

## Improving your health with the odds stacked against you

The past two weeks, I've been incredibly inspired by two men who have reversed their risk of heart attack, stroke and common cancers despite a hectic overseas travel requirement - they are both overseas 25-30% of their year. A hectic work schedule with overseas travel, in an environment with poor quality food and variable time zones is probably the ultimate in obstacles to actual health improvement. Both are high level businessmen in their 40s and 50s. These were both people that needed to lose weight.

The first man was challenged by a bet that I gave him - he was to lose 5 kg or pay \$100 to a charity of his choice. He lost over 7kgs. Being a competitive executive, this spoke to his heart and he made an emotional choice to go after this goal. Typical for an intelligent person, he needed no diet plan, exercise program etc - he worked it out for himself. Whilst flying, he only chooses vegetarian food and has no alcohol on the aeroplane, he follows the 5:2 diet (all diets work if you stick to them - you just need to find which system works for you), and he gets incidental activity whilst in Sydney by cycling to and from work, which is incredibly time efficient. He remained very focused.

The second person 12 months ago was advised to lose 5kg and he was reviewed three months later to see how he was fairing. He had lost an astonishing 20kg and has maintained that weight loss. Not only does he look fantastic, his cholesterol profile dropped, his blood pressure dropped so much that we could take him off of his blood pressure medication, and other risk markers that came with excessive weight decreased. Again, once he made up his mind, he figured a solution. The methodology for him was to aggressively exercise every day for an hour. He burns an astonishing 1000 calories using an elliptical trainer or treadmill. He does this regardless of where he is in the world and generally what time it is. He also became more diligent with his food intake and initially used the MyFitnessPal app (which I have spoken about before) to give some structure in terms of portion sizes and calorie intake.

These two men literally added years to their lives by forming new health behaviours. My patients continue to inspire me and its fantastic to see such success and we enjoy sharing their stories to inspire other people.

In essence, excellent health is about forming good habits and just repeating the action over and over. These habits are portable and can be taken around the world no matter which time zone you're in. To change behaviour, often we just need little push and once the new habit is created, it becomes self sustainable and part of your life. Happy travels.