



December 10, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

## The Shortest Path

It probably wouldn't surprise you if I said the shortest path is usually the most efficient. It's almost always true when you're driving, and in many other situations.

But it's often the best way to get fit as well. Here are some examples:

### The Shortest Path to the Gym

Paula says that back when she had an office job, the likelihood of getting to the gym for a workout was directly proportional to how far away the gym was from the office. She'd go after work, but the farther away the gym was, the more likely she'd stop to run a quick errand or two, run out of time, and just go home. And "the weather's bad and I don't feel like driving that far" won't be a handy excuse.

- The lesson: when you have a choice, choose the closest gym.

### Exercise Early

The same principal applies—the later in the day you exercise, the more likely you are to be too tired or too late or too busy, or whatever. Making time early in the day isn't easy, but it's the best way to make sure it gets done.

- The lesson: exercise as early as possible.

### Exercise Harder

Maybe you don't have time for a long workout. No problem—you'll burn more calories by working out harder. Jog instead of walk, run instead of jog, bike fast instead of taking a leisurely tour of the neighborhood. Do interval workouts: a standard workout with timed bursts of maximal effort. Caution: don't take on a form of exercise you're not ready for, such as doubling the weight you're lifting; that's a good way to make sure you get injured and don't work out at all. Keep it under control, but ramp it up safely.

- The lesson: exercise as hard as possible.

### Eat Raw Food

In most cases, the less time you spend cooking vegetables and fruits, the more nutrition you get out of them. With a little planning or creative shopping, that's fairly easy. Every supermarket and even convenience stores offer chopped vegetables with dip. Carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, celery—all nutrition powerhouses. There's also the fruit medleys or single pieces of fruit. Even fast food restaurants offer healthy salad choices. Just watch the dressings; that's where the fat is found.

- The lesson: skip cooking whenever possible.

### Eat Soup to Fill Up

In my lifetime, there have been significant improvements in the nutrition available in frozen and canned foods. They often come with reduced fat, reduced sodium, and reduced preservatives. If you want a finite amount of calories and a great way to get vegetables, choose a healthy broth-based soup (not a cream soup) with plenty of vegetables from the canned or frozen food section. Microwave it, and you're ready to eat in almost no time. It makes a good snack, too—have half a can, and save the rest for another snack.

- The lesson: soup fills you up, not out.

I'm sure you can come up with the shortest path for health, fitness, and weight loss if you think about it. So why wait? Take a few minutes, analyze your health goals, and then figure out the shortest path it would take to get there safely—no 500-calorie diets, please. If you can't, send me an email and I'll give you some pointers. This is a great time to plan for the body you want to have in 2012. Taking the shortest path that's safe and healthy seems like a reasonable thing to do. Let's get on it.

What are you prepared to do today?

***Dr. Chet***

---

**WGVU** FM 88.5/95.3 **npr** ***Straight Talk on Health***

Hear Dr. Chet's take on the latest health news and research—listen to *Straight Talk on Health* at 7 p.m. Sunday in the Eastern Time Zone on WGVU-FM 88.5 or 95.3, or listen live via the Internet by going to [www.wgvu.org](http://www.wgvu.org) and clicking on "Listen Live" in the gray bar at the top.

---

The health information in this message is designed for educational purposes only. It's not a substitute for medical advice from your healthcare provider, and you should not use it to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. It's designed to motivate you to work toward better health, and that includes seeing your healthcare professional regularly. If what you've read raises any questions or concerns about health problems or possible diseases, talk to your healthcare provider today.

**Subscribe to the Message from Dr. Chet at DrChet.com — © Chet Zelasko PhD LLC**