

Take Excellent Care: How to Maximize Your Vitality, Productivity and Creativity Via Smart Health and Fitness Practices - Outline

by Don Braden

I. INTRODUCTION

The most important thing we can do to maximize the quality of our music is to take excellent care of ourselves. This ensures that we will have the energy and sense of well-being to both do the necessary work and to fully realize the joy of creating and expressing music. For me, that means consistently making smart choices that contribute to my health and fitness (both physical and mental).

The panel and I will discuss the following and more. Panelists will include varied musicians who are very knowledgeable and serious about health and fitness: **Matt Townsend** (saxophonist and personal trainer), **Lauren Sevian** (award-winning, touring bari saxophonist), **Robin Eubanks** (award-winning, touring trombonist).

Central concepts:

- A. Maintain a *lifelong* health-priority mindset. *Stay proactive about your health!*
- B. Understand that every healthy choice has a positive effect (and that unhealthy ones can be negative).
- C. Develop a set of health-positive practices to stick with consistently, at home and on the road.
- D. Hone your honest self-awareness. Learn to really observe, listen to, and understand your body & mind.
- E. Look after your mental health – find your power sources, learn to self-soothe, develop your personal strength and resiliency. Nurture relationships. Explore professional mental health resources as needed.
- F. Embrace the power of teamwork. Engage friends, family – and health/fitness professionals – for guidance, inspiration, and accountability.
- G. Synchronize the discipline and increased energy with your life and music creativity, productivity & joy!

II. EATING

We are what we eat, literally, so choose well! In our modern, busy world, convenience is often the priority, but taking time to organize our food, especially when travelling, is more than worth it.

Here are the basics of eating well:

- A. Eat/drink a variety of nature-based, nutrient dense foods, mostly plants, that are as minimally processed as possible.
- B. Avoid food/drinks mainly created in factories.
- C. Be mindful of the highly addictive qualities of refined wheat and sugar (they're as addictive as cocaine).
- D. Choose good timing of your eating; learn about Intermittent Fasting (IF).
- E. Explore food-tracking apps to better understand the nutritional content of what you eat.
- F. Be aware of healthful foods that travel well: nuts, prunes, apples, carrots, boiled eggs (in the shell), etc.

III. EXERCISE

Our bodies are designed to move, and developing good physical strength is highly advantageous on many levels. Daily exercise is ideal, but you don't have to go to the gym for hours (unless you really want to!) Here are some tips:

- A. Envision how you would like to look and feel
- B. Regularly build your skills on fitness techniques
- C. Find something physical you like or love (soccer (football), running, biking, weightlifting, yoga etc.) and do it regularly. ***The best exercise is that which you actually do!***
- D. Learn basic calisthenics (push-ups, squats, planks, curls, pull-ups), which you can do so anywhere anytime. Even 5-10 minutes is beneficial!
- E. Develop knowledge and skills for soft tissue recovery (massage, foam roller, pulse gun, stick roller, etc.)
- F. Develop excellent habits for breathing, stretching, relaxation, meditation, and sleep.

IV. COMMON SENSE TIPS AND TACTICS

- A. Be proactive about medical checkups and maintenance, bloodwork, etc.
- B. Be aware of your body, head to toe. Maintain good posture and balance. Don't sit too much. Stay relaxed. Keep flexible (stretch regularly). Take great care of your teeth (brush, floss daily, etc.)
- C. **DON'T SMOKE!** It's toxic and addictive.
- D. Get sufficient sleep – most people need 7-8 hours per night for optimal health.
- E. Minimize chemical drugs (opiates, illicit pharmaceuticals, alcohol).
- F. Wash your hands regularly (especially in the bathroom, the gym, and during cold and flu season, and during pandemics!) Use a quality moisturizer as needed.