

*A Wrongful Conviction Stole a
Decade of His Life; Determination
to Grow Strong and Smart Won It
Back*—Here Is the Fitness Plan
That Made All the Difference

Stronger, Faster, Smarter

A Guide to Your Most Powerful Body

Ryan Ferguson

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RYAN FERGUSON

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A Note of Gratitude

Many thanks are in order, for without the love, encouragement, support, and help I've received along the way, this book, my very first attempt at writing one, would almost certainly not exist.

I would like to first thank the two incredible individuals who played *the* central role of taking my crazy idea of a book from words handwritten on notebook paper in prison to something that felt real, professional, and, most important, presentable. If Myka Cain and James Dunn, a.k.a. Young Dizzle, hadn't believed in my drive and vision, this exercise in creativity would likely have been nothing more than a short-lived moment in time. Worse, I'd probably still be staring at notebooks full of chicken scratch and useful information with no clue of how to transfer it onto one of those things I hadn't seen in a decade . . . a computer! You two helped bring this to life with *a lot* of hard work, while not once asking for or expecting anything of me. Even more than for getting this book off the ground, I would like to thank both of you for showing me what true friendship is all about. As far as I am concerned, we are, and always will be, a team. I can't wait for the day you get out of there, James, so we can work, and work out, together once again. As you know, I'd acknowledge more of your editorial skills here, but I don't want the pettiness of prison to hamper your current existence.

Myka, my beautiful love, what can I even begin to say about you? So many times you have saved me on this book. The hours you've put in . . . you are an incredible woman! I don't know how you do it, but this should be your primary job. Editing, communications, design, technical skills, social media expert, you've got it all. And that's not even talking about your radiant personality and charming smile! I am one lucky man to have you in my life!

I'd also like to thank the individuals who helped on other aspects of this book, primarily reading over for ways to improve it, as well as those who fought for my freedom and took the time to review the evidence, thus not only believing in my innocence but knowing of it. The reason for thanking both at once is because, more often than not, these people were one and the same. Richard Drew, your name pops up first in my mind, since you have been and continue to be a huge part of my life. I'm very lucky to have a friend who looks out for me as you have. Much love, man!

Ben Hamrah, Ashley Hennerich, Affton Hennerich, Mike Rognlien, Andrew Jenks, Anthony Galloway, Dylan Ratigan, Erin Moriarti, Gale Zimmerman, Jason Flom, and Chip Rosenbloom also come to mind here. I'm grateful for so many aspects of what you've done for me and this book. Whether you know it or not, you've all contributed a great deal to my success in not only various aspects of this book but also, and more important, my success in finding the freedom that had been unjustly taken from me.

Speaking of the fight for freedom, I must say a huge "thank-you" to the brilliant Doug Johnson and my "lifetime attorney," friend, adviser, and mentor, Kathleen Zellner. If not for their drive, passion, belief, and superior skill in the field of law, my family, my supporters, and I would likely still be fighting for justice.

Supporters! Yes, I have a special place in my heart for all of the beautiful people out there who have supported my family and me. It is you who showed me that even though there is much evil in the

world, particularly from those in positions of authority, there is also an overwhelming abundance of kindness, generosity, and love. Just when I was about to give up on humanity, it is you who bonded together, bringing me the gift of peace and happiness that comes with knowing you're part of something much larger: a worldwide family!

Which brings me to the last and ultimately most important people in this book, in the fight I've endured, and in my life in general: family. Bill Ferguson, Leslie Ferguson, Kelly Ferguson, Don and Kappy Frazier, Alberta Ferguson, Bob and Steve Frazier, the balance of the Fraziers, and the Norrises as well as the rest of my extended family. Thank you so much to all of you for showing me what family is all about. I could not have made it through this past decade without you. This book wouldn't be a reality or have even been a dream of mine if you hadn't chosen to sacrifice, suffer, and endure the pain of the reality that held me hostage. You had the option not to care and I will never forget, or take that for granted. You are everything and I love you so much!

Especially Bill, Leslie, and Kelly Ferguson. No one in this world could have anticipated the brilliance of one family. Both in their fight and their love. I've said it a million times, but what's one more? I would be nothing without you. My life begins and ends with you three. Always. I love you.

Thank you.

—Ryan W. Ferguson

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Preface

God asks no man whether he will accept life. That is not the choice. You must take it. The only choice is how.

—HENRY WARD BEECHER

My Life Behind Bars

Hello, my name is Ryan Ferguson. Thank you for picking up my book. This is the story of a young man who came of age within the confines of a maximum-security prison. What makes this story unique is that this man was locked up for a crime he did not commit. In total, he lost nearly 10 years of his life. Friends turned their backs on him. The world called him a murderer and a liar. The experience could have broken him. Yet he chose to fight back and persevere. That man is me, and my story began on March 10, 2004. That was the date I was arrested for murder.

Over the last decade I have experienced more setbacks and defeats than most people experience in a whole lifetime. I have seen the inner workings of the U.S. justice system at its very worst and how the truth comes second to securing a conviction. I *never* gave up, though. I fought endlessly to prove my innocence, and now I continue to fight for others.

Once convicted, I was faced with two options: fight or flight. I was a terrified 19-year-old kid who had never been in trouble with the law and who suddenly found himself locked up in county jail and later in a maximum-security prison. It didn't seem possible. After the initial panic attacks subsided and I faced the grim reality of a possible life sentence staring down at me, the only thing I knew how to do was fight. Fight for my future; fight for my life; fight for my mind, my body; and, most important, my innocence. I knew I had to find a way. More than that, I had to find *my* way. My way to fight through the stresses, the pain, and the fear in order to make myself tougher.

Throughout this torturous journey I have endured many trials and tribulations that probably should have destroyed my strength, my hope, and even my will to carry on. That is not me, though. Backed by an incredible family and an overwhelming set of documented facts, I refused to allow someone to get away with taking my life for something they knew I did not do. As time went on, media attention rose and my case was featured on several national television news programs. Maybe you've seen these or know my story from another source. If not, I'll start with the basic facts. Here's where it all began: Halloween night 2001.

Around 2:10 a.m. on November 1, 2001, Kent Heitholt, sports editor for the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, logged off his computer and left his office in Columbia, Missouri. Within minutes he was savagely attacked and murdered next to his car in the newspaper's parking lot. A tragic death, Kent's

murder shocked the local community.

Sitting in the empty lot that night was Kent Heitholt's colleague Michael Boyd. Boyd claimed the two spoke briefly and then he drove away at around 2:20 a.m. Heitholt, a large man standing six feet three and weighing 315 pounds, was struck from behind on his head multiple times and strangled with his own belt. Nothing of value was stolen from the victim, aside from possibly an inexpensive watch and his car keys.

The first people on the scene were two janitors, Shawna Ornt and Jerry Trump. Ornt had gone out for a break and observed two figures beside Heitholt's car. As suspicion mounted within her, she quickly retraced her steps and got her coworker Trump. The two peered out into the parking lot but couldn't see anything. Finally, Trump called out and two men stepped out from behind the car. The man at the rear of the car walked toward Ornt and spoke to her, saying, "Somebody's hurt, get help," before calmly rejoining the other man and walking away. Ornt got a good look at the man, including his face, before he left the scene. They then called 911 at 2:26 a.m.

Later that night, Shawna Ornt helped police create a composite drawing of the man who had spoken to her. Police considered her the "sole witness." Her colleague Jerry Trump was also questioned. Trump told the police, and later others, that he couldn't identify or give a detailed description of the individuals. Meanwhile, Boyd, the last known person to see Kent Heitholt alive, was only briefly questioned by the police and never investigated as a potential suspect.

Investigators discovered a trail of hair, blood, and fingerprints at the crime scene. The killer would likely have been covered in blood. There were also two sets of shoe prints leading away from the scene. A police K-9 unit tracked the scent from those shoe prints to a University of Missouri dorm. For the authorities there seemed to be a trove of evidence to follow, yet the murder of Kent Heitholt remained unsolved.

On the second anniversary of Heitholt's murder, the *Tribune* printed an article in hopes of gaining information about the unsolved murder. The article displayed the composite sketch that Shawna Ornt assisted investigators with and urged the community members to speak up if they had information about the murder.

For those in the Columbia Police Department who appeared so eager to crack the case that the facts became secondary, a lead arrived in the form of a troubled young man who read the newspaper article. Charles Erickson, a high school friend of mine, saw the composite sketch and thought it vaguely resembled him. He then appeared to have a dream that he was involved in the murder. On account of these newfound "images," Erickson began airing his fears and his dreams to his friends, including myself. Needless to say, I clearly remembered that Halloween night. Erickson and I had been at a local bar called By George. We left at closing time; I then drove him home and drove home myself. Erickson's dreams didn't make any sense. But his story was taken seriously by at least one friend, John Alder, who reported Erickson's dreams to the police. Following Alder's tip, for which there was a \$10,000 reward, Erickson was picked up for questioning in March 2004.

What followed was one of the most shocking and disturbing police interrogations ever caught on camera. Erickson had no actual independent knowledge of the crime. He didn't know what the murder weapon was, how many times Kent Heitholt had been struck, or even where the murder had taken place. And those images from his dreams . . . not one of them fit the actual crime scene. Nevertheless, the police, desperate to clear up a high-profile cold case, proceeded to coerce and spoon-feed Erickson key unique details about the crime.

This, unfortunately, is where I came in. That morning, right outside of Kansas City, Missouri, was like any other. I was attending a history class at Maple Woods Community College and the only thing

on my mind was the next day's exam. I had no worries. I had a decent job, good friends, an amazing family, and what I considered a bright future. All was going well until I left class and headed home. On the way there, two huge guys in an SUV were riding my bumper. This, of course, happens from time to time so I didn't think anything of it. Just a couple of douches with no respect. Nothing new. Once the lane I was in went from one to two, they stared me down as they passed. I soon turned off into my apartment parking lot, and no sooner had I put the car in park than that very same SUV flew up behind me, essentially blocking me in. My life would never be the same.

What followed was something I don't think I'll ever understand. These people I'd never seen before proceeded to treat me like the dirt on their shoes, rushing at me screaming "FBI," telling me not to move. From the arrest, to locking me in a car handcuffed with no explanation, to instantly and randomly stripping every right I had, things got intense. I didn't know what to make of it. I even thought for a time I was being arrested for a recent bomb threat at our school. I had no idea what was going on. I was totally and completely lost.

Within an hour I found myself in an interrogation room much like the ones you'd see in a bad movie. I told the police time and time again, over multiple hours of redundant questioning, that yes, I had been at the By George bar with Erickson on Halloween night 2001. I stated the obvious, that I had left around 1:30 a.m., when the bar closed. I told them repeatedly how I'd driven Erickson home before heading home myself. These were the simple facts and I never wavered from them.

In a neighboring room, however, while I sat there doing what I could to help, those same police were apparently doing what they could to wring a confession, right, wrong, or indifferent, from Erickson. Even though he had no personal knowledge of Heitholt's murder, and had stated multiple times that he'd blacked out and didn't know what happened after he left the bar, they didn't seem to care. After many grueling hours of blatant threats and damning lies from the detectives, Erickson folded under the pressure. Assuming the police were being straight up with him about this false evidence, he figured he must have been present at the crime scene and simply told detectives what he thought they wanted to hear.

Over the following months, as Prosecutor Kevin Crane charged the two of us with murder, Erickson's statements slowly evolved, changing a number of times. Aided by "discovery," which contained fabricated police reports bolstering Erickson's supposed guilt and an exhaustive source of details about this crime, Erickson eventually came to believe his dreams were true; he and I had murdered Heitholt in a robbery gone wrong. Due to these false beliefs, and the fear that he must have committed the crime, Erickson panicked and agreed to a plea deal that would frame me for the murder of Heitholt in exchange for a lesser sentence for himself.

From the time of my arrest in March 2004 until my trial in October 2005, I found myself, a person convicted of no crime, trapped inside the county jail. Apparently those who wield the power within our criminal justice system find the Eighth Amendment of our Constitution to be nothing more than a joke. Case in point, the "Honorable" Judge Ellen Roper chose to ignore the whole "excessive bail shall not be required" part of the Constitution and gave me one for \$20 million. The largest of its kind in history. We sought accountability for what appeared to be an outright senseless and slightly biased decision but found instead what would be the first of many indications that those within the justice system simply will not hold their colleagues responsible for their actions. Many wondered why I was even on trial in the first place, considering that Erickson's story was riddled with inconsistencies and flat-out impossibilities. None of the DNA evidence at the scene matched either Charles or me; there was absolutely no motive; I had no criminal background; and the ultimate reality was that there was, and would remain, zero evidence connecting me to this case.

But these same people had underestimated the indifference of the Columbia Police Department and an ambitious prosecutor, Kevin Crane. After multiple coaching sessions in Crane's office, the Charles Erickson who appeared before the jury was a new man. Confident and assured in his testimony, Erickson took the stand and pointed me out as responsible for the murder of Kent Heitholt. In so doing, he and Crane reenacted the supposed particulars of the murder, details Erickson had no knowledge of just a year earlier.

It was still far from an open-and-shut case. My attorneys fought back, barely. Partially because they didn't properly prepare for trial, a sad reality that plays out all too often once attorneys get your money, and partially because they weren't given all of the evidence to fight this case to begin with. This last issue of the defense not getting all of the information is actually illegal, but because our Supreme Court won't allow the law to hold police and prosecutors accountable for hiding evidence, it tends to happen in a vast majority of innocence cases. It's similar to making laws against drinking and driving where, instead of prosecuting those who are caught breaking this law with a felony and possible prison time, the courts would merely say, "Well, I'm sure you didn't mean to get drunk and run over those kids. How can you be responsible for them being on the road in the first place?" There is NO accountability. Just as drinking and driving would never stop if we didn't prosecute the offenders, police and prosecutors will continue to hide evidence and destroy countless lives if they know they won't even get so much as a slap on the wrist.

Nonetheless, Prosecutor Kevin Crane had a new "star witness" to place Erickson and me at the scene: janitor Jerry Trump. Though Trump had previously admitted he couldn't identify anyone at the scene, he now pointed me out in front of the jury as the man he had seen the night of the murder. Even more interesting was prosecutor Crane's choice *not* to ask Shawna Ornt, the police's "sole witness," if she could identify me as being there. Why ask Trump, who stated multiple times that he couldn't see the people in the parking lot, and not the sole witness, Ornt? Shawna Ornt later testified in a 2008 evidentiary hearing that she had met with Prosecutor Crane about three times prior to my trial. In that testimony, she said that she had told Crane numerous times that the men she saw that night were neither Erickson nor myself. Apparently, this information was not good enough for my attorneys or the jury to be made aware of.

After hearing just five days of evidence, which grimly coincided with my 21st birthday, the jury took the case into deliberation. Hours later they delivered their verdict. They found me guilty of first-degree robbery and second-degree murder. My sentence . . . 40 years behind bars. Happy 21st.

Instead of leaving 18 months of hard time in the county jail to the beauty of freedom, I'd instead be going to a place I never thought I'd see the inside of: state prison. I was shocked, betrayed, scared, lost . . . You name it and I was feeling it. It was a flood of the emotions you attempt to avoid in life. I could do nothing. I was powerless. I felt like the whole world was against me and the only people who could change that were the very ones who chose to defy the facts by choosing to put me in prison. I was left with so many questions. How could a jury convict me with no evidence? How long would it take to right this obvious wrong? How could those with the authority to serve and protect ignore the facts, and fight for what the documented evidence proved was so blatantly wrong? And the most pressing question, which may never be answered: How could they live with themselves?

This, thankfully, was not the end of my journey. Incensed by the jury's verdict and knowing I was innocent, my family made it their mission to uncover as much evidence as possible to prove my innocence. Devoting his life to the case, my father, Bill, eventually uncovered a shocking series of facts that would help prove that I should never have even been arrested, let alone tried or convicted.

Following my conviction in 2005, I was back in court several times over the years in a series of

hopeless appeals. Each time the local judges ignored the facts of my case and, unsurprisingly, ruled against me. Unwilling to challenge the authority and judgments of their colleagues, none of these “ministers of justice” would be bold enough to stand in opposition to their peers. Sadly, as statistics show, this is typical for small-time judges. So, I sat in prison for years while these local hacks callously carried on with their country-club lives. This continued throughout many years of appeals, even though the only two witnesses against me would eventually take the stand, admitting to perjury. Remember, there was never any physical evidence linking me to Heitholt’s murder and the “sole witness” to the crime scene had said I was not the person she saw in the parking lot. Could this really be how our justice system works?

Thankfully, back in October 2005, a few months before my trial, the media started to take an interest in my case. Over the years, three major news magazine shows ended up highlighting my family’s extraordinary efforts, and their attention would prove invaluable in securing my eventual release. CBS’s *48 Hours* and NBC’s *Dateline* each ended up airing four episodes on the absurdity of this case. Later, ABC’s *Nightline* also aired two detailed segments. I have since been interviewed by *Today*, *Good Morning America*, *The Early Show*, and *Katie*, Katie Couric’s show. Beyond that were countless newspaper articles and posts written about my struggles and my family’s. The world of fighting for yourself in the media is a story unto itself. It is a strange and difficult one for sure but ultimately gratifying once all the facts are exposed. All the media attention eventually attracted the interest of prominent defense attorney Kathleen Zellner. An extremely well-respected lawyer who focuses on appealing wrongful convictions, Kathleen and her brilliance and incredible work ethic were essential for the fight to come. In the fall of 2009, Zellner and her law partner, the unassumingly tenacious Doug Johnson, met with me and my family, examined the evidence, and realized there had been an obvious miscarriage of justice. They took my case pro bono, no expenses, and worked tirelessly to prove my innocence. Shortly after they came on board, an incredible break occurred in the case. Out of the blue I received some unexpected good news. In early November 2009, Charles Erickson had decided to come clean. In a handwritten statement, Erickson admitted he had lied under oath at trial!

Finally! After years of attempting to prove what was so obvious to a bunch of courts whose members wouldn’t even listen to the evidence, the truth would reveal itself. I was still a bit frightened since I knew how these courts operated, but it felt like this hellish journey would soon come to its long-awaited conclusion. How could they *not* give me my life back when this man admitted to lying and all the evidence backed it up? For the first time in years I began to dream again. Later, things began to look even more promising. My defense team ended up speaking with the other witness, Jerry Trump, who confessed that he, too, had lied during his trial testimony under pressure from Prosecutor Kevin Crane. Apparently Crane had told Trump it would be “helpful to him” if Trump could place me at the scene of the crime, which clearly led to Trump’s contrived story. Trump was fresh out of prison on an unrelated charge, and he was on parole when he was called into Kevin Crane’s office. A classic scenario for the state to drum up false testimony. During his 2012 sworn habeas corpus testimony, Trump stated he was “scared out of his mind” during that unfortunate meeting and he was “under the guidance of the prosecutor’s office.”

When Erickson and Trump took the stand at my habeas corpus hearing in April 2012 and admitted they lied at my trial, both men subjected themselves to perjury charges. This had never happened before in an American courtroom during a habeas hearing. Recanting witnesses may give affidavits admitting perjury but they rarely take the stand under oath and admit perjury because this act can carry with it a potential 30-year prison sentence. Powerful! How else do you describe a moment like

this in a case that was built on nothing more than words? What could possibly be more reliable than witnesses subjecting themselves to a veritable lifetime in prison just for coming clean?

This was it. My time had come, vindication had begun! It was a watershed moment in my case. C so it seemed. Six months later, almost to the day of the 11th anniversary of Kent Heitholt's murder, Judge Daniel Green denied my appeal in the Cole County Circuit Court, stating that Trump's trial testimony had no weight in the jury's verdict and that Erickson's habeas testimony was "unreliable." What? Turns out Green had confused quite a few facts of my case, not to mention Missouri law. He didn't even understand the testimony in his own courtroom. A prime example is how he completely misstated a witness's, Kim Bennett's, testimony about where my car was parked at the By George nightclub in his 2012 finding. I was appalled. It felt as though he was intentionally attempting to alter the facts. What came out of the courtroom was so bad that I simply assumed he was completely out of touch with the facts he was ruling on. And that's being nice. How could a man given the responsibility to determine the course of another's entire future not even take the time to get the basic facts correct?

All those hopes and dreams about the future I thought I'd soon be having . . . gone. Taken away in an instant. It looked like my future would be that of the only person in the United States to still be imprisoned with absolutely no evidence and with the only alleged eyewitnesses, whose testimony was key in my conviction, recanting in open court.

Nonetheless, we fought on. On January 31, 2013, my attorney filed a petition requesting a writ of habeas corpus from the Western District Court of Appeals, challenging Judge Daniel Green's ruling. At this time I was a bit wary and had little faith in Missouri courts. Even with no evidence and the only "witnesses" of this case recanting, Chris Koster, the Missouri attorney general, opposed the petition, calling it "a waste of judicial resources."

What could be worse than that? One no-name judge not doing his elected duty is bad enough, but the attorney general saying that he quite simply didn't care . . . heartbreaking. At that point, it really didn't feel as though anyone inside this privileged little bubble could have cared less about getting it right. Justice didn't exist. They essentially told us: "We'll never listen to your facts and arguments no matter how much proof you've got. You might as well get comfortable in your little cage."

At this point, I almost lost faith . . . almost. Even then I figured I'd give it one last shot. Oral arguments were just around the corner and this was pretty much the end of the line for me. If these people didn't feel it necessary to listen to the merit of our facts, no one else would. Chances were I'd spend the next 30 years listening to my celly snore as I attempted to sleep while a corrections officer shined a light in my eyes.

On September 10, 2013, my case was heard in front of the Western District Court of Appeals. I wasn't there but everyone I cared about was. It was a huge day. All the media even flew down. Looking back on that day I remember my girlfriend's phone dying just before the hearing started and a new friend of mine, film producer Andrew Jenks, giving her his so that we could finish our frantic conversation. Needless to say, it was a crazy time in my life.

Although the judges would not decide on anything during that hearing, I couldn't wait to hear how things went. After that phone call to my girlfriend, as everyone I knew went in and listened to my attorneys fight for my life, I had to go sit in my cell and hope to hear from someone soon how things transpired. All I could think was how surreal it was to have the center of my world so far away from me. I even wrote a post on Facebook about it, one of the many that would highlight my thoughts and feelings at the time. Don't get confused . . . I didn't have access to the Internet the entire time I was in prison. I recited a post to my girlfriend over the phone, so she could type it on her phone and then post it on Facebook. Anyway, later that day I received an ecstatic phone call from Kathleen saying that

things went great. Better than even she could have hoped! I felt nothing. Maybe fear, sadness, or bewilderment but ~~nothing like peace or joy~~. Even as I was able to speak to all those I loved and cared about, my emotions never changed. Everyone sounded great and felt more confident than ever, but for me it was just more of the same, I'd lost all faith. Hope no longer existed.

A couple of months went by, and on November 5, 2013, after I had spent nine years and eight months behind bars, the Western District Court of Appeals panel of judges ruled. It *finally* happened, they overturned my conviction! A week later, on November 12, 2013, they unexpectedly released me. I was a free man for the first time in nearly a decade! Chris Koster, the same attorney general who nine months earlier stated my case was a "waste of judicial resources," decided not to retry or pursue further legal action against me. Justice had finally won! I was 19 years old at the time of my arrest and released nearly 10 years later, less than a month after my 29th birthday. In total I spent nine years, eight months, and two days in prison for a murder I had no involvement in.

There are many blanks to fill in during those years, but that's for another book. What you've just read is the meat and potatoes of the life I was forced to endure. Every day I lost was a day I would never regain. While high school friends went off to college, graduated, pursued careers, married, and had children, I was behind bars. I missed the college experience, friends' weddings and the births of their children, celebrations, and even my grandmother's funeral. I eventually lost touch with many people whose lives had moved on while I remained falsely imprisoned. Life would never be the same.

My trials and conviction, however, are not what this book is about. The pages that follow are not about dry facts and the workings of the legal system. Instead this book is about my journey in prison and my experiences as one of the many wrongfully convicted men in America's justice system.

Prison is a severe form of mental torture. Through the days of this mental oppression and the physical hell of those first few years, I somehow managed to find a balance and was able to maintain most of my sanity. In this book, I highlight what I did to keep moving through the most oppressive time of my life, how I stayed focused, and what I learned along the way. I emerged from prison after almost 10 years not just unbroken *but* also stronger physically and mentally than I ever thought possible. This is the story of how I did it.

My hope is that this book will inspire you in your own life, too. It was initially written during my last five months of incarceration and much of it concerns my physical growth as I transformed myself from a skinny 19-year-old student into a wall of muscle. I had to in order to survive. Along the way, I'm going to explain, step-by-step, how I transformed my body, from exercises and routines to diet and daily habits.

But this isn't your typical fitness book. Sure, you'll pick up all the methods, tips, and ideas you need to get into the best shape of your life; but that ultimately is not what this book is all about. Many of you reading it will already be in good shape or may have no interest in packing on muscle. That's fine! I didn't set out to write a standard fitness book. I'm also *not* your typical fitness expert. I'm just giving you my personal experiences of how I transformed my body. If you want a typical fitness book, trust me, there are countless options on the shelves or online. *This, though, is better!*

Ultimately this book is about one word: GROWTH. If I can grow during what has been in many ways a truly terrible decade for me then so can you. Wherever you are, whoever you are, the only limits on you are the ones YOU impose on yourself. I was stuck in a concrete box for years and certainly had no advantages. This is the story of perseverance and determination, one celebrating our collective capacity to excel.

I *did not* give up hope, and I was not going to let the Missouri justice system define me. While in prison, I exercised my mind and body daily. I went to the physical extreme and fed my brain with

knowledge. I wrote this book highlighting what got me through and gave me the sanity to continue my journey. For my last six years in prison, I even worked as a tutor three days a week helping other inmates study for their GED. Helping others helped keep me going.

My intention is for this to be the first of a series of books I plan on writing as I continue my personal journey. I will also highlight my efforts on my Facebook page (Freed Ryan Ferguson), which has over 100,000 (and counting) amazing supporters. Newer are my Twitter and Instagram accounts (@lifeafterten) and a website (www.RyanFergusonFitness.com). I now have a tremendous opportunity to reveal the ins and outs of our criminal justice system. I will use these platforms to help expose other cases of wrongful convictions, as well as to update people on my own life and personal growth.

Many people have wondered why I am writing this book now rather than simply telling the story of the last 10 years in a straight autobiography. The latter will share a story that will take time for me to tell properly, and there is also a great deal I must process in my own mind. My story is quite dense and complex; it's not one I want to rush. Don't worry, though, I'm working hard and it's coming. For your sake, for mine, and, most important, for all those who are currently wrongfully convicted, it has to be done right.

My point here is to prove that if I could make it in prison, where you're seen as nothing more than a number in a system that herds people like cattle through an inefficient, nonsensical bureaucracy, then you, too, can achieve great things no matter what life hands you. To the people who controlled my life for 10 years, I was little more than the dirt on their shoes, carelessly pushed around while they cashed a paycheck or scored a promotion. But that didn't stop me—and NOTHING in this world should ever stop you! Whatever we face, we can always find ways to become better.

I *know* my future is going to be amazing. I have been blessed with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, which I am committed to making the most of. I have a great support team: an incredible family, a wonderful girlfriend, fantastic friends, and countless allies in the legal and media worlds. I also know that I must take action in order to grow, and I want the same for you, too. So don't just read this book. USE IT!

There is no stopping you. The choice is yours. Take action. Take control of your life! Make every moment matter!

Introduction

I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Small Changes Equal Big Results

Many fitness books consist of nothing but pure, cold, hard facts. Dull, bland, and uninteresting. Others are stuffed full of life, emotion, and personal vicissitudes, thus taking the reader on a wild roller coaster ride while unfortunately lacking the information necessary for change. I cannot promise that what you are about to read will transcend these vehicles; however, the goal of this book is to marry these two concepts in order to inform, educate, and leave you in awe of what you're about to accomplish.

This book is, first and foremost, a tool. Its primary intention is to give the reader a clear and concise path to building the best possible physical version of him or herself without wasting time in the gym or the kitchen. Over and over again I've seen hoards of people attempt to get into shape only to end up quitting a few months or even a few weeks later. What has become obvious to me, after many years of observation, is that people are quitting not because of laziness, which is what I'd initially suspected, but because of the intense frustration of seeing lackluster results, which are the inevitable by-product of doing a lot of hard work *the wrong way*—in essence, wasting time spinning your wheels. Ernest Hemingway said it best when cautioning: “Never confuse motion with action.” If used properly, the ideas contained in the next 10 chapters will eliminate all that useless movement and, thanks to the aid of education, will give your actions purpose.

The reason for 10 chapters is quite simple. Once I was able to untangle myself from all of the absurd, unrealistic expectations I'd built up in my mind thanks to many of the latest “two-minute fitness crazes,” a clear path became increasingly evident. Ten necessary elements slowly began to reveal themselves as the core fundamentals to any health and fitness program. This pragmatic approach was an evolutionary leap forward for achieving not only the degree of physical success I'd experienced but also for the probability of my survival as an innocent man forced to live inside a maximum-security prison for what might be the remainder of my existence.

These steps encompassed the answers to nearly all of my goals: (1) get big so I can protect myself (2) stay healthy so I don't get sick in a place where medical care is little more than two Tylenol and a pat on the back; and (3) safeguard my mind and my dreams against the overtly evil environment that was forced to call home. My path was a perilous one and if I missed just one step, disaster was more

than happy to greet me in the icy cold waters below.

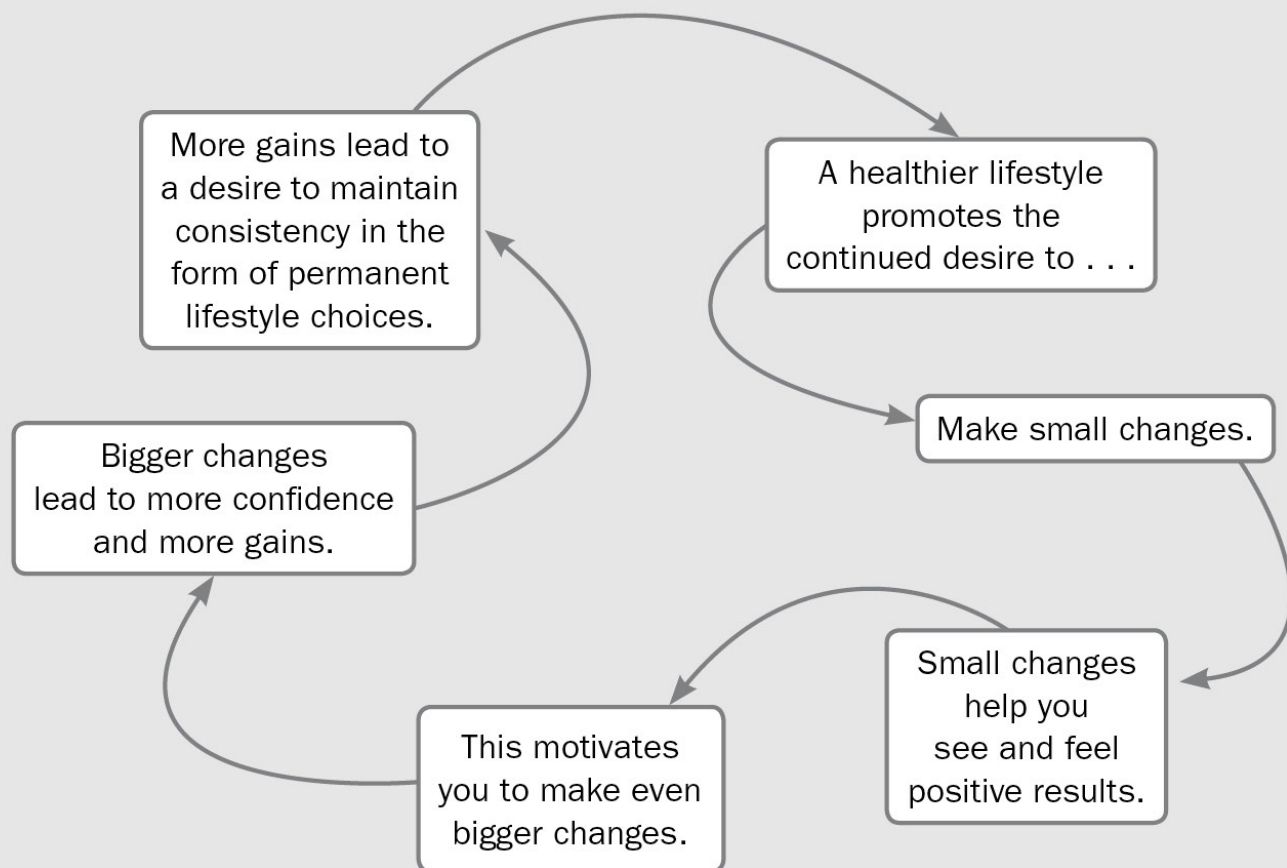
~~Although our journeys will inevitably differ, we can all readily benefit from these simple~~ concepts. It may seem a bit daunting at first, but I can assure you that through a few small changes taken from each chapter, you'll be well on your way to success. As far as I'm concerned, this isn't *a* path to success, this is *the* path to success. It's not always easy and it certainly isn't as simple as many charlatans might tell you, but *this is it*. This is what I wish I could have picked up and read 10 years ago. Nothing but the raw facts of what we need to do to look and feel good. The simple truth, presented in a concise manner, and made as attainable as possible from someone who has done it himself.

The simple reality is that by following the fundamental steps described in this book, you *can* have the body you want in the time you have. That said, in order to do this you must evolve your thinking and understand that it's all about working smarter, not harder! The whole idea is that through attaining knowledge and understanding the "whats, whens, and hows" of your diet and exercise habits, you'll be able to accomplish *more in less time*. As far as I'm concerned it's just that easy.

We will be able to achieve this by focusing primarily on the three main components that comprise this outlook: your workout; your diet; and your continued education, which will transform your daily activities. These components have been broken down and designed in such a way that each individual can immediately begin implementing changes, both large and small, into his or her lifestyle at his or her own pace, without too much disruption of normal activities. From here, we will be able to see and feel positive changes over time, which will inevitably aid and motivate us to make even more changes as we become comfortable with our progress and are increasingly encouraged by our results.

The basic reality that we all must face is that change takes time and that that is okay. The sooner we accept this, the sooner we'll see what we want looking back at us from the mirror. All that's needed is to start making whatever changes you feel comfortable with, and try adding something new each week. Remember, the more changes you make the better your results WILL BE.

Small Changes, Big Results



Who Can Benefit from This Lifestyle?

For a while now, I have struggled with how to describe this book's target audience. Who will this book be helping most? What is the central theme? Who can it most help? That's when I realized it shouldn't have to be so specific. Why should a book composed of research ranging from living longer to bodybuilding science and women's health to sports science be focused primarily on one group of people? This dynamic approach includes everyone!

Although it was initially intended for guys like myself who wanted that muscular, athletic beach body, but were tired of reading endless books and magazines that contradicted one another, it turned into an all-inclusive guidebook that presents the necessary information for attaining phenomenal health in one accessible volume. Much like my own goals and desires, the primary goal of this text progressed to a point where mental and physical health were just as important as body aesthetics. These are things I believe we all want, need, and desire to some degree—especially if they can be achieved through a series of smaller, readily achievable lifestyle changes.

Throughout my decade-long evolution, it became clear to me that when attempting to create our best physical selves, the same basic principles of workout, diet, and mentality apply across genders and lifestyles. Whether young or aging, skinny or big-boned, male or female, if we choose the right diet, at the right time, with the right workout for a sustained period of time, we can all attain the body we want with less work and be not only healthier but also happier for a lifetime.

In my opinion, as a typical person just trying to get into better shape and look good, this book encompasses what I believe other fitness books and magazines *should* be telling you but most often o

not. Instead, they put us on overload with the minutiae in hopes of getting us to come back time and time again to buy more worthless or partially useful products. Although I go into great detail about my story, and the evolutionary process I went through, it's not really about my story. It's about you. It's about you and your story. It's about you accomplishing your goals and seeing the body and the life you want.

This book is essentially a guide to show you that even under the most extreme circumstances, YOU have the power to transform into the best-possible version of yourself. My story is merely here as an example to show you why I am so incredibly passionate about each and every word you will soon read. To show you that if *I* can do it, YOU can too! Thus illuminating how an extraordinarily *ordinary* person such as myself can transform his body, mind, and spirit using these basic, well-established principles.

We all have our own stories, our own personal struggles, which we must contend with daily. My personal story may seem extreme, but, in reality, these events and circumstances are only as powerful as we perceive and allow them to be. Who's to say my story is more life-altering than yours? No one. All you can do is pick yourself up and choose to be a survivor! Choose to give the time and dedication to do for yourself what no one else will. Choose to engage in creating the best life possible for yourself. This is simply the story of how I personally did it, which is why I believe we can ALL benefit from these life-enhancing habits.

How Vanity Makes Us Better

Let's be realistic. How many of us go out and buy books on fitness and exercise because our sole desire is to be "healthier"? If your answer was anything other than a laugh, then you're a better person than me. All I know is that I want to look good, period. At least that's how I started out. Although some may say this is superficial and the wrong reason for getting into shape (and they may very well be right), the fact remains that it's the number one reason people pick up this kind of book.

Some of you will read this book because of my story, of which there is a whole lot just for you, but if not, stop and think for a moment about *why* you bought this book. If you're being honest with yourself, the likelihood is that your desires are in line not only with mine but with millions of others who want to look good. Who *doesn't* want to look their best? Quite simply, it just makes life easier. You have more confidence, more energy, more pizzazz, and, whether right or wrong, people are more likely to gravitate toward you. Studies have also shown that finding jobs or enjoying benefits such as upward mobility are more readily accessible as well. And who knew about the laundry list of positive aspects as they pertain to your sex life? Google it! (I wouldn't know personally, as I've missed out on the past decade of life, but that is what "they" say.)

There's one other incredible benefit I want to touch on briefly, one that we'll address in depth later, and it's about how you start gaining the residual effects of actually feeling better mentally. At this point, health, short-term and long-term, tends to take hold, and you'll likely become a full-blown "health nut." It may take some time to reach this point, but mark my words, if you stick with it long enough, IT WILL HAPPEN! Ask any person you see with an above-average physique, or any friends and coworkers who have transformed themselves, and nine times out of 10 they will tell you how their desires went from pure aesthetics to overall health. Aesthetics, of course, remain a predominant factor.

My point is this: regardless of why you begin this quest, the reality is that you're making a better

you. As you begin to feel great and see gains, that better you, in turn, will want to keep getting better and better. So, as far as I'm concerned, any reason—shallow or not—is a good reason to get started. Just venture down this path and you'll reach your destination soon enough. But I must note that, while this process contains relatively few steps, it certainly isn't child's play, and it requires a great deal of determination, effort, and energy. The harder you work and the more disciplined you are, the sooner you will begin to see the fruits of your labor.

Before We Begin

At this point, before we reach the good stuff, I'd like to make it clear that I am no "expert" on these subjects. The list of things *I am not* is far greater than the list of things that I am. The former list is quite extensive and includes such things as a personal trainer, nutritionist, physical therapist, or even an author. I mention this for two reasons. First, my goal is to improve your life, much in the same way that this program has improved mine. That said, you should always consult with your doctor before undertaking any physical, mental, or nutritional regimen. This book contains all of the key components necessary for you to change your body. A portion of the information I've chosen to share in this book has come from various sources such as university studies and research by doctors, nutritionists, sleep experts, and so on. This is my sincerest attempt at a safe and simple starting point, but, as you will often hear throughout the book, you must find what works best for you. ALWAYS PRACTICE CAUTION!

The second reason that I mention my lack of qualifications is because I believe this is precisely what makes the book so special. What do experts in physical therapy, nutrition, sleep, and working out have in common? They all know a lot about *one* particular subject. They are also absolutely necessary in their chosen fields and offer far more expertise than I could ever hope to share. But how many of them can competently combine all these subjects in a practically applicable way? How many have the real-world experience of experimenting with their own bodies for nearly a decade in the harshest of environments? How many have the perspective of a layperson, someone like you and me, who's fed up with all the confusing nonsense out there pulling you in a multitude of directions? None that I've ever come across, that's for sure.

I, however, have the experience. I've been pulled in all those directions. I've tried them all. At this point, I've sacrificed my poor mind and body during more than a decade of trial and error—something most experts have never done—and that's why I believe this book is so special. We could get caught up in all the small details to which the single-field experts must generally adhere; however, the majority of that information is not necessary to begin attaining the body of your dreams.

Consider this your foundation, if you will. The acquisition of a strong, competent base, which has been laid out in the following pages, will not only get you moving along the path toward realizing your dreams, it will also provide the support necessary for sustainable growth. Continue down this realistic road less traveled and you WILL be amazed before you are halfway through.

For the record, that was an opinion you just read: one that I believe in 100 percent, largely due to having experienced firsthand everything you are about to read. Many other opinions about such things as workouts, ease and simplicity of certain endeavors, and fitness or prison in general are discussed as well. All that can be said is that I call it how I see it and say what I believe in, so feel free to take what you read with a grain of salt if you like. I always do.

Fortunately for you this is what you need to know to get you where you want to be, from a guy who has read it all, extracted all the necessary information from hundreds of books and magazines, cut out the fat, and, most important, has tried it all on himself. This is it. This is what you've been waiting for! There's also a decent story about my journey through prison as an innocent man looking to stay safe while attempting to perfect his body the easy way.

The conclusion: DON'T WASTE TIME, GET EDUCATED! For years now, people have commented on my work ethic. When I'm in the gym, I go *hard*. I push myself to the limits in order to get the most out of whatever time I'm willing to spend toiling away under the weights or on the track. When people ask how I'm able to push myself so hard and maintain consistency in my health regime my answer is simple: *I'm actually lazy*.

On the outside, and if looked at from our current perspective, this may seem like a joke, farcical . . . so far as it contradicts the solid work ethic that drew people to me in the first place. But this truth is, to me, just a simple fact. From what I've observed, most people, myself included, want to be in shape. Who says, "I'd like to be considered morbidly obese" or "Man, I wish I had a few more pounds around my hips"? NO ONE. The problem is that many of us, as we progress through the seasons of life, hit droughts. Droughts where our physical activity has dropped off. Droughts in our diets, when parties and holidays take over and we realize that, in the blink of an eye, we've been consuming terrible food for a month, three months, or a year. Even droughts where we simply choose to no longer care about our health or our bodies at all. Who among us can say that they've never lost for a time their motivation, their will, and their desire to be better?

We must be wary of these droughts, however, because when they hit us, they consume far more than just the present. These quiet, unassuming assassins consume our future—and it's not just the immediate future I'm concerned about. We can end up spending inordinate amounts of time and money on ridiculous diets trying to get back on track, compromising our long-term future. Lack of exercise, terrible diets, and the accumulation of fat and its by-products poisoning our systems over time will steal years from our lives. What's worse and thought of less often is that the quality of life in our remaining years will be plagued with disease, unnecessary suffering, and a revolving door of hospital visits. Who wants that?

Managing multiple chronic illnesses, the unnecessary strain of built-up stress, and the never-ending quest of trying to get back in shape . . . sound good to you? To me, all of this seems like a lot more hard work than investing a little of the now in positive lifestyle choices. If you take the simple steps laid out in this book, you can largely avoid much of this unnecessary suffering. Through putting in at least a minimal effort to *consistently* eat right, exercise, and maintain your health, your workload will be significantly less taxing and, more important, easier on your body.

So yes, I'm 100 percent serious when I say I'm lazy. Getting back into shape is far more difficult than staying in shape will ever be. So by staying in shape, I'm saving myself loads of time, money, and dignity. And this doesn't even get into the fact that the quality of life spoken of earlier will almost certainly be at a sustainably higher level. When considering our health, we must be *forward thinkers*. What we do now (eat, drink, exercise) determines our future. Think of your time and habits as an investment. Pay in a little each day, remain aware, and stay educated about your investments and their return. Don't coast off into the sunset enjoying life as you age. Ignore these realities and the future is no longer in your control. Although a joke, I've always liked what comedian Redd Foxx had to say about us lovers of health: "Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in hospitals dying of nothing." Ha, we

Redd, that's a good one—but at least I'll have gotten the absolute most out of life. Whether it be one day more, ten years more, or just better quality in the years I've got, the opportunity to be here on spaceship mother earth, kicking back and enjoying the ride, is all worth it.

So here is your all-inclusive guide: all you need to know, in one place, at one time, to get yourself started down the path to a better you. What's more is that I know how difficult this journey can be, since it is one I have been living for the past decade of my life. We all have our own time constraints and difficulties, but I assure you, if I can do it under the circumstances you'll read about in this book YOU CAN TOO! *So start being lazy now by implementing these changes* and you'll soon be leaping into your new life. You'll thank me when you're lying on the beach in your sunset years, with your six-pack (abs that is), drinking a six-pack (of beer, of course), following a good game of tennis with your grandkids, and enjoying your life. Best of luck, my friends!

A Note to Women

The myth that women shouldn't lift weights is only perpetuated by women who fear strength and men who fear women.

—UNKNOWN

Why a Note for the Ladies?

Although the principles for a healthy, well-balanced lifestyle outlined in this book are for everyone, of nearly any age, both men and women, I thought it important to take a moment (further urged on by my girlfriend, who is also an avid believer in the benefits of this healthy lifestyle) to speak directly to women readers. Ideally these few short pages will clear up some of the most common misconceptions around women's fitness, so that we can all move forward together into the bodies we want and deserve.

Due to all the fads, pseudodiets, and infomercials trying to sell the latest rinky-dink machine or butt-lifting workout, you ladies have been fed a lot of useless and counterproductive information. We all have, but society plays a big role in confusing the average woman even more so, mostly because the media, for reasons I have yet to understand, seems to push the supermodel body on you from the womb to the tomb. It makes no sense because almost NONE of the guys I have ever known find this look to be exceptionally flattering. (That is, of course, in reality at least. If, however, you plan on living your life in print, the supermodel look may work for you.) For the most part, we males respect and desire a healthy, happy woman who eats a well-balanced diet (not just low carbs) and who has a little shape to her. Essentially what is generally considered most attractive is often most natural. Stic figures, in comparison, are not natural. But who cares what guys want? What's important is what *you* want and what matters to *you*. That being said, it must be noted, once more, that this lifestyle, workout included, *is for you, too*. Although everyone has different body types (guys are different from other guys, while girls are different from other girls), the reality is that guys and girls are physiologically very much the same in terms of how we gain and lose both fat and muscle. So let's take a look at how these fundamental similarities operate.

Should Women Lift Weights?

The single most important difference in fitness between the two sexes is that women develop muscle mass at a much slower rate than men—that's it, which is why I believe this workout is universal and designed for everyone. Because this workout incorporates foundational movements, it delivers the most desired and sought-after body type for *both* men and women, even though the end goal (lean

muscle mass) is slightly different from a visual perspective. As men gain the muscle necessary to give them a masculine, athletic body type, women also gain the toned athletic look but without the mass. Multiple studies also suggest that weight training has an even more important place in women's lives; it can aid in bone densification, which helps solve a prevalent concern for aging women about bone-density loss. Otherwise, the two sexes are very similar in terms of the need for weight training and the vast array of health-related benefits they accrue from it.

How is this possible, you may ask? The science is complicated but the predominant differentiating factor is testosterone. This hormone, which men have in far larger quantities than women, helps men grow larger while women will generally stay smaller and get leaner due to their body not producing high levels of the substance. My point is that **YOU WILL NOT GET TOO BIG!** I often hear women say that they avoid weights because they don't want to gain mass and look all "manly." Sound familiar? I get it, though. While some may want this look, this book is for those of us in the middle who just want to look naturally healthy, lean, and athletic.

The reality is that it is extremely difficult to gain mass. The volume of work necessary for a man to do so is quite intense and grueling; and, given the physiological differences, for a woman to do so requires more or less doubling a man's efforts. This is why I can promise that you will not gain unsightly mass or have manly muscles. Even if you did, that wouldn't be a bad thing because that means you've met and surpassed your goals. It's a lot easier to lose muscle than it is to gain (trust me), so if this were the case, all you would have to do is stop.

Think about it: If gaining mass were so easy, wouldn't all your guy friends go to the gym every now and then and come out looking like Ryan Gosling or Mark Wahlberg? The reason they don't is because it takes a lot of very specific training, a very particular diet, and copious amounts of hard work. In order to get there, it would have to be a very deliberate goal on which you focused all of your energies. You'd have to lift heavy, work out more than most lifestyles would allow, and consume massive quantities of food to feed those Herculean muscles. If you want to get that big, good luck. It ain't easy and you'll have to find another book. While desirable for some, this quite simply is not our goal.

On the off chance that you do start gaining a little unwanted muscle, there is one simple solution. As we said earlier, just stop working out. If you ever begin to feel like you're getting too much out of your workout (although this is quite rare), all you have to do is take some time off and all that hard work will slowly begin to vanish.

This also brings up one of the most unfortunate things about exercise and fitness, which seems to continuously boggle my mind. You've got to stay on top of it . . . FOREVER. Once you get your body exactly how you desire it to be, you **CANNOT STOP**. If you do . . . poof . . . it'll vanish into thin air. We are all created equal in terms of losing gains from hard work, so unfortunately, this goes for everyone. Welcome to the importance of consistency.

It has also been brought to my attention that these days there is a large emphasis on women attempting to perfect their backsides. There are many ways to work on this muscle (that's what it is), but one remains king no matter how people attempt to view it. The squat. This is, was, and always will be your butt's best friend. The simple reality is the harder and heavier you go, the more you'll have to hold and to love until death do you part. There are many other supplemental workouts for your glutes such as glute ham raises or bridges, but by forgoing this primary move, as both men and women often sadly do, you'll likely never see Beyoncé-esque images staring back at you from your full-length mirror. Add the stair stepper to this mix and you'll be well on your way to legs fit for the silver screen: toned, shapely, and seductive. What more could you want? That's why I love the stair-stepper.

contraption as a supplement to my squats. It gives me that extra burn in the legs, and it's a way of doing cardio while still building better hams, thighs, and, of course, those all-important glutes! I only mention the stair stepper here because I know that many women will actually use it, whereas guys often will not. If you think your friends can be finicky, then you've never seen a bunch of guys in the gym. The way they run from those stair steppers would make you think it was a yogurt-dispensing Shake Weight. Pathetic!

Come to think of it, I may need a guys' chapter, too. While women shouldn't be wary of protein powders and weights, men shouldn't be afraid of stair steppers, yoga, and Pilates. It's all relevant and useful to *everyone*! Heck, I do it all and my ego seems to be intact. No problems here; it's all about education. With this knowledge, I continue to diversify what I do, while managing to look and feel better than ever. Even if some may disagree, I know, thanks to understanding why some things are good for me and others aren't, that I'm physically healthier and physiologically better off than ever. We just have to get over ourselves. So as you can see, the notion that lifting weights is for men only is pure garbage. DON'T BUY INTO IT.

The Art of Counting Calories

This leads me to one of the most common misunderstandings that derails women's physical progress. Apparently, ladies (more so than men, who seem to get a thrill out of shoving food in their mouths in rather Neanderthal fashion) tend to feel comfortable eating anything so long as they do it "responsibly." And many generally eat "responsibly" by keeping their caloric intake at an alarmingly low level. This misunderstanding of the need to count calories can quickly become an inhibitor of progress if acted on. It's important to note that counting calories is more a matter of science than just another numbers game. Although men, too, subscribe to this method of madness, albeit in significantly lower numbers, I cannot stress how detrimental this is to your overall health and progress in the gym.

First of all, you must take into account the nutritional differences of the types of food you eat. Although you may be consuming fewer calories, it may take far more work to burn these off than if you consumed 20 to 30 percent more calories from food of a different variety. If done correctly, you could consume more food, feel full for a longer period of time, and burn what you consumed at a faster rate than if you consumed fewer calories of a less nutritional profile. This brings up the second and most important aspect of food, which is the nutritional quality of the calories you consume. If, for instance, you take in 300 calories of food with a poor nutritional profile, such as a plain white bagel with cream cheese, you'd be getting almost zero nutrients or proteins and loads of simple, bad carbs and fats. If you instead ate 300 calories of food with a healthy nutritional profile, such as steel-cut oatmeal with peanut butter and bananas, you'd be getting vitamins A, C, and D; complex, good carbs and a quality source of protein. Plus, you'll likely burn it all off faster due to how our bodies would use these nutrients.

For example, one day I ate an 800-calorie Blimpie sandwich in the prison visiting room. Eight hundred calories is quite a significant meal, so you think that would fill me up, right? It didn't. There wasn't even a whole lot to it, since it contained a little meat and cheese, white bread, and some dressing. Because the sandwich had no complex carbs, very little protein, and virtually no other nutrients, not only did I *not* get full, it had almost zero health benefits, which just made things worse. In contrast, the day after, I made myself a bowl of fresh vegetables with four ounces of chicken, ate a

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