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What is Bio-Individuality?

It's time to start looking at health differently.



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Fitness and nutrition are often viewed as one-size-fits-all. New diet trends promise weight loss for anyone willing to put in the work. Fitness experts suggest that anyone can be a size two with enough motivation.

But in reality, there is no perfect diet or exercise routine, and health is not all about having enough motivation or cutting out certain food groups. Just because one person is thriving in a gluten-free or keto or paleo lifestyle doesn't mean it will work for everyone. Every human body is unique, and working at our individual needs rather than copying something that works for someone else. That's where bio-individuality comes in.

So What is Bio-individuality?

Bio-individuality helps determine what habits will work best for each person's health, specifically when it comes to nutrition and fitness. It's the idea that certain factors, such as genetics, blood type, and stress levels, determine what you should eat and how you should exercise. Because each person has different genetics, stress levels, and more, everyone has highly individual needs regarding health.

So the best way to get healthier is to learn about yourself and pay attention to what works for *your* body, not what works for your neighbor, your friend, or your coworker.

How is Bio-Individuality Determined?

Genetics

Ancestry plays a huge role in bio-individuality. According to [this study](#), the foods that your body can effectively metabolize are linked to the foods your ancient relatives ate frequently. If you're descended from Western Europeans, for example, you would easily metabolize bread and cheese. But your body might struggle with spicy foods or rice since those food groups weren't abundant in Western Europe in ancient times.

You can also look to your ancestors to determine *when* you should eat meals. But you don't have to go back to ancient times. Your parents' and grandparents' eating habits could give you a good idea of when you should eat. Your specific optimal eating times

may surprise you. Start by asking your family what works for them, and then try a few different eating schedules to determine what makes you feel the best.

Some people skip breakfast. Or eat a small lunch. Some people eat five small meals a day, while others eat two big ones. So don't feel stuck in the generic "three meals a day" pattern. That doesn't work for everyone. You don't have to push through your hunger. Change your lifestyle to adapt to your needs.

Genetics plays a role in the bio-individuality of exercise as well. According to an article in Men's Journal, "When it comes to athletic and physical performance, genetics can be attributed to about 50–60% of the difference between your skills and someone else's."

So stop comparing your goals to a stranger's. If a certain diet works for someone else but not for you, it could be because you have different genes.

All bodies are all built differently, but looking to your relatives could give you a useful starting point for building your perfect gym routine.

So learn a little more about your ancestry this week, and try eating what your relatives ate many generations ago. Try eating when your parents or grandparents do. Do your uncle's favorite workout. See if that makes a difference in the way you feel. And cut out the processed food because no one's ancestors had access to Cheetos.

Blood Type

Do you know your blood type? Most people don't, but it's not hard to figure out. You can even order a blood typing kit on Amazon. Maybe you've never had a reason to know your blood type before, but blood type may play a role in your nutritional needs, according to Harvard Health. This is a relatively new theory, but it's worth a read.

Once you know your blood type, you can experiment with foods considered "better" for your metabolism. If your blood type is O, for example, you might have a more sensitive stomach and could try adding some supplements to your diet. Use the chart below to choose your next meals.

Blood Type	Eat	Avoid	For Weight Loss, Eat	For Weight Loss, Avoid
O	High Protein Foods Vegetables Fish Fruit	Grains Beans Legumes	Seafood Kelp Red Meat Broccoli Spinach	Wheat Corn Dairy
A	Fruit Vegetables Tofu Seafood Turkey Whole Grains	Meat	Seafood Vegetables Pineapple Olive Oil Soy	Dairy Wheat Corn Kidney Beans
B	Diverse Diet Meat Fruit Dairy Seafood Grains	Nothing!	Green veggies Eggs Liver Licorice tea	Chicken Corn Peanuts Wheat
AB	Dairy Tofu Lamb Fish Grains Fruit Vegetables	Nothing!	Tofu Seafood Green veggies Kelp	Corn Buckwheat Kidney Beans

What should you eat for your blood type? According to the book, Eat Right for Your Type—chart by the author.

This same theory can be applied to exercise. For example, if you have type O blood, you will be better off choosing high-intensity aerobic exercise. And if you have to type A blood, you should stick with low-intensity activities, such as yoga.

Stress Levels

It's no surprise that stress affects what you should eat and how you should exercise. Especially in the last year, stress has become a chronic problem in the lives of many.

Chronic stress makes its way into every corner of life, from sleep quality to work performance.

Each person's nutritional habits are impacted by stress. Some people are emotional eaters, while others lose their appetite when they're anxious. Not only does your stress guide your eating habits, but your eating habits can have a significant impact on your stress. Some foods, particularly foods high in sugar or caffeine, are known to increase stress. While other foods, particularly foods containing "feel good" nutrients such as omega-3's or magnesium, can decrease stress.

So your stress levels dictate what your daily diet should look like. If you're chronically stressed, here are a few nutritional changes you should make, according to the Harvard Health Blog:

- Eat complex carbohydrates to keep your blood sugar stable throughout the day.
- Don't skip meals. If you do, your blood sugar will drop, and your anxiety will spike. Read more about how to keep your blood sugar stable [here](#).
- Eat foods rich in Zinc, Magnesium, and Omega-3 fatty acids. Refer to the chart below for some examples.

Zinc	Magnesium	Omega-3's
Meat Shellfish Eggs Nuts Milk Cheese Dark chocolate	Nuts Dark chocolate Lentils Seeds (flax, pumpkin, chia) Quinoa Bananas Kale Spinach	Salmon Chia seeds Oysters Mackerel Sardines Anchovies Walnuts Soybeans

Add more of these foods into your diet to reduce stress—chart by author.

For people with higher stress levels, daily exercise is just as important as nutrition. According to [the Mayo Clinic](#),

“Virtually any form of exercise, from aerobics to yoga, can act as a stress reliever.”

So if you're feeling stressed, add some exercise to your routine. Find an activity you enjoy, and pencil it into your schedule. You don't have to go all out right away. Just do what feels good for your body. Slow and steady really does win the race when it comes to building an exercise habit and busting stress.

Summary

Bio-individuality is a relatively new way of looking at health. Instead of looking at what works for most people, bio-individuality indicates that each person should spend more time looking at what works for them personally. Through exploring your unique genetics, blood type, and stress levels, you can get closer to finding your optimal health habits, especially when it comes to nutrition and exercise. So start experimenting and find what works for you. And try not to get too caught up in what works for everyone else during the process.

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