

SAVORY SURVIVAL GUIDE

By SSG Ken Weichert, Master Fitness Trainer

When I think of the word ‘survival,’ I am reminded of the typical flight attendant speech before take-off, “If the plane should lose cabin pressure at any time, the oxygen masks will drop from the overhead compartment. Place the mask on yourself first, and then place the other mask on the person that you are with.”

We are taught to do this because it is not possible to help anyone else unless you are already prepared yourself.

When I was young I was told that the definition of survival is “to live longer than, or beyond the existence of, another person, thing or event.” The military has taught me a great deal about surviving in the wilderness and in urban environments during very difficult circumstances.

I still remember all of the special tactics that my drill sergeant taught me during Basic Combat Training (“Boot Camp”). From building shelters in the field with raw materials from the environment to navigating in the wilderness with or without a compass, my military survival training has helped me to feel confident that I would be able to help people survive during natural disasters.

As I wrote the Savory Survival Guide, I was reminded of the good ‘ole days. I used to think that if I worked out hard that I could eat anything that I wanted. Boy, was I wrong. As more and more birthdays arrived, my metabolism slowed down immensely. By the time I hit 30, I noticed that my battle of the bulge was getting more difficult.

The first time I noticed a little extra girth around my waist, I simply increased my workouts to 90 minutes for each session. Then, reality set in. My time at work and with family took control of my schedule and 90-minute workouts were not possible. I was losing my battle against stomach and intestinal inflation.

By the time I hit 35, my body began rejecting my eating habits by replacing digestion euphoria with belly bloating and slight nausea. Worst of all, I noticed my energy level drop a great deal! It was time to make a change, a change toward a better life through healthy nutrition!

The Savory Survival Guide is a list of meals and snacks that have helped me to reduce my cholesterol and blood pressure levels, and increase my strength and stamina. The foods that I eat work well for me, and have helped me to realize that part my lifelong survival training includes fitness and nutrition!

The Savory Survival Guide is my personal meal plan. Use it for suggestions only. Always seek guidance from a certified dietitian and your primary care physician before starting any new diet or fitness program. Remember to be conscientious of any potential allergies that may prevent you from consuming certain foods or liquids of any kind.

Keep a journal during your diet changes. Your body may react in some way to specific foods that are new to you. Indeed, you may experience some discomfort to a new diet plan. Make note of how your body reacts to certain foods and liquids.

My body reacted differently to every new food that I added to my diet. Eventually, my body became comfortable with the changes. In fact, my body now has adverse reactions to consuming unhealthy foods.

Lastly, remember the three basic steps when hunting for better health:

Be resolute. Stop thinking about it and just do it.

Be accountable. No cheating allowed. This is your life.

Be thorough. Consume as many fresh foods as possible and eliminate over-processed foods from your diet.

By the time I hit 40, I noticed my new diet plan was working! Even with a busy life that restricted me to 30-minute daily workouts, I was

in better shape than 10 years earlier. In fact, I noticed that my military fitness test scores were far better than ever in my life!

Looking forward, I can honestly say that I know what it takes to survive. Between my specialized military field training and experiences, my unremitting fitness sessions, and my healthier diet, I feel more confident about my health. As a result, I feel more confident about my ability to survive.

Using a flight attendant speech as an analogy, my mask is on and I am ready to help those in need! HOOAH!

Monday

Breakfast

Scrambled egg whites (2-3 eggs) with sliced mushrooms, arugula, sliced avocado (half), and cooked chicken (4 oz. skinless; boneless)
Notes: Makes 1 serving. Multiply the ingredient quantities for additional servings.

Fresh fruit

Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soymilk

Water (16 oz)

Mid-morning snack

Red bell pepper, sliced into strips, with hummus (¼ cup)

Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

Grilled salmon (4-6 oz.) over fresh spinach, walnuts, raisins, and a small amount of light balsamic vinaigrette

Note: Makes 1 serving.

Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

Granola (1 cup)

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

Whey protein (30 g.) smoothie with blueberries, banana, strawberries and soymilk (24 oz.)

Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

Boiled, baked or grilled chicken (6-7 oz.) over brown rice and steamed vegetables

Note: Makes 1 serving.

Water (16 oz.)

Remarks: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

Tuesday

Breakfast

Oatmeal (1 cup), full oat or steel cut (not 'instant oatmeal'), mixed with raisins (1/4 cup), honey (1 teaspoon), natural peanut butter (1 teaspoon), and a splash of soymilk.

Note: Makes 1 serving.

Banana (1 each)

Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soymilk

Water (16 oz)

Mid-morning snack

Trail mix (1 cup), with mixed nuts and raisins (no chocolate)

Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

Turkey breast (3-4 oz.) slices in a multi-grain pita pocket, with dark greens, fresh tomato slices or sundried-tomato pieces, and a small amount of light balsamic vinaigrette or light honey mustard (2 each)

Note: Makes 1 serving.

Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

Freshly blended fruit and vegetable juice (24 oz.)

Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

Turkey and bean tostadas, with 93% fat free ground turkey (1 pound), wheat tortillas (8 inches x 6 each), chili beans in chili sauce (15 oz.), shredded romaine lettuce (3 cups), 1 chopped tomato, fresh cilantro (1/4 cup), chili powder (1/2 teaspoon), sprinkled with reduced fat Monterey Jack cheese (1/4 cup) and topped with low fat sour cream (optional)

Notes: Makes 4-6 servings. The additional yield is necessary based on how the meat is purchased at the grocery store. Unconsumed foods may be used for future snacks or following-day breakfast.

Water (16 oz.)

Remarks: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

Wednesday

Breakfast

Scrambled egg whites (2-3 eggs) with spinach, red bell pepper (half), 1 small tomato (diced), and 4 oz. of cooked chicken (skinless) or leftover turkey or salmon from Monday and Tuesday

Note: Scrambled eggs or omelets are the perfect dishes to throw in leftover vegetables and meats.

Fresh fruit

Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soymilk

Water (16 oz)

Mid-morning snack

Celery and carrots, sliced into long strips, dipped into small amounts of natural peanut butter

Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

Chicken gyros (4-6 oz.) with shredded romaine lettuce (1-1/2 cups), one cucumber (diced), crumbled feta cheese (2 tablespoons), one tomato (diced), dried dill weed (1 teaspoons), fresh lemon juice (2 teaspoons), olive oil (1 teaspoons), Greek seasoning (1-1/2 teaspoons), and pita bread (4 pieces)

Notes: Makes 4 servings. You may already have a local restaurant that prepares good chicken gyros. Be careful not to overload the gyro with dressing.

Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

Freshly blended fruit and vegetable juice (24 oz.)

Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

Broiled or seared rare tuna and raspberry salad with commercial fat-free salad dressing (1/2 cup), raspberry vinegar (1/4 cup), Cajun seasoning (1-1/2 teaspoons), thick-sliced tuna steak (8 oz.), arugula or mixed greens (3 cups), fresh raspberries (1/2 cup)

Note: Makes 1-2 servings.

Water (16 oz.)

Remarks: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

Thursday

Breakfast

Oatmeal (1 cup), full oat or steel cut (not 'instant oatmeal'), mixed with raisins (1/4 cup), honey (1 teaspoon), natural peanut butter (1 teaspoon), and a splash of soymilk.

Note: Makes 1 serving.

Banana (1 each)

Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soymilk

Water (16 oz)

Mid-morning snack

Red bell pepper, sliced into strips, with 1/4 cup of hummus

Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

Tuna salad sandwich with fat-free mayonnaise and honey mustard, Cajun Seasoning (2 teaspoons), diced tomatoes and bell peppers, served over fresh greens on wheat or multi-grain bread

Notes: Makes 1 serving. Tuna has a 1-2 day standard shelf life. I use leftover tuna from the previous night and mix it in with remaining vegetables, finished with seasoning and fat-free dressing. It's a perfect way to keep foods from going bad before you have the chance to consume them.

Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

Granola

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

Whey protein (30 g.) smoothie with blueberries, banana, strawberries and soymilk (24 oz.)

Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

Grilled chicken or fish kabobs (4-6 oz. of meat) with 1 red or green bell pepper (cut into squares), zucchini (half, cut into squares), sprinkled with salt and pepper, and marinated in low sodium soy sauce or a barbecue sauce or your choice

Notes: Makes 1-2 servings. Kabobs are also a great dish to use left over meats and vegetables.

Water (16 oz.)

Remarks: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

Friday

Breakfast

Scrambled egg whites (2-3 eggs) with spinach, red bell pepper (half), 1 small tomato (diced), and 4 oz. of cooked chicken (skinless) or leftover chicken or fish from Wednesday or Thursday

Note: Scrambled eggs or omelets are the perfect dishes to throw in leftover vegetables and meats.

Fresh fruit

Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soymilk

Water (16 oz)

Mid-morning snack

Trail mix (1 cup), with mixed nuts and raisins (no chocolate)

Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

Chicken or turkey chili with 90% or better fat-free ground meat, chopped onions, tomatoes, green and red bell peppers, minced jalapeno pepper, low-sodium chicken broth (28 oz.), chili powder (2

teaspoons), ground red pepper (1/2 teaspoon), and kidney or pinto beans (15-16 oz.)

Note: Makes 4-5 servings.

Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

Freshly blended fruit and vegetable juice (24 oz.)

Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

Cajun-style chicken soup with chopped chicken (12-14 oz. chopped into cubes), diced yellow onions (3, large), fresh cut green beans, bay leaves (2-3), Cajun seasoning (2 cups), Creole Instant Roux Mix (1 cup), water (64 oz.)

Note: Makes 8-10 servings.

Water (16 oz.)

Remarks: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

Saturday

Breakfast

Oatmeal and blueberry wheat pancakes with whole oat or steel cut oatmeal (3 cups), ready-made wheat pancake mix, egg whites (2-3 eggs), olive oil (1 tablespoon), and fresh blueberries (2 cups), topped with sugar free syrup

Fresh fruit

Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soymilk

Water (16 oz)

Mid-morning snack

Trail mix (1 cup), with mixed nuts and raisins (no chocolate)

Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

Turkey breast (3-4 oz.) slices in a multi-grain pita pocket, with dark greens, fresh tomato slices or sundried-tomato pieces, and a small amount of light balsamic vinaigrette or light honey mustard (2 each)
Note: Makes 1 serving.

Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

Granola

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

Soup made from Friday.

Notes: Your soup will have a three-day shelf life. What you don't finish can be frozen for later use.

Water (16 oz.)

Remarks: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

Sunday

Breakfast

Pancakes from Saturday or oatmeal

Fresh fruit

Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soymilk

Water (16 oz)

Mid-morning snack

Red bell pepper, sliced into strips, with ¼ cup of hummus

Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

Grilled salmon (4-6 oz.) over fresh spinach, walnuts, raisins, and a small amount of light balsamic vinaigrette

Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

Granola

Fresh fruit

Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

Whey protein (30 g.) smoothie with blueberries, banana, strawberries and soymilk (24 oz.)

Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

Boiled, baked or grilled chicken (6-7 oz.) over brown rice and steamed vegetables

Water (16 oz.)

Remarks: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

What you have just read is the short version of the Savory Survival Guide, a meal plan that has helped me to maintain a healthy level of body fat and long-lasting energy.

Prior to writing this guide we noticed many people gained weight by eating 2-3 large meals a day, instead of breaking down the meals into smaller portions and consuming them in frequent intervals. By eating 5-6 times throughout each day like in the Savory Survival Guide, your body is constantly metabolizing. This is a way of countering the effects of aging when your metabolism naturally slows down.

Remember, the Savory Survival Guide is meant for suggestions only. Most of the meals listed in the short version can be prepared in 30-minutes or less. You may wish to substitute certain ingredients based on preference or due to allergies.

Let us know how it is working for you. Try the short version of the Savory Survival Guide, and tell us what you think at ssgweichert@nationalguard.com.

HOOAH!
SSG Ken Weichert

Remarks:

The Savory Survival Guide was first mentioned in the fitness section of GX 6.7. If you would like to read more, go to OPERATION HUNTING 4 HEALTH.

About the authors:

Staff Sergeant Ken Weichert is a Six-time Soldier of the Year, Master Fitness Trainer and veteran of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm. Ken and his wife Stephanie, a Certified Personal Trainer, founded START Fitness, a group exercise and hiking business that delivers military-style workouts to Soldiers and civilians since 1998. Ken and Stephanie have led thousands of Soldiers to better health through Operation Fit to Fight, a fitness and nutrition training program designed to help Soldiers prepare for deployments and Basic Combat Training (BCT). Ken and Stephanie currently produce health and fitness programs for GX magazine and for the National Guard website.