



Building a strong mind, body and game

by Stan Oley, USPTA

Have you ever gone in to get a routine physical from your doctor and thought everything was going to be fine? I did. And I was wrong. Prior to this physical I had been experiencing more injuries, was tiring quickly, snoring during sleep, and had acquired an ongoing bout with acid reflux. In my mind, I was attributing these things as just part of getting old.

After the testing and lab work, I always have a review appointment to discuss the findings and results of the tests. When the doctor turned his laptop around and explained all of the bad results to me (cholesterol over 300, glucose off the charts, blood pressure 145/98), I was in shock. He explained that I could have some serious health issues in the near future, such as diabetes, as well as being put on medication for the cholesterol and high blood pressure. Fortunately for me, my doctor discussed with me making changes to delay medication including a lifestyle nutritional change. He explained that diets were short term, inconsistent and not healthy. I decided that day was going to be a turning point in my life, and I lost 10 pounds over the next two months and a total of 40 pounds the next 10 months after that.

It has been three years since I lost the 40 pounds and I still feel great. I want to be very clear: I am not a nutritionist. I realize that some people have genetic issues which make physical milestones impossible without medication; however I took what worked for me and ran with it. My nutrition plan is part of my new program I created called FBT60 (Fit By Tennis in 60 days). This plan can work for anyone because you just need to look at what is in everything you eat and take very seriously everything you put into your body.

Here is a piece from the FBT60 Nutritional Plan:

THE NUTRITIONAL FAB 5

1. Good fats and bad fats – This was one of my biggest kryptonites. There was really no excuse for me not knowing this information before, especially being in the tennis industry my entire life. Many foods I ate had a tremendous amount of fat in



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them. The mayo on sandwiches and on tuna or chicken salad has an astronomical amount of bad fat in them. Meats such as hot dogs, hamburgers, wings, and too much red meat in general had to be addressed because of their bad fats. Frozen packaged foods, fast foods, fried foods, butter, cheese, and other dairy products, snack foods, soups, salad dressings, and cream-based foods were all part of my daily diet and extremely high in bad fats.

Then there are the good fats that I was missing altogether such as avocados, nuts, olives, olive oil, salmon and tuna. Beware of the “fat-free” label because it doesn’t mean you can eat all you want without consequences to your waistline and your body; many fat-free foods are high in sugar, refined carbohydrates and calories.

2. Sodium – I was known as a pre-salter – someone that begins salting his food even before he tastes it. Frozen packaged foods, fast foods, table salt, garlic salt, soups, cheese, snack foods and cold meats were just some of the high sodium items that were on my daily list that I had to address immediately. There are many low or no sodium choices out there now. My doctor explained that once you stop using the table or garlic salt, your pallet would adjust and no longer crave it. He was right!

3. Sugars – There are many low or sugar-free choices out there now. Just select these sugar-free items carefully because sometimes they can have a lot more ingredients and chemicals that could be harmful. Products such as cakes, pastries, candies and table sugar as a sweetener are among the bad sugars that I was eating. I neglected the good sugars found in such foods as fruits and vegetables that are good for your body and immune system. I tend to eat the raw fruit in the early morning so the sugar can burn off throughout the day.

4. Bad carbs and good carbs – Soda, candy, pastries and beer are some of the bad carbs that needed to be addressed in my diet. I replaced them with the good carbs such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits and beans.

5. Portions you eat and deceptive portions on packages – Many packages that could be considered one serving for an adult list the package as three to four servings. This makes the 8 fat grams and 1,000 milligrams of sodium three to four times as much!

Portions are also important to your change. I would go all day without eating much of anything and then eat a huge meal at dinner. This was leading me to become a diabetic. I found if I ate

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something as soon as I woke up, and ate small portions throughout the day, I ate much less for dinner and felt so much better at night.

I now pay attention to everything that goes into my body and try very hard to make the best decisions possible whether I am at home or on the road. I treat myself occasionally, but most importantly I have found healthy solutions to my vices (one example being spicy or garlic hummus in place of cheese).

When I began to change my nutrition I tried a number of fitness plans as well but wanted to do something incorporating tennis. I began to write drills that were fitness based and simple enough to do with almost any ball machine. Now I have compiled a series of ball machine drills for FBT60 in two categories called “Besiders” and “Touch N Go’s.”

“Besiders” are drills I created to focus on constant movement by the player to get beside a particular shot. Many times when players train on the ball machine they hit 150 to 175 balls without stopping. Most players get fatigued during points that last 15 to 20 hits, so you can see how a player hitting 150 to 175 balls without stopping would not be playing at game-speed or moving much. This is not productive for their game or their fitness. These “Besiders” drills were designed to create strenuous movement performed in short intervals similar to point play.

The “Touch N Go’s” were again designed to create strenuous movement from the player while practicing a wide variety of shots. The player has to hit a particular shot, touch a towel placed on the court, and then recover to play the next shot. Again, these are strenuous drills performed in short intervals similar to point play. These “Touch N Go’s” are great to increase the player’s fitness and endurance, as well as provide an opportunity for them to practice shots they may not ordinarily practice.

These drills will not only improve your strength and fitness but will preserve the integrity of strokes and improve both footwork and movement. You don’t have



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to be a tennis player to perform them, just someone wanting to get a great workout. Players can make them as strenuous as they want based on the distance they wish to travel in each drill. These drills will give the person tired of the elliptical or treadmill another option for a tremendous workout as well as give seasoned players a great way to increase their fitness and endurance.

I kept everything very short and sweet here, but it will be more detailed in FBT60. The FBT60 nutritional change and drills



“Besiders” and “Touch N Go’s” are part of the FBT60 plan.

workout has been a great story for me because I brought my cholesterol down from over 300 to 180. My blood pressure went down from 145/98 to 116/60, and my glucose levels are no longer at a dangerous level. The nutritional change and weight loss virtually eliminated my acid reflux as well as my night-time snoring. I used to have low energy and burn out early in the day, and now my energy level is great all day, and I have been playing injury-free.

Many people eat poorly with the concept they will work out harder that day to compensate. Think of your body like a car. People work out like they are sports cars, but then put oil in the tank instead of premium fuel. Just remember you are personally responsible for everything that goes into your body.

My doctor explained to me that your body gets programmed to like what you put in it. Once I decided to start eating better, my body started to crave the good foods, and the bad foods seemed disgusting.

Before you ever make a substantial nutritional change or perform a new strenuous activity, it is important to see a doctor first. This will also give you a baseline to let you measure your progress.

The slogan for FBT60 is “Building a Stronger Mind, Body and Game.” I think the mind is the most important part of this program. If you can fight through the beginning of this lifestyle change and perform the drills on a routine basis, your mind will become stronger and less likely to crave the previous poor habits, ultimately improving your body and game. Remember, “What the Mind Believes, The Body Achieves!”

The FBT60 Program and Drills are FREE at www.FBT60.com. If you ever want to discuss these concepts, please feel free to contact me at Stan_Oley@msn.com. Look out for my FBT60 seminar coming soon to your town! 🐾



Stan Oley is Playmate Ball Machine’s product marketing specialist. He has taught with ball machines for the past 22 years and has performed seminars at USPTA conventions, PTR International Symposiums and in five countries for various tennis organizations. Oley was featured on the Tennis Channel’s One Minute Clinic, “On-Court with USPTA,” and has three full length DVDs. Oley is sponsored by Adidas and Babolat products.