

# Gold's Gym Newsletter

LAKE RIDGE &amp; LORTON, VA

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## February Fitness Focus: Building Endurance and Enhancing Workouts

Greetings, Gym Family, and Happy February – Love has been in the air all month.

Though the shortest month, February is a powerful checkpoint in the fitness and health journey, bridging the enthusiasm of New Year's resolutions with the commitment needed for long-term success. As winter lingers, it challenges discipline and motivation, making it a pivotal time to solidify habits rather than fall into seasonal slumps. With days gradually lengthening, the circadian rhythm begins adjusting, allowing for more energy and improved sleep cycles, both crucial for recovery and performance. February's Snow Moon, often representing endurance and resilience, aligns perfectly with the mental toughness required to push through plateaus and stay consistent.

From a metabolic perspective, colder temperatures encourage brown fat activation, which enhances calorie burn and thermogenesis (heat generation), making workouts surprisingly beneficial. Additionally, February's connection to love and self-care, especially with Valentine's Day, offers a moment to shift focus toward self-love, mindful eating, and movement as a celebration of the body rather than just a means to an end. Whether through maintaining momentum, finding new ways to stay active, or embracing the balance of discipline and self-compassion, February is a reminder that progress is built in the spaces between motivation and perseverance. Stay with it, stay with us!

Jeremy and I have been diving deep into something we all do every second of every day but rarely think about—breathing.

Sure, we focus on the breath in yoga, but in strength training, cardio, and everyday workouts? Not so much. We usually huff, puff, and assume that gasping for air means crushing it. But what if we told you how you breathe could make your workouts more efficient, your endurance stronger, and your recovery faster? It's so weird that we don't focus on breathing during our conscious hours. Yes, breathing is automatic, and you don't have to think about it, but maybe it is time that you do. Life begins and ends with breath, but we take it for granted. It's everything! The breath is so powerful, so how about giving this some thought? Hear us out:

For the past year, we've been experimenting with nasal breathing—in and out through the nose only, across all our workouts. And let me tell you, it's a game-changer. At moderate heart rates (65-75% of max), it's pretty easy. But once you start pushing higher, it gets challenging. The good news? Like training any muscle, the more you practice, the better you get.

### The Benefits of Nasal Breathing in Training

#### It Keeps You Calm & Collected

All mammals breathe through their noses until they're under duress, when they go

into open-mouth, almost, or definitely, panic mode. Nasal breathing keeps you in a parasympathetic state (aka calm and controlled), while mouth breathing kicks you into fight-or-flight mode.

#### More vigorous, More Efficient Workouts

Nasal breathing helps engage your diaphragm correctly, which means better core bracing for lifting (think of it as an internal weightlifting belt)—more stability = better strength gains.

#### Oxygen Efficiency = More Endurance

Your body absorbs oxygen on your exhale, so breathing out through your nose helps trap and recycle more oxygen, increasing endurance and stamina.

#### pH Balance & Fatigue Control

Mouth breathing dumps too much carbon dioxide too quickly, messing with your body's pH and leading to dizziness, lightheadedness, and faster fatigue. Nasal breathing keeps your chemistry in check so you can train longer and recover faster.

#### Stay Hydrated Longer

Breathing through your mouth speeds up water loss, leading to quicker dehydration. If you're training hard, every drop of hydration counts!

#### Better Sleep, Focus, and Recovery

Nasal breathing supports deeper sleep, sharper mental focus, and even better lung function. It can even help reduce the risk of exercise-induced asthma by filtering and warming the air before it hits your lungs.

In this newsletter  
you can expect:

BUILDING  
ENDURANCE

NASAL  
BREATHING

PAIN VS.  
DISCOMFORT

HORMONE  
OPTIMIZATION

HORMONE  
TESTING

DEBUNKING  
MYTHS



## How to Start?

Before you go trying to hit a new goal while strictly nasal breathing, let's be honest. It takes some time to adjust. If you're sprinting, skiing moguls, cycling hard, crushing the stair climber, or lifting heavy, your body will need time to adapt.

Here's a simple guideline: **180 - your age = your ideal heart rate to maintain nasal breathing.** So, if you're 40, aim to maintain nasal breathing at 140 bpm. Try it in your training for a week or two and see how your body responds.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of what proper breathing can do for your performance and overall well-being. Give it a shot, stay patient, and see how you go. The benefits are enormous. If you are a mouth breather, exercising in nasal breath mode will help you become more comfortable breathing with your mouth shut when you sleep or even better when you're on a plane. It's a more controlled and beautiful way to live.

Let's move on to another subject. As we continue our journey on the longevity road, another thing that we have been visiting is dealing with our brain and identifying:

## Pain vs. Discomfort

I, Lori recently read Hunter Williams's article on this subject. It got me thinking about how our mental state (excuses) often gets in the way of how we train and optimize. We have concluded that this could be the key to unlocking our full potential at the gym, so we are digging into this, and perhaps you should, too.

Most people never reach their full potential, not because they're in pain but because they can't handle discomfort. Pain is a signal that something is wrong. It's your body's way of saying, "Stop! Back off! Pay attention!" It's an alarm warning you of injury, overtraining, or an underlying issue that needs immediate care.

Discomfort, on the other hand, is a signal of growth. It's your body adapting, strengthening, and evolving, whether through an intense workout, a disciplined diet, or pushing through mental barriers.

### Distinguishing Between Pain and Discomfort in Training

Understanding the difference is crucial for performance, longevity, muscle composition, and overall well-being.

- Pain is a torn muscle. Discomfort is the soreness that comes from training hard.
- Pain is an inflamed, sluggish metabolism. Discomfort is the hunger and energy shifts that come with shifting your diet for the better and metabolic adaptation.
- Pain is burnout and chronic fatigue. Discomfort is the challenge of waking up early to train, even when it's tough.

Most people avoid discomfort at all costs, choosing the easier path of instant gratification over the disciplined path of transformation.

They skip workouts, avoid eating properly, give up on hard training, and quit when things get complicated. Of course, this doesn't apply to any of you, our gym members, but maybe you know someone like this.

But what if you could train yourself to embrace discomfort, even enjoy it?

### The Science of Pain vs. Discomfort: Why High Performers Thrive

Pain and discomfort activate different pathways in the brain.

- A 2016 study published in The Journal of Neuroscience found that acute pain triggers the brain's matrix, signaling a threat to the body.
- Discomfort, however, activates areas linked to motivation and endurance, including the prefrontal cortex and ventral striatum, the same regions responsible for mental toughness, goal setting, and resilience.

This is why elite athletes, military special forces, and high performers don't just tolerate discomfort; they train their brains to thrive.

A 2018 study from Frontiers in Physiology found that endurance athletes have higher dopamine signaling, reduced stress hormone responses, and improved nervous system regulation, allowing them to push through discomfort with greater ease.

The Takeaway? The More Optimized Your Body Is, the Easier It Becomes to Push Through Discomfort.

### How to Make Discomfort Your Ally (Not Your Enemy)

If you want to recover faster, train harder, and become the person who thrives under stress, you need to support your body by training your mind and fueling your body correctly.

When you train hard, you create micro-tears in muscle fibers. Your body needs to repair and strengthen these, which is where growth happens.

## Hormone Optimization for Strength, Energy, & Endurance. Don't Ignore This.

Your hormonal balance determines how well you handle stress, recover from workouts, and sustain energy.

Testosterone Optimization is critical for muscle growth, energy, and resilience. Low testosterone leads to fatigue, poor recovery, and decreased performance.

HGH or HGH Precursor Peptides (Tesamorelin, Ipamorelin, CJC-1295, no DAC) all boost sleep quality, tissue regeneration, and endurance.

Thyroid Support (Desiccated Thyroid) regulates metabolism, energy levels, and fat oxidation, making fat loss and fasting easier.

When your hormones are optimized, your body becomes more efficient at handling discomfort and turning it into progress.

When was the last time you had your hormone levels tested?

Perhaps never. Paying attention to these levels is an important aspect of understanding yourself, especially as we age.

### Mitochondrial & Metabolic Peptides for Energy & Adaptation

The better your mitochondria function, the more energy your body has—which means discomfort becomes more tolerable. When your body efficiently produces energy, discomfort doesn't feel like suffering; it feels like progress.

Turn Your Discomfort Into a Superpower! Most people back down when things get complicated. They let fatigue, soreness, hunger, and stress dictate their actions.

But the people who succeed? They train their bodies and minds to embrace discomfort and give themselves the tools to make it easier.

### What This Means for YOU

If you're ready to recover faster, train harder and quickly adapt to stress. Optimize your hormones, so you have the energy, drive, and mental clarity to thrive. Build a body that welcomes discomfort instead of running from it.

Get your bloodwork done. See where you are and work from there. You can't improve it if you don't measure it.

The choice is simple: Stay comfortable and stagnant, or lean into discomfort and grow.

Your body was designed to adapt, so ensure it has everything it needs to do it at the highest level.

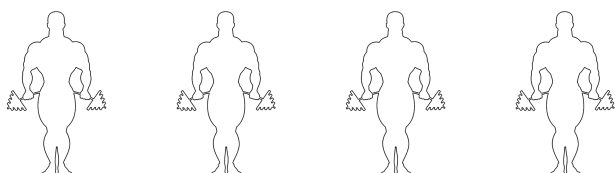
### Why Everyone Should Get Their Hormones Checked: The Key to Longevity, Performance, and Optimal Health

Since 2020, Jeremy and I have made it a point to get our hormones checked regularly. Many people we know do a fantastic job complaining about how sluggish they feel, how unmotivated they are, and how they sleep terribly. They just complain constantly and spread negative energy.

If I hear one more person say, "This getting old thing sucks," I'm going to scream. It makes me crazy that we hide behind the "getting old" excuse and do nothing about it. Hormonal health is the foundation of energy, metabolism, mental clarity, muscle growth, fat loss, and overall well-being, yet it's one of the most overlooked aspects of mainstream medicine.

Most assume that checking their hormone levels is only necessary after symptoms appear or when they reach middle age. The reality? Hormonal optimization should be a part of regular bloodwork from early adulthood.

Unfortunately, standard medical testing often ignores comprehensive hormone panels, leaving millions of people struggling with unexplained fatigue, weight gain, depression, brain fog, low libido, and poor recovery without ever realizing the root cause is hormonal imbalance.



### Why Hormones Matter for Both Men and Women

Hormones are the chemical messengers that regulate nearly every function in your body. When they are balanced and optimized, you feel strong, energized, and mentally sharp. You experience sluggishness, weight gain, poor recovery, and even long-term disease risks when they are out of sync. Yet, most people don't get their hormones checked until they already feel terrible. Traditional bloodwork only includes basic panels such as cholesterol, glucose, and liver enzymes but ignores key hormones that impact daily performance and longevity.

### The Benefits of Being Hormonally Optimized

- **Increased Energy & Mental Clarity** – Balanced hormones prevent chronic fatigue and brain fog.
- **Better Muscle Growth & Fat Loss** – Testosterone, HGH, and thyroid hormones regulate metabolism and body composition.
- **Stronger Immune Function** – Optimized hormones reduce inflammation and support immunity.
- **Improved Libido & Sexual Health** – Healthy hormone levels improve sex drive, function, and reproductive health.
- **Faster Recovery & Longevity** – Hormone balance supports better sleep, cellular repair, and anti-aging benefits.

### Hormones That Should Be Regularly Tested

#### For Men:

- **Testosterone (Total & Free)** – Critical for muscle mass, metabolism, libido, and cognitive function.
- **DHEA** – A precursor to testosterone and key for anti-aging and adrenal function.
- **Estradiol (E2)** is essential for cardiovascular and bone health. An imbalance can cause fatigue and weight gain. Hello—men need estrogen, too!
- **Cortisol** – The stress hormone that, when chronically elevated, leads to burnout and metabolic dysfunction.
- **Thyroid Panel (TSH, Free T3, Free T4, Reverse T3)** – These regulate metabolism, energy, and fat loss.
- **IGF-1 (Indicator of Growth Hormone Levels)** – Key for recovery, endurance, and longevity.

#### For Women:

- **Estradiol (E2)** – Regulates mood, metabolism, and cardiovascular health.
- **Progesterone** – Essential for menstrual cycle health, mood stability, and sleep.
- **Testosterone (Yes, Women Need It Too!)** – Supports muscle tone, energy, and libido.
- **DHEA** – Important for stress resilience and hormone production.
- **Cortisol** – High levels contribute to weight gain and adrenal dysfunction.
- **Thyroid Panel** – Regulates metabolism, energy levels, and body composition.

Doctors rarely check these levels unless requested, so advocating for yourself and demanding comprehensive testing is essential.



### At What Age Should You Start Checking Your Hormones?

#### Early 20s-30s: Establishing Baselines

- Ideal for detecting early imbalances before they cause major issues.
- Athletes, high-performers, and those with symptoms like low energy, poor recovery, or brain fog should check hormones early.

#### 30s-40s: Catching the First Signs of Decline

- Natural testosterone and estrogen production start declining in both men and women.
- This is the ideal time to consider hormonal optimization strategies for longevity and performance.

#### 40s-50s+: Reversing Age-Related Declines

- Key hormones like testosterone, estrogen, DHEA, and growth hormone drop significantly.
- Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) can restore youthful function and prevent age-related disease.

### Debunking the Myths: Bioidentical Hormones vs. Synthetic Estrogen

For decades, mainstream medicine misled the public into believing that hormone replacement causes cancer when, in reality, this was based on flawed research using synthetic hormones, NOT bioidentical ones.

#### The Truth About Bioidentical Hormones:

- Bioidentical hormones are molecularly identical to what the body naturally produces.
- They do NOT increase cancer risk. Studies show they reduce the risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, and neurodegenerative diseases. Many men think that if their libido is high, then they are “good” to go and don’t need anything. Remember, just because you have a high libido doesn’t mean that you are hormonally optimized.
- Unlike synthetic hormones (such as those used in the flawed Women’s Health Initiative study), bioidentical hormones work with your body’s natural rhythms, enhancing energy, performance, and longevity.

#### The Myth of Synthetic Estrogen

The Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) study led to widespread fear about hormone supplementation therapy, but what most people don’t realize is that the study used synthetic conjugated estrogens from pregnant horse urine (Premarin) and synthetic progestins, which do not behave like the body’s natural hormones.

Bioidentical hormones, however, are safe and beneficial, especially when appropriately monitored.

#### Why Hormonal Optimization is Critical for Your Health

The modern lifestyle destroys hormonal balance. Stress, poor sleep, environmental toxins, and nutrient deficiencies contribute to early decline.



But with the proper testing, nutrition, lifestyle changes, and (if needed) hormone therapy, you can:

- Feel younger and more vibrant at any age.
- Improve your metabolism and maintain a lean, strong physique.
- Protect against cognitive decline, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disease.
- Optimize your energy levels, recovery, and performance.

### And we'll leave you with this...

You're reading this because you're a strong, badass, and committed member of our gym family. You are someone who cares about their health, their well-being, and living life at their fullest potential. That's something to be proud of.

Now, imagine if you could inspire those around you: friends, family, maybe even that one person who's a bit of a hot mess to step into a healthier, more potent version of themselves. The gift of fitness, movement, and mindful living can change lives. Share your impressive wins with your family and friends, and be proud of all you do for yourself.

So, keep showing up, keep pushing forward, stay strong, stay committed, and remember—it's your body—it's the only place you have to live!

See you in the gym, and as always, we welcome your communication. Write to Lori if you have something good to say, and write to Jeremy if you want to complain about something [Lori@lowellmgmnt.com](mailto:Lori@lowellmgmnt.com), [Jeremy@lowellmgmnt.com](mailto:Jeremy@lowellmgmnt.com)

In service and gratitude,

*Lori & Jeremy Lowell*

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