How to change is an area that (like nutrition and exercise) is riddled with myths. One of the biggest myths is the *myth of willpower*. Willpower exists, and it is good stuff, but **trying to rely on willpower to change is a recipe for failure especially when it comes to getting and keeping the body you want.**

Most people read fitness books (like *Results Fitness*) and do absolutely nothing with the information. I don’t want this to be you. I want you to get and keep the body you want for the rest of your life because if you’ve got enough drive to even read the bonus content, then you’re the kind of person who deserves results.

Most people fail at change, especially at body changes. In my chapter I broke down how the method itself can be the problem (i.e. the completely false and useless notion that weight loss is about “eating less and exercising more”). Diets break you, *not* the other way around. Trying to do things that don’t work does *not* make them work. Trying harder at things that don’t work doesn’t make them work.

### Willpower is Overrated

I’m not about to tell you that you can get the body you want without work, and without making changes in your life. Nonsense. The things worth having in life – meaning, happiness, money, family, great health, etc – *all* require work and rarely if ever show up all by themselves.

Willpower is like a can of shaving cream – there’s only so much inside. It runs out. Most people are trying to make changes by gritting their teeth and fighting their life, and generally exhausting themselves until they fail.

Here’s a pretty typical start to a bad week of eating:

- 7am: wake up, skip breakfast because there’s nothing to eat at home; or whatever is at home seems gross or seems too hard to make
- 10am: hungry as hell, sitting in a meeting.
  - You see delicious pastries in a tray on the conference table. You’re hungry.
  - You are now in a fight with yourself – it’s willpower vs. your stomach.
  - If you are virtuous and well rested, and not already stressed out, then willpower might win. *But* you’ve just spent some of your precious *willpower* that you will need later.
- Noon: crazy day at work. Can’t go for lunch. Work orders lunch for you.
You are ravenous. They order pizza because whoever is in charge of ordering food at work always seems hell-bent on turning everyone into fat sloths.

- Willpower will lose this fight by the way.
- You eat a ton of pizza and then polish off a bowl of M&M’s because you are so disgusted with yourself.
- Shit!

You get the point. This doesn’t end well, and your progress comes to a screeching halt and you get upset, mad, and depressed.

*You don’t have enough willpower to fight with yourself all day long,* let alone win that fight all week long. The above is about as good as it gets on a Monday after a good weekend.

**The Right Answer Is To Never Have The Fight In The First Place**

It’s like the old adage, “the only way to win an argument is to avoid it.” (Like if you “win” an argument with your wife, you know you’re winning the right to sleep on the couch and to miss out on the “perks” of marriage for a week. Great prize!)

This is why strategy trumps willpower every single time.

Gotta say it again in bold: **Strategy Trumps Willpower Every Time**

Strategy is figuring out how to take action *once* and prevent a problem multiple times in the future.

**Example #1:** one of the most important strategies for clients to adopt is to have a regular day to go grocery shopping every week¹.

Think about what happens if you don’t have a regular shopping day:

- You don’t have healthy stuff at home, so when you come home after a long day all you feel like is ordering some kind of crappy take out.
- You don’t have healthy stuff to take to work, so you’re at the mercy of whatever “food” shows up at work.
  - As best we can tell there is a literal conspiracy at every single office in the DC Metro area to make its employees as fat as possible with the crap that is always everywhere – candy bowls from October to January; weekly home baked cookies; free pizza for lunch; pastries and cookies at every meeting…
  - Who is actually getting more productive by eating platters of sugar? I know for myself a chocolate chip cookie might as well be Nyquil.
- You don’t even have healthy stuff to eat for breakfast, so you skip breakfast or eat whatever junk is at the office because you’re hungry and you don’t have any better solutions.

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¹ Or to have somebody else do it. Like Pea Pod, or, if your kids have a driver’s license, that’s how they pay for the privilege of driving your car. They can’t pay for gas, or for the car, but they can run errands for you. You’ve been their servant and chauffeur long enough.
That’s leverage. Just one simple discipline yields benefits every single day of the week. One discipline helps you prevent having 48 fights with yourself.

Yes. You do actually need to think about what you’re going to buy – it needs to consist of stuff that you both like and will help you reach your goals.

The 80/20 Rule (or the Pareto Principle)

The 80/20 Rule says that if you have 10 things on your to-do list, then 2 of those items is going to give you 80% of your results. Something are way more important than other things, and if you don’t have the time or energy to do everything (and who does?), then you better get to work on the most important thing(s) and ignore the unimportant.

In terms of fitness there is something called the Hierarchy of Fat-Loss: you can list all of the actives for fat-loss in a descending hierarchy of return on time invested. The biggest bang-for-your-buck are the items at the top, and the lower yield stuff is at the bottom. If you do not have unlimited time, then start at the top or your time will be wasted.

This is the Hierarchy of Fat-Loss:

#1. **Nutrition:** you can’t out train a bad diet, but its also pretty hard to look how you want without a great fitness program. Eat better. (Details to follow.)

#2. **Resistance training:** a thoughtfully designed resistance program will do more to help you look better naked that anything else you can do. If you only have 2 hours per week for exercise, then spend all of it on resistance training. It will make you the most fit and give you the best results of anything else you could possibly spend those 2 hours doing.

#3. **High intensity interval training:** this is stuff like our Group Metabolic Acceleration classes. If you have 3 or 4 hours per week, spend the rest of your time here (or maybe add in a 3rd hour of resistance training and then the 4th hour could be your interval work).

Why? Because nothing else will give you better results for the time invested.

The “ideal” schedule would be 3 resistance sessions and 2 high intensity interval training sessions. (But not everyone’s body or schedule will allow that.)

If you are here and you are not seeing results, go see #1… ask your coach.

#4. **Recovery and regeneration work:** extra foam rolling, stretching and low intensity movement on your “off” days to help speed up your recovery (results!) and balance your hormones.

If you had 5 or 6 hours in a week, get your resistance work, your interval work, and then finally your extra recovery work.
#5. **Regular “cardio”:** to be honest with you I am only including this on the list because the guy I first got this list from, Alwyn Cosgrove, put it on his list… but, I’m not sure if this would actually enhance most people’s results at all. In fact, it might reduce some people’s results.

I’d say, just go for a walk with your family or something to have quality time with them. Its not going to make much of a difference directly, but it should make you feel better, it might enhance recovery, and it’ll probably enhance your relationships.

**Reality check:** Most people start at the bottom – walking, low intensity stuff and say that they’ll get to #1 when they lose some weight. Won’t happen.

**Bottom line:** there are an *infinite* number of things you could be doing. However, time and energy are *finite*. Identify and invest your time and energy only in the things that matter most. Start at the top. Invest the time you actually do have wisely.

## The 10 Most Important Strategies For Success

Don’t feel that you need to implement all 10 at once, but none of them are particularly difficult or time consuming. In fact the point is that they are not time consuming. They allow you to get the results with less time, effort and stress.

The first 5 would be a good place to start. Refer back to this section as needed.

**#1. Go grocery shopping the same day every week**

We already covered the why.

Pick a day.

What would you like to eat? Think through breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner.

Make a list on paper or your iPhone, but *not* in your head. Nothing good comes of plans or lists in your head.

Decide on the day and the time.

Go. Do. Delegate. Somehow, get it done.

**#2. If It’s In Your House, It’s In Your Mouth… Better Throw It In The Trash Than See It On your Ass**

If you have crap in your house, sooner or later it *will* end up in your mouth. If you don’t feel like throwing it in the trash, then you’ll most definitely see it on your ass.
When you come home tired and hungry after a terrible day at work and in the fridge you have a choice between a big piece of chocolate cake or reheating the low-carb eggplant parmesan you made on Sunday, what do you honestly think you’ll pick?

I’ve written 5 books on health and fitness and I know that even I would eat the cake… maybe I would have both, but while the good food was in the microwave I’m stuffing my face with the cake.

That chocolate cake is going to be so easy and will seemingly feel so good. When you’re exhausted your willpower is also exhausted.

Do you know what would’ve made avoiding that cake really easy? Not having the damn cake in my house in the first place.

No. You do not have the steely will necessary to live in a house that is littered with temptation. Every time you have to sit there and deliberate about the crap you have hidden in your house you are wasting precious willpower that could be spent doing any number of valuable things for your body or life.

There are several hard and strict rules that you need:

- I do not keep crap in my house – soda, cookies, bread, etc
- After a holiday meal or party everything non-compliant goes home with somebody else, to the Food Bank, or it just goes in the trash
- If people mail you junk, it does not stay in the house – give it away at work, give it away somewhere else, or throw it in the trash

Yep, you may very well end up throwing away $2, $5, or even $15 worth of food. Is your body worth a $2 box of cookies? You are free to answer “no,” but its hard to believe you’d be paying us the kind of money we charge if you can’t sacrifice $2 in cookies… we can’t really cure being cheap, that’s a problem to solve somewhere else.

#3. Have Workout Appointments
It’s only real if it’s in writing or pixels. If it’s in your head it doesn’t count. The human brain can only keep track of 5-9 things at any given time. The only people who can keep it in their head are people who have nothing going in their life.

#4. Cook one thing every week in bulk
Cook one big thing that will last for 3-5 days once a week. Generally, to keep from getting bored, change it every week or so. You can rotate a handful of recipes so you don’t wind up with a container full of food you are sick of.

Generally people can eat the same breakfast without boredom IF they have variety in lunch and dinner.

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Having healthy food that is already done and only needs to be reheated in your fridge when you get home from work is really, really nice, and takes a lot of the stress out of compliance.

Make the right behavior easier.

**#5. Have a handful of easy meals that you like and are compliant**
You need some recipes that you can pretty much always make at home that aren’t hard to make and that you can make for yourself in a jam.

These can change over time as your tastes change. That’s totally fine. Just have some recipes that are easy and compliant that you can go to when you are short on time, hungry or stressed out.

**#6. Don’t “treat” at home**
Treat yourself – have stuff that you know isn’t good for you – outside of your home. Have some places other than the places where you go for healthy food that you “treat” yourself at.

Have your treat there. It makes it easy to have an automatic mental separation between treats and home. Its just not something your brain associates with home anymore.

Now you have to leave your house to go get the “bad” stuff. If you have to expend energy to do something that is an automatic break.

Bonus tip: try to have a consistent day of the week – Friday, or something that you “treat” yourself on most of the time. Its so you can avoid having to think about it. The less you have to think the easier it is to do the right thing.

**#7. Find a handful of places to eat where you can get compliant food that you like**
You need to find 3 places where you can get healthy food that you actually like eating.

Don’t order “treats” at these places. You’re trying to get “auto pilot” behavior. You want to have a psychological anchor to these places that you only order good stuff. If these places are “healthy food places” in your head, then it is very easy to stay on track at those places.

However, if you are flexible at these places, then when you go to eat you have to think about what you’re going to order. You have to deliberate. If your willpower is exhausted, you’re likely to slip up.

**Thinking is the enemy.** Establishing automatic, unthinking and positive behavior is the answer.

**#8. “No thanks”**
“No thanks for the bread basket.” 6 simple words to make your life so much easier. If you’re hungry and you have to stare at a basket of bread and butter for 20min that might not turn out very well.
Avoid the fight. “No thanks. Don’t want the bread.” It is more uncomfortable to ask, but it is much easier.

#9. Avoid debates
I’m one of the best read people on the subject of fitness, weight loss and nutrition I have ever met. (I’m humble too.) I’ve taken all of the courses to become an RD. I’m reasonably persuasive. But, I can’t reliably win nutrition debates. Can’t do it.

Like, years ago before my father came to his own conclusion that I was right, he would challenge me on everything I said (and generally get on my nerves). In my view he had absolutely no business trying to debate me. Dad was completely unqualified.

Didn’t matter. He was sure that he was right, and sure that I was wrong, and that was it.

People are going to ask you about the “you don’t do aerobics,” and “you don’t eat that many carbs”… they’ll be asking because they want you to know that their completely unqualified opinion is right and you are wrong. Doesn’t matter that they got their education watching Oprah (and she’s been really successful long term). People want to be right for some reason.

And, do you know what else? It doesn’t matter why they want to be right? That is one of the mysteries of the Universe that there is no reward for solving. You’ve got a job to do. You need to get in shape. You have other things that are way more important to do other than trying to figure out why somebody needs to be right.

God forbid you are friends with a physician. They will argue with you for days in spite of having absolutely no training in exercise science or nutrition whatsoever.

You will not win. Just deflect and ignore and/or move on to the next topic of conversation. Just do your workouts, eat your food and get great results. If you’re lucky in 2 years they might actually ask for your opinion on something, but they probably will still want to argue with you even though you look incredible and they look worse for their own advice.

#10. Don’t drink your calories: juice, soda, etc are just sugar (we’ll get into why sugar – fructose – is the worst thing in your diet later). Sugar makes you hungry, tired and eventually fat.

#11. (no, I can’t count) See cravings as hunger, ‘cuz that’s usually what they are
If you’re mentally occupied – like, working or something, it is very, very common to completely miss that your body is hungry. You miss feeling the physical sensations for food, and you don’t realize the impact of this until you start thinking about Chicken McNuggets (that’s what I think about).

Because you’ve got this craving in your head for the McNuggets, you (I) think you need them nuggets. Nope. You need food. You were too busy, too stressed, had too much caffeine, or where mentally occupied in a presentation or whatever to ever feel the hunger.
Just remember the craving for sweets when you see the M&M bowl at work is almost always your body saying, “Hey, dammit! You forgot to feed me. Feed me know! Feed me know! That looks good! Feed me now!”

Eat enough healthy food that you are satisfied and in 20-30min the cravings will be gone.

Cravings = hunger.

Again, thinking is the enemy. Don’t sit around wondering, “Well, is Josef right?… I might really need those M&M’s this time… I could also just be some fat, lazy sloth who just craves junk all the time… maybe I am a terrible person… oh I need those M&M’s… oh, I’m just a miserable bastard with no self-control! Let me have ‘em!”

When you have:
- Been doing this professionally since 1998
- When you literally bet your mortgage on your advice (and won the bet)
- When you have 30,000 hours of deliberate practice (not repetition)
- When you find yourself reading science journals until 2 and 4am on the weekends just because you had a question stuck in your head, and your wife gets mad at you because you lost track of the last 6 hours and you forgot to pee that whole time because you were curious

then you can come debate me. You can’t debate me when you’ve only been able to coach one person unsuccessfully. You didn’t hire us because you have all the answers, you came to us to find out what we know. Listen. Don’t bastardize the advice.

Eat enough healthy food to be satisfied. ENOUGH. Not a bird sized portion. ENOUGH to be satisfied, not enough to be hungry again in 15min.

Here’s how I’ve seen this advice play out:
- Grown man with muscles and who does our workouts = a guy that needs food
- 7:15am: For breakfast he eats 2 eggs cooked in butter (this is maybe 250 calories)
- In meetings non-stop until 11am
- “Lunch” is a protein shake with about 200 calories in it (total for the entire day = 450 calories)
- By the time 3pm rolls around he’s been in meeting all day long, and the Danish on the platter is calling his name.
- His cravings are so bad that he answers their sweet song.
- He caves, and he just flies off the handle. He ruins the rest of his day because he is so upset.
- He comes in later and tells me about how bad his “sugar cravings” are. I run through his menu with him and notice “hey, you didn’t really have any food before the Danish. You were just hungry. Have twice as much food tomorrow you won’t have a problem.”
- He does it (to his credit), and the “cravings” are way better.

Food quality drives obesity. If you focus on food quality, food quantity will take care of itself.
Eat enough good food to not have cravings.

**#12. Be selectively strict:**
The key to successful strategies is to be strict with them. *Not* strict with *everything* however. That is a recipe for failure. Only strict with a handful of selected things that will really make a difference: such as, only eat healthy food at your healthy food places, or find a new healthy food place.

You want them to be automatic behaviors so you don’t have to consume your precious willpower, and so when you’re tired or preoccupied it is easy to do the right thing. Being strict with your strategies is also key to making them easier to follow. Every exception to a rule is a choice that you have to make. It’s brain power that you have to consume. Strictness eliminates the need for repetitive, tedious choices all day long.

**The Question:** how could I simply solve this problem in the future?

- Problem: I always forget about my recovery shake. I have it at home, I mean to bring it to the gym, but I always forget it.
  - Simple ideas:
    - Put the container of protein powder in the trunk of your car so it’s always with you. (magic!)
    - Or, put your shakes into individual Ziploc bags and throw it inside of your shaker cup so you don’t have to remember it.

- Problem: they always order crap at work for lunch when we have to work through lunch (or crap for dinner when we have to work late)
  - Simple ideas:
    - Find out who is in charge of ordering the food, and ask them to help you out.
      - Ask, don’t demand.
      - Make it easy on them by giving them things on the menus of the places they order from that you would like.
      - If they forget, ask them again and ask if you can do something different to help them.
      - Thank them when they get it right.
      - You can’t thank people too much for doing you a favor.
    - Volunteer to be in charge of this yourself
      - Or not, if it’s a huge pain to do so
The Process

1. Based on the content in *Results Fitness* and pick 2 things that you can *commit* to changing as of right now. Not in a fanciful perfect future world that doesn’t yet exist. Not should. Not will. Can commit to right here and now with all of the imperfection of the present. Pick ‘em:

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Do it for 3-4 weeks because you need at least 21 days to install a habit.

2. *Then* move on to the next thing.

In business there is a saying, “you only get paid for done.”

In fitness you only get results for done. Half-assed “implementation” of a bunch of things will usually lead to almost no results. Really good (done) implementation of 2 things that really matter will lead to good results.

3. When you have all the results you want, then you can stop upgrading your lifestyle.
About Josef Brandenburg
Josef Brandenburg is founder of The Body You Want Fitness Solutions in Washington, DC – it's the place you to get the body you want in the time you actually have, and have a good time doing it.

Josef first got interested in health, fitness and nutrition when his physician told him he was “too fat for your own good” at age 9. That, and being made fun of at summer camp sparked a drive to learn everything he possibly could about looking better without his shirt off, so that he could go to the beach without feeling ashamed of his body.

Eventually someone asked Josef for help with their workouts, and that first request has turned into a calling, a 15-year career, and the opening of The Body You Want Fitness Solutions. Josef is the co-author of The Body you Want, The Client Success Manual, and several other books. He’s also a nationally syndicated fitness columnist.

Josef was also chosen as the fitness expert for the PCOS challenge reality TV series, and has been featured in The Washington Post, on ABC, WUSA 9, and in news-papers coast to coast. He’s also received certifications through ACE, NASM, FMS, CHECK, and the NCEP.

To learn more about what Josef and his awesome team can do for you, and how you can “try before you buy” visit: www.TheBodyYouWant.com or call 202-316-1457.

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