The Simplicity Project

A Simple, No-Nonsense Approach to Losing Weight & Changing Your Body

Forever!

Jenn Pike

Former Model turned Yogi & Lead Holistic Nutritionist to Yoga Rock Star Sadie Nardini
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Forever!
"The Simplicity Project is a masterful compilation of everything you could possibly want to know if you’d like to create a healthier, lighter, more vital version of yourself. I’ve known Jenn for years and I can tell you that she embodies these very concepts you’re about to read.

Professionally, I have referred hundreds of patients to her services as a Registered Holistic Nutritionist because of her phenomenal ability to communicate complex ideas in a simple, specific and realistic manner. She knows it’s not enough for you to just receive the information, but to know how it fits into your life and is going to result in lasting changes.

Jenn’s heart, passion, humour and say-it-like-it-is approach is 100% refreshing. She is your biggest cheerleader and your most blunt friend all rolled into one! Enjoy this book—it will most certainly change your life if you let it."

Dr. Laura Foster, D.C., B.Sc.

“Jenn Pike is my go-to resource for nutritional education and combined physical therapies. Her extensive qualifications and experience, and her boundless enthusiasm, provide us all with the information and motivation we need to improve our health and well-being.”

My Light to Your Light, Tathaastu* SO BE IT, Theresa Gagnon
“I am not a person who is partial to testimonials in general, but my exposure to, and involvement with Jenn Pike and Simplicity have been life-changing for me, therefore, I would like to share my experience with others.

I met Jenn when she first opened up Simplicity in 2010. I was 57 at the time, had exercised all my life, but needed something else in my life. I had recently retired from a career with the Ontario Public Service and was going through ‘new retiree’ doubts. I hadn’t practiced yoga in a very long time, but had this nagging pull to go back and revisit it. So I took the plunge.

What has inspired and kept me loyal to Jenn Pike and Simplicity? Simple. It’s her vision, her energetic personality, her caring, and understanding. The studio itself is a thriving mini hamlet of yoga, health, wellness and friendship. I find it inspirational, soothing, and above all, my second home. My immersion into yoga and all it encompasses has helped me become a more understanding, calm and nurturing individual. I eat and live healthier!

Jenn has shown me what is possible at any age and, as a result, I have learned to enjoy life more, accept and address challenges as they arise and appreciate everyone in my life. My objective is to emulate Jenn’s focus and passion and become a yoga teacher myself in one year’s time.

I truly respect Jenn and all the personal sacrifices she has made to make her dream come true! We in the community have definitely benefited greatly!

Here’s to your continued passion, health and growth!”

Hugs, Sandy Wickeler
"I met Jenn Pike almost two years ago when I walked into her yoga studio with the intention to introduce a new component to my exercise practice—stretching. I’d never done much of it before. My intention was that simple when I first went there—I needed to start stretching. Now, almost two years later, my life has gone through a major transformation. Jenn has been my yoga instructor, my personal trainer, my nutritionist, an invaluable consultant, a great inspiration, and an exceptional role model. Jenn leads the way for, and motivates people to take control of their body, mind and health. And what I love about Jenn’s style is she is practical, real and down to earth. I am personally inspired by Jenn’s example to be the best me and have fun doing it!"

Heidi McDonald

“The practice of holistic nutrition is an incredible science of combination and observation. Jenn has an outstanding talent and the wisdom to support the best balanced and complete program for her students. She is an advocate of empowerment and education. She is exceptional in her approach to the best potential and, most importantly, Jenn demonstrates a total holistic lifestyle. She is an active, wise and truthful model of her beliefs in action. Thanks Jenn. You inspire me!"

Ann Green
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I first met Jenn Pike in a yoga workshop I was leading in Canada. She’d had the guts to postpone her own studio opening for a few days in order to attend and sit with someone she felt might have some inspiration for her. That’s when I knew I liked this woman.

It wasn’t until we began talking after class, and her incredible depth of nutrition and fitness knowledge came pouring out that I understood that I needed her as well.

I’ve become an international yoga and wellness instructor, TV host, author, and much more. Along with manifesting my personal and professional dreams, I’d been on a physical tear, constantly touring to teach, existing between airports and hotels, saying yes to every opportunity that was presented, and sometimes, neglecting my own self-nourishment in favour of just “getting it done”. I was beginning to default to sugary lattes and quick-fixes to power me through.

One day I was feeling so fatigued and bloated after an especially long time on the road—and eating poorly. I knew I needed to do something differently, after all, I am a role model for health, so I had to rein it in, not only for my own sake, but so that I could speak in public to my students and not feel like a hypocrite.

Diet, or as I like to call it, a “food lifestyle” is personal, yet there are some principles that are absolutely universal. And
when it comes to the Self, it’s all too easy to lose perspective. I definitely had.

Jenn intervened, went through an entire nutrition profile for me and my activity level, and pinpointed many places, such as lack of enough protein and the aforementioned sugar addiction, where I was sabotaging, not supporting, all the good work I was doing out in the world—and in my body.

Together we were able to kick my negative habits to the curb and make space for me in the madness, all while keeping my best body-mind-spirit routines so simple—simple enough to fit into my busy life, and that’s saying a lot.

Using Jenn’s program, I lost excess weight and bloating, gained energy, and found that toned, true body I knew was in there somewhere. Best of all, I’m now empowered to clearly, straightforwardly understand how to carry this state of being through my whole life, forever. There is no better gift than this, and you are holding it in your hands.

And don’t worry—there are so many different voices and opinions on what works when it comes to your health ... and at this point, I’ve probably met them all, or at least done their programs. I can tell you that Jenn is the real deal. Out of all the experts I’ve met, she is one of the few I could confidently categorize as a genius.

Yet somehow, she has simplified her genius so that anyone and everyone can grasp exactly what to do next to co-create their most incredible, vibrant experience, not of simply living, but of fully being alive.

For me, this is the mark of a masterful teacher: someone who not only knows things, but can translate them into practical tips and tools that anyone, from über-yogis to frazzled new moms, stressed execs and beyond can apply—today—with ease.

We require a lifestyle of giving out without burning out,
and Jenn’s book, *The Simplicity Project* is your best advocate to transform yourself into the vital, glowing, fit, toned, energetic you that you’re meant to be. I love her principles so much, I included some of Jenn’s quick recipes, and *The Simplicity Project* as a resource in my own book, *The 21-Day Yoga Body* (Random House, Sept 2013).

I’m not only blessed to have Jenn as one of my colleagues and support network, I’m excited for you to gain the fast-track to the wisdom and techniques that she’s compiled and simplified over the course of many years. Now you can skip light-years ahead; just follow the program, and watch yourself be revealed and renewed, on all levels.

I’ll see you on the other side. It’s incredible over here.

Sadie Nardini

Host of *Rock Your Yoga* on Viera Living TV
Author of the *21 Day Yoga Body* (Random House)
I am so grateful for all of the amazing people, teachers, students and influences in my life; it is a challenge for me to summarize my appreciation to a few. First and foremost I need to thank my husband, Chris, who has been so supportive and loving during this whole journey, and our two amazing and spirited children, Emerson and Sam. They have, by far, been my greatest teachers in life and continue to push me to creative abilities I did not know I had. They are also, quite possibly, the best huggers. To my Mom and Dad, you have always been my biggest fans and made me feel like anything was possible. I have no doubt that growing up with home-cooked meals made the difference and guided me to where I am today. So much love to you both. To my sister, Wendy, my brother, Matthew, and their families, your love, enthusiasm and support mean the world to me. To Bruce, Lesley and kids, thank you for your support and never-ending excitement for all I do. And to my girlfriends, thank you for years of enduring my recommendations, classes and insane schedule. I love you all.

To MY teachers: Caroline Dupont, my earliest teachings in your kitchen and with your books sparked my interest in this field, which eventually led me to this point. Your kind-
ness, passion, and integrity are absolutely infectious. Theresa Gagnon, you were by far the greatest influence in my yoga practice. Your teachings extended beyond the mat, and I am always grateful for you and our friendship. Ann Green, my friend, you are the truest warrior of life that I know! You are such an inspiration of growth, love, and real humanity; I cherish our friendship and look forward to future projects and endeavours together. Sadie Nardini, you Sista are a true rock star in my life. The level of all that has transpired since we met and became great friends and partners in education and fierceness has been one of the most incredible gifts to me—a ridiculous amount of love, respect, and gratitude to you. Laura Foster, we truly are cut from the same cloth, girlfriend. I don’t even know where to begin with how grateful I am for our amazing friendship and accountability to each other. You have been such an awesome mentor to me in my life, my business, and this book. The SHIFT we have created this year excites me beyond words, and I cannot wait to see where this journey leads us.

Natasha Turner, we do not know each other very well and you may not remember many of our conversations back at The Kingsmill Club, but you have taught me much and given the world such a gift in your book, The Hormone Diet. I cannot thank you enough. I’m also extremely appreciative to you for allowing me to use The Hormonal Health Profile from your book.

Jack Doak, you may be shocked to see your name here as it has been many years since we worked together, but my experiences working for and with you, and watching you build businesses were at times more valuable lessons than formal business classes. Your extra time and advice have not gone unnoticed and definitely not without gratitude, thank you.
Simplicity staff and members, you have all become my family these past two years; I mean that from the bottom of my heart. You have added such depth and richness to my life, and have been the fuel to my spirit for creating Simplicity and watching this truly unique, amazing space and energy continually transform. You have no idea how much joy you bring into every day when I step onto the mat and look back at all of you. You should be proud of yourselves as you have all served to be a teacher to your “teach”. You are simply the best and I love you all. xo.

To my Publisher, Sheri Andrunyk, and your entire team, words can’t begin to express how appreciative I was and am for all your patience and expertise along this journey.

And to you, the reader, thank you so much for taking the time to read my book. This is truly my passion, my soul, and my life. I do everything with you in mind. I look forward to bringing you more in the way of books, e-books, videos, webinars, seminars, recipes, workshops and wellness-based products, from my world to yours.

To the highest level of potential in you, Namaste,

Jenn
As far back as I can remember, exercise has been part of my life. When I was little I taught myself how to swim, do front and back walkovers, round-offs, and handsprings in my backyard; I used to lead classes in the neighbourhood when I was five. By the age of nine, I was a member of the local gym’s Cardio Kids program and an avid participant in the 20 Minute Workout program on TV. By the time I was in high school, I was heading to the gym at 6:30 a.m. with my Dad before school, setting my alarm to do the Reebok Caribbean Workout on TSN, or Breathing Space Yoga with Diane Bruni. The seed had been planted.

When I was thirteen, I won a modelling course after taking part in a contest at the local mall. Within a few years I was building my portfolio, doing professional shoots, and then at sixteen, my big moment came: I won the prestigious Top Female Model of the Year 1996 Age 16+ award at the Modelling Association of Canada (MAOC) convention and was scouted by twenty-eight agencies. I decided to sign with Ford Modelling Agency as my Toronto-based agency and my “Mother” agency became Flare Modelling Agency for international modelling. I am 5’9½” and during this period of time weighed about 125 pounds (nine less than I weigh now), and I was told to lose weight and inches off my hips at nearly every casting call I went to!
Exercise became an even bigger part of my life then, as did nutrition, in an attempt to drop the inches and make it big in the industry. I can honestly say I never once starved myself or contemplated anything drastic; instead I read everything I could get my hands on about nutrition and exercise. I looked forward and never looked back. I finished high school and started travelling for modelling: Miami, New York, Montréal and Japan. And, yes, was repeatedly told to lose weight. When I lived in Japan, I remember one day being out on casting calls, and the staff taking our money away from us because some of us were gaining weight and they did not want us to have the choice of what to buy and eat. Instead they gave us water and gum for what turned out to be a ten-hour day of casting calls!

That was the final straw for me! I called my agent at home, who still remains a friend to this day, and said, “Get me outta here. I am DONE!”

What I didn’t recognize then that I do now is that this was one of the shaping moments in my life, and I had the option to either stifle what my gut was telling me or listen to it and make a different choice. That decision has since led to wonderful direct bookings with clients, and no one ever treating me that way again.

Many years after graduating from The Canadian School of Natural Nutrition in Richmond Hill and Cambrian College in Sudbury, with honours in Fitness Leisure and Health Sciences and a minor in Business Management, I decided to head back to school for a degree designation as a Registered Holistic Nutritionist. A true love affair and passion with helping people fuel their minds and feed their souls with positive, useful information was born.

Throughout all my years of exercise I had flirted with yoga here and there, but never found a class or had an experience
that made me want to fully commit or move away from all my hard-core spinning, running and heavy weightlifting ... that is until one day in 2003. That day, I walked into the studio, laid out my mat and in walked this energetic, eclectic, and mesmerizing new instructor. For the next hour, Theresa moved me in ways, both mentally and physically, that I had never felt before and I LOVED it! However, when it came time for the relaxation posture, savasana, I rolled up my mat, put my shoes on, and walked out. I felt I didn’t have time to lie around! One day, as I was about to head out the door, Theresa looked straight at me and kindly said, “I’m sorry Jenn, but you’re going to have to unroll your mat and lay back down for savasana. It’s part of the class and this class isn’t over.” Are you friggin’ kidding me? I was not impressed! I lay back down in front of two dozen people, who were also my students and personal training clients in this gym, and I was fuming. I could not believe she just did that to me in front of everyone!

It was the best lesson and aha moment I’ve ever had. Theresa woke something within me, and from that day forward I made yoga classes with her part of my schedule, booking soul appointments with myself five times a week. I even went to her home where she led small classes out of her living room; you walked in, dropped ten dollars into a basket, for which you got a bottle of water and one of six places, and then proceeded to sweat and twist in close proximity to the other participants. It was AWESOME!

Seven years later, in June 2010, after many years of hard work in the industry, I decided to take the leap and open my own studio. Things moved quickly. I opened my doors on Tuesday, September 29th of the same year.

A moment of alchemy I will never forget.

From my seed-planting moment at fourteen years old to
now, I offer you the power and ability to access your deepest core potential and Simply Rock It Out!

Love Jenn
Welcome ... You’ve Been Waiting!

The Simplicity Project is designed to fuel your life and transform your body from the inside out.

When you begin this food journey, don’t think of it as dieting or being on a diet. Diets are temporary vehicles on the road to looking a certain way, being a certain weight or size, and measuring up to society’s image of health and beauty. Diets are mainly based on calorie counting, strict portion control, deprivation, self-deprecation and are, for most people, extremely unsuccessful and painfully boring.

Instead, consider this eating plan as part of your self-renewal and self-discovery. I want you to become more educated and empowered by your food choices, to know a whole food from one that’s not, to know how to combine your foods for proper nourishment and balance, to know what to shop for and what to avoid, and to know how to make the most delicious healthy meals and snacks right at home.

Ultimately, I want you to rediscover your relationship with food so that you can sit at the table, smell, chew, savour, and enjoy your food without worrying about how it will impact your weight.

It may take some getting used to (especially if you’ve been
feeding your body processed, fast foods and sugar-filled drinks), but you'll soon appreciate and look forward to your new way of eating. You'll be preparing and enjoying fresh, real, nutrient-dense meals. You will stop feeling like you need over-the-counter antacids or a nap after you eat, and you'll start feeling energized and transformed by your meals.

Your cravings for high-fat, sugary foods will stop and, on the days that you do indulge, your body will provide feedback instantly, motivating you to keep on your “clean eating” path.

Your commitment to your food plan is just as important to your core transformation as the Simplicity workouts. If you only commit partially you will only see AND feel partial results. Movement and food go hand in hand.

If you stick to my suggestions you will see amazing results—inside and out. After reading The Simplicity Project and beginning your NEW YOU journey, you will have begun to learn how food can empower you instead of taking you down. You will have a much healthier relationship with food and you will find yourself making better choices about what you let pass your lips!

High five to a new you and a lifetime of healthy, lip-smacking meals.

Much love and Namaste,

Jenn
INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, I’ve developed and fine-tuned *The Simplicity Project*. This is a plan focused on practical principles that have worked phenomenally well for my clients, based on simplicity and whole foods. It is one that I truly believe will have you feeling more in touch with your body, more in tune with your energy, and ultimately leave your body better supported and nourished than ever before.

This is not a diet book, or a quick-fix geared towards rapid weight loss, or a temporary solution.

I want you to look at *The Simplicity Project* like a form of school. Your butt’s back in class and the subject is YOU, baby!

That’s right, welcome to the class of year RIGHT NOW, working towards your PhD in You & Your Body 101!

I will give you all the tips and tools necessary to shift today and change tomorrow. One step at a time, you will feel your world and your body changing for the better. No gimmicks. This book is the “real deal” and is the first step on your path to a more vitally simplistic way of living.

The hard truth about being healthier, stronger, feeling invigorated, and achieving a desirable body weight, is that things are not as difficult as we all make them out to be.

If we just relaxed into eating and let our intuition and appetite regulate what we ate, chose the obvious healthier options at the store or restaurant, only chewed what we
needed, and worked with our bodies to move and groove, we
would not have as unhealthy a society as we do today.

We are trained to run to our family doctor for every issue
we have going on in our bodies. The problem here is that
too often the benchmarks within the “normal” medical range
are far too high and leave us being dismissed as “fine”. For
example: TSH levels (your thyroid stimulating hormone) in
the traditional medical industry is considered normal if it is
between .35 and 4.7. In the holistic industry we strive to
detect issues when they are beginning to brew. A reading
above 2.0 is considered to be sub-optimal; an early indicator
that if you don’t begin to make some serious lifestyle changes,
you could be facing medication and a lifelong struggle with
your body’s internal thermostat.

We are, however, much less likely to go to our family doc-
tor for the less serious issues like fatigue, headaches, dizziness,
mood swings, or weight gain—all early signs that something
is going on.

We are going to work together to eliminate the impossible
battle you place upon yourself with your hormones, your
 cravings, and your body. My hope is that this book will help
you to realize symptoms before they become ailments, and
to encourage you to think and react differently about your
health and well-being.

As with everything I do, I try to maintain an open mind
and admit that thoughts and views in this book may change
with time.

However, I do feel the core concepts and methods described
in this book will stay consistent and provide a realistic tem-
plate for nourishing your body and your life!
When you take the time to notice what is around you, the people and the energy, what you will find are some major and saddening disconnects. Many are disconnected from their bodies and how they are feeling, with no remorse or pleasure from what they are eating or where their meals are coming from. They’re constantly suffering from inflammation, illness, depression and living with an overall sense of “I just need to get through the day,” instead of truly LIVING the day and feeling joy in the process.

You may even find you look at yourself and notice that you too are among those living disconnected. And you can hear that little voice inside asking, “How did this happen? How did I let myself get to this point? What have I done?”

STOP THIS CONVERSATION RIGHT NOW!
Move from your past: your past choices of poor food, lack of movement and lack of care and respect for your body and MOVE FORWARD!

Don't waste another second in the land of over-analyzing and under-valuing your time. You have defined that you don't feel well and that you would like to feel better... CONGRATULATIONS! Now what?

CHANGE. It takes one simple change to create a SHIFT.

If there was only one choice for you to make that would hold the most weight, the most impact on your health and well-being, it would be the food you are purchasing, preparing and consuming. Everything that enters your mouth, whether it is the food you chew or beverages you drink, has a direct impact on your body, mind, and spirit. I learned this quite literally when I began changing the way I ate and felt about food more than seventeen years ago. Not only did my body begin to change, but I felt happier and more connected to myself. Something shifted in me that I never expected or even thought to look for. But there it was. Changing the way I ate, the way I perceived food and nourishment for my body, changed my life and who I was completely ... it led me on the path to where I am today.

And now today is your day.

Your first task: Create a reasonable, yet challenging and meaningful goal for yourself with regard to your new way of eating. It can be as simple as no more eating right before bed or in bed, or drinking two litres of water a day, to something more aggressive like giving up wheat. Everyone is at a different level of “done with feeling like crap” and everyone has different goals. You decide what is most important to you, what you are up for and most importantly, WHAT YOU CAN HANDLE.
But ... in order for this shift of consciousness to be impactful enough, you are going to have to push yourself beyond your comfort zone. Being uncomfortable is a good thing here; it means things are changing for the better.

I, __________________________ (your name), am going to begin
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

How I would describe myself now _________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In order to be successful with my goal of ___________________,
I will need to _________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Some things that might get in my way ______________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
How I plan to get out of my own way ______________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Why I am worth this journey and how I will describe myself once I am done ______________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

**Be The Change You Want To FEEL ...**

When it comes to nutrition, dieting, shopping, cooking, and eating a well-balanced diet, there is no such thing as black and white. The food and nutrition industry is grey and suffocating in thousands upon thousands of books, programs, and gurus claiming to be THE voice for you. The reality is that you need to be patient, you need to spend time moving through the information that is available to you and, more importantly, while reading and digesting ... LISTEN to your inner guide and guru. What resonates most with you in terms of the information? What do you think you could begin to do right now that wouldn't be overwhelmingly life-altering and excruciating; something you could do a little planning for today and start tomorrow?

This is where I would recommend you begin ... at the beginning.

We tend to put these huge expectations and parameters upon ourselves that almost immediately set us up for disaster. This time, choose to slow down and learn something along the way.
Too many believe that we can get healthy if we lose weight. The reality is that we must be healthy to lose weight. When you complete your Hormonal Health Profile, you will begin to see exactly what has been going on all these years, and finally begin to optimize your health and hormonal balance, lose fat, and restore your health and vitality.

*The Simplicity Project* is really a “Living More Simply” program, which includes understanding the causes of why you feel less than optimal, and a holistic wellness approach for shifting you out of it.

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**Get Your Engines Ready!!!**

### 1.2 The Stress & Imbalance Of Today’s Metabolic System

One of the primary factors determining your body weight is metabolism, the internal furnace that regulates fat burning. Everyone’s metabolism is different, which is why some people seem to be able to eat anything and remain lean while others can pack on the pounds so easily.

Having a healthy digestive system is the essential foundation to having a strong metabolism. The old saying is, “You are what you eat”; I say, “You are what you absorb and what you fail to eliminate (poop)!"

Many of us are suffering from major internal inflammation hindering our ability to ever lose weight or feel great. Most people have one of two digestive scenarios unfolding. The first is an under-active digestive system which is characterized by bloating, gas, belching, headaches, low blood sugar, acne, constipation, feeling full for a long time after eating, and the need for a snooze after meals. Typically, these individuals also crave caffeine, sodas, chocolate, candy, and
cookies and must hit the 1:00 p.m. sweet zone before they become a complete bitch on wheels. Within a couple of hours, they hit the 3:00 p.m. nap zone and the vicious cycle begins again.

The other individuals are suffering from an over-active stomach with excess acidity, burning, sourness in the stomach, reflux, heartburn, frequent and often explosive or loose bowel movements, and craving a lot of stimulants like coffee, cigarettes, and alcohol. These people tend to crave more salty, savoury foods than sweet, and usually approach their meals with the “open, chew twice, and swallow” technique that is contributing to the raging fire happening in their bellies and eventually their butts!

Seventy percent of our immune system lies within our digestive tract. Compromises to our digestion such as allergies, sensitivities, over-consumption, parasites, yeast over-growth, and stress negatively affect not only our digestion but also our overall immunity. I begin the treatment of all my clients with focusing on optimizing and healing their digestion. I truly believe that to get out of your rut, you’ve got to start with your gut!

### 1.3 You Will Not Count Calories

I hope you are starting to understand why typical weight loss diets don’t work. We all know the old routine: it’s Sunday and after feeling totally gross from the weekend, the week, the month, the year, whatever, we make the solemn oath that, “That’s It! Starting tomorrow [Monday] I am going on a diet!” Meanwhile, we still have all the food vices in our cupboards and fridges and have done no work to prepare the foundation of this “plan”.
Monday morning we wake, have some oatmeal and fruit and give ourselves a pat on the back. We have a piece of fruit for a mid-morning snack and salad for lunch ... Yes! High five to me! Now it’s 1:30 p.m. and the plan starts to fall apart. You’re searching for something, anything to conquer your craving. And there it is, the vending machine. You charge it like you are suddenly part of the defence line for the Chicago Bears (my hubby’s team) and you press C4, the chocolate bar ... VICTORY!

This victory is short lived by the crashing hit you get from team “blood sugar dropping”. You now feel horrible and guilty, and convince yourself that you have totally blown it and might as well just throw in the towel. Sound familiar?

Life is going to happen; sweet, yummy, not-so-good-for-us food is going to happen. So here is my advice: lick your lips and enjoy it. Seriously, what are you going to do about it now? Go in after it? Guess what the best part is? You didn’t blow your new way of eating. That’s right, because you have another meal coming up in a few hours and you get to choose all over again—this time just a little healthier.

**You Can’t Excessively Restrict or Count Your Calories as Your Weight Loss Approach**

When you do, this happens:

- You feel hungrier because the body responds to calorie restriction by releasing hormones that increase your appetite.
- Your level of thyroid hormone drops, causing a slow-down in your metabolism.
• Your level of the stress hormone, cortisol, increases in response to the physical stress of skipping meals or insufficient carbohydrate intake.

• Reproductive function slows because your sex hormones change due to insufficient intake, contributing to excessive PMS, menstrual changes, etc.

When your hormones get thrown out of whack, your tendency to overeat and overindulge kicks in. Then your body starts to suffer through highs and lows of up and down calorie intake. Your body is very intelligent. As a defence, if you do not feed it well or often enough, it will learn, from you, to hold on to any new food coming in as fat, just in case you don’t eat for a while again or you don’t eat what the body needs. Diet food products do this continuously. The end result is havoc on your system, more weight gain, cravings, depression, mood swings, no energy, and worst of all, a damaged metabolism and the loss of precious, metabolically active muscle tissue.

*Cheers to Whole Foods!*

Here’s the beauty part though: when you choose fresh (organic when possible) fruits and vegetables, healthy lean sources of protein like organic meat, chicken, fish, and eggs, good quality essential fatty acids, raw nuts and seeds, lots of water, and properly balanced snacks and meals, your body will finally get what it needs and release its grip on you. When you eat only nutrient-dense food, you won’t be able to overeat and have crazy portions—you will be too full of the good stuff! Plus, your digestion will be enhanced and your body will break-down food more effectively, meaning you will absorb more of it.
I have been eating this way for over ten years now and have stayed within my current weight by five pounds through two pregnancies, a lot of celebrations, some down days, and the stress of starting a new business. I don’t punish myself with feelings of wishing I hadn’t eaten certain things; I choose every bite that goes into my mouth and I OWN that. I never say I can’t or I’m not allowed; instead I say, “I choose to eat this” or, “I choose not to.” Just as you do when you grocery shop, you vote for health and well-being each time you eat.

What will your next vote be?

1.4 Your Weight Loss Friends & Your Weight Loss Foes

Losing weight is more than simply burning more calories than you consume or just eating less in the first place. There is a myriad of events that must take place in order to shed the extra weight you are carrying. First of all, your body needs to produce certain hormones. Secondly, your body and brain must be able to receive the messages these hormones are trying to send. Otherwise, you will never feel full, satisfied, or know when to put the fork down!

No hormone in your entire body works on its own. Each one interacts and influences each other, which is why, when there is a spike in one hormone, another one usually drops. Too much or too little of ANY hormone in the body can cause major disturbances, and will interfere not only with your metabolism, but also your sleep, sex drive, energy, and overall wellness.

The top four hormones that affect your metabolism are insulin, cortisol, estrogen and ghrelin.
Too Much Insulin

Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that helps the body store and use glucose. I like to think of insulin as being the key to a car. The car is the body and instead of gas it runs on glucose. The gas gauge is like a blood glucose meter. We can run without it for a while, but it is really useful for telling us when we are going to run out of energy. Without the key to the car (insulin) we are not going anywhere. We need insulin to use the sugar to give us energy.

The food we eat is broken down into sugar (glucose). Once this happens it triggers your pancreas to release the insulin hormone. The insulin is released in relation to the amount of sugar in the bloodstream, so, the more sugar you consume, the more insulin you produce.

However, your body only has the ability to use up so much glucose at a time, and any extra is stored in the muscles or the liver as glycogen for later use. The room available for extra glucose to be stored in these areas is only so big, and what isn’t stored here doesn’t vanish into thin air. Your body will hold onto excess insulin and store it as fat for later use. If this is how you are eating or functioning on a daily basis, the “extra” sugar being stored in your fat becomes more than the body can either burn off or handle and you end up with major weight gain, low energy, and unbearable cravings. The not-so-awesome BONUS: this excess insulin also blocks your body’s ability to use this stored fat as an energy source.

This may explain why you are holding onto a lot of extra weight around your mid-section and you feel like nothing you do helps you to lose weight and your “muffin top”, which should now be called your “insulin top”.

Having too much insulin will also cause you to overeat and consume more calories because: a) it blocks signals to
your brain from the appetite-suppressing hormone, leptin, causing you to eat more, and b) it creates a spike in dopamine, your feel-good, pleasure hormone in the brain. This hormone spurs addiction and literally makes you become addicted to food!

The main ways we create excess insulin are:

• Too much CRAP! Processed, sugary, chemically created foods and drinks
• Too little protein, fat and fibre; the three key elements that, when combined with carbs, slow down the rate at which insulin enters the bloodstream and helps to maintain healthy blood-sugar levels
• Stress
• Overburdened liver and impaired digestion
• Steroid based medicines, antibiotics, birth control pills, synthetic hormones
• Lack of exercise or too much exercise (yes, you can exercise too much!)

Beyond making us fat-storing machines, insulin can also give us symptoms and feelings such as: heart palpitations, fatigue and mood swings, sweating, anxiety, insomnia and poor concentration, acne, abnormal hair growth, and shrinking, sagging breasts. In men, the more insulin they have tends to convert their testosterone into estrogen and create man-boobs, big bellies and can lead to erectile dysfunction.

AB Fat Central a.k.a. Cortisol!

Cortisol is the “awesome”, fat-packing stress hormone that is produced by your adrenals (two glands that sit on top of your
The immediate production of stress hormones are designed by the body to be in response to something sudden, immediate, and life-threatening. Think about the old story of a bear coming out of the forest in front of you and you suddenly have this surge of energy (adrenaline) that helps you hightail it out of there. The good thing about short-term stress like that is, it happens; you deal with it and then move on.

The problematic stress is the everyday “bear” chasing us down: raising children, finances, work or relationship-related stress, poor diet, no exercise or exercising like a freakin’ mad person wearing a tiara that says Cardio Queen, feeling overwhelmed, and in poor health. This type of chronic stress—whether real or imagined—causes your body to release high amounts of the stress hormone, cortisol.

Unlike adrenalin, which draws from your fat stores for energy during stress, cortisol consumes your muscle tissue for fuel. Chronic stress will lead to muscle wasting and higher blood sugar levels, simply because your body is struggling to figure out a way to adapt.

Some of the other symptoms and effects of excess cortisol are:

- Decreased metabolic rate
- Blood sugar imbalances
- Thyroid dysfunction
- Decreased serotonin, the happy hormone, causing depression and increased carb cravings
- Insomnia and low libido
The most common characteristics of cortisol imbalance that I see in clients are extreme difficulty getting out of bed in the morning, excess fatigue throughout the day, and an over-stimulated hamster wheel at night that makes it difficult to calm the body down enough to fall asleep—a “wired but tired” feeling.

The key to achieving optimal health and a strong, lean body is learning to implement the strategies throughout this book in order to control your cortisol production. Managing cortisol is truly the key to decreased stress in your body and overall wellness!

**Excess Estrogen or Estrogen Dominance**

Estrogen dominance is, I believe, the cause of many hormonal imbalances we see today. It describes a condition where a woman can have deficient, normal, or excessive estrogen, but has little or no progesterone to balance its effects in the body. Even a woman with low estrogen levels can have estrogen dominance symptoms if she doesn’t have any progesterone.

**Estrogen Dominance Symptoms:**

- Acceleration of the aging process
- Allergies, including asthma, hives, rashes, sinus congestion
- Autoimmune disorders such as lupus and hypoactive thyroid
- Breast cancer (estrogen feeds many cancers)
- Breast tenderness
- Cervical dysplasia
• Cold hands and feet as a symptom of thyroid dysfunction
• Decreased sex drive
• Depression with anxiety or agitation
• Dry eyes
• Early onset of menstruation
• Endometrial (uterine) cancer
• Fat gain, especially around the abdomen, hips and thighs
• Fatigue
• Fibrocystic breasts
• Foggy thinking
• Gallbladder disease
• Hair loss
• Headaches
• Hypoglycemia
• Increased blood clotting (increasing risk of strokes)
• Infertility
• Irregular menstrual periods
• Irritability
• Insomnia
• Magnesium deficiency
• Memory loss
• Mood swings
• Osteoporosis
• Polycystic ovaries
• Premenopausal bone loss
• PMS
• Prostate cancer
• Sluggish metabolism
• Thyroid dysfunction mimicking hypothyroidism
• Uterine cancer
• Uterine fibroids
• Water retention, bloating
• Zinc deficiency

Why & How Has Estrogen Dominance Become Such an Issue?

There are only two ways extra estrogen builds up in our bodies: you are either producing too much, or it is coming in via your environment or food choices. You would have to virtually live in a bubble to escape the excess estrogen we’re exposed to through pesticides, plastics, industrial waste products, car exhaust, meat, soaps, and much of the carpeting, furniture, and panelling that we live with indoors every day. You may have on-and-off sinus problems, headaches, dry eyes, asthma, or cold hands and feet for example, and not know to attribute them to your exposure to xenoestrogens (chemical forms of the hormone estrogen).

Women are far more susceptible to estrogen dominance (although the rate is rising with men) because of how many bodily products we use: make-up, lotions, creams, perfumes, even your feminine hygiene products. Unless they are organic, they contain chemical forms (xenoestrogen) of estrogen that burden your system with too much.
Too Little Estrogen Can Also Create Problems ... 

Estrogen helps your cells to effectively respond to insulin so when estrogen levels drop, insulin levels tend to increase. This is most common in peri-menopause and menopause. Making matters even worse is that during this time there is also a drop in the happy hormone, serotonin, which drives us to crave more sweets, treats, and carbs ... and yet again produce even more insulin! Are you beginning to see a pattern?

Great Ghrelin!

You know when you and everyone else around you hears your stomach growl? That is the sound of your stomach producing ghrelin. Ghrelin is the hunger hormone. It’s made in the stomach, and it tells the brain when it’s time to eat. The problem with ghrelin is that when we eat nutrient-devoid foods and not enough healthy calories, ghrelin production can increase, making us feel hungrier, and may cause us to eat more than we really need. Eating healthier foods and ensuring that you are not going beyond three to four hours without eating will help to keep the hunger-hormone, ghrelin, in check.

Your Weight Loss Friends

We will delve much deeper into each of these in Chapter 3, but I will give you a quick preview of the specifics. In order to effectively lose weight AND keep it off, there are a few areas of the body that need to be in proper balance:

- Your thyroid
- Your adrenals
• DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone) and your growth hormone
• Leptin
• Your sleep must be adequate
• Your exercise must be in alignment with your goals, the reality of your pace in life, and what your body may NOT be craving

Now let’s move on to your Simplicity Hormonal Health Profile in the following section.

1.5 **How Balanced Are You?**

*Complete Your Hormonal Health Profile*

Thank you to one of my most profound teachers, Dr. Natasha Turner, author of the best-selling book, *The Hormone Diet*, for use of this profiling system.

**Inflammation:** (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Sagging, thinning or wrinkling skin
- ☐ Spider veins
- ☐ Cellulite
- ☐ Eczema, rashes, acne
- ☐ PMS
- ☐ Fibrocystic breast
- ☐ Menopause (women)
- ☐ Heart disease
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ High cholesterol and high blood pressure
☐ Low to no exercise
☐ Aches and pains
☐ Water retention in hands and feet
☐ Gout
☐ Alzheimer’s disease and/or Parkinson’s disease
☐ Depression
☐ Fibromyalgia
☐ Increased pain or poor pain tolerance
☐ Headaches or migraines
☐ High alcohol consumption
☐ Allergies
☐ Autoimmune disease
☐ Fat gain around abdomen
☐ Loss of bone density
☐ Type 2 diabetes
☐ Sleep disruptions
☐ Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
☐ Gas and bloating
☐ Constipation, diarrhoea or nausea

TOTAL (Warning Score: >12)

**Excess Insulin/Insulin Resistance:** (please check all that apply)

☐ Sagging, thinning or wrinkling skin
☐ Cellulite
☐ Infertility
☐ Irregular cycles
Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)
Abnormal hair growth
Vision changes
Menopause
Heart disease
Fatigue
Insomnia
High cholesterol/blood pressure
Lack of exercise
Burning feet in bed
Poor memory and concentration
No or low sex drive
Fat gain around mid-section and upper arms/ puffy face
Hypoglycemia/low blood sugar
Tired after eating
Type 2 diabetes

TOTAL (Warning Score: >10)

Low Dopamine: (please check all that apply)
Fatigue, especially in the morning
Lack of exercise
Restless leg syndrome
Poor memory
Parkinson’s disease
Depression
Loss of libido
- Addictive eating or binge eating
- Weight gain/obesity
- Cravings for sweets, carbs, junk food or fast food

TOTAL (Warning Score: >4)

**Low Serotonin:** (please check all that apply)

- PMS characterized by hypoglycemia, sugar cravings, sweet cravings
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Feeling wired at night
- Lack of sweating
- Poor memory
- Loss of libido
- Depression, anxiety, irritability or seasonal affective disorder (SAD)
- Loss of motivation or competitive edge
- Low self-esteem
- Inability to make decisions
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Bulimia or binge eating
- Fibromyalgia
- Increased pain or poor pain tolerance
- Headaches or migraines
- High alcohol consumption
- Generalized overweight/weight gain/obesity
- Cravings for sweets or carbohydrates
- Constant hunger or increased appetite
- Failure to sleep in total darkness
- Inability to sleep in, no matter how late going to bed
- Less than seven and a half hours of sleep per night
- Irritable bowel
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Use of corticosteroids

**TOTAL (Warning Score: >8)**

**Excess Cortisol:** (please check all that apply)
- Wrinkling, thinning or skin has lost its fullness
- Acne
- Hair loss
- PMS
- Infertility or absent menses (unrelated to menopause)
- Feeling wired at night
- High cholesterol or blood pressure
- Lack of exercise
- Heart palpitations
- Loss of muscle tone in arms and legs
- Cold hands and feet
- Water retention in face/puffiness
- Poor memory or concentration
- Loss of libido
- Depression, anxiety, irritability or seasonal affective disorder
The Simplicity Project

- Low self-esteem
- High alcohol consumption
- Frequent colds and flus
- Hives, bronchitis, allergies (food or environmental), asthma or autoimmune disease
- Fat gain around “love handles” or abdomen
- A “buffalo lump” of fat on neck or upper back
- Difficulty building or maintaining muscle
- Loss of bone density or osteoporosis
- Cravings for sweets or carbs, hypoglycemia or constant hunger
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Failure to sleep in total darkness
- Difficulty staying asleep (especially waking between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m.)
- Less than seven and a half hours of sleep per night
- IBS (Irritable bowel syndrome) or frequent gas and bloating
- Use of corticosteroids

**TOTAL** (Warning score: > 10)

**Low DHEA** (Dehydroepiandrosterone): (please check all that apply)

- Dry skin
- Heart disease
- Erectile dysfunction
- Andropause
- Fatigue
Feeling wired at night
- Poor tolerance for exercise
- Lack of exercise
- Loss of muscle tone in arms and legs
- Poor memory or concentration
- Irritability or easily agitated
- Loss of libido
- Depression
- Loss of motivation or competitive edge
- Autoimmune disease
- Fat gain around “love handles”
- Fat gain over the triceps
- Fat gain around abdomen
- Difficulty building or maintaining muscle
- Difficulty staying asleep (especially waking between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m.)
- Use of corticosteroids

TOTAL (Warning score: >7)

**Excess Estrogen:** (please check all that apply)
- Spider veins
- Varicose veins
- Cellulite
- Heavy menstrual bleeding
- PMS characterized by breast tenderness, water retention, bloating, swelling and/or weight gain
- Fibrocystic breast disease
Prostate enlargement
Erectile dysfunction
Breast growth (men)
Loss of morning erection
Irritability, mood swings or anxiety
Headaches or migraines
High alcohol consumption (>4 drinks per week for women and >7 drinks per week for men)
Autoimmune disease or allergies
Fat gain around “love handles” or abdomen (men)
Fat gain at the hips (women)
Current use of hormone replacement therapy or birth control pills

TOTAL (Warning score: >6)

Low Estrogen: (please check all that apply)
Dry or sagging skin
Thinning skin or skin has lost its fullness
Hair loss
Dry eyes or cataracts (women)
PMS characterized by depression, hypoglycemia, sugar cravings and/or sweet cravings
Infertility or absent menses (not related to menopause)
Painful intercourse and/or vaginal dryness
Shrinking or sagging breasts
Urinary incontinence (stress or otherwise)
Menopause
Ignite The Fire Within  

Fatigue  
Hot flashes  
High cholesterol or blood pressure  
Poor memory or concentration  
Irritability  
Loss of libido  
Depression or mood swings  
Headaches or migraines  
Fat gain around “love handles” or abdomen (menopausal women)  
Loss of bone density or osteoporosis  
Cravings for sweets or carbohydrates  
Difficulty falling or staying asleep  

TOTAL (Warning score: >8)  

Excess Progesterone: (please check all that apply)  
Acne  
PMS characterized by depression  
Infertility  
Water retention  
Depression  
Headaches or migraines  
Frequent colds and flus  
Weight gain or difficulty losing weight  
Current use of hormone replacement therapy or birth control pills  

TOTAL (Warning score: >4)
Low Progesterone: (please check all that apply)

☐ Dry skin or skin that has lost its fullness
☐ Spider or varicose veins
☐ Hair loss
☐ Short menstrual cycle (<28 days)
☐ PMS characterized by breast tenderness, anxiety, sleep disruptions, headaches, menstrual spotting, water retention, bloating and/or weight gain
☐ Infertility or absent menses (not related to menopause)
☐ Fibrocystic breast disease
☐ Menopause (women); andropause (men)
☐ Prostate enlargement
☐ Hot flashes
☐ Lack of sweating
☐ Feeling cold or cold hands/feet
☐ Heart palpitations
☐ Water retention
☐ Irritability and/or anxiety
☐ Loss of libido
☐ Headaches or migraines
☐ Autoimmune disease, hives, asthma or allergies
☐ Loss of bone density or osteoporosis
☐ Difficulty falling or staying asleep

TOTAL (Warning score: >6)
Excess Testosterone: (please check all that apply)

- [ ] Dry skin
- [ ] Thinning skin or skin has lost its fullness
- [ ] Painful intercourse
- [ ] Heart disease (men)
- [ ] Erectile dysfunction
- [ ] Andropause (men)
- [ ] Loss of morning erection
- [ ] Fatigue
- [ ] Poor tolerance for exercise
- [ ] Lack of exercise
- [ ] Heart palpitations
- [ ] Loss of muscle tone in arms and legs
- [ ] Poor memory or concentration
- [ ] Loss of libido
- [ ] Depression or anxiety
- [ ] Loss of motivation or competitive edge
- [ ] Low self-esteem
- [ ] Difficulty making decisions
- [ ] Headaches or migraines (men)
- [ ] Gaining fat around abdomen or “love handles” (men and women)
- [ ] Difficulty building or maintaining muscle
- [ ] Loss of bone density or osteoporosis (men and women)
- [ ] Sleep apnea (men)
- [ ] Use of corticosteroids

TOTAL (Warning score: >8)
**High Testosterone:** (please check all that apply)

- [ ] Acne
- [ ] Hair loss (scalp)
- [ ] Abnormal hair growth on face (women)
- [ ] Infertility
- [ ] Shrinking or sagging breasts
- [ ] Prostate enlargement
- [ ] Irritability, aggression or easily agitated
- [ ] Headaches or migraines (women)
- [ ] Fat gain at abdomen (women)
- [ ] Generalized overweight/weight gain/obesity (women)
- [ ] Cravings for sweets or carbohydrates (women)
- [ ] Constant hunger or increased appetite (women)
- [ ] Fatty liver (women)

**TOTAL** (Warning score: >5)

**Low Thyroid:** (please check all that apply)

- [ ] Dry skin and/or hair
- [ ] Acne
- [ ] Hair loss
- [ ] Brittle hair and/or nails
- [ ] PMS, infertility, long menstrual cycle (> 30 days) or irregular periods
- [ ] Fibrocystic breast disease
- [ ] Abnormal lactation
- [ ] Fatigue
- [ ] Lack of sweating, feeling cold or cold hands and feet
- [ ] High cholesterol
Poorest tolerance for exercise
Heart palpitations
Outer edge of eyebrows thinning
Aches and pains
Water retention/puffiness in hands or feet
Poor memory
Loss of libido
Depression
Loss of motivation or competitive edge
Iron deficiency anemia
Hives
Generalized overnight/weight gain/obesity
Constipation
Use of corticosteroids
Current use of synthetic hormone replacement therapy or birth control pills

TOTAL (Warning score: >8)

**Low Melatonin:** (please check all that apply)

- Andropause (men); menopause (women)
- Fatigue
- Night eating syndrome
- High alcohol consumption
- Frequent colds and flus
- Cravings for sweets or carbohydrates; increased appetite
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Failing to sleep in total darkness
Difficulty staying asleep (especially between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m.)
Sleep apnea
Less than seven and a half hours of sleep per night
Use of corticosteroids

TOTAL (Warning score: >4)

**Low Growth Hormone:** (please check all that apply)

- Dry skin
- Thinning skin or skin has lost its fullness
- Sagging skin
- Menopause (women); andropause (men)
- Fatigue
- Poor tolerance for exercise
- Lack of exercise
- Loss of muscle tone in arms or legs
- High alcohol consumption
- Fat gain around “love handles” or abdomen
- Difficulty building or maintaining muscle
- Loss of bone density or osteoporosis
- Generalized overweight/weight gain/obesity
- Failing to sleep in total darkness
- Difficulty staying asleep (especially waking between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m.)
- Sleep apnea
- Use of corticosteroids

TOTAL (Warning score: >6)
1.6 What Do Your Results Mean?

The Hormonal Health Profile is not meant to be used or looked upon like a diagnostic test. It is merely a helpful tool to open your eyes to how you are really feeling in certain areas of your body, and what your signs and symptoms could be telling you about specific systems or glands, e.g., you scored high for under-active thyroid or excess cortisol.

The problem with so many of us today is that we’re always running to the doctor, the pharmacist, or the psychiatrist, to tell us what is wrong. Then, we take pills to make our symptoms stop, instead of looking in the mirror and having a conversation with ourselves about what’s really going on.

*The Simplicity Project* is geared towards rebalancing your body, diminishing the majority of your uncomfortable symptoms, and helping you lose the extra weight that has been plaguing you for so long.

ANY steps or suggestions you choose to take or make happen from this book are going to positively impact your overall state of well-being and your life.

You are on a Simplistic path to bliss my friends ... enjoy the scenery.