

CHAPTER 1

TOTAL WELLNESS

Your blueprint for life

Functional Health is the new paradigm of wellness which is about being healthy so that you can embrace life..



ENJOY YOUR JOURNEY!

Chapter 1

Total Wellness – Your blueprint for life

Functional health is not just about a body's physical ability to move or to function. It is more about the body's overall optimization to do things. Total wellness introduces a new dimension of health which focuses on the foundation of body by its design, what disrupts its function, and how we can keep our bodies in shape by making conscious healthy choices.

This book is the realization of a dream. I'm passionate about wellness because I've experienced first-hand the difference total wellness can make to any life. I wanted to share my experience and understanding of total wellness because I know that it can transform your life too.

However, before we get onto the ways to bring total wellness into your life, for those new to the idea I wanted to explain the concept and just why it can be so beneficial to you and your loved ones.

A New Paradigm of Wellness

Total wellness, often called functional health, refers

to the holistic view of health that makes life so much better. Instead of just focusing on one aspect of health, such as improving the immune system or strengthening the heart, total wellness is the preservation of health everywhere. Your muscles, bones, immune system, your mental and emotional health and everything other aspect of your physical and spiritual being. By bringing everything together, total wellness helps you feel and be the healthiest you can be.

But total wellness is not just about health, the reason total wellness is important for you is because of the impact it can have on life. Functional health is not about being healthy for health's sake, it's about being healthy so that you can embrace life and enjoy everything you want to, without restriction. Right now, you may be relatively healthy, but do you have any lasting aches and pains? An old knee injury from your sports days, back pain from an accident maybe. Think about how that pain impacts life, not just your own but your family's.

If we are being honest with ourselves, most of us can think of a time where we skipped something that we really wanted to do because we were not sure we could complete it, or pain simply made it impossible. That could be mountain biking with the kids, sailing with the family or

even missing an important competition as an athlete.

Instead of suffering in pain, or missing out because of health concerns, total wellness provides a foundation for life that allows every individual to have the health to do the things they want to do. Whether that is reaching the highest level as an athlete or keeping up with the kids on a day at the park, the idea, and effect is the same. When we can live without physical limitations and pain, we feel freer, and with that comes clearer thinking and a spiritual balance that brings happiness. Total wellness really is a new paradigm for health that can transform your life, and those around you.

A New Dimension of Health

The holistic thinking of total wellness is so different to the thinking that you are used to, it can be difficult to adjust. If you talk about illness to friends and family, it will usually be in relation to Uncle Jack's heart disease, diabetes or depression (unlucky Jack!). Society recognizes those conditions as general medical health problems, cardiovascular problems and mental health issues, and they can indeed have a debilitating effect on your life.

But what if you have a muscle strain, or a pinched nerve, those things can severely limit your ability to do

everything you want, and they can even have an impact on your working day. But how many will recognize such a problem as an illness? You may even be living with the pain of a similar issue yourself right now, no one thinks you're ill, do they?

For most people, having such pain is simply something to live with through work and everything else life involves. As a society, we seem to have accepted that life involves pain like this, and the limitations it imposes on the things you can do. But it does not have to be like that. Functional health embraces every facet of physical, mental and spiritual health, recognizing that a muscle strain that stops you doing something is a health problem.

The core thinking in total wellness is that anything that impairs your ability to function normally in life or any athletic pursuit is compromising your functional health. By recognizing the impact of these health issues, unlike traditional health, you are saying that they are not just something to live with, but a problem to be treated and an obstacle to living the life you want that must be overcome.

It is that thinking, the idea that any problem that prevents you from being what you want to be and do what

you want to do is an illness, which takes the idea of health into a new dimension. Total wellness really does mean complete wellness. Feeling great physically, mentally and spiritually frees you from constrain and brings all possibilities life has to offer within reach.

Foundation by Design

When talking about functional health, the foundation for what we view as ‘healthy’ is the body’s physical design. Think of the body as a complex machine, like any machine, it works at its best when it is working exactly as designed.

For a machine, that means the right lubricant, power, every part and joint as originally specified, and completing tasks the way it was deigned to do. For your body, that means receiving the nutrients it needs, every muscle and joint working without pain and so on.

To optimize your body’s health, it also means working the way your body is designed to work too. In both daily activity and in exercise, working with your body rather than against it is key to getting results. Improving your functional health means understanding those basics of how the body moves and works, using a holistic or integrated approach to find ways to optimize performance.

Being healthy and in shape to do nothing

Some may think that most pain is caused through overextending yourself in some way. Trying to achieve a personal best on the track or reaching for an impossible catch may bring risks, but the truth is that most injuries occur doing routine things. In fact, the riskiest way to spend your time is doing nothing at all. Sitting at a desk doing nothing (physically), or just lounging around really doing nothing are the cause of more back pain than any sport, and there is a reason for this.

Having good functional health means that your body is healthy and in shape, so that it can do anything you want to do. That includes ‘nothing’, because to do that you really do have to be in shape.

While everyone gains from total wellness, not everyone who reads this book will need to have the agility of a basketball player, the endurance of a cyclist or the strength of a football player. Everyone’s functional health is unique. Your functional health is the level of health that allows you to do whatever it is you want to do. You determine what level of Functional Health you need to

improve your performance of your life or athletic sport. Accomplishing functional health or optimal performance requires that we assess and understand the main pillars of wellness - nutrition, exercise, sleep, stress, intelligence/mind, occupational safety and others.

Better Function means Better Living means Better Performance

The reasons and way we exercise change throughout life. It begins in youth as a way to look and feel good, the idea that you need to work out just to be able to do nothing never crosses the mind at that age.

However, age, or even a few injuries as an athlete, changes all that. Aches and pains, stiff joints all begin to appear, and suddenly you find that injuries happen much more frequently too. Just doing things you normally do begin to cause problems, and suddenly, the idea that you may no longer be able to do the sport or other things you enjoy becomes a very real prospect. Suddenly, a game of touch football down the park is not just a Sunday morning thing you do without thinking, it's an event to prepare for, that you need to take care in, and that you need a few painkillers ready for the consequences.

Here, you can still do those things, but you are far more aware of your functional mortality, and that changes your perspective.

Making a Conscious Choice

With that new perspective, exercise becomes something completely different, and with that, you probably need a new approach too. In fact, that new approach is a necessity if you want to maintain functional health and achieve total wellness. Because ultimately, that is your best bet for a healthy, active and enjoyable lifestyle in the years ahead.

Life is not a spectator sport, it's about participating, getting involved in everything you want to do, and functional health ensures that when you want to participate, you have the physical health to do so.

I hope that having understood how total wellness can transform your life and ensure you get the most from everything it has to offer, you are ready to take the first steps on your journey to functional health and total wellness.

Over the next chapters we will look through every facet of your health and how you can take control and achieve total wellness. It takes commitment, so before we

end this chapter, I want to ask you commit yourself to this journey. Choose a life of activity and participation, choose to maintain your functional health and embrace total wellness. Do it now, make that commitment, and you are ready for life as it should be lived.