

Becoming Superhuman

HOW TO PERFORM AT YOUR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL PEAK



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**IN STARK WE TRUST,
AND THE HEROES WHO
WALK AMONG US.**

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What separates an average person from above average. Where exactly is the line between average and exceptional? History shows us that we're still evolving...well, most of us are.

Fifty years ago there'd be a small, handful of individuals that would stand out in athletics. They'd set records in a time when foods were free from pesticides, and the pace of life moved a little slower. How are these records, set in a time of bountiful, healthy food, and less stressful lifestyles, being smashed in a time of processed foods, synthetic additives, diabetes, and "dad bods?"

Evolution is the cornerstone of our potential, but evolution alone can't help us any more than you can make a cake with just two eggs. Lets narrow down the recipe necessary to turn raw materials into something that we can 'ooh' and 'awe' over.





ASSESS YOURSELF

Tally up your strengths and weaknesses. For example, you may excel in endurance but lack flexibility. Or you can balance a stack of books on your head but can't do a pull-up. Or you just want to be able to lift ten pounds more. Regardless, without listing specifics, your goals will have unpredictable results. Ever see a guy that's jacked from the waist up, but from the waist down he's more like a stork? Exactly.

TAKE ACTION

Write your strengths and weaknesses down the old school way, with a big T in the middle. Physically documenting this will help keep it front and center in your mind.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

A well-rounded exercise routine, or strategy, will guide you to your goal with as little injury to your body, and self-esteem, as possible. Develop an exercise routine that becomes a lifestyle change that evolves and progresses with you. Don't let people that aren't familiar with your health history dictate your strategy.

For example, I read up on a professional bodybuilder that exceeded what most people would say is a “natural” amount of sleep. He used to sleep the typical 7 to 8 hours each night, but he'd also catnap for a couple of hours at a time, frequently throughout the day. Most said it wasn't normal. However, he listened to his body, and it was telling him he needed more sleep to make progress toward his goal. In less than four months of working out, he was almost unrecognizable.

He went from a boney teenager in appearance, to resembling a television superhero. He worked out for such long periods and pushed himself so incredibly hard that his story is unbelievably like Captain America's. He did this with almost no physical injury, most likely because he listened to his body, and would sleep whenever his body told him to.

TAKE ACTION

Practice meditation at least 30 minutes a day. Find a quiet, comfortable spot where you can keep your feet planted firmly on the ground. Focus on slow breaths - 4 seconds in 4 seconds out through the nose. Finally, scan each part of your body from your toes to the crown of your head, noting how each part feels.

Yoga classes or apps like [Insight Timer](#) or [Headspace](#) are great places to help you practice your meditation techniques in order to better understand what your body is saying.



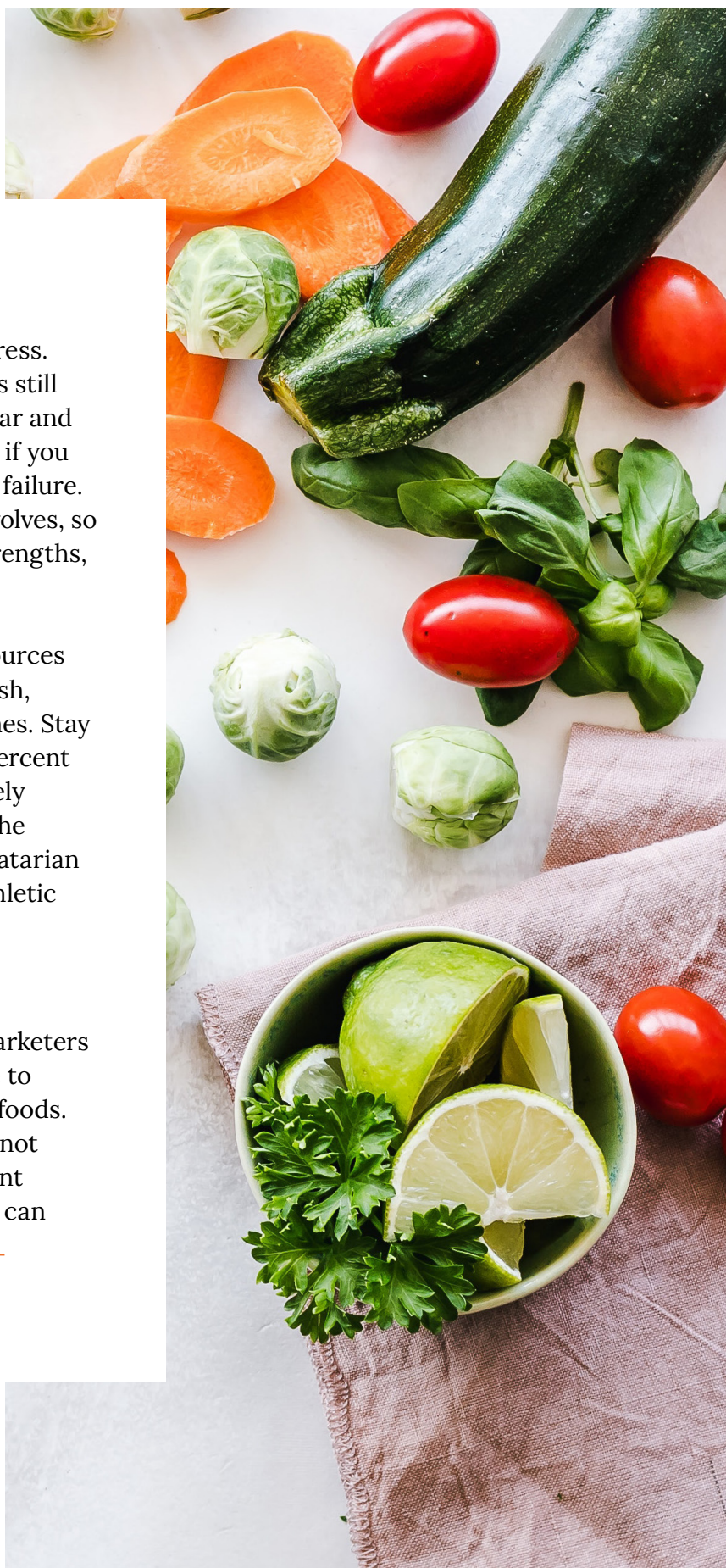
PROPER DIETING

Diet is a huge factor in making progress. Your body is a living machine, but it's still a machine. If your body was a race car and you put in cheap fuel, you'll be lucky if you finish the race without catastrophic failure. Your diet will evolve as your body evolves, so intermittently assess your body's strengths, weaknesses, and diet.

UW Health recommends “healthy sources of protein such as chicken, turkey, fish, peanut butter, eggs, nuts, and legumes. Stay hydrated with beverages, as a two percent drop in hydration levels can negatively impact performance.” Don't fall for the dieting fads like Keto, Paleo, or Pescatarian without asking your doctor or an athletic professional first.

TAKE ACTION

Most 'Superfoods' are super fake. Marketers have coined the phrase as an excuse to charge more for so-called healthier foods. A lot of these 'top 10' type foods are not backed by research to have significant benefits. Do your research first. You can start with Harvard's [“Superfoods or Superhype?”](#)





MENTAL FITNESS

A huge factor that most people fall short with is mental fitness. There've been individuals that have reached a higher level of physical being without the fad diets and regular exercise. Even so, they had the mindset that drove them to work out at a level where most people would collapse or give up. This sounds counter-intuitive, but hear me out.

The mind is one of the most underestimated muscles that have potential that scientists still argue the limits of to this day. Practitioners of Shao Lin kung fu are capable of feats at age ten that most experienced Olympic athletes strive to complete. What enables a scared mother to lift heavy objects, with no preparation or training, off of their children? Determination: a word that describes the level of passion or mind's desire to accomplish a task.

We all possess passion, determination, and desire. We just fall short of harnessing that lightning and bottling it for future use. If we take daily steps to emulate passion, much like a lifestyle, it becomes a habit. It becomes who we are. Our minds become the lightning. We unleash the energy, the passion when needed. Each time we do this, we strive to exceed previous exhibitions of physical prowess.

At first, we consistently exceed our perceived capabilities. But when we reach above-average levels of skill, it becomes harder to exceed that level. Keep in mind, (no pun intended), that harder doesn't mean impossible. Perception of what we're capable of doesn't mean that's the reality of what we can accomplish. If that were the case, there'd be no history of mothers rescuing their children from heavy objects. No Chinese children making the planet's top athletes look like average, high school jocks.

TAKE ACTION

It's inadvisable to throw caution to the wind and abandon expectations of what our bodies can achieve. It opens us up for physical injury and mental anguish. Either can place major hurdles on our path to progress. For some those hurdles appear to be insurmountable and halt our progress. Everybody should prepare for this possibility.



FIND BALANCE

Balance of all of the above is the “magic” that ties everything together. You may be able to see some impressive physical and mental progress by adjusting your lifestyle choices, but if balance out these factors, you can reach levels that people will talk about for generations.

Akin to individuals like Bruce Lee, who not only worked out arduously and practiced martial arts almost incessantly, he sought mental enlightenment just as passionately. Few people are aware that he had a college degree in philosophy and writing. Bruce was versed in the teachings of Niche, Sun Tzu and Aristotle, to name a few. He'd recite philosophical beliefs while training. Bruce Lee wasn't great just because he was capable of astonishing, physical feats. And he wasn't capable of those feats just because he trained. He found balance, fueled by passion and determination. He was great because he walked, talked, and lived on a level that most people tell us isn't possible. That level, we label “hero.”

TAKE ACTION

“Pressure to do our best at everything can be paralyzing, and perfectionism is deadly to balanced living. In pursuit of the best, we end up burning tons of time and energy trying to maximize the things that may already be good enough and leave ourselves depleted when we head into the next activity. In fact, research has found that while gold medalists may be happiest, bronze medalists appear considerably happier than silver winners.”

- Sam Chase, MFA, author, positive psychologist, and certified yoga teacher



**“IF YOU WANT TO BE THE BEST, YOU HAVE TO DO
THINGS THAT OTHER PEOPLE AREN’T WILLING TO DO.”**

— MICHAEL PHELPS

Whether it comes to writing, coaching, sports performance, or life in general, this is a mentality I’ve tried to apply to my daily routine. I’m the type of person who sets audacious goals and then looks for creative ways to turn them into accomplishments. Overall, I’m fascinated and inspired by those who take on daunting challenges and persevere in the face of unimaginable circumstances. These are the kinds of things that drive me.

In addition to being a published author, I’m also certified fitness professional (NESTA & IYCA) with an emphasis on youth athletic performance training. It’s my belief that all athletes can be developed to compete at an elite level with the proper training program. I’m also founder of the Tri-City Thunder AAU Basketball Program and coach of the nationally-ranked 2018 team.

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