

CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Stage

This book offers you the tools and techniques that can give you a Near Perfect Body. I make this claim confidently. I want you to *really* like the way you look, period.

Prior to December 2022, I never really thought about making my body something that I would feel extremely proud of, as I am now. I exercised and would occasionally try dieting. But I never saw any meaningful results. As you probably have, I heard about all kinds of diets and exercise programs, but they just seemed to be a lot of noise. There may have been good things out there, but they seemed too much like “one size fits all” or too good to be true. “Well,” you ask, “how do I know that what you are offering isn’t too good to be true or ‘one size fits all’?”

I am glad you asked. First, my approach is very flexible, and that will become obvious throughout this book. Second, you can be the judge about “too good to be true.” I don’t think you will have to read much further to conclude that it isn’t “too good to be true.” It will require effort, time, and diligence. But you will probably find it quite interesting, very helpful, and most important of all, very effective and very doable!

Before December 2022, when it came to making dramatic and substantial changes to my body for the better, I was literally in the dark. Then, in December of 2022, a series of events happened to me which resulted in me seeing something in an entirely new and exciting way. I was not looking for something and, in a way, it felt as if something had found me. Over the course of four or five months, it started to take shape and could be likened to slowly turning up a dimmer switch in a dark room. Now, I see it as a mighty lighthouse shining brilliantly through the dark of night!

The best way that I can describe it is that it is an epiphany that occurred over a period of several months. An epiphany is normally thought to mean a sudden insight or understanding. I have had several other epiphanies that did, in fact, occur suddenly. Some of them are mentioned later. However, this one took time to crystalize in my mind. What happened during those months is nothing short of remarkable. As a result, I now feel compelled to share my epiphany with you and with the world. I will also share, in detail, the steps and actions you can take to give you your own Near Perfect Body.

Why do I say “near perfect” and not just “perfect”?

I am a realist. This was written primarily for retirees. Most retirees are in their 60s and above, although more and more younger people are retiring. This book was written with individuals age 55 and up in mind. I think that anyone can benefit from it, but its focus is on retirees 55 and up. Note that when I started writing this book in March of 2023, I was 68 years old and retired.

Let’s face it, we do not have the bodies that we used to. Time and wear (and maybe a little abuse on occasion) have taken their toll. But so many of us have pot bellies, love handles, muffin tops, man boobs, and an array of other undesirable features that make us look like maybe we shouldn’t be walking around in bathing suits on a crowded beach in the summertime (I *used* to feel this way).

Maybe some of you have kept up your bodies over the years and could achieve a perfect body, even given your age. That would be wonderful. However, the real beneficiaries of this book are those individuals who are just not happy with the way they look now. Also, you are going to need some reasonably good health to really take advantage of everything this book has to offer. Maybe dieting alone can help, but it is also going to require a significant amount of exercise if you really want to get that Near Perfect Body (NPB). But do not leave me yet, I am going to help you find ways to make the exercise part, and frankly, the dieting part, not that difficult to do at all. In fact, by following my suggestions, you can have dramatic breakthroughs in how you see and feel about these things.

I am going to take you on a journey. I will try to make it as entertaining as possible. If you stay with me and trust me, I am confident that you will be very glad you did. I am confident that this approach, if you follow it well, can give you the results you seek, and probably, much more.

If you give it some time—perhaps six months, or possibly a year or so (depending on how strong your resolve is and how vigilant you are in following all the suggestions)—I believe that you will be glad and proud to be out on that crowded beach in the summertime in a bathing suit. (I feel this way now!) I am not kidding.

First, let me get several important things out of the way. As you will learn, I have limited writing experience. Some of my financial articles (I was a financial advisor) have been published, but those handful of articles and my investment guide are the extent of my writing experience. I am telling you this because, not being a professional writer, I am concerned that I might not deliver this incredibly important message of how you can have your Near Perfect Body as effectively as it needs to be delivered. Please stay with me as I share my experience and see how you can tailor it to fit your situation.

It can work for you, too, and it can really help you if you stick with it. My methods, style, and/or wording may be somewhat rudimentary at times, but know that I am giving you my very best. I will tell you categorically that it worked amazingly well for me, and I think you will find that my pictures prove it (see Chapter 8).

As I was writing this book, some friends took issue with some of my ideas. The biggest one being that most retirees would not want to work out like I do. This is such a critical point: **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO!**

I worked out (weights and cardio) very hard, and still do. I also lost about two pounds a week (a good bit of that being from dietary changes) from around December 10th until mid-March, when I hit my target weight (mid-160s). I achieved my NPB on May 1st, 2023. **Target weight does not always mean a Near Perfect Body;** you will probably need significant muscle toning as well (see Chapter 12). My results came very quickly. However, my pace was, I firmly believe, only responsible for me achieving my Near Perfect Body *sooner*.

Had I been less rigorous, I am sure it would still have happened, but it would have taken longer. It took approximately four and a half months, but I am not recommending this pace for anyone. I think for most people, a minimum of 6–12 months is necessary to achieve your Near Perfect Body. It could take a bit longer, but your pace is up to you (and your doctor). Besides, are you going anywhere? I thought you were retired!

So if this takes you a year or more, but you start to see results in several months, is that acceptable? If you realize that it does not have to be too hard or painful and maybe even realize that you are enjoying yourself along the way, how would that be? In other chapters, I will discuss the fact that sooner or later you might start to really like the process and want to move at a faster pace. You might find that my approach can even be fun.

Another issue friends raised was about my recommendation to weigh yourself at least twice a day, once in the morning and once before supper. I think this goes against most schools of thought. I have read that once a week is “proper.” One article suggested that daily weigh-ins might even trigger anxiety or disordered eating. Still, I recommend it at least twice a day. I found that it did several helpful things for me:

- 1) It kept my weight “top of mind.” This is important. When I would sit down for supper, I had just seen what I weighed. In other words, it reminded me of my goal just before I started eating. (That I weigh less in the morning is, to me, irrelevant.)

- 2) It showed me trends and weight ranges, which enabled me to manage my weight more easily. This is important, because I recommend against weight loss any greater than two pounds per week—unless you are very large, and even then, not much more. I always recommend that you see your doctor first regarding any diets or any exercise program and keep your doctor in the loop.
- 3) It is consistent with my belief that you must change the way you do things in order to break free of old self-defeating behaviors. My friends told me that many nutritionists say once a week is “proper.” I heard that, and I thought about the definition of insanity, which is doing the same (old) things over and over and expecting a different result. I like keeping things that support my goals top of mind. I think that the scale can be your friend and a helpful guide. I think weighing yourself at least twice a day is “proper.”