

THE
WHOLE LOTTA
LIVING
Guide

for You and Your Family

by Douglas Haddad



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Whole Lotta Living Guide for You and Your Family is intended to provide helpful and informative material for healthy adults and their children. This book does not provide medical advice. Please consult a medical or health professional before you engage in any new exercise, nutrition, supplementation or wellness program. The author specifically disclaims all responsibility for any liability or losses, personal or otherwise, that is included as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the information that is provided in this book.

Hello from Douglas Haddad



Thank you for visiting my website and taking the opportunity to receive this free guide intended to create a happier and healthier you and your family.

My Story

I am Douglas Haddad, an award-winning middle school educator, best-selling author and wellness expert dedicated to helping you and your family THRIVE. Helping children and their families is my specialty and what I have done for the past 20+ years. I have taught over 3,000 students and worked with children from all different backgrounds and abilities not only as a teacher, but also as a coach, mentor, tutor, nutritionist and an inspirational speaker. I have spoken with parents to help put together specific plans of action to get their children on track to social, emotional, academic and physical well-being. So, what inspired me to become the person I am today? Well, here is my story.

Growing up, I experienced being both mentally and physically bullied by my peers. In elementary school, I was dragged numerous times to the back of the bus and physically abused. Even in my own neighborhood I didn't feel safe. A group of kids used to tackle me, put me in headlocks, and even hit me with a baseball bat.

Middle school was rough as well. I was socially isolated at lunch, regularly called derogatory names and experienced vandalism to my home. Bullying continued into high school and took on a different form, as I was intentionally outcast by select members of the varsity basketball team. However, no matter how tough my experiences were in school, I never followed the crowd. Those encounters made me a strong person and fueled my desire to become the individual I am today and help young minds grow and develop and also inspire people to overcome obstacles to live a happy, healthy and fulfilled life.

The social environment for a child can be quite daunting and being socially outcast and feeling rejected can leave a young person emotionally fragile, which can affect them later into adulthood. To this day, the core of my practice as an educator is rooted in the three Cs: **connections, care and compassion**. These are the key ingredients that are at the core of my passions and the work that I do as a teacher, in my literary work, and in the health and wellness arena.

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

~ Frederick Douglass

How My Shift in Health Transformed Me

After high school, I attended college where I received my bachelor's degree in biology/secondary education and master's degree in biology. Upon graduation, I was fortunate enough to get a job as a science teacher in one of the top school districts in Connecticut. Life seemed to be progressing in a normal manner (or so I thought) when all of the sudden, on five separate occasions, I was rushed to the hospital after going into anaphylactic shock. After a number of blood and food allergy tests came back normal, one doctor said that the reactions I had were most likely my body's way of responding to chronic stress.

Upon hearing that news, I immediately immersed myself into learning all kinds of stress-reduction techniques and began practicing different forms of meditation on a daily basis. I became a certified Shamballa and Usui Reiki Master, learned Tai Chi Ch'uan, obtained certification as a NASM Performance Enhancement Specialist and wrote my first book in health and wellness, all while having a full-time job as a science teacher.

I have spent years researching topics in health and wellness. I also received my second master's degree in human nutrition. All of this led me to discover the core components that contribute to a person's health and happiness. I have applied these principles to my daily living, which have become the basis for **The Whole Lotta Living Guide for You and Your Family**.

This free guide provides you and your family with the core components for healthy living. The intent of this guide is to focus on what is most important for you and your family's social, emotional, mental and physical well-being, all while creating a living space that is happy and healthy. This guide will walk you through each of the five components that make up your overall well-being and provide you with a solid foundation to get you and your family started down the road to a **Whole Lotta Living!**

Happy Discoveries!

Doug

What is Whole Lotta Living?

You can think of “Whole Lotta Living” as a “whole-istic” way of living that is comprised of five fundamental components:

Healthy Home + Eat Well + Move Well + Sleep Well + Think Well

When these five pieces are put together, they form the basis of what I like to call your “Super Health Status.” As you read through each of these components, you will be able to immediately apply useful tips and strategies to help get you and your family on the road to achieving overall wellness. This guide will also serve as a checkpoint along each of your super health stops to see which areas you and your family are and aren’t getting a whole lotta living in.



How you feel on a daily basis is comprised of the cumulative effect of where you spend most of your **time**, how you **think**, the consistent amount of daily **sleep** you get, how physically **active** you are, and the **food** you put into your body. One part leads to the other, which leads to the other, which (you guessed it!) leads to the other – in no particular order. It makes sense that when one part of the equation is off, the other parts get disrupted.

Food is the fuel that powers your body. It provides the energy for the various chemical reactions to take place and for all body systems to work top notch. If the quality of fuel you put into your system is low, the output performance is going to be less than optimal. Consequently, with poor fuel input, you will not have the necessary energy to perform or complete all kinds of important functions in your body correctly. Just like a car, your system will misfire and behave unpredictably. When you exercise, your body produces natural painkillers called endorphins that give you a natural high. On top of that, if you don’t get a good night’s sleep on a regular basis, your risk of developing depression or anxiety significantly increases. Ultimately, with a chronic imbalance of those factors, your health is caught in a vicious circle, putting you at risk for a combination of psychological and physical problems. When things are good, we tend to neglect or not pay much attention to them, but man...when things start to go awry, we wish we could turn back the clock and do things differently.

That is what this guide is for: **you and your family’s path to live a happy, healthy, less stressed out, and more fulfilled life**, while juggling the daily responsibilities and facing obstacles along the way. Even though Forrest Gump told us that “life is like a box of chocolates – you never know what you are going to get,” I will add that - if you don’t ever check the “ingredients” to those chocolates, you may end up finding out what you don’t want to get.

Knowledge is power and as the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates once stated:

“To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom.”

HEALTHY HOME

Maintaining a healthy home and living space is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and the well-being of your family and pets. You may not be aware of the different hazardous and toxic chemicals that could be lurking throughout your home. The consequences of long-term exposure to indoor pollutants include severe body system malfunctions and even cancer. It is important to identify specific areas of concern within your home to help build a safe environment for you and your family.



Personal Hygiene and Beauty Products

Many personal hygiene products, such as hairsprays, gels, deodorants, shampoos, conditioners, body washes and lotions contain harmful chemicals and toxic ingredients that can have a negative effect on your body. I recommend to choose products that are fragrance-free. Fragrances are mixtures of chemical ingredients that are either unknown to or bad for your health.

Be on the lookout for the following chemicals in the beauty and personal care products you buy as they have been thought to be endocrine disruptors, reproductive toxins and even carcinogens (cancer-causing agents):

- Sulfates
- Parabens
- Triclosan
- Polyethylene Glycol (PEG)
- Polysorbates
- Phenoxyethanol
- Potassium Sorbate
- Quaternium-15
- Dimethicone
- Propylene Glycol

Dangers in Cosmetics

Additionally, there are other chemicals to be on the lookout for in cosmetics.

- Lead (and other heavy metals, such as arsenic and mercury) are found in a wide variety of personal care products, such as lipstick, eyeliner, nail color and whitening toothpaste.
- Ethanolamines are ammonia compounds used in cosmetics as emulsifiers or foaming agents and are potential carcinogens. They are listed as MEA, DEA and TEA.



Cleaning Supplies

There are many inexpensive, non-toxic products that are safe for your home and the environment. When cleaning the kitchen, windows, walls, floors and bathrooms, here are some of my recommendations for cleaning supplies that you can use, in combination with others (as well as with water), that will get the job done - with you and your family's safety in mind.

- **Baking soda** – absorbs strong food odors, removes dirt and cleans countertops, stainless steel sinks, microwaves, cooking utensils and range hoods.
- **Lemon juice** – cleans hard to remove food on dishes, stains from butcher block countertops and wooden cutting boards, deodorizes the garbage disposal and polishes copper cookware and cooking utensils.
- **White vinegar** – wipes off a dirty faucet, kills bacteria, cleans the shelves and walls of the refrigerator, deodorizes the kitchen and storage containers, lessens or removes stains from coffee/tea cups.
- **Olive oil** – cleans cast iron cookware, shines stainless steel or brass, removes paint from your skin and removes stickers or price tags.
- **Coarse salt** – cleans sink drains, stained cups, greasy pans, brass, copper, rust, and deodorizes the inside of your refrigerator.

Laundry Detergents

There is a plethora of eco-friendly laundry detergents on the market, which can make it difficult to choose the best one for removing stains, while still containing the safest and most eco-friendly ingredients derived mainly from plants.

Food Preparation and Storage

When it comes to storing your food, avoid plastic containers. When I store foods in the refrigerator, I put them into different size pyrex glass containers. All plastics contain harmful chemicals that can leach into the food that it is stored in and can cause disruption to the functions of hormones in your body, especially estrogen.

Just a quick word on reheating your food. Never do so in a plastic container. Rather, transfer the food to a glass or ceramic dish. Limit your microwave use and heat up your food in a toaster oven, on top of the kitchen stove (mainly for soups) or in a conventional/convection oven.

Placing your food on aluminum foil and putting it in the oven raises concerns as well, especially in acidic and spicy food where the amount of leaching has been found to be high. Studies have shown that high concentrations of aluminum have been detected in the brain tissue of patients with Alzheimer's disease.⁹ Therefore, be aware of your cumulative use of aluminum in your cookware, silverware and foil.

When preparing your meals, you want to take into consideration cookware that is free of toxic pigments and heavy metals. Avoid going the convenient route and using pans that are non-stick (e.g. Teflon) as they contain a synthetic compound called polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) that is known to produce toxic fumes at high temperatures, which may kill pet birds and result in flu-like symptoms for humans.⁵ Despite it being a little harder to clean, opt for the safer alternatives of stainless steel and cast iron.

Bedding and Beyond

When it comes to choosing the right bedsheets, pillows, pillowcases and mattresses for your home, you want to look for chemical-free and organic-based options. First off, avoid purchasing bedding materials that contain synthetic fabrics and fibers. These possess toxic chemicals (e.g. polyurethane foam) that can be released as volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Furthermore, there are a group of synthetic chemicals called PBDEs, which act as fire retardants. These are added to conventional mattresses, furniture, carpets and curtains.

Natural fibers, however, are safer options and include: natural latex, wool, organic cotton, silk, hemp and buckwheat. However, just because something is called "organic" doesn't mean that it is also "chemical-free." Given the number of hours you will be using your mattress, it is important that you do your homework and check out all materials thoroughly before you make these purchases.

Furthermore, when taking showers, the water you use should be filtered to remove harmful chemicals such as bacteria and fungi. A shower filter is easily installed and should last for at least six months.

EAT WELL

Food is fuel. Garbage in equals garbage out, resulting in an inefficiently working machine. It is true that what you consume, in large part, affects your mood and your overall feeling. To keep your mood and energy levels up, it is important to fuel yourself and your children with a healthy diet.

Many foods today that children consume are highly processed and laden with sugar in many hidden forms, such as many breakfast cereals, energy drinks and products that contain high fructose corn syrup. This is a major contributor to why obesity and other health ailments are striking more youth today than past generations. Today's processed food supply is saturated with all kinds of sugar that can throw blood glucose levels out of whack. Food manufacturers prey upon youth because they realize how addictive sugar can be, as they continue to add it to an increasing number of food products.

If you are reading this thinking, "How am I going to get my child to like 'healthy foods' because he or she just loves candy and cookies so much?"... then worry no more!



"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

~ Hippocrates (ancient Greek physician)

WHOLE LOTTA HEALTHY EATING Tips for You and Your Family:

- Stock your home with nutritious food on a regular basis. What is readily available is what is consumed.
- Provide some options for your child to be actively involved in selecting and preparing nutritious and delicious foods.
- Your child should eat breakfast each day. It sets the tone for the rest of their day.
- Educate yourself on what is healthy eating. The general rule of thumb when planning meals is to follow the updated food plate.

Stock your home with alternative sweet, healthy foods. Replace candy bars, cookies and cakes with natural sugars such as fruits, which contain fiber to help process the sugar better (and it's a much lower concentration of fructose). This will help stabilize your child's hormones, which in turn will increase energy levels and overall mood, stabilize blood sugar, sharpen memory and improve concentration.

The Major Nutrients Involved in Eating for a WHOLE LOTTA HEALTH

Carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals are the major nutrients found in food and are necessary for optimal body functioning. **Carbohydrates** are your body's preferred energy source (4 calories/gram) and are found in the forms of starch, sugar and fiber. It is recommended that most people's carbohydrate consumption be between 45 and 65 percent of total caloric intake, coming from the healthy carbs comprised of whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes, as opposed to the refined, higher glycemic index carbs, including most breads, crackers, cookies, pastries, candies and ice cream.

Fats are the most energy dense of all the macronutrients (9 calories/gram) and are classified into the following categories:

Unsaturated fats come mainly from plant-based foods (e.g. nuts, seeds, different types of oil) and are typically liquid at room temperature. **Saturated fats** come primarily from animal-based foods (e.g. poultry, beef, dairy products) and are typically solid at room temperature. However, some saturated fats come from plant-based sources, including coconut, palm and palm kernel oils. **Trans fats** are chemically altered fats that are the most harmful and should be avoided. Look for the words “partially hydrogenated” on nutrition labels to best identify foods containing trans fat (e.g. commercially baked cookies, crackers, pies and fried foods). It is recommended to limit your intake of total fat to around 20 to 35 percent of your total calories.

Proteins, like carbohydrates, contain 4 calories/gram and are utilized for a multitude of bodily functions, such as building and repairing tissues, speeding up chemical reactions, transporting molecules around the body and fighting disease. Between 10 and 35 percent of your calories should come from protein. Major sources of protein include meat, dairy products, eggs, fish, nuts and legumes.

Vitamins are an important part of food, classified based on how your body absorbs them. **Water-soluble** vitamins -- B-complex and C -- dissolve in water prior to absorption.

Fat-soluble vitamins -- A, D, E and K -- dissolve in fat to be absorbed and stored for later use. Vitamins from natural food sources are absorbed more efficiently than vitamins in supplements.

Minerals play an incredibly important role in preventing chronic ailments and living a healthy life. The following minerals play crucial roles in your overall well-being:

- **Calcium** – bone strength, nerve and muscle function.
- **Magnesium** – nerve and muscle function, bone health, carbohydrate metabolism, energy production, blood glucose regulation, cardiovascular health.

- **Phosphorus** – aids in bone and teeth development and strength, helps maintain the body's pH balance.
- **Potassium** – skeletal, muscular, circulatory and digestive system functioning.
- **Sodium** – nerve and muscle function, maintenance of fluid balance.
- **Copper** – works with iron to help the body form red blood cells, aids in iron absorption and healthy nervous, circulatory, immune and skeletal systems.*
- **Iron** – aids in the proper growth, metabolism, functioning of the respiratory system and overall cardiovascular health.*
- **Zinc** – sensory, reproductive, digestive and immune system functioning, aids in wound healing.*

*Other trace elements: boron, cobalt, chromium, fluorine, iodine, manganese, molybdenum, selenium, silicon, vanadium

My recommended **WHOLE LOTTA FOODS**, which have a good balance of all the nutrients:

- **Whole grains** (wild or brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, barley, whole wheat pasta, unrefined breads and cereals – 3-4 servings a day).
- **Beans, legumes, nuts & seeds** (2-3 servings a day).
- **Fish** (wild caught salmon, haddock, flounder, mahi mahi – 3x a week).
- **Fruits** (3-4 servings a day).
- **Vegetables** (eaten abundantly).
- **Poultry** (2x a week).
- **Beef** (organic grass-fed – once a week).
- **Oils** (extra virgin olive/coconut/flaxseed/avocado – use daily in moderation).

Gut Health

Your intestinal tract is inhabited with a variety of different bacteria species (both good and bad). Consuming traditional fermented foods is crucial to maintaining healthy digestion and warding off pathogenic (disease-causing) bacteria.

Here are some fermented foods to include in your diet:

- Yogurt (made from goat's or sheep's milk)
- Homemade sauerkraut
- Pickles
- Miso
- Kimchi
- Kefir
- Apple cider vinegar (Bragg Organic - With The 'Mother')

Happy Foods

Beyond natural sugars found in fruits and vegetables, here are some super foods that I recommend, which can boost you and your child's spirits to feel happier and calmer throughout the day:

- **Vitamin D rich foods** – (milk, salmon, mackerel, tuna, egg yolks, etc.). Vitamin D contributes toward healthy bones and teeth. It aids in calcium absorption, a high-functioning immune system and has a protective effect against multiple diseases and conditions. It also boosts serotonin levels, which contribute to feelings of well-being.



- **Chocolate** – (organic, fair trade, non-GMO dark chocolate (at least 70%). Research suggests that chocolate has many beneficial effects on one's health, especially a piece of dark chocolate.⁶ It contains antioxidants (helping to prevent against cancer, heart attacks and other circulatory system malfunctions), lowers bad cholesterol levels and serves as a brain stimulator.

- **Nuts** – (almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios, Brazil nuts, macadamias). Research has shown that nuts benefit in helping increase life span. They are best eaten raw or dry roasted. Nuts are one of the best natural sources of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin E, B2, folate, protein, fiber and essential minerals such as magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, copper and selenium. Grab a handful for your health!



- **Water** – drink at least 6-8 glasses a day (equivalent to a 2-liter bottle). Water is important for optimal brain function. Drink throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty. It is also an energy booster and helps flush out any built up waste products in the body that would otherwise slow down your metabolism making you feel sluggish. Avoid drinking water from plastic bottles — as harmful chemicals from the plastic can leach into the water. Instead, consume filtered water and store in a glass water bottle while on the go.

Are You at Risk?

Millions of Americans could be at an increased risk of getting cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, hypertension, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and certain cancers by consuming the wrong types of food. Even "All Natural" foods put on a disguise and use highly processed ingredients that can be dangerous to your health.



Have you ever wondered why a pre-packaged food has a longer expiration date than the same food made from scratch, which spoils in a matter of days? Just look at the ingredients listed on the nutritional label. A general rule of thumb is that foods with more than five ingredients usually contain chemical additives and preservatives. If you check the food label and see words like "sulfites," "nitrites," "nitrates," "butylated," that indicates that a chemical preservative has been added to enhance the shelf life or make the food look fresh by turning it a certain color.

Avoid Foods with These Ingredients

Nitrates and Nitrites

Nitrates and nitrites are often found in processed meats such as deli meats, hot dogs, bacon, frozen meat dinners and breakfast meats. In food, nitrate salts can react to form compounds called nitrosamines, which are problematic because they can be carcinogenic by reacting at the cellular level and altering gene expression — thus causing DNA damage.

High Fructose Corn Syrup

High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is the main ingredient in soft drinks and is also hidden in foods like bread and pasta sauce. Studies have shown that large doses of HFCS can cause damage to the gastrointestinal tract and allow toxic byproducts produced from bacteria flora to pass into the blood stream and trigger an inflammatory response that is at the root of obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, dementia and accelerated aging.⁸

MSG

Another chemical to avoid, which is found in countless foods in the grocery stores, restaurants, school cafeterias and used to add flavor, is monosodium glutamate (or MSG for short). It is tricky to really know whether MSG is in your food because it goes by so many other hidden names. MSG is commercially added to many foods, despite evidence that these excitotoxins can penetrate certain areas of the brain and cause damage. This chemical has also been linked to possible eye damage, headaches, migraines, fatigue, dizziness and depression.¹⁵

Here is a short list of common foods that contain MSG:

- Fast food
- Canned soups
- Crackers
- Soy sauce
- Many cold cuts
- Flavored and salty chips
- Gravy
- Dipping sauces
- Chicken and sausage products

How to Choose Clean Food

Keep yourself and your family healthy with super foods packed with nutritional power. When you go to your local supermarket, the easiest tip to remember when shopping for these healthy foods is to travel along the outer perimeter of the store. There you will find foods that contain the greatest amount of nutrients,

including fresh fruits, vegetables, fish, dairy products and meats. These foods are the healthiest and should be primarily consumed.



Whether you are shopping at a supermarket or a farmer's market, keep in mind the top 10 signs for selecting a “super healthy food” for you and your family:

1. It is **organic-based, preferably USDA certified organic**.
2. It is grown without pesticides and chemical fertilizers.
3. It does not contain any added growth hormones or antibiotics.
4. It does not contain any artificial flavors, food dyes, chemical additives or preservatives.
5. It is fresh, not expired.
6. It does not contain added salt or unhealthy trans fat. Avoid products that contain the words “partially hydrogenated” on the label.
7. It does not contain an exhaustive list of ingredients (preferably five or less).
8. It is **wild caught**, not farm raised (for fish).
9. It is produced by obeying the laws of nature. Animals are humanely raised and fed their natural diets (pasture-raised poultry; 100% grass-fed beef).
10. It is **not genetically engineered**. My home state of Connecticut is the pioneer state to require labeling of GMO foods. Food safety advocates hope this sparks a nationwide march toward all foods having these labels.

By educating yourself on how to accurately identify a “super healthy food” next time you are at the store, you will be able to avoid sabotaging your healthy eating plan and provide you and your family with the proper nourishment for optimal health.

Healthy Snack Options

When you are looking for a little pick me up, ditch the caffeine and high-sugar foods as much as possible. Instead, pack your pantry with snacks that pack a wallop of protein, fibers, vitamins and minerals to help nourish your body. Be aware that if the food comes already packaged, it has been processed and stripped of much of its nutrient value, and given a variety of additives and preservatives to boot.



Here are some healthy options to choose from for you and your kids:

- Fresh fruit (bananas, apples, pears, grapes, berries, pineapple, etc.).
- Nuts (almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc.).
- Seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, sesame, chia, hemp, flax).
- Veggies (celery sticks, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, sliced green and red peppers) with hummus.
- Homemade guacamole with tortilla chips.

Breakfast Options for You and Your Child:

- Toast with almond butter and banana.
- 1-2 hard boiled eggs with a piece of whole grain toast.
- Oatmeal (steel-cut, rolled).
- Whole grain cereals.
- Veggie omelette.

My Personal Favorites:

#1 – Sit Down & Relax for a While Veggie omelette (tomato, spinach, onions, peppers) with a slice or two of whole grain bread and a side of fresh fruit.

#2 – I Have 20 Minutes

A cup of oatmeal (preferably steel-cut or rolled oats) sprinkled with flaxseed or chia seed and topped with fresh fruit.

#3 – On the Road in 10

A smoothie packed with protein (peanut or almond butter, flax/hemp seed, etc.), fresh or frozen fruits (banana, strawberries, blueberries, etc.) and lots of greens (spinach, kale and chard).

Lunch Options for You and Your Child:

- A sandwich made with whole grain bread, lettuce, tomato, a piece of chicken/turkey or a plant-based option, such as chickpea salad. Avoid deli meats as they contain different preservatives and additives and high levels of sodium.
- Leftovers from last night's dinner.
- Salads (remember to add some protein, such as chicken, fish, turkey, lentils, beans, nuts and seeds). Use extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar for a dressing.

My Personal Favorites:

#1 – Finger Lickin' Good

Grilled chicken sandwich on whole grain bread (made with lettuce, tomato, onion, avocado, roasted peppers and honey mustard) with oven baked sweet potato fries on the side.

#2 – Super Salad

A pre-made salad with sliced chicken (or salmon), broccoli, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, avocado, a hard boiled egg, slivered almonds, cranberries, extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar.



#3 – Keepin' It Simple

Greek yogurt (with fresh fruit, nuts and some granola added).

Dinner Options for You and Your Child:

- Divide your plate into three sections. Half of your plate should contain vegetables - lightly steamed or raw (2 servings), a quarter of your plate should be protein-based and the other quarter should be carbohydrate-based.
- Add a healthy soup, such as minestrone, butternut squash, vegetable, lentil or chicken.

My Personal Favorites:

#1 – Spice It Up

Chicken curry made with onions, garlic, tomatoes, coconut milk and served over brown rice. Delicious!

#2 – Keeping It Simple Tonight Rotisserie chicken with a side of mashed cauliflower and a serving of green beans.

#3 – Long Day, Late Night Sandwich

Avocado sandwich on whole grain bread or whole wheat pita bread. Add some chopped celery, broccoli sprouts, shredded carrots, a dash of turmeric, a dab of honey mustard, and sprinkle some black pepper throughout and you are good to go!

MOVE WELL

Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or bogged down with so many responsibilities at work and at home? Do you find it nearly impossible to find time for yourself, let alone get in some physical activity each day? It may not be as difficult as you think.

The Benefits of Exercise

A WHOLE LOTTA MOVING can take place anywhere — by you and your family doing something fun — and the benefits can be reaped from a wide variety of physical activities.

Aerobic Activity

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, healthy adults should be getting at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity per week.¹⁰ The benefits are reaped when the exercises are spread out over the course of the week. Regular physical activity has been shown to regulate mood, reduce depression, decrease pain, improve brain function and strengthen the body's antioxidant defense mechanism. It has also been shown to reduce the risks of Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, diabetes and dementia.¹³

Different aerobic exercises include:

- Brisk walking
- Jogging
- Sprinting
- Swimming
- Biking
- Rowing
- Hiking
- Aerobic/cardio classes
- Dancing
- Kickboxing
- Skiing
- Mowing the lawn/gardening



Strength Training

We have known that resistance (strength) training coupled with cardiovascular (aerobic) training can protect us against a number of chronic diseases as we age. The good news is you don't have to get to a gym to do strength training exercises. Doing push-ups, sit-ups and lifting weights at least twice a week is recommended. Strength training maximizes muscle strength, flexibility, metabolic function and overall athletic performance. In many instances, biological age is reduced by 10 to as many as 20 years and life expectancy is increased.¹¹

Yoga, Pilates & Tai Chi

If one of your goals is to reduce stress, gain flexibility and strengthen your core, then I highly recommend engaging in an activity such as Yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi (**my personal favorite!**) at least once a week. These activities condition the entire body with a balanced blend of stretching, breathing, meditation, relaxation and visualization. They help improve posture, coordination, concentration, reduce stress and help develop lean muscles and strengthen the body's core. I recommend to attend an aerobic center or studio and learn under the supervision of a certified instructor in a small group setting until you begin practicing on your own.

The Science Behind The Benefits of Getting Regular Physical Activity

Maximal heart rate decreases with age, mainly because of a decreased responsiveness to circulating catecholamines, such as epinephrine, norepinephrine and growth hormone. Catecholamines are neurotransmitters that regulate nervous system functions, such as motor control, cognition, memory, emotion and endocrine function.¹⁶

Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between exercise intensity and the release of catecholamines during exercise.¹⁶ As exercise intensity is increased, there is an increase in carbohydrate metabolism (sugar burning). After recovery from high-intensity exercise, there is a shift toward fat oxidation (fat burning). This is where you will witness the results from your hard work.

A study conducted analyzed the exercise habits of some 5,209 Americans over a period of 36 years. Researchers found that those who did a moderate amount of exercise lived 1.3 to 3.7 years longer than those doing very little exercise.¹² This type of activity can raise the HDL levels ("good" cholesterol) by 10%. Regular exercise can also lower insulin sensitivity — a problem with metabolizing blood sugar that is frequently a precursor to diabetes — by up to 80%.

Cardiac output is also increased, thus indicating higher levels of oxygen uptake and transport to the blood vessels throughout the body. As you age, the rate of maximum oxygen intake progressively decreases. This restricts the ability of someone to undertake the normal activities of daily living. An appropriately graded aerobic training program can increase the aerobic power of a 65-year old individual, effectively lowering the biological age of the oxygen transporting system by 20 years.¹¹

"I want to move well and comfortably, and enjoy the world around me."

~ Jack LaLanne (exercise and fitness expert)

How Do I Reap the Most Benefits From My Workout?

You may be asking, "How can I stay younger longer and have the energy to keep up with my child?" The key is to move more and quicken the pace. You don't have to take up residence at the local gym to get a complete workout. Moderate exercise can come from an array of activities, whether it's vigorous gardening or taking a leisurely walk by yourself or with your family. You may also wonder if it is possible to raise your performance up a level or two as you age? Of course you can! The biggest leap forward is by engaging in *vigorous exercise* and the key factor is *intensity*.

Your training heart rate zone is a critical element in exercise

Research indicates that intense interval exercise is more beneficial to the body than long-duration, lower intensity exercise.³ However, to ensure you can achieve this without hurting yourself, you must gradually build up. Always remember to consult your physician before starting any exercise program or if you're over 35 years old and have been inactive for a period of a year or more.

Here is how you breakdown your target heart rate for various intensities:¹¹

220 – (your age) = maximum heart rate
220 – (your age) x (your desired intensity) = heart rate for that intensity level

For a 40-year-old:

220 - 40 = 180 beats/minute (max heart rate)
220 - 40 x 75% intensity = 135 beats/min*

*Intermediate zone

- A low and slow intensity is 60-70% of your maximum heart rate
- An intermediate intensity is 70-80% of your maximum heart rate
- A high intensity is 80-90% of your maximum heart rate

Getting Your Kids More Active

Although children are usually bursting with energy, they oftentimes lack the self-discipline to regularly exercise. As they get older, it may become more challenging to find opportunities for them to get in the required 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Reasons for a drop in activity levels include: increased academic demands, technology, dislike in sports, a lack of active role models and/or lack of participation in a physical-related activity or sports team.

Physically active children are more likely to:

- sleep better,
- be academically motivated,
- be alert with better concentration,
- have stronger muscles and bones,
- be in good cardiovascular shape,
- reduce the risk of developing diseases,
- have a higher self-esteem and a positive outlook on life.

Here are my recommended tips to get your child motivated to become more physically active:

- Limit the “tech time” and set a standard for daily physical activity.
- Provide options for different “activity choices” versus calling it “exercise.” If a child doesn’t like sports, there are a host of other heart-pumping, healthy, non-competitive activities available.
- Provide chores for your child to do around the home that increase activity levels.
- Show physical activity as FUN and engage in different games with your children.
- If the environment isn’t conducive for going outdoors to play, take your child to

an indoor activity. Many areas have free recreation centers that offer a variety of activities, such as swimming, skating, karate, dance and different sports.

- Encourage participation in school-related activities. Allow your child to choose his or her own activity. The more inherently motivated a child is to do the physical activity, the more likely they are to continue doing it.
- Make physical activity a part of your child’s daily routine for 60 minutes a day. All of it doesn’t have to be done in one shot. They can spread it out over the course of the day.

Family Fun Physical Activities

Research demonstrates that spending quality time with loved ones is actually healthy. According to a study from Brigham Young University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a strong network of family and close friends is linked to increased longevity.² Parents serve as primary role models for their children.

Find time to engage in fun, physical activities with your child. Here are some of my recommendations:

- Before or after dinner, go for a family walk in nature.
- Start a family garden.
- Plan a nature scavenger hunt.
- Take a family bicycle ride.
- Play an outdoor sporting activity.
- Go swimming, skiing or build a snowman together.
- Find out about different seasonal programs available at fitness clubs, local YMCAs or recreation departments and join a sports, dance, fitness or some aerobic program.

SLEEP WELL

Having trouble getting those Zs each night? Maybe you have too much on your plate as a super parent. Maybe there are way too many responsibilities and too much going on that is keeping you up late at night or waking you in the middle of the night.

Losing even one hour of sleep can put you in the wrong frame of mind and affect how you think and respond. A lack of sleep also adversely affects your cardiovascular health, energy levels and immune system.

According to the National Institutes of Health, adults require between 7-9 hours of sleep a night for optimal functioning.⁷ So, speaking of that, I would like to share with you some important **sleep well** points that will be sure to get you the sleep you need.

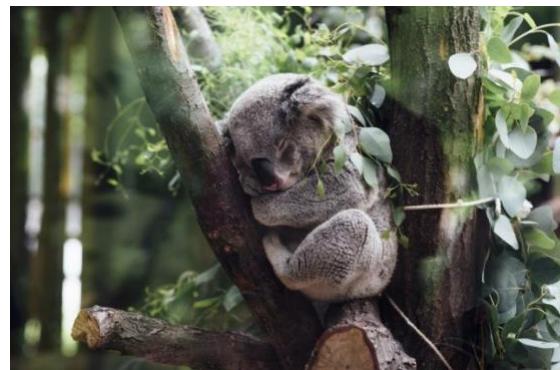
Five Secrets to Getting a **WHOLE LOTTA SLEEP** Every Night

1. Cut out the electronics at least two hours before bedtime

Most of us are guilty of it, but watching a late night television show or spending time on the computer or on your mobile devices can disturb your ability to fall asleep. The blue light that is emitted from cell phones and other personal electronic devices causes a cognitive arousal that promotes wakefulness. Wind down about two hours before bedtime from all electronic devices (including the television) to give your brain an opportunity to prepare for sleep.

2. Listen to relaxing, meditation music

This is one of my go to relaxation techniques every night. Playing soothing music will not only help you fall asleep faster, but will give you a better quality of sleep.



3. Limit your food and drink intake before bed

I advise not to go to bed hungry or stuffed, but rather satisfied. My personal favorite snack to have (about an hour and a half or so before bedtime) is a slice of whole grain toast with almond butter. Both contain magnesium, which is linked to decreasing cortisol levels (a.k.a. “the stress hormone”), helping muscles relax and providing a calming effect to help you sleep. A deficiency of this mineral has been linked to insomnia and muscle cramps, which can disrupt sleep.¹⁷

4. Incorporate a regular amount of physical activity into your daily routine

Getting into a routine and obtaining regular physical activity can promote better sleep. However, I would recommend refraining from doing any physical activity at least two hours before bedtime, as that can make it difficult to fall asleep with all the adrenaline flowing through your body.

5. Get a comfortable mattress and pillow

Your choice of mattress and pillow contributes to the quality of your sleep. Since you spend (or should spend) about a third of your life sleeping, choose what feels most comfortable — not too firm and not too soft.

For those of you who suffer from chronic back pain, I would recommend purchasing a mattress that is medium-to-firm. As for pillows, if you suffer from neck pain, I would suggest to get a memory foam pillow. Feather pillows cause the most neck pain and may feel comfy when you first settle in, but then the feathers move around and end up dispersing unequally throughout the pillow, resulting in little or no support and causing you pain.

Having Trouble Getting Your Child to Sleep?

Children ages 6-13 require 9-11 hours of sleep a night, while teens ages 14-17 need 8-10 hours. Research has shown that the sleeping habits of children are very closely tied to a host of issues: overweight, obesity, behavior problems and academic performance.⁷ In addition, kids that don't get enough sleep are more likely to have problems with language and memory issues.

Some children get hyped up from a lack of sleep. These symptoms may be mistaken for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. I tell parents that one of the first things to do is to keep a consistent schedule. As much as your child may fight you on it, sticking to a daily routine of bedtime will actually reduce, if not eliminate, arguments in the long run before going to bed.

How to Help Your Child Get a Good Night's Sleep

- For a young child, read a short story to him or her each night. The reading is not only beneficial for your child's learning and development, but also builds a routine that allows your child to relax.
- Set rules for bedtime and stick to them. Your child should go to bed the same time each night during school days and not much later on the weekends. Sleeping later can affect your child's sleep-wake cycle, which can make it that much harder for them to go to bed early enough on Sunday night to get

the optimal amount of sleep and wake up in the morning ready to go for school.

- Get all electronics out of your child's bedroom at least two hours before bedtime. Use an alarm clock, rather than a smartphone or tablet, as a wakeup device.
- Refrain from having your child eat 2-3 hours before going to bed (especially caffeinated products). This will interrupt their sleep patterns.
- Refrain from having your child engage in high-energy activities before going to bed. It won't put your child to sleep, but oftentimes causes difficulty sleeping.
- For a young child, refrain from him or her sleeping with many toys in the bed. Allow just one favorite toy or doll. For an older child, reading a book can be a pleasurable means to wind down and elicit sleep. Most importantly, make sure the room is quiet, temperature-controlled, and that the bed is of good quality.

"Fear can keep us up all night long, but faith makes one fine pillow."

~ Unknown

THINK WELL

The daily stresses of being a parent can take a toll on your overall well-being and happiness. It is important that you take a look at the factors that create the emotional state of your happiness and see what can be done to boost and maintain that state of mind for you.

The Happiness Factors

According to many studies conducted on the topic of happiness, there are three things that contribute to this state of being. First, there are genetic factors — biologically speaking — the level of “happy hormones” in our bodies, which include serotonin, dopamine and endorphins. This accounts for 50% of a person’s happiness.⁴

There are cognitive factors that make up 40% of your happiness, which is your own personal outlook. This includes your thoughts, actions and reactions to events and situations. Lastly, there are circumstantial factors, such as a loss of a job, loved one, a sickness or an injury, which constitute 10% of your overall happiness.⁴

Boosting Your Happy Hormones

There are healthy things you can do to elevate the happy hormones in your body — starting with your diet. Consume foods rich in B-vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids, such as brown rice, leafy green veggies, fish, poultry, nuts, lentils and whole grains. Studies have shown that people who are depressed have low levels of folate in their bloodstream and increasing the consumption of leafy green vegetables and legumes have been shown to boost serotonin and dopamine levels.¹⁴

You can naturally boost your endorphin levels, the pain killing hormones secreted within the brain and nervous system, through a variety of means including:

- Exercising
- Listening to music



- Smelling vanilla or lavender oil
- Making love
- Eating dark chocolate
- Laughing (deep belly laughing is a great way to give your abdominals a workout!)

Your Happiness Starts Right Now!

When you begin to understand the factors that contribute to happiness, you can better help yourself and others achieve this state of mind — no matter what situation you or others are presently in.

We have over 50,000 thoughts that we play in our head each day where we are judging, evaluating, planning and behaving in accordance with our core values. Our happiness gauge is derived from our daily thought patterns and our core values about things such as: money, health, relationships, feelings of self-worth and the state of the world around us.

Albert Einstein once said, “The most important question you can ask is if the universe is a friendly place or not?” From there, your thoughts will determine what actions you take next and will lead you to your ultimate destiny.

Tips for a Whole Lotta Good Thinking

- *Determine what truly inspires you* – What do you love doing and what are you actually doing? Do those two things align each day? If not, prioritize your schedule by making time to do the things that you love to do or

that will get you toward achieving your goals.

- *Write down your goals* – A goal is nothing more than a dream with a deadline. Holding yourself accountable by writing down your goals and reporting to an accountability partner will greatly improve your odds in achieving your dreams.
- *Surround yourself with all things positive* – When you put yourself in the right frame of mind for success by reading empowering books, listening to positive music and empowering audio, and being around people who are uplifting, you will find yourself feeling more positive, creative, open and expansive in your mindset and the way you set out to achieve your dreams.

Your thoughts are the foundation of your well-being and overall health. Dedicating time to some form of meditation early in your day is a great way to set the tone for the entire day. This could be as simple as setting the alarm clock 10 minutes before you normally get up and engage in guided meditation or simply visualizing your perfect day. Start by focusing on diaphragmatic breathing exercises by doing ten cycles of inhaling and exhaling and count 1 to 10.

Find a time in the day that is best for you to engage in mindful practices, such as:

- Yoga,
- Pilates,
- Tai Chi,
- EFT tapping,
- Progressive muscle relaxation,
- Massages,
- Taking a daily walk,
- Playing with a pet,
- Listening to relaxing music,
- Playing music,
- Watching something funny,
- Spending time in nature,
- Doing creative therapy through stress relief coloring and drawing books.

Teaching Your Child to Think Well

Society favors instant gratification over the long-term process for achieving a higher goal. Delaying is painful, so satisfying an immediate desire doesn't require patience or any vision for the future. Children who are constantly praised for their good deeds or engage in activities that have immediate reward systems, such as video games and use of electronic devices, lose out on opportunities to develop problem-solving skills, patience and resilience in the face of adversity.

Willpower is a key ingredient that is necessary for a child to attain major success at almost any aspect of their life — whether it be obtaining good grades, getting a fulfilling job, maintaining positive relationships with people, making a sports team, being physically fit or achieving any breakthrough goal.

Here are some strategies that I recommend you use to help your child become self-disciplined:

- Teach your child to use moderation as the key principle in eating junk food. Many children have control over their eating situations at school by choosing to bag it or buy it. For those children that receive free or reduced lunch, the good news is that the school lunch menus are offering healthier choices. Children can be provided more nutritious options that they agree to eat. Otherwise unknowingly and quite commonly, there may be daily trading of food at the lunch table and a child misses out on consuming nutritious foods that parents had provided them.
- When the school year begins, have your child get into a daily routine of doing homework in the same place at home where you are able to check it once it's been completed. Children benefit most from this structure and routine, which in turn helps build a solid foundation for other aspects of their lives.

- Teach your child to say, “NO!” to peer pressure. Even though peer pressure can seem like the worst thing in the world to a child at the time, each “NO” expressed will build a greater confidence and prevent children from making poor choices.
- Teach your child to avoid friendships that are one-sided in nature. If a “friend” talks to your child because they want something from your child all of the time, talks behind their back, and/or cannot be trusted with a secret, then that person is not worthy of your child’s friendship.
- Have your child practice daily meditation. Start by simply having your child sit still with their eyes closed for a few minutes. Teach them to breathe with a relaxed in through the nose, out through the mouth action slowly. Their exhalation should be twice as long as their inhalation. Recent studies conducted have shown that the practice of meditation-based training has long lasting positive alterations in brain and cognitive functions.¹ Many of the cognitive

improvements observed after meditation-based training have implications for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

- Teach your child to focus on creating a vision for their dreams to come true. Have them post their goals on a “dream board” so they can see them every day. Tell them to envision having complete control over their life and achieving their goals. If negative thoughts appear, advise them to release them kindly and focus on a positive outcome. There are many benefits that are associated with this daily practice. Your child will experience a number of paybacks, including an increase in self-confidence, feeling more relaxed and less anxious, reduced overall stress, enhanced immune system and increased success in all areas of their life.

“If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.”
~ Wayne Dyer (philosopher and motivational expert)

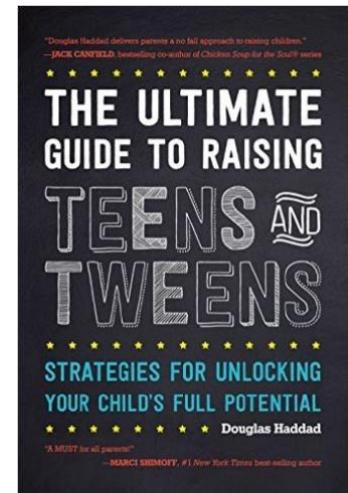
WHERE TO FIND ME

If you are interested in receiving a more in depth and comprehensive program to help bring balance to you and your family's life, you can go to my official website and get my 10-Step Personal Happiness Formula audio package titled **30 Days to Finding You: Your 10-Step Personal Happiness Formula**. This includes 10 audio tracks, along with a PDF workbook with step-by-step exercises, that will help you regain balance in your life, discover what truly inspires you and live the life you imagine.

Also, if you are a parent of a child who will be entering or is already in the "tween or teen zone" and looking to receive an in depth and comprehensive program to help raise a smart, successful and self-disciplined child, you can also go to my official website and get the audio parenting course titled **Raising a 6S Child**. This includes six audio tracks, along with six individual PDF quick tip guides for all 6Ss (self-confident, self-disciplined, self-motivated, self-regulated, self-reliant, and smart).

You can also pick up a copy of **The Ultimate Guide to Raising Teens and Tweens**. It addresses all of the questions that parents of adolescent children have such as:

- "How do I gain confidence as a parent to make wise choices and help my child succeed at all levels?"
- "How can I react better when faced with temper tantrums or rebellious behavior?"
- "How do I effectively talk about topics like sex, drugs and bullying with my kid?"
- "How do I listen better so I actually get to know who my child really is?"
- "How can I communicate effectively and connect with my child so they know how much I love them?"
- "How do I get my child to be motivated at school and in organized activities, without becoming detrimental to my child's development or injuring our relationship?"



With time-proven, research-based and kid-tested methods, including all of my years as an educator, handling stressful situations appropriately and effectively, this book can be the transformational tool you are looking for to help you and your family. Whether you are a parent desperately seeking solutions to the biggest of problems in your child's life, or looking to bring your child to the next level of personal development, this book has everything you need and more.

"Douglas Haddad delivers parents a no fail approach to raising children. If you could read only one book to help children become successful and reach their unlimited potential, *The Ultimate Guide to Raising Teens and Tweens* has everything you need and is the one to get!"

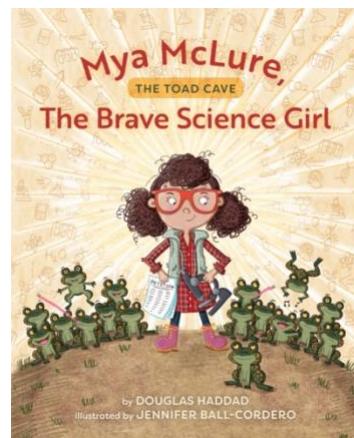
~ Jack Canfield (multiple #1 New York Times and USA Today bestselling co-author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul* ® series, success coach, and human potential thought leader)

"Doug's tools for the 3 S's are a MUST for all parents! There are so many challenges that children deal with these days, and Doug truly gets it! His advice will help you gain the confidence you need to handle problems effectively and make the right choices so you can help your child succeed in every way."

~ Marci Shimoff (#1 New York Times best-selling author, *Happy For No Reason*, *Love for No Reason*, *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul*)

Lastly, if you are a parent, grandparent, uncle, aunt, cousin, or anyone looking to get a children's picture book that focuses on helping young girls (ages 4-8) find and express their unique voices in the realm of science, engineering, mathematics, technology, and the creative arts, pick up a copy of **[Mya McLure, The Brave Science Girl.](#)**

STORY SYNOPSIS: A family of toads, threatened by land development, is re-homed by an innovative and courageous second grader, Mya McLure. In this dazzling adventure, Mya McLure not only has to figure out a way to save the toads, but also how to help her teacher in a moment of unanticipated crisis.



Feel free to reach out at any time if you have questions or comments. The best way to connect with me is through my official website at: www.douglashaddad.com.

You can also find me on:



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[Blog](#) (www.douglashaddad.com)

Please remember that I am here for you along your journey and always looking to help you and your family experience a **WHOLE LOTTA LIVING!**

Peace and looking forward to connecting with you,

Doug

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