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# The Healthy Programmer: Get Fit, Feel Better, And Keep Coding



## The Healthy Programmer

Get Fit, Feel Better,  
and Keep Coding



**Joe Kutner**

Foreword by Dr. Ed Wallitt,  
physician and software developer

*Edited by Brian P. Hogan*



## Synopsis

To keep doing what you love, you need to maintain your own systems, not just the ones you write code for. Regular exercise and proper nutrition help you learn, remember, concentrate, and be creative - skills critical to doing your job well. Learn how to change your work habits, master exercises that make working at a computer more comfortable, and develop a plan to keep fit, healthy, and sharp for years to come. Small changes to your habits can improve your health - without getting in the way of your work. The Healthy Programmer gives you a daily plan of action that's incremental and iterative just like the software development processes you're used to. Every tip, trick, and best practice is backed up by the advice of doctors, scientists, therapists, nutritionists, and numerous fitness experts. We'll review the latest scientific research to understand how being healthy is good for your body and mind. You'll start by adding a small amount of simple activity to your day - no trips to the gym needed. You'll learn how to mitigate back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, headaches, and many other common sources of pain. You'll also learn how to refactor your diet to properly fuel your body without gaining weight or feeling hungry. Then, you'll turn the exercises and activities into a pragmatic workout methodology that doesn't interfere with the demands of your job and may actually improve your cognitive skills. You'll also learn the secrets of prominent figures in the software community who turned their health around by making diet and exercise changes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Diet books are literally a dime a dozen. They generally benefit only the author, publisher and , leaving the reader frustrated and bloated. With a failure rate of over 99%, diet books are the epitome of a sucker born every minute. One of the few diet books that can offer change you can believe in is *The Healthy Programmer: Get Fit, Feel Better, and Keep Coding*. Author Joe Kutner observes that nearly every popular diet fails and the reason is that they are based on the premise of a quick fix without focusing on the long-term core issues. It is inevitable that these diets will fail and the dieters at heart know that. It is simply that they are taking the wrong approach. This book is about the right approach; namely a slow one. With all of the failed diet books, Kutner is one of the few that has gotten it right. While the title of the book says it's for programmers, it is germane to anyone whose job requires them to be at a desk for extended amounts of time. Kutner is himself a programmer who builds Ruby and Rails applications, and a former college athlete and Army Reserve physical fitness trainer. The book focuses on two areas that require change: regular exercise and proper nutrition; and it details the steps necessary to create a balanced lifestyle. While popular diet books require rapid and major lifestyle changes and promise quick weight-loss, the book notes that small changes to your habits can provide the long-term effects that can improve your health. The book focuses on incremental changes and sustainability, not about losing x pounds in x weeks. The book is different (read: effective) as opposed to other diet and lifestyle books, in that its goal is to make your healthy lifestyle pragmatic, attainable, and fun.

I sit at a desk all day. I sit with my hands on a keyboard or mouse and my eyes fixed on a computer screen. This is a terrible thing to do to one's body. I learned this first hand when, just over two years ago, I developed wrist and back pain so severe I nearly chose a different career. Instead, I talked to a doctor, read up on ergonomics and repetitive stress injuries, and made some significant changes to how I work. I wish this book had existed back then, and better yet that I had read the book before the pain started. Even though I am healthy and doing well, I find that I must be vigilant. I get up and walk for a few minutes every hour. I take longer walks at least twice a day. I look away from the monitor frequently. Still, when I'm in the groove, it is easy to look up and realize that I have not changed my position for 3 hours. Those moments are far less frequent, and must be infrequent if I want to be able to do this sort of work the rest of my life. Same goes for you, and the sooner you realize it and adjust your work habits for the sake of your health, the better. *The Healthy Programmer: Get Fit, Feel Better, and Keep Coding* is a book I recommend highly to all who work behind a desk all day, but it is especially written for programmers. While I spend more time writing documentation nowadays, my thinking patterns and my physical habits fall into the same category.

This book spoke clearly to me and I think it will to anyone in a similar position. The Healthy Programmer suggests a method of implementing changes to daily work and diet patterns that will be familiar to programmers. It is iterative, measured, and all-around Agile. You start by taking stock of where you want to go, what you want to see happen.

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