

THRIVING

Helping Men Lead a Healthier and More Balanced Life

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invest in you!

Most of us have, at least, a vague idea of what we need to do to live healthy lives. We may also have the best intentions to take action to make ourselves healthier. Unfortunately, we may not be successful because many of us, though ambitious, set ourselves up for failure. Our goals are too vague and unrealistic, the changes we make are not sustainable, and we do not view our goals as a journey to healthier lifestyle changes. Instead, we latch onto quick fixes that, once achieved, lead back to our same old behaviors.

The great news though, is that you have the power to make decisions about your health. You can commit to investing in yourself. And just like when you're investing money, you're looking for growth over the long-term, adding more years of life, and for more of those years to be healthy, productive years. So, exactly how do we add years to our lives? How do we keep doing the things we love even as we get older? How do we push back against disease and death? By going back to basics.

This edition of Thriving Magazine is all about men's health and wellness, and how making small changes to your every-day routines can greatly influence your overall health. Let's make it fun by experimenting and exploring. Let's try some easy ideas we can implement today. Let's uplift ourselves and each other by investing in our well-being!



Acupuncture

- Beneficial for pain management and recovery from sport injuries.
- Can lessen anxiety and boost mood.
- Targeted energy points during your sessions assist with male health and general vitality.

Physical Therapy

- Physical therapists work with men of all ages, from young athletes to andropausal men. With our specialized understanding of the postural, mechanical and muscular balances of the body, we evaluate and treat the musculoskeletal disorders that may occur at any stage in a man's life.
- Physical therapy can help improve the strength and function of pelvic floor muscles and alleviate pain, weakness, and dysfunction. Treatment will stretch the muscles if they are short and contracted or apply resistance if they are weak and dysfunctional.

Fitness Training

- Helps you to be pain free and move well by integrating functional breathing patterns and posture into an individually-programmed workout.
- Promotes moving better, in order to improve energy, power, and physical vitality during all seasons of life.

Massage

- Helps promote good gut health and assists with overall wellness.
- Reduces stress, helps recover from injury, relieves sore muscles, reduces aches/pains, and promotes healing, all which help to improve energy.
- Essential oils with your massage can help improve circulation, reduce inflammation, reduce anxiety, relax senses, and reduce overall pain/tension.
- Reflexology opens up energy flow within the body, clearing up stagnation and improving nerve transmission and efficiency in the body.

Chiropractic Care

- Assists with proper alignment of the hips, sacrum, pubic bones and spine, and can increase proper circulation, which can increase oxytocin levels and improve overall vitality.
- Helps the body for optimal alignment and functioning.
- Helps align the spine, allowing signals from the brain to flow more easily to all parts of the body, thus boosting energy and sexual response.

Naturopathy & Functional Medicine

- Can help men lead longer and healthier lives by providing highly personalized healthcare focused on preventive care.
- Naturopathy & Functional physicians create an individualized health plan, which may include diet and lifestyle changes, non-prescription therapies, and patient education.
- Addresses top men's health complaints such as sexual dysfunction, heart disease, diabetes, chronic pain and depression.

Nutrition & Health Coaching

- Empowers you to take control of your health by implementing nutrition and lifestyle changes that contribute to the achievement of personal wellness goals.
- Assists in the understanding of how food and lifestyle affect overall health.
- Provides education on blood sugar balance to help you understand what foods to pair together. This will fuel your body properly for more energy; improve sleep; improve skin; provide fewer cravings; and provide a happier, calmer mood.

Men wear many hats—loving partner, devoted father, driven professional, handyman, weekend athlete, coach, volunteer, friend, neighbor, and so many more. They're expected to show up strong, steady, and dependable in every area of life. But with so much time and energy invested in supporting everyone and everything else, there's one essential role that often gets pushed aside: *protector of their own health*.

In the rush to meet demands and fulfill expectations, many men move through life at full speed, rarely pausing to check in on their physical or emotional well-being. They're often taught to power through pain, minimize stress, and dismiss discomfort. But why is that? Why do so many men, who excel at managing so much, struggle to prioritize their own health?



HEALTH SHOULD BE A MAN'S NUMBER

The statistics are alarming!

In 2023, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) research predicted the average lifespan of a woman is 81 years of age compared to 76 years for a man.

According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the cancer mortality rate is higher in men than women.

In 2023, according to the CDC and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), men died by suicide approximately four times more often than women.

PRIORITY

Men demonstrate incredible strength in countless areas of life, but when it comes to personal health, the statistics tell a different story. A 2020 CDC data brief revealed that women visit health centers nearly twice as often as men. This gap isn't just a number—it's a warning sign.

So, how do we start to turn the tide for men's health? The answer is simple: Start small.

Taking even the smallest steps toward better health can lead to powerful, lasting change. You don't need to overhaul your entire life overnight. Instead, begin with manageable actions that build momentum over time.

Men, your health and longevity are in your hands. You are the keeper of your own well-being.

Start at the top of this list and work your way down, one step at a time.

These habits are designed to support a strong, fulfilling life, the kind you've worked so hard to create and absolutely deserve.

Prioritize annual visits to your doctor to get a baseline of labs, physical exam, and a snapshot of your current health.

Ditch the sugary drinks and minimize the alcoholic drinks. Instead, grab some water or electrolytes to keep you hydrated.

Make time to exercise; this may be in the form of the gym or walking with your partner after dinner each night.

Honor your hunger with real, whole foods and less packaged food.

Find something you connect with that helps you decompress and find joy; we all need to let the inner child out sometimes.

Create healthy work/life boundaries. You don't have to check your email when you're not at work.

Honor your mental health needs. This is where true inner peace is found.

Prioritize family dinner time to encourage good food on the plate and connection with the ones you love.

If something is interfering with your sleep, it's time to regroup and come up with a routine to regain your sleep.

Stay connected with those who are most important in your life.

Four Exercises You Should Probably Be Doing Differently

While every man's training goals are unique, there's something that often gets left out of the conversation: mobility and posture. Most guys know they *should* move better and improve flexibility, but let's be honest—when we hit the gym, the focus is usually on lifting heavy and pushing limits.

What if improving how your body moves could actually help you lift *more*—with less effort—and look even stronger while doing it? It's not a gimmick.

It's simply about working smarter, not harder.

By making a few smart tweaks to four common exercises you're probably already doing, you can improve your posture, enhance mobility, and challenge your body in new ways. These movements are simple, effective, and accessible—and they help reduce tightness, correct muscle imbalances, and build both flexibility and strength at the same time.

1 Alternating Dumbbell Press

SUPINE, FEET ON WALL

DON'T overextend and hold your breath

DO set your posture by engaging your hamstrings and tilting your pelvis before the first rep — continue breathing throughout



2

Renegade Row

KNEE-POSITION PLANK

DON'T collapse into your shoulder blades

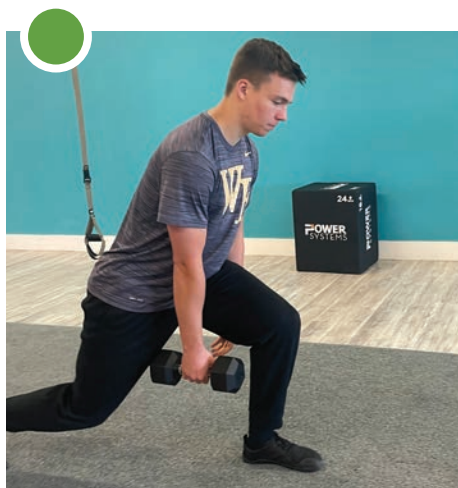
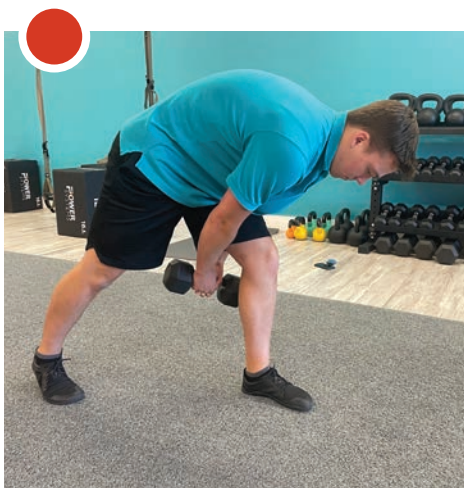
DO reach your upper back to the ceiling while avoiding shrugging your shoulders



3

Tactical Lunge

ALTERNATING A KETTLEBELL OR DUMBBELL PASSING THROUGH YOUR LEGS



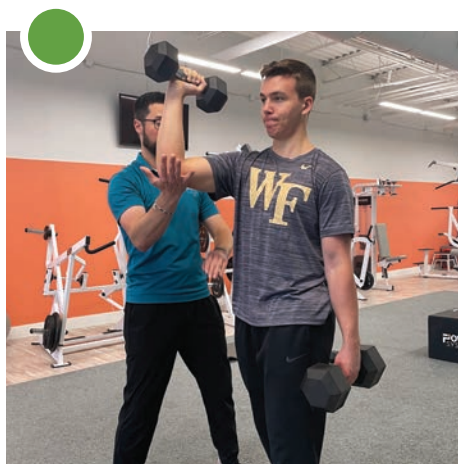
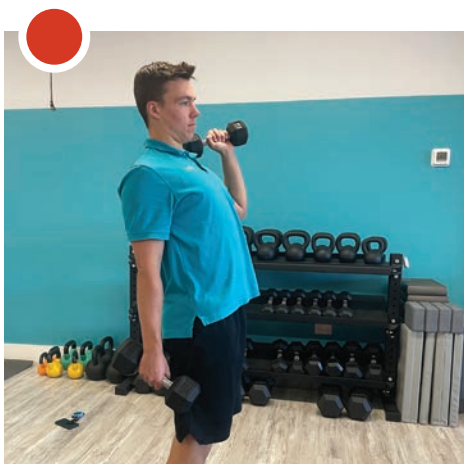
DON'T lock out your legs and overreach or round your back

DO ensure that your hips and shoulders rise and fall together

4

Farmer's Carry

ONE UP/ONE DOWN • "UP" ARM AT 90 DEGREES



DON'T lean back to "prop up" the weight

DO keep your ribcage down so your shoulder blade can be free, avoiding impingement

SIX PLAYS FOR MEN TO STAY AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME



Hey man, you good?

The power of positive thinking is, well, powerful. When you shift your mindset, you create momentum that helps you reprogram your daily habits and cultivate more positive emotions in your life.



It's quitting time.

A good night's sleep is essential to a healthy lifestyle. Your body and brain need time to restore themselves, allowing them to recuperate from the physical and mental stress you put on them throughout the day.



Assess your stress.

Your ability to acknowledge and modulate your stress response can influence your emotions and how you cope with it. You can learn to reflect and better respond to stress rather than react in the moment or act on impulse.



No man is an island.

Relationships and social interactions impact our physical, mental and emotional well-being, and can propel us forward in our health journey. The Thrive community helps you make connections for motivation, inspiration, encouragement, growth and support.



Get a move on.

A daily dose of exercise is important for you to stay healthy and counterbalance any physical inactivity and negative life stressors you may have.



You are what you eat.

Nutrition is the fuel and medicine your body needs for healing, and for the maintenance of your brain and body function. Healthy eating is about understanding how your food choices affect you on a cellular level, and impact your energy, mental health, mood, pain, stress levels and quality of sleep.



LOVE NOTES

WE LOVE HEARING FROM OUR THRIVERS

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your healing, health, and wellness journey!

“ I tried Thrive seeking relief from a sports injury that had been giving me persistent pain for over a year. I had a great experience. After four sessions I was almost pain free! + WILLIAM P.

“ One of if not the best physical therapy places I've been to. Staff is super friendly, caring, and knowledgeable. Customer service is off the charts! They are patient and extremely helpful when providing therapy. This is my preferred choice for physical therapy.

+ CHUCK D.

“ Chantal is an extraordinary masseuse, healer, and intellect. She's worked on my chronic pain/injuries for years with excellent results. She diagnoses and fixes my pain with massage and other homeopathic methods that traditional western medicine doctors cannot. I do my best to see her monthly and I always feel like a healthier and happier version of myself when I do. She'll also recommend books and other resources/equipment for my healing journey. Also, the rest of the staff is super courteous and helpful. Every minute at Thrive is professional, fun, and enjoyable.

+ JOSH F.

“ Finding Thrive Proactive and working with Julie has been a transformative experience for me. Her expertise in Postural Restoration is unparalleled, and she's been instrumental in alleviating my back pain and sciatica. Julie's personalized approach and genuine care set her apart. I've seen remarkable improvements in my posture and overall comfort thanks to her effective techniques. The entire team at Thrive Proactive is incredible, from the welcoming front desk staff to Jake, one of the talented trainers. If you're seeking relief from musculoskeletal issues, look no further. Julie and her team are the real deal and truly know their stuff! + MIKE P.

“ Very kind staff and knowledgeable nutritionist. She answered all my questions and provided great strategies for addressing the issues I had.

+ NELSON A.

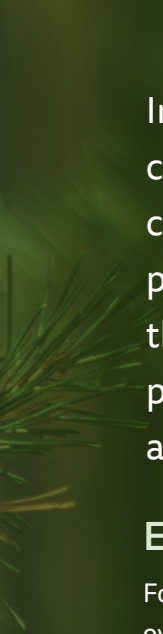
*If you enjoyed the content in this magazine or loved your service from Thrive Proactive Health, we'd love to hear from you: **ThriveVB.revue.us***

REDEFINING STRENGTH

Why Men Need Self-Care More Than Ever

Taking time
to care for the
body and mind is
not just wise—
it's essential.

And it's never
too late to begin.



In a world that often rewards hustle, ambition, and relentless achievement, self-care can feel like an afterthought—especially for men. From a young age, many are conditioned to chase success, equating their worth with productivity, wealth, and professional milestones. But what happens when that drive begins to wear down the body, mind, and spirit? It's time to talk openly about the importance of balance, peace, and personal well-being—and why practices like massage and meditation aren't just helpful, they're essential.

Escaping the "Get Ahead" Mentality

For generations, men have been taught to value progress over presence. The push to secure the next promotion, build financial security, and achieve more can often come at the expense of rest, reflection, and health. In this environment, taking time for oneself is sometimes viewed as weakness or indulgence.

But that couldn't be further from the truth. Self-care isn't a luxury—it's a necessity.

Obstacles in a Work-Hard, Money-Driven Culture

The modern world moves fast, and the pressure to keep up is intense. Many men feel obligated to prioritize work, even if it means sacrificing sleep, skipping workouts, or spending less time with loved ones. This constant strain takes a toll, leading to physical tightness, emotional fatigue, and eventually burnout.

The challenge lies in breaking free from these expectations and giving oneself permission to rest and recharge without guilt.

The Healing Power of Massage

Massage therapy is one of the most effective and immediate ways to care for both body and mind. Beyond easing physical tension, massage promotes deep relaxation and emotional release. Stress tends to lodge itself in the body—especially in the shoulders, neck, and lower back—and most don't even realize how much they're carrying until that tension is released.

Regular massage sessions can improve circulation, reduce anxiety, and support overall wellness. Working with a skilled therapist who understands the specific challenges men face can make a world of difference.

The Transformative Practice of Meditation

Meditation is another powerful tool that can help men reconnect with themselves. Despite its modern image, meditation has been practiced for centuries as a way to cultivate clarity, resilience, and emotional balance.

Even a few minutes a day can bring noticeable benefits: reduced stress, improved concentration, better emotional regulation, and a deeper sense of inner peace. It's not about sitting perfectly still or clearing the mind completely—it's about showing up, tuning in, and giving the brain a much-needed rest.

Embracing Self-Care as Strength

It's time to rewrite the narrative that self-care is soft, weak, or unmanly. True strength lies in knowing when to pause, when to heal, and when to prioritize health. Self-care is not about escaping responsibility; it's about being strong enough to take care of the person others rely on.

By caring for their physical and emotional health, men become more present partners, more engaged fathers, more focused professionals, and more grounded individuals.

Masculinity doesn't have to mean burnout, self-sacrifice, or silence. It can mean emotional intelligence, inner strength, self-compassion, and a commitment to living fully. Embracing self-care is one of the most powerful decisions a man can make—not just for himself, but for everyone who depends on him.

A New Perspective On Low Back Pain

More often than not, with low back pain, the low back is not the first place to look.

In human movement, the hips and the low back work together.

In terms of muscle function and attachment, the hips and the low back are interestingly and inseparably interwoven. One affects the other and many muscles span both structures. In addition, the muscular system works in polyarticular muscle chains to move the body, as opposed to independently isolating and contracting one muscle at a time.

Hips have strong muscles intended to be used as “prime movers,” such as the glutes and hamstrings, and the hip is a ball-and-socket joint designed for motion. In contrast, the vertebrae of the low back are primarily set up for stability and the transfer of forces.

Does your lumbar labor when you lumber?

Lumbar vertebrae do not have the range of motion of a ball-and-socket joint such as the hip. However, if the hip muscles are stuck or cannot function harmoniously, the low back is likely to have to work too hard.

There does need to be some low-back motion in terms of lateral shifting and rotation for gait, but if you lack proper motion in your hips, and you are primarily using back muscles to propel yourself through your day, you’d rather go home and sit in your lounge chair instead of going out to have a fun night on the town.

For low back and torso optimal positioning, look to abdominal conditioning.

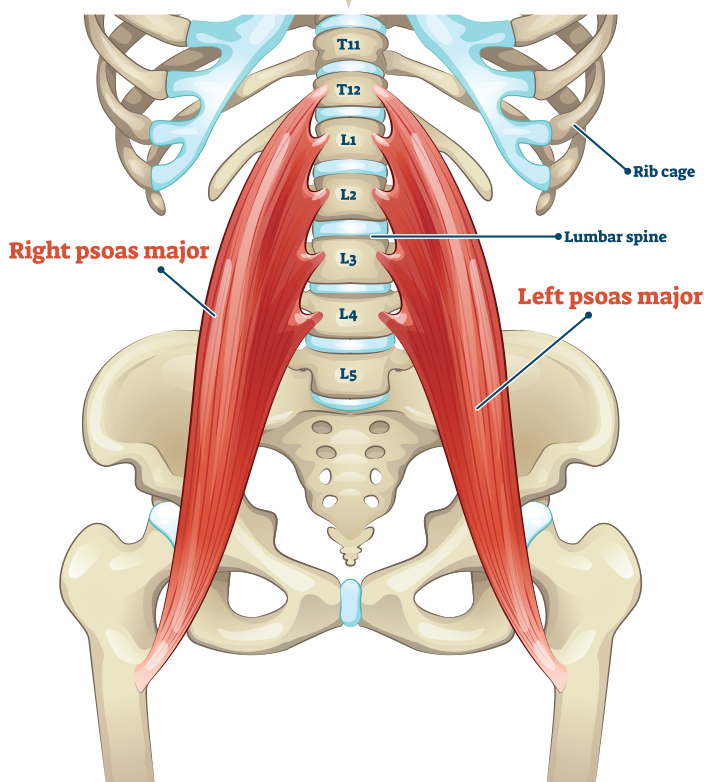
Ideally, stabilizer muscle activation and endurance (primarily obliques and transverse abdominus) are working to hold your torso in a neutral position, creating a pleasant, pain-free disposition, while larger hip muscles propel you where you want to go, with a smooth, graceful flow.

A neutral torso position should enable relatively equal muscle activation/contraction all around your abdominal wall: back, front, and sides.

Tightness or limited muscular control in the hips will often create low back pain, and not necessarily hip pain.

The psoas muscle, commonly referred to as a hip flexor muscle (brings your knee up towards your chest), might initially not be of much interest. However, this muscle originates on your lumbar spine, giving a direct connection to pull on, compress, or twist your low back. There are some interesting theories that a healthy psoas acts more as a lumbar stabilizer and the iliacus is the primary hip flexor.

But getting back to psoas... If this muscle is stuck in a shortened or contracted state, perhaps from you being in a prolonged static seated position (driving, flying, working at the computer, etc.), when you stand up, the muscle's lack of lengthening can pull on the attachments to your lumbar vertebrae, restricting your ability to extend into upright posture and keeping your lumbar spine pulled forward. **This is a common culprit that can influence low back pain.** Releasing the hip flexors with targeted bodywork such as ART can be powerful at restoring hip motion and taking pressure off the low back.



So what does this all mean?

Strengthening your hips through their functional range of motion will make your every-day movements easier and less painful.

In other words, targeting your hips with a strengthening emphasis on hip extension (glutes and hamstrings) as well as strengthening your abdominals to stabilize and hold your torso in a neutral position will help reduce hip flexor over-activity. It will also help get you on track for a happy low back.

Simply stretching, prodding or poking only your lower back area may have limited or temporary benefit.

Thrive's physical therapy, bodywork, and rehab techniques incorporate these principles and can help keep you strong and limber.

Why Breathing Into a Balloon Will Improve Your Golf Game

Jason Day's back pain made the news during the 2019 Masters. While his back pain is nothing new, his trainer started incorporating some new and different exercises that required the use of a balloon into his program.

What? A balloon? How crazy is that?

Actually, it's not crazy at all. Those exercises may have been new to Jason Day and the news media, but they are secret-weapon, fundamental exercises to many other athletes... And also to our team at Thrive Proactive Health. No one should ever be embarrassed or feel silly blowing up balloons.

There's a scientific reason behind the power of these balloons; it's science that can help millions of people if the media can help spread the word so it's better understood.





He blows up balloons? Jason Day will try anything to help his bad back, and he doesn't let it slow his Masters roll

By Teddy Greenstein

Chicago Tribune • Apr 12, 2019 at 8:20 pm



Good posture should be effortless.

It's important to understand that good posture should not involve constant, active muscle engagement. You should not have to force yourself or work hard to hold your body erect. Many people hang on to too much tension in an attempt to achieve "good" posture. If you're holding yourself with tension (meaning you feel unwanted tension or your muscles are working too hard), then that's a sign you've compromised the postural relationship with compensatory strategies acting on your postural system.

Good posture is built upon a postural frame that can breathe well. If you are looking to improve postural organization, then retraining breathing relationships should precede stretching or strengthening. Proper breathing improves postural balance and how the parts of your body stack up.

By regulating the proper length and tension relationship of your diaphragm, retraining diaphragmatic variance and diaphragmatic support, your postural system can find its alignment. Your upper body and shoulders can find their home above your lower body, hips and pelvis. This realignment occurs as hyperactive chains of muscles learn to let go and relax. By letting go of excessive tension in the wrong places, your body then generates tension in the correct places to hold your body frame upright.

First, proper alignment. Next, proper rotation.

It is from that better place of alignment that your body can then rotate. When your postural relationships are stacked optimally, your shoulders can separate from your hips and rotation occurs without strainful effects on your lower spine. It's these fundamental principles that Jason Day's trainer understands and why a balloon is being incorporated into his exercise routine. The balloon is simply a biofeedback device and tool to train components of postural organization. The balloon helps to apply resistance to his breath just like a dumbbell would apply resistance to a bicep curl.

With balloon activities, we observe the mechanics our clients use. We can see how the balloon challenges the resistance of the breath to better understand if the correct muscles are active and syncing for proper core activation. It is through the exhalation that key abdominals learn how to best support the diaphragm and spine.

Our abdominals were designed to support the ribcage and mechanical respiratory system. It is through these key principles that core activation and proper dynamic spinal support originates. The abdominals wrap around

our core at varying angles because of how the core was designed to rotate. Many people misuse their abdominals and train them in anti-rotational ways, when in fact our core is designed to rotate. In order to rotate without compensation, your ribs must move. This is the principle many people are lacking. Rotation can be a vulnerable movement for people who do not have a postural frame that breathes well. Rotation is a basic fundamental need for your body frame—by retraining proper breathing mechanics, we can facilitate rotational support and coordination to better support your spine and core.

Masters 2019: The routine Jason Day goes through to get his back ready to play golf is officially insane

By **Ryan Herrington**

April 12, 2019



Rotational mobility is important for golf, and for everything else you do.

Golf is a sport where rotational mobility is important, but even more important is how the full-body rotation is controlled and sequenced. Without adequate control or correct postural setup, the way that your body rotates during a round of golf can influence how you move in other areas of your life.

In an article, the media described Jason Day pulling out his back while he was going to lift his daughter, but you better believe that had everything to do with his ribs and pelvis not working well together to rotate, bend, and flex. The motor control required to rotate is dictated by neuro-respiratory influences that need training just as other traditional muscles need training in golf fitness. When the right body parts are in sync with one another, rotation is effortless.

When body parts are unorganized and misplaced, rotation can be straining, stressful and aggravating, leading to pain and injury. We should be training muscles to synchronize and sequence well to best support our posture.

In closing, I hope you get my point: Rotation doesn't happen in a vacuum. Rotation is regulated through the weight shift and frontal plane. When I say frontal plane, I'm referencing the side-to-side weight shift when your body transfers weight from left to right (or vice versa). The frontal plane movement at our ankles and hips influences the power and momentum that our core can generate to rotate properly throughout a golf swing.

Frontal plane organization and synchronization is the prerequisite to rotation. Prerequisite to frontal plane control is the quality of movement available to our mechanical breathing system.

Jason Day's routine of breathing into balloons is directly related to that last piece. His trainer was helping him to find his foundational requisite so he could rotate without excessive compensation.



Protein Marinade

¼ cup apple cider vinegar	1 tsp onion powder
¼ cup coconut aminos	2 tsp black pepper
2 tbsp olive oil or avocado oil	1 tsp paprika
2 tsp garlic powder	1 tsp sea salt

- 1 Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well.
- 2 Marinate protein: grass-fed beef, organic poultry, or vegan option of Tofu in a glass container. *Our go-to choice of meat for this recipe is a flank steak.*
- 3 Place marinated meat covered in a container in the refrigerator for a minimum of 20 minutes, and up to 24 hours.
- 4 Pull out and cook when ready.

Veggie Marinade

¼ cup olive oil or avocado oil	½ tsp onion powder
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar	1 tbsp of lemon
2 tsp garlic powder	½ tsp salt
1 tsp dried basil	½ tsp pepper

- 1 Choose vegetables and slice. *Our favorites are zucchini, squash, tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, eggplant, or bell peppers.*
- 2 Turn on the grill to medium heat. Preheat for a minimum of 15 minutes.
- 3 Combine all marinade ingredients and mix well in a glass container or jar, set aside.
- 4 Grilling vegetables can be tricky due to size, so if you have a grill pan or grill mat, grab it for ease. Place vegetables on the grill in the grill pan or grill mat for about 8 minutes on each side. The key is to not overcook them; you don't want them to be mushy.
- 5 Remove vegetables from the grill and place in a glass bowl.
- 6 Toss vegetables with the marinade, and let it soak in for about 10 minutes.

GRILLMASTER TIPS

Instead of using a brush with bristles that can break off into the grill and possibly end up in your food, cut an onion in half to clean your grill. After the grill is heated, take the onion half and stab a fork into the large circular end of it. Using protective hand mitts, hold the fork in the onion and scrub the grill with it to get old/dried food off of it. Bonus, it leaves a yummy taste for your food.

When you are cooking something like fish or vegetables that have a tendency to stick to the grill, use the starch of a potato to keep the food from sticking. Here's how:

After the grill is heated, cut a potato in half and stab the potato with a fork on the skin side. Using protective hand mitts, hold the fork in the potato and scrub the grill in order to prevent food from sticking to the grill when cooking.

If you are grilling in the evening and mosquitoes start to ruin the party, before turning off your grill, take a few sage leaves and grill them. The scent from the smoke will minimize the unwanted mosquitoes.

Grilling your citrus (lemons, limes, oranges) that you want to drizzle on your fish or vegetables will maximize their tanginess. You can use the same technique for your drinks as well; it's a sure way to add extra tanginess to your homemade lemonade or margaritas.

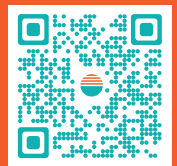


THRIVE

PROACTIVE HEALTH

A LIFE DESIGNED TO THRIVE

We are devoted to providing specialized, personalized care that empowers individuals of all lifestyles to be proactive about their health and to live balanced, resilient lives.



SERVICES

SPINE & SPORTS REHAB

Physical Therapy
Breathing Therapy and
Postural Restoration®
Chiropractic Care
Recovery Services

WELLNESS

Massage Therapy
Acupuncture
Fitness Training
Nutrition Coaching

HOURS

MONDAY • 9AM – 7PM
TUESDAY • 9AM – 7PM
WEDNESDAY • 9AM – 7PM
THURSDAY • 9AM – 7PM
FRIDAY • 8AM – 4:30PM
SATURDAY (ALT) • 9AM – 2PM
SUNDAY • CLOSED

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