



FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen

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Sprints

I've been slowly working my way through [The New Primal Blueprint: Reprogram Your Genes for Effortless Weight Loss, Vibrant Health, and Boundless Energy](#) by Mark Sisson (who also runs the blog [Mark's Daily Apple](#)). It's easily the best book I've ever read about health, nutrition and exercise. I have the 2017 hardback version (which is like a high quality textbook), but I see that a 2019 version is available in paperback.

Based on his advice, I've made some major changes to my exercise program. I've reduced the amount of "chronic cardio" (where your heart rate is above 180 minus your age for extended periods, which can actually be detrimental to your health) I do and have been lifting heavy weights (for no more than 30 minutes) twice a week. I think I'm now stronger than I've ever been, my athletic performance is very good, and I'm sleeping better.

But the biggest change has been the addition of sprints (which could also be done in a pool, on an elliptical trainer, etc.) once every 7-10 days, when I feel well-rested. Initially I did them on an elliptical trainer and gradually increased the intensity and duration (though you shouldn't do more than six of them, and they shouldn't last longer than 20 seconds). I was already in very good shape, so if you're out of shape, your train-up period

will need to be longer so you don't have a heart attack or injure yourself.

Now I do them on a field—barefoot, so my feet can splay and grip like they're supposed to, like human feet did for millennia before we started encasing them in shoes. First I do a thorough warmup that includes a lot of dynamic (as opposed to static) stretching, as the last thing I want to do is pull a muscle. I warm up my entire body, as sprints are a functional exercise that involve the entire body. Towards the end of the warmup, I start mimicking the movement of sprinting, but in an exaggerated way, in slow motion.

When I sprint, I just wear shorts and a short-sleeved shirt, as I want to feel the shock of the cold air and feel the sunlight on my skin. After slowly jogging across the width of the field a couple of times, I line up for my first lap, which I do at half speed just to make sure that my muscles are really warmed up. At full speed, it takes me about 15 seconds to go from one end of the field to the other, which includes acceleration and deceleration. In between laps, I jog the width of the field, recovering my breath and bringing my heart rate down, which doesn't take long at all. I wait until I feel fully recovered before starting the next lap. I do five laps at max speed, then spend about 10 minutes doing a series of leg stretches.



The frost on my feet feels invigorating!

During a sprint, I feel like a youthful, powerful racehorse. My entire body is engaged in the effort. My vision is shaky from a moving head and blurred by the air rushing by. It feels exciting to be doing something kind of extreme that you thought you'd never do again. It's a minor shock to my body, but I know that it will end soon, so it's manageable.

I've come to realize that people in Western industrialized societies have become way too comfortable and need more stressors like this in their lives to achieve optimal health. It's what our genes expect from us. I think hauling a** across a field sends a message to your brain that "I'm still alive and thriving, and I've still got it."

Doing sprints in the early morning is also a quiet, solitary, almost meditative experience. Exposure to the first rays of sunlight recalibrates your body's internal clock, which helps you sleep better. Breathing in the cold morning air feels bracing and provides another minor shock. The soles of your feet are in contact with the Earth (this is called *grounding*) and you feel more connected to the world. You feel more *alive*, like Thoreau may have on one of his more extreme hikes through the woods in the winter or at night.



"Only that day dawns to which we are awake." ~ Henry David Thoreau

Rewild yourself. Get out there and shock your body some by exposing it to a few extremes. What doesn't kill you will make you stronger. In two days, it will be the fifth anniversary

of my heart attack. I'm grateful I got a second chance, but I also wish that I had heard of the primal lifestyle before that happened. Learn from my mistake.

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