

How to Bypass Those Holiday Pounds

When you think of the Christmas season, what comes to mind first? Pretty packages? Gingerbread cookies? Gaining weight?

Although many people estimate they gain more than five pounds during the holidays, most of us don't put on nearly that much. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that most Americans gain only about a pound between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. That sounds like good news, but it's not—the researchers also found that most people *never lose that pound*. So packing on an extra holiday pound each year contributes to obesity later in life.

Let's analyze that sneaky holiday pound. It takes 3,500 calories to create a pound of body fat. A mere 100 extra calories each day over the six weeks from Thanksgiving to New Year's would easily rack up over a pound of fat. What equals 100 calories? One iced cookie. Four or five chocolate kisses. Just two ounces of eggnog. Calories from holiday treats add up incredibly fast!

As a reaction to holiday food temptations, sometimes people decide to start a weight loss plan. But the last six weeks of the year are not the best time for attempting to shed pounds—you may end up feeling deprived and lose your holiday cheer. A more sensible goal is maintaining your current weight. Instead of loosening your belt and welcoming that holiday pound, go on the offensive this year and bypass it.

The Reason for the Season

Before we strategize about foiling that pound, let's get back to basics by revisiting that first question: When you think of Christmas, what comes to mind first? Jesus! It's a celebration of His birthday. As Christians, we want to honor Jesus with

our words, deeds, and conduct during His birthday season. If we keep a proper perspective on Christmas, we can focus on what's most important, and it's NOT the holiday food.

At this time of year, magazines and Web sites run countless articles on healthy holiday eating. They list ideas such as eating a healthy snack before you go to a party or drinking water with lemon instead of high-calorie beverages. These strategies are helpful and can keep us mindful of what we eat. However, relying solely on dieting tips keeps the focus on ourselves and on food.

Instead, let's turn our hearts toward loving others and experiencing the joy of the season. For a different approach, try the acrostic "PEWS" to outsmart that holiday pound while honoring Jesus.

P is for Prayer

Fortify yourself with prayer. God knows it is hard for you to eat sensibly when faced with an array of holiday goodies. Ask Him for the strength to stick to a few favorite foods. Ask Him to remove your desire to eat too much and help you focus on showing the love of Christ to others at Christmas parties and dinners. Praise Him for the wonderful body He made for you.

E is for Exercise

One of the best ways to fight that holiday pound and erase extra calories is to move your body. Walking at a brisk pace for half an hour each day can burn 100 calories. A convenient way to rack up 30 minutes is to march in place while watching a television show or football game. Get fresh air while walking the dog, pace around the house while talking on the phone, or grab your sneakers and head to the mall. Make exercise a priority.

W is for Wisdom

When faced with a table of goodies, stop and think. Ask yourself, "Which of these foods are truly worth the calories?" Take small servings of two or three of your favorites and savor them. Move away from the food area as soon as possible and mingle with friends and family. Avoiding second helpings is always wise. What do you think Jesus would do and say at a holiday party? What would He eat and how much? Food for thought.

S is for Scripture

Lots of Christians struggle with food temptation and even gluttony during the holidays. Strengthen your resolve by memorizing encouraging Scripture verses about God's faithfulness. Post them on the fridge or mirror. Before you go to a holiday party, put a verse in your pocket so feeling the paper with your fingertips is a reminder. Here are a few verses to get you started:

- *"And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (I Corinthians 10:13b).*
- *"The Lord delights in the way of the man whose steps He has made firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand" (Psalm 37:23-24).*
- *"He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe" (Proverbs 28:26).*
- *"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).*
- *"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made..." (Psalm 139:14).*

Holiday treats taste good for an instant, but they are not worth the extra weight that might stay for years. As you head out to Christmas parties and dinners this year, try the PEWS approach to bypass holiday pounds.

***Beth Bence Reinke** is a registered dietitian who writes about food, nutrition, and health topics. She is a mom of two sons and the author of numerous magazine articles for adults and children. Beth and her husband have been CBN partners since 1998. Visit her at www.bethbencereinke.com.*

For the original article, visit cbn.com.

Study: Frequent Cellphone Use Boosts Anxiety

Feeling anxious? Try turning off that cellphone. New research has found cellphone use by college students not only lowers their grades, but also boosts their anxiety.

The findings are based on a survey of more than 500 students by Kent State University researchers. Daily cellphone use was recorded, along with clinical measures of anxiety and each student's level of satisfaction in life. Participants also allowed the researchers to access their official university records in order to retrieve their actual cumulative college grade point average (GPA).

All students surveyed were undergraduate students and were equally distributed by class (freshman, sophomore, junior and senior).

The results showed that students who used their cellphones a lot had lower GPAs and higher levels of anxiety—and reported lower general happiness in their lives—than those who used their mobile devices less frequently.

The study follows earlier research by the same team of medical

experts that tied frequent cellphone use to lower levels of cardiorespiratory fitness.

“Taken as a whole, these results suggest that students should be encouraged to monitor their cellphone use and reflect upon it critically so that it is not detrimental to their academic performance, mental and physical health, and overall well-being or happiness,” say the researchers, who reported their findings in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*.

© 2013 NewsmaxHealth. Reprinted with permission.

5 Ways to Resolve the Blame Game in Your Marriage

It's easy to blame your spouse for your marriage issues when you think you're doing everything possible to make it great. The real question is, “Are you?”

Chances are you are both responsible for your marriage issues. Now, stay with me here.

My wife and I struggled for years when it came to our marriage issues. Especially when it came to God.

Sunday morning is a great example. We would wake up Sunday and ask if church was on the schedule or not. I'd deflect and ask what time it started. She'd deflect and ask what else was going on that day.

In short, we would “excuse” ourselves out of going to church. There we would lie in bed, not helping our marriage and slowly destroying it. And what was it for?

As a changed husband looking back, I had to ask myself some hard questions. There may be some hard questions you need to be asking in your marriage too. How could I have approached situations differently? Was I really being the spiritual leader? Was I really loving my wife by giving in to laziness and fear?

What questions require honest answers in your marriage?

Let's look at a few more scenarios.

You want to lead in your marriage, but instead of getting or asking for help, you hope the regular Sunday morning message at church will hold the answers you seek. Maybe.

So, things are really rough in your marriage and the only thing you do is pray. I am a firm believer in prayer, but I also believe that God has given certain people specific tools to use and help marriages grow. Don't stop praying, but get off your butt and get some help from a counselor, mentor or pastor.

Say you're dating this wonderful girl and you're thinking about marriage. That's great, but the problem is you live together and continue to have sex. Whose fault is it? I'll say it's both partners' fault. My advice to the men is to step up and stop. Don't wait for her to stop. Be honest with her and let her know your heart. Wait for marriage. Trust me, it's possible and it's worth it.

So, how can you lead? How can you stop blaming your spouse for all the issues and start taking responsibility in an effective and safe way?

Here are five questions you need to ask yourself:

1. Am I honestly doing everything I can to lead?
2. Have I communicated my feelings honestly to my spouse?

3. Have I honestly been praying about the situation on a daily basis and seeking God's direction (not my own)?
4. Have I honestly and maturely discussed the situation with a church elder, pastor, friend, mentor or marriage counselor?
5. How long have I been passing the blame on to my spouse, when the issue is really mine to take care of?

Carefully consider the questions above, and start making big changes in your marriage or relationship today. That's right; don't wait any longer!

Have you experienced this in your marriage or relationship? What are some ways you and your spouse effectively communicate with each other and throw water down on the blame game fire?

Manturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages and help them in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. Manturity.com features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Manturity blog communities on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/manturity) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/manturity).

For the original article, visit manturity.com.

Top 4 Reasons to Take Deep Breaths

If I had a nickel for every time I've been told to take a deep breath, I'd be able to buy for each of you your very own air purifier. From my P.E. teachers in elementary school to my CrossFit coaches today, I've always heard the simple phrase

“Take a few deep breaths” whenever a pesky cramp plagues my activity or a wave of frustration crashes into me mid-workout.

When I’m enjoying a deep tissue massage or foam rolling after lifting weights, I’m instructed to breathe deeply ... *in through the nose, out through the mouth*. When I’m riled up or stressed out and can’t catch my breath, guess what I’m encouraged to do by friends and family? That’s right: *Breathe through it*. And after 17 years, I can honestly say that taking a few moments to take a few deep breaths has never been a waste of time ... or air!

We read in Genesis that God breathed life into the nostrils of the first man, Adam. The Book of Job affirms that we all have been created by God’s Spirit, and that the “*breath of the Almighty gives [us] life*” (Job 33:4, emphasis mine). Indeed, there is power in the breath.

The word *ruach* occurs in the Old Testament nearly 400 times. Its root meaning is “moving air,” whether through a breath, a breeze or stormy winds. In Hebrew, the Holy Spirit is *Ruach HaKodesh*, which means “the breath of God” or “the holy breath.”

Before Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples, breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). As you can see, breathing has had life-giving and rejuvenating effects on mankind since the beginning.

Of course, we cannot exhale into a pile of dust and expect it to turn into an animate object, such as was the case with the creation of Adam. Neither can a single breath of ours, no matter how minty fresh, inspire and motivate, as Jesus’ did over His disciples.

However, we are made in God’s image, made to speak and breathe life, just as He does. The Lord designed our bodies to respond favorably to positive words and purposeful breaths. When we

pay attention to the words we say and the breaths we take, we begin to feel better—freed of worry, filled with peace and restored with hope.

Here are four reasons you should breathe deep daily:

1. Your stress will be relieved. Getting more oxygen through deep breaths can facilitate healing from a surprising number of serious conditions, including chronic pain, immune and digestive disorders, depression, atrial fibrillation, asthma, and a wide range of stress-related illnesses. Newborns naturally breathe deeply, but stress alters that healthy pattern as we age. By adulthood we're taking 15 to 20 breaths per minute on average—three to four times faster than is optimal.

Breathing exercises can be used as a method to train the body's reaction to stressful situations and dampen the production of harmful stress hormones. Esther Sternberg is a physician, author of several books on stress and healing and researcher at the National Institute of Mental Health. She says rapid breathing is controlled by the sympathetic nervous system; it's part of the "fight or flight" response. In contrast, slow, deep breathing actually stimulates the opposing parasympathetic reaction—the one that calms us down.

"The relaxation response is controlled by another set of nerves—the main nerve being the Vagus nerve," she says. "Think of a car throttling down the highway at 120 miles an hour. That's the stress response, and the Vagus nerve is the brake. When you are stressed, you have your foot on the gas, pedal to the floor. When you take slow, deep breaths, that is what is engaging the brake."

2. Your pain will diminish. In 2006, researchers at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, conducted a small pain management study in which they compared the value of using deep-breathing relaxation exercises together with pain-

relieving drugs versus using drugs alone.

Forty patients were divided into two groups: one for relaxation; one for pain relief. Members of the relaxation group were taught a deep-breathing technique that consisted of inhaling slowly through the nose and exhaling slowly through pursed lips. Subjects either closed their eyes or focused on an object in the room. Each participant practiced the technique for 5 minutes before health care workers removed the chest tube dressing and sutures. During the actual chest tube removal, subjects held their breath. After the procedure, researchers encouraged patients to continue the deep breathing as long as they liked.

Members of the pain-relief-only group followed the standard procedure with no supplementary coaching on how to relax. Before, during and after the procedure, scientists measured participants' pain levels.

Both groups experienced high levels of pain both before and during the procedure. However, members of the deep-breathing group reported significantly lower pain ratings during the 15-minute period after the procedure.

Doctors theorize that slow, deep breathing reduces pain by directly impacting the sympathetic nervous system, which comprises the central nervous system which helps control blood flow and skin temperature. Studies have proven that dampening down the sympathetic nervous system can block pain.

3. Your blood pressure will stabilize. Deep abdominal breathing promotes full oxygen exchange—that is, the beneficial trade of incoming oxygen for outgoing carbon dioxide. This type of breathing slows the heartbeat and can lower or stabilize blood pressure.

Stress triggers your body's "fight or flight" response. The brain then releases adrenaline, which causes blood to thicken and the heart to pump faster, causing strain on weakened

arteries. Cardiologist John Kennedy, author of *The 15 Minute Heart Cure*, says “You can teach your body how to slow down, how to be present, how to relax. And what this does is it helps you concentrate and protect your heart all at the same time.”

Mladen Golubic, a physician in the Cleveland Clinic’s Center for Integrative Medicine, says that breathing can have a profound impact on our physiology and our health.

According to Golubic, “You can influence asthma; you can influence chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; you can influence heart failure. There are studies that show that people who practice breathing exercises and have those conditions—they benefit.”

Ready to breathe deep? The first thing you have to do, according to Harvard Medical School, is to find a comfy, quiet place to sit or lie down. (Sounds great so far, right? I might recommend lighting a candle and putting on some soothing classical or worship music.) The following breathing steps are taken directly from a health report for Harvard Health Publications:

1. Start by observing your breath. First take a normal breath.
2. Now try taking a slow, deep breath. The air coming in through your nose should move downward into your lower belly. Let your abdomen expand fully.
3. Now breathe out through your mouth (or your nose, if that feels more natural).
4. Alternate normal and deep breaths several times. Pay attention to how you feel when you inhale and exhale normally and when you breathe deeply. Shallow breathing often feels tense and constricted, while deep breathing produces relaxation.

5. Now practice this breathing for several minutes. Put one hand on your abdomen, just below your belly button. Feel your hand rise about an inch each time you inhale and fall about an inch each time you exhale. Your chest will rise slightly, too, in concert with your abdomen. Remember to relax your belly so that each inhalation expands it fully.

4. Your appreciation for life will grow. When I slip into a still, quiet space and take in slow, deep breaths I cannot help but think on verses such as Psalm 39:5 which tells us that all mankind is a “mere breath,” or James 4:14 that compares life to a vapor.

How sacred life is! How precious and fragile! Composed of 60 chemical elements that make up muscles, bones and fat, our temporary tents of dust can only endure a few weeks without food, a few days without water and only *minutes* without breath. I think this fact offers significant spiritual application as we think on the power of God’s own *ruach*, the eternal force that propelled the first words of creation through the void of darkness, breathed life into the first Adam, and was given up unto death by the second Adam with the words, “It is finished.” Without the *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, continuously energizing, leading and strengthening us, we are without hope, without power, without the fruit that produces an abundant life; He is the heavenly oxygen our souls thirst for.

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13, NLT).

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of Creation House’s [Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman’s Guide to Total Fitness](#). Her popular website can be found at fit4faith.com, and she is the owner and a coach at [CrossFit 925](#). Diana can be reached on [Twitter](#).

For the original article, visit dianafit.com.

Joseph: Showers in the Desert

I've noticed in my life that even during the long, hard years, God was always there. I see the same thing in Joseph's story. And I believe it will be true for you as well.

The Lord will encourage you in big and little ways—a kind word at work that cheers you up, a special time in prayer or reading your Bible, a friend who asks you to lunch with no agenda, warm times with your family. In those special moments, you will sense His goodness or will be reminded that He hasn't forgotten you. These times may feel too brief. But they're real—like a cloud bursting open in the desert that makes flowers bloom in the least likely places.

Think of it like this: When God sends you on a mission, He will also send His favor. Look at the strong connection between God's favor to Joseph and the mystery-shrouded mission God sent him on:

- “The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered” (Gen. 39:2, NIV).
- “When ... the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor” (vv. 3-4).
- “The Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor” (v. 21).
- “The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did” (v. 23).
- “It was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you” (Gen. 45:5).
- “God sent me ahead of you” (v. 7).

- “It was not you who sent me here, but God” (v. 8).

The simple truth is that we can endure almost any amount of pain if we believe it has a purpose.

Chuck Colson told a story in *Kingdoms in Conflict* about some prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp. Every day they were forced to fill wheelbarrows with sand and push them from one end of the prison yard to the other, then empty them. The next day they put the sand back in the wheelbarrows, pushed them back to where they started the day before, and emptied them again.

This went on day after day. The prisoners started going crazy. One man collapsed and began to sob uncontrollably. Another man ran into the electric fence and was electrocuted. Why? It was because there was no purpose in his ordeal. It was a form of torture.

You may be enduring something right now that makes no sense to you. It feels like torture. But God has given us the story of Joseph to show us that He never deals with us like those guards in the concentration camp. God always has a higher purpose, a greater good for our lives. And in the midst of even the toughest circumstances, He is at work, not just in the circumstances themselves, but in us—shaping us as His sons to be more usable and beautiful for Him.

The preceding is an excerpt from Patrick Morley’s book How God Makes Men, Multnomah, 2013.

8 Ways to Avoid the Flu and

Colds

Just because it's cold and flu season doesn't mean you're destined to get sick. Sure, it's tough to avoid germs when many of us are inside most of the day, avoiding wintry weather and getting less fresh air than during the warmer months.

And when there is coughing and sneezing going on around you, how do you prevent yourself from becoming susceptible? For starters, experts say, practice good overall health habits, like eating right and getting enough sleep.

Here are eight ways to avoid getting sick this winter:

1. Wash your hands. Frequently washing your hands with soap and water, or using an alcohol hand sanitizer will help keep germs at bay. When washing hands, health experts recommend rubbing them together vigorously for at least 20 seconds and turning off the faucet with a towel. While you're at work, routinely clean objects and surfaces that are touched frequently, like a computer keyboard and mouse, phone, and doorknob.

2. Avoid touching your eyes. And keep your hands away from your nose and mouth, too. The flu and colds spread from person to person through droplets expelled from coughing and sneezing, and by touching infected objects and then touching our mouths, eyes, and noses, according to health experts. Cough and sneeze into a tissue. If you don't have one, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow to avoid spreading germs.

3. Get a flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone 6 months and older receive the flu vaccine. Some groups of people, including pregnant women, children younger than 2, and people with chronic medical conditions like asthma and diabetes are considered especially vulnerable to getting serious flu-related

complications and are particularly encouraged to get the vaccine. People with a severe allergy to chicken eggs shouldn't be vaccinated because the vaccine is made using them, the CDC advises.

4. Limit contact. Flu symptoms start one to four days after infection, but an adult with the flu is contagious beginning the day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after they hit. So you can be spreading the virus before you know that you are ill. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend staying home for 24 hours after your fever has broken—and that's if it breaks without the aid of fever-reducing medicine.

5. Practice health habits. Be sure to get enough sleep, eat nutritious food, drink lots of fluids, and get regular exercise to help maintain overall good health. Staying hydrated—drinking eight eight-ounce glasses of fluid a day—helps flush the body of toxins, reports WebMD.com. You'll know you are well hydrated if your urine is nearly clear. Doing heart-pumping aerobic exercise, like brisk walking or biking, helps increase the body's ability to fight viruses.

6. Don't smoke. Cigarette smoke contains toxins that paralyze cilia, tiny, hair-like projections that line mucous membranes in our noses and lungs, and work to sweep out viruses and other invaders. Cilia also move mucous out of the lungs and generally work to keep them infection free. Health experts believe having impaired cilia is one of the reasons smokers suffer a higher incidence of pulmonary infection, according to Livestrong.com.

7. Eat yogurt. Bacteria in some active yogurt cultures work to prevent colds, according to the National Institutes of Health. Researchers believe the bacteria stimulate the immune system to fight disease. Studies have shown that people who eat yogurt daily have 25 percent fewer colds. So grab a spoon; two six-ounce servings a day of yogurt containing the bacteria

Lactobacillus reuteri is recommended, says eHow.com

8. Hit the sauna. An Austrian study of 50 people—25 who took saunas over six months and 25 who did not—found that the sauna-bathing group experienced fewer colds. In fact, during the last three months of the study by researchers at the University of Vienna, the sauna group reported half the number of colds of the control group. Health experts speculate that the heat from a sauna weakens cold and flu viruses.

For the original article, visit newsmaxhealth.com.

Are You Equipped to Love Your Family Well?

Have you ever seen pictures of the people in African villages washing clothes, bathing and drinking from the same filthy water source? Day after day, they're consuming dirty, diseased water, and they are getting sick and dying.

In the same way, people in our country are getting sick from a lack of clean, truthful resources. They're consuming polluted, dirty stuff from the world's well, and it is inflicting enormous emotional, mental and even physical pain in relationships and on families.

How do I know? I know because people are telling us. They're emailing and commenting on our websites, blogs and social media outlets by the thousands.

They know something is missing in their marriage. They know what their kids are consuming isn't good for them. They know

things are not the way they're supposed to be. They're searching and thirsting for something that will satisfy them. So where are they turning for answers? More often than not, they're searching online for answers.

- 85 percent of people in the U.S. are now online.
- 98 percent of those online say the Internet is an essential source for their information, including information about parenting, marriage and relationships.

The Internet is not people's additional stop; it's their first stop.

What are they searching for the most? What are people really craving? Love. To love and be loved. This year, there will be 360 million online searches in the U.S. alone for love—more than the entire US population.

People are going to the Internet to answer their deepest questions. Unfortunately, they are getting tainted advice that will make them even sicker. People are searching for love in all the wrong places, and they don't even know what love is.

People crave love. Like water, love is a basic need. We were created in the image of God and therefore created to love and be loved.

In His greatest commandment, Jesus said we're to love God and love others with everything we've got (Matt. 22:36-39). Love is all about giving—giving selflessly and sacrificially to others. Love. We crave it, God commands it, but people can't find it.

That's why Family First is here. Our sole mission is to provide parenting, marriage and relational truth that helps people love their family well and gives them greater hope for the future.

For years, we've been bringing that truth to millions of

people each day through our [All Pro Dad](#), [iMOM](#) and [Family Minute](#) programs. We bring it in [NFL stadiums](#), in [public schools](#), on billboards, on [mainstream radio](#) and [online](#). We're doing it in the world.

Our purpose is to bring glory to God by sharing His truth, His love and His hope to families worldwide. It's for our kids and grandkids. And it's for you, me and the thousands like us who want to love well.

If you're a dad, check out [allprodad.com](#) for the resources you need to be a better dad and love your family well.

If you're a mom, check out [iMOM.com](#) for the encouragement and resources you need to help you love your family well.

For resources to help you stay relationally fit, then check out [FamilyMinute.com](#) and [sign up for the Family Minute email](#).

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit [markmerrill.com](#).

7 Nutrients Lacking in Your Diet

A recent analysis of the 2001-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) found most American adults do not maintain recommended levels of several key nutrients. Modern food processing, modern commercial farming methods and lifestyle all combine to greatly reduce the nutrient content of the typical American diet.

Here are the alarming results of this recent study.

1. Ninety-nine percent of people need more vitamin D. This nutrient supports a healthy mood, a strong immune system, reduced inflammation and the absorption of calcium. Your body primarily absorbs vitamin D from sunlight, but various lifestyle and environmental factors interrupt this process.

Few foods contain vitamin D, although small amounts may be found in fatty fish (tuna, salmon or mackerel), beef liver, cheese, egg yolks and vitamin D fortified foods (milk, yogurt, orange juice, cereal). For many, a supplement of 1000 IU per day may be necessary.

2. Ninety-eight percent need more vitamin E. This powerful antioxidant protects cells from free radicals. Vitamin E also supports healthy blood vessel function, blood clotting and the immune system.

The best source of vitamin E is wheat germ oil, with 1 tablespoon providing 100 percent of the daily value. Other sources include nuts, seeds, peanut butter and some oils (sunflower oil, soybean oil, corn oil, safflower oil). While naturally occurring vitamin E exists in eight chemical forms, alpha-tocopherol is the only form recognized to meet human requirements.

4. Eighty-two percent need more magnesium. This important nutrient plays a role in more than 300 bodily functions, including blood glucose control, blood pressure regulation, bone strengthening and the metabolism of carbohydrates, protein and fat.

Modern food processing removes many nutrients from food, especially magnesium. Groups most at risk for magnesium deficiency are older adults and adults with gastrointestinal diseases, type 2 diabetes or alcohol dependency.

Good food sources of magnesium are green leafy vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains. In general, foods naturally containing dietary fiber also contain magnesium.

5. Seventy-eight percent need more vitamin A. Healthy eyes require adequate levels of this nutrient. Vitamin A also plays a key role in immune function and reproduction.

The highest concentrations of vitamin A are found in sweet potatoes. Other good food sources include beef liver, spinach, black-eyed peas, fish, milk, eggs, spinach and yellow or orange fruits and vegetables.

6. Sixty-nine percent need more calcium. This is the most abundant mineral in the body, and the vast majority of it is stored in your teeth and bones. The remaining calcium supports heart, muscle and nerve function. Some studies suggest that calcium, along with vitamin D, may also play a role in protecting against cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure—but more research is needed.

Dairy products (milk, cheese, and yogurt) contain the highest amounts of naturally occurring calcium. Other sources of calcium include calcium-fortified foods, dark leafy greens (kale, spinach, collards), soybeans and white beans.

7. Fifty-six percent need more vitamin C. A powerful antioxidant that protects against cell damage, vitamin C also boosts the immune system and helps form collagen in the body. It's also an important ingredient in protein metabolism and synthesis of neurotransmitters.

Citrus fruits are one of the best sources of vitamin C. Other good sources of this power vitamin include sweet red peppers, orange juice, kiwi fruit, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cantaloupe.

Numerous adults need more omega-3 fatty acids. Numerous studies suggest this. Omega-3 fatty acids contribute to heart and brain health, as well as the reduction of inflammation.

Most people—especially those at risk for heart disease—need at least 1 gram of omega-3 per day. Good food sources are

walnuts, ground flax seed, fatty fish such as salmon and salad dressing made with olive, canola or soybean oil. Since this is more than most people get in their diet, omega-3 supplements containing EPA + DHA may be beneficial.

Don Colbert, M.D., is board certified in family practice and in anti-aging medicine. He also has received extensive training in nutritional and preventive medicine, and he has helped millions of people discover the joy of living in divine health.

For the original article, visit drcolbert.com.

How to Get the Right Support for a Healthy Lifestyle

One of the critical keys to your success will be creating a support system around yourself to help and encourage you in your quest.

Do you have any family members or friends who are also living a healthy lifestyle? If not, then you will need to find some traveling companions. You might find other health conscious people on a walking trail, a gym or even some online fitness sites.

Having the right support system will not only provide encouragement when the going gets challenging (which it will when your old habits come knocking), but you will also have accountability.

Accountability is a means to take responsibility for the choices you are making. It can also include informing others

about how things are going with your plan. That will put positive pressure on you to stay the course.

A word of caution: When I was seeking to change, I discovered that the friends in the same shape as I was could not help me. All too often, if they suggested not exercising that day or going to eat at a place where our favorite tempting foods were served, I was only too happy to say “just this one time” and agree to it.

Before I knew it, we had all abandoned our health goals, only to complain again months later about how unhappy we were about being out of shape. This cycle continued for years.

However, after I had my chest pain, I was super motivated to conquer this issue in my life once and for all. I wrote down tactics that seemed to work for me in the past and what didn't. I also ended up partnering with a co-worker who was in great shape who offered me practical advice and encouragement.

Your biggest source of help is your relationship with God. Just as soldiers have generals to order their steps, so you need God to order your steps. God can give you access to uncommon wisdom to help you handle life's challenges. If you have had challenges in the past in dealing with your weight, then this might be the missing ingredient. Pray faithfully, act diligently, and watch your circumstances change for the better.

Promise yourself that you will never quit. If you do that, then minor stumbles won't shake you because you will know that you will get right back on track.

And that is the attitude that makes a winner!

Physical Freedom Assignment

Answer the following question: Who in your circle can support you during this journey? Ideally, it should be someone who

already practices a fit, healthy lifestyle. If you don't know anyone, then use a search engine to locate online fitness and health groups to join.

Kimberly Taylor is the author of *The Weight-Loss Scriptures* and many other books. Once 240 pounds and a size 22, she can testify of God's goodness and healing power. Visit takebackyourtemple.com and receive more free health and weight-loss tips.

Kenny Luck: Stop the Self-Gratification

Admit it. You masturbate. Either in the past or recently—heck, maybe this morning. All men, married or single, young or old, struggle with this self-indulgence.

While it would be easy to get caught in the debate of whether or not it's a sin (and I believe it is), let me suggest that, in my own journey as a God's man, the reward of [saving my sexual appetite](#) for my wife is so worth waiting for.

But that's easier said than done, especially with culture flaunting the female body and shoving sexuality in our faces. The temptation to “relieve” yourself with a helpful hand puts men smack dab in the middle of a battle for the mind.

We justify it. “Well, it's not in the Bible.” Or “I only [fantasize](#) about my wife.” Or “God made us in His image, so He gets it.” Or “As long as I'm not having premarital sex or cheating on my wife, it's OK.”

I know. I know. I've heard these and other justifications

before.

But the Bible teaches us to evaluate our behaviors with the outcomes they bring. It's the law of the harvest: "That which a man sows, he also reaps." So, what do you reap from masturbating—even while fantasizing about your wife?

I believe you reap a substitute for God's intended plan while training yourself to listen to your body over the Spirit and trusting your own action instead of waiting for God's plan for a wonderful wife.

The negative outcomes of masturbation are:

1. It creates distance from God. I've never heard any man tell me it draws him closer to God.
2. It impacts the way you view women, or your wife, as objects of gratification versus someone with whom you're in a relationship where sex is a result of intimacy.
3. [It's addicting. Habitual masturbation is hard to stop.](#) The chemicals released in the brain from having an orgasm are the same being released when doing cocaine or heroin.
4. It's a slippery slope, meaning masturbation can lead to other behaviors that do not glorify God, namely porn, experimenting with pre-marital sex, cheating on your wife and learning how to hide something, allowing masturbation to become an idol.
5. It can produce false intimacy that the body and brain can wind up preferring over the real thing.
6. It short-circuits character and spiritual development in the areas of self-control, faith and patience.

So, if you are struggling with masturbation, ask yourself:

- Does it move me closer to God?

- Does it move me closer to my goals to be God's man?
- Will it improve my relationship with women and my wife?
- Will it improve my ministry to other people?
- Does it glorify God?

If you are striving to know God and love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, then take your hand off your boy toy and allow your focus to reap a much higher reward. If you truly trust God, His plan and that sex within marriage is, can be or is going to be the absolute (mind-blowing) best ever, then stop masturbating.

Here are a few suggestions if you want help.

Tips to Quitting

1. Make a strong decision to no longer stop short of God's plan.
2. Make a strong commitment to honesty with yourself, God and others.
3. Find strong accountability that's open and honest with another man or men.
4. Replace the false intimacy with a strong passion to be God's man that involves your time, energy and money.

Trust me on this one. Masturbation is only a consolation. But sex in marriage is a fascination!

Kenny Luck, founder of *Every Man Ministries* and the men's pastor at *Saddleback Church*, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow Kenny and [Every Man Ministries](#) now on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) (@everyMM) and [YouTube](#).

For the original article, visit everymanministries.com.