile yet powerful force. During this intermediate-level series, students can continue to build mobility, coordination, balance and strength, with the ability to carry, control (and eventually pull) their own weight.

LION SERIES BENCHMARKS

The Lion Flows, Flights and Fights on the next several pages will act as your **Benchmark workouts on the Lion's Ladder**. Once you safely and successfully complete the Benchmark workout in each category, you can progress to a higher Lion level or move onto the Griffin series.

A note on form: Starting at Phoenix Level 1 with a trainer is recommended to be thorough and to check proper form, even if you are a more advanced athlete. The majority of individuals exercise without proper form and don't even know it—they are laying the groundwork for future injuries and premature plateaus.

FLOW
Complete the Lion Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries for that level). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed the Flow with no problems, feel free to move onto a higher level.

FIGHT
Follow our gymnastics and weightlifting Lion Benchmark Fight. Check that you have all the equipment you need at your gym or at home. **Make sure you warm up before beginning any Fight session. Form should be your first priority, even if it's not absolutely perfect.** Record each repetition (rep) as a point, and measure your performance at the end of each timed session. Check your energy levels, and if you are feeling confident in progressing further, challenge yourself with the next level Fight.

FLIGHT
Complete the Lion Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto a higher level.



LION FLOW 1

Complete the Lion Level 1 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed Lion Flow 1 with no problems, feel free to move onto Lion Flow 2.

TO QUALIFY	1 Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain. 2 Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots. 3 Gain a basic understanding of the pranayama and bandha skills listed below and perform each in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.
PRANAYAMA (breath control)	KAPALABHATI (FIRE BREATH) Isolating a quick contraction of the lower body, exhaling powerfully through the nostrils and inhaling passively at a steady rhythm, this practice strengthens the mind-body connection with active breathing while also toning the lower belly.
BANDHA (body lock)	ROOT LOCK: MULA Demonstrate the Root Lock (<i>Mula</i>): lifting the lower body, from anus to navel, upward toward the spine. Practicing the mula bandha strengthens the pelvic floor for a variety of health benefits.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

The defining moves of Lion Flow 1 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

MOUNTAIN Tadasana	HAND TO BIND
EAGLE Garudasana	CHAIR TWIST Parivrtta Utkatasana
SHOULDER STAND Salamba Sarvangasana	REVOLVED WARRIOR 2 Parivrtta Virabhadrasana 2
WARRIOR 3 Virabhadrasana 3 (focus on flat, level hips)	HALF MOON Ardha Chandrasana
BOUND SIDE ANGLE Baddha Utthita Parsvakonasana	CROW Bakasana

LION
FLOW 1

MAHA SIMHA BANDHA
FULL LION'S LOCK

BEGIN

1 Mountain
Tadasana

2 OH Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

3 Chair Twist
Parivrtta Utkatasana

4 Crescent Twist
Parivrtta Anjaneyasana

9 Side Plank
Vasisthasana

10 Chaturanga
Chaturanga Dandasana

11 Bound Locust
Baddha Salabhasana

12 Upward Dog
Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

17 Rev. Warrior 2
Parivrtta Virabhadrasana 2

18 Warrior 2
Virabhadrasana 2

19 Ext. Side Angle
Utthita Parsvakonasana

20 Peaceful Warrior
Viparita Virabhadrasana

25 Bound Side Angle
Baddha Parsvakonasana

26 Warrior 3
Virabhadrasana 3

27 Lizard
Utthan Pristhasana

28 Pigeon
Kapotasana

33 Low Boat
Ardha Navasana

34 Shoulder Stand
Salamba Sarvangasana

35 Plow
Halasana

36 Folded Staff
Paschimottanasana

5 Warrior 3
Virabhadrasana 3

6 Eagle
Garudasana

7 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

8 High Plank
Utthita Chaturanga Dandasana

13 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

14 Hip Opener
Eka Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana

15 Triple Knee Tuck

16 Crescent
Anjaneyasana

21 Half Moon
Ardha Chandrasana

22 Peaceful Warrior
Viparita Virabhadrasana

23 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

24 Crescent Twist
Parivrtta Anjaneyasana

29 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

30 Low Squat
Malasana

31 Crow
Bakasana

32 Boat
Navasana

37 Bridge
Setu Bandha Sarvangasana

38 Supine Twist
Supta Matsyendrasana

39 Happy Baby
Ananda Balasana

40 Easy Pose
Sukhasana



LION FIGHT 1

Complete the Lion Level 1 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order. **At the end of the first 6-minute set, rest for one full minute before beginning the second 6-minute set.** You can rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point, and each second you hold in plank counts as 1 point.** If a total of 120 points or more is achieved during the 12-minute exercise window, you have passed the Lion Fight 1 Benchmark and can then move onto Lion Fight 2.

PULLUP x1 PUSHUP x5 FRONT SQUAT x7 @ 1/3 BW	1 MIN	DEADLIFT x7 @ 2/3 BW WALL PLANK 10sec @ 45°	REQUIRED SCORE 120
6:00		6:00	

THE EXERCISES

The fight has become even more furious! We remain at 5 total exercises, but increased the difficulty level and total timing window. Lion Fight 1 introduces a full pullup for the first time as well as a 45° wall plank, which is the precursor to a full handstand.

Make sure that you have warmed up before beginning. Also check that you understand the exercises and proper form for each, and be sure you have all equipment set up before the timer starts—you don't want to waste time chasing after your equipment if it is not already next to you!

SET 1

PULLUP
(x1)

Reach for the bar firmly in an overhand position about shoulder-width apart. Begin from a dead hang—elbows should not be bent in starting position. Using arms and shoulders as a team, pull upward until the chin passes over the bar and holds for 1 full second without momentum or swinging. Lower back to the starting position.

SET 1

PUSHUP
(x5)

From plank position, keep shoulders away from ears and the back at a 45° angle. Chest, stomach and hips move as one rigid unit. Lower the torso looking at the ground until torso simultaneously touches mat. Press back up to start position.

SET 1

FRONT SQUAT
(x7 @ 1/3 BW)

Unrack or clean a barbell onto the shoulders, resting the bar across the front of the shoulders with the elbows lifted high and pointed straight ahead. Keep the chest up and shoulders high as the hips descend into a squat. Press up through the legs to return to the starting position.

SET 2

DEADLIFT
(x7 @ 2/3 BW)

Approach the bar until the shins almost touch the bar, legs hip-width apart. Keep the chest up while hinging the hips down and back, grabbing the bar in an overhand grip. With straight arms and engaged back, drive the weight upward using the hips, ensuring the chest remains facing forward.

SET 2

WALL PLANK
(10sec @ 45°)

Go into a perfect plank stance with the feet 1" from a sturdy wall. Walk the hands in front up to a 45° angle, then walk the feet up the wall to match the angle of the arms. The body should become a single rigid line pressing against the wall. Bring the legs down first to return to plank before moving the hands.



LION FLIGHT 1

Complete the Lion Level 1 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Lion Flight 2.

100M 0:18
5K 30:00

RUNNING TIPS

We are achieving new levels of distance! By now you've most likely established a good 1-mile jogging pace—you don't have to run any faster in this endurance 5k challenge, but you will have to maintain that pace for 3x as long. If this is your first attempt at a 5k distance, know that your body will most likely need to run slower in order to reach the 5k mark. With time and practice, the speed will return and a 30-minute time will feel more achievable.

Your sprints continue to drop seconds at a time. Finding a more efficient sprint starting stance and initial acceleration/kickoff will help you achieve an overall faster time as well. This quick acceleration from a dead stop naturally increases the risk for injury, which is why it has not been a focus until the Lion level. Combining foundational skills from the Phoenix level such as mobility, stride techniques, and shock absorption will allow you to grow in your sprints while remaining safe and form-focused.



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED LION LEVEL 1.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so continuing to find ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



LION FLOW 2

Complete the Lion Level 2 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed Lion Flow 2 with no problems, feel free to move onto Lion Flow 3.

TO QUALIFY

1

Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain.

2

Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots.

3

Gain a basic understanding of the pranayama and bandha skills listed below and perform each in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.

PRANAYAMA
(breath control)

NADI SHODHANA (ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATH)

Extend the fingers and close only the index and middle finger. With the right thumb, close the right nostril, inhaling through the left nostril. Release the right nostril, closing the left nostril with your right ring finger. Exhale fully and inhale through the right nostril. Release the left nostril, close the right nostril with your right thumb, exhale and repeat the process.

BANDHA
(body lock)

CHIN LOCK (JALANDHARA)

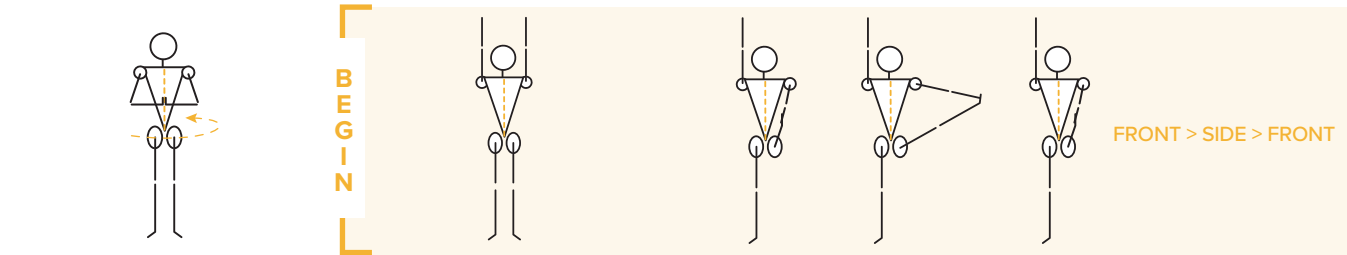
Demonstrate the **Chin Lock** (*Jalandhara*): Drop the chin down and draw it back closer to the collarbone, while simultaneously lifting the sternum towards the chin. Relax the shoulders down and away from the ears. Hold as long as it is comfortable, then lift the chin up and release the breath.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

The defining moves of Lion Flow 2 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

1-LEG SIDE PLANK Eka Pada Vasisthasana	WILD THING Camatkarasana
GODDESS Utkata Konasana	HALF MOON Ardha Chandrasana
LORD OF THE DANCE Natarajasana	BIRD OF PARADISE Svarga Dvijasana
KING PIGEON Eka Pada Rajakapotasana	SIDE CROW Parsva Bakasana
REVERSE PLANK Purvottanasana	WHEEL Chakrasana

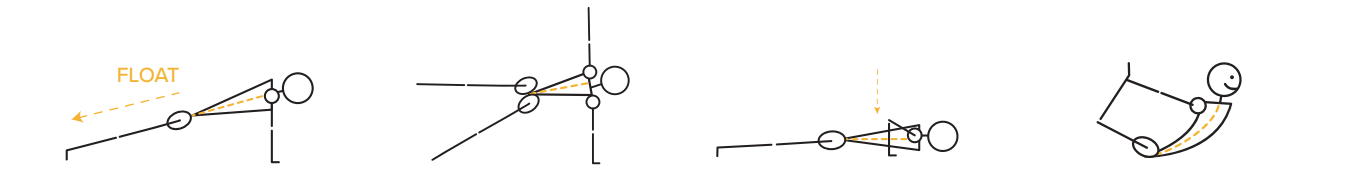
LION
FLOW 2



1 Reverse Prayer
Viparita Namaskar
Tadasana

2 OH Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

3 Extended Hand to Toe
Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana

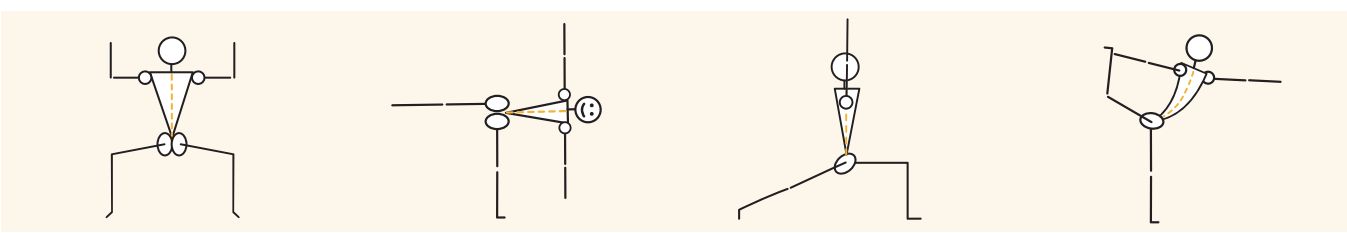


8 High Plank
Utthita Chaturanga
Dandasana

9 1-Leg Side Plank
Eka Pada Vasisthasana

10 Chaturanga
Chaturanga Dandasana

11 Bow
Dhanurasana

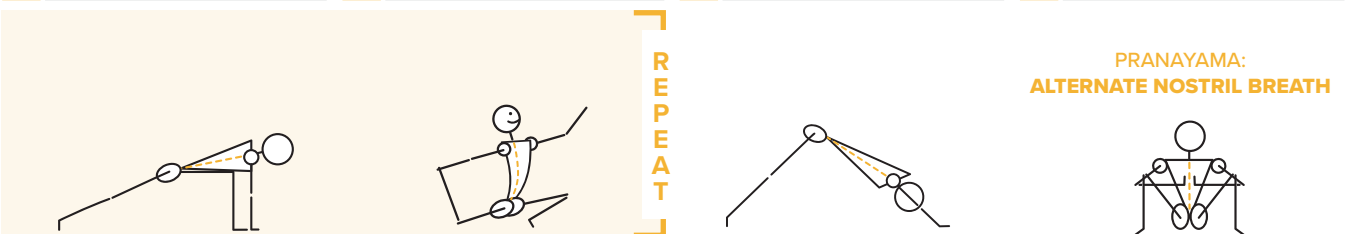


16 Goddess
Utkata Konasana

17 Half Moon
Ardha Chandrasana

18 Crescent
Anjaneyasana

19 Lord of the Dance
Natarajasana

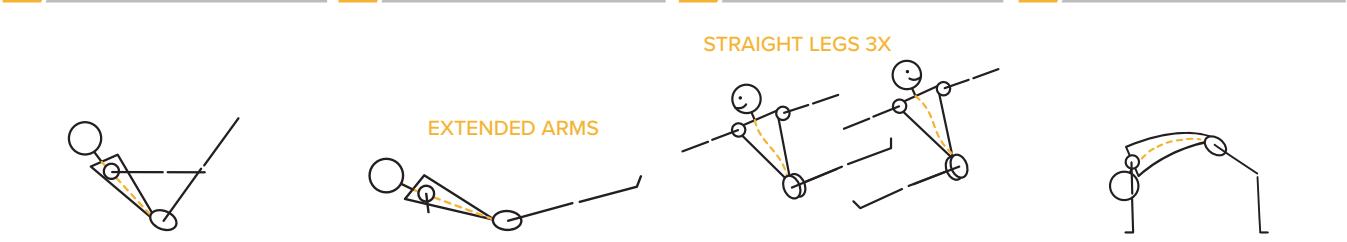


24 Low Lunge
Ashva Sanchalanasana

25 King Pigeon
Eka Pada Raja Kapotasana

26 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

27 Low Squat
Malasana

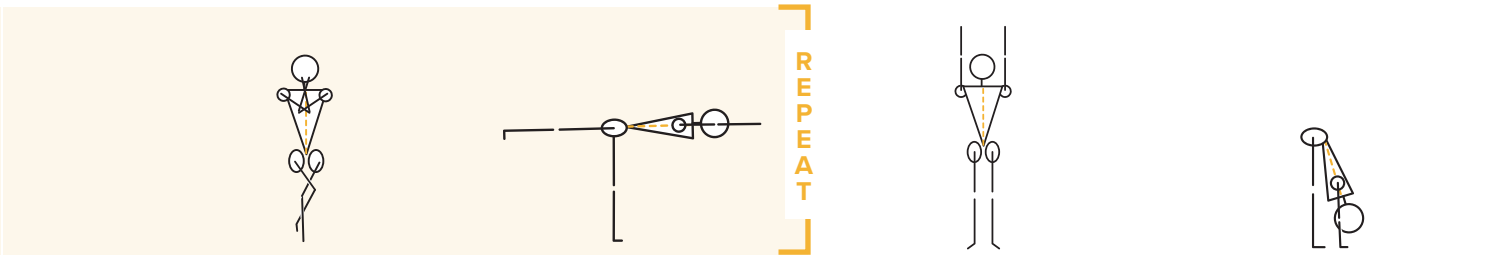


32 Boat
Navasana

33 Low Boat
Ardha Navasana

34 Supine Twist
Supta Matsyendrasana

35 Wheel
Chakrasana

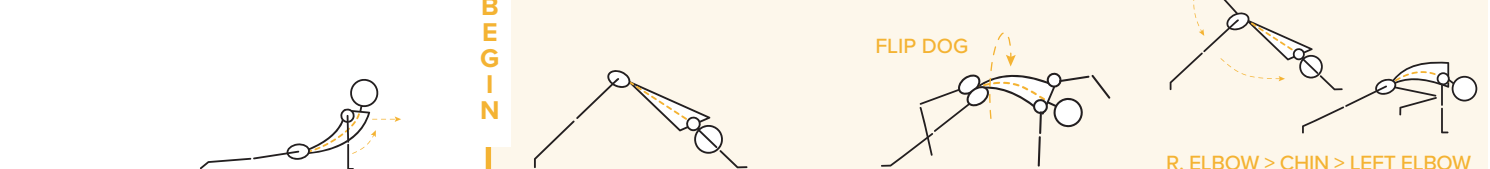


4 Eagle
Garudasana

5 Warrior 3
Virabhadrasana 3

6 OH Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

7 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

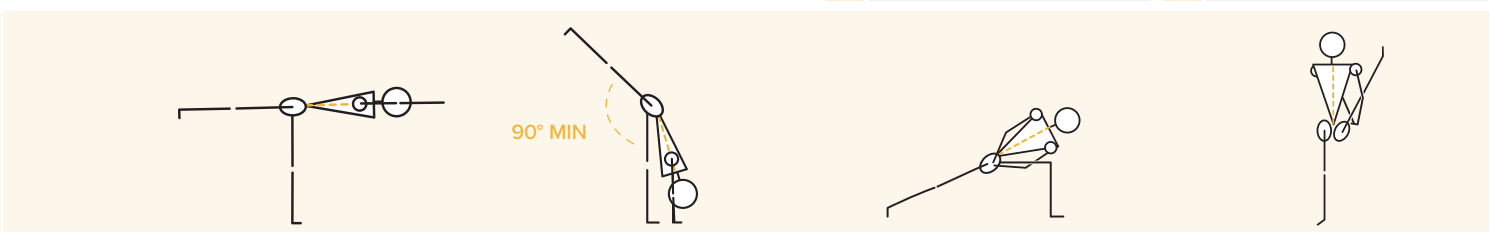


12 Upward Dog
Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

13 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

14 Wild Thing
Camatkarasana

15 Triple Knee Tuck

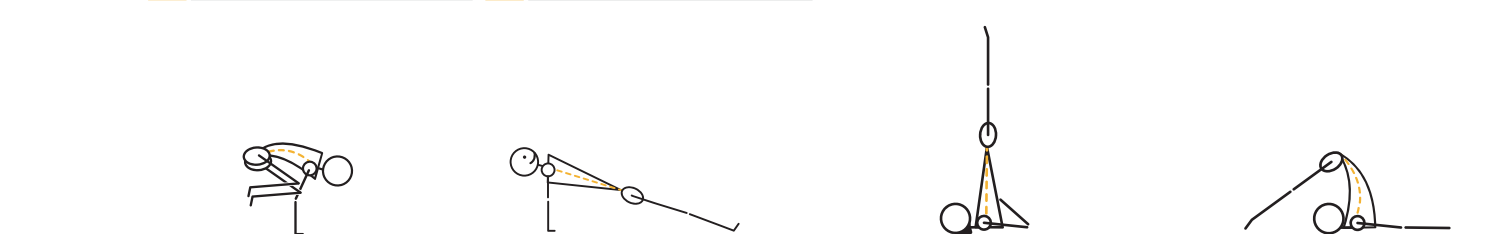


20 Warrior 3
Virabhadrasana 3

21 Standing Split
Urdhva Prasarita
Eka Padasana

22 Bound Side Angle
Baddha Parsvokasana

23 Bird of Paradise
Svarga Dvidasana



28 Side Crow
Parsva Bakasana

29 Reverse Plank
Purvottanasana

30 Shoulder Stand
Salamba Sarvangasana

31 Plow
Halasana



36 Happy Baby
Ananda Balasana

37 Half Lotus
Ardha Padmasana

38 Half Lotus
Ardha Padmasana

39 Corpse Pose
Savasana



LION FIGHT 2

Complete the Lion Level 2 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order. **At the end of the first 7-minute set, rest for one full minute before beginning the second 7-minute set.** You can rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point, and each second you hold in handstand counts as 1 point.** If a total of 140 points or more is achieved during the 14-minute exercise window, you have passed the Lion Fight 2 Benchmark and can then move onto Lion Fight 3.

PULLUP x5	1 MIN	BOX JUMP x7 @ .3 height	REQUIRED SCORE 140
GTO x7 @ 1/2 BW		WALL HS HOLD 10sec	
7:00		7:00	

THE EXERCISES

The fight continues to become even more intense! We have lowered the number of exercises to 4, but increased the difficulty level and total timing window. Our introduction of complex moves such as the Ground to Overhead (GTO) are less of a single exercise and moreso a combination of several individual movements, and build the foundation for other complex Olympic lifting exercises. We have also moved up to multiple full pullups per set, and introduced full handstands

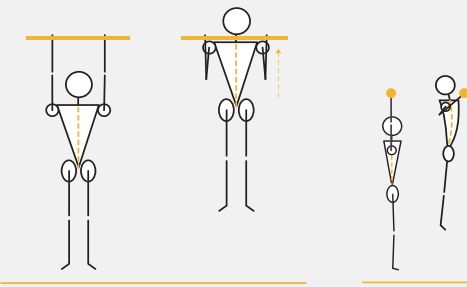
against the wall for increased upper body strength and more advanced balance work.

Make sure that you have warmed up before beginning. Also check that you understand the exercises and proper form for each, and be sure you have all equipment set up before the timer starts—you don't want to waste time chasing after your equipment if it is not already next to you!

SET 1

PULLUP
(x5)

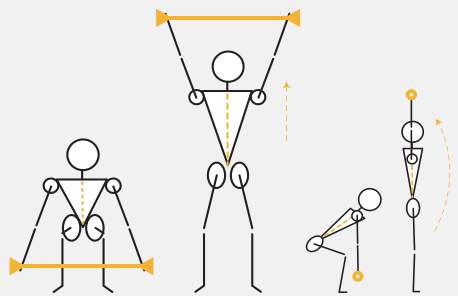
Reach for the bar firmly in an overhand position about shoulder-width apart. Begin from a dead hang—elbows should not be bent. Using arms and shoulders as a team, pull upward until the chin passes over the bar without momentum or swinging. Lower back to the starting position.



SET 1

GTO
(x7 @ 1/2 BW)

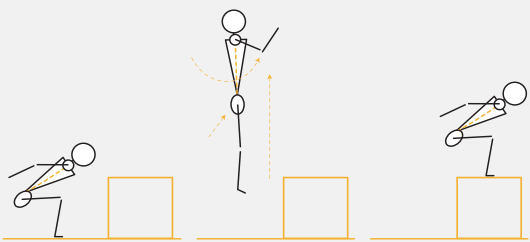
A successful GTO can be performed using a variety of strategies to move the bar from the ground to above the head. You can safely snatch the weight directly overhead, or use the combination of a squat clean or power clean to bring the bar to the shoulders, and a press or jerk to bring the bar overhead.



SET 2

BOX JUMP
(x7 @ .3 height)

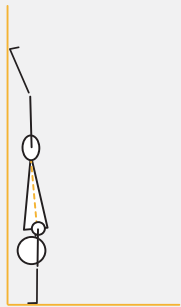
In front of the box, hinge the hips backwards into a partial squat position. Jump out of the squat and onto the box, landing in the bottom of another squat. Stand upright with feet remaining firmly placed on the box, and step or jump back down to the ground to repeat.



SET 2

WALL HS HOLD
(10sec)

Warm the wrists up before beginning. Approach a wall and kick up into a handstand with the hands planted 6-12 inches away from the wall. Straighten the body until you form a rigid line with the core tucked in for stability. Keep the head in a neutral forward position, and kick the legs down to return smoothly.





LION FLIGHT 2

Complete the Lion Level 2 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Lion Flight 3.

100M 0:16
5K 27:00

TIPS

We are taking our speed up a notch! Through consistent, smart and tough training, you will need to knock three minutes off your 5k time. You will need to have even longer distance and interval days in order to achieve the faster time.

Your sprints continue to drop seconds. Continuing to find a more efficient sprint starting stance and initial acceleration/kickoff will help you achieve an overall faster time. By drilling form as well as more dynamic jumping, lunging and explosive lifts in the gym, you will add pure, explosive power to the skillful stride you have been developing on the track.



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED LION LEVEL 2.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so continuing to find ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



LION FLOW 3

Complete the Lion Level 3 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed Lion Flow 3 with no problems, feel free to move onto Griffin Flow 1.

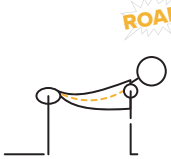
TO QUALIFY	1 Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain. 2 Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots. 3 Gain a basic understanding of the pranayama and bandha skills listed below and perform each in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.
PRANAYAMA (breath control)	LION BREATH (SIMHASANA) Simhasana is named as it resembles a roaring lion. Inhaling through the nose, open the mouth fully, open the eyes wide, extend the tongue and contract the muscles of the neck and esophagus. Exhale a powerful “haah” to ignite courage and strength.
BANDHA (body lock)	ABDOMINAL LOCK: UDDIYANA Demonstrate the Abdominal Lock (<i>Uddiyana</i>): adding the third body lock of the Lion Series, we are now able to perform Maha Bandha—all bandhas performed simultaneously. Exhale the breath forward while contracting the esophagus. Create a false inhalation, pulling the lower belly up and into the ribcage, shrinking the waist inward. Within bodybuilding, this is the foundation of the “vacuum” pose.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES The defining moves of Lion Flow 3 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.	
REVOLVED HAND TO TOE Parivrtta Hasta Padangusthasana	HALF MOON WITH UPWARD GAZE Ardha Chandrasana
REVOLVED HALF MOON BOW Parivrtta Ardha Chandrachapasana	LORD OF THE DANCE Natarajasana
BIRD OF PARADISE Svarga Dvijasana	MERMAID Eka Pada Raja Kapotasana
HEADSTAND Salamba Sarvangasana	FOREARM STAND Pincha Mayurasana
UPWARD HERO Urdvha Virasana	FIRE LOG Agnistambhasana

LION
FLOW 3

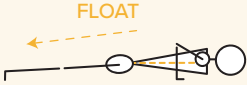


1 Upward Hero
Urdvha Virasana

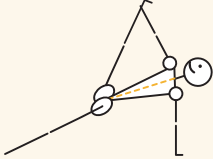


2 Lion
Simhasana

BEGIN



3 Chaturanga
Chaturanga Dandasana



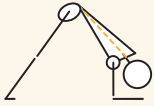
4 1-Leg Side Plank
Eka Pada Vasisthasana

REPEAT



9 Forward Fold
Uttanasana

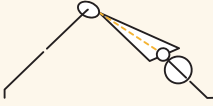
BEGIN



10 Dolphin
Ardha Pincha Mayurasana

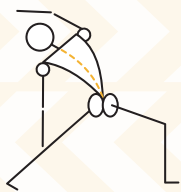


11 Forearm Stand
Pincha Mayurasana

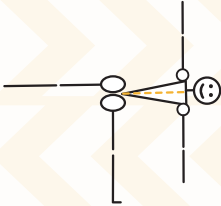


12 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

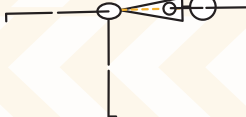
BEGIN



17 Peaceful Warrior
Viparita Virabhadrasana



18 Half Moon
Ardha Chandrasana

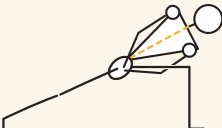


19 Warrior 3
Virabhadrasana 3



20 Rev. Half Moon Bow
Parivritta Ardha Chandrachapasana

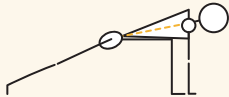
REPEAT



25 Bound Side Angle
Baddha Parsvokanasana



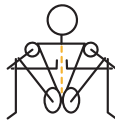
26 Bird of Paradise
Svarga Dvidasana



27 Low Lunge
Ashva Sanchalanasana



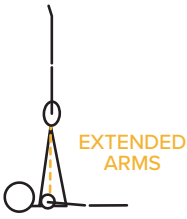
28 Mermaid
Eka Pada Raja Kapotasana



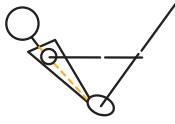
33 Low Squat
Malasana



34 Plow
Halasana

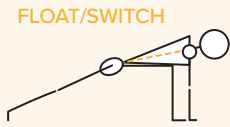


35 Shoulder Stand
Supta Matsyendrasana

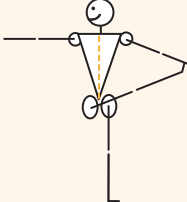


36 Boat
Navasana

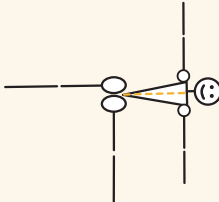
BEGIN



5 Low Lunge
Ashva Sanchalanasana



6 Rev. Hand > Toe
Parivritta Hasta Padangusthasana

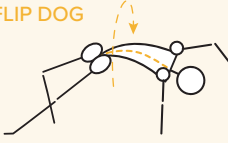


7 Half Moon
Ardha Chandrasana



8 Eagle
Garudasana

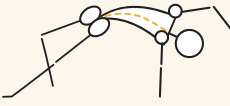
REPEAT



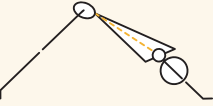
13 Wild Thing
Camatkarasana



14 Wheel
Chakrasana



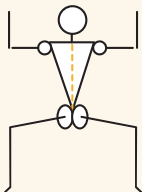
15 Wild Thing
Camatkarasana



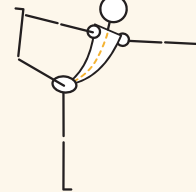
16 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

REPEAT

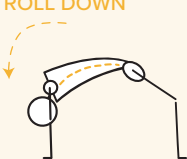
BEGIN



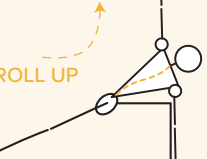
21 Goddess
Utkata Konasana



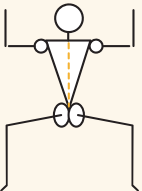
22 Lord of the Dance
Natarajasana



23 Wheel
Chakrasana

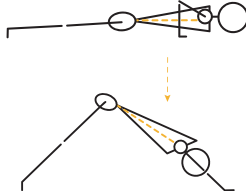


24 Crescent Twist
Parivritta Anjaneyasana



29 Goddess
Utkata Konasana

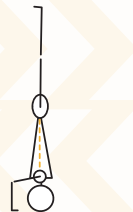
REPEAT



30 Chaturanga > DD
Adho Mukha Svanasana



31 Crow
Bakasana



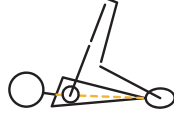
32 Headstand
Salamba Sarvangasana



37 Low Boat
Ardha Navasana



37 Bound Bridge
Setu Bandha Sarvangasana



39 Happy Baby
Ananda Balasana



40 Fire Log
Agnistambhasana

LION'S HEART LOCK:
SIMHA BHUJA BANDHA

MAHA
BANDHA:
CORE LOCK
UDDIYANA BANDHA
PELVIC FLOOR LOCK
MULA BANDHA
NECK LOCK
JALANDHARA



LION FIGHT 3

Complete the Lion Level 3 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order. **At the end of the first 7-minute set, rest for one full minute before beginning the second 7-minute set.** You can rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point.** If a total of 140 points or more is achieved during the 14-minute exercise window, you have passed the Lion Fight 3 Benchmark and can then move onto Griffin Fight 1.

DIP x7	1 MIN	OH SQUAT x7 @ 1/2 BW	REQUIRED SCORE 140
LEVER TUCK x5		PULLUP x7	
BOX JUMP x5 @ .4 height			
7:00		7:00	

THE EXERCISES

We’ve reached the King of the Lion Fights! We are plowing through pullups easily now, and we move into overhead squats to set the foundation for future Olympic snatches. The box jump is set to almost half our height, and full lever tucks prepare the foundation for advanced gymnastic strength.

Make sure that you have warmed up before beginning. Also check that you understand the exercises and proper form for each, and be sure you have all equipment set up before the timer starts—you don’t want to waste time chasing after your equipment if it is not already next to you!

SET 1

DIP (x7)

Either gripping rings or rigid dip bars, lock the arms out to a stable position with the hands close to the hips. Slowly descend down, bending at the elbows and opening the chest, until the arms reach a 90° bent angle at the elbow. The body can lean forward slightly in the descent to protect the front of the shoulders. Pause and return up to the locked-out position.

SET 1

LEVER TUCK (x5)

Place a mat below your bar or rings. Hang with active shoulders and straight arms, similar to a hanging tuck. Curl the body upward until the body forms an upside down ball. Find the level of inversion where weightless balance can be achieved and hold. Slowly unravel back to a full hang and repeat.

SET 1

BOX JUMP (x5 @ .4 height)

In front of the box, hinge the hips backwards into a partial squat position. Jump out of the squat and onto the box, landing in the bottom of another squat. Stand upright with feet remaining firmly placed on the box, and step or jump back down to the ground to repeat.

SET 2

OH SQUAT (x7 @ 1/2 BW)

Clean the bar with a wide snatch grip to an overhead position, or remove directly from a rack. Begin with the bar balanced overhead with a wide grip. Descend into a squat with the weight locked out as the shoulders press toward the ceiling. Balance the bar directly over the feet as the torso tilts slightly forward, and push up to standing to repeat.

SET 2

PULLUP (x7)

Reach for the bar firmly in an overhand position about shoulder-width apart. Begin from a dead hang—elbows should not be bent in starting position. Using arms and shoulders as a team, pull upward until the chin passes over the bar without momentum or swinging. Lower back to the starting position.



LION FLIGHT 3

Complete the Lion Level 3 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Griffin Flight 1.

100M 0:15
5K 25:00

TIPS

We are taking our speed up to new levels! Through consistent, smart and tough training, you will need to knock two more minutes off your 5k time. You will need to have even longer distance and interval days in order to achieve the faster time.

Your sprints continue to drop seconds. Continuing to find a more efficient sprint starting stance and initial acceleration/kickoff will help you achieve an overall faster time. By drilling form as well as more dynamic jumping, lunging and explosive lifts in the gym, you will add pure, explosive power to the skillful stride you have been developing on the track.

In order to surpass these qualifier times, you will have to seek out any weak points. To have progressed to this level, you already have a solid foundation in several dimensions, but finding and training your weak points (whether it is your stride, strength or cardiovascular endurance) will help you pass this level with flying colors!



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED LION LEVEL 3.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so continuing to find ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



GRIFFIN SERIES

BENCHMARKS

The Griffin Series™, modeled after the supernatural creature embodying the power of the lion and eagle, is a 3-part **advanced series of full body workouts and yoga flows** allowing the lion to take flight. This advanced series trains extraordinary mobility, coordination, balance and strength at professional performance levels for world-class athletes.



GRIFFIN SERIES BENCHMARKS

The Griffin Flows, Flights and Fights on the next several pages will act as your **Benchmark workouts on the Lion's Ladder**. Once you safely and successfully complete the Benchmark workout in each category, you can progress to a higher Griffin level.

A note on form: Starting at Phoenix Level 1 with a trainer is recommended to be thorough and to check proper form, even if you are a more advanced athlete. The majority of individuals exercise without proper form and don't even know it—they are laying the groundwork for future injuries and premature plateaus.

FLOW

Complete the Griffin Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries for that level). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up with some simple moves before beginning the Flow, and focus on mind/body connection and maintaining an even breath. If you have completed the Flow with no problems, feel free to move onto a higher level.

FIGHT

Follow our gymnastics and weightlifting Griffin Benchmark Fight. Check that you have all the equipment you need at your gym or at home. **Make sure you warm up before beginning any Fight session. Form should be your first priority, even if it's not absolutely perfect.** Record each repetition (rep) as a point, and measure your performance at the end of each timed session. Check your energy levels, and if you are feeling confident in progressing further, challenge yourself with the next level Fight.

FLIGHT

Complete the Griffin Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto a higher level.



GRIFFIN FLOW 1

Complete the Griffin Level 1 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up extensively before beginning this Flow, as it is an advanced series of asanas from the start and does not include a gentle warmup like some of the previous Flows. If you have completed Griffin Flow 1 with no problems, feel free to move onto Griffin Flow 2.

TO QUALIFY

- 1 Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain.
- 2 Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots.
- 3 Gain a basic understanding of the mudra skill listed below and perform it in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.

MUDRA (hand gesture)

JNANA MUDRA

Symbolizing Wisdom, the **Jnana Mudra** is our first focus mudra. To perform this mudra, fold the index finger inward toward the base of the thumb, forming a circle shape. The other three fingers remain straight, pointing downward while the thumb points outward.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

The defining moves of Griffin Flow 1 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

LOTUS

Padmasana

HANDSTAND

Adho Mukha Vrksasana

1-LEG CROW

Eka Pada Bakasana

STANDING COMPASS

Parivrtta Surya Yantrasana

BOUND LORD OF THE DANCE

Baddha Natarajasana

EIGHT ANGLE

Astavakrasana

HALF FIREFLY

Ardha Tittibhasana

FLYING PIGEON

Eka Pada Galavasana

BOUND HALF MOON

Baddha Ardha Chandrasana

FUNKY WHEEL

Eka Pada Chakrasana





Griffin FIGHT 1

Complete the Griffin Level 1 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order. **At the end of the first 7-minute set, rest for one full minute before beginning the second 7-minute set.** You can rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point, and each second you hold in pike lever counts as 1 point.** If a total of 140 points or more is achieved during the 14-minute exercise window, you have passed the Griffin Fight 1 Benchmark and can then move onto Griffin Fight 2.

HSPU x3	1 MIN	SNATCH x7 @ 3/4 BW	REQUIRED SCORE 140
PIKE LEVER 15sec		CHEST TO BAR x7	
BOX JUMP x5 @ .5 height			
7:00		7:00	

THE EXERCISES

Griffins are extraordinary, and so are the exercises we are now executing and building the foundation for! We have culminated our Olympic lifting exercise into a full Olympic Snatch—the king of Olympic lifts when it comes to blending agility and strength. We have also stepped into the threshold of full handstand pushups. Our pullups have become explosive chest-to-bars, laying the foundation for future muscle-ups.

Make sure that you have warmed up before beginning. Also check that you understand the exercises and proper form for each, and be sure you have all equipment set up before the timer starts—you don't want to waste time chasing after your equipment if it is not already next to you!

SET 1

HSPU (x3)

Kick up into a handstand against the wall with hands slightly wider than shoulders. Try to keep a tight, straight body with no large arch in the back. Slowly descend with elbows staying in and tight, rather than flaring out to the side. Lightly touch the ground with the crown of your head, and push back up into a full extension.

SET 1

PIKE LEVER (15sec)

First, hanging from a pullup bar or rings, pull yourself into a tuck lever or inversion. Flatten the back parallel to the ground and extend the legs, creating a 90° angle at the hip. Engage the lats and core, finding your most strict and geometric shape.

SET 1

BOX JUMP (x5 @ .5 height)

In front of the box, hinge the hips backward into a partial squat position. Jump out of the squat and onto the box, landing in the bottom of another squat. Stand upright with feet remaining firmly placed on the box, and step or jump back down to the ground to repeat.

SET 2

SNATCH (x7 @ 3/4 BW)

A culmination of several moves, made successful by subtle timing and form details. Approach the bar and reach with a wide grip. With an explosive, agile movement, jerk the bar overhead, catching the weight in the bottom of an overhead squat. Press the bar upward as you come to standing.

SET 2

CHEST TO BAR (x7)

Reach for the pullup bar with a firm, overhand grip that is slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Begin from a dead-hang. Using the arms, shoulders and back as a team, pull upward, leading with the chest. Use explosive force to pull the shoulder blades back to lightly touch the chest to the bar.



GRIFFIN FLIGHT 1

Complete the Griffin Level 1 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Griffin Flight 2.

100M 0:14
10K 50:00

RUNNING TIPS

It's time to double our distance! By now you should have established a good 5k running pace—you don't have to run any faster in this endurance 10k challenge, but you will have to maintain the pace for twice as long. Start adding volume and playing with pacing splits to build up endurance. With time and practice, you will be able to carry your 5k pace into this longer-distance benchmark.

Your sprints continue to drop seconds. **As your speed moves into a higher tier, the need to develop weak point training increases.** You will need to drill repeated sets of form nuances, such as working on subdistances (30m dashes, for example) if your Start is the weakest link in your sprint performance. By drilling form as well as more dynamic jumping, lunging and explosive lifts in the gym, you will add pure, explosive power to the skillful stride you have been developing on the track.



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED GRIFFIN LEVEL 1.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so continuing to find ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



GRIFFIN **FLOW 2**

Complete the Griffin Level 2 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up extensively before beginning this Flow, as it is an advanced series of asanas from the start and does not include a gentle warmup like some of the previous Flows. If you have completed Griffin Flow 2 with no problems, feel free to move onto Griffin Flow 3.

TO QUALIFY

1

Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain.

2

Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots.

3

Gain a basic understanding of the mudra skill listed below and perform it in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.

MUDRA
(hand gesture)

PRANA MUDRA

Symbolizing Life Force, the **Prana Mudra** means “the energy or spirit of life.” Prana mudra is a hand gesture that is used during yoga and meditation practice as a means of symbolizing or representing the flow of vital life force energy, known as prana.

To perform the prana mudra, bring the tips of the ring and pinky finger together with the tip of the thumb. Allow the middle and index fingers to straighten outward, lightly touching together at the sides.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

The defining moves of Griffin Flow 2 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

FRONT STANDING SPLIT Utthita Trivikramasana	SCORPION HANDSTAND Vrschikasana
GRASSHOPPER Maksikanagasana	BOUND LOCUST Baddha Salabhasana
FLYING SPLIT 1 Eka Pada Koundinyasana 1	FLYING SPLIT 2 Eka Pada Koundinyasana 2
SOARING VISVAMITRA Visvamisraasana	CHIN STAND Ganda Bherundasana
LITTLE THUNDERBOLT Laghu Vajrasana	BOUND LOTUS Baddha Padmasana

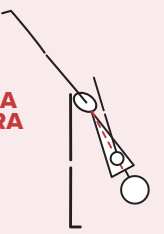
GRIFFIN
FLOW 2

Individual Warmup

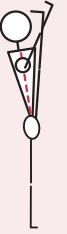


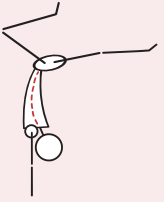
PRANA
MUDRA

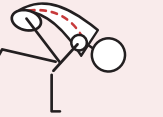
BEGIN



PRANA
MUDRA

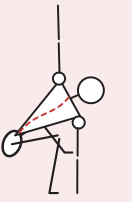












1 OH Mountain
Urdhva Hastasana

2 Bound Standing Split
Urdhva Prasrita Eka Padasana

3 Front Standing Split
Utthita Trivikramasana

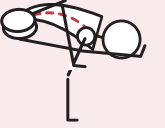
4 1-Leg Scorpion
Eka Pada Paripurna Vrschikasana

5 Crane
Bakasana

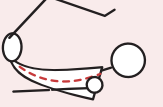
6 Chair
Utkatasana

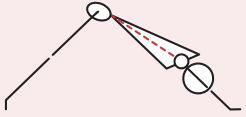
7 Funky Chair
Eka Pada Utkatasana

8 Funky Chair Twist
Parivrtta Eka Pada Utkatasana



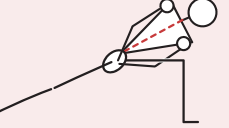


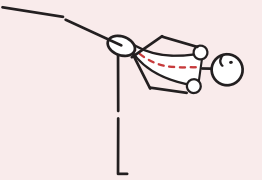


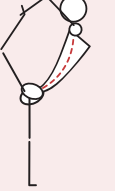




SWITCH
LEAD LEG







9 Grasshopper
Maksiganasana

10 Chaturanga
Chaturanga Dandasana

11 Bound Locust
Baddha Salabhasana

12 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

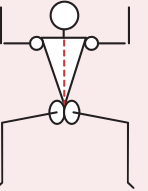
13 Bound 1-Leg Dog
Baddha Eka Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana

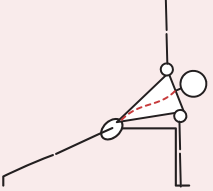
14 Revolved Bound Side Angle
Baddha Parivrtta Parsvakonasana

15 Revolved Bound Half Moon
Parivrtta Baddha Ardha Chandrasana

16 Bound Lord of the Dance
Baddha Natarajasana

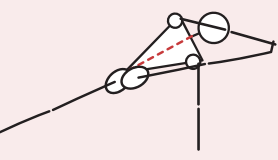
BEGIN

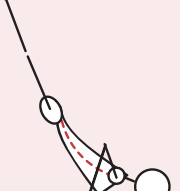
















17 Goddess
Adho Mukha Svanasana

18 Crescent Lunge to Crescent Twist
Parivrtta Anjaneyasana

19 Flying Split 1
Eka Pada Koundinyasana 1

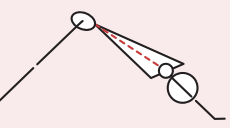
20 Flying Split 2
Eka Pada Koundinyasana 2

21 Soaring Visvamitra
Visvamitrasana

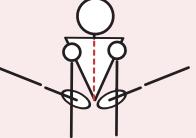
22 Chin Stand
Ganda Bherundasana

23 Chin Scorpion
Ganda Vrschikasana

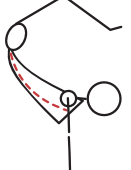
24 Full Bow
Dhanurasana

















25 Downward Dog
Adho Mukha Svanasana

26 Handstand
Adho Mukha Vrksasana

27 Firefly
Tittibhasana

28 Child's Pose
Balasana

29 Handstand
Adho Mukha Vrksasana

30 Scorpion
Vrschikasana

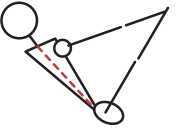
31 Wheel
Chakrasana

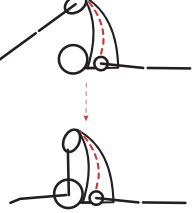
32 Camel
Ustrasana





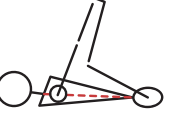


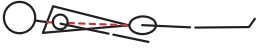






PRANAYAMA





33 Little Thunderbolt
Laghu Vajrasana

34 Seated Hero
Virasana

35 Rabbit
Sasakasana

36 Big Toe
Ubhaya Padangusthasana

37 Plow to Deaf Man
Halasana > Karnapidasana

38 Bound Lotus
Baddha Padmasana

39 Happy Baby
Ananda Balasana

40 Corpse Pose
Savasana

Individual Cool Down



GRIFFIN FIGHT 2

Complete the Griffin Level 2 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order, repeating continuously for 15 minutes. You can rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point.** If a total of 100 points or more is achieved during the 15-minute exercise window, you have passed the Griffin Fight 2 Benchmark and can then move onto Griffin Fight 3.

MUSCLE UP x7	SNATCH x7 @ BW	REQUIRED SCORE 100
15:00		

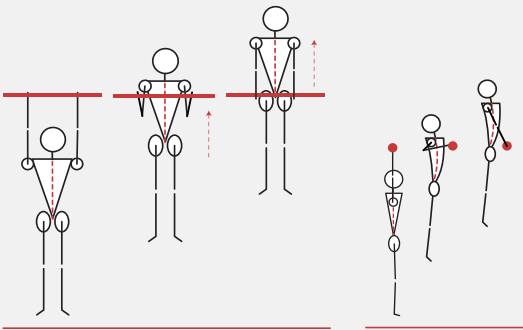
THE EXERCISES

The fight has become simply difficult at this point. The variety of movements we have previously used as a measure are all housed within these two nearly opposite compound exercises. The muscle-up is the culmination of an explosive pullup and dip, taking your weight from below and through an explosive downward force, driving yourself over the bar. Opposing this movement is the Olympic Snatch, a culmination of our Olympic lifting preparatory moves, taking a weight from the ground and exploding it overhead with an upward force.

Make sure that you have warmed up before beginning. Pacing is key for this simple but difficult trial. Do not injure yourself to achieve a point, practice regularly, and you will see your pacing and volume will increase more safely.

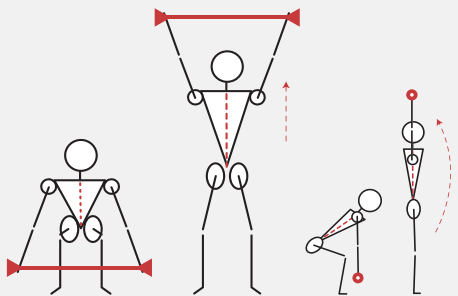
MUSCLE UP
(x7)

Reach for the pullup bar with a firm, overhand grip that is roughly shoulder-width apart. With a kipping explosion using the core, arms and shoulders as a team, pull upward in a gentle arc, overtaking the bar and transitioning into a dip that extends the body into a full lock over the bar.



SNATCH
(x7 @ BW)

A culmination of several moves, made successful by subtle timing and form details. Approach the bar and reach with a wide grip. With an explosive, agile movement, snatch the bar overhead, catching the weight in an overhead squat. Continue to drive the bar upward as you come to a standing position.





GRIFFIN FLIGHT 2

Complete the Griffin Level 2 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, you can move onto Griffin Flight 3.

100M 0:13
10K 45:00

RUNNING TIPS

We are taking our speed to new heights! You are in the upper ranks of distance times, so you will have to build a rigid training schedule and refine subtle form nuances to traverse this challenge. Necessitating a steady pace under 7 and a half minutes for an entire 10k may require finding a running coach or joining a team, should you plan to develop your skill further.

Your sprints are approaching track and field standards for scholarships. As your speed becomes top-tier, the need to develop weak point training will continue to increase. You will need to drill repeated sets of form nuances, such as quick drills to power up your Start position for kickoff. By drilling form as well as more dynamic jumping, lunging and other explosive lifts in the gym, you will add pure, explosive power to the skillful stride you have been developing on the track. Keep an eye out for the perfect coach or team for you!



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED GRIFFIN LEVEL 2.

Feel free to continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. These exercises become the foundational layer for the next level and beyond, so continuing to find ease in each Fight, Flight and Flow is increasingly important as you progress to higher levels.



Griffin
Flow 3

Complete the Griffin Level 3 Benchmark Flow (or use any variation by your instructor or yourself that includes the 10 Movement Masteries on the next page). All you need is a yoga mat. Warm up extensively before beginning this Flow, as it is an advanced series of asanas from the start and does not include a gentle warmup like some of the previous Flows. If you have completed Griffin Flow 3 fluidly, congratulations! You have progressed to a top-tier level of balance and agility. An open road of professional exploration within circus, dance, and more awaits you!

TO QUALIFY

- 1 Perform each pose of the Flow as directed by your instructor (online or in-person) to your best ability without pain.
- 2 Hold each pose for a minimum of one calm breath (3-second inhale, 3-second exhale). You are encouraged to spend extra time in any of your trouble spots.
- 3 Gain a basic understanding of the mudra skill listed below and perform it in the presence of a Lion’s Heart certified coach.

MUDRA
(hand gesture)

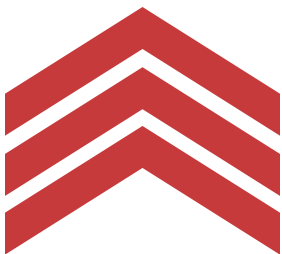
HRIDAYA MUDRA
Symbolizing a healthy heart, the **Hridaya Mudra** is our last focus mudra. To perform this mudra, curl the index finger into the base of the thumb, and connect the ring and middle fingers to the thumb at the tips. Allow the pinky finger to remain straight, pointing outward.

10 MOVEMENT MASTERIES

The defining moves of Griffin Flow 3 that play a key role in ascending to the next level.

HALF MOON (RELEVÉ) Ardha Chandrasana	FOREARM SCORPION Vrischikasana
CENTER SPLIT Samakonasana	CENTER SPLIT HANDSTAND Samakonasana Adho Mukha Vrksasana
LOTUS HANDSTAND Padma Adho Mukha Vrksasana	ROOSTER Kukkutasana
BOUND WHEEL Chakra Bhandasana	TORTOISE Kurmasana
PENDANT Lolasana	ELBOW STAND Sayanasana





GRIFFIN **FIGHT 3**

Complete the Griffin Level 3 Benchmark Fight with strict form and in the prescribed order, repeating continuously for 15 minutes. You can rest and/or break up repetitions as needed, but the clock does not stop when you do. **Each repetition counts as 1 point.** If a total of 120 points or more is achieved during the 15-minute exercise window, you have passed the Griffin Fight 3 Benchmark and are in an elite class of strength and gymnastics!

90° PUSHUP x3	BACK FLIP x3	REQUIRED SCORE 120
1-ARM SNATCH x3 each side @ 2/3 BW	1-ARM PULLUP x3 each side	
15:00		

THE EXERCISES

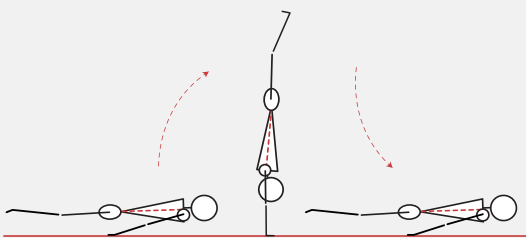
Meant to test if an individual is world-class within multiple strength modalities, we use the 90° pushup to demonstrate complete competency between both horizontal and vertical pressing planes. The 1-arm pullup demonstrates the pure pulling strength that few elite strength athletes can execute, and showcases unilateral control in the pull chain needed to perform the movement. The 1-arm snatch at near bodyweight demonstrates the explosive lower-body strength, speed and

balance required in order to have single-handed dominance over objects at nearly the mass of the body. Lastly, the back flip demonstrates the maintained agility to launch and rotate the body with acute precision.

Make sure you have warmed up before beginning. Also check that you understand the exercises and proper form for each. Pacing is key—do not push yourself just to earn a point.

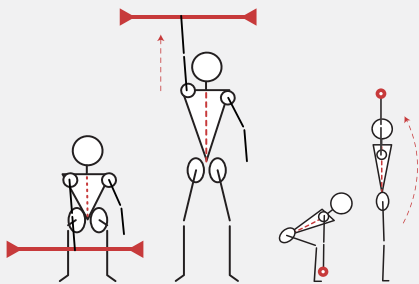
90° PUSHUP
(x3)

From a firm gymnastic planche, press yourself up into a free-standing handstand. Lower back into the planche using the same path that you came up into, and repeat. This can be performed on parallettes or directly on the floor.



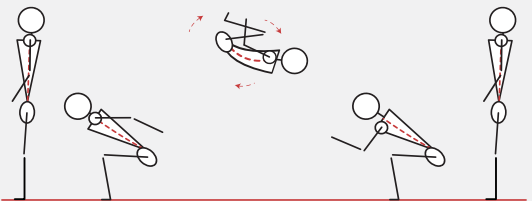
1-ARM SNATCH
(x3 each side @ 2/3 BW)

Similar in complexity and nuance to the Olympic Snatch, but the hand grips in the center of the bar. Explode the bar overhead with a single arm while catching the weight in a 1-arm overhead squat. Continue to drive the weight upward and come to standing to complete the move.



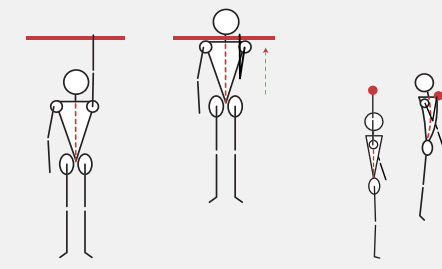
BACK FLIP
(x3)

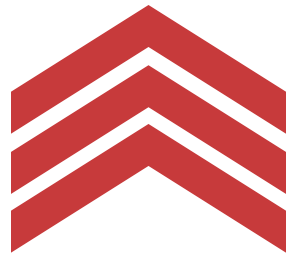
With a spotter and a safety mat, load up the movement by squatting down, similar to a box jump. Tuck the lower body inward to allow for rotation, then gently extend out of the tuck as the body finishes the rotation and feet land firmly on the ground.



1-ARM PULLUP
(x3 each side)

From a 1-arm dead hang with an underhand grip and without the assistance of the other arm, pull the chin over the bar or ring with the arm tucked tightly to the body. This should be done without a large kipping motion. Return down to the starting position and repeat.

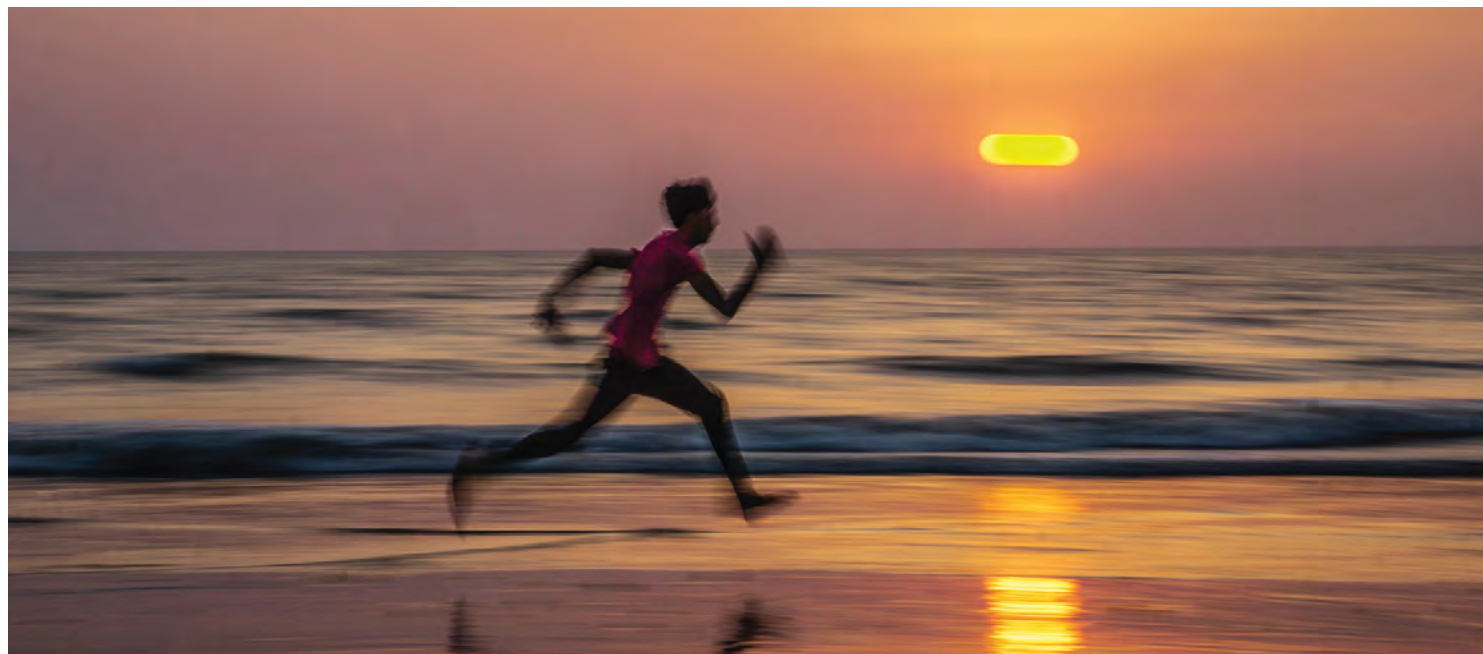




GRIFFIN FLIGHT 3

Complete the Griffin Level 3 Benchmark Flight of sprint and distance times to measure your ground speed and endurance. All you need is some running shoes! Be sure to warm up and stretch before running. Before you attempt your distance time, walk or lightly jog until you are in a low-level cardiovascular state. Before sprinting for time, attempt a few sprints at 50-70% of your peak intensity level. Once you have hit the target or below for your distance and sprint times, congratulations! You are now considered a top-tier endurance and speed athlete. Recruiters will be looking for you!

100M 0:12
10K 40:00



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE COMPLETED GRIFFIN LEVEL 3.

You are a top-tier athlete in the areas of strength, agility and endurance. Continue practicing these Benchmark workouts to improve your workout time, form, or comfortability with each move. Continue to aim for balance in your workouts between strength, agility and endurance, and you will remain a powerful and rare force to be reckoned with.



PHYSICAL ABILITY

Chapter 5: Programming

- Understand the primary points of success
- Build a weekly schedule
- Fill schedule with workouts and SHOW UP!

Once you have assessed your athletic baseline accurately, it's time to make a plan and schedule your routine to take you where you want to go. The systems and programs that are actually successful at positive transformation in individuals all work off of the same primary principles, which are held up by a few pillars that only you can provide when you step into the gym.

Let's ensure that we are indeed engaging in all of the areas necessary for a successful plan of ascension. We'll learn to build a sustainable weekly schedule that is aimed toward our goals, fill it with workouts tailored to match this plan, and continue to step upwards toward our best physical self. ■

MAKING YOUR WORKOUTS WORK

In order to make your fitness journey as successful as possible, build your program on a foundation of these basic pillars we believe to be crucial in achieving any fitness goal.

THE STARTING LINE

Congratulations for making it this far—now that you have a basic understanding of the Lion’s Heart fitness program, it’s time to grow into your fitness routine and get going! Few ever make it to this point—some are still contemplating starting a workout routine from their couch, waiting for motivation (or the perfect Pinterest workout) to fall from the sky. Actually showing up to the starting line is half the battle sometimes.

The following chapter contains information on building progressive workouts and schedule splits, meant to act as building blocks for a program tailored to fit your current abilities, schedule constraints, and goals. You can also find a selection of upper, lower and full-body workouts in your Action Book, tailored to each level on the Lion’s Ladder. These tools are designed to give you a benchmark in which to grow from and customize as you learn more about how you respond to certain athletic stimuli.

Before beginning, make sure you have had a PT screening for any issues that could sideline you, as well as an athletic

assessment so you can know where your starting line truly is. We also strongly encourage you to GET A TRAINER in the beginning. Yes, you might get lucky with your form or be a natural, but the head start you can get by knowing you are performing these exercises and implementing these principles correctly can have a noticeably greater impact on the hours you spend training. Imagine the time spent “unlearning” bad habits after you’ve already performed a move incorrectly for 1,000 reps and have already sunken poor movement patterns deep into your muscle memory.

FOUR PILLARS OF ATHLETIC ASCENSION

The four pillars explained on the following page are the keys to any successful athletic routine, regardless of your starting level within strength or athletic ability—if these four pillars are not in place, you will not grow or gain the progress that you are looking for in your routine.

The first three pillars—discipline, intensity and form focus—must come from deep within. Others can encourage you in each realm, but they cannot be purchased for \$19.99, they don’t come in a magic pill, and no program will work without them, regardless of how much you pay or which athletic genius has been recruited to teach you.

The truth is, even a cookie-cutter or mediocre training program powered by the first three pillars of discipline, intensity and form focus will usually provide some sort of measured improvement. Many have blamed their own fitness failures on some faulty program, when in fact they never held up their end of the bargain by following through on the first three. **The individuals who continually look for the “perfect” program, the latest machine, or the next fitness fad, without putting in the effort from the first three pillars, are doomed to fall into a cycle of external blame as their own athletic abilities fail to progress.** Make sure you thoroughly check yourself and be honest in holding up the first three pillars on your athletic progression. Once you can achieve this, most science-based progressive programs constituting the fourth pillar can illicit life-changing results.



CONSISTENCY/
DISCIPLINE

COMMIT AND SHOW UP.

None of your results will occur if you cannot consistently show up. Working out two days per week will give you a slow increase in results—three days per week will give you a more consistent and steady improvement. Build a schedule and Commit to your Split!

INTENSITY

GIVE YOUR ABSOLUTE 100%, EVERY TIME.

Adaptation only occurs when necessary. If you are not giving your full 100%, your body will never get the signal to change or improve. Don’t watch TV or scroll on your phone—get your game face on, rouse up some passion, and visualize your idea of victory.

FORM-FOCUSED

DON’T SACRIFICE YOUR FORM.

Intensity is crucial, but if you are not focusing on the timing, fluidity and accuracy of the movements, you risk getting sidelined by injuries and stuck on plateaus due to imbalanced strength. Never sacrifice your form for “one more rep”—instead, **strive for deeper and fuller form with the goal of always learning to perform the move better.** This journey is both an exercise in humility and a quest for wisdom that will overflow into other areas of your work and your life.

USING THE
RIGHT PROGRAM

USE PROGRESSIVE, BALANCED FITNESS.

There are several types of programs that are effective (and many, many more that are not). **Look to programs that contain a progressive and balanced fitness plan** that caters to where you are in your fitness journey that will give dramatic and balanced results within strength, agility and endurance.

USING THE RIGHT PROGRAM

Since no one but you can harness the power behind the first three pillars of athletic ascension, let’s dive deeper into the fourth pillar with a few **primary programming principles**.

Before jumping directly into workout schedules and example routines, let’s go over some of the principles that those routines are crafted from. In doing so, you have the ability to match the right pieces to your current lifestyle while troubleshooting your own personal best program. The beauty of a progressive system is that as you grow and conquer your first workouts, new ones will continue to be unlocked. This program truly grows with you.

Note that we are using this program with a health focus based on our original definition of fitness we covered in the previous chapter—**fitness is a spectrum of one’s ability to perform an athletic balance of strength, agility and endurance in moving oneself, other objects, and movement over terrain, within the planes of available human movement, relative to the rest of the human population**. We will be programming our workouts with a focus on safe ascent of performance that supports a core vigor and energy. Our focus is not aesthetic (although it will naturally follow with time). If you wish to diversify your current training program to focus more on physical aesthetics at the sacrifice of balanced ascension, that is your decision to do so. However, we recommend you at least complete the Phoenix Series in its entirety as a foundation of balanced functional health before pursuing the hobby of aesthetic body sculpting.

PRINCIPLE 1: RESULTS ARE MEASURABLE.

Yes, it actually is that easy—all you need to find your best program is to measure your fitness and keep track of progressions to see if your program is actually working. If not, adjust accordingly. This guiding principle is a safety net that ensures you are not wasting your time and is an obvious but under-utilized fact—your fitness metrics should be improving if you are actually putting forth the effort from the first three pillars on the previous page. Within the Lion’s Heart perspective, our fitness is numerically quantified in both the simple overarching badge of your benchmark level on the Lion’s Ladder, as well as your “Fitness Stats” record with all of your major fitness metrics (found in your Action Book). Keep track of core stats and use a powerful principle to determine whether your program is benefitting you week

after week. **The Principle of Measured Effectiveness states that if your primary points of measure are increasing, you are succeeding.**

If your numbers are static or are dropping, yet you are putting forth your end of the bargain with consistency, intensity and a form focus, it might be time to fine-tune or change your program. Keep in mind that when you first begin, your metrics should grow more quickly—conversely, all individuals will run into a “plateau” of their potential at some point, at which time you can either ride it out and try to maintain at that level, or restrategize and push past each plateau as it emerges.

PRINCIPLE 2: USE PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD.

Now that we are keeping track of our metrics, the next and most basic principle of athletic ascension in your workout is **progressive overload, which is the idea that you will progressively add more to your workload (without sacrificing form)**. Scientifically, this is done by systematically increasing volume and/or intensity. Common ways this might be done can include:

- » **Volume:** More reps per set, slower reps (more time under tension), more total sets, more distance in terms of endurance, holding poses longer in yoga
- » **Intensity:** Adding more weight, increasing speed, progressing to a more difficult variation of an exercise

Progressive overload is a powerful and vital tool, though when done in excess or when poorly programmed, it can result in injury. Ensure you give yourself the time for a proper warmup by performing less intense versions of the motion, systematically adding volume or intensity to each set while maintaining proper form. Each workout should be measured against the last, stepping it up just one notch. But how much is a notch? That really depends on your body and the workout you are performing. When you first begin athletic training, you may be able to increase more dramatically, adding 5-10% to your reps and intensity for every workout. Later in your fitness journey as you start to plateau, more subtle changes might be necessary, such as adding in an extra rep here or

adding just 5 more pounds there. Though there are many systems and guides in the world in addition to ours, you must be in tune with your own mind/body connection to safely overload—only you can truly know if one more rep is indeed a good burn or actually a sharp pain that will end up sidelining you if you attempt it. The best tip is to *slowly* progress upwards. As you get more advanced, you might design some weeks or months to progressively overload more intensely than others, so that you are scheduling periods to heal with periods of more potent stimuli. This structuring is called “periodization” and will be covered more in our future resources.

PRINCIPLE 3: PERFORM MAJOR MOVEMENTS.

Make sure your workouts are structured around large, multi-joint movements as your primary measured exercises. These exercises should follow the primary movement patterns we focused on in the previous chapter, and summarized again below. They are essentially your workout “main course” and should be classic, long-standing movements from gymnastics, weightlifting, track and field, yoga, dance or martial arts.

In general, aim to avoid machines that provide assisted stability unless you are substituting because of injury,

making a strategic step toward the goal of free or unassisted exercise by building up your base strength, or you are simply using them for aesthetic reasons and not for function. **With assisted machines, you will atrophy in your own function for every bit the machine helps you function**—this can become a problem. In the arena of raw physical ability, machines can weaken you like an overprotective parent weakens a child—so, go into using machines knowing why you are using them.

Performing small isolations of single joints can be a great source for aesthetic sculpting, fine tuning, and weak point training or pre-hab—in general however, these smaller, single-joint isolations should be secondary exercises to multi-joint movement chains and found more in larger, multi-day workout splits. **If you are only practicing isolations, you are missing out on training your body along the multi-joint chains that it functions within**, and you can sometimes end up training yourself into an awkwardly-moving, injury-prone muscular frame with poor coordination and little physical integrity. These multi-joint “major chains” listed below are found to be the majority of the Fitness Stats recorded in the Lion’s Heart method.

MAJOR CHAINS OF EXERCISES	
PRESSES	Pushup variations, Overhead Press variations, Arm Balances, Bench Press variations, Dip variations
PULLS	Pullup variations, Ring Row variations, Gymnastics/Hanging, Dumbbell/Barbell Row variations
LEGS (SQUAT, HINGE, LUNGE)	Barbell Squat variations, Deadlift variations, Sprinting, High Lunges, Warrior 3, Jumps, Split Squats
CORE (SPINAL, FLEXION/EXTENSION, ROTATION, MIDLINE STABILITY)	Plank variations, Backbends, Bridge/Wheel variations, Hanging Tuck variations, L-Sit variations, Twists
MULTIPLE CHAINS (GOOD FOR FULL BODY DAYS)	Barbell Squat variations, Deadlift variations, Sprinting, High Lunges, Warrior 3, Jumps



PRINCIPLE 4: FIND YOUR REST RATIO.

A work/rest ratio is your recovery time in relation to your workload, balanced in two ways: **on the large scale**, how much rest you take for your body to rebuild and recover (anabolic) from the training sessions that exercised and broke down the body (catabolic), and **on the small scale** of how much rest you take between sets and reps.

ON THE LARGE SCALE

Total periods of rest needed to fully recover can vastly differ based on the intensity of the training session and the individual; however, there is consensus on some fundamental recovery ranges and differences in certain training modalities and their recovery times. A good mind/body connection should be your primary reference point in conjunction with these guides.

Strength and Conditioning Recovery

When you are doing anything rough that involves pushing your body toward its limits, performing several reps of difficult strength-based movements, filling the muscles full of blood, punching/fighting/rough activity, or cirque/aerial arts that leave the body swollen, scuffed up and bruised, you will need an anabolic period to fully physically recover to a new and stronger self. The rest period for the heavily-used muscle group to fully recover to a supercompensation state superior to its last session is generally 1-3 days, if adequate rest and nutrition is supplied. This is not to say that this muscle group cannot be trained multiple days in a row—it just means the muscle group may not be fully recovered or in a supercompensation state ready to gain new PRs.

Full-body training, or overlapping training schedules so that one muscle group gets repeat abuse, can make you tougher and help break through plateaus with increased athletic stimulus. However, training again before a full recovery does increase the chances of injury and will slowly lower performance until adequate time for recovery is allowed. Be aware of potentially overtraining, especially when training the same muscle group day after day. On the other hand, waiting too long between training sessions and having excessive rest can leave you soft, performing more poorly than in your last session. This drop-off is a little different for everyone, and if you had a very extreme cycle of training, you might even grow stronger from a week or two off; but generally, not training a muscle chain for more than 5-7 days will leave you losing any precious gains you might have previously built. The goal when putting together your

“weekly split,” especially in regards to your tougher strength-based exercises, is to find the optimal days of rest that you feel the peak of your supercompensation curve. This is usually right after 1-3 days of rest, so as a rule of thumb, try to train every major muscle group twice in a week with 1-3 days of rest between them. Understand that our templated weekly splits in the following pages are formed around this principle, so if you modify one to make it your own, try to maintain a good work-to-rest ratio in your solution.

Endurance Recovery

Endurance is inherently the ability to “keep going”—by nature, endurance takes less time to recover from so that we can get going quicker than we could with a strength-based workout. Our greatest endurance athletes sometimes work out for days at a time, with proper sleep and nutrition. However, cumulative muscle fatigue and energy stores must be rebuilt. In general, endurance athletes can train for several days in a row and take 1-3 days to recover from any cumulative fatigue. As long as your body still feels able, there is nothing wrong with a daily run, even though at a muscular level you are still using the same kinetic chains—just listen to your body and find your balanced rest, especially if you are going on more grueling distance sessions. Above all things, **remember that one person’s warmup is another person’s workout—it all comes down to the relationship you have with your body and the familiarity you have with your measured past performance.** Integrate endurance regularly into your routine (2-5 days a week) and take time off just before or as you feel cumulative fatigue setting in.

One person’s warmup
is another person’s
workout—it all
comes down to the
relationship you have
with your body.



Agility Recovery

Very similarly to endurance, agility (speed, balance, coordination, range of motion and accuracy) can be trained daily except for an occasional recovery time for cumulative fatigue. Agility is a much more mental activity, specifically to the central nervous system (CNS). A practical way to think about agility is the hybrid of muscular intelligence and plyability. The more you drill the movements mindfully, the more you know them in a way that gives you spring, coordination, fluidity, and total control of your movement. Some attributes like flexibility will not budge when trained on the schedule of a strength split with 1-3 days between sessions, but will thrive when trained once or more daily, several days in a row.

Just like the others, the greatest guide is the mind/body connection you have that allows you to find your edge but keeps you from overstretching or attempting a balance that your body is not yet ready for. A good coach will always reference your past performance and your current status to guide the art of what is too much and what is not enough. Integrate agility training daily into your weekly splits and take time off right before, or as cumulative fatigue starts to set in.

ON THE SMALL SCALE

How much should you rest between sets? This is an area which many can get confused. In general, if you are training

endurance, you want less time between sets; if you are training strength, you want to give yourself more time between sets. As you become more advanced, you can learn a few tricks like building a circuit of a few exercises that use different muscle groups, so that while one is working the other is resting, but there is an opportunity cost whichever way you go. Let’s begin with some general guidelines before thinking about mixing them together in a single circuit, and remember our Principle of Measured Effectiveness: **the only reason we are resting is to recover, and your performance on the next set compared to your previous set will show you if you had enough rest.**

Pure Strength

If you are lifting heavy weights or performing explosive movements close to your max weight for 1-7 reps, where the last rep can barely be achieved, you will want 2-3 minutes between sets for full strength potential to return. If you are going for a competitive record, you might want to wait up to 5 minutes—just don’t wait so long that your body cools down and you lose your psychological intensity.

Mixed Strength/Hypertrophy

If you are in the 8-15 rep range per set, hitting 45 seconds to 1 minute of “time under tension” where you can barely finish the last rep with good form, you will often need less rest. Anywhere from 1-2 minutes is enough time to recover.



Strength and Endurance Conditioning

If you are lifting in the 20+ rep range or tackling a For-Time workout like 100 burpees, 50 pullups, or a gauntlet of exercises like our Lion’s Heart Fight series, the most important thing again is to listen to your body and find a cadence or rest rhythm you can maintain without redlining your body, losing form and burning out prematurely. It might be a series of 10 reps followed by 15 seconds of rest repeatedly, or just a single rep every 20 seconds. Find your mental strategy for your safest and best performance.

CIRCUITS

Circuits can be a great way to layer our rest ratios into a steadily paced series of exercises. When doing circuits, one strategy is to rotate muscle groups so that each exercise allows the first muscle group to rest while the other works, and you can keep a steady pace to gain an element of cardiovascular endurance while saving time as you are harnessing your otherwise “down time” to train something. For example, a 3-exercise circuit could look like:

- » 15 Back Squats (LEGS)
- » 10 Pushups (PRESS)
- » 5 Pullups (PULL)

You can go from one exercise to the next with maybe 0-30 seconds of rest as long as your performance is staying relatively steady. After your squats, your legs get the 1-2 minutes of rest needed for anaerobic recovery during the pushups and pullups. The pushups rest during the pullups and squats, and so on. The only thing that doesn’t rest is your heart, which allows you to layer cardiovascular training over your strength and agility.

Circuits sound like the perfect structure for training and are definitely a preferred method of writing workouts for Lion’s Heart when given limited time, but they will never give the same strength results as a slower, methodical routine where 2-3 minutes is spent resting and building psychological focus for an approaching set. In the area of agility, sometimes circuits can be distracting when you really need to put 100% focus on drilling a single move or routine.

Keep in mind that these are all general guidelines. If you still must know how many seconds you should wait between circuits or how many hours you should rest after a 7-mile run and 100 squats, remember one person could use this to “get their blood flowing” as a warm-up while another would have trouble walking for a week afterwards. There are so many overlaying factors which makes programming more of an art. You could either follow a coach fluent in this art or use one of our templates until you get the feel of finding your ideal rest ratio.

PRINCIPLE 5: TRAIN YOUR WEAK POINTS.

It’s a beautiful thing to be able to celebrate our strengths and accomplishments, and very easy to overlook the areas we are weak in. Unfortunately, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. When it comes to our physical body, we often avoid our weak areas to the point that they can actually hold us back.

If you are able to run a marathon but don’t have the ability to touch your toes due to neglecting your agility, you are risking a future pulled hamstring, shortening of your gait pattern which slows down your speed, and setting yourself up for general mobility issues in older age. If you are muscle-bound but get out of breath going up stairs due to neglecting your endurance, you are not going to fare well in a fight or emergency situation, and you might find yourself with sleep apnea and other cardio-respiratory issues. If you are as flexible as a rubber band but can’t do a single pushup, you might find yourself having bone density issues, lowered metabolism, and postural issues down the road.

We encourage the pursuit of your strengths, but we find it is extremely important and often complementary to your stronger area training to make sure you have a firm foundation in your weakest areas as well. Lion’s Heart recommends completing the Phoenix Series as a foundation before seeking to specialize in a more specific sport for the purposes of safety and additional performance.

When completing the Lion’s Ladder initial assessment, the overwhelming majority of people will see that they perform much weaker in one area of the Fight, Fight or Flow. Once you know your individual area(s) of weakness, we recommend you skew your programming schedule to incorporate more of this weak point training into your routines.

USING THE RIGHT PROGRAM:
THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLES

- 1

ENSURE RESULTS ARE MEASURABLE.

Measure all of your major lifts and fit metrics regularly. Let this be the primary check and affirmation of whether a program works for you or not.
- 2

USE PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD.

Be prepared to slowly add reps, sets, and intensity into a pattern that best achieves your most steady gains. Stay humble, and don’t compromise form and safety.
- 3

PERFORM MAJOR MOVEMENTS.

Think in terms of major chains—upper body, lower body, and full body, or a common split such as push/pull/legs. Build a rotation through these major chains vs. working only isolations.
- 4

FIND YOUR REST RATIO.

Find the optimal balance of rest between sets (higher weight = longer rest) and between days of rotating workouts to allow for a full recovery of muscle groups.
- 5

TRAIN YOUR WEAK POINTS.

Find your weak links and put them into your workout rotation to build them up. Think in terms of strength, agility and endurance.

COMMIT TO A SPLIT

When choosing the right weekly split for your schedule, consider the times and recovery limits you would need to adequately drive your workouts and not cripple them.

Below are some common rotations for how to structure your main workouts. **These are not necessarily weekday/weekend specific and can be shifted as needed for your ideal schedule**—the important factor is the order in which

these splits are listed with the balance of work and rest intervals. The right split for you will fit within an active life with daily stretching and alignment practice. Listen to your body primarily and start small in your pursuit to larger goals.

2-DAY FULL | BASE MINIMUM

Two days per week can be a first step into fitness or an emergency base maintenance to stop from losing core athletic ability.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
FULL BODY	REST	REST	FULL BODY	REST	REST	REST

3-DAY FULL

Three days per week can give you steady results in increasing fitness goals. Rotate through full-body workouts for your level, focusing on making steady progress in your key metrics.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
FULL BODY	REST	FULL BODY	REST	FULL BODY	REST	REST

3-DAY SPLIT

Three days per week can give you steady results in increasing fitness goals. In this split, rotate through one full-body workout and two workouts split between upper body and lower body.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
FULL BODY	REST	REST	UPPER BODY	LOWER BODY	REST	REST

4-DAY SPLIT 1

Four days per week can give you accelerated fitness results and allow a higher level of athletic ability to be unlocked.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
LOWER BODY	UPPER BODY	REST	LOWER BODY	UPPER BODY	REST	REST

4-DAY SPLIT 2

Four days per week can give you accelerated fitness results and allow a higher level of athletic ability to be unlocked.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
LOWER BODY	UPPER BODY	REST	FULL BODY	REST	FULL BODY	REST

5-DAY SPLIT 1

Five days per week enters you into a professional-level schedule that can support advanced levels of sports and fitness at an accelerated pace. Ensure plenty of rest and proper nutrition for adequate healing.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
LOWER BODY	UPPER BODY	REST	FULL BODY	UPPER BODY	LOWER BODY	REST

5-DAY SPLIT 2

Five days per week enters you into a professional-level schedule that can support advanced levels of sports and fitness at an accelerated pace. Ensure plenty of rest and proper nutrition for adequate healing.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
PUSH	PULL	LOWER BODY	REST	FULL BODY	FULL BODY	REST

PICKING YOUR WORKOUTS

You’ve chosen your weekly split—now let’s fill it with workouts! Each of our template workouts found in the Action Book (organized by intensity their corresponding series) can be tailored to your individual needs. **When checking your own progress, remember the Principle of Measured Effectiveness and adjust as needed for a successful ascension.**

WHERE DO I START?

Though we dive deeper into program design in future resources, you really don’t need an extensive knowledge background—you just need to start with some quality templates that match where you are on your fitness journey and focus on a progressive direction. As you begin to build your custom schedule, remember that your guiding light should always be the Principle of Measured Effectiveness and weak point training. In short, find what you feel like you are horrible at, aim to see improvement in that area over time, and maintain what you are already good at with a steady pace. Here are our steps for getting started:

EVALUATE YOURSELF

Test yourself within a Fight, Flight and Flow from the previous chapter. Know where you stand on the Lion’s Ladder within each test. **The spectrum between your highest placement and lowest placement on the Lion’s Ladder is your Training Range, and you will use this as your spectrum of available workouts that you should be using.** For example, if you are a Phoenix Level 2 in your Fight evaluation but a Lion Level 1 in

your Flight and Flow, evaluations, you will use the workouts that fall between Phoenix Level 2 and Lion Level 1 to build weak points and maintain stronger areas.

CHOOSE YOUR SCHEDULE

Pick the weekly split that best reflects your current schedule, the intensity level that aligns with your goals, and the variety that you feel suits your interests best.

CHOOSE YOUR WORKOUTS

Using our library of example workouts that fall within your Training Range and fit the description of your chosen Split, begin to lay out your workouts for the week. Each template workout is either entirely balanced, or skewed more toward strength, agility or endurance to help in weak point training. Choose workouts that align with your fitness goals—that seem challenging, but not overwhelming—with a focus on weak point training at some point in the week.

BEGIN YOUR TRAINING

Run through your first week as originally scheduled. If an exercise is far too difficult, take it down a notch (or an entire rank level). Conversely, if you find your workout is too easy, take it up a notch (or an entire rank level). Most importantly, keep a record of your lifts, your times, new PRs, and any other key stats. Continue this for three weeks using the primary pillars and principles we covered at the beginning of this chapter, fine-tuning as needed, and use this as a checkpoint to see which exercises, benchmarks and weak points have improved.

PROGRESSING

After you have found a challenging training split, your measured performance numbers should start to improve. Continue the principle of progressive overload (sneaking in an extra 5lbs here, and an extra rep there) and you will potentially see that after a few weeks, you will have broken through to the next rank on the Lion’s Ladder. This will



raise the peak of your Training Range and hopefully bring your lower weak point into a tighter range as well. As these major steps occur, be sure to celebrate yourself and your milestones. You can return to your schedule with a new badge of experience and confidence for the next steps!

HOW MUCH TO DIVERSIFY

As you continue your weekly schedule, the beauty of focusing on health and performance is how clear a reference for a good routine it is. If it gives you positive metrics, keep going. In general you will want to mix up the weekly workouts, but mixing it up too much (usually due to performance anxiety in picking “the right routine” or boredom) can halt your progressions, since you are stopping something right before you have a chance to learn, grow and adapt. Our general advice is to choose a weekly routine and repeat it for 3-6 weeks in a row to see if you make improvements. If so, great! You’ve hit gold—continue the routine until you begin to plateau. Then would be the time to mix it up and try a new routine or fitness schedule/cycle.

FILLING YOUR SPLIT WITH “ACTIVE DAYS”

A common question when filling out a split tends to be, “will playing tennis/kayaking/being active in general count as a workout?” The answer is ... potentially. But in general, your best guide will be based on whether this activity pushes you out of your comfort zone or if it barely makes you break a sweat. If you feel pushed or feel sore from the activity the next day, you are likely going to see progress.

If you have any regularity to these activities, the Principle of Measured Effectiveness will give you a definitive answer. For example, let’s say you are currently tracking at a 10-minute mile that has improved from an 11-minute mile three months ago. If you join a soccer league and begin practicing twice a week instead of training your mile time, and in two months your mile time has decreased to 9 minutes, then your substitution is 100% working. On the other hand, if your substitution for your mile time training is a slow walk in the park with your significant other and in two months your mile time has only improved by 3 seconds, you may want to reconsider that substitution.

The spectrum between your highest and your lowest placements on the Lion’s Ladder is your Training Range.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Chapter 6: Building Your Best Life

- Balance your schedule
- Craft your environment
- Hone in on your habits

Your lifestyle ends up defining how you live your entire life and can dramatically affect other areas of your physical health and its outcomes.

Analyzing the lifestyle you currently have—and the one you want leading you through the journey of your life—is something to be taken extremely seriously. Take a look at how your life and health goals relate to your chosen schedule, habits and environment you place yourself in each day.

Though a lifestyle is always a work in progress, there are certain key seasons for rebuilding. We each live a rhythm—a recurring cycle of activities, meals and environments. How do we make sure these routines build up to allow us to be the best and healthiest versions of ourselves? ■

FROM HEALTH KNOWLEDGE TO LIFE PRACTICE

Understanding the concepts to measure physical fitness is a one-time endeavor requiring intelligence. But using this knowledge to **craft a new life empowered by your health practice** is a daily dance of wisdom and will.

After making the heart-led journey of discovering who we are and what we want out of our lives, we must turn to craft the daily and weekly processes, habits and environments that come together to compose this goal lifestyle.

The first two sections of this book, Medical & Nutritional Knowledge and Physical Ability, help us understand where we are physically and what would need to change in order to improve in those areas. This section focuses on examining the rhythms of our lives and training to change behavior patterns, integrating the pursuit and practice of health into our routines. Some will say that any changes in their schedules would be an impossible task. Phrases like, “If you only knew my schedule,” or “I’m just too busy” are

common ways of deflecting change. If you are one of those people or are close to others like that, I challenge you to let Henry Ford’s famous quote sink in and share it with others: *“Whether you think you can or whether you think you can’t, you’re right.”*

Lifestyles seem to maintain autopilot once they find their rhythm. Unless we actively grab onto the steering wheel and shift gears, we can sometimes end up slowly veering offroad until we crash, forcing us to start over. Not everyone seems to be called (or willing) to step up and manifest as their greatest self “Like a Lion” on this earth, but those who are ready will find the path to walk. The act of putting your best health together into a lifestyle that transports you to your dreams is not an easy one—but if your heart is ready to be your absolute best, let this be a positive resource in your environment.

THE EXAMINED LIFESTYLE

There are many approaches in examining our own lifestyle, but you can be sure that the unexamined lifestyle is a lot more difficult to define and refine. Congratulate yourself on making the decision to examine your own lifestyle, even if you are one of the few who may not want any changes. **Remember that hard choices make an easy life, and easy choices make a hard life—sometimes it’s worth putting in that extra work early on to fully reap the benefits.**

For clarity, we are dividing the Lifestyle section into a few dimensions for self assessment—going through a quick tour of existing personality self-evaluations, goal setting, and then looking at a simple way to view the framework of our lives that we must bind these goals within.

A healthy perspective of self starts in the heart. No one else can make decisions for you. When YOU are ready, you can truly impact change in your lifestyle.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

These are two of the most powerful questions anyone can confront in their life. These questions, when considered deeply and honestly, should be the baseline of your goals. There is not one single “healthy lifestyle” everyone is supposed to adopt—rather, your healthy lifestyle helps you achieve your own greatest goals. So, **defining your own “self” before defining your goals may help you uncover the lifestyle needed to support these goals.**

There are many takes on what measure of personality is most useful for all humans—this concept is very similar to

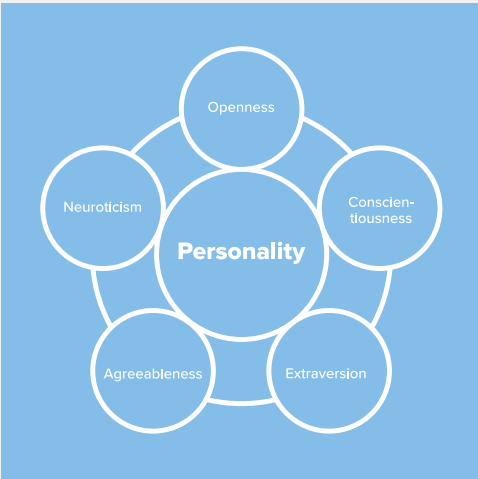
the dietary strategies from chapter 2. We recommend you work with a counselor, if possible, to help you examine how multiple perspectives of self and personality can illuminate your sense of identity and purpose. A counselor can also help you learn more about your present properties of self, your story, and how you have come to frame it toward yourself and others. If you choose not to work with a professional, it may help to explore several styles of self-assessment to get a balanced perspective—sometimes, finding out what you don’t agree with can help lead you closer to what you do believe. Below is an overview of a few common systems we can use as a starting point in this assessment.

Whether you think you can or whether you think you can’t, you’re right.

HENRY FORD

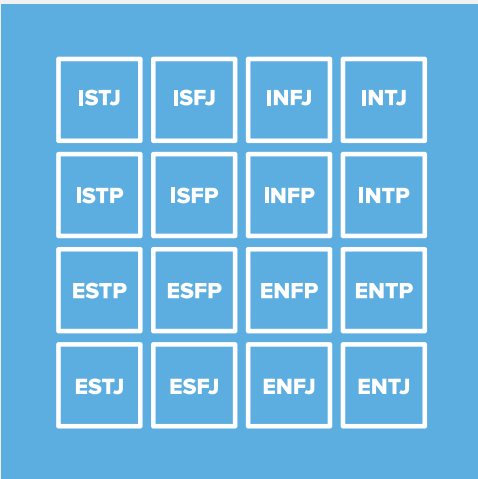
WHO ARE YOU?

Five unique systems to analyze your personality more deeply



BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TEST⁸

The Big Five Personality Test is currently the most scientifically-accepted personality test, though it still comes with criticism. Its largest strength is that it doesn’t guide the user toward any path—it is merely a taxonomy system for classifying all personality traits into five larger categories for self-analysis and reflection.



MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR⁹

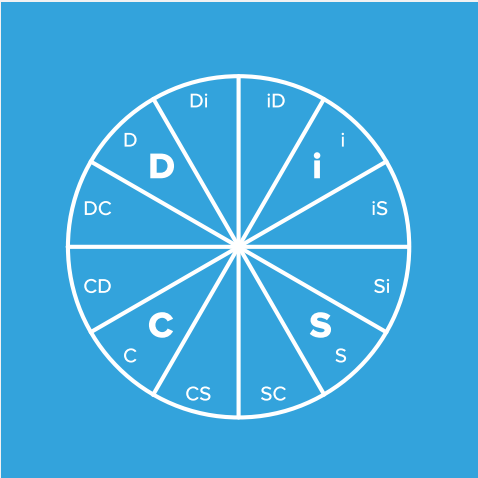
A popular analysis of personality, Katherine Briggs and daughter Isabel Briggs Myers constructed a four-dimensional personality theory based on the work of Carl Jung. Widely criticized, this 4-axis personality test produces 16 unique types used to explore everything from career guidance to building better relationships.

⁸ Big Five Personality Test. <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/IPIP-BFFM/>

⁹ Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. <https://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/>

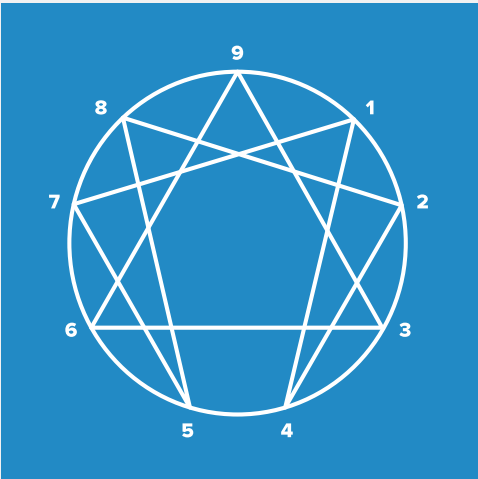
WHO ARE YOU? (cont'd)

Five unique systems to analyze your personality more deeply



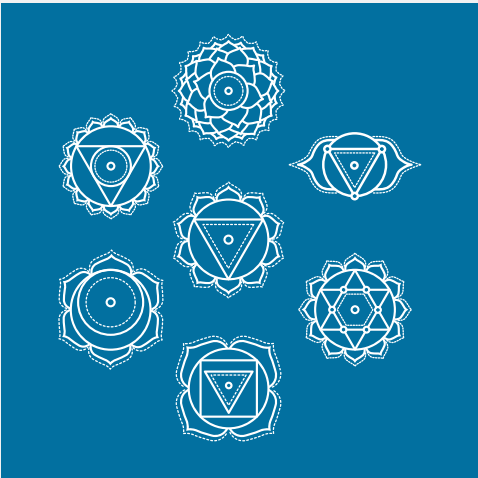
DISC ASSESSMENT¹⁰

This unique utilitarian system was developed from the work of psychologist William Marston, adapted to help determine team and leadership structures for businesses and organizations in order to solve problems more effectively. Although criticized, this system has grown based on its positive results.



ENNEAGRAM¹¹

The Enneagram model of the human psyche is a 3x3 arrangement of nine personality types. Its system is designed to classify each type for self-awareness and self-development. This perspective has both wide criticisms as well as positive testimonials, both in the business world and for personal use.



CHAKRAS¹²

Having origin in Yogic and Hindu traditions, the chakra system has had varied arrangements in the past. The more contemporary yogic chakra system uses 7 chakras as aspects of a healthy human psyche. Balancing each chakra, which can be in excess or deficiency, is a path to greater self-realization and health.

WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

Self-discovery is a beautiful journey that is a goal in itself. This powerful question of “Who Am I?” will naturally grow into “What Do I Really Want?”

The mission and vision we have for our lives (known as our Dharma, from a Yogic perspective) can only be manifested through choice and action. All of the hopes and dreams that lie in the palms of our hands can be broken down into goals. Ideally, these goals become a list we bring into form and then use to make key choices and actions that will steer the course of our life.

Have you recently asked yourself the questions below to set goals in these areas?

WHERE AM I RIGHT NOW?

WHAT DO I WANT TO ACHIEVE?

WHAT STEPS DO I NEED TO TAKE TO GET THERE?

PHYSICAL HEALTH	PERSONAL FINANCE
WORK/CAREER	RECREATION/TRAVEL
FAMILY/FRIENDS	ROMANTIC
HOBBIES/SKILLS	MY BIGGEST GOAL

¹⁰ DiSC Assessment. <https://www.everythingdisc.com/>
¹¹ Enneagram. <https://www.truity.com/enneagram/what-is-enneagram>
¹² A Beginner's Guide to the 7 Chakras and Their Meanings. <https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness-exercise/7-chakras>

You can find your own Goal Planner in Step 5 of the *Lion's Heart Foundations Action Book*.



LION'S HEART™
GOAL PLANNER

Brainstorm the goals you want to plan and work toward achieving this year. Then, refer back to this sheet at the start of each month to check in with where you are and what next steps you can take to complete your goals.

	WHERE AM I RIGHT NOW?	WHAT DO I WANT TO ACHIEVE?	WHAT STEPS DO I NEED TO TAKE?
PHYSICAL HEALTH			
PERSONAL FINANCE			
WORK/ CAREER			
RECREATION OR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES			
FAMILY/ FRIENDS			
ROMANTIC			
HOBBIES/ SKILLS			
IF I COULD ONLY COMPLETE ONE THING BY THE END OF THE YEAR, IT WOULD BE:			

CRAFT YOUR LIFESTYLE

After exploring who you are and what you want, it all comes down to placing this purpose into frame. We each have our own unique strengths, weaknesses, goals and personal circumstances, but **if we look closely, it all runs along the same framework:**

TIME: You will have 24 hours in a day in which you can find a daily rhythm. What will you do with the hours you have?
ENVIRONMENT: You will be surrounded by several layers of environments, both physically and socially, either building you up or tearing you down.
ACTION: You will have direct decisions in life, which—when repeated—become habits. These guide your life like a current, either pulling you closer or further away from your goals.

Each of the following planes listed below plays an important role in refining and re-engineering your lifestyle. **Review each question listed within the planes below, examine more closely how you may act (or react) to them,** and take note of which questions you recognize need a deeper exploration. You might just find new opportunities for refinement over the course of this chapter.



YOUR ROUTINE

Do you enjoy your daily and weekly routine?
Would you consider it to be balanced?
Who has control over this?
Is it tearing you down, or building you up?
Is it taking you where you want to go?



YOUR ENVIRONMENT

How are you being shaped by your surroundings?
Who is in your social circle?
What is the terrain your body must navigate every day—physically, socially, at work and at home?
Do you have any opportunity to shape it?



YOUR HABITS

What habits would you like to sow and grow?
What habits have got to go?
How often do you feel stressed?
How can you create healthy automatic responses to common stressors?

BRINGING BALANCE BACK

Let’s look at the big picture—how do you like the way your life is balanced? Where there is a will, there is a way. Finding the balance in your work, rest and play states can change the course of your life to allow for a more joyful journey on the way to your many destinations.

Our health is directly related to our lifestyle, which is a combination of our environment and the choices we make every day within it. Over time, most of us find ourselves riding the revolution of a schedule we have built, or more often, have fallen into.

This usually weekly routine we find ourselves in is a ship that has been built over time with the boards of necessity, personal preferences, and complacency, and becomes one of the most influential factors in the navigation of our life.

Our committed daily routine and habits can set the sails of this ship to harness our abilities and assets to direct us through our environment toward our dreams. If we lay sight to these dreams and expand on the steps needed, we can lay hold onto the helm and integrate the pursuit of these goals into our schedule, steering our ship to our best life.

CATABOLIC ACTION

If your weekly cycle has no time and action specifically carved out to achieve your personal development goals, the chances are slim that you will achieve them in any timely manner. Similarly, if you do not have time in your weekly routine allocated to progressively working toward a fitness goal, the chances are slim that you will spontaneously get fit. And in the “necessity” section, we all know that the bills that keep our dream ship afloat don’t get paid unless we show up to our scheduled career obligations.

WE NEED AN ELEMENT OF
WORK IN OUR LIFE BALANCE
TO PROPEL OUR SHIP TO
ITS DESTINATION.

On another spectrum, we can find ourselves missing quality time with loved ones week after week, and the hobby or travel adventures we always seek to pursue continue to float off in the distance. If we do not integrate and link play into our daily schedules, we can find our hearts running on empty, and our dreams eventually pass us by with the tide.

WE NEED AN ELEMENT OF
PLAY IN OUR LIVES TO
ENJOY THE JOURNEY AND
REJUVENATE THE HEART.



ANABOLIC ACTION

Both work and play are actions, satisfying different arenas of our health. So, in order to find a balance, we need a time of inaction to absorb, rest and recharge. This creates a cycle of action and rest that can support greater vigor and satisfaction. Often, all of our dreams, goals and neverending to-do lists are at the forefront of our minds, so restorative practices that fill us with joy as they recharge our system and psyche are the furthest from the priorities we hinge our schedule upon. Spend some time analyzing the below examples of health restoration practices that can be both enjoyable and profitable.

- » **Lowkey Lounging:** Setting aside enough time—as little as 10 minutes in some cases—for relaxing hobbies like reading, knitting, putting together a puzzle, sprawling out on the floor, sitting by a fire, or taking a hot bath can remove you from the chaos of life’s constant demands.
- » **Happy Hygiene:** Therapeutic hygiene practices, even the smallest of acts—like just brushing your hair or slowly washing your own feet—can be a form of active meditation. If you have a companion or the wealth to do so, a massage or a spa treatment is another great form of self care that the frenzy of life tends to overlook.

- » **Mighty Meditation:** If you want to restore and align your health guided by the testified wisdom of both ancient and contemporary guides, structuring as little as 10 minutes of meditation in your day can amplify your own restoration, energy levels, and headspace.
- » **Sweet Sleep:** Everyone seems to have subtle variations to how much sleep is the optimal amount to feel fresh and energized for the day ahead. Some only need six hours of good rest while others swear by over eight, but anyone could attest that having too much or too little will weaken us. Developing a mind/body connection to find your ideal rest cycle is an important first step—it is a vital necessity in your daily function, so it deserves just as much attention as your work and play.

WE NEED AN ELEMENT OF
REST IN OUR LIVES TO
REPAIR AND REALIGN OUR
SHIP SO IT SAILS SAFELY
AND SURELY.

BALANCING IT ALL OUT

There is an old saying that an even split of 8 hours of work, 8 hours of play, and 8 hours of rest makes up an ideal schedule. This sounds like a far away dream for most of us, and for a majority of us, work or life responsibilities make this a near impossibility. However, where there is a will, there is a way, and the unexamined schedule cannot refine itself.

Though a drastic shift in our schedule is unlikely to happen, the truth is that most of us can tweak certain aspects of our schedule a degree or two with a little bit of effort and ingenuity. Just like you might change your cell phone plan to find a better option that fits in the budget, we challenge you to periodically analyze your routine schedule, the direction it is taking you, and the balance you have built to see if you can make any refinements—even if just 10 minutes at a time.

Often these few subtle yet intelligent tweaks can add hours and vigor to our life. If a lack of rest or alignment is causing us to drag in our work or be too tired to joke around with our coworkers, we can sometimes find our waking hours are far less effective and better budgeted toward an earlier bedtime. Or, sometimes we find we can layer our time more efficiently by going to a gym nearby to skip rush hour

traffic. Not only are you saving time spent sitting in a car, but you are accomplishing another goal and renewing some physical energy. Another effective shift could be taking the 15 minutes you spend scrolling on your phone before bed or in the morning and replacing it with a quiet meditation or a morning walk. The options are endless for these small but potent shifts in your lifestyle.

Thinking about your work/play/rest split, are there any areas you feel like these small (or large) shifts can be achieved? We challenge you to periodically re-examine your schedule in light of a few factors:

- » **Work:** your actions which are necessary to support the achievement of your hopes and dreams
- » **Play:** your happiest, most joyful experiences, both solo and with friends/loved ones
- » **Rest:** the relaxation and downtime you need to recharge the body, mind and heart

Independently or along with the guidance of a counselor, we recommend starting with our weekly balance and schedule worksheets in Step 5 of your Action Book.

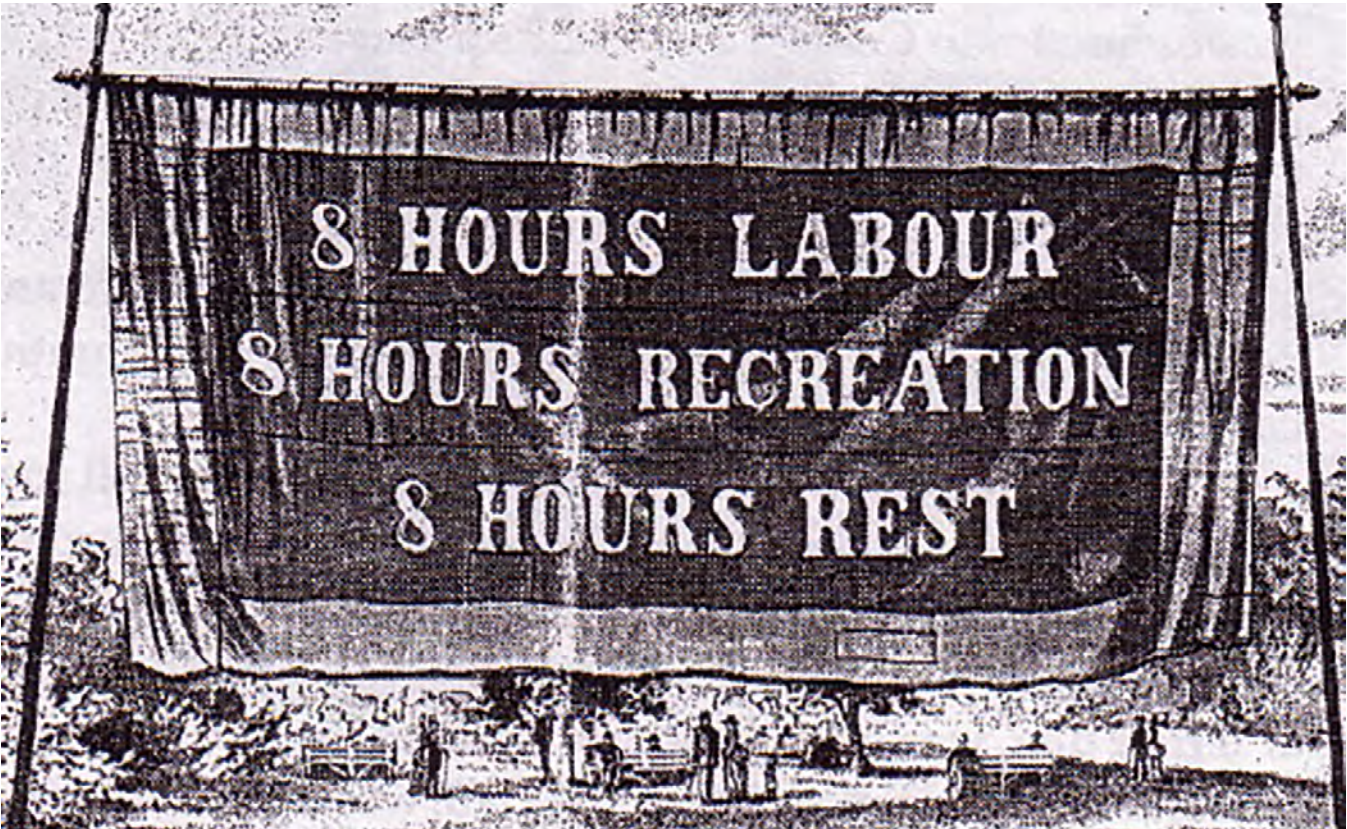


image credit: thefleece.org

BALANCED LIFESTYLE TIPS

When you’re ready to restructure your base schedule to find a healthier balance, use some of these tips to get you started.

There will be seasons of life that are more demanding than others. Try to keep some core elements of balance and layer in where you can, but don’t let it defeat you. Keep a calm breath and a grateful mindset, and do your best. You’ll make it through.

Protect your schedule. Be assertive (not rude) with others who might ask for all of your time. You can be charitable while still protecting yourself. And always remember: make sure your oxygen mask is on before helping others.

WORK

Diet: Schedule exactly what your meals will be throughout the week and schedule time to meal prep if needed.

Exercise: Schedule workouts in advance and set a focus for each, or they will continue to happen “later.”

Personal development: Goal storm! Find out where you want to grow, and block off time in your schedule to take these steps. No one else can do this for you.

PLAY

Vacation: Where have you always wanted to go? Make a plan and set a date!

Hobbies: Anything from fly fishing to learning how to knit can be included in your schedule. If you enjoy it, it’s worth your time (with an appropriate balance).

Activities with friends/family: We only have so much time, and some of that is meant to be shared with those around us. Devote some time to building positive relationships.

REST

Sleep: Though this tends to be the last area of focus for those too busy during the day, it’s imperative you block off enough sleep time in order to thrive during the day.

Meditation: Just 5-10 minutes of quiet time in the morning or before bed can add clarity and peace to an otherwise hectic day.

You can find your own Balance Check in Step 5 of the *Lion's Heart Foundations Action Book*.



LION'S HEART™
BALANCE CHECK

CAN YOU THRIVE WITH BALANCE?

EVALUATING YOUR BALANCE OF WORK/PLAY/REST:

- 1 //** Analyze each of the categories in the key below and rate the level of satisfaction you experience with each within your life, where **1** represents the least satisfied and **5** represents the most.
- 2 //** Fill in a blank schedule on the next page that roughly represents your current routine. Feel free to use multiple colors to look at your balance between work, play and rest.
- 3 //** Observe your schedule and ask yourself:
- Is this my optimal healthy schedule?
 - Are there areas that I could rearrange my schedule for personal growth toward my mission and goals while maintaining balance to cultivate a joyful life?
- 4 //** Based on your current schedule and future goals, fill in your most ideal and healthy schedule on the following page.
- 5 //** Start planning any small steps you can take to shift your current schedule closer to your ideal schedule.

WORK

Time spent at your job/career	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteering/giving back	1	2	3	4	5
Personal development/exercise	1	2	3	4	5

PLAY

Active Hobbies	1	2	3	4	5
Quality time > friends & family	1	2	3	4	5
Quality time > significant other	1	2	3	4	5

REST

Low-key hobbies/R&R	1	2	3	4	5
Reflection/meditation/prayer	1	2	3	4	5
Quality sleep	1	2	3	4	5

You can find your own schedule sheets in Step 5 of the *Lion's Heart Foundations Action Book*.



LION'S HEART™
CURRENT SCHEDULE

Based on the work/play/rest categories from the previous page, fill in your current schedule based on an average week in your life. Feel free to use multiple colors to easily identify the difference in work, play and rest.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
12AM							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12PM							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12AM							



LION'S HEART™
OPTIMAL SCHEDULE

Based on the work/play/rest categories from page XX, fill in your ideal schedule based on where you might feel the healthiest and most balanced. Feel free to use multiple colors to easily identify the difference in work/play/rest.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
12AM							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
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10:00							
11:00							
12AM							

ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Quite often, a negative habit or routine can be altered or removed entirely by a simple shift in your surroundings. Are you ready to make the changes necessary to shape your environment, or will you continue to passively let your environment shape you?

One of the most influential factors in your development, direction and final destination is your environment. The classically-framed question to our fate of whether Nurture or Nature plays a greater part in our development attests to the large role our surroundings play in our life. **If we step our minds outside of our daily structure, we will see that our routines occur inside a few layers of environments, some of which have more power than others.** Though these environments can be broken down in various ways, we will be discussing them as Physical, Social, Home, Work/School, and Political/Economical.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

On a large scale of personal preference, some individuals may have a disposition to prefer certain environments—one might feel most alive in a location with mountains to hike, or waves to surf, and fresh air and sunshine fueling their daily errands around town. On the other hand, a rainy, dark and cold environment may lead individuals to struggle with depression, making healthy habits feel like a weighted and arduous task.

How do you feel about the health of your environment, and what choices or abilities do you have to alter it?

On a smaller scale, choosing between living next to a park or the center of the city should be weighed very heavily on how it might affect the many layers of your health. Living in an environment that inspires or necessitates physical activity and health practices could drastically change the rhythm of your life and the state of your wellbeing. From a more serious vantage point, issues like air or water pollution could literally remove years from your life and should be factored into your environmental decisions. How do you feel about the health of your physical environment, and what choices or abilities do you have to alter it?

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Some say that you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with. Whether this equation is irrefutable or not, countless studies attest to how powerful social environmental influences are on our behavior, and this seems fairly self-evident. The people we choose to share our life and thoughts with affect us consciously and subconsciously—this is why we must choose our social terrain wisely, or we may find ourselves picking up on poor behavior patterns, being left stuck to form boundaries, or being forced to rip an unhealthy relationship out of our lives. If you have a behavior pattern you hope to reinforce, surrounding yourself with old or new friends that share those same behaviors is a great first step. Working up the courage to go outside of our comfort zone, saying “hello” to new individuals in a shared activity space, and risking rejection may seem scary, but the potential to find a really great new crew of healthy people you can laugh with and grow closer to every day is worth the risk of a dismissive look from someone who wasn’t even good for your health in the first place (considering they couldn’t even be polite for an authentic introduction).

Relationships we find ourselves in, either by necessity or complacency, also shape us. We can’t always choose everyone we constantly come in contact with, especially when it comes to the workplace or our family members, but we can choose how to react or respond to those relationships if they require some healthy boundaries. Among those that we can choose,

it’s important to build positive relationships that can benefit both parties when possible.

We’re not advocating for abandoning a friend in need who might struggle with negative behavior patterns. Reaching out to those close to us that may be hurting can be a life-saving act of love for those who are able to take the rope and respond positively. However, for the majority of us, spending our prime social hours with those who are headed toward personal destruction can have some strong negative impacts—especially compared to the opportunity cost of spending that same prime time with those modeling healthy attributes which are mutually valued.

Taking inventory of the relationships in your life and the way they influence you can have enormous impacts on your own life. How do you feel about your own social environment, whether romantic, in friend circles, in your family, or in the workplace? What choices or abilities do you have to change these relationships for the better, or build new and more positive bonds?

HOME ENVIRONMENT

Usually this area is where we have the most influence, and home is one of the first places you can start to engineer your environment to your benefit. For the sake of this evaluation, let’s view “home” as both the personal area you return to for a little R&R—as little as just your bed, and extending out to any other areas you have autonomy over, like your bathroom, a desk, additional rooms, a backyard, etc.—to the mobile environment you travel with and control, like your car, a bike, a boat, your backpack or purse, and any other items or areas of ownership.

The reason our homes are one of the primary areas for environmental engineering is due to the regularity in which we return to it, the amount of time spent within it, and the usual freedom we have to manipulate it (time, energy and money depending). Even if all we have to call home is a backpack, the contents and organization of it are ours to directly influence wherever we go. Our home can have an enormous impact on the health of our diet, as we use our pantry and refrigerator to stock up on the foods we eat (or a



lunch bag we travel with). Emotional inspiration is powerful within the home as well—strategically-placed quotes, photos or other images of significance can lift us up in times of need. We each have our own sense of style that allows us to use art, paint colors, or even the layout of our living room to convert an area that just feels “meh” into an environment that supercharges the soul.

Taking initiative in engineering our home environment to be a place of comfort, relaxation and positive energy can trigger huge reponses that overflow into other areas of our health. Look around your home environment. Does it inspire you? Are you surrounded by healthy choices? How can you make your home be more inspirational or set yourself up for success in your native environment?

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Although the topics of political and economic science can seem heavy for a personal health inventory, these factors can strongly influence whether you have acces to medical screenings, physical therapy, personal coaching, massage/body work, medical repair, and more if needed or desired. This can extend to a variety of emotional and mental health factors when it comes to whether you believe your political values and preferences are represented in your current region or whether there is a district that more closely aligns with your ideals elsewhere. Similarly, some other areas have



a richer economic environment or series of opportunities that can support your ability to pursue whole health. Overall, we should realize the impact that political and economic environments can have on our ability to access and afford our own healthy lifestyle.

Look at the district you live in. What are the available health services you might have access to, and is there economic opportunity in which to afford this care? Is there a better environment you might be more well suited within, where you might surround yourself with those similar to you?

WORK/SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Our career is where we often find ourselves spending quite a bit—if not an actual majority—of our lives. Work can be a mini-ecosystem of the other categories. You will have a regular physical environment that may include lots of fresh air, or you might be working in a closed-in, tight corner of a poorly-lit office space. You will often have a “home” area where you keep personal belongings or food, and there is always a social environment (or lack thereof) that you may or may not have any control over.

With the amount of time spent in this ecosystem, it’s no question of how much it might shape us. Work is (often) a necessity, and it should be put into perspective as such, but this should not stop you from seeking the best from the environmental categories within it. Making physical changes in an occupational environment can be more difficult than it might be at home, but sometimes it is possible. More often, however, it’s wiser to focus on your own **response** to the environment than attempting to change everything around you to suit your own needs. And in the event that, after well-counseled evaluation, you find a job environment is detrimental to your overall health and wellbeing, it may be your moment to take your time and skills elsewhere.

Think about how your work environment shapes you. Is this a place where you can grow? Are there positive ways you can shape or react to your work environment without negatively influencing the environment of others?

Taking inventory of these areas of your life is a great first step in engaging and shaping the environment that will otherwise shape you. We invite you to answer the self-evaluation questions on the following page and see if you find any areas of growth in pursuit of your best lifestyle.

QUESTION YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Let’s look at a few core areas of your environment that can largely make an impact on your health. Some areas might be more challenging or have substantial cost associated with them, while others could be as simple as a bedroom furniture rearrangement.

PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS

Are you in a work or home environment that, by nature, invites movement or physical activity? Do you find yourself regularly walking up hills or steps? Do you have a stretch area, or a home or company gym? Can you find one?

Do your surroundings inspire you, or invite negativity and stress? Are there items in your surroundings that you could remove or replace to induce joy?

Do you live in a toxin-free environment? Does your municipality have a clean water filtration system, or do you need to install one? How is the air pollution in your area? Are you changing your air filters regularly in your home, and have you checked for carbon monoxide or mold growth?

SOCIAL SURROUNDINGS

Are you surrounded by at least one solid core group of friends or family members who regularly engage in physically healthy activities? Is it easy to spend time with these friends? Do you find yourself being pulled into negative behaviors with friends or family?

Are you surrounded by at least one solid core group of friends or family members that are uplifting and encouraging as a whole? Do you often find yourself belly laughing, exchanging compliments, lifting each other up, and giving pep talks?

DIETARY SURROUNDINGS

Your setup: Do you have a travel lunch bag, a refrigerator, and a pantry full of items that fulfill “your best diet” and free from temptations of “your worst diet”?

Your perspective: Have you made a health appraisal of your favorite restaurants? Do you see any menu items as healthier alternatives you could turn to in a pinch?

THE HORTICULTURE OF HABIT

Plant the beginnings of healthy habits and watch them take root and flourish. Go through the tough work of sowing a full garden of these healthy habits, prune when necessary, and find yourself gathering the fruits from your efforts.

Our life is composed of a series of routine habits that we have either chosen or passively fallen into which direct the course of our lives. These regular habits are like a current of water that pushes and pulls our decisions toward a certain direction over time. These habitual actions, whether financial, relational or health/hygiene related, will influence the course of where we end up in each dimension of life.

When we fully grasp how powerful habits can be in determining the paths of our lives, we can feel the sense of urgency that will lead us to discover how to sow new healthy habits and how to prune unhealthy or negative habits.

HABITS TO SOW AND GROW

The art of sowing new and healthy habits might be one of the most profitable skills for success, bar none—yet, only a treasured few of us regularly work toward it. Just like we have observed in other arenas of health, there are many thoughts and philosophies on building new habits (which we encourage you to explore further, either alone or along with a counselor), but let’s start with a few foundational principles that can lead to sowing new habits.

PLANTING TECHNIQUES

Once you have made a thorough assessment of realistic habits you’d like to plant into your routine, you must begin by setting up your “trigger” or “cue” that will set off the activity that you otherwise would not have normally done. Some examples include:

- » Setting a few alarms to prompt you to begin this habit or actually writing it on your calendar.
- » Wearing a “string on your finger”—like a bracelet with a sun on it to remind you to smile, an up arrow on your desk to remind you to correct your posture, or a “call mom” post-it note on your planner.
- » Hook a habit to a habit—every time you go to the water cooler at work like you may already do, add in a new habit like using this time to stretch the back and legs.

Regardless of how you might achieve this trigger or cue for yourself, keep it up until the habit is formed without it.

WATERING HABITS

Hopefully we all have a small budget of time and/or finances to have some recreation and reward in our lives. Connecting the timing of the rewards you already enjoy—or the addition of a new reward—to the completion of your newly-formed habit is a great way to subconsciously let them take root into your life. Even if the reward is a zero-cost positive affirmation in the mirror, find time to give yourself a pat on the back, but with one caveat: beware of giving a good habit a bad reward, which can truly become an art of balance.



TAKING ROOT

Some say it takes a month of consistent work to form a habit, while others say 21 days—common sense says it’s a little different for everyone. But everyone can agree that you must be diligent with new habits before they will take root and feel more automatic. Make sure that you strike on all fronts to both trigger and reward your habits. Finding an accountability partner or group can greatly influence the strength of your commitment, and immersing yourself in others who model these habits can be fertile soil of social support to grow your garden full of positive new routines.

COLLECTING FRUIT

Whether your new habit is an inclusion of daily postural stretches or just to floss more, occasionally take the time to look at all of the positive fruits that your commitments have given you. Use this gratitude and feeling of success as fertilizer for even larger habits in your future.

HABITS THAT HAVE GOT TO GO

As hard as it can be to get a new healthy habit going, stopping a negative habit can often become much harder, and it should be approached with reverence. Let’s look at some of the primary principles in removing poor habits and runaway vices. If you do have a serious problem, seeing a guidance counselor or a more specialized addiction counselor are the most powerful allies you can have for this time in your life.

CHOKING OUT THE WEEDS

One of the greatest paths to removing bad habits is replacing that time and reward path with other, more positive habits that fuel your life. Removing the familiar environment of the addiction and replacing it with a new, healthier environment may help to end the habit.

CREATE SOCIAL SOIL

Your social environment is incredibly linked to your behavior and habits. Just like sowing new habits can capitalize on surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals who embody positive behaviors, removing the negative social environments may be needed—sometimes just for a season, but other times require this to be a permanent change. A simple removal of the negative environment will often not be enough on its own. You will want to replace this with a new, positive and optimistic support system that you can see yourself thriving within.

In moments of weakness, use the acronym H.A.L.T. to keep from falling back into negative actions or behaviors.

PROTECT FROM FUTURE WEEDS

Situations may occur that will weaken your garden enough for the weeds to try and creep back in, and recognizing this vulnerability within yourself is a key first step. Keep yourself from following instant gratification or any other fleeting emotional states, and protect your garden of healthy habits.

In moments of weakness, use the acronym H.A.L.T. to keep from falling back into negative actions or behaviors, and see if one of these areas needs correcting instead:

- » **Hungry:** The emotional irritation of being hungry can make us impatiently seek something satisfying, and extreme hunger takes over our better judgment. Instead, treat yourself to a healthy snack and reassess how you feel afterwards.
- » **Angry:** Being frustrated or in a state of rage can be another place where you “just don’t even care about these stupid goals.” Take a step back and find a quiet place to cool down before making any sudden decisions.
- » **Lonely:** Finding yourself in a place of social isolation can make you vulnerable to reaching out to anyone or anything that can provide an immediate warm feeling—in most cases, these people may not be the healthiest individuals to reach out to, and may not have our best interests in mind. It’s best to plan ahead for situations such as these and keep a small list readily available of positive friends or family members you can talk to in times of loneliness or need.
- » **Tired:** Running on empty in the sleep department can lead to a series of poor decisions, as all of our faculties are not about us. Save the big decisions for the morning, and get some rest.

HABITS SELF-EVALUATION

As you review a few of the below classic healthy and unhealthy habits, take a moment to compare them to your own. **Do you already practice some of these? Is there is anything listed here you'd like to include in your life, or anything else you would add?** These have a physical health focus, but if you are taking a deep inventory of your own habits, other areas of health will overlap.

BIG 3 BEHAVIOR CHANGES

Ask yourself these three questions as vulnerably as possible.

GROW

What habits do I already have that I would like to fertilize, expand upon, or guide further?

SOW

What new habits do I seek that I'd like to sow or get started on in my life?

GOT TO GO

What negative habits do I have that I wish to uproot and remove from my life?

COMMON ELEMENTS TO GROW OR SOW


BETTER POSTURE


DRINKING MORE WATER


MEAL PREPPING


ROUTINE HYGIENE


POSITIVE ATTITUDE


DAILY PLAY


ACTIVE LIFESTYLE


DAILY GRATITUDE

COMMON ELEMENTS THAT HAVE GOT TO GO


SUBSTANCE ABUSE


STAYING UP TOO LATE


SUGARY DRINKS


SMOKING


MINDLESS MEDIA INTAKE


CONVENIENCE EATING


DAILY SWEETS


ALCOHOL INTAKE

You can find your own Habits Self-Evaluation in Step 5 of the *Lion's Heart Foundations Action Book*.



LION'S HEART™ HABITS SELF-EVALUATION

WHAT HABITS DO I ALREADY HAVE THAT I WOULD LIKE TO FERTILIZE, EXPAND UPON AND GROW FURTHER? HOW MIGHT I GO ABOUT ACHIEVING THIS?

WHAT NEW HABITS DO I SEEK TO SOW IN MY LIFE? HOW MIGHT I GO ABOUT PLANTING THEM INTO MY DAILY ROUTINE?

WHAT NEGATIVE HABITS NEED TO BE REMOVED? HOW MIGHT I GO ABOUT REMOVING THEM OR REPLACING THEM WITH MORE POSITIVE HABITS THAT I SEEK?

STRESS LESS

We might find stress in every corner of our lives, but creating the mentality of **recognizing onsets of stress early** while managing and releasing it in a productive way can be a lifesaving habit.

Stress is a normal part of living, but an overappearance of the same stress over time can exacerbate a long list of health issues while also shortening (and reducing the quality of) our lives. Stress becomes so difficult to fight because it can come from so many combinations of factors that are unique to each individual, their surroundings, and their life decisions. Unfortunately, our automatic physical reaction to stress is almost a hardwired instinctual response to tighten the muscles, breathe quickly and shallow, and have increased levels of cortisol in our systems.

A stress response on the athletic field or in an emergency situation can give us an edge physically with the onset of adrenaline that's ready for use, but the chemicals released into the body when you might be late to a meeting, receive bad news, or have an impending and unattainable deadline are increasingly negative to your health the more often these stressors occur.



Actually discerning how to manage and/or resolve these various stressors that rear their ugly heads on repeat requires some wisdom—however, correcting the automatic shortening of breath and tightening of the body can be forged into a habitual healthy physical response by relaxing the body and focusing on an even cadence of breathing. This can ease the destruction that stress can repeatedly cause on the body, while allowing you to have a clear mind to approach the stressful situation more neutrally.

MINDFULNESS

One of the first areas of stress management is the attitude of mindfulness. The term has been trending lately as a way to manage stress and be more present in the every day, but what does it really mean?

Merriam-Webster defines mindfulness as “the practice of maintaining a non-judgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn, creator of the research-backed stress-reduction program Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), defines mindfulness as “awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.”

Although there are many viewpoints on the subtle specifics of the definition, **to be mindful is to generally have an awareness of yourself and your surroundings, leading you to set yourself in a neutral or positive mental posture toward the present moment.** Just as we assessed the physical form and physical posture in chapter 3, we also have a mental posture that is worth analyzing—certainly, you can think of a time in the past when your mental posture could have used an adjustment. Alternatively, there must have been times when your mental posture was in a sharp and positive position.

One way or another, mindfulness is an aspect of being aware of our mental posture and placing it in a position most conducive to interaction with the external world, which will

build us up instead of break us down. It's important to give ourselves the time and space to take a breath and engage in a more mindful perspective of our present situation so that we can see and act more clearly and calmly from day to day.

MEDITATION

Meditation is a practice that has been taught and experienced in several different formats for thousands of years. However, similar to the conundrum of teaching humans exactly which diet they should eat, there are many ideas of what meditation is and how to perform it “correctly.” In short, **meditation will look and feel unique to every person who practices it.**

Merriam-Webster defines meditation as: 1) to engage in contemplation or reflection; 2) to engage in mental exercise (such as concentration on one’s breathing or repetition of a mantra) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness.

Lion's Heart believes that meditation can be defined as any conscious mental exercise that improves one or more facets of a person's health. This opens the practice of meditation to include several categories—traditional seated meditations and mantras, mindful jogging, prayer, bioenergetics, pranayama practices, quiet daily readings, and many more can all be considered a meditation practice.

For those just beginning, it may be hard to “shut off” the brain, or focus only on what you are hoping to focus on. However, the more you practice your chosen meditation style, the easier and more comfortable the practice will become. Though starting out with a new style may feel awkward or aimless, we hope the testimonies of those who have persevered through meditation as a path to daily stress relief and enlightenment will encourage you to experiment with the practice for at least one season of your life.

There are limitless ways to meditate—as long as you feel comfortable, **you might want to experiment with multiple meditation practices to determine which styles seem to resonate with you the most.** If you are struggling with getting started, beginning with a basic setup of 10 minutes of meditation for 10 days is a great initial goal.

Whether you focus on nothing but the breath to clear the mind (Prattyhara) or focus deeply (Dharana) on all of the people who have loved you into being, meditation can allow us to release large amounts of stress, while posturing our

Meditation will look
and feel unique
to every person
who practices it.

minds into a more positive placement. We hope you are able to find a meditation practice and style that suits your lifestyle and allows you to find stress relief through it!

STRESS LESS TIPS

Check yourself before you wreck yourself. When an onset of stress rears its head, become mindful of your physical posture, tension and breathing rate, allowing you to be in the driver's seat of your day.

Bring it back to the breath. When you feel your mood shifting to negativity, redirect your breath to the diaphragm-based, two-part full breathing you learned in the Phoenix Flow Level 1 Benchmark from chapter 4.

Stretch it out. If you are able, you can now incorporate the entire body into your breathing patterns. Stretching will increase the effectiveness of your breath, while also aligning the body and building up positive energy.

Visualize your best self. Additionally or separately, you can use either a gratitude or a success visualization or mantra to shed more stress, releasing endorphins and placing you back into union with a calmer, clearer self.

These are just a few methods of self-evaluation that we challenge you to complete by looking in the mirror of your life's daily routine. If you feel as though you have fallen into a dangerous addiction, if your stress has become a chronic weight you carry with you each day, or if a negative habit has taken hold of you beyond your control, we implore you to seek a counselor, coach, or support group as your next healthy step. **Remember that you are never alone—there is always help for those who seek it.**

THREE KEY AREAS OF STRESS

We must manage stress when we feel it take hold of us, but we must also seek to find the root stressors in our life so that we can fight them at the source. Below are a few common areas of life that can easily lead to a stress response if not managed, as well as ways to combat or release those stressors. Remember solutions such as simple breathing techniques,

meditation time, or a run around the block can be great ways to blow off some steam—**just don't bury your stress**. If you need more assistance or the stress becomes too large to reign in by yourself, calmly seek the source and look to friends or a mentor for advice on how to address it, with a counselor or therapist as support if needed.

	STRESS CREATION	STRESS CESSATION
 MIND	- Overwhelming responsibilities and surprise tasks - Saying “yes” to too many things, either in work or play - Financial struggles - The dream or desire for success is going slow or not happening at all	- Developing a planning mindset, task lists based on priority, organization - Knowing when to create boundaries - Refining financial budget and plan - Defining clear goals with realistic, time-based steps to achieve them
 BODY	- Lack of sleep, which creates physical exhaustion you have to fight through - No exercise or stretching leaves physical pain, lethargy, weakness, and a feeling of low energy - Fast-paced diet and lifestyle results in the body feeling enflamed, bloated and out of shape	- Creating rigidity within the boundaries of your sleep schedule - Making exercise a priority in your schedule for alignment and release - Refining and planning an improved dietary and exercise lifestyle
 HEART	- High criticism of self and others with negative self talk, which leaves a heavy and negative feeling - Weighed down by broken, unstable or toxic relationships with others - No sense of purpose or direction	- Taking time to look at all of your assets and all that you can be grateful for in others and around you - Practicing grace and forgiveness of self and others, balanced by wise boundaries - Seeking personal passions and gifts and budgeting time toward them

PUTTING IT ALL INTO PERSPECTIVE

Elements of a healthy lifestyle span far and wide. Below, you can review each piece we have covered in this chapter in order to quickly see which areas might need more focus.

WHO ARE YOU?

What is your most positive and accurate perspective on how you define yourself?

WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

What is the best framework for what you truly want in your life?



YOUR ROUTINE

What is the optimal routine of both daily and weekly processes and balances that will take you where you want to go in life?



YOUR ENVIRONMENT

What is the most ideal environment, in all its forms, that you can place yourself in for your own health?



YOUR HABITS

Which habits would you like to sow and grow in your life, and which habits have got to go?

YOUR STRESS RELEASE

What are your steps for managing and releasing stress in your life?

A person with a backpack is walking away from the camera on a dirt path that winds through a dense forest of tall, slender redwood trees. The path is bordered by a rustic wooden fence. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

AND NOW, THE PATH CONTINUES.

OUR HEALTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR LIVES.

As long as we are still breathing, nothing concludes in our journey of health—instead, our fortitudes and abilities exist in a constant state of flux. Pursuing health is a daily, weekly and lifelong process of balancing our ideal with the real. Even at the conclusion of our individual life, the choices and actions we have set in motion continue to ripple.

I hope that this Foundations overview can shed a light on the “wholeness” of health. I also hope you can take this journey of self-evaluation and continue to use these tools as a reference to recenter and nurture your own health throughout your conscious and purpose-driven life.

And now, the path continues.

- C.Z. Potter



Thank you to all those who
have loved me into being.

A special thanks specific to this project:

TO MY PARENTS

for always having an open ear;

TO BOB FORMAL

for countless hours building Lion's Heart Foundations;

AND TO SARAH ADAMS

for sharing in the creation of every concept and design in this book.

- C. Z. Potter



APPENDIX

MY STORY: THE WHY BEHIND THE WHAT

I was born into a loving family of artists who had a calling to unite the local community of creatives and serve as a collective resource for those that needed it. I found myself in the midst of my parents’ dream-turned-reality in the halls of the Artisan Resource Center (ARC) in Atlanta, Georgia. On any given day, I might have been playing with my father’s wood scraps, sketching on his drafting table, blowing glass, turning pottery or learning how to faux finish with one of the many ARC tenants. Because of this, I saw firsthand a remarkably diverse perspective of what art was and what it meant to pursue one’s dreams.

I could feel a deep desire growing inside of me to give my gift—to share my art—but being surrounded by so many forms of others’ art and expression left me uncertain and aimless about what my own art was supposed to be. Though I never felt any pressure from my parents to solve this dilemma, I could feel the curiosity of others, wondering which direction I might take. Meanwhile, I also found my curiosities tended to lean toward a (seemingly polar opposite) hunger of science—I would consume one *Scientific American* after another in the quiet escape of my room.

I could feel a deep desire growing inside of me to to share my gift, but being surrounded by so many forms of others’ art left me uncertain about what my own art was supposed to be.

As I learned more about the state of our planet’s shrinking ecology, and of historically-recurring sociological struggles of war, slavery and torture, I became increasingly depressed and even more lost in finding my gift. When I discovered the hypocrisy and corruption that exists in seemingly every level of government and the civil unrest with what felt like nightly stories of death, I began to lose hope altogether. What was the point of this? Why should I be obedient and go to school and get good grades just to get a job and assimilate into just another role in what felt like a pointless, redundant and surely painful existence?

My grades plummeted and I started smoking. I dressed in all black and hung out with the other kids who dressed in all black. I skipped classes I didn’t care about, and grew an increasingly nihilistic perspective while studying philosophy and religion. My physical form was barely existent. At age 17, I was 6’1” and weighed 120lbs, which made me the second skinniest kid in the school (I played Dungeons and Dragons with the skinniest). I did any drug that was put in front of me and received zero attention from the female gender. Though I had been formally diagnosed with depression, I still couldn’t help but give a big smile when I would meet eyes with any of my friends, while simultaneously trying to convince the adults around us that they should submit to the obvious futility of life as well.

One night around 3AM—in the midst of looking upon my own sad existence with philosophy, psychology and sociology swirling around in my head—I had an epiphany. I wanted to know what my life would be like if I just woke up one day with a full 180° change in my physical health. 100% Go Mode. I pictured my higher endorphin potential, the increased level of social acceptance I would undoubtedly receive, and the networking opportunities that would open their doors to me. I fully committed. That night, I hacked off my shoulder-length hair and thus took my first bold step into the new physical health experiment that I had created for myself. Soon after that night, I participated in my first weightlifting class.



The results were far more than I had imagined on the night of my epiphany, and extended further into planes that I had never anticipated. I was suddenly happy for no reason at all. I didn’t need my prescription drugs for treating depression. As my facial muscles learned to smile more and my pores welcomed my regular sweat regimens, my face began to change and girls started to notice me (I still didn’t know how to respond). As my cardiovascular system started to come online for the first time, I felt clear, more awake, and sharper. I started to understand how my body worked, feeling my posture rise with new confidence and musculature. I realized I had previously been just a floating head that now had a body. I had always been afraid of athletics, but had finally discovered the warrior inside me who had been there the whole time but had never been awoken.

As I continued to pursue my physical health, so followed mental and emotional health. I quit smoking, strengthened relationships with positive friends, and grew spiritually in my own journey as well. I started to examine the cynical view of God that I once held—this fake, Santa Claus-like figure for weak people to use as an excuse to cope with a difficult life—and began reading religious texts with an entirely different intention. I was now searching for practical wisdom from our past for which to love others, instead of the previous campaigns I fought for, which usually ended in me finding contradictions to smear in the faces of other less well-read

devotees. Looking back, this was really just me committing a Logical Fallacy called Confirmation Bias—trying to make others believe my own bleak perspective with biased “facts” aligned to support my viewpoint. My heart was warming, and finally aimed more toward discovering what “good” truly was regarding the choices I had in front of me. **I started to feel like I had an aspect of control in my life to make a positive difference in others’ lives, which then returned a flame of hope in my heart.**

I attended college, first for genetic engineering and then business. However, I noticed that my extroverted zeal and enthusiasm for talking about health, fitness, and the many planes of our lives it affects, resulted in others asking me to teach them what I knew! This was HUGE. It was the first step in me earning a living actually doing something that I had passion for. I started to accumulate knowledge as fast as I accumulated equipment. Each client became a puzzle to solve—what techniques could I use to actually change them for the better?

During this journey, I came to realize one of the most core pieces of my identity. Even more than I consider myself an athlete, I consider myself a teacher. My deep talent became knowing how to teach others what I already knew myself. I had heard the saying before, “Those who can, do. Those who can’t, teach.” I now realize the owner of this quote must have



been a fool, because I subsequently gained a new respect for those who, as a specific skill in itself, can understand how an individual learns and upload valuable knowledge and skills unique to their needs.

As I grew in my own mind, body and heart, I watched those I taught grow in many planes. Everywhere I witnessed people seeking one dimension of health, I saw growth and unexpected connections to other areas of their lives and within their community as well. This was a joyful and rewarding vantage point that lead me to take a full 180° look back into the eyes of my youth—back into a sick, sad planet of people who could not find love or joy. Examining the sight that had once broken my soul with my older eyes led me to believe something new about the human population, which has now shaped my life’s path: **I belive that for the world to ever be healed from the many imbalances of humanity’s collective and destructive actions, we must individually take personal responsibility for the many facets of our own health.**

I decided to embark on a journey to understand what “whole health” truly meant—to find the primary pieces that make up the comprehensive core of a healthy member living in a healthy community. My goal was to strengthen my own knowledge and thus be able to share any true power through the information I might find. The journey (and subsequent discovery) I was about to embark on happened in several overlapping seasons of life, but it began with my heart’s decision to study and empower the human body.

I studied physical health and athletics in most every facet, both physiologically and philosophically. I pursued the art of gymnastics, dance, martial arts, and yoga, discovering that the body was **adapting to achieve mastery over itself** within each discipline. In my path of learning the many families of weightlifting from Power Lifting, Olympic Lifting, kettlebell techniques, and weaponry, I discovered that the body was **adapting to achieve mastery and dominance over the main entities within its environment**. Track and field, swimming, rowing and climbing taught me that the body was **adapting to achieve mastery with momentum over the terrain** of the earth itself.

I studied nutrition, anatomy and health psychology. I distilled the complexities of physical health into its simplest idea: Our physical health is our fortitude and longevity of homeostasis paired with our athletic abilities, supported and by our diet, exercise and lifestyle, and protected, pruned and repaired through health technology. Using this distillation, I separated physical health into an artistic view of its core attributes allowing the principles of design to display a more simplified and synchronized image of the path to whole physical health.

I studied the great ancient minds of the past, including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and began to understand the educational art of the Trivium—the original core of the Liberal Arts—named quite literally the skills (“arts”) needed for citizens to be free (“liberal”) from mental slavery by the sword of reason and logic. I studied the knowledge

organization systems of Melvin Dewey, who put order to the totality of human knowledge itself, paired with the pragmatic educational philosophies of John Dewey and the ubiquitous principles of the Scientific Method. I studied what humanity believed to be the most foundational and primary arts needed to flourish. I discovered that after the establishment of grammar and arithmetic, there were six core “arts,” or life skills, that are vital to a successful, safe and satisfying life. I realized that without these core skills it would be nearly impossible to have a free life to pursue happiness, and I found the direct implications these six skill types have had on my own happiness, success and safety.

The truth above all, was that none of this education meant anything without love. A skilled mind and a strong body without purpose can quickly fall into despair, hopelessness and suicide, as I had once confronted myself. The majority of my adult life, I have sought after the questions, “What is good? What is truth? What is justice? What is the purpose of life?” I have studied the scriptures of Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), which all have the same root. I studied Eastern religions and mysticism. I studied many psychological perspectives like Freud and Jung. I studied the “Hero’s Journey,” the tale that repeats itself through history in the stories that pull at the heartstrings. This led me to the next step in my quest: to understand what love and goodness was in greater detail.

I took over a blank wall in my house and spent weeks writing every instance of virtue known to mankind I could find in any account. I wanted to see if the elements of love could be broken down like the periodic table. If dimensions of love and kindness were light, I wanted to see the spectrum of colors it would create. What does the substance of this stuff look like in its raw elements? What are the curves of “good”? As I arranged and rearranged the placement of my sticky notes on the wall, I peered into an ocean of virtue. I saw a few very distinct energies, or elements of goodness, emerge. Although it’s true these energies can’t be measured to the decimal by a ruler, all but the staunchest nihilist would consider these dimensions of a “healthy heart.” Who could deny that in their most raw form, elements like gratitude for our very breath, forgiveness of ourselves and others, courage to pursue dreams despite adversity, and love of ourselves and others are vital to the deepest essence of our health? Though these elements are a soft science but vital nonetheless, I used the skill of fine art to capture the six energies that emerged and craft them into an artifact of

the elements of love itself. I used this as a mirror to view my own heart’s health and as a compass to give me direction in my journey of love in this world.

The Lion’s Heart logo became the art form that encapsulated all that I had learned on my quest for knowledge. I crafted the six families of virtue into the six segments that make up the lion’s mane. I placed the mane on a triangle representing the body, divided into the three core areas of physical fitness. Lastly, a double-edged circle outlines them all—one edge representing the core knowledge every free and healthy citizen must have, and the second edge representing the paths of specialization in this communal existence. And so, Lion’s Heart was born.

In this life journey, I finally discovered what my art—my gift—was that was meant to be shared with the world. My life’s work is to design, craft and lead a simple yet comprehensive path to whole health—a program that will help us become our best self and thus become what the world needs. I have the joy of sharing this growing creation with you, and I invite you to look at how these tools of health might illuminate a path to new areas of growth in your own life.

My life’s work is to
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become what the
world needs.



MIND



BODY



HEART



The Lion's Heart Logo

The Lion's Heart logo was formed as a visual representation of the three components of human health. This compound shape, a collective of its individual parts, is meant to inspire and empower each time it is seen.

MIND

is a two-faceted circle; represents both core life skills, as well as the specialized vocations or career paths we might take

BODY

is a multi-faceted triangle made of three smaller triangles; each represent a major component of physical health

HEART

is the face of a lion with six segments that form the mane; each represent a core virtue that forms a healthy heart

HEART

Follow your path to a healthier heart.

Find the “why” behind your “what”, as the answer will truly be the driver in your health journey. Each piece of the lion’s mane symbolizes an area of a healthy heart. Whether you call it psychology or spirituality, confront how to love yourself and others with wisdom and courage, accept grace in failures, and experience gratitude for the gifts around you.



Let's find and live with a purpose of love. Seek deeper to find how to love yourself and others, and choose to act upon it.

Let's have loving, caring and considerate hearts.



Enlist courage to take on your unique path in life. Kindle the fire that ignites your passions. Build the self control to restrain from unhealthy actions.

Let our hearts be brave and persevere through all things.



Find true happiness in your daily life. Give thanks for the abundance that you're given, and live with purposeful positivity for a satisfying existence.

Let our hearts be filled with gratitude and joy.



Have the faith that you are a part of something bigger than just yourself. Connect honestly and loyally with relationships founded in trust.

Let our hearts be honest and empathetic, unified with one another.



Find true peace in letting go. Forgive ourselves and others who hurt us for a cathartic experience that removes the stress and pain holding us back.

Let's have graceful and forgiving hearts.



Awaken your wisdom to skillfully discern and make strategic decisions in your life more clearly. Find the insight to open the power of your creativity.

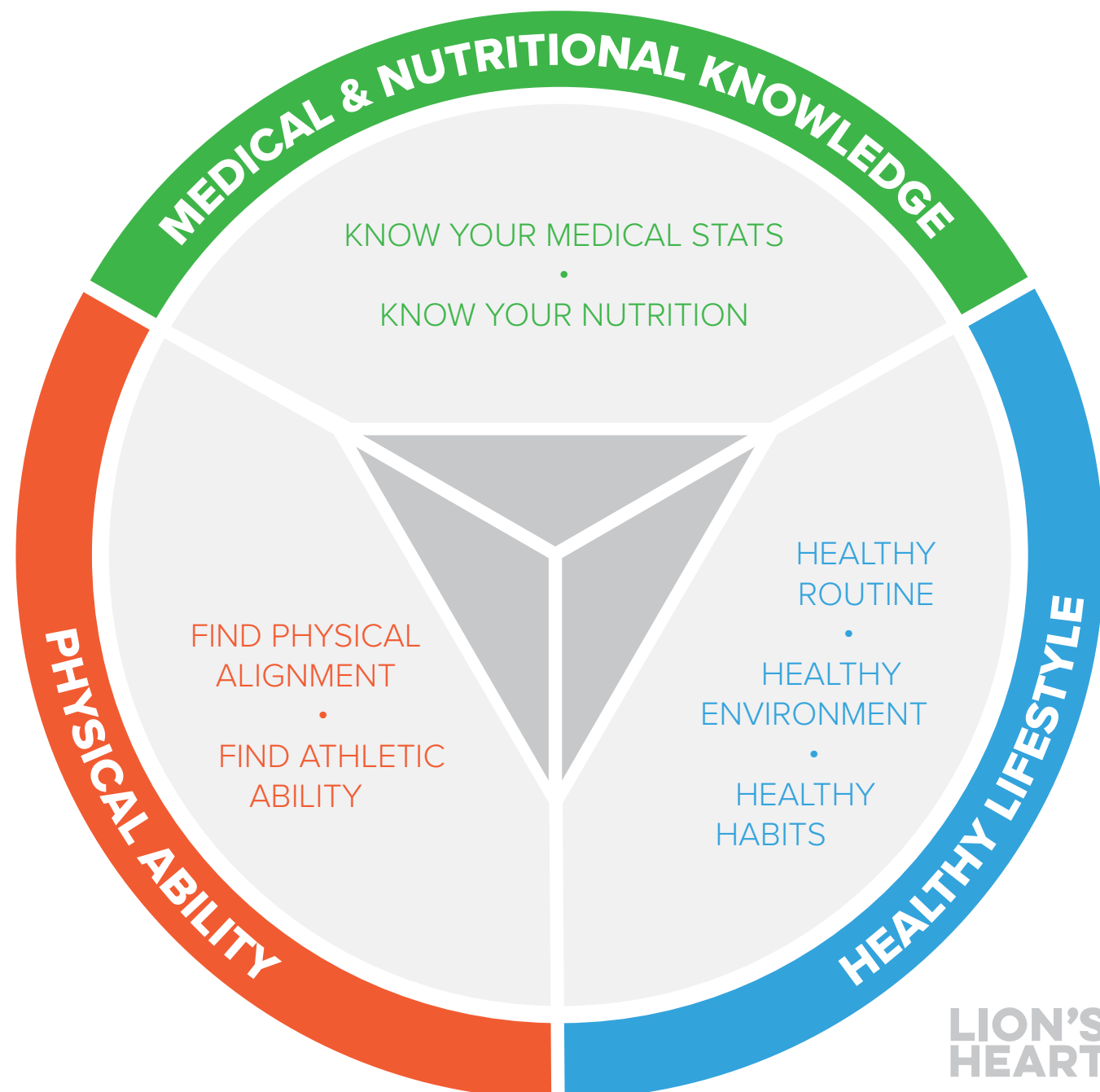
Let us be wise in the decisions of our hearts.

BODY

Follow your path to a healthier body.

As a new view framing whole physical health, our program has three focus categories.

Each has a streamlined set of tools to guide you to a greater state of physical health.



MEDICAL & NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Your vital stats and dietary patterns alone may place you at risk for some of the most deadly diseases. Gain a basic awareness of the building blocks that make up your medical and nutritional health, and learn to develop a plan of care if you are aiming to improve in any given area.

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE Get screened for any major diseases. Discover your vital stats, what they are, and how to course-correct by developing a relationship and a plan with your primary care professional.

NUTRITION Get an introduction to the groups of food that exist and the macronutrients they are composed of. Learn more about common diets and distinguish similarities and differences to build your own diet.



PHYSICAL ABILITY

For an energetic, powerful and pain-free body that feels both open and flexible, we lead you through a full alignment evaluation to find any weak links before going down a path to achieve your best physical fitness.

PHYSICAL ALIGNMENT Evaluate every major joint and posture with a functional movement evaluation before beginning a physical fitness program. Discover any weak points and begin rehabilitation before injury.

PHYSICAL FITNESS Assess how balanced your athletic abilities are within strength, agility and endurance along core functional movement patterns, and learn to design and commit to a program that develops or maintains balanced physical fitness.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Cultivate your health goals by assessing your lifestyle, becoming aware of the environments we surround ourselves with, and the habits we form.

HEALTHY ROUTINE Discover how we can look introspectively to pursue our goals, balanced between work, play and rest in our lives.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT Take a deeper look into some of the key layers of our environment, and learn to engineer them into the best settings for the life we want to live.

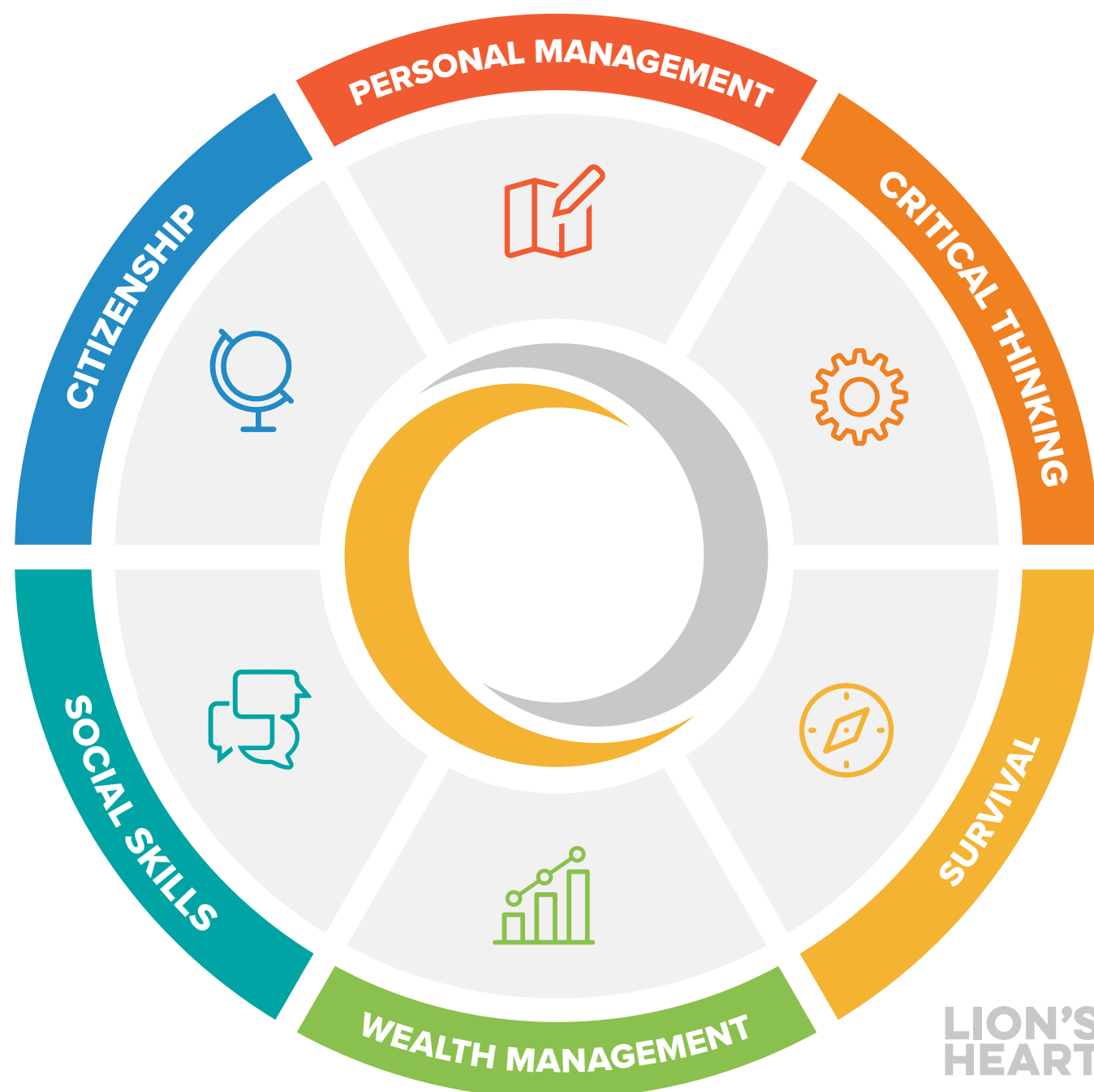
HEALTHY HABITS Create and maintain healthy daily habits within posture, breath, nutrition and more.

MIND

CORE LIFE SKILLS

Follow your path to a healthier mind.

Gain competency in the fundamental life skills most everyone needs to lead an intentional and successful adult life. We view these skills in six categories: personal management, social skills, wealth management, citizenship, survival, and critical thinking.



PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

Understanding yourself, what you want, and being able to turn these ideas into a well-planned goal is the beginning of achieving any vision. Let's build the daily processes to take us to our dreams.



CRITICAL THINKING

Fight foolish decisions by developing a critical mind that confronts new ideas methodically—screening for bias, fallacies of logic, continuity and utility. Make your best decisions by building solid reasoning skills.



SURVIVAL

When it rains, it pours. Learn to protect yourself and your loved ones through situational awareness, survival skills, emergency preparation and first aid.



WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Time is money, money is time, and time is our most valuable commodity. Develop the necessary skills to live a financially independent life, empowered to give back.



SOCIAL SKILLS

The ability to communicate clearly and confidently allows us to accomplish our career and life goals, as well as build and grow core relationships.



CITIZENSHIP

All for one, and one for all. Becoming an active member within your own community is the first step toward a stronger, more resilient, thriving tribe.

MIND

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Follow your path to a healthier career.

Secondary to the core life skills, every person has tendencies toward certain vocations or professions in their life. We have developed a creative way to display the classic career paths to illustrate how society has been growing, mixing and matching the same 12 archetypes.



LION'S
HEART

 WARRIOR MILITARY/SPORT Athletics, military, hunting, martial arts, police force, emergency responders, physical competitors, dancers	 HEALER HEALTH/MEDICAL SCIENCE All medical professionals, health education, health research, mental health, fitness coaching
 MERCHANT BUSINESS/ECONOMICS Business administration, stock brokers, industry economics, distribution, retail, logistics, marketing, banking & finance	 PRIEST COUNSEL/PSYCHOLOGY Counselors, psychologists, therapists, theologians, spiritual leaders, shamans, philosophers, pastors, ministry work
 TAVERN KEEPER HOSPITALITY/ENTERTAINMENT Design and operation of pubs, hotels, restaurants, spas, parks, game centers, playgrounds, concierge, transportation	 SAGE SCIENCE/EDUCATION Academia, librarians, historians, curriculum and information designers, teachers, scientists, mathematicians
 STORYTELLER FINE ARTS/THEATRE Drawing, painting, sculpting, music, theatre, dance, poetry, comedy, creative writing, script writing	 JUDGE POLITICS/LAW Public policymakers, human rights activists, members of judicial system, law, civic groups, international relations
 MESSENGER COMMUNICATIONS Journalists, linguists, writers, media platforms, copywriters, advertisers, public speaking, broadcasting	 FARMER AGRICULTURE/ECOLOGY Farmers, ecologists, biologists, animal husbandry, agricultural studies, sustainability, ecodiversity
 BUILDER ARCHITECTURE/CONSTRUCTION Architects, construction workers, structural designers, public transport, city planning, contractors, tradesmen	 TOOL MAKER TECHNOLOGY/INVENTION Applied science, digital developers, computer science, engineering, system designers, leading-edge thinkers



THE LION’S LADDER: BODYWEIGHT EDITION

CLIMB THE LADDER TO PHYSICAL FITNESS.

Each bodyweight benchmark workout tests the range of your athletic ability in the areas of strength, endurance and agility, and allows you to progress to the next level.

No weights required: all you need is a suspension setup with rings and a pullup bar.

Each level requires you to master:

FLOW	FIGHT	FLIGHT
A yoga asana flow to align the body, mind, and breath	A strength challenge to push the body to new limits	Benchmark run times to test speed and endurance

GLOSSARY		
RC Repeat continuously	HS Handstand	BW Body weight

		FLOW	FIGHT	FLIGHT
GRIFFIN ADVANCED		GRIFFIN FLOW 3	3x 90° PUSHUP x3 1-ARM PULLUP x3 each side - BACK FLIP x3 - JUMPING PISTOL SWITCH x10 each side 360° LEVER x3 15:00	100M 0:12 10K 40:00
		GRIFFIN FLOW 2	4x - MUSCLE UP x5 - HS PUSHUP x7 - SKIN THE CAT x1 slow - PISTOL SQUAT x10 15:00	100M 0:13 10K 45:00
		GRIFFIN FLOW 1	5X 5x - CLAPPING PULLUP x7 - HS PUSHUP x3 @ elbow - PISTOL SQUAT x5 15:00	100M 0:14 10K 50:00
LION INTERMEDIATE		LION FLOW 3	3x - PULLUP x7 - RING PUSHUP>DD x10 - PISTOL ROLLUP x3 each side 3x - RING L-SIT 10sec - PIKE LEVER 10sec - SUPER MARIO x12 each side 15:00	100M 0:15 5K 25:00
		LION FLOW 2	3x - PULLUP x5 - RING PUSHUP x10 - SUPER MARIO x10 each side 3x - LEVER TUCK x5 - HS HOLD 15sec - DROP SQUAT x25 14:00	100M 0:16 5K 27:00
		LION FLOW 1	3x - PULLUP x1 - WALL WALK x1 - SPLIT SQUAT x10 each side 3x - PUSHUP x10 - RING ROW x15 @ hip height - DROP SQUAT x15 13:00	100M 0:18 5K 30:00
PHOENIX BEGINNER		PHOENIX FLOW 3	4x - PUSHUP x5 - HANGING TUCK x5 - SPLIT SQUAT x10 each side - RING ROW x10 @ hip height 10:00	100M 0:20 1 MILE 10:00
		PHOENIX FLOW 2	3x - KNEE PUSHUP x7 - RING ROW x12 @ elbow height - BW SQUAT (full depth) x20 7:00	100M 0:25 1 MILE 12:30
		PHOENIX FLOW 1	3x - RING ROW x10 @ shoulder height - FULL BURPEE x5 - BW SQUAT x10 6:00	100M 0:40 1 MILE 15:00
START HERE				

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ISBN: 978-1-7356045-0-3

Published in the United States by Lion’s Library Publishing

Design and Illustration by Sarah Adams

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

Second Edition

www.lionshearthealth.com



MIND



BODY



HEART