

What Has Dr. Shook Been Reading.

Body for Life 12 Weeks to Mental and Physical Strength.

By Bill Phillips

Harper Collins publishers 1999

Bill Phillips had been publishing in fitness magazines and marketing nutritional products for years when, while at a fitness conference, he came to the unpleasant realization that most of those who consider themselves his loyal readers and fans were in dreadful physical shape. He came to the realization that he needed to motivate people to not only read, but to actually follow his advice. So he sponsored a contest to see who could become the most fit in 12 weeks. The prize was his Lamborghini (A very expensive and imported sports car -- wow at the YMCA all we ever get are T-shirts), and the rest is history. The stories, photographs and information collected from the 54,000 contest participants eventually became the popular fitness program know as *Body for Life.*

Body for Life is big on motivation and serious about exercise and dietary requirements. Goals are written down, obstacles acknowledged, new patterns established, before and after photographs are taken, and most importantly a decision is made to change.

The thrice-weekly weightlifting workout is alternated with a thrice-weekly aerobic workout. Progress is carefully recorded in a workout log. And while Bill's own workout (which rather blew me away with its intensity) is used as an example, everyone is encouraged to start at their own beginning level, stay focused on the future and to progress at their own pace. The emphasis is on progress rather than perfection. To help with this, the reader is encouraged to write everything down, post photos frequently and review it all daily.

Body for Life encourages people to stop feeding themselves accidentally and start recreating themselves deliberately. (I like the way that sounds.) The dietary advice is about portion control and requires eating 6 small nutritious meals a day. These six quality meals provide the building materials necessary for the bodily transformation that is taking place. And for people unable or unwilling or just overwhelmed at the idea of planning 6 MEALS A DAY???!!!, Bill Phillips conveniently markets protein drinks and power bars, which, not surprisingly, are recommend for three of the six daily meals. With a nod to reality and human nature the "Body for Lifer" is encouraged to take one day a week and eat whatever they want in whatever quantities they want ... ONE day a week. The other 6 days, the 6 small nutritious meals are all carefully recorded in the diet log.

My sister and many others have greatly benefited from the *Body For Life* program. Sister Linda reported that the allowance of a weekly food binge keeps her from "going ballistic in the Hagen Das section of Safe Way."

It is important to remember that anyone new to physical exercise, especially those who are out of shape or physically challenged, should consult with his or her health care provider before beginning an exercise program.

Over all I liked *Body for Life*. I think this motivational, exercise and diet program would be great for someone needing a plan to follow on the road to fitness.

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