

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 **ORIENTATION**1

CHAPTER 2 **FOOD** 8

How to Choose When Faced with Choice	10
What to Eat.....	13
How to Eat	15
Indulge Like a Pro.....	23
Quantity Control.....	27
Cooking for One.....	30
The Struggle Is Real	35
For When You Forget	41

CHAPTER 3 **BOOZE**..... 43

New Friends and New Surroundings	45
Drinking Like a Fish.....	46
Drinking Like a Responsible Land Mammal	51
Stages of Intoxication.....	57
Alcohol and You	61
On a Lighter Note.....	70
Heavy Stuff	74
Be Smart	87
For When You Forget	87

CHAPTER 4

EXERCISE 89

Why Bother 93

When to Work Out 97

What to Do 101

The Gym 104

Outside the Gym 124

Crafting Your Own Workout Plan 126

Falling Off 126

It's Worth It 129

For When You Forget 129

CHAPTER 5

STRESS 132

Feeling Stuck 134

It Starts with Stress 134

Stress Management 136

Getting Ahead of Stress 142

The Usual (Stress) Suspects 149

Types of Stress 161

Stress-Related Conditions and Concerns 163

Don't Join the Contest 171

For When You Forget 173

CHAPTER 6

SLEEP 175

Downsides of Sleep Deprivation 177

Cycles, Rhythms, and Schedules 181

Sleep Rules 186

Waking Up 189

Tracking Your Sleep 191

Sleep Roadblocks 192

Rest Assured 200

For When You Forget 200

CHAPTER 7

TRIAL AND ERROR 202

 Pretrial: Where Are You At? 203

 The Trial: Focus on Habits. 208

 Get Testing 213

 Getting Ahead of Obstacles. 216

 The Error: It's Not Failure 219

 For When You Forget 221

CHAPTER 8

GRADUATION 223

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 231

ENDNOTES 235

INDEX 249



CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

PART 1: DAVE

One month after winter break, I found the first evidence of change in a picture my friend pulled up from the night before. I can't recall the exact theme of the party, but I was wearing a red bandana, covered in face paint, and shirtlessly drinking out of a giant glass boot. I looked . . . *different*. Swollen. My entire torso was enormous. It appeared as though I'd swallowed a barrel, but not in a barrel-chested or "that guy's built like a brick shithouse" kind of way. It looked like I'd swallowed an *inflatable* barrel that people would use as a pool toy. And I was so pale! Really pale. If not for my beet-red face, I had the milky complexion of a cadaver or an albino lab rat kept in a basement. After growing up in California, one semester in Iowa had turned my body into a ghostly couch cushion. I stared at that picture in astonishment, thinking, *Why didn't anybody tell me that I look like this?*

I had no idea how to take care of myself when I got to college. Most people don't. That's probably because once you're away from your parents and on your own for the first time, the notion that you'd be prepared to set some ground rules for yourself is absolutely ridiculous. In high school, it's easy to eat the food that's in your fridge or the meal that's made for you. It's easy to turn down booze when you know you'll get grounded if you're caught, or to get enough sleep when there's a knock on your door if the lights aren't out by midnight. All that changes when

2 THE GREATEST COLLEGE HEALTH GUIDE

you're dropped off on campus and left to fend for yourself. It's the beginning of independence, and it is incredible, but it also increases the chances that you're going to accidentally adopt some habits that are *really* bad for your health. That's certainly what happened to me.

I religiously stayed up late, drank four nights a week, and regularly ate a large pizza around midnight. The dining hall entrées typically tasted like garbage and looked as if the entire plate had once been a canned good, so I survived on burgers. Often two or three of them, accompanied by an additional *plate* full of fries. After my meat feast, I'd hit the soft-serve machine, getting seconds before leaving simply because it was there. It's no wonder why six months straight of gluttonous chaos made me look like *Moby Dick* just in time for spring break.

From a health standpoint, the college environment is comically designed for you to fail. Want to have a few beers on a Tuesday? No problem! You'll definitely find someone on your floor to join. Want to bail on exercise and take an afternoon nap? Great idea, I love naps. If you want to play video games until four in the morning, that's okay too. Your RA isn't going to tell you to go to bed. And if you're too tired to go to class in the morning, you *can* skip it. Seriously. There's little chance your professor is going to check in. While some people seem to be able to balance the stress of schoolwork, social life, and cruise-ship-buffet-style eating while living on vampire hours, I found the vast majority of my peers in the deep end with me, struggling to swim. What's strange is that I hadn't noticed the patterns I was picking up or the toll they were taking on my physical and mental health. I'd been led to believe that was just how everybody lived, because, frankly, it sort of is.

The "Freshman 15" is widely talked about, and chances are good that you know at least one person who came home for Thanksgiving break looking a little *different* than when they left in September. Nearly 25 percent of college freshmen gain ten pounds in their first semester alone.¹ I gained twelve. But while an increase (or decrease) in weight might be the most obvious repercussion of living like an animal on campus, that's only the tip of the iceberg—just one possible side effect of being overwhelmed by too much *everything*. Access to temptation coupled with a lack of structure creates a perfect storm, which brings about an increased risk of many other health concerns, such as chronic stress, severe sleep deprivation, anxiety, depression,

alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and suicide. College isn't easy. And the simple problem at the heart of most struggles for the millions of students who enter every year? A lack of knowledge about how to effectively take care of themselves.²

I'd never thought about any of this until I headed back to high school, but not in a *Billy Madison* kind of way. I started coaching football part-time to bring more balance and meaning to my work life and was instantly rewarded with all the good feelings that come from helping people work hard and reach their goals. As the graduating classes moved on to colleges across the country, I'd inevitably hear stories that sounded similar to my own when I checked in with former players. They were eating like shit, pulling all-nighters, and had completely given up on exercise. My typical response was to listen, reply with my own horror story, and end with the sentiment, "Well, you know what they say: everyone shits their pants in college." Connecting with alums over the challenges of campus life was an unexpectedly entertaining part of the job, but I never really knew how to help them better navigate the pitfalls they were facing. The answers wouldn't become apparent until years after I met my wife.

Jill is the girls' cross-country coach and a math teacher at that same high school. Our first few encounters felt like an awkward teenager rom-com but applied to adults in PE clothes. Eventually, the head football coach at the time, a fully tattooed former MMA fighter, came up to me at practice and let me know that I had a "secret admirer." His face was a mix of confusion and delight when he shared that she had referred to me as a "stone-cold fox" after confirming with him that I was single.

I've never met anyone like Jill. She's incredibly disciplined and responsible but has a surprisingly foul mouth and an endearingly immature sense of humor. She will find a way to turn anything into a game, but mostly because she enjoys shit-talking anyone who can handle it. She grew up in New England, and after meeting her family, I came to understand that that's kind of a thing there. My brother aptly described her once as a cartoon character due to her endless supply of energy and use of sound effects, which she applies to everyday actions like tying her shoes or unloading groceries.

We've been teammates since the beginning of our relationship. Health was a priority for both of us before we met because we'd learned the hard way that it's

impossible to feel good without taking care of yourself. We each struggled with health for the first time while in college, and there we were, years later, still trying to master good habits. It felt natural to continue those efforts together. For years, we read books and articles and played around with different routines and structures, noting what seemed to make a difference and what was just a headache. We often talked about this trial and error with our athletes. While the failures made for better stories, the successes, along with research, helped broaden our understanding of what was needed to kick ass in every area. We never thought we'd really do anything with what we'd learned until one of Jill's senior runners asked her after the last race of the season, "Coach, how do I *not* get fat in college?"

PART 2: JILL

As a cross-country coach, I take great pride in assigning clever names to our team workouts. *Horseshoe of Death. Pyramid of Pain. Shovel of Doom.* The more difficult the workout, the more whimsical the title. *The Ice Cream Cone Run.* You might think that one sounds awesome. My team certainly did, until I explained that the objective was to run up a mountain on a hot day without melting. The expectation versus the delivered product was a contrast that delighted me. My runners didn't think it was funny.

Though I sometimes play the hard-ass when we're all together, I care deeply about my athletes. Working with them is about more than just training. In cross-country, we spend runs engaging with one another. Coaches and athletes conversing freely, sharing about the ups and downs of our days, airing frustrations and concerns, having a laugh, or swapping advice. Over the course of each season, we become a family, and the roads and trails become our proverbial dinner table. By the time my runners graduate, I've formed meaningful relationships with many of them. There's a mutual trust and shared respect that is a direct result of spending four years working *together*. I run each of those horrifying workouts with my athletes, by their side, encouraging them to push through the pain every step of the way. The workouts destroy me too, but

sharing those experiences with my girls is one of the best parts of my job. Witnessing them realize how capable they are is a privilege. They not only learn how to work hard, they develop confidence in themselves. They discover that they're strong enough to come out on top when shit hits the fan. It took me a long time to learn those lessons, and I mostly got there alone. So while it's important to me to foster an environment that encourages toughness, it's more important to create a space where vulnerability is seen as a strength, support is given freely, and growth is nurtured, not forced.

When my runner asked me, "How do I not get fat in college?" she wasn't joking. She was scared. She didn't even know where she'd be going to school yet, but the idea of managing her health alone had brought her close to tears. I promised to do whatever I could to help. She wanted to know how to stay healthy once she was on campus, which put her one significant step ahead of where I'd been at her age. I didn't know how to take care of myself before I got to college and had no idea at the time that I even needed to. Neither did Dave.

He was an all-state quarterback in high school who went on to play not one but two college sports. He's still an athletic machine when he wants to be. Just recently, on a day where he was particularly fired up, one of his coworkers overheard Dave muttering to himself, "I think I could run through a wall right now." Dave instead decided to run up a nearby *mountain* with the goal of making it back before the end of his lunch break. If it wasn't for his inability to resist burritos and beer and his firm resistance to going to bed before midnight, he might have made it through college (and his twenties) with his health unscathed.

As he said earlier, we met while coaching. By then, he had figured out how to take care of himself and was invested in getting even better at it. What he hadn't figured out was that asking someone (*me*) out on a first date after practice while within earshot of fifty or so high school students was insane. We both endured a chorus of *oohs* and *awws* as we clumsily exchanged numbers. I was then immediately subjected to an onslaught of dating advice from my runners: *Don't make him do math problems. Don't challenge him to a push-up contest. Oh! And don't talk in your man voice—it's creepy.* I won't say they are the reason we went on a second date, but I will admit that it was probably time to scrap the line I'd been using at bars ("solve this equation and you'll have my number").

Although we figured out how to function like adults before meeting each other, we both screwed up mightily in college with our mental and physical health. My own bumpy ride is what inspired me to start teaching my athletes how to take care of themselves. That information is particularly useful in cross-country, where the only weapon you can bring to battle is your body. If you treat it like garbage, that's how you'll perform. So, I spend time every summer teaching the wellness basics. My runners learn about nutrition because you can't fuel workouts on fries and soda. They learn about sleep because you can't get stronger if you never rest. They learn about stress management because you can't do *anything* well if you are always overwhelmed. My immediate goal was that the knowledge would help them excel as runners, but my ultimate hope was that after four years of sticking to healthy routines, they would feel prepared to take care of themselves even after high school sports were over. Unfortunately, they didn't. They already knew what I hadn't been even remotely aware of at their age: college would be different, and many of their current good habits wouldn't survive the transition.

As much as he loved it, Dave's crazy work schedule ultimately forced him to step away from coaching football a few years after we got married. However, he filled that void by working with my team whenever he could. When my runner asked for help, it was no surprise that Dave wanted to work with me to provide the solution. That said, we definitely never set out to write a book. Our initial plan was to prepare a packet of workouts and meal suggestions for the seniors in hopes that some basic guidance would be enough to help them avoid making the mistakes we had. But at some point we realized that, based on our own experience, learning how to take care of yourself is an *enormous* undertaking that can't be condensed into a tiny guide. We expressed that sentiment to the seniors at a postseason team brunch, saying, "We're sorry we don't have something for you yet, but there's so much content to cover that we could write a book!" We will both never forget the moment that one of them looked at us and said, with complete sincerity, "You should."

After considering that seemingly outlandish suggestion for weeks, we high-fived like idiots and decided to go for it. We spent a year doing countless hours of research on food, booze, exercise, stress, and sleep. We sent out hundreds of anonymous

surveys to college students. We rehashed the details of our own failures, and then put them on paper for the first time. Oh, in the middle of all of that, we had a baby!

Despite wanting to help you avoid the same traps we fell into, we are firm believers that it's impossible to be perfect with your health. It's also unnecessary. Yes, taking care of yourself requires effort, but if we've learned anything from reviewing studies, speaking with health professionals, and conducting years of our own trial and error, it's that you don't have to work out like a machine every day, sleep eight hours every night, or give up certain foods to feel good. Unless you're allergic to mangos. If you're allergic to mangos, you should probably not eat those. All you need is a solid understanding of what "healthy" looks like and strategies for navigating your current environment so that you can put some good habits in place. Habits that make sense for *you*. Habits that you can realistically stick to *most* of the time.

The first key to taking care of yourself in college? You have to want to. Your "give a shit" meter is the only thing that will *ever* dictate your ability to make positive changes in your life. Do you want to know how to avoid becoming pizza's bitch? How to consume alcohol so that you don't pass out and get wieners drawn on your face? How to exercise without dreading it? How to keep your cool when assignments start to pile up? How to get enough sleep so that your brain doesn't eat itself? If you're ready, then it's time to learn "how to not get fat in college" and so much more. **Let's do this.**

CHAPTER 2

FOOD

JILL

I used to moonlight as the mascot now and again back in high school. Nothing builds character quite like a few hot hours in a giant pirate head coated with decades' worth of sweat. When I got to college, I wanted to utilize the invaluable entertainment skills I'd developed during my time as a gigantic human puppet. There seemed to be only one choice—I became a tour guide.

My tours were filled with bad jokes and awkward pauses. The only comment that consistently earned something other than pity laughter always happened in front of the dining hall, where I would talk about how fat I'd gotten since coming to college. While standing on a bench outside the entryway, I'd slap my belly for effect. "There's an all-you-can-eat buffet set up inside," I said, like a carnival worker trying to lure unsuspecting guests into the House of Horrors. "The food here is so good that I gained the Freshman 20!" Then I'd go on about how I had used all of my savings to buy new pants because I'd split the seams in the old ones. Apparently, the weight gain happened to everyone, so I wasn't embarrassed. And hey, at least I wasn't wearing a giant pirate head.

Google "Freshman 15," and you'll get nearly eighty million results. Many articles give seemingly simple yet unrealistic advice on how to avoid it: always walk to class, take the stairs instead of the elevator, don't eat a whole stick of

butter. *Blah, blah, blah.* Others state it's entirely a myth—arguing that college weight gain is very minimal and actually the result of the physical transformation from a teen to an adult body. A second puberty of sorts? *Who knew?* There is some truth to that claim, because it is entirely normal and healthy to gain around five pounds during college as your body continues to change. For many, however, it's more than that. We spoke to a lot of students, and no one tried to blame their bodily changes on blossoming into an adult. Whether their weight gain was two pounds or fifteen, students were more than capable of zeroing in on how they were sabotaging their health. Some cited a total lack of exercise, others hard boozing, but an overwhelming majority declared that their rapidly expanding figure was a direct result of eating like a pig on Christmas. All of the food. All of the time. *All of it!*

“When I went in for my annual physical, I realized the Freshman 15 was real. Or the Freshman 22, in my case. I should have expected it, as I had been getting a tad bigger in the muffin top area.”

—SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA, SOPHOMORE

In this chapter, we're going to give you a straightforward food rundown that will be less preachy than a typical health book and less dense and technical than a nutrition class. Dave and I still eat like shit sometimes, and we're going to argue that you should too. There are, however, some things that you should keep in mind when you're shoving things in your mouth, particularly given the excessive nature of the college environment. A categorization of foods based on their quality will be combined with some pointers on how to chow down, given the unfathomable amount of options you'll be exposed to. We'll also discuss strategies for experiencing *all of the food* in a way that won't make you feel like shit *all of the time*. Feasting at a buffet requires an awareness of portion control, so if you're hoping to hold onto your sweet precollege physique, stick around for that. And finally, we'll talk about cooking for yourself and the complications that can arise when food freedom becomes a reality.

How to Choose When Faced with Choice

The typical dining situation in college is ridiculous. Much of your eating will happen at a buffet, which features endless options, lets you serve yourself, and doesn't give you a bill at the end. The food choices will span the entire nutritional spectrum, and if you've got an unlimited item plan, you'll have the luxury of "sampling" whatever you want. A small handful of fries. A baby cup of soft serve. One teeny weeny slice of pizza on the side. Even on a pay-per-item plan, you may be tempted to opt for junk food because it's quick, cheap, and easy to eat.

To further complicate things, junk food is also absolutely delicious and is actually engineered to blow our minds. Most junk is high in salt, fat, and sugar. When any *one* of those ingredients is consumed independently, a pleasure response is triggered in our brains. Combine them, and your head explodes with delight. Research has shown that the brain's reward center essentially malfunctions when we eat foods high in fat and carbohydrates.¹ We crave those foods even when we're not hungry, and as one study suggests, human bodies haven't really evolved to handle that. That's probably why I can look at an apple after dinner and be like, "meh, don't need it," but moments later eye a box of Girl Scout Cookies and eat an entire sleeve. It's no wonder that 90 percent of adults don't eat enough real food²—junk food is the perfect drug. It's cheap, it's everywhere, it's delicious, it's addictive, *and* it's legal.

Assuming you're not regularly crushing Thin Mints by the dozen and brushing your teeth with Cool Whip, you probably don't need to avoid junk completely. If you don't have a serious health problem and can somewhat moderate your portions, crappy food isn't going to destroy your body. I ate a donut fifteen minutes before I sat down to write this. I know it's not good for me, but I was really feeling it, all smothered in pink frosting and topped with sprinkles. It looked incredible, and it needed a friend. A friend that was going to tear it apart and make it disappear. I was up to the task.

Donuts, however, don't make a regular appearance in my day or even my week. When I have a craving—when I see a donut that *must* be removed from this earth—I

"If I'm running late and don't have time to put together a good meal, sometimes I just grab one of the giant cookies by the register and eat that for dinner."

—SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE,
FRESHMAN

get after it, but I tend to avoid eating things that will make me physically feel like hot garbage twenty minutes later like that neon pink donut always will. I'm talking bloated and grumpy, with indigestion, heartburn, and maybe even some constipation thrown in for good measure. The "everything in moderation" adage might be overused, but it works when it comes to shitty food.

"I don't think healthy eating means salad all the time, because if mac and cheese and chocolate cake are what I need emotionally to finish a 20-page paper, then I'm going to eat mac and cheese and cake. But eating that way every day for every meal eventually makes me sluggish and sad, and I'm pretty sure that is when it becomes unhealthy. I try to eat in a way that makes me feel good and gives me energy. I've realized that it's all about balance and listening to what my body wants and needs."

—GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, FRESHMAN

But let's face it: self-control is challenging to master. I don't see donuts every day, which is part of the reason I don't eat them more often. The college environment, however, ups the ante. It's easy to go buck wild when you are always surrounded by temptation.

The good news: You don't have to eat *anything* in moderation if you don't want to. There will be no one to prevent you from eating a whole bucket of fries at lunch every day if that's what you dream about. You are now entirely responsible for making your own choices when it comes to food.

The bad news: You are now entirely responsible for making your own choices when it comes to food! No matter how much you might want to, you should *not* eat a whole bucket of fries every day at lunch, you filthy monster! Those salty pleasure sticks may be unassuming at first, but eating copious amounts of fries, or whatever else you crave, every day will ultimately become a hard-to-break ritual. Unfortunately, it's all on *you* to make sure that doesn't happen, because no one will be there to smack those bad boys out of your greasy hands.

Like it or not, balance is crucial if you want to be healthy. You should have fun with what you eat, but you also don't want to treat every day like a free-for-all. A

basic understanding of food and some simple guidelines for how to eat well will get you one step closer to locking that shit down.

This Is Not a Diet

Before we dive in, I have to clarify something. Our primary objective with this chapter is to encourage you to eat well for health, not for weight loss. It's easy to think that those two go hand in hand, but that's not always the case. The one you emphasize *really* matters. Prioritizing weight loss doesn't guarantee you'll be eating properly. Many diets focus on restrictions—don't eat this, don't eat that—which can make eating *anywhere* stressful. More importantly, it's not sustainable for the long haul

and doesn't result in lasting change. Research shows that the lost weight comes back for most dieters, within as little as a few months.³ In essence, cutting out everything “bad” and eating exclusively what’s “good” isn't effective. It might seem doable for a few months, but it's not a realistic template for life. So why even bother starting there? Drop any plans that focus on what you *shouldn't* eat. Healthy eating doesn't mean eating healthy food all the time. It means that you approach food with a degree of flexibility and listen to your body for feedback as to how you're doing, not the scale or some food dogma. So instead of trapping yourself inside some temporary diet that won't help you in the long run, make a concerted effort to develop a healthy relationship with food. Getting there isn't always quick, but once you figure it out, that relationship will serve you for the rest of your life. The best part? Your weight will absolutely stay in check as a result.

Now, I say all of this knowing full well that flexible eating can be daunting at first—it certainly took me some time to figure out. I started CrossFit shortly after college, right around the time Paleo was becoming popular and bacon was being hailed as the king of all proteins. The pigs were terrified. Anyway, I initially really liked the black-and-white approach of Paleo, which was to give up all grains, sugar, and dairy. I was convinced that I'd get a sweet six-pack if I jumped on the

“As a freshman, it is your first taste of freedom in all aspects, but especially in nutrition. You find yourself being able to eat whatever you want, from burgers every meal to cereal for dinner.”

—UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, SOPHOMORE

bandwagon. So, I went for it. Did I get that six-pack? No. Instead, I developed gigantic man quads from all the protein and powerlifting, alongside a real obsession with bacon. I had to buy new pants . . . again. *Curses!*

Given that wasn't really the look I had set out to achieve, I decided against a dietary life that forbid bread, ice cream, and cheese. I really love those foods, and having to ignore their existence at every turn was a bummer. I moved away from a restrictive version of Paleo after about six months, though ultimately, I had learned a valuable lesson: my body *felt* different. I actually felt great. I experienced heightened energy levels when I cut back on sugar and introduced more vegetables and protein to my diet. I had given my body something different, and it had communicated approval. The whole Paleo experiment didn't help me get washboard abs, but it did give me a more definite sense of *what* to eat and *how* to make changes. Since bailing on Paleo, I've stayed entirely away from food restrictions; however, I eat certain foods—the ones that zap my energy—less frequently than I used to. I have a clearer sense of which foods make my body feel great and now intentionally plan my meals around those. Ultimately, I now crave the way I feel after eating quality foods, and that alone prevents me from constantly stuffing my face with shitty ones.

My point is twofold. Don't diet or restrict, but do experiment with different ways of eating. Give your body two or three weeks to respond with feedback after you make changes. As we said earlier, the key is learning to recognize the warning signs. Puffy, sweaty, tired, sad, or shitting mud? If this is you after eating, it's time for a change. Energized and upbeat? That means you've properly fueled for battle (or class). Your body will tell you which foods it thrives on and which it merely tolerates—all you have to do is pay attention and adjust accordingly. With some guidance for your trial-and-error process, we hope that you will discover a balanced and healthy way to eat that will make you feel good.

What to Eat

The following list is a starting point for your experimenting and has been assembled with the help of a registered dietitian. The groupings are meant to clarify which foods pack the most nutritional punch. No one food is going to kill you or torpedo your health goals, but certain foods are best as daily staples, whereas others are better

WHAT TO EAT	
EVERYDAY	<p>All fruits, all veggies, most proteins (chicken, seafood, pork, beef, eggs, turkey, tofu, tempeh), whole grains (rice, quinoa, unflavored oatmeal), beans, all nuts and natural nut butters, avocado, olives, quality fats (olive oil, coconut oil, butter), plain yogurt, plain kefir, cottage cheese, bread products without preservatives, real cheese, milk</p> <p><i>These are real foods. Most are grown or raised and can be found in nature. They will rot if you forget them in the back of your mini fridge. Many are colorful. These are the most nutrient-dense foods you can consume.</i></p>
SOMETIMES	<p>Pizza, bacon, flavored oatmeal, packaged bread/bagels, tortillas, pasta, cereal/granola, cream, sour cream, industrial vegetable & seed oils, processed peanut butter, microwave popcorn, bottled smoothies, homemade sweets</p> <p><i>Many of these foods contain high levels of saturated fat or sugar. Some are factory made. Although these foods are less than perfect, they still offer some nutritional value.</i></p>
RARELY	<p>Chips, fries, fruit juice, ice cream, processed meats and cheeses, soda, sugary teas, candy bars, packaged sweets (like muffins, cookies, cakes), fast food</p> <p><i>These aren't foods, these are products. They are loaded with chemicals and/or sugar. These offer the least nutrients or no nutrients at all.</i></p>

as occasional additions. I'm guessing it's obvious from the naming conventions, but you'll be doing your body a solid if you routinely eat the "everyday" foods, as these are the ones that will give you the most energy. Then, mix in items from the "sometimes" and "rarely" categories as desired throughout the week. These might not add to your energy stores, but they'll make you happy inside, and that's just as important.

It's hopefully clear by now that you will likely have unlimited access to the foods listed above. Particularly the foods in the last two sections. And that access complicates matters. No one is losing their minds over the all-you-can-eat broccoli, but it's definitely hard to eat pizza only *sometimes* when you walk by it *every day*. If your diet consists mostly of foods found in the "sometimes" or "rarely" categories, start making some simple swaps. Even if you feel fine surviving off of fries and pizza and avoiding vegetables, you're not giving your body what it needs to function properly. It's as simple as that. This shit is *science*! Food is a central component of our well-being, and if you're not getting the right stuff, you'll have no idea how good your body can really feel. If you eat better, you'll be able to climb up walls, shoot webs

from your wrists, and Tarzan your way through the city from building to building. Or something similar. Anyway, make some changes, but keep in mind that they don't need to be to the tune of a complete and speedy overhaul. Start small by adding in or making a daily trade for food in the “everyday” category. The following strategies will guide that process.

How to Eat

These guidelines aren't revolutionary; you've likely heard some of them before. They work, though, which is why they've stuck around. Treat them like you would any other rule, letting them guide your decision making when you're trying to eat well, and throwing them out the window every so often to keep your sanity. Here are eight to keep in mind:

1. **Eat Your Colors.** Take your current fruit and vegetable consumption and double it. More than half of college students only eat one or two total servings of fruits and vegetables per day,⁴ well below the CDC daily recommendation of 1½–2 cups of fruits and 2–3 cups of vegetables, which equates to between 5 and 8 servings of both. As nutritional powerhouses, they should be the foundation of your diet. Fruits and veggies are jam-packed with vitamins and minerals that boost immunity and protect against chronic disease.

The goodness found inside kale and spinach keeps your bones strong and your teeth from crumbling. Bananas, broccoli, and cucumbers carry potassium, which helps your muscles rebuild, and carrots, bell peppers, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes are vessels for vitamin A, which is what powers your peepers. All

“Sometimes you’ve just gotta eat those undercooked greens.”

—UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER, FRESHMAN

veggies and fruits are carbohydrates, which provide you with the energy you need to breathe, walk, type, eat, think, dance the robot, or hold thirty pounds of textbooks . . . just a few of the things you need to do to survive college. Fill half of your plate with colored food first, then fill the other half with a split of whole grains and protein. If cooked veggies aren't your thing, opt for raw ones from the salad bar instead.

If the produce choices at your school aren't of good quality, speak up. Talk to the head of your dining hall. I'm serious! Don't write a crappy review bashing your school's food on some third-party website. Instead, reach out via email and then schedule a meeting. Be respectful and give useful feedback—it's the most effective way to get what you need. It's also in the best interest of the institution to make sure that its students feel heard and are satisfied with what's offered, which is precisely why they will make changes when possible. Advocating for yourself is an essential life skill, particularly regarding things that impact the quality of your daily life.

2. **Eat at Mealtimes.** “Fourthmeal” was an ad campaign used by a particular fast-food taco chain back in the mid-2000s to attract hordes of stoners and drunk

MACRONUTRIENTS			
Each macronutrient plays an important role in the functioning of your body. While it's not necessary that you "count" macros, it's important that you include each type in your diet regularly.			
	CARBS	PROTEINS	FATS
PRIMARY FUNCTIONS	Supply cells with energy <i>the brain and red blood cells can only be powered by glucose</i> Can be stored as energy for later use Help preserve muscle <i>when your body is low on the necessary glucose, your muscles may be broken down to provide emergency energy</i>	Builds bones, muscles, cartilage, skin, hair, and nails Repairs tissue after exercise or injury Regulates hormones Helps with digestion and curbs hunger	Secondary source of energy <i>significantly more oxygen is required to break down fat than carbs</i> Regulates body temperature Important for vitamin absorption and storage <i>Vitamins A, D, E, and K cannot function without fat</i>
SELECT FOODS	Fruit, Veggies, Grains	Meats	Oils, Avocado
		Nuts & Nut Butters, Quality Full-Fat Dairy Products, Eggs	
	Beans, Chickpeas, Quinoa, Lentils		
	most junk foods live in the intersection between carbs and fats		

people to stop in for late-night chalupas. It promoted a full dinner's worth of dinner . . . after dinner. Even though there's nothing better than eating the shit out of a chalupa at midnight on occasion, daily or weekly indulgence in second dinner *isn't* one of the secrets of highly successful people. If you're regularly hungry late at night, that means you're not eating enough during the day. To start, eat breakfast, even if it's small. Then eat a substantial lunch, snack between meals, and have dinner at dinnertime. If you tend to be rushed in the evening and hungry at night because your dining hall closes early, keep some smuggled fruit in your room so that you're prepared when hunger strikes.

3. **Snack Well.** I've always hated the word "snack." I can't say it without aggressively wrinkling my nose, and seeing it in print gives me the creeps. Snacks, however, are genius—they're basically tiny insurance policies that prevent us from going nuts at our next meal. They allow for sustained energy throughout the day, which can be a lifesaver when you're bouncing between class, homework, and a job. Combine a quality carbohydrate and a protein or fat to ensure maximum satiation, and try to only eat snacks when you're actually hungry, not just bored.

PERFECT SNACK COMBOS

EASY-TO-EAT CARBOHYDRATE	PROTEIN OR FAT SIDEKICK
Carrot or celery sticks	Peanut/almond butter
Cucumber slices	Plain yogurt
Bell pepper strips	Hummus
Pretzels	Cheese stick
Berries	Almonds
Apple	Jerky
Banana	Hard-boiled egg
Clementines	Olives

4. **Eat Your Calories, Don't Drink Them.** Liquid calories don't fill you up like solid ones, and most drinks are devoid of any nutritional benefit and full of sugar. Cut back on soda, chocolate milk, sweet tea, juice, and fancy coffee drinks. If you're reading this while sipping on a hot, creamy, delicious mocha, (a) thank you for reading, but (b) stop drinking that sugary death bomb! Well, not really, but at least don't have it every day. Not only does it likely have more sugar than ice cream, it's also expensive. Opt for a black coffee instead, and splash in some milk if you need it. Try sticking to water, sparkling water, coffee, and unsweetened tea (hot or iced) for a few weeks. You'll notice the difference in your stomach and your wallet.
5. **Eat Real Food.** There's only a one-letter discrepancy between produce and product, but there's a world of difference. Food is an industry, and unfortunately, the goal of food manufacturers isn't to ensure your good health, it's to make money. Companies spend millions of dollars each year trying to convince consumers that a product is healthy, *especially* when it's not. Because it's remarkably easy to be fooled, your best defense is a bit of awareness.

"Health food" marketing ploys began in the early seventies when scientific studies first connected a healthy diet to the prevention of cancer and other diseases. Companies saw a business opportunity and took it, putting bold and typically unwarranted claims about the healthfulness of their products on the packaging. The nutrition label, in part, was created as a way to regulate that type of marketing,⁵ but many companies still use deceptive packaging to draw people in, assuming that we won't read the label if we believe a product is healthy.

Protect yourself by ignoring any wellness claims or "greenwashed" packaging that makes you *assume* something is good for you, and approach foods that are actively advertised to you with caution. Regardless of how kind or honest they may seem, commercials are designed to get you to spend money, not to make informed decisions. Get into the habit of reading the ingredient list on the back of the package and follow two basic rules. First, the shorter the list, the better (typically). Second, if you can't pronounce or visualize an ingredient, chances are good that it was created in a lab, so best to skip that product.

Three Red Flags. *Keep an eye out for these particular ingredients in your food. They're the worst of the worst.*

- **Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA)** is a preservative often found in breakfast cereal, nut mixes, chewing gum, butter spread, meat, dehydrated potatoes, dessert and beverage mixes, popcorn, chips, and beer. It's also used to create animal feed, food packaging, makeup, and rubber and petroleum products. A real multipurpose ingredient, am I right?! BHA is *not* banned in the US but is banned in Japan and many European countries, including the UK. Even though California includes BHA on a list of "Known Carcinogens and Reproductive Toxicants" (also known as the Prop 65 list) due to its link to cancer,⁶ it still somehow passes muster with the FDA. Terrifying.
- **Potassium bromate** is an additive found in many packaged bread products. It has been linked to kidney and nervous system damage, thyroid and GI tract issues, and cancer.⁷ Potassium bromate is *not* banned in the US but is banned in all of Europe, Canada, and China. Just like BHA, it was added to the Prop 65 list in 1990 due to cancer links.
- **Artificial colors** are apparent in certain foods. Bright drinks, candies, and some cereals clearly have an added tint, but so can salmon, yogurt, salad dressing, pickles, popcorn, granola and protein bars, soups, and canned fruit. Eight dyes—including Red 40, Blue 2, and Yellow 5 (all of which can go by complicated aliases)—have been linked to cancer and hyperactivity in children.⁸ Artificial colors are *not* banned in the US but are banned in Norway, Finland, France, Austria, and the UK.

6. **Cut Back on Added Sugar.** Any idea how much sugar the average American consumes each day? For the purpose of your guessing, let me tell you that the recommended daily sugar allowance is thirty-six grams for men and twenty-four grams for women. You ready to guess? All right. Here's the answer: seventy grams.⁹ That's a half cup of sugar. Every. Single. Day. *Holy shit.* That's

not just disgusting, it's also scary because an abundance of fructose can actually damage the liver just like too much alcohol can. In the last fifty years, worldwide sugar consumption has tripled.¹⁰

Unfortunately, there's no real end in sight. Sugar isn't regulated in the same way that other toxic substances, like booze and tobacco, are. Quite the contrary. It's practically been built into our food system. Added sugar is in 75 percent of packaged items.¹¹ You'll find between twenty and forty grams in desserts and sodas, which shouldn't be a surprise, but what might shock you is that you'll find nearly the same amount in muffins, flavored yogurt, cereals, and granola bars. The only way to know for sure what you're getting yourself into is to read the nutrition label on whatever you're eating. While you're there, check out the ingredient list. Items are displayed in order of predominance, and it will blow your mind how often you'll find sugar in the top three.

Thinking sugar-free is the way to go? Think again. Although five artificial sweeteners are considered safe by the FDA, research suggests that the daily consumption of diet sodas—one of the most popular vessels of fake sugar—actually *increases* the risk of metabolic syndrome and diabetes by 36 and 67 percent, respectively.¹² Those are the exact diseases we should be trying to avoid by cutting back on real sugar, so it appears the fake stuff isn't really helping us out in regard to our health.

Fruit, however, doesn't register in the same way as sugar. The twenty grams of sweetness in an apple, for instance, don't count toward the daily limit stated earlier. That's because apples, and all other fruits, are perfectly packaged with fiber, vitamins, and minerals that positively alter the way your body processes glucose. You should eat fruit without concern, so long as it's whole and not juiced or dried. Avoid bottled smoothies that advertise themselves as having two apples, half a banana, and a quarter cup of blueberries. While the label will shout "no added sugar," there's also no fiber to slow down the digestion of glucose. That was stripped from the fruit when it was obliterated and jammed into a bottle. Therefore, your body processes all

fifty-three grams of that fruit sugar no differently than it would process the sugar in a milkshake.

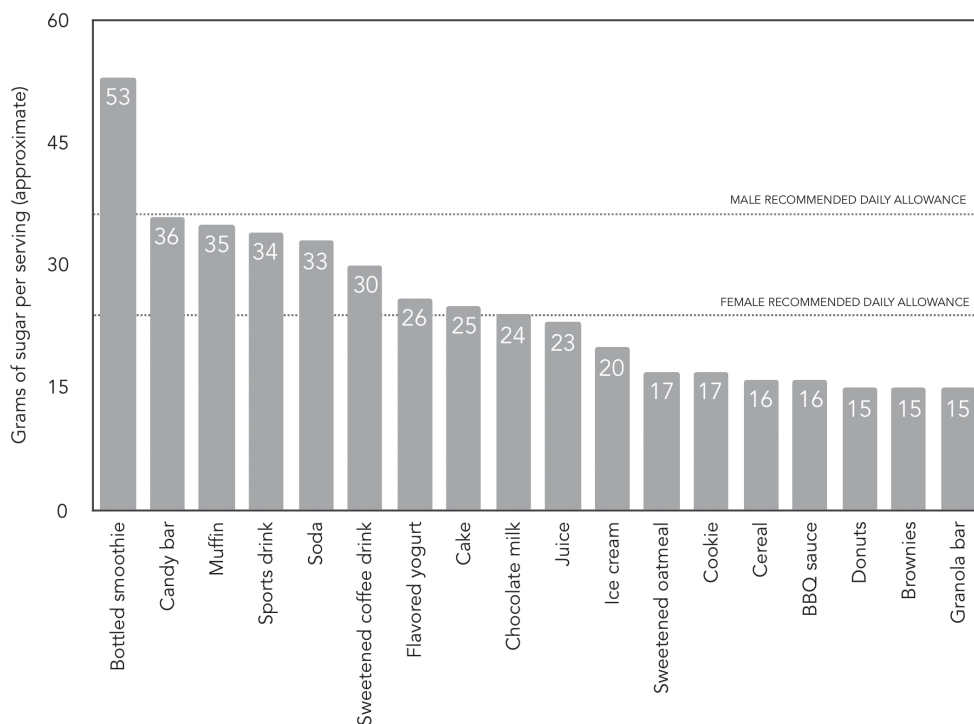
Some argue that sugar is the most toxic ingredient in our food today.¹⁴ Both the real and fake versions offer zero nutritional benefits, and overeating them can lead to a whole host of terrifying medical conditions. Furthermore, it's incredibly addictive (some studies say *as* addictive as cocaine), so it's a hard habit to break if you get sucked in.¹⁵ The bottom line is that we *all* need to be mindful of our sugar consumption. If sugar has become a regular part of your day, especially unintentionally, now is a good time to start eliminating some of it wherever you can. Conscious consumption is key.

Sweet Nicknames. You may not be able to locate “sugar” easily, as it’s often listed under an alias. Here are the sixty-one different names that it can go by:

“Agave nectar, Barbados sugar, Barley malt, Barley malt syrup, Beet sugar, Brown sugar, Buttered syrup, Cane juice, Cane juice crystals, Cane sugar, Caramel, Carob syrup, Castor sugar, Coconut palm sugar, Coconut sugar, Confectioners’ sugar, Corn sweetener, Corn syrup, Corn syrup solids, Date sugar, Dehydrated cane juice, Demerara sugar, Dextrin, Dextrose, Evaporated cane juice, Free-flowing brown sugars, Fructose, Fruit juice, Fruit juice concentrate, Glucose, Glucose solids, Golden sugar, Golden syrup, Grape sugar, HFCS (High-Fructose Corn Syrup), Honey, Icing sugar, Invert sugar, Malt syrup, Maltodextrin, Maltol, Maltose, Mannose, Maple syrup, Molasses, Muscovado, Organic Sugar, Palm sugar, Panocha, Powdered sugar, Raw sugar, Refiner’s syrup, Rice syrup, Saccharose, Sorghum Syrup, Sucrose, Sugar (granulated), Sweet Sorghum, Syrup, Treacle, Turbinado sugar, Yellow sugar.”¹³

- 7. Don't Start Sweet.** Speaking of sugar, there's really no better way to guarantee a midday struggle than to start with sweets for breakfast. Sugar-heavy breakfasts—think pancakes, muffins, scones, waffles, cereal, bagels, toast with jam, sweetened yogurt, granola—cause a quick spike in your blood sugar. Your body loves this, as your blood sugar is low in the morning, and sugar provides an energy boost. Unfortunately, within a couple of hours, you'll likely experience a crash, indicated by fatigue, irritability, headache, and difficulty concentrating. You'll feel terrible until you get *more* sugar. To avoid that never-ending shit-storm, get a good dose of protein and fat at breakfast instead with things like eggs, avocado, nut butter, and Greek yogurt.

SUGAR CONTENT IN COMMON FOODS



8. **Eat at a B+.** You won't be able to avoid unhealthy choices all the time, nor should you. The world is filled with delicious and terrible foods that should be enjoyed by those who want them. Kicking off the morning with a bacon, egg, and cheese on a bagel or capping off the night with an enormous bowl of ice cream sometimes just feels like the right move. So, I sometimes do it and then adjust accordingly. If I already ate or know I am going to eat some mouthwatering garbage-food, I will intentionally eat well for the rest of the day. I've found that if I freely allow myself to give in to temptation, I'm less likely to go overboard because I know I'll be able to eat that food again the next time I'm craving it. Balancing those choices with healthier foods is how I regularly hit a "B+" with my nutrition, which keeps me feeling healthy, unrestricted, and free from guilt. The closest comparison is probably budgeting. On a limited amount of money, you can't buy everything you want all at once. So you learn to spread out big purchases and try to spend thoughtfully and intentionally in between. Food can be looked at the same way—permit yourself to indulge once a day or a few times a week without any guilt by consciously making quality choices the rest of the time. Food can provide *both* the needed fuel and desired pleasure if you focus on balancing spontaneity with discipline.

Indulge Like a Pro

Eating with reckless abandon is part of the college experience for many. I remember the first time I ate an entire family-sized bag of Cheetos by myself. I made it three-quarters of the way through before I even thought to assess my pillaging. When I realized how few neon-orange puffs remained, I was actually impressed with myself. I sat in that moment for a second and then proceeded to polish off the entire thing. *Just a regular Tuesday.*

*"When I first got to college, I saw all of this food, just staring me in the face.
I had soft serve every night."*

—TUFTS UNIVERSITY, FRESHMAN

Restraint wasn't on my radar when I got to college, but even if it had been, it's challenging to exhibit self-control when surrounded by unlimited quantities of

all the foods you crave. Unless your family is in the ice cream business, navigating constant temptation is probably a new experience, and setting some ground rules can keep you from becoming a complete animal. Here are seven ways to do that:

1. **Reserve Treats for Special Occasions.** Food provides comfort. It gives us a way to let loose, socialize, have fun, celebrate, and commiserate, all without substantial effort. Hard day? Have a burrito. Great day? Have some cake. Rewarding yourself with certain foods on special occasions is a common practice.

This policy becomes problematic, however, when every day is viewed as a celebration. Back away from the food holiday calendar, where January first is National Bloody Mary Day, the second is National Cream Puff Day, the third is National Chocolate-Covered Cherry Day, the fourth is National Spaghetti Day, and the fifth is National Whipped Cream Day. *This is just January.* What a way to start the year! Bet you're not thinking about resolutions on day five while you're squirting whipped cream into your mouth straight from the can.

Allow celebrations to feel special by not celebrating every day—at least not with food. Given that breakfast and lunch are unlikely celebratory meals, eat well at those times from Monday through Friday to give yourself more leeway at dinner and over the weekend.

2. **Don't Deprive Yourself.** Years ago, during one of our many *attempts* to get shredded, Dave and I tested out a weekly “cheat day.” We’d eat *perfectly* from Sunday morning through Friday night, and then as soon as our workout was over on Saturday morning, we’d lose our minds. After all, we’d spent an entire week thinking about the foods we’d been missing. There was pressure to make every moment count when cheat day finally arrived, so we did just that. *9:00 a.m.—breakfast burritos, iced mochas, and cookies. 1:00 p.m.—foot-long Italian subs and chips. 6:00 p.m.—lots of pizza and lots of beer. 9:00 p.m.—ice cream sundaes; more cookies.*

Sunday morning was always a real kick in the face. Our bodies were on overdrive, trying to sort out the cesspool we’d created in our stomachs during the previous twenty-four hours. We not only ate an obscene amount of trash, but we also didn’t include a single healthy item (a waste of precious stomach

space!). I look at this now and think, *Man, we were idiots*, but it took us *months* to figure out that what we were doing was unhealthy. The cheat day system doesn't work for many because it removes "the rules" after a long stretch of restriction—a recipe for disaster if you have trouble with self-control.

3. **Don't Indulge in the Same Thing More Than Two Days in a Row.** A treat, by definition, is an item that is out of the ordinary and gives great pleasure. So let your treats be treats. Don't let ice cream become your automatic postdinner routine. By spacing out your indulgences, you give yourself a chance to look forward to them, which in turn allows each one to feel special.
4. **Avoid Desperation.** Keep healthy food in your backpack or room to prevent a situation where you're starving and, as a result, grab the first thing you can get your hands on—which, when you're desperate, will likely be something packaged, comforting, and terrible for you. Indulgences are much more enjoyable when they happen due to choice rather than desperation.
5. **Plan for When You're Drunk.** As you'll learn in the alcohol chapter, drunk munching doesn't help sober you up, which was absolutely a misconception of mine during freshman year. I once ate a whole loaf of white bread in my top bunk after a night of hard drinking, thinking it would stop the world from spinning around me. It didn't. I puked up a stomach of coconut rum and sandwich slices in my roommate's tiny trash can, then passed out covered in crumbs.

Eating after a night out can be part of the fun, but if impaired judgment results in your choices or portions being out of control, then attack your weakness head-on by devising a system to help you avoid overdoing it. Keep popcorn, pretzels, instant noodles, or a decently healthy cereal in your dorm room, so you've got something to eat when you get home. If you're going out, split a meal with a friend and order a comfort food that has a dash of something good, like a thin-crust veggie pizza or a grilled chicken sandwich. Those calories aren't serving any purpose in terms of alcohol

"I've stopped bringing money with me when I go out, and I don't keep food in my room so that I don't eat after I've been drinking."

—COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY, JUNIOR

defense, so try to consume something that won't add to how shitty you're going to feel when you wake up.

6. **Steer Clear of Temptations.** If you don't want to eat dessert and fries every day, don't curiously saunter past those stations in the dining hall. If you don't want to eat chips at night, don't keep an emergency stockpile in your dorm room. A study published in 2012 about self-control in the face of desire stated that situational factors, more than personality, affect someone's ability to refrain from temptation.¹⁶ In short, we humans are weak-willed and programmed to fail. *Which is exactly why the robots will win.* The difference between those who cave and those who don't? **Access.** When bad options abound, you're much more likely to crave them. So, maintain some distance between yourself and the "rarely" or "occasional" foods that you typically have trouble resisting.

"When I was living at home, there was rarely unhealthy food in the house, which made it a lot easier to eat well. In college, you always have the option of ice cream after dinner, or even ice cream for dinner if you want. Having the option requires more self-control, and that is a hard transition to make."

—WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, FRESHMAN

7. **Don't Throw in the Towel.** So you cracked. You ate a whole pizza at 2:00 a.m. Don't let a single indiscretion snowball into an avalanche of not-great-for-your-health decisions. Continuing to indulge because you feel like you've already ruined your day is like continuing to spend money that you don't have by putting your purchases on a credit card. It all adds up. But here's the thing—you *will* overdo it at some point. You and pizza are going to have a standoff, and pizza will win. Pizza is a powerful opponent, and you should not judge yourself for losing the battle. Remember, it was just one battle—not the whole war. Start fresh tomorrow. Work out, drink lots of water, eat a healthy breakfast, and stop feeling guilty! The best thing that you can do now is to take note of whatever you're feeling and stash it away. You're going to get another opportunity to battle, and now you're one step closer to avoiding becoming pizza's bitch . . . again.

Detox with Water. Your kidneys are responsible for dealing with the mess that exists in your body when you've gone a little wild with unhealthy foods. Kidneys filter blood, a job that requires them to essentially snatch up anything nasty and send it out with pee. But kidneys can't do their crucial job without water, and they do it best when water is available in excess.¹⁷ Keep this in mind when you go off the deep end with any foods that you know don't sit well in your body, and instead of feeling shitty about yourself, counter your actions by drinking a huge bottle of water. Dilution fights pollution.

Quantity Control

A 2016 study found that 75 percent of Americans classified their diet as good, great, or excellent,¹⁸ yet 70 percent of our country is overweight, and more than half of that group is considered obese.¹⁹ Where's the disconnect? Many registered dietitians believe that people are either (a) falling for "health" food marketing on unhealthy foods or (b) not observing proper portion sizes.

Coming face-to-face with a buffet three times a day when you're on your own for the first time can make food feel even more overwhelming. Not only do you have to make choices about what to put on your plate, you also have to consider how much. Without considering portion size, it's remarkably easy to overeat despite your best intentions. One of my friends recently started tracking her food for a health challenge and realized that she was consuming a thousand more calories each day than she thought, simply because her portions were too large.

I've never been a dainty eater. When I was in sixth grade, my summer camp counselor sent a letter home to my parents that read: "Jill needs to learn to control herself when it's time for seconds in the dining hall." It's possible that comment was in response to a minor incident where I *accidentally* hockey checked a kid who was picking up the very last chicken patty. He dropped it, and I ate it off the floor.

"When I first started college, I found it hard to limit my intake as I wanted to try everything and maximize each swipe used to get into the dining hall."

—UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, FRESHMAN

Being healthy in college was a challenge not just because I always wanted seconds, but because I wanted to sample *everything*. Suddenly I was surrounded by an array of delicious options, all of which I had never experienced unfettered access to before. I found it hard not to load up my plate every time I was in the dining hall. I only got better with restraint when I figured out how to listen to my body, which took a ridiculously long time. *Welp, I feel like trash again. Probably didn't need that fifth slice of pizza.* You don't have to suffer through stomachache after stomachache to get a handle on portion control, though. Here are four ways to consider serving size that don't require a physical sacrifice:

1. **Estimate Portion Size.** Ever participated in the classic “how many jellybeans are in this humongous glass jar” game? Anyone who is out to win probably devises a system, like say, ballpark the number of jellybeans on the bottom layer, estimate the number of layers in the jar, crank out a quick little multiplication, and boom: a guess that's sure to win. *I've never won.* Even if you've never played that classic raffle game, you're probably no stranger to approximate measurement. For a guess to be “educated,” a system is critical. Eyeballing *is* an efficient and decently accurate system, so long as you have something concrete to use for comparison.²⁰

Your hands work particularly well as a frame of reference when it comes to food, because, unless you've got hooks for hands, they're always with you. *I'm sorry if you have hand hooks, I bet that's really hard.* Your feet work if you're measuring the size of a room but are better left under the table when it comes to eating. Furthermore, if any of your portions are even close to the size of your feet, you'd better be in some sort of competition. *For your first challenge, a boot of mashed potatoes!*

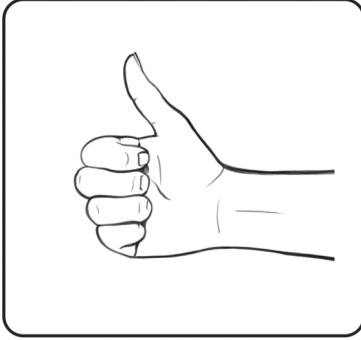
The size of your palm, your thumb, your fist, and so forth will obviously be different than someone else's, but that difference is actually okay, as it should equate to the amount that is appropriate for your needs. A five-two woman should have a smaller hand than a six-two man, thus her portions will be smaller than his, which they probably should be. He burns more calories than she does each day by simply being alive, so he needs more food. Thus, this *handy* system (see what I did there) is a solid way of measuring food.

FATS

nut butters, oils, cheese

THUMB

2 tablespoons = 1 ounce

**FIST**

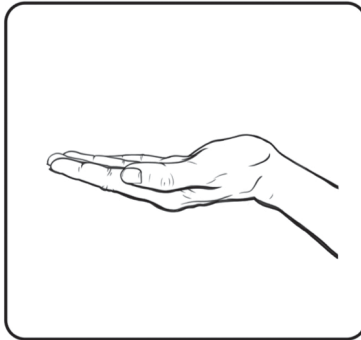
1 cup = 8 ounces



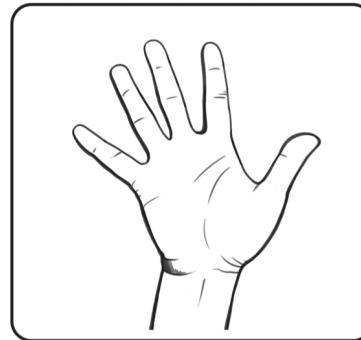
yogurt, beans, cereal, oatmeal

DAIRY +**GRAINS**

rice, quinoa, pasta, granola

**CUPPED HAND**

1/2 cup = 4 ounces

**PALM**

~1/3 cup = 3 ounces

chicken, beef, pork, tofu

PROTEIN

2. **Push Some Water and Watch the Clock Before Pressing “Repeat.”** The curse of the buffet is that you can finish one plate and jump right back up for another without a moment of hesitation. Maybe you ran up a mountain and need that second plate of food, but maybe you’re just bored and want to see how many burgers you can eat in one sitting. Before hitting the buffet a second time, drink a full glass of water (hell, make it two!) and set a timer for five minutes before determining whether you’re actually still hungry.

3. **Listen to Your Body.** Your body knows things. It is designed to tell you when you're consuming a food that it doesn't like, or when you've had too much food altogether. Ever felt bloated, gassy, hot, and uncomfortable at the end of the meal? Oh. No? Yeah . . . me neither. That's your body communicating that you've overeaten—you just need to be present enough to listen. If you need to unbutton your pants after eating, it's probably time to cut back on your portions. Not that I really know from experience. I swear. I only did that once. In an Olive Garden. I just went a little overboard on the free breadsticks and needed some room to move, all right!?
4. **Eat What You Need.** Unfortunately, it's easy for us to tune out our bodies because we're often preoccupied with socializing while we eat. Additionally, it's possible to be influenced by the group that you're eating with.

“Who I have meals with always impacts what and how much I eat. I eat way more than I need to when I’m with the baseball players, and eat much healthier food than usual when I’m with a girl that I’m into.”

—PITZER COLLEGE, FRESHMAN

Make an effort to eat what you need. You're the one putting food into your mouth (hopefully), and you're the one that will be stuck feeling like trash if you overdo it. You're in charge of your consumption, for better or worse. Is it hard to eat a reasonable portion when everyone around you is housing plates of fries and stacks of chicken patties? It definitely can be, but try your best to do you. Resist the urge to do what everyone around you is doing with their food. Once you've got a success or two under your belt, you'll know it's possible and will be able to do it *again* with less stress. And then *again*. And *again*. Before you know it, what and how much the people around you are eating won't matter.

Cooking for One

If you're lucky, you'll have access to a kitchen at some point during college. Not one of those nasty dorm situations with sticky counters, ancient hot plates, and

spaghetti-splattered microwaves. I mean the real deal. An actual temple of cooking, complete with a stove top, an oven, and some proper tools.

The privilege of a kitchen presents both benefits and challenges. Being able to determine what goes into your meals is a major health perk, but spending time and money on cooking and food shopping when you would rather spend that time and money literally anywhere else can be a real bummer. The reality, however, is that unless you work at Google or an equally badass company that has a cafeteria to provide you with meals, dining halls will be a thing of the past once you graduate.

“Word to the wise, not knowing how to cook is the biggest turnoff in the world. You’re an adult, google it and get it done.”

—NEW YORK UNIVERSITY,
RECENT GRAD

Beyond being able to advertise your culinary skills on dating apps, there’s a lot to gain by learning how to make yourself food while in college. Although cooking at home requires time and planning, it’s truly the best option for your health and wallet. The trick is figuring out how to make it quick, cheap, and fun.

Keep it Quick

The first key to enjoying cooking is to make something that you’re excited to eat. The second key is to get it into your belly as soon as possible. Don’t place unrealistic expectations on yourself in terms of how much time you’ll be able to dedicate to the creation of sustenance. If you want to avoid or cut back on fast food, focus on fast meals instead. Here are three ways to do that:

- **Don’t Stray from Simple:** Plan to make dishes and recipes that don’t require a lot of ingredients, as that means there will be less to prep, clean, and buy. Additionally, zero in on recipes that can be completed in under twenty minutes. It’s easy to quit altogether with cooking if it becomes complicated, expensive, and time consuming. When you’re busy and stressed, convenience has a sneaky way of trumping health. Take advantage of the tons of cookbooks and blogs that specialize in quick, cheap meals, and if you really

love cooking, then turn labor-intensive meals into weekend activities and share the workload with friends.

- **Buy an Instant Pot:** There's nothing better than coming home to a meal that's already made. There are three ways to achieve this: (1) move back in with your parents, (2) find yourself an outstanding roommate, or (3) buy a slow cooker or Instant Pot. One is not ideal, two is hard to find, and three is fifty dollars. Once or twice a week, take five minutes to load up your robotic cooking device before class, and you'll come home to dinner and lunch for days, all with minimal hassle. Chicken breast and a sauce of your choice go in in the morning, shredded chicken to throw on anything comes out at night. The best thing about an Instant Pot in particular is that it's also a pressure cooker, so if you forgot to load it up before class, it can still be used to make a meal at night. Additionally, it can cook rice and steam veggies. I bet it could even wash your dirty socks, but that's really gross and may result in a house fire, so you probably should use the laundry room instead.
- **Have a Quick Signature Dish:** Identify a few meals you'll always be psyched to eat that are (a) reasonably healthy, (b) use ingredients you typically have on hand, and (c) can be prepared in under five minutes. This is critical for when you've had a busy day and won't have much time to cook or when you get home and need food immediately but haven't planned ahead. Think scrambled eggs and toast. A quesadilla and a handful of bagged salad. Greek yogurt, fruit, and granola. Frozen mac and cheese and some sliced cucumbers. You get the gist.

"The only reason I ate vegetables at home was because my parents made me. Eating the same way at college has been a struggle. There are so many delicious (and unhealthy) options here."

—CARLETON COLLEGE, SOPHOMORE