

SAVAGERACE

PERFORMANCE NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE GUIDE

BY ROBB WOLF



INTRODUCTION FROM ROBB WOLF

Howdy folks!

My name is Robb Wolf. I'm a former research biochemist with an emphasis on autoimmunity and cancer research. I'm also a former California State Powerlifting champion and have dabbled in sports and activities ranging from Thai boxing to Capoeira and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. I've always had a fascination with human performance and this has served me well for both my own training and in my capacity as a strength coach. I also have the possibly dubious distinction of co-founding the FIRST and FOURTH CrossFit affiliate gyms IN THE WORLD.

Yep, El Mundo.

I've worked with a wide variety of athletes and folks just looking to get in shape and lose some weight. Our gym, NorCal Strength & Conditioning, was picked as one of Men's Health "Top 30 Gyms in America" so I guess we've done a decent job helping our clients reach their goals.

THE DOCUMENT YOU ARE READING IS A

**COLLABORATION
BETWEEN MYSELF
AND SAVAGERACE**

The document you are reading is a collaboration between myself and Savage Race that we hope will help YOU reach your goals — be those optimizing performance or getting back in shape and enjoying the fun that is central to every Savage Race event. Ironically, the needs for a high-end athlete are not that different from the needs of someone trying to drop extra body fat. Both groups must consider the impact of nutrition, sleep, lifestyle and training. I'd say the high-end athlete might be a bit more challenging as we are trying to pull the last bit of human potential from these folks, so food, recovery and smart training are critical. Losing some weight is actually a reasonably easy process if we can get folks to drive within the lane-lines of a few general concepts, which I'll outline below and will be detailed in this program. Without further ado, let's get into the broad brush strokes of what we will cover in this guide:

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NUTRITION: AKA-FOOD

Food is an incredibly contentious topic and I'd say it is tertiary only to politics and religion as a "hot button" subject, but ironically, politics and religion can dramatically influence food leanings, so it's safe to say folks generally have an emotionally charged perspective of what they should and should not eat for performance, health and longevity.

MY "GREASY, USED CAR SALESMAN" PITCH IS THE FOLLOWING:

Try it. For 30-60 days. See if you look, feel and perform better than before. It's a remarkably transparent process and bypasses all the intellectual debate that can rage around these topics. If that all seems too straightforward, you can certainly send me a few hundred dollars, THEN do that self-experimentation!

I will detail what to eat later in this program but the broad brushstrokes are the following: Eat largely whole-foods with minimal processing. What does that mean? For the most part, our food is not coming from boxes, cans and packages. Please don't get pedantic about this as although technically almonds come in a bag, you generally consume them in an "unprocessed" state. Make sense? I strongly recommend eating foods that are generally regarded as "anti-inflammatory." I'd like to see good quality protein at most meals (fish, fowl, meat) with the bulk of carbohydrates coming mainly from fruits, vegetables and tubers like yams, sweet potatoes and regular old spuds. As part of that 30-60 day trial period I HIGHLY recommend trying a largely grain-free approach paying particular attention to avoid gluten-containing items. Some folks handle gluten just fine but for many the removal of gluten is perhaps one of the greatest steps they can take towards better health, body composition and performance.



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SLEEP

If you asked a group of people, particularly in fitness circles, what is the #1 thing they can do to improve performance, recovery and body composition I think it's safe that you will hear about things such as protein powder, creatine and fish oil. These are all great items to use when appropriate but unfortunately few people would put "sleep" at the top of the list as a performance aid. Although I'm generally known as "the food guy" I spend more than 80% of my time talking to Police, Military, Fire and corporations about the power of getting adequate, restful sleep.

“ I'D ALMOST SAY
SLEEP IS MORE IMPORTANT
THAN PROPER NUTRITION. ”

I'd ALMOST say that sleep is more important than proper nutrition. The only caveat I'd put on that is that if you are a shift worker, a new parent or in a similar situation in which your sleep is continually disturbed, keeping an eye on your food may be much more doable — it's likely not feasible to quit your job as an ER nurse or Cop and there's no way but through for the folks in the new parent category. In this guide we'll look at the WHY behind the importance of sleep, the principles of sleep hygiene as well as many of the common objections folks have to spending time in the rack.

LIFESTYLE & STRESS

Most of us live pretty hectic lives. Careers, kids, crime fighting...folks are busy. Then, for an as-yet-unknown reason, we add adventure racing to the mix! It can all be stressful...or perhaps not that stressful at all; much of this depends on how we choose to respond to various situations. I'll be honest with you: THIS section is the material that I am actively working on (struggling with??) in my own life. I have the food, training and sleep reasonably well dialed in. What's my deal? Oh....I'm kinda "wound tight." I'm a warm, loving person on vacation but I can be a bit of a prick during my work week (again, just ask my wife). I have slowly learned that many of my perceptions of stress exist nowhere but between my own ears. I'll talk more later about some ways to reframe what we perceive to be stress and offer some resources and strategies for doing a better job enjoying life and being a mellow, relaxed, but effective person.

Without further ado, let's jump into the "carne y papas" of the guide.

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NUTRITION

nu·tri·tion

noun

the process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth.

"a guide to good nutrition"

1

CLEAN OUT THE PANTRY



2

GO SHOPPING



3

COOK



4

GO FOR A WALK



5

SLEEP



1. CLEAN OUT THE PANTRY

Self-control is a myth. PLAN AHEAD! Don't have tempting foods in the house. Remove the bread, rice, pasta, cookies, crackers, puddings, ice cream, waffles, juice, sodas, cereals, oatmeal, artificial sweeteners, yogurt, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, canned soups, apple sauce, noodles – all refined, packaged foods. Bag it all up, take it to a food bank or homeless shelter. The kids do NOT need crackers and Goldfish. They might actually be healthier if YOU are healthier!

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2. GO SHOPPING

Now it's time to fill your cupboards with food worth eating.

PROTEIN

Ideally these options are grass-fed or wild caught. If you cannot find those, should you eat a bagel? No! Conventional options are fine. Beans and rice do NOT count.

- Land: Pork, beef, lamb.
- Sea: Trout, salmon, shrimp, crab. You know—fishy type stuff!
- Air: Chicken, turkey, duck, ostrich. I know, ostrich is flightless... don't get cheeky.

Round things out with some good quality bacon, omega-3 enriched eggs and some items like chicken apple sausage to help you with breakfast on busy days.

VEGGIES

Ideally these are local and organic, but again, this should not be a deal breaker. Our local mega-food chain actually has the best produce outside of the farmers market, and at an amazing price. Shop with the season, which typically means what is on sale. Mix up the colors.

FRUIT

Limit fruit to 1 serving per day if fat loss is your goal. A serving is not a whole watermelon. If you want to screw things up and not make progress, eat all the fruit you want - it's your nickel, ride the ride as you like. In order of preference: Berries, melons, citrus, apples, pears. Bananas, papayas and mangoes are great for athletes post-workout but dodgy for folks who want to lose fat.

FATS

Olive oil (extra virgin), coconut (whole and oil), avocado (whole and oil), macadamia (whole and oil), almonds, walnuts. If fat loss is a goal, limit nuts to 1-2 oz per day.

ODDS & ENDS

Marinara sauce, herbs, spices, curry powder, garlic, ginger, cilantro, garam massala, chili powder, black pepper, lemon zest, allspice, cinnamon, cumin, oregano, and basil. Get at least 20 herbs and spices to keep your cooking lively. Stock up on espresso, teas, and mineral water as these are your beverages of choice.

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3. COOK

The majority of your meals should look something like this:

- 4-8 oz of lean protein such as:
 - chicken
 - lean beef
 - turkey
 - pork loin
 - seafood
- Several servings of vegetables, either raw, steamed, or lightly cooked.
- Finally, round out the meal with good fats from avocado, olive oil or a handful of unsalted nuts such as almonds, pecans, macadamias or walnuts.

KEY POINTS

- Protein at every meal
- 3-4 meals per day
- Limit fruit to 1 serving if fat loss is a goal
- Limit nuts to 1-2 oz if fat loss is a goal
- Beverages are coffee, tea, mineral water. Unsweetened. No artificial sweeteners (no, not even stevia).

4. GO FOR A WALK

Get outside and move. Gauge your fitness level and act accordingly. To bring out your true inner-Savage, download the official TrainSavage training guide!

**DOWNLOAD
NOW!**



5. SLEEP

Black out your room. I mean REALLY black out your room. No LED lights from alarm clocks, fire alarms, TV's, cell phones. Do not watch TV or check email for at least 1 hour before bed. Go to bed early, get at least 8-9 hrs of sleep. You should wake up without an alarm, feeling refreshed.

Questions? Confused?

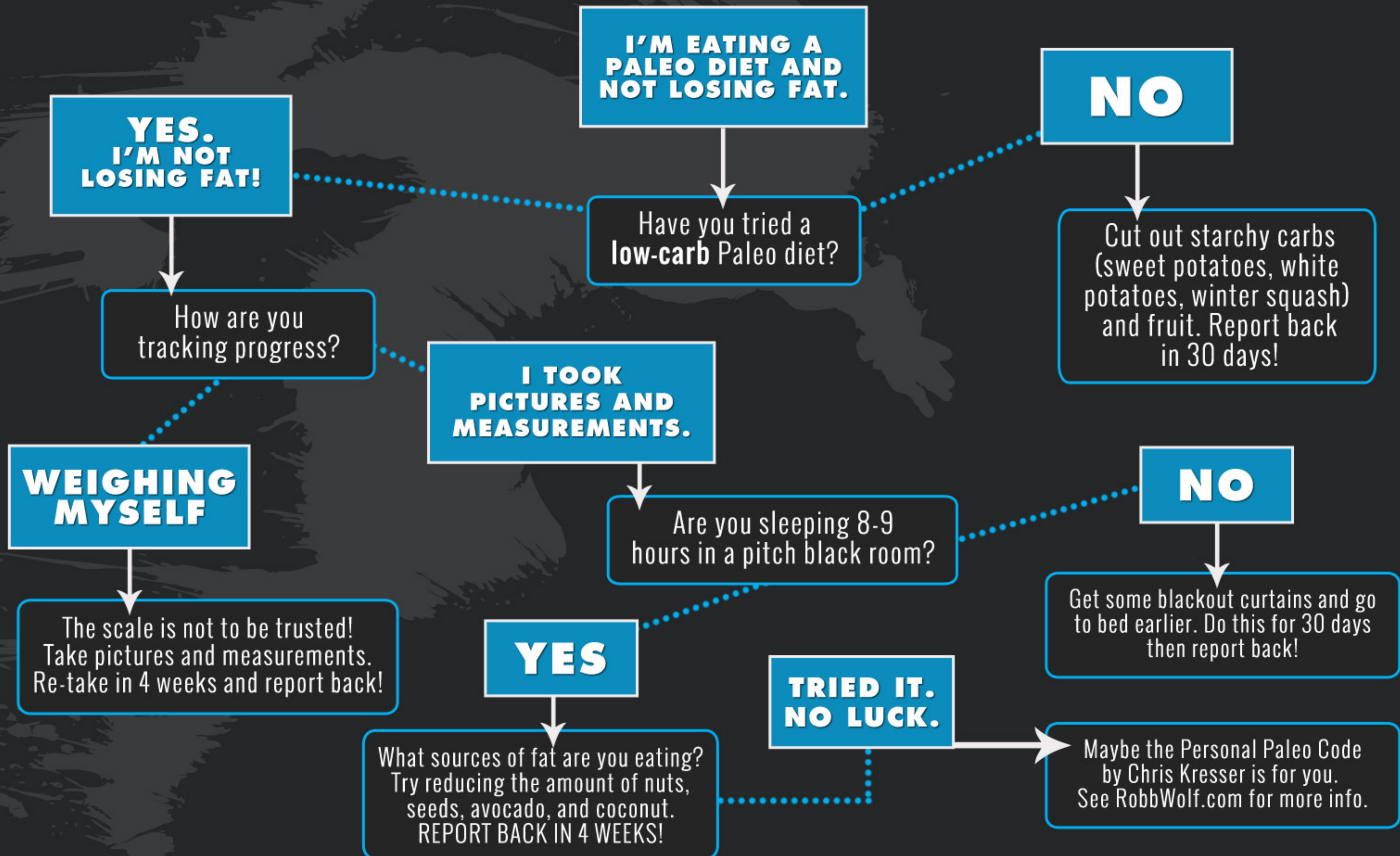
If you are curious about these recommendations or need more help, check out Robb Wolf's 30 Day Paleo Transformation, a month-long guide including meal plans, exercise videos, and more. Want more scientific information and the research behind things? Check out The Paleo Solution.

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PERFORMANCE NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE GUIDE

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TROUBLESHOOTING FAT LOSS



FUELING FOR ENDURANCE

I NEED TO BUILD AN AEROBIC BASE.

FASTED +10-20g BCAA

TRAIN RELATIVELY LOW CARB.
EAT DENSE CARB SOURCES
POST-WORKOUT.

EAT PER POUND
OF BODYWEIGHT

0.8g PROTEIN
17-19 CALORIES
50-100g CARBS
THE REMAINDER IN FAT

I WANT TO FUEL FOR INTERVALS.

EAT 80-90% OF CALORIES FROM
CARBS IN POST-WORKOUT
PERIOD.
LIQUID CARBS OPTIONAL.

EAT PER POUND OF BODYWEIGHT
0.8-1.0g PROTEIN
17-21 CALORIES

I WANT TO FUEL FOR COMPETITION.

POST WORKOUT BCAA +10-20g

EAT 80-90% OF CALORIES FROM
CARBS IN POST-WORKOUT
PERIOD.
LIQUID CARBS OPTIONAL.

TEST YOUR FUEL SOURCES BEFORE
GAME DAY. EAT DENSE CARBS PRE
AND POST-WORKOUT.

EAT PER POUND OF BODYWEIGHT
0.8-1.0g PROTEIN
17-21 CALORIES
EAT 50-60% OF CALORIES
FROM CARBS

FUELING FOR POWER ATHLETES

I NEED TO CUT WEIGHT.

FASTED +10-20g BCAA

TRAIN RELATIVELY LOW CARB.
EAT DENSE CARB SOURCES
POST-WORKOUT.

EAT PER POUND
OF BODYWEIGHT

1.0-1.25g PROTEIN
15-17 CALORIES
50-100g CARBS
THE REMAINDER IN FAT

STRENGTH MAINTENANCE BLOCK

EAT 80-90% OF CALORIES FROM
CARBS IN POST-WORKOUT
PERIOD.
LIQUID CARBS OPTIONAL.

EAT PER POUND OF BODYWEIGHT
1.0-1.25g PROTEIN
17-19 CALORIES
CARBS AS TOLERATED

I WANT TO GAIN MUSCLE MASS.

POST WORKOUT BCAA +10-20g

EAT 80-90% OF CALORIES FROM
CARBS IN POST-WORKOUT
PERIOD.
LIQUID CARBS OPTIONAL.

EAT PER POUND OF BODYWEIGHT
1.0-1.5g PROTEIN
19-21 CALORIES

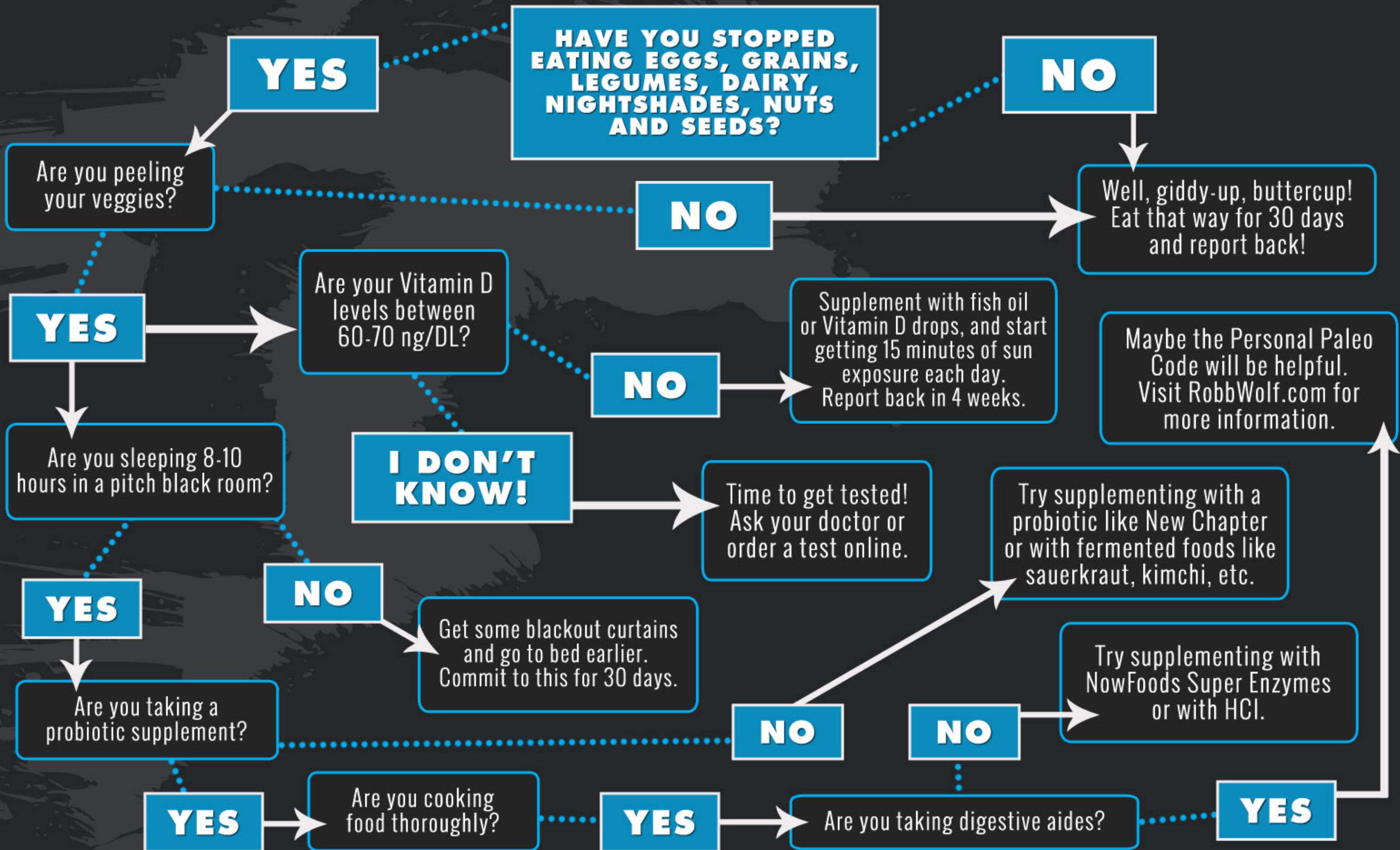
EAT 20-40% OF CALORIES FROM
CARBS AS TOLERATED

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PERFORMANCE NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE GUIDE

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EATING FOR AUTOIMMUNITY



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PERFORMANCE NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE GUIDE

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SLEEP. NO. REALLY, SLEEP!

CATCH THOSE Z'S AT ALL COSTS

Selling people on more and better sleep should be as easy as selling them on more and better sex. For some damn reason that is not the case, however, and I receive significant pushback when I tell folks to prioritize their shut-eye. "I'll sleep when I'm dead!" "Sleep is for the WEAK!!" These are common refrains I get when pushing my nefarious agenda of more rack-time. It's honestly a head-scratcher for me but I'm 43, have two kids under the age of four and I now protect my sleep with razor wire and guard dogs. Well, not really, but I would if my wife would let me. I hope that when you work your way through the program you read things like "sleep more," "eat an anti-inflammatory diet" and you say "CHECK!" and just jump in and do it. If you are a hard case that's fine but it just forces me to put more electrons on paper to try and goose you into some action that will benefit...(wait for it)...YOU. Yea, I'm "here" trying to help "you," keep that in mind when your BS detector is telling you to keep eating Twinkies and that you really only need 4 hours of sleep. People are notoriously hard to convince to do new things but two time-honored tactics for lighting a fire under folks are the following: 1-Appeal to authority/experience. 2-Citing science that most people have no hope of deciphering so they just acquiesce and get with the program. With that in mind here are my not-so-subtle applications of the aforementioned motivational techniques.

APPEAL TO AUTHORITY TACTIC OR "LISTEN TO ME, I HAVE "EXPERIENCE!"

I spent five years working as a consultant for the Naval Special Warfare Resiliency program. What this entailed was talking to the SEALs about sleep, food, training...really not dissimilar to what I'm covering in this program. The SEALs are selected, in part, for their ability to shrug off the impact of sleep deprivation but there are some major caveats to this. Although it's clear the folks who make it through the selection process are wired a bit differently than most folks, that lifestyle of stress, sleep deprivation, time zone travel etc. is considered a "young man's game." Part of my job was to point out that although yea, these guys are tough as hell, they can and do break at some point. One of the main breaking points is sleep. I provided strategies for mitigating sleep deprivation (naps, smart supplementation, attention to nutrition) and like I'm doing with you now, I made a strong case for the importance of sleep...within a community that prides itself on being able to motor through sleep deprived states. They kept asking me back to talk about this stuff which leads me to one of two conclusions: 1-They thought I was a huge nerd and felt sorry for me, thus kept asking me back. 2-What I was saying to the guys was actually useful and they wanted to get that information to as many people as possible.

"I SPENT FIVE YEARS WORKING AS A CONSULTANT FOR THE NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE RESILIENCY PROGRAM"

SAVAGERACE

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SLEEP. NO. REALLY, SLEEP!

BLIND THEM WITH SCIENCE
OR "LISTEN TO ME, I'M SMART!"

A quick search for terms like "sleep deprivation + health problems" can shock even the most stalwart Sleep Denier into thinking there might be something to this sleep schtick. Let me just hit a few highlights:

1. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now recognize that shift work is a known carcinogen, similar to smoking or playing catch with chunks of uranium.
2. One night of poor sleep can leave one as insulin resistant as a type 2 diabetic.
3. Poor sleep negatively impacts the immune system and hormones such as testosterone, insulin and thyroid.
4. Poor sleep is associated with significantly higher injury rates amongst both recreational and professional athletes.

I could go on. And on. You are not a unique snowflake (most likely) and no, you do not function optimally on 4-5 hrs of sleep. You may have conditioned yourself to function at that level, but you are not as lean as you could be, you do not recover as fast as you could and you are increasing your likelihood of a host of health issues by relegating sleep to the back burner. In a moment I'll detail how to do the best with what you have (I know there are a lot of police, fire and military personnel who participate in Savage Races, as well as medical professionals and new parents) but please, take the sleep topic seriously. If you ignore everything I say about nutrition but make sleep a priority you will be shocked with your results. OK, let's get beyond the theory and sales-pitch around sleep and figure out what to actually do.

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PERFORMANCE NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE GUIDE
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SLEEP HYGIENE IN A NUTSHELL

1 SLEEP IN A PITCH BLACK ROOM. If you need to scare your neighbors into thinking you run a meth lab in your house due to covering the windows with aluminum foil, DO IT.



2 AVOID WATCHING TELEVISION OR READING IN BED. Your bed should be for sleep and sex only. But do remember you CAN have sex elsewhere...

3 AVOID PAYING BILLS, READING EMAILS OR HAVING STRESSFUL DISCUSSIONS for at least 2 hours before bed. I dearly love my wife but this was nearly a breaking point for us as she tends to “ruminate” before bed and used to ask me business/planning questions before bed. After seeing me freak out a few hundred times she realized this was counterproductive on a lot of levels. Get a notepad to record all your obligations and write them down so you can tackle them the following day. You are getting ready for bed; your best bet for effectively tackling the things you need to do is to get a good night’s sleep.

4 MAKE SURE THERE ARE NO LED OR OTHER LIGHTS IN YOUR ROOM (alarm clocks, etc). Please see recommendation #1 above (folks never take this seriously...it works!) Get after it!



5 CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTING WITH SLEEP COCKTAIL. My good friend Dr. Kirk Parsley MD is a former US Navy SEAL and he took care of the medical concerns for the West Coast SEAL Teams for a number of years. In an effort to help his charges get better sleep he developed his sleep cocktail formula. I highly recommend grabbing a box of this and using it as needed. It’s “all natural” and just provides the raw materials necessary to produce the neurotransmitters involved in both initiating and maintaining sleep.

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LIFESTYLE

If you recall from the introduction to this guide my main area of struggle is the “stress and lifestyle” piece. I tend to be wound pretty tight and it does NOT do me any favors. Not for performance, productivity or being an effective father, husband or CEO. I assumed this was “just how things are” and built a whole excuse-based reality around literally protecting my own suffering. This process changed when I had my friend, Andy Bernstein, on my podcast. Andy wrote a book called **The Myth of Stress**. The premise is simple: Most of what we perceive to be stress is self-imposed. Stress really does not exist unless we create it. Deadlines, financial worries, “keeping up with The Joneses,” anxiety surrounding thoughts of failure or success all tend to be nothing more than internal dialogue that sets us up for what we perceive to be “stress.” If you have ever read any type of Zen literature or Stoic philosophy you have likely gotten a taste of the concept: Be in the present, most of our thoughts are illusions, etc. My grandmother said something to me years ago that I both realize the power of but struggle with the implementation of:

Grandma: “I spent most of my life worrying about things where I had no control over the outcome. When I learned to just focus on what I CAN change, I was a much happier person.”

I highly recommend Andy’s book; it has been a game-changer for me. It explains the concepts behind most of our stress being self-imposed and provides real, actionable strategies for choosing to live a different way. It will require some work on your part (it certainly does for me) but the rewards are remarkable.

MOST OF WHAT WE PERCEIVE TO BE STRESS IS SELF-IMPOSED.
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STRESS REDUCTION STRATEGIES

While you are working on changing your perceptions that lead to stress I'd like to mention a few strategies that are beneficial whether you are a stress-mess (like me!) or have the imperturbable psychic makeup of a Tibetan monk.

UNO

MEDITATION APP

There are a remarkable number of smart-phone apps that make it easy for squirly folks (like myself) to unwind. I really like the [Brainwave](#) and [Breath Pacer](#) apps.

I tend to structure my work into 25 minute chunks (I set an alarm in my phone) and then I take a 5 min "restoration break" at the end of each chunk. You may feel like this will fracture your work mode...I don't think that will be the case. It allows you to REALLY focus for that 25 min period, then you can shift gears into a completely different type of brain activity. Neuroscience research indicates this break actually lets you recover from the work you were doing.



DOS

READ THE BOOK...

The Myth of Stress and pay close attention to how you are thinking about items you view to be stressors. I know, this may seem hokey. It did to me. I fought it. I was wrong. Give it a shot; you will be impressed with the results.



TRES

GET OUTSIDE

Make time daily to get outside. If you can get to some semblance of nature, that'd be great. If not, do the best you can. Getting outside lowers stress hormones and helps to entrain our circadian rhythm to the light/dark cycles that make up our days. Many people spend so much time inside their physiology is divorced from the very things that help us to be alert when we should be and ready to relax, sleep and recover at the other end of the spectrum.



CUATRO

SHUT-EYE

Apologies, I'm talking more about sleep! That stuff is important, just had to sneak more in.



BUT ROBB, IS THERE SUCH THING AS “GOOD” STRESS?

Every organism on the planet exists in a dynamic process of experiencing various inputs and responding to those inputs; this is true from bacteria to Sequoias to humans. These inputs, be they light, hydration, predator/prey pressure, etc. are interpreted and (hopefully) responded to in an effective way. Critters like humans have remarkably complex hormonal and neurological systems that help us to deal with the “stress” of things like heat, hunger and exercise. If you are dropped off in the woods with no food and must find your way out of the wilderness, a portion of your nervous system (called the sympathetic nervous system) will “ramp up.” You will be alert and your blood glucose will be a bit higher than normal. You are ready for ACTION.

This is a survival mechanism.

This is a survival mechanism that is a large part of why our species is still here and you likely have heard of this as being called the “fight or flight” response. As great as this adaptive state is, it has some downsides: Our digestion grinds to a halt, our immune function falls and the stress hormone cortisol climbs. We do well with short periods of stress like this. A key problem of modern life is that we spend far too much time in this “fight or flight” mode and inadequate time in the restorative or “parasympathetic” mode. Getting a handle on the mental side of this story by using the techniques found in *The Myth of Stress* goes a long way towards reducing the fight or flight response, but things like sleep deprivation or too much exercise (be that volume or intensity) are real, legitimate, potentially crippling stressors. Given that you are likely training for a Savage Race event and likely participate in other activities like CrossFit you DO need to keep an eye on your training load and recovery. A nifty bit of technology that can help you manage your training load is a Heart Rate Variability monitor (HRV). A full explanation of HRV is outside the scope of this guide, but the basic idea is that properly monitoring your HRV will give you a sense of your recovery status and thus allow you to dial up or down your training volume and intensity. There are a number of HRV platforms available and I do not have a personal favorite. Give HRV some thoughts as it can provide the objective feedback you need to validate if your sleep, nutrition, training and lifestyle efforts are on point.

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PERFORMANCE NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE GUIDE
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CLOSING THOUGHTS OR

“DO I REALLY NEED TO DO ALL OF THIS?”

I know this is a fair amount of material you have chewed through. You are likely thinking “Dude, I just want to kick ass at this next race!” I have made the aforementioned recommendations because they will positively affect your performance, body composition (level of body fat) and honestly, your whole life. Tackling a Savage Race is no easy affair. Folks do it for a number of reasons but perhaps most central is the desire to test oneself. If this guide feels overwhelming I’d recommend tackling things like this:

- 1 - Make sleep an absolute priority. Do everything you can to “get that right.”
- 2 - Change your breakfast to “anti-inflammatory foods.” Run with that for a few weeks, then add in lunch. A few weeks later, add in dinner. Don’t turn it into a religious process where a dodgy meal makes you scuttle the whole process. If your last meal was not great, you are only one meal away from being back on track. Don’t let perfection get in the way of “good enough.”
- 3 - Set aside some time daily to reflect on how you are doing with your perception of stress. This includes the internal dialogue that can lead to stress, as well as take short breaks to act as a “system reset.”
- 4 - Add in a HRV and put some thought into the volume and intensity of your training.

In an ideal world I’d like to see you do all of these things, right from day one as they are additive and supportive of one another. Better food means more restful sleep and faster recovery. Meditation-breaks and reduced psychic anxiety means better digestion, body composition, sleep and recovery...it all adds together and in a profound way. So, how you tackle this is up to you, both paths will get you where you are going.