



The Balancing Brazier

Triathlete extraordinaire, Brendan Brazier, fills you in on how to stick to your diet and workout goals

By Nikki Yeh

Brendan Brazier has blazed through Ironman triathlon competitions since 1998, winning the *National 50-km Ultra Marathon Championships* in 2003 and 2006. However, it's not only the race that keeps this premiere athlete's life in the fast lane. In 2004, Brazier wrote, *Thrive: A Guide to Optimal Health and Performance Through Plant-Based Whole Foods*, a book about how he's enhancing his athletic performance through diet. In the same year, he launched VEGA, an EFA-blended drink. And in 2005, Brazier released a 100% raw whole food energy bar.

Brazier understands that whenever a new year hits, healthy diets and new exercise routines top off many peoples' lists of resolutions. It's easy to say that we want to eat better and workout, but let's face

it; it's not simple putting the plans into action. So, why do we have such a hard time sticking to new diets and workout regimes? Brazier says that many people do too much too soon — "we're going 100% into it instead of just easing into it." Brazier deems it's best to gradually adapt to new diets and exercises. "It can take up to six months (mostly six weeks) for your body to adjust. If you do it slowly, your body will start craving what's good for it."

The most important step in maintaining your diet resolution is to consider what you eat overall and why. "Comfort food takes people to a happier, less stressful time in life. People also crave sugary foods because of the rush, but it fades quickly," Brazier explains. However, if you're craving that mug of mocha, avoid

running to the closest coffee shop and listen to what your body is trying to tell you. "If I start craving starches and those types of food, it's my body telling me I'm tired. Coffee and sugar and starches give you energy, but don't last. Get more sleep," Brazier recommends.

So, what exactly should you start eating for a balanced diet? Consider whole, natural plant-based foods. "Start with a smoothie in the morning. Once your body gets cleansed with greens and smoothies, you'll actually want to eat more of the healthy stuff," Brazier says. He also advises, "eating carbs [such as sugar from fruit and starches from grains] are better to eat earlier in the day because they're fuel for muscles." VEGA's basic ingredients, which include omega-3 EFAs, also "give you a [balanced diet]."

If you're worried about sticking to your diet, Brazier recommends preparing your meals in advance. "I make a huge batch [of my energy bars] and throw them in the freezer," reveals Brazier. "If you're

prepared, then it's much easier to stick to a sensible diet."

After you've started a good nutrition program, Brazier advises, "give it a few weeks and then start exercising." The Vancouver-born triathlete believes that the best way to stay fit is to find out what activities you enjoy the most. "Find one that matches your personality type," Brazier says, who was 15 when he started running and engaging in other athletics, including biking and swimming. "I just started looking into making it a career because I loved it."

What's even more important to Brazier is keeping good company close to you, which he believes has an impact on what you eat. "If you enjoy spending time with your friends and family, do it. When you're happy, it's easier to make sound food choices."

Tried, tested and true, Brazier can personally say that balanced living has influenced his daily life. "I don't even have to think about it. It's so ingrained. The reward is to have it ingrained." ■

"Whole, plant-based foods and smoothies make great (and delicious) additions to your new healthy meal plan."

