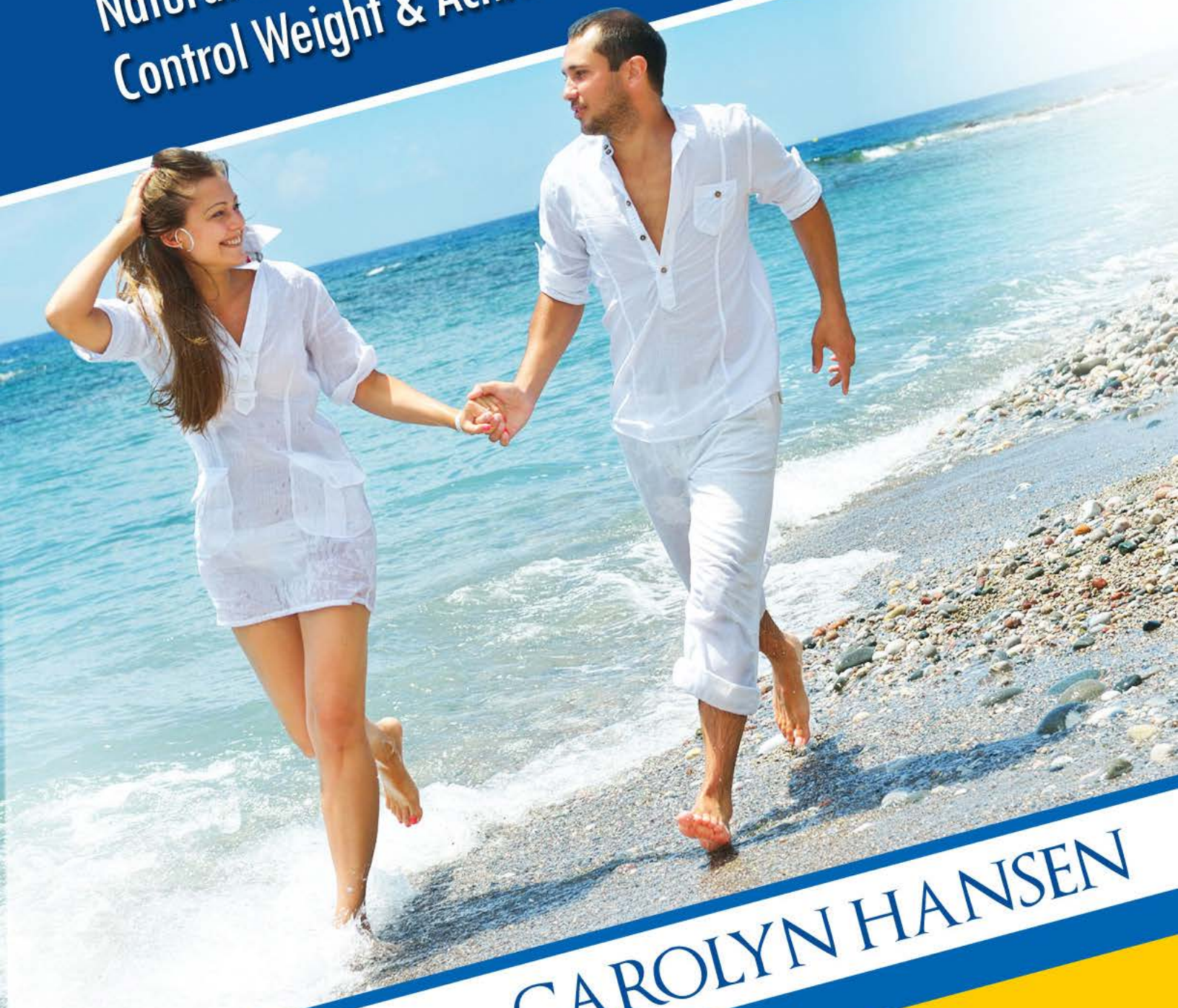
FIX YOUR HORMONES:

Natural Strategies to Boost Metabolism, Renew Energy, Control Weight & Achieve Optimal Health and Wellness



CAROLYN HANSEN

ABOUT
Carolyn Hansen

Carolyn Hansen is a noted Holistic Health and Wellness Coach who hails from Whangarei, New Zealand where she owns an Anytime Fitness Gym. She has gained a reputation online as an authority on health, exercise and weight loss matters and is the author of several thousand health and fitness articles along with eBooks and programs that can be found here.

She has devoted more than three decades to the fitness industry, both offline and online, teaching people the simple secrets to getting into better shape, losing weight, and improving health.

Her main goal is to change the paradigm of health care from sickness care to wellness care and will be showing people how to live longer, healthier lives while avoiding the many mistaken beliefs and practices that diminish health and longevity.

She will encourage you to become stronger and stay that way through each decade of your life, maintain your health, wellness and vitality and to ensure your "health span" matches your "life span".

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to achieving optimal health, many people are well aware of the basics:

- Good nutrition
- Proper exercise
- Mental health awareness

If you have these three covered, you may *think* that you're on track to living your optimal life. But sometimes it's best to take a step back and really ask yourself, *are you doing everything you can to get your body in proper working order?*

Often the answer to that question is that you aren't.

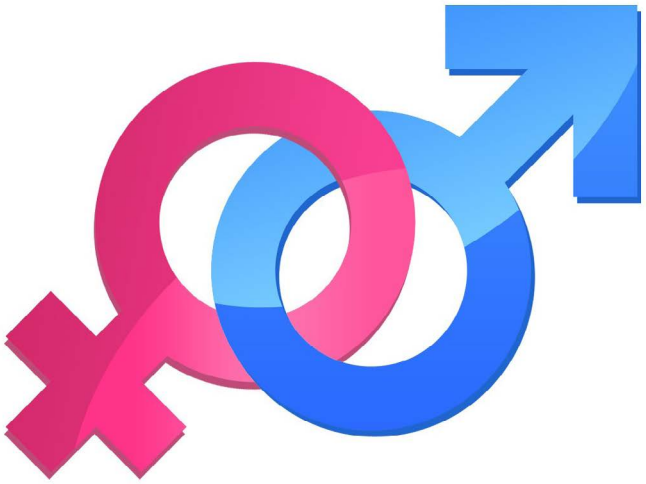
The fact is, there is one underlying issue that is impacting just about everyone in this day and age and only a handful of people are taking control over it.

That issue?

Hormones.

Your hormones are critical to your health. What's a hormone? And how does it impact you?

Let's clear this up right now.



A hormone is a substance that is produced in the body that acts as a messaging system for other cells and tissues. Essentially, it's how your body 'talks' to itself. When a particular hormone is released by one type of tissue, it signals another type of tissue to do something else.

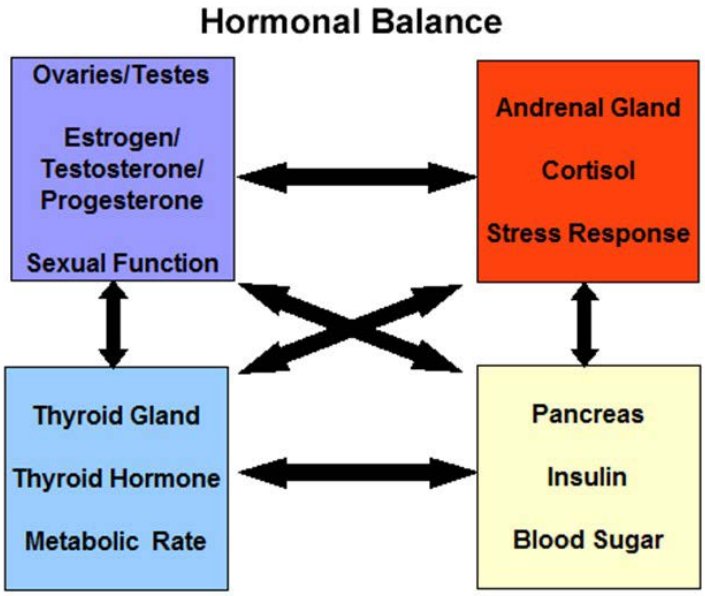
In all aspects of life, you are governed by your hormones. You might like to think that you have control over your body, but the fact of the matter is that you don't.

Hormones do.

Hormones dictate whether you're happy, sad, excited, or mad. Hormones tell you that you need eat lunch an hour earlier or your stomach is going to throw a fit. Hormones also tell you whether you should cross the street or not when a car is headed your direction.

Hormones dictate *everything*.

When your hormones are off, BIG problems can occur. Most people do not realize the extent of the problems that can erupt due to hormonal imbalances, so that is what we are here to talk about today.



Sadly, most people are suffering from hormonal related problems. They're feeling exhausted most days of the week. They're feeling burnt out and are riddled with health issues. They're also gaining weight at an alarming rate and may not even know why. Even sadder, some are having fertility issues that are rendering them incapable of having the family they've always dreamed of.

Hormones can cause *all* of these issues to occur. This is why it pays to learn the various hormones in the body and what they are responsible for and then figure out what you can do to optimize them. Because once you get hormonal optimization in your approach, you will see, *everything* comes that much easier.

You feel energized. Weight seems to melt off your body. And, your mood will be better than it has been in *years*.

Do not underestimate the power that hormones bring. When you manage them properly, they will make a significant difference in your health and well-being.

Over the course of this book, we're going to cover all you need to know about hormones. First we'll start the discussion with some information on what sorts of things tend to disrupt natural hormone balance in our body and go over why so many people in today's world are suffering from these problems.

From there, we're going to give you a primer on each of the key hormones that you need to know about. While this will not be an exhaustive list of every hormone in the body, it will include the main ones that you need to keep in mind that will be impacting your life the most on a day to day basis, especially as far as your bodyweight is concerned.

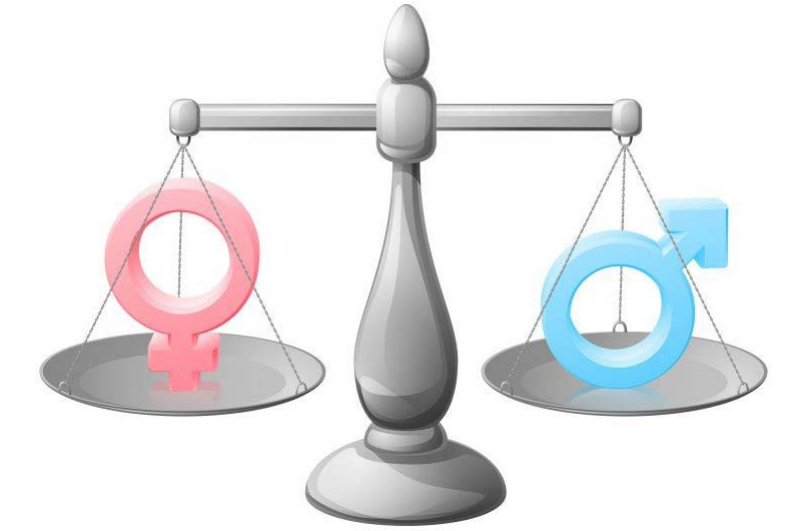
From there, we'll take an individualized look at each of those hormones and go over what you can do to better manage them. This will help ensure that by the end of the book, you are ready to become a master of your own body.

The following sections will contain quite a bit of information, so pay close attention and be open to making a few lifestyle changes. Great rewards will come if you do.

Let's get started.

CHAPTER 1:
Hormone Disruption

So what causes your hormones to become unbalanced in the first place? Why are we in the position we're in today where we are struggling with our energy levels and bodyweight so often?



There are a number of factors that can disrupt the natural flow of hormones in the body. These will be covered in much greater detail in coming chapters.

To brief you on them, they are:

- **Sleep**

People in today's times are sleeping less and less on a regular basis. While in the past, we would go to sleep when the sun went down and not rise until it came up, now thanks to the advent of room lights and alarm clocks, we can set our own sleep hours.

This may go against our body's own natural circadian rhythm, which is setting our entire system entirely off course.

Getting a proper night's sleep is at the heart of managing your body.

• Food intake

The next factor to consider is food intake. How has our food intake changed over the last decades and centuries? One walk through the grocery store will quickly tell you everything you need to know.

Gone are the days where people ate off the land. Now we are faced with a wide assortment of food choices, many of which are incredibly processed and 'man made' so to speak.

Take that chocolate bar you may have had for a snack this afternoon. How natural was it? There were probably a good 20 or more ingredients in that bar, which is your very first clue it's anything *but* natural.

We rarely feast on foods that are natural in state any longer. Everything has been altered and along with it, nutrients lost.

This is changing our overall nutritional status and really compromising how our body's operate – hormones included.

Your food choices exert some of the most powerful influence over your state of health but unfortunately, this is one thing that most people are not using to their advantage. Instead, while they *know* they should eat healthier, they are too busy giving into their food cravings and temptations.

• Stress

Stress is another big problem in today's world. While in previous ancient times the biggest stressor we faced was running away from danger when out hunting animals, now stress lives with us 24/7.

Think about your daily life. When do you *not* feel stressed about something? For most of us, the answer is never. We are always stressed out about something or another whether it's work, our personal relationships, finances, or our health in general.

It may feel like there's no escaping it at times. But yet, it's impacting you, if not immediately, slowly, day by day.

They often call stress the 'silent killer' and this is because it tends to creep up on you when you don't even realize it. Then one day, it's grown so large that you have a break of sorts.

Either you psychologically have a breakdown because you cannot take it any longer or you start to feel physically, your body is suffering.

Make no mistake about it though – you are not immune to the effects of stress. Too many people who are younger and healthy right now think that stress won't impact them that much. They're resilient and can take it.

Wrong.

It may not show up now, but just you wait until later. You'll eventually notice the effects taking place 10, 20, even 30 years from now. What you do now paves the way for the future.

• Environmental toxins

Another thing you'll want to be thinking about is environmental toxins that you may encounter. This is something that most of us overlook, but can also have an influence.

This means things like pollution from the local plant that is just outside your city to the chemicals that are seeping into your water bottle that you drink every day.

These toxins can also alter your hormone activity and start to really exert effects on your overall well-being. Again, this is usually something that happens gradually, so you may not notice it until it's really begun to build up in your body. By that point, it becomes much more challenging to manage.

• Medications

While I'm not about to tell you to go off the prescription medication you are on that is allowing you to keep living as you are if you have a serious health concern, I am going to say that you should not rush out to get medicated at the first sign of a symptom.

We tend to over rely on medications in this day and age as many of us see them as a quick fix. We pop a pill and magically, we're feeling better. Sadly, this isn't quite how it goes.

Sure, you may feel better almost right away, *but*, at what cost? Remember, medications do have side effects as well. They may not be immediate, but they can show up over the long term.

Everything you do will have a consequence and usually it's a trade-off. So before you rush out to use drugs of any kind, always consider the trade-off. Obviously in some cases, it's a trade-off you need to make, but in many others, it's something that may have you rethinking things.

Use natural treatment methods as often as you possibly can and you'll be far better off because of it. Usually natural treatment methods do involve more work on our part however, so this is why many brush them off. We'd rather go for the quick fix over the short term rather than thinking about our long term hormonal health.

• Lack of physical activity/movement

Finally, the last major game player that is impacting our hormone status is the lack of physical activity and movement we are getting on a daily basis.

Our bodies are made to move yet many of us remain sedentary on a day to day basis. We sit in desks for up to 8 hours at a time, hardly shifting at all.

Then we go home and succumb to the couch where we aren't moving again. This needs to stop.

Exercise is a way of strengthening your muscles, but also strengthening all the other systems in your body. When you don't exercise, everything becomes weak – including your ability to produce hormones like you should.

Things get altered and next thing you know, you are feeling miserable. The nice thing about exercise too compared to some of the above factors is that changing your exercise habits can have virtually immediate effects. Right from day one after you finish a good workout, you should be noticing that you are feeling better than ever.

So there you have a much closer look at some of the big game players in terms of what's impacting your hormone levels. Of course there are more factors than this out there, but these are the biggest ones to know and what you can most control going forward.

Now let's dive in and begin discussing the various hormones that you need to know about so that you can get informed on what's all going on in your body.

CHAPTER 2: A Primer On The Key Hormones You Need To Know

Now that you've had a chance to learn *what* impacts your hormones, it's time to learn about the main hormones that circulate through the body. If you want to take control over these hormones, you need to know what it is that you are working to take control over.

Many of these hormones are interrelated, so note that one hormone may also influence another. If you have problems in one area, it's not totally atypical to see problems in another.

The good news is that because we know quite a bit about each of these hormones, you can get things on track and to the place where you are feeling good again with some smart strategies.

Let's look at these hormones in more detail now.

Insulin

The first hormone that we must talk about is one that you have surely heard of before, *insulin*.

Insulin is produced by the pancreas whenever you consume carbohydrates in your diet plan. Carbohydrates break down when they are in the digestive track, releasing glucose, which is the byproduct of digestion.

As glucose enters the blood stream, this causes blood glucose levels to rise, which then signals to the body that something needs to be done. Your body always wants to maintain homeostasis as best as possible, so when blood sugar gets high, action must be taken.

This is insulin's job. Insulin is released by the pancreas and goes into the body, where it escorts the excess glucose out of the blood. Think of it like a bus for glucose. This bus will take glucose to one of two places: your body fat stores or your muscle cells.

If you've just done an intense workout and have depleted your muscles of their glucose storage (which is referred to as muscle glycogen), that is where your glucose will end up.

On the other hand, if your muscles are fully saturated with muscle glycogen, you're going to wind up placing the excess glucose in body fat storage. There is an unlimited amount of storage in body fat cells, so there's no limit to what can go here.

Sadly, this is the fate for most people and why having high glucose levels tends to be so problematic. When glucose is high, fat storage potential is also very high.

Of course do remember that if you *need the glucose for energy purposes*, such as if you are being active at the time, then it will simply be burned off for fuel.

Now, apart from the fact that having too much insulin and therefore glucose in your system can lead to excess body fat, there are other issues that come into play here.

First, your pancreas can burn out. All this stress and strain on the pancreas takes a toll over time. It has to continually keep pumping out more and more insulin, which can cause it to become very overworked. In time, it may start to malfunction due to so much stress and overuse.

On top of that, as this progresses along, you'll notice that your cells stop becoming as responsive to insulin. Before, it may have only take a small dose of insulin to cause the effect you were hoping to create.

But, as time went on, more and more insulin is needed to produce the same desired result. This is a situation referred to as *insulin resistance*, and is essentially where the cells are resistant to insulin.

This only makes the entire cycle worse as then you must pump out *more* insulin to get the job done, putting more stress and strain on the pancreas.

If this situation is left to continue for a great length of time, you can welcome diabetes into your life.

So controlling the hormone insulin is one of the first priorities if you want to get your weight and health under control.

Cortisol

The next hormone to know about is cortisol. Cortisol is a stress hormone in the body and in some cases, can be a good thing.

When cortisol is released from the adrenal gland, this signals to the body that there is some type of danger or stressor that you must escape from. As a result of the release of cortisol, a dose of sugar is released into the blood stream, which then becomes available as a quick source of fuel.

In ancient times when our ancestors were out on hunting expeditions, this was actually a very good thing. If you were suddenly being chased by a tiger or another predator, you need fast energy to run away quickly. Cortisol could in fact save your life.

But in today's world, our stressors typically come to us while we are in a sedentary position. They come to use while we are at work or at home, sitting at the table having an argument with our significant other or balancing our monthly budget. Rarely do we need to use the energy that is being released into our body.

So where does this energy come from? In most cases, as cortisol is a catabolic hormone, it's coming from lean tissue stores. So essentially, cortisol is causing the breakdown of lean muscle mass tissue and releasing glucose in the blood stream.

If this glucose is not used, guess what happens?

It'll be the same scenario as above. Insulin will be released and that glucose will be taken up and stored as body fat storage.

So in essence, you can get a complete body recomposition happening. You will be losing lean muscle mass and instead, gaining body fat. Not to mention, along the way, becoming more insulin resistant.

Clearly managing cortisol is something that you *must* strive to do as best as possible.

High levels of cortisol on a regular basis are also associated with a higher accumulation of fat in the abdominal region as well. It appears as those who experience this high cortisol release are more likely to store fat in the stomach area, which can set you up for a number of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke.

Furthermore, stress itself tends to get your heart racing and can also lead to anxiety, high blood pressure and related health problems as well.

Finally, stress wears you out psychologically as well. It builds over time and soon, you end up feeling burnt out, depressed, and socially withdrawn. You've probably experienced this before if there's ever been a time in your life when stress was at an all time high.

You may have felt like you just wanted to sleep all the time, but yet, despite being so fatigued, when it came to lay down for the night, you were still so wound up that sleep escaped you. This led to greater fatigue levels and the cycle continued.

Those who are suffering from high levels of stress on an ongoing basis are more likely to suffer from depression and other psychological disorders for this reason.

So as you can see, it pays to take care of your stress levels.

Estrogen

The next hormone that needs to be mentioned is estrogen. Estrogen is the female sex hormone, so this one is going to be far more applicable to women reading this, however don't be fooled, men are not immune either.

In fact, men can suffer even more dire consequences when estrogen levels become too high – a common occurrence in today's society.

Now, in general, women do need enough estrogen in order to function properly. Estrogen is required to support a healthy menstrual cycle and ensure that you are able to have children, so from that standpoint, it's a good thing.

The problem comes when estrogen levels get too high though, for either gender. In men, when estrogen levels become elevated, their testosterone levels usually decreases (which is the opposing sex hormone in men).

This causes males to take on female-like characteristics instead. For example, men may notice their voice getting higher when too much estrogen is present. Or, they may notice that they are even starting to develop breast tissue that is more similar to that of what a woman would have. This is a condition called gynecomastia. This is becoming more and more prevalent in today's society.

Men who have higher estrogen levels are also at a higher risk for developing erectile dysfunction and infertility. If you are experiencing either of these things, it could be that your estrogen levels are to blame.

Women on the other hand may notice their PMS symptoms get far worse when they have high estrogen levels and may also notice they have significant mood swings, difficulty sleeping, poor memory, feel tired all the time, and may also suffer from bloating, headaches, and even weight gain.

One of the primary causes of elevated estrogen in today's world is the expanding rate of our waistline. That's right – the more body fat you have, the higher your estrogen tends to be. This is because fat cells themselves produce estrogen, so the more fat cells you have present in the body, the greater your estrogen tends to be.

This is also why usually it's males who are overweight suffering from issues related to high estrogen. Many think that it's the excess weight causing the issue, but really that's not the direct cause. The direct cause is too much estrogen, which is caused by the excess weight. So the extra weight is the indirect cause of these problems.

We'll go into more details on what else can lead to high estrogen levels when we speak about this hormone specifically later on.

Testosterone

Moving along, now it's time to talk about testosterone more specifically. This hormone is the male sex hormone, however will still be present to small degrees in the female body as well. It just won't be nearly as prevalent as it is in a man's body.

Testosterone is the hormone responsible for giving men their male-like distinguishing features – a deeper voice, chest and facial hair, as well as increased muscle mass tissue.

As you might imagine then, having lower testosterone levels is going to make any man feel less like himself. He'll typically notice he starts to gain weight, partly due to the fact that he's losing lean muscle mass.

He may also notice that he's not as aggressive or dominant as he used to be. He's lost his 'edge'. This too can be related to testosterone levels.

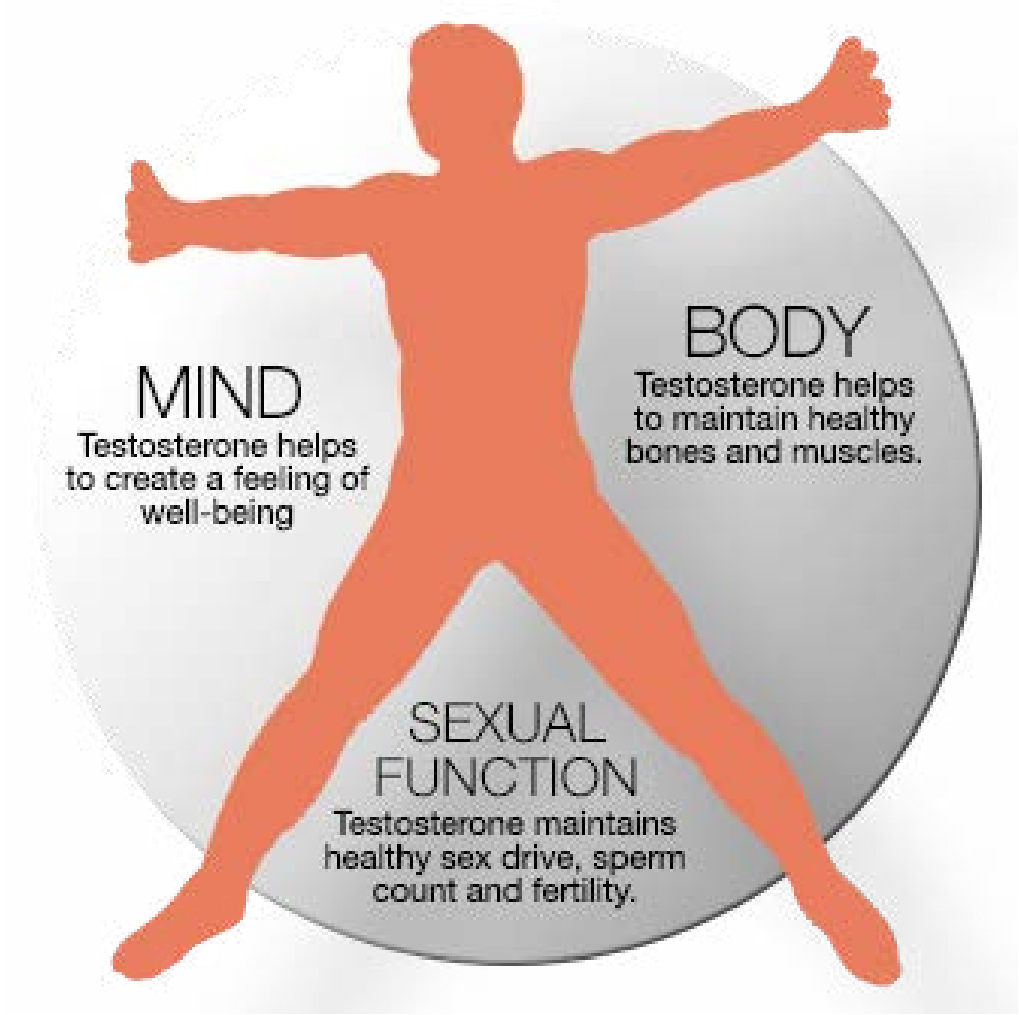
If the gym is a regular thing in his life, the man with low testosterone levels will see a dip in performance. He won't be as strong as he used to be and won't bounce back nearly as quickly either.

Finally, with low testosterone levels, sex drive may be absent and sexual performance begins to decline.

The longer testosterone is left to lag, the more prevalent these symptoms will be. It's important to note that every man will experience some natural decline in testosterone with aging – this is inevitable, but some do experience a greater decline than others due to lifestyle factors they are choosing.

Current studies note that today's man has testosterone levels that have declined about 50 percent since the early 1950's. Meaning, your grandfather may have had twice the level of testosterone that you have today.

The good news is that for the most part, this is something that you do have control over.



Growth Hormone

The next hormone on the list to note is growth hormone, which tends to go hand in hand with testosterone in most people's mind. That is because both of these hormones can be heavily related to the development of lean muscle mass tissue.

Both men and women maintain certain levels of growth hormone in their body however and when this hormone dips, unwanted side effects will occur.

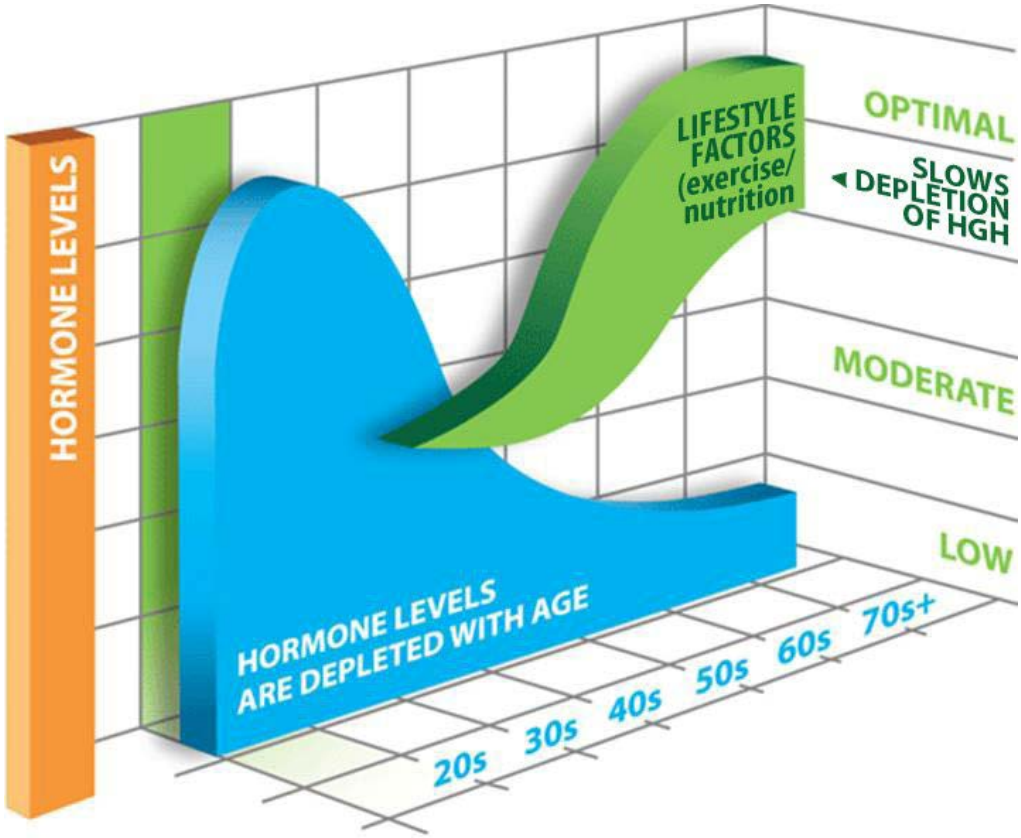
Growth hormone is involved in the building of new lean muscle mass tissue, but on top of that, it's also often considered the 'fountain of youth', so to speak. It's the hormone that can help you stay looking young longer. When you start to age quickly, this is often because you have low levels of growth hormone in your body.

Growth hormone also helps make weight management easier. Those who have higher levels of this hormone in their body tend to have lower BMI's compared to those who don't. This is because growth hormone can stimulate the rate of lipolysis (fat burning) taking place in the body, increasing the speed in which you use fatty acids as a fuel source.

Growth hormone is also associated with stronger bones as well. If you let your growth hormone levels dip too far down, you may notice you suffer from more stress fractures and bone breaks.

Low levels of growth hormone can also lead to higher incidences of depression and/or anxiety, a decrease in overall sexual interest and function, a higher risk for cardiovascular disease, a worse cholesterol profile, as well as an increase in insulin resistance, which we spoke about earlier.

So as you can see, it really pays to keep your growth hormone levels where they should be.



Thyroid Hormones

Finally, the last of the hormones to know about is the thyroid hormone, which is responsible for regulating your resting metabolic rate. There are a few hormones to know here – thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), as well as the thyroid hormones themselves, T3 and T4. T3 is the active hormone in the body that exerts the biggest impact, so it's the main one that needs to be considered.

Usually the level of TSH in the body will indicate where the levels of T3 happen to be, so this is what doctors usually test when making their assessments.

There are two main thyroid related problems that can occur: hypothyroidism as well as hyperthyroidism. Hypothyroidism is the issue of having a thyroid output that is too low, meaning you don't have sufficient levels of T3 being produced.

Hyperthyroidism on the other hand is the opposite condition – a condition where your thyroid is in overdrive and you are producing too much T3.

The good news is that both of these conditions can be managed with medication if they are serious enough. This said, do not rush out and start thyroid medication before exhausting all options. Do remember that once you are taking synthetic forms of thyroid hormones, your body will need to stay on those hormones, usually for the rest of your life.

In some cases, having too much stress in your life can actually result in a reduced output of thyroid hormones (often referred to as adrenal insufficiency), so correcting that may help you get back on track without having to resort to medication.

This said, if you have exhausted that option and are not under a lot of stress (and the rest of your blood work comes back fine), then the doctor can put you on medication to either increase or decrease the level of active thyroid hormone in your body.

Some of the symptoms that are typically associated with hypothyroidism include feeling sluggish all the time and having very low energy levels, feeling cold all the time, experiencing weight gain, having dry skin, losing hair, and wanting to sleep all the time, despite having troubles falling asleep.

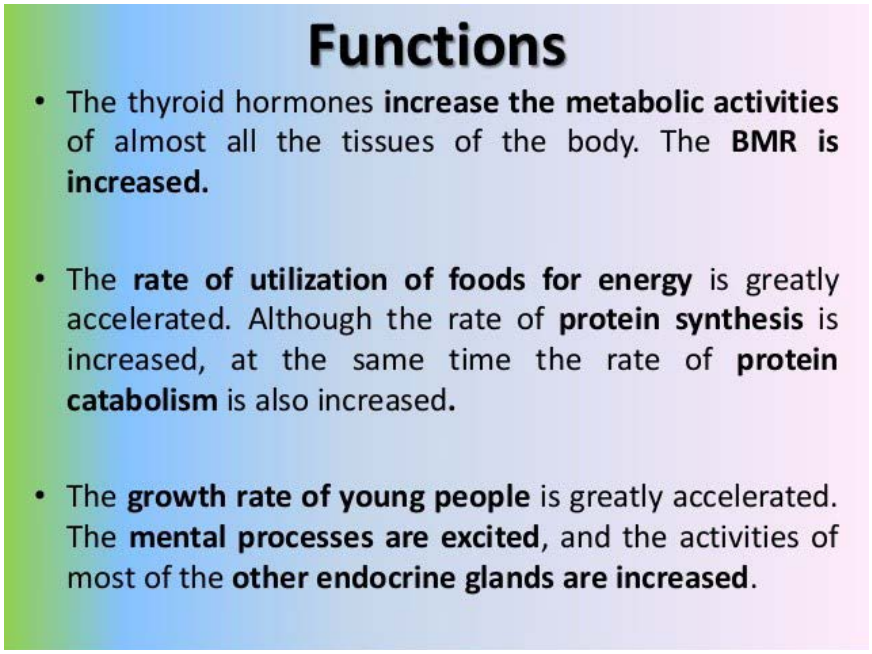
If you have hyperthyroidism, you'll tend to experience the opposite issues. You'll find that you lose weight, often without even trying and really struggle to keep any weight on your body. On top of that, you may feel anxious and jittery much of the time and could suffer from high heart rates and blood pressure levels. You'll also notice that you aren't able to sleep and may have a high amount of energy, but then crash later on.

Essentially, in hypothyroidism, your body is *slowing down*. In hyperthyroidism, it's *speeding up*. While having a lightening fast metabolism may sound like an awesome thing, it's not. Those who suffer from this condition do not feel well, so it's important to seek out proper treatment if that is occurring.

This said, hypothyroidism is the far more common condition of the two, and what most people tend to notice.

All of this said, don't be too quick to write off your weight gain to a slow metabolism. Many people take this way out, thinking it's not their fault they cannot lose weight. The number of individuals who actually have a medically diagnosed condition of hypothyroidism is actually quite low, so it isn't as common as some people make it seem.

Remember that there are many positive things that you can do to help bring your metabolic rate up through proper diet and lifestyle choices. We'll be discussing these all more in detail later. Be sure to try those first before using a slow metabolism as an excuse for your lack of weight loss.



So there you have the primary hormones in the body and what each is going to be responsible for. As you can see, there are a *lot* of different hormones at work here. It's not just a few things that you need to attend to but many hormones that are governing your body and how you feel on a day to day basis.

The good news is that when you get your lifestyle on the right track, most of these hormones will straighten themselves out quite naturally. And, what helps one get back on track often helps them all get back on track, so it's not a million things that you need to be doing.

A few small adjustments to your program plan and you are usually right on track to seeing great results again.

In the next section of this book, we'll look at what you can be doing to fix these hormones and the changes you now need to consider making. Remember, it does you no good to just *read* this information. You want to be sure that you put it into action because it's action that creates change.

If you don't change *how* you are doing things right now, you will continue to get the same result that you've always gotten.

Section 2:
Getting Back On Track

CHAPTER 3:
Fixing Insulin

The first hormone that we need to discuss is insulin. As you'll recall, this hormone is one that is released whenever your blood sugar levels are elevated above a normal level. Therefore, it only stands to reason that one of the best ways to get insulin under control is to manage your carbohydrate intake better.

Since carbohydrates are where sugar comes from, the two go hand in hand. The more control you have over your carbohydrate intake, the better you'll be able to keep this hormone in check.

Here are the main things to remember when assessing your carbohydrate intake for maximum insulin control.

1. The Type Of Carbohydrate

First, consider the type of carbohydrate you're eating. Processed carbohydrates or those that are high in sugar are always going to break down faster than unprocessed carbohydrates. This means they will cause a greater spike in insulin, leading to more strain on the pancreas.

Choose wholesome, unprocessed carbohydrates whenever possible. Oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, barley, sweet potatoes and yams, along with fresh vegetables and smaller doses of fruit are all a good idea.

You can use the glycemic index if you are unsure how fast a carbohydrate will break down in the body. This index tells you the rate in which they break down in comparison to white bread, so the higher the GI value is, the faster it will break down.

Eating foods that are low on the GI index is your best bet.

2. How Many Carbohydrates You're Eating

Next up, consider how *many* carbohydrates you are eating. That too will be an important consideration. If you are eating 20 grams of carbohydrates in one meal, this will influence blood glucose levels much less than if you were consuming say 40 or 50 grams of carbohydrates in that one meal.

You can eat very wholesome, slow digesting carbohydrates with your meals but if you eat enough of them, there will still be a high carbohydrate 'load' so to speak being put into the body. These carbohydrates will have to break down and when they do, glucose will be released.

This is why taking into account the glycemic load, which refers to the amount of carbohydrates as well, is vital.

For example, if you eat one candy that contains 5 grams of pure glucose, you probably won't get as much of an insulin release as you would if you ate 50 grams of brown rice.

Despite the fact the brown rice breaks down much slower in the body, there is simply far more of it, thus a greater potential for insulin release.

5 grams of sugar in contrast isn't all that much, so it won't have too great of an impact on your blood sugar levels.

3. What Foods Are Consumed With The Carbohydrates

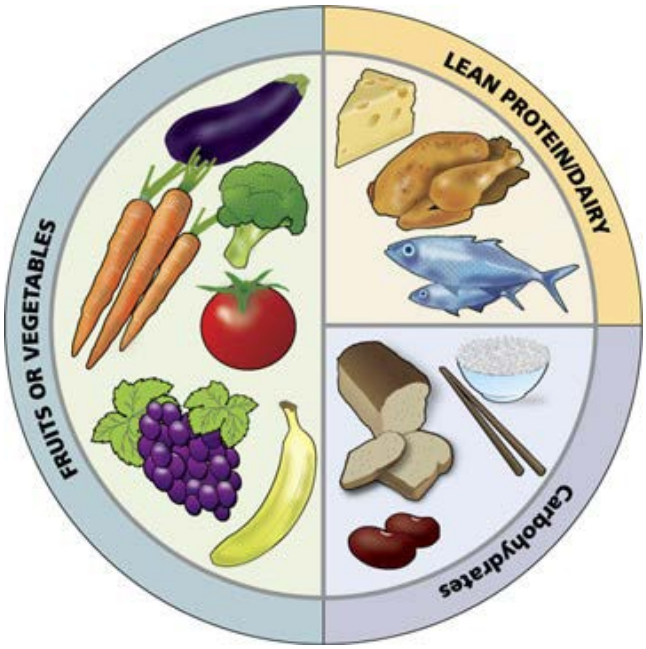
Finally, also take into account the foods that you are eating with the carbohydrates as this too can influence the speed in which they are broken down at. If you eat protein or healthy fats with carbohydrates, this will slow the process of digestion, meaning the glucose is released slower into the blood stream. The slower the glucose is released, the less of a blood sugar spike you get and as a result, the less insulin comes into the picture.

Making sure you never eat carbohydrates alone, whether it's in a meal or snack, is very important when controlling your blood sugar levels.

Even if you can eat just 5-10 grams of protein or healthy fats with your carbohydrates, that will go a long way towards better controlling the situation.

Balanced meals are key.

So there you have the main things that you'll need to remember with regards to controlling your insulin levels through your food intake. What you eat on a daily basis is going to play a huge role, but in addition to that, there are other things you can do.



How Insulin Sensitivity Fits Into The Mix

Along with choosing your foods wisely, you also want to consider your overall insulin sensitivity. This refers to how well your body responds to the insulin that is being released.

As we noted earlier, when insulin resistance develops, this means the cells to not respond as well as they should to the insulin that is being produced and as a result, you end up having to make more and more of it.

Doing whatever you can to improve your insulin sensitivity should help you minimize the total amount of insulin being reduced as well.

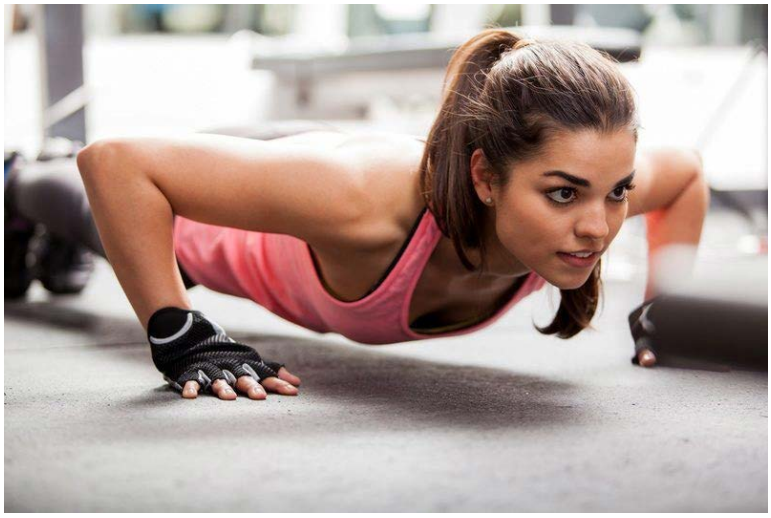
So what improves insulin sensitivity?

Let's look at a few of the key factors.

1. Intense Exercise.

One big game player in terms of boosting your insulin sensitivity is intense exercise. Now, any exercise is theoretically going to help improve insulin sensitivity, so even if it's light exercise you are getting in, it will help position you better for success.

But, if you can ramp up the intensity and do some sprint training or heavy weight lifting, you'll reap even better benefits. The more intense the exercise is, the more it tends to increase the cells ability to utilize glucose in the body, thus the more insulin sensitive you become.



Remember that you don't have to do intense exercise every single day of the week to benefit either. Just 2-3 sessions of 20-30 minutes of more intense exercise a week is enough to really get your body noticing a difference.

The rest of the time, feel free to do lower intensity exercise to help keep your workout program balanced.

2. Omega-3 Fatty Acids.

The next thing that can help improve insulin sensitivity is a high intake of omega-3 fatty acids in the body. Not enough great things can be said about this particular type of fatty acid, so you want to ensure that you are not overlooking it.

Omega-3 fatty acids boost insulin sensitivity and can also help to lower your overall risk factor for diabetes as well as a number of other diseases including heart disease, stroke, and even cancer.

Most people are currently not getting enough omega-3 fatty acids in their diet protocol, so it's one thing that you really want to be focusing on.

The best food sources to find omega-3 fatty acids include salmon and mackerel, flaxseeds, walnuts, as well as fish oil capsules. Most people will want to consider supplementation to ensure they are getting their levels to where they need to be.

Otherwise, you may fall low and risk suffering ill-health effects because of it. You should aim for 3-6 grams of fish oil capsules per day if you do choose to go the supplemental route.

3. Sufficient Sleep.

Another way to control your insulin level is to ensure that you are getting sufficient sleep each night. Sleep is really the cornerstone of good health overall and something that you cannot be shunning, but it becomes even more important when trying to control your insulin and blood sugar levels.

Those who aren't sleeping enough at night are going to experience increased insulin resistance, so even when insulin is released, it's not going to have the impact on the body that it should have. This makes it harder right from the start to manage this hormone.

On top of that, when you are short on sleep, you tend to crave sugary foods more often, thus you may choose food options that aren't going to be doing much to keeping your blood glucose in check either.

One **study** published in the Diabetes Care journal noted that when subjects received between 6.5 and 7.4 hours of sleep each night, this was going to give them the best overall blood glucose control compared to those who slept for fewer hours each night.

Don't try and burn the midnight oil thinking it's okay. It's damaging your health, day by day.

4. Cinnamon.

Not only will cinnamon help add delicious flavor to the meals you're preparing, but it can also help to control your blood sugar as well. Cinnamon appears to have an anti-diabetes effect on the body according to **research** studies done testing animal subjects so start adding it to your daily diet whenever possible.

Cinnamon is totally calorie free, so there's no reason not to be including it in your meal plan. Most people view cinnamon as something that can only be used in baked goods or on your breakfast bowl of oatmeal but you can make delicious marinates with it as well or incorporate it into sauces to use on your main course meal.

Experiment and see what delicious recipes you can come up with that utilize cinnamon in the mix.

5. Apple Cider Vinegar.

Finally, you'll also want to consider harnessing the power of apple cider vinegar as well. This one may not be the most pleasant of treatments, but drinking a tablespoon or two of apple cider vinegar (mixed with some water if you prefer) before your meals could help you gain better control over your insulin and blood sugar levels.

Apple cider vinegar **appears** to lower glucose and inulin response in those who consumed a higher carb meal about 30-45 minutes after taking the apple cider vinegar. It appears to do this through lowering the overall GI value of the food you are eating, thus slowing the release of the sugar into the bloodstream.

Do keep in mind that the stronger the vinegar, the more powerful the effects will be, so if you can, try taking it straight. If you must dilute it, try not to do so too much or it may reduce the efficacy of the treatment.

So there you have the many ways that you can gain better control over your insulin levels. Making wise dietary decisions is going to be the number one trick to keeping insulin levels stable and ensuring that you aren't experiencing unwanted weight gain, but beyond that, there are quite a few lifestyle factors that do come into play that can help you better manage your body.

Now let's move on to the next hormone we need to talk about, cortisol.

CHAPTER 4:
Fixing Cortisol

Whether we care to admit it or not, all of us are impacted by stress. Our stress levels can waver throughout the week depending on what we have going on in our lives as well as how well we are able to effectively manage stress on a day to day basis.

Some of us have better stress coping techniques than others, so if you are someone who doesn't deal all that well with stress, it's vital that you learn how to best handle it. This will in turn play the most significant role in fixing your cortisol levels.

Let's go over the key steps to take to get this hormone under control.

1. Stress Reduction

As just noted, one of the most significant things that you must do if you hope to manage cortisol is get stress under control. Remember that you may not even be fully aware of your stress at times. You may *think* you aren't stressed out, but look again.

Are there worries that creep up at the back of your mind? Do you ever feel pre-occupied with your thoughts? Do you experience tension in your shoulders?

These are all signs of stress – signs that you may not be paying attention to.

There are many ways that you can deal with stress and each person will have a way that is unique to them. It's all about figuring out *your* best strategy to dealing with stress and putting that into action.

So what are some of the top methods? Here are some to consider.

- Go for a long walk to clear your mind
- Talk to a friend, loved one or counselor
- Write down in a stress journal what you are experiencing – sometimes the act of 'getting it out on paper' is one of the most stress relieving strategies out there
- Perform intense exercise – this will release positive 'feel good' endorphins that can help relax the mind and body

- Increase your intake of complex carbohydrates, which can increase the release of serotonin in the brain, which also has a calming effect
- Take time out each day to relax and unwind – a few minutes can make a big difference
- Practice relaxation breathing exercise
- Meditate on a regular basis

These are all things that you can be doing that will have an impact over your stress level. Try one or two of them out – or come up with some of your own. Just remember to avoid unhealthy means of dealing with stress such as drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes (or other recreational drugs). These may take away your stress, but you are just replacing one problem with another.

2. Proper Exercise Timing

Another smart thing to do is to consider what time of day you are exercising as well. Most people do not realize that the time of day can influence their cortisol levels.

Exercise is already going to be a stressor on the body, meaning your cortisol levels will increase whenever you are performing intense exercise as-is. If you perform intense exercise when you are already experiencing higher than normal cortisol levels, you're going to have a bigger problem on your hands.

Cortisol levels tend to be highest in the early morning hours and then taper off later on in the day. For best results, you'll want to consider moving your strength training to the afternoon or evening hours to help minimize the catabolic reaction in the body.

If you are doing steady state cardio training, doing it in the morning shouldn't be too harmful as provided it's not going on for hours, it's not going to be overly catabolic. Intense interval training however is best saved for the afternoon or evening as well.

While this may not always be possible given your current time schedule, it is something to keep in mind if you can control it.

3. Sufficient Protein Intake

Making sure you have sufficient protein intake is another key trick to keeping your body as anabolic as possible. Protein is the nutrient that provides the raw materials that lean tissues are made up from, so without it, it's very likely that you'll start to move into a catabolic state.

Focusing on taking in some protein every 3-5 hours during the day, especially while on a reduced calorie diet will be important.

Now, don't stress out over this. If you have to go six hours without food one day, your body won't start eating itself. *But*, if you can eat at regular intervals most of the time, it will serve you well.

4. Reduced Caffeine Consumption

Caffeine, as much as we all love the energy boost it can give us, is a stressor on the body and will also cause cortisol to be released. The odd cup of coffee here and there is unlikely to have much of an effect over this, but if you are chronically taking in 200+ mg of caffeine per day, you can rest assured it's going to impact you over time.

Ever notice how after the caffeine wears off, you feel more miserable than ever? This is the cortisol response kicking in. You will eventually crash and when you do, you'll be left feeling worse than you were before you had the caffeine to begin with.

Ironically the time of day most people take in their caffeine is during the morning, which is a time when cortisol is at it's highest. This really creates a 'double whammy' effect so to speak and puts you in a more catabolic state.

5. Alcohol Moderation

Finally, also note your alcohol consumption. Alcohol does place stress on the body as it is a toxic substance and must be properly and immediately dealt with. While it won't create as much stress as a huge hit of caffeine will as caffeine stimulates the nervous system, the stress is still there, nevertheless.

Try and moderate your alcohol at the very least. Consume no more than one glass per day – and try and limit the number of days you consume alcohol per week. If you really want to try and keep your cortisol in check, it's a small sacrifice you'll want to make.

So there you have the key tips and tricks to remember to manage your cortisol levels. It may seem like a lot to worry about, but once you get these actions into place and see how much better you feel on a daily basis, you'll definitely be happy you did.

CHAPTER 5:
Fixing Estrogen

The next hormone that we need to discuss is estrogen. This is the primary female sex hormone but one that can also seriously impact men as well. So both genders need to be paying attention to this.

As we noted earlier, when men have higher than normal estrogen levels, it can really mess with their health and well-being, so it's in your best interest to be doing absolutely everything you can to control it.

What are the best methods of managing estrogen? Here is your to-do list line-up.

1. Get to a healthy body weight.

One of the most important things you should do to help combat high estrogen levels is get to a healthy body weight. This may be easier said than done, but remember that every pound lost is progress.

As fat cells produce estrogen, the larger the fat cells are in the body, the greater the chances of estrogen production will be.

Usually men who are having issues with their estrogen levels are almost always overweight. Getting started on a good strength training and cardio program will be your best bet to ensure that you are moving in the right direction, along with getting your diet in check.

For those with high estrogen levels, strength training will be of particular importance as it can help to increase testosterone levels naturally offsetting what's going on with your estrogen level.

2. Avoid estrogen causing foods

Certain foods may cause excess estrogen to be produced in the body, so to best gain control over this hormone, you'll want to limit the consumption of these foods whenever possible.

Some of the main foods that you'll want to best limit include apples, alfalfa, barley, baker's yeast, beets, cherries, chickpeas, carrots, celery, cucumbers, dates, fennel, oats, olives, beans, and flaxseeds.

These foods can still be eaten in moderation, just don't overdo them. Too much may lead to hormonal balance issues.

Soy and soy-based products are another set of foods that you'll want to avoid if estrogen is becoming a problem for you. Soy is quite estrogenic in the body, so men especially should back away from including this in their diet plan.

One final note on alcohol: alcohol will raise estrogen levels in both men and women (while also decreasing testosterone), so you'll want to be very careful about how much you are drinking. Beer especially tends to be estrogenic as the hops that it's made from will directly increase this hormone in the body – so much so that it is often prescribed (in non-alcoholic form) to women who are suffering from low estrogen levels.

The only alcohol that is recommended for those who are looking to gain better control over their estrogen is red wine. Stick to that and do away with the rest.

3. Be careful about medications

If you really think you have an issue with too much estrogen, be sure that you are speaking to your doctor about any medications you are taking. While not all medications will alter hormone levels, some do and this can lead to further problems.

Usually if you bring this up they will run hormone tests on you to determine whether this is an issue of concern or not. In some cases the medication may be more important than the potential risk of estrogen increase, so you'll need to weigh the pros and cons.

But, in other cases, there may be an alternative medication that you can go on that would simply be a wiser solution.

4. Consider supplementation

Along with checking out your medications, also consider supplementing with a few vitamins and minerals as well. The B vitamins will help to metabolize estrogen, so they are important to have in your day. Likewise, zinc is another mineral that will play a critical role in metabolizing estrogen and ensuring that your levels aren't creeping up there. Magnesium, selenium, and vitamin E also all assist with the controlling of estrogen in the body, so be sure that you are getting enough of those, either through your food intake or through the supplements that you are using.

Finally, Green tea may also help to eliminate excess estrogen in the body, so swapping a few cups of coffee with some green tea may be in your best interests.

5. Take note of household products that are causing problems

Plastic containers are one of the biggest estrogen-causing culprits in today's society, so you'll want to do a double check on how much you are exposing yourself to these.

If you are microwaving in plastic Tupperware containers for example, you'll want to stop that immediately. Only cook food in the microwave on glass plates if you must. Even better, consider skipping the microwave altogether as it's simply not the best way of cooking as it can degrade the nutrients in the foods.

Also be careful of the water bottles you are drinking from as well. Here again, drink from *glass* whenever possible. That will be your better choice.

6. Consider eating organic foods

It's also important that whenever possible, you focus on consuming organic based foods. While there is extra cost involved, you'll want to take that extra cost, especially if you're eating the 'dirty dozen'. These foods are especially known to contain pesticides and toxins, which could lead to unwanted estrogen increases and other health related problems.

Likewise, you'll also want to choose organic meat whenever possible to avoid the consumption of hormones used on the animals to increase their size. Too much of this exposure can also lead to higher than normal estrogen levels.

So there you have the main points to know and remember about combating high estrogen levels. It will take some work on your part with this one, but it's well worth your efforts.

Women should always speak to their doctor before using any specific estrogen lowering strategies however to ensure that they will maintain a proper hormonal balance necessary for reproduction (if you are of child-bearing age).

CHAPTER 6:
Fixing Testosterone

Now we come to the next hormone that needs to be addressed, testosterone. While estrogen is the primary female dominant hormone, testosterone is the primary male dominant hormone.

This said, both genders do benefit from having sufficient testosterone in their system. Women who lack testosterone may gain body fat more easily and may notice they aren't able to be as athletic as they would like to.

So how can you best manage your testosterone levels?

Here are some tips.

1. Focus on eating sufficient dietary fats.

Dietary fat is essential for keeping your testosterone levels in check. As these hormones are steroid hormones, they are manufactured from dietary fat, so when your fat intake from food gets too low (or your body fat also dips down), this can cause issues with testosterone production.

Many men who are involved in the sport of bodybuilding notice that their natural testosterone release begins to decline dramatically the leaner they get. For this reason, it will be important that you don't try and take your body fat lower than around 7-8 percent for a male or 15-18 percent for a female. These percentages are considered to be *very lean* – leaner than most people in the average population will ever go.

Getting back to dietary fats, your diet should consist of no fewer than 20 percent of your total calorie intake from dietary fats, or preferably, you should get at minimum 0.35 grams per pound of body weight. Don't be afraid to go slightly higher than this either. The old notions that dietary fat will dramatically increase the risk for heart disease and other health problems are not longer viewed as accurate. As long as you are eating healthy varieties of fat, you can safely take your intake up higher.

To that, you'll also want to ensure that you are getting some saturated fat in particular. This fat variety more than any other fat variety is associated with proper testosterone levels. Saturated fat should be around 15-20 percent of your total dietary fat intake, and should come from natural sources.

Remember there is a difference between taking in saturated fat from deep fried French fries and saturated fat from grass fed beef.

The best sources of saturated fat include lean red meats, coconut oil, along with eggs and dairy. Try to stick with these whenever possible.

2. Monitor your dietary fiber intake.

Along with getting enough saturated fat in your diet, you also need to be sure that you are keeping tabs on your total dietary fiber intake. Most conventional advice is to increase dietary fiber as high as possible. Even earlier on when talking about insulin we spoke about the beneficial effects that dietary fiber can have.

While you do want to eat some dietary fiber, if testosterone is a concern, you do want to also ensure you don't go overboard. **Research** published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has noted that men who consume high fiber, low fat diets tend to have lower free testosterone levels compared to men who consumed diets that were higher in saturated fat and lower in fiber. The low fat diet in the study provided just 18.8 percent of its calories from dietary fat while the higher fat diet was comprised of 41 percent of its total calories from dietary fat.

Do eat vegetables, but don't go crazy with them. For optimal testosterone release, balance is key.

3. Take sleep seriously.

The next tip to help you optimize your testosterone release is to make sure that you are taking sleep seriously. You'll notice that sleep keeps coming up here in all of these sections, illustrating just how important it really is for you.

When it comes to testosterone optimization, sleep is crucial. Research published in the Jama journal noted that with just one week of sleep restriction (where sleep was restricted to 5 hours per night), male test subjects noted a decline of 10-15 percent of their total testosterone levels.

Considering the fact that the average male shows a decrease in natural testosterone of around 1 percent per year, this means that after just one week of not sleeping enough, he could be producing testosterone levels that are more akin to that of a man a decade older.

Try and get at least 7, if not 8 hours of sleep each night to optimize your testosterone levels.

4. Minimize stress.

Stress is making an appearance once again. If you hope to maximize your testosterone levels, you should be focusing on minimizing your stress levels. The big reason why stress is so problematic for testosterone is because it increases the hormone cortisol in the body, which we noted earlier.

Cortisol counteracts that of testosterone. Cortisol is a hormone that breaks down tissue, thus is 'catabolic' in nature. Testosterone on the other hand is 'anabolic' meaning it focuses on building tissues up.

So as you can see, the two have basically the opposite purpose. For this reason, as cortisol goes up, testosterone tends to go down.

If you are heavily stressed out, cortisol is going to be high. Practicing stress managing techniques to lower stress and cortisol, as discussed earlier, will therefore be imperative to your ability to increase testosterone release.

5. Add more zinc to your diet plan.

Just as zinc is able to effectively help to metabolize estrogen, lower your overall levels, it can also help with the optimizing testosterone levels as well. **Research** has indicated that men who have low zinc levels to start with typically also have lower levels of testosterone, so you don't want to let yourself become deficient.

The best foods to take in more zinc include spinach, beef, oysters, shrimp, kidney beans, flaxseeds, as well as pumpkin seeds. Try and eat one of these per day or consider supplementing with a quality zinc product.

6. Lift weights regularly.

Next up on the list is exercise. If you want to naturally boost your testosterone levels, weight lifting is key. By lifting heavy weights with a high intensity level, you can naturally elevate your testosterone while also building muscle mass tissue.

The real secret to getting the testosterone release appears to be training for strength and power over muscular endurance.

So think lower rep ranges – between 5 and 10 repetitions at most. Go over ten and you could actually start suffering from lower testosterone levels if this is the primary rep range that you are working in.

In addition to that, shortening up your rest periods as much as you can (while still sustaining heavy lifting) can also help you maximize your testosterone release. This will increase the overall intensity of the program, which is what appears to be key to getting you the results that you are looking for.

7. Avoid endurance focused cardio training.

Finally, the last thing that you'll want to know and remember when it comes to boosting your testosterone levels is to avoid endurance training as much as you can. Endurance training will have a negative impact on testosterone, causing it to drop while cortisol levels increase.

To put this into perspective, take a look at your average marathon runner. These athletes have very little muscle mass to speak of and instead tend to be very long and lean. This is because their testosterone is low and they've essentially 'burned up' much of their lean body tissues.

Research published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism noted that when subjects performed endurance training, their testosterone levels took a nosedive.

This is yet another reason to avoid a very high rep range when strength training as well. If you begin training into the 20+ rep range, you may start to notice that you are teetering on the edge of actually doing endurance training itself.

This isn't to say that you should avoid all cardio training and *some* cardio training is definitely a wise move to help build a healthy and strong heart and body, but you should be focusing more on intense forms of interval training rather than endurance related cardio work.

So now that you have a better idea of how to get your testosterone levels back up to where they need to be, let's move on and talk about how to fix growth hormone when it's lagging.

CHAPTER 7:
Fixing Growth Hormone

Growth hormone and testosterone tend to go hand in hand. Both are hormones that are involved in building muscle mass tissue and will help you become stronger than you were before as noted earlier.

While there isn't quite as much you can do to boost growth hormone as there is testosterone, there definitely are still steps that you can take to help get your growth hormone numbers up there.

The other thing to keep in mind is that increasing growth hormone is going to be applicable for both men as well as women as both genders want to have healthy levels circulating throughout their body.

Let's look at what you can do to improve the growth hormone release taking place in your body.

1. Lose weight.

Sure, easier said than done, but if you really want to improve your growth hormone release, you should be doing everything you can to shed those excess pounds. **Research** published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism noted that those who have higher levels of total abdominal visceral fat and fasting insulin levels tend to have lower overall levels of 24 hour growth hormone release. This is independent of age, gender, or other physiological factors. From this, it's clear: the more fat you have, the less growth hormone you'll have circulating throughout your body.

While you don't want to get down to abnormally low bodyweight levels as that can be just as detrimental to maintaining optimal growth hormone and testosterone, you don't want to be sporting a lot of extra pounds either.

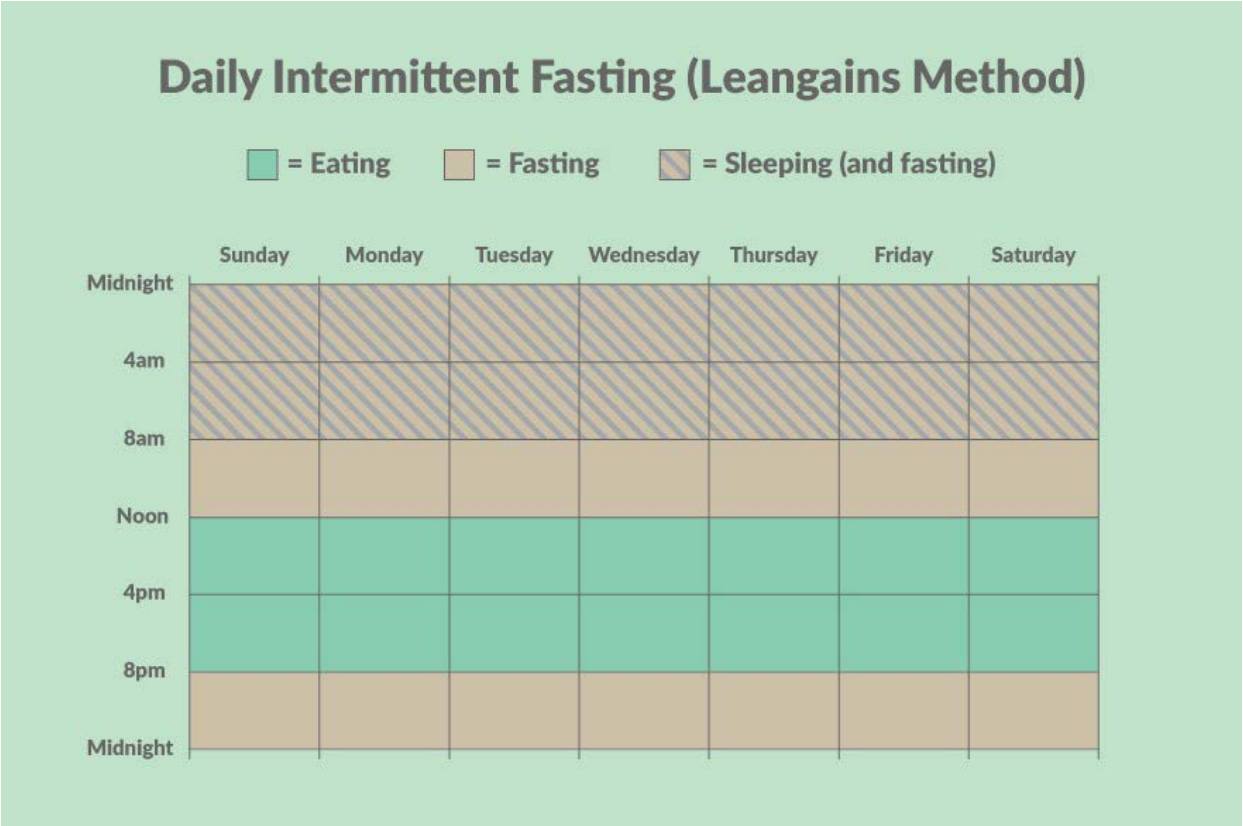
2. Consider intermittent fasting from time to time

The next thing you can do to ensure that you maintain a favorable growth hormone level is consider intermittent fasting from time to time. While you may not even do this every day, doing it on occasion can help to boost your growth hormone release.

Fasting has been proven in **research** to help elevate the total levels of growth hormone released in the body, so it can give you that boost when you want it.

The easiest way to fast is to simply skip breakfast, fasting from around 8pm in the evening (after dinner) to around noon the next day. This will give you a total of 16 hours of fasting time, leaving you with an 8 hour eating window.

You may feel like fasting would be very trying and lead to a high degree of hunger, but most people find that once they try it and begin their fasting program, it really isn't nearly as bad as they initially thought. Don't knock it until you try it.



3. Reduce your sugar consumption

Because fasting insulin levels tend to have a negative correlation with growth hormone release, you need to be doing all that you can to manage your insulin levels better.

Reducing your sugar consumption will do just that. Start looking for hidden sources of sugar in your diet that you may be missing. It's one thing to cut out the obvious choices – cakes, cookies, pastries, sugary candy, soda, and so forth but quite another to seek out and reduce all instances of sugar in your diet plan.

Most people are taking in a much higher level of sugar than they realize simply because they aren't aware of all the places its sneaking into their diet.

4. Avoid a high calorie meal before bed time

Here's another reason to give fasting a try: eating too much before bed can blunt the natural growth hormone release that should be taking place. The primary time for your body to be releasing growth hormone is during the early stages of deep sleep.

If your body is up digesting a large meal, this can mean your sleep isn't as deep and therefore, you don't release the level of growth hormone that you should be. **Research** suggests that skipping a meal right before bed (not having a late night snack) may be the best option to help dramatically boost your growth hormone levels.

Combine this with the fact that if you consume carbohydrates before bed, you'll get an insulin spike and that insulin spike may just counteract the natural growth hormone release as we noted earlier and you may have a real problem on your hands.

5. Try intense exercise

The next good way to dramatically boost your growth hormone response is to add some intense exercise to your day. Intense exercise, more than any other form of exercise, is going to dramatically boost your degree of growth hormone. Just like with testosterone, this trumps endurance exercise any day of the week.

You can reach the intensity needed through either your strength training exercise or your cardio training exercise. If doing cardio, you'll want to turn to high intensity interval sprints. If doing strength training, a good metabolic circuit training set-up should fit the bill perfectly and help get you the response that you are looking for.

It appears from **research** published in the Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise that for optimal growth hormone release from your strength training sessions, shortening the rest periods will be the best bet. Try and keep the resistance level as high as possible, but do decrease how much downtime you have between sets.

This is one reason that metabolic training proves to be such a good option.

6. Improve your sleep quality

As noted earlier, the greatest release of growth hormone you're going to get comes from time spend in deep sleep during the initial sleep cycle. Therefore, if you want to improve your overall growth hormone release, you might want to consider improving your sleep quality.

Research published in the Life Sciences journal clearly notes that when slow wave sleep is disturbed, this will hamper the release of human growth hormone in your body.

What can you do to improve your sleep quality? Some of the things to consider include:

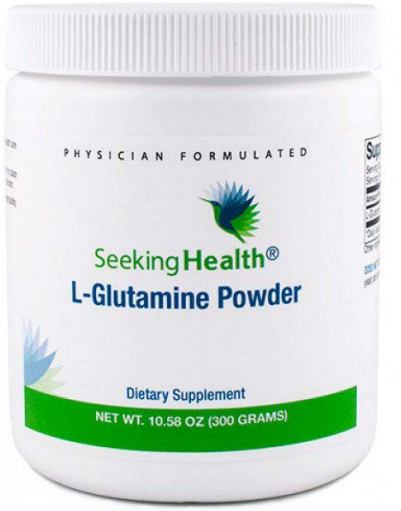
- Avoiding a fatty meal before bed (as digestion can decrease sleep quality)
- Read a book in the evening as a means of 'winding down' before sleep
- Keep your bedroom at a lower overall temperature level to promote deep sleep
- Take a hot bath to increase body temperature prior to going to bed
- Write in a stress journal to minimize any thoughts that may keep you awake tossing and turning
- Be sure that you are using a supportive mattress and pillow
- Use blackout blinds to minimize any light exposure. Light will disrupt melatonin production, which in turn will lead to feelings of wakefulness.
- Try a white noise machine to block out any sounds from passing traffic that may keep you awake
- Avoid caffeine consumption beyond the early afternoon hours

If you put these into place, you'll soon be noticing a difference in your sleep quality and likely, your corresponding growth hormone release.

7. Supplement with glutamine

Finally, you might consider supplementing with some glutamine as well. Research published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has noted that subjects who supplemented with a dose of glutamine noticed an increase in their total growth hormone release compared to those who did not.

Glutamine is an amino acid that is also heavily involved in maintaining a favorable immunes system, so by supplementing with it, you may also notice that you start feeling better overall on a day to day basis as well. It may even assist with recovery after a workout session.



By using these tips and techniques, you should be able to get your growth hormone release back on track and start noticing improvements in how you feel as well as how lean and strong your body is. You may even start noticing yourself looking younger as well.

Now let's move on and discuss thyroid hormones.

CHAPTER 8:
Fixing Thyroid Hormones

Now it's time to talk about our final hormone that you need to know about: thyroid hormone. The thyroid hormone is applicable to both men and women so it will be important that you are paying attention to where yours stand and keeping them in check.

In most cases, if you actually have an issue with low thyroid hormones, the best course of action is going to be to get proper medical treatment through prescription drugs. Synthetic thyroid hormones will be given to you which will then replace the natural thyroid hormone that your body is not making as it should.

This said, in some cases, your thyroid gland has simply down-regulated production of these hormones due to excess stress, overtraining, or poor nutrition.

If that is the case, fixing some of those can help get you back on track. Here is what you should do if you think this may be the case for you.

1. Take one-six weeks off all exercise

As counterintuitive as it may sound, sometimes the best way to optimal health is to simply take time *away* from the gym. If you have been pushing your body hard in the gym for too long, this stress could be what's causing your adrenal glands to malfunction, leading to a lower thyroid output.

Often the only way to recover from this however is to actually get out of the gym entirely. Spending one to six weeks out of the gym will often do the trick. How long you need to stay out of the gym will primarily depend on just how overworked you are and how long that has been going on.

The longer you've been feeling less than optimal, the longer you'll need to spend to recover from it. This is one reason why catching overtraining during its initial stages is so very important. The sooner you catch it, the less down time you'll need to get back on track.

2. Focus on your sleep habits

Sleep is also essential to repairing overworked adrenal glands and thyroid function. As this is very much an issue of simply being burned out and tired, sleep is one of the best things you can give yourself.

Aim to get at least seven hours of sleep each night, if not eight or nine. One week of nine hours of sleep can do wonders to help repair your body and get you back to a state of feeling your best again.

3. Ensure you are eating sufficient carbohydrates (100+ grams per day)

Sometimes very low calorie and low carb dieting is at the heart of adrenal related issues. If that is the case, it's time for you to change that. Begin adding carbohydrates back into your diet plan until you are consuming at least 100 grams of carbohydrates per day at a minimum. If you are exercising, you'll want to consume at least 150 grams if not more.

Carbohydrates are what will help to boost your thyroid output, returning levels closer to normal.

Whenever you go on a lower carbohydrate diet, especially for an extended period of time, thyroid hormones will become suppressed, as will your metabolic rate.

While bringing your carbohydrates up may lead to some weight gain, note that if you want to repair a damaged metabolism and thyroid function, this may be required.

4. Get more omega-3 fatty acids into your diet plan

Another step to take if you hope to optimize your thyroid hormones is to ensure that you are getting enough omega-3 fatty acids into your diet plan. These fatty acids are going to be critical for lowering the levels of inflammation in the body, improving your immune system, and enhancing your ability to tolerate stress.

It only makes sense then that this would in turn help you overcome adrenal fatigue as well. Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include salmon, mackerel, flaxseeds and walnuts.

Aim to eat those multiple times each week or alternatively, consider supplementing with a quality fish oil supplement instead.

5. Reduce everyday stress levels

Reducing everyday stress levels is an absolute must if you are going to overcome adrenal fatigue. Remember that *any form of stress* is going to tax the body. It doesn't matter if this is physical stress or emotional stress. You still need to deal with it and that can add up.

Learning good stress management techniques such as writing in a stress journal, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and talking to those who are close to you are all important if you are going to successfully be able to limit the levels of stress in your day to day life.

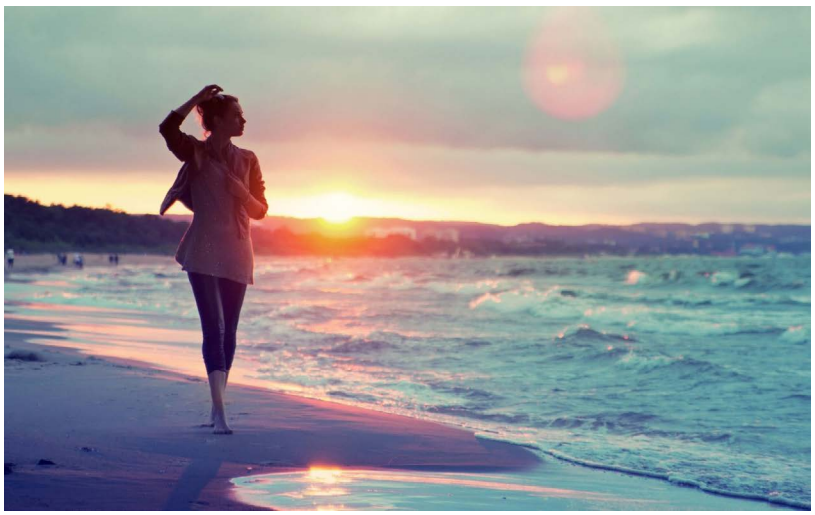
Pay close attention to how stressed you are as well. Some people don't even realize they are stressed because they aren't focused internally on their feelings. Don't let stress get out of control before you finally realize this is how you feel.

6. Practice meditation

Finally, consider practicing meditation. Not enough good things can be said about meditation in terms of healing the body and elevating your state of health. Not only will meditation help with stress, it'll also help to lower the levels of inflammation in the body, strengthen the immune system as well, and improve your ability to cope with anything that is taxing your body.

These will all in turn play a strong role in making sure that you are optimizing your adrenal glands.

Consider making activities such as walking in nature as 'moving meditation'. This way you kill two birds with one stone. You get your mental relaxation and physical activity all in one session.



So there you have the few things that you can do to help ensure that your thyroid gland is functioning as it should. Remember that if you do have a clinical thyroid issue, none of these are likely going to help you out all that much as you'll simply need medication to overcome your issue.

But if you don't have a clinical issue and your adrenals are instead just overworked, these can definitely help you start feeling better.

Now that you have a better idea of how to manage all the hormones in your body, let's wrap up by talking a little more about staying on track for optimal success.

CHAPTER 9:
Staying On Track

Awareness is the first step to success. You've gained that, so now it's time to put this information into action.

You should now come up with a game plan of all the changes you need to make in your life to get from point A to point B. Figure out which hormones may be not optimized in your own body and what things will help you bring them to a healthier place. Remember that you won't get there overnight – this process is going to take time. Especially as far as hormones are concerned, it can be a while before you start seeing the results you are hoping for.

But you must stick with it. Giving up too soon will just short-circuit the results you otherwise would be seeing and leave you back right where you are now.

As you go about implementing these strategies, take the time to watch how they are impacting you. Monitor your progress. If you notice something isn't having much of a change, consider alternating your approach slightly.

Seeing success with any health improvement is very much an individualized thing. You need to learn what works for you and then go from there. Things may not always take the path you thought they would, so be flexible to make changes as need.

You may decide to keep a journal of what you are doing and how you are feeling. Track the results you get. This way you have something to look back on and can best determine your course of action moving forward.

On top of that, do make an effort to have blood work done regularly. This will be important to look at changes in your hormone levels as well as certain nutrients in the body. For example, if you are low in iron, your low anemia levels will show up when you do blood tests. If you never have this test done, you won't be able to know if what you are doing is yielding progress.

This will be an ongoing process but one that if you do tend to, will yield great results.

CHAPTER 10:
How to Balance Your hormones 10 Minutes at a Time...

For the final chapter of this book I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce you to one of my favorite ways of accelerating your progress when it comes to the exercise portion of my recommendations for rebalancing your hormones.

If you've paid attention to this point you know that I think exercise is the key to resolving MANY of the problems that affect us as we are slowly assaulted by the "slings and arrows" of modern life.

Even if you have largely avoided exercise until now it's important to realize that it's never too late to take action.

Very real benefits to your long term hormonal health are likely to be the result of engaging in some form of exercise going forward.

Recently I asked myself whether there might be a way to come up with a simple workout, no more than 10 MINUTES in duration, that could be used two or three times a week to accelerate your progress towards a state of optimal fitness and hormonal balance. Something to help counter all the irregular hormonal issues outlined in this book.

I realized that there IS such a workout.

It's one that can be performed in your own home with the barest minimum of equipment.

But before I tell you more about that piece of equipment and the exercises that can be performed with it I want to provide you with a little background so that you can better understand why I feel as strongly as I do about recommending this particular approach to exercise.

Let me take you back a bit.

In fact, let me take you back a LOT, like 2000 years, back to the time when Rome was a force on the world stage, a civilization that projected power in every direction and whose citizens enjoyed so many of the advantages that we take for granted today, but back then had to be regarded as remarkable considering that so much of the world outside the influence of Rome was still rather barbaric.

The Romans built a vast empire characterized by impressive architecture, roads, highways and aqueducts. They developed concrete, bound books and newspapers, formal education and a legality-based system of government that allowed them to spread their influence across three continents.

These guys were awesome and the rule of Rome lasted for more than 1100 years.

But it didn't remain stable for so long by accident.

It's doubtful the Romans would have lasted anywhere near the length of time they did had they not also enjoyed the protection afforded them by one of the best-trained armies of the ancient world.

Roman soldiers and the commanders responsible for their training understood that hand-to-hand combat meant that every soldier was ultimately responsible for his own safety and would likely forfeit his life on the very first occasion that he did not exhibit total physical and weaponry skill over his opponents.

So the physical aspect of the training needed to be intense, both to build a soldier's body in size and strength, and to develop the kind of stamina needed to fight for the entire duration of a battle.

But the strength-building portion of the training also had to be short enough that it allowed for a soldier to train long hours to gain mastery over his weapons.

Somewhere along the way it became apparent that one of the ways to do this was to have soldiers march with a 70-pound pack on their backs - for as much as 24 miles in just 5 hours.

Despite the fact that no one at the time could have any idea of why such physically-demanding training worked as well as it did to build strong and sturdy bodies, worked it certainly did.

Today we'd say that the Romans were utilizing full body workouts to stimulate virtually all the muscles of the body and spur increases in testosterone and human growth factor, just the hormones needed to encourage muscle growth and to build strength.

It's also likely that such physical activity promotes a proper balancing of many of the body's other hormones - as it is hard to imagine, for example, the perfect fighting machine going about his day plagued by too much cortisol (the stress hormone) and lack of insulin sensitivity, two effects that might cause his body to excessively convert incoming calories to fat rather than lean muscle.

Even today this idea of marching under load is used to prepare military men for the physical demands of the battlefield.

So it is a proven approach to optimizing levels of both physical fitness and hormonal health that has survived for more than 2000 years.

Here's where I tell you about that workout that can be performed in 10 minutes to stimulate the same hormones that helped to whip the Roman legionaries into shape so long ago.

Now you COULD throw on a heavy back pack loaded with weight and go trekking through the neighborhood with friends for an hour or two.

That's fun, people do it, and it works to rev your metabolism.

But it's so time-consuming.

Wouldn't you rather spend 10 minutes in the comfort of your own home and get your exercise quota out of the way so that you can get on with the rest of your day?

I know I would, which is why I'm such a big fan of sandbag training.

I particularly like sandbags, not just because they allow for very short workouts, but because the sandbag has the advantage that it can be taken with you anywhere you care to go. It's entirely portable.

In terms of appearance it's a lot like what it sounds - an elongated bag with handles on it that can be filled with a coarse-grained material like sand or rice (and in some cases even water) and manipulated during a workout to force your body to do fairly intense work.

When you are finished with your workout you can toss your sandbag in the garage.

Or if you are traveling and it's time to vacate your hotel room you might unplug your filler bags, pour away the water you'd filled them with from the faucet a few days earlier, and then roll up your sandbag and stash it with the rest of your luggage for easy transportation.

That kind of portable workout convenience I find really valuable.

If you'd like to know more about how sandbag training can be made to work for your personal situation, including how to get access to a FREE mobile app designed to manage your sandbag workouts, simply go here:

http://projectmefinallyfit.com/

And if you'd like to check out the sandbag I recommend for training, here's where you can find details on that and reviews of the product:

http://projectmefinallyfit.com/sandbagamzn

CONCLUSION

So there you have the many things to know about all the hormones in your body and how they are impacting you potentially in a negative manner. It is more critical than ever that you sit up and take action to improve your overall hormone status because we are being swayed in a direction we shouldn't be going by the lifestyles we are choosing to lead today.

We are eating unhealthy foods, exercising less, sleeping less, and are exposing ourselves to harsh pollutants in the environment.

All of this is making us travel down roads to becoming far less healthy than we optimally should be.

The great news however is that you do have the power to stop it. It's within you to begin making changes and put your body on a better path to success. It will take work and a high degree of commitment, but if you value your health and well-being, it's a must.

Those who are serious about making changes in their health will follow the recommendations as outlined and will likely start seeing results from the very first week they are making these changes.

While you may not reach a point of being completely optimal after a week, you will start noticing improvements taking place and this should inspire you to keep working hard and stay the course on your game plan.

Here's to your success!

For more tools and resources from Carolyn Hansen to assist you in attaining your goals and achieving the success you desire in life, please visit:

Carolyn Hansen Fitness

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