

CHARLES SIMMONS MUSIC & FITNESS presents

# VOXXBODY

## NUTRITION GUIDELINES



by Charles Simmons

# DISCLAIMER

Check with your doctor before starting this or any other fitness program, especially if you have circulatory, respiratory, skeletal or muscular issues.

If you have a history of vocal problems or other upper respiratory issues, please consult an ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist before starting the VOXXBODY Vocal Fitness System™.

Although The VOXXBODY Vocal Fitness System™ is designed to help you improve your physical and vocal fitness, it is not intended as a comprehensive weight loss program (although one of the possible side effects of the successful completion of the program is weight loss).

The VOXXBODY Vocal Fitness System™ is a VIIT (Variable Intensity Interval Training) program. Results will vary according to the frequency and intensity of the training, as well as the amount of rest and recovery time taken between workouts. For maximum results, please adhere to the guidelines specified in the program.

All images (graphic and video), sounds and text are the intellectual property of CHARLES SIMMONS MUSIC & FITNESS™ and are protected by international copyright and trademark law. Unauthorized use of The VOXXBODY Vocal Fitness System™ materials without the express written consent of CHARLES SIMMONS MUSIC & FITNESS™ is not permitted and will be prosecuted according to international law.

# WHAT? NO MEAL PLAN?!?

---

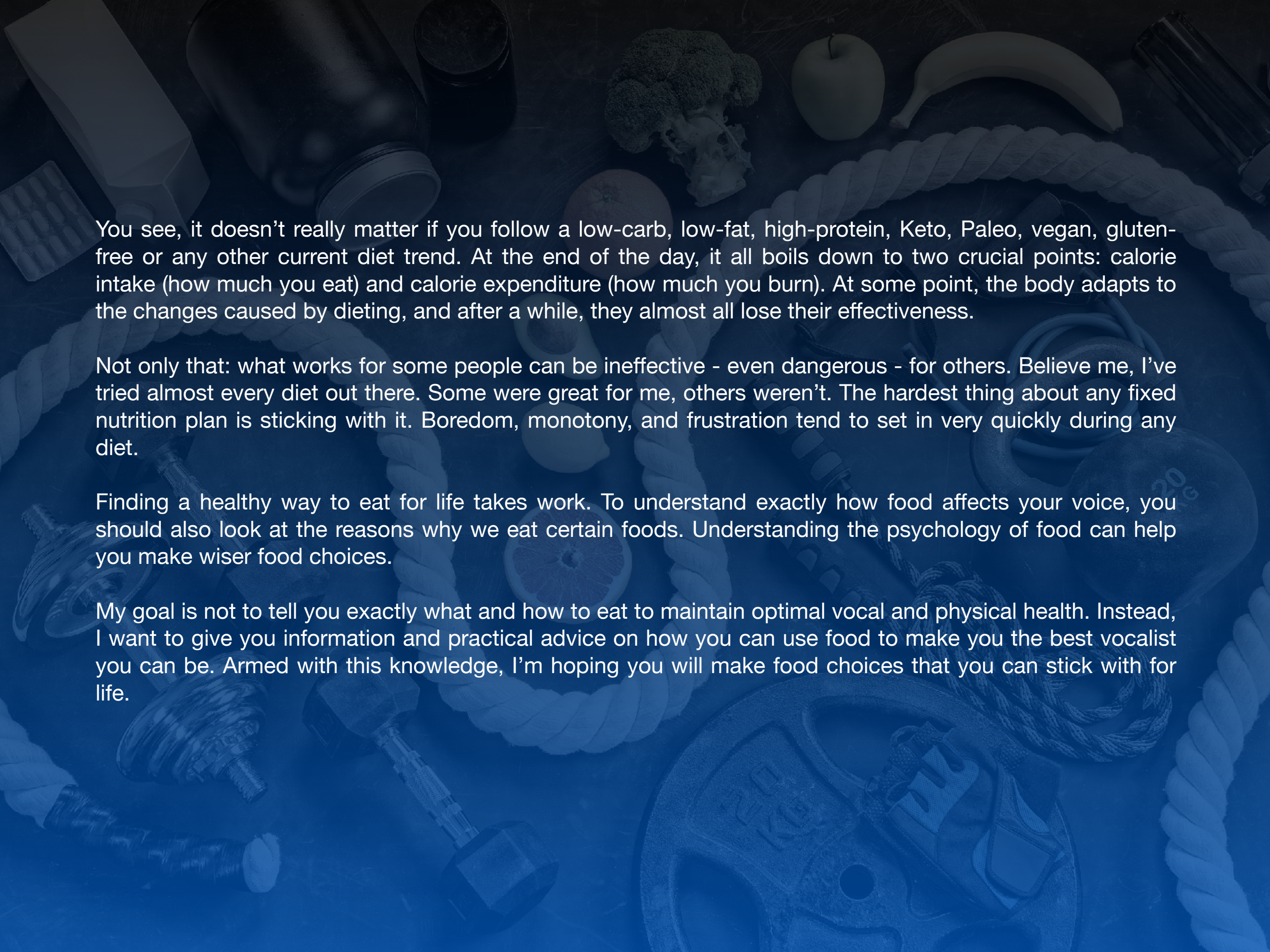
One of the questions I'm most often asked regarding VOXXBODY is, „Why isn't there a meal plan as part of the program like in other workouts?“ There are two answers to this question:

- Unlike the majority of online fitness programs on the market, VOXXBODY *isn't designed as a weight loss workout*. I created the program specifically to help singers and non-vocalists learn how to improve their physical and vocal endurance effectively. Eventual weight loss is an awesome side benefit.
- I view nutrition as a *long-term lifestyle change*, not a short-term scheme to lose weight quickly.

There is one absolute truth when it comes to nutrition:

***ALL diets work until they don't.***





You see, it doesn't really matter if you follow a low-carb, low-fat, high-protein, Keto, Paleo, vegan, gluten-free or any other current diet trend. At the end of the day, it all boils down to two crucial points: calorie intake (how much you eat) and calorie expenditure (how much you burn). At some point, the body adapts to the changes caused by dieting, and after a while, they almost all lose their effectiveness.

Not only that: what works for some people can be ineffective - even dangerous - for others. Believe me, I've tried almost every diet out there. Some were great for me, others weren't. The hardest thing about any fixed nutrition plan is sticking with it. Boredom, monotony, and frustration tend to set in very quickly during any diet.

Finding a healthy way to eat for life takes work. To understand exactly how food affects your voice, you should also look at the reasons why we eat certain foods. Understanding the psychology of food can help you make wiser food choices.

My goal is not to tell you exactly what and how to eat to maintain optimal vocal and physical health. Instead, I want to give you information and practical advice on how you can use food to make you the best vocalist you can be. Armed with this knowledge, I'm hoping you will make food choices that you can stick with for life.

# HOW FOOD AFFECTS YOUR VOICE

---

## Source of energy

Food is fuel. Nowhere is this more evident than in athletes and performing artists. In the case of dancers, musical theater performers and touring singers, a well-rounded diet is necessary to help deal with the demands of a long tour or multi-night engagement.

Performing artists are notorious for their bad eating habits, which stems from constant traveling and limited access to healthy foods in airports, on tour buses, or in dressing rooms.

A quick (mostly unhealthy) snack before a performance may give a quick energy boost but can wreak havoc on your metabolism in the long run.



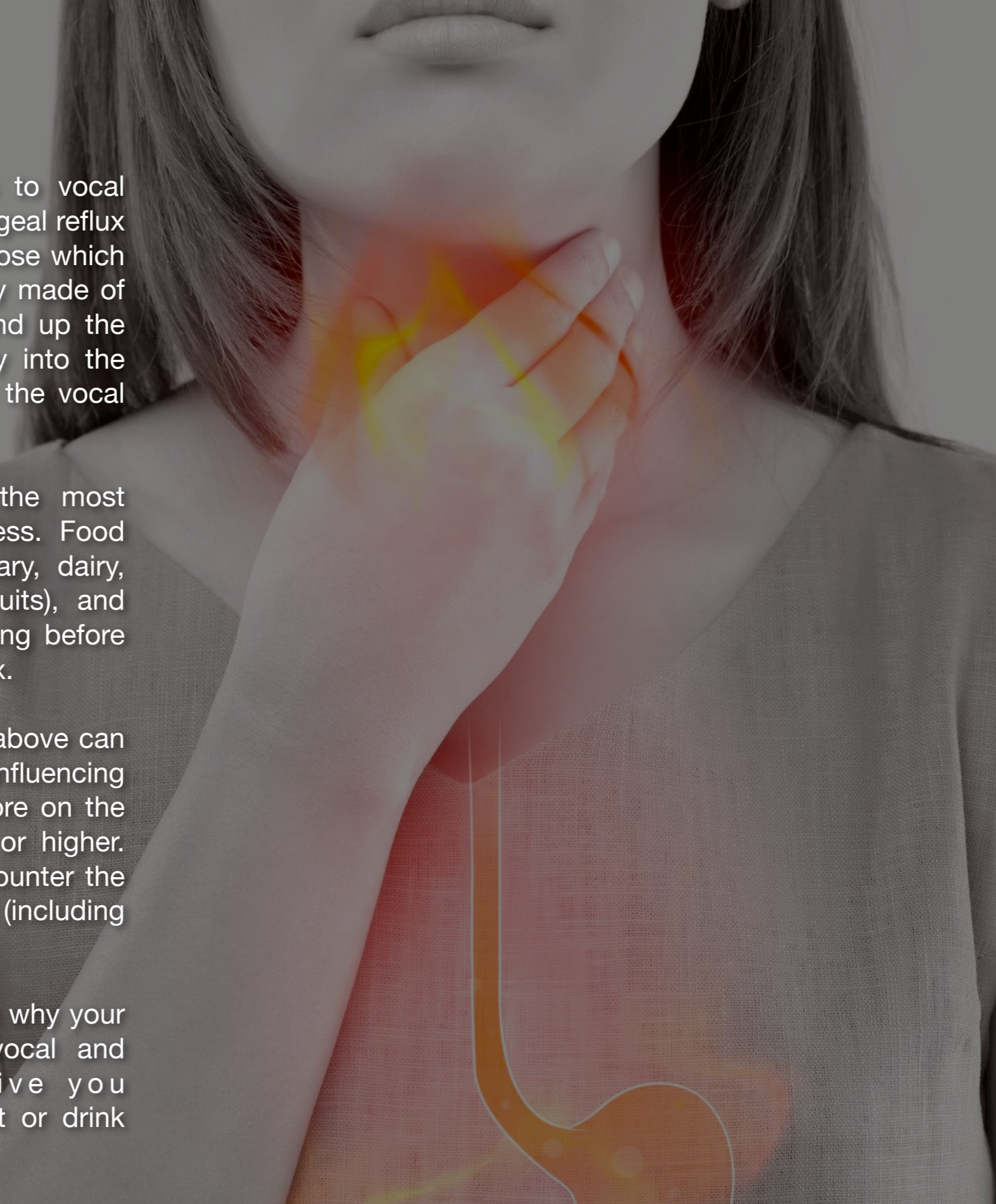
# ACID REFLUX

One of the most common contributors to vocal disorders is acid reflux (aka laryngopharyngeal reflux or LPR). It is seepage of gastric juices (those which are responsible for digestion and primarily made of hydrochloric acid) out of the stomach and up the esophagus. These juices make their way into the larynx and can cause severe damage to the vocal folds over time.

Many issues can trigger acid reflux, the most common being dietary choices and stress. Food allergies, trigger foods (spicy, fatty, sugary, dairy, caffeine, alcohol, gluten, some citrus fruits), and lifestyle choices such as smoking or eating before bed contribute to the development of reflux.

Eating too much of the foods mentioned above can throw our body chemistry out of sync by influencing its pH balance. Naturally, our body is more on the alkaline side with a pH of around 7.35 or higher. Eating more alkaline-forming foods can counter the effects of acid reflux and help the body (including the voice) heal and repair itself [1].

On the following pages, I will elaborate on why your food choices are important for your vocal and physical health. I will also give you recommendations on which foods to eat or drink and which foods to avoid if possible.



# WATER

A close-up photograph of water being poured from a clear plastic bottle into a glass. The water is captured in mid-pour, creating a dynamic, flowing shape. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue, and the overall image has a cool, blue-toned aesthetic.

A sufficient amount of water is crucial to every diet on the planet. Water is necessary to help process food, regulate our body temperature, maintain healthy blood flow to the brain, keep our muscles working efficiently, and to make sure that our internal organs are working correctly.

Water is also vital in helping us to avoid overeating. Many times, when we think we are hungry, we are actually thirsty! As vocalists, water is crucial to keeping the muscles associated with the voice flexible and the vocal folds moist and elastic.

At least 2 liters of room-temperature water (approx. 8 x 6 oz.) per day is a good start. Avoid drinking cold water before a performance or presentation.

If possible, avoid drinking sparkling or carbonated water on performance days. Sparkling water contains carbon dioxide and other ingredients that are acid forming and can contribute to acid buildup in the stomach.

Keep in mind that water doesn't directly affect the vocal folds; since the larynx is connected to the pharynx (windpipe) and not the esophagus (food pipe), no food or drink can directly affect the health or elasticity of the vocal folds. Water does keep the throat moist, but the direct benefits for the voice come from the increased blood flow to the muscles and tissues of the vocal tract.

# **SWEETENED CARBONATED DRINKS**

Avoid all sweetened carbonated drinks. Period. Even those that contain sweeteners like Stevia, Xylitol, Saccharin, Sucralose (the main ingredient in Splenda). Aside from the fact that carbonated drinks are acid forming, there is no scientific evidence that beverages with artificial sweeteners are any more healthy than those sweetened with sugar.



# FRUIT JUICE, SMOOTHIES DETOX SHAKES

Personally, I'm not a fan of fruit juice. I say this as a former fruit juice junkie. [Orange juice was a staple of my diet for decades.] Common fruit juices such as apple and orange juice are severe calorie bombs and contain way more sugar than is necessary for a healthy diet. You would never eat in one sitting the number of oranges it takes to make a single 8 oz. glass of fresh orange juice! The same can be said for smoothies, and so-called „detox shakes.“

Another problem with juices and shakes is the lack of fiber; liquids are processed much faster than solid foods, and digestion burns calories. High-fiber foods, in particular, burn lots of calories when digested and contribute to healthy gut bacteria and regular bowel movement. Fruit juice contains almost zero fiber since the fiber content of most fruit is in the skin or the pulp. The pulp content of juice is far lower than that of the whole fruit from which it came.

So the next time you go for that glass of apple juice, consider eating an actual apple and drinking a glass of water with it. It produces the same effect, has fewer calories, and it's better for your digestion.



# DAIRY PRODUCTS

Despite popular belief, milk and other dairy products have a highly acidic pH. It doesn't matter if it's butter, greek yogurt, cream (dairy products where the whey is removed or significantly reduced), whole milk or low-fat milk; dairy products are acid-forming foods and should be used in moderation, especially if you're lactose intolerant or experience digestive issues.

Because of the acidic nature of dairy foods, phlegm can start building up in the throat, requiring you to clear your throat more often than usual. If you're a performing artist or presenter, avoid all milk products starting from at least two hours before you take the stage.



# CAFFEINE

A white ceramic mug filled with coffee, topped with a layer of foam. The mug is surrounded by a large quantity of dark brown coffee beans, which are scattered across the surface. The background is a light, neutral color, making the coffee and beans stand out.

There are many positive and negative effects that caffeine has on the body. In the sports and fitness worlds, caffeine is one of the staple foods of many professional, amateur, and hobby athletes, due to its effects as a natural stimulant. Many sports drinks and bodybuilding supplements, energy drinks, chocolate, and certain brands of chewing gum contain caffeine.

Caffeine consumption among vocalists is controversial. Although it does cause dehydration which reduces the flexibility and responsiveness of the vocal folds, it's also the go-to energy booster for many singers, especially right before a performance. There is an ongoing debate among vocalists about how to consume it best: a cup of coffee or a shot of espresso?

Technically, espresso has more caffeine per ounce than regular coffee. However, no one drinks one ounce of regular coffee. The average cup of coffee is at least 8 oz. and each ounce contains between 12 and 16 mg. of caffeine. Depending on the type of bean, the amount of coffee used, and the way it's prepared, an 8 oz. cup of coffee can contain up to as much as 155 mg. of caffeine. You would have to drink at least 2 - 3 espresso shots to get the same effect as one cup of coffee.

If you are a coffee drinker but want to limit your caffeine intake, consider switching to espresso. For non-coffee-drinkers, black or green tea are great alternatives, providing the same benefits as coffee.

# PROTEIN

Protein is found throughout the body—in muscle, bone, skin, hair, and virtually every other body part or tissue. It makes up the enzymes that power many chemical reactions and the hemoglobin that carries oxygen in your blood. At least 10,000 different proteins make you what you are and keep you that way. Protein is made from twenty-plus basic building blocks called amino acids. Because we don't store amino acids, our bodies produce them in two different ways: either from scratch or by modifying others. Nine amino acids—histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine - known as the essential amino acids - must come from food.

The amount of protein we actually need has been a topic of discussion for years. It's generally recommended that adults get a minimum of 0.8 grams of protein for every kilogram of body weight per day or just over 7 grams for every 20 pounds of body weight.

- For a 140-pound person, that means about 50 grams of protein each day.
- For a 200-pound person, that means about 70 grams of protein each day.

Anywhere from 10% to 35% of calories each day should come from protein. If you are considering a low calorie or low-carb diet for losing weight, your protein intake should be slightly higher to prevent the muscle tissue loss that will occur due to the body's use of other available energy sources.

If you eat meat, I recommend poultry, fish, or lean beef as protein sources. Eggs are one of the most complete animal-based protein sources. For vegetarians/vegans, great protein sources include beans, lentils, peas, tofu, soybeans, tempeh, oats, broccoli, spinach, and nuts such as almonds, peanuts, and cashews [2].

# CARBS



Fact is: carbs are the body's primary energy source. You can't live without them, so it makes no sense to try and completely eliminate them from your diet. It's recommended that carbohydrates should account for about 45% to 65% of your total caloric intake.

Over the past few years, it's become fashionable to portray carbs as the bad guys of nutrition, especially with the resurgence of low-carb diets (the Keto Diet, Atkins, the Mediterranean Diet, etc.). Keep in mind that many of the foods in these low-carb eating plans contain carbs in the form of fruits and vegetables. A truly zero-carb diet may be effective for weight loss in the short term, but cannot be maintained in the long term and has been shown to carry severe health risks [3].

One of the most significant risks that low-carb or no-carb diets carry for vocalists is the build-up of ketones in the bloodstream, which can increase its acidity and place unnecessary strain on your liver and kidneys. This acidic blood also makes its way to the voice, which can increase the risks of vocal problems over time.

There are „good carbs“ and „bad carbs.“ Good carbs include fruits, vegetables (especially leafy green veggies, which have an alkaline pH level), whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes (beans and peas), all of which are high in fiber. These foods can and should be a part of your diet.

Bad carbs are any foods that contain processed sugars, corn syrup, white flour, or excess additives and preservatives. These foods can spike your blood sugar levels, which can lead to weight gain, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease and should be avoided.

# FATS

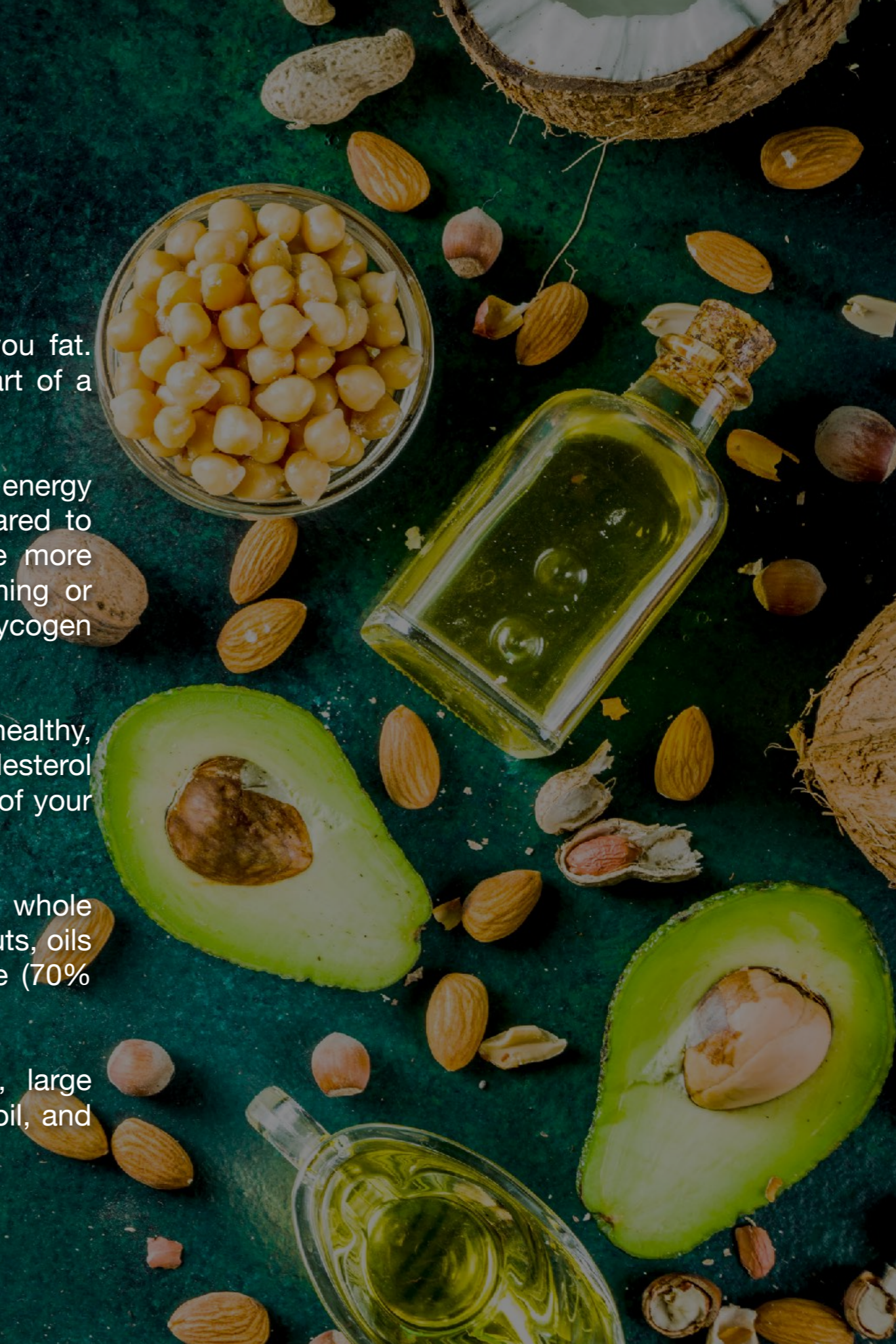
For many years it's been believed that eating fat makes you fat. Nothing could be further from the truth. Fats are a vital part of a healthy, well-balanced eating program.

Keep in mind that although carbs are the body's primary energy source, fats contain more calories per gram (9 kcal compared to only 4 kcal per gram of carbohydrates) and are therefore more energy rich. When doing „steady-state“ exercises like running or cycling, the body switches to burning fat once its muscle glycogen stores (carbs) run out.

The body needs both saturated and unsaturated fats to stay healthy, though unsaturated fats are better for controlling your cholesterol levels. Unsaturated fats should make up no more than 10% of your total daily calories, and saturated fats no more than 30%.

Excellent sources of healthy fats include avocados, cheese, whole eggs, fatty fish (salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, sardines), nuts, oils (olive, sunflower, coconut), greek yogurt and dark chocolate (70% cocoa or higher).

Limit or avoid foods like processed meats, fried foods, large amounts of dairy products like milk, butter or cheese, corn oil, and milk chocolate.



# ALCOHOL



I'm not here to tell you if you should drink alcohol or not. I drink occasionally, and I don't believe that alcohol - when consumed in moderation - is inherently dangerous. That being said, there are many reasons for vocalists to severely limit or altogether avoid alcohol, in addition to the obvious and well-documented ones:

- **Alcohol contains empty calories.** A 6 oz. glass of wine contains anywhere between 95 and 260 calories and between 9.1 to 19g of carbohydrates, depending on the type. A 12 oz beer contains between 95 and 360 calories and between 15.6 to 22.4g of carbs. [4.] Some studies suggest that the occasional glass of wine or beer may have some health benefits, and a glass of wine is even recommended in the Mediterranean Diet, but none of these studies are conclusive.
- **Alcohol causes concentration and control issues.** While it has not been medically proven that alcohol can cause dehydration, it does severely influence concentration, cognitive and motor skills, all of which are crucial to vocalists.

Many singers I know drink alcohol before a performance to counter the effects of a tired voice, to help them relax, or to lower their fear threshold. In reality, alcohol can cause you to overcompensate for any vocal issues you may be having (singing louder or higher than usual, for example), making a bad situation even worse.

If you are going to drink, limit your alcohol intake to once or twice a week, and make sure you drink plenty of water in addition to your wine, beer or hard liquor.

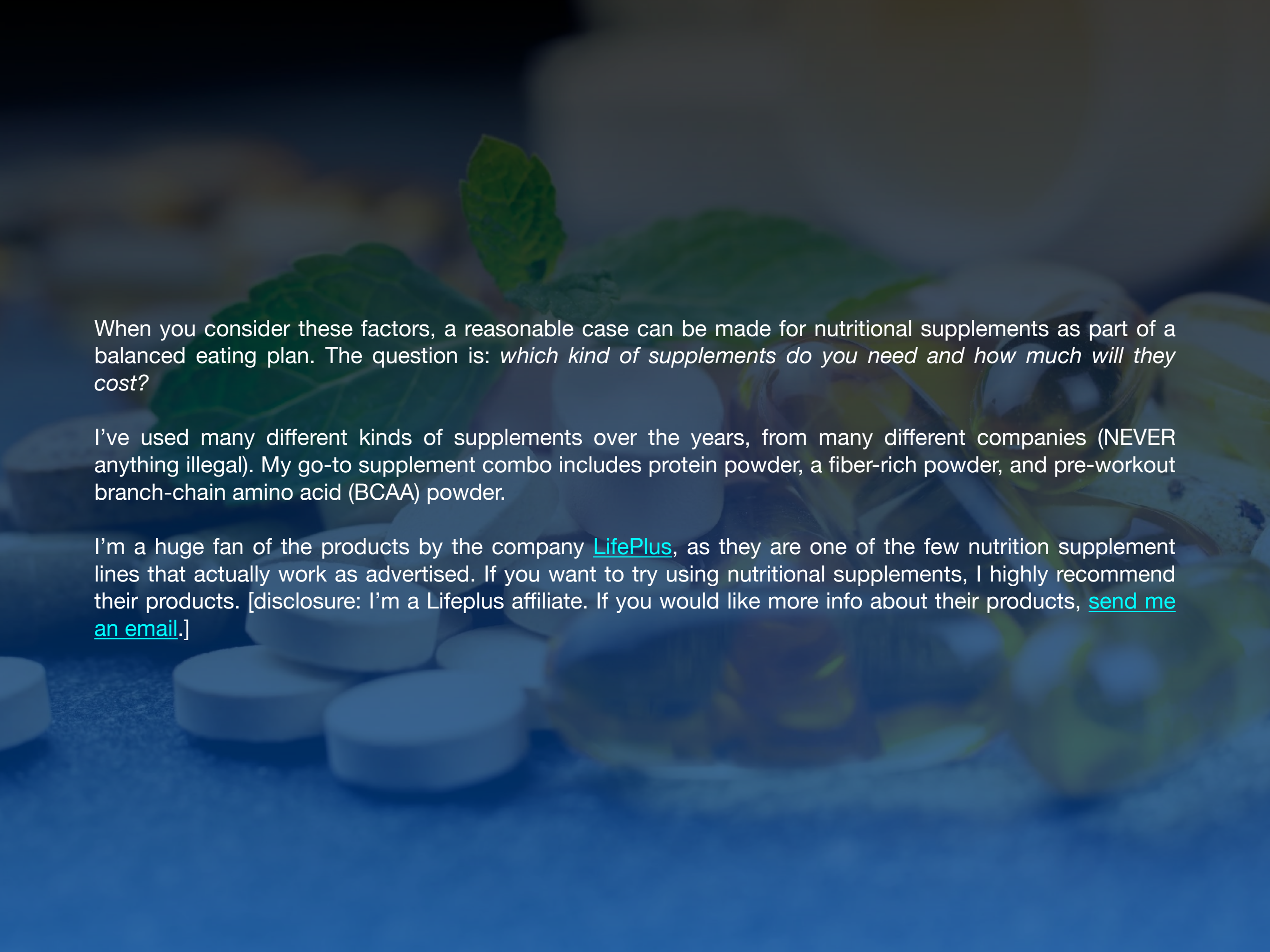
# SUPPLEMENTS

The subject of supplementation is another controversial topic in the health and fitness worlds. Many doctors and dieticians recommend against supplementing your diets with powder, pills, drop and other products to maintain a balanced, healthy diet. The nutrition supplement industry spends billions of dollars a year in advertising to convince you that their products are critical in your weight loss success and general health and well being.

Before you dismiss entirely adding supplements to your diet, there are a couple of things you should consider:

- Not everyone has the time, money, patience, or cooking skills to eat the way most doctors and dieticians recommend. Much of this has to do with the nature of our modern society.
- Processed food is in many cases much cheaper to buy and far more convenient to prepare than natural, whole foods. This unfortunate fact is one of the main reasons for the current worldwide obesity epidemic.
- We do not get all of the nutrients the body needs to maintain a healthy weight and properly functioning bodily systems, especially when considering the worldwide sugar epidemic.





When you consider these factors, a reasonable case can be made for nutritional supplements as part of a balanced eating plan. The question is: *which kind of supplements do you need and how much will they cost?*

I've used many different kinds of supplements over the years, from many different companies (NEVER anything illegal). My go-to supplement combo includes protein powder, a fiber-rich powder, and pre-workout branch-chain amino acid (BCAA) powder.

I'm a huge fan of the products by the company [LifePlus](#), as they are one of the few nutrition supplement lines that actually work as advertised. If you want to try using nutritional supplements, I highly recommend their products. [disclosure: I'm a Lifeplus affiliate. If you would like more info about their products, [send me an email.](#)]

# WHEN SHOULD I EAT?

---

There are plenty of articles on the Interwebs that give advice on when you should eat. The conventional wisdom is that you should eat three meals a day (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and maybe a healthy snack during the day to stave off cravings. I used to follow this age-old recommendation, but as I got older and began to research the effect of nutrition on the voice, I started to see things differently.

Another one of the main reasons there's a worldwide obesity epidemic is this the false notion of „three square meals a day.“ We've been conditioned to believe that constant food consumption is healthy and necessary, when in fact, there is no scientific evidence that people who eat three times a day are any more or less healthier than those who eat five times a day, once a day, or three to four times a week. The „eat-three-times-a-day“ concept is a social construct not based on nutritional science. Early humans didn't have a feeding schedule; they eat when food was gathered and fasted when food was scarce.



# CONSIDER INTERMITTENT FASTING

Over the years I've become a huge fan of intermittent fasting as a means to control my weight and maintain my general health. There are many different IF protocols out there, but my two favorite ones are:

- The **16:8 protocol (aka the Leangains Method [5.])**, where you eat all of your calories per day within an 8-hour window and spend the remaining 16 hours fasting. A large portion of the 16-hour fasting period is your nightly sleep time. In its most basic form, you're essentially skipping breakfast and working out in a fasted state. You can also choose to skip dinner.
- The **alternate-day fast protocol (aka the Eat-Stop-Eat Method [6.])**, where you fast for 1 to 2 24-hour periods per week. The interesting thing about the ESE method is that you *actually still eat every day*. Example: you eat breakfast and lunch on Monday and at start your 24-hour fast at 12:00 PM, just after lunch. You do not eat again until 12:00 PM on Tuesday, after which time you eat as usual. You can drink as much liquid as you want (water, coffee, tea, etc.) during the fasting period to suppress any feelings of hunger.

Both protocols are safe ways to put the body into a caloric deficit while being able to eat „normally.“ Combine these methods with healthy food choices and physical activity, and you have a powerful system for maintaining optimal health without the psychological stress of dieting.



# OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS

---

## SLEEP

Fact: sleep is a vital component of physical and vocal health. Another fact: the average person does not get enough quality sleep. What constitutes quality sleep? I consider quality sleep to be the amount of time in the deep-sleep phase, where your body is completely relaxed.

The amount of sleep time one needs varies depending on your metabolism, eating habits, and physical activity level. I usually get about 6 to 8 hours of sleep per night, depending on whether or not I'm on the road. When I sleep, I try to make sure that the room is dark, quiet and relatively cool. This allows me to fall asleep faster.

Regardless of what process you follow, try to make getting quality sleep a priority.



# WORK-LIFE BALANCE

We are conditioned to devote our lives to work. Nowhere is this more evident than in the entertainment industry. To the freelance artist or performer, finding that balance between work life and personal life can seem impossible, since so much of our time is dedicated to our craft. The phrase “you are not your job” doesn’t apply to us, although it probably should.

Consider the consequences of poor work-life balance [7.]:

- **Fatigue.** When you're tired, your ability to work productively and think clearly might suffer - which could take a toll on your professional reputation or lead to dangerous or costly mistakes.
- **Poor health.** Stress is associated with adverse effects on the immune system and can worsen the symptoms you experience from any medical condition. It also puts you at risk of substance abuse.
- **Lost time with friends and loved ones.** If you're working too much, you might miss important family events or milestones. This can leave you feeling left out and might harm relationships with your loved ones. It's also challenging to nurture friendships if you're always working.
- **Increased expectations.** If you regularly work extra hours, you might be given more responsibility — which could lead to additional concerns and challenges.

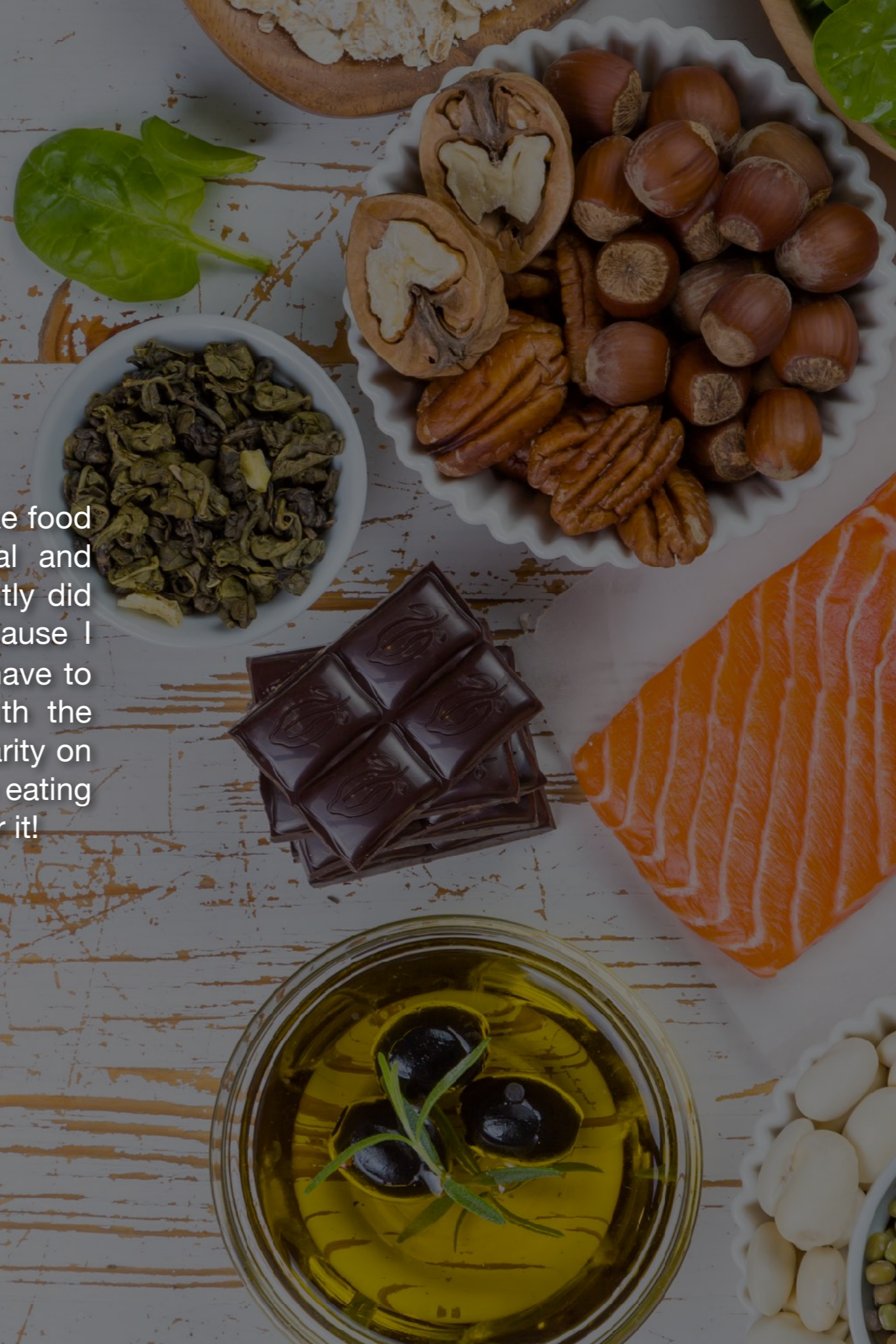
Maintaining good vocal and physical health requires finding a balance between your work and personal life. Here are some things you can do to achieve a healthy work-life balance:

- **Manage your time.** Cut or delegate activities you don't enjoy or can't handle. Organize household tasks efficiently, such as running errands in batches or doing a load of laundry every day; don't save all the laundry for your day off. Do what needs to be done and let the rest go.
- **Make a list.** Put family events on a weekly calendar, and keep a daily to-do list at home and at work. Having a plan helps you maintain focus. When you don't have one, it's easy to be sucked into the plans and priorities of others.
- **Learn to say no.** Whether it's a co-worker asking you to spearhead an extra project or your child's teacher asking you to organize a class party, remember that it's OK to say no respectfully. When you quit accepting tasks out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you'll have more time for activities that are meaningful to you.
- **Leave work at work.** With the technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually anywhere, there might be no boundary between work and home — unless you create it. Make a conscious decision to separate work time from personal time.
- **Reduce email and social media access.** Check emails and social media no more than three times a day — late morning, early afternoon and late in the day. If you access email or social media first thing in the morning, you tend to focus on and respond to other people's issues rather than being proactive about your own needs.
- **Make time for fun and relaxation.** Set aside time each day for an activity that you enjoy. Better yet, discover activities you can do with your partner, family or friends.

# YOU DO YOU!

I hope these guidelines help you to figure out how to make food and lifestyle choices that positively impact your vocal and physical health and well being. As you can see, I explicitly did not include a specific meal plan for you to follow, because I believe that for you to achieve long-term success, **you** have to find a way to eat that works best *for you*. Armed with the information I've provided here, you should have some clarity on what you need to do to maintain a healthy lifestyle while eating foods that you love. Your body and voice will thank you for it!

Your Coach and Friend,  
Charles



# CHARLES SIMMONS

Singer. Producer. Vocal coach. Personal fitness trainer. Charles Simmons is a true multi-talent. As a performer, he has traveled the world, electrifying audiences with his multi-faceted singing style, stretching from classical to jazz, soul / R&B and hip-hop, rock and metal.

His passion for teaching and motivating people has spilled over into the world of fitness; as a certified personal trainer, what was once a hobby has transformed into a mission to educate, inspire and motivate his fellow musicians and others to live healthier, more active lifestyles.

Charles is an instructor at the prestigious University of Popular Music & Business (aka Popakademie) in Mannheim, Germany. He was a vocal coach on the German versions of 'X-Factor' and 'My Name Is...', and has coached many successful national and international artists, including Alice Merton, Vanessa Mai, Joris, Linda Föh, Luca Optifanti (Antiheld), Matthias Sayer (Farmer Boys) and many more. Charles received his personal training certifications from the National Academy of Sports Medicine in the USA (NASM-CPT) and the Safs & Beta Academy in Germany (DEKRA and TÜV Rheinland accredited). He's also an Alliance Member of the American College of Sports Medicine.



# SOURCES

1. <https://www.thefitsinger.com/blog/acid-reflux-and-the-singer-what-every-singer-should-know>
2. <https://www.vrg.org/nutrition/protein.php>
3. <https://www.livestrong.com/article/390928-is-a-no-carb-diet-safe/>
4. <https://winefolly.com/update/calories-in-wine-vs-beer-infographic/>
5. <https://leangains.com>
6. <https://www.eatstopeat.org>
7. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/work-life-balance/art-20048134>

# COPYRIGHT

© 2019 by Charles Simmons Music & Fitness

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed “Attention: Permissions Coordinator,” to [support@voxxbody.com](mailto:support@voxxbody.com)

Photos courtesy of [Traboldphoto](#) and [Sandra Wolf Photography](#).