

Built To Last

TRAIN SMARTER.
AGE STRONGER.
LIVE BETTER.



BY DR CLARESE DE MEILLON

Built To Last

CORE CONCEPT

This isn't a book about hacks, fads, or fitness trends. This isn't about getting your 20-year-old body back. It's about building the 70-year-old version that still crushes life.

We talk about how to train smarter, build real strength, boost your metabolism, and protect your healthspan like your life depends on it—because it does.

This is an actionable, science-backed guide that shows busy professionals how to optimise their performance, resilience, and longevity—starting with measurable metrics like VO2 max, muscle mass, and metabolic flexibility.

If you want to live well, not just live long, this is your starting line.

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INTRODUCTION

Why This Ebook Exists

We focus on building wealth for retirement but forget to build the health required to enjoy it. Which is wild—because as a doctor, I see how that plays out every single day.---- Not good

I treat patients who are dying without dignity. People who can't get off the toilet unassisted. People who can't lift their own grocery bags, let alone play with their grandkids. They're not old, they're unwell—and most of the time, it was preventable.

And that's why this book exists.

This isn't another "eat kale and do more cardio" lecture. It's a science-backed, real-talk guide for long-term health and performance—made for working professionals, parents, and high-performers who don't just want to live long... they want to live well.

I'm here to help you take your health off autopilot—before a crisis forces you to. Because proactive health isn't a luxury—it's your best shot at freedom, resilience, and aging with strength and dignity.

Let's get to work.



CHAPTER 1

Why Healthspan Matters More Than Lifespan

Let's be real—most of us assume we'll live to a ripe old age. Eighty? Ninety? Maybe even one of those Instagram-famous 100-year-olds doing yoga in the park.

But here's the million-dollar question: do you want to just live long... or live long and well?

That's the difference between lifespan and healthspan.

- Lifespan = how long you're alive.
- Healthspan = how long you're alive without being stuck on ten medications, Googling "how to get off the floor without help," or planning your week around doctor's appointments.

The Quiet Decline No One Talks About

Spoiler alert: you don't wake up at 85 and suddenly feel old. The slide starts much earlier—like, now.

- VO_2 max (your body's ability to use oxygen, aka how fit you really are) peaks in your 20s and drops ~10% each decade after 30.
- Muscle mass and strength? Bye-bye, 1–2% per year after 35 unless you fight back.
- Metabolism and insulin sensitivity? Eroded slowly by stress, bad sleep, and enough Uber Eats to make your pancreas file for divorce.

But here's the twist: this isn't just "aging." It's dis-use. – aka use it or lose it. And you can do something about it.

Don't Wait for the Warning Lights

Most people wait until someone like me tells them their warning lights are flashing:

"Your blood results are borderline."

"Your cholesterol's up."

"You might want to sit down for this."

By that point, reclaiming health feels like trying to climb out of a hole you didn't know you were digging. We want you to avoid the hole altogether. The goal?

Get proactive, not reactive.

CHAPTER 1

You Can Train for Old Age—Seriously

Think of your 70s, 80s, and 90s like an athletic event. You wouldn't show up to a marathon with zero prep, right?

So why coast through your 30s and 40s like your future self will magically "get it together" later?

At our gym and VO₂ lab, we train for longevity metrics:

- Cardiorespiratory fitness
- Lean muscle mass
- Metabolic flexibility
- Stress resilience

You don't need to biohack your eyeballs or live off kale and spirulina. You just need a plan—and to actually stick to it.

Quick Reality Check

Pause and ask yourself:

- If I keep living the way I am now... what will 75 look like?
- Will I be able to hike, play with grandchildren, travel, dance, or even get off the floor without help?
- Am I building a future I actually want to live in?
- What am I doing now to invest in my future body, mind and metabolism?

Think about your answers. This isn't about scaring yourself—this is about grabbing the steering wheel before your health ends up in the ditch.

This book is your roadmap to a longer, stronger, more independent life. So let's get into it.

CHAPTER 2

VO₂ Max — The #1 Predictor of Longevity You've Probably Never Heard Of

"If you could only measure one thing to predict your lifespan, it should be your VO₂ max."

— Dr. Peter Attia, longevity legend and guy who makes aging look like a sport

Imagine there was a single number that could tell you how long—and how well—you're likely to live. Not your cholesterol. Not your steps-per-day. Not even how many leafy greens you ate this week.

We're talking about VO₂ max.

Wait... VO-what?

VO₂ max = the maximum amount of oxygen your body can use during exercise. In simple terms, it measures how well your heart, lungs, and muscles play together under pressure. It's basically your fitness IQ.

And no, it's not just for marathoners, triathletes, or people who willingly sign up for burpee challenges. It's for anyone who plans to outlive their cat and still be able to chase a grandchild, a soccer ball, or a runaway shopping cart.

Why Should You Care?

Because this one number might be the best predictor of how long you'll live—and whether those later years will be spent dancing... or stuck in a chair

Science-backed reasons to obsess (just a little) over your VO₂ max:

- **Low VO₂ max?** Higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, dementia, and becoming a human houseplant.
- **High VO₂ max?** Lower risk of dying from any cause—even if you have other risk factors like high blood pressure or family history.
- **Trainable AF.** You can actually improve your VO₂ max with the right kind of exercise.
- **Starts declining in your 30s.** Yup. It drops ~10% per decade after 30 if you don't actively maintain it.
 - I just need to add here that if your VO₂ max hits 18 (for men) or 16 (for women), congratulations—You've officially entered the "couch is your final destination" phase of life. We're talking can't- stand- up, can't - make- tea, can't- reach- for -the- biscuits and yes tragically can't- even -wipe- your -own -arse territory. So train like your dignity depends on it—because it kinda does.

CHAPTER 2

How do you measure it?

There are two routes:

- **Real Factual Testing** (like we do in our lab): You wear a fancy mask while exercising and we measure your real-time oxygen use, fat vs. carb burn, and other secret sauce data. It's nerdy, high-tech, and awesome.
- **Wearable Estimate:** Your smart watch guesses based on your heart rate and activity. It's like asking a stranger to guess your age—it might be close... or way off.

How Do You Improve It?

Good news: you don't need to be a gym rat or live on a bike.

Try these:

- **Zone 2 Training** – The goldmine. Low-intensity cardio where you can still hold a conversation. Think power walking, cycling, or slow jogging.
- **HIIT** – High-Intensity Interval Training: short, sharp bursts of exercise. It hurts (a little), but it works (a lot).
- **Threshold Work** – Train just below your red zone. Builds serious stamina.

We use your actual VO_2 data to tailor this. No guesswork. Just precision and progress.

Action Time: Know Your Number

This week's mission, should you choose to accept it:

- ✓ Book a VO_2 max test with us (or a qualified provider near you).
- ✓ Or use your fitness tracker to get an estimate—just know it's the warm-up act.
- ✓ Record your starting point. Don't judge it—just own it. This is your baseline.

Because when you track your VO_2 max, you're not just getting fitter—you're building a body that can go the distance.

CHAPTER 3

Muscle Is Medicine

“The most underrated longevity drug? Strength training.”

— Dr. Gabrielle Lyon, muscle whisperer

Muscle isn't just for gym selfies, beach holidays, or people named Chad. It's your metabolic armor, your mobility insurance, and quite possibly your best shot at a longer, healthier life.

Think of it this way: muscle is your body's version of a retirement fund. And spoiler alert—if you haven't been making regular deposits, future-you might be broke... physically speaking.

Sarcopenia: The Thief in the Night

Meet **sarcopenia**, the villain in this story. It's the sneaky loss of muscle that begins as early as your 30s. If you're not strength training, by your 70s you could have lost **up to half** your muscle mass.

Half. As in: going from deadlifting your grandkids to struggling to lift a laundry basket.

And it's not just about strength—it's about survival:

- Higher risk of type 2 diabetes
- Slower recovery from illness and surgery
- More hospital stays
- Increased risk of falls
- And yes, higher mortality—even if you're not “overweight”

Basically, **less muscle = more problems**.

Muscle: The Metabolic Multitasker

Muscle isn't passive. It's one of the most metabolically active tissues in your body. Here's why that matters:

- **It stores glucose.** More muscle = better blood sugar control.
- **It burns more calories.** Even at rest.
- **It helps regulate inflammation and immunity.**
- **It's your body's crisis reserve.** Get sick? Get injured? Your recovery is powered by muscle.

And here's the best part: muscle is **highly trainable at any age**. Whether you're 25 or 75, your body is just waiting for a reason to get stronger.

CHAPTER 3

Strength Training for Longevity

You don't need to live at the gym or deadlift small cars. What you do need is:

- **Consistency** (2–4x per week is the sweet spot)
- **Compound movements** (squats, deadlifts, push-ups, rows, carries—real-life stuff)
- **Progressive overload** (basically: lift a little more over time)
- **Recovery** (sleep, protein, and days off are part of the plan, not a weakness)

This isn't about aesthetics. It's about function. Being able to get up off the ground at 80 is the real flex.

Action Step: Start Lifting This Week

Pick one:

- ✓ Add one strength session to your week.
- ✓ Learn 1–2 basics: goblet squat, push-up, or dumbbell row.
- ✓ Already lifting? Ask yourself: Am I progressing or just going through the motions?

Remember: **waiting until you're "old enough" to strength train is like waiting until you're broke to start saving.** Start now. Your future joints will throw you a party.

CHAPTER 4

Burn Fat Like a Boss — Metabolic Flexibility & Fatigue Resistance

"Train your body to burn the right fuel at the right time—and you unlock energy, endurance, and longevity."

Ever feel like your energy crashes harder than your WiFi during a Zoom call? Or like you need a snack every two hours or you'll bite someone?

That's not just "getting older" or "having a fast metabolism." That's your metabolism waving a tiny white flag.

What's likely missing? **Metabolic flexibility**—your body's ability to burn both carbs and fat efficiently and to switch between them like a well-trained hybrid car. Most people today? More like a 1990s diesel truck stuck in first gear.

What Is Metabolic Flexibility Anyway?

Think of it like this:

- **At rest or low intensity** (walking, cleaning, Zoom fatigue), your body should burn **fat**.
- **At high intensity** (sprinting, lifting, escaping awkward social situations), it should switch to **carbs**.

If your body does this effortlessly, congrats—you're metabolically flexible. You're basically a fuel ninja.

But if you feel hungry all the time, have energy dips, and struggle to lose fat no matter how "healthy" you eat? Your metabolism might be stuck in carb-only mode... and fat-burning is offline.

Symptoms of a stiff, inflexible metabolism:

- ❌ Constant cravings
- ❌ Afternoon slumps
- ❌ Poor endurance
- ❌ Fat storage on autopilot
- ❌ Creeping toward insulin resistance or prediabetes

CHAPTER 4

“The Fix? Train It Like a Muscle

Metabolic flexibility isn't lost forever. You retrain it. Here's how:

1. Zone 2 Cardio (aka, "Fat-Burning Goldmine")

This is low-intensity exercise where you can talk but not burst into song. Why it works: It boosts mitochondrial density (your cellular energy factories) and teaches your body to burn fat more efficiently.

- ✓ Do it 2–3x/week, 30–60 minutes
- ✓ Think brisk walks, cycling, incline treadmill, easy rowing
- ✓ Bonus: it's relaxing and anti-anxiety too

2. VO₂ Testing (Nerdy but Worth It)

With our VO₂ Master setup, we can see exactly when your body switches from fat to carbs—and optimize your training zones. It's like getting a blueprint of your engine.

Don't guess. Test. It makes your training way more effective and personal.

3. Smart Nutrition (Not a Diet, Just Strategy)

- Eat whole foods—protein, healthy fats, slow carbs
- Try time-restricted eating (12–14 hours overnight)
- Avoid constant grazing—snacking every 2 hours keeps your body in sugar-burning mode
- Post-workout low-carb meals help reinforce fat metabolism

4. Lift Weights, Ditch the Glucose Spikes

(See Chapter 3!) More muscle = better insulin sensitivity = easier fat access. It's all connected.

The Payoff: Energy That Lasts, Fat That Burns

When you unlock metabolic flexibility, your body becomes smarter with fuel.

You:

- ✓ Feel steady all day (fewer crashes, fewer hangry episodes)
- ✓ Perform better in workouts
- ✓ Burn more fat
- ✓ Lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes—even Alzheimer's

Yes, even your brain prefers a flexible metabolism.

CHAPTER 4

“Action Step: Build a Fat-Burning Engine**This week, try this:**

🔥 Do one 30-minute Zone 2 cardio session (walk with a slight incline or cycle easy).

🧠 Track how you feel for the next 12–24 hours: Energy? Cravings? Focus?

📊 Bonus: Book your VO₂ test to discover your personal metabolic sweet spot.

CHAPTER 5

Rest Like a Pro — Stress, Sleep & Recovery for the Long Game

“You don’t get stronger from training. You get stronger by recovering from training.”

— Every good coach, ever

Getting fitter, stronger, and healthier doesn’t happen during your workouts. It happens **after**—when you’re eating, sleeping, Netflix-ing, or just not doing burpees.

That’s right. **Recovery is where the magic happens.**

And if you’re not recovering well, you might just be *training yourself into a hole*.

Burnout in Beast Mode

You could train like a Navy SEAL and eat like a monk, but if you’re under-slept, over-stressed, and treating recovery like a luxury spa day you “don’t have time for,” your body will hit the brakes—and hard.

Muscle won’t grow. Hormones go sideways. And that shiny “health plan” starts looking suspiciously like self-sabotage.

Especially in your 30s, 40s, and 50s, **recovery isn’t optional—it’s the multiplier.**

Stress Isn’t Evil. But It Needs Boundaries.

Stress gets a bad rap, but it’s not the villain. The right kind of stress—like a heavy lift, sprint session, or cold plunge—challenges your body to adapt. This is called hormesis, and it’s how we grow.

But when stress becomes your 24/7 background music—think deadlines, bad sleep, family drama, and doomscrolling at 11 p.m.—you’re not building resilience, you’re draining it.

Chronic stress =

- 🔥 Inflammation
- 🧠 Brain fog
- 📉 Hormonal chaos
- 😡 Mood swings
- 🚨 Slower recovery + higher disease risk
-

The trick? **Stress → recover → repeat.** You’re not a machine. You’re an ecosystem.

CHAPTER 5

“The Big 3 of Recovery (No Crystal Balls Required)”**1.  Sleep: The King of Gains**


If sleep were a supplement, it would be illegal for how good it is. During sleep, your body:

- Repairs muscle
- Regulates hormones
- Consolidates memory
- Reboots your metabolism

Goal: 7–9 hours of quality sleep per night.

Pro tips:

- Ditch screens 30–60 min before bed (yes, even Instagram)
- Keep your room cold, dark, and quiet
- Avoid late-night burritos and wine (sorry)

2.  Nervous System Reset

Your body flips between:

- **Sympathetic (fight or flight)**
- **Parasympathetic (rest and digest)**

Most of us live in stress mode, even when lying on the couch. That’s why you need intentional downshifting.

Try this:

- Box breathing or 4–7–8 breathwork
- 5-minute meditations (no, you don’t have to float)
- Nature walks or breath-based stretching
- Journaling to brain-dump the madness

5–10 minutes a day can flip the switch.

3.  Active Recovery: Movement = Medicine

Rest doesn’t mean doing nothing. Actually, gentle movement boosts circulation, reduces soreness, and clears your head. Ideas:

- Mobility flows
- Walking meetings
- Sauna or hot/cold contrast
- Light cardio after a tough session

CHAPTER 5

Train Smart. Recover Smarter.

Longevity isn't about grinding harder—it's about recovering faster. That's the real flex in your 40s, 50s, and beyond.

We design recovery into every training plan we create, because if you don't recover, **you don't adapt**. Period.

Take Action: Audit Your Recovery This Week

- ✓ Track your sleep for 3 nights—How long? How rested do you feel?
- ✓ Pick ONE recovery habit to start: breathwork, a screen-free bedtime, a 10-minute stretch, or a walk.
- ✓ Remind yourself daily: *What I do outside the gym matters just as much as what I do in it.*

CHAPTER 6

The Executive Training Model —Train Smarter, Not Just Harder (Because Beating Yourself Into the Ground Is So Last Decade)

“Don’t train for the next 10 weeks. Train for the next 30 years.”

By now, you’ve met the key players in your longevity lineup:

- ✓ VO₂ max – for heart and lung power
- ✓ Strength – for muscle, metabolism, and staying upright
- ✓ Metabolic flexibility – so you don’t crash mid-meeting
- ✓ Recovery – because gains happen when you rest
- ✓ Nervous system balance – so you don’t lose it over a slow email

Now it’s time to put the pieces together into a sustainable, high-performance training plan—one that works whether you’re a busy exec, a parent, or just someone trying to age with dignity and muscle.

The Longevity Training Blueprint

This isn’t random “hit the gym when I can” energy. This is **training with purpose**. Here’s what a week looks like for the real-world humans we coach (you know, the ones with meetings, kids, deadlines, and maybe a bad back):

Day	Focus	What It Looks Like
Monday	Full-Body Strength	Compound lifts + accessories; 45–60 mins
Tuesday	Zone 2 Cardio	30–60 mins brisk walk, bike, or row (you can chat!)
Wednesday	Active Recovery	Stretch, mobility, breathwork, light walk
Thursday	Upper Body Strength	Progressive loading + stability
Friday	HIIT	20–30 mins of short bursts + full recovery (e.g. 30:90)
Saturday	Zone 2 + Core/Mobility	Long cardio + functional core + joint work
Sunday	Rest/Nature Walk	Chill movement only; bonus points for trees 🌳

Customizable? Absolutely. But the structure is gold. It balances intensity, recovery, and progress—without burning you out or stealing your weekend.

CHAPTER 6

“Personalisation: Because You’re Not a Spreadsheet

Cookie-cutter programs? Nah.

We use tools like VO₂ Master testing, body composition scans, and lifestyle profiling to tailor everything. This lets us:

- Pinpoint your ideal cardio and HIIT zones
- Track fat vs. carb burn (hello metabolic upgrade)
- Set decade-specific strength goals
- Spot recovery issues before they sideline you

This isn’t about chasing perfection—it’s about building a high-performance, low-burnout system you can actually stick to.

Train for Life, Not Just the Next Holiday

In your 20s, you could YOLO your way through workouts. In your 30s, 40s, 50s, and beyond? You need **strategy**.

Here’s what we’re really training for:

- 🦋 Mobility + strength = independence, not injury
- ❤️ VO₂ power = stamina for real life (and play)
- ⚡ Fatigue resistance = no more afternoon zombie mode
- 📅 Smart recovery = consistent growth, not breakdown
- 🧠 Resilience = mental AND physical toughness for the long haul

This isn’t just fitness. It’s functional aging—and it’s way cooler than it sounds.

Take Action: Build Your Blueprint

This week:

- ✅ Block out your ideal training week using the sample above
- ✅ Treat your workouts like meetings—with you as the top priority
- ✅ Book a VO₂ test or strength screen to personalize your plan

Training for longevity may not be flashy. But it is the best ROI you’ll ever get.

CHAPTER 7

The Longevity Mindset — Why Showing Up Beats Going Hard

“Longevity isn’t about finding hacks. It’s about doing the basics, relentlessly well.”

— Dr. Peter Attia (aka the guy who made zone 2 cool)

Congratulations—you’ve officially unlocked the science, the systems, and the sweaty truths of training for life. You’ve learned how to breathe better, lift heavier, recover harder, and fuel smarter.

But there’s one final piece of the puzzle. And spoiler: it’s not a new supplement or a shiny gadget.

It’s **your mindset**.

Because here’s the thing: you don’t win at longevity by going beast mode for six weeks and then ghosting your health like a bad Tinder date. You win by showing up, day after day, year after year—even when motivation is nowhere to be found.

Why Mindset Is the Real MVP

Most health programs sell intensity:

- 🔥 “Shred in 30 days!”
- 💧 “Sweat, starve, succeed!”
- 😓 “No pain, no gain!”

But that stuff flames out faster than a New Year’s resolution.

The truth? Longevity isn’t sexy. It’s **consistency in the basics**. It’s brushing your teeth for your cells. It’s being the person who still lifts, walks, sleeps well, and drinks water in their 70s—and *enjoys it*.

This Isn’t a Hustle. It’s an Identity.

Ask yourself:

- Are you training to punish your body... or to protect your future?
- Do you eat for short-term comfort, or long-term capability?
- Is rest a luxury—or a non-negotiable part of your plan?

When training becomes part of **who you are**, it stops being a chore. It becomes your competitive advantage.

CHAPTER 7

Five Mindset Shifts for Longevity Legends

1. Play the Long Game

Think in decades, not weeks. Build habits your 75-year-old self will high-five you for.

2. Do the Boring Stuff—Brilliantly

Walking. Sleeping. Lifting. Hydrating. The basics aren't sexy—but they work.

3. Stay Adaptable

Life throws curveballs: travel, injuries, screaming toddlers. Pivot, don't panic. Keep showing up.

4. Track What Matters

Forget the scale. Track your VO₂ max, strength, muscle, and recovery. Data keeps you honest.

5. Small is Still a Win

Five minutes is better than none. A walk beats a scroll. You don't need perfect—you need progress.

Redefining Success

Old success = grind, burnout, and hoping you make it to retirement without a stent.


New success = health as your baseline, fitness as your buffer, energy as your unfair advantage.


You don't need to be perfect. You just need to stay in the game.

Final Action Step: Choose Your Identity

Ask yourself:

 Who am I becoming?

 What do I do consistently that aligns with that future version?

 What's one habit I can start today that my older self will quietly thank me for?

You're Just Getting Started

This may be the final chapter of this book—but it's **chapter one of your next decade.**

You now have the blueprint. The tools. The team.

And most importantly—you've got the mindset.

Because this isn't about adding years to your life.

It's about adding **life** to your **years.**

Let's train for it—together.

Train Smarter.
Age Stronger.
Live Better

