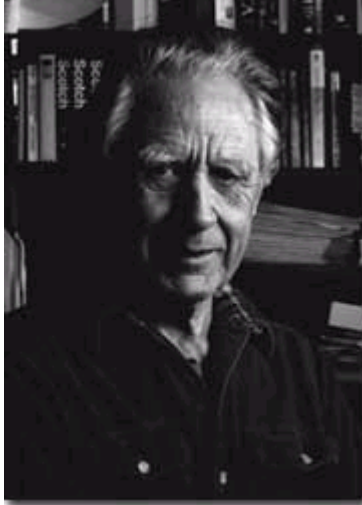


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PROFILE

**Turning to Diet and Exercise**

When going through the motions is no longer enough

When Howard Powers turned 42, he realized he wasn't particularly happy about the quality of his life. He'd been getting a lot of colds, allergies and headaches, and frequently found himself depressed. He seemed to be going through the motions-at work and at home-without ever feeling very healthy. At the time-in 1966-he lived what he refers to as a "normal American lifestyle" in which he ate standard fried fare, used his car to get to places that he could have reached by walking, and shunned exercise in winter. He remembers looking around at his relatives, many of whom lived well into their eighties, and thinking that he didn't want to spend the rest of what was likely to be a long life, feeling decidedly sub par. When he happened upon a book about aerobics that explained the benefits of cardiovascular exercise, Howard had an epiphany. "I said, 'Ah, ha . . . that's what's wrong with me,'" he recalls. "That's when I started running three times a week at the high school gym and pretty soon I was feeling alive and strong and vigorous-and I wasn't getting sick." A mechanical engineer by trade, Howard left his native Massachusetts for the West Coast just as opportunities in Silicon Valley began heating up. During his long career he's had a

hand in developing everything from power supplies and CO² lasers, to solar collectors, electronic packaging, computers and electronic instruments. Since retiring in 1996, Howard has devoted himself to fixing up a 275-year-old Cape Cod style house in New Hampshire that he rents out and working on his own inventions, such as a way to create underground cities that are self-sustaining ecology systems. But the most amazing part of Howard's story is that 31 years after turning his life around through exercise-he once again redirected his life, this time through diet. This isn't to say that Howard was eating french fries and hamburgers all those years that he was entering races and taking home trophies (He won the Grande Prix series of ten races in Northern California and Nevada, covering distances from one mile to 18.6 last year at age 74). It's just that he recently found an even healthier way to eat, which has given him back the energy level he had in his 30s. "I was ready to give up running when I turned 73," he says, adding that he had not taken a break from running for longer than two weeks in over 30 years. "My ability to run was deteriorating so badly that my legs felt like lead-I could hardly move them-and I was overcome by tremendous fatigue. I was coming in last every time." He believes that his physical deterioration resulted from plaque build-up in his blood vessels, particularly in the capillaries that supply blood to the muscles. Howard has belonged to a running club in Saratoga, Calif. for years, drawing inspiration from his colleagues, while also learning from their example. So last year, when a new member signed up who ate only raw, living food, Howard paid attention and quickly became a convert. Now he steadfastly avoids dairy products, eats very little animal protein or whole grains and no refined grains. He has also eliminated sugar, honey, caffeine and margarine-opting instead to fill up on nuts, seeds and dark green, leafy vegetables like kale, broccoli and sprouts, seasoned with Celtic sea salt. Fruit is fine, but only in the mornings. Howard likens his diet to eating like a hunter-gatherer. "Eating only raw foods is really one of the oldest ideas in the world, but it seemed like an amazing breakthrough to me," says Howard, who turned 75 in December. "I'm convinced that cooking my food and eating food that comes from a factory or a high-tech farm was depositing fat and filling me with toxins." Howard says the bulging abdomen and thick arms and legs that he'd learned to accept as his normal physique over the last 15 years virtually melted away on the raw food diet, and he was surprised to find that he didn't have the stocky muscular build he had long thought. He lost 35 pounds, going from 24 percent body fat to an amazing three percent in the process. (In the last year, his weight-lifting regime has added about eight pounds of new muscle to his physique.) And, it certainly doesn't hurt that he practices Hatha Yoga six days a week. Howard realizes that if running were his only form of exercise, he'd be chronically stiff, so he's found yoga to be the best way to keep his spine healthy and his muscles supple. Weightlifting is equally important. In fact, he believes that the three types of exercise-cardiovascular, stretching and bodybuilding-are a necessary triumvirate to stay in shape. "The great problem today is that as people get older, they tend to think that it's time to stop exercising," he says. "But the truth is that's exactly the point at which you should be spending hours every day exercising, or pretty soon you won't even be able to walk." Howard also maintains good health through daily supplements, being especially drawn to those that have long grown naturally such as blue green algae, spirulina, wheat and barley grass. These he takes in capsules or in a green powder that he mixes with salads and fruit juices. "This is the world's original food," he says. "Everything that evolved later is derived from algae." He finds this extremely important today, given that



most soil is so depleted of minerals that it's nearly impossible to get enough nutrients even from produce that's been organically grown. Howard has also taken six to eight 25 mg tablets of DHEA every day for the last five years to increase his hormone level and because "It's the greatest discovery of all: it rejuvenates the skin and kind of molds your body back to its youthful contours."

Joint supplements are also high on his daily list. Howard says he was having severe hip pain eight years ago, at which point he began using glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate. These days he claims to have the joints of a teenager. "I'm a great laboratory for what works and what doesn't," he says. "For instance, I ran a 30 km race recently and didn't even have a twinge of joint pain." Though he believes that his fresh vegetable diet gives him plenty of antioxidants, he also uses Ginkgo biloba and grape-seed extract, which he calls the "ultimate antioxidant," as extra insurance. On the rare occasions that he ingests anything cooked or pasteurized, he'll be sure to stock up on enzymes. For prostate health, Howard turns to a mix of saw palmetto, pygeum, and pumpkin seed powders, as well as l-lysine HCL and l-glutamine. COQ10, chromium picolinate, l-carnitine, selenium and bilberry- and a host of vitamins, including E, A and assorted Bs-round out Howard's daily list. He had been turning to zinc and echinacea to give his immune system an added boost when fighting off a cold, but says that these days that is no longer necessary as he "gets no colds at all." "I probably feel better than I have in my whole life," he says. "I didn't even know what it was like to feel like this-it's totally changed my personality. I used to be very quiet and reserved. I didn't talk to strangers, but now I have an outgoing personality for the first time. " So outgoing, in fact, that he recently wrote a letter to the editor of the Silicon Valley magazine of the San Jose Mercury News in which he talked about his experience eating on raw, living food. The letter evidently hit a chord among readers, as Howard has since developed a group of like-minded individuals with whom he communicates regularly by e-mail. And he also just sent a memo to all 70-plus runners in the West Valley Joggers & Striders Running Club to tell them about the amazing success he's had jump-starting his own running career with the help of his raw, living food diet and lifestyle. His opening salvo: "I am here to tell you that the natural process of aging is a myth. It is neither natural nor a process. There may be malnutrition and sloth, but there is no such thing as aging!" -*Twig Mowatt*



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