



# Fitness for Geeks: Real Science, Great Nutrition, and Good Health

By Bruce W. Perry

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**Fitness for Geeks: Real Science, Great Nutrition, and Good Health** By Bruce W. Perry

This inquisitive and highly useful book shows the hacker and maker communities how to bring science and software into their nutrition and fitness routines.

The digital age has made a big splash with new web-connected gear in the sports/fitness world. *Fitness for Geeks* covers many of these new self-tracking tools and apps, including Endomondo, FitBit, Garmin Connect, Alpine Replay, Zeo, and more. The book shows you how the gear and apps work, relate to human physiology, and can be hacked and integrated into your lifestyle and fitness routine.

*Fitness For Geeks* is designed to appeal to a broad audience of techies and other engineers, athletes, gym rats, adventurers, in short anyone with a scuffed-up muddy pair of running or cycling shoes (or bare feet) who wants to take a cerebral approach to health. The "measure mantra" is a useful concept for people seeking fitness ("what gets measured gets managed and fixed"), and now you have the software, gear, and companion book to do it.

The book includes an eclectic mix of interviews with a wide range of experts, including two NFL pro football players, a mountaineering guide, a national expert on vitamin C, a runner who won a hot Boston Marathon, a scientist who tests the effects of fasting on mice and tumors, an MIT scientist who studies our mTOR growth pathway, an expert sports masseuse, and a former Israeli soldier who studied the diet of the Spartans, Greeks, and Macedonians.

*Fitness For Geeks* has detailed chapters on nutrition as well as outdoor and indoor fitness and sports, with explanations of various protocols (for resistance training and sprinting), the physiological aspects of exercise (such as metabolic equivalent of task and calculating your basal metabolic rate (BMR) and total energy expenditure), and of course a number of apps and tools that can accompany your workouts.

Sprinkled throughout the book are familiar software-engineering concepts, such as antipatterns and design patterns, and how we can apply these same paradigms to fitness. How important is real food, an oscillation of movement throughout the day, as well as getting plenty of sleep and healthy sunlight? We have the same "preinstalled software code," our genes, as pre-modern people. The book discusses this imperative of mashing up a techie lifestyle with the paradigm of evolutionary health - the ancient behaviors for which we are programmed.

A geek is someone who spends a huge amount of time analyzing the fine points of whatever interests her, ad infinitum, to a level that no one around her can possibly understand. Her family members and friends are all flabbergasted and scratching their heads, until finally with a shrug of their shoulders and a murmur of "fanatic..." they return to quotidian concerns. See yourself in there? Then Fitness For Geeks is probably the book you've been looking for.

Just as Jeff Potter brought a new perspective to cooking in O'Reilly's bestselling Cooking for Geeks, in Fitness For Geeks you're likely to find a similar originality and outside-the-box approach to taking charge of your own health.

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### **Fitness for Geeks: Real Science, Great Nutrition, and Good Health By Bruce W. Perry Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

### Top 5 Fitness Tips from Bruce Perry, Author of *Fitness for Geeks*

**Sleep** Sleep a lot, and consider monitoring your sleep to work out the rough spots with gear such as the Zeo Sleep Manager. We all know that life intrudes on sleep, but the idea is to maximize your sleep when you have the opportunity. Go to bed early (e.g., to catch the restorative deep sleep that can happen before midnight when the body secretes the repair mechanism called growth hormone), and don't skimp on the final long REM sleep in the early morning.



**Choose exercise that makes you run faster or physically stronger over long slow exercise that breaks down your body. This means up to 30 minutes of effective resistance training about twice per week (with experience, lower reps and higher weights), and interval training as opposed to moderate jogging. A recent study discovered that 30-second bursts of cycling (4 to 6 times per session with 4 minute rests in between) was just as effective as traditional endurance exercise, but involved 90 percent fewer miles.**

**Eat food that's grown or pastured locally. Find a local farm,**

**and become one of their good customers for pastured eggs, which generally offer higher levels of vitamins and minerals, grass-fed meats, berries, and veggies (in season).**

**Fast once in a while (This advice is only for adults, not for 3. growing kids). Consider narrowing the window of eating to around 8 to 12 hours per day. An intermittent fast a couple times per week (such as fasting overnight and extending it to about 15 hours) can help with blood-glucose metabolism and reduce inflammation.**

**Do something once in a while that represents an acute 4. challenge. (Meaning, it scares the crap out of you then makes you laugh and/or tell stories about it afterward). The reason wilderness treks, for example, are so gratifying and exciting is because they seem to stimulate built-in instinctive pathways, according to the author Laurence Gonzales' *Deep Survival*. Although unproven, maybe they represent hormesis or "good stress." For even more fun, bring along self-tracking apps such as Endomondo or Backpacker GPS Trails Pro.**

#### About the Author

Amidst a varied career in journalism and software engineering, Bruce W. Perry has moved on from numerous long runs and multisport events to hiking, skiing, weightlifting, and general fitness tracking and pursuits. He's written two recent O'Reilly software books, and occasionally climbs in the summer with mountain guides, including Mt. Rainier and Mt. Whitney's Mountaineer's Route.

Perry lives in Warren, VT with his wife and two kids.

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##### Marian Sheffield:

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