

ANTI INFLAMMATORY *Diet*

**A GUIDE TO FOODS THAT
FIGHT INFLAMMATION**
With Easy To Make Recipes



TED BEGNOCHE

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Anti-Inflammatory Diet
A Guide To Foods That Fight Inflammation
With Easy To Make Recipes

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The information contained in this book should not to be used as medical advice of any sort. Any recipes should be checked for compatibility with your current medical condition by your physician. Do check with your doctor before making any dietary changes. For those currently on medication of any sort, or with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, it is vitally important that you work in conjunction with your doctor when making any changes at all to your diet or exercise routines.

Other Books By Ted Begnoche

[Sugar Detox: A Simple Guide To Curb Sugar Cravings And Beat Sugar Addiction](#)

Meet The Author

Hello, I'm Ted, and it's nice to meet you. I've been writing for almost as long as I've been reading, which by now is longer than I'd care to admit.

I'm passionate about my writing, and I strive to produce the absolute best product that I can each and every time I sit down to work.

I have a few other passions as well. In no particular order, they include, fishing, being outdoors, my amazing family, all things technology, and researching subjects I'm interested in.

I have an intense interest in food and nutrition, and I feel as though there are gaps in what we learn as we go through life regarding nutrition and what effects food has on our bodies.

As I continue to research the subject of nutrition, I invite you to come along on with me. There is no greater investment than you can make than to improve your health through better nutrition.

Sincerely

Ted Begnoche

Introduction

Welcome! Thank you for purchasing this book. By doing so you've demonstrated that you're ready to invest your precious time and a little bit of money to improve your understanding of the role proper nutrition plays in your life.

Chronic inflammation has been proven to be a contributing factor in many major diseases, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity, just to name a few. Inflammation can build quietly over many years until it becomes a real problem.

Much research has been done in the area of chronic inflammation, and scientists have made great strides toward understanding how inflammation works.

My job as a writer is to provide you with information you are looking for, in a way that's entertaining and informative. That's what I've tried to do in the following pages.

I've done all the research so you don't have to.

Please don't just read this book and then let it gather dust. Take action on what you learn in the contents here. This book is short by design. I don't want you to get bogged down. Just read and then take action on what you learned.

Old habits die hard; no one knows this more than I do. But habits can be changed with determination and commitment.

Read the book.

Take action.

Simple as that.

Thanks again for coming along with me. Let's get to it.

Sincerely,

Ted Begnoche

Chapter 1 - Inflammation Explained

Inflammation is both a friend and an enemy at the same time. It's your body's way of protecting itself, and it usually appears when there's been some sort of injury or infection.

Inflammation is a vital part of the body's self-defense system. Any time there's some sort of injury present, the body part that's affected has a good chance to become inflamed. Scientists call this response a part of your body's innate systems; that is, it's built in and the response is automatic.

Inflammation is natural and actually good, because it's a sign that your body's systems are functioning and doing their job. Bumps and bruises, cuts, a sunburn, and almost every other kind of injury in between are all prime candidates to have your body go into defense mode.

The classic signs of inflammation include Pain, Swelling, Redness, Heat and Loss of Mobility. Think of a sprained ankle and what goes along with that.

You'll get the **pain** first, then possibly **immobility** right along with it. It usually **swells** pretty quickly, and after a period of time you'll most likely experience **redness** and **heat**. All of this is natural and expected, and the result of an increased flow of blood at the site of the injury.

Pain, although pretty much always uncomfortable, is not always a bad thing. It's an alert that we should go easy on a certain part of our body because there has been extra stress or strain on it. It's usually caused by extra fluid that's present after an injury. The fluid puts pressure on nerves and pain is the result.

It's your doctor's job to determine when to intervene to reduce swelling and ease the pain, because inflammation is not always a bad thing. The decision to treat and how to go about it should be made by a trained professional who takes many factors into account.

Reducing swelling seems like a perfectly normal thing to do, and we've all probably had an icepack on a swollen joint or appendage at one time or another. In fact, it's usually our first course of at-home treatment.

And we're quick to reach for an anti-inflammatory drug when we have headaches, fever, sore throats, etc.

These measures are all meant to combat a certain type of inflammation, called acute inflammation.

We'll discuss this in detail in the next chapter, but basically acute means that it's an immediate response to an injury of some sort. This is the kind of inflammation you really don't want to be absent from your body.

The other type of inflammation we'll discuss is chronic inflammation. As you can probably guess, chronic means that it's pretty much always present, and has been for a long time.

This is because inflammation can help heal an injury or pain, but it can also lead to more inflammation as well.

Infection and Inflammation

Don't confuse inflammation with infection, even though the two are closely related.

Infection comes as a result of your body's systems being invaded by some sort of unwanted organism, such as various forms of bacteria or a nasty virus.

Think back to the last time you had a cold. It's not very pleasant, that's for sure. Another name for a cold is an upper respiratory infection, and it always lead to inflammation of your sinuses. Colds generally go away on their own, but sometimes they can be responsible for you developing a sinus infection.

If you've ever had one, you know how painful they can become.

And throughout the process, inflammation will be running rampant in your nose and throat, as a result of the infection that has invaded your body.

So the two are not the same thing, but closely related. One causes the other to appear.

Treatment of Inflammation

There are many ways to treat inflammation, and we've already mentioned a few. One of the most common ways is the prescription of NSAIDs. This acronym stands for Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug. Ibuprofen is one of the common ones, and others include aspirin and naproxen.

These drugs work by going up against the COX enzyme, which is responsible for synthesizing prostaglandins. Prostaglandins create the inflammation we're trying to control, so if we can stop that process, the pain is lessened or disappears altogether.

Phew! That's enough science for one day.

Other traditional methods for treating inflammation include applying ice to the affected area. Ice should not be placed directly on exposed skin, however.

Less common, more holistic treatments include Fish Oil, cherries and cherry juice, and also green tea.

Inflammation has been around since the dawn of mankind, quietly doing its job of rounding up all the substances in your body to fight off injuries. Scientists continue to study inflammation seriously every day, because it's known to play a role in many diseases which we'll examine in detail soon.

You may be wondering if some people are more susceptible to inflammation than others. It's true that genetics plays a major role in a lot of diseases. [Studies have determined](#) that there is a single gene that is related to cancer and inflammation.

Other physical conditions, such as being obese, also lead to an increase in inflammatory diseases.

Inflammation is generally accepted as a good thing, and it certainly would be tough to live life without it. When it comes around and does its job after an injury or illness, and then departs and leaves no damage behind, all systems are working as designed.

However, if inflammation visits and decides to hang around, or maybe even divide and conquer, this can lead to long lasting damage and serious side effects.

Learning how to control inflammation is important in maintaining a healthy body. There are certain steps you can take, and foods you can eat, that will assist you in trying to fight inflammation, and we're about to discover all these.

Let's take a look at the two major types of inflammation right now.

Chapter 2 - Types And Causes Of Inflammation

As we've discussed, there are two main types of inflammation, acute and chronic. The first one we'll expand upon is acute inflammation.

Acute inflammation is usually a result of some sort of trauma or injury, like a cut or a bruise of some sort. We discussed this briefly in the last chapter but let's dig a bit deeper.

We live in a society that always wants immediate results and will not wait for anything, including our bodies to heal from too much stress and strain.

If we have a sore back, we pop a few Motrin™ and get on with our hectic lives, eager to get to the next task that may or may not leave us sore and tired. It sometimes seems as if we're caught on a treadmill and there's no time for anything but go, go, go.

There's a general consensus that if we are able to reduce inflammation, we'll be able to resume our normal activities and get back in the game sooner.

But there are some that feel shortcutting the body's natural response system again and again will only lead to more trouble down the line somewhere.

Your body is a marvelous machine, and can learn to adapt to almost anything. Let's take working out as an example.

During a rigorous workout routine you will push your body's muscles to the limit, and sometimes beyond, resulting in strains that linger and hamper your normal day-to-day activities. We've been trained to reach for pills and apply ice to the affected area, but is this really the best course of action?

Well, yes, if you have to get around and function the day after a tough workout.

But if you repeat this routine too many times it could interfere with your body's normal repair mechanisms. Here's the reason why.

When you take an anti-inflammatory drug to relieve your pain, it blocks the natural inflammation process that's taking place in your body. But your body uses inflammation to repair itself, right?

If you repeatedly workout hard, your muscles will almost always be sore from the stress and strain. And if you're continually easing the effects of the inflammation by taking pills, your body may never learn and adapt to the new level of intensity.

Letting your body repair itself, [so say some researchers](#), may be the better route to go because if you don't, your body may lose the ability to adapt and adjust.

It's a tough call, because no one wants to be in pain, and we all have busy lives to live. It's easier and quicker to take a pill and feel better, and that's a very addictive notion.

If an injury is severe enough, like a sprained ankle, your doctor will make the call as to how to treat it, but most likely the treatment will involve ice and NSAIDs to make you as comfortable as possible while your body heals.

Chronic Inflammation

Whereas acute inflammation occurs quickly, often within minutes or hours, chronic inflammation can literally take days or even longer to appear. Not only does the appearance take longer, but it can also last for months or even years.

Chronic inflammation can be a result of bacterial infections, a virus, or even because we were unable to completely eliminate the acute inflammation when it appeared.

Sometimes your immune system can even be fooled into thinking that healthy tissue is the enemy. In this case it will begin attacking the healthy tissue, causing inflammation.

There are literally dozens of conditions that fall into this category.

They're called autoimmune diseases, and they include **Celiac disease**, **Lupus**, **Crohn's disease**, and **Psoriatic arthritis**, to mention a few of the more well-known ones.

Examples of chronic inflammation include severe periodontitis, tuberculosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and chronic sinusitis.

But what is the main cause chronic inflammation? How does it get to this stage?

Sadly, a lot of us suffer with chronic inflammation as a result of some poor choices we've made.

The Standard American Diet consists of way too many grains, way too much sugar, fats that are not at all healthy for us, and food allergies that we don't even know we have.

We also, and I'm including myself here, don't get nearly enough exercise, and this doesn't help our case at all.

Chronic inflammation is sneaky and can creep up on you without you knowing it. Because it can be so subtle, we should know some of the signs and symptoms so we can be more aware of what our body might be telling us.

First of all, [researchers have determined](#) that obesity is strongly linked to both inflammation and diabetes, so being overweight is one of the most risky characteristics when it comes to chronic inflammation.

Some of the other signs that you might be chronically inflamed include memory loss or the inability to focus on things, joint pain that won't go away, moodiness, excessive anxiety, and even depression.

There's also chronic problems with your skin, such as eczema or psoriasis, as well as allergies that last all year round.

Having one or more of these symptoms doesn't necessarily mean you're suffering from chronic inflammation, but if you see a number of commonalities you may want to consider finding ways to reduce the inflammation in your body.

In the coming chapters we'll discuss how to go about doing just that, using some commonsense and easy methods that don't involve heavy drugs or regimented routines.

In fact, all the things you need to combat the insidious nature of chronic inflammation are at your fingertips right now.

Armed with knowledge, you'll be able to turn the tide against inflammation and take back control.

So what do you say? Let's get to it!

Chapter 3 - Inflammation Epidemic – Why You Should Be Concerned

Whether you know it or not, chronic inflammation is running rampant here in the United States. Some of the statistics are alarming, but knowledge is power so let's take a look at what we're dealing with here.

Diabetes is a serious illness that affects over 25 million Americans. On top of that, it's been estimated that nearly 80 million Americans are in the pre-diabetic stage, meaning they are very susceptible to developing Type 2 diabetes.

If we stay on our current course, it's estimated that by the year 2030 about 1 in every 3 people in the US will have diabetes.

Research has shown that there is a definite link between inflammation that develops inside the body and diabetes. Other factors include a sedentary lifestyle and poor dietary choices.

Arthritis is another disease that affects almost one third of the adult US population at the present time, [depending upon which study you go by](#). That number is up from only twenty or thirty years ago by almost double.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease that can be devastating to your joints. It has been closely linked to inflammation, because the immune system is doing damage to the lining of your joints, resulting in chronic inflammation and also severe pain.

Crohn's disease is another autoimmune disease that is part of a group of inflammatory bowel disorders. It's estimated that almost 700,000 people in the US are afflicted with Crohn's.

Another one of these types of inflammatory bowel disorders is colitis.

These diseases have chronic inflammation at their core. Anyone who has these problems knows the importance of good dietary choices versus poor ones. For instance, diet plays a huge role in lessening the effects and managing the symptoms of Crohn's.

These diseases and many more like them all have at least one thing in common, and that is chronic inflammation.

But where does this chronic inflammation originate?

Under Attack - Our bodies are under assault every day. This attack may come from the environment we live or work in, or the stressful conditions of everyday life, and even from the foods we take in at mealtimes.

As an example, let's take chemicals. When we go to the kitchen faucet to get a quick drink of water, we may not think about where that water comes from when we open the tap. But there could be quite a mix of heavy metals in your glass that you can't see, smell or taste.

How did they get in the water? Well, depending on the age of the pipes the water is flowing through, there could be asbestos and arsenic in there, among other things. And depending on where the water came from, there could be pesticides and other contaminants like mercury and lead as well.

All these types of heavy metals have a way of getting stuck in your body and hanging around until they have an opportunity to make trouble.

Another assault that we never think about is that of the food we eat every day. If you examine the Standard American Diet you'll notice some pretty scary facts.

Americans eat way too many unhealthy fats, such as the saturated fat found in ground beef, instead of healthier choices like fish and lean meats.

We also don't consume enough complex carbohydrates, instead leaning heavily on simple carbs like table sugar and food additives such as high fructose corn syrup.

And don't forget about fiber, even though a lot of us do so every day. More fiber in our diets would help with blood sugar regulation and also lower our skyrocketing cholesterol levels.

All of these poor nutritional choices lead to a body that's eventually chronically inflamed. And instead of learning what the cause is, we reach for another round of the latest drug to combat this insidious condition called inflammation.

Wouldn't it be better to find out what actually causes all this inflammation, and then deal with it that way, instead of depending on drugs that potentially have even worse side effects than the problem they're tasked with eradicating?

Silent Killer – For years high blood pressure has been known as the silent killer, because even though your blood pressure may be elevated, you may not feel bad at all. If it gets high enough you will certainly have some symptoms, but until then, you'll go along your merry way until finally one or another of your body's systems has had enough and starts to break down.

In many ways, chronic inflammation can be called a silent killer as well. Aside from a few aches and pains, which we usually associate with "getting old", you may not notice too many symptoms.

But there is a level of constant inflammation in a good percentage of us as a result of our diet and lack of exercise.

All of our body's systems work together to create one perfectly functioning unit, and when one system gets out of balance it throws the others off as well.

Researchers have begun to investigate the link between chronic inflammation and chronic disease. Some research has coupled inflammation with such pervasive problems as heart disease, blocked arteries, stroke and even some forms of cancer, although the research is very preliminary at this point.

What should be noted, however, is that a lot of this inflammation can be thwarted with the correct kind of diet, and of course some exercise.

So if there's even a remote chance that some of these diseases are linked to chronic inflammation, wouldn't it be prudent to take action on the things you have some control over?

Options – Luckily for us we have some options. In the United States we have plenty of places to get fresh produce, even when it's not in season locally. Or we have the option of growing our own produce, allowing us to have even more control over what type of chemicals and pesticides are used during the growing process.

If we're healthy enough we can choose to get more exercise to keep active and work extra calories off.

So why do so many of us choose the other route, opting for speed and convenience rather than more healthy alternatives?

I'm afraid it's the way of our modern world. We've all become so busy with both spouses working to make ends meet, and family members all headed in different directions at most times of the day, that we don't always take the time to prepare proper, healthy meals for ourselves.

I hate to paint with a broad brush, because I know lots of folks are concerned with eating right and exercising. It's just that the world gets busier every day and despite good intentions, it's sometimes easier to drive through a fast food restaurant than it is to get home and cook.

Life just gets in the way sometimes, and I can speak from experience here, because I too would rush around the same way as everyone else seems to. Admittedly, at some points in your life you really have no choice.

And there's no app that you can download to fix your busy schedule.

So is there an easy answer?

Well, yes and no. It's easy because it's one word, but it's tough because it's a word that's scares the heck out of a lot of people.

Commitment.

Yes, I'm afraid so. It takes making a commitment to make anything worthwhile happen your life, and when it comes to getting healthier, it's no different.

I say it takes commitment because there's slightly more work you may have to do to begin to reduce the inflammation level in your body.

You may have to plan meals ahead of time, or make an extra stop or two when you're doing your grocery shopping. Or make lunches the night before to keep yourself from grabbing something quick from the cafeteria at work.

Commitment

Think of it this way. There aren't many things that are more important than your health, right? I mean, where would we all be without good health?

So if it takes a few extra minutes a day to get into a routine that leads to your eating more healthy food, or an extra 30 minutes for a brisk walk around the block a couple times, that seems like a pretty fair trade off, wouldn't you agree?

Yeah, me too!

Let's take a look at some foods that you might have on your shelves right now that could be causing inflammation in your body.

Chapter 4 – Foods That Build Inflammation

Your daily diet is directly related to how much chronic inflammation you're carrying around with you. After years of eating the same old stuff and not realizing that inflammation is building all the time, your body may be sending signals that it's time to rebel.

It will do so quietly at first, so softly you probably won't even notice any changes. Once it's reached its limit, the signs won't be so subtle any more.

That's what we're trying to avoid here, so let's dig in.

Saturated fats – This is one of the biggies. And, as it turns out, one of the most controversial as well. I think the majority of Americans have too much saturated fat in our diet. You will find many other people who believe that saturated fat has gotten a bad rap over the years and that it's not necessarily the evil demon we've been led to believe.

So who is right?

Good question, and one that requires much more research on the part of the scientific community. If you feel like doing some extra reading I have some links for you. I must warn you beforehand that these studies can be awfully dry and boring to read, peppered with scientific nomenclature and hard-to-pronounce words.

I believe this reason alone is why some people give up the quest to become healthier, but they are here for your edification. I won't go into great detail here because the purpose of this book is to alert you about chronic inflammation and not the evils of saturated fats.

[Saturated Fat Prevents Coronary Artery Disease](#)

[Saturated Fats And Heart Disease Link Unproven](#)

[Fats And Cholesterol](#)

[Saturated Fats And Heart Disease Controversy](#)

With that said, I'll let you know what works for me.

I try to limit my intake of saturated fat because I believe there's a link between too much fat and too much inflammation. A lot of the studies I've read show that there is a direct connection between saturated fats and chronic inflammation.

Not only that, I also feel much better when I'm eating lower amounts of saturated fats and sticking with fish, chicken and leaner cuts of meat like pork. I gradually lost my taste for red meat after eating lower fat alternatives for years, and while I believe there's nothing wrong with enjoying a good steak every now and then, I don't believe it should be a part of your everyday life.

As I said, you will definitely find differing opinions, and you have to do what's right for you.

It's my belief that limiting saturated fats will reduce the low-grade inflammation in your body, and also make you feel healthier at the same time.

Don't confuse the good and bad fats however, and don't get rid of all fats altogether. There are still plenty of fats that are good for you, like those found in tree nuts and avocados, for example.

Refined Sugar – Here's another big one, so big in fact that I wrote a whole book on it here: [Sugar Detox](#)

The kind of sugar we're talking about is processed sugar, the stuff that hides in most of our boxed, packaged and processed foods these days.

You can find these processed sugars everywhere, from cereals to yogurt, and soda pop and ice cream as well.

Pastries, pies, fruit juices, chocolates bars, and virtually all packaged foods contain some sort of added sugar. And sugar goes by so many names that it's difficult to detect sometimes.

Without getting too much into cell physiology, the ingestion of excess added sugar is instrumental in releasing cytokines. These cytokines are released by cells to interact with our immune system.

During normal operation, they play a key role in our overall health, but if something causes our body to release too much of these cytokines, disease can be the result.

As I said, this is a very over-simplified view of what takes place, but needless to say, reducing the amount of processed sugar you eat will certainly help your overall health as well as reduce the amount of chronic inflammation inside your body.

Artificial Sweeteners – Wow, it doesn't get any tougher when it comes to controversy, does it?

Artificial sweeteners have been on the bad list of a lot of nutritionists for a long time.

The reason people have embraced them is because they seem to be a great substitute when trying to lose weight. Most of them have very little if any calories, so if weight reduction is your goal then these seem like a logical choice.

But upon closer examination, it seems that all of these fake sugars have one thing or another that make them less attractive than at first glance.

Saccharin - If you're old enough to remember the saccharin studies of the early 70s, you'll also remember the warning labels this product was required to display. (It turns out that this was reversed in the year 2000 because there's something in the bladder of rats that humans don't possess, thereby eliminating the risk in humans).

Aspartame – This sugar substitute goes by the name of NutraSweet™ or Equal™. It's found just about anywhere food manufacturers need sweetness but want to eliminate calories. Almost all diet sodas contain aspartame.

It's been known to cause headaches, dizziness, depression, anxiety, diarrhea, and a whole host of other issues.

Not only that, but studies have indicated that aspartame breaks down into formaldehyde in your body.

That should be reason enough to step back from diet soda, yet they continue to sell vast amounts of these products each year to people who are intent on losing weight. Another irony is that diet soda has also been proven to be responsible for weight GAIN in many people.

Splenda™ - Another laboratory created sugar substitute, this concoction has lots of things going for it. It's as sweet as sugar but doesn't cause a spike in your blood sugar level. Dozens of foods already contain this artificial sweetener.

Not enough studies have been done in humans to determine the long-term effects of this sugar substitute, but suffice it to say that anything created in a laboratory should be reason enough to do your own research when it comes to putting it in your body.

The list goes on and on. There are sweeteners that are natural instead of manmade that are slightly better, like honey and maple syrup, but they're not non-caloric so if you're trying to lose weight you need to be mindful of that.

Like all the other foods we've talked about so far, sugar substitutes have their opponents as well as their supporters. I'm not coming down on either side of the fence here, but merely trying to highlight certain foods that have been shown to cause inflammation in the body.

Let's examine some others.

Trans Fats – Well, finally one we can all pretty much agree upon. In 2006, the FDA stated that trans fat information had to be included on package labeling, and since then, food manufacturers have begun limiting the places where these fats used to pop up freely.

Consumer education plays a huge role in how the food industry plays the game, and when consumers were tuned in to how bad these fats are for us, manufacturers began to pay attention.

Now we can find the No Trans Fat label on a lot of our favorite snack foods and lots of the other products where these fats used to play a major role.

But they still lurk in some spots where we don't give it much thought, such as the following.

French Fries – Okay, I'll admit it. I'm a French fry addict. I hardly eat them anymore, and only get them where I know they've been baked and not fried. Believe me, if you find a restaurant that bakes their fries, you'll never go back to the fried version again.

Most fast food chains have taken great strides to reduce or even eliminate the trans fats in their fried foods, but there are some out there that still use hydrogenated oils to do their frying, so you should check before you chomp.

If you can't find the information on the Internet, simply ask.

Pies – Pies have traditionally been made with products containing hydrogenated oils. Again, fast food places have stepped up to the plate and removed a lot of the trans fats, but you can still find these in the grocery store, so check the label for hydrogenated oils.

Margarine – For years, margarine was touted as a healthy replacement for our beloved butter, but lately research has been showing that margarine, and especially stick margarine, is not as good as we once thought.

The reason is that in order to hold its shape, margarine needs to employ the use of hydrogenated oils.

It turns out that butter may be better, after all.

Pancakes – What? Say it ain't so! I'm sorry, but I'm afraid it is. Pancake and waffle mixes are notorious for hiding hydrogenated oils. It's best to read the label because some varieties are okay.

Microwave Popcorn – All right, now I'm just being mean, right? Believe me, I used to eat this stuff like crazy, and I still indulge sometimes, but not nearly as much as I used to. And there are some varieties that are perfectly fine, while others have 15 grams of trans fat per bag! And who doesn't eat the whole bag?

Cookies – My waistline is allergic to cookies, they cause it to swell tremendously. I love them, but again, I try to stay away. Store bought cookies stay on the shelves for who knows how long, and to do that, they almost always employ hydrogenated oils. Again, label reading is a must.

Crackers - Lots of crackers contain trans fats, although manufacturers have gotten better at reducing or eliminating the bad stuff. Even though the amount may not be that much per serving, they all add up, and even a little is too much of this dangerous type of fat.

I hope that you're a bit more enlightened than when you began reading this chapter. I'd like to take about one more category here, so bear with me.

Refined Grains – These types of grains are just what they sound like. They have been pretty far removed from their natural state by some sort of processing. The most famous example just might be white flour, which is stripped of its nutrients and fiber in an effort to make it stable and increase its functionality and stability in the food world.

Unfortunately, it's also unleashed a whole host of health problems as well.

Let's think about it. White flour is almost everywhere at every meal. It can be found in muffins at breakfast time, in wraps and slices of bread at lunch, and at dinner time, almost every meal comes with rolls or some sort of bread.

Flour is easy to find in almost all of our processed foods these days, and some say it's wreaking havoc on our waistlines and our health.

Other refined grains include white rice, pizza crusts, white bread, pastas, grits, and crackers.

Try to avoid these at all costs. Their nutritional value is not that great, and they tend to raise the chronic inflammation level in your body.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT NIGHTSHADES

You may be wondering what nightshades are and why they need a special note. The nightshade family of vegetables includes tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and also potatoes.

Much has been written about nightshades and their effect on arthritis and inflammation in general, and a lot of controversy surrounds them. Personally, I don't feel there is any reason to exclude this family of vegetables from a healthy diet, and to support that I've even included them in the cover of this book.

But you will find other people who say they are definitely one of the contributors to inflammation, and are adamant about their exclusion if you're trying to reduce inflammation.

I have just never found that to be the case, but let me emphasize that everyone's body is different, and that you may indeed notice an increase in inflammation and pain from arthritis after consuming certain nightshades.

If you do, then it's easy to exclude them. Listen to your body and make the necessary adjustments.

All of the nightshades offer certain benefits that I think a healthy body can use, but if you're uncertain then please exclude them from your diet.

One thing is for certain: There is much controversy and difference of opinion in all areas of diet and nutrition, and an anti-inflammatory diet is no exception. In the end, let common sense and your body tell you what's right.

These foods contained in this chapter are by no means a complete list. I've merely tried to stimulate your thought process.

I think you get the idea here. There are two main takeaways from this chapter that I'd like to make sure you really get.

Number one, in order to be the healthiest person you can become, you must be a label reader. The food manufacturers are required by law to label their products, and you'll find a whole host of information contained there.

Number two, control as much as you can. This means reading labels, but it also means researching restaurant menus before you go out so you can be prepared to order something delicious AND healthy too.

Do I want you to completely rearrange your life?

No. You should still enjoy foods you love, but really limit the ones you know are not that healthy.

Remember we talked about commitment in an earlier chapter. Change will take commitment, but your health is totally worth it, and I'm confident you will find a balance between enjoying life and optimum health.

Now let's take a look at some healthy foods!

Chapter 5 - Foods That Reduce Inflammation

Now that we've examined some of the foods that have been shown to contribute to chronic inflammation, let's take a look at some foods that can help reduce the quietly smoldering fires inside our bodies.

And don't worry, the items we'll talk about aren't exotic by any means. In fact, the majority of them are probably in your pantry or refrigerator already.

Fatty Fish – We might as well start with one of the biggies! Touted for years as a way to get heart healthy fats, fish like salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines have long been a way to work Omega-3 fatty acids into your diet in a delicious way.

All fish offer some Omega-3s, but salmon offers the most. Watch the way you prepare it, though. Avoid frying, as excess heat will destroy some of the Omega-3 fatty acids. A better way to enjoy it is baked.

Tuna is another great food that will help fight chronic inflammation. Once again, how it's prepared makes a huge difference in how much of the good Omega-3s you get.

For instance, a tuna steak on the grill may be more beneficial than tuna out of a can, although there is still some benefit from the canned stuff. Be aware, though that tuna canned in oil has a lower amount of fatty acids than those packed in water. That's because the oil used in the packing process mixes with the oil in the fish and when you drain the tuna, some of the good stuff goes down the drain with the excess oil.

I've never been a huge fan of mackerel, mostly because I've never learned how to prepare it and it's not as readily available to me as some of the other fish I consume.

Sardines, on the other hand, have always been a favorite of mine. I eat them right out of the can or add them to salads and even have sardine sandwiches from time to time. I know, I know, it's not for everyone...

If you're not a big fan of fish, here's some good news: Fish oil supplements have become very popular these days, as evidenced by the number of them on the market. The array of choices gets confusing.

Some experts recommend only a certain type of fish oil to minimize the chance of consuming an environmentally contaminated product. Others tout the benefits of krill oil as opposed to fish oil because it's more of a renewable resource.

Obviously, more research needs to be done, but [here's an article](#) I found helpful.

Remember that like any vitamins or minerals, the closer to the source you consume these, the better. For instance, a piece of salmon would be better for you than a supplement.

Olive Oil – You probably knew this one already because of all the good press olive oil has gotten in recent years. But did you ever wonder why?

Studies have indicated that there is a substance present in olive oil, called oleocanthal, that acts much the same way as a NSAID would when entering your body.

That is, it inhibits the creation of COX-1 and COX-2 enzymes the same way that an ibuprofen tablet would. Researchers have indicated that about 3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil is equivalent to around 200 milligrams of ibuprofen.

Once again, certain varieties of olive oil are better for you than others. Extra virgin olive oil derived from the first pressing of olives is actually the best for you.

There is a type of olive oil, called refined, that uses chemicals to extract the oil from the olives. It just doesn't seem right to me, so I always choose extra virgin.

However, some studies indicate that because of extra virgin olive oil's smoke point, which is relatively low compared with other cooking oils, it shouldn't be used in cooking. Instead, you should reserve its delicate flavor for dipping and dressings.

Even this is confusing, though, because you will find other studies that recommend sautéing vegetables in extra virgin. And what's more, smoke points for various olive oils vary anywhere from 225°F to over 400°F.

It's a judgment call, and I know I'll create some controversy here, but I still cook with extra virgin olive oil. I've been experimenting with coconut oil and don't mind the flavor, but have also seen contradicting studies about how healthy it is for you.

Ultimately, you'll have to make the decision for yourself, but at least you'll be armed with knowledge so you can make the best decision possible.

Eat Your Vegetables – That's what our parents used to say. And they were right, just like they were right about everything else.

Dark, leafy greens such as **kale**, **collard greens**, and **spinach** are excellent inflammation fighters. While we're at it, let's throw **broccoli** on this list as well.

Collard greens offer up a significant amount of vitamin K, which plays an instrumental role in regulating our body's inflammation. Collards are also another great source of Omega-3 fatty acid.

Adding collard greens to your diet on a regular basis will help reduce the chronic inflammation in your body. Remember that overcooking is not good for any vegetable, and this is especially true for collards.

Steaming works perfectly for this vegetable. Simply cut the leaves into small pieces and steam for 5 or 6 minutes and you have a super healthy side dish that tastes delicious.

I believe collard greens are one of the most underrated and healthiest vegetables you can eat, and they haven't received nearly the attention they should.

As an added bonus, research has shown that collard greens seem to play a role reducing cholesterol levels.

Spinach is one of Popeye's favorites, and mine as well. It one of those vegetables that you either love or hate, there seems to be no middle ground. If you like it, you're in luck because it offers some great benefits.

Spinach offers a whole array of vitamins and minerals, and is among the healthiest foods in the world to eat. It's been shown to have anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties along with high levels of vitamin K. In fact, I think a whole book could be dedicated to the nutritional benefits of spinach.

It's versatile as well. You can make a salad entirely out of baby spinach, or mix it in with your favorite salad greens. Its raw taste is mild and pleasing, but it takes on a more acidic taste when cooked.

There has been some discussion about spinach and pesticide contamination, and while virtually all vegetables grown in the US have trace amounts of pesticides, spinach is always near the top of the list.

E-coli contamination is also a potential issue, and because so many people like to enjoy raw spinach, this is a valid concern.

I try to use organic produce whenever possible, but in the case of spinach it's an absolute must. Buying only organic spinach will go a long way towards reducing the possibility of any sort of contamination.

I want to say a word about purines. Okay, I can hear you now. What the heck are purines? Well, if you've ever had gout, or maybe kidney stones, you are probably familiar with purines.

Purines occur naturally in plants, humans, and animals. Most people have no problem with them, but for those that do, excess purines in the body can lead to more uric acid, and that spells trouble for those prone to gout.

I used to suffer with gout so I had to be careful with these types of foods, and until I changed my diet and my understanding of nutrition, it was always a problem.

I don't worry about it anymore, but I just wanted you to be aware of one of the issues with spinach if you're subject to gout or kidney stones.

Kale – What can we say about kale that hasn't already been said? It's a superfood because of all the nutritional goodness it offers.

One cup of kale contains around 10 percent of the amount of Omega-3 fatty acids that you need for the day. As a bonus it is also high in calcium and vitamin C and A.

Kale is super powerful in the areas of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Like the others we've talked about here, it's in the class of cruciferous, or cabbage, family of vegetables.

While most of the research regarding the health benefits that kale offers has been in the area of cancer prevention, we can only imagine what the anti-inflammatory properties will be, given its high amount of Omega-3s and vitamin K.

Kale is particularly fibrous, so while you can enjoy it raw, it's best to get baby kale for salads. You can toss a handful of kale in a homemade soup to give it an extra nutritious and tasty twist.

Kale can be lightly steamed as well, or sautéed with onions and garlic for a tasty side dish.

Brussels Sprouts – Aside from tasting great, Brussels sprouts are oh so good for you. Another member of the cruciferous family, this tiny vegetable packs quite a nutritional punch.

Once again, an abundance of vitamin K, along with a good dose of Omega-3 fatty acids, makes this little beauty an excellent choice for inflammation-lowering duties.

Brussels sprouts have been the subject of plenty of research in the area of cancer prevention. It's also a great detox vegetable, and pretty versatile in the kitchen.

Can you see a pattern here? We're talking a lot about these cruciferous vegetables (scientists are now starting to refer to this family of vegetables as Brassica vegetable more and more, so don't get confused). Let's list some others so you can pick your favorites.

- Turnip
- Cabbage
- Bok Choy

- Kohlrabi
- Radish
- Arugula
- Broccoli
- Rutabaga
- Cauliflower
- Beets

This is still not a complete list, but these are the most popular and they will certainly get you going. I'm confident you can find enough vegetables here so that you won't get bored with eating the same old thing day after day.

Fruits And Things – What if vegetables just aren't your thing? Well, you still have some delicious options.

Berries – While almost all fruits offer some sort of anti-inflammatory protection due to being low in fat and supplying plenty of antioxidants, berries in particular have been shown to be extra good at keeping inflammation at bay. Let's take a look at a few different types.

Blueberries pack a powerful antioxidant punch thanks to the high phytonutrient content. Phytonutrients are contained naturally in almost all plants, and there are over 25,000 of them! One very important category is flavonoids.

Many phytonutrients fall in this category, and without taking you back to high school science class, let's just say that flavonoids are responsible for color and taste, and they do a great job fighting inflammation.

Strawberries are another excellent choice. They are sweet and juicy when in season, and also seem to lower the levels of C-reactive protein, or CRP, in your body. High CRP levels are a sign of inflammation.

Strawberries go good just about everywhere. You can add them to your yogurt in the morning, carry along a few as a snack during the day, or eat them for a healthy dessert after dinner.

More berries you can turn to for great taste and fighting inflammation include raspberries, boysenberries, blackberries, and cranberries.

Nuts – Nuts contain properties that assist in fighting chronic inflammation. Some are better than others. In particular, almonds, cashews, and walnuts seem to offer the most benefit.

You'll notice that some websites will advise removing the skin of nuts because they can taste bitter, but experts recommend against this.

The skin of almonds and walnuts contain many of the good properties and should be eaten along with the nuts.

A wide variety of nuts are reported to have a positive impact on your heart health, and because we know there's a direct correlation between inflammation and cardiovascular health, this shouldn't be surprising to us.

Traditionally, people trying to lose weight would avoid nuts because of their high caloric content. Recent studies have proven, however, that people who ate nuts regularly were LESS apt to gain weight than those who avoided nuts altogether.

Whole Grains – The best way to consume grains is as whole grains. Let's take brown rice, for example.

It's one of the healthiest ways to eat rice. You can think of white rice as brown rice with all the good stuff removed.

During the process of refining, the outer hull and bran are stripped from the rice grains, eliminating pretty much everything that's good for you.

On almost every package of white rice you'll see the word enriched. To me, it doesn't make any sense. Why strip away all the good stuff and then "enrich" it with additives?

Go for the whole grains. They have more fiber, regulate your blood sugar better, and are tastier than their refined counterparts.

More examples of whole grains include the following:

- Wild Rice
- Whole Oats
- Quinoa
- Buckwheat
- Millet
- Popcorn

- Whole Grain Barley

According to studies no one really seems to eat enough whole grains, and I think that's because it's so darned confusing.

You really have to be a label reader when you make the commitment to be healthier. As you know, manufacturers are required to list all the ingredients in the product, and they do so in descending order. In other words, whatever level of ingredient is highest is at the top of the listing.

So in order to get the highest concentration of whole grains, look for items that list whole grain as the first ingredient, and also make sure there's no sugar added.

And don't be taken in by manufacturers that add molasses and other colorings to refined grains and call it 100 percent wheat, because this happens all the time.

I think you get the idea here. You really need to educate yourself to take control of your health, and though it can be a chore sometimes, there aren't many more important things you'll do every day than taking charge of your health.

Next, let's take a look at some herbs and spices that are delicious to cook with and also do double duty, fighting inflammation as well.

Chapter 6 - Spice And Herbs

Just like there are powerful foods we can turn to in the fight against chronic inflammation, there are also delicious spices and herbs that can assist us in our quest.

Let's take a look at a few of the more better known ones, and then we'll throw in a few surprises as well.

Cinnamon – Besides tasting great, cinnamon has some wonderful health benefits associated with it.

For people with diabetes, it's been shown to improve blood sugar levels. It does so by decreasing the body's insulin resistance.

It also has great cholesterol lowering properties as well. Research has also shown that it can help prevent blood clots too.

Cinnamon is rich in antioxidants, especially polyphenols, which help your heart health, and it's been determined that it has anti-inflammatory properties as well, making it perfect for us when trying to reduce our chronic inflammation.

Remember that any spice or herb should not be substituted for any prescription medication that you're taking. In fact, you should speak with your doctor about possible interactions with prescription drugs before adding any new type of herbs or spices to your diet.

Ginger – This is one of my all-time favorites! It's so versatile that you can use it in all sorts of dishes. We mainly think of ginger as an Asian spice, but it has a place in lots of other dishes as well.

Ginger has long been known for its anti-nausea properties. In fact, in some recent studies ginger was shown to be as effective as over the counter seasickness medications such as Dramamine®.

Ginger is also well known for aiding in digestion. It has properties that soothe the intestinal tract and if you remember back to your childhood, wasn't it ginger-ale that all parents gave to their children to make a sick belly feel better?

Perhaps one of the most important benefits of ginger is its anti-inflammatory effects. This fact has been well researched and confirmed by numerous studies over the years.

Ginger has a wonderful taste and many people enjoy it, but if you're not one of them there's still hope. Ginger capsules and supplements seem to be almost as effective as fresh ginger root, but as always, consult with your doctor before adding any sort of supplement into your daily routine.

Sage – Pungent and earthy, sage is one of my favorite herbs to cook with. Its taste is slightly sweet, slightly savory and makes a wonderful addition to many dishes.

I try to choose fresh herbs over dried whenever possible because the taste is much better, but dried sage works in dishes as well. It goes very well with root vegetables and added to casseroles and soups.

You'll enjoy antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits from adding sage to your meals, as well as increased brain function. It also increases insulin activity and reduces your blood sugar levels.

Turmeric – This spice was virtually unknown to me until recently when my daughter-in-law mentioned how great it is in all kinds of dishes. It's even fantastic standing on its own.

Turmeric has a brilliant yellow color and a slightly bitter, spicy taste that is very pleasant. Mostly thought of as what gives curry its unique taste, it also gives color to the table mustard we use on hamburgers and hotdogs.

Curcumin is the component of turmeric that gives this spice its anti-inflammatory properties. Studies have compared it to ibuprofen and other prescription drugs in the way it acts to relieve inflammation, but without all the nasty side effects.

Turmeric can be enjoyed in many different ways. Some people simply add ground turmeric to boiling water and boil for ten minutes, then strain it into a cup and add lemon or even honey to adjust the taste.

Others sprinkle turmeric powder directly on steamed or sautéed vegetables for a unique flavor.

Be careful when working with fresh turmeric root, as it stains anything it touches. Be sure to wash surfaces immediately, and you can also wear gloves when handling the raw turmeric.

Garlic – I think of garlic as a vegetable, but it really belongs in the spice family. It's a close cousin to the onion, which also has great anti-inflammatory properties.

Garlic has long been famous for its cholesterol lowering properties, but recent studies have shown it's a powerful anti-inflammatory as well.

There's not much use in offering recipe suggestions, as I think everyone has their own favorites when it comes to garlic. To get the maximum health benefit from garlic it's best to buy fresh and use it that way. However, many people swear by garlic supplements for lowering cholesterol.

Too much of a good thing can actually be bad for you, so like any other supplement or herb, if you have any questions about interactions with other drugs you should ask your health care provider. Moderate garlic use should be safe for everyone, but it can cause heartburn and other gastrointestinal discomfort.

Also, since garlic has a tendency to thin the blood, if you know you're having surgery you should cut back or eliminate your garlic intake leading up to the procedure. Again, a quick check with your doctor would be best.

Cayenne – If you like it spicy, this is the seasoning for you. Not only does it pack a punch in the heat department, it does a great job at reducing inflammation.

Capsaicin is the compound responsible for delivering the hot stuff, and it's found in all kinds of hot peppers. There are trace amounts in other spices like cinnamon, but not in nearly the same levels as some pepper plants.

This ingredient can be found in lots of over-the-counter preparation that treat muscle and joint pain.

You can sprinkle cayenne on any type of food that needs a little extra kick, from scrambled eggs in the morning to soup you're having for lunch, and almost anything you're preparing for dinner. As long as you don't mind the heat, you can enjoy the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory health benefits that go along with this versatile spice.

Again, this list just highlights some of the more common spices you may have in your kitchen cabinets right now that you could incorporate into your cooking today as a way to begin reducing chronic inflammation.

Next, we'll look at why it's important to begin thinking about changing your diet to fight inflammation – today!

Chapter 7 - Change Your Diet Or Change your Lifestyle

Diet is the ultimate 4 letter word to me, and I'm sure I'm not the only one who feels that way. It conjures up bad images of counting calories and starvation techniques, stepping on scales with my eyes closed and fingers crossed, and always feeling HUNGRY.

Most diets I've tried have ultimately led to failure for me, not because they didn't have their merits or involved complicated recipes and procedures, but simply because they seem more like a temporary change that cannot be sustained.

I don't know if any of you feel the same?

After trying several famous and a couple of not so famous diets, and after learning a number of diet jokes ("I started that new 30 day diet, so far I've lost 15 days...") I began to realize that the yo-yo diet treadmill just isn't for me.

If you've found one that you can live with and have had success, I think that's great. It's just not for me.

What did work for me was a shift in thinking. I simply changed my lifestyle by changing the way I approach a healthy diet.

It worked for me, and I think it can work for you as well. Let's take a look.

Don't Fear The Unknown – When it comes to eating, most of us have our go-to options that we trot out at mealtimes. We often don't have the time or energy, or even the desire, to try new things when it comes to cooking.

Grocery shopping is the same way. We're stuck in a rut, wandering down the same aisles and reaching for the same items every week, like most of the other people shopping next to us.

This is a fact I verified by checking my shopping bill over a several month period. It didn't vary by more than 5 dollars, and many of the items were exactly the same. Not for budgetary reasons, just a lack of effort on my part.

Wow, that was a deep rut.

It seems we are all creatures of habit.

But if you want something to change, you have to initiate it. You can't just sit around hoping for change. So your first order of business on the road to modifying your lifestyle should be to embrace change.

Shake things up a bit. I'm not saying turn your whole shopping cart upside down, but toss a different vegetable into your cart, one you've never tried before, and see what happens.

Remember we talked about gradual changes? Don't change so much that you get discouraged and confused and end up tossing out a bunch of food because you're not sure what to do with it. Make the changes slow and gradual and you'll have the best chance at adopting a new eating plan.

Give yourself a break, and don't be too hard on yourself if you choose collard greens and they're just not your thing. Next week, go at it again.

Or better yet, stop at a farmer's market or roadside vegetable stand and see what they have to offer. Strike up a conversation with the vendor and I guarantee you'll end up with delicious vegetables and also a recipe or two to try.

The point is, don't be afraid to try something different or new.

Changing the way you do things may take some planning on your part, and yes there will be effort involved. But guess what?

After a while the changes you are incorporating will become your new, healthy habits!

Setting Yourself Up For Success – There are dozens of ways to slowly and successfully change your eating habits. Let's take a look at a few right now.

- **Pair up.** Get someone else in your house on board, or even better, everyone in the house. If you live alone, team up with a friend so you have someone you can discuss ideas and frustrations with. This technique is employed with great success by some well-known dieting programs, so learn from them and get a wellness buddy. It really works.
- **Employ Mindful Eating.** Okay Ted, what? This means thinking about what you're doing instead of sitting down in front of the television with a bag of snacks. And whenever possible, eat with people, because this will slow you down a bit so you actually taste the food without being in a hurry to get on to the next event or activity. Also, make mealtimes something special instead of something that just has to be done. I realize this is not possible every single day, but please give it a try.
- **Give Yourself A Break** – Reduce the guilt you're feeling with a cheat day once a week. Some people are dead set against this, instead opting to stay the course all week long rather than going crazy one day a week and then trying to get back on track after that. I'm

just telling you what works for me, but I don't expect it to be a one size fits all solution. In fact, ultimately your body will tell you what's right... During a cheat day I don't consider any foods off limits, I just try to limit how much I eat of my favorite stuff. Moderation is the key. Soon you'll see that you may feel lethargic after one of your cheat days, and then realize why; it's the fact that your body is getting accustomed to the good food you've been feeding and the stuff that's not so good for you is actually making you feel poorly.

- **Make A Plan** – I am the world's worst planner, and I've held the title for a very long time now. Please don't be like me. In order for you to succeed you'll need to put a little effort into planning meals and snacks. But don't worry, it's not that bad and actually not too time consuming either. You'll just need to get into the habit. The worst part for me was planning meals at night, and until I broke out of that familiar rut I was in, it was a bit of a struggle. Now it's just second nature, and soon it will be for you too.
- **Set Goals** – Each week you should set small goals for yourself. Vow to try a new recipe, or take your lunch to work 4 days out of 5, or something similar that's achievable. Getting little victories like this is very encouraging and will make you feel better about what you're accomplishing. Don't take it lightly. Changing your eating habits can be a major undertaking, but slow and steady wins the race.

Stress Relief – Another thing I'd like to mention is stress. Stress does a number on your body, and constantly being under stress can wreak havoc on your immune system and sabotage your efforts to reduce inflammation. In fact, I'll dedicate a whole chapter to stress, that's how important it is.

Stress while you're trying to change your lifestyle can send you right back to your old habits as you seek comfort in well-worn routines.

Many people turn to “comfort foods” when stressed, or eat as a form of stress relief. If this sounds like you, then it's best to reduce or eliminate the stress to increase your chances of success.

Easier said than done, I know. That's why we're devoting a whole chapter to stress.

So let's get on with it, shall we?

Chapter 8 - The Time Is Now

As the famous quote goes, “There’s no time like the present.”

It’s not about a number, like some magic age you reach. I wish it was that easy, because it would remove a lot of the guesswork.

It’s more about a feeling you have, or a point you reach in your life, when you realize that maybe you’re on the wrong road and some changes need to be made.

I can tell you my story to maybe better explain what I mean. Yours, of course, will be different in many ways, but there may be some similarities you see that could spark a thought or an idea that will get the wheels turning.

Sometimes all it takes is a little push to reach your light bulb moment, whether it’s from a good friend, or from Mother Nature, or even good old Father Time.

For me, I was tired of feeling run down all the time. Couple that with nagging health problems that didn’t seem too serious, but were nevertheless always keeping me from doing what I thought a person my age should be enjoying, like hiking, vacationing, and my beloved fishing, and suffice it to say I was unhappy, confused, and frustrated.

It’s no way to go through life, and one day I finally had enough.

The health issue I alluded to is gout, and if you’ve ever had it you know how painful and debilitating it can be. It’s a complicated form of arthritis, which we know by now is a result of inflammation.

I could keep gout at bay with prescription drugs and over the counter pain relievers, but every time an episode would strike it would leave me feeling helpless to do anything about it, because it seemed to come on quickly and out of nowhere, without any rhyme or reason.

And if you think it only affected me that would be a wrong assumption, because even the people around me would feel the effects of gout as I became grumpier by the minute while going through this painful condition.

I think what was even worse than the pain was that no matter what I did, I was powerless to stop the gout. It came and went as it pleased, and each bout left me confused and feeling, well, old.

This started in my early-thirties and lasted a good 15 years. You might think that sounds crazy, but life has a way of getting in the way.

My typical gout episodes, if there were such a thing, would last between 1 and 2 weeks. Generally by the time I would make a doctor's appointment it would be on the decline, and depending on how I felt I would either keep or cancel the appointment.

Looking back, I bet I canceled ninety percent of the appointments I made. All the doctor would do is offer Motrin and ice, and I figured I could do that on my own anyway.

When I became too frustrated or the gout would just not go away, I saw the doctor and he would prescribe something specifically to work on the uric acid buildup that is responsible for depositing crystals in the joints of your feet, knees and elbows, all typical places where gout likes to rear its ugly head.

And then it happened.

Enough Is Enough

One day during yet another painful round of gout, after dragging myself through another miserable day, I simply decided that I'd had enough.

Certainly there had to be a way to take control of the situation and improve the quality of my life so I wasn't in so much pain all the time.

I was afraid of what I might find out, but decided to begin researching gout and arthritis in general, and I learned a great deal about what causes it and also ways which at least would lessen the severity or frequency of the episodes so I could have a shot at a somewhat normal life.

I had heard from my doctor and everyone else I talked to that a poor diet and sedentary lifestyle would bring on attacks of gout, but I never really believed it.

I was in denial, thinking that my diet was pretty darned good and the lifestyle I was living was not really that bad.

And I was way off base.

The more research I did, the more that all signs pointed to the fact that a 180 degree change was the exact prescription I needed, not more pills and doctor visits.

But how do you turn around a battleship that has momentum and habit propelling it in one stubborn direction?

Slowly, 1 degree at a time...

I've learned over the years that radical changes don't work, at least for me. The best way for me to change a habit is to work the change in gradually.

Proceeding in this manner, I was able to give up alcohol completely, rid myself of caffeine almost entirely, and change my so-called "good diet" to include much healthier foods.

All in all, it took the better part of a year.

That might sound like a long time, but let me tell you that time passes regardless of what you're doing, so the sooner you get started, the quicker you'll be on the road to a healthier lifestyle.

I know this method won't work for everyone, but I think it's a sensible approach rather than trying cold turkey.

I believe what helped the most was changing my diet to include more healthy items. And what's funny is, like I mentioned above, I was pretty well convinced that my diet was darned good.

But upon closer examination, there were a lot of problems.

Because of the lifestyle most of us are forced into these days, we look for quick solutions to everything.

Buy an app, take a shortcut instead of sitting in traffic, pop a pill to feel better instantly. We've been forced into finding ways around problems instead of actually thinking about things and solving the problems.

It's easy to get caught up in that sort of lifestyle, especially when it comes to food, because everything is packaged for convenience and speed these days. Instant this and microwavable that, from drive thru breakfasts to dinner on the run to the next kid's sporting event, our lives have become a blurry kaleidoscope of activity.

And the food manufacturers are wise to this. They produce items that are convenient to cook and that are tasty, but in my opinion they are lacking in the nutrition department.

I'd rather spend a few extra dollars and a few more minutes of time to ensure that I'm putting the most nutritious food possible into my body, but it wasn't always that way.

I completely understand if you're totally out of time and energy when it comes to mealtimes, because there was a point in my life when I felt exactly the same way.

I'm urging you to rethink things, however, and challenging you to work more nutritious foods into your daily life gradually.

I know you can find the time to prepare fresh vegetables instead of opening a can, or to stop by a farmer's market on the way home from the local superstore.

And I know it's an extra effort to prepare some healthy snacks for the next day when you're tired or stressed from the current day's activities.

It takes commitment, but if there was ever anything worth committing to, it's to improve your health and wellbeing.

So at the risk of repeating myself, let me say it again.

Now is the time.

Chapter 9 - Stress Reduction For Inflammation Reduction

Stress is a major factor in almost everyone's life these days. At one time or another we all experience elevated stress levels. This is a normal part of everyday life, and it's usually transient in nature. That is, we encounter a stressful situation, we deal with it and stress levels return to normal, and we go on about our day.

Let's take a more detailed look at exactly what the body goes through when put into stress mode so we can better understand why stress can be so bad for us.

Let's say you wake up feeling refreshed after a solid eight hours of sleep. You have a delicious, healthy breakfast and when you leave the house the birds are chirping and singing and the sun is shining through the giant oak trees at the end of the street.

All is right with the world.

Traffic picks up as you leave your neighborhood, and your hands grip the steering wheel a bit more tightly. By the time you stop at the third traffic light, horns are honking and you can hear other drivers yelling through your open car window.

The next light just turned green, but someone in a real hurry has decided to run the red light from the opposite direction and you barely have enough time to screech to a stop without hitting him.

Immediately your stress level, which was already on the rise, skyrockets through the roof and your body begins to react.

First, a complicated series of events begins, the end result being a release of cortisol from your adrenal glands. Cortisol is a hormone, a steroid that is often called "the stress hormone". Cortisol is responsible for regulating many of the body's responses to stress, like blood sugar levels and blood pressure.

Once cortisol is released it readies your body for action, kicking your systems into gear. It actually tries to stop the production of insulin in an effort to stop the storage of glucose, instead aiming to release glucose into the bloodstream for immediate usage. This supplies your body with an instant source of energy that your muscles can put to use right away.

Your arteries constrict and your heart rate will increase as your body goes into full flight or fight mode, and all this happens pretty quickly.

Once the immediate threat or situation that sent you into this stress mode has passed, your body's systems and hormone levels return to normal and you go on about your day, after a few choice words for the crazy driver.

All of this is normal and good. Your body is acting exactly the way it should.

However, if you're subjected to stress repeatedly, or maybe kept in a stressful situation constantly due to family issues or a job that's way too busy, your body may never transition in and out of stress mode, instead staying on high alert for extended periods.

The lifestyle that most of us are living these days is a contributor to our increased stress levels. Add to that jobs, commutes, and regular everyday frustrations, and you have a recipe for constant stress and ultimately declining health.

Type 2 diabetes is on the rise in the U.S., chiefly because of poor dietary choices, but increased stress levels also play a major part.

Remember when we said glucose is released into the bloodstream when you're in a stressful situation? Insulin can counteract it, that's its job, but your body will struggle mightily to keep up if stress continues over extended periods, and this will lead to one system or another breaking down.

High stress can also lead to weight gain, and not just from overeating. All the extra glucose that your body doesn't use immediately will eventually get stored as fat for use later.

Or not...

There's another effect that high cortisol levels have as well. It could lead to craving the wrong types of foods as it stimulates your appetite.

One of cortisol's jobs is to reduce inflammation, but over a long period of time it may just have another side effect we don't count on; a lowered immune system. This is because our inflammation level is constantly high and that also keeps the cortisol level higher than it should be. This in turn will serve to weaken your immune system and make you more susceptible to colds, allergies, and even more serious diseases.

It seems as though we're all walking around at a slow-burn level these days. I'm not sure if it's all the stuff in the news every day, the pressures of modern life, or if it's just the new norm, but everyone I talk to seems to be in a hurry to get onto their next task, running out to do errands at lunch time with all the other stressed and harried people who don't have enough time in their days.

When you add poor food choices into the mix, this is a recipe for disaster. And I think most people would prefer to eat a more healthy diet, but are forced to make tough choices between good nutrition and convenience and speed.

So I see reducing your overall inflammation as a two-pronged approach, and neither can be ignored for optimum impact.

First, nutrition must play a key role. The food we consume is directly related to our overall health, and the sooner we modify our diets to include more fresh fruits and vegetables instead of those that are packaged and canned, the sooner we'll see a positive impact on our health.

But we must also strive to reduce our stress levels whenever we have the chance. So let's take a look at ways to do that.

Delegate – Don't try to be everything to everyone. These days it's difficult, and I realize that. It takes both spouses working to make ends meet, and this puts extra strain on life at home. But if you're stretched to the limit with work, household chores, kid's sports activities, etc. it may be time to analyze ways to divide the tasks so one person doesn't get overwhelmed.

It could mean sharing duties with other parents for rides to practice, sporting events, after school pickups, and other tasks that can be split up. Or taking turns cooking dinner or grocery shopping. Whatever it takes to reduce stress when one person or another feels overwhelmed.

Exercise – Okay, did I just stress you out by saying that? Not only do you not have enough time in your day for everyday tasks, now I'm recommending exercise.

It's a proven way to reduce your stress, and it's a perfect way to get a little "me time" at the same time. You don't have to train for a marathon, but a walk around the neighborhood can be just the thing to de-stress you from a day at work. Work it into your daily routine and make it a priority and you'll notice a difference in how you look and feel.

Meditation – This one makes me feel silly sometimes, but I can't argue with the positive effects it has. People have been using meditative techniques to relax and de-stress for centuries. It has great power to restore calm to your frenzied world.

When you get good at it, you can meditate almost anywhere, but it's best to start in a quiet place devoid of outside distractions. The Internet is chockfull of great resources to get started, and best of all it's free and it's extremely effective. Try it!

Sleep – This is a big one, and seems like a vicious cycle because when people are stressed they have a hard time falling asleep or staying asleep.

If you're not sleeping well, there are steps you can take to try to remedy that. Make sure your room is conducive to sleep by darkening it as much as possible, adjusting the temperature so it's cool enough for restful sleep, and turning off the television completely.

I used to fall asleep using the television as a night light, and wake up at 2:00 AM to a test pattern and blaring noise. I changed that and I'm sleeping much better now. There's still a TV in the bedroom but it's used rarely these days.

Also eliminate computers, video games, cell phones, and other electronic devices well before bedtime, as they have a way of making your mind race.

We could devote an entire book just to sleeping well, and many have been written on the subject, it's that important. If you're not sleeping at night, investigate why and solve the problem.

Analyze – Sometimes the hardest problems have the simplest solutions, but you can't see the forest for the trees. Maybe all it takes to reduce your stress significantly is to sit down and analyze your situation with a spouse or another family member. Sometimes a different perspective can help you see things you're overlooking.

Have a good think about your situation and see where the stress is coming from, then take steps to eliminate it.

Your health depends upon a happy mental state as well as the best possible nutrition you can get, so paying attention to these two areas will drastically improve your life, I guarantee it!

Chapter 10 - Breakfast Recipes

It's been said over and over again that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and I'll just echo that here. A good breakfast sets your entire day up, so don't ignore this meal.

Instead, make it special every day. See below for some great ways to start your day off right!

Oatmeal – Let's face it, oatmeal isn't that exciting all by itself. Unless you take into account the amazing health benefits, it's hard to get pumped about it.

But it doesn't take much to jazz it up a bit and make it a solid breakfast performer. Here's what I do.

First of all, stay away from the sugary instant variety. The added sugar in these is a great way to ADD to your inflammation, not reduce it. Instead, opt for the steel cut variety – it's much healthier for you.

TIP: I prepare enough for a few days in advance, and I do it on the weekend. It'll keep all week in the fridge and it saves time in the morning.

- Boil 3 cups of water in a heavy sauce pan
- Add 1 cup of steel cut oats
- A pinch of salt, if desired

Turn the heat down to a simmer and cook for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick or burn.

And here's where we go from boring to brilliant!

Just reheat in the microwave when you're ready for a quick, healthy breakfast.

Mix in some dried cherries, or even better, fresh ones, for a great taste and an extra boost of antioxidants that are well known inflammation fighters. In fact, any dark colored berry that's a favorite of yours can be added to your oatmeal to spruce it up.

I also chop up a banana and throw in some raisins to make things taste better.

When we think of oatmeal we naturally expect something sweet landing on our taste buds, but oatmeal works surprisingly well with savory foods as well.

Try adding sautéed spinach and lean Canadian bacon for a real taste treat.

A small handful of nuts also works well, and almonds or walnuts are known to reduce inflammation.

Oatmeal by itself doesn't do it for me, but dressing it up makes it into a super way to start the day. There are endless ways to jazz up your oatmeal, so use your imagination.

Give it a try, and stay away from the instant stuff, you'll be better off for it.

Green Tea – A cup of green tea is a staple in my morning diet. Don't worry, I still have my coffee from time to time, and coffee has been shown to have some anti-inflammatory properties, but it's not the same as green tea.

My favorite way to make any kind of tea is loose leaf, not in a bag. I realize that's not always possible due to time constraints, but the difference in taste is well worth it in my opinion.

You can get green tea with all sorts of different flavorings these days, and if you don't have a tea shop near you, the Internet is always a good choice.

Make sure you add green tea into your morning routine for a tasty way to fight inflammation.

Eggs – The medical community goes back and forth on the subject of eggs, and I don't believe any single food has caused more controversy and discussion. I think they're currently in favor.

People with cholesterol problems should probably stay away from eggs, but it's really a question for your doctor to answer, so be sure to consult with him or her before making changes to your diet.

If you do like eggs, the best way to consume them is to look for high Omega-3 eggs. While you're at it, you might as well look for organic eggs, as they are certified by the USDA to be hormone and pesticide free.

Try these healthy ways to enjoy your morning eggs.

Avocados make a great addition to a healthy, protein filled breakfast that will keep you full until lunch time.

- 3 hardboiled eggs
- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise (more or less to suit your taste)
- 2 tablespoons of sweet onion (or red onion if you prefer), diced

- 1 tablespoon of lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Proceed as if making egg salad, combining all the ingredients and mixing well together. This mixture is best if consumed immediately, so scale the ingredients and make only enough to serve your immediate needs.

Mash all items together, and if desired, a nice taste kick is adding a teaspoon of chopped parsley.

You can enjoy this on toast in the morning or in a whole wheat wrap. Add a handful of almonds to make a super nutritious breakfast treat.

Avocado On Toast

Super simple, and oh-so-delicious! It doesn't get much easier than this.

- 2 slices of your favorite whole grain bread
- 1 ripe avocado
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Optional – tomato slices or turkey bacon, or both!

Simply mash the avocado in a small bowl, adding salt and pepper to taste. You may omit the lemon juice but in my opinion it makes everything pop!

Using the avocado as a spread, layer some on the toast, and top with a tomato slice or a strip of turkey bacon, or both, and enjoy.

I'm all about keeping it simple, especially in the morning.

Green Smoothie – Okay, so I was a doubter about green smoothies until I made this one. I just couldn't see myself drinking one, especially in the morning. But this recipe is so simple and easy and so alive with freshness that it's a great way to start your morning...

- 1 cup of kale, tightly packed
- 1 cup of spinach, tightly packed
- 1 cucumber, peeled
- 1 mango, peeled and chopped up

- 1 cup of ice cold water
- 6 ice cubes

Put the heavy stuff in your blender first, ice, water, mango and cucumber, cover tightly and blend briefly, then add kale and spinach and blend until smooth.

Pour into a glass and enjoy immediately.

Apple Sandwich – This one is extremely simple, in fact only 2 ingredients, and very portable. Give it a try when you're pressed for time but still want to stick with something healthy. One thing, though, You'll need an apple corer for this.

- 1 large apple, your favorite variety
- About 3 tablespoons of almond butter

Simply core the apple, leaving the rest intact. I leave the skin on as well. Once it's cored, slice it into quarter inch slices and spread almond butter on one slice, and use another for a topper, making a sandwich.

That's it! No refrigeration required, quick and easy, and you can eat it on your way out the door in the morning. If you don't have an apple corer, you can improvise and cut the apple into slices and spread the almond butter generously.

Greek Yogurt – This one takes no time as well. I have some thoughts about buying Greek yogurt though.

Do not buy yogurt with the fruit already in it. There's far too much sugar in this type of yogurt to be any good for you, in my opinion. In fact, I wrote a book about [Sugar Detox](#) and where all the hidden sugar is in your everyday life, but let me assure you it's everywhere.

Instead, read the labels on the plain non-fat Greek yogurt at the grocery store until you find one that has the lowest grams of sugar per serving.

Then simply add your own goodness to the yogurt. Some excellent additions are any kind of dark colored berries, walnuts, almonds, a sprinkle of cinnamon, lemon or lime juice, or banana.

This just scratches the surface, use your imagination and come up with some different twists on the same old thing. HINT: It's not just for sweet sensations. As you know, yogurt works great in savory dishes as well, so go wild!

These breakfast recipes should give you some ideas to get you started. Remember to check the big list of anti-inflammatory foods at the end of the book to see if you're on the right track.

Also remember that you don't have to spend a lot of time in the morning to have a good breakfast. In fact, doing so will almost surely derail your efforts and sabotage your good intentions, so the easier you can make it on yourself, the better. Many recipes can be prepared ahead to save you time in the morning.

Chapter 11 - Lunch Recipes

Lunch can be an afterthought for many people. If you're at work it's easy to grab something from the cafeteria without much thought, and eat at your desk while you catch up on emails or do some other tasks you need to squeeze in so you don't fall too far behind.

Here again, proper planning will prevent you from making bad choices when it comes to lunch time meals. Once you commit to lowering your inflammation through the proper diet mixed in with some exercise, you'll have no trouble doing what it takes to keep yourself on track.

I believe recipes are meant as starting points and shouldn't be taken as written in stone. I adjust and modify things all the time, and I'm sure you will too.

Use your imagination and have fun with experimenting.

Raw Wrap – I prep the ingredients the night before and then assemble everything when I'm ready for lunch. Super simple and delicious!

- 1 whole wheat wrap
- 3 Tablespoons of your favorite hummus
- 3 strips each of raw red and green pepper
- Handful of raw spinach
- Handful of raw carrot slices

That's it. Spread the hummus on the wrap and the stuff it with the other ingredients, roll up and enjoy! Obviously you can switch in your favorite vegetables if you don't like any of the above, and adjust the amounts to your liking. Change it up and enjoy!

Monster Salad – If you like salads, I have a good one for you, complete with homemade dressing that takes 30 seconds to make. Delicious, healthy food doesn't have to be complicated.

First of all, I hate to bash anyone's favorites, but let's ditch the tried and true iceberg and go for some real taste here. Grab a couple of handfuls of dark leafed lettuce or spring mix, and mix in some spinach if you have some lying around. This will be the base of your salad.

You can buy some of these salad mixes already washed and ready to eat. This is the way to go in my opinion. To your base, add the following

- 1 tablespoon of slivered almonds
- Small handful of each, red and green peppers, chopped
- Small handful of raw carrot slices
- A couple of avocado slices (I have a tip for keeping avocados fresh)
- Half dozen cherry tomatoes
- Protein source – either hardboiled egg, or diced chicken, or 3 ounces of canned tuna
- Small handful of red onion

That's it. Of course, you can switch your own ingredients in and out, but use this as a base. And avoid things like candied nuts and croutons, both of which are high in calories. There's plenty of crunch in this salad, and some protein to keep you feeling fuller for longer.

A note about tomatoes. Depending on who you trust and which blog you're reading, you'll see differing opinions about whether or not tomatoes belong in an anti-inflammatory diet. According to everything I've read from my most trusted sources, tomatoes DO offer anti-inflammatory benefits. They are, however, part of the nightshade family of fruits, and some people have trouble digesting them.

I see no reason why they can't be included in an anti-inflammatory diet, but if you have questions it's best to check with your healthcare provider.

For the dressing you have a couple of choices. What I've been doing lately is buying a great quality extra virgin olive oil and drizzling that over the top, then squeezing on half a lemon. The citrus juice works well with this salad and gives it a fresh taste.

You can also throw together the following:

- ¼ extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon of lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon of Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste

Just whisk it together and drizzle it over your salad for a healthy and tasty dressing!

Whole Wheat Pasta Salad – I do love my pasta, but I've switched over to whole wheat pasta now, and I absolutely don't regret it. The texture is almost the same and I think the taste is better, unless you're eating fresh pasta, which cannot be beaten.

Follow this recipe for a tasty lunch that has anti-inflammatory benefits

- 8 ounces of whole wheat pasta
- 1 cup of broccoli florets, steamed lightly or raw if you prefer
- ¼ cup each of red and green peppers, diced
- ¼ cup of sweet onion, diced
- 1 dozen Greek olives – sliced in half
- 12 fresh basil leaves, torn by hand
- 2 ounces of extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of one small lemon
- Optional – quarter cup of Feta cheese

Simply boil the pasta according to the package directions, rinse well and let cool, then combine the rest of the ingredients.

It's best to let this marinate overnight so the flavors meld together. Easy to make and if you need to scale the recipe to make more it's simple to do.

Healthy Chicken Salad – Chicken salad has always been one of my favorites, and I used to slather on the mayonnaise to get it to taste just right. Nowadays I have found a better alternative to mayonnaise, and I'll share that here.

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trim the fat if there is any
- Your favorite spice to give some flavor. I use Mrs. Dash to keep it simple, but you can use anything you're fond of.
- 1 ripe avocado

- About 2 ounces of orange juice, fresh squeezed is best so there's no added sugar
- 1 clove of garlic, minced

Season the chicken and cook it chicken any way you like. When the weather is nice I prefer to use the grill, but if that's not possible I sear the chicken in olive oil on top of the stove and then finish it in the oven.

For the "mayonnaise" simply mash the avocado and add the orange juice and garlic and stir until you get a creamy consistency.

Cut the chicken up into small chunks and combine with your healthy mayonnaise.

That's it! You can enjoy this chicken salad in a whole wheat wrap with some mesclun greens, or on top of any kind of salad. It's delicious!

Quinoa Salad – Quinoa is one of healthiest foods in the world to eat, and it's so delicious. Check out this easy to make salad.

- 1 cup of uncooked quinoa
- 12 cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
- ½ of a large cucumber, diced
- 2 tablespoons of fine minced sweet onion
- 15 ounce can of chick peas, drain the liquid
- 2 tablespoons of fresh mint, chopped
- 1 tablespoon of fresh oregano, chopped
- ¼ cup of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional – crumbled feta cheese ¼ cup

It looks like a lot of ingredients, but it takes no time to throw together.

Cook the quinoa according to the package directions, then set aside and let cool for 45 minutes.

In a separate bowl, combine the olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, onions, salt and pepper; mix thoroughly. Let stand 15 minutes.

Next, add the dressing, tomatoes and cucumber, and also the oregano, mint, and chickpeas to the quinoa and mix gently.

Enjoy! This is a fresh tasting and very healthy salad to prepare ahead of time.

Chickpea Rollup – This one is delicious and very easy to make. Give it a try, I'm sure it'll become one of your favorites.

- 1 can of chick peas (garbanzo beans) 19 ounce size
- ¼ cup of celery, diced
- 1/3 cup of sweet onion, diced
- 2 tablespoons of low-fat mayonnaise **
- 1 tablespoon of fresh oregano
- Juice of ½ small lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Whole wheat wrap
- Lettuce leafs

All you have to do is drain the chickpeas – actually I rinse them really well too, and then place them into a bowl and mash them with a fork.

Mix in the mayonnaise, onion celery and oregano.

Add the lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste and mix again.

You can bring this to work in a container and assemble everything desk-side. Just layer the wrap with lettuce leaves and add the chickpea mixture to enjoy a different and tasty treat.

You can adjust this recipe any way you'd like. For instance, instead of celery you can add a favorite vegetable of yours.

** You can also use the mayonnaise we made in a previous recipe, the one made from avocado, instead of mayonnaise from a jar, if you prefer.

Easy Vegetable Soup – Veggie soup is a wonderful thing, and this one is super simple and delicious.

- 1 sweet potato, sliced
- 4 small purple potatoes, (or any type you prefer), sliced
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 medium yellow squash, sliced
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 6 cups of low sodium vegetable stock
- ¼ cup of sweet onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon of parsley

In a large pot, add the veggie stock, potatoes, sweet potatoes, onion and carrot and bring to a boil.

Boil until the potatoes are just starting to get tender, then add both types of squashes and boil for another minute and remove from heat.

You can either eat this immediately or let it cool and transfer it to containers for lunch. If you eat immediately, top with the parsley. Take the parsley to work with you and top the soup there if you're having it for lunch.

That's it! Enjoy this super simple and fresh tasting soup that's easy to make!

Keeping Avocados Green –I've tried everything to keep avocados from turning brown after you cut them in half, but the best way I've found is to place it in an airtight container with a piece of raw onion.

The onion flavor really doesn't get absorbed into the avocado, and it should keep for a couple days this way. It also works to keep guacamole fresh!

Chapter 12 – Dinner Recipes

Dinner doesn't need to be complicated or time consuming. It should be filled with healthy ingredients and be easy to prepare.

Take a look at the recipes below for some inspiration. I'm sure some of these will become your favorites!

Salmon Burger

Salmon is high in Omega 3 and tastes great, especially prepared this way.

- 1 pound of salmon fillets, no skin
- 1 egg white
- ½ cup of bread crumbs – I use panko
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup of feta cheese
- 4 whole wheat buns

Other toppings could be cucumber slices or a piece of red onion, or anything that's your favorite.

In a food processor, add the salmon, egg white and bread crumbs and use the pulse control to chop the salmon up finely.

Make 4 burgers out of the mixture and salt and pepper each side.

You can cook these on the grill or pan fry them. I prefer the grill and cook the patties 5-7 minutes on one side and then flip them cook them 5-7 minutes more.

Lay the cooked burger on the bottom bun and top with feta, onion, or cucumber slices and serve immediately.

You can add a fresh side salad to this to make a super healthy and quick and easy dinner.

Enjoy!

Quick And Easy Stir Fry

This stir fry is quick and easy to make, requiring no special exotic ingredients. Give it a try and you won't do takeout again any time soon!

- 8 ounces of boneless chicken breast, cut into bite size chunks
- 2 cups of broccoli florets
- 2 cloves of minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons of minced ginger
- 2 ounces of olive oil
- 8 ounces of your favorite mushrooms
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- ½ cup of water chestnuts
- ½ cup of sliced carrots
- 2 tablespoons of low sodium soy sauce
- ½ cup of sweet onion

It's easy to throw this dish together. I like the veggies crunchy, but you can also steam the broccoli and carrots for 4 minutes to soften them up a bit, then drain good and set it aside.

In a wok or large frying pan, heat the olive oil and then add the chicken and stir fry until it's almost done and the juices are clear. Add the garlic, ginger and onion and stir in.

Next, add all the vegetables and soy sauce and cook until they start to get tender but still have a bit of crunch to them. If the mixture seems a bit dry you can add chicken or vegetable stock a little at a time while cooking.

Optional: You can top this with slivered almonds after you plate it for an extra crunch and anti-inflammatory punch!

Enjoy!

Baked Cod

Cod is a delicious white fleshed fish that is easy to get and relatively inexpensive, but you can substitute any of your favorite white fleshed fish here and be perfectly fine.

- 2 6-8 ounce cod fillets

- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 medium summer squash, sliced
- 1 cup of red onion, sliced
- 1 cup of red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- Italian seasoning spice blend
- Non-stick cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Rinse the fish and pat dry with a paper towel. Use non-stick cooking spray on a glass baking dish to coat the surface.

Add all the vegetables to a large bowl and drizzle the olive oil over the top, saving a bit for the fish.

Toss the vegetables to coat with oil, then add the Italian seasoning blend and toss well to coat.

Use the remaining oil to coat the fish and then season with salt and pepper and place in the baking dish. Add the rest of the vegetables around the fish and place in oven for 15 -20 minutes, or until the fish is flaky.

Remove from oven and serve immediately

Enjoy!

Spaghetti Squash Mediterranean

Spaghetti squash is a good source of calcium, potassium and magnesium, and has only 42 calories per cup. Couple that with the fact that it's so easy to make and you have a winning combination that's hard to beat.

Check this recipe for an easy way to use spaghetti squash.

- 1 spaghetti squash 3-4 pounds
- 1 medium sweet onion, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- ¼ cup of chopped Greek olives
- ¼ feta cheese

- 1 cup of grape or cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
- 3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- OPTIONAL: 10 fresh basil leaves

Preheat your oven to 350.

Carefully slice the spaghetti squash in half lengthwise and place on a baking sheet, cut side down. You can use a little oil or non-stick cooking spray on the baking sheet to prevent sticking.

Cook the squash for 30-40 minutes, until it flaked easily with a fork.

While the squash is cooking, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil to a frying pan that's big enough to hold all the cooked squash, and cook the onions and garlic until soft, then set aside.

When the squash is done, wait until it cools and then use a fork to scrape the flesh of the squash so that it comes loose from the skin. It should be easy to make it look like spaghetti at this point. Gather all the squash on a bowl.

Apply heat to the frying pan with the onion and garlic mixture, and when it's hot again, add the squash to the frying pan. Toss to coat the squash with oil and to mix in the onions and garlic.

When the squash is heated, add the olives and feta cheese and toss for 1 minute more to heat everything.

Turn out into a bowl and add the tomatoes, tossing gently to just warm them.

Serve immediately, garnishing with torn basil if desired.

Enjoy!

Turkey Chili

Substituting turkey for ground beef can reduce the overall fat in any recipe without sacrificing any taste. Try this turkey chili at any time of year, but especially the fall and winter.

- 16 ounces of ground turkey breast
- ½ cup of celery, chopped
- 1 ounce of olive oil
- 1 ½ cups of sweet onion, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced

- 2 red bell peppers, chopped
- 1/4 cup of chopped cilantro, for garnish
- 2 cups of water
- 1 can of crushed tomatoes, 28 ounces, low sodium
- 2 tablespoons of chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon of paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon of dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon of red pepper flakes, more or less to suit taste (you can also use Tabasco© sauce or your favorite hot sauce, to taste).
- **OPTIONAL:** 1 15 ounce can of your favorite beans

Heat the oil in a large pot and cook the turkey until browned. Add the onions and garlic and cook until onion is tender.

Add the water, the add celery, peppers, tomatoes, and beans, and stir well. Next, add the chili powder, paprika, oregano, and your favorite hot sauce or pepper flakes. Stir well to incorporate all the ingredients.

Bring the mixture to a boil and then turn to low and simmer for 30-40 minutes, then transfer to bowls and garnish with cilantro.

Enjoy!

You can use your imagination with this one. For instance, if you like carrots then by all means add them. If you want to make a meatless chili, subtract the turkey.

Use the recipe as a starting point and add your own spin.

Quinoa Stuffed Peppers

Quinoa is an underutilized item in my bag of tricks, but I aim to change that by adding tasty dishes like this one. Give it a try soon!

- 4 large red peppers, cut in half and ribs removed
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped

- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 2 cans of low sodium diced tomatoes – 15 ounces each, liquid drained
- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 cup of grated carrots
- 1 cup of low-fat cheddar cheese
- ½ teaspoon oregano

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees

Heat the oil in a sauce pan, then add the onion and celery, cooking until they soften. Add the garlic and saute another minute or two. Add the tomatoes and oregano and cook another 5 minutes.

Add the quinoa, carrots and 2 cups of water and cover the pan until the mixture boils. Reduce the heat and simmer until quinoa becomes tender, it should take around 20 minutes or so. Turn off the heat when the quinoa is cooked.

Next, add the cheese and make sure it's thoroughly incorporated.

Lay the pepper halves in a glass baking dish and fill each half with the mixture. Cover with tin foil and bake for 45 minutes, then uncover and sprinkle a bit more cheddar cheese on top of each pepper and bake for 15 more minutes.

Remove from oven and transfer peppers to serving platter. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Enjoy!

Spicy Cabbage With Sausage

Cabbage is great tasting and so good for you. This recipe is wonderful with chicken sausage or just omit the sausage altogether for a vegetarian version.

- 1 LB chicken sausage
- 1 medium head of green cabbage, sliced
- 1 medium sweet onion, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic

- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- ½ teaspoon of red pepper flakes, more or less to suit your taste

Boil the sausages in a large pan until cooked thoroughly, about 20 or 25 minutes. (NOTE: I peel the skin off before I cook them). Set aside until cool, then cut into quarter inch slices.

In a large frying pan or wok, saute the onion in the olive oil until it softens, then add the garlic and cook another minute, keeping the mixture moving.

Next, add the cabbage and red pepper flakes, and keep turning the cabbage from top to bottom, keeping the mixture moving. Cook about 10 minutes or so for cabbage with a little crunch, more or less depending on how you like it.

Add the sausage to the mix and stir to thoroughly incorporate.

Turn out into a large bowl and serve immediately.

This can be served as a main dish with the sausage as a component, or as a side dish without the meat.

Enjoy!

Big List Of Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Garlic

Cauliflower

Broccoli

Chard

Cabbage

Bell Pepper

Collard Greens

Green Beans

Brussels Sprouts

Kale

Spinach

Turnip Greens

Sweet Potatoes

Olives

Leeks

Fruits

Apples

Blueberries

Pineapple

Avocados

Lemons

Limes

Guava

Strawberries

Tomatoes

Raspberries

Oranges

Papaya

Kiwi

Peaches

Black Currants

Cantaloupe

Cranberries

Acai Berries

Spices

Oregano

Basil

Thyme

Turmeric

Ginger

Cinnamon

Rosemary

Mint

Cayenne Pepper

Parsley

Cocoa (Must be at least 70% cocoa)

Striped Bass

Snapper

Sardines

Rainbow Trout

Salmon

Cod

Oysters

Herring

Tuna

Mackerel

Nuts

Almonds

Flaxseeds

Walnuts

Sunflower Seeds

Hazelnuts

This is by no means a complete list, but it gives you a great reference point to start from.

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To Your Great Health!

Ted Begnoche