

The Insider's Guide *to* Health and Weight Loss

8 Keys to Reclaim Your Well-Being



INTRODUCTION

Health, energy and well-being are the fulcrum on which our entire life experience turns. When we feel good, everything else is easier and more enjoyable. When we we're tired, overweight, stressed-out and grappling with health issues, everything else becomes more challenging. Life is not a spectator sport, and struggling with our health consumes time, energy and resources, while also impacting our mental-emotional well-being, our relationships, our productivity and more.

As of 2020, over 74% of Americans over 20 years old are overweight, with more than half of those people being obese. Every year in the U.S., well over half-million people die from heart disease while another 600,000+ die from cancer; both are chronic diseases. Meanwhile, the vast majority of Americans—hundreds of millions of people—live with chronic health issues such as acid reflux, digestive issues, blood sugar imbalance (diabetes), autoimmune challenges and chronic headaches.

Why is obesity and chronic disease rising? How can we—individually and collectively—reclaim our health and well-being?

This eBook will uncover our prevailing approach to health and weight loss, which is clearly not working. We'll then explore the foundational pillars that promote lifelong well-being.



YOUR WELL-BEING: THREE POTENT *PITFALLS* TO AVOID

Optimal health is a life journey worth engaging with, while perfect health is an unrealistic goal. Yet the diet and pharmaceutical industries feed us images and stories of overnight health turnarounds. Do this diet and lose 20 pounds in 10 days. Take this pill and those nagging symptoms will disappear. We unwittingly buy into these stories because we want them to be true, and because we're immersed in a culture that centers around quick diets, symptom suppression and overnight success.

The truth about health is a little more complicated and requires more skin in the game, if we want to truly reclaim our health and well-being. If we want to lose the excess body fat and keep it off. If we want to enjoy our life experience instead of feeling stressed-out by it. The good news: YOU are the steward of your health journey, which means YOU can have immense influence on how you feel, how you look and your experience of health. You can get started by avoiding the diet bandwagon, the time story and the disempowered mindset. Let's explore each of these in a little more detail.



1. The Diet Bandwagon

Diets don't work. Ninety-seven percent of diets fail over a two-year period, with the dieter initially losing body fat and then gaining it all back, often coming out of that two-year period heavier than when they started the diet. Can you imagine flying on an airline that crashed 97% of its planes? Never! Yet we keep going back to an alleged health tool that delivers that kind of failure rate.

Sadly, not only is the dieter still overweight and unhappy about it, but now they also feel like something is wrong with them. "The diet works for all those skinny, shiny people in the ads, but not for me, so I must be incompetent or irreversibly broken." This simply isn't true. It's not the person that's incompetent, it's the \$7 billion diet industry and its accompanying mentality. Losing body fat is a journey and a lifestyle, not an event. The diet bandwagon, and its accompanying quick-fix mentality, keeps us overweight and unhealthy.

2. The Time Story

We often cite lack of time as the reason for why we don't take better care of ourselves. And this story is deeply supported by our culture. Being busy has become an inward and outward signal that we are worthwhile and important, while our sense of self-worth has become wrapped up in how busy and productive and we are. We don't seem to have time for the quiet-yet-important tasks of connection, daily living and self-care. This idea is simply the narrative we've adopted; it's not truth.

The majority of the time, our inattention to our health is not a function of time, it's a function of priorities. As an example, the same person that believes that they don't have time for a health-building breakfast, will suddenly find the time if they're offered a \$100 bonus for every day that they eat a healthy breakfast. Especially when they find out how easy and inexpensive a health-building breakfast really is. The time story is a culturally-created phenomenon that we don't question, as it quietly erodes our self-care and our health.



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3. The Disempowered Mindset

Our medical system was designed for trauma and infectious disease and is quite adept in those areas of healthcare. If we get in a car accident, rupture our appendix, or develop bacterial pneumonia, a hospital with trained medical professionals is the place to be. Yet the powerful intertwined triad of medical, healthcare insurance and pharmaceutical companies has underpinned an evolution of thinking where we view them as our only choice for all health challenges. Where we view medical advice as an instruction—as opposed to options to consider—and pharmaceutical drugs as the intervention-of-choice. We hope to be “fixed.”

There are so many good, caring doctors who feel trapped by the broken healthcare system in which they practice. Our medical system has a low success rate with chronic disease, weight loss or helping people evolve their health. For instance, Type 2 diabetes typically has a high cure rate via lifestyle choices, often in a matter of months. But the tools of our medical system are largely surgery and medication—often with the focus being symptom suppression as opposed to healing—so lifestyle choices are viewed as supplementary nice-to-haves, as opposed to curative.

Optimal health is a pro-active inside job of lifestyle choices, mindset and habits. Of foundational healing. We can become active stewards of our own health journey, instead of buying into the disempowered mindset of relying on a broken and often-ineffective healthcare system.

The great news is that you can break out of this web of pitfalls and engage powerful pillars that will support your ability to reclaim your health and well-being.



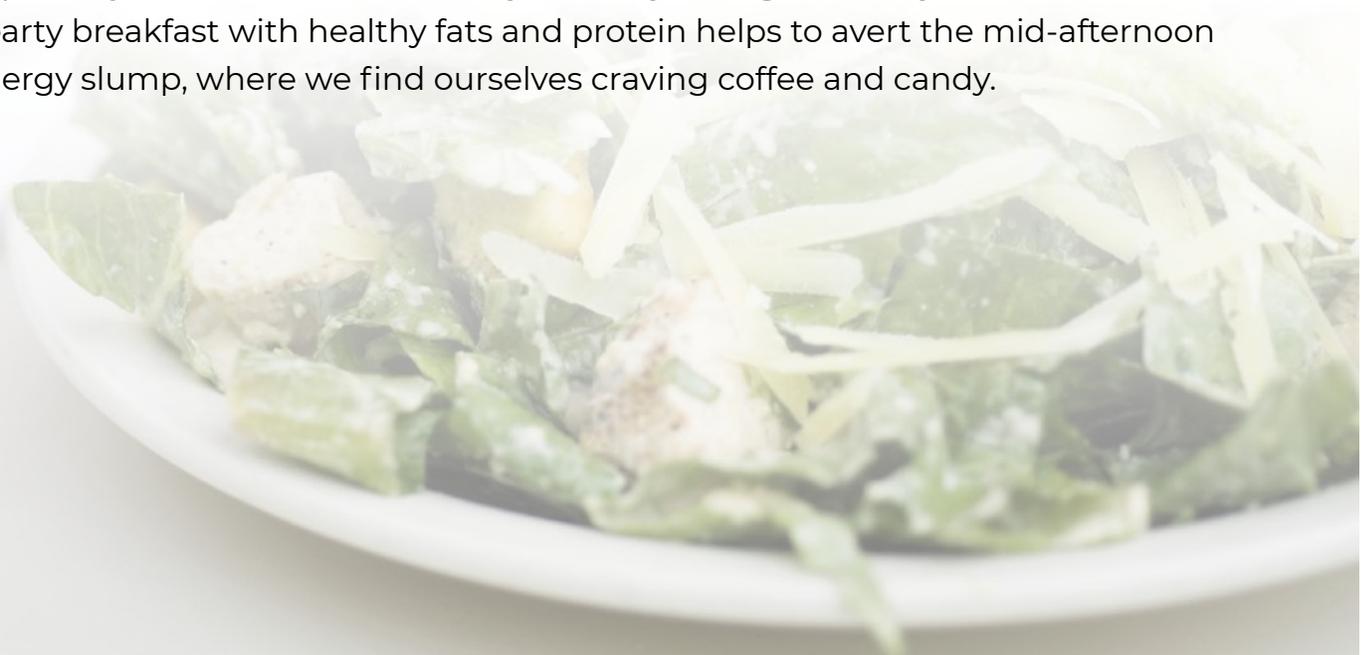
YOUR WELL-BEING: FIVE FOUNDATIONAL *PILLARS* TO ENGAGE

Each one of us is a bio-individual snowflake. Our particular health needs are slightly different from anyone else. Yet. In my decades of helping people lose weight, heal chronic health issues, reduce chronic stress and evolve their belief systems and mindset, there are five pillars of foundational health that require attention in the vast majority of health-seekers. We will touch on each pillar, and I'll offer up an example of how you might get started with each one.

1. Evolve Food Choices and Timing

“You are what you eat.” Although many of us think of this as a slightly exasperating quip that we heard as kids, it's actually quite true, biologically. We BUILD our bodies with food, *building 300 million brand new cells a minute, every day of our lives*. We build those cells with oxygen, water and FOOD; the resulting health of the body we're building is deeply affected by our food choices.

As always, start with baby steps. If you're just getting started on building a new food lifestyle for yourself, maybe start by committing to yourself that, five days a week, you'll break your overnight fast with health-building foods. Eggs, greens, oatmeal, unsweetened yogurt with some fruit, or even a handful of nuts and an apple. Any of these choices allows your body to begin the day nourished. And a hearty breakfast with healthy fats and protein helps to avert the mid-afternoon energy slump, where we find ourselves craving coffee and candy.



2. Promote Digestive Health

Many people—especially people over 40—struggle with compromised digestive health, and it stands in the way of our health, energy, restful sleep and a calm, focused mind. The food we eat is important. But if our digestion is compromised, how much of those nutrients do we actually assimilate? If we fill our car gas tank with premium gas, but the engine is in terrible shape, the car still won't likely run well. Same holds true for our body.

Our modern world finds many of us struggling with acid reflux, food sensitivities, SIBO (small intestine bacterial overgrowth), leaky gut, IBS and more. These chronic health challenges can be addressed. Integrative nutrition and functional medicine approaches to healing can create profound change in our digestion...and in our health. Maybe you start by ending your daily eating window by around 7pm, affording your digestive tract a long overnight fast to conduct important healing and maintenance work.

3. Support Hormone Balance

Hormones rule the school! Even for weight loss, imbalanced hormones will trump diet every time. These chemical messengers run nearly every aspect of our body, including our brain. Food choices, food timing, nutritional status, beverage choices, and chronic stress are examples of controllable factors that can shift our hormones. And the plot thickens: Hormones are interrelated. This means that one hormone coming out of balance can eventually pull other hormones out of balance along with it.

For instance, soy foods and alcohol can increase estrogen in the body, while overindulgence in empty carbs (like sugar) can increase insulin in the body. Alcohol, soy and empty carbs as a small part of an otherwise-healthy food lifestyle are fine. When they are a daily occurrence and/or consumed in large amounts, our hormones can start to shift in earnest. One thing, done every day, adds up to be a big thing over time. This fact can work in our favor or disfavor, depending on our choices. For instance, if you consume multiple alcoholic beverages every night, maybe you reduce your intake to four days a week and drink a glass of water between each cocktail.

4. Develop Stress Resilience

Culturally, and as individuals, we talk a lot about stress, but we typically don't do much about it. Part of the challenge is that we believe stress is something outside of us that we experience—a “stressful day” or a “stressful meeting” or a “stressful life.” The Time Story that we explored earlier also feeds the fire of our stress experience. Another challenge is that most of us don't understand chronic stress, beyond the fact that it feels stressful. Yet another barrier to healing chronic stress is the idea that stress-healing tools are “touchy-feely” or “woo-woo.” Finally, similar to creating a healthy food lifestyle, stress management is a health pillar that we must build habits around. This can feel hard or un-doable for people without support and guidance.

Chronic stress assaults our well-being in ways wide and deep. It impedes digestion, elevates the hormones cortisol and insulin, destroys mental focus and productivity and can make us emotionally reactive and cranky. Chronic stress promotes weight gain, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and heart disease, while hobbling our immunity and seriously impeding our ability to get restful, restorative sleep—which in turn causes more issues.

A simple and easy way to get started in lowering your stress levels is to utilize a practice I call Breathing Snacks. When we can't get a full meal, sometimes we'll eat a snack to tie us over. Similarly, when we're not in a situation conducive to meditation or yoga, we can do a breathing snack...in under 45 seconds! Three deep breaths—4 seconds for each inbreath and 4 seconds for each outbreath—actually engages our parasympathetic “rest and digest” system. And it's a tool that can be used most anywhere...at a stoplight, on the toilet, in the grocery store, or sitting in a waiting room. Again, one thing, done every day, adds up to a big thing over time.



5. Consider Professional Guidance

Creating health involves more than just visiting the doctor for an annual exam. It's more than taking a multivitamin or going to the gym. It's more than taking our medications on schedule and staying on top of refills. It can certainly include those things, but they are only the tip of the health and well-being iceberg. Creating health for ourselves is the result of creating a lifestyle—habits, mindset and support system—that supports our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

It stands to reason then, that thoughtful, intelligent health guidance by a practitioner involves humility, curiosity and thoughtful data-gathering. Yet doctors are rushed, overworked and held to a treatment framework that is dictated by the healthcare system, as opposed to by patient needs. It's impossible to gather the data needed to support a patient's healing journey in under 7 minutes—the typical allotted length of an office visit. Additionally, doctors receive important training in many areas, but less than 20% of U.S. medical schools have a single required course in nutrition—the very thing that we're building our body and state of health with. Meanwhile, our prevailing healthcare system focuses on chasing and suppressing symptoms, rather than foundationally supporting whole-person healing that lasts. We may feel better for a little while, but the underlying health issue is continuing, unabated.

We want foundational healing, not just symptom management.

A symptom isn't a disease or even a disorder, it's a message. Painkillers may dull our daily headaches, but this is akin to telling a child to be quiet when she keeps trying to tell you there's an alligator in the bathtub. Quieting the messenger doesn't mean the problem is solved. The question is: WHY are we getting daily headaches?

And there are other deeply important questions required in order to gather appropriate data. What does your food lifestyle look like? What are you eating? When are you eating? How is your sleep? Are you properly hydrated? Do you engage in regular exercise? What are your stress levels and how do you manage stress? What health barriers do you perceive in your daily life? Addressing health habits and lifestyle are a key part of health, healing and weight loss.

Intentional stewardship of our health involves attention to our whole being—body, mind and spirit—while we create the habits, mindset and support system to maintain an empowered well-being lifestyle. Knowledge and intention are important, yes, but the real magic is in the everyday application of what we learn.

We make our habits, and then our habits make us.

The ideal approach to empowered well-being—to healing and weight loss and optimal health—is a foundational-healing approach guided by a multi-expertise practitioner. A practitioner that understands the interplay of biology, nutrition, biochemistry, epigenetics, hormones and mental/emotional barriers to healing. A practitioner that takes the time, interest and care to partner with people on their unique and personal healing journey. A truly adept collaborator who can help you follow the thread toward foundational, whole-person health.



THE SOLUTION: A MULTI-EXPERTISE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WHO FOCUSES ON WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH

How can you reclaim your health and well-being? The solution is to engage with a multi-expertise, science-based health professional who appreciates both the benefits and limits of our healthcare system—a true steward of foundational healing and health. The key to finding this unique practitioner is to ask what their areas of specialty are, how their onboarding process works and the resulting methodology—how expertise and onboarding are interwoven and applied to your healing journey. Let's explore these three key considerations.

Area(s) of Specialty

An ideal practitioner will focus on whole-person health and healing. Our body, mind, emotions and spirit are deeply interconnected; research clearly shows that issues in one area—say, the mind—can create poor health in another—such as the body.

This means that your ideal practitioner has training in some key areas of foundational well-being such as functional medicine, integrative nutrition, epigenetics (influences on gene expression), endocrinology (hormone function) mental well-being and coaching. You might notice that these areas of expertise map to the first four pillars outlined in section two: Food choices and timing, digestive health, hormone balance and stress management. A good working knowledge of these areas will allow your practitioner to see the big picture, guide you in keeping your health journey cohesive, and refer you to a specialist in an area, if required.

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Onboarding Process

Anyone who has ever painted a room knows that proper preparation is key to success. When preparing to work with you, the ideal practitioner will have an onboarding process that is time-tested and repeatable in a way that uncovers important symptoms, flags and barriers in your overall health experience.

Look for a practitioner who offers:

- ▶ **Discovery** – A free consult session via phone or video conference during which you can assess the practitioner; they can assess if they are a good fit for your needs; and you are invited to ask questions about their expertise and methodology.
- ▶ **Intake** – Needs assessment. Forms and questionnaires that provide a first look into where imbalances may be. Includes inquiry—at a minimum—into symptoms, food intake and timing, medications, supplements, exercise, water intake, and stress resilience.



Take time to assess the practitioner's expertise, onboarding process, methodology and fit.

Methodology

The methodology of the practitioner, alongside your own commitment to doing the associated work, is the key that brings it all together. You are looking for a practitioner who has excellent listening skills, takes notes for continuity and provides you with both education and do-able takeaways at every session. You want someone who doesn't have a "cookie-cutter approach," where he/she approaches health challenges—each digestive issue or each hormone issue or each weight loss struggle—in exactly the same way. It can certainly be helpful to have a template, but each healing journey is different, and the practitioner needs to continually assess your progress with an eye to maximizing successes and spearheading potential re-direction.

An ideal practitioner methodology will include:

- ▶ **Interactive Counseling** – One-to-one sessions (in-person or virtual) where you work with the practitioner to explore imbalances, discuss healing avenues, navigate barriers, cultivate mindset and create health-supportive habits.
- ▶ **Lab Tests** – When needed, inquiring into the biochemistry and physiology of the body by reviewing blood labs and utilizing functional medicine testing.
- ▶ **Evaluate Progress** – Assess what's working, what isn't and how your well-being is evolving. Are you moving closer to your health and well-being goals? If yes, great! If not, a pivot may be required.
- ▶ **The Pivot** – It's a rare healing journey, weight-loss journey or stress resilience journey that is a straight line. You want a curious and nimble practitioner, who is ready to pivot the plan where needed, to accommodate how your body-mind-spirit is responding.

Our modern medical system is simply not set up for this kind of attention, inquiry and care. Setting yourself up for success by having a multi-expertise practitioner—who also functions both as a guide and advocate—is your path to reclaiming your health and well-being. To learn about our Empowered Well-Being approach to whole-person health, please download the eBook titled: **The 5 Steps to Health and Well-Being with Laurie Warren.**

**THE 5 STEPS TO
HEALTH & WELL-BEING**
with **Laurie Warren**

Ditch the frustration and engage with the path of whole-person health.

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8 Keys to Reclaim Your Well-being

AVOID PITFALLS

1. The Diet Bandwagon
2. The Time Story
3. The Disempowered Mindset

ENGAGE KEY PILLARS

1. Evolve food choices & timing
2. Promote digestive health
3. Support hormone balance
4. Develop stress resilience
5. Consider professional guidance