

Seven Gettits for Miraculous Health and Fitness in the 21st century

By Phil Kaplan

SECTION 1: THE WILD RIDE

OK, you've been on a wild ride. If you've attempted fitness and despite partial commitments, some results, and achievement milestones, you're presently in a body you aren't particularly thrilled with, you had a seat on the WILD RIDE roller coaster. You didn't board the roller coaster by choice, but once you unwittingly strapped on the harness, you were whisked along for the chaotic ride.



What am I talking about? I'm talking about the twists and turns and loops and pitfalls that Americans seeking weight loss, health, and fitness have collectively been exposed to.

There was a time we were told to **reduce our fat intake**. We were also told to get into our Target Heart Zones and stay there for awhile to burn fat.



The ride didn't stop there. Some people stuck to their programs, some people were more erratic, but the next turn flipped things upside down.

*"Hold on people, **fat isn't the culprit!** Its those darn carbohydrates! You know the pasta you've been eating because the experts told you it gave you energy? Well, turns out it gave you love handles. If you want fat loss, stop eating those carbohydrates . . . oh, and as far as the exercise thing . . . weights are the key to metabolism. Yes, for the girls too!"*

Suddenly, a loop throws everything upside down. Phen-fen hits the mainstream as the new miraculous weight loss drug, and the bodybuilding underground brings forth a gray market of some drugs on the borderline of legality, clenbuterol and ephedrine.

Amazingly, as the ride continues, as a population we grow fatter and move farther away from health. Phen-fen is pulled from the market after it brings some people primary pulmonary hypertension, a fatal heart and lung ailment, but the drug companies have tasted blood. They pour out new drugs, Redux, Meridia, and Xenical hit the market, and to kick things up to a new level, the drug companies start buying advertising time on television!

While the drug sellers admire their exploits, the supplement industry sees an opportunity. They see the wild ride is taking a turn toward relying upon a pill, and if they move quickly, they don't have to worry about research and FDA approval.



After all, they don't sell "drugs," they sell "supplements!" Ephedrine comes from an herb and so does caffeine.

The ephedrine / caffeine "fat burners" hit the market. Are they fat burners? Not really, but they are stimulants and they are addictive, so lots of people started buying lots of bottles of lots of pills.

Predictably, ephedrine gets some bad press and over time gets pulled from the world of fat burning, but by now there's a never-ending party going on. The drug companies are raking it in, and the supplement sellers find other stimulant compounds they can sell as "new fat burners." There's a feeding frenzy as the ride takes our well-intentioned fitness wanters through the land of "magic pills."

Now the professional end of the fitness field is getting worked up. Fitness professionals understand kinesiology and they fully grasp the importance of exercise in any health program, so they attend workshops and seminars and they find out . . . those exercise machines people were using in the gyms . . . they suck! They ignore the core muscles, they force the body into unnatural linear movement patterns, and they may put excessive strain on joints and connective tissue. The "new" turn is functional training! Suddenly, the fitness world erupts with medicine balls, stability balls, bands, and contraptions, and trainers have people standing on wobbly devices helping clients train for better balance and stability. At this point, you'd think the ride ends. You'd think the population has been properly led . . . but you'd be thinking incorrectly. It's only yet another turn.



Some clever pseudo-scientists are watching from a distance, noting the emergence of new infomercial devices, watching the growth of old-school Pilates presented as "new," and realizing there's a hole. Yes, there's an opening. Nobody seems to be focusing on a culprit. At one time people knew the villain was fat, then they came to know the villain was carbs, and now . . . they were going to introduce a new villain. Cortisol!

Corti-slim was released with an incredible marketing campaign using computer graphics to shrink a waistline in seconds. The "TV-scientist" showed us a graphic of a cortisol molecule and explained, *"regardless of what you do with your exercise and eating, if you have too much fat around your midsection, you have a cortisol problem."* Few people outside of the worlds of medicine, endocrinology, and biochemistry had heard of this monster before, but the infomercial took the ride to a new high.



Cortisol is "the stress hormone that makes you fat." True? Nope. At best it's hype built on partial truth, but wow did that work . . . I mean . . . from a "let's make money at the expense of people" perspective of "work."

Next came hoodia, the great weight loss cactus pill touted as the weight loss secret of the Kalahari, and as the pill parade continued, the gyms became even more confusing.

Functional training replaces selectorized resistance machines . . . but what about the cardio idea? What about the 15-20 minute minimum requirement three days per week in your Target Heart Zone to burn fat? There was evidence those theories were simply a turn on the ride. The new lines of treadmills, elliptical, and stationary bikes had charts that indicated a lower intensity range referred to as your “fat loss zone.”



Some rebels said “enuff’s enuff” and the Bootcamp explosion led to a massive scream as the ride ran amuck. Bootcamps for men, bootcamps for moms, bootcamps on the beach, and bootcamps for athletes seemed to emerge in every neighborhood and suddenly the idea of “the gym” seemed archaic. The functional training movement teamed up with the bootcamp concept and the “kick your ass hard doing lots of exhaustive movements” idea took hold, and “Cross Fit” became an explosive phenom.

I can keep going, but I’m personally exhausted just from sketching the boundaries of the wild ride. If you tried to take all of that wisdom that was sent our way over all of those years, the conclusion would be don’t eat fat, and eat carbs, and don’t eat carbs, and eat fat, and commit to lengthy aerobic exercise sessions, which isn’t really all that important after all, since the key lies in “weights,” and drugs, and supplements, and use the gym machines, but don’t, and run fast, but run slow, but exercise as hard as you can.

Now, is it any wonder our population is fat, tired, dis-eased, and confused? I’d have to say no. It isn’t any wonder at all! After a wild ride like that, it’s amazing so many people are still trying.

SECTION 2: THE DESPERATE NEED FOR CLARITY

I’ve spent the last 30 years challenging the wild ride, trying to keep people on a sound course of what was evidenced and proven. I relentlessly examined the research and the claims, and realized misinformation was more of a culprit than fats, carbs, or cortisol. Everything I shared with clients 30 years ago holds true today, and I now meet former clients who thank me for changing their lives decades ago. They understood, they stayed the course, and they found lifelong fitness.

Here we are, after a decade of the 21st century has gone by, and the ride is in full motion, but I say it’s time to get off. I’m about to share seven “gettits.”

What’s a gettit? Urban slang defines it as a sexual position or sexual demeanor, but that’s not what I’m referring to here. I’m referring to the theory that “some people “get it” and some people don’t.”

If you fail to understand the realities of the human machine and its care, fitness will elude you forever. On the other hand, if you're willing to get off of the ride, realize that many of your beliefs have shifted erratically as the public message changed, and accept that the foundation of "what works to help human beings find fitness" will work for you, you open up your mind to new information. Every thought that knocks a false belief out of your brain and replaces it with a "yeah, that makes sense" is, at least in my language, *a gettit*.

So, in hopes of you "getting it," I'm about to share Seven Hard-Hitting Gettits that I hope will release you from the wild ride and lead you to a new you, a body that you love!

SECTION 3: THE SEVEN GETTITS

Gettit #1: *It's not your willpower. It's your insulin that's out of control!*

Insulin disruption is epidemic .



OK, before I start on my insulin rant, you'd have every right to accuse me of being hypocritical. "Why, Phil, did you condemn diet marketers and supplement sellers for indicting carbs and cortisol when you're about to indict insulin?" With all due respect, let me explain. Insulin is not the cause as much as the effect, or at least, an intermediary, but a failure to understand what the 21st century has done to human insulin levels will leave you limited in your ability to find optimal health and fitness.

You likely know insulin as "the thing diabetics inject." It is. It's a "storage hormone" that removes excess glucose (sugar) from the bloodstream and stores it as fuel in the muscles and the liver. Insulin-controlled diabetics are managing their blood sugar exogenously (using something outside of the body to drive something inside the body) because something internal is malfunctioning.

We've always had a segment of our population suffering pancreas pathology, the pancreas being the gland that manufactures insulin, but never before have we had an epidemic of what is now referred to as "type 2 diabetes."

"Type 1" is the diabetic disease we've known for years. The pancreas is broken and exogenous insulin keeps blood sugar in check. Type 2 is newer. In fact, it used to be called "adult onset diabetes." It is a lifestyle disease. In other words, in the great majority of cases, it is self-induced, and it used to take 20, 30, or 40 years of poor nutrition and inactivity to create this condition. Today, nutrition has changed so radically (not in a good way) insulin compromise is showing up in 10 and 12 year olds, thus the shift from "Adult Onset" to Type 2.

When insulin is disrupted, the body has a difficult time efficiently managing fuel, and fat loss ability is compromised. The simplest way to explain what is going on epidemically is . . . the American pancreas is confused and the damage trickles downward! High carb intake, then low carb intake, then dieting, then sugar binging, and the erratic or continued ingestion of refined, bleached, and processed carbohydrates lead to blood sugar eruptions and drops, and the pancreas tries desperately to keep up. It begins going often into “insulin dominance” but the receptor sites at the cellular level become lazy or blocked. In other words, insulin is present, but isn’t doing its job, and blood sugar gets higher, and higher, and higher as the endogenous control is weakened.

If you’ve been on 10 or 12 diets in your life, if you’ve been diagnosed with “elevated blood glucose,” if there are dramatic differences in your energy between 10 AM and 3 PM, if you’re fighting or indulging sugar cravings every evening, if you’re storing more fat than you used to, and if you go through any sugar binges, it’s quite likely you’re a statistic.

Now the good news. **Fix insulin** (I’ve found, simply from my own experience in taking clients through my A.L.I.V.E. protocol most Type 2 cases to be fixable without medication) **and you do wonders to fix metabolism!** The pancreas wants for consistency. It wants a steady and slow release of glucose from nutrient complete meals. It doesn’t want simple sugars, it wants thermic meals, meals that ask the body to work in the act of digestion, allowing proteins to break down gradually into building blocks of cells, and maintaining a blood glucose constant as it gradually stores fuel for the near future. Eating frequently is vital, as is reducing refined carbohydrate intake and simple sugar intake, but so too is ensuring adequate protein, balanced meals, and a daily exercise “spike” and “recover” so the body becomes efficient at “storing” and “releasing” fuel as you need it. Of course, this plays into the Synergy I’ve always touted as “what works,” the right nutrition (eating, not starving), moderate aerobic exercise (you’ll find later how moderate it’s become), and a concern for muscle. If any piece of the Synergy is absent, you’re going to wind up frustrated, but if you learn to make all three pieces a habitual part of the life you enjoy, your pancreas will thank you in many ways, and your mirror will reflect the gratitude.

Gettit #2: Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia, Reduced Sex Drive, and Attention Deficit aren’t diagnoses. They’re symptoms!

I meet many people who reluctantly wear labels. They were often given these labels by doctors, or sometimes, they simply read “some stuff on the internet” and it led them to stamp themselves using their very own undesired labeling strategy. *Chronic fatigue syndrome* and *fibromyalgia* are incredibly common. The first is a severe lack of energy, the second moderate to severe chronic muscular pain. They are often satisfied, not with their lives, but with the diagnoses, and they seek answers in medications and supplements.

Here's what I'd suggest. If you're having trouble producing energy, you're quite likely having a problem at the mitochondrial level. The sections of human cells known as mitochondria are the energy centers of the cells, and in that, the energy centers of life (no energy, no life). If the wall or function of the mitochondria are damaged, energy suffers. What leads to reduction in mitochondrial integrity? Oxidative stress! The energy-centers are weakened by poor nutrition, and then when toxins, emotional stress, processed foodstuffs, and polluted air enter our bodies, the energy centers are beaten up and broken down. There is incredible research, backed by the results I've achieved with people through my A.L.I.V.E. protocol, to demonstrate that specific types of exercise, when matched with supportive eating, can rebuild mitochondria. In fact, by incorporating some of the important elements of a supportive nutrition and exercise program, you can reverse your biological age, rejuvenating the cells of your body.

Fibromyalgia and reduced sex drive are other symptoms of "oxidative stress" and "cellular damage." and there aren't any medications that "fix" these problems. Responsibility is vital, as is preliminary guidance for most people seeking to be responsible and jump off of the wild ride.



I'm preparing myself for the slew of criticisms I'm about to receive from Chronic Fatigue and Fibromyalgia sufferers who will insist these conditions are real. I want to try to buffer the attack by clarifying. I know that they're real. I don't question the existence and seriously debilitating nature of these conditions. I believe, however, the mistake is stopping at diagnosis and turning toward managing the condition through medical and supplemental interventions. We've entered into a world where symptoms are given names and accepted as dis-eases. I think we should work to erase those labels. My head hurts isn't a dis-ease, but a symptom. So too is "my sex drive is dropping," "I'm too tired to get off the couch," and "my muscles ache so much I can't carry my child." I am not presenting anything I have to offer as a "cure," but I will tell you with absolute conviction, I've seen people with these conditions find, not only relief, but complete reversal of the sense of being compromised in any way.

Attention Deficit warrants its own article, and I'll likely write that article soon, but for now, let's recognize it as difficulty concentrating. It isn't only amped up kids (many of them consuming insane amounts of sugar and caffeine) who are diagnosed with a deficit of attention, but also adults who describe a reduced ability to concentrate. These, too, are symptoms. There are of course some cases where neurotransmission in the brain is pathologically compromised, but the explosive diagnosis of this "condition" suggests that it is, at least at times, lifestyle induced, and if we clean up our internal and external environments, often the symptoms will diminish or vanish completely.

Gettit #3 - You didn't get sick on the day your doctor said you did! Disease is a continuum.

"I developed a thyroid problem when I was 42" and "I developed high cholesterol two years ago" are common utterances that reveal an understandable ignorance. Ignorance, in this case, has nothing to do with lack of intelligence. It has to do with a flawed medical system in which well-meaning doctors are taught to diagnose and medicate at the expense of educating and empowering. The diagnosis allows for the doctor to issue a "code," and with that code insurance companies may cover prescribed meds. Unfortunately, in most doctor-patient interaction, there isn't time to explain the disease continuum. I have the time.

You don't "get" hypothyroidism like you "get" a cold. It happens over time. Your lifestyle habits impact your brain's communication with the pituitary, and that relationship determines how active or inactive the thyroid gland may be in its production of metabolism-regulating hormones. Calorie deprivation coaxes the body into a protective mode where it attempts to adjust to limited caloric intake.



A part of that mechanism involves the communicative network between the brain and endocrine system. Much like "pancreatic confusion" leading to changes in insulin production, changes in endocrine communication with the thyroid gland leads to "thyroid confusion." Erratic eating habits can lead to thyroid concerns over time, and the erosive decay along that timeline is the continuum I'm referring to. If you can identify the progression, and understand, accept, and implement an exercise and eating intervention that supports metabolism, you can move back along that continuum, back toward health.

Conceptually, this continuum relates to heart disease, inflammatory disease, blood sugar irregularities, and hormonal imbalances. You don't "get" the disease in a moment, but you allow a condition to progress over time. Take the reins and reverse the movement along the path that has disease on one end and optimal health on the other.

Gettit #4: What we've learned about exercise is wrong. Less may be more . . . as in 6 minutes a day!

With all of the twists and turns, one of the most confusing factors has been consideration of exercise volume. We look at athletes and their excessive training loads and that leads to the assumption that the more you do, the more fit you become. Athletes have not only developed their performance ability, but they've also developed their recuperative powers, and they don't take recuperation lightly. Their nutrition, rest, and sleep are vital parts of their training regimens.

Whether or not you achieve positive change from an exercise and eating regimen comes down to a complex balance between load and recovery, between “work” and “recuperation.” One of the elements of this balance that has been too-long neglected in conventional exercise circles is the parasympathetic recovery system. The adrenal system, the glandular system that causes that fight or flight stir we’ve become familiar with works to prepare the body for action, but when there is no longer need for stimulation, the parasympathetic system helps the body to recover, to return to a state of relaxation. The parasympathetic system can be trained to allow for better recovery, and science links improvements in recovery with decreases in inflammation. The bottom line is this . . . I’ve been leading people to do six-minute aerobic sessions with 12-second all-out bursts and their improvements in body composition and health have been astounding.



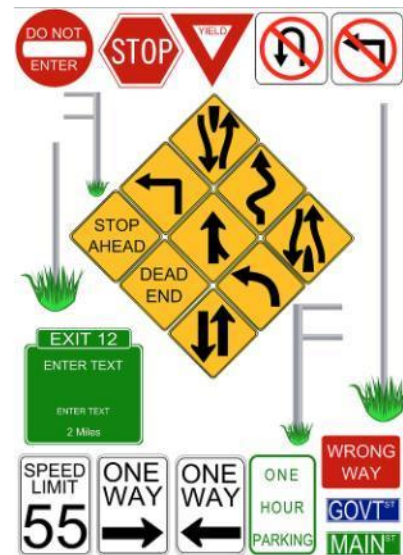
I’m not suggesting that six minutes a day will be all anyone needs for improvement, but a twenty minute resistance training routine, moving the body through space the way the body was designed to move, combined with six minutes of aerobic exercise staggering sympathetic response with parasympathetic recovery is the underlying foundation of my A.L.I.V.E. protocol. Most people are shocked by how little the exercise volume is and how the results prove for superior to those results they achieved with greater volume.

Gettit #5: Conventional Wisdom isn’t wisdom at all

There are some elements of the programs I prescribe that go completely against convention. *“Phil, you can’t train the same muscles on consecutive days! Conventional wisdom says you’ll overtrain. The muscles need 48 hours for recuperation.”* Here’s my response.

“Screw conventional wisdom!” Conventional wisdom changes so quickly it’s like a map cluttered with conflicting directions.

If you’re looking for “conventional wisdom,” perhaps a contradiction in terms, you’ll either find some of the twists and turns on the roller coaster ride, or . . . you’ll begin the next drop by hooking onto the HcG Diet, signing up for the lap band, believing that 15 minutes of any activity a day is sufficient, or you’ll buy new expensive sneakers that are going to “shape up your legs” as you walk. Convention is driven by advertising more than it is by evidence.



Let's be honest. Conventional refers to a practice that is common. We know Americans are fatter than ever and dis-ease is on the climb. If what people are commonly doing is leading to a decline in health . . . who in their right mind wants to do what's conventional?

Gettit #6 - More than eight supplements and you're likely being drained

Stock up on supplements and prepare to have something drained. Maybe not your health, but certainly your bank account. Supplement sales is big business and the big sellers have learned, the right marketing spin, the right message on a website, can make people believe a single supplement will in and of itself serve as a solution. There are many supplements that have shown genuine promise in research. Saw palmetto has proven valuable in cases of prostatitis. N-Acetyl Cysteine has demonstrated increases in glutathione, the immune system's most powerful anti-oxidant. Acetyl L-Carnitine and Alpha-Lipoic Acid have both demonstrated anti-oxidant properties at the cellular level. Pure fish oil from untarnished sources has significant evidence behind it to demonstrate its anti-inflammatory properties. Then there are the standard vita-mineral formulas that provide us the micronutrition assurance that puts our minds at ease. Add into the mix meal replacements (almost a necessity today), fiber, and the ergogenic training aids athletes use. Amino acids, herbal protection, and cleansing formulas round out the overkill and when you total up the dollars you'd spend on all of the supplemental products the common marketing would lead you to believe you "need," you're out 700 dollars a month or more!



While specific supplements have specific biological value, you are a unique organism and your needs are individual much like your fingerprint. Not only is your metabolism intricately unique, but so is your lifestyle. If you're going to get the best value for your dollar, you'll want to recognize that food is your foundation and long term tweaking of "what you eat" can help you match your unique nutrition program with your unique needs.

Although we are biological individuals, there are those rules that apply across the board. Try to get nutrient complete meals from the most natural sources possible. Next, consider "filling in the gaps" with a daily shake that might contain protein, fiber, and probiotics. At that point your gut is being given the assistance it may need to allow you to better utilize the nutrients you're getting from your supportive meals. The starchy carbs and fibrous carbs you consume give you a slow and steady stream of energy, and if you incorporate wild caught cold water fish into a few of your weekly meals, you're getting much of what you're going to want from food.

At that point, if you feel you want to find “better” nutrition, study the available information, try to separate hype from science (not easy to do but I hope to serve as a resource for helping people make those distinctions), and try a single supplemental product. In other words, if you’re experiencing some joint pain, and you’ve looked at the research and are satisfied that there might be some value to glucosamine / chondroitin, add in such a product and stay with it for a few months. Then you can evaluate its value.

I meet many people who are taking upwards of 20 supplements a day, and while it is feasible that each one has value, I find in most cases some of the supplements are perceived excuses for poor nutrition. Almost always, we can find improvement by making positive shifts in food consumption.

After working with tens of thousands of people consuming hundreds of thousands of supplements, I find seven or eight supplements to be reasonable for most. The question, before adding more to the mix, should be, “do I know this one is working for me?” If the answer is a shrug, then replace one of your supplements and try something new.

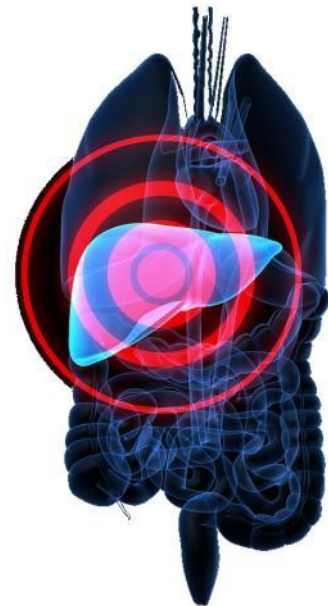
The common mistake I want to prevent you from making is falling into the belief that says, “this supplement will fix you.” It won’t. At best, it can be a supplemental piece of the all-important Synergy.

Gettit #7 - Beware the Tipping Point!

Your body is a detox wonder . . . until, the “load’ becomes overbearing, and once that baby overflows, once you “tip” beyond balance, you have a whole lot of cleaning up to do.

Think of the human liver as a waste plant, a location where trash and waste can be filtered out of the environment. When the liver is capable of meeting the filtering demand, it does a wonderful job, but once it becomes overwhelmed, once the toxic load becomes excessive, both the liver and the cells of virtually every bodily system begin to break down, to change their structures, and to re-script their genetic programming.

Fifteen years ago, toxins were entering our body if we smoked cigarettes or hung around with people who spent the better part of their days in nicotine clouds. Add in auto-exhaust and the toxins pumped into our air and dumped into our water supply and our incredible biological systems could funnel out the toxins at least as quickly as they came in. Today, things have changed dramatically.



1500 new chemical compounds are released into the environment with little EPA control every year. Many of these have been identified as toxins, carcinogens, or agents that bring damage to entire bodily systems. You'll find these chemicals in your foods, your home (drywall, paint, furniture, etc.), your cleaning supplies, laundry products, fragrance products, aerosol sprays, water (even bottled water) and plastics. You'll find toxins come out of your AC vents in your car, seep through your home foundation from pesticides, and move through the air ducts in many office spaces.

I've seen the tipping point first hand. After being exposed to mold, my body began holding onto toxins, and the "undoing" process is a bear. It's major. It requires a far more delicate balance between exercise and recovery, emotional stress management, super clean food choices, avoidance of perfumes, fragrances, and air fresheners, sweating, breathing, and detoxing.

Why is our population becoming sicker? It's far to say that at least a portion of the reason comes down to the recognition that the buildup of toxins is leading to excessive levels of oxidative stress.

I've always been healthy and fitness minded, so I had a great head start in working to beat this health challenge, but many people affected negatively by toxins lose their quality of life, their health, and in some cases, they are swallowed by toxin-induced diseases that doctors simply call cancer, leukemia, or auto immune disease.

Today, exercise and supportive eating combined with meticulous choices as to what you put in your home and your body are essential to maintain optimal health and fitness, so minimize your exposures and get lots of clean fresh air.

IN CONCLUSION

The best weapons for fitness are those same weapons that battle disease. The "panacea" medical approach considers interventions such as drugs and surgeries, but the medical field has neglected to recognize the power of responsibility and self-care.

While nothing that I do today has invalidated anything I've done with clients in the past, I continue to learn, and the "new strategies" I've learned to employ simply stack upon the foundational elements I've held to all along. Today, it isn't only about changing carb intake and increasing training intensity to get great abs. With the degradation of our food supply, the toxic load we're faced with, and the increasing stresses our society imposes upon us, we need new responses to handle unprecedented reactions.

If you want to shed "those last five pounds," or "get your energy back," if you want to "increase endurance for better running times" or "reverse the inflammation your doctor identified in your arterial system," the same approach proves valuable.

- Eat clean and often
- Exercise strategically
- Manage your environment
- Commit to downtime and fun-time (with family)
- Get outside and breathe deeply inhaling fresh air

Sounds simple? It isn't, at least not at first. In closing, allow me to briefly revisit each of those bullet points adding a few words of clarity to each point, and then, it's in your hands. Here we go . . .

Eat clean and often (not easy – it requires a new understanding of food choices), **exercise strategically** (combining resistance with core movement, tapping the anaerobic threshold, and staggering sympathetic with parasympathetic response), and **manage your environment** (make careful choices when it comes to furnishings, cleaning supplies, or technology that you bring into your home). **Commit, not only to down time, but to fun-time**, and **get outside in fresh air** (the park between the buildings in downtown Manhattan where trucks drive by with gray exhaust every eight seconds doesn't count), and watch how it all starts to fall into place. Fat goes away for thrilling aesthetic change. You begin to feel better, function better, and better ward off dis-ease, and you feel a wonderful sense of control, not only over your health, but of your life!

Do you Gettit?

I hope you do.

I invite your thoughts and feedback.

- Phil Kaplan

Note: The concepts discussed herein are all strategically incorporated into the A.L.I.V.E. protocol. You can now attend a live interactive webinar where the author shares the specifics of the program and details a fail-proof course of physical improvement. Find additional information on A.L.I.V.E. at:

<http://yourhealthbeginsnow.com>

Find more information at: <http://philkaplan.com>

To reach Phil Kaplan with comments or questions, email phil@philkaplan.com

