



TAKE  
BACK  
YOUR  
LIFE

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My No Nonsense Approach  
to Health, Fitness and  
Looking Good  
Naked!

*Wendy*  
IDA

# TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

WENDY IDA



 *Comfort* PUBLISHING

# TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

Wendy Ida's No Nonsense Approach to Health, Fitness and Looking Good Naked!



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For information, address Comfort Publishing, 296 Church St. N., Concord, NC 28025. The views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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First printing

Cover photo by  
Jurgen Reisch

ISBN: 978-1-936695-06-5  
Published by Comfort Publishing, LLC  
[www.comfortpublishing.com](http://www.comfortpublishing.com)

Printed in the United States of America

## DEDICATION

To my sister Sylvia, whom I couldn't save, even though she saved my life on many occasions. Love you Sis! I am still inspired by you.  
Your spirit continues to guide me. We will never part.

To God who gives me strength, vision and drive to see things through.



My heartfelt commitment is to encourage a higher consciousness with greater empowerment to self, health and life's realities.

If I can inspire just one person to make life saving changes ... I believe I can fly!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## SECTION ONE — TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE FROM THE CALENDAR

### CHAPTER ONE — CREATING CHANGE AFTER AGE 40

- Body Basics — How You Got to Where You are Now
- Motivation Hurdles — What Makes It Tough to Change
- How Your Past Catches Up with You
- The Own Principle: Outlook, Workout and Nutrition

### CHAPTER TWO — OWN YOUR OUTLOOK

- Motivation Fuel-Up — How to Get Yourself into Gear
- Daily and Long-Term Motivation
- Reframe Change for Renewal and Rebirth

### CHAPTER THREE — OWN YOUR WORKOUT

- Why Your Workout Works Differently Now
- How to Cheat the Clock and the Calendar
- OWN Your Workout by Understanding Your Body

### CHAPTER FOUR — OWN YOUR NUTRITION

- Food — Satisfaction or Saboteur?
- Understanding Why You Eat and How You Need to Eat Now
- Own Your Nutrition by Mastering Metabolism

### CHAPTER FIVE — THE TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE 90 DAY BASIC PLAN

- The Take Back Your Life 90-Day Basic Outlook Plan
- The Take Back Your Life 90-Day Basic Workout Plan
- The Take Back Your Life 90-Day Basic Nutrition Plan

## **SECTION TWO — TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE FROM CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **CHAPTER SIX — HOW LIFE GETS IN THE WAY OF A GOOD WORKOUT**

- Different life stresses and life stages create unique obstacles to your Outlook, Nutrition and Workout
- How your body reacts to stress and how to Take Back Your Life in the midst of chaos or crisis
- What to do when the chickens come home to roost — and how to shoo them away for good!
- Unloading your personal baggage — the most common midlife crises and how to adapt the Take Back Your Life system
- OWNING your new stage of life to get results

### **CHAPTER SEVEN — RELATIONSHIP CHANGES**

- Divorce: How the changes change you — for good and not so good
- Empty Nest: Kids are gone — why isn't there more free time?
- Grief: Midlife is the time for loss. How to avoid the biggest pitfalls when sadness strikes
- Caregiving: Caring for older parents puts extra stress on Outlook, Workout and Nutrition

### **CHAPTER EIGHT — CAREER TRANSITIONS**

- Job Loss: Losing a job can mean a loss of confidence, less energy and dark moods.
- Retirement: Leaving the 9-to-5 job doesn't have to mean leaving the gym behind
- Relocation: Moving can throw off Outlook, Workout and Nutrition as you settle in
- Promotion/New Career: New opportunities can play havoc with your OWN progress

### **CHAPTER NINE — HEALTH CHANGES**

- Illness: Bouncing back after surgery, sickness or a chronic condition
- Menopause: No getting around it — the Change can change everything.

### **CHAPTER TEN — TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE AND OWN YOUR FUTURE**

- OWNING is one thing — keeping is another. Gaining the confidence to hang onto the life you've taken back
- Shaping up when you slip up — how to hang on to everything you've achieved
- Making the most of the best half of your life

# FOREWORD



## YOU DESERVE GOOD HEALTH

An introduction by motivational speaker and bestselling author, Les Brown.

For more than two decades, I have traveled the world helping people learn to live their dreams. But how can you live your dreams to the fullest if your health is compromised? It's absolutely clear to me that good health is not a given; you have to work for it. You deserve good health. When you are in good health, you have the stamina to go the distance, to do what it takes to win. When you're not in good health, everything becomes more difficult.

I've often said that "a lot of people are content with their discontent." Too often, people put up with things they don't like because it's easier that way. They pretend not to notice, even though they're still not happy. That kind of thinking is not going to help you live your dream. It's not going to help you win. And if you're discontented with your health—whether you're overweight, have diabetes, have no energy for living, or whatever the problem — you're being held back from that dream. As a 15-year cancer conqueror I can attest that many people have overcome serious illnesses to go on to achieve great things. But how many more great things could they have achieved and how much easier would it have been for them to achieve those goals had they been in good health?

I want you to live your dream. So when Wendy Ida asked me to introduce *Take Back Your Life*, I understood that Wendy made the connection between good health and achieving one's dreams. Wendy has overcome negativity and tragedy because Wendy had the hunger and courage to change her life. And when she took action and made those changes, she found a way to empower other people.

Wendy's "OWN" system of "Outlook, Workout and Nutrition" requires a commitment on your part, but I've always said that once you make a commitment, then life will give you some answers. Even more than that, learning to *Take Back Your Life* by taking the steps you need to take to improve your health will enable you to overcome whatever is keeping you from reaching your dreams.

I believe with all of my heart that you have it in you! You have the discipline and drive to live your dreams. And I also believe that you have the self-love and motivation to improve your health. You deserve good health.

Take your life in a new direction, develop new relationships with people who are positive, healthy and fit, and full of life and energy. The Take Back Your Life program will require that you make the decision that you want to live. You may need to change some old habits of negative thinking or to change beliefs that are holding you back. That's the price of attaining good health. You may need to change eating habits that are working against you and making you unhealthy. So be it. You may need to change your daily routine to get off the couch and up on your feet to strengthen your body and lift your mood. So get up! Get up now! Get up and shout to the world that you are going to Take Back Your Life! I know that change is difficult. But I also know that change is essential for survival. And Wendy and I want you to do more than just survive. We want you to thrive!

Maybe you feel like you have hit a wall when it comes to your health. Perhaps you've had a major setback, a serious illness, or an ongoing challenge. Maybe you've gone through a divorce or lost your job, or have become a caregiver and it's taken the fight out of you. None of this is an excuse to give up. It's not a reason to become "content with your discontent." You deserve good health. So if you've hit a wall when it comes to getting healthy, reach out to someone on the other side of the wall who can help you climb over the wall. Let Wendy Ida be that person for you. Wendy will help you get out of your unhealthy comfort zone. She will show you how to eat better, how to see possibilities, and how to build strength and stamina so that when the opportunities open up for you to live your dream, you are ready to go the distance.

I believe that you deserve good health. I want you to experience the blessing of being healthy, but more than that I want you to eliminate all of the obstacles that stand between you and your dreams. And if your health is an obstacle to achieving your dreams, then you need to change your health. Wendy's Take Back Your Life system will show you how to overcome the Outlook, Workout and Nutrition challenges that are holding you back and set you free to grow. You have within you the power to achieve your dreams. I believe that, and so does Wendy Ida.

Now it's your turn. It's time to Take Back Your Life and turn your dreams into reality.

## ENDORSEMENTS



“I just finished reading *Take Back Your Life! Wendy Ida’s No Nonsense Approach to Health, Fitness & Looking Good Naked!* I loved it! For those of us “over 40” Wendy tackles the real changes that are happening to our bodies and explains how to hit back! I found myself having “ah-ha” moments while reading her book. She understood what I was going through and was able to give me the necessary tools to make positive changes and OWN my life again. Wendy is motivating and gets straight to the point! Every woman over 40 should read this book. Now that I have more of an understanding about myself and my body, the best is yet to come! Bring it! Thank you Wendy!”

— *Cindy Popp, Producer/Director, NBC’s “The Bold and The Beautiful”*

“Wendy understands the issues facing people at midlife and we highly recommend her common sense approach to bolster a person’s self worth through nurturing healthier habits. On every page, you can “feel” her passion and belief that you can transform your health and your life ... no matter what. Read her book, follow her advice and get ready to take back your life!”

—*Jeanne Peters RD & Allen Peters MD*  
*Co-founders of the Nourishing Wellness Medical Center*

“In *Take Back Your Life*, Wendy Ida has cracked the code about what it takes to regain and maintain a great state of health. Her comprehensive yet easy-to-understand explanations are empowering and results oriented. “Take Back Your Life” is a must read for anyone who wants to gain control of their most precious asset, their health!”

—*Peter McCarthy, CEO AHI Productions, Inc.*  
*Certified Traditional Naturopath*

Throughout the book you may hear me repeat some things.

That's intentional – That's my style – I want you to get it!

I've learned that sometimes we need to hear things more than once to retain it.

It's like the last person to whom you were introduced — Did you remember her name after you shook their hand?

Hmmm...

SECTION ONE — TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE  
FROM THE CALENDAR



# CHAPTER ONE: CREATING CHANGE AFTER AGE 40



Now that you've reached (or have passed) the age of 40, here are a few key questions to determine what you'll make of the rest of your life.

Are you where you thought you would be by this time in your life?

Are you what you thought you would be by age 40?

Are you who you thought you would be?

If you answered NO to any of these questions, it's not too late to turn your life around. Your approach must be different, though. Your mind must be open, and you have got to embrace change. Stay with me and I promise to guide you through these things and help you make the biggest and most important change that you could ever make in your life. Think of it as a turning point in your life. This is BIG because if you dare...it can lead you to your best health, your best self and to the best of what real happiness inside your soul, at any age, is all about.

The key to getting what you want out of the decades to come lies in a commitment to Take Back Your Life. Take Back Your Life from a sedentary lifestyle or a schedule that leaves you no room for yourself or for staying in shape. Take it back from poor nutrition. Take it back from worry, fear and a negative outlook. Take it back from a loss of interest in sex. Take it back from bad habits and poor decisions. Take it back from menopause, chronic illness or inherited medical conditions. Take Back Your Life from depression, self doubt and fear.

Forty is a turning-point birthday because it is the time when we begin to clearly see the convergence of our past choices, our habits and our decisions. Some people will find themselves largely on track with their expectations. They want to fine tune their game plan for the decades ahead. Others — the majority — will find that as John Lennon said, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." Somewhere along the way, dreams, goals and plans went off track and we fear that it may be too late to change.

That's certainly what happened to me. I married young, and then had two kids while trying to go to college for an accounting degree. That was my life, and it was also my excuse. After I earned my degree and escaped a bad marriage, suddenly my kids

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

were grown; I was stuck in a rut with my job and life felt kind of weird. “What do I do now?” I kept asking myself. And then I realized: I had to take back my life.

Does this sound like you? Can you relate? I’m guessing that you can or you wouldn’t be reading this book. Here’s what I want you to know: Now is the time for you to Take Back Your Life. Now is all you have.

I did it. I took back my life. You can do it too.

### **SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS**

I’ll be asking you some personal questions in this book... but that’s only fair, because lots of people ask me very personal questions.

Being a personal trainer means people ask me questions they’d never ask their best friend. Questions about my body, my workout routine, my diet. They ask: What’s your secret? What do you eat? How often do you work out? How can I get abs like yours? Where do you get all that energy from? Do you take a special pill? How long are your workouts?

I’m honored to be asked such things. It tells me that people want help and have a desire to do better and be better. Some say it’s a testament to my hard work that I’m asked such questions; however I see it as a blessing

But let me say this up front: Results don’t just happen. People stop me in the strangest places and when I’m on the fly. The questions they ask as well as the looks they give me suggest that they are looking for a fast and simple answer that will instantly change their lives. So my response is, “I would do you a disservice if I gave you a quick answer without knowing more about you.” That is why I’m writing this book.

After so many requests for help from people who honestly want to change but don’t know how, I knew there was a need for solid, action-oriented information to help women over age 40 create the changes they want to see in their lives and in their bodies. This book is intended to address those concerns.

I want to give you a deeper understanding of the fact that where you are in life and what you’re going through affects how you cope with getting and staying healthy. Throughout this book I will ask you questions, which I want you to ask yourself– and be honest. Otherwise it’s all for naught. Find out where the real problems lie and let me help you resolve them. I went through this process myself and it has changed my life. The rewards are endless and nothing gives me greater joy than to pass that information on to you.

Someone once told me there are only two important events that happen in your lifetime; One is your birth and the other is finding your true purpose in life. I found mine. I discovered that I was born to preach and teach the gospel of health and fitness. Yes, I'm a late bloomer, but better late than never. So many people live their whole lives, then die without even knowing their purpose. I am fortunate to have made it to this point in my life and now I am on a mission to help you do the same.

So keep an open mind, trust yourself and keep your eye on the prize instead of focusing on the junk you're leaving behind. I want to shed a little more light into your life by giving you some new coping skills to stay healthy in this amazing stage of your life – so that you'll be able to say that this isn't just the middle of your life, it's the beginning: the very best part.

## **BODY BASICS**

It's not your imagination. Your body really isn't the same as it was twenty years ago.

Childbearing, old injuries, menopause, medications and metabolism changes have profound effects on your body's strength, stamina and appearance. As you've probably noticed, the foods you once ate without gaining an ounce now seem to bypass your stomach and go straight to your hips. The workout or the sport that left you energized and relaxed just a few years ago now leaves sore muscles and joint twinges. Sex seems like just another thing to check off on the 'to do' list before you can fall asleep.

The good news is, you can go back to being energized again with fewer or no muscle aches. You can love your body, feel sexy and get in the mood for great sex again. You just need to learn how to do the things you love a little differently than you did when you were younger. That's all.

The boundless enthusiasm that sustained you in your 20s and 30s has morphed into a voice in your head that sounds suspiciously like your mother on a bad day. Many people begin to notice changes in their outlook and in their bodies and find it hard to deal with those changes. They know that their flexibility, stability, agility, strength and cardio abilities have declined, and it seems to get worse with each passing day. Over and over again, I hear clients say, "I used to be able to touch my toes or run around the block or lift 15 lb. weights." Well believe it or not, you can still get back to doing all those things.

You heard the phrase, "It's not over 'til it's over?" Well, it's true. You can Take Back Your Life, your body, your exercise and your joy. To do that, I'll help you create a different

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

approach to develop results. And I'll show you how to put a "safety net" in place because you don't want injuries to slow you down. Does it take more conscious effort to have the body and the life you want after age 40? Yes. Is it impossible? No.

Let's quickly review all the ways being over age 40 makes it a challenge to slim down and tone up.

- After age 40, women's bodies distribute fat differently than they did before. For many women, this means that weight gain is concentrated more in the abdomen than being evenly distributed. This can make even a small weight gain more noticeable.
- Burning fat after age 40 is more of a challenge because muscle tone peaks somewhere around age 25-30. (Sorry — it's true!) As muscle tone declines, it affects your metabolism, making your body less efficient at burning fat.
- Losing muscle mass due to a sedentary lifestyle also makes your body a less efficient fat burner.
- Bone density decreases and bones become more porous after age 40 if we aren't actively involved in strength training.
- Many women report more problems with balance and neurological issues as they age and/or after menopause, making aggressive workouts such as step aerobics more difficult and potentially dangerous. Balance problems coupled with decreased bone density also increase the likelihood of broken bones from minor falls.
- It's no big surprise that our hormones change as we age and change drastically during menopause. What you may not realize is that many women experience those changes in on-again/off-again spurts rather than in a steady decline or sudden shift, which is a problem. Hormonal changes affect mood, metabolism and hunger as well as energy levels and your feeling of general well-being. Hormones also affect libido — your sex drive — as well as causing body changes (like vaginal dryness) which can make sex less comfortable.
- Family history, diet, obesity and lifestyle contribute to joint problems, inflammation and arthritis, which in turn affects your willingness to exercise.
- Women who have given birth can regain muscle tone, and reshape and strengthen their bodies. For many women, the body they sculpt through cardio and strength training in their 30s, 40s and beyond is often the best body they've ever had. Why? Because they learned they had to take responsibility for results, and that having a

great body isn't just an accident of youth.

- Sometimes, the changes are just plain weird. Things happen that no one warns you about. For example, after my first child, I came down with hay fever. I'd never had it before. It was something new I had to deal with but I learned to work around it. Even with hay fever and other allergies I later developed, I can still say I'm in better shape now than when I was in my 20's.
- Midlife mood changes also impact health by affecting diet, exercise and outlook. These changes (good or bad) may be a result of our relationships, our changing hormones, or our medical history.
- By our 40s, chronic disease, genetic conditions and bad habits start showing their effects. Some people give up because of their family history. Don't let that get you down! Your genetics are only 40% of the picture. The other 60% is lifestyle-related — something you can control if you Take Back Your Life!
- Old injuries catch up with us. That skiing accident back in high school, the tennis elbow from college, the torn ligament from your 20s all start to come back like last night's chili. Old injuries can place real limitations on the types of movement or exertion that are safe for you, and they can place perceived limits due to stiffness or soreness.
- Because we have to work harder to maintain the weight and fitness level we desire, adult responsibilities impact our workouts and make change more challenging. Women 40-plus may be caring for children, older parents, or an ailing partner. Many women in their 40s are having babies because they married later or focused on their careers. Other women have their hands full getting college kids on the right track or helping their young adult children make a good start in their careers. An increasing number of women give birth to companies and non-stop volunteer commitments after their children are grown, not realizing that these new "children" are just as demanding as their flesh and blood counterparts.
- Your health affects your sex life, too. Can you even think about sex when you don't have much energy? Joint pain, body aches and stress are libido-killers. Also, how you feel about your body can mean the difference in low sex, no sex or phenomenal sex. Given a choice among those three options, which do you prefer? Taking back your sex life is part of taking back your life.

*Wendy says: "Decide. Commit. Win."*

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: SUPERMOM

When one of my long time clients first came to me, her life was out of control and she was so unhappy with herself that she suffered silently with depression. The problem was that she was a very selfless, giving and free spirited person who did everything for everybody else but herself. She was a super mom when her kids were young and she continued to put them and her husband first even when the kids became young adults. She heavily invested her time into extended family, friends, work, church and many other things to make others happy. She was 46 with a host of health problems, along with a desperate feeling that she had lost control of herself. She felt doomed and believed life had passed her by and that it was too late for her to ever get back on track to any semblance of the life she once dreamed of for herself.

A caring friend took notice, took action and finally brought her to me. I am delighted to say, the rest is history. During the time I worked with her, there were some ups and downs but she had faith and trust in me and a persevering attitude that bought her to a winning conclusion and change in her life. This amazing woman is living a life that is happier, much healthier and most of all manageable. Yes, she's got it now: Control. It's something she thought she had lost forever. This is simply a testament to controlling your life through learning how to recapture, rebuild and re-introduce health and fitness into your life.

Every now and then she still checks in with me to keep herself accountable and to stay on track. In return, it keeps me reaching out to others to do this again and again and again.

### Wendy's Favorite Quotes:

*"In the confrontation between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins – not through strength but by perseverance."*

– H. Jackson Brown

Yes, I hear you, it's challenging to Take Back Your Life. But hear me on this: I know you can do it. I believe you want a better life — One where you're in control. Maybe you feel that same loss of control I felt before I mustered the strength to take back my life. Feeling out of control isn't fun; in fact it's down right painful, but hang in there with me because I am about to give you all my secrets. These tips helped me and continue to help my clients. Anything that's good or good for you is worth fighting for, right? If you answered "yes," you've made the first decision. That's Step One of the attitude adjustment you need to Take Back Your Life from the changes aging life throws at you.

How? I want you to learn to **OWN** your future. That stands for:

Outlook

Workout

Nutrition

As you'll see in a few pages, your Outlook (and motivation) makes all the difference. I learned that the hard way, when my decision to make a change was literally a matter of life and death. You need to firm up your Outlook before you can tackle the Workout to take back your body. And your Workout not only relies on your motivation for success, but it needs a boost from Nutrition engineered for success. You wouldn't put cheap gas in a Mercedes-Benz, and you shouldn't put crappy food into the high-end luxury vehicle that is your body. Nutrition after age 40 makes a huge difference for both your Outlook and your Workout.

The 90-day Take Back Your Life Results Routine in Chapter Five shares the tried-and-true method I use to train women over the age of 40 in my L.A. studio. It worked for me. It works for them. And now I'll show you how to make it work for you. But before we get to that, let's take a look at how being over 40 affects motivation and your Outlook on life.

## **MOTIVATION HURDLES IN MID-LIFE**

To make it to your forties and beyond, you have run life's obstacle course. And as they say, sometimes you eat the bear, and sometimes the bear eats you. You are wiser, more seasoned and richer in life experiences than you were when you were twenty. You are also a little more jaded, a lot more cautious, and maybe even disappointed. You've done a lot — and your life has also done some things to you. Welcome to mid-life.

Past experiences aren't the only reasons it can be tough to feel motivated. Women are doing more than ever before. You may be raising young children or still actively nurturing grown children who have their own life challenges. You may also be the caregiver for an ailing spouse or older parents. Menopause makes some women's moods swing further than a bad bungee cord. Past failures (job, relationship, financial) may make you wonder if you've got what it takes to make a fresh start. Medications for conditions like high blood pressure and other mid-life ailments can also have an affect on your mood.

Midlife is also when we start to feel old wounds. Many women don't really begin to understand or address some of the issues that have affected them until they reach their forties and beyond. This can include self doubt, poor self image, toxic family issues,

domestic violence or childhood abuse. Heard the term, “He comes with too much baggage”? Well, we all have baggage by midlife. Some people have a piece of carry-on luggage, and some have a steamer trunk. Some of us have more baggage than a major airline — and it’s harder for us to lose it! It’s not important right now how you accumulated the baggage, but I do want to know what you are going to do about it. Do you let your baggage weigh you down or do you toss it overboard so you can learn to fly?

That’s where a good personal trainer is different from a therapist. I can help you overcome the results of old wounds, where a therapist helps you pull them out by the roots. So if you’re already working with someone to deal with the roots of your issues, good for you. You’ll be amazed at how much therapy and personal training together can make you feel empowered. If you haven’t yet worked with a professional to get to the root of the problem, it may be something to consider, even if you want to move forward with personal training first. But take it from me, good therapy is worth every penny, just like good personal training. Without healing the mind and the body, old wounds can drain away your motivation until they receive the professional help they require.

Feeling intimidated can also suck the life out of you. Some women are intimidated by the mere thought of going to a gym. Others are scared off by personal trainers. (Let me assure you — I’m not your junior high or middle school gym teacher!) The right trainer should help you set all those fears aside and make you feel very comfortable and motivated. And other women are afraid that they’ll be the only person at the gym who needs to lose weight and firm up.

Then there’s the little voice in the back of your head that predicts failure. You know the voice I mean. It’s the one that tells you you’re “too this” or “too that” — never “just right.” Learning to “change the channel” to listen to your inner cheerleader is essential for success. Pretend your mind is a radio. YOU control the channel. So the next time you hear your inner critic, imagine clicking on a remote to get a different voice, a voice that encourages you to succeed.

Motivation affects sex, too. If you don’t feel sexy, you won’t act sexy. You won’t think sexy. Most of sex is mental: it’s more about what we perceive than it is about reality. You don’t have to be rail thin or built a certain way to be sexy. And you don’t have to look like a fashion model to enjoy great sex. But you do need to feel good about yourself. In fact, I’d say that how you feel about yourself is a bigger turn-on than any skimpy negligee. Here’s another thing: when you know you’re achieving an important goal, you feel empowered and that translates right into sexy. Working out and eating

right also help your body make more of the good chemicals that put you in the mood for sex. Trust me on this: working out does a body good!

There are a lot of reasons why it can be tough to feel motivated in mid life. You want change, but it's so hard to get psyched up for the challenge!

The truth is, motivation is a decision you make. It doesn't happen TO you, it happens BECAUSE of you. Here's one of the first steps to help you Take Back Your Life.

### **MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO BE MOTIVATED!**

Now in this book, you may see that I use the words “motivation” and “outlook” interchangeably most of the time. That's because the two ideas have a lot of overlap. Motivation can mean the energy that inspires you to keep on going and see something through to the end. But it can also mean the goal you're striving towards that makes you get back up when you feel like quitting. Your outlook is how you view the world or a specific situation. Is the glass half full, half empty — or poisoned?

Your outlook goes a long way toward remaining motivated. If you always focus on the reasons why something can't succeed instead of seeing ways in which it can, you'll feel less energy and be less motivated to keep on going. On the other hand, if you look for the positives in any situation — even the times when you fall short of your goals — you're more likely to get back up and keep on trying. And that's the secret. Everyone slips up along the way, makes mistakes, gets off the program. But when you're motivated (energy + goal) and you have a positive outlook that believes success is a “when” instead of an “if,” you'll forgive yourself and pick up where you left off. That's persistence, and it's the single biggest factor for success.

I play mind games with myself all the time to get my rear in gear when I don't feel like doing what I should be doing. That's right. There are times when I don't feel like working out too, just like you. That may sound funny because some people seem to think I was born fit. They're surprised to see me working out or to hear that I have to psych myself up sometimes to get going. I'm human. The only difference is, I play games to keep me on track. Here are some of my favorite “motivation mind games” for you to try. Don't hesitate to get creative and come up with some ideas of your own.

#### *Motivation Mind Game #1 — Remember When*

Remember the last time you had a great workout? How did you feel? Were you energized, upbeat and really proud of yourself? Did it help you sleep better? Did it make you

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

feel sexier? Was it a prelude to great sex? The next time you don't feel like doing your workout, Remember When you succeeded and use that as an incentive to do it again! The Remember When game uses one of the most basic human motivations to get you back in the gym. When something feels good, we want to feel it again. (Hint: This is why there are so many babies in the world. What else feels so good that you want more — and I certainly don't mean ice cream!) This game kicks my behind into second gear. Once you're revved up from your workout, feel free to use that body confidence to find good feelings elsewhere, if you know what I mean!

### *Motivation Mind Game #2 — Let's Make a Deal*

Everyone has days when going to the gym for a workout seems like too much to handle. So make a deal with yourself. Say, "I'll just work out for 15 minutes and then I'll stop." Or, "I'll only do eight reps instead of twelve today." Here's what usually happens: Based on these thoughts, your workout feels achievable enough to get you up and going to the gym. When I do this, I often start to get a second wind and I go beyond the bargain I made with myself. And if I don't, I still got more than I would have if I hadn't gone at all. The important thing is that every time you honor your deal with yourself, you're creating consistent and lifelong behavior. That behavior ultimately leads to accomplished goals, feelings of pride and a mind free of guilt trips.

### *Motivation Mind Game #3 — The Buddy System*

Instead of meeting a friend for coffee or dinner, meet up at the gym instead. Race each other on the treadmill or stationary bikes. Do an evening Yoga or aerobics class, and then go for a relaxing cup of tea. Share suggestions for great workout tunes and download them to your iPod. Or just make it a priority to meet your friend for a daily walk at lunch or after dinner and make exercise a social activity. You'll stick with it longer when you feel accountable. Don't have any friends who want to work out? Make your trainer your gym buddy and tap into your trainer for motivating feedback.

Motivation is the key to being able to Take Back Your Life. That's why it's the number one step to help you OWN your future. Outlook is everything!

### **Wendy's Favorite Quotes:**

*"If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right."*  
– Mary Kay Ash, Founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics

## LET ME TELL YOU A STORY – MY WAKE-UP CALL

Oh God, help me! Please help me! I cried as I ran up the street trying to get away. Today I ran longer and harder than ever and I was more afraid than ever. A scary guy with a lead pipe was chasing me. He was closing in and seemed relentless while I was running out of steam. I was starting to feel hopeless and doomed and all I could think about was my family and that I might never see them again. The tears on my face dried up as fast as they came down because of the wind I created as I ran.

Suddenly I saw a taxi. I dashed into the street, ran behind the taxi and screamed out, "Wait, wait, please come back!" The taxi driver waited, and as I grabbed the door, I begged with tears streaming down my face and very little breath left for him to please take me home. I see that driver's face today as clearly as if it were yesterday as he hesitated for a few seconds, which at the time seemed like a year and a day. Was it that he knew I had no money or was he just shocked at the terrorized look on my face?

I looked over my shoulder and there was my pursuer, bigger than life and within arms' length of me. He was holding a big metal pipe in one hand as he lunged forward to grab me. I instinctively jumped into the taxi and slammed the door shut and the cab driver took off. His face resembled something out of a nightmare and it haunted me for many years to come. I turned around once after the cab sped off to make sure I was safe and once again had escaped harms way before breaking down again into tears. All I wanted was the safe haven of my mother's arms.

For years this boy in my neighborhood terrorized me almost every day. Although I think he was a bully, I never knew why he chased me with a big pipe or why he was always trying to hurt me. The funny thing is that he never spoke a word to me...ever! One day he just came after me. I don't think I heard him speak to anybody else either. He always looked so angry and full of hate. His name was Butch.

It was no joke where I lived. It was the projects. The projects were the setting for my earliest memories of life on earth and it sucked. It seemed every day there was an event where I had to protect myself in one way or another. But I do believe everything happens for a reason. All these experiences toughened me up.

I didn't realize it then, but toughness was what I needed. My favorite pastimes were hanging upside down on the jungle bars, roaming abandoned buildings and racing the girls and boys in the neighborhood. Although I was still young, all of those things, including running from Butch, kept me in shape. They made me strong and they were proof that I had a competitive streak in me. Some folks may think of these early memories as meaningless. But the fact is, all of these childhood events, no matter how traumatic, eventually became the tools from which I had to

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

draw on later in life when I had to face someone “bigger and badder” than Butch.

Little did I know, this early childhood event was just the tip of the iceberg because the events and drama that shaped my life became more intense. Life was sometimes unbearable and more than once circumstances almost killed me, but fitness saved my life many times over.

I gained 50 pounds when I had my second child. Trust me when I say that it didn't make me feel good about myself. Then I went through a traumatic divorce. My self-esteem hit bottom. And although I had succeeded in business (my degree was in accounting and I worked in finance at the time,) I didn't feel empowered.

But the same thing that made me run away from the boy with the lead pipe made me decide to fight for my life in another way. A friend convinced me to start weight training to lose that post-baby fat. In the gym, nothing mattered except me and the weights. I might not have felt in control of some of the other things in my life, but I could control my workout. And that was the beginning of when I started to Take Back My Life.

I decided to become a trainer and a nutrition specialist so I could share this success with others. Pretty soon, my friends started to call me the “Ab Queen” because of my workouts to slim my midsection. My body started to change and I started to become more confident. I had taken a risk and it was paying off. I went on to earn two national certifications as a personal trainer. But more importantly, I discovered that I could help people find a way back to new beginnings through exercise.

My mission is to guide you through your days of shadow in hopes that you can skip over some of the mistakes I made and capitalize on the things that helped me. It would enrich my life and be an amazing blessing to know that I am turning on the light in the heads of women around the world. I want to help you understand that it IS possible to take back your life with dignity and grace and that it is never too late to start.

The excitement I discovered when I took back my life and then seeing so many women in the same predicament has lead me to a bittersweet point. I OWN my future since I discovered how to take back my life. But so many of you have not made it over the hump yet, so it is my mission and my responsibility to help you OWN your future too.

*Wendy says: “This is not a dress rehearsal. You have only one life to live!”*

### **WHY NUTRITION MATTERS**

There are some things about our teenage years that we don't miss. Acne. Awkwardness. First dates. Here's one you probably do miss: the way you could eat anything and never

gain weight. The eat-anything-and-stay-thin piece is something I personally thought was never going to end. I remember a day at college when I sat with a friend and we were eating lunch. My plate was piled high and I shamelessly shoveled food down my throat. My friend said, “You keep eating like that, you’re going to look just like me.” She was very overweight. Although that was an “aha” moment that burned deep in my psyche, I still didn’t take it seriously. I thought I might be one of those people who got lucky and could eat anything I wanted for the rest of my life without consequence. We all think we’re invincible when we’re young, don’t we? But life (and weight) eventually caught up with me, as they do for almost everyone. Sorry, but those teenage days of consequence-free eating are gone for good.

Food after 40 becomes a love/hate relationship. You love the food but you hate the way it looks on you. It goes with the territory. That’s where I come in. My goal is to give you a new map of that territory to help you achieve your goals. Understanding how food works after age 40 is an important part of taking back your life.

The changes that affect your body in mid life have a big effect on what you can eat. There are three main reasons. First of all, your metabolism begins to slow down due to muscle loss and if you haven’t been routinely involved in some type of strength training program, you continue to lose muscle mass, which means you’re not burning calories as efficiently as you used to.

Secondly, genetic history and your chosen lifestyle start to show up in the form of diabetes, high cholesterol and other diseases. Needless to say, old habits not only catch up with you, but they die hard.

The third reason comes from a lack of work-life balance. My clients are often torn between work and family responsibilities, leaving no time to cook or plan healthy meals. That, along with the guilt of family pressure to express love by socializing with food, starts to have visible results on your body as well as your mind. I can’t tell you how many times women have told me that it’s hard for them to eat right because their significant other demands their presence on various dining excursions. What women really want is respect and support from their partner to honor their desire to switch to a healthier lifestyle.

The truth is, your body needs less food, but more nutrition as you get older. You store fat differently after age 40 than you did when you were in your teens or twenties. Not only that, but you start to see the impact from what you ate as well as what you eat!

Your nutritional needs change after age 40. Many women, like me, become lactose

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

intolerant for the first time in their lives in their forties. Your vitamin needs also change as you age, as well as after menopause. For example, once menstruation ends, most women need less iron than they did during their child-bearing years. If that's not enough, your body at 40+ may be struggling with inflammation, a part of aging. To add insult to injury, some medicines to control chronic conditions also play havoc with weight gain and nutrition. Moreover, many women retain water for a variety of reasons, and this can lead to weight gain as well as a puffy, bloated feeling.

Whew! That's a lot to swallow. Recognize yourself anywhere? These are all silent killers that are not talked about much. Men don't talk about it because they don't understand our issues (it's up to us to teach them.) Our employers don't get it because we wear our game face when we're at work, and our families don't know what's going on since they are too close to the situation. And we're often afraid to ask other people whether they struggle with the same problems we're having because we assume that no one else has similar issues.

Now here's the 64 million dollar question. How in the world can anyone understand what's going on inside our own bodies if we can't figure it out ourselves? In our minds, everything is just going haywire and we wind up either putting out fires or ignoring them, but never really get to the root of the problem. Without understanding why we have the problem, we can't get proactive and fix the problem to keep ourselves sane and fit as we age and as menopause gets under way.

As we move forward through this book, I'm going to share my strategies to Take Back Your Life through Outlook, Workout and Nutrition (OWN). I'll help you make healthy choices that give you more energy, help you feel satisfied without feeling guilty and help you make empowered choices every time you sit down for a meal.

You must have all three pieces — Outlook, Workout and Nutrition — to successfully Take Back Your Life.

So let's get started!

## CHAPTER 2: OWN YOUR OUTLOOK



Are you a victim or a victor?

Do you believe life just happens to you, or are you convinced that you can influence your destiny?

Taking Back Your Life is all about empowerment. It's about YOU taking control. Right now.

I promised to show you how to OWN your life. (That's Outlook, Workout and Nutrition.) OWNing your life begins with your outlook and motivation.

Let's start off by defining a few words the way I use them. "Outlook" for me means how you think the world works. Do you think hard work always pays off, or do you look to fate to change your life? Are you waiting for a lucky break, or do you believe you make your own luck? The more you believe that certain things will never change (your weight due to family history, your career due to your age, gender, race or education, etc.) the less control you believe you have over your life and the less you think you have the power to change.

On the other hand, if you believe that you can change your destiny by changing the choices you make and that you can create your future by the actions you take, then your outlook is right in line with taking back your life.

News flash: You can change your outlook.

What happens if you were brought up believing "that's the way it works?" We've all been around negative people. They drag us down and stifle our dreams. Usually, they are negative because they weren't able to achieve their own dreams, and rather than see the role their choices and actions played in their disappointment, they blame the system or other people because it hurts less that way. But blaming the system or other people robs you of your personal power. So long as you blame other people or society for your disappointments, you are powerless to change.

The power to change comes from realizing that you control you. That's right. YOU control YOU!

### **MOTIVATION FUEL-UP**

Who starts your motivation motor? You do. But just like the engine in your car, we all need fuel to keep going. So let me tell you about some of the sources of motivation

that my clients and I use to keep energized because no one accomplishes goals alone. Now some of these sources of motivational “fuel” may really resonate with you. Others may not be your “thing.” That’s OK. Just use the ones that fuel you.

Role models and heroes often encourage us to do better, try harder and go further. These can be people we know, or people we’ve just read about. They can be people who are alive or people from long ago. Using heroes as a motivation tool can put and keep things in perspective. I have found most real heroes are diligent and hard working risk takers performing selfless acts time and again even when it’s inconvenient.

Role models and heroes play an important role in motivation because when we see them accomplish something we want to do, we know it is possible for us to achieve the same. We study how they did it, so that we can do it, too. They inspire us. This works well for me when I meet life’s roadblocks. I say to myself, “If she or he did great things during hard times, so can I. I’ve learned that “no” only means “find another way to do it!”

An important note here. No one is perfect. Someone can be an admirable role model in one area of life and not-so-great in other areas. Think of the champion athletes who rose from poverty to win all kinds of pro sports awards and set records for achievement only to get in trouble with the law or have a disastrous personal life. Your role model and hero will make mistakes. You may learn more from their mistakes than they do. Just because someone makes mistakes it doesn’t make their accomplishments less worthy of imitation. Let their missteps serve as a cautionary tale for you and take the best of what they have to teach you.

### Wendy’s Heroes — My Sister

My sister Sylvia is one of my heroes. My mother died when I was young and my sister became my role model and life guide. I simply would not be the woman I am today without my sister. I could be dead or worse. She selflessly gave me major remedial life lessons on how to live without losing myself. She taught me confidence. She modeled strength. She was head chief in charge and the glue that kept our family and friends together. I chuckle with fond memories when I remember how she played jokes on everybody, helped me role play job interviews and gave me dating advice. If that weren’t enough, she showed me what it meant to trust my intuition and tap into my inner being, even in her death. Because of Sylvia, my life took shape with more educated and intelligent choices. Through her, I learned to lean more on God and less on people for true peace and guidance. She was my second mother and I will never forget her. She will always be my hero.

### *Faith*

My clients come from all kinds of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Some of them are very devout in their faith, and others have a private understanding. Whatever your beliefs, realize that they can be a source of strength and motivation as you Take Back Your Life. Faith focuses on healing and a return to wholeness. Your decision to OWN your life is a step in that journey. Your body will become healthier as you learn to eat right and maintain it with proper exercise. Your mind will become healthier as you clean the junk out of your mental trunk and focus on positive steps for a healthy and successful future. By OWNING your body, mind and nutrition, you can find wholeness. So take the encouragement and power of whatever faith you follow to seek serenity and strength as you make healing changes in your life.

### *Biography*

We can learn a lot from the struggles and victories of those who came before us. What types of people inspire you? When it comes to role models and heroes, you're not limited to the people who are your contemporaries. Sometimes I find it very encouraging to realize that none of the things I'm struggling with are new. Weight gain, discouragement, and problems have troubled people since the beginning of time. We often think that we're the first ones to have these problems, or that ours are worse than anyone else's. When I read about the struggles of people in prior generations, I find not only inspiration, but a sense of perspective and balance. And I can learn from their struggle and success. Just as you can learn from mine.

Some people read about great presidents. Others read about people who have struggled for civil rights and equality. Some love to read about heroic generals or humble religious figures. Still others enjoy reading about adventurers or scientists or sports legends or artists. Take a trip to your local library and pick out one or two biographies of people who intrigue you. They can make great reading while you're on the recumbent bike! You'll find that they faced their share of hardships and disappointments, just like you. Most of them had negative people early in their lives telling them to give up, to go home, to pack it in. They didn't listen. Whatever obstacles they faced, they found a way over, under, around or through to win the day. You can learn from their stories. You can even imagine yourself making the effort alongside your hero and sharing in the victory. But don't let your vision end when you close the book. Get up off your rump and write your own ending!

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

Here's a tip some of my clients have shared. Some people (the ones with good imaginations!) create a mental "board of directors" from their heroes and role models. They get to know their heroes so well from watching them and reading about them that they can imagine themselves asking their heroes for advice. In the hugely famous book, "Think and Grow Rich," writer Napoleon Hill suggests just such an approach. If you've stepped yourself in your heroes' lives, you'll have a mental image of them that is very clear.

You may even imagine what their voices sound like or what their mannerisms would be from what you've read. Make your mental picture as real as possible. Now ask your heroes for advice on whatever problem you face, and let the things you've read about them come back to you as if they were speaking just to you. Listen to their wisdom and ask them to encourage you. Then go forward and make it happen. After all, you wouldn't want to let your heroes down when they're counting on you!

### *Family and friends*

Sometimes our family and friends are among our role models. Sometimes, they're part of the negativity we need to distance ourselves from. But most of the time, they're rooting for us. Accept their help and encouragement, even their gentle nudging. Find a person you can trust and share your dream with them on how you will Take Back Your Life and what that life will look like. To be successful, you must have a support system. No one accomplishes his or her goals alone.

### *Fear of consequences*

Fear can be a powerful motivator. If the doctor has told you that you must lose 50 pounds or you won't be around to celebrate your child's graduation, you have a tremendous incentive to change your ways. If you know that the women in your family tend to have diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems by their 50s due to lack of exercise and extra weight, you have seen what your future holds unless you OWN it and change it and Take Back Your Life.

Sometimes, fear paralyzes us. This is especially true if you grew up with a disempowered view of life. You may believe that fate rules your destiny and that "some things don't change." Malarky! Total pigeon poop! Don't believe that for a moment. YOU control YOU. And you can take steps, starting right now to change your life and change your outcome. So let fear be a motivator, but never let it become a reason to

quit. You're made of stronger stuff than that. You CAN change and you WILL change if you make a promise to Take Back Your Life!

*Desire to change the outcome*

This is really the fear of consequences looked at from the other side. If you don't want to go where your life train is taking you, it's up to you to change trains. Get off the train! You wouldn't get on an airplane to Dallas if you wanted to fly to London. You wouldn't take a bus going north if you wanted to go south. The fact is, if you want to end up in a different place than where you're heading, you've got to turn your bus around!

Imagine yourself on a train. The train is heading down the tracks going very fast. You realize that the train is going in the wrong direction. It's not going where you want to go. Worse, it might crash before it reaches its destination. You decide to do something. You've got to tell the engineer! You move from one car to the next, making progress towards the engine. You throw open the door to the engine and you find out that no one is driving the train!

What do you do? You get into the cab and pull the brake! It's up to you to stop the train from going in the wrong direction. It's up to you to prevent the big wreck and the first step is to stop the train. After that, you can flag a train that's coming in the other direction and get a ride to the nearest station. So get out of your seat and stop your train! Change your outcome. Take Back Your Life. OWN your future. Yes, I'm talkin' to YOU!

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: SANDRA

Sandra came to me after she experienced a weird accident. She was walking across the street against a red light when a car came out of nowhere. So she wouldn't get hit, she took off sprinting. Her legs however, didn't move as fast as her brain did. She fell and then dragged herself to get out of the way. She made it, but was badly bruised. The doctor said her problem was weak leg muscles. That was her "aha" moment.

In search of a better life, she was serious in her need to step up her game and curious as to what weight training and a true workout regimen was all about. All she knew was that people who did it started to look better. She was stuck in a rut and wanted to look good and feel young. She didn't want to be old, and run down and be in pain in her senior years like some of her friends.

Since the day she took her first step towards changing her life, she has made some amazing transformations through my custom workout program. Her entire outlook on life has blossomed. When I interviewed her last, she said: "I'm so glad I made this life choice. I feel good, look

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

better and I'm stronger. Now I'm in control of my butt, even when I travel. My friends are talking and the compliments keep coming."

She finds it important to go to the gym to exercise because it motivates her to be around others who are fitness minded. Also, it keeps her pumped to find new people to aspire to be like. When she gets bored she just changes up her routine.

A cute story Sandra told me: "I walked into a restaurant the other day and a bunch of women stared me down in awe. They knew I had done something and I could tell they wanted it too, but they didn't know how. I felt confident knowing my hard work in the gym had paid off."

### *Accomplish a goal/live a dream*

People who have a dream or a goal can accomplish amazing things. They win Olympic medals. They overcome injuries and birth defects. They leave behind poverty and abuse. They overcome every obstacle because they never take their eyes from the dream. Martin Luther King wasn't the only one who had a dream. People who are fueled by their dreams and their goals are all around you. The neighbors who moved here from another country to make a brand new life had a dream that let them leave behind everything familiar and start over. The teacher at your child's school had a dream to encourage children to invent the future. The doctor you saw for your check-up had a dream that sustained her through all the long years of school it took to earn her degree. I remember what happened to me one day when I had to run for my life from an abusive partner and leave all I owned behind. With two kids and just the shirts on our backs, I had to pull energy out of nowhere to begin a new life. It was really hard, but I had dreams. I had goals and I had to make sure they played out. By any means necessary, I had to take control. Even as I speak to you right now, I get a little emotional because I realize that I am living the most satisfying time of my life, due to that one decision I made to Take Back My Life.

Dreams are all around us. Sometimes, it seems as if they're far away. Don't let that get you down. Your dreams and goals can sustain you while you Take Back Your Life so long as you never take your eyes off the prize. This doesn't mean you need to have a dream to change the world. Maybe your dream is to look good naked. Mine was! (Yes, really!) Maybe your dream is to climb stairs without huffing and puffing. Maybe your dream is to be able to go on a hike with your teenage son without needing to stop every ten minutes. Keep that image in front of you. Never let go of it. Imagine how it will feel when you get there. Make it as real as possible. Then do it!

A word of caution here. Make sure that the dream is your dream, and not someone else's. Motivation works best (and lasts longest) when you are making the changes for yourself and not to please someone else. That doesn't mean others won't be happy for you. But you have to want to change you for you. Got that? If your significant other thinks you should lose ten pounds, that's not good enough unless you are actually unhappy with your own weight because of how it makes you feel about you. If your mom thinks you should lose weight, or someone in the car pool makes you feel fat by comparison or you think your boss would give you a promotion if you looked better, that isn't enough. It takes too much energy to make lifestyle changes and stick to them if your heart isn't in it. You have to want it for you. It really is all about you.

*Wendy says: "If life is worth living, it's worth taking risks."*

### **LET'S TALK ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY.**

Accountability means having to give a report to someone. It means checking in to provide an update on progress. Accountability can be a powerful motivator when you know you will have to have something to show for your time.

Let's talk about what accountability isn't when it comes to taking back your life. It's not having a judge glare at you for failing. It's not about disapproval or judgment or being made to feel bad. You may have encountered people or situations like that in your past, but that's not what we're talking about here. Get rid of the guilt, shame and worthlessness. Remember what Eleanor Roosevelt said: "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

When it comes to the Take Back Your Life strategy, accountability is important. It keeps you on track. Sometimes (and I've had days like this myself), the ONLY thing that gets me to the gym is knowing that I'll have to report my progress to my designated cheerleader. I don't want to let that person down, and so I go. In reality, the accountability keeps me from letting myself down. That's why some of my clients sign up to run a 5K race — it pushes them to train and gives them a deadline. That's why it's so important to be accountable.

You can be accountable in your journey to Take Back Your Life in several ways. You can be accountable to your trainer. If you're working with someone — either alone or in a group or class — you know he or she is investing time to help you accomplish your goals. You honor their investment by keeping your part of the bargain: showing

up to the gym; eating right; making positive lifestyle changes. You want to show them that you can do it. You're accountable. Accountability here takes several forms. You see it in the measurements of your body that change over time. You see it in the workout chart that records your increased reps or weights. You see it in the attendance sheet at your aerobics class that shows you've never missed a session.

You're also accountable to yourself. You show this through the food journal you keep that helps you track every bite you put into your mouth. Maybe your journal also helps you track your mood and your workouts. That works, too. You show your accountability by setting milestones and goals and keeping track of every step you take toward accomplishing them, no matter how small.

You show your accountability to yourself by staying true to the lifestyle changes you promised yourself you'd make. Maybe those are changes in your internal dialogue (telling yourself "I will" instead of "I'll try," for example). Maybe those changes are in what you choose to eat or how you choose to spend your time or money. Maybe the change comes in the people you surround yourself with or your choice of entertainment. Your accountability to yourself records a series of challenges and rewards the effort for meeting your goals.

### WENDY'S HEROES: JACK LALANNE

Do you remember watching Jack LaLanne on TV as a kid? I do! Jack LaLanne became famous as a bodybuilder, and he was one of the very first people to encourage women to become active and exercise. Back in the 1960s, women were afraid they'd get muscles. They thought exercise wasn't "ladylike." I appreciate Jack LaLanne because he encouraged millions of women to get down on the floor in front of their TV sets and exercise. What a genuine fitness pioneer. He founded an early chain of health clubs and created several of today's well-known exercise machines. Yes, Jack LaLanne is certainly my idol because even in his 90s, he proved that age is not a limitation or an excuse! Jack said, "The only way you get that fat off is to eat less and exercise more." Amen!

### WHEN YOU BACKSLIDE.

"Backsliding" is an old-fashioned term. It means to lose ground or to quit trying to make positive changes. Here's the honest truth: Everyone backslides. Yep, me too. The difference between successful people and people who don't succeed can be boiled down to this: successful people catch themselves backsliding quickly and get back on

track. If necessary, they start over. But they never, ever, give up. Ever!

So how do you handle it when your motivation wears thin and you start to back-slide? Maybe you've had a lot of stress at home and it's been hard to get your workout done. Maybe you've been traveling a lot for work and you've eaten fast food on the go because your time was limited. Maybe you've just gotten over being sick and your energy levels are low. How do you get back on track and keep a few bad days (or weeks) from snowballing?

Here are my favorite tips for stopping the slide:

*Rely on your support network.* Get positive reinforcement from your cheerleaders.

*Remember the struggles and successes of your journey so far.* Recognize what you've accomplished and celebrate your wins. Think about all you've overcome to get to where you are.

*Visualize your dream.* Make it real in your mind. You want to be able to see, hear, taste and smell what it's going to be like when you reach your goal.

*Reframe the problem that got you off track.* Look for the opportunity hidden inside the problem. For example, instead of saying to yourself, "I don't have any control over what I eat when I'm traveling," say, "I can tuck an apple and a bottle of water and a protein bar or sandwich into my purse. That way, I'm not stuck with eating fast food at the airport!" Instead of saying, "I don't have any time to get to the gym," think, "I can't get to the gym, but I can climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator."

Now let's apply all this motivation stuff to Taking Back Your Life through your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition!

### **DAY BY DAY MOTIVATION: GETTING TO THE GYM**

It snowed. You have a cold. The baby didn't sleep well last night. It's your time of the month. Your workout buddy is out of town. There's a good show on TV. Do any of these excuses sound familiar? There are a million reasons why going to the gym doesn't sound like a good idea. If you're running a fever, stay home. Otherwise, I'm going to show you how to get your rear in gear by taking ownership of your daily motivation.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

Don't think for a moment I haven't experienced it. Being a trainer doesn't make me any different from you when it comes to wanting to haul my butt out of bed in the morning and go to the gym. I understand the challenge of day-to-day motivation personally. But I also understand that results require consistency. If I only work out "when I feel like it," I won't achieve the results I want or keep the results I've gained. So here are some more of my favorite games I play to get myself motivated on a daily basis.

### *"Just do it."*

Nike was right. Don't "over think" what you ate the night before or what new hassles the day may bring or you'll lose the battle. Lace up those shoes and hit the pavement! If you can't run, walk. Shuffle your feet. Dance. Just move it! Once you get going you'll start to feel better and most of the time, you'll do more and go longer than you originally thought you would.

### *Mix up your routine*

Boredom is the number one enemy of workout results. Here's how it happens. You start a new routine and it's challenging because you've never done it before. You begin to see results. Then a few weeks or months go by and you're afraid to change what you're doing because you don't want to stop getting results, but you're beginning to get bored. A few more weeks go by and now you're really bored. You start inventing excuses not to go. This problem has a simple answer. Do something different! Try different free weight exercises. Use different weight machines. Go to a different style of cardio class. Walk at a different time of day in a different place. Change the music on your iPod. Mix it up!

### *Compete with yourself*

I'm a very competitive person. I like competing with other people, and I always try to out-do my own personal best. Try it! You could learn to like motivating yourself with some competition. Make a chart for your workouts so you can track how long you work out or how far you walk or how much weight you lift or how many reps you do. See if you can do "just a little better" every time you go to the gym. That doesn't mean you have to do a million reps or bench press a VW Beetle. How well you control your reps, your breathing and your balance also count. Quality, not just quantity is extremely important. See if you can beat your own recent record!

*Make it a game*

Play catch with your dog. Have a dance competition with your best friend. Try one of those dance step-to-music-match-the-pattern machines at the arcade. Play basketball with your teenager. Play tag with your kids or grandkids. Kick, bounce or throw a ball. Crank up the music and dance like a complete fool. Shake your booty. Throw in an active session or two of physical games like these to mix up your routine and have some fun. I guarantee that if you are really playing hard for half an hour or longer you'll get as much cardio and work up the same sweat as you would at an aerobics class. It isn't a permanent substitute for your workout, but it's a great way to change it up and keep yourself from being bored.

*Avoid stress injuries*

There are few things as discouraging as an injury. Injuries make workouts painful or cause you to reduce the intensity just when you're starting to see results. Worse, an injury can sideline people and lead them to stop exercising altogether. How can you prevent a stress injury? The first key is to warm up before you start to exercise. Start out doing something at a low intensity (like walking slowly, biking w/no resistance or swinging your arms) and stretch, to warm the muscles and prepare your mind and body for exercise. Also lack of diversity in your exercise routine can be a culprit (just like repetitive typing on the computer causes carpal tunnel). Don't try to lift more weight than you can handle or do additional reps to impress the guy on the next weight machine. Make sure you have good shoes and that you know how to use the equipment. If something hurts, don't keep doing it! And always take time to cool down and stretch again after a workout to reduce muscle soreness and cramping. You'll feel better and be at less risk for a painful stress injury.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: LINDA

When I met Linda she had basically given up. She was frustrated with life. The hopelessness and frustration caused her to back out of life emotionally and let herself go to the point of self sabotage. She said to me, "I had given up and told myself to just go ahead and get fat. I'm getting old, nobody cares, and the younger players on the soccer team treat me like an outcast."

Linda knew she needed something to help her from sinking deeper, but she didn't know what to do. So her downhill spiral continued. Then she noticed Sue, her co-worker (and my client) who seemed to have it all together. Sue explained how our workouts had helped her. I met Linda shortly after she decided to give life another try.

I'm happy to say that Linda has been a joy to work with and has made some amazing progress — physically and mentally.

Linda said, "I love me! I am so happy with myself. I feel better. I'm stronger now. I eat better. I exercise everyday and I'm down three dress sizes (12 to 6). Although much has not changed around me, I'm so proud that I have the strength to stand up for myself."

When I asked what motivates Linda, she said, "You do, Wendy. Plus I enjoy our workouts. I've made a commitment to you and I don't want to disappoint you. I don't want to waste our time together. It's what gets me out of bed even on the days I don't see you."

Linda says she's proud of herself and looks forward to aging gracefully and to an exciting future.

### **YOUR WORKOUT: WHAT AFFECTS DAY-TO-DAY MOTIVATION?**

If your workout was the only thing going on in your life, you'd probably be buff and beautiful without even trying. Unfortunately, the real world isn't like that. Our past, present and future crowd into the car with us on the way to the gym. They hitch a ride in our gym bag and follow us into the weight room. Here are some of the most common motivation-killers I see in myself and in my clients:

#### *Current events*

Turn off the evening news! Use the newspaper to line the cat box and quit paying attention to all the naysayers. Yes, you need to know what's going on but you don't need to wallow in all the negativity that boosts TV news ratings. Until you become queen of the universe with the power to fix all the problems, limit the time you spend soaking up the woes of the world.

#### *The past*

Does a little voice whisper to you every time you go to the gym? The voice that says, "You've tried this before. It never works. Give up now." We all bring our pasts and our old regrets to the gym with us. Now it's time to shut them in your locker (and leave them there). You know what all the investment ads say: past performance is not a reliable predictor of future results. It's true for the stock market and for you, too!

#### *Medication and health*

Chronic diseases such as asthma or problems like migraine headaches can have an impact on your workout. Medicines can affect your energy level and can have side-effects

such as shortness of breath, dizziness and nausea. Notice that I said they can “have an impact,” not that they “are an excuse?” Get the difference? Your doctor can help you understand what is and isn’t safe for your particular situation. If you’re well enough to leave the hospital, there’s probably something you can still do to work toward your fitness goals, even if it’s just walking back and forth across your room.

### *Worries and problems*

We’ve all got them. The question is: do they have you? When we let our worries get the best of us, they zap our energy and make us feel like a big pile of sludge. But when you get up and take a walk, do a workout, play an active game, you’re not thinking about your problems. For the half hour or hour that you’re exercising, your mind is on your feet, the ball, or your reps. The worries go away. Not only that, but your body pumps out all kinds of good chemicals when you do an active workout that leaves you feeling charged up and full of life.

### *Mental habits*

Are you thinking like a victim (“why does this always happen to me?”) or a victor (“I control what I do in response to what happens to me?”) Bad mental habits like blaming others accomplish nothing except to make you feel powerless and tired. Get over it! Catch yourself sliding into victim-talk and gently but firmly reframe it to a victor attitude. Then get up and get going!

### *People*

If you’re surrounded by inactive people, no one is encouraging you by example to get moving. Their apathy rubs off on you. Even worse, if you’re around negative people, you start to think like them. Leave the room. Walk outside. Limit your time around the negative people in your life. Use your workout as an excuse to get away from them, and meet new people who share an upbeat attitude and a commitment to exercise and good nutrition.

### *Hormones*

Did you know that hormones affect you all the time, not just during “your week?” Hormones play a crucial part in how our bodies work, and they affect brain function and physical wellbeing. Hormone imbalances can play a role in depression and weight gain.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

If you suspect that hormones are part of your motivational problems, ask your doctor about what you can do to make a difference through exercise, nutrition and medication.

### *Work and family commitments*

In a perfect world, we could put in a full day at work, cook a gourmet dinner, keep a spotless house, read bedtime stories to our children, and still have the time and energy to do a body sculpting workout while getting a full eight hours of sleep at night. Right. And I thought I just saw the tooth fairy go by. In the real world, you have to make tradeoffs. You take a ten minute walk at three different times instead of 30 minutes all at once. You can buy a rotisserie chicken for dinner instead of roasting it yourself. Instead of watching TV, you can play an active game with your kids for “quality time.” And you can cut yourself a little slack about the dust bunnies under the couch. It’s great to be conscientious, but women tend to take care of everyone else first and themselves last. Part of being able to Take Back Your Life is seizing the power to adjust the routine in order to meet your own needs as well as your other obligations.

### *Illness*

In the early stages of an illness (whether it’s the flu or something worse,) rest is a good idea. You don’t want to make others sick and rest will help you heal. But too often, illness becomes an excuse, or you become used to taking time off and avoid coming back. Even if you’ve got an arm or a leg in a cast, there are ways you can still exercise safely. Start with doing a little and do a little more each day as your strength returns. Ride the exercise bike if the treadmill seems like too much. If you’re unable to work your lower body, do upper body workouts. If you are weight training, do eight reps this time instead of 12, but do the eight reps correctly. Exercise and good food support healing, and can often make you get better faster.

### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: DEBRA, THE ONE WHO GOT AWAY

When Debra came to me, her main goal was to correct some health problems and lose weight. More friends and a better love life were also on her list. Pumped and ready to get started, she was diligent with her workouts and religious with her nutrition plan. She was getting results. But Debra had a hidden problem. She didn’t like herself very much. Sometimes she would sink into moments of self defiance and self pity. That would cause her to resort to food for comfort which would always snowball into more bad habits and a return to old ways. Eventually, this up and

down battle got the best of her and she stopped coming to the gym.

Remember when I said we all have baggage and sometimes we must resolve past issues before we can go forward and change our life? Unfortunately, that was the case here. I hope to see Debra sometime again soon and I pray that she will accomplish what she originally set out to do.

### **OUTLOOK AND YOUR GOALS: WHAT AFFECTS YOUR SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES?**

Your workout is only one part of the OWN equation. Your Outlook and Nutrition are also part of achieving your goals. We've talked a lot about motivation, which is why you do what you do. But when it comes to bigger goals, your overall Outlook also plays a big role in your success.

Motivation gets you to the gym on a day-by-day basis. Your Outlook tells you that you have a right to be healthy and fit. Your Outlook is framed by how you believe the world works and what you perceive your place in the world to be.

<b>MOTIVATION</b>	<b>OUTLOOK</b>
Wants to look good naked	Believes you have a right to feel good about yourself.
Gets you to the gym today	Believes good health is your birthright.
Keeps you working out when you feel down	Assures you that you are worth the effort
Keeps you moving until the end of the workout	Believes that effort will pay off in the long run
Wants to look great in a swimsuit	Believes that you are more than the sum of your body measurements or your weight

See the difference? Motivation and Outlook are related, but when it comes to short-term objectives and the big picture, Outlook determines whether or not you'll be able to muster up the motivation to keep on going. It's what makes you a victim or a victor in the first place.

Why do some people endure a childhood of abuse, poverty and neglect and then rise to become educated professionals or successful celebrities while other children with the same background end up in jail or worse? Outlook plays a key role. Without a positive Outlook, you can't see a way for the future to be different from the present. With a positive Outlook, you believe the present is just a passing phase and that the future will be whatever you make it. It's the true difference between powerless and powerful.

## WENDY'S HEROES: MY MOTHER

My mother had a rough time of it starting out. She had her first child, my sister, when she was only 13 years old. In total, there were four of us girls and one baby boy. There were times when the money was so tight that Mommy did without so we would have enough to eat. But who can explain a mother's love? I only know that my fondest memories of her were how she used to try to keep me from harm's way by loving, teaching and constantly preaching to me on how to survive in a tough neighborhood. But even though she experienced struggle and hardship, she rose above it. Instead of giving up and becoming bitter, she became wise and street smart. She protected us in ways she had not been protected herself when she was young. Because she suffered from a lack of knowledge as a young girl, she made sure we knew the score — not just about sex, but about life. Everyone gave my mother respect. She didn't let the obstacles in her life stop her and she didn't let anyone else define her. She taught me the same — to “rise above.”

## WHAT CREATES A NEGATIVE OUTLOOK?

### *Fear*

Fear actually prunes back the nerve connections in your brain. You stop seeing possibilities. You freeze or hide. Fear keeps you from taking the opportunities for change that are right in front of you.

### *“Stinking thinking.”*

No, I didn't make up that term but I wish I had. “Stinking thinking” is all the bad mental habits, negative thoughts and rotten memories mashed together. It's every put-down anyone ever gave you that's stored away in your brain. Only now, someone else isn't saying it to you — you're saying it to you! Tell yourself to stop that! It takes time to overcome “stinking thinking” and often, it requires professional help. But the results are worth it.

### *Inertia*

Sir Isaac Newton said that “bodies at rest tend to remain at rest.” He was talking about the planets. But it's true about you, too. Sitting on the couch all night makes you want to sit on the couch tomorrow night. Doing nothing makes you want to do more nothing. And the reverse is true. “Bodies in motion tend to remain in motion.” Get up and get moving and it will feel so good you don't want to quit.

*Doing it alone*

You need your cheerleaders. They can be your trainer, your family, your best friend or coworker or the people you see at the gym. Taking Back Your Life is too big to do by yourself. You need help and encouragement with your goals as well as your daily workout.

*Unrealistic expectations*

Did you expect to be three dress sizes smaller in time for your class reunion? Were you hoping to drop ten pounds in two weeks like the tabloid in the supermarket promised? Anything good takes time. Think about planting a crop or having a baby. All the wishing in the world won't make the process go faster, and trying to speed it up results in disaster. It took you a lifetime to get where you are now. It will take time to change that. Focus on the small victories and keep your eye on the dream.

*Lack of feedback or visible progress*

This is one reason why it's so demoralizing to try to make changes all alone. Often, you can't see the progress you're making while it's very apparent to those around you. Here's where having a trainer or a workout buddy really pays off. Maybe you're defining "success" as losing ten pounds, and you are so wrapped up in the number on the scale that you can't see that your pants fit better and you've lost your love handles. Progress takes many forms. Going longer or with more intensity in your cardio workout is progress. Lifting more weight or more repetitions with better control is progress. You need your cheerleaders to give you the feedback and show you the progress you can't see for yourself.

**MOTIVATION AND YOUR LIFE: WHAT AFFECTS THE BIG PICTURE?**

Taking Back Your Life begins with OWNING your future through your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition. It involves having day-to-day motivation to keep you on track, and having your eye on a dream to stay in touch with your goals. As you do that, you're also changing the whole picture. You're beginning to change your life.

What are some things that affect your ability to change your life?

*Noise*

Remember what I said about keeping your eyes on the dream? When we listen to the noise around us, we take our eyes off the big goal. We get distracted and discouraged.

What is the noise? Noise is everything that distracts you. It can be your problems, your family not wanting to let you have time to yourself, your aches and pains, the price of gas or the value of your 401K. Learn to manage the noise so you keep your eye on the prize.

### *Fear of success*

Yep, I said “success.” Surprised? Don’t be. After all, success means change. Who will you be if you’re not your old flabby self? What will change if you become thinner, healthier, more attractive and more confident? Will you attract more attention from men? (Exciting, but scary at the same time.) Will people expect more from you? Will your significant other feel jealous or threatened? Will you have to change how you dress, do your makeup or carry yourself? Yikes! Fear of success derails as many people as fear of failure. Here’s the thing to keep in mind: You control your success and the changes you choose to make. Remember that you’re in control and keep your mind on your goal.

### *Unresolved issues*

These are the biggies that go beyond what a trainer can do for you. If you’ve experienced abuse, neglect, violence or other trauma, it can be very difficult to picture a future at all. Those issues will continue to dog you and drag you down until you muster up the courage to get real professional help. You can rise above whatever is in your past. I know from personal experience how hard that is, but it can be done. As you deal with your unresolved issues, it will get easier to create goals and keep your eye on your dream. You will come to understand that you deserve to have good things happen and that you can create good things in your life. Part of that includes Taking Back Your Life through exercise and nutrition.

## **SO HOW DO YOU GET YOUR “MOJO” BACK?**

Many of the same tools that help with your motivation and goals also affect your overall Outlook and influence the change you can create in your life. These great tools are useful outside the gym, too. Here are my favorite ways to get the “mojo” back in your life:

### *Change your routine*

Don’t just change your workout: change your life. Get a new outfit. Change jobs. Get a degree. Move to a new neighborhood. These are more than superficial changes. They

fundamentally change how you see yourself and how others see you, and as you see yourself in a new light, you'll see opportunities you've never glimpsed before.

*Try a new reward*

If your old reward was food or sitting down to watch TV, your rewards were undercutting your success. Reward yourself with something that advances your dream. If you want to be an artist, reward yourself with time and go to a free gallery crawl. If you want to be a singer, sign up to be in a local chorus. Choose rewards that put you around positive people who are living their dreams and around things that will help you get closer to your dream. (Hint: this doesn't have to include spending money.)

*Celebrate your successes and your journey*

Change is a process. Enjoy the ride and celebrate along the way. Celebrating reinforces the gains you've made and helps you change the way you think about yourself.

*Add or change your meditation routine*

If you're not having "quiet time" to meditate, consider adding a technique that feels right to you. If you're already doing some form of meditation, change your routine. If you've been reading, try yoga. If you've been doing yoga, try focusing on a word or a picture that has meaning. Learn to listen to yourself and you'll start to see where the distractions are coming from. There is real wisdom in silence.

*Find a coach and create a fan club*

Your coach may be a personal trainer or a counselor. He or she should be someone who genuinely cares and who has experience and a certification so that you receive good advice on your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition. Then find a few friends you can count on to share your goals and cheer your progress. Make the time to spend with your "fan club" to get the real benefit from their support. (And while you're at it, banish the negative people from your inner circle.)

*Read a motivational book or watch an uplifting movie*

Movies and books don't need to be "religious" to be spiritual or motivational. Find something that makes you feel like standing up and cheering and then watch it or read it again when ever you need a lift.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

### *Change the music you listen to*

It's sad but true: many of today's popular songs don't have very positive messages. If you're having trouble getting your Outlook straightened out, start listening to the words of the songs you put in your head. Are they all about bad relationships and unhealthy situations? If so, change the channel by choosing music with words that support a positive Outlook.

### *Create a "talisman" to anchor yourself to your goal*

This means having something you can touch or hold in your hand that reminds you of what your goals and dreams are. It can be a small rock from a place you mean to re-visit, or a rubber band around your wrist that you snap when you catch "stinking thinking" sneaking in. It can be a picture you keep by your computer or a charm bracelet with a charm for each of your goals or dreams. Creating a talisman helps make your dreams real and keep you on the right track.

### *Build a vision board*

A vision board is a type of talisman because it helps your dreams stay real. Take a piece of cardboard or foam board. Cut out pictures from magazines or the Internet of the things you want most. If you want a family, choose a picture of a happy couple with children. If you want to travel, choose pictures from the places you want to go. Carefully arrange the photos into an attractive display on your board and then place it where you will see it frequently. Seeing, after all, is believing.

### *Breathe*

Did you know that how you breathe makes a big difference in how well you handle stress? Instead of taking quick, shallow breaths from your chest, learn to slow down and take deep breaths from your diaphragm. Breathe in through your nose, hold it for a few seconds, and then slowly exhale through your mouth. You'll be amazed at how quickly stress falls away when you learn to breathe!

### *Spend an hour laughing*

Yes, laughter is the best medicine. When you've lost your motivation to work out or eat right and your outlook is bleak, find a funny YouTube video and laugh. Tune in to a comedy program on TV or download a comedy podcast from iTunes. Go online to

a joke web site or find your favorite comic strip. The point is — stop taking everything so seriously.

*Write and repeat affirmations*

What you write down you remember, and what you repeat begins to affect your actions and the world around you. Take a few moments to write down your workout and nutrition goals. You can add even bigger life and career goals as well. Try to have no more than 10. Keep them to one sentence each. Now put that list where you'll see it every day — on your bathroom mirror or next to your computer screen. When you see it, repeat your affirmations out loud. Next, repeat them mentally before you go to sleep each night. Make your affirmations specific (“I want to lose 20 pounds” vs. “I want to lose weight”) and include a timeframe. (“I want to lose 20 pounds by December 31 and keep it off.”) You'll be amazed how affirmations can affect your motivation and your outlook.

Now that we've squared away your motivation and Outlook, it's time to tackle your Workout.



## CHAPTER THREE: OWN YOUR WORKOUT



You have a choice. Do you really want to Take Back Your Life? Do you really want change? Only you can make change happen. Some people dream about change, while others do nothing but talk about it. Only the dedicated make the commitment and take action. They get results. Which will you be?

I know what you are thinking. You're thinking, "What does she know about my life? She's a professional trainer. She wins body-building competitions." Yes, those things are true — but did you know, I didn't start really working out until I was about 42 years old! I had been through a very difficult divorce. I had been unhappy at work and made a career change, with all of the ups and downs that entails. I gave birth, raised two children and later had surgery that played havoc with my hormones, sending my mood spiraling and my weight soaring. I was out of shape, depressed and suffering from domestic violence. I didn't like the woman I saw in the mirror. I needed help and wanted change, but I didn't know how to get it.

Then I started working out. It not only helped me to Take Back My Life, but I'll honestly tell you that I think working out saved my life.

### WENDY'S STORY — HOW WORKING OUT SAVED MY LIFE

My life before I got into fitness was like many people, just living day to day, meal to meal and job to job while taking care of my family. Most of the time I felt run down and stressed out and I seemed to be sick all the time. When I realized that my twelve year abusive marriage was part of the problem, I literally ran for my life with my two children across the country with only the clothes on our backs for a safe haven. That marriage ended with a devastating divorce. I was suddenly single with no money and two children to raise who were eleven months apart (ages six and seven). I worked full-time and went to college part-time to earn my accounting degree. Just when I thought things were looking up it went out of control again. I had an early hysterectomy. I was thrust abruptly into menopause after my surgery. Hormones, emotions, hot flashes, sleepless nights — it felt like everything was ganging up on me. Life seemed way too hard to manage. It was completely out of control! I felt helpless.

Because I loved so hard, up to this point in my life I realized I was doing everything for

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

everybody else and never focused on myself. At that moment, I really saw myself for the first time: I looked like I felt — so unhealthy, overweight and out of control. My thoughts were, “You are going to die before your time just like Mommy.” With that realization, I thought I should join a gym. I started participating in aerobic classes from time to time, but I didn’t know what else to do in the gym so I went back to my old habits. I continued this yo-yo effect for a few years, and my energy remained low. I was starting to realize that I would never come even close to being as in shape as I was in high school. Plus, Mommy was big boned so I figured I would be that way too. I thought that getting fat and tired was what happened when you get into your forties. I saw no improvement in my image and frankly I was bored with my aerobic classes.

Then an angel came to me in human form. It was a man — a personal trainer — who changed my life forever! He saw my real potential, so he bugged me for months to train with him. I resisted because I thought weights would bulk me up and make me look like a man. Am I glad he nagged me! I finally said, “What the hell, I’ll give it a try” and I signed up. My workout started out slow but steady and after about four weeks, my body started making changes I had NEVER seen before and I was getting compliments I had never heard before! “Wow”, I thought. I was on to something. It was the best decision I made in my life! It didn’t just change my body: it changed my career. I had an accounting degree and worked as a financial accountant for many years, but now because of what I was experiencing after only four months of training I pursued my thoughts of becoming a personal trainer. It was a pivotal point in my life and at 42 I felt a sense of rescue.

It was not an easy transition, however. Before I received my personal training credentials, I got off track and the changes in my body stopped happening. I fell back into the idea that my body was destined to be where it was. I started to think that the big hype about bodies getting fit was BS. That’s when some more angels stepped in. Some ladies in my accounting office were starting a weight loss competition and I wanted to get on board. I always loved games as a kid and that’s the way I looked at this competition. I was motivated because I would be part of a team. It seemed like fun and I would be held accountable. I knew I would be conscientious and not want to disappoint my team. So I stepped up my game to cardio five times a week and paid more attention to my eating. I actually won that challenge. As time went on, I learned more about my body and how it reacted to my ever-changing environment.

Fitness is a process and a combination of phases that you go through in order for it to become a lifestyle. My life finally changed when I began to believe I could do it. Then I kept my eyes on the goal. And the rest, as they say, is history!

Women confide in me all the time at the gym. They tell me that the men in their lives don't understand them — at home or at work. And at the same time, those women tell me that they don't understand how their changing bodies affect their workouts. Now if we women don't understand our own bodies, how are men going to be able to understand us any better than we understand ourselves? We have to teach ourselves, and then we can teach the other people in our lives — men and women. Understanding your body and being aware of the changes happening inside you and around you is the first step to creating a successful and long-lasting workout program. Embarking on a real and legitimate exercise program is a journey, but as with any journey, everyone begins at a different place and time based on previous conditioning and past life experiences.

Around age 40, many women realize that the techniques they had been using for fitness and weight loss just aren't working as well as they used to work — or aren't working at all. After a few less-than-successful attempts at shaping up or slimming down, it's tempting to just decide that you're destined to be pudgy and let nature take its course. And the problem is, nature will do just that. A ten-pound weight gain gradually inches up to fifteen or twenty pounds. Muscle tone decreases and just walking around the mall begins to feel like an ordeal.

In the beginning, one of the biggest changes comes in terms of planning, learning new habits and being careful to start out carefully and slowly. Women 40+ cannot suddenly start doing high-intensity workouts. Once you get into the rhythm of regular workouts, some days will be long and others short and still others high intensity and then low intensity. The variation is important to get the body to make changes. The process is different for each individual in how quickly the body changes, but by the same token, the intensity level changes will ultimately decide the progression of the fitness level and therefore how quickly your goals will be reached.

There is an improvement stage to your workout and a maintenance stage. The improvement stage will always be more time consuming than the maintenance stage. (i.e. improvement may be cardio six times a week for one hour and maintenance may be three times a week for forty minutes.) That is why I say all the time, "it is better to keep up than catch up."

The first step toward taking control of your life is to commit to your workout. Change begins in the mind before it can happen in the body. Make a commitment to your own health and prepare to give 100 percent focus, effort and energy to turn that commitment into reality. I have no doubt that you can win this battle once you

understand how to play the fitness game at this stage in your life. Once you begin to Take Back Your Life through your workout, you'll find that you can handle the ups and downs with confidence and you'll feel so good at the same time.

### **GET YOUR NUMBERS STRAIGHT**

How long has it been since you had a medical check-up? Not an annual appointment with the gynecologist — an appointment that actually checks your whole body? Most women put off going to the doctor because they're busy taking everyone else for care. It's an expensive mistake.

I believe every woman should get what I call a “holistic female overhaul.” That means a top-to-bottom check-up that not only goes over all the usual elements (heart, lungs, blood pressure) but also tests hormone levels. It's best to do this in your thirties or before you begin to experience symptoms of menopause so that you have a baseline set of test results taken at a time when you are feeling good.

Part of this “holistic female overhaul” also includes finding a doctor who will actually talk to you about what is going on in your body, how your statistics have changed over time, where the danger areas are, and where you are doing well. Doctors are often rushed and many of them either aren't trained to talk to patients or think patients don't want to hear details. Be assertive! It's your body. Even if you have to schedule a longer appointment or pay a little extra, make sure you let the front desk know when you make the appointment that you want a consultation, not just a series of tests. You want to know what the results mean, not just what they say.

### **A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO WORKING OUT**

When you OWN your workout, you are building the skills for a long-time fitness lifestyle. Not only will you achieve results with toning up and slimming down, but you will also avoid many illnesses and injuries.

With so much at stake, why do women hesitate to work out? It's the “no pain, no gain” mentality. It helped to turn so many children off from gym class and created a nation of couch potatoes. I have heard so many women say that their first experiences with previous trainers included such rigorous first workouts that they were literally scared away. They felt discouraged and felt their goals weren't achievable.

That kind of approach may work with some men (and maybe a few women), but it's a turn off for most women. Women don't like to feel bulldozed, especially when

they are starting something new and already feel unsure of themselves.

I want you to OWN each stage of your workout plan. That means we're going to take small, careful steps together and look at not only your physical needs/wants, but also your mental state and your personal stage of readiness to make big changes in your life. I also want you to feel that you've mastered one stage before you move on to the next challenging stage.

### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: BERTHA'S WORKOUT

Bertha had been thinking about working out for months, and made several attempts to make progress on her own before deciding to find a trainer. She knew her health was on the line, so she adjusted her budget to scrape together the money and went to a popular gym to set up an appointment with one of their trainers.

After her first session, Bertha barely made it out to her car because her legs were so wobbly from the hard workout. In fact, she fell as she was about to cross the street because her legs gave out on her. Strangers rushed to help her. Bertha got back on her feet and made light of it. "Don't go in there because they'll kill you," she laughingly told her rescuers as she pointed toward the gym. "They probably have skeletons hanging in the back room."

Bertha was in so much pain that she had to cancel the next few sessions. When she was able to return to the gym, she begged the trainer to revise her workout. "Please understand that I need to have some strength left to get to my car," she told the trainer. The trainer didn't listen, and the second session was a repeat of the first one.

Bertha quit! "Forget the money; I have the fear of God in me now. Call Security!" Bertha ended up feeling victimized by her trainer because the trainer didn't listen to her needs and didn't adjust the system for Bertha's level of fitness. Bertha didn't OWN that workout — it mugged her!

The good news is that Bertha gave fitness another shot. She and I have worked together successfully for months, and with her amazing attitude, Bertha has seen her fitness goals come true.

### RECOGNIZE WHAT'S DIFFERENT

The hard truth is that getting results requires more effort once you're over 40. It takes a little more time to warm-up to prepare the body and mind for vigorous activity. In part this is due to injuries, age related problems or preventative concerns. That makes stretching and low-intensity warm-up time a priority. So overall it will take longer to

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

reach the fat-burning zone. Real fat burning begins after about thirty minutes of cardio. Once you become used to the idea of working out, you have the option to train at a higher intensity for a shorter time or do interval training to achieve quicker results. Keep in mind this is only one part of the equation. Proper nutrition can quicken the pace and make up for lost time. These factors are underrated, misunderstood and overlooked — and they represent the reasons why so many women give up in frustration. If you remember that changing your lifestyle and avoiding the quick fixes are your ultimate goals, then you will win – you will take control and ultimately Take back Your Life!

Balance and stability problems also increase as we age unless we specifically address those areas. It is a natural part of aging. Poor balance impacts quality of life by making it difficult to walk, climb stairs or move independently around your home. Specifically training these areas during your workout can help you avoid these problems.

*Wendy says: “Fight for this little bit of you! You may not be able to control your divorce or your job loss but you can control your workout. So do it for you and fight like a warrior! I know it can be done.”*

Menopausal symptoms also make an impact on working out. Hot flashes can be brought on by stress or exercise for some women. That alone can be enough to make women avoid the gym. These hot flashes are very different from sweating. They feel like you’re burning up inside, and then suddenly, you turn cold. It’s distracting and embarrassing, and it’s also disempowering because you don’t know when the flashes will start or when they’ll end. That lack of control plays with your mind. It’s another reason women get frustrated and give up. Trust me. I know. I’ve been there and done that. But here’s the thing to keep in mind: if you can push past the temporary inconvenience, you’ll begin to see results that increase your confidence and may even lessen other symptoms of menopause. It’s worth it.

### **LOOK GOOD NAKED**

I love the way working out makes my body feel. I feel sexy when I work out. In fact, I feel downright amorous and easily aroused during my workout. Sometimes, sexy mental images motivate me while I’m working out.

Now I’ll admit it wasn’t like that when I first started to get in shape. But once you know that your workout at the gym can improve your fun in the bedroom, it’s one

more reason to stay on track with your exercise goals.

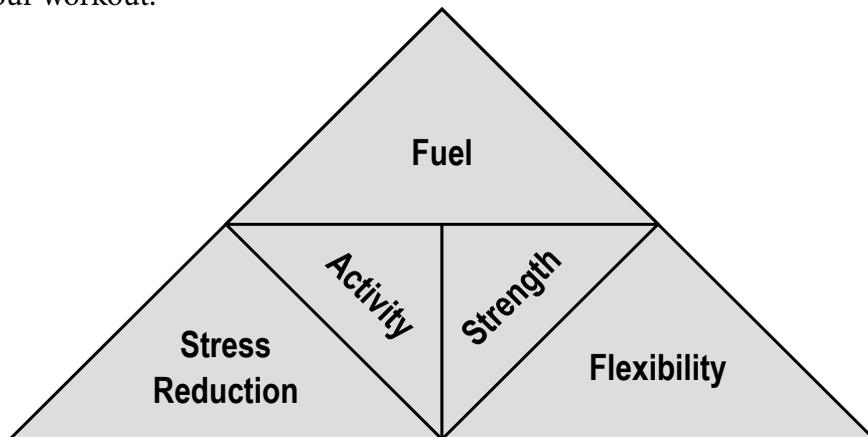
Working out produces endorphins which make you feel good. Not only that, but exercise has been linked to decreased vaginal dryness, improved mood swings, fewer sleepless nights, decreased hair loss and improved sex drive, so don't let anyone tell you that those negatives have to be part of getting older. They don't! You can slow down the clock on aging, look great and feel better just by OWNING your workout. Isn't it worth it?

*Wendy says: "First, be aware and recognize what you've gone through and decide that now is the time to Take Back Your Life!"*

### **OWN YOUR WORKOUT: USING THE DELTA FACTOR**

To make the most of your fitness program, you need to develop what I call the Delta Factor. Now the word "delta" comes from the Greek letter that is shaped like a triangle. It's a symbol that is often used for "change." The Delta Factor is one of the things that will enable you to make change and Take Back Your Life. And like the Greek symbol, the Delta Factor can be pictured as a triangle.

There are five sections in the Delta Factor: Fuel, Activity, Strength, Flexibility and Stress Reduction. Cultivate all five and you have a strong base to help you succeed as you Take Back Your Life. It's no coincidence that the triangle is one of the strongest shapes in nature. Engineers and architects often use triangle shapes when constructing buildings because of their strength. You need to use the strength of the Delta Factor to OWN your workout.



### *Fuel*

One type of Fuel is the food you consume. We'll talk about nutrition in the next chapter. The fuel you use is very important. Fuel can also be your motivation. Attitude is everything. When you believe that change is possible and that you envision the success you desire, you are providing fuel for yourself to create that change for success. Fuel is also energy. As you get into your workout and you start to see the changes in your body, you'll also notice changes in your energy levels. You will feel better. You will have more energy. You will feel powered-up. Your body releases natural chemicals when you work out that fuel your performance and help your stamina. These are all types of fuel and they're part of your Delta Factor.

### *Activity*

This is essential. Whether you're jogging, participating in an aerobics class or dancing, you're being active. True aerobic activity can be defined as nonstop and continuous movement for twenty minutes or more. Regular aerobic activity is important for heart health and it also helps to burn off body fat. Not only that, but aerobic activity makes your body produce endorphins, the natural feel-good hormones that make you feel great about living. Other types of aerobic activity build agility, making it less likely that you will fall or lose your balance if you have to move quickly or pivot out of danger.

There's another level of activity that matters: the steps you take to reach your goals. Some of that activity may be mental and some may be physical but let me be clear: nothing happens unless there is activity!

### *Strength*

The optimal workout regimen for women over age 40 includes strength training. Strong muscles and bones are necessary just to get through the day. Good muscle tone helps you push a shopping cart, walk without wobbling and get out of a chair without help. Bone density increases with strength training, and we know that good bone density helps to prevent osteoporosis, a common cause of easily broken bones. Good muscle tone also helps to maintain a healthy body weight, burn body fat and give you a better, more positive image of yourself. You're engaging both your body and your mind when you work out. Both forms of activity are important and as you keep body and mind active, you are building strength.

### *Flexibility*

This is frequently overlooked or disregarded, but it is essential to every workout program — especially as we age. Flexibility improves range of motion, prevents painful joint and muscle aches and helps to prepare the body for more vigorous activity. When we are young, we are naturally agile. Jumping and running are not usually difficult for healthy young people. As we age, our body chemistry changes as does our lifestyle. As a result, the joints in our bodies stiffen up and limit normal everyday functions. In our mind's eye, we still think we can take off and jump into things like when we were young, but we soon find out it now causes muscle strains or other unpleasant injuries. I've learned this the hard way with injuries I received simply because I didn't stretch or warm up. I continue to warn all my clients about the importance of stretching regularly.

### *Stress reduction*

When you are stressed, your body does not work at peak efficiency. Your muscles tense, your body releases stress chemicals that affect your blood pressure and other bodily functions, and it becomes more difficult to concentrate. Stress can also prompt unhealthy behavior, such as eating too much or consuming too much alcohol. Chronic stress has been linked to heart disease and other physical and mental problems that then create more stress. It's a vicious cycle! If stress gets bad enough, we just shut down. Without high levels of stress, it's easier to make healthy eating choices and enjoy the company of other people. You no longer need to rely on alcohol or cigarettes or prescriptions to help you sleep or cope or keep from screaming. When you're experiencing high levels of stress, it can be difficult to organize your time effectively to fit in time to work out. This is when workouts are more important than ever! Workouts can be your saving grace because they reduce stress. Your life can be richly blessed when you OWN your workout!

Working out helps you reduce your stress levels. When you're thinking about the weight you're lifting or the reps you're doing or the steps in an aerobics class, you're not dwelling on your problems. Working out also helps your body create the good chemicals that reduce stress, and a challenging workout can also give you a healthy way to work off your frustration. Once you're done with your workout, odds are you'll not only feel more confident and able to handle the situation, but you'll also be thinking more clearly and find yourself on a healthy 'high' from all the good chemicals your body has circulating through your blood. When you reduce your stress, you improve your health, your fitness and your ability to reach your goals!

## TAKING IT BEYOND THE GYM:

The Delta Factor not only affects more than your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition. To really Take Back Your Life, you need to apply the Delta Factor outside the gym. Here's another way to apply the Delta Factor: Forgiveness, Faith and Love. These are important as you move beyond the past to create the present you desire. Forgiveness: Free your heart in order to get beyond the painful past and live in the present. Faith: You need Faith to be able to trust again and try something new. Love: With love, you can grow, feel and learn to really be yourself.

## CREATE AN OMEGA ATTITUDE



It's been said that "attitude equals altitude." In other words, your beliefs, motivation and Outlook affect how well you will achieve your dreams. The attitude that enables you to succeed is what I call the Omega Attitude. It will keep you young and vibrant! It's your state of mind, your flexibility to change and your willingness to stick with it to achieve your dream. The Omega Attitude has three elements: Confidence, Creativity and Consistency.

Confidence comes from knowing you can win and attain your goals. It also means believing that you deserve to win and that you deserve to live the life you've dreamed about creating. Confidence is empowering. Show your attitude! It takes attitude to win.

Creativity keeps you motivated, challenged and young at heart. Creativity enables you to change with the times. It keeps you from getting stuck in a rut. Creativity also helps you see solutions to your problems and envision a new reality to replace your current situation.

Consistency is required to stick with your plans even when the going gets tough. It's the ability to finish what you start. Remember that it's not how you start; it's how you finish that's important.

Master the Omega Attitude and you can Take Back Your Life!

### Wendy's quote:

*"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out."*

— Robert Collier

## CHEAT THE CLOCK

It's no secret that our bodies change as we get older. What most people don't realize is how wide-ranging those changes are. Some of the changes happen on the outside, but many changes happen on the inside, and because we can't see them, we don't always realize that they're happening until the change causes something negative to happen.

Women experience a cluster of age-related changes as part of menopause. That's why they used to call it "The Change." Because of the way menopause affects the body's hormones, women lose minerals in the bones which can make bones more brittle and can even cause the spine to compress. This is why older people break bones more easily than healthy young people. The spine compression also explains why people seem to shrink as they age.

Aging also can make joints stiffer, causing an overall loss of flexibility in many parts of the body. Muscle weakness can reduce balance, making it easier to fall. Older people also are more prone to arthritis and other inflammatory problems that result in pain and stiffness because of hormonal and chemical changes inside the body. As women age, they also often find themselves feeling tired all the time. They lack energy and begin to move more slowly. Everything seems like a struggle.

Some of the age-related changes happen on the outside, too. Dry and peeling skin occur when the oil glands decrease the production of natural oils that keep younger skin plump and hydrated. Skin can look loose and baggy as the layer of subcutaneous fat beneath the skin becomes thinner.

The changes can also affect sex. Things like vaginal dryness, mood swings, sleepless nights and decreased libido can make sex a chore instead of a joy. These changes can also make women feel unattractive and out of control, wondering where the person they used to be has gone.

The good news is that you can OWN the way you age. You can Take Back Your Life from aging. Just because these changes CAN happen doesn't mean they MUST happen. Exercise, nutrition and your mental outlook can make an amazing difference in how your body and mind age.

Women age differently than men. It's true, and we have our hormones to blame. Women over age 40 need to factor their changing bodies into their workout plans to avoid injury and to get results. Not only that, but women age 40+ also need to be aware of the changes that come with age so they can cheat the clock. Once you know what the enemy is, you can fight more effectively! People always ask me what my secret

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

is to looking young and fit. This is it folks! I live by, I swear by, I commit to a daily regimen of the Delta Factor and Omega Attitude. It makes me feel amazing. It's helped me fight the effects of aging. Now it's your turn. You will look better, feel better and think more clearly!

The Omega Attitude is essential for cheating the clock. Women are sensitive, emotional beings and we carry the world on our shoulders. When you're accustomed to taking care of everyone else first, I repeat, you often skip taking care of yourself. But unless you make taking care of yourself a priority, age will run its course and the problems I've mentioned above will gradually rob you of your health, confidence and options. It doesn't have to be like that! Get your Omega Attitude in gear and put Confidence, Creativity and Consistency to work for you!

So how does exercise help you cheat the clock? Here are ten ways a great workout helps you look and feel younger — inside and out.

### *Posture*

How you stand and sit affects your appearance and your health. Slouching and slumping not only makes you feel old and look heavier, but it impacts your attitude as well. Your mother was right: Stand up straight! When you stand up and bring your shoulders back you can breathe easier. You look taller and more self-assured. You feel more confident. You also strengthen and lengthen the muscles in your back and shoulders. I continually emphasize the importance of posture with my clients. This is a pet peeve of mine and I preach about it so much that my clients tell me they can even hear me in their sleep!

### *Try it for yourself*

Stand in front of a mirror. First, slouch your shoulders and let your belly poke out. Then stand tall. Pull your shoulders back and tighten your tummy. I'm not a betting woman, but I bet you all of Oprah's money that you will look — and feel — much younger when you correct your posture.

### *Good form*

Make it a habit to pull your tummy muscles in and rotate your hips underneath you so that you support your core muscles instead of standing like a swaybacked old horse. Create stronger back muscles and avoid injuries by standing up straight with your shoulders squared and pull your neck out of your shoulders. Also, building strong

core muscles will help you with everyday tasks like lifting a load of laundry or carrying sacks of heavy groceries.

Beyond a strong core, it's also important how you move. I've seen people turn ankles, throw out their backs and create all kinds of injuries because they moved first and thought later. Before you reach for something or lift something, THINK! Use good form, whether you're at home, at work or in the gym. If you can't safely do it yourself, ask for help. It also pays to be crafty. The first, "obvious" way to reach, lift or shove something might not be the best choice. Is there another way to move so that you reduce your risk of injury? Thinking first also helps you avoid losing your balance, tripping and falling. So use your brain before you use your muscles.

Without mindfulness, bad form becomes a habit. When that happens, aches, pains and injuries set in, and we blame them on age. Bad form isn't about age; it's about laziness. Working out replaces that bad habit with a healthy habit by emphasizing good form and training your body to keep that good form. You'll avoid those aches and pains, look younger and feel younger.

### *Back exercises*

The workout for a woman over age 40 should include an emphasis on back strengthening exercises to help with posture, function and stability. These exercises make it easier for you to stand tall, be strong and be more comfortable with maintaining a healthy neutral alignment. Strengthening your back muscles can also help avoid spinal compression and counteract the natural pull of gravity on your body. I have often seen young women look old and tired because they lack back strength and I have also seen older women look young because they were strong and stood tall.

### *Shoulder exercises*

One of the first things to go on women is their shoulders. They will actually stop working. No kidding! The shoulder is the most mobile joint on the body because it flexes in more planes of motion than any other. This makes it more susceptible to injury. Loss of motion is so gradual it sneaks up on you. For example, one day when you're asked to raise your hand above your head you may not be able to do it or it could be painful. I have seen this happen to clients many times. Flexibility exercises can keep you from losing range of motion, and weight training exercises will give you the strength to raise your hand over your head.

*Abs. Ahhh...the infamous abs!*

A spare tire around your middle ages you. Women whose babies are 25 years old are still complaining they can't get rid of baby fat on their tummy. Others are experiencing midlife spread. Flattening the belly gets frustrating for a lot of women, and achieving results can seem complicated. I receive more questions on how I get my abs than any other part of my body. Know this folks...YOU CANNOT GET TRIM ABS BY DOING CRUNCHES ALONE!

It is necessary to strength train abs. You need abdominal strength to function well and for quality of life. The tricky part is, training abs for strength and training for definition can be different. I have always said, "EVERYBODY has a six pack" I do mean everybody! The difference is some have a layer of fat covering up their six-pack. I can't say this enough...To reveal your hidden six-pack, your time is better spent doing more cardio and changing your nutritional patterns. (See Chapter Four for more on nutrition)

*Balance and stability*

Fitness programs must include components that enhance balance and stability as well as neurological testing and conditioning to combat unsteady movements and reduce dizziness. Balance and stability gradually decline with age unless you make a conscious effort to train these muscles too. Otherwise, you will feel old way before you look old. Sometimes diet can also contribute to this. I had a personal battle with vertigo at one time and the doctor told me I would have to take a pill for the rest of my life. NOT! That had everything to do with the unhealthy lifestyle I was living.

*Fat*

Overall excess body fat can make you look older. Lose the fat and gain some more youthful years! Losing weight also decreases your chance of illness. Lowering your body fat percentage also makes you feel healthier, younger and more motivated to exercise and socialize.

*Train your brain*

The brain is a part of the body and it gets lazy too. A lazy brain can impact your quality of life. Find things that stimulate the mind like playing a game of Scrabble™, challenging yourself with Sudoku or finding other creative pleasures. Learn something new instead of sticking to old, comfortable, familiar things. When you stop learning, you become old and out of touch with the world.

### *Skin care*

If you neglect the TLC your skin deserves, age creeps in. It takes more time to care for your skin as we age, but it's worth it. Once you get into a rhythm, it gets easier and you wind up on cruise control. Find out what works for you and your skin type to make it vibrant, supple and spot free. See a dermatologist if you need to. Just remember that skin care starts from the inside. Watching what you put in your mouth and being aware of nutritional gaps can make a huge difference to younger looking skin.

### *Young friends*

Stay in touch with people younger than you. They generally have the 411 on what's hot and what's not, be it fashion, makeup or fitness trends. The young people in your life can be grandchildren, neighbors or a college student. Or, sign up to volunteer at a nearby social club. You'll be amazed at how much you can learn from anyone who is young at heart, and how their excitement, energy and laughter can rub off on you.

### WENDY'S HEROES: RICHARD SIMMONS

Richard Simmons is my hero too. I believe we have much in common. Ironically he used to be an accountant just like me before finding his passion for fitness. He loves the oldies and so do I. The oldies take me back to the endearing parts of my childhood. It's comforting to reminisce about them. The main thing is that I could always feel his compassion for others and see that he had a strong commitment to sharing and giving. I connect with that. It inspires me to action. You must understand...I'm on a mission not only to talk about what needs to be done, but to show you how to do it and to prove that it can be done at any age.

### **LET'S TALK SOME MORE ABOUT SEX**

The Delta Factor and your Omega Attitude affect your sex life. Feeling healthy is not only sexy, but it's sensual, too. Sex starts with your state of mind. If you feel good about yourself, you automatically feel sexier and that sexiness shows. Not only that, but the endorphins and other good natural chemicals that are released in your body during a workout also help you feel sexier.

Exercise can help you achieve a fulfilling sex life. Too many women give up on sex because of a poor body image, or because of age-related problems like vaginal dryness or decreased libido. But when you Take Back Your Life with exercise, all of that changes. Your body image changes. As you regain your health and your strength, your

attitude changes and you start to be more interested in sex. As your health improves, libido reawakens and with exercise, you can also regain lubrication and better muscle tone in your thighs, lower back and vaginal area, making sex feel better.

Here's a sexy secret: sex itself is an exercise. Think about it. You increase your heart rate during sex. You need flexibility and muscle strength to enjoy a variety of sexual positions. You breathe harder and you work up a sweat. Sex is an exercise that burns calories, and research shows that a workout in the bedroom can burn as many calories as a workout in the gym. So what are you waiting for?

Exercise improves circulation, and that also improves your sex life. Every organ in your body gets an extra oxygen boost when you exercise because of improved circulation. You can actually feel the boost if you pay attention. That's one of the reasons I love cardio workouts so much. I can literally feel my skin breathing from head to toe. It's quite arousing! After a good cardio session and/or strength training workout, I always say that "I love the way it makes my body smile." Now you know my secret — and why I'm smiling!

Exercise firms the muscles in your core, your buttocks and legs, and even your upper body, which all contribute to more exciting, pain-free sex. You need those muscles to work out, and you need those muscles to have great sex. There's another set of muscles that affect sex, and they're the muscles that surround your vagina. Time, childbirth and poor muscle tone can stretch these muscles and leave them weak. Kegel exercises focus on these specific muscles to help tighten and strengthen them. Not only do Kegel exercises help increase sexual sensitivity for you and your partner, but they can also help you avoid bladder leaks. Women often complain about urine leakage and sudden urgent urination as they age. These things don't have to happen with age. They occur because of poor muscle tone (I talk more about this in Chapter 5). You can cheat the clock and Take Back Your Life by getting into shape. Shaping up affects all of you — and I do mean ALL!

Taking care of your body is the first step to feeling good about you. When that's in order urges will arise in you that you thought were long gone.

Wendy's "Power Fit" tips

1. Reset your priorities & make a decision to put your health first.
2. Commit to that decision heart and soul & list 10 reasons why you are making the change.
3. PLAN! (your food and your exercise) THIS IS A BIGGIE!

4. Increase your activity! You've got to move to improve.
5. Pump some iron. It's essential for health, strength & maintenance of fat loss.
6. Start slowly- Make one small change at a time & remember life is not a sprint!
7. Shut out the negativity in and around you. It happens when you're trying to do good.
8. Create a vision board to renew your commitment daily.
9. Reduce your food portions by refusing to super size ANYTHING!
10. Listen to your body & educate yourself to avoid injury
11. If you stray a bit, don't beat yourself up & don't let it snowball — Re-route instead!
12. When things get tough, (Oh, they will get tough!) PRAY!



## CHAPTER FOUR: OWN YOUR NUTRITION



Nutrition is a tough cookie. (No pun intended.) It is the saboteur of saboteurs when it comes to sticking to your goals and promises. That's because so many social, emotional and other external factors can play a part to derail your well-intended efforts.

Women get so busy in their daily lives that they don't take time to eat properly. Eating on the fly has become a way of life. You skip breakfast because you got up late and wind up bingeing late at night on the wrong foods. I'm reminded of this every time I talk to my sister. She's a busy bee and has come a long way with my help, but often when she calls me on the way home from work she's pulling up to a drive through window to order a meal. I remember when I did this too. That's how I put on weight and didn't know why I couldn't get rid of it. My husband used to talk about me about my bad eating habits. I ate fried chicken nearly everyday. I was doing a lot of what I call "unconscious" eating and living. Then I saw pictures I didn't like and my family would comment on my butt getting big. I had gained 50 pounds with my two babies and 17 years later, remnants of that weight were still with me.

I pretty much ate what I wanted, when I wanted and how much I wanted. It was habit. I never thought about weight until I gained 50 pounds. My body was never the same after childbirth — in appearance or strength or wellness. Since my children are 11 months apart, pregnancy took its toll on my body. I had a difficult second pregnancy, and the baby had to stay longer than normal in the hospital because he had jaundice. I was really too sick to leave the hospital myself, and when I tried to do too much too soon after returning home, I got sick, collapsed and was bed ridden for weeks. So someone had to nurse me and both my babies for a while. All those circumstances led to the weight I gained.

Women over 40 cannot eat the way they are used to eating. Your exercise needs are different and so are your nutrition needs. As you age, your body requires fewer calories. Depending on what's going on in your life, you may find that your appetite changes too, so you must adjust what you eat to maintain the same weight. Most of us don't do that. In fact, we tend to eat more and exercise less as we get older. With hormonal changes creating muscle loss that increases as the years stack up, it's no wonder why

we get fat. When I hit 40, I was still clueless about why I was overweight. I was doing the same old things that had worked for me before, like the aerobic classes and my same old fried foods diet.

I have found that my body and women's bodies in general change and shift with age. Your hips spread, you gain more quickly around the waist and your arms become saggy. One lady said it to me this way, "When I wave hi to someone, my arms keep waving long after my hand stops." Hormonal changes that wreak havoc with your appetite are also going on, and these cause further changes to your body and play with your mind.

Doing more research about nutrition and consuming more fat burning foods and foods that aid in weight loss were the keys to my success. Now I don't mean fad diets. I admit that before I knew better, I probably tried every fad diet out there, and I discovered that diets don't work. I couldn't maintain them and they were doing nothing to encourage my metabolism to change.

There are other times you go out to eat and order all the wrong things with tons of calories because you either don't have time to plan and make dinner or you wait until you're so hungry that anything will do. I am high maintenance when I eat out now. My family used to say I was picky. They don't say that anymore since they have seen my life change. Instead they are asking me questions so they can do it too.

You can't always avoid eating out so you have to be smart when you do go out. If the menu says no exceptions to an order, I ask for substitutions anyway and I usually get my way. I ask the chef how foods are prepared. For example, I want to know whether they use butter or olive oil. I won't get it if it's prepared with butter or I ask if they can use olive oil instead. If a dish is prepared with a glaze, I have them omit it. I always get my salad dressing on the side. If there is a pot luck dinner, stick to the simple dishes that don't include a lot of sauces and leave the fried stuff alone. When all else fails, you can feast on the dish you brought (be sure to make it a healthy one). There are many ways to avoid the extra calories yet enjoy a nice dining experience during the holidays and on other special occasions.

### **STRESS RUINS EVERYTHING**

Since our bodies are aging and changing, we have to eat foods that will compliment that change. Nutrition is vital to building and sustaining our bodies and to keep them operating efficiently. Nutrition fuels us, and healthy eating can give you back a youthful

glow. Keep in mind however, that lifestyle — more than your genetics — is the key to making this all come together. Stress can destroy everything you may be doing right (like eating and exercising.)

When you are stressed, a stress hormone called cortisol spikes in your bloodstream. As a result, your body will hold on to fat (particularly around your tummy). Your mission should be to try to keep your emotions from running rampant so the physical and chemical changes your body experiences won't send you into an emotional overeating rage. This can be difficult when you are going through a stressful transition in your life. (We'll address some tips for overcoming some of the most common mid-life transition stresses in chapters 6 – 10).

The Delta Factor and the Omega Attitude also play a role in defeating stress. Remember that your Delta Factor has five parts: Fuel, Activity, Strength, Flexibility and Stress Reduction. Consuming good Fuel (healthy food) can help your body deal better with stress because it has the building blocks for good nerve function, healthy blood and strong muscle and bone. Activity gets the good chemicals going in your bloodstream and brain, which can clear your head, make you feel energized and give you a natural “runner's high” to feel as if you can successfully tackle anything.

Strength can be mental or physical. I think the two are connected. You learn mental strength as you push your body to gain physical strength. When you see yourself as strong and healthy, you feel up to the challenges in life because you are tapping into your inner warrior. (And for those who aren't very militaristic, remember, there can be a lot of different types of “warriors.” Anyone who takes a stand for a cause using words, ideas or non-violent resistance can be said to be a warrior. Growing up, I even heard some people referred to as “prayer warriors” because they prayed without ceasing for someone or for a situation or problem to be resolved!)

Flexibility is essential to stress reduction because when you're flexible (in mind or body) you can find more than one way to meet a challenge. Just think about water and how it can bend itself all around a rock that gets in its way to go where it wants to go. Physical flexibility (learned through stretching, yoga or Pilates,) brings mental calm and makes your body more resilient. Mental flexibility teaches your mind to see more than one way out of a situation, giving you options. When you can see options, you reduce your stress because you no longer feel trapped.

Your Omega Attitude contributes Confidence, Creativity and Consistency. Confidence is a huge stress-buster, because stress is often our fear of being inadequate to whatever

challenge lies ahead of us. When we feel rightfully confident, we decrease stress because we're not worried about coping. We have proven to ourselves that we can do it, and so we don't sweat it.

Creativity applies to the challenges we've not yet tried to overcome. How many ways can you eliminate a brick wall that is standing in your way? Well, you can go over it, go around it, dig under it, ram through it or blow it up! Creativity gives you more than one way to attack the brick walls in your life, and that gives you Confidence that you can succeed, so your stress levels go down.

How does Consistency play a role? When you get in the habit (consistency at work = habit) of using healthy ways to reduce stress, you become more Confident that no matter what the challenge is, you can use your Creativity to overcome it. You feel confident because you have Consistently applied your Creativity and seen it overcome obstacle after obstacle. So while you might not have a plan in mind just yet, your history of success puts you in a winning mindset, which decreases stress.

Along with exercise, outlook and good nutrition, other factors also contribute to reversing the aging process. These include: having a happy sex life; laughing long and often; finding inner strength through meditation and/or prayer; creating positive feelings about yourself; and cultivating great relationships with friends, family and co-workers. "Ageless" people are positive, connected and enjoy giving and learning. They're also active people who eat a healthy, balanced diet and continually set and achieve goals.

## **DON'T QUIT TOO SOON**

I can't say this enough. When beginning new and healthy eating habits, your body needs time to adapt. Change won't happen overnight. Many people have said things to me like, "I can't eat breakfast" or "I have to work out on an empty stomach" or "I'm not hungry every three hours." The truth of the matter is, these are all habits that you have lived with and cultivated every day, and your body has adjusted to these habits. But that doesn't mean that your body is running in the most efficient way. Exercising on an empty stomach lowers your blood sugar and causes you to overeat later on.

Here's the deal. First, you must have faith in the process. Trust those who have successfully used these tried and true methods. Also, trust the scientifically proven studies on how the body works. I have experienced this myself. I used to be one of those people who complained that they couldn't eat in the morning. So I know what

you are feeling. It was hard for me to change and I felt like I could never get out of the rut. My first attempt at trying to eat in the mornings almost made me gag. I didn't want food. I wasn't hungry and my brain said "Put it down. You don't need this."

When I tried it again and it didn't work, I just gave up. I didn't understand why eating breakfast was so important. At that time I thought fewer meals meant less food and therefore more weight loss. NOT! Too few calories as well as too few meals can produce some of the same effects as overeating.

Since then, I have learned how the power of five to six small meals a day can impact and change your body. I was amazed when I finally tried it. My body started changing when I stuck with it. I repeat...you have to stick it out! It takes about ten consecutive days for the body to recognize a different rhythm to adjust to the change. The way I explain it to my clients is: You're body is running on a specific train track, a track you laid the rails for yourself. When you change to new eating habits, it takes time for your body to switch itself to run on a completely new train track. (Remember, Fuel is one of the Delta Factors you need to see real change.)

Think about it. Two plus two will always equal four. If you want a different answer (like five or six) you must use a different equation. If what you did in the past has not worked for you then it might be a good idea to walk by faith in another direction. (That's the Confidence, Creativity and Consistency of the Omega Attitude at work again!) Give it time and your body will change and catch up with your mindset. When you were in school, did you always get what was taught to you the first time? Probably not. That's why there's a learning curve when you begin to feed your body on a different schedule. It takes time, patience and commitment to make a successful change.

#### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: "JANE"

I remember working with a morbidly obese woman who needed to either lose weight or lose her knees and maybe even her life. She had high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart problems — you name it, and she had it. She could barely walk. Besides all the medications she was taking, her doctor said she needed two knee replacements.

Fortunately for her, she had a caring family who sought a healthier alternative by hiring a personal trainer — me. Unfortunately, her medical condition was not enough to motivate her to completely change her ways. She was uncooperative during our workouts and her eating habits were irregular and out of control. Her complaint was, "I'm used to doing it this way." She did not trust the process. She never gave it a chance! She was not ready to improve her health at that time. I wish her well.

Understand that the body naturally strives for homeostasis, which is a natural process the body goes through to maintain balance in order to sustain life. Therefore if you're inconsistent with how you treat your body, it will adjust in order to maintain some kind of balance. Your body will adjust whether the habits are good or bad.

For example, if you aren't drinking enough water, your body turns its thirst channel down. Often, you'll confuse thirst for hunger. Sometimes, your body won't alert you about your thirst. This can be dangerous. The good news is that you can reset your thirst "alert" when you begin to drink enough water and drink frequently during your workout and throughout your day. This is one issue I continue to struggle with!

### **WHAT'S YOUR SPEED BUMP?**

You know what a speed bump is. It's designed to slow down a car and keep drivers from going too fast. Life has speed bumps, too — and so do efforts to shape up, eat right and Take Back Your Life. Good eating efforts often hit speed bumps which slow down our attempts to lose weight or change a lifetime of bad programming. There are a lot of reasons why women eat badly. Let's talk about some of the most common speed bumps, which can include bingeing, food that lacks necessary nutrients, hormonal imbalances and stress.

I'll never forget the day I walked in on a co-worker who was fifty-something. She was raiding the refrigerator with a look on her face like a deer caught in headlights. The refrigerator gaped open and she was standing in the opening uncontrollably stuffing meats, pasta and every other thing she could find down her throat. It was shocking and she looked so unnatural with her cheeks stuffed. I couldn't ignore it, and so I had to ask her what she was doing. She told me she was an insulin-driven diabetic and was upset because she just learned her brother took a turn for the worst after suffering a heart attack. This is a classic example of binge eating that is both stress-related and due to a hormonal imbalance.

Here are some of the most common nutrition speed bumps:

*Celebrating with food is a "NO-NO"!*

Take Back Your Life one day and one week at a time. That's all the brain can handle when you have so many things going on in your life and your body. Celebrate and reward yourself (but not with food) at each phase. Create a short term reward with things you love to do (i.e. getting a massage, going shopping etc.) on a weekly basis

for the things you are doing right. Instead of waiting for fireworks to go off when you meet your long range goals, create sparks along the way by setting daily and weekly goals. That way it's very motivating.

### *Not getting enough sleep*

Many people overlook sleep as a weight loss aid. Ongoing sleep loss can cause a hormonal imbalance. That imbalance can stifle your weight loss and cause you to crave sugary sweets. Studies have proven that people who get seven to eight hours of sleep are leaner and happier.

### *Irregular meal times*

Plan to eat five or six small meals a day (something every three hours). If your meals are fewer than this your metabolism is running slower. Your basic meal should always include a complex carbohydrate, protein and a good fat. Plan some grab-and-go small meals to keep in your purse or in a desk drawer at work in case your schedule requires you to eat on the run.

### *My favorite grab-and-go meals*

Whether you're traveling, working late or visiting a friend, always have something with you so you don't become a victim of fast food and eating binges.

- Fruits and veggies
- Celery, carrots, apple slices or banana chunks dipped in peanut butter or hummus
- Crackers with tuna (this comes in shelf-stable packets too)
- Granola bars or bulk granola
- Protein drinks
- Fresh blueberries you can just pop in your mouth.
- Dried fruits and nuts. Be careful of portion sizes. Nuts are also high in fat and dried fruit has more sugar than fresh fruit.
- Healthy sandwiches with Ezekiel bread, low carb wraps and fat-free spreads like mustard (instead of mayo)

Some of these snacks can be put in a decorative insulated bag to keep cold. You can store others in the car or in a desk drawer so you always have a healthy snack close at hand.

*Eating on the fly*

Without appropriate meal planning, you fall victim to fast foods because you're short on time and they're convenient. Many people desperately want to lose weight but fail to plan their meals and create quick alternatives for times they're running late. Good planning is the key to success.

*Don't beat yourself up*

It's inevitable: sometimes you're going to screw up. Even the most iron-willed people hit speed bumps that affect their eating. (For example, a death in the family. Did you ever notice that no one ever brings broccoli as a consolation casserole? No, they bring pasta and homemade bread and high calorie "comfort" foods.) Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is your effort to Take Back Your Life. Nobody's perfect. Emergencies and life just happen! Going off track once in a while is okay. One day won't undo months of hard work. The key thing is to get back on track as quickly as possible to avoid falling back into bad habits. Bad habits are familiar and when we're stressed, what's familiar can seem comforting. Before you know it, you've put on ten pounds worth of "comfort." Be aware of your moods and find other options like meditation, yoga, going for a run or reading a book (without a snack) to reduce your stress.

**SUGAR AND CARB ADDICTIONS**

You must understand that sugar is a drug. When your taste buds get a little bit of sugar, you generally crave more sugar. A similar thing happens when you eat too many simple carbs. You start to crave more carbs and eat one carb after another and wonder why you are not feeling satisfied. Part of the problem is that these foods don't have many nutrients in them. So you think your body is sending hungry signals out to you when in fact it's asking for more nutritious meals.

I remember this happening to me before I knew better. One day I went on a carb frenzy. I was eating many different types of breads, then I wanted cereal and then I went on to other carbs but I never felt satisfied. Every five minutes I would look in the refrigerator for something else. It was maddening. I thought something was wrong with me. It wasn't until after I became a trainer and did my research on nutrition, I remembered that moment and realized what was going on. My carb addiction was how I picked up much of my weight. To prevent that from happening to you, include several different types of food in your meals so that your body gets the nutrients it

needs to feel satisfied. Also, if meals are not balanced, bingeing on carbs only causes your body to crave more carbs, (the wrong kind).

## GETTING YOU ON TRACK

Proper nutrition is the key to helping you live longer. There are certain foods that help to protect you from aging. Here are also some nutrient-dense foods that women should always have. They can boost your workouts, increase your energy and help your immune system.

- **Green Tea** — Drink this instead of coffee to get powerful antioxidants which delay the aging process. Green tea still has some caffeine, if that's what you want.
- **Blueberries and plums** — These are powerful antioxidants that help reduce age-related memory damage.
- **Walnuts** — Try a handful of these. Walnuts have lots of omega 3 fatty acids compared to other nuts. Omega 3 fatty acids reduce the risk of heart disease and help to lower bad cholesterol. The antioxidants also help fight aging.
- **Tomatoes** — Garden-fresh tomatoes are an antioxidant that can fight cancer, protect your liver, prevent hemorrhaging and improve your skin.
- **Spinach** — Your mom was right. Spinach is good for you. It helps clear your arteries, fights cancer and is an anti-aging veggie – One of my favorites.
- **Almonds** — These are so good for you! They have been shown to help reduce the risk of diabetes and heart disease and they help avoid blood sugar spikes.
- **Protein** — Some kind of protein is a must-have in your diet. Protein helps to build and support muscle mass. I have found salmon and turkey to be your best bets. Fish such as salmon, halibut, tuna and mahi mahi are also known to be brain foods because they give you the nutrients you need to think clearly. Turkey helps to reduce carb cravings and improves your mood. If you must eat beef, get free-range lean beef and eat it no more than once a week. Protein also helps with depression, reduces inflammation, protects blood vessels and aids in the prevention of high blood pressure.
- **Supplements** — We don't always eat right and each year our bodies experience a reduction in some nutrients, hormones and other natural functions that we didn't have to worry about when we were twenty. That's where vitamins come in. Good quality vitamin supplements fill in the "cracks" that can occur even in a good diet.

## WENDY'S HEROES: OPRAH WINFREY

Oprah is one of my heroes because she is like the Energizer Bunny! She keeps on going and going! She is strong and candid about her struggle with weight and her tenacity to try and try again inspiring millions of women to do the same. However, I see her as a woman like you and me who has the same triumphs and struggles. Think about it. When she's staring at her refrigerator, she's just like the rest of us. It's not about money or fame or influence. It's about being able to say no, no, no to food or bad habits. No to the demands of other people. No to our tendency to want to juggle too much. And most especially, no to the desire to find a refuge in food. Oprah is also one of my favorite people because of the visibility she has given to good nutrition and living a healthy and active lifestyle. I always say, more is better when exposing creative ideas on living healthier. If these tips were really "common sense," we wouldn't be one of the fattest countries in the world! I believe that together we WILL help to reduce obesity rates! Oprah says: "We are each responsible for our own life - no other person is or even can be." I dig that!

## WENDY'S ELEVEN STEPS TO GOOD NUTRITION

### *1. Plan*

Folks this one is a BIGGIE! It is the reason why people eat badly so often. **THEY DON'T PLAN AHEAD! I REPEAT...NO PLAN – NO SUCCESS!** If you don't plan ahead, you fall victim to your cravings. Living and eating on the fly with no direction and no plan is like having someone else drive your car for you. You may intend to head in a certain direction, but since you are not in control of the wheel, you will go wherever the driver feels like taking you that day. Plan to succeed!

### *2. Drink water*

Most people are chronically dehydrated. Proper hydration can fix a lot of things. Drinking more water can help diminish menopausal symptoms, flush your body of toxins, and carry nutrients to your cells. Water makes up about 60 to 70% of your body fluids. Some people who complain of being tired all the time are really dehydrated. The body's systems depend on water to function and your energy droops when you don't drink enough. If you're tired, you'll be tempted to skip working out. Everyone has different water needs. I strive for at least a gallon a day since I am so active.

It can be difficult to get enough water. One of my clients was not getting enough water even though a water bottle sat right on her desk at work. Here's a trick I gave her

that you can use: Instead of taking little sips that may only amount to half a bottle of water by the end of the day, drink a glass or two each hour on the hour and that can also be a little mental break for you.

### *3. Address the problem*

Eating disorders have many causes. Some disorders occur because of out-of-control hormones, deficiencies in essential minerals, poor sleep patterns, or stress. They can all lead to depression. If you don't identify the problem, you can't fix it. You must address the root cause for the emotional roller coaster you're riding; otherwise, you waddle thru life in perpetual denial fixing nothing and getting nowhere.

### *4. Reduce stress*

Women do a lot of stress related and emotional overeating to solve crises. Chronic stress actually damages your DNA and as a result, it contributes to many diseases including cancer, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. It can even cause gray hair. If you have ever known anyone who has gone through extreme stress for a lengthy period of time, you probably felt you could observe them aging. Think about how every new U.S. president looks when he comes into office and how much older he seems at the end of four or eight years. No one else seems to age as quickly! It's the stress. I witnessed my client, who was only thirty, gain quite a number of gray hairs during the time she nursed her mom through a very difficult illness.

To help combat stress you must stay active and eat healthy foods. Meditation, seeking help and support from family and friends and even listening to a comedian instantly changes my mood. It's like medicine for the soul.

### *5. Portion control*

This is a major problem. Many of us were told to eat everything on our plates when we were children. Now we are programmed and habitually continue that pattern as adults. We are also teaching our kids to do the same thing. Even if you are eating the right kind of foods, overabundance will wreak havoc on your body. I don't ever advocate taking drastic measures when it comes to nutrition or exercise. That only sets you up for failure. I have found much success in gradual behavior changes.

So here's what I do: If portion size is your problem, whatever your portion size is today, reduce it by 20%-25%. After a few weeks, continue to do the same until you

reach the recommended portion size for each food category. (See chapter 5) It also helps if you buy smaller plates or use a saucer to help control portion size. That way your mind doesn't feel like you have a big plate with a little bit of food on it. It really does help you eat less.

#### *6. Reduce processed foods*

Cutting out processed foods will not only help diminish menopausal symptoms, but it also reduces that dreaded tummy fat. Some examples are: artificial sweeteners, canned foods, cheese snacks, foods with processed sugar, instant soups and dishes, potato chips, ready made dinners, snack bars, sugary beverages and more. Processed foods often contain fewer nutrients and more calories, which contributes to a spare tire around your tummy. Our bodies don't recognize it as real food. That's because it's not. I call it "entertainment food." Since "entertainment food" is also nutrient deficient, your body can't utilize processed foods to repair itself. This allows the aging process to invade your body sooner. Inflammation and arthritis occur more often as we age and with them comes pain. Once movement is painful, we've got another excuse to avoid exercising. Reduce the processed foods in your diet and increase more natural and fresh foods like raw veggies and Omega 3 fatty acids to help reduce inflammation to put the pep back in your step and keep the pain away.

#### *7. Cut out saturated fats*

When you reduce the amount of saturated fats you eat, you reduce your risk of heart disease. Cutting out saturated fats also helps you maintain a healthy weight and decreases arthritis pain. Examples of saturated fats are found in red meats, egg yolks, creams, or any oils that turn solid at room temperature (like butter, lard coconut oil and palm oil). These fats increase inflammation in your body, which causes pain, swelling and eventual joint destruction. Replace those foods with omega 3 fatty acids found in fish and nuts. These "good" fats have anti-inflammatory effects on your body, promote joint health and contribute to healthy blood vessels. Again, supplements can help if you know you are not eating as you should. Eating right can also help with medicinal side effects.

#### *8. Eat protein*

Keep in mind, as you age, protein becomes more important in your diet. Consuming too little protein, calcium, or vitamin D can lead to a weakening of the musculoskeletal

system and to osteoporosis. Protein is also necessary to build and support muscle mass during strength training.

### 9. Calcium

To prevent osteoporosis and promote bone health you need calcium, so make sure you include some dark leafy greens, salmon, tuna, nuts, and Vitamin D in your weekly diet. If you're not getting enough of these nutrients naturally, then I would add a high-quality vitamin supplement. Dairy is also a source for calcium, but for many reasons I prefer not to get the majority of my calcium from dairy, therefore I don't usually recommend it.

### 10. Oats and grains

Keep your heart healthy and add years to your life by eating whole grains. Oatmeal is one of my favorite breakfasts, with a little protein and/or blueberries it's also yummy. It contains fiber and other nutrient essentials. Fiber not only helps your bowels stay healthy, but it also makes you feel full and keeps you feeling full so you avoid snacking. Try to avoid processed versions of these foods as best you can.

### 11. Potassium

Potassium is important when you're strength training. It's found in bananas and cantaloupe. A lack of potassium can cause your muscles to cramp up as hard as a rock. Believe me, cramps are no fun. Get your daily dose of potassium!

#### Wendy's favorite quotes:

*"Knowing is not enough: we must apply. Willing is not enough: we must do."*  
— Goethe

## PLAYING GOOD MIND GAMES

Remember how I play mind games to help keep me motivated to exercise? Mind games are also great when it comes to eating. Playing some mind games with yourself can help you stay on track to finish what you start. Being in control when you eat, while you eat and where you eat is the goal here. (By the way, I think mind games work very well with sex too!)

Some people think that I don't have weaknesses to food or that it's easy for me all the time. Let me say it loud and clear: Oh yes, I do! I face the same temptations that

you experience. An overweight store clerk, who echoed a client of mine, said to me one day, “Are you ever tempted to eat the wrong foods?” “Oh my gosh,” I replied. “All the time.” The only difference between that clerk and me is that I recognize my weaknesses and attack them in a methodical way. And when I am tempted, I play my favorite mind games. Here are some for you to try:

### *Banish temptation*

I don't keep my favorites anywhere in the house. If I happen to want some pie I go and get one serving (a slice) instead of the whole pie and I'm done. Half the time the chances of me dropping everything to go and buy something at that time are slim to none. By the time I am ready to get dressed and go out, I've usually lost my craving for whatever it was.

As long as one of my favorite no-no foods is in the house, that food successfully seduces me. It whispers my name and continually gnaws at my mind until I get relief by gorging until the food is completely gone! The funny thing is, I always think I can win when I buy these goodies, but I never have. I weaken as the minutes (not hours) tick by. I struggle with it all the time. I can easily go on a bad carb frenzy! Pumpkin pie is one of my favorites. I used to take a sliver at a time, but found out I was only fooling myself when I realized that the whole pie was gone after only a half hour.

I remember once at Thanksgiving, when all of our guests had gone and I was left standing in front of all my favorite leftover goodies. I could have sworn all that food was having a conversation about me, trying to figure out which one of them I loved the most. As I struggled to contain myself, sudden urges took over. I was alone, I was relaxed and I was ready to party! So I thrust some cake and peach cobbler in my mouth while I threw a pie in the garbage. I had to get rid of it somehow. Instinctively, I went back in the garbage and took out the pie and ate it. Now that's pretty sick! I have no willpower to throw away a luscious pie. I haven't tried to throw anything away since that day. Instead I make my husband do it only after I leave the room. I can't bear to watch. Don't tell anybody I told you about this. (Didn't I tell you I know my weaknesses?)

### *The gift that keeps on giving*

It's tough when your man is trying to do something nice for you and he brings you your favorite food or goodie. My husband knows I love bread and he can make a mean banana loaf. To make me happy, he would always bake this scrumptious bread even after

I told him not to. One night I smelled that bread a mile away. I camped out upstairs until I heard him take it out of the oven and turn out the light. Then I sneaked down stairs and cut a sliver in the dark. It was so good! Then I heard my husband's footsteps. I jumped behind the counter as he turned on the light and told me he knew I was there. I was busted! He laughed because not only did I look like a little mouse hiding under the counter, but this time, the bread was not for me. He made it for an event at his office. Oops! After that, no baking was allowed in the house.

*Other ways to say no*

Unfortunately, my husband likes some of the things that are hard for me to resist. So if he buys them, I make him hide them. If I ever want a little bit he goes to his hiding place to get me some. That's how I control that. Sometimes, I imagine how bloated and disappointed I'll feel after I eat something bad for me or I think about how much harder I will have to work out and that usually stops me from eating bad.

Even better, before I load up on the wrong foods or pile my plate high for the second time, I think out loud: "What am I doing? Do I want extra fat on my hips?" Now that's a vision that stops me cold! Who needs the extra fat? Another thing I do when I'm confronted with things I should not have is I reflect on how long it took me to get where I am and how good it's made me look and feel. I also remember how bad I felt when I ate all the wrong stuff. These thoughts actually empower me to move and improve. Each step I take toward my goals makes me feel amazingly good and I don't want that to stop!

Here are more tricks for controlling eating and staving off cravings:

- Drink a couple of glasses of water
- Chew gum
- Sit back and analyze whether you are really hungry or not. Sometimes, we just want something because everyone else is eating it
- Plan ahead on what you should eat or not eat even if you are going to a friend's house
- Do as the French do. Slow your eating way down, chew your food more and try to take in the scenery (sometimes the scenery may be a person) and enjoy conversations and company. That way, your brain has a chance to catch up with the sense of fullness your tummy feels
- Stay food-conscious, especially when you're socializing. On many social occasions,

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

I have seen people just eating for the hell of it. This includes me. I have literally caught myself dipping my hand in the fat-filled snack bowl of chips, nuts, pretzels, cream dips, etc. for no other reason than just to keep my nervous and fidgety hands busy. I would be thinking, “You know you are not hungry or stop eating this non-nutritious, fattening stuff.” But I didn’t stop until I was removed from that situation. Now I will either remove the food “frenemy” from the area or remove myself.

- Eat before you go to an event or bring your own food. I already know some social events I attend will not have nutritious foods so I eat before I go and when I get there I just have something to drink. If traveling by air, I always bring my own brown bag.

I find that many people don’t lose weight because of two main reasons: They are inconsistent with sticking to good eating habits and/or they don’t use the proper frequency and intensity when it comes to working out.

Beating your eating is one of the toughest battles in the fight to Take Back Your Life. But when you really OWN your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition, amazing changes start to happen. It’s not easy and it doesn’t happen overnight, but if you stick to it, you’ll get results.

That’s where the Delta Factor comes in. Remember that one of the Delta Factor elements is Fuel. The foods you choose to eat (or not to eat), the water you drink and the supplements you take all become fuel for your body. If you don’t put good quality fuel into your body, you won’t get high-performance results. Learning to make good food choices on a regular basis is a huge step toward the ability to Take Back Your Life.

Changing your food habits isn’t easy. But if you’ve got that Omega Attitude, you have what it takes to win this battle. Use your Confidence to say no to foods that aren’t helping you achieve your goals (and to politely turn down the people who offer that food to you). Use your Creativity to find new foods and food combinations that fuel your body and give you energy without sabotaging your nutrition goals. Then use Consistency to make better food choices every day to reach your goals and stay in good health. You’ve got what it takes. Now use what you got and get going!

*Wendy says: “Celebrate the small accomplishments in your life and they will grow like roses.”*

# CHAPTER FIVE: THE TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE 90 DAY BASIC PLAN



Now that we've talked about the foundation of how you can Take Back Your Life, let's get down to business. In this chapter, we start with the details of the 90 Day Take Back Your Life Basic Outlook Plan, and spell out the details of the 90 Day Take Back Your Life Basic Workout Plan. Then I really lay out the good stuff with the 90 Day Take Back Your Life Basic Nutrition Plan. By harnessing the power of your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition, you can OWN your life and look good naked — and you'll be amazed at how good it feels!

We'll also be talking about the five parts of the Delta Factor. You remember those, right? (Fuel, Activity, Strength, Flexibility and Stress Reduction.) And, we'll be putting the three parts of the Omega Attitude into play, since Confidence, Creativity and Consistency all make a big impact on the success of your program. Best of all, you can begin to see change in your life — real, noticeable change — in 90 days with my system. So let's get going!

## PART ONE: OUTLOOK

### **IT ALL STARTS IN THE MIND**

I've heard it said that sex is mostly mental, and I think it's true. Being attracted and aroused starts in your head long before you really get physical. Fitness, exercise and taking back your life from old patterns and bad habits also is mostly mental. Did you realize that your workout begins in your head before you even put on your sneakers?

Imagine two versions of the same morning. It's a cold, gray autumn day and it's raining outside. The alarm goes off. You had planned to get up early and go to the gym. Version one: You listen to the rain for a moment and think, "I'm really, really tired. Just 10 more minutes." So you hit the snooze button. Then the alarm goes off again and you get out of bed. You think, "Rain always gives me a headache." Then you start to think about traffic and walking into the gym in the rain, and you think, "Maybe I can go on my way home." Would you bet money on that? Now here's Version two: The alarm goes off. You listen to the rain and think, "The rain sucks, but it's warm

inside the gym. And I'll see my friends there, so it'll put me in a good mood for the rest of the day." Then you think about how doing your workout will bring you closer to the body you want, and how good you'll feel once you've done your workout and you jump out of bed ready to get going.

Two motivational tools help me control my Outlook: Affirmations and Guided Meditations. Affirmations are powerful statements you repeat to yourself, write on notes to remind yourself, and say aloud to keep your motivation going. Guided Meditations are a mild form of self-hypnosis, where you read a statement aloud (or record yourself reading it and then listen to it) to program your mind to make an idea into a reality. I want to share both of these tools with you. They fall under the Delta Factor of Stress Reduction, because they help to reduce the inner push-pull about doing your workouts, and they use Creativity to create Confidence and encourage Consistency, so they're all about the Omega Attitude.

### **MY FAVORITE AFFIRMATIONS**

Use these affirmations daily to keep yourself motivated and moving toward your goal. I recommend that you print these neatly or type them and then put them in places you see frequently during the day, such as beside your computer screen, on your bathroom mirror, on the dashboard of your car, or on your refrigerator door. Read through the list, and then add your own affirmations to make this a very personal motivation. Every time you see the list, take a few seconds to say the affirmations aloud or in your head. What you focus on becomes reality!

- I will be a great example for my family
- I am unstoppable
- I will fulfill my destiny
- I will reach my goals
- I am committed to making things happen
- I am committed to winning!
- I am shutting out negativity and shouting out all that I love about myself
- Exercise makes me feel energized and alive
- I will live long and strong!
- I am powerful and beautiful!
- I am in control of my life and my body!
- I will take care of my body so it can take care of me

- I am choosing life over sickness
- I can do this. I will WIN!
- My consistency creates powerful results
- Exercise gives me my power back
- Working out gives me my life back
- I am Confident and Beautiful
- My discipline equals results
- I am creating a new and amazing life
- My body is beautiful and I feel sexy when I work my body.
- I deserve to enjoy sex, and having a healthy, fit body will give me the best sex ever!
- Working out gets me in touch with my body, which leads to great sex
- I am committed to winning!
- I am unstoppable
- I will fulfill my destiny
- I am Confident I will lose 20 pounds
- I will reach my goals
- I am committed to making things happen
- With God on my side I will win this battle
- I am shutting out negativity and shouting out all that I love about myself
- Exercise makes me feel energized and alive
- My body is beautiful and I feel sexy when I work my body
- I will live long and strong!
- I am powerful and beautiful!
- I am in control of my life and my body!
- I am choosing life over death and sickness
- I love me!
- I will be consistent and disciplined to get the results I deserve
- With my faith and determination I will reach my dreams
- I must do this for me and then help my family
- Working out gives me my life and power back
- I will take care of my body so it can take care of me
- Working out gets me in touch with my body, which leads to great sex
- I am creating a new and amazing life
- My priority is my body, my health and my life!

## WENDY'S GUIDED MEDITATION

Do your guided meditation whenever you need a pick-me-up or when your willpower to workout or to stay on the Take Back Your Life program seems to be waning. Find a quiet place where you can sit for five minutes without disruption from the phone, children, co-workers, partner, TV, etc.

Take off your shoes, get comfortable, and relax. Dim the lights if you can. If your clothes feel too tight, loosen what you can depending on where you are (you may at least be able to unbutton your waistband, for example). Close your eyes. Breathe slowly and deeply. Now either open your eyes and read the guided meditation, or record it so you can listen to it. Try to pay full attention for just a couple of minutes. Don't let yourself get sidetracked by other thoughts, your to-do list, or worries about what happens later in your day. Just breathe, be, and focus on these words:

"I deserve good health. I deserve to feel good. Working out and eating healthy foods helps me to Take Back My Life. I am confident of my choice to create a healthier life for myself. I use creativity to find the time to work out and to combine healthy ingredients to make foods that nourish my body. I am losing fat and gaining sleek, sensuous muscle. Working out makes me feel good. I enjoy working out. I feel healthy and sexy. I like what I see in the mirror. I already have the power to Take Back My Life. Every day, I take another step toward accomplishing my goals. I feel great!"

Use this technique for 90 days along with the Workout and Nutrition plans I'll share later in this chapter and get your imagination and subconscious mind working hard to help you achieve your goals.

## VISUALIZE YOUR SUCCESS

Visualization is another part of your 90 Day Basic Motivation Plan. When you see your own success clearly and tangibly in your mind, you improve your Outlook and increase your motivation to make that vision real.

Visualization is different from your Guided Meditation because it's an image or series of images, like a slide show in your mind and not a script.

Here's the visualization I recommend to get you started:

Picture yourself looking the way you want to look. You might be thinner, more toned, or more confident. Make the picture in your mind detailed. Picture sleek, toned arms, thin thighs, fewer lumps and "love handles." Pay attention to how your clothes fit, and the smile on your face. Call this image to mind when your commitment to

exercise and healthy eating wavers. This is your end result.

Now picture yourself working out. See yourself on the treadmill, elliptical machine or in the aerobic class or running your mile. See yourself taking the next step, finishing the next song, completing your full time. See yourself accomplish your goal. If you can see it, you can do it. You can use this visualization to get started or keep going throughout your workout. Just keep the picture in your mind a few steps ahead of your body, and see yourself finishing the job.

Here's an even more detailed approach to visualization. You can use the short version we just talked about for a quick energy boost. Use the detailed versions below to reprogram your subconscious and increase your commitment to working out and being fit.

Now take a couple more moments and walk yourself mentally through this scene. See yourself getting dressed to work out in your favorite, most comfortable exercise clothing. Imagine that you stand up tall in front of the mirror and run your hands down your body. You look trim and healthy. Your form-fitting clothes are looking better on you than ever before. Imagine you can feel a rush of confidence as you notice that you look thinner and more toned.

Your skin and hair look healthy because you choose foods that are good for your body. You move with a spring in your step because you are confident and relaxed, and you feel excited, because you can't wait to get to the gym. Feel the anticipation light up your body. Now imagine yourself doing your weights routine. Think about how the weights feel in your hands. Think about how good it feels to go up a new weight, and how you feel a sense of accomplishment when you can complete your repetitions. Think about how warm your muscles feel with a good, tingling feeling, when you finish your reps. Think about how strong and confident that makes you feel, seeing your sleek, toned muscles moving as you work out.

Now picture yourself doing your favorite cardio workout. Hear the music. Feel the cool air, and imagine the feel of the ground under your feet, whether it's a basketball court or an asphalt street. Think about how your heart beats and makes you feel alive. Think about the excitement of moving with the music, and how you feel when you're breathing in good, clean air and you are glowing with the blood that's pumping through your body.

Think about how alive you feel with a sheen of sweat on your skin and how wonderful it is that your feet are moving and keeping pace. Feel the rhythm of your movement and how your whole body is a symphony of motion. See the smile on your face and feel the smile in your body. You're happy. You're making your dream of a healthy life

come true. This is what it feels like to Take Back Your Life.

Now imagine you have a special camera that snaps a picture of feelings. Snap a mental picture of how good you feel when you work out. Snap it now. Imagine you have a feelings-photo of that moment. Carry it around in your mind like you would a real photo in your wallet. Whenever you feel tired or discouraged or you don't want to go to the gym, take your mental "feelings-photo" out and remember how you felt at that moment. Then Take Back Your Life one day, one meal, one workout at a time.

You can use visualization beyond the gym. When a meal is coming up, or a party or a dinner out, picture yourself at the table. See and mentally smell the food that is being passed, or "see" the menu. Watch yourself making wise choices. See your plate filled with sensible portions of vegetables, lean meats and healthy salads. Watch yourself decline the breads and high calorie extras. See yourself order fruit instead of dessert. Hold this picture in your mind, and it becomes easier to do the right thing, because your mind has already "done" it in your visualization. Use visualization for 90 days along with your Workout and Nutrition plans, and you'll be amazed at the results.

### **YOUR VISION BOARD**

Creating a "vision board" is another form of visualization that I recommend to clients. A Vision Board is a poster that you create of your most powerful goals. The idea is to put pictures of your goals onto a poster that sits where you see it every day throughout the day to reinforce your motivation and to subconsciously attract what you want to achieve.

First, get a poster-sized piece of paper. I've found that foam core works best — it's the rigid material with paper on both sides and Styrofoam in the middle. You can find it at office supply stores and some large drug stores or grocery stores. Next, make a list of your top 10 goals. They don't all have to be about exercise or weight loss, although at least one should be. They can include a big vacation, a milestone at work, a personal goal like eliminating credit card debt, writing a book or taking a class, or reaching a particular weight.

Now, find photos in magazines and on the Internet of your goals. If you want to go on vacation to Hawaii, find a picture from Hawaii. If you want to do one hour on the treadmill every day, cut out a photo of a clock and put it above a photo of a treadmill. If you want to lose weight, get a picture of yourself at the target weight or a photo from a magazine of a realistically healthy person of your general height and build. (Please, no supermodel photos!) Be creative. As a last result, if you can't find a representative photo, write a word or two that will trigger you about a goal and print it out in big

lettering. Now arrange your goal photos and trigger words on your piece of foam core. Make it attractive — this can be a fun and creative experience. Do a good job because you're going to put this Vision Board where you see it all the time.

Take a moment to really look at the end result. If you've done it wholeheartedly, your Vision Board should be an expression of your most heartfelt goals and your vision for your own successful life.

You will be amazed how powerful this simple step can be. The act of making a Vision Board is a form of commitment to your goals, and seeing the pictures every day reinforces your commitment in your conscious and subconscious mind. Many people I know who have made Vision Boards were amazed at how opportunities to realize their goals suddenly seemed to appear. What was really happening is that they were more attuned to their goals and had made a commitment, and so they were recognizing opportunities instead of being oblivious. My Vision Board friends have reported great success in making their goals come true more quickly than they expected. And of course, as you realize one goal, you can replace it with another, or create a new Vision Board to carry you even further toward the life you desire.

Re-evaluate your Vision Board after 90 days. What have you accomplished? What would you like to add?

In Chapters Seven – Ten, we will adapt the motivation tools for specific life situations that can wallop your workout and derail your diet. Now that you have the Basic Plan for Motivation, use these tools along with your 90 Day Workout and your 90 Day Nutrition Plan and see what a difference 90 days can make!

**Wendy's Quote:**

*“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time.  
Vision with action can change the world.”*

— J. A. Baker

## PART TWO: WORKOUT

### **LET'S GET SWEATY!**

The next step to OWN your future is your Workout. Now that you've got the 90 Day Outlook plan to boost your motivation, it's time to get to the heart of the program, which is my 90 Day Take Back Your Life Workout Program.

I've made the program customizable for every fitness level. Most people in good health should be able to start with the plan as it's written. (Always check with your doctor before beginning any workout.) But if the plan is too hard for you, or too easy, I've given "step it up" and "ease it down" options so you can still do a great workout to get results in 90 days.

I've designed this program to give you many options to get in your workout. I've included quickie workouts, intervals, and additional circuits that work for you on even your busiest days. You can do them at home, in a hotel room, in the gym or anywhere at all with just a few pieces of equipment. That means there are NO EXCUSES!

Your 90 Day Take Back Your Life Workout Plan taps into three more Delta Factor elements: Activity, Strength and Flexibility. Your Omega Attitude not only helps you get your mojo back, but it also gives you the burning desire to stick with your workout to achieve your goals. There's nothing that fuels Confidence like looking great and feeling great, and when you work out with Consistency, that's what you achieve. I've also given you options for Creativity in your workouts, to keep them fresh and challenging.

Whether it's in the Gym or at home, there is a wide variety of things you can do to get and stay in shape and live healthy. Just starting out? Choose the basic beginner workout plan. If you're already a gym rat or you've established a familiar pattern of exercising, give yourself a kick and bump up your routine by doing one of my other exercise plans that will challenge you most. No matter what level of intensity you choose, be sure to include the flexibility exercises to assure a balanced exercise program. Also, I've included other functional exercises that are already built into the program to help you improve your posture, balance, stability and overall well-being.

Did you know what you learn in your workouts can help you in the bedroom? Look out for my sizzling Sexercises coming up in this chapter. They will help you enjoy sex even more than you already do. Promise!

### **LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: BEATING PLATEAUS**

Memories flash in my mind every now and again of when I used to feel stuck. Plateaus are a difficult and frustrating place to be in and tough to pull out of when you don't understand it. My

body was becoming fuller and matronly and fat was shifting and showing up in weird places. My twice a week aerobic classes weren't doing any good, either. I know I was eating fast foods, canned foods, soul food and plenty of bad snacks, but my life was really busy! What a merry-go-round! Many women like me who hit their 40's (and these days their 30's) are in a perpetual state of plateau – body and mind and feel powerless to being able to change it. I say, it's not over yet! You can do it if you put your mind to it!

The magic that helped me break through was in planning and re-prioritizing my meals, my life and my exercise routine. It really made all the difference! My greatest joy since then has been showing others how to push through their own personal plateaus.

*Wendy says: "NO NONSENSE – NO STOPPING – NO EXCUSES...NO KIDDING!"*

## **STAY FOCUSED UNTIL YOU TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE**

I look at exercise very seriously. Working out, watching what you eat and consciously keeping an eye on your outlook and motivation can become a comfortable life habit that will bring you many life benefits as well as a lifetime of joy. So focus on yourself when you work out and nothing else. This is your “me” time. Make it a ritual and visualize the health and body you want while doing it. Get in the zone and don't come out until you're done. You're in control now. Leave the babies at home, leave the work at work and leave any other problems you may have on your mind at bay. I embody it – I rejoice in it – I say to myself I am “going in for the cleanse” and when I come out, I am like a tiger! Grrrr! Caution: It will take time to totally get to this level, but trust me, and trust the process. If you stick with me on this, it will come. So don't socialize in the gym until you're done. People will respect you for it. If you need a trainer to help with this, get one as soon as you can!

## **GROUND RULES:**

I'm going to get into the nitty-gritty, no-nonsense details in a moment, but first, let me lay down some ground rules to help you get more out of your workout and stay safe.

- No jumping and pouncing if joints are sore or achy. Whether you already have some muscle aches from overdoing it on the weekend, or whether you have sore shoulders from stress, listen to what your body is saying and if part of you hurts, treat it with love!
- For women over 40, shoulder muscles, hip and pelvis stabilizers are key “trouble areas.” We'll focus on them because they tend to be weak for most women, and that causes all kinds of problems with posture, balance, sore backs, sex etc.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

- For faster results, do the workouts more often. You'll see slower results when you work out inconsistently or do fewer workouts per week. It's up to you. Strength training should be at least two to three days a week for beginners and three to four days a week for intermediate and advanced. Keep in mind that you will reach your goals faster the more often you train.
- Muscles always need a rest day in between your workouts to help the muscles grow and recover. It also helps to avoid over training,. If you're doing a total body workout three days a week, do it on say Monday, Wednesday and Friday so you have time to recover between workouts.
- Don't forget to stretch – Stretching” is a functional activity that is as highly important as the other parts of a fitness program. Many people do not understand or place enough value on it. It increases your flexibility and decreases the likelihood of painful joints. It also improves your coordination and balance, which can help you avoid falls. Stretching moves the blood and lymph through your body, which keeps everything moving as it should for better health. Stretching can also help to reduce stress, so make sure you include these moves after every workout!
- For beginners (first time working out or not worked out in long time), only do one set of my total body workout to wake up the body.
- Follow exact order of exercises per each week
- Intensity, Intensity, Intensity! Stay out of your comfort zone to get results! Use weights heavy enough to feel fatigued at the end of each set to make progress and see results.
- Use your Outlook and Motivation tools (from section I of this chapter) to stay on track. Say your affirmations as you workout. Psych yourself up by using the guided meditation before you begin or as part of your cool-down after your workout.

### WENDY'S HEROES: MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi, who is one of my favorite people, was a great leader in India and a man who fought for dignity and freedom. I'll never forget what he said: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

I adapted those words with a bit of a change in how I see it and I say, "Be the change you want to see in your life." Don't wait for someone to offer you a chance. Make a chance by taking the steps and doing the hard work to succeed.

### THE SET-UP – PREPARATION IS KEY TO WINNING

Taking the time to do some basic preparation before launching your Take Back Your Life workout will dramatically increase your chances of success. Here are five key

things you'll need to do before beginning your workout to track your progress and stay motivated.

1. *Take your baseline measurements to track your progress*

- Take your measurements each week.
- The best time to take all of your measurements is early in the day and never after your workout. Record the following in a diary or log:
  - Weight – Be naked and get on the scale as soon as you get out of bed.
  - Body Fat – Have a trainer or knowledgeable health care professional do this for you.
  - Circumference – With a measuring tape, take your measurements before workouts. Measure your waist, thigh, upper arm & hips
  - Your thoughts – Be mindful of how you feel during workouts and anything unusual.
- Remember that muscle weighs more than fat, therefore pay more attention to your body fat and inches lost rather than your weight.

2. *Goals – Set your goals.* What do you expect to accomplish? Set an ultimate goal then break it down into weekly goals. Get my Take Back Your Life “Action Guide” to get you started.

3. *Gauge progress.* Be consistent with this. Pick a day and time of the week to check all of your measurements. It will help to keep you motivated and accountable. If you are not taking your own measurements, make sure you choose the same person with the same equipment each time you check it.

4. *Choose your workout area.* Making a conscious choice of where you'll work out is important so you can properly set up all of your equipment for each workout station you will be visiting. That way you won't have to stop once you get going to search for equipment or regroup because you need more room.

5. *Equipment set-up.* Make sure you have what you need on hand. To do the exercises in this chapter, you will need some basic equipment. They include: Swiss ball, dumbbells, jump rope, a portable step or sturdy stairs, a medicine ball (optional) and resistance tubes/bands.

- How do you know what weight to use? If you can do ten reps easily with your chosen weight, put it down! It's the wrong weight. Don't waste your time. If it's a

little challenging by the time you get to your tenth rep, you've got the right one baby! The body sculpting can now begin!

## HOW TO EXERCISE SAFELY

Especially if you've never exercised before, here's a guide to helping your workout be safe, effective and enjoyable.

1. *Warm up* – Before you start any activity, warm up. That means doing five to ten minutes of light activity along with some light stretching or dynamic warm-ups (stretching with movement). It mentally and physically prepares you to move from one phase to another, enhances coordination, revs up nervous system, readies the heart and lungs and warms the body up for more vigorous exercise. It's especially important for the health of your muscles and joints. This will help you avoid injury by reducing the risk that you will strain or pull something. Warming up can be easy and fun. Try some of these ideas.

- Rowing
- Walking
- Dancing
- Kicking/punching
- Cycling
- Running/Marching (in place)

2. *Activity (Cardio)* - Mix it up! Cardio is fun, and if you use a variety of activities to get your heart rate up, you won't get bored. Try walking, dancing, biking, running, aerobic classes, swimming, or even climbing sets of stairs. I suggest you try to do your cardio all at one setting rather than spread it out in 10 minute sections. However, when short on time or when there are no other alternatives, by all means just get it in. Keep in mind maintaining your weight will be easier after you reach your weight loss goals or get through what I call the "improvement phase" of your workout. To be successful, efficient and get timely results commit to the following:

- Frequency – of activity should be 5 to 6 days a week
- Intensity – of activity should be between 60% - 80%. Use the Perceived Rate of Exertion (PRE) Scale (See Page 114)
- Duration – 15 minutes or more beginners, 30 minutes or more intermediates, and 45-60 minutes for the advanced level.
- Do interval training.

3. *Cool Down* – Give your body a chance to adjust before completely stopping. So if you've been running, dancing or doing something else that got your heart pounding, gradually slow it down instead of just stopping. Cooling down helps the body rid itself of metabolic waste. It also prepares the heart, body and mind to gently return to a resting heart rate. When you stop suddenly, it can make you feel dizzy. That's because you interrupt blood flow back to the heart. It's never good to jolt or shock the body into anything.

4. *Strength training* - Big time... This is a large part of helping to slow down the aging process and maintaining your weight loss. Depending on your fitness level you should do 1 to 4 sets of 10 to 20 reps three to four times per week. Look at the levels of exercise plans and pick one that is right for you!

- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced

5. *Flexibility* – Stretch daily whether you're working out or not. After your workout is the best time. On other days make sure you warm the body up through Yoga-type deep breathing and/or some and/or some activity. Major areas to stretch (included in this chapter) are:

- Back stretch
- Chest stretch
- Quadriceps stretch
- Hamstring stretch
- Gluteus stretch
- Hip flexor stretch
- Shoulder stretch
- Abs

## **THE “EXERCISE ESCALATOR” WILL GET YOU WHERE YOU WANT TO GO**

I call this an “exercise escalator” because it gives you the power to ramp it up or down depending on your level of fitness, how you feel and what your fitness goals are.

“Beginner” level workouts are for people who are just starting out or who haven't been working out consistently. Start with these.

“Intermediate” exercises are the next step up from beginner

“Advanced” exercises are even more challenging. Try them when the other workouts

get too easy or start with them if you are already at an advanced level. It will push your body to a new, stronger and exciting level of fitness.

In the beginning of the program you will start out with one set and gradually progress to allow your body and mind to get into the rhythm of things. Follow my plan exactly and plan your time so that you can get in your cardio and flexibility exercises. Smooth and gradual transitions are key to helping not only your body make a life long change, but more importantly your mind too.

If you are ever out of time, cut out one of your sets (but not your cardio) or simply do one of my circuit workouts and/or interval cardio drills. Do something! Just don't skip out on everything because something has come up. Interruptions happen to all of us. That's reality. That's why I'm giving you options to help you maneuver through them so you can stay on track. According to the ACSM guidelines, you can increase muscle size, strength and endurance through full body workouts with fewer sets than previously believed. This means that you can spend less time on your workout but still get great results!

Pay attention to the alerts that will tell you when a change has occurred in sets, reps, timing or order of exercises for that week. Through these changes your body and mind will be constantly challenged but continually improving. So hang with me!

### **THE BASIC 90 DAY BEGINNER WORKOUT**

For someone new to exercise: You can do this program at home without any equipment. Simply follow the recommended workout and you'll begin to see results and feel better in only a few weeks. While this program is a total body workout, it also adds focus to help flatten the tummy while developing strength and definition in the hips and thighs. It will keep you moving, to increase your fat burn, boost your heart rate and increase your endurance. You will be moving non-stop at each interval circuit station. Even at rest (better known as "active rest") you will march, jog, jump, tap or just dance (make it fun). See workout chart for the weekly progressions between exercises. That little extra push burns off a lot of extra calories! For optimal results, do exercises three times a week with one or two rest days in between workouts.

### **THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL 90 DAY TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE BASIC WORKOUT**

For people who are already exercising on a regular basis: This program will confuse your muscles and get rid of that dreaded plateau. When you don't have time to make it to the gym but still want to work out, you can do it from home or on the road while

traveling. Also, you never have to worry about missing your workouts and falling behind because even if you only have eight minutes, I have a workout for you!

Again, keep your heart rate up with active rest by marching, jogging, jumping, tapping or dancing between exercises to keep it moving! For best results, do the exercises at least three times a week with one or two days in between for rest and recovery of your muscles.

### **THE ADVANCED LEVEL 90 DAY TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE BASIC WORKOUT**

For people who are experienced exercisers and looking for a greater challenge: This will rock your core...literally! If you are progressing well in the intermediate level, slowly try integrating a few of these moves a little at a time until you can do them all. You will be surprised at what you can do. Remember – keep it moving until you're done!

**WARNING:** Do not begin exercising before reading the previous sections. It could prevent you from reaching your goals and keeping them for life. It will help you understand and fuse the mind games and motivational techniques you'll need as "staying power" to see this thing through.

Check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program. My circuit training exercises are designed with complete rest of 1-2 minutes only between stations. If you are new to circuit training be careful when starting out. If you feel faint lightheaded or weak you should stop exercising immediately! You may need to take a longer recovery time than indicated between exercises until your body adjusts to the new demands. As time progresses you can mix and match the different levels one exercise at a time.

You are about to begin your workout therapy session. If done correctly, precisely and religiously it will change your body and your life forever. Again, do not let anyone interrupt or intrude until you're done. Give yourself permission to have it be all about you for once.

Choose one or two affirmations from my list or make up your own before you begin your workout. Chant the affirmation loud enough to hear with each exercise and each repetition that you do.

Now you're ready to begin your Take Back Your Life workout!

**FOR EXERCISE ESCALATOR: See page 190**

## THE REALLY IMPORTANT PART — HOW TO DO THESE EXERCISES

Especially if you're new to exercise (or even if it's been a while since you've been to the gym), you may not be familiar with all the exercises I've recommended. That's OK, because in this section, I explain how to do them.

My objective is to start you out slow-but-steady and to make sure you have the correct form to avoid injury. In the process, I want to re-create and replace old bad habits with new, good ones. I also want to keep your body motivated by giving you choices to mix things up and to show you ways to make the exercises harder or easier to suit your level of fitness. That will help you make steady progress, and help you avoid frustrating plateaus.

Among the many ways to keep the body improving is to change up the order, frequency and intensity of the exercises. You will find these methods embedded within the basic exercise escalator.

When you reach the intermediate and advanced levels, I have included more complex strength training combination exercises. These build more muscle and endurance and target multiple muscle groups in a shorter amount of time.

No gym? No problem. Each exercise can be done at home. All you need is a few pieces of equipment as indicated in the five set-up steps to getting started.

Please follow the instructions carefully to help avoid injury. Be very aware of how your body is positioned, and avoid anything that feels like you are in an unnatural position or over-extending. Form really matters, because if you aren't sitting right, standing correctly or holding your body properly, it's easier to get hurt.

## HOW TO DO THE EXERCISES

### 1. Alternating V Spread Abs

**Set up:** Lie on your back with legs perpendicular to floor (and slightly apart in a V shape pointing towards the ceiling). Hands should be behind your head for support.

**Action:** (a) Reach for your right toe with your left hand and return to start. (b) Repeat on other side.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Keep feet on the floor with knees bent to perform a basic alternating crunch.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Lie on a Bosu ball or unstable surface.

**Targets:** Abs



## 2. Bicycles Abs

**Set up:** Lie face up with knees bent and aligned with hips. Your hands should be unclasped behind your head and elbows out to the sides.

**Action:** (a) Tighten abs, keep low back pressed to floor. (b) Extend left leg about 6 inches off the floor. (c) Bring right knee toward chest and twist torso toward right knee so left elbow barely touches it. (d) Switch sides, lowering right leg to 6 inches off the floor and bringing left knee in while twisting torso left for one rep.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) If you cannot keep your low back firmly on the floor or if you have back issues keep your head and torso on the floor during the exercise.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Use ankle weights and/or hold a medicine ball at chest level with arms out to the sides.

**Targets:** Abs (rectus abdominis, external and internal obliques and transverse abdominis)



## 3. Bunny Hops (No Photo)

Hop side to side with both feet. Arms are bent.

#### 4. Burpies

**Action:** From a standing position stoop down by bending your knees and placing both hands on the floor in front of you. Contract the abs and jump (or do a one-two-step) backwards into pushup position. Do one push up. Then reverse your position by jumping (or one-two step) both feet forward to meet your hands and return to a standing position.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Do not jump backwards or forwards. Instead do a one-two step (left foot steps back then right foot). Then reverse this order coming back into the standing position. Leave out the pushup.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) At the end instead of coming to a standing position go straight into a jump with hands raised overhead.



#### 5. Butt Burner

**Set up:** Stand on right leg only with a slightly bent knee and a dumbbell in right hand. Palm is facing body and left hand is on hip.

**Action:** (a) While contracting abs and keeping back flat, drop hips back and bend standing leg to touch floor (or step) with dumbbell (b) Return to standing position keeping a



slightly bent knee (d) Finish all reps then repeat on other side.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Instead of hand on hip for support use a stick, pole or counter.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Increase hand weights and/or stand on an unstable surface such as a Bosu, foam mat or inflated exercise disc.

**Targets:** Quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, core, balance.



## 6. Corkscrew

**Set up:** Sit on the floor with left knee bent, heel only on the floor and toe in the air. Right leg is straight in front of you off the floor and at an angle with toe pointed.

Holding a medicine ball (or one dumbbell) in both hands, lean torso back at an angle.

**Action:** (a) Twist torso to your right and tap ball on the floor and then twist to your left side and tap ball on the floor. (b) Repeat count with left leg straight and right leg bent.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Lean back only slightly or as much as you can tolerate without losing your form and keep both heels on the floor.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Do this exercise with both heels off the floor and legs straight (or bent) out in front of you. You should be balancing on your sit bones.

**Targets:** External/internal obliques, rectus/transverse abdominis, quads, hip flexors.



## 7. Flys/Pullover combo

**Note:** Regardless of what level you think you are on check your stability on the ball by getting into position and holding for 20-30 seconds without using weights or use a spotter (someone to help you out).

**Set up:** Sit on a stability ball with dumbbells in each hand. Walk feet forward until only upper back, neck and head are supported on ball. Knees are bent at a 90 degree angle and aligned over ankles about shoulder width apart while glutes are pushed towards the ceiling and abs are tight. Extend arms out to sides with a slight bend in the elbow at shoulder height with palms facing ceiling.

**Action:** (a) Squeeze chest while bringing weights together aligned with middle of chest (b) Keeping weights together raise arms overhead even with ears (or as far as you can go without changing torso position) while maintaining small bend in elbow. (c) Bring weights back to align with middle of chest (arms still extended) by contracting back muscles (d) then return arms to the sides of the body at starting position.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Lie on a flat bench (or floor) with legs bent and soles of feet flat.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Place feet on an unstable surface like a foam cushion.

**Targets:** Chest, back, shoulders, core.



### 8. Forward Lunge w/rotation

**Set up:** Hold a weighted medicine ball or dumbbell in both hands and stand with legs slightly apart.

**Action:** Step left foot forward into a lunge. Knee should be behind toes and over ankle. Back of thigh should be parallel to floor (b) At the same time rotate the ball to the left side over the lunging leg. (c) Return to start and repeat on the other leg.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Hold this position while you rotate from side to side.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Move forward with each lunge into a walking lunge rotation

**Targets:** Legs, Glutes, Obliques.

### 9. Ham Curls

**Set up:** Lie face up on the floor, place hands alongside of body with palms down and place both heels on a stability ball.

**Action:** (a) Lift the hips up so that your body is in a straight line from head to toes. (b) Press the heels into the ball and roll the ball in toward hips while contracting the ham-



strings and keeping the feet flexed (d) Roll the ball back out, keeping the hips lifted.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Just hold your position after rolling the ball toward hips for 20 to 30 seconds.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Do this move with one heel on ball and the other leg straight out at an angle.

**Targets:** Hamstrings, calf, core.

### 10. Hoops (No Photo)

Holding a medicine ball, tap it on the floor in front of you. Then bring the ball overhead, jump up and reach out as though you are going to shoot it into a basketball hoop.

### 11. Hop Scotch (No Photo)

Standing with legs close together jump both feet apart, then back together again. Next jump forward, then backwards. Repeat for time.



### 12. Jump Squat

**Set up:** In a standing position place your feet shoulder width apart and tighten your abs.

**Action:** (a) Sit into your squat pushing butt back as if sitting in a chair bringing arms forward and out in front of you. (b) Now leap into the air by pushing through your heels and land back into the squat position. On the last rep hold squat position for five seconds. Make sure you keep the knees behind the toes.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Don't jump just sit in squat position and do little short pulses (up and down) for fifteen to thirty seconds.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) As you leap into the air do a half turn with your body to the right before you land in squat position. (b) On the next rep do a half turn back to your left. Each jump (it doesn't matter the direction) counts as one rep.

**Targets:** Quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, and calves.



### 13. Lateral Hop Lunge

**Set up:** Stand with feet wider than shoulder width apart.

**Action:** (a) Take two steps to the right (with a hop) starting with the left foot then the right. Go right into a side lunge pushing the butt back and tapping the floor in front of your toe. (You may also keep hands out in front of you) (c) Repeat on the opposite side taking two steps to the left starting with right foot then left.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Leave out the hop and only do as much as you can handle on the lunge.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Do this exercise with hand weights

**Targets:** Quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings and adductors

### 14. Lateral Hop n Touch (No Photo)

Standing with two feet together hop to the right side and touch the floor. Then hop to the left side and touch the floor.

### 15. Lunge freeze w/Alt curls

**Set up:** Bring left foot forward keeping foot flat on the floor and put right foot behind you on ball of foot with knee bent and lowered enough so front thigh is parallel to the floor. Knee should always be behind your toes and aligned with the ankle. Emphasis of body weight should be on front leg not back leg. Hold this position with shoulders back and abs contracted.

**Action:** (a) Perform alternate curls by curling right arm then left. (Or do single arm curls)

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Keep your feet planted in the lunge position but only



lower your body towards the floor as much as you can reasonably handle it and complete one arm curls only.

**To make it harder – Advanced:**

(a) While doing your alternate curls move the body up and down (like an elevator) while feet are planted in lunge position.

**Targets:** Quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, calves and biceps.



### 16. Mountain Climbers

**Set up:** Get into a pushup position with the hands and toes on the floor.

**Action:** Bring the right knee in towards the

chest, resting the foot on the floor. Switch feet with a small leap in the air, bringing the left foot in and the right foot back. Continue alternating the feet as fast as you safely can.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Do this exercise holding onto a bench, chair or wall.

**Targets:** Arms, Shoulders, Core

### 17. Plank Tango

**Set up:** Position body face down and parallel to the floor, straighten both legs behind you with feet together and support yourself on balls of the feet and forearms. Align head and neck with spine and tighten abs. Elbows should be aligned with shoulders.

**Action:** (a) Now simultaneously step one foot to the right and the other foot to the left. (both legs are wide apart now) (b) Then return to start by placing right foot back to center, then the left foot. (c) Continue this dance for required reps.

Plank Tango



**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Just hold this position on your knees for 20-60 seconds.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Place hands on floor instead of forearms (a) Instead of placing one foot to the right and following with the other foot to the left, hop your feet apart at the same time. Then hop them back together again (like a legs only jumping jack).

**Targets:** Abs, spine extensors, chest, shoulders, triceps.

## 18. Plank walk

**Set up:** Position your body face down and parallel to the floor. Support yourself on balls of your feet and palms of your hands. Straighten both legs behind you with feet slightly apart. Align head and neck with spine and tighten abs.

**Action:** (a) Lower your body onto your forearms one at a time (b) then return to the straight arm position.

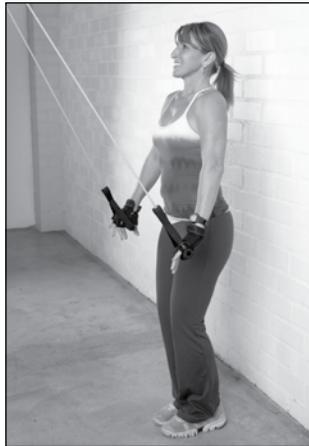
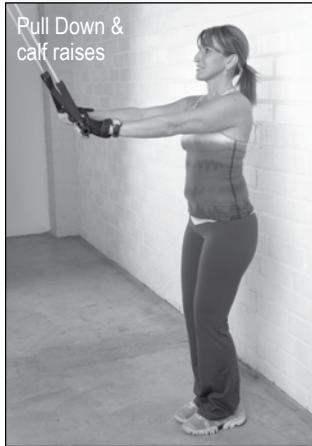
**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Do this exercise on your knees or just hold for 10-30 seconds.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Do this with one leg raised

**Targets:** Abs, spine extensors, chest, shoulders, triceps.

Plank walk





### 19. Pull Down & calf raises

**Set up:** Secure a resistance tube around an object that's high above your head. Position feet slightly less than shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent and abs contracted.

**Action:** (a) Grab tube handles in both hands with palms facing down (b) Keeping arms straight, lower arms by contracting back muscles until they are along side of your body. (c) Return to start. (d)

On the very last rep you should hold your arms down along your sides and do calf raises (by raising heels off the floor and lowering again), then release hands.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Decrease distance between you and where you bracketed tube and/or use a tube with less resistance. Before doing calf raises complete last rep by returning to start. Release tube handles and hold onto a chair or pole for support.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Do this exercise standing on one leg instead of two. Also your palms should face the ceiling instead of facing down.

**Targets:** Back (Lattissimus Dorsi), Triceps, Calves

### 20. Push ups

**Set up:** Place your hands on floor with legs extended supporting yourself on toes and hands a little wider than shoulder width apart and abs contracted.

**Action:** (a) Bend elbows and lower chest a few inches above the floor then return to start.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Do this exercise on your knees, a wall or a desk.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Do this on one leg. **Targets:** Chest, triceps, core.





## 21. Rock & Roll Crunches

**Set up:** Lie on your back, legs straight and unclasped hands behind your head. Press abs into your spine and spine into the floor.

**Action:** (a) Raise the left leg to hover two inches off the floor. Hold it there while you raise the right leg as high as you can as you reach up to touch your toes with your left hand. Left shoulder should be off the floor. (b) Repeat for all reps on this side before moving to opposite side of body. By week 7 begin your rock and roll by alternating from one side to another.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Rest legs on floor instead of hovering them two inches above.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Use ankle weights.

**Targets:** Abs (rectus abdominis, transverse abdominis, internal & external obliques)



## 22. Seated Bent Row

**Set up:** Sit on a bench or chair with legs close together and dumbbells in each hand. Lean forward so chest is almost parallel to the floor. Keep your abs tight, the back flat and the chest pushed out. Arms should be hanging along side of legs.

**Action:** (a) Exhale as you pull your elbows towards the ceiling while squeezing your shoulder blades together and pause for a second. (b) Return to start.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Use lighter weights.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Do this in a standing position or for more challenge, do this standing on one leg. Keep knee(s) slightly bent.

**Targets:** back and biceps



### 23. Seated Crunches

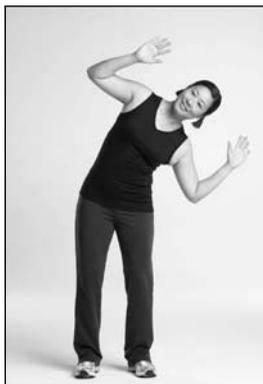
**Set up:** Sit on the edge of a bench or chair that is stable and has enough room so you can lean backwards without obstruction. Grip hands to bench at the sides of your butt.

**Action:** (a) Start out bringing knees to chest and chest forward. (b) Extend legs in front of you and lean back keeping abs pulled in to support back. (c) Return to start and continue in this motion until all reps are complete.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Keep feet on the floor and bring knee to chest one leg at a time until you are strong enough to do both legs at the same time.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Try this with no hands on bench and legs straight out in front of you balancing on your butt. (b) Pull in your arms and legs at the same time to meet your chest (like you are rowing a boat). Repeat.

**Targets:** Abs, hip flexors.



### 24. Side Bends

**Note:** If you have back problems be careful with this one. Even if you are intermediate or advanced you may want to try beginner level first.

**Set up:** With a pair of light dumbbells in hands hold arms up (like a football goal post). Upper arms should be parallel to the floor, back straight, abs pulled in and knees slightly bent.

**Action:** (a) Inhale as you slowly bend to your side without twisting your upper body,

pause and exhale as you return to start.(b) Repeat on opposite side.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Do without weights and keep hands at your sides.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Do this with arms extended above your head.

**Targets:** Obliques.



## 25. Side Squat (& Sit Squat) w/front raises

**Set up:** Stand with feet slightly apart with dumbbells in each hand and arms at sides.

**Action:** a) Step to the right a little wider than shoulder width and sit back like you are sitting in a chair with the weight of your body on the heels of your feet. (Torso should be upright with legs at a 90 degree angle). (b) Raise both your arms with palms facing each other as you lower yourself into the squat

position. (c) Return to start and repeat on the opposite side.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (Sit Squat) Instead of stepping into a side squat, you will do a sit squat. Sit in a chair with the same arm position, Walk feet forward enough so your knees stay behind your toes. (a) Stand (without moving feet) and lift arms to the front each time you stand (b) Return to start and repeat.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Do this exercise standing on an unstable surface like a foam cushion. Add a calf raise between each squat.

**Targets:** Quads, hamstrings, glutes, calves, shoulders.



## 26. Step ups w/Shoulder press

**Set up:** Use a solid platform or step about twelve inches or just under knee-high. Stand with the right side of your body facing the step with a dumbbell in left hand. Arm is bent; forearm should be vertical with palm facing body at shoulder height.

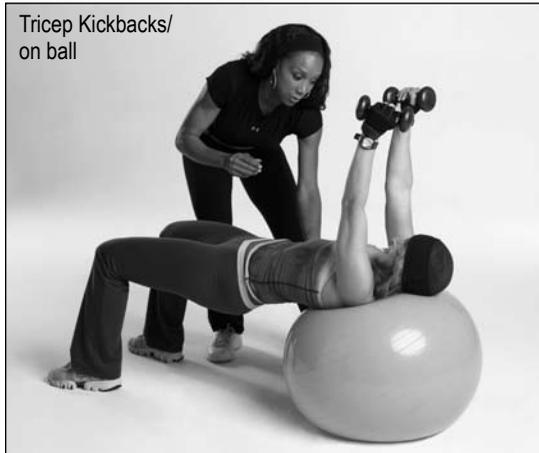
**Action:** (a) Place entire right foot on edge of step and lift the body up. (b) At the same time bring left knee up and press left hand up completely extending arm. (c) Return to start. Note: The right foot

stays planted without lifting until all reps are complete. (d) Repeat on opposite side. Use a steady pace you can maintain for the entire time.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Use a standard stairway-height step and tap the board instead of bringing knee up if lower intensity is needed.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Add a plyometric (hop) after stepping up on board.

**Targets:** Quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, shoulders and calves



## 27. Tricep Kickbacks/on ball

**Note:** You may want to start at a beginner level on this one. (See beginner instructions) Regardless of what level you think you are on check your stability on the ball by getting into position and holding for 20-30 seconds without using weights or use a spotter (someone to help you out).

**Set up:** Sit on a stability ball with dumbbells in each hand. Walk feet forward until only upper back, neck and head are supported on ball. Knees are bent at a 90 degree angle and aligned over ankles about shoulder width apart while glutes are pushed towards the ceiling and abs are tight. Extend arms straight out in front of you towards the ceiling and align with middle of chest with palms facing each other.

**Action:** (a) Bending at the elbows but keeping your elbows stationary and in line with your chest lower hands towards shoulders at a 90 degree angle. (b) Return to start by straightening your arms.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** (a) Instead of using a ball lie on the floor with soles of feet flat and raise hips off the floor. Then continue with arms as described.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** (a) Place feet on foam cushion or bring legs closer together.

**Targets:** Triceps, core.



## 28. Tube Shuffle

**Set up:** In a standing position with resistance tube in hands place both feet slightly apart while stepping on top of a resistance band.

**Action:** (a) Contract abs, slightly bend knees and hold body erect while stepping to the right against the resistance about shoulder width. (b) Bring left foot in to meet right ankle (without touching floor) and return to start - stepping wide (c) Re-

peat on opposite side and bring right foot in to meet the left and return to start.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Use a light weight resistance band.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Use a heavier weight resistance band.

**Targets:** Hips, quads, hamstrings, glutes abductors.



## 29. Wall Sit w/Curl and Press

**Set up:** Stand with your back against a wall, dumbbells in each hand, arms at sides w/ palms facing forward, abs contracted and shoulders drawn back Slide down the wall by walking feet forward bending knees and lowering hips until thighs are parallel to the floor at a 90 degree angle.

**Action:** (a) Curl arms up so forearms are vertical, upper arms are in line with torso and palms are facing your body (b) Then rotate palms to face forward and press arms overhead. (c) Reverse this movement by returning dumbbells to shoulder height, rotating palms to face body and lowering palms to sides.

**To make it easier – Beginners:** Don't slide all the way down the wall. Stay slightly above a 90 degree angle or where you can reasonably maintain your position throughout reps. Start out doing curls only, then try complete combo in later weeks.

**To make it harder – Advanced:** Do this movement on one leg only.

**Targets:** Quads, biceps and shoulders.

## 8 MINUTE CRUNCH WORKOUT

Are you short on time this week? How about a quickie? Circuit B or Circuit C is great for those days when you don't have time — no excuses — know what I mean? Depending on your available time and level of fitness, you can choose any of my workout quickies. You can spend as little as eight minutes. You can also add this as the fourth day of workout to your regular exercise plan to add variety to your routine

Perform this circuit straight through with no rest as follows: Do first exercise for time indicated below then follow with active rest by marching or jogging in place. Immediately follow with next exercise the same way and so on until you're done with all eight exercises. Then you rest. That completes one circuit set. If you are doing more than one set rest for 1-2 minutes before beginning the next set.

**Power Circuit B or C:** (Timing is based on one set. Try 1-3 sets)

**Takes 8 minutes**

Perform 30 seconds of each exercise. Between each one march for 30 seconds

Circuit B	Circuit C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burpies</li> <li>• Sit Squat w/front raise</li> <li>• Mountain climbers</li> <li>• Bunny hops</li> <li>• Push-ups</li> <li>• Lateral hop lunge</li> <li>• Plank walk</li> <li>• Bicycles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lateral Hop Lunge</li> <li>• Push ups</li> <li>• Forward Lunge w/rotation</li> <li>• Side Squat</li> <li>• Bunny hops</li> <li>• Bicycles</li> <li>• Plank Tango</li> <li>• Jumping Jacks</li> </ul>

For more of a challenge change the timing on Circuit B or C as follows:

**Takes 10 minutes**

Perform 45 seconds of each exercise. Between each one march for 30 seconds.

**Takes 12 minutes for 1 set / Takes 24 minutes for two sets**

Do 60 seconds of each exercise. Between each one march for 30 seconds.

## **THE #1 SECRET TO LOOKING GOOD NAKED**

Would you believe that the secret to looking good naked has nothing to do with how much you weigh or what size pants you wear? It isn't about the size of your waist or hips, or whether you can wriggle into Size 0.

The #1 Secret to looking good naked is healthy confidence. I say "healthy" because good health is sexy. When you're taking care of your body, it shows. Your hair is healthy and touchable. Your skin glows. Your eyes are bright. Your breath is good. Your teeth are clean. There's something magnetic about a healthy person, and good health looks even better naked.

"Confidence" is the other piece. My plan is designed to help your confidence grow. We're all works in progress. If you wait to be sexy until the scale tells you a certain number or you fit into a dress size, you miss out on a lot of living. So be your sexy best now and enjoy today. Maybe tomorrow or next week or next month or a year from now you'll feel even sexier because you've achieved your fitness and weight goals. Fantastic! But you won't have missed out on all those nights between now and then if you decide that sexiness starts today.

Doing everything possible to create a healthy, happy you through a positive Outlook, challenging Workouts and good Nutrition helps you feel that you OWN your future. You know you are making steps to Take Back Your Life. Feel the confidence that comes through empowerment. Let that confidence radiate through your skin. Let the confidence animate your eyes and make you smile. Stand up straight and walk tall. You are empowered. You are confident. And because of that....you ARE sexy.

If being more lean and toned is what you see for yourself and that translates to feeling sexier naked then don't hold back. Go for it, girl! Getting lean and toned can definitely boost your spirits, positively affect your psyche and make you look better naked all day long. But "You have to give up something to get something." That would be sweat! The best way to get started and the most efficient way to burn fat in the shortest amount of time is to do interval training.

Try out my interval activity charts to help you begin the fat melting process. Then weight training is a must to keep you lean and toned for a lifetime. I am in love with it for what it's done to my body. Seriously! It will literally sculpt your body and surprise your mirror. I've laid it all out for you so all you have to do is be serious, be committed and be patient when doing my plan and you will get results like I did.

Often people make comments to me when they see me working out. They'll say,

“Hey you don’t need to work out. You’re already lean and fit.” I reply, “Yes I do. How do you think I stay this way?” The idea is not to get fit and then sit on the couch. The point is to make fitness a part of your life. Trust me, I’ve had huge food fantasies and every now and again I’ve fulfilled them. At the same time I have fallen prey to skipping too many workouts which left me feeling depressed. So I am not exempt from this process. What keeps me into my workouts religiously is that I choose to feel good over feeling bad. To stay on track I chant to myself, “It’s easier to keep up than catch up.”

### **SEX-ERCISES — NO-NONSENSE EXERCISES THAT MAKE FOR GREAT SEX**

A healthy sex life is important for good health. More strength means more fun. It also means you are able to engage in a variety of positions and creative play.

Did you know that:

- You need a strong back for sex. A weak lower back only gets in your way and adds frustration and pain.
- The clitoris will atrophy if you don’t use it? That’s right! It’s like any other muscle on the body. Use it or lose it! Kegal exercises will tighten those muscles right up.
- Research suggests that sex releases disease-fighting chemicals when enjoyed in a happy relationship. It was also founded that (along with masturbation) sex can actually help with muscle and joint pain as well as lengthen your life,
- Cardio increases heart safety during the sex act while chemicals released during sex promote heart health. So make sure you keep up with your cardio daily. I know too many people who have had heart attacks during sex. Sex is a cardio experience! Now check out these Sexercises!

All of the following exercises work your core and nether regions along with some upper body strengthening for balance including: back, hips, pelvic girdle, vagina, abs and legs. Besides sexual health, here are some other reasons you might want to do this: you had a baby, suffer with back pain, pee when you laugh/cough/jump or want better general health.

Try this quick 30 minute circuit. It’ll make you feel all wet and sexy just doing it.

1. Mountain climbers — 30 seconds each
2. Bridge n’ press — 8-10 reps
3. Abductor reach & circle — 8-10 reps
4. Double crunch & reach – 8-10 reps

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

5. Adductor squeeze and Press (with Kegal) — 8-10 reps
6. Push-ups – 8-10 reps
7. Magic gate (dirty dog) - 8-10 reps

### *Stretches:*

1. Four point camel hump stretch – 5 seconds
2. Cobra and shoulder stretch – 30 seconds
3. Re-energizing 4-16-8 stretch & meditation

You should feel re-energized yet relaxed with heightened sensations when you're done. For more information visit my website at [www.wendyida.com](http://www.wendyida.com)

## HOW TO DO THE SEXERCISES:

### **Kegal**

Contract PC (pubococcygeal) muscles by clenching your vagina as though you are stopping urine and hold for two to three seconds per squeeze. Inhale as you squeeze each time. Then try and fully relax your muscles between each contraction. Start with 10 to 20 squeezes. Practice anytime and anyplace (no one will know). This exercise firms the muscles of the vagina and strengthens PC muscles.

### **Bridge n' press**

**Set Up:** Lie on your back with hands clasped overhead and knees bent with the soles of your feet on the floor.

**Action:** (a) Inhale and then exhale as you raise your bottom off the floor. At the same time, your clasped hands should be moving down towards your legs and then hovering a few inches above your body while you squeeze your butt tight and pause for three seconds. (b) Slowly inhale as you return to start. (c) Repeat.





### Abductor reach

**Set Up:** Lie on your right side with your head resting on your right arm. The arm is on the floor straight up extended above your head. Right leg is slightly bent and left arm is straight and resting along left side of your body.

**Action:** (a) With abs pulled in slowly raise

your left leg and reach for your toe with left hand (lifting upper body at the same time). (b) Return to start without resting leg on floor. c) Repeat.

### Double crunch & reach

**Set up:** Lie on your back with legs bent, shoulder width apart and soles of feet on the floor. Arms should be on floor, elbows in line with shoulders and forearms perpendicular to floor.

**Action:** (a) Move your knees towards your head while lifting your hips slightly off the floor. (b) At the same time reach both arms between legs lifting upper body off the floor. For variety you may also alternate from one side to other with left arm only down the center then right arm..



## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE



### Adductor squeeze & press

**Set up:** Lie on your back with knees bent and soles of feet flat on the floor. Arms are out to sides with elbows bent and forearms perpendicular to the floor holding dumbbells. Place a soft weighted ball, rolled towel or a roll of toilet paper between your knees.

**Action:** (a) Raise your hips toward ceiling while squeezing the buttocks tightly and performing the Kegal exercise, pause (b) At the same time do a chest press by contracting chest muscles while pressing dumbbells towards the ceiling. (c) Return to start.



### Magic gate (dirty dog)

**Set up:** Kneel down on all fours. Knees are directly under your hips, hands are under shoulders, elbows are slightly bent and abs are tight.

**Action:** (a) Keeping your leg bent, lift the left leg out to the side, lower it without touching floor, then extend it behind you heel first while squeezing at the hip. Return to the starting position.



### Four point cat stretch

**Action:** On all fours exhale as you squeeze abs into your spine while rounding your back like a camel or spooked cat. Hold for a good stretch, then exhale as you reverse your position and draw abs towards the floor, hyper-extending your back (like a reverse camel hump).



### Cobra stretch

**Set up:** Lie face down on the floor with the palms of your hands on the floor next to your shoulders with your arms bent.

**Action:** (a) Push down on your palms and raise your chest towards the ceiling while keeping your pelvis, your legs and the top of your feet on the floor. (b) As you rise, keep your shoulder blades together and your shoulders down as your stomach stays in contact with the floor and you push your body up with your hands. (c) Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds for a good ab stretch. (d) Then lift your glutes up to rock backwards, resting your buttocks on the calves of your legs. (e) Lower your chest down to the floor while your arms remain straight out in front of you to stretch out your shoulders. Hold 30 seconds, concentrating only on your breathing.

### Re-energizing- 4-16-8 stretch meditation

Lie face up on the floor with your legs together against the wall and perpendicular to floor (buttocks on wall too), focusing on deep breathing. For a count of 4-16-8 do this: Inhale through your nose for 4, hold for 16 and exhale out of your mouth making an audible sound for 8. Spread your legs as wide as they will go and repeat the count of 4-16-8. Do once more in each direction.

### HOW TO STRETCH

It's important to stretch correctly for all the same reasons why it's essential for you to position your body properly when you do the exercises. Stretching in ways that are unnatural or forced can hurt you or over-extend joints. Listen to your body as you stretch, move slowly through a range of motion until you feel mild tension and hold for 20-30 seconds. Never use bouncing or jerking motions during a stretch. If it hurts, stop!



#### Back stretch - Floor

- Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Gently grab both legs and pull to chest at the same time. (Also known as the fetal position) and pull your knees up to your chest as comfortably as possible until you feel a stretch in your lower back.
- Avoid the knee-to-chest stretch if you have osteoporosis.

#### Alternative: Back stretch (Chair) (No Photo)

- Sit on the edge of a chair with your feet flat on the floor and legs shoulder width apart.
- Bend forward from the hips, curling your neck and back until your chest is on your thighs and you can touch the floor with your hands.
- Hold for 30 seconds.
- Return to starting position and repeat two times.

#### Chest stretch

- Stand to the right of a pole or wall and place left forearm flat against it with upper arm parallel to the floor. Right arm is along your side.
- Bring right foot forward keeping foot flat with knee bent and put left foot straight behind you.



- Rotate your upper body towards the right as though you are trying to look behind you.
  - Hold for 30 seconds.
  - Return to starting position and repeat two times
- OR—
- Face a corner wall, put hands up against the wall with upper arms parallel to floor, elbows level with shoulders and feet staggered (one in front and one in back).
  - While squeezing the shoulder blades together and contracting your abs, lean forward into the stretch until you feel a mild stretch.
  - Hold for 30 seconds.
  - Return to start and repeat two times.

### Glute stretch

- Sit tall and put your right ankle on your left knee.
- With your left hand, support your right ankle so it doesn't slip off your knee.
- Push your chest out, contract abs and pull shoulders back.
- Lower chest down towards legs, keeping back flat.
- Hold for 30 seconds.
- Return to start, and repeat before going to other side.





### Hamstring stretch - Chair

- Sit on the edge of a chair or stability ball with legs slightly apart and feet flat on the floor.
- Extend your right leg straight in front of you and lock your knee.
- Bend forward from the waist and reach for your toe.
- Move slowly and stop when

you feel a gentle stretch in the rear of your legs.

- Hold for 30 seconds and breathe deeply.
- Repeat two to three times before doing opposite leg.

### Alternative: Hamstring stretch (Floor) (No Photo)

- Lie on your back on the floor with your butt up against a wall. If possible find a corner so you can stretch your left leg out. Note: If you want more of a stretch put a towel around your ankle and pull leg towards chest. If you can't find a corner come as close to the wall as possible.
- If your hamstrings are tight instead of keeping the left leg straight bend the left knee and put the foot flat on the floor. Each time you stretch try to straighten that leg a little more.



### Hip flexor stretch - Kneel

- Kneel on your right knee, cushioning your kneecap with a folded towel.
- Place your left foot in front of you, bending your knee and placing your left hand on your left leg for stability.
- Place your right hand on your right hip to avoid bending at the waist. Keep your back straight and your abdominal muscles tight.
- Lean forward, shifting more body weight onto your front leg. You'll feel a stretch in your right thigh.

- Hold the stretch for about 30 seconds.
- Switch legs and repeat two times

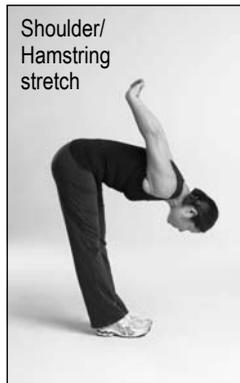


**Alternative: Hip flexor stretch (Stand) (No Photo)**

- In a standing position, stagger your feet about a foot and a half-step (left foot in front and right foot in back).
- Bend your left knee, contract your abs and shift your weight back to your right hip, tilting pelvis forward until you feel a stretch.
- Hold for 30 seconds.
- Repeat two times and switch sides.

**Quadriceps stretch**

- Stand near a wall or a piece of sturdy exercise equipment for support.
- Grasp your ankle and gently pull your heel up and back until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh.
- Tighten your stomach muscles to prevent your stomach from sagging outward, and keep your knees close together.
- Hold the stretch for about 20 - 30 seconds, relax.
- Repeat two times and switch sides.



**Shoulder/Hamstring stretch**

Prevents forward shoulder slumping

- In a standing position with feet slightly apart, interlock your fingers behind your back, with your elbows bent. Keep your neck straight and relaxed. Keep the chin tucked.
  - Gently straighten your elbows, push the chest out and lift your arms up towards the ceiling until you feel the stretch in front of your shoulders.
- Alternative: You can bend forward from the hips keeping legs straight to get a hamstring stretch at the same time. Keep the arms pulled away from the body and as far up as possible to feel the stretch.
  - Hold for 30 seconds.
  - Return to start, repeat two times.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE



**Spinal/Oblique stretch** Massages internal organs to improve digestion & elimination

- Sit upright on the floor or stool with your legs stretched out, your spine tall and straight.
- As you inhale pull your right knee up and cross the leg over your left knee, placing the sole of your foot flat on the floor on the outside of your left knee .
- Exhale and twist to the right, placing your left forearm on the outside of your right knee. Place your right hand on the ground behind you.
- Turn your head as far to the right as you can, but keep both hips on the ground and your spine straight.
- Hold the twist while taking big deep breaths.
- Repeat on the left side.

### **CARDIO INTERVAL TRAINING SAMPLE CHARTS**

When you're traveling, you may not have access to the gym equipment you usually use. Don't despair! You can find a way to stay active and burn calories no matter where you are. You can do interval training with any activity: biking, treadmill, elliptical, rowing, swimming etc. Not only can you get a good workout, but you'll burn more body fat, break plateaus and get a nice break in your routine from changing things up!

The key to getting a good interval workout is timing your "push" periods and your "recovery" periods. Your "push" periods are where you go all-out, pushing yourself to go faster or harder than usual. Your "recovery" periods let you catch your breath without allowing your heart rate to fall back to your resting rate. By keeping your heart rate high, you help your body burn fat.

You can use my sample Interval Training charts to get started and/or create your own workout, depending on your current level of fitness and how much time you have

for exercise. Note that the terms I’ve used, such as “moderate exertion,” “high exertion” etc. are relative, and depend on your personal fitness level. So a competitive athlete would have a very different idea of what was “moderate” than a workout newbie! Also compare the RPE numbers next to the exertion type with the RPE scale to understand how you should be feeling at each interval level change.

The goal with Interval Training isn’t to push yourself until you drop. Instead, I want you to try to push yourself just a little further each time so that your body adapts to the new demands and your fitness level increases. After you’ve been working out for a while (sooner than you think), you’ll look back on your beginning ideas about what made for a challenging workout and laugh. By that point, you’ll have gained confidence, strength and cardio capacity so that you’re doing workouts that you couldn’t have imagined when you started. That’s progress!

Diagram A

SAMPLE CHART I			SAMPLE CHART II			SAMPLE CHART III		
Interval Training: Mild variation pyramid			Interval Training: Ascending/descending pyramid			Interval Training: Reciprocating pyramid		
Type	Time	RPE <small>(Rate of perceived exertion)</small>	Type	Time	RPE <small>(Rate of perceived exertion)</small>	Type	Time	RPE <small>(Rate of perceived exertion)</small>
Warm up	10 min	4	Warm up	5 min	4	Warm up	5 min	4
Mod Exertion	5 min	6	Mod Exertion	2 min	6	Mod Exertion	3 min	6
Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	30 sec	7/8	Hi Exertion	30 sec	7/8
Mod Exertion	2 min	6	Mod Exertion	1 min	6	Mod Exertion	2 min	6
Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8
Mod Exertion	2 min	6	Mod Exertion	2 min	6	Mod Exertion	1 min	6
Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	2 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	2 min	7/8
Mod Exertion	2 min	6	Mod Exertion	3 min	6	Mod Exertion	30 sec	6
Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	2 min	7/8	Cool Down	5 min	3
Mod Exertion	2 min	6	Mod Exertion	3 min	6	Total Time	20 min	
Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8			
Mod Exertion	2 min	6	Mod Exertion	2 min	6			
Hi Exertion	1 min	7/8	Hi Exertion	30 sec	7/8			
Cool Down	4 min	3	Cool Down	5 min	3			
Total Time	35 min		Total Time	30 min				

## EXHIBIT I - RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE) SCALE

Keep in mind that you will get results by making sure your workouts are challenging. To make sure that's happening use this Perceived Rate of Exertion (RPE) Scale. I have adapted it from the original Borg Scale Rate of Perceived Exertion so it's more relatable as well as memorable. I've also included these RPE intensity levels in your workouts to give you an idea of how hard you should be working.

### Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

This RPE scale is used to measure the intensity of your exercise

- Level 1:** I'm just kicking back — eating my strawberries and rubbing my feet
- Level 2:** I can do this all day long! — I just love window shopping!
- Level 3:** I can laugh and have a comfortable conversation, but notice my breathing has increased.
- Level 4:** Now I'm starting to sweat and I can feel my heart pumping a little more
- Level 5:** Okay I'm feeling a little uncomfortable. Breathing is labored and sweats a rolling.
- Level 6:** I'm a little out of breath now; don't feel like talking too much.
- Level 7:** I'm sweating like crazy and trying to catch my breath. Can only focus on task at hand.
- Level 8:** Whoa! Can't keep this pace for long and don't even look like you want to talk to me!
- Level 9:** It's way too hard. Feel like I may pass out!
- Level 10:** I passed out!

## **PART THREE: THE 90 DAY TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE NUTRITION PLAN**

The third step to OWN your future and Take Back Your Life is healthy eating and nutrition. Outlook and Workout can take you far, but if your Nutrition isn't healthy, it will derail your success and keep you frustrated. That's why I've created the 90 Day Take Back Your Life Nutrition Plan.

People always ask me what I eat. I've heard people say, "I have worked out really hard but I still don't look like you." What they really mean is that they can't seem to get the definition they want in the right places. Others are blunt and say, "I can't get this extra fat off my abs and butt." This is where I reveal another one of my little secrets! I have grown into a methodical (but comfortable and enjoyable) way in which I go about my eating. I have it down to a few steps. Keep in mind I always try to eat "clean" whenever possible. For me that means buying fresh foods that are organically grown. Let me point out that this didn't happen for me overnight. It's been a process. I changed one thing one day, one week and one month at a time. That's the staying power that turned my life around!

Let's get one thing straight: this is not a diet. Diets are temporary fixes. Diets don't work because in our minds, diets don't last forever. It's not a realistic way to live. If you lose weight on a diet and then go right back to poor eating habits, the weight will come back on — and then some. The 90 Day Take Back Your Life Nutrition Plan is not a temporary fix. It's meant to be a plan you can use for the rest of your life to choose healthy foods, healthy portions and healthy combinations of the nutrients your body needs to function at its peak efficiency. You can use this eating plan for years to come. (Always check with your doctor before beginning any new eating program, especially if you have a chronic health condition.)

### *Now for the details*

I'll be honest with you. I'm not a chef. I don't even pretend to like cooking one bit. I am so busy; that's why I have to keep it simple. We all have busy, fast-paced lifestyles and don't want to be stuck in the kitchen half our lives. But we do want proper nutrition. In the past I have found the recipes in many nutrition books too time consuming and difficult to follow. So I have simplified the rules on getting it fast and furious and with great results.

### *Start with the basics*

Let me break it down to you in simple terms. There are three main groups of food nutrients you should have at each meal. Those basic components are: protein, complex carbohydrates

(starchy and non-starchy) and a good fat. Think of the three parts of a meal at dinner time, you have a protein (chicken), a non-starchy complex carb (broccoli) and a starchy carb or fruit (baked potato). A little olive oil would qualify for the good fat. These components are found in many foods. The trick is to eat just the right amount of each component. People gain weight because they eat too much of one kind of thing (often carbs or fat) and not enough of other healthy foods (usually vegetables and proteins prepared in a healthy way).

Follow my five easy steps and you will begin to experience what I have come to know as the core of my success to being a healthy, fit and sensual being. I want you to understand how to build a healthy meal that's easy to understand and use no matter where you are for the rest of your life!

## **STEP 1. CHOOSE ONE FOOD FROM EACH CATEGORY** (See chart on page 196)

Keep in mind the following guidelines: (a) Eat protein at every meal; (b) Eat a non-starchy vegetable at every meal; (c) Aim for a small serving of essential fats at all meals; (d) Limit your starchy carbs to the minimum. The best time to eat carbs is within an hour after a workout – within thirty minutes would be optimal. Be sure to include a little protein to help with your recovery process. The worst time to eat carbs is after dinner and before bedtime. Remember, too many starchy carbs can make you fat.

### **I. Protein**

Meat and poultry choices should be lean or low fat. Fish, nuts and seeds contain healthy oils, so choose these foods frequently instead of meat and poultry. Choose organic or free-range meat with no hormones added whenever possible. If you are a vegetarian, you will not only find protein in this category but you will also find it in category III of the complex carbohydrates where proteins double as a carbohydrate.

Eat one serving at every meal. One serving is two to four ounces (approximately the size of the palm of your hand.)

*Best protein sources are:*

- Cottage cheese
- Egg whites
- Game meat
- Halibut
- Lamb
- Lean chicken
- Lean red meats
- Lean turkey
- Mackerel
- Other cold water fish
- Quinoa
- Salmon
- Sardines
- Shellfish
- Tempeh/Tofu
- Tuna
- Whey protein
- Yogurt

## II. Non-starchy vegetables (*complex carbohydrates*)

Veggies, fruits and whole grains are all classified as complex carbohydrates. It's broken down this way: Non-starchy vegetables, Starchy vegetables, Fruits and Whole Grains.

Carbs don't always appear to be starchy. In fact, many of the foods you see below aren't ones that you would think of as "starchy," but they're still carbohydrates. Everything on the list may not be among your favorite foods, but I'll bet you haven't tried them all. Make this your chance to explore, be adventurous and find new favorites. Just be careful about what you top your veggies with because using lots of cheese or butter adds calories. So remember that when you are dining out. Instead of asking the waitress to hold the pickles and lettuce, ask them to hold the butter, sauces and cheese. Try sprinkling on spices, using a bit of flavored oil, and resisting the urge to pile on salt.

Eat one serving at every meal. 1 serving is ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw (Approximately the size of your fist)

*Best non-starchy vegetables are:*

- Arugula
- Asparagus
- Bamboo shoots
- Bean sprouts
- Beet greens
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cassava
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Chives
- Collard greens
- Cucumber
- Dandelion greens
- Eggplant
- Endive
- Fennel
- Garlic
- Ginger root
- Green beans
- Hearts of palm
- Jalapeno peppers
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Mushrooms
- Mustard greens
- Onions
- Parsley
- Radishes
- Snap beans
- Snow peas
- Spinach
- Summer squash
- Swiss chard
- Tomatoes
- Turnip greens
- Watercress

\* Not an exhaustive list

## III. Starchy, high-fiber vegetables (*complex carbohydrates*)

This is where I carefully monitor my servings to encourage fat loss. If that is what your goal is limit your intake to only two to four servings a day and don't forget that one serving should be eaten after exercise and no starchy carbs should be eaten after dinner.

No more than two to four servings daily. 1 serving is ½ cup (or approximately what fits in one cupped hand.)

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

### *Best starchy veggies*

- Acorn squash
  - Adzuki beans \*
  - Artichokes
  - Black beans\*
  - Butternut squash
  - Corn
  - French beans\*
  - Garbanzo beans (chick peas)\*
  - Kidney beans \*
  - Leeks
  - Legumes\*
  - Lentils\*
  - Mung beans
  - Navy beans \*
  - Okra
  - Pinto beans \*
  - Potatoes
  - Pumpkin
  - Split peas\*
  - Sweet potato
  - Turnips
  - White beans \*
  - Winter squash
  - Yams
- \* These are also a protein source.  
\* Not an exhaustive list

*Wendy says: Refined Grains – Forget it or regret it! For optimal fat loss, stay away from refined grains and keep whole grains to a minimum.*

### **Starchy whole grain** (*complex carbohydrates*)

Grains are a food group most people tend to overeat. Part of that is our idea of what a “serving” is. Did you know that the top and bottom of a hamburger bun are actually two servings? Yes, that’s right. Each half counts as one serving! A serving of grains is one-half a cup for beans, rice or lentils, one slice of bread or half of a bun. Try to limit choices to whole grains for healthiest outcomes

Grains are any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, and barley. Grain products include: bread, pasta, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits. We’re used to eating a lot of grain products, so when you’re trying to lose weight, be conscious of them in your diet and try to reduce your overall grain product intake.

Grains are divided into two subgroups, whole grains and refined grains. Whole grain contains the entire grain kernel, the bran, germ and endosperm. Examples include: whole wheat flour; bulgar (cracked wheat); oatmeal (whole oats not instant); whole cornmeal; and brown rice. Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ, it also removes dietary fiber, iron and many B vitamins. Some examples are: de-germed cornmeal; ready to eat cereals, grits, couscous, crackers and all the white stuff like white bread, rice, flour and pasta.

Most refined grains are enriched. That means there is an attempt during processing to add certain B vitamins back to the grain such as thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid. Fiber, however, is not added back. That means enriched grains may have some vitamins, but they have been heavily processed away from a more natural state, and they have more of a mushy consistency (like white bread) that doesn’t help your body digest. Good

digestion and elimination requires the roughage of whole grains, so if you have problems with constipation or other digestive issues, keep your refined grains to a minimum.

I felt grains were worth going into a little bit of detail so you really understand what grains do to your body when you are trying to lose body fat. It's my "big little weapon" to getting that extra body fat off. I promise you, if you give yourself just 10 days of staying away from all the refined stuff while keeping the starchy whole grains down to a minimum and focus more on the non-starchy complex carbs, your body will start to feel better. You will be motivated to continue and you will experience amazing results! I am so excited for you to get started. That's because I know good things are going to come your way.

LISTEN BIG! Besides sugar, these carbs get us in trouble. They make us FAT. Try starchy vegetable carbs instead.

#### *Starchy whole grain carbs*

- Brown rice
  - Brown rice pasta
  - Corn tortillas  
(1 = serving)
  - Sprouted bread  
(1 = serving)
  - Oatmeal
  - Whole grain barley
  - Whole wheat pasta
  - Whole wheat bread,  
crackers, tortillas
- \* Not an exhaustive list

*Wendy says: DO NOT EAT REFINED GRAINS like:  
white pastas, bread, rice, flour tortillas, crackers, grits and ready to eat cereals, etc.*

#### **IV. Fruit**

Fruits are another food group that can be easy to over-do because fruit is just so yummy! We all have our favorites, and it seems harmless to pig out on fruit because fruit is healthy, right? Well, yes — in moderation. That's the key. Just like with the grains, we often eat much larger amounts than a real "serving" and that's how we end up gaining weight.

For fruits, a "serving" means one-half of a cup of berries or cut up fruit or one-half of a medium whole fruit. Yes, you heard me. That means that eating an entire medium-sized apple (not the monster-sized fruit in gift baskets and some supermarkets) is actually two servings, not one! Now you see how fruit can sneak up on you, just when you think you're being virtuous.

Here's a list of fruits to explore, enjoy and eat without guilt, but remember to stay within the recommended serving sizes. The fruits with the asterisk should be limited to one a day because they contain more natural sugar and calories than the others.

Eat at least 2 to 3 servings per day – 1 serving is ½ cup fruit or 1 cup berries.

*Best fruit sources are:*

Low glycemic index (slow-releasing carb) Least likely to store as body fat:

- Blackberries
- Boysenberries
- Gooseberries
- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Elderberries
- Raspberries

Moderate glycemic index (medium-releasing carb):

- Apples
- Grapefruit
- Melons
- Persimmons
- Apricots
- Kiwi Fruit
- Nectarines
- Plums
- Avocados
- Lemon
- Peaches
- Pomegranates
- Cherries
- Limes
- Pear
- Tangerines

High glycemic index (fast-releasing carb) - Eat sparingly, or after your workout:

- Banana
- Mango
- Watermelon
- Grapes
- Pineapple
- \* Not an exhaustive list

## V. Good Fat

Yes, there is such a thing as a “good” fat! Really! Years of yo-yo dieting have taught women that all fats are bad, but the truth is that your body actually needs some fat in order for your body to work properly. Now the key word here is “some.” Your body just needs “some” fat — not a whole big gloppy pile of it!

Way back in the times when people had to hunt for food and often nearly starved, our bodies developed a way to store calories for when food was scarce. People, and animals, store those calories in fat. It’s like nature’s emergency ration, or our backup battery. And because fat was so important for survival in an uncertain world, we’re programmed to like fat. It tastes good for a reason, because our cavemen ancestors survived better if they ate the stored fat of animals and stored their own fat for the next time there wasn’t any food to be found.

For most of us (especially if you’re reading a book on diet and exercise), our problem isn’t too little food, it’s too much food, all the time. So what used to be a survival strategy has turned into a cultural nightmare. Given America’s obesity rates, most Americans could skip a few meals and not really put a dent in those fat stores.

Especially when you’re trying to lose weight, you need to be smart about taking in new fat. A little goes a long way, but you shouldn’t try to cut out fat entirely. It does make food taste better and in moderation, it helps your body function. Just remember, you’re not stocking up blubber for the winter, so take it easy!

In short, good fat helps your cells and digestive system to work properly. It also keeps your skin looking good and reduces inflammation. So choose from my list of “good” fats. You’ll be glad to hear that nuts are a good source of fat, protein and fiber, but the portion is likely to be much smaller than you’re used to eating. You can include a serving of these “good” fats in your diet without guilt. Enjoy!

Eat four servings per day. One serving is two tablespoons of Nuts, Seeds, Flax Meal or 1 teaspoon of oils (No time to measure? It would be the size of your thumb.)

*Best fat sources are:*

- Almonds
  - Flaxseed oil
  - Peanut butter
  - (dry roasted)
  - Macadamia nuts
  - Pistachios
  - Avocado ¼ svgs
  - Olive oil
  - Sesame seeds
  - Cod liver oil
  - Olives
  - Walnuts or walnut oil
- \* Not an exhaustive list

Now that you know which foods are on the list, let’s get back to the Five Steps to Take Back Your Life and OWN your life through nutrition.

It’s not always what you eat that causes weight gain; it can also be how you prepare your food. Especially if you come from certain regional or ethnic backgrounds, you may have grown up with lots of fried food, food covered with plenty of cheese or heavy sauces, or foods dipped in batter. All of those cooking styles pile on the calories along with artery-clogging fat.

“But they taste so good!” Well, only if they’re what you’re used to eating. You’ll be amazed that once you stop eating heavy, greasy, fried, battered and over-sauced food, you no longer crave it. Then one day, you decide to indulge and eat one of your old favorites, and now you find out that eating all that glop makes you sick. Truly! The good thing is that after that, when you think of that food, you won’t be craving it anymore. You’ll remember how awful it made you feel and you will think about something different.

That doesn’t mean you have to give up your favorites forever. Once you get used to eating in a healthier way, you’ll also discover how to makeover your favorite dishes so that they are lighter in calories, less heavy and less “gloppy” so that you have all of the taste and less of the damage. You might even find that you like the new version better!

## **STEP 2 –SOME OF THE HEALTHIEST WAYS TO COOK FOOD INCLUDE:**

Bake — Boil — Grill — Poach — Steam — Stir fry — Roast — Sauté
--

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

When you cook, these are some of the healthier spices to use: pepper, cinnamon, garlic, basil, red pepper, parsley, chili powder, onion powder, ginger, turmeric, oregano, sage, thyme, mustard seed and rosemary. You'll discover great new flavors without adding calories. Remember to use sugar and salt sparingly.

Salt is a bad habit. If you grew up with a mother who put lots of salt in the cooking, your taste buds have been jaded so that they only taste salt, not the food itself. A little bit of salt is good for you, especially iodized salt, because it helps you get some important minerals that keep you healthy. Try sea salt for optimal benefits. Most Americans eat way more salt than they need, which can lead to high blood pressure and heart problems.

Start by removing the salt shaker from the table. Add salt when you're cooking, because it tends to put more flavor in the whole dish. A little salt added when you're cooking can remove the need for a whole lot of salt added at the table. Then gradually experiment with using less salt when you cook until you find a point where it still tastes good but with less salt.

Suddenly, you'll actually begin to taste the food itself. It may seem strange at first, but you really want to taste the food, not just the salt.

You can also experiment with spices other than salt. Look in the spice aisle at your grocery store. You'll find all kinds of spice blends intended for the table, such as Mrs. Dash. They will come in a variety of mixes, including some that are spicy and some that aren't. Once you cut back on salt, the variety of other spices can really make the food taste so good, you'll wonder how you missed out all this time!

**STEP 3 – KEEP PORTION SIZES TO ONE SERVING** (Think palm, fist and thumb)  
A great way to start bringing your weight down is by watching your portion sizes. The fact is if you leave out just this one step, you will not achieve your goals. Eating too much food (whether it's good food or bad food) is simply too much and it will keep you fat. A good way to measure portion sizes without a scale, measuring cup or fancy charts is to apply the fist rule for your veggies. What that means is measure your portion sizes by the size of your fist. Take a look at your hand (right now) with palm side up; make a fist and each time you eat hold your fist next to what's on your plate. Anything in excess should be saved for another meal. If you are having a snack the portion size should be half of your fist. For protein check the palm of your hand for the portion size you should be consuming. As for the necessary good fat required in your diet, all you need is a thumb size amount.

## **STEP 4 – EAT EVERY THREE TO FOUR HOURS**

In order to rev up your metabolism and increase your fat burning, you need to eat fairly often. Have three small meals and two to three snacks a day (a snack between each meal) depending on what time you go to sleep at night. Always carry healthy snacks with you to stay on track and avoid binging on fattening foods that have little or no nutrients in them. Make sure even your snacks are a protein/carb combo.

Give your body at least ten days to adjust to this new healthy way of eating before you feel a change. For example if you are eating every three hours where before you were eating twice a day, at first you may not feel hungry enough to eat every three hours but after ten days it will be like clockwork. You will have hunger pains every three hours. That's a good sign.

Snacks under 100 calories (Don't forget to combine a protein with a veggie or fruit.)

- Blueberries ½ cup – 41
- Fresh peach – 37
- Apple – 81
- ½ Grapefruit – 39
- 1 slice whole grain toast – 85
- 17 fresh grapes – 52
- Cup vegetable juice – 50
- Dill pickle – 15
- Hardboiled egg – 79
- 2 oz water packed tuna – 80
- 8-10 Almonds – 71 cal
- ½ cup fat free refried beans – 80
- 2 Tbs. Hummus on ¼ pita pocket bread – 93
- 7 small fresh shrimp – 65

## **STEP 5 – DRINK PLENTY OF WATER**

Need to lose weight? Water is your best friend. Need to build muscle? Who's your daddy? You guessed it – water! Want to speed up your metabolism? A great place to start is by drinking water! I have to admit, one of the keys to my great abs is getting plenty of water in my system. As far as how much water and when you should drink it? A good rule is:

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

- Before activity – drink about 20 ounces two to three hours before any activity. Add another 10 ounces 10 to 20 minutes before working out.
- During workouts – take 5 to 10 gulps every 15 minutes
- After workouts – Drink approximately 20 ounces within two hours for every pound of weight lost.
- Total daily intake – Drink at least 8 to 12 eight ounce glasses of water. That's 64 to 96 ounces a day. Active people need even more. I strive for 15 glasses (That's 120 ounces or 1 gallon of water) a day since I am so active.

For those of you who have taken sips of water throughout the day like me and find by the end of the day you didn't drink enough because you got so busy, try this. It's worked great for me. I drink two glasses of water as soon as I get out of bed and then two more before each of my other meals. That's 96 ounces. During my workout I get in at least 24 ounces. That's the way I get in my gallon. Or drink two glasses of water every two hours. Work out a method that works for you and your lifestyle. If you want other beverages, drink an unlimited amount of green teas and herbal teas that are caffeine-free (and sugar-free) or drink mineral water.

### **STEP 6 –EAT SLOWLY**

We're often in so much of a hurry or so distracted when we eat that after we're done, we don't even remember what we ate. Think about the last time you ate at your desk, ate in the car while driving, or ate while you read or carried on a conversation. Did you lose track of how much you ate? Did the food disappear and you couldn't really recall chewing?

The problem with eating quickly and without concentrating is that our minds don't get a chance to catch up with our bellies. It takes about 20 minutes after you eat for your stomach to get a signal to your brain that you're full. What happens if you are eating too fast? Your brain doesn't get that signal until you've crammed lots of extra food in your mouth.

The other problem with fast, unfocused eating is that we don't take the time to savor the food. Your mind has as much to do with when you feel full and content as your stomach does. When you eat too fast and without paying attention, your mind doesn't feel satisfied, so it keeps asking for more and more. When you slow down, taste the food and really enjoy what you eat, you'll find that you feel full sooner, and you're happy with less food.

## STEP 7 –PLAN

To stay on track and ensure that you get to eat every three to four hours regardless of how busy you are, planning is necessary. Here is what happens when we don't plan. We rush through breakfast grabbing whatever we see in the refrigerator or stop at a fast food place. We work through snack time and when our tummies tell us it's time for a late lunch we are so hungry we buy from the lunch truck, or fast food joint or settle for the vending machine. By the time we get off work we realize we don't have anything at home to eat or we're too tired to cook so we buy dinner from the first place we see. Then we eat too much simply because we've failed to plan the whole day. Oh, yeah, and then we say, "Forget the workout, because I'm too tired and hungry. Maybe tomorrow." This becomes a never ending cycle. I've been there and done all that!

Here is what really works for me now. It keeps you consistently eating on time, and makes you healthier because you know what you are eating. You will be less stressed, more content and have greater clarity and energy output for work as well as workouts.

Plan your meals (breakfast lunch dinner and snacks too) for the entire week and shop on your day off. Prepare those meals and store them in containers that have at least three sections in them to separate your food types. Now when you wake in the morning you can operate on auto pilot. You can eat or take your healthy breakfast with you. Grab and bag the other meals you need for the day and just whip it out when you need it. When you get home, dinner is just waiting for you to heat it up. Now that's what I'm talking about! It's so easy and stress free this way. What a way to save money too!

*Wendy says: Eating smart doesn't have to be difficult.*

### Here's a recap of the seven simple steps

1. When preparing meals select from three food groups – a protein, non-starchy complex carbohydrate (veggie), and a starchy complex carbohydrate (fruit or veggie). Add some good fat for proper digestion and limit whole grains. Snacks should be limited to a protein and veggie or fruit.
2. Select a healthy cooking method.
3. Use portion control: Know what a serving size looks like – Think palm, fist and thumb.
4. Know your eating frequency. Eat every 3 to 4 hours.
5. Drink eight to 12 glasses of water daily.
6. Eat slowly.
7. Plan your meals.

## THE NO-NOS

You knew there had to be a list of no-nos, didn't you? Well, here it is, and it's pretty short. It's also not as grim as you might expect. I already warned you about deep fried foods. If you go through the drive-through often, eliminating fried foods is going to mean re-thinking your lunch hour. Maybe you start choosing fast food places that offer salads. Maybe you brown bag it (healthier and cheaper.) Fried food and fast food are usually synonymous, so make sure you understand how the food you order is prepared and what goes into it.

Unfortunately, fast food places aren't the only ones that fry foods. Many sit-down restaurants fry food as well, and all fried food isn't necessarily covered in batter. Don't be afraid to ask your waiter how a dish is prepared, and find out whether they have anything on the menu that is prepared in the "healthy" preparations methods listed above.

Most of this list is common sense, if you stop to think about the discussion we've just had about food. You only need a little bit of fat, so adding lots of gloppy extras in sauces and gravy drowns the flavor of the food and adds calories you don't need.

Sugar is another way your body stores fat for the winter. Most Americans have all the fat they need to get to Spring, so avoid desserts. Watch out for "diet" cookies, cakes and pies. It's easy to think you're being good by only eating "diet" cake, but it still has sugar and fat, and it will still nix your diet. If you need a bite of something sweet, cut off one bite and then stop. Share a desert with two or three people when you go out. Put one small bite on your plate and then, before you eat it, wrap up the dessert and walk it over to the fridge so that if you want a second bite you have to go to a lot of work to get it. If you're like me, don't do it at all. If I take a bite I will eat the whole thing and half the house if I can. Wait till the weekend and buy a small portion. Eat it and be done until the next weekend.

Soft drinks are packed with sugar. So is alcohol. Alcohol can also make it hard to lose weight because after a drink or two, you lose your inhibitions. If alcohol can make people dance with lampshades on their heads, it can make them "forget" that they weren't supposed to eat nachos or scarf down all the peanuts at the bar.

Replace regular soft drinks with herbal tea, or even better, with lemon water. When you're out, order a flavored spritzer, seltzer or soda water with lime or lemon instead of alcohol. Or, stretch your wine with soda water or seltzer for a wine cooler. If it's in a rocks glass with a sliver of fruit, people will assume you're having an alcoholic drink. If you must have a drink limit yourself to two drinks for men and one drink for women once a week — be careful of portion sizes! "One" drink is a shot of hard liquor, six ounces

of beer and five ounces of wine. Many bars and restaurants pour generously, so watch out!

We've already talked about refined, "white" flour products. Get rid of them!

Any fat that is solid at room temperature (butter, margarine, lard, Crisco, etc.) is something to eliminate when you're trying to lose weight. You might as well just skip the step of chewing and rub it right around your stomach and onto your thighs, because that's where it's going! Remember, fats are meant to get hibernating animals through the long, hungry winter. You aren't hibernating, so you don't need it! (And neither does your dog.)

Do I have to say it? "Supersized" anything is bad. You may think you're getting a bargain by getting more food for a few more cents, but the only thing that really gets supersized is you. Regular restaurant portions are usually two or three times (or more) the size of healthy portions, so supersized portions are even worse! Be careful when you go out: The movies always offer supersized popcorn for a quarter or dollar more than what you originally ordered, and drive-throughs offer you cheap upgrades.

Corn syrup and fructose are just fancy names for sugar. So despite the TV commercials that challenge someone to explain why corn syrup is "bad" (paid for by the corn growers), the real reason is that it's all sugar. You don't need more sugar. Get into the habit of reading the labels on your food before you eat it (or buy it). They have to list the ingredients in the order of how much of that ingredient is in the food. If you look at a bottle of fruit juice and the first ingredient listed is actually juice, that's a good sign. Often, the first ingredient listed is corn syrup or fructose, which is sugar in disguise. You don't need more sugar, so avoid it by any other name.

## WENDY'S GUIDE TO FOOD SANITY

Here's your guide on how to shop, eat out and eliminate foods that make you fat.

*When shopping for groceries keep a few basic rules in mind.*

- Try to buy fresh foods first, otherwise choose frozen or use canned foods as your last option.
- Avoid processed foods and high sodium (salt) laden foods whenever possible.
- Read the labels on food products and avoid fructose. Even some wheat breads have high fructose in them.
- Don't buy sugary foods like cereals with sugar on them
- Don't be suckered in by all the fancy sugary drinking beverages you see while shopping. Try organic non-caffeinated herbal teas instead.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

*When eating out, here are some helpful hints to keep you healthy and on your program.*

- Don't freak out because you were invited out to dinner or you are meeting friends for lunch. This is where many people get off track. Once you understand a few principles, you can go anywhere without fear. It just takes a little practice.
- Don't be afraid to ask the waitress for a different combination of the food on the menu. For example, some foods come with French fries. Ask for a veggie or fruit with it instead. If they won't replace it for what you've asked for then buy it as a side dish. But please don't feel forced to get those fries simply because it comes with the meal.
- Speak up and ask how your choice of food is cooked. Some places still use saturated fats. I ask that my food be cooked with olive oil all the time.
- Always get your salad dressing on the side and stay away from the creamy stuff.
- Don't be afraid to use your creativity when ordering. For example, if the menu says glazed salmon, have them hold the glaze. It's loaded with calories.
- When ordering your food, also ask for a take-out box. When your food is served, immediately split it in half and box it to go. Most restaurants give you two to four servings of food.

*Eliminate these foods to improve health and slim your waist fast*

*Wendy says: If you want to reduce belly fat, cut out the processed foods!*

### **Summary of foods to avoid**

1. Deep fried foods – chicken, fish, French fries etc
2. Added fats – gravies, sauces, oils, glazes and other toppings
3. High fat/sugar foods – cakes, pies, croissants etc.
4. Soft drinks – Sodas etc
5. White flour products – breads, cereals, cakes etc.
6. Saturated fats – you can identify these because they turn solid at room temperature
7. Double, jumbo or super sized anything!
8. Alcohol – this adds calories too!
9. Highly salty and/or processed foods

Now that you have all the right information, it's time to put it together. Here are some sample menus that I have actually used that were chosen from the lists above.

You can customize your own menu by substituting some of the foods to ones you like better. Just make sure of two things. Follow all the steps I have listed here and make sure that when you substitute one food for another they must come from the same category. For example, if you don't like turkey, you must replace it with another protein like chicken which are both in Category I.

— SAMPLE MEAL MENU PLAN—

*Breakfast*

Egg white omelet: 5 whites made w/1/2 cup of spinach (or chopped veggies of choice)  
+ 1 cup blueberries + 1 slice spouted bread

*Snack*

6 celery stalks, 2 tbsp reduced fat peanut butter

*Lunch*

4 oz grilled Mahi Mahi or white fish of choice + 1 cup steamed broccoli/cauliflower mix + 1 tbsp olive oil + ½ cup baked yam

*Snack*

11 whole, dry roasted or raw almonds, medium apple

*Dinner*

2 oz ground turkey, ¼ cup beans, 1 oz low fat cheese, 2 tsp picante sauce, 2 cups salad greens

*Snack*

14 baby carrots, ¼ cup hummus

Below is a different sample menu showing my actual meal times. This really works for me! I know exactly what times I eat each day and I don't stress over trying to remember when I last ate. Aside from a few life circumstances that throw me a little off schedule, I'm never hungry, I keep my own food nearby and I don't worry about falling victim to fast foods. I love it! You have to find the times that work for you! It's a little tough at first to find your groove, but believe me it gets easier as you go along and you'll be motivated by your results!

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

### *Meal 1 – Breakfast:*

6:00 AM – ¾ cup oatmeal w/2 tbsp flaxseed, 1 scoop of Whey Protein & ¼ cup fresh peaches

### *Meal 2 – Snack*

9:00 AM – ½ cup sliced berries, & ½ cup light plain yogurt

### *Meal - Lunch*

12:00 PM –3-4 oz of Baked Chicken, 1 cup cabbage, 1 cup mixed salad, ½ - 1 cup yam, 1-2 tsp olive oil, Herbal (non-caffeinated) tea

### *Meal 4 – Snack*

3:00 PM - ½ cup apple & ¼ cup dry roasted almonds

### *Meal 5 – Dinner*

6:00 PM - 4 oz Broiled Salmon, 1 cup steamed asparagus, ½ cup black beans, Iced tea

### *Meal 6 – Snack*

9:00 PM –1 cup cooked egg whites with ½ cup fresh organic spinach

In order to prescribe a general menu plan, it's critical to know the person and their lifestyle and energy needs. Everyone's energy needs are different. It depends on gender, weight height activity etc. It also depends on energy expenditure, body fat composition, BMR metabolism. Sedentary people need a certain micronutrient profile, while very active people need something different, and a diabetic person has other needs. There are several methods in which to use to calculate each persons needs. Some are more complex than others. For more information go to [wendyida.com](http://wendyida.com).

## **A FEW FOOD EXTRAS**

Remember the part about looking good naked? I've told you that I'm a sensuous woman, and I love eating and working out in ways that make me feel sexy. Yes, food can be sexy, and some foods can make you feel sexy, too! Did you know that oatmeal is one of those foods? Oh yeah! No wonder I love morning workouts! Believe it or not studies show that oats increase testosterone levels in your blood. These other foods also are

aphrodisiacs and really do have chemicals in them that put your body in the mood. So include these foods in your diet, and just get carried away!

**Aphrodisiacs that make women feel sexy and excited about intimacy**

1. Papaya (a soy estrogen compound)
2. Pumpkin – has zinc which help stimulate the libido
3. Mints
4. Oysters (good for vascular system & high in zinc)
5. Honey – increases testosterone
6. Ginger
7. Avocado
8. Pine nuts

**Other sexy foods to choose:**

1. Bananas
2. Chile peppers – stimulates endorphins
3. Strawberries
4. Figs
5. Walnuts
6. Garlic
7. Arugula
8. Watermelon – Improves circulation, low cal, lycopene

Flaxseed is a wonder food for women over age 40. Flaxseed helps decrease menopausal symptoms, enhances the immune system and helps to relieve inflammation in the body. This tiny miracle seed also adds a healthy glow to your skin and hair and speeds up your metabolism. Many experts recommend it for breast cancer prevention. Flaxseed has at least 25 cancer-preventative properties in it. For additional information visit my website: [www.wendyida.com](http://www.wendyida.com)

SECTION TWO — TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE  
FROM CIRCUMSTANCES



## CHAPTER SIX: HOW LIFE GETS IN THE WAY OF A GOOD WORKOUT



By now, I've heard every excuse in the world for not working out. (Well, maybe not "my cat ate my workout clothes," but close.) The truth is, catastrophes large and small derail our plans and interfere with our schedules. Whether it's a project due date, a child with the flu, a sprained ankle or a dead battery, sometimes, life stops us from having perfect attendance at the gym.

In this chapter, and the remaining chapters in the book, I'm not talking about those one-day or one-week derailments. It's not always easy to get back on track after a holiday, vacation or minor illness (or a crunch period at home or work), but most people who really want to see results can haul themselves back to the gym as soon as the insanity passes.

What I'm talking about in this chapter (and the chapters that follow) are the big events that knock us way off schedule: relationship changes, career transitions and health changes. While these circumstances can play out in a number of ways, they have a few things in common.

First, they last for more than a few days or a few weeks. Big life changes can knock you for a loop for months, even years. It takes time to find yourself and establish a new "normal."

Second, these kinds of life changes cause tremendous stress on your emotions and your body. They throw your whole calendar out of whack and impact the way you sleep and eat. In some cases, they strike at the heart of your support system because they also affect family and friends.

Finally, major life events change who you are and what you want. The goals you had before the event may no longer make sense to the person you've become. That's true for all areas of your life, including your workout.

Big life changes often derail even the most motivated women from making good choices for Outlook, Workout and Nutrition. Stress, family obligations, changing personal circumstances, life stage transitions and health issues combined with packed schedules do sideline most women at one time or another. Our culture has only just

begun to talk about how fitness can positively impact aging and menopause. Most of us just accept problems as an unavoidable side effect of getting older and going through “The Change” as women used to call it. Don’t believe it! You can OWN your outlook, workout and nutrition at any age, and you can Take Back Your Life at any point. It starts with the determination to make a change.

I know that life can throw a curveball (life has pitched me a few of those over the years, let me tell you,) but I also know that it’s much harder to get back into a fitness and healthy diet routine once it’s been abandoned than it is to make modifications and stick with it.

### **UNLOADING YOUR PERSONAL BAGGAGE**

In the next few chapters, I’ll talk about how some of the most common major life changes affect women’s Outlook and day-to-day motivation, as well as how stress affects Nutrition. I’ll tell you how different kinds of stress affect your body, your metabolism and your state of mind. Then, I’ll share detailed, realistic advice on how to modify eating and exercise to avoid losing ground while working through some of life’s toughest challenges. I’ll show you how to adapt the Take Back Your Life program to these stressful situations. I’ll also help you do the groundwork for addressing hidden emotion that is often looking for an excuse to ruin the attempt to make permanent, positive changes.

First, take a quiz to see how many of the following life changes have affected you personally in the last year:

1. You got divorced or separated, or broke up with a long-time life partner
2. You had a child (especially your youngest or only child) leave home
3. Someone very close to you died
4. You have become the primary caregiver for a sick partner, parent or child
5. You lost your job (or your partner did)
6. You retired (or your partner did)
7. You relocated due to work or retirement
8. You received a promotion or started a brand new career or business
9. You had a serious illness or were diagnosed with a chronic health condition
10. You started full-blown menopause

Even experiencing one of the life changes on that list can play havoc with your mental perspective, your metabolism and your appetite, especially if you eat to soothe

stress or negative emotions.

The good news is that in times of greatest stress, it can be especially powerful to Take Back Your Life through diet, exercise and making a conscious effort to manage your frame of mind. When it seems as if the whole world is coming unglued, you still have total control of three things: Outlook, Workout and Nutrition. You can OWN your life even when everything is in chaos because only you control how you move (Workout), what you put in your mouth (Nutrition) and how you choose to think about what is going on around you (Outlook).

When life gets tough, it's time to rely on the Delta Factor and the Omega Attitude. Let's take a look at how both of these concepts can help you turn tragedy (or at least, major stress) into triumph.

*Wendy says: Anybody can shine and show her best self when times are good, but the true test of who you are and what your character reveals is in how you can shine when times get tough!*

## **THE DELTA FACTOR AND LIFE CHANGE**

The five parts of the Delta Factor (Fuel, Activity, Strength, Flexibility and Stress Reduction) are more important than ever when you're fielding life's curveballs. I'll get more detailed in Chapters Seven through Nine, but now, let's take a look at some of the ways the Delta Factor cuts across all big life changes to help you Take Back Your Life.

### *Fuel*

When you're under stress, it's truer than ever that you are what you eat. Many women (maybe even most women) have emotional ties between food and comfort. Usually, we learned these from our mamas, who learned them from their mamas — you get the picture. If your mother soothed you with food, (or you saw her soothe herself with food) when there was a bad day, then you know what I mean. “Poor dear, have a cookie” have been the words that have put more women on the road to diet perdition than any others. The truth is, eating lots of sugars and bad carbohydrates like candy, white pastas or white rice, white flour, baked goods and soda when you're stressed can make you less able to deal with stress productively because they tend to make you feel sluggish and the comfort they provide is short-lasting. A healthy diet of fruits, vegetables, lean meats, beans, legumes, nuts and whole grains, will give you the energy you need to tackle the challenge.

### *Activity*

Did you know that exercise stimulates the brain's natural "feel good" drugs? It's true. When you exercise, your brain generates a natural version of some of the same chemicals found in prescription anti-anxiety drugs. (That's why people talk about getting "runners' high" from a good workout.) Working out lifts your mental fog and makes you feel capable and confident. The "high" you get from the body's good brain chemicals lasts for hours, and can also help you avoid binge eating. Even better, you don't need a prescription and it's not a bad thing for great workouts to be habit-forming.

### *Strength*

Stress plays havoc with your body. It compromises your immune system, making it more likely that you'll catch colds and viruses. It causes aches and pains all over your body. Stress tightens your muscles, making it easier to pull a muscle or throw out your back just doing your normal routine. That's why strength training is so important when life turns upside down. First of all, the routine of going to the gym and going through your weights workout is an anchor when everything else in your life is in flux. Secondly, every time you graduate to a new weight or increase your reps, it's a win, and that helps you think about winning in the big picture. And third, keeping up with strength training when you're stressed makes it more likely you'll avoid injury because your muscles are staying toned and strong.

### *Flexibility*

Everything I've just said about strength training is also true for flexibility, but flexibility has some additional benefits. Stretching encourages you to breathe deeply, taking air all the way into your diaphragm. Most Americans are too busy to breathe right. They take shallow breaths from their chests, and this encourages stressed-out feelings. But stretching helps you breathe slowly and deeply, which immediately releases stress and muscle tension. Stretching also loosens and lengthens cramped, tight muscles and helps get blood flowing to all parts of your body, including your brain. That means you'll think more clearly. Flexibility helps to reduce the chance of injury by keeping muscles and tendons limber. But did you also know that exercises like Yoga also help to massage your body's organs and stimulate the glands that secrete the chemicals and hormones you need to deal effectively with stress? Best of all, you can do stretches and flexibility exercises anywhere: at work, on the road, even in a doctor's waiting room!

### *Stress Reduction*

Two things are going on in your life right now. One of them is the major life event that has turned your world upside down. The other is the stress that is created by those changes. You can't change the life event, but you can make choices that radically reduce your level of stress. Stress is a killer. It's been linked to heart disease, cancer, arthritis, immune system problems, chronic pain, and other health conditions. You can learn to manage your stress and minimize the harm that you experience due to the life event. Some of my favorite ways to reduce stress include meditating, doing deep breathing exercises, stretching, working out hard, playing with my dog Princess, finding sexual gratification, and staying connected with a supportive group of friends and family. Stress is 99 percent mental, because it is driven by how your mind perceives the situation and whether or not you see opportunities for a positive future. So managing your mental state is an essential part of reducing your stress.

I've found that having an "attitude of gratitude" helps reduce stress even in the worst situations. That's not a Pollyanna perspective that bad is really good. But it is true that endings lead to new beginnings. It can be hard to find gratitude when you're in pain or feeling afraid. But no matter what is going on, I know you can find things to be grateful for. Sunsets. Puppies. A hot cup of tea. A card in the mail. The time you had to enjoy the situation that has now ended. Now more than ever, it's important to look for even small things and focus on feeling grateful. You'll be amazed how much practicing gratitude on a mindful, daily basis changes your whole outlook and raises your energy.

### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: LEAVING CALIFORNIA

I made a major life change that rocked my world when I re-located to California in 1984. No way could I think about exercising and taking care of myself. I was just trying to survive. I had no job and no car – my children and I just had the clothes on our backs. My sister gave me and my children a place to stay while I tried to enroll them in school and rebuild our lives.

Those were tough times and I had a lot of stress going on that made me sick. I had no one to show me how to manage my health through times like that. I had no point of reference, either. However, there are times in life when you must first protect and preserve before building and moving forward. Had I known then what I know now, I would have avoided a lot of stress and recovered more quickly. My outlook now? I have lived and learned through my experiences and am proud to be able to lead, guide and provide a healthy reference for others through critical times.

## **MAKING THE OMEGA ATTITUDE WORK FOR YOU**

The three parts of the Omega Attitude come into play when the chips are down. They are your secret weapons to OWN your life.

### *Confidence*

Major life changes do a real number on our self-confidence. Often, they sweep away something that has been part of how we define ourselves, like a job, a marriage, a relationship (wife, mother, employee). Life changes often also take us out of a situation where we may have gotten compliments on something we were good at doing or where we felt good about the visible outcomes. Having an Omega Attitude means finding the source of confidence inside yourself. When your confidence comes from within, life changes can knock you off stride, but they can't take away your mojo.

### *Creativity*

During a big life change, it's essential to approach problems creatively. Your old "normal" had established routines that made you feel secure and efficient. As your life changes, your routines will have to change, too. Instead of focusing on what's going away, use a sense of wonder and creativity to re-think your routines, make them more effective, and design them to support your new future. Creativity is also part of re-framing, which is the mental exercise of looking at something in your life and seeing new possibilities. Instead of focusing on the loss of a job's security and status, reframe the change to focus on your new ability to choose a new direction, gain new skills and pursue new goals. Finally, Creativity helps you find ways to stay on track with your exercise and diet choices even when your schedule becomes hectic.

### *Consistency*

One of the reasons big life changes (positive or negative) are so stressful is that they change our day-to-day routines. People are really creatures of habit! Whether those habits are good or bad, we keep them because doing the same thing in the same way makes us feel secure. Even if life's changes have upended some of the habits and routines in your life, you can Take Back Your Life in little ways by establishing consistency in the areas you do control. For example, you can create a new, consistent habit of getting up half an hour early to take a walk, jump on the treadmill, do Yoga or meditate. You can create an anchor in the storm by making your gym time a "do not touch" zone that

doesn't get preempted for anyone or anything. Consistency not only helps you achieve your diet and exercise goals, but it also gives you back a feeling of control and stability.

Use the Omega Attitude to OWN your life during this time of change!

## **OWNING YOUR STRESS**

Another piece of good news is that your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition can make important, basic biological changes that help you weather the storm. In the chapters that follow, I'll take you through some of the most frequent life changes, with detailed suggestions on how to adjust your 90 Day Basic Plan for Outlook, Workout and Nutrition to survive and thrive.

Here are the body basics to keep in mind as you Take Back Your Life through this season of change:

### *Metabolism*

Outlook, Workout and Nutrition all affect how efficiently your body burns calories and changes food into energy. You can make changes through your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition to help your body feel more energetic, lose weight (or avoid gaining weight), digest your food efficiently (to avoid gas, heartburn and acid reflux), and sleep better. A healthy metabolism is one of your best allies in reducing stress and productively managing your life changes.

### *Motivation*

When life turns into a rollercoaster, it can be difficult to keep your eye on any long-term goals. But without goals, we drift from day to day, and that means we usually don't end up in a place we want to go. If you really don't feel like you can see more than a day at a time, then create motivational rewards for yourself in whatever timeframe you can work with. For example, don't think about losing 20 pounds in six months. Think about eating right today, just today. Reward yourself with a non-food "atta-boy" at the end of the day. Or, tell yourself that you'll send out five job search emails, and then give yourself a fifteen minute break to relax with a cup of tea. Little wins add up to be big successes. Even if time or money is tight, you can find mini-goals and mini-rewards to keep yourself moving. During really crazy times, just promising yourself an uninterrupted half hour to lose yourself in your favorite book can be a great reward that doesn't cost a thing!

### *Memory*

A growing number of health professionals are beginning to believe that we “remember” with our whole bodies, not just our minds. I’ve heard doctors say that patients’ bodies “remember” an accident or trauma years after the fact by not releasing tension or holding on to pain. We may discover that many chronic illnesses have as much root in the body’s memory of stress or trauma as they do in other causes. If your body is holding onto bad “memories” with stiffness, generalized pain, grinding fatigue or poor alignment, getting professional help from a doctor or chiropractor can truly give you a new lease on life. Tell your personal trainer when you run into a problem that might be the result of fear of re-injury, an old injury that hasn’t healed, or a trauma that involved a part of your body. Even if there’s nothing that is visible to the eye, your trainer will understand how a healthy body moves, so he or she can help you adapt your routine to reduce pain and can plan your workout to restore movement, comfort and flexibility.

### **AFFIRMATIONS FOR TIMES OF CHAOS**

- I control what I eat. I choose what I put in my mouth. I will make healthy choices to build a healthy new life.
- No matter what happens in my life, I control my perceptions. I will reframe what is happening to me now to see the possibilities that are opening for me to live a healthy, happy and empowered life.
- No one controls my body but me. I choose to work off my emotions in a healthy way by exercising regularly. I will make time for exercise, and exercise will save my sanity.
- This, too, shall pass. And when it does, I want to be ready to claim a brand new future.

### **SHOO THE CHICKENS AWAY FOR GOOD!**

To the extent that the habits (good or bad), stresses and choices from the first half of our lives catch up to us in midlife, some of the health side-effects could be seen as “having your chickens come home to roost.”

Well I say, shoo those chickens away for good! Life is a learning experience. We all make some bad choices along the way. We do some things that have consequences we couldn’t foresee. We muddle through and worry about the consequences later. View your younger self with compassion and realize that you did the best you could at the

time, even if that created outcomes that you're now trying to un-do. It happens to everyone. Drop the "woulda, coulda, shoulda" and start shooing off those darned chickens by OWNING your health. That's the whole point of the Take Back Your Life system.

You can't change your past, but you CAN change your present, which WILL change your future. Take Back Your Life now and send the chickens to roost somewhere else.



## CHAPTER SEVEN — RELATIONSHIP CHANGES



I speak from experience when I say that relationship changes are difficult and can have an extreme impact on everyday life. Sometimes it's downright devastating. It can disrupt the comfort of life as you knew it and flip it upside down and inside out.

Our relationships are the foundation of our lives. So it should come as no surprise that as our relationships change in midlife, it can make our foundation feel shaky. Some changes are predictable: for example, children leaving home for college. Others, such as divorce, the death of a parent or spouse, or an unexpected illness that requires caregiving support, can happen without warning.

Although I don't talk about it much, I will never forget the pain, loss and depression I suffered from divorce and from the deaths of my mother and sister. Sister Syl's death felt like the breaking point. Thoughts of giving up ran through my mind. I began to question life's purpose. I felt lost and out of control.

The good news is that there is always light at the end of the tunnel. You can create a different, but brighter, future if you follow some rules. Keep in mind that learning and growing increases the quality of our lives. Nobody said it would be easy, but understand that "making it" means pushing past that comfort zone, believing you can do it and by faith knowing that you will claim a new and enriched life when all is said and done. Don't let age be an excuse to stop you either. Too often people say, "I'm tired" or "I'm too old." Reluctance to adapt to change makes us old. Saying, "I'm tired, I'm old and I don't want to change" means you are making the choice to surrender to old age and become an old fogey!

There's one thing that I learned later in life that had I known sooner, I would have avoided a lot of undue stress in my life. Here it is: change is a consistent and inevitable factor. The sooner we learn to accept and adjust to it, the faster we will grow and increase our quality of life. Think about it. Change is what makes our lives better. For example, because of the changes and improvements in health care, we are living longer.

Changes that shake the core of your world are likely to have an impact on your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition. So whether the change is mostly happy (as with children leaving the nest) or heart-wrenching (as in death, divorce or illness,) you

can still OWN your fitness and Take Back Your Life from circumstances for your own health and sanity.

Stressful times are when the Delta Factor elements really come into play. You'll need healthy Fuel to give you stamina and keep you from getting sick or worn down. And while you may think that the circumstances are making you run in circles, taking the time for planned fitness Activity is a great way to relieve stress. Fitting in a workout also gives you a feeling of control when the rest of the world has gone crazy. You'll also want to build physical and mental Strength, which is where Workout intersects with Outlook. Major changes will test your Flexibility in dealing with altered circumstances, but physical flexibility is also important to avoid pulling a muscle or throwing out your back when you can least afford downtime. And do I even need to say that Stress Reduction, the last of the Delta Factors, is a must-have when you feel like your whole world is coming apart?

The Omega Attitude is your key to surviving relationship changes. You'll need to reinforce your Confidence to see opportunities and create a brand new life for yourself, a life that is filled with good things regardless of whether or not the change that got you to this point was painful. Eating right, working out, taking responsibility for your health and attitude (in other words, OWNING your future) are building blocks of Confidence. You'll need Creativity to problem-solve during this rocky period, and to adapt your Workout and Outlook to your new circumstances. And amid all the chaos, Consistency will be essential because although everything around you is changing, you'll need a few anchors to keep you steady. When you OWN your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition and you make Consistency a priority, you'll feel more Confident about your ability to handle change, and your Creativity will blossom.

In this chapter, I look at the biggest relationship changes most women encounter in midlife: Divorce, Empty Nest Syndrome, Grief, Caregiving and Midlife Sex. In each section, I'll touch how the changes change you, and give you tips on how to adjust your Take Back Your Life Outlook, Workout and Nutrition in order to help you navigate your changing world. I've lived through all of these changes myself, and I've helped many of my clients survive and thrive even when they thought life could never be the same again. Here's something to keep in mind: Life won't be the same — but it can be even better.

## **DIVORCE**

Divorce is a biggie. In the U.S., 60 percent of marriages end in divorce. This is one case where knowing you're part of the majority doesn't make you feel better. Whether it's a surprise or not, regardless of who initiated it or whether or not it's ultimately for the best, divorce is traumatic. Even if both partners are amicable, there's still the fact that hopes and dreams didn't work out the way you'd planned. It's easy to retreat into old habits to find comfort, but when those habits include too much food, too much alcohol, antidepressants that cause weight gain and slacking off on your workout, you can make an upsetting situation worse than it needs to be.

Divorce changes you — in good ways and in not so good ways, if you're not careful. You'll have less free time, because you will have to deal with lawyers and the nitty-gritty of splitting up the household. No matter who keeps the house, each of you will now be doing all the chores, shopping, yard work, and maintenance around where you each live. You'll have a new routine, and you may be moving to an apartment, getting a new job, or even moving to a new city.

Divorce is a peak stressor. Down the road, you may come to believe that it's all been for the best, but that's going to be difficult to understand right now. If you have children, they're going to need extra support from you, leaving fewer emotional resources you can use to comfort yourself. Most women who divorce experience a drop in income, at least for a while. Having less spending money could lead you to eat more junk food, cut down on healthy (but more expensive) fruits and vegetables, maybe even drop your health club membership. Stress and depression unquestionably affect your Outlook, and you may find yourself feeling pretty hopeless.

Now's the time to focus on your Delta Factor and make it work for you. You can Take Back Your Life from divorce and make your future bright. But first, you'll need to OWN what's going on around you.

### *Outlook*

Don't try to go it alone. Find a counselor and a support group for yourself and your kids. Don't assume it will be too expensive. Yes, there are private counselors, and if your income permits, you may want to ask newly-divorced friends for a referral. But there are plenty of free programs or counselors who require only a token or nominal payment. Look for these through your house of worship and through community agencies. Put your pride aside and ask for the help you need.

While you have an understandable right to privacy, don't push family and friends away during this time. But make sure that you surround yourself with positive people. Steer clear of friends who are still bitter about their own divorces. You don't need a pity party. Find women who have emerged from divorce and gone on to bigger, better and more fulfilling things. They're all around you, and they remember how they felt when they were where you are. Ask for help.

Meditation is free, and it's a tried-and-true stress reducer. Take 15 quiet minutes for yourself every morning and then again before you go to bed. Clear your mind of all your worries and to-do lists. Find things to be grateful for, even if they're small, and feel that gratitude. Find a positive phrase, (like "I am strong enough, smart enough and brave enough to get through this,") and repeat it to yourself. Breathe. Take deep belly breaths and focus on feeling the air fill your body and rush back out. Begin to imagine the future you want for yourself, and write down five to ten different statements that affirm the reality of that future. For example, "I will find love again when the time is right" or "I can take care of myself financially." Read over these statements throughout the day, and repeat them to yourself during your morning and evening meditation. You can also look for free (or very inexpensive) community classes to help you stay flexible and reduce stress.

### *Workout*

Divorce often brings with it feelings of low self worth. You feel old, fat, tired and unwanted. It's not all in your imagination. Without a doubt, stress ages you. You can bring everything back into focus, however, with a therapeutic circuit workout. It will boost your spirits, keep your emotions under control and help you sleep better. You will look better and your confidence will soar. Don't worry, because you don't have to spend a dime. Build your strength and stamina through cardio kick boxing classes on TV fitness channels or at your gym to air out your hidden aggressions. Then follow some of my strength training circuit moves and repeat your own personal affirmations during each timed move or rep. You need the strength and power it provides to Take Back Your Life. Remember that strength training is the number one way to reduce aging.

Try this seven minute circuit workout in the meantime. Do each move with no rest until you're done: March/jog in place for two minutes, then for 30 to 45 seconds, (or as long as you can,) do lateral hop touches, sit squats w/shoulder press, push-ups, jumping jacks and basic crunches. Work your way up to three to four sets.

### *Nutrition*

Amid all the chaos in your life right now, it's important to remember some basics. Don't skip breakfast and be sure to eat your first meal within an hour after waking for optimum benefits. Breakfast will give you the energy to get through it all and will help you avoid binging on junk foods. Include a multi-vitamin in your regimen. Bodies under high stress absorb abnormal amounts of nutrients and can be depleted rapidly. Supplements often recommended for stress relief are Vitamins C, B complex, calcium, potassium, zinc, and magnesium. I prefer to get these supplements naturally by eating foods that highly contain these nutrients like leafy green and sea vegetables, whole grains, wheat germ, nuts, seeds, and fruits. Include vitamin D which among other things improves your immune system. Add in calcium to help you lift weights, build strong bones, avoid osteoporosis and improve teeth. Yes we have to take care of our teeth too. After age thirty, many people begin to notice that their teeth have yellowed and gone crooked or gone missing. Take good care of your teeth!

For instant stress relief, avoid coffee, alcohol and carbonated beverages. Replace coffee with herbal non-caffeinated teas. According to the American Heart Association you are 25% less likely to die of heart disease if you drink tea every day. The flavanoids in tea reduce the chances of blood clots by thinning the blood. Some of the best choices are green tea, rooibos and tulsi tea. Add healthy, soothing and low-cost meals to your menu by making soups, smoothies and casseroles made with whole foods.

*Wendy says: "When life gets you down, get down on your workout mat or get up on the treadmill to get moving and clear the junk out of your head!"*

### **EMPTY NEST**

There were moments (come on, 'fess up) as you were changing diapers, driving car-pools, running around looking for soccer cleats or feeding a screaming baby, when you thought about how peaceful it would be when your children grew up and flew the coop.

Now that the youngest is finally leaving, you're ready to take it all back. Whether or not you've been employed while you raised your family, your new freedom stretches out in front of you with a calendar of unplanned free time. All the hours that used to fill automatically with child-related appointments are now yours once more. Yikes!

Or, you may find that you've unconsciously already filled in that time with volunteer commitments, longer work hours, or social events, anything to keep from noticing

that the ebb and flow of life has suddenly gotten a bit slower and quieter.

I vividly remember the day my second child was leaving home. He left the house that day and I stood in the middle of my family room feeling empty, like the wind was knocked out of me. For a moment I reminisced of the busy Pop Warner football days, then suddenly realized my babies were grown and didn't need me anymore. I cried. I had no plan and no life without my children. My thoughts were, "Is this how it ends?"

Then I got it together and followed my passion.

The great news is that with the kids finally gone, there's more time for you to pay attention to you. You can use this new time to make exercise a priority and learn to prepare healthy meals. Don't be afraid of the stillness. It's a natural phase in life. Avoid filling your days with errands and extras just to stay busy. Use the time to your best advantage. Think about going to your high school reunion. You may find yourself rekindling lost relationships.

### *Outlook*

Make the most of the fact that you no longer are constrained by the school schedule or by making breakfast for a hungry crew. Take 15 minutes for yourself first thing in the morning to breathe, stretch, and meditate. Focus on your intentions for the day, and consciously name two or three things for which you can appreciate. Write down your goals or make a vision board, and spend a few moments re-reading your list or studying your board. Get the help of other empty nester friends to help you team up to succeed, whether it's creating a mastermind group for your business, a diet support group or a few walking buddies who keep you on track with your exercise.

### *Workout*

It's time to re-invent yourself. What's your passion? Get involved and reinvest in yourself. Maybe you'll even decide to do a complete makeover. Start with re-visiting an activity you once loved or learn to do something you've always admired. Just make sure it's an activity that gets you up and moving and is fun. Follow your heart.

Pay extra attention to muscle building, increasing bone density and improving your form. Need I remind you that strength training is the number one way to reduce aging? Understand that lifting weights at least two times a week for 30 minutes a day will help you gain up to four pounds of (much needed) muscle in less than eight weeks. It will also grow your confidence and assert your attitude. To accelerate your

muscle development, use a full range of motion and focus on each rep by squeezing with each contraction,

Start with my basic recommendations in Chapter 5 and work up to my more advanced levels. For more options, join a gym. You'll meet some new people who share your passion for fitness. Make the gym a regular part of your new life. After one look at the new you, your kids may even think about coming back to learn your secrets. Mine certainly did!

### *Nutrition*

Take time to try out new and healthy recipes and get creative with cooking. Think quality, not quantity. Look into buying meats that are free range and focus less on processed foods and more on fresh produce. Try herbs and spices for flavor instead of salt and watch how your taste buds change and come alive to other flavors. Spices like cumin and turmeric help to decrease inflammation in the body. Cinnamon is good for the liver and will help to metabolize fat. When shopping or dining out, read labels of prepared foods so you know exactly what you're eating. Avoid buffets, since they tend to encourage you to overeat and to eat the wrong things.

Plan your meals and include a variety of cooked and raw foods of all colors — that means both veggies and protein sources. Learn to listen to your body's needs. It's all a part of your makeover from the inside out.

It's empowering to understand how to make smart food choices and it's comforting to feel the nourishing affects in the new you.

Now's the time to re-think your recipes. If you were used to cooking for a houseful of hungry teenagers, look for ways to downsize your recipes and portions for one or two people. Clear out the snack food that your teens preferred, and stock up on healthier alternatives. Any of the foods from my list in Chapter Five will work. What you eat is a direct result of how you feel and what's going on with your hormones.

For example, if your hormones are out of control your mood can feel the same way and the collagen in your skin can dwindle to a very low level, causing wrinkles. Dehydration can have the same results. Make shopping, preparing and eating food into a festival of the senses. Get to know the people who grow your food and ask them for recommendations and recipes. Experiment with "adult" flavors your kids wouldn't eat. Savor your senses and don't bolt down your food the way you did when you had to pick the kids up from practice. Slow down and enjoy the taste of healthy food.

## GRIEF

Midlife offers some wonderful new adventures, but it's also the time when most people experience loss. When we hit midlife, it means our parents are moving into their elder years. Losing one or both parents, in-laws, older siblings, cousins and extended family begins to happen more frequently past age 50. It's true we need time to grieve. Go ahead and give yourself that time: it's healthy. But don't get caught up with grieving to the point that you can't think clearly and take care of business. Shift gears and re-create yourself and your future. You can navigate grief without giving up on your Workout and Nutrition goals, and despite the sadness, you can manage your Outlook to OWN your response to what's happening to you now and Take Back Your Life, even during times of loss.

### *Outlook*

As painful as your loss is, you must remember that you are still alive. When you OWN your future, you take control and you no longer feel like a victim of fate. Use your meditation time to gently adjust your Outlook and begin to think about life "after." Even during grief, it's important to focus on gratitude: thankfulness for the years you had with the person who died, for the good times, for the lessons learned. Think about how their best qualities remain alive in you. Try to find one or two good or beautiful things in each day that break through the fog of grief. A beautiful flower. Children's laughter. A loving pet. Create a list of affirmations to remind you of your worth and to create a mental picture of a better future.

The point is to gently lead yourself to reconnect with the vibrant world around you, a world that has seen hundreds of generations pass and will welcome billions of new lives. You are part of that vibrant, living world. If nothing else, focus on breathing and with each breath, feel the life in your body. Someday, perhaps sooner than you think, the fog of grief will lift, and you will re-enter the world and your life. Until then, use your meditation time to feel the intensity of your loss without using food, activity or other drugs to run away from the pain.

### *Workout*

Working out releases endorphins, the body's natural "feel-good" chemicals. While anti-depressants can provide an important short-term benefits, they also can cause weight gain and dependency. Use your exercise to feel "in control" even when your

routine is turned upside down. Even if you must travel to handle the situation, squeeze in a walk or enjoy the solitude of the hotel gym to refresh your mind and help get that monkey off your back. Chronic grief worry, regret and wishing you could relive the past is the best way to accelerate aging, disease and death. Learning, laughing and once again, strength training will keep you youthful. A workout buddy or family member can help snap you out of the blues by encouraging you to keep up with your program. Keep it light and do one of my short 10 minute routines in chapter 5 or pump out a few reps of step ups, pushups and jacks and it will help you more clearly sort things out.

### *Nutrition*

No one brings broccoli as a funeral casserole. When well-meaning neighbors show up with sympathy meals, they bring comfort foods: pasta, cheese-heavy casseroles, potatoes and other diet-busting favorites. Make the most of frozen vegetables and pre-bagged salads to ensure that you continue to eat vegetables, and try to avoid loading up on heavy carbs that will make you feel weighed down. Use counseling, not food and alcohol, to resolve your grief. While grief is fresh, everything — including preparing meals — will seem like it's too much effort. Take advantage of fresh-prepared, ready-to-go meals with healthy ingredients and the low-calorie or organic frozen entrees to get through this period. Keep meals simple and be sure to include lean or low-fat ingredients.

It might be a good idea to temporarily subscribe to a food home delivery service. I don't mean a ton of miscellaneous groceries. There are companies that plan well balanced meals with proper proportions and will deliver to your home daily. If you enjoy this service it can be continued indefinitely, but right now it can be a blessing to help you keep some order in your life and health. This is a time in your life when you most need to rally all the support you can get. I urge you not to forget to take care of yourself. Eating properly is half the battle to be able to handle what's on your plate right now.

During a particularly difficult death in my family, I fell into the trap of losing myself. I was so focused on my loss and the actions I needed to take to handle the details. All I ate during the course of a day was probably two glasses of water and a few saltine crackers I got really sick. My body freaked out and came to a breaking point to where it rebelled against itself. I went into anaphylactic shock and was rushed to the hospital. I had become allergic to hormones and other fluids that my own body manufactured. I almost died that day.

### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: MY MOTHER'S DEATH

When my mother died I stopped everything and went into hiding. I didn't think about exercising and taking care of myself. All I could think of was the pain, loss and regret I felt. That was until my big sis came along and gave me a different perspective. She helped me see the positive side like the funny things Mommy said to us and the great wisdom and precious time we spent together. I began to see things much differently and appreciate the here and now. There have been more major life events since then, and I know there will be other upsetting situations in the future. The difference now is that I have managed to keep up my fitness regimen through it all and as a result I am so much clearer, stronger and better equipped to handle stress. Tip: If you invest your love in the living, death is more manageable.

### CAREGIVING

Caring for someone who is sick — whether that person is a spouse, parent or child — creates extra stress. Caregiving loads more activities into your already-packed daily schedule, on top of housework, a job, and other responsibilities. It can be tempting to give up on exercise and eating right because “there just isn't enough time.” But that's exactly when OWNING your life is even more important. Eating right will give you the stamina you need for the hard work of providing care. Exercise will protect your body from injury, increase energy and help your mood. Managing your Outlook is crucial when you're feeling overworked, unappreciated and bone weary.

#### *Outlook*

Isolation is one of the biggest problems for caregivers, because their responsibilities leave little time for socializing. Staying connected is essential to avoid burn-out, and it will help keep you healthy. Many community agencies and houses of worship offer caregiver support groups. Don't be afraid to ask friends and relatives to help you with errands or give you a few hours of respite time to rest and recharge. You'll need to draw on the wisdom and connections of your support circle as needs arise, so be sure to find groups in your area dedicated to whatever type of illness or condition has affected your loved one.

You don't have to leave home to find connections. Use the Internet to find online support groups, discussion forums and resource organizations. You can connect with other caregivers through the Web to encourage and support each other, and you can also draw on the wisdom and resources of professionals and non-profit organizations.

You're never too busy to put in some quiet time. Take five-minute "mini-breaks" throughout the day. Close your eyes, breath slowly and deeply, and focus on what your body is feeling. Picture yourself being filled with golden light from your head down to your toes. Allow yourself to relax and the light covers you. Clear your mind of worries and errands and just breathe. Then take a few more minutes to stretch, then close your eyes focusing on listening to your breath and to your body. You'll be amazed what a difference that can make!

### *Workout*

Start your day with an ancient Eastern holistic exercise that focuses on mind and body called Qigong. It involves very gentle movements and focuses on posture and alignment. It's most helpful to learn this creative art with a live person and continue on your own once you've got the technique down. The reason I love Qigong is that along with the mental techniques you learn how to utilize and control the energy systems that flow throughout your body. This encourages a sense of balance, mental clarity and relaxation in your life.

Midday if you need a break, do some core and back work which is especially important for caregivers who do a lot of lifting, pushing and pulling. Rows and planks are good for that. It will help your endurance and strength, but make sure functionally (when you are performing normal work/play activities) throughout the day that you pay attention to your posture and form to avoid injury. You can also try this mini workout that can be done in your own backyard and only takes about 10 minutes. (a) Start out by marching in place for two minutes and for one minute (or as much as you can) do the following (b) Jump rope, lat pull downs, isometric (holding no movement for balance) lunges, corkscrew kicks, plank tangos, butter fly marches and jump rope (again.)

Studies have shown that several ten-minute bursts of exercise can be as effective as one long workout and they're certainly better than no workout at all!

### *Nutrition*

When you're pressed for time, it can be tempting to "save time" with fast food, junk food and easy, processed foods. But healthy eating can be quick and easy, and you won't feel sludgy and awful afterwards. Marinate a chicken breast with Italian salad dressing, wrap it in aluminum foil and bake it along with a potato then add a salad or steamed broccoli for a quick, no-fuss healthy meal. A bowl of red beans and brown rice is inexpensive, quick and tasty, and packed with fiber and protein. Frozen vegetables

require no prep time, and they retain most of the nutrients of fresh veggies without the salt that's often added to canned foods. Grab a yogurt or a whey protein drink and some almonds if you're heading to the car. Hard boiled eggs, cut up carrots and celery dipped in peanut butter are healthy "fast" foods that won't slow you down.

## WENDY'S HERO

Someone very close and special to me is not only a hero but is a testament to what true character is. I'm talking about my friend Joey. How he handled a crisis in his life says it all.

Timing is never right when bad things happen and that was certainly true when Joey got the news that his brother had testicular cancer. He was in the middle of college mid-terms and his full time job was at an all-time high. As if things couldn't get any worse his brother died three days later and his parents became incapacitated. Joey didn't falter. Although extremely distraught, he took control. He nursed his brother and dealt with doctors while he also took care of his parents. Then he planned the funeral, ran the family business (parents were too broken-hearted to work) held down his own full time job and managed to take his mid-term exams and graduate. Whew!

It took two years for his parents to recover. Joey earned my respect. I have seen him handle other tough life traumas and he continues to step up to the challenge in a big way.

## MIDLIFE SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

Are you surprised to find out that people over 40 are actively dating, having great sex and finding love in new relationships? You shouldn't be — it's happening all around you. Newly single people are re-entering the dating game. Empty nest couples are rediscovering new options for intimacy now that they have the whole house — and evening — to themselves. After all those years you've spent taking care of everyone else, it's time to shift out of high gear and realign your libido with a smorgasbord of new options for mind-blowing midlife sex.

### *Outlook*

Do you remember when you were first dating your darling? You didn't need any help with motivation back then when it came to sex. Why does it seem harder to get your sexy on now?

Odds are, back in the day when you met your sweetie, you might not have been juggling kids, career, housework, caring for older parents and the multitude of other responsibilities you have now. (Or if you did, you were a little younger.) The good news is, whatever you put your mind to, you can achieve, and in this case, I do mean whatever.

Does daydreaming for better sex seem like a strange idea? Stick with me on this one. When you were a teenager, fantasizing about your boo didn't seem like a tough assignment. In fact, it was hard to think about anything else! You can recapture some of that with a little daydreaming. Spend five minutes thinking about what you like best about your partner. It can be anything at all — hair, voice, quirky things, crazy things. Think about how much pleasure you get from those special favorite things. Now take a moment to be grateful for your partner. Say “thank you” to the universe for giving you that special person, and be specific. Here's the wicked part — now think about what your sweetie does in bed that lights your rockets. Can you feel it yet? I guarantee it's not hot in here, it's just you! Sex is 99 percent mental, so during the day, take a moment to fantasize, and you'll be amazed at what a difference it makes.

### *Workout*

Working out gives you energy, tones your body, and increases stamina and flexibility. That's a recipe for great sex. As I've already shared, working out makes my body “smile” because a good workout is arousing. When you work out, you start to pay attention to your body — your whole body — and to how you feel in every corner of yourself. Every corner. You also feel better about yourself, knowing that you're working towards being your personal best. And you've got the energy — and the desire — to go the distance, if you know what I mean!

A healthy heart means healthy circulation, and that isn't just to your fingers and toes. Heart disease is a major contributing factor to erectile dysfunction. Wouldn't it be great to hop in the sack without the little blue pill? Working out can help. Staying in shape also helps you avoid sore joints and shortness of breath, which definitely make it hard to enjoy vigorous sex. If you're having problems with the sexual “parts” of your body, go to the doctor and find out why. You deserve great sex.

Working out together can be the warm-up to awesome sex. Something about all that moving around and getting sweaty is a real turn-on. It's time for you to Take Back not just your life but your body after so many years of doing for others. So trade in your clunker for a sports car by revving up your workout and reap the benefits in bed.

### *Nutrition*

Ever see the movie “Tom Jones?” Now that was a guy who knew how to make food into a sexual turn-on. Food is definitely part of the equation to create great sex. Healthy foods

not only strengthen your body, but some foods (see my list in the Nutrition chapter) are known to be aphrodisiacs. They really do stimulate arousal. Healthy food makes you feel more alive, and it makes your body work the way it's supposed to work.

You can even make healthy food preparation into a couple's experience, and have your dessert in the bedroom. Take a couples' cooking class, or pick out some healthy recipes and team up to put dinner on the table. Savor handling the fresh ingredients and smelling the aromas. When you heighten your awareness of one set of senses, other senses become sharper, too. A little red wine is good for the heart, and it might just put you in the mood. (Watch your portions — a lot of red wine will make you skip sex and go straight to sleep.)

One of the great things about midlife is that you may have a more flexible schedule than you did with kids at home. Sex doesn't have to wait until the last thing at night. Burn off lunch calories with an "afternoon delight" and you won't have to worry about staying awake for the big finish. Come home from the gym and make love in the middle of the living room. Remember: you've got the whole house to yourself now!

## CHAPTER EIGHT — CAREER TRANSITIONS



In America, we all-too-often define ourselves by where we work and what we do. A friend of mine who was laid off from a large company told me this story:

“Going back downtown seemed strange after I lost my job, even though I was meeting people for interviews or networking appointments in the buildings where I used to work every day. Then I realized that I was the only one without a little photo ID badge that said I belonged to someone. I felt like a stray dog at a pedigree show. I know it’s crazy, but I felt as if everyone was staring at my belt, looking for the ID badge, and wondering why I was there if I didn’t ‘belong.’”

Losing a job, whether to a layoff or retirement, or to good things like a relocation or new career, can feel as if we’ve lost a part of ourselves. We no longer know how to introduce ourselves or how to define our value. We feel adrift, especially if the transition leaves us with “too much” free time and no structure.

You can Take Back Your Life from career transitions by realizing the gift of time such an occasion presents to you, and by recognizing the opportunity to assess your path, align the future with your goals, and achieve your dreams. Unfortunately, stress along with the time and opportunity to munch often derails fitness plans — unless you choose to make fitness a priority. The truth is, by OWNING your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition during a career change, you hand yourself a lifeline to climb out of the bruised feelings, depression and anxiety that come with making a major life change.

Use the Delta Factor and your Omega Attitude as your secret weapons. The Delta Factor is Fuel, Activity, Strength, Flexibility and Stress Reduction, while the Omega Attitude focuses on Confidence, Creativity and Consistency.

You’ll need good Fuel in the form of healthy food (as well as mental Fuel — healthy reading material and healthy input from people who want to help you succeed) to take on the challenges of creating the next phase in your life. That’s true whether you are looking for a new job, moving across the country, retiring or starting your own business. Activity helps reduce depression and anxiety. A good workout puts you in control for the hour you’re in the gym. If money is tight and you’ve dropped your gym membership, take a long walk, grab a jump rope, or borrow some exercise DVDs from

the library. Strength is essential, and by Strength, I mean physical, mental and emotional toughness. Making a big life change like a career transition is rough, and you need to be able to handle the ups and downs. Flexibility helps you avoid injury — a little stretching, core work and maybe some Zumba classes can go a long way toward lifting your mood and getting rid of negative thoughts. Stress Reduction is an absolute must-do. Whether or not you wanted the transition, and whether or not you currently see it as a good thing, change causes stress. Even if you're thrilled to be starting a new job in a new city, or to be opening your own business, stress can make you sick if you don't have a plan to deal with it.

As for the Omega Attitude factors, you'll definitely need them during this transition time. If you've always drawn your Confidence from your title or the size of the company that employed you, now is a good time to dig a little deeper and discover reasons for Confidence within yourself. Use your Creativity to identify your unique skills and abilities, and to see new ways you can make use of those special talents in your new life. Consistency is also important, whether you're hunting for a job, planning your retirement or starting over with another company or with your own firm. Consistency is the key to success. If you're job hunting, that means being consistent in the time you spend meeting with people, answering ads and making calls. If it's starting your own firm, then you'll need to be consistent in the time you spend building it from scratch. And if you're retiring, you're not off the hook. Studies show that retirees who drift along without hobbies or a regular schedule tend to be more depressed and have shorter lives than those who have an active calendar of social events or are engrossed in favorite activities. Consistent mental and physical activity makes all the difference, so get moving!

### **JOB LOSS**

Losing your job can mean a loss of confidence, energy and direction, particularly if your social life also centered on your work. You don't have to slip into depression and mope on the couch.

#### *Outlook*

Now that your time belongs to yourself, envision the “new you” — not just a new job, but also a healthier body and a happier mind. Was your old job unhealthy? Many people suffer months of stress before a corporate downsizing, as layoffs happen around them, management changes and the company thrashes. If you can, give yourself some time to decompress before launching right into the hard work of job hunting or starting a new business. If you're retired, think about how your job was healthy and

unhealthy, and look for ways to make improvements with your new schedule. If you're looking for a new job, define your expectations for what will bring you satisfaction and help you create a healthy, balanced life.

The way you talk to yourself is very important. Most of us beat ourselves up with all kinds of negative messages when something doesn't go according to plan. We would never let someone else talk like that to us, but we take it from ourselves because we don't realize that we can change the channel on the radio in our minds. Here's the secret: You can program your own internal radio station, so make sure it runs messages that support and nurture you. Write down 10 positive things you want to find in your new job and repeat them to yourself twice each day. Then write down 10 more things you do very well — this could be job skills, people skills, or special talents — and remind yourself how special and talented you are every day.

### *Workout*

Seize the opportunity to get in shape during this transition. This is your moment! Connect with others in your neighborhood to go to the gym. You can even run up and down your stairs or do intervals with exercises, stretches, resistance bands and hand weights along with cardio moves like jumping jacks, running in place and skipping or even sign up for a 5K race. These are great cardio workouts and free of charge. Staying fit doesn't have to be expensive.

Take charge of your life. Job loss doesn't have to mean a loss of control. YOU control your Outlook, your Workout and your Nutrition. Use this time to make healthy changes you can take with you into your new life.

Try these exercises on for size. They will give you an immediate boost of energy and a clear head. The best part is, you'll be confident and tiger-ready for your next interview. Use light weights to perform each of the following moves for 30 to 60 seconds each with no rest in between until you are done.

1. March in place while making small circles with arms
  2. Jumping Jacks
  3. Crunches
  4. Side squat w/front raises
  5. Push ups
  6. Lateral hop lunge
- Rest then repeat sequence two more times.

### *Nutrition*

Today's office environments are so high-paced that many employees don't have time to eat, so they grab fast food on the go or nibble from the vending machine. If that described your work time lunches, now's the chance to make a healthy new start.

Begin with a good breakfast. You don't have to rush out the door, so make sure you have a healthy, balanced, low-calorie start to your day. Did you know that eating breakfast has been proven to actually help you lose weight? It also helps you to keep your energy from dipping throughout the day. Choose whole-grain cereals, eggs, fresh fruit, yogurt and other good-for-you foods, and steer clear of fatty sausage, sweet rolls, pastries, sugary juices and pancakes.

Make lunch a real treat and a time to take a break. Be sure that you use a nice plate, sit at the table, and have a calm environment. You no longer have to eat while you work, so make up your mind that you will eat in peace and enjoy it. You can also enjoy the food preparation as well as the meal. Use your new flexible schedule to indulge in your creativity. Discover some new recipes. Now that you don't have to pack a lunch, enjoy hot soup, cold salads, or something other than a sandwich. Eating right will help your mood and give you energy for your workout, so make meals that you enjoy.

### **Wendy's Quotes:**

*Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal."*

— Henry Ford (1863-1947)

### **RETIREMENT**

Many people dream about the day they will retire. Then the day arrives, there's a nice party, and some gifts and cards. But what happens the next morning? No alarm clock, no rush to get dressed, no commute, no daily office routine. For a few days, it feels like vacation, and then you realize that this is the beginning of the rest of your life. It's time to Take Back Your Life and make your retirement great!

### *Outlook*

Hobbies and social activities are essential to staying healthy, remaining mentally and physically fit, and to warding off depression. Many people who retire feel blue without their normal job routine and the status that came with their job. They wonder who they are, now that they're not a (fill in the title of their old job). I'm sure you've even

heard about some people who died immediately after retirement. They may have had difficulty understanding how to recreate themselves and as a result, they sensed a loss of identity, purpose and therefore will to live. The good news is that you can define a brand new life that emphasizes healthy choices, prioritizes fitness, claims a positive attitude, and embraces supportive friends.

One of the best ways to improve your Outlook is to turn off the TV and get off the couch. Go outdoors on a sunny day. Find out what daytime classes and activities are going on — there's a whole world of great things you missed while you were working. Connect with people who share your hobbies, whether that's model trains, gardening or climbing mountains. Call up friends and plan for lunch. Explore the modestly-priced bus tours and excursions run by alumni groups, houses of worship and local recreation centers, and see the sights. Take a class, knowing that the grade doesn't count. You can also connect with friends all over the world online with social media like Facebook, and discover all of the free learning opportunities offered on the Internet by colleges and universities across the country.

The key is to keep your mind active and focused on positive things. Plan a trip. Write your memoirs. Learn to cook. Take up Pilates; it's great for flexibility and a positive outlook. Make up your mind that you will enjoy the time you've earned.

### *Workout*

Many people with active jobs never had to worry about exercising before they retired. But when the job went away, so did their "exercise program," making it easy to gain weight or feel sluggish. It's essential to stay active after retirement to remain healthy.

It's easy to fall into the trap of sleeping late, but resist the urge. This is your opportunity to create a rewarding new routine. If you've never gone to a gym, check out the facilities that are available through community programs or private facilities. Many are very reasonably priced, and offer programs especially for seniors. Now is the time to try something new, or pick up an old favorite. There are many ways to be active but swimming is especially good for people with joint pain. The water takes the weight off your joints, while it refreshingly massages your organs. You also increase the efficiency of your heart, lungs and cardiovascular system to keep operating at peak performance. It will keep your mind sharp, and improve your mood too.

Exercise doesn't have to be fast to be healthy. Tai Chi is one of several ancient exercise traditions that value slow movement, balance and quiet centering.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

It's extremely important to focus on weight-bearing exercises to increase bone health, stability and core strength. It is equally important to get a basic understanding of how to accomplish this safely. So in your best interest find a Certified Professional Trainer who caters to good form, posture and technique. I see way too many people (especially seniors) in the gym who think they know it all from watching others who are exercising incorrectly. As a result, serious injuries have occurred.

Once you have the basics, try group classes with motivational music. A good program will also teach you how to prevent falls and improve your reaction time.

Try these quick anytime, anywhere on the go exercises to improve your balance:

1. Slowly walk heel to toe. Step forward with right foot, (left toe should be touching right heel) hold, look at your right shoulder then look forward again. Repeat by stepping left.
2. Stand on one foot, look left then right, up then down. If you're good at that close your eyes for 3 to 10 seconds. Repeat on other foot. Make sure you are near something or someone for support until you get better at this.

### *Nutrition*

Now that you're home all day, it's tempting to graze, eating a little bit a lot of times throughout the day. Between a lack of routine and feeling down, some retirees over-do it on snacks or alcohol consumption. Stay alert to make sure that you're not nibbling to cover up restlessness or anxiety.

Good nutrition can be fun. Now that you don't have to hurry home from work and get a meal on the table for hungry kids, make meal preparation an event. Become a regular at the farmer's market and get to know the people who grow your food. Plan your meals around what's fresh and in season, and enjoy the output of local farms. Revive some old favorite recipes. Look for ways to make old recipes lower in fat and calories with healthy substitutions. Pare down big recipes to feed one or two people. Take a cooking class. Make every meal special by using pretty plates and napkins and sit down to eat.

Avoid centering every social event around eating out. It's tempting to meet up with old friends at restaurants or coffee shops, but too much socializing while eating can pack on the pounds. How about meeting them in the park or get together early in the morning for a stroll around the mall?

Don't hang around with people who use food as a drug or who are angry or de-

pressed. You don't want to copy their bad habits. Make a conscious effort to make mealtime positive, and avoid watching the news, talking about stressful things or paying bills while you eat. Make eating a time for nourishing both body and mind by keeping the conversation positive.

#### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY DEAR FRIEND SHIRLEY

Shirley, a friend who was also my client, was under a lot of stress at work and it would be two more years before she could retire. She was committed to her workout and looked forward to going to the gym because it gave her a sense of control. But on several occasions, I saw how the stress soaked up her genuine zest for life and left her weary and broken.

It was so bad, we often discussed whether she should consider leaving before retirement. I was so proud of her when she finally did quit her job early and she was excited that she would be able to see me more often. But she never made it back to the gym. Days after she took early retirement, she was in a lot of pain. The problem turned out to be pancreatic cancer. I believe in my heart that stress was the culprit. Remember that stress can override your good intentions if you let problems fester. It took my friend. Don't let it rob you!

#### **RELOCATION**

Whether you move for a job or to enjoy retirement, moving can throw off your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition as you settle in. It's tough to be the new kid on the block. Starting over can put a whammy on your workout and diet unless you decide to OWN your choices.

#### *Outlook*

Focus on what you're building, not on what you left behind. That choice will go a long way to combating stress, depression and loneliness. Explore your new city, and find new favorite places to shop, exercise and socialize. While you're getting to know your way around, use the Internet and social media to find a new trainer or to connect with people who have similar interest and who live in your area. You can also use social media to stay in touch with family, former co-workers and friends regardless of where you — or they — are located.

Getting connected quickly is the single best way to improve your Outlook and keep your mood positive. Introduce yourself to your neighbors. If your apartment building or neighborhood has committees, join one and get involved. Look for a support group for newcomers to your area. If you belong to professional associations, industry clubs or alumni networks, look for a local meeting and know that you'll be among people who

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

share a common bond. Start exploring what your local houses of worship, community center and library offer and consider signing up for a book club, aerobics class or small group study. You'll meet new people and get out of the house.

OWN your outlook by choosing to focus on the positive aspects of your move. Are you closer to the beach? To the mountains? To great shopping or attractions? Can you take in a whole new kind of nightlife, or bask in a newfound quiet and a slower pace? Look for the good things and make a choice to enjoy them.

### WENDY'S HERO: MICHELLE OBAMA

Michelle Obama is an elegant, wise and witty lady. I appreciate her for the way she has taken on her role as first African-American First Lady. She has set precedent and paved a path for other women to feel hopeful, aspire, dream and achieve. Also, as a fitness professional and mother, I am excited about the fact that she has taken on the problem of childhood obesity. It's a serious problem, but we can make things happen to change the mindset and habits of children to create better health.

### *Workout*

Use the gym, YMCA, recreation center or local park to meet new people and find a place where you belong. Even though you're in a new place, doing a familiar workout or aerobics routine can make you feel right at home and provide an important thread of consistency.

Take a daily walk around your new neighborhood. Get exercise while you explore. Read bulletin boards or stop in at the local running shop to find out about upcoming races, team sports, or running/biking groups. You may find that your new home has some fantastic new exercise opportunities that were not available where you lived before.

If you relocated to a different climate, take advantage of the options that provides. Can you run, bike or swim more months of the year? Does a colder climate offer new workout choices like cross-country skiing, ice skating or winter sports? Near the mountains? Explore the hiking trails. Closer to the beach? Take a run on the sand or go for a swim. Open your mind to all the new opportunities available to you.

It's easy to lose track of your workout and food choices in the craziness and busy pace of a move. Make exercise and nutrition a priority to stay healthy. This workout will keep you on the move. And don't worry – no equipment is needed. Start out at 30 to 60 seconds each with the following exercises: hoops, bicycle abs, lateral hop lunges, pushups, jog in place, jump squats, corkscrew kicks, hop side to side.

### *Nutrition*

When life takes you to a new region, celebrate by learning to love local foods, fruits and vegetables. Make it a game to find the local farmers' markets, fresh food co-ops, and organic food stores. Get to know the vendors; they're a great source of information on everything from recipes to restaurants.

Look for new regional recipes and eating places that incorporate locally grown foods. You may find that a warmer climate offers a longer growing season for your favorite organic produce. Or, your new region may take outdoor cooking and grilling to new heights. If you've moved someplace that has cold winters, learn to take off the chill with hearty stews. People love to share their recipes and tell you about the area's favorite foods. It's a great way to meet people and discover new tastes.

A move can be hectic. Don't get pulled into eating fast food. Unpack your dishes and celebrate your meals in a new home. Enjoy your new surroundings by eating outdoors when you can, and basking in the warmth of a fire or the glow of candles when the weather is chilly. Make mealtime a pleasurable event. Serve up familiar foods for a taste of home. With the Internet, it's not hard to find your favorite back-home foods and have them shipped to your door, even if they aren't available from local grocers. But be careful about comfort food, because while mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese and other heavy favorites may make us feel warm and snuggly inside, too much comfort starts to make us lumpy and bumpy outside!

### **PROMOTION/NEW CAREER**

Congratulations! You've started a new career, opened your own business or gotten a promotion.

Did you know that even really good changes can take a toll on your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition? "Good stress" is still stress. Unless we're mindful about how we handle stress, even the best changes can derail our exercise, eating and mood. I remember many times in the past when good things had devastating effects on my health – like the times when I got a new job or before going on vacation or even when I was getting married. I either broke out in a rash, developed pimples on my face or had really bad headaches.

### *Outlook*

No matter how excited you are about your new beginning, there will still be "bad hair" days. Eventually, you'll run into someone at the new company who is a jerk, hit a road-

block with your new business, or find out that even your sparkling new promotion comes with its share of grief.

Schedule changes and new responsibilities can make you feel like you're being nibbled to death by ants, pulled in every direction. You get tired, and then you get cranky and depressed.

OWN your mood by taking a moment to stop, breathe, and figure out what really has you down. Is the shiny newness wearing off? Were there some unexpected "got-chas" that no one bothered to tell you about? Is reality not quite living up to expectations? Those things happen to everyone. Call a friend over to share some stories and do some bonding or fire up the stereo and dance like a maniac. Activity and social connection are the best ways to snap out of a funk.

Remind yourself of your short-term and long-term goals. Make a vision board with photos of things you want to see happen in your life. If you have a vision board, spend some time looking at it and thinking about all the things you've done to make your dreams come true.

When the going gets tough, don't fall into the trap of wishing you were back where you used to be. It wasn't perfect back then either, or have you forgotten? Claim your destiny and make the most of your current situation by making a choice to think positively and believe that you have the power to overcome all obstacles.

### *Workout*

A new job can wreak havoc on your workout schedule. Maybe you used to work out before going to the office, or you could count on getting in some exercise at lunch or right after five o'clock. If a new work routine interrupts familiar patterns, it can be a challenge to get yourself motivated to establish new patterns — but that's just what you need to do.

Believe it or not, exercise will stir up your creative juices, help you sleep better and rid you of those mood swings. You'll feel good about accomplishing your workout, even when you're still learning the ropes of your new role at the office. Doing a challenging aerobics class, going for a run or increasing your weights can make you feel empowered, and give you a burst of all the good body chemicals that create a natural high.

If the demands of a new job make it too hard to get to the gym or be outside during daylight hours, try an exercise DVD to help ease the mind and lengthen and strengthen the body or use the Wii Fit videogames that provide an interactive "trainer" and a personalized workout.

Plyometrics is another useful tool to engage the body. It's a neuromuscular type of training that helps to stabilize your joints and is effective for teaching muscle control. It therefore improves your coordination, balance and strength. Any type of jump training is good to accomplish this like jump squats, box jumps or clap push-ups. Start out slowly, only do a few reps, then work your way up. If you have not exercised in a while or have knee issues do not try these unless you are supervised by a health professional. Remember to be consistent and be patient with yourself and your body. Don't try to do it all in one day because you may do more harm. Just a little each day will make a big impact in the long run.

And who says you can't work out on the job? That's right! There are no excuses! Health is wealth, remember? Trust me, you'll feel better, think clearer and perform brilliantly at work when you throw in a little exercise. You'll prove that you deserve that promotion. I know you get lunch breaks and maybe other breaks during the workday. So go to a quiet place like your office, a conference room, or outside, someplace you won't be interrupted for 10 – 15 minutes.

Do some low kicks in place for one to two minutes while you raise both arms overhead, moving your arms up and down continuously. Then lean on a wall, floor or chair and do 10 pushups, 10 squats and 20 side bends with hands clasped behind head. March in place for 30 seconds. Rest for 30 seconds then repeat the sequence two more times (if you have time). Now that's what I call a good coffee break!

### *Nutrition*

When you're busy starting a new job or a new company, there doesn't seem to be time to eat. It's easy to snack while you're working, go to a drive-through, or grab whatever is lying around that doesn't bite you first. Unfortunately, that kind of stress eating will pack on the pounds and clobber your mood, leaving you feeling sludgy and slow.

Don't leave your meals to chance. Pack a simple lunch and a snack with fruit, vegetable slices, yogurt and other healthy goodies so you're not dependant on the vending machine or the nearest fast-food drive-through. Stash healthy snacks in your desk drawer, like raisins, almonds, protein drinks/bars, apples and microwave popcorn. Do your best to make lunch a must-do, even if you can only carve out 15 minutes. Scope out the healthy choices at local restaurants or convenience shops, and if there are no good-for-you choices, then elevate packing your own lunch to a top priority.

When you get home at night, resist the temptation to eat dinner out of a bag. Stock your freezer with healthy meals that are quick to heat. Make sure you use glass containers

for storage and reheating. There is concern that some plastic containers may allow chemicals to get into your food and cause health problems down the line. Use an hour on the weekend to chop vegetables, make a reheatable entrée or prepare food for a slow cooker meal so you have a warm dinner waiting for you. Rather than a burger, pick up a rotisserie chicken from your local grocery store; it's healthier and you can use the leftovers in many ways. Keep your meals simple with a protein, vegetable and starch. For example, a chicken breast, sautéed spinach and some brown rice cook up quickly and make a delicious, healthy meal. Get to know and love your slow cooker. There are plenty of low-calorie quick-preparation recipes available online — make sure you keep an eye on fat content and calories and watch out for sodium from sauces and marinades.

### **SAVING YOUR SEX LIFE FROM JOB-RELATED STRESS**

Your job (or lack thereof) can affect your sex life through stress, depression, fatigue, worry, frantic schedules or travel. If you don't feel good about your work-life, your sex life will suffer.

Maintaining a healthy approach to Outlook, Workout and Nutrition will help you Take Back Your (Sex) Life. When you work out, you have more energy — not just for your job, but for the fun stuff, too. Keeping a positive outlook makes you open to all kinds of opportunities, even those in the bedroom. Eating healthy not only gives you energy, it also helps your brain chemicals stave off depression. Being out of shape or in poor health due to a bad diet or no exercise makes for bad sex.

Don't leave sex to chance. Plan "dates" with your significant other for dinner or a movie. Remember, sex starts in the brain and a sexy mood begins long before you turn out the lights. Honor your couple time the way you would respect a work-related appointment. Take five-minute "vacations" during your day to think sexy thoughts about your sweetie. Touch, hug and say nice things outside of the bedroom. If you have more time due to a job loss or retirement, then there's no excuse for being too tired for the good stuff. If travel and long hours are taking their toll, try planning for sex on a Saturday morning, Sunday afternoon, or early in the evening instead of TV. If you leave sex until the last thing on your agenda, it will be the first thing that gets eliminated.

You can also get sexy couple-time by taking a dance class together, sitting in the moonlight, or eating dinner (even if it's a salad) by candlelight. Rent a movie and snuggle on the couch. Put on music and dance in your living room. Find a reason to laugh together. You'll be surprised how much activities like these will put you and your significant other in the mood!

## CHAPTER NINE — HEALTH CHALLENGES



When we're healthy, we rarely think about our health. It fades into the background and becomes part of our assumptions, just like the rising of the sun. Then one day, something goes wrong. Pain flares. Fatigue overwhelms. We crash, and recognize the unsung role health has played all along in being able to go about our business.

Many people encounter serious health problems for the first time in midlife. Youth and a strong physical constitution often compensate for bad habits, lack of regular exercise or poor diet. Until midlife, we may not care whether cancer, high blood pressure or diabetes runs in the family, until we're diagnosed with it. All of a sudden, all the family talks about grandma's problems with "sugar" or Uncle Leo's bad heart echo in our memories. We suddenly become desperate to seek out older family members and pick their brains on who died from what in order to assess our own likelihood of disease.

Sometimes, disease strikes even when we've done everything right. Exercising regularly, even strenuously, avoiding tobacco and alcohol, and eating good foods can help keep us healthy in many ways, but even the fittest people can find themselves sitting in a doctor's office, hearing bad news. Genetics and bad luck can strike anyone.

Chronic conditions aren't the only health challenges in midlife. Sometimes, surgery can derail the most active person. Whether it's a bad knee, a ruptured appendix or a tricky gallbladder, surgery and recovery can make a mess of a dedicated exercise and diet program. We learn the hard way that it takes longer to get back on our feet in midlife than it did when we were in our teens or twenties. The same is true for a serious illness, whether it's a bad bout of the flu or something worse. Good workout and eating habits are set aside out of necessity, and it's difficult to pick back up where you left off. After a break of a few weeks or a few months for healing, going back to the gym can feel like starting all over again. We get depressed over lost momentum and decreased strength, and now motivation is a challenge. Believe me, I've been there.

Sickness isn't the only health challenge that affects midlife. For women, menopause can be as big of a body and mental change as pregnancy. Menopause isn't an "illness," but women who experience severe symptoms may feel pretty sick from the effects as "The Change" runs its course. And as with any major shift, menopause affects not only exercise and energy, but also our relationship to food and our motivation.

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

Sexuality is another area that can be dramatically affected both by illness and by menopause. It's hard to feel sexy when you don't feel good. And when you're depressed, sex doesn't sound like fun. Life loses its sparkle in every way.

You can Take Back Your Life by OWNING your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition and get yourself back on track. That's where the Delta Factor and Omega Attitude really come in handy.

Remember, The Delta Factor is Fuel, Activity, Strength, Flexibility and Stress Reduction. When your body is stressed, good food (fuel) is essential. If you're limited in what you can eat due to a chronic illness or as part of the recovery from surgery, choose the best foods you can from your limited options. Remember to pick fresh foods and whole grains, and to avoid processed foods and additive-laden packaged foods.

Depending on the nature of your condition, your Activity may have some constraints. Always consult your doctor about your plans for exercise, and make the focus on what you CAN do instead of what you CAN'T do. When you're recovering from a health challenge, Strength plays a major role in how quickly you bounce back. Here's where good lifelong habits stand you in good stead. If you were new to exercise before your health problem, don't fret. It's never too late to start fresh. Building bone and muscle strength and cardiovascular power will all speed recovery so long as you follow your doctor's orders and don't overdo it.

Even when the set back from surgery or recent illness temporarily limits strenuous exercise or how much weight you can lift, gentle stretching is often permitted (always check with your doctor, especially if you've just had surgery). Slow and steady exercises like Yoga, Tai Chi and Pilates can increase the flow of blood and lymph, which helps your body heal. Not only do you gain Flexibility, but these programs have a remarkably positive effect on your mental attitude as well. Just getting back to some kind of exercise can help with Stress Reduction. The foods you choose also affect your perceived stress. This is where meditation can also be a part of your recovery program, as you consciously choose to reduce your stress by focusing on healing thoughts.

Don't forget the Omega Attitude! Confidence, Creativity and Consistency can all take a hit when you're dealing with health changes. But to Take Back Your Life, you need all three. Any time we're faced with the realization that we're not in total control (health challenges will hit you in the face on that one), our Confidence takes a dive. But you can OWN your recovery by using your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition to regain Confidence. Just returning to healthy habits can be a big Confidence booster

after a stay in the hospital or a period of illness or injury. Use your workout routine, good food choices and daily meditation to boost your Confidence.

Creativity is the make-or-break factor in returning to your workout and nutrition choices when you haven't been well. Many people use illness or injury as an excuse to abandon their workout and healthy eating choices, blaming it all on the sickness, or on "doctor's orders." Use your Creativity to find out what you CAN do, and then do it! Steer your doctor's recommendations toward how you can get back in the swing of your routine, instead of focusing on fears, dangers and "thou shalt not" items. Listen for what you need to avoid or where you should exercise caution, but don't stop there. Find out what activities are appropriate for your personal situation, and then do them!

Consistency will also help you Take Back Your Life. When we experience injury, illness or a major shift like menopause, our neat and tidy routines get blown apart. We feel rootless and adrift. It's easy to become depressed, because nothing is as it was before. Here's where creating a new routine and sticking to it faithfully can be a real life saver. Whatever level of activity you can resume, do it quickly and keep at it. Regardless of what limitations might be on your food choices, make it a daily passion to choose as many permitted healthy choices as possible. Make a time for clearing and cleansing the mind to improve your outlook, and stick to it faithfully, using it as your anchor. Not only will Consistency make you feel more "in control," but you'll also begin to reap the benefits of good physical and mental habits with a quicker recovery.

#### **Wendy's favorite quotes:**

*The secret of success is learning how to use pain and pleasure instead of having pain and pleasure use you. If you do that, you're in control of your life. If you don't, life controls you.*

— Anthony Robbins

### **BOUNCING BACK AFTER SURGERY, SICKNESS OR A CHRONIC CONDITION**

Taking care of yourself means finding a way to fit fitness, good eating habits and spiritual healing into your recovery.

#### *Outlook*

Just sitting around thinking about how bad you feel can nose dive your mental attitude, leading to depression (which can also be a side-effect of some medication). Trust me when I say that you NEED to get up and get moving!

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

Even “temporary” illnesses like severe seasonal allergies can make you feel miserable enough to be tempted to just stay on the couch. Resist the temptation! I can’t tell you how many times I’ve seen people get the flu in February and by June they still aren’t back to the gym. Their good habits got derailed and they never got back on track. Don’t let that happen to you!

Remember that drinking lots of water, working out at even a moderate level of activity and eating healthy food is enough to enable your wonderful body to fend off sickness and mend itself. Getting out of bed (and turning off the TV) is also an amazing mood lifter! So respect your body, take time to heal, but don’t let your injury or illness become an excuse. Remember - “it’s better to keep up than catch up”

Your mind can play tricks on you when you don’t feel good. Remember that your body reacts to your thoughts. If you’re blue, you don’t feel like doing anything, and that begins a downward spiral. You can really feel like the bottom has fallen out of your world if some of your medicines exaggerate mood swings!

One of the motivation-killers about an illness or injury is the feeling of being out of control. When you’re in the hospital, everyone seems to be in control except you. You don’t seem to be able to control your body, and you leave the doctor’s office with a long list of things to do or not do. Suddenly, instead of an empowered adult, you feel like a kid again, and not in a good way!

Exercise can help. When you exercise, your body releases good brain chemicals to lift your mood. Even if you don’t feel like getting up and moving when you begin, if you stick with it, your brain gets a rush of good chemicals and your body will react to your positive thoughts. Your brain is a powerful and wonderful tool, and it has the ability to make you feel better or worse. Depression can make physical healing take longer, so you’ve got a real vested interest in keeping your mood in a “can-do” mode.

Focus your mind on healing thoughts. Picture yourself restored to better-than-ever health. Forgive old hurts and grudges. Let go of anger along with the toxins and germs that are part of your illness. Believe it or not, gratitude can be a force for healing, so make time every day to think about at least three things you’re grateful for, even in the midst of recovering from illness.

Here are some affirmations to help you on your way:

- “Today, my body is healing faster and better than ever.”
- “I can feel health and healing radiating throughout my body.”

- “No matter what else happens to me today, I choose my mood and my reactions.”
- “Forgiveness and gratitude are flowing through me, letting go of stress and pain.”
- “I will take steps toward my goals today, and I will not let this illness slow me down.”
- “Every time I work out and eat right, I defeat pain and illness, and build strength and wellness.”

#### WENDY'S HERO: PAULA ABDUL

I've been a fan of Paula Abdul's for a long time. I admired her transition from cheerleader to dance consultant to singing sensation, and I've danced to plenty of her videos and top-ten songs. But it's only been recently that Paula has publically shared the toll all those years of rigorous cheer squad workouts, grueling dance tours and long hours took on her body and her health. She's battled pain, surgery and the long-term effect of injury, but she's done it with grace and she hasn't let it stop her from achieving her goals. Way to go, Paula!

#### *Workout*

Extended bed rest or inactivity can lead to muscle atrophy, loss of bone mass, weakened core muscles and decreased cardio health in a surprisingly short period of time. When you stop moving around on a regular basis, your sense of balance can become impaired, making re-injury more likely. Reduced muscle movement can also increase the chance of blood clots.

I've already mentioned how important it is to make sure you leave the doctor's office or hospital being just as clear on what types of exercises you can do or what you can't do. Even now, some doctors get so busy telling you what not to do that they don't remember to focus on what's still possible, so it's your job to make your doctor give you details on how you can still stay active. As your health improves or as you get better at living with an ongoing condition, remember to check back with your physician, physical therapist, fitness trainer and/or occupational therapist on what new activities you can add back into your routine. Just because you weren't allowed to lift more than a few pounds after your surgery, that doesn't mean that, as time progresses, you might not be permitted to do more! Your doctor's limitations on activity should be a way to protect you as you heal, not a permanent “get out of the gym” pass for life!

Your doctor and health team should be a fully engaged partner in your wellness program. After all, they have a real stake in keeping you healthy! Today's physicians are much more aware of the role that exercise, diet and motivation play in overall

health. If possible, you may also want to add holistic medical counseling to your recovery, incorporating the benefits of non-traditional (homeopathic) medicine, acupuncture, aroma therapy, massage or chiropractic care. Many of these “alternative” health practitioners (whose practices are now truly in the mainstream of public acceptance) have a deep understanding of the body-mind-spirit interconnection, and can help you OWN your recovery with suggestions on Outlook, Workout and Nutrition. To avoid problems, always make sure that any seeming contradictions between what one doctor tells you and what another advises gets worked out between the professionals!

Be willing to change up your routine in order to get moving again. If you need to take it easy, take long daily walks instead of a hard-charging aerobics class. Try water-based exercises to take the stress off muscles and joints. Any activity is better than nothing! Here’s where your Creativity can really come into play, helping you find ways to stay fit while obeying your doctor’s orders.

### **Your get-back-in-the-groove workout:**

Here are some ideas that can gently help you regain range of motion, improve circulation and build strength. As always, be sure to check with your physician before beginning any new physical activity.

**1. Arm Raises** – Sit, stand or lie on your back with hands on thighs, inhale for four counts. As you exhale, extend arms in front of you and overhead, then bring your arms out to the sides and back to the starting position as you exhale. Repeat for 10 reps or do as many as you can. Perform with light weights or water bottles in your hands if you need more challenge.

**2. Side bends** – Sit or stand with arms folded in front of you. Inhale as you bend your trunk to the right side. Exhale as you return to start. Repeat on left side. Do eight to 10 or as many as you can. For more of a challenge, do this with hands clasped behind your head or extended overhead.

**3. Chest stretch** - Stand facing the corner of a room with forearms on each side of the corner and feet eight to 10 inches away from the wall. Elbows should be shoulder height. Press chest forward toward corner.

**4. Wall sit** – Press your back against the wall and walk your feet away from the wall as you slide down to a 45 – 65 degree angle. Your glutes should be almost parallel to the floor or go as low as you feel comfortable. Then hold 30 seconds (or as long as you can). Work your way up to a minute.

*\* Repeat all exercises four to 10 times or as much as you can handle.*

When you are done, lie on the floor face up, with legs (glutes and heels) resting against the wall, perpendicular to the floor and soles of the feet facing ceiling. Breathe deeply. This will help tired feet and improve circulation. No matter what type of surgery you had, it is important to stretch and do strengthening exercises afterwards. It will help to decrease any side effects of surgery and improve your recovery time.

### *Nutrition*

Illness can affect what you are allowed to eat, depending on the nature of your condition. Or, you might just feel so crummy that nothing tastes good or stays down. Loss of appetite or a sense of taste/smell, sluggish digestion or problems with elimination can keep you feeling yucky. The worse you feel, the harder it is to get up and get moving, and the easier it becomes to slide into self-pity.

Extended inactivity can lead you into temptation, causing you to eat from stress or boredom instead of real hunger. You may crave high carbohydrate “comfort” foods that remind you of happy times, but that aren’t nutritious or good for you. Remember GIGO: Garbage In/Garbage Out! You’ll heal faster when you eat nutritious food that is not especially high in calories, fat, sodium, or sugar. Nature is a wise mother, and it’s often the simple foods that promote health and healing. Fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains have an amazing number of vitamins, minerals and natural chemicals that speed healing. Food is nature’s own medicine. When you eat fresh foods that haven’t been over-processed or gunked up with salt, fat, sugar and additives.

If you have time on your hands while you recuperate (after you’ve done your workout), read some books or do some Internet searches on the healing properties of the nutrients in food. Prevention Magazine and books by Rodale Press are especially good on this topic, but there are many other very good sources of information. You’ll find foods that can help relieve everything that ails you, and gain an appreciation of how amazing Mother Nature really is.

Remember to adjust the amount of food you eat for your level of activity, so if you

aren't moving much (on doctor's orders), you may need to cut back on your intake of food, depending on what your physician recommends. As your activity increases, add back in healthy foods to fuel your workout.

Try to consume organically grown raw foods. I call them healing foods. They are the best medicine for your body and will dramatically speed up your recovery time.

Complex carbohydrates are also a must-have when you are sick. They are your energy source and can help to detox your body, getting rid of the unhealthy byproducts of your illness. The best choices are spinach, cabbage, celery and other dark, leafy greens. When snacking, focus on fruits like apples, papaya and berries. Stay away from the "bad" carbs like white breads, pastas and rice.

Here are some other hints. Choose carrots to help with arthritis, osteoporosis and eye health. Radishes cleanse the liver and also fight obesity and high fats. Foods that promote healing for cancer and heart disease include carrots, garlic, lime, lemon. Other foods that help to reduce inflammation include cherries, garlic, turmeric, pineapple, and strawberries.

Potassium-rich bananas help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol. (Never rely on diet to do the job of medicine without checking with your doctor first!) If you're having a hard time eating enough of these healing foods, juicing could be a good choice for you.

### **MENOPAUSE: "THE CHANGE" CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING**

There's no denying it; menopause really is a "change." Menopause isn't an illness, but it does cause profound changes in your body and mood. Every woman experiences menopause differently, but some symptoms are nearly universal: hot flashes, mood swings, poor sleep, bloating, loss of energy, and a tendency to gain tummy fat even if you had washboard abs.

Hormone swings can also inspire stress eating or PMS-like symptoms as your body struggles to regain equilibrium. Hormones also dramatically affect mood, hence the stereotype of menopausal women who are crying one minute and angry the next! Hopefully, your progress through this recalibration of body hormones won't be extreme. You can ask your mother or older female blood relatives how their transition went, but don't automatically expect that your experience will be just like theirs. In the generation or two that separates you from your mother, grandmother and older aunts, you've been the beneficiary of many medical advances they did not have. You're also more likely to

have exercised more frequently and pursued fitness goals than did women of prior generations. And you've had the benefit of vitamin supplements, preventive health care and the year-round availability of nutritious food that our elders may not have experienced.

So just because your mother or aunt had a terrible time with hot flashes or mood swings doesn't mean you're doomed to repeat their experience. Back in the day, the medical establishment (who were all men) didn't even think it was important to conduct clinical research about menopause. What even doctors "knew" was likely to be a mish-mash of old wives' tales and pseudo-science. In recent years, health organizations, pharmaceutical companies and research universities have realized (big surprise!) that women aren't just men with boobs. There's a much deeper recognition that women's endocrine systems are much more complicated than we gave them credit for being, and with the rise of women in roles as researchers and physicians, we're seeing more detailed research into how menopause works and how to decrease or better manage its negative aspects.

Having said all that, the truth is that your body at 40, 50 and on doesn't work the way it did when you were twenty-something. Is this a surprise? With age and menopause, your metabolism becomes more sluggish, making it harder to lose weight and keep it off. Hormones also affect how weight gain is distributed. That means you may find that the extra five pounds you've gained goes straight to your tummy, where it used to spread out over your whole body where it was less noticeable.

Hormones are the "power behind the throne" in our bodies, running every aspect of our metabolisms even though we rarely give them a thought (other than to blame them for teenage mistakes). Were you relieved when your hormones settled down after your teen years, ready to kiss acne, moodiness and weird body changes good-bye? Well, those same hormones are back again, to give you an exciting ride in mid-life. We've all wished to be a teenager again. Menopause reminds you to be careful what you wish for, because you can experience the parts of being a teenager you were happy to leave behind!

### *Outlook*

For some women, the onset of menopause seems like the end of youth. Perhaps that view made sense when people didn't live many years past midlife, but with the explosion in the number of people living to be 100 years old, the view of menopause as the beginning of the end is as outdated as a horse and buggy.

Just like the hormone swings of the teen years were the gateway into adulthood (driver's license, turning 18 and then 21 with all the privileges that came with it), the

changes of menopause herald the grand second act of your life. So focus on the future and not the past! Greeting cards and coffee mugs joke that hot flashes are really “power surges,” but there’s truth to the idea of reframing an idea to turn a negative into a positive.

Count up how much wisdom you’ve gained since those awkward teen years. You are rich with life experience, confidence, and perspective. You’ve got real accomplishments to your credit, whether those are educational milestones like diplomas and graduations, family achievements like marriages, the birth of children and caregiving, or community leadership roles that have improved the lives of those around you. And think of what you leave behind: unplanned pregnancy scares and the discomfort and mess of menstruation.

Every stage in life has its own initiation rituals, and midlife is no different. You are being initiated into the realm of wise matriarchs who are the queens of their families and communities. Hold your head high! Remember the benefits of your new place in life when mood swings inevitably show up and use those positives to combat the temptation to long for the past. Pull yourself out of the moment and observe what is really going on, realizing that your blue feelings or bad mood is just a hormonal phantom instead of being a reflection of reality.

Menopause often coincides with other life changes, such as having the last adult children leave the nest, losing a spouse to divorce or death, caring for older parents, or being diagnosed with chronic health conditions. Together with hormonal mood swings, these life changes can seem overwhelming, tipping you into depression. Fight back! This is your chance to Take Back Your Life, and the first step to OWning a bright future lies with your Outlook and motivation.

Have an “EMP” (that’s short for Emergency Mood Plan) already in place when the blues hit. Plan ahead for how you’ll combat sudden dips into depression, by making your own “early response” checklist, just like medical professionals have for dealing with heart attacks. Here are some ideas:

- **Get out of the house!** A change of scenery can work wonders. Walk around the block, go to the mall, or drive to the park or library, but get some fresh air.
- **Call a friend.** When your mood dives, call an upbeat friend for a “reality check” and focus on the positive.
- **Get moving.** Exercise improves your mood, and it makes you feel good because you’ve accomplished something. Even ten minutes of Yoga, jumping rope, or dancing to music can make a big difference in the way you feel.

- **Read or listen to something uplifting or funny.** This can include inspirational or upbeat music, affirmations or a guided meditation, a page from a devotional book or daily positive thinking tip from one of the many web sites that offer encouragement.
- **Count your blessings and practice gratitude** by making a list of five to ten things for which you are grateful — everything from big things like having people you love in your life to small things like seeing sunshine on a cold day.
- **Change your focus.** Get your mind off yourself by focusing on the beauty all around you. Study the details of a flower, watch a sunset, or listen to the birds. Play catch with a child, or doodle. Interrupt gloomy thoughts by shifting your attention.

### *Workout*

Once you understand the changes that happen to your body during menopause, you can adjust your workout and your attitude accordingly. Hot flashes, feeling bloated and other symptoms are not an excuse to stop working out. You're not old yet! No matter when you started to exercise, the years ahead of you can be the fittest years of your life.

Just look at me! I didn't exercise regularly at all from the time I got out of high school until I was 42 years old, and now I'm winning body building/figure championships as I approach age 60! I never in a million years thought when I was 30 or 35 that I'd be where I am now, with a sleek, strong and sexy body. People say I look younger now than I did then, and I'm not kidding about that! (Really I'm just healthier.) People often guess my age wrong — underestimating it by fifteen or twenty years. No doubt, that makes me feel great! The truth is I FEEL younger, stronger and sexier than I did back then. In fact, I'm in the best shape of my life! Our culture equates being slim, strong and sexy with being young, but here's the secret — age has nothing to do with it. Attitude is everything!

Use the wisdom that has come with time to learn to listen to your body as you exercise. Don't use this as an excuse; rather, use this "body language" to let you know where you can push harder or where you need to cut yourself a break on any given day. We all have strong days and not-so-great days, and the secret to a great workout lies in using what your body tells you to change up your routine to get the best workout each day.

The truth is that as we get older, strengthening exercises become even more important because strengthening reduces your risks of falls, helps to keep you from becoming frail and can help you maintain independence in daily life. Take steps to create a healthy future by using resistance or weight training to keep your bones strong and ward off osteoporosis. Increase your muscle mass and speed up your metabolism.

Strengthen your core and emphasize stretching and balance to decrease the risk of falls. Increase your energy by doing a workout early in the day to rev you up and get your motor running.

Start with something you enjoy, like power walking, bike riding or dancing. Mix it up so you change activities often and stay motivated. Just don't overdo it! I repeat... don't overdo it! Starting slowly will take you a long way. You can't be inconsistent and then try to catch up in one day from years of abuse or neglect to your body.

If you suffer from cramps, water exercises are a great way to get relief from menopausal symptoms. In the water, you can do cardio and resistance training and you don't have to worry about joint stress or hot flashes. Try kickboard paddling, water aerobics, lap walking, swimming or water sports.

The idea is to increase your heart rate and breathing by doing cardio along with strengthening techniques so that you reap the benefits and experience overall relief while also sculpting your body. As you increase your stamina and confidence, work up to more advanced moves. Weight training becomes essential as we get older. It has been a God-send for me!

### *Nutrition*

It's true: after you hit menopause, you probably can't get away with eating the quantity of food you might have been able to eat in your teens and twenties. Not only does everything seem to go straight to belly fat, but you may find that your digestion has changed and things that didn't bother your tummy now leave you feeling bloated or uncomfortable. On the other hand, you have probably learned to eat a wider variety of foods than you did when you were younger, and to enjoy foods cooked in a broader range of preparation styles. Embrace the good stuff and let go of fried and fast food.

Investigate soy and other natural food remedies to help reduce the negative symptoms of menopause. Avoid the temptation to turn to food for stress relief or companionship. Be conscious of portion size, but enjoy small servings of better quality foods. Load up on fresh veggies, ripe fruits, fish and lean protein and add whole grains for good digestion. Pay attention to how you feel after you've eaten certain types of foods, and avoid the ones that make you feel sluggish. You've got places to go and things to do, so you need premium fuel!

Help regulate your body and hormones by not skipping meals. Make it a habit to eat meals around the same time each day so that your body knows when to expect

nourishment. Promise yourself you will choose low-fat meals whenever you're at home or dining out.

Soy foods have been found to improve menopause symptoms like hot flashes. Soy can be found in many products, from tofu to soy milk, and is used as a flavoring, coating or additive in other foods. It has been reported that consuming up to six servings of soy food a day can significantly lower menopausal discomfort. However, there are other conflicting reports that show soy should not be consumed by people with some medical conditions. If you are a cancer survivor or have a chronic illness, be sure to talk with your doctor before adding soy to your diet.

To reduce bloating, include potassium rich foods in your diet. Potassium has been shown to help balance water and sodium retention. Eat a diet rich in Omega 3 essential fatty acids (salmon, sardines, tuna etc.) as well as nuts (almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds etc.) to help with menopausal relief.

During menopause, avoid spicy foods like cayenne pepper, chili peppers, cilantro, vinegar, jalapeños etc. which tend to bring on hot flashes. I learned this the hard way! Processed foods, canned foods, fast foods and preservatives in foods can also aggravate menopause symptoms. This will probably require some trial and error to determine which foods are safe for you to eat and which cause side-effects. Be mindful when you eat and note whether unpleasant effects occur right after consuming certain types of food. You may be able to decrease or eliminate some of the unpleasant aspects of menopause by watching what you eat.

During menopause, do your best to reduce stress and drink plenty of water. Drinking lots of water is good at any time, but during menopause consuming water helps rid your body of toxins, hydrates your cells, and helps dry skin (among other benefits).

If sleep loss, mood swings, vaginal dryness, hot flashes, memory loss or other menopausal symptoms become unmanageable, see your doctor. Bio-identical hormone replacement therapy may be an option for you, but it also has risks and may not be right for everyone.

#### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: ANN

When I met my client Ann, she was 66 years old. She had been a 12 year out-of-control insulin diabetic who had recently lost her husband. Emotionally she was quite bruised and her weight and health had been pushed to the outer limits (she even went into a diabetic coma once). As I learned more about her stress, trials and tribulations, I didn't understand how she was still liv-

ing, breathing and standing in front of me. All I knew was this woman was a brave, strong soul and I wanted to honor that by helping her regain her health

After six months of working with me, Ann completely re-invented herself. I watched as she became more energetic, lost weight, increased her self confidence and the best part - her doctor took her off of insulin for the first time in 12 years. The point I want to make is that Ann didn't give up. She could have given many excuses like, "I'm too old, too depressed or too sick", but instead she took the high road, however difficult. She recently turned 74 and by all accounts doesn't look or act her age. She has worked really hard to turn her life around. I love her! She is my shining star, my friend and my hero.

### A FEW LAST WORDS ON HORMONES

Here are some parting thoughts to keep in mind:

- Women have varying degrees of symptoms.
- Get your hormones under control if they are way out of whack and impact your life dramatically and/or are causing you to lose focus.
- Learn your options from your doctor if you need Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)
- Hormone imbalances can accelerate injuries and aging. Things that improve hormone imbalances are: Nutrition, exercise, herbal remedies, supplements and bio-identical HRT.

### SEXY IS A STATE OF MIND

Look at Meryl Streep in recent movies like *Mamma Mia* and *It's Complicated*, or at other films like *Letters to Juliet*. These mid-life love stories show that sexy is all in your own mind — and in the eye of the beholder. It's true that 50 is the new 40 — maybe even the new 35!

As you feel the confidence and empowerment of working out, OWNING your attitude and eating right, let yourself experience what it's really like to feel sexy all over. You can be a "cougar" at any age, even if it's just with your husband!

Sexy starts with taking care of yourself every day, whether or not you go into an office. Take the time and make the investment in yourself to have your hair, nails and make-up all looking great. Don't do it for other people; do it for yourself. Your self-image gets a boost or takes a dive every time you see your reflection in the mirror throughout the day. So put on a nice shirt and some earrings, touch up your lipstick or squirt on some perfume, even if you're the only one home. If you look ratty, you feel

ratty, and ratty is the opposite of sexy.

No matter what your age, weight or height, you can be sexy and glamorous. Watch the sales flyers for your local department store, and go get a free makeover when they have a special deal running. Buy yourself a few new tops or a new piece of jewelry. If your clothing is older than your adult children, it's way overdue to be donated. Short on cash? You can scoop up phenomenal bargains on designer clothes and accessories by shopping at consignment stores. In other words, there's no excuse!

Remember that the goal isn't to look like you're a twenty year-old supermodel; it's to be your personal best. When you feel like you're working toward the goal of being your best, you accept yourself and let the old guilt and negative self talk drift away. You gain body confidence and walk tall and proud. Aim to be the best you can be, and you'll feel fantastic. Tone, firm and strengthen what you've got and you'll have the best body shaper!

When you know you're attractive, other people (even your significant other) change their perception of you to see you as more attractive. They accept your evaluation of yourself. So hold your head high and strut your stuff! Not only will you feel sexier, but you'll feel more confident about initiating sexy moments with your partner, and you'll enjoy intimate moments more because you won't be worrying about how you look with no clothes on. Loving your body is the best aphrodisiac in the world.

Remember that when you work out you increase blood flow throughout the body — and I do mean everywhere! Yes, “down there” too! If you need to use lubrication to compensate for the vaginal dryness some women experience during menopause, by all means, don't be shy! Your body takes a “use it or lose it” approach to most activities, and sex is one of those things. Having regular sex makes sex more enjoyable and reduces problems such as thinning of the vaginal walls. Plus, sex can be its own mini workout, if you know what I mean!

Don't let injury, illness or menopause keep you from Taking Back Your Life. Once you realize that the obstacles you perceive are only in your mind, you can take the power to make “The Change” a change for the better.



## CHAPTER TEN — TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE AND OWN YOUR FUTURE



In this book, you've learned how to OWN your Outlook, Workout and Nutrition in order to Take Back Your Life from the bad habits and negative thinking that has held you back. OWNING your life is a great accomplishment, but it takes work to hang onto the gains that you've accomplished.

It's easy to "backslide" into old habits. I have known clients who went on vacation, got the flu or had a bad week and got out of the exercise habit, and then never came back. That's where your mental attitude makes all the difference. If there's a little voice in the back of your mind that doesn't think you "deserve" to be in good health or to be happy or to be thin, then you will find reasons to sabotage yourself. When that happens, you'll find yourself back where you started wondering what happened.

Even though I'm a late bloomer, I believe things happen the way they are supposed to and in their own time. I am still growing and learning and my struggles and temptations will always be there. The difference now is I am healthier, happier and more in control of my life and I understand the rewards that brings. So when trials and tribulations hit me up I regroup, deal with it and keep on moving.

When you believe that you are worth the effort required to be trim and healthy and that happiness is your birthright, you will make the investment of time and money to keep healthy habits and be your personal best. Always remember that good health and positive outlook empowers you and attracts new opportunities to you.

### LET ME TELL YOU A STORY: MY LIFE

Divorce, menopause, death, abuse and all the other stresses in my life couldn't keep me down. You know why? Because in little ways throughout it all, I stood up for myself and realized I was worth more than what I was getting. Along the way I fell on my face and made some wrong turns that took a toll on me, but somehow, God blessed me with favor, sent me an angel and gave me strength to survive it all. I believe it was a test and a plan to make me who I am. I'm stronger now and as a result, I'm able to be a mentor, to teach and inspire others.

Everything in life happens for a reason. Thank God, I learned in a BIG way to Take Back my Life before it ended. I know there will be more trials and tribulations, but now I look at challenges

and change as an opportunity to grow. I have faith that I will continue to search for the good in the sour to make a happy, healthy and passionate life for myself. I deserve it and so do you!

### **WHEN YOU SLIP UP**

Slip-ups happen to everyone. It's inevitable that, sooner or later, you will eat too much at a holiday meal, not feel like going to the gym, or undo some of your progress in one way or another. As soon as you realize that you've slipped, catch yourself before you go any further!

It's never too late to get back on track, and just because you've gained a pound or two (or five or ten) doesn't give you license to chuck everything out the window and go for broke. It's so much easier to hang onto your new weight, body and confidence than to let them slip away and have to work hard to get them back again.

Yo-yo diets and big changes in body mass are hard on your metabolism, and it can be more difficult to get back into shape than it was to get in shape in the first place if you let yourself go too far. It's much like car maintenance. Regular oil changes are cheaper and easier than letting the oil run dry and needing to replace the engine! So when you do slip up, recognize it and move on. Don't spend time beating yourself up, just go back to your routine, and remember that Consistency (part of the Omega Attitude) counts!

### **WENDY'S HERO:**

Cyclist Lance Armstrong is a legend and perfect example of not allowing an illness to keep you down. Daring to defy all odds and believing he could be better and do better, he did more than bounce back from one of the most feared illnesses – cancer. He pushed himself beyond the limits others set for him and went on to compete and win the Tour De France seven consecutive times. That takes courage, commitment, passion, faith and lots of soul searching. He is definitely my hero. I think about him especially on the days when I don't feel like working out or when I'm sick or depressed about an injury. He inspires me to move and count my blessings. That Live Strong attitude really turns me on!

### **NO GOING BACK**

Make a promise to yourself that you will not allow yourself to go back to old, unhealthy ways of acting, eating or thinking. It's not just about the gym: you've got to fix your mind, lifestyle and eating habits. If there are old hurts or patterns from your past that you need to work through, find a professional counselor and resolve the issues so that you are free to move on. You're worth it!

Are you inspired? Do you feel like you finally have the right information to put your life back on track? Have you learned something new to take you to the next level? Did you feel as if I was talking directly to you during our journey through *Take Back Your Life*? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, it’s time to believe in yourself and listen to that little voice inside. I can honestly say that my inner voice has never led me astray. Listen to your body also, no matter what doctors say. It will give you great insight no one else can see or feel.

Be alert to bad habits, negative thinking, poor eating and the lure of a sedentary lifestyle that can undo all your progress. Prepare yourself mentally so that when the temptations arise, you already have a game plan in mind. There’s no room for self-pity. Getting and staying healthy doesn’t come easily for anyone — and I do mean “anyone.” Not for me, not for the actresses and models you see on TV, not for sports stars. No one “just looks like that naturally.” They may make it look easy, but hard work and consistency has a lot more to do with it than age, good genes or luck.

Most TV and movie stars work out for hours a day with a trainer who puts them through their paces like an Army drill sergeant. Sure, you see them in the slinky dresses on the runway, but you don’t see them sweating and huffing in the gym with their hair matted to their heads and their clothes soaking wet and nasty. But I do. Remember, I live in L.A., the land of “beautiful people” and I know for a fact that beauty in this town either comes from a gym and a healthy lifestyle or it gets constantly propped up with nip-and-tuck surgeries. Looking good and feeling great isn’t free, but it is priceless. Choose the gym over the scalpel! It all begins with the decision to OWN your body, mind and future.

*Wendy says: Our prayers are answered not when we are given what we ask  
but when we are challenged to be what we can be. – Morris Adler*

So now that we’ve come this far in our journey, let me share with you two last secrets: Even though some people call me a superwoman or feel I have some extra-terrestrial powers to discipline myself, I want you to know that how I am today has not come without sacrifice, tradeoffs or setbacks. Here’s the first secret. I am (or WAS) a fast food, fried chicken, biscuit eating and soda drinking kind of fool. That was before I changed my ways and my life (along with my taste buds) with small but gradual changes that became a comfortable lifestyle and habit over time. That’s the second secret. Making small and gradual changes will change you, your palate and your lifestyle forever!

## TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

Watching my own transformation during the process was not only amazing but motivational and the improvement in my health was the icing on the cake or shall I say, the peanut butter on the banana!

### **THE BEST HALF OF YOUR LIFE**

Have you ever gone to see a play at a theater? If so, then you know that the second act is when all the good stuff happens. If you're over 40, you're in the second act of your life, and that means there is good stuff waiting to happen. You want to be fit and healthy to enjoy the climax — in every sense of the word!

The health decisions you make at 40 or 50 directly determine your quality of life at 80, 90 or even 100 years old. (Those decisions also determine whether or not you have a life!) OWN your future by making fitness, good nutrition and a positive attitude a priority, and by consciously managing your outlook and motivation.

Would you invest in something that was guaranteed to pay you back many times over for the next forty or fifty years? Of course you would — especially if the pay-back was worth more than what you had to put into it. Your health pays you back by enriching your life every moment of every day through pain-free movement, boundless energy, and the strength and optimism to overcome any obstacle. Your health has a guaranteed pay-back that far outweighs the time, effort and money you put into becoming and staying fit. So use the Delta Factor and Omega Attitude to Take Back (the rest of) Your Life. It's time to get sassy with the past and tell it to be gone for good!

As you've moved through the pages of this book, I hope what you've learned here has changed your life for the better. Even if we've never met in person, I hope you know that I am cheering you on to victory as you Take Back Your Life. You are worth every bit of the effort it takes to be healthy and happy, and not only will your choice to OWN your life pay you back, but it will enrich the lives of everyone around you.

Now you know what to do. So do it! The time is gone for living in the past and wishing for the past to reappear so you can fix it. I know all too well, because I've been there. No one has ever been able to move forward with their eyes on the past, including myself. Although we can't go back and make things better, we can change and gain control over what's happening now. Just keep in mind that new habits take time. Give yourself a break and believe it can happen for you too. I can't say it enough...your outlook WILL determine your outcome!

I wish you health, happiness and success in all that you do. Thank you for letting

me accompany you on this journey to a new and happier you.

Did you find something that was helpful to you? Do you feel motivated to Take Back Your Life? Are you ready willing and able to use what you've got and apply what you've learned? Share your thoughts with me on my blog at: [www.wendyida.com](http://www.wendyida.com).

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## Exercise Escalator: *Perform all exercises each week in exact order*

Equipment: Swiss Ball, Resistance Tube, Dumbbells (2-3 weight sizes), Jump Rope, 12-18" Step.

*Beginners* do 2 times a week-*Intermediate* 3 times a week-*Advanced* 3-4 times a week.

Week 1	Week 2
For weight loss the goal is to work up to doing cardio five days a week.	
<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 30 min – 3 days this week (ie Tues, Thurs, Sat)	<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 32 min – 3 days this week (ie Tues, Thurs, Sat)

(See page 86 for How-to Exercise Descriptions)

<b>Strength Training:</b> Do 1 Set at each station.	<b>Strength Training:</b> Do 1 Set at each station.
<b>Station 1</b>	<b>Station 1</b>
Hop Scotch - 20 sec. 12 - Seated Bent Row 12 - Plank Tango ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	Hop Scotch - 20 sec. 12 - Seated Bent Row 12 - Plank Tango ~active rest (march) 60 sec~
<b>Station 2</b>	<b>Station 2</b>
12 - Push ups 12 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	12 - Push ups 12 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press ~active rest (march) 60 sec~
<b>Station 3</b>	<b>Station 3</b>
Hop Scotch - 20 sec. 12 - Flys /Pullover Combo 12 - Alternating V Spread Abs ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	Hop Scotch - 20 sec. 12 - Flys /Pullover Combo 12 - Alternating V Spread Abs ~active rest (march) 60 sec~
<b>Station 4</b>	<b>Station 4</b>
Hoops - 20 sec. 12 - Side Squat w/front raises 12 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	Hoops - 20 sec. 12 - Side Squat w/front raises 12 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 60 sec~
<b>Station 5</b>	<b>Station 5</b>
Hoops - 20 sec. 12 - Pull Down & calf raises 12 - Side Bends ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	Hoops - 20 sec. 12 - Pull Down & calf raises 12 - Side Bends ~active rest (march) 60 sec~
<b>Station 6</b>	<b>Station 6</b>
12 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press 12 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	12 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press 12 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball ~active rest (march) 60 sec~
<b>High Intensity*</b>	<b>High Intensity*</b>
2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~	2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~

\* High intensity means go hard at Perceived Exertion level 7-8.

\*Active Rest means march, jog or dance in place

## Exercise Escalator: *Keep up the good work!*

Week 3	Week 4
For weight loss the goal is to work up to doing cardio five days a week.	
<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 34 min – 3 days this week (ie Tues, Thurs, Sat)	<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 36 min – 3 days this week (ie Tues, Thurs, Sat)
<b>Do 1 Set at each station.</b>	<b>Do 1 Set at each station.</b>
<b>Strength Training:</b> This week increase timers to 30 seconds and increase reps as noted.	<b>Strength Training:</b> This week decrease active rest.
<b>Station 1</b>	<b>Station 1</b>
Bunny Hops (Side to Side) - 30 sec. 15 - Push ups 15 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	Bunny Hops (Side to Side) - 30 sec. 15 - Push ups 15 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 2</b>	<b>Station 2</b>
Bunny Hop (Side to Side) - 30 sec. 15 - Seated Bent Row 15 - Flys /Pullover Combo ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	Bunny Hop (Side to Side) - 30 sec. 15 - Seated Bent Row 15 - Flys /Pullover Combo ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 3</b>	<b>Station 3</b>
15 - Side Squat w/front raises 15 - Pull Down & calf raises Hoops - 30 sec. ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	15 - Side Squat w/front raises 15 - Pull Down & calf raises Hoops - 30 sec. ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 4</b>	<b>Station 4</b>
15 - Plank Tango 15 - Alternating V Spread Abs Hoops - 30 sec. 15 - Side Bends ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	15 - Plank Tango 15 - Alternating V Spread Abs Hoops - 30 sec. 15 - Side Bends ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 5</b>	<b>Station 5</b>
Bunny Hop (Side to Side) - 30 sec 15 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 15 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 15 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press ~active rest (march) 60 sec~	Bunny Hop (Side to Side) - 30 sec 15 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 15 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 15 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>High Intensity*</b>	<b>High Intensity*</b>
2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~	2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~

\* High intensity means go hard at Perceived Exertion level 7-8. \* Active Rest means march, jog or dance in place

## Exercise Escalator: *Be patient – Stay focused*

Week 5	Week 6
For weight loss the goal is to work up to doing cardio five days a week.	
<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 36 min – 4 days this week	<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 38 min – 4 days this week
<b>Do 2 Sets at each station.</b>	<b>Do 2 Sets at each station.</b>
<b>Strength Training:</b>	<b>Strength Training:</b>
<b>Station 1</b>	<b>Station 1</b>
Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Flys /Pullover Combo 15 - Corkscrew 15 - Pull Down & calf raises ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Flys /Pullover Combo 15 - Corkscrew 15 - Pull Down & calf raises ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 2</b>	<b>Station 2</b>
Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Push ups 15 - Seated Crunches 15 - Tube Shuffle ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Push ups 15 - Seated Crunches 15 - Tube Shuffle ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 3</b>	<b>Station 3</b>
12 - Jump Squats 15 - Seated Bent Row 15 - Lunge freeze w/curls 15 - Bicycle Abs ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	12 - Jump Squats 15 - Seated Bent Row 15 - Lunge freeze w/curls 15 - Bicycle Abs ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 4</b>	<b>Station 4</b>
Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 15 - Plank Tango 15 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 15 - Plank Tango 15 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>Station 5</b>	<b>Station 5</b>
Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 15 - Side Squat w/front raises ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Jumping Jacks - 30 sec. 15 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 15 - Side Squat w/front raises ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
<b>High Intensity*</b>	<b>High Intensity*</b>
2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~	2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~

\* High intensity means go hard at Perceived Exertion level 7-8.

\*Active Rest means march, jog or dance in place

## Exercise Escalator: *Take notice—A Body Change is Coming...*

Week 7	Week 8
For weight loss the goal is to work up to doing cardio five days a week.	
<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 40 min – 4 days this week Increase resistance, increase pace or add hills	<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 40 min – 4 days this week *Maintain new intensity levels

Do 2 Sets at each station.	Do 2 Sets at each station.
<b>Strength Training:</b> This week increase weight by 3-5lbs. and decrease reps as noted	<b>Strength Training:</b> This week increase timers to 40 sec.
Station 1	Station 1
Lateral Hop n Touch - 30 sec. 10 - Seated Bent Row 15 - Jump Squats 20 - Bicycle Abs ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Lateral Hop n Touch - 40 sec. 10 - Seated Bent Row 15 - Jump Squats 20 - Bicycle Abs ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
Station 2	Station 2
Lateral Hop n Touch - 30 sec. 12 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 10 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press 10 - Ham Curls ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Lateral Hop n Touch - 40 sec. 12 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 10 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press 10 - Ham Curls ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
Station 3	Station 3
20 - Corkscrew 10 - Plank Walk 20 - Tube Shuffle 10 - Side Squat w/front raises ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	20 - Corkscrew 10 - Plank Walk 20 - Tube Shuffle 10 - Side Squat w/front raises ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
Station 4	Station 4
Bunny Hops (Side to Side) - 30 sec. 10 - Butt Burner 15 - Push ups 10 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Bunny Hops (Side to Side) - 40 sec. 10 - Butt Burner 15 - Push ups 10 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
Station 5	Station 5
Bunny Hops (Side to Side) - 30 sec 18 - Pull Down & calf raises 15 - Lunge freeze w/ curls 10 - Flys /Pullover Combo ~active rest (march) 45 sec~	Bunny Hops (Side to Side) - 40 sec 18 - Pull Down & calf raises 15 - Lunge freeze w/ curls 10 - Flys /Pullover Combo ~active rest (march) 45 sec~
High Intensity*	High Intensity*
2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~	2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~

\* High intensity means go hard at Perceived Exertion level 7-8.    \*Active Rest means march, jog or dance in place

## Exercise Escalator: *Hang in there!*

Week 9	Week 10
For weight loss the goal is to work up to doing cardio five days a week.	
<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 40 min - 4 days this week *Maintain new intensity levels (Do intervals 2 of the 4 days)	<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 42 min - 4 days this week *Maintain new intensity levels (Do intervals 2 of the 4 days)

### Do 2 Sets at each station.

### Do 2 Sets at each station.

<b>Strength Training:</b> This week decrease active rest to 30 secs.	
<b>Station 1</b>	<b>Station 1</b>
Lateral Hop n Touch - 40 sec 18 - Pull Down & calf raises 18 - Push ups 10 - Seated Bent Row 20 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	Lateral Hop n Touch - 40 sec 18 - Pull Down & calf raises 18 - Push ups 10 - Seated Bent Row 20 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>Station 2</b>	<b>Station 2</b>
15 - Jump Squats 12 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 10 - Butt Burner 10 - Ham Curls ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	15 - Jump Squats 12 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 10 - Butt Burner 10 - Ham Curls ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>Station 3</b>	<b>Station 3</b>
10 - Side Squat w/front raises 20 - Corkscrew 20 - Rock & Roll Crunches 10 - Plank Walk ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	10 - Side Squat w/front raises 20 - Corkscrew 20 - Rock & Roll Crunches 10 - Plank Walk ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>Station 4</b>	<b>Station 4</b>
Lateral Hop n Touch - 40 sec 20 - Lunge freeze w/ curls 10 - Flies /Pullover Combo 10 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 10 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	Lateral Hop n Touch - 40 sec 20 - Lunge freeze w/ curls 10 - Flies /Pullover Combo 10 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 10 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>High Intensity*</b>	<b>High Intensity*</b>
2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~	2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~

\* High intensity means go hard at Perceived Exertion level 7-8.      \*Active Rest means march, jog or dance in place

## Exercise Escalator: Home Stretch – BIG Payoffs

Week 11	Week 12 & 13
For weight loss the goal is to work up to doing cardio five days a week.	
<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 44 min - 4 days this week *Maintain new intensity levels *Do circuit B or C 5th day of week	<b>Cardio:</b> Do at least 45 min - 4 days this week *Maintain new intensity levels *Do circuit B or C 5th day of week

Do 2 Sets at each station.	Do 3 Sets at each station.
<b>Strength Training:</b> This week increase timer to 50 sec, Increase reps as noted	
<b>Station 1</b>	<b>Station 1</b>
Jump Rope - 50 sec 18 - Push ups 12 - Flys /Pullover Combo 12 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 12 - Butt Burner ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	Jump Rope - 50 sec 18 - Push ups 12 - Flys /Pullover Combo 12 - Tricep Kickbacks/on ball 12 - Butt Burner ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>Station 2</b>	<b>Station 2</b>
20 - Jump Squats 20 - Lunge freeze w/ curls 12 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press 12 - Side Squat w/front raises ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	20 - Jump Squats 20 - Lunge freeze w/ curls 12 - Wall Sit w/Curl & Press 12 - Side Squat w/front raises ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>Station 3</b>	<b>Station 3</b>
Jumping Jacks - 50 sec 12 - Seated Bent Row 20 - Pull Down & calf raises 20 - Tube Shuffle 25 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	Jumping Jacks - 50 sec 12 - Seated Bent Row 20 - Pull Down & calf raises 20 - Tube Shuffle 25 - Seated Crunches ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>Station 4</b>	<b>Station 4</b>
15 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 12 - Plank Walk 25 - Corkscrew 25 - Rock & Roll Crunches ~active rest (march) 30 sec~	15 - Step ups w/ Shoulder press 12 - Plank Walk 25 - Corkscrew 25 - Rock & Roll Crunches ~active rest (march) 30 sec~
<b>High Intensity*</b>	<b>High Intensity*</b>
2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~	2 min - Cycling or running in place ~ Cool Down ~

\* High intensity means go hard at Perceived Exertion level 7-8.

\*Active Rest means march, jog or dance in place

## Food Chart Summary (See page 116)

### CARBOHYDRATES

I. Protein	II. Non-Starchy Veggies	III. Starchy Carbs	IV. Fruit	V. Good Fat
Best Protein Sources Are:	Best Non-Starchy Veggies	Best Starchy Veggies	Best Fruit Sources Are:	Best Fat Sources Are:
Cod	Arugula	Acorn Squash	<b>LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX</b>	Almonds (Dry Roasted)
Cottage Cheese	Asparagus	Adzuki Beans*	Blackberries	Avocado - 1/4 Svgs
Egg Whites	Bamboo Shoots	Artichokes	Blueberries	Cod Liver Oil
Game	Bean Sprouts	Black Beans*	Boysenberries	Flaxseed Oil
Halibut	Beet Greens	Butternut Squash	Elderberries	Macadamia Nuts
Lamb	Bell Peppers	Corn	Gooseberries	Olive Oil
Lean Chicken	Broccoli	French Bean*	Raspberries	Olives
Lean Red Meats	Brussels Sprouts	Garbanzo Beans*	Strawberries	Peanut Butter
Lean Turkey	Cabbage	(or Chick Peas)		Pistachios
Mackerel	Cassava	Kidney Beans*	<b>MODERATE GLYCEMIC</b>	Sesame Seeds
Other Cold Water Fish	Cauliflower	Leeks	<b>INDEX</b>	Walnuts or Walnut Oil
Quinoa	Celery	Legumes*	Apples	
Salmon	Chives	Lentils*	Apricots	
Sardines	Collard Greens	Mung Beans	Avocados	
Shellfish	Cucumber	Navy Beans*	Cherries	
Tempeh/Tofu	Dandelion	Okra	Grapefruit	
Tuna	Greens	Pinto Beans*	Kiwi Fruit	
Whey Protein	Eggplant	Potatoes	Lemon	
Yogurt	Endive	Pumpkin	Limes	
	Fennel	Split Peas*	Melons	
	Garlic	Sweet Potato	Nectarines	
	Ginger Root	Turnips	Peaches	
	Green Beans	White Beans*	Pear	
	Hearts of Palm	Winter Squash	Persimmons	
	Jalapeno Peppers	Yams	Plums	
	Kale		Pomegranates	
	Lettuce	<b>Starchy Whole Grain Carbs</b>	Tangerines	
	Mushrooms			
	Mustard Greens		<b>HIGH GLYCEMIC</b>	
	Onions	Brown Rice	<b>INDEX</b>	
	Parsley	Brown Rice Pasta	Banana	
	Radishes	Corn Tortillas	Grapes	
	Snap Beans	(1 Serving)	Mango	
	Snow Peas	Oatmeal	Pineapple	
	Spinach	Sprouted Bread	Watermelon	
	Summer Squash	(1 Serving)		
	Swiss Chard	Whole Grain Barley		
	Tomatoes	Whole Wheat		
	Turnip Greens	Bread, Crackers,		
	Watercress	Tortillas Etc.		
		Whole Wheat Pasta		

\* THESE ARE ALSO A PROTEIN SOURCE

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for your free digital copy of my companion guide!  
This guide will give you extra tips and tricks to help you  
in your journey to “Take Back Your Life”!

Enjoy!

