

## 'Changing Behaviour, Changing Lives'

### 15th March 2007 - Be an Animal!

Genetic research has shown that our closest living relative is the Chimpanzee, with whom we share 98% of our DNA. At the same time nutritionists are beginning to conclude that nuts and berries are "super foods" we need to be including in our diets. Let [WeightMatters](#) help you **discover the animal within** (or, at least, the caveman or cave woman) and get your diet and fitness back to basics.

#### diet



#### In *The Rise and Fall of the Third*

**Chimpanzee**, Jared Diamond, renowned author of many popular science works that combine anthropology, biology, genetics, and history, looks at how our animal heritage affects our modern lives. According to Diamond, most of the million or so years we have existed has been spent as hunters and gatherers.

Our ancestors hunted game and ate lots of meat. They also gathered whatever fruits, vegetables, nuts, and berries were in season. The agricultural lifestyle came along about ten thousand years ago and spread around the world. In terms of genetics and our body's ability to adapt to dietary change, this is a very short time. The archaeological record shows that early hunter-gatherers were 4 to 6 inches taller than early farmers. The hunters had stronger bones, fewer cavities, and, barring accident, they lived longer. Hunter-gatherers were rarely obese and had low rates of autoimmune diseases like arthritis and diabetes.

In spite of civilization and ten thousand years of farming, all of us still have the DNA and nutritional needs of a cave-man.

The diet industry is jumping on the band wagon with books such as *NeanderThin* by Ray Audette, and online communities chatting about the Palaeolithic diet. The rules of the Palaeolithic diet are simple: Only eat what you could pick or kill with your own hands.

So consider **cutting the modern food of the farmer - grains, potatoes, dairy, and sugar - from your diet** and instead focusing on a few of the many "super foods" as suggested by Jonny Bowden, MA, CNS as well as Steven Pratt, MD in his book *SuperFoods RX: Fourteen Foods That Will Change Your Life*:

- Blueberries (as well as other berries and cherries)
- Broccoli
- Oranges and Grapefruit
- Salmon and Sardines
- Spinach
- Walnuts and Almonds
- Tomatoes

Look for the next issue of WeightMatters newsletter for a more in-depth look at the benefits of these "super foods"!

#### exercise



**There was a time in our far past when we first** stood up on two legs so that we could look for danger or find herds of animals to hunt. We also began looking across the plains where, most likely, the grass seemed greener. We walked, and ran, for most of the day everyday. What used to be a method of survival and then became a way of life and work is now considered "exercise" and we often feel as though we haven't the time for it.

We can't forget that despite our machines and ability to automate most of our lives and tasks, we are mammals. We need to maintain a level of fitness in order to be effective in every aspect of our lives. As animals we naturally crave activity and often misinterpret the urge to "do something" when we are "bored" as something other than our bodies wanting to move and our minds wanting to explore, to hunt, to gather.

The fact that we have spent most, if not all, of our history trying to get out of doing physical labour and now often have to pay for the privilege, is strikingly ironic.

Walking is the most natural, and therefore beneficial, exercises for anyone of nearly any age. It is just a few quick steps from walking to running! The need for equipment is minimal, the pace is yours, and the benefits can be seen and felt almost immediately.

Walking is especially good for your brain, because it increases blood circulation and the oxygen and glucose that reach the brain. Walking does not have to be strenuous, so your leg muscles don't take up extra oxygen and glucose like they do during other forms of exercise. As you walk you effectively oxygenate your brain. That is why walking helps "clear your head" and helps you think better.

Take a moment and walk around the block, your body and your highly evolved brain will thank you.

#### mind



**The mind is the one thing about being human** that we feel separates us from the rest of the animal kingdom. We tell ourselves we have a mind as well as a brain. But it important to remember that if we don't keep the brain healthy, the mind declines as well.

The human brain is amazing in its ability to continually adapt and rewire itself. Even in old age, it can grow new neurons. Severe mental decline is usually caused by disease, whereas most age-related losses in memory or motor skills simply result from inactivity and a lack of mental exercise and stimulation. In other words, use it or lose it.

But where to start! There are so many ways to keep the mind active throughout our lives. Physical exercise helps keep our brains and bodies healthy but just like any muscle it must be used and challenged to maintain fitness and vigour.

Travel is a very good way to stimulate your mind and body. It is also very good for the brain. It worked for our ancestors, the early Homo sapiens. Their nomadic lifestyle provided a tremendous stimulation for their brains that led to the development of superior tools and survival skills. In comparison, the now-extinct Neanderthal was apparently did not venture too far from their homes. (Maybe they were simply content with their lives "in contrast to the seldom-satisfied sapiens.) Early humans gained a crucial evolutionary edge from the flexibility and innovation required by their strategic lifestyle, which also led to a more diverse diet that allowed their brains to rapidly evolve.

So what are you waiting for? The choice is yours, be a Neanderthal and hole up in your cave or become a Modern Sapien and plan some travel. Where have you always wanted to go, wanted to see, wanted to taste, touch, and hear? Engage your senses, expand your mind. It is what you're made to do!

Other sources: [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu), The Franklin Institute



#### Recipe of the month

Tonight eat like a bear, a bear with a hibachi) and improve your memory and mood with Grilled Salmon with Blackberry Mustard Glaze "rich in Omega 3, low in saturated fat, and low GI!

#### Grilled Salmon with Blackberry-Mustard Glaze

Fresh blackberries add a bright splash of colour to this tangy glaze; a great--and easy--sauce for grilled salmon.

- 170 g fresh Blackberries, divided
- 25 ml olive oil, plus extra for grilling
- 45 ml honey
- 45 ml whole-grain mustard
- salt and pepper
- 1 kg fresh salmon fillets

Preheat grill to high heat. Set aside 80g blackberries. In a blender, combine remaining berries with the oil, honey, mustard, salt and pepper. Blend until smooth. Pour the mixture into shallow baking pan or casserole dish. Brush the grilling grate (in flame-free area) with oil. Coat salmon with glaze and place skinless-side down on grill. Let grill for 8 minutes. Flip salmon and brush with glaze. (If salmon doesn't easily peel off grill, leave for 1-2 more minutes until ready to flip.) Cook until middle is just barely cooked (about 8-10 minutes per side/20 minutes total). Serve immediately. Serves 4 to 6.

Nutrition Facts: 1 serving or 1/6 of recipe

Calories 300kc; Total Fat 14.5g; Saturated 2.1g; Carbohydrates 11.2g; Dietary Fibre 1g; Sugars 9.6g; Protein 30.2g



#### Quote of the month

"Hunter-gatherers enjoyed a varied diet with adequate amounts of protein, vitamins, and minerals, while farmers gained cheap calories at the cost of poor nutrition." Jared Diamond

#### Events

#### Free Weight Management Seminar, Wimpole Street, W1

The following seminars are **FREE**. You will receive take-home notes and refreshments. Each seminar is 60 minutes long; location Wimpole St and places are limited. To sign-up, please contact us

'Dealing with Childhood Obesity' - Fri 23rd March @ 1pm

'How do I change my eating habits?' - Wed 28th March @ 6.30pm



#### WM Fact #61

"We help our clients understand their motivations for change, for without this, change will not occur."