

Know Thyself

During my daughter's first year of college, her volleyball coach called me with some shocking news. The coach informed me that my daughter, who played as a middle-hitter, had failed her physical and would require permission from a hematologist to continue playing with the team. I explained to the coach that my daughter had a genetic condition called Thalassemia, which causes chronic or severe anemia and has no cure. However, the coach insisted that my daughter obtain a medical release to continue playing.

The hematologist conducted his usual series of tests and then entered the room where we were waiting. He confirmed what we already knew - the diagnosis was Thalassemia. After a quick rundown of information, we left his office with the necessary signed release, and volleyball career secured.

The members of my family who have received this diagnosis know that eating nutritious foods, getting moderate exercise, and plenty of sleep are the only remedies for living life without suffering disabling effects.

Medical conditions, inherited disease, age, lifestyle, medications, weight, and times of intense stress or grief can all have a significant impact on our ability to manage the demands of our work and personal lives. It's important to be aware of these factors and take steps to address them to maintain our overall well-being and productivity.

We need to eat protein to support muscle growth and repair. Most adults should aim to consume around 100 grams of protein daily. Protein contains amino acids, the building blocks of muscle, hormones, and neurotransmitters. Some foods that provide protein (all nine essential amino acids) are beef, poultry, fish, dairy, and eggs. Additionally, soy, quinoa, and buckwheat are also great sources of complete protein. These foods are easily absorbed and used by our bodies. Protein has the added benefit of keeping you feeling full longer because it takes longer to fully digest.

Complex carbohydrates are an essential source of fuel for our brains and muscle movement. Including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in our diet can provide us with good sources of complex carbs. It's recommended to combine protein and complex carbs in every meal. This is because consuming protein alongside carbs helps keep blood sugar stable. While protein can ground us, carbs can help us soar.

In addition to nutrition, we need to know what helps our bodies perform at maximum levels. Everyone's needs are different, including yours, mine, and your co-workers. Consider a person who's been working in the control room for many years. This senior member of the team is likely to need extra protein for muscle and hormone regulation. They may also need more rest and stretch breaks to relieve joint pain which can worsen fatigue. They should also be aware of any medications they are taking that could affect their alertness and fitness for duty.

Take inventory of your daily habits. Are they supporting you in feeling well-rested and motivated to complete tasks when you start your shift? Keep in mind, your best practices may look different from those of your colleagues. If you need help creating a plan that caters to your individual needs, talk to your doctor. As you implement your plan, remember that the best way to make changes is to take one step at a time.

