



8 Weeks to Optimum Health

Andrew Weil

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A Proven Program for Taking Full Advantage of Your Body's Natural Healing Power

In *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health*, Dr. Andrew Weil translates the brilliant insights and discoveries he outlined in his acclaimed bestseller, *Spontaneous Healing*, into a practical plan of action: a week-by-week, step-by-step program for enhancing and protecting present and lifelong health. The Eight-Week Program sets up a foundation for healthy living that will keep your body's natural healing system in peak working order. With clearly defined and authoritatively informed recommendations, Dr. Weil explains how to

- Build a lifestyle that protects you from premature illness and disability
- Fine-tune your current eating habits so that your diet is more nutritious
- Walk and stretch in regimens that satisfy weekly exercise requirements
- Safeguard your healing system by adding four antioxidant supplements--vitamin C and E, selenium, and mixed carotenes--to your diet
- Incorporate five basic breathing exercises for greater relaxation and energy
- Benefit from visualization, overcome sleeping problems, and test and filter your water supply
- Make art, music, and the natural world more important parts of your life

PLUS--a dozen tailored programs that address the specific needs of pregnant women, senior citizens, overweight people, and those at risk for cancer.

8 Weeks to Optimum Health Details

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From Reader Review 8 Weeks to Optimum Health for online ebook

Lauren says

After hearing about this book for years, and getting more negative health news that I think I should get at this point in my life, I picked up Andrew Weil's book. I finished reading through it in two days, and am looking forward to integrating his recommendations into my lifestyle over the next two months. As a vegan with a regular yoga routine, the changes aren't really all that intimidating and mostly common sense. What I appreciate most in the book is that Dr. Weil has a flexible approach. He acknowledges that sometimes we'll need to resort to more traditional approaches and that everything he says isn't for everybody.

T.J. Beitelman says

I have learned firsthand how the body can change drastically depending on what it's given for fuel, and this book is the primary source of that knowledge/experience. One December more than a decade ago, after a twelve-hour drive from Virginia to Alabama, and a steady diet of French fries and cheeseburgers and sodas along the way, I pulled off the highway and into one of Tuscaloosa's sundry strip malls to buy a book at a mega-bookstore. (Books are — I think I may have mentioned this — a salve for me.) I ended up buying two: the very first Harry Potter book and *Eating Well for Optimum Health*. I can't remember precisely why I chose to pick the book up in the first place, but it must have had something to do with the queasy feeling in my stomach, the concomitant throbbing headache I had been nursing since northeast Georgia. I just didn't feel right and I blamed it (not erroneously) on the food I'd eaten that day.

After sitting on the floor of the aisle where it was shelved and reading the first chapter, I bought the book and immediately forswore processed food. The next day I began shopping the fringes of the supermarket — the outer rim being where the less processed foods, like fish and vegetables, are kept. I started making weekly forays to the whole foods store for things like whole grain breads, soy waffles, and almond butter. (This was before these things started creeping into the larger supermarket chains, before "Wholefoods" was an actual brand.)

I started exercising too. Swimming. Jogging. Lifting weights. It sounds kind of obtuse to say it now, but I didn't expect the appearance of my body to change noticeably — I didn't really think about that one way or another, which is strange because I'm pretty vain. I have to say that, eventually, my main focus with the change in my eating and exercise habits was my emotional health. I've always been a moody person, capable of pretty intense emotion one way or another. Mostly I'm fine with that, but at the time my personal life was really in flux and so my emotions were that much more intense. I chose to subscribe to the theory that eating well and exercising would help my mood level out over time. I would be calmer, less anxious and/or sad, more able to cope with the stresses of my so-called adult life in the Western world.

Looking back, I'm pretty sure I had already read Walt Stoll's *Saving Yourself from the Disease Care Crisis*, but for some reason I hadn't had the gumption yet to take him up on his ideas. They're ostensibly the same ones in Weil's book, but Stoll didn't really present a systematized approach. Weil does. There was also something about the rhetoric and packaging, I must admit. Stoll was a truth-telling crackpot, a la that locust-eating loony, John the Baptist. But something about Weil — maybe (let's be honest) that I'd seen him on Larry King? — made him seem less a far-out/cranky voice in the wilderness and more a mainstream Nazarene.

At any rate, I don't remember how much my moods changed for the better. I'd like to think they did. I'd like

to think I at least understood them a little bit better, but I know they still fluctuated. I'm not sure moods are supposed to do anything else, actually. Mine aren't, anyway.

Another thing happened, though: I lost twenty-five pounds in about three months. It was twenty-five pounds I didn't really think I had to lose, but I did feel better. I slept better. I was stronger. There was a spring in my step. Etc. I felt like I was managing my life better by managing what I put into my body. I have tried to use this metaphor to better understand all kinds of consumption: TV, relationships, work. What you put into your body, mind, life can consume you. What you eat can also eat you. It doesn't have to, but it will if you're not careful.

Something else was instructive. People around me reacted with great interest to my body's transformation. Some were impressed, but I have to say a great many of them seemed uncomfortable with it. Even (or especially) the ones who were most impressed. I was bombarded with questions about my eating habits. Do you eat this? Would you eat that? I eat this — I know you don't eat that! You eat chocolate! How does that fit into your diet? How much do you exercise? People would ask me whether I could eat what they were serving, or if I could go to a certain restaurant. While there was certainly a level of courtesy they were trying to extend, it often felt strange to me — or maybe it made me feel strange, weird, Other. Instead of leaving me to manage my own eating, my eating became a topic of public discussion, maybe even when I wasn't there, to the point where I consciously decided to go back to eating more like I had before.

There were other factors in that decision, to be sure: I was kind of worried that I had lost so much weight so quickly, without even trying. I also worried that I was starting to feel guilty if I ate a not-so-unhealthy chicken gyro from my favorite "fast food" Mediterranean restaurant. But mainly I just wanted to shut people up about what I ate. It took a long time — people would watch me eat a cheeseburger and fries one day, and the next, they'd wonder if barbecue fit into "my diet." Over the course of a couple of years, I went back to my original weight, and maybe even added a few pounds to it.

Only a routine physical exam that showed I had high cholesterol scared me back into eating "cleaner" again. As before, there was the precipitous weight loss. As before, there was the hubbub around me, my waist size, what I would or wouldn't eat, whether or not I was sick. This time I tuned it out, focusing instead on the cautionary tale of my father's massive heart attack at age 54. In the whole process, I learned that food is not just food. It is psychological, interpersonal, communal, metaphorical, spiritual, and probably a bunch of other things that either A) I'm forgetting or B) I don't yet know. What we eat and who we eat it with (and when and where and why, for that matter) is as complicated as it is vitally important to who we are.

Jeremiah says

Weil may not be as cutesy as Rachael Ray or as studly as Richard Simmons, but the dude is right on the money for the most part. I've devoured several books by Weil with no indigestion so far, and I've savored every last morsel of his wisdom. Though the "New Age" fluff didn't sit well with me I still found 8 Weeks to be a meal fit for a king: he's realistic, holistic, & correct about what it takes to be what he simply calls "wellness". The program is about a holistic wellness: body, mind, spirit & emotions which is a nice antidote to merely losing weight. The more philosophical/spiritual parts of the book are thin gruel indeed, but I'm not so starving for truth that I'll devour anything without a proper cleaning.

Andrea James says

This is a detailed prescriptive book about what to do to potentially optimise your health. Some of the suggestions feel like they need more investigation. I say this not because the recommendations are necessarily dangerous or wrong (unlikely to be, though I can't say for certain) but more because they require quite a lot of effort especially for people with busy full-time jobs and a non-generous budget. Nevertheless, there are some reasonable sounding suggestions and it is a quick read.

The book has lots of case studies/anecdotal stories and testimonials as opposed to broad studies with large sample groups.

Mina says

I usually don't get books like this because of their associations with New Age, Boomer-type literature that is all about connecting with the self and so forth, the type of diet plus pseudo-spirituality that really bothers me. Not that I am against spirituality, I just don't like all of this fake spirituality that is meant to comfort people without making them think! Anyhow, back to Weil's book. It really doesn't have any of this New Age propaganda, and I'm thankful for that. Now, I mostly skimmed the book for now, as there are different sections pertaining to the weeks you're on his programme, each broken up by week; then there are sections pertaining to women, men, older people, those living in cities, etc. I have to say that Weil has some really good recipes in this book that I'm going to follow. Unfortunately, the part about buying supplements and so forth will have to be put on hold because it's too expensive for me right now, and I'm always too busy. What I'm going to do is try out some of the recipes; as a vegetarian, I'm always looking for new things to try. I can say that Dr. Weil sounds like he knows his stuff, and I'd recommend this book for that reason; however, as I said, people who can't afford the supplements or have an incredibly fast-paced lifestyle may not be able to implement the entire programme. Still, this is a book I would recommend, and I think if we all followed it our health and spirituality would be much improved. Now if I could only get my hamburger-loving husband to want to eat some of the recipes. :(*sighs* I'm still trying anyhow. At least he's starting to eat Boca Burgers.

Mikejencostanzo says

[Eight Weeks to Optimum Health](#) presents a really neat summary of health from what I guess you'd call a holistic or natural perspective. It's a perspective I've not had much exposure to, but came to appreciate through reading this book.

Author Dr. Andrew Weil asserts that our bodies were made to be able to heal themselves. Coming from the perspective of believing that humans are created by God, I can really appreciate this acknowledgment. God knew what he was doing when he created our white blood cells, for example. Weil goes on to describe how, in our prime, our bodies are generally able to maintain good health through the ups and downs of your basic colds & illnesses. It's as we age, or encounter injury that we are particularly in need of extra interventions.

In this book, Weil presents elements of a healthy lifestyle that one can adopt to help or encourage the body do what it's naturally supposed to do. Also, Weil presents good, commonsense lifestyle tips that when applied throughout one's life, can help avoid some of those premature breakdowns of health (such as cancer, heart disease & diabetes).

I was intrigued in reading this book by Weil's summary of the place of traditional medicine (drugs, surgical procedures, etc.) in healthcare. Rather than saying that there is no place for this type of medicine in a holistic health plan, he suggests that there are times when the body's natural healing system is simply overwhelmed

and needs the intervention of drugs or surgery. I like the way he puts that.

Weil appeals to a very wide audience in writing this book. He manages to describe things like meditation without totally alienating me as a Christian. I definitely read this book with discernment, and did not agree with everything Weil proposed, but did not find myself totally gagging at new-agey mumbo-jumbo at any point.

Here are the take-away points I gleaned from this book that I'd like to apply to some degree. This is not a comprehensive summary of each week's plan, but rather the elements from each week that I think are realistic for applying in my own life right now:

Week One:

- Use mainly (or only) Olive oil
- Use less (or no) artificial sweeteners
- Start eating fish (like salmon, sardines) once weekly
- Start eating brocolli twice weekly
- Start taking vitamins (like C, E, Selenium, Carotenoids, & Coenzyme 10)
- Begin walking daily

Week Two:

- Drink non-chlorinated water
- Start eating soy
- Eat more whole grains
- Try green tea

Week Three:

- Try growing some of your own food
- Keep electric appliances (hairdryers, alarm clocks, microwaves) away from your body & especially your head

Week Four:

- Use garlic in cooking regularly

Week Five:

- Remember, sweating is good for you
- Use ginger in cooking regularly
- Use special breathing exercises

Week Six:

- Eat more cooked greens
- Up fish & soy intake to twice weekly
- Take low-dose aspirin daily

Week Seven:

- Connect with someone from whom you've been estranged
- Become involved in service or ministry

Week Eight:

- Use turmeric in cooking regularly
- Less cheese & animal product intake (meat as a side dish)
- Avoid fruit/veggie pesticides
- Keep some spider plants at home to improve air quality

Samantha says

When it comes to personal health and wellness, I'm a supporter of integrating both Western and Eastern medicine into my lifestyle. Dr. Andrew Weil, a Harvard Medical trained physician, and advocate of alternative medicine is a good combination of the two (and forgive my saying this, not too crunchy birkenstock, which is often my worry with seeking alternate remedies for my health issues).

In this (not quite diet/ mostly lifestyle) manual for health, Dr. Weil explores the adoption of healthy habits into everyday living, including walking, drinking water, and the addition of vegetables, etc. into a balanced diet.

The book is broken down into different sections in a step by step approach, although is easily readable and adopted in less than eight weeks, although, I think for most people, slowly adopting habits is the way to make them stick.

Most of the stuff in this book I already knew, but Dr. Weil frames the issue in an informative and inspirational way. I'd recommend this to most people I know, just to take another look at how they are living, and what they can do to achieve optimum health.

Rebecca Jelinski says

I've read many diet and health books. This one exceeds them all. It focuses on what's most important in life. Your health by providing a sound ramp plan that addresses diet, exercise, supplements, mental health and optional additions for the very enthusiastic. Separate chapters after the core plan cover additional information by gender, age, if you live in a city, are a parent or if you're expecting.

Joanne Annabannabobanna says

4.5 stars. Bias alert: I have loved Dr. Weil since 1999 and everything he says makes perfect sense. I continue to refer to his timeless books as I attempt my daily exercise and diet regimen. That's right. I said timeless.

No trending fads, lame gimmicks or conceited trickery here. Dr. Weil is considered the leading proponent of integrative medicine and he is so Not-Dr.Oz inspirational. He's been combining traditional medical practices with alternative and herbal remedies and writing about them for at least 25 years. As the "guru of alternative medicine" his practical, no-nonsense advice is unparalleled, imo. And there are definite links to Eastern spiritual traditions in Weil's approach that I appreciate: various breathing exercises, with benefits as vital to health as diet and exercise, are discussed and detailed. Exceptional.

A clue as to the kind of human being he is: In an appendix to the companion guide book: "Eating Well for Optimum Health" (2000) the doc includes a brief description of people living today who never eat food but survive on their stored chi. Totally esoteric and fascinating! <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8...>

Btw: Found the mysterious Qigong, and it rules. If you're unfamiliar and plan to live past the age of fifty-five Weil (and more and more other 'aging experts') highly recommends it.

To a healthy oldness!
