

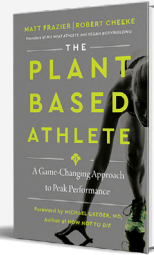
# The Longevity Fitness Blueprint

A sustainable fitness plan to build long-term health and happiness.



**BY MATT FRAZIER, NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF  
THE PLANT-BASED ATHLETE**

Hi, I'm **MATT FRAZIER**,  
co-founder of Complement,  
founder of *No Meat Athlete*,  
and The New York Times  
bestselling author of *The  
Plant-Based Athlete*.



Matt Frazier is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Plant-Based Athlete*, and a vegan ultramarathoner, author, and entrepreneur. He is best known as the founder of the **No Meat Athlete movement**.

Matt found he could run faster and farther with the help of a plant-based diet, and shortly after adopting a plant-based diet, Matt qualified for the Boston Marathon after taking over 100 minutes off his first marathon time. He has run several 50-milers and a 100-mile ultramarathon on a vegan diet.

Matt's books have sold over 200,000 copies in seven languages, including *The No Meat Athlete Cookbook*, one of Sports Illustrated's "7 Best Health & Wellness Books of 2017."

He and his work have been featured in books including Seth Godin's *What to Do When It's Your Turn*, Rich Roll's *Finding Ultra*, Brendan Brazier's *Thrive Foods*, Julianna Hever and Ray Cronise's *Complete Idiot's Guide to Plant-Based Nutrition*, and Kathy Freston's *Clean Protein*; print magazines such as *Runner's World*, *Trail Runner*, *Outside Magazine*, *VegNews*, *Shape*, and *Canadian Running*; online publications including *Sports Illustrated*, *People*, *Huffington Post*, *Forbes*, *Business Insider*, *WebMD*, *Shape*, and *Competitor*; and other media including *CNN* and the *Rich Roll Podcast*, where Matt has been a two-time guest.

Along with *No Meat Athlete*, Matt co-founded **Complement** ([lovecomplement.com](http://lovecomplement.com)), a company whose mission it is to grow the plant-based movement by helping vegans thrive. Most recently, he has started a live podcast called **The Plant-Based Morning Show**.

Matt lives in South Carolina with his wife, two plant-based athlete kids, and rescued dog and cat.

## **Most scientists look at longevity all wrong.**

They zero in on the total number of years we live, when in reality, what most of us care about is living a healthy and happy life.

Whether we die at 85 or 105, those years only really matter if we spend them happily — playing with our kids and grandkids, hiking our favorite trail, traveling the world, or escaping into good books, movies, and performances that lie ahead.

And when it comes to extending your healthspan and the joy you experience during it, fitness plays just as big of a role as nutrition.

You may have heard the statistic that 21% of people over 65 who break their hip die within the next 12 months. Not only because of potential complications from the break, but because of the lifestyle shift that comes from limited mobility.



Fitness is an indicator of cardiovascular, metabolic, musculoskeletal, and immune health — which in and of itself will help you live longer — but arguably more importantly, it also plays a direct role in your quality of life.

Being active, independent, and pain-free is key to happiness and health for many of us, and is only obtainable through maintaining a certain level of fitness as we age.

## **So how do we maintain a high level of fitness late in life?**

Below I outline a simple structure to help you do just that.



# How to Maintain Years of Fitness Without Burning Out



**When it comes to fitness, most longevity experts fall into one of two camps.**

The first focuses heavily on a robust exercise regimen, emphasizing the importance of strength and fitness as essential tools for living long, healthy lives.

Throughout this guide, I'll call this camp the Exercise Camp. Dr. Peter Attia, who you may know from his New York Times bestselling book *Outlive*, is a card-carrying member (if not the leader) of the Exercise Camp.

In it, Dr. Attia prescribes an intense program of 12+ hours of exercise involving running, weightlifting, and rucking each week, along with daily stretching and mobility exercises.

Standing in stark contrast to this philosophy is the Lifestyle Camp, where the emphasis is integrated lifestyle movement — gardening, walking to errands, cleaning, playing with your kids, for example — as the key to long-term fitness.

This mindset is in line with what Dan Buettner discovered in the Blue Zones, but is popular with a lot of experts who would prefer to see people spend multiple hours moving at a low-to-moderate intensity as they go about their day, than to have them spend 90 minutes in the gym.

On paper, both approaches sound attractive for their own reasons:

The Exercise Camp's emphasis on elite-level fitness will establish a level of strength, balance, heart health, and mobility that will help keep you mobile far beyond today's standard for aging adults, even as the years gradually erode your fitness from its peak.

The Lifestyle Camp's approach will free up vast amounts of time and will probably also encourage you to establish hobbies and a way of living that feels more natural to most people.

**But in today's world, is either approach practical?**

12+ hours of dedicated weekly exercise time may create a long, healthy life. But a happy one? Not for most people.

Motivation will fall, compliance will dissipate, and resentment will build.

Having talked to thousands of readers and health-seeking consumers over the years, I know the reality is that almost nobody will (or even wants to) exercise like that — not even those of us who consider ourselves athletes.

The picture painted by the Lifestyle Camp, on the other hand, is likely too rosy outside of a few specific cultures.

Most of us spend a considerable amount of time working behind a desk and commuting in a car, not naturally moving throughout a field or around town.

And as we can see throughout our society, once our work is done for the day, most of us are more interested in relaxing or socializing than doing yard work.



# What Does a Sustainable Fitness Plan Look Like?



I can't deny that it would be ideal for health if everyone fell into the Exercise Camp.

But I also believe that many of us would happily trade in a couple years of life in order to not have to exercise (sometimes intensely) for two hours a day.

So after years of research and working with the No Meat Athlete community, I've discovered that the best approach to fitness-for-longevity falls somewhere between the extremes of the Exercise Camp and the Lifestyle Camp.

It centers around regular, intentional exercise while also building in integrated movement.

It's designed to be sustainable, adaptable, and flexible enough to ebb and flow with your lifestyle and goals.

# The Fitness-for-Longevity Plan

Below I share what I believe to be a practical approach to long-term health, but I want to emphasize something very important:

**This is more of a blueprint than a strict plan.**

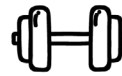
In order for it to be sustainable, you'll need to personalize it to your needs and happiness.

That may mean you focus on strength training and yoga, or perhaps you prefer tennis and hiking.

Sticking to this general plan will give you enough structure to keep you on track, but enough flexibility to adjust to your ever-adapting life.



2-3 hours per week  
Zone 2 (we'll call it  
"conversational pace"  
— fast walking or very  
slow jogging — to avoid  
exercise terms)



1-2 harder workouts per  
week (20-40 mins total)



A relatively small amount  
of strength training and  
mobility — focus on  
functional movements  
and incorporating these  
into your hobbies and life



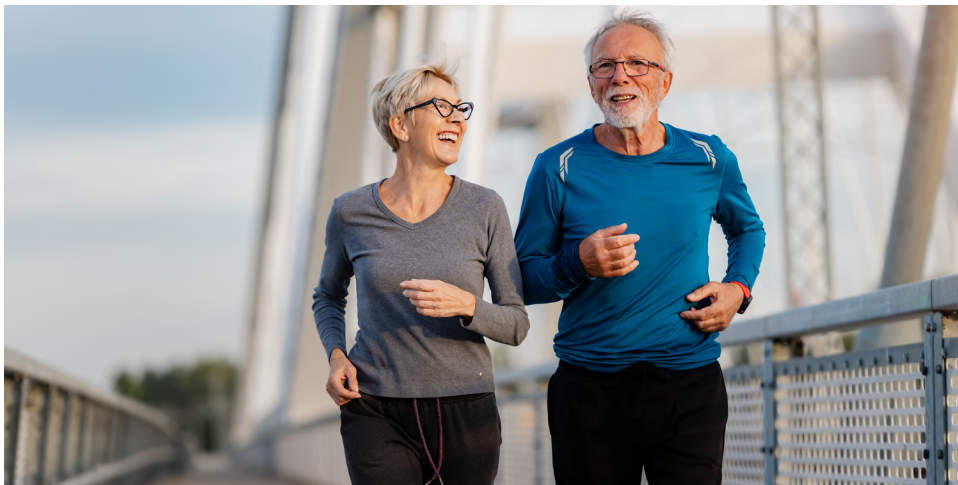
Activity even when not  
exercising; walk and play  
as much as possible

# A Closer Look at Zone 2 Training

This plan places a high emphasis on “Zone 2” training.

So what is Zone 2 training, and why is it beneficial?

Zone 2 refers to a specific intensity level of aerobic exercise, which is calculated based on your maximum heart rate.



**For most of us, Zone 2 is about 60-70% of our maximum heart rate.**

You may have heard this described as a “conversational pace,” meaning you should be able to speak full sentences comfortably while exercising at this intensity — making it much slower than most of us would consider our standard run pace.

For many people, Zone 2 looks more like a brisk walk or easy bike ride than a run.

## **Why is Zone 2 important?**

The primary goal of Zone 2 training is to improve your aerobic capacity — making your heart, lungs, and muscles more efficient at using oxygen.

It also builds endurance and stamina, allowing you to exercise for longer periods without getting as tired.



In Zone 2 training, you're primarily using fat as your main source of energy, which is good for long-term performance and can help with weight management.

Also, from a performance perspective, it can help you take your training to the next level.

You may have heard the phrase "Train slow to run fast."

Training in Zone 2 actually helps prepare your body for the higher-intensity workouts also prescribed in this plan by improving your overall cardiovascular health and increasing the number of small blood vessels in your muscular tissue.

## How to Calculate Your Zone 2

While far from scientific, the most basic way to estimate your Zone 2 is by relying on the "conversational pace" technique.

Can you speak in full sentences without having to pause for a breath? You're probably in or around Zone 2.

But if you want to truly understand your heart rates zones (which I recommend doing at some point, even if not right away), here are the details for calculating your Zone 2:

**1. Find Your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR):** The most commonly used formula to estimate your maximum heart rate is 220 minus your age. So, if you're 30 years old, your estimated maximum heart rate would be  $220 - 30 = 190$  beats per minute (bpm). Note: this isn't particularly accurate, but it's a start.

**2. Calculate Zone 2 Range:** Once you have your estimated MHR, you can calculate your Zone 2 heart rate range. Zone 2 is usually between 60% to 70% of your MHR.

- **Lower End of Zone 2:** Multiply your MHR by 0.6. For example, if your MHR is 190 bpm, then  $190 \times 0.6 = 114$  bpm.

- **Higher End of Zone 2:** Multiply your MHR by 0.7. Using the same example,  $190 \times 0.7 = 133$  bpm.

So, for a 30-year-old with an estimated MHR of 190 bpm, the Zone 2 heart rate range would be between 114 and 133 bpm.

**3. Monitor During Exercise:** Use a heart rate monitor, smartwatch, or if you're really dedicated, manually check your pulse to make sure you are staying within your Zone 2 range while you exercise.

***Remember, these are just guidelines and individual heart rate zones can vary.***





# The Fitness-for-Longevity Plan in Action

## Example 1, the Runner

<b>MON</b>	20-minute morning yoga routine, • Example: <a href="#">Jessica Richburg's Stretch + Strength Flow</a>
<b>TUE</b>	1 hour of Zone 2 running • Slow jog at a “conversational pace”
<b>WED</b>	30 minutes of a high-intensity hill workout • Example: After a warm-up, 8 repeats of 60 seconds intense climbing, followed by 120 seconds of recovery descent.
<b>THU</b>	45 minutes of Zone 2 running
<b>FRI</b>	25 minute bodyweight strength workout • Example: <a href="#">Growingannanas's Full Body HIIT Low Impact Workout</a>
<b>SAT</b>	75 minutes of Zone 2 running
<b>SUN</b>	15 minutes mobility session + Yardwork and walk with family • Foam rolling, stretching, and mobilizations

## Example 2, the Cyclist

<b>MON</b>	20 minutes of high-intensity HIIT-style strength training
<b>TUE</b>	1 hour of Zone 2 cycling + a 15 minute mobility session <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foam rolling, stretching, and mobilizations</li></ul>
<b>WED</b>	40 minutes of stationary bike racing (Zwift, Peloton, etc.)
<b>THU</b>	60-minute yoga class
<b>FRI</b>	30-minute easy walk with a partner
<b>SAT</b>	2-hour Zone 2 “long ride” with a friend
<b>SUN</b>	15 minutes of kettlebell exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Example: <a href="#">Caroline Girvan’s Fully Body Kettlebell Workout</a></li></ul>

## Example 3, the Strength Junkie

<b>MON</b>	30 minutes of low-intensity kettlebell exercises
<b>TUE</b>	30 minutes of Zone 2 running + 30 minutes of Zone 2 elliptical training
<b>WED</b>	20 minutes of a high-intensity Tabata workout
<b>THU</b>	60-minute gym strength session
<b>FRI</b>	30-minute easy walk with a partner
<b>SAT</b>	1 hour of Zone 2 running or walking
<b>SUN</b>	15 minute mobility session + Gardening and walking around town <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foam rolling, stretching, and mobilizations</li></ul>

### Example 4, the Newbie

<b>MON</b>	60-minute gentle yoga class
<b>TUE</b>	30 minutes of walking
<b>WED</b>	20 minutes of higher-intensity stair climbs
<b>THU</b>	60 minutes of walking
<b>FRI</b>	15 minutes of bodyweight exercises + 15 minute mobility session • Foam rolling, stretching, and mobilizations
<b>SAT</b>	30 minutes of walking
<b>SUN</b>	30 minutes of moderate intensity on the bike trainer or elliptical



# Additional Resources

Here are a few books I love that dive deeper into various fitness routines and plans.

- [Mind, Body, and Sport](#) by John Douillard
- [Becoming a Supple Leopard](#) and [Built to Move](#) by Kelly Starett
- [Outlive](#) by Dr. Peter Attia
- [The Longevity Diet](#) by Dr. Valter Longo
- [The Blue Zones](#) by Dan Buettner