



Is Perfection Keeping Your Health Far From Perfect? Could you be experiencing Orthorexia?

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The quest for the “perfect diet” may be the only thing that’s keeping your health less than ideal. **Board certified nutritionist, personal trainer and creator of SPIDERBANDS, Franci Cohen, discusses the not so well known eating disorder: Orthorexia.** Similar to a woman suffering with bulimia or anorexia, a woman with orthorexia may find that her food obsessions begin to hinder everyday activities. Her strict rules and beliefs about food may lead her to become socially isolated, and result in anxiety or panic attacks in extreme cases. Worsening emotional symptoms can indicate the disease may be progressing into a serious eating disorder.

Franci describes orthorexia as, “Completely avoiding foods that one sees as unhealthy or impure.” This can become such an obsession that one may see sugar, flour, or other foods as evil. This can also lead to not allowing one to eat out because of not knowing exactly what is going into the food or avoiding social settings to be sure that they are not to consume anything that will throw them off from “perfection.”

Common behavior changes that may be signs of orthorexia may include:

- Obsessive concern over the relationship between food choices and health concerns such as asthma, digestive problems, low mood, anxiety or allergies
- Increasing avoidance of foods because of food allergies, without medical advice
- Noticeable increase in consumption of supplements, herbal remedies or probiotics
- Drastic reduction in opinions of acceptable food choices, such that the sufferer may eventually consume fewer than 10 foods
- Irrational concern over food preparation techniques, especially washing of food or sterilization of utensils

“Of course eating healthy is what everyone should strive for,” Franci explains, but when eating healthy dictates your life you may want to take a step back.

Here are some tips Franci gives to keep healthy eating and healthy living in a balance.

- **Healthy LIFESTYLE.** Never judge your diet day to day. Eating healthy is a whole lifetime of nourishing your body to help it properly function. One off meal won't harm your health when you have had multiple good meals all around it. Know that you will always go back to eating healthy after you decide to indulge.
- **Get your GREENS.** Even if you aren't a huge fan of eating the leafy vegetables there are sneaky ways to get your greens in.
“Adding spinach to smoothies will give you a boost of greens without ever being detected,” Franci suggests.
Opting for the green juices or preparing the veggies differently will allow for anyone to find a way to keep it green.
- **Don't forget the PROTEIN.** No matter your diet choice there are always go-to foods that are high in protein. Besides the typical meat and eggs protein supplies there is protein found in: Chia Seeds, Beans, Nuts and Nut Butters, Quinoa, Greek Yogurt and multiple types of protein powders.
- **Eat the CAKE.** Make sure that eating a healthy, clean diet does not rule your life. Take in the special moments; eat cake on your birthday and eat those cookies that your Grandmother made you. Treating yourself from time to time will allow not only a mental break but also can trick your body (digestion, metabolism, and blood flow) to continue to properly utilize those healthy meals.



Meet Franci Cohen:

Eating healthy is a whole lifetime of nourishing your body to help it properly function, says Cohen. Franci Cohen is a personal trainer, and a certified nutritionist with a masters degree in both nutrition and exercise physiology. She is also the creator of **SPIDERBANDS®**. This modality is a total-body cardio resistance workout that leverages gravity and your bodyweight with other intense exercise modules such as rebounding, kickboxing and indoor cycling. With over 18 years of experience, Franci has been a mainstay in the fitness and nutrition industries.

Franci believes in a tough love approach to fitness and health. “We all have our fitness wake-up call at some point in our lives and it can be a powerful catalyst for change,” says Franci. “Unfortunately, many people overcompensate and try to change everything at once, which is a disaster. Making lasting change involves going through stages that aren't necessarily linear. People fluctuate and transition between the stages. Knowing how to move through them can get you where you want to be.”

Franci devotes much of her time to her specialty fitness center, Fuel Fitness, in Brooklyn, NY and continues to teach group fitness classes, train clients and broaden her perspective in all areas of fitness, nutrition and wellness. She designs unique fitness modules and group exercise programs for her clients utilizing the most effective and popular products, tools and exercise equipment available. "Exercise is one of the most important things you can do for your health, but sometimes it's hard to just get motivated. My goal is to keep it fun and interesting by creating out-of-the-box programs that wow my clients with both the innovative nature of the classes, as well as with the rapid results they see in their bodies! My classes are the ultimate playground where fitness meets fun, and nothing is off limits!"

Education:

- Triple Bachelors Degree
- Masters in Nutrition
- Masters in Exercise Physiology

Certifications:

- Nutritionist
- Group Exercise Instructor
- Group Fitness Specialist
- Personal Trainer
- Lifeguard/Professional Rescuer
- Indoor Cycling Instructor

Certifying Institutions

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (A.N.D.)
- American College of Sports Medicine
- National Academy of Sports Medicine
- American Council on Exercise (ACE)
- American Fitness Association of American (AFAA)
- Mad Dog Athletics
- American Red Cross

Franci has been married for 14 years and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY with her husband and four children.