

Take the

**GET OFF THE
COUCH**

7-Day Challenge for Men

Based on the book, *Get Off the Couch*, by Steve Reynolds



Introduction

Congratulations! Taking this 7-day challenge may feel like a risky move. Maybe you downloaded this resource for yourself, or maybe a loved one (possibly your wife) passed it on to you. Whatever, or whoever it was, I want you to know that if you will take this challenge, I will help you break the frustrating cycle of losing and gaining weight. I will help you to increase your energy to perform better at work, to play with your kids, and enjoy time your wife.

This 7-Day Challenge was created to help you start tackling your own weight and health issues. Each day I am going to say to you, “Man UP! It’s time to change. You can do this!” Yes, this challenge is about action, but it is also about your re-action. So stay focused—you’ll be glad you did.

I understand the battle that a lot of men face. Earlier in my life, I was extremely overweight and faced high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes (see my before and after pictures below). Fortunately, God and my doctor got my attention. I decided to get off the couch, lose 120 pounds, and change my life. I did it—*so can you!*

Use this 7-day challenge to get the ball rolling. And, then get a copy of my new book, ***Get Off the Couch***, to walk you through the entire process to transform your body, your health, and your life.



In God’s power,

Pastor Steve Reynolds

Steve Reynolds has served as the senior pastor of Capital Baptist Church in Annandale, Virginia, since 1982. He launched a weight-loss campaign in his church and community after he lost more than 100 pounds. His story has been featured in local, national and international media, including *FOX News*, *CNN*, the *Washington Post* and the *Chicago Tribune*. Steve is a graduate of Liberty University and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Debbie, have three children. For more information, visit: www.LosingToLive.com

NOTE: *Before beginning any new eating and exercising regimen, make an appointment with your doctor to get expert advice on what your body can handle and how you should begin.*

If you're ready to lose weight, keep it off, and feel better, get your copy of *Get Off the Couch* at:
www.LosingToLive.com."

Day 1

A Man's A.C.T.I.O.N. Plan

Based on Introduction & Chapter 2 of *Get Off the Couch*

Action! Every guy loves action and adventure. Action movies...fast car chases...war...sports...anything that will get our adrenaline pumping. We live for danger, risk and fun. As little boys, we dreamed of being super heroes, warriors, sports stars, fireman and police officers rushing into perilous situations to save the day. We were always looking for the next adventure.

Well, you are about to embark on a brand new one—an exciting journey. This adventure is your life. You may not feel like much of a conqueror these days. Your current physical condition may have you feeling defeated and lost. But things are about to change. In this challenge, you are about to explore six actions that will make you victorious and keep you from being a victim. These six actions, found in the following A.C.T.I.O.N. acronym, will enable you to launch your new adventure.

Aware: Be *Aware* of the seriousness of your physical condition and understand your body matters to God.

Commit: *Commit* to living a disciplined life and to winning over temptation.

Transform: *Transform* the way you think and the way you live.

Incorporate: *Incorporate* healthy eating habits and exercise into your daily life.

Organize: *Organize* a team of people to help you win.

Navigate: *Navigate* your way to a lasting legacy by creating an A.C.T.I.O.N. plan for healthy living.

“Man Up!” Action Steps

Set a goal

Do this: Weigh yourself. How much do you *want* to weigh? Write out your goal on a sticky note or two. Post these where you can see them during the day (mirror, dashboard, monitor...).

Congratulations—you've posted your first goal!

Walk the Walk

Do this: Man Up! It's time to take action, and it's time to get moving. Exercise is movement—the more you move, the more you lose. So this week, think of little ways to intentionally move your body. Using your surroundings to get in a workout is a great way to minimize excuses for not being able to exercise. Find a set of stairs, and walk up and down them.

Key Bible Verse for 7-Day Challenge:

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” - Philippians 4:13

Day 2

If I Don't Get Up, I'm Gonna Die!

Based on Chapter 1 of *Get Off the Couch*

Thought for the day: The journey toward a healthier life begins by becoming *aware* of the seriousness of your physical condition and the fact that your body matters to God. What do you know about your body? Do you know your current cholesterol level, your blood pressure, your blood sugar levels, your body mass index (BMI) or even what you currently weigh? Are you aware of the fact that God carefully crafted your body and that He loves you and wants you to be in good health? It's time to face the facts regarding your health, and it's time to start living a life that reflects the image of the One who created you.

I had no one to blame for my health situation but myself. I was reaping what I had sown all those years since I had played my last football game. My wakeup call came when I finally realized that I was killing myself slowly with a knife and a fork and an ice cream spoon. The thought of heading to an early grave was terrifying. My health had deteriorated to the point that this was a possibility. I knew that if I didn't do something, I was going to die. What would happen to my wife, my children, and my ministry? I was so sick and tired of being sick and tired, and the thought of having to take prescription after prescription for the rest of my life was no longer acceptable.

This was not the way I had imagined my life would be on that day I walked off the football field with such hope for the future. I had been so young, healthy and full of dreams. I had been ready to take risks, live dangerously, have fun doing it and prove that I could make it in a difficult area of ministry when all the statistics were against me. For me, failure was not an option. I dreamed of whom I would be—the type of impact I would have on my kids, my grandchildren, my community, my ministry. But in the physical condition I was in, I now doubted whether I would even meet my grandchildren and have the opportunity to invest in them.

I was taking risks all right—risks with my health; risks that displeased my Creator; risks that could kill me. What type of impact would I leave behind if I dropped dead of a heart attack because I was too fat? That was not how I wanted to leave this life. It was not how I wanted to be remembered. I had to do something, and I wasn't sure what that something was. I just knew I had to change. I had become a “la-Z-y bum” sitting in the La-Z-Boy. I had to say to myself, *Get off the couch, you lazy bum!*

Can you relate to my story? Have health issues benched you and forced you to watch life pass by instead of enjoying being healthy and productive?

“Man Up!” Action Steps

Watch Your Portion Size

Do this: This week, it's time to seriously start thinking about portion control and how much you are eating. Start by being intentional when putting food on your plate, and make it a point to limit your portions.

Get Moving

Do this: Walk a little further than necessary today. For instance, park your car in the space farthest from your entrance. Take the stairs instead of the elevator.

Day 3

It's All Around Me—How Do I Handle It?

Based on Chapter 4 of *Get Off the Couch*

Thought for the day: The next step in your journey toward greater health is to *commit* to living a disciplined life and to winning over temptation. Change is not easy. If you are going to improve your health and wellness, you have to be committed to using the Bible—your new Playbook—to help you develop a strategy that will help you change, reach your new goals, and overcome the temptation that Satan will use against you to keep you from winning.

I admit it: I was an addict! I was addicted to ice cream. From the time I was a child all the way up to 48 years of age, I ate a *huge* bowl of ice cream just about every night. It was my comfort food, my reward after a long hard day's work. After all those years, you had better believe it had become a habit in my life—a very bad habit. So you can imagine how difficult it was for me to stop eating ice cream before I went to bed.

We are all creatures of habit, and our bodies resist change. We also easily revert back to our old ways, even if they are unhealthy. The good news is that as our bodies adapt to new healthy habits, the temptation to cheat will grow less and less over time. Now, I am not saying that this will be easy, because it won't be. It will be hard. But I want to give you hope that you can change and that it is going to get easier and easier.

One of the first things I did when I was starting out was to reward myself with a cheat *meal*. I emphasize the word “meal”—I did not say a cheat “day.” I would satisfy a craving I had by telling myself that I would save this food for my cheat meal, which was usually on a Friday night. If I really wanted pizza, I would force myself to stay on track and then reward myself with pizza for that cheat meal.

“Man Up!” Action Steps

How to Eat a Rainbow

Try this: Conquer cravings by “eating the rainbow.” Fill your plate each day with different colors of fruits and vegetables to give your body a boatload of nutrients that will fill you up, give you more energy, and keep you satisfied.

Compress Your Stress

Try this: Keep a foam-compression ball at your desk and squeeze it throughout the day.

Day 4

Start Small to Win Big

Based on Chapter 5 & 6 of *Get Off the Couch*

Thought for the day: The third step in your journey toward greater health is to *transform* the way you think and the way you live. Your thought life will make or break you. It's time to stop listening to Satan, the father of foul play, and start meditating on the truth found in God's Word. Once you transform your thinking, it's time to start transforming your doing. Stop making excuses and start producing positive change in your life.

I love the fable of *The Tortoise and the Hare*. Even though it's a children's story, the lesson it teaches is such a vital one for us at this stage of the game. Even though the hare was much faster than the tortoise, he kept getting distracted along the race and kept losing sight of the finish line. The tortoise, on the other hand, never lost sight of the goal. He kept moving at a slow and steady pace until he reached the finish line ahead of the hare.

I love the moral of the fable: *Slow and steady wins the race*. Keep that in mind, guys, as you are transforming your routines and habits. Start slow, start small, and don't lose sight of the finish line. Pick one positive thing you can do today to get started. Maybe you can drink more water today or go for a walk. Maybe you can park a little farther away from your office or store, or, better yet, determine to limit the number of times you go through the drive-thru. Get out of the car and walk in. I'm sure if you were honest with yourself, there are many small steps to life you could take that would help kick-start the momentum you need to start producing positive change. (In my first book, *Bod4God: The Four Keys to Weight Loss*, you can read more about the small steps to life that I took to help me improve my health and quality of life.)

Picture a baby learning to walk. He or she starts with slow, small steps that are a little wobbly, unstable and uncertain. Well, it's time to start learning to walk a new walk right now. It's time to start with those small baby steps and use them to lead you to new, healthier habits.

"Man Up!" Action Steps

35 a Day

Do this: Fiber fights off fat, so if you want to live a long, productive, high-energy life, eat high-fiber foods such as beans, lentils, vegetables, fruits, nuts and whole grains.

Shoulder Shredders

Do this: Doing shoulder circles are great for working the entire shoulder girdle, even the tiny muscle fibers. Do as many circles as you can, and then rest and change rotation direction.

Day 5

It's Not a Diet, It's a Lifestyle Plan

Based on Chapter's 7 & 8 of *Get Off the Couch*

Thought for the day: The fourth step in your journey toward getting off the couch and getting into shape is to *incorporate* healthy eating habits and exercise into your daily routines. It's time to put what we've been talking about into action and start making changes in how you eat and live your life. Start thinking of food as fuel, and start feeding your body healthy living food. You won't reach your goals sitting on the couch eating junk—you have to get up and get moving. If you do, you will begin to see results, and your body will thank you.

The main thing I want you to remember after completing this challenge is that this is *not about a diet; it's about creating a healthy lifestyle plan for you*. If I am repeating myself, I'm doing it for a reason. You have to find what works for you. Everybody is different, and what works for you might not work for another person. That's why I don't promote or push one single plan or approach to weight loss.

Take these thoughts, suggestions, tips and strategies that we have discussed in this chapter and start putting together a healthy eating plan that will work for you based on what the Bible says about food. Make a decision today that you are going to quit the fast-food frenzy and incorporate more living food into your diet. Get rid of soda and replace it with water. Take these simple steps, and you will see results.

I've said it before, but it is so important that it bears repeating: We have to train ourselves to *eat for our health and not for our happiness*. I know this is tough to do, because so much of our culture revolves around food. Just think about the way marketers try to convince us that fast food will promote our happiness. IHOP has used the slogan, "Come hungry, leave happy." KFC has promised, "Buy a bucket of chicken and have a barrel of fun." Burger King has told us that "sometimes we've got to break the rules" and that we should be able to "have it our way."

"Man Up!" Action Steps

Healthy Fats

Do this: Did you know that nuts help hinder heart attacks? According to research, one handful of raw unsalted nuts a day cuts the risk of having a heart attack in half. Add a ¼ cup of almonds or walnuts to your salad. Eat a handful of raw unsalted nuts.

Change Out that Spare Tire

Do this: Torso rotations are core-strengthening exercises that allow your torso to move through a full range of motion, targeting your back, abdominals and obliques all at once. Do as many as you can during the day, and hold a medicine ball or dumbbell for added effort.

Day 6

Teamwork Works

Based on Chapter's 9&10 of *Get Off the Couch*

Thought for the day: The fifth step in your journey toward getting off the couch and getting into shape is to *organize* a team of people who want to help you win. You can't do this all on your own. You need to start building a circle of support—a team of people who will educate, encourage and equip you so you can meet your health and wellness goals. There is strength in numbers, and you will achieve more and experience greater success if you have a team of likeminded people supporting you. So choose your team wisely, and start winning together.

If you want to lose weight, join a team—preferably a competing team. In a recent study conducted as part of the 2009 Shape Up Rhode Island campaign, a group of 3,300 overweight or obese participants with a BMI of 31.2 or greater were placed into teams of 5 to 11 members. The participants were told that they would be competing as a team in three areas: weight loss, physical activity, and the number of steps they took each day as measured by a pedometer. Interestingly, team members recorded their weight and activity via an online tracking system, and they received feedback online from other members about their personal and team goals. It was a kind of virtual competition.

Researchers found that those who shed at least 5 percent of their initial body weight during the competition were more likely to be on the same teams. Furthermore, those who had a higher level of social influence with their teammates increased their weight loss by 20 percent, with team captains losing more weight than other participants. The study also revealed that couples who attempted to lose weight together did better than when one of them tried to go it alone.

“People around us affect our health behaviors,” said Tricia Leahey, a lead researcher on the study. “It could be quite beneficial if a bunch of friends that choose to lose weight make healthy food choices together, and hold each other accountable to those choices.” She adds, “We know that obesity can be socially contagious, but now we know that social networks play a significant role in weight loss as well, particularly team-based weight-loss competitions....Being surrounded by others with similar healthy goals all working to achieve the same thing [can really help our] weight-loss efforts.”

“Man Up!” Action Steps

Plug in Positive Proteins

Do this: Replace heart-damaging red meat and pork with leaner poultry such as turkey or chicken.

Standard-Issue Push-ups

Do this: Push-ups set the standard for upper-body strength training and use your own body weight. Do as many as you can, and then rest and repeat.

Day 7

The Most Important Play is the Next Play

Based on Chapter 12 of *Get Off the Couch*

Thought for the day: The fifth and final step in your journey is to create an A.C.T.I.O.N. plan for healthy living so you can *navigate* your way to leaving a lasting legacy. You only have one life—one that is too valuable to waste—so it's time to start putting a plan together that will help you live longer and continue to impact and influence the lives around you. It's important to finish well, so keep your eyes on the end zone and head for it, giving it everything you've got.

The last item I want to leave with you before we head out to the field is something my football coach at Liberty drilled into us players again and again: "The most important play is the next play." He was constantly telling us to forget about the past and what had just happened on the field. If we messed up and blew a play, it was done, and we needed to move on. If someone fumbled the ball or accidentally went offsides, we needed to learn from it and focus on what we are supposed to do next. If we missed a tackle, that was okay; just try not to do it again.

The coach's point was this: you can't focus on your past failures, because the most important play is coming up. It's what you do *next* that counts. I want to leave that same message with you: your most important play in this game of getting healthy is your next play. It's time to forget about your past mistakes and failures and focus on your next steps—you're A.C.T.I.O.N. plan for getting in shape. Don't let the past cripple your future; learn from it and move on. Put all your time and energy into your *next* play.

You're ready for the big game now. I have faith in you. I know you can do it. So leave this locker room with your head held high, ready to take out anything that gets in your way. Remember you only have one shot—one life—so don't waste it.

"Man Up!" Action Steps

Green Up

Do this: Real men eat salad! Fill your salad with dark leafy greens such as spinach, romaine and leaf lettuces, which have been shown to protect against cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and dementia.

Shadow Boom Boxing

Do this: For this exercise, put on your favorite song, bounce around, and throw some jabs, uppercuts and any punch combo that comes to mind.

A Final Word from Steve Reynolds

I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is the moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle—victorious.

Vince Lombardi

Congratulations, you've completed the challenge! I hope you are pumped up, motivated and ready to move in the right direction. I hope you are ready to join with thousands of other men across America who has committed to:

- Break the frustrating cycle of losing and gaining weight.
- Increase their energy to perform better at work, play with their kids, and enjoy time with their wife.
- Win the battle against over-eating and take control of food cravings.
- Improve their health and prevent harmful diseases, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.
- Boost their confidence and feel good when they look in the mirror.
- Appreciate the unique body that God has given them.
- Lose weight and keep it off for good!

One final *Man Up* Action Step:

Guys, there is one last thing to do for your health—If you have not had a physical in a year or more—then do yourself and your family a huge favor and make an appointment with your doctor today!

The decision is yours. Are you ready to get healthy and in shape? This 7-Day Challenge is a great start. However, it is but a small portion of what you will learn and put into action from my book, *Get Off The Couch*. I encourage you to pick up your copy today. Order at www.LosingToLive.com to get a signed copy, or visit your local bookstore.

