

RICH BELL/AUTUMN Q&A

By Richard Bell

- 1. What would you like to see people eat less of?*

Simple sugar stuff—white flour, white sugar. All that garbage can be replaced with seasonal fruit.
- 2. What do you wish people would eat more of?*

Raw fruit and vegetables, lean meats, fish oil and a 12-ounce post-workout shake that contains glutamine. Of course, when I say “post-workout,” I mean the real thing, as opposed to walking on a treadmill and reading *Cosmo*. You can buy this stuff on the Internet or at GNC. Just make sure you’re getting clean ingredients.
- 3. Your number one tip for winter sports conditioning?*

Get into the weight room and change something: repetitions, weights, actual lifts. If you’re doing a lot of reps, do less, and go heavier. Switch it out. Keep your body guessing. Nothing frustrates me more than watching people do the same thing, with the same weight, indefinitely.
- 4. What about rest days?*

If you’re not recovering, you’re not improving. Keep in mind that if you’re taking a day off from upper-body weights, you could go skiing, or take a walk around the lake. But personally, I’ll take two weeks off once a year, and it doesn’t cause me any anxiety. I know that my muscles are re-building, and that I’m ultimately getting stronger.
- 5. Can I still make progress at 50, or am I basically going downhill from here?*

Okay, you won’t be going to the Olympics—unless we’re talking Senior Olympics, in which case you still have 15 years to prepare—but you can still achieve goals. High bone density is a great one. You can kick your own butt instead of taking it easy. As far as outdoor activities go, you can still improve with a smart workout.
- 6. How would you approach a client with an eating disorder?*

I thank my client for cluing me in. I also immediately recommend they work closely with a doctor, and I reverse my usual position on nutrition, emphasizing enjoyment of food. I concentrate on building up their strength, because when you’re living in your head, it helps to take the focus off that and put it back into motion and sweat. On the bright side, I find this can really help with recovery from the disorder.
- 7. Can my body type really change?*

I need to consider three things: your genetic background, your age, and how much time I have. Six weeks? Ten? Twenty? With enough time and drive on the part of the client, incredible changes can occur. My own family, for example, is prone to obesity. Looking at my mother and my siblings, you’d assume I’d be fat. But I’m not, and it has to do, one hundred percent, with workouts and nutrition. What you can’t change are things like the shape of your calves, your propensity to arthritis, your risk for heart disease—but you can certainly work around them.
- 8. What’s your favorite kind of person to work with?*

My non-politically-correct answer: someone who can stand punishment, or who can at least tolerate discomfort, and yet doesn’t think of exercise as torture. Someone who wants to compete, if only with themselves. A person who’s open to trying something new.
- 9. I’m bored of my solo aerobic sports. What do you recommend?*

Equal parts of explosive strength, lactic acid threshold and FUN. How about basketball, soccer, or a hard game of tennis? Adults don’t do enough of this stuff.