

## THE BIG IDEAS

### Eat Move Sleep

Work on all three simultaneously.

### 10,008 Hours + 36 Minutes

For peak performance.

### Candy for Cancer Cells

150 lbs of sugar = not good.

### Want to Improve?

Measure!

### Buy Willpower

At the store.

### Be Less Refined

Refined carbs aren't your friends.

### A Vaccine for the Cold

Finally! Hint: Sleep.

### Your Brain Works Better

Following exercise.

# Eat Move Sleep

How Small Choices Lead to Big Changes

BY TOM RATH · MISSIONDAY © 2013 · 240 PAGES

“Let me be clear. I am not a doctor. Nor am I an expert on nutrition, exercise physiology, or sleep disorders. I am just a patient. I also happen to be a researcher and voracious reader who loves to extract valuable findings and share them with friends. In this book, you will find the most credible and practical ideas I have found so far.

What I learned from all this research influences my countless daily decisions. Every bite of food either increases or decreases my odds of spending a few more years with my wife and two young children. Half an hour of exercise in the morning makes for better interactions all day. Then a sound night of sleep gives me energy to tackle the next day. I am a more active parent, a better spouse, and more engaged in my work when I eat, move, and sleep well.”

~ Tom Rath from *Eat Move Sleep*

*Eat Move Sleep.*

The simple, powerful keys to optimal health and well-being.

We talk about these fundamentals ALL the time and this is my new favorite book on health. And, Tom Rath is one of my new favorite teachers.

His work is backed by a TON (!!!) of scientific research and he distills it all into very simple, fun, smart, practical tips we can apply \*TODAY\*! (My kind of guy.) Plus, you can tell he's just a \*really\* good human. Super passionate, humble, hard-working, balanced and integrated while committed to making a huge difference in the world.

I HIGHLY recommend this book.

If you could only pick one book to optimize your health, you'd do very well to go with this one. It avoids the extremes of any one approach while integrating all the good stuff echoed among them. (Get a copy [here](#).)

As always, I'm excited to share some of my favorite Big Ideas so let's jump straight in!

P.S. As I mentioned in our Note on another one of Tom's books called [Are You Fully Charged?](#), Tom also wrote one of our favorite children's books called [The Rechargeables](#). Basically [Eat Move Sleep](#) for kids. It's genius. Emerson loves it and constantly talks about getting “recharged” as he eats, moves and sleeps. (The characters Poppy and Simon often hang out with us as well. :)

P.P.S. While we're on the subject, other favorite children's books include [Your Fantastic Elastic Brain](#) (= neuroplasticity for kids—Emerson talks about his cerebellum, hippocampus, amygdala and pre-frontal cortex and I laugh as I type that) + a new fav: Obama's [Of Thee I Sing](#) (a book he wrote for his daughters featuring American heroes—beautiful and inspiring). And, of course, [The Little Engine that Could](#) (“I think I can” is another one of E's mantras) + Dr. Seuss's [The Places You'll Go](#). hehe :)

*“No single act can prevent cancer or guarantee that you will live a long life. Anyone who promises you that absolute is a fraud. What I will share in this book are some of the most practical ideas to improve your odds of a longer, healthier, and more fulfilling life.”*

~ Tom Rath

*"If you eat, move, and sleep well today, you will have more energy tomorrow. You will treat your friends and family better. You will achieve more at work and give more to your community. It all starts with making decisions like \*tomorrow\* depends on it."*

~ Tom Rath

## WORK ON ALL 3 SIMULTANEOUSLY

"Starting your day with a healthy breakfast increases your odds of being active in the hours that follow. This helps you eat well throughout your day. Consuming the right food and adding activity makes for a much better night's sleep. This sound night of sleep will make it even easier to eat well and move more tomorrow.

In contrast, a lousy night of sleep immediately threatens the other two areas. That bad night of sleep makes you crave a less healthy breakfast and decreases your odds of being active. In the worst-case scenario, all three elements start to work against you, creating a downward spiral that makes each day progressively worse. This is why the book is structured to help you work on *all three elements together* and not broken into three parts about eating, moving, and sleeping.

New research shows that tackling multiple elements *at the same time* increases your odds of success, compared to initiating a new diet or exercise program in isolation. Eating, moving, and sleeping are even *easier* if you work on all three simultaneously. These three ingredients for a good day build on one another. When these elements are working together, they create an upward spiral and progressively better days."

Did you know that recent research shows optimizing your eating, moving and sleeping at the same time actually helps you rock it? Yep.

(Note: We're not talking about setting ridiculously impossible goals that overwhelm you but merely committing to optimizing these important facets together!)

To emphasize the point that these three fundamentals of awesome go together, the book is organized in a creative way. Rather than one section on Eating then another on Moving then another on Sleeping, each mini chapter has a theme that features one little Idea on each aspect of our triad. It works.

We've gotta remember that each little decision we make during the day has an impact on the next little decision. We're either spiraling up or spiraling down.

Therefore, we want to pay attention to each bite, our choices to move (or not) and our decision to turn off the electronics and get a good night of sleep (or not).

Let's SPIRAL UP!

## 10,008 HOURS AND 36 MINUTES

"One of the most influential studies on human performance, conducted by professor K. Anders Ericsson, found that elite performers need 10,000 hours of 'deliberate practice' to reach levels of greatness. While this finding sparked a debate about the role of natural talent versus countless hours of practice, another element was all but missed. If you go back to Ericsson's landmark 1993 study, there was another factor that significantly influenced peak performance: sleep. On average, the best performers slept 8 hours and 36 minutes. The average American, for comparison, gets just 6 hours and 51 minutes on weeknights.

The person you want to fly your airplane, operate on your body, teach your children, or lead your organization tomorrow is the one who sleeps soundly tonight. Yet in many cases, people in these vital occupations are the ones who think they need the least sleep. And more than 30 percent of workers sleep less than six hours per night."

10,000 hours of deliberate practice.

AND...

8 hours and 36 minutes of sleep per night. :)

*"Most people need seven hours of sleep just to be in the game the next day and ideally eight to have enough energy to win."*

~ Tom Rath

We'll talk more about how few people can actually get by optimally on <7 hours of sleep (2.5% of the population) but for now, remember 10,008 hours and 36 minutes.

Peak performance (as a mom, dad, athlete, executive, teacher, whatever) comes as a result of deliberate *practice* AND deliberate *sleep*. #10,008:36

## 150 LBS OF CANDY FOR CANCER CELLS

"Sugar is a toxin. It fuels diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and cancer. At the current dose we consume, more than 150 pounds per person *every year*, sugar and its derivatives kill more people than cocaine, heroin, or any other controlled substance around.

One report aptly describes sugar as 'candy for cancer cells.' It accelerates aging and inflammation in the body and subsequently fuels tumor growth. It is now clear that if you lower your sugar intake, you reduce your odds of developing cancer."

Did you know that the average American consumes 150 POUNDS OF SUGAR EVERY YEAR? That's (sugared) nuts.

Added sugar is so ubiquitous we forget how insidious it is. Restated more accurately: Added sugar is insidious BECAUSE it's so ubiquitous.

It's not like we're sitting around and spooning sugar into our mouths by the dozen. That would be easier to notice and eliminate.

But, the fact is, we're pretty much effectively sitting around and spooning sugar into our mouths by the dozen all day every day. Those spoonfuls are coming in the form of liquid sugar hidden in sodas and fruit juices (yes, fruit juices—quit giving them to your kids!) and in pretty much everything else from ketchup to your salmon marinade.

Unless you're looking to feed cancer cells, it's time to reduce/eliminate the added sugars.

Question: What's one \*easy\* thing you KNOW you could do to reduce your sugar intake today?

Tip: Do that!

## WANT TO IMPROVE? MEASURE!

"One little secret of medicine and social science is how *measurement itself creates improvement*. When researchers study the effect of a given intervention, simply asking people to track a specific outcome makes it more likely to improve. While this is a limitation for scientific experiments, you can use this to your advantage.

If you want to increase your activity, measure how much you move. When people are assigned to wear a pedometer as part of randomized controlled trials, they walk at least one *extra mile* per day on average. Overall activity levels go up by 27 percent. Body Mass Index (BMI) decreases, and blood pressure goes down."

This is big. Want to improve something? Simply measure it.

[Darren Hardy](#) shares similar wisdom in [The Compound Effect](#) (see Notes) where he tells us: "Right this moment: Pick an area of your life where you most want to be successful. Do you want more money in the bank? A trimmer waistline? The strength to compete in an Iron Man event? A better relationship with your spouse or kids? Picture where you are in that area, right now. Now picture where you want to be: richer, thinner, happier, you name it. The first step toward change is awareness. If you want to get from where you are to where you want to be, you have to start by becoming aware of the choices that lead you away from your desired destination. Become very conscious of every choice you make today so you can begin to make smarter choices moving forward."

Remember: Simply having a pedometer results in people walking an EXTRA MILE every day! (What?! Awesome.)

I've totally noticed the benefits of measuring movement in my life. Simply tracking ANY aspect of my life IMMEDIATELY improves it--from exercise to how I spend my time to what I eat, etc.

What area of *your* life do you want to improve? Time to measure!

P.S. Did you know exercise boosts your mood for up to 12 hours? Yep. Exercise earlier in the day to get the full benefits! As [John Ratey](#) tells us in [Spark](#), exercising is like taking a little bit of Ritalin and a little bit of Prozac--it focuses your attention while boosting your mood. I'll take it!

## BUY WILLPOWER AT THE STORE

*"Researchers have estimated that 90 percent of us could live to age 90 with some simple lifestyle choices."*

~ Tom Rath

"The most influential choices you make for your health occur in the grocery store. Once you put something in your cart, good or bad, it is likely to end up in your stomach. Even if you feel some remorse about your poor choice in the store, when you get home, your willpower stands little chance. After all, you paid for it, and it is only a few steps away at that point.

Anytime I visit our neighborhood grocery store, I spend most of my time in the fresh produce and seafood sections. I also try to avoid the middle aisles altogether. As they are filled with unhealthy, addictive items. If I don't see the salty pretzels, there is no chance they will wind up in my cart."

I love that. Want willpower? Buy it at the grocery store.

Scientists (like [Roy Baumeister](#) in [Willpower](#) and [Kelly McGonigal](#) in [The Willpower Instinct](#)—see Notes) would describe this behavior as a form of precommitment.

Just like Odysseus tied himself to his mast and his men plugged up their ears to resist the temptation of the Sirens, we need to come up with effective strategies that make our goal attainment more likely.

Not walking down the aisles with the junk non-food is a great idea. Precommitting to not putting that stuff in your cart is also a very wise idea.

Don't test yourself later when you're at home. Buy your willpower at the store.

P.S. Tom has another great Idea in the book he calls "Home Product Placement." Research shows that the placement of certain products influences an individual's buying pattern. So, to change your consumption pattern at home, put the healthiest stuff at eye level and hide/get rid of the other stuff!

## BE LESS REFINED

*"As one of the world's leading researchers on obesity put it, the next time you consume buttered toast, consider that the butter may be healthier than the bread."*

~ Tom Rath

"We are addicted to refined carbohydrates. One publication went as far as to describe carbs as 'more addictive than cocaine' and concluded, 'At the center of the obesity universe lies carbohydrates, not fat.' As a team of Harvard researchers wrote in the *Journal of American Medical Association*, carbs are a 'nutrient for which humans have no absolute requirement.' Another study suggests that eating fewer carbs even curbs cancer growth by as much as 50 percent. ...

Do everything you can to replace refined carbohydrates with vegetables when you prepare or order a meal. You get enough carbohydrates from fruits, vegetables, and protein. Try to reduce your consumption of pasta, bread, rice, and chips in particular. Most restaurants will let you substitute a vegetable for a side of rice, pasta or fries. Keep most of the refined carbs from making it to your plate in the first place. That way you won't need a superhuman amount of willpower to resist what is sitting in front of you during a meal."

As discussed above, we know that sugar is pure kryptonite. But guess what? Refined carbs are not your friends either. Period.

This isn't a fad diet idea, it's backed up by studies in leading medical journals.

As Tom advises, we get plenty of carbs in our fruits and vegetables. Unless you're looking to fuel any potential cancer growth, cut back on the "pasta, bread, rice, and fries." Swap them out for more veggies and watch your immediate energy + long-term health prospects soar.

Best time to start? Your next meal.

## (FINALLY!) A VACCINE FOR THE COMMON COLD

*"Prioritize eight hours of sleep ahead of all else. ... Remember, every extra hour of sleep is a positive investment. It is not an expense."*

~ Tom Rath

"What if someone told you there was finally a vaccine for the common cold? One experiment suggests a good night's sleep may be the answer. Participants in this study reported their sleep quality for 14 consecutive nights. Then they were quarantined and given nasal drops containing a rhinovirus (common cold). Researchers monitored participants for the next five days to see if they developed a cold. This experiment revealed that the participants who typically had less than seven hours of sleep before being exposed to the rhinovirus were nearly *three times as likely to develop a cold.*"

Looking for a vaccine against the common cold?

Here it is: Turn off your TV + Internet and get some more sleep. (Hah.)

If you're getting less than 7 hours of sleep per night, know that you're THREE times as likely to get a cold. Getting a cold is not bad luck. It's bad sleep hygiene.

Tom comes back to the point that prioritizing 8 hours of sleep every night is the most important thing we can do for our well-being.

A good night of sleep drives the whole show—you'll be more likely to exercise, eat better, get more done at work and treat your family better.

Q: What's one thing you can do TONIGHT to get a better night of sleep?

## YOUR BRAIN WORKS BETTER FOLLOWING EXERCISE

"Your brain works better following exercise. A team of researchers in Ireland made this discovery through a relatively simple experiment. They asked a group of students to watch a rapid lineup of photos. Each photo included a name and face of a stranger. Then, after a brief break, the students tried to recall the names of the faces that had moved across the computer screen. After this initial test, half of the students were asked to ride a stationary bicycle at a strenuous pace until they reached exhaustion. The other half of the students sat quietly for 30 minutes. Then both groups took the test again to see how many names they could recall.

The group of students who exercised performed much better on the memory test than they had on their first attempt. The group who simply sat in another room did not improve. As part of this experiment, the scientists also collected blood samples, through which they discovered a biological explanation for the increase in recall among the students who exercised. Immediately after the strenuous activity, students in the exercise group had much higher levels of a protein known as brain-derived neurotrophic factor, or BDNF, which promotes the health of nerve cells."

Science says: Your brain works better after exercise.

Knowing this, I structure my days so I always work out (even if just for a few minutes) right before I teach or do an interview (or do anything important).

It's a fun little hack to get my mind humming to help me perform at my best.

*"Help yourself. Then help the people you love to live like life depends on it. Because it does."*

~ Tom Rath

Fun story: Emerson and I go to the farmer's market every Sunday morning while mom meditates, exercises and enjoys some nice quiet time. There are a lot of sweet people at the market with whom we enjoy interacting, but one young high school girl who works there is my favorite. We've said "Hi!" for years and she's now applying to colleges. I love getting updates.

Recently she told me she re-took her SAT and didn't do as well as she would have liked and was nervous this would affect her ability to go to the school she hoped to attend.

I shared some of this research on the science of exercise with her--encouraging her to work out before her test and even do jumping jacks or something right before she walked into the room to start. (Other Ideas included making sure she got a great night of sleep plus--to deal with some other general test anxiety she'd experienced in the past--I suggested she practice seeing the Upside of Stress (via [Kelly McGonigal](#)) and say "I'm excited!" rather than "I hope I don't mess up!" And, I might have dropped in some "Bring it on!" magic a la [The Tools](#). hehe)

Long story short: Last weekend I got the good news that her test scores went up 120+ points along with an enthusiastic thanks! Who knows what role those little Ideas played but I'm typing this with some misty eyes. So excited for her.

I wouldn't change anything in my life as it all perfectly brought me to where I am today.

But... If I *could* go back and change anything, it would be prioritizing Eating right, Moving more, and Sleeping better earlier in my life. (And, in college, I \*definitely\* would have scheduled my workouts right before important exams! Hah. Seriously.)

I hope you enjoyed this quick look at a great book. Here's to optimizing our fundamentals as we actualize our potential in greatest service to the world!

B

**Brian Johnson,**  
*Chief Philosopher*

If you liked this Note,  
you'll probably like...

[Are You Fully Charged?](#)

[No Sweat](#)

[Spark](#)

[The Power of Rest](#)

[Willpower](#)

[The Willpower Instinct](#)

## About the Author of This Note

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Brian Johnson is the Founder + CEO of Heroic. He's spent half of the last 25 years as a Founder/CEO and the other half as a Philosopher. Brian loves integrating ancient wisdom and modern science to help YOU become the best, most heroic version of yourself so we can create a world in which 51% of humanity is flourishing by 2051. Learn more at [heroic.us](http://heroic.us).