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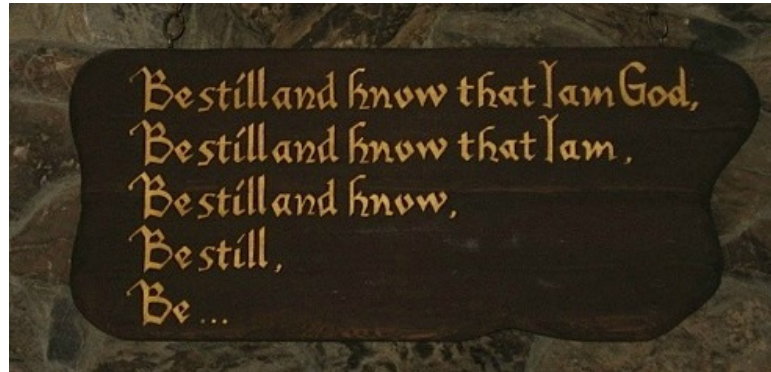
AUGUST 2012 | ASHRAM EXPERIENCE

What an amazing experience I had at [The Ashram](#) in Calabasas, California the first week of July! No, this was not the type of retreat where I couldn't talk, but it was still challenging. Each day we woke up at 5:30am, ate breakfast and then began a 3-4 hour hike. I was very impressed with how athletic our group of 12 was, and I was the youngest! The hills in California are no joke and challenged me every day. The afternoons began with yoga, lunch, a massage, water aerobics, pool volleyball (best part of the day), two classes and more restorative yoga. By 9pm I was beat and passed out. [Make sure to check out my blog entry for amazing pictures!](#)

The Ashram has a lush garden where they grow most of the food we consumed. The meals are mainly vegetarian with a few eggs. It was an eye-opener on how little food I needed even during the strenuous activities. I grew to really enjoy hot water with lemon right before bed and when I woke up.

Here are a few of the lessons I experienced that I hope to incorporate into my daily life:

- *Using chopsticks helped me slow down while eating
- *Working out does not always mean pushing oneself to the limit but relaxing, breathing and stretching are key to keeping balance
- *Having a hearty breakfast (2 eggs scrambled in coconut oil) kept me full and I was able to skip the morning snack
- *Sliced apple with lemon on cinnamon satisfies my sweet tooth and I can eat a piece or two throughout the day
- *I can live without my blackberry!



Plaque at the Ashram Entrance

My favorite meal was lunch on the beach where we had Gazpacho served with jicama, celery, and cucumbers. The Ashram allowed me to include their recipe below. Even if you can't make it to Calabasas, take your exercise outside this month. Check out the Conditioning Corner for some tips from fitness expert Joshua Margolis, founder of MindOverMatter. For their annual supplement guide, [Men's Health Online](#) asked me to discuss the benefits of ginger root extract. Their extensive 59 item list is a must read! [Livestrong.com](#) compiled a list of healthy salads that nutritionists eat, and I shared with them one of my favorites; Corn, Crab, and Tomato Salad ([recipe is also listed on my blog!](#)) Plus, I was honored to be invited on the [Better Show on Better TV](#) where I spoke about what Olympians are eating to fuel their bodies! I challenge you to incorporate some of the suggestions I shared and keep me posted on how they or new ones work!

See you in September!

Sharon's Suggestions

Food without a face

There are many reasons that people decide to exclude meat from their diet. Whether it's because they picture "Bambi" every time they take a bite of venison stew or because their doctor said to cut out sources of saturated fats, each person has the right to choose what's on their plate. To eat or not to eat meat,

Nutrition News

Fad Diets

There was an article in the [New York Times](#) discussing diets. It simply states that diets don't work! What was interesting was that they looked at how different foods effect a person's weight. Some studies had subjects intake the exact same amount of calories but the types of food varied from high fat and high protein to

that is the question. Even if your mouth waters at the mere thought of bacon, read on; there is something we can all learn from vegetarian diets.

The parameters of a vegetarian diet vary from person to person from the most inclusive to the most exclusive diets. Generally speaking, a vegetarian does not eat meat, poultry, or seafood. Technically people who only exclude animal flesh, but who do eat eggs and dairy products are lacto-ovovegetarians. A stricter class of vegetarian is the lactovegetarian. For these folks eggs are a "no-no" too. Next are the vegans. A vegan will not eat any food or food product that comes from animals. That means no meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or dairy. Last and certainly least (in terms of allowed foods) are vegetarians who follow a raw food diet. The raw-foodies are vegans who limit the way their food is prepared-it has to be raw.

Now's the perfect time to feed your inner vegetarian; take advantage of summer, and create a feast from the fresh produce at your local farmer's market!

[Learn more about Vegetarianism!](#)

high carbohydrates. It appeared that the high fat high protein diets burned more calories. But what one needs to consider is how carbohydrates hold water, so the results are not conclusive. I cannot count the number of times that people have asked me about Atkins, the Cabbage Soup Diet, South Beach, Lemonade Cleanse... but they are usually not willing to hear the truth founded on science and based in reality. **Fad diets don't work!**

Try some of these tips!

- *Switch from a bagel with cream cheese to a whole grain English muffin with low fat cream cheese- save about 380 calories
- *Take the cheese off your sandwich and replace it with mustard- save about 200 calories
- *Replace your full fat salad dressing with reduced fat- save about 100 calories
- *Have cocktail shrimp as an appetizer instead of fried calamari- save about 300 calories
- *Steam your vegetables and sprinkle with 1 TBSP grated cheese instead of sautéing in butter or oil- save about 200 calories
- *Add salsa to your baked potato instead of butter or sour cream- save about 100 calories
- *Have one square of dark chocolate instead of ice cream- save about 250 calories

[Learn more about avoiding fad diets!](#)

Richter's Recipes

Ashram Gazpacho



Conditioning Corner

Making Fitness Fun!

With Guest Columnist Joshua Margolis, CPT
From [Mind Over Matter NYC](#)

**Ingredients:**

3 cups corn off the cob or organic frozen
3 cups tomatoes peeled and chopped
2 TBSP minced parsley
1/2 cup chopped celery leaves
1 cup water
2 TBSP Braggs (soy sauce)
2 tsp olive oil
1 clove garlic
1/2 cup basil

Directions:

Blend all the ingredients in a blender or food processor
Serve cold with celery, jicama and cucumbers

Nutritional Information:

Serving: 4
Calories: 149
Fat: 3g
Carbohydrates: 30g
Fiber: 4.5g
Sugar: 7g
Protein: 4g

[Click here for printable recipe!](#)



1. When it comes to lugging your stuff to the beach, you don't have to put it on wheels. Carrying your things back and forth can be your workout. Bring a frisbee, perhaps a game of kadima, -anything will work, as long as your heart rate is elevated for 30 minutes.

2. Play in the water. Swimming has been around for a long time, and for good reason: it's great exercise. Another hot and heart pumping water exercise is surfing or stand up paddling.

3. Running or speed walking along the beach is more of a challenge than your typical treadmill. Due to the uneven, soft surface, your muscles have to work harder to help with stability.

4. Cooler step-ups: this is one from the videotape, but use your cooler as a step bench similar to those in class at the gym. It is a great way to tone your glutes and your hamstrings.

[Check out the entire Top 10 List!](#)

Why Sharon?

I am a Registered Dietitian and for the past ten years have based my

Let's Get Started!

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Richter Reco Blog

Read about Sharon's most recent projects, nutrition advice, and

private practice in New York City.
My main objective is to help others
achieve a healthier lifestyle by
incrementally creating attainable
mental and physical goals. [Click
here](#) to learn more!

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