

Embrace the Holiday, Enjoy the Food, Give Thanks and Ignore the Diet Advice

With Thanksgiving a few days away I was thinking about the sort of wisdom I could impart on you this Monday that would be timely, relevant and add value to your life.

The first thing that jumped out was a new study that suggests *the more you eat, the more you eat.*

The study published in the Journal *Cell* last month focuses on how overeating impacts the hypothalamus--your metabolic command center--stimulating cravings to eat more and creating a vicious cycle of calorie consumption that can lead to obesity, diabetes and insulin resistance.

Interesting at first. Seemingly relevant to the holiday but the more I looked at this science the less relevant it became.

My inner critic was saying, "So... You're saying that the more I overeat, the more I'm inclined to overeat? *Reeeeeeaaally.*"

In my continued search for holiday fitness wisdom I happened across quite a number of Thanksgiving diet tips and tricks, culminating in Thanksgiving diet quiz on the Today show.

The sort offerings I found included such perennial life wisdom as:

- White meat is leaner than dark meat
- Pigs in the blanket are lower calorie than crackers and cheese
- Eat all your vegetables first
- Eat your pie but not the crust
- Cut back on the bread and butter

The more I witnessed the onslaught holiday dieting idioms the more clear I became that I don't want to be involved. It trivializes something much more important. Telling people to "diet" for Thanksgiving is a little like screaming "duck" when you see the A-bomb coming. Nothing wrong with the intention but let's face it, it's a little too late to do anything about it.

About the only good coming from the heaping helpings of turkey day diet trivia is that it's making me nauseous. I take no joy in seeing a holiday celebration become an excuse to widdle away at our freedom and besiege us with uninvited diet advice.

So, when it comes to slinging the turkey day trivia, using the holiday to slip in some public service messages, you can count me out.

My take is quite simple. Thanksgiving is a holiday—it's one single day. And while I agree that most people overeat on this day... and that they would feel better and it might be helpful for them to eat less, in the big scheme of things it just doesn't matter.

If you're eating yourself out of house and home 364 days a year, incorporating some diet tricks to help push away from the table for thanksgiving is pointless. That's like teaching Charlie Manson table manners.

Thanksgiving, the one day, is not going to make or break you. How you're living the other 364 days—also known as your lifestyle—is. A day is a day—it'll be over too soon. Likewise, a diet begins and ends. It's your lifestyle, the way you're *being* the other 364 days a year that is screaming for your focus and attention.

If you're living your *life at full strength*, enjoying Nutritional Freedom and a naturally active lifestyle that embraces fitness or as I detail in my book, you've stopped *doing* fitness and are simply *being* fit, the last thing you need or want on Thanksgiving is dime store diet advice.

You may choose to eat less than you might have in the past but not out of discipline or with restraint. It will be your choice—an easy one. After a hearty dinner, you may choose to enjoy a walk or do something active with your family. Perhaps you'll all play Twister, go Wii bowling or play some Guitar Hero with Grandma. Whatever works.

As for the copious diet tips take what you want and leave the rest. For even for their lack of remarkable, there's no harm in stating the obvious. It's always wiser to eat half a stick of butter rather than a whole stick and it may ever be helpful to solar cook your turkey (this I can't say for sure). Just know that none of this is an antidote to your lifestyle—the person you are *being* the other 364 days.

In the interest of leveraging this day of gratitude that is Thanksgiving to support your freedom for those 364 other days, I leave you today with three original nutritional wisdom tips. You'll find them together in one PDF document if you follow the link below and you'll also see each is individually recorded for your listening pleasure.

Also, note the final word before you go, below.

3 Nutritional Wisdom Tips for You: Because Awareness Changes Everything

Tip #1 : Indulge in the Light

Before Thursday arrives make a choice about how you're going to embrace the holiday. Will you take it easy, try to cut a knew groove and go light or are you simply going to dive in to the deep end? It's your call but whichever you choose, be honest with yourself.

If you're going BIG do so without pretending it's any other way. Don't give the cover up story about cutting back on the gravy and then slam five pieces of pie. If you start bending the truth just a little now it's a slippery slope to the new year and you may find your body and reality warped by then. And that's enough time to take a heavy toll on even the most fit body.

Tip #2 : How to Have Your Cake and Eat it Too

On page 97 of [Strength for Life](#) you'll find an eating awareness exercise which many readers have called diabolical. And I think they mean that in a good way. Just by reading it you'll get a sense of how state altering it can be. It revolves around bringing a full and present awareness to the eating of a dessert by enjoying 15 first bites.

You've got to try is just once to feel how powerfully it can alter your experience of food. If you promise not to tell my publishers, I'm sharing this transformative practice with you here: <<link>>

While the book version requires a three days to fully engage, I invite you to try the final step, the part where you eat the dessert, with your thanksgiving pie or dessert. Give it a bite—I mean try—and see what changes for you.

Tip #3 : BaseCamp Bookends

This suggestion comes straight from my own personal strength arsenal. In the interest of enjoying thanksgiving fully and freely, bookend it with **BaseCamp** like days. On Wednesday and again on Friday deploy the lean, clean and green nutrition strategy from [Chapter 5 of Strength for Life](#), **BaseCamp : The Total Body Reboot**.

Basecamp is the revolutionary 12-day reboot for your body and mind that has been called by many fitness experts, "the missing link in fitness transformation." These

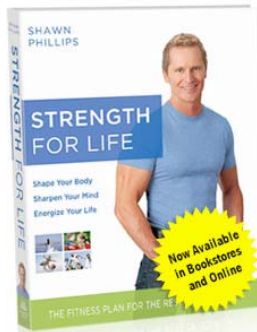
seemingly simple 12 days focus on rejuvenating your natural energy and vitality with a very basic set of guidelines, including very clean eating, no dieting, moderate, non-intense physical movement which stops short of exercise. And a number of positive focus exercises including the perfect Thanksgiving accompaniment, Gratitude.

For all the food and fun aside, this is a day of giving thanks... of expressing gratitude for the abundance of food we are so blessed to enjoy. And especially in these challenging times, there's nothing that can be more altering to your being than the silent, selfless expression of gratitude.

A TIME FOR STRENGTH

While this is no time for an emotional booster-rally, I urge you to read the preface from *Strength-for-Life*. You'll find the similarity to the life transforming experience I share to be strikingly familiar to this crisis. It's a brief, vivid and uplifting story that may help you draw upon your reserve of inner strength.

[Click here to download](#) two chapters of *Strength for Life*.



Shawn Phillips is a world renowned strength, fitness and nutrition expert with an emphasis on the integration of body and mind. Shawn has helped athletes, celebrities and even more interesting people all around the world to achieve this best body and life. Strength for Life is Shawn's most recent work and his second book. He is also the founder of Phillips Nutrition and creator of *Full Strength*® the world's finest total nutrition shake and performance fast food.

How to Have Your Cake and Eat It Too (15 First Bites)

The promise of Nutritional Freedom is delivered through strengthening your muscle of Nutritional Awareness. You must be able create a pause and begin seeing through cravings the instant they arrive. Remember your freedom is in the space between temptation and reaction.

A saying I often use that captures the essence of Nutritional Freedom is: *"You can't have your cake and eat it too, until you can have your cake and NOT eat it."*

It's as much a life principle as it is about sensible eating. For whether it's cake, shopping, or love—only when you're fully content without them will any of these be an appreciated addition to your life. Otherwise, you're eating and consuming out of weakness rather than the strength of gratitude.

Here's what you're going to do: During week number one of your Transformation, buy, make, or bake the food you most crave when you want to indulge or treat yourself. Get it by Thursday because you're going to indulge on Sunday—or your 7th Day. I want this favorite indulgence to be in your awareness so that you can be with the experience of not eating it, even knowing you will in a few short days.

For this example we'll use one of my favorites: A creamy, rich, dark chocolate layer cake. When you see the cake in the fridge, listen closely to your inner dialogue. Feel the temptation and desire to act that leaps up. You might even decide to journal about the experience—putting words to the feelings of your desire for food is a great way to create some distance. It helps give you perspective and expands the space between craving and re-action.

Keep with your experience—monitoring it Friday and Saturday. No slips. Then come Sunday, set aside 15 minutes to indulge. But don't just dig in as you normally would. Instead, enjoy each and every bite as though it was your *very* first taste of this favorite food.

That's right. Rather than enjoying the first bite or two and slipping into full-consumption mode, which is the normal way, you're going to take 15 first-bites (yes 15 first bites) of this amazing, delicious chocolate cake. Make certain you taste and enjoy the last bite as much as you did the first.

As for what, if anything may surprise you; I'll leave that for you to discover.

Bon-Appetit!

(Excerpted from [Strength for Life](#) p. 97 © Shawn Phillips)