



STREET TO STABLE™

Healthy Eating

Wellness » Healthy Eating

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By K.M. Thornton & Co.



Nutrition for the Equestrian Lifestyle

by **K. M. THORNTON @ Co.**

from a high school friend suggesting we discuss skin care on this blog. I realized I have spent many years hiring the expertise of others to become better rounded in the health and wellness aspect of my life and these topics are also extremely relevant to others with an equestrian and/or active lifestyle. After some discussion, it was decided that in addition to our other topics, one of the goals of this blog in 2015 is to tap into authority figures to help others become better informed about health and wellness.

Additionally, I would like to share the most important lessons that I have acquired, either through hiring experts or from my career in business that have had a positive impact on my life. Some stories are embarrassingly candid, but I hope there is at least one take-away that you can procure from my trials and errors that will enhance your lifestyle in 2015!



During undergrad, I enhanced my figure with not just the "freshman 15", but rather the college thirty. The diet guru's of the nineties espoused "non-fat" as a green light to enjoy sugar laden processed foods. I enjoyed every bite of Snackwell Cookies Devil's Food cookies and cinnamon sugar rice cakes, but my appetite was never satisfied...so I kept eating. If I was more astute to what I had grown up feeding my horse, I would have been much healthier. Before Smart Pak and Platinum Performance, our local feed store sold livestock grain in burlap bags marked as "C.O.B.". This blend of corn, oats and barley with molasses was a common mixture for weight gain. My horses from years past and I were eating strikingly similar ingredients, yet aiming for opposite results.

After literally decades of dietary confusion (organic, gluten free, Paleo, etc.) and defaulting to extreme exercise to stay slim, I started working with Adam Gilbert, the owner of My Body Tutor, to develop a simple program that I could sustain for life. I discovered his nutrition consulting company through an article in The Chronicle of the Horse and for the first time I had daily accountability with a real person and someone to go to with questions to end my confusion. I worked with Adam for approximately a year to learn the nutritional components that work for my dietary preferences and activity level. Thanks to his assistance, sensible eating is now second nature.

Below are the biggest lessons I learned from my personal daily consults with Adam:

- 1) Sugar limitation: This was by far the biggest adjustment to my diet and the one that seemed to have the biggest impact on weight maintenance. Pastries and sweets take the most blame for containing sugar, but it is hiding in a multitude of foods including breads, processed foods and even many brands of tomato sauces. You will be shocked when you start to look at the amount of sugar listed on many nutritional labels. Avoid sugar substitutes as they are chemically processed and believed to stimulate the appetite.
- 2) Beware of the sugar level in certain fruits. Prior to working with Adam, my husband was diligent about making smoothies made entirely from fruit in our VitaMix, yet he seemed to be gaining weight. Little did we know that not all fruits are created equal. As a general rule, Adam had me exchange high sugar fruits like mango and grapes to lower sugar choices like berries, in moderation.
- 3) Exchange bread made from flour and sugar to bread made from sprouted grains. I exclusively eat Ezekial 4:9 because it is free from flour and is readily available in the freezer section at my local Albertsons and Whole Foods. Just because it is not laden with refined sugar does not mean you can eat all you want. Ezekial is usually only a part of my breakfast. Everything in moderation.
- 4) Eliminate the "bad carbs". My biggest culprits were low fat fat sweets (reduced fat cinnamon coffee cake at Starbucks...so yummy!), potatoes and white bread/rice. This was a major behavioral change for me because I had been told in the 90's that baked potatoes were an excellent food choice as long as you didn't add butter or whole milk cheese. Instead, my roommates and I would bake potato wedges and dip them in sugar-laden ketchup. We were totally misguided (and still hungry).
- 5) Greens are a fantastic carb! My favorite vegetables that have a lower glycemic index include lettuce, spinach, kale and mushrooms. I typically toss these ingredients in a bowl with a drizzle of olive oil and a tiny bit of lemon juice. Greens are now the majority of my daily diet.

time restraints, Adam worked with me to integrate items like all-natural almond butter spread on a piece of Ezekiel bread for breakfast. I also reach for edamame and/or chickpeas at salad bars and raw nuts for a protein source. On Sundays, I like to slow cook lean proteins and then shred them, specifically chicken breast and pork tenderloin. I then use the meat throughout the week to create quick meals like vegetable wraps for dinner.

7) Eat foods that have minimal to no processing. For me, this meant dropping most of the middle aisles of the grocery store and heading for the vegetable section.

8) While bars are not recommended because they are typically extremely processed and full of sugar, sometimes you have no choice. Adam turned me on to Qwest Bars. I keep them in my tack trunk and glove compartment as they don't melt and they have a low glycemic index (HINT: Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough tends to be everyone's favorite flavor). I order them by the case through Amazon Prime and last year in Kentucky I had them shipped ahead of me to the hotel. These are a lifesavers for horse shows where nerves are high and time is limited. Please don't miss eating breakfast or lunch at these events as you are doing your body and your horse(s) a disservice by skipping meals.

9) Don't fear traveling and eating out at restaurants. When I go out to dinner with my barnmates and friends, I typically order the salad bar (when possible) or ask the server for a lean protein seared with salt and pepper and a side salad. For a dressing, I request olive oil and vinegar in a cruet because most dressings have hidden sugar or excessive "bad" fats (a whole different topic, but typically I reach for olive oil and avoid animal fats). I always pass on the bread bowl. If I am exceptionally hungry before meeting for dinner, I consume a 100 calorie pack of raw nuts so as not to make a poor dining choice out of hunger. You would be amazed how willing most servers are to work with your requests ... just remember to leave a nice tip!

10) An occasional treat is more than OK. We are not robots and life should be enjoyed! In fact, Adam learned to accept that I love my daily Starbucks short non-fat mocha with no whip served extra hot (smallest cup on image below-typically a child's size). I'm sure it made him cringe on the food and exercise log I submitted to him each evening. Because I felt great and my weight was stable, he learned to just write back "Fair Enough". Now that I have moved to the country and we don't have a Starbucks two blocks from my home, I have taken Adam's original advice and I just whip in a dash of cinnamon to my morning coffee.



image source: wikiHow

We are excited to embark on this journey with you in 2015 as we seek to enhance a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. Please feel free to contact me through our website for any topics you would like discussed.