# pulse

From the experts at TeensHealth.org

Four Ways to Love Your Body

# Feeling Good

How to score a kickin' mind and body

What's Your Fitness Personality?

EAT FOR ENERGY

# KURT WARNER
## FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL TO MVP


As quarterback for the NFL's Arizona Cardinals, Kurt Warner, 34, knows a lot about what it takes to stay fit and take on challenges. After being cut from the Green Bay Packers in 1994, it looked like his NFL career was over. But he didn't give up. And after he worked his way back into the league, he became the NFL's most valuable player – twice! – and led the St. Louis Rams to the Super Bowl in 1999 and 2001. Warner took some time out to tell Pulse about the days before he had the help of expert trainers and professional coaches – how he stayed active in middle school, coped with tough times, and never stopped believing in himself.

***Middle school can be a time of change. What was it like for you?***

It's a sort of time in life when you're trying to find your niche and it was no different for me. I was trying to find out who I was and what type of person I wanted to become, because it's not always clear when you're young. Over time I gravitated to the people and activities I liked – the people I wanted to be like, the things I wanted to do.

***Was it clear back then that football was what you really wanted to do?***

I started into athletics at a young age, definitely. But it wasn't necessarily football. It was just about all sports. But the point for me wasn't so much a career in sports but was that I loved playing, anything that got me moving. Of course, I dreamed of being an athlete, but mostly it was about just being active and having fun because I loved it.

***Do you think that's the way kids approach sports today?***

It's changed quite a bit for a lot of kids. Nowadays you have so may people that focus on one sport and play that sport year-round – they go to all the camps and the tournaments and get on a lot of teams in that sport. And they're competing against people who are doing the same thing so they might feel like they're falling behind even when they're still learning the game.

I think you're better off, in any part of your life, being well rounded. That gives you more benefit than focusing on one thing. When I was a kid you were always refreshed and excited about the new season – you know, it's time for basketball now or time for baseball or whatever. And the different sports challenged you in different ways as far as coordination or understanding, so it made you a better athlete. But the best thing was you stayed refreshed because of the variety.

***Did most of your exercise and activity come from organized sports?***

A lot of it did, but mostly I was just active in my free time, and not necessarily with a team. It was just about doing something – could have been hide-and-seek or tag or making up my own game. I didn't watch a lot of TV, and video games weren't as big then as they are now. I didn't sit around much. It was always like, what can I do now?

***How about your eating habits – did you think about eating in a healthy way?***

I can't really say that I thought a lot about it when I was young. I had parents and coaches who sort of took me in that direction, I guess. They made sure I got nutrients and a well-balanced diet. They kept their eye on my snacks and junk food and made sure I didn't eat too much of it – but I definitely ate some junk.

***You've had a great career. But it's had some ups and downs. What advice do you give teens about dealing with tough times?***

The first thing I tell them is that everybody goes through it. It's not just them. We all go through difficulties. You can be sure of it. The question is how you deal with it.

The most important thing is that you don't lose faith in yourself. It's so easy at a young age to get discouraged and to buy into something negative somebody is telling you about yourself or just get discouraged by what your circumstances are. My life has sort of become testimony to the fact that you shouldn't let your situation dictate your attitude. If you keep your work ethic, keep focusing on your dream, never waver in your approach, eventually you will be in a better position to accomplish things down the road.

CONTINUE

That's why it's so important to be surrounded by friends and coaches and people who are encouraging. Or if you don't have those people, try to gravitate toward people or friends who are.

***You're one of the stars and veterans in the NFL and on your team. The younger players look up to you as a leader. How do you handle that?***

Number one, from my perspective, is to lead by example. You live your life the way you feel called to lead your life. For me, that's directly related to my faith. The way you live is always going to have the greatest impact on others. Your actions will always speak louder than your words. People on a team or in school or wherever will know first what they see you do. If that earns their respect, your words will become more powerful.



# GET YOUR PULSE GOING

Changes are going on all around you – and happening inside you too. You're at a time in your life of incredible growth, both physically and emotionally.

Change can be good. But it can sometimes be confusing. That's where we can help. This issue of Pulse contains lots of tips on taking care of yourself.

We hope it helps you make smart decisions about staying energetic and upbeat, and loving life!

***The medical experts at TeensHealth.org***

## WHAT'S INSIDE



TeensHealth
TeensHealth.org

**About TeensHealth:** TeensHealth offers a safe, private place to get information about health, growth, and emotions. We give you the doctor-approved info you need to understand the changes that you may be going through.

TeensHealth gives you advice and information that's written just for you and your friends. Log on anytime, day or night, to get the straight story on everything from cutting to cliques. Visit us at www.TeensHealth.org.

# EAT FOR ENERGY

Caught napping in math? Struggling through practice? Going for candy, soda, or other high-sugar snacks may give you a quick energy boost. But this lift doesn't last, and will leave you feeling tired again.

**Here are better ways to rev up energy levels in the classroom and on the field:**

- **Don't skip meals:** Your body needs a steady source of calories throughout the day so be sure to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day.
- **Choose whole grains:** The carbohydrates found in whole grains are broken down more slowly, giving you steady energy rather than highs and lows.
- **Eat fresh fruit:** Naturally sweet fruit has the carbs for quick energy along with important nutrients and fiber.
- **Add a little protein:** Put a little peanut butter on celery or a slice of cheese on whole-wheat toast. Protein will keep you energized long after the carbs are used up.



# Junk This Food?

Why do people call some foods "junk"? Usually it's because these foods are high in calories but low in nutrients. But don't worry, **you don't have to give up these foods completely**.

Here are two secrets to enjoying the occasional indulgence:
1) Practice moderation by ***not eating too much of these foods***.
2) ***Balance them with healthier eats*** that provide the nutrients you need.

**Here are some tips for enjoying your favorite foods when the craving strikes:**

**Pizza:** Go easy on the cheese and meat. Add veggies whenever possible. Choose whole-wheat crust, if offered, and opt for thin-crust pizza instead of thick or stuffed crusts. Replace that extra slice with a side salad – but just use a small amount of dressing!

**Snacks:** Choose small snacks to curb your hunger until mealtime. Try half a PB&J (on whole-wheat bread, of course!) with a glass of low-fat milk. Or enjoy a carton of plain yogurt with fresh fruit. String cheese and fresh fruit slices will give you energy and still leave room for dinner. If you crave a salty snack, try whole-grain pretzels, baked snacks, or air-popped popcorn. Or send your taste buds some zingy flavor and your body some vitamin power by dipping carrots, celery, or other veggies into salsa.

**Fast food:** Order single-patty burgers and small-size fries instead of super-size combos. It may be a good deal moneywise, but people eat a lot more food when the portions are bigger. Although chicken may seem like a healthier choice, chicken sandwiches or nuggets can be higher in calories and fat than a regular burger.

If you're ordering sandwiches, choose whole-grain bread and lean meats (like turkey). Add lettuce and tomato to get some veggie value. Request sandwiches without mayonnaise or dressing. Mix it up – order a salad, baked potato, or fruit instead of fries and get low-fat milk or water instead of soda.

# What's Your Fitness Personality?

Now's the time to start thinking about what you enjoy – or don't enjoy – when it comes to exercise. For each question, pick one response that sounds most like you. Then see what the results have to say.

### *What kind of activity do you do most?*

A. Athletic activities, such as team sports or classes (e.g., dance, gymnastics, or karate) that let me learn and advance as an athlete.
B. Fun stuff that I can do on my own or with friends like riding my bike, jumping rope, skateboarding, etc.
C. Uh . . . Is working the TV remote an activity?

### *How often do you get some kind of exercise?*

A. Every day – I usually have a practice, game, or class scheduled.
B. Now and then – whenever the mood strikes me.
C. When I'm forced to, like when I don't have a note to get out of gym class.

### *Your class has planned a canoe trip and everyone's going. What's your reaction?*

A. Great! I'd like to learn a new sport.
B. Excellent! I hope we hit some rapids!
C. Oh, no! Maybe they'll let me be that person who sits in the back with a megaphone and yells at everyone.

### *When you haven't had much exercise for several days, how do you feel?*

A. I feel awful – tired, stressed out, cranky, and all-around miserable. I can't wait to get back to it.
B. I feel bad, but find something else to do, like playing the guitar, drawing, writing, or taking my computer apart.
C. I don't get regular exercise, so I feel just like I do every other day.

# The Results:

### *Mostly A's or a mix of A's and B's: Athletic All-Rounder*

Athletics and getting exercise come naturally to you. You're probably involved in several different activities and enjoy learning and improving your skills as much as playing. As you get older, make sure you don't get too caught up in competing or winning. It's important to enjoy what you're doing and just relax and have fun.

### *Mostly B's or a mix of B's and A's: Fun Fanatic*

You're in it for the thrills – and that's great! One of the best ways to stay active for life is to enjoy what you're doing. But if you're not active regularly, you may want to think about building some kind of exercise routine that helps you stay active. See the exercises on page 7 for some ideas.

### *Mostly C's or a mix of C's and B's: Leisure Lover*

During their teens, people often get less active. Now is a good time to avoid this trap. Think about how your interests are changing and which activities you enjoy. Then figure out a way to work these into your life. Getting in the habit now makes it much easier later!

***What if you don't fit into any of these profiles? Talk to your PE teacher to get some advice on building a fitness routine.***

# Body Beautiful

Why am I smaller than my friends? When will my breasts develop? What's the right weight for me?

Because every person is unique, there's no one right answer to these questions. Some people develop earlier than others. Some get a temporary layer of fat to prepare the body for a growth spurt. Some get acne or sweat more. Some feel like they're moody or angry all the time.

These changes can sometimes seem unfair, but they are all normal – and usually temporary. It all depends on how your individual genes and hormones do their development thing.

One thing ***is*** the same for everyone: We all need to adjust to living inside a new body. Here are some ways to come to terms with all those changes:

## Beware – don't compare!

Because everyone develops differently, it's not a good idea to compare yourself with how your friends look. If you go through a growth spurt early, you may feel too tall. Yet your friend may think that he or she is too small.

It's also a bad idea to compare yourself with celebrities and models. The purpose of ads is to sell fantasy, not reality. In reality, most people don't look like models. In fact, even the models and celebs often don't look like their photos: They have photo editing to thank for their flawless skin or pumped-up shoulders.

## Treat your body well.

Making smart choices about food and exercise is part of developing a mind and life of your own. Healthy eating and exercise can give you some control over how your body turns out.

Exercise is also a great mood booster. If your changing body has you feeling sad or confused, it may help to go for a walk, play with your dog, or throw a Frisbee® with friends.

## Befriend your bod.

Like a friendship that grows and changes, your developing body can let you down at times and make you feel great at others. Think of your body as you would a friend: Accept it for what it is and realize that it will have its up and down days.

Just as you know a friend's secrets, you know stuff about your body that other people don't. You may think your stomach sticks out or your pimples are obvious – but that's because you spend hours focusing on them in the mirror. Other people aren't seeing just this one part of you, so they probably won't notice like you do.

## Walk tall – even if you're not!

What people ***do*** notice is how you project your feelings about yourself. If you think you're too tall, it will be more noticeable if you hunch over. If you're self-conscious about your pimples, hiding behind your hair may cover the zit on your cheek – but you'll look awkward and uncomfortable.

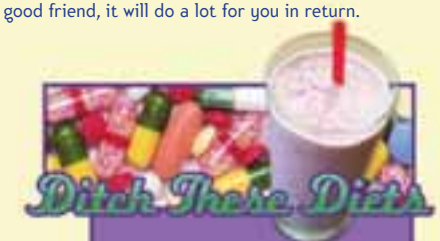
As your body changes, it can help to move with a sense of confidence. After doing this for a while, you'll probably become more confident too. Write down all the things that you really like about yourself – like your glossy curls or how good you are at making people laugh. Then focus your thoughts on these positives as you walk through the halls.

Learning to accept and appreciate a changing body helps build an important life skill called **resilience**. People who are resilient can deal with problems and bounce back from disappointment better than people who are not. Accept and appreciate your body, no matter what it looks like right now. Like a good friend, it will do a lot for you in return.

## Diet Wise

Sometimes it seems like everyone's dieting. Does that mean you should be too? If you're between the ages of 10 and 14, only your doctor can tell for sure if you need to lose weight.

Why's that? Lots of people go through puberty between 10 and 14, so their bodies are changing. Some people may feel like they are getting fat when they're really not. Many of the changes that come with puberty, like rapid weight gain, only last a short while. When you're finished with puberty and your growth spurt, your weight should stay about the same as long as you eat right and get enough exercise.



## Ditch These Diets

Lose 5 pounds in a weekend? Eat what you want and still lose weight just by popping a pill? Yes, it ***is*** too good to be true.

Diets that promise fast weight loss don't work. That's because people on them lose mostly water weight, not fat. So they usually gain back the weight they lost very quickly.

The only way to lose weight for real is to change your eating habits and get more exercise. Exercise is great because it burns calories ***and*** builds muscle. And when you have more muscle, you burn more calories even when you aren't exercising.

# Fitting in the Fit

You already know exercise is good for you – that's nothing to IM home about. But with school, after-school commitments, hanging out with friends, downloading those must-have songs, and just taking time out to chill, it's lights out before you know it.

Good news! Here are a couple of exercises you can try at home. Start with 10 and add sets of 10 as you're comfortable. Rest for 30 seconds between sets.

Get into workout mode with this yoga pose. Inhale deeply.

- Stand tall
- Feet hip width apart
- Arms lifted out to the sides

## Butterfly Breath

As you exhale, lift your right knee and touch your left elbow to it. Inhale and lower your leg. Switch sides for the next breath. Do 10 breaths in all.

## Chair Squats

- Stand tall
- Chair behind you

Keeping arms straight in front, make like you're going to sit down s-l-o-w-l-y. Just before your butt hits the chair, slowly straighten to standing position and repeat. Start with 10, adding sets of 10 as you're comfortable. Rest for 30 seconds between sets.

- Legs bent
- Arms straight in front

## Sit Backs

Sit-ups not your thing? Try sit-backs! From a sitting position, lean back gradually, keeping arms straight and tummy tight. Take it as far as you're comfortable before gradually moving to sitting position again. Start with 10, adding sets of 10 as you're comfortable. Rest for 30 seconds between sets.



# Choose This?

# Or Choose This!

You want to eat well. But it can seem like lots of work to remember everything. **Here's a tip: Instead of counting every calorie or worrying about how much fat there is in a particular food, focus on building good eating habits overall.** After a while, these habits will become so much a part of your life that you won't need to worry about all the details. Here are 5 to get you started.

## 1. Choose variety.

What does variety mean? Lots of different food groups (like fruits, vegetables, grains, and lean proteins) and lots of color. With more variety, you'll get the nutrients you need and your taste buds won't get bored – so they may be less likely to send you crazy craving signals.

## 2. Choose less.

Decide ahead of time to split large portions (like a milkshake) or high-fat foods (like fries) with a friend so you're not tempted to scarf it all. Or cut the portion in half and put half aside for later.

## 3. Choose your own snacks.

Take your own good-for-you snacks and food on the road so you can avoid the vending machine. Most vending machines are stocked with prepackaged foods that don't have much nutritional value.

## 4. Lose the guilt!

Don't think of a certain food as "bad" or off limits, just take smaller portions and eat it less often. So instead of eating a candy bar a day, cut back to once a week or less. Any food is fine as long as you don't overdo it and you also eat the healthy stuff.

## 5. Keep healthy foods on hand.

This might involve teaching your parents a thing or two about food. Are they still buying you the same old sugary stuff you liked in third grade? Tell them it's time for an upgrade. If your kitchen is stocked with healthy choices like celery, raisins, and peanut butter, you can make ants on a log instead of dipping into the cookie jar.

make it easy

# FOOD LABELS: Your Cheat Sheet to Good Eats

Want to know if that food is good for you or just plain indulgence? Check out the label! It tells you about the calories, fat, nutrients, and other stuff (good and bad!) in your food. There are a few secrets to figuring out food labels, though. Some key ones:

- **Start with the serving size and calories.**
  At the top of the label, you'll see a serving size. All the information on the rest of the label is based on that serving size. The label will tell you how much a serving is (e.g., 1 cup, 8 oz.). It will also list how many servings are in the package. So if you have 2 cups of the mac and cheese shown on the right, you're getting double the calories, fat, and other nutrients. Sometimes a serving is way smaller than most people eat – like half a cup of cereal. So watch out!

- **Choose foods that are lower in fat.**
  Look for foods that have less than 3 grams of fat for every 100 calories in a serving. On our mac and cheese label, one serving has 250 calories and 12 grams of fat. So even if you limit yourself to the 1-cup recommended serving, you're still getting more than the 7.5 grams you should be getting from a serving size of 250 calories.

Check the label on low-fat foods.
Sometimes manufacturers cut back on fat but add sugar. Many low-fat foods have nearly as many *calories* as their full-fat versions.

- **Watch out for saturated and trans fats.**
  Even for thin people, too much of these fats can lead to heart disease and other health problems down the line.

- **Look for fiber.**
  Try to eat breads and cereals with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving. Fiber helps keep your digestive system healthy and strong. Fiber also helps you feel full without added calories.

- **Look for iron and calcium.**
  Many teens, especially athletes, don't get enough of these two minerals, which are important for muscle and bone strength and growth.


## So is this mac and cheese a good choice? Yes and no.

Yes, because it provides calcium and some iron, both of which are good. It also gives you protein, another plus. And it doesn't have a lot of sugar, which is good – sugar gives you a lot of calories and little nutrition.

But there are some not-so-good things about this food: The fat content is high and there's no fiber.

The bottom line? Go ahead and enjoy it – in moderation! Since eating a lot of this food gives you more fat than you should be getting, it's a good idea to have less macaroni and cheese and fill up on a green vegetable or salad – something that offers additional nutrients (especially vitamins and minerals) for fewer calories and fat. Eating healthy is all about balance!

Food labels can't tell you what foods to eat – that's your decision! But they can help you find foods that taste good and treat your body right.

# 10 Things to Do Today

1. **Eat breakfast.**
   Arrive at school ready to roll by combining proteins and carbohydrates. Try yogurt mixed with low-fat granola.

2. **Get that body hot.**
   Work it! Warm up with something that gets your heart going, like jumping rope. Then do the simple exercises on page 7.

3. **Try a new food!**
   You're maturing and so are your taste buds. Things you didn't like as a kid may appeal to you now.

4. **Find delight in every bite.**
   Mmmm . . . yum! Appreciate your food and you're likely to eat less. Slow down and enjoy every bite. Notice how crunchy, how fruity, how smooth, how tangy, how refreshingly cold, how spicy the food you're eating is.

5. **Pack your lunch.**
   Promise yourself that you'll take a healthy lunch to school at least 2 or 3 days a week.

6. **Fall in love – with a sport.**
   Your interests are growing and changing along with the rest of you. Try a new activity or sport. Regular exercise can give you extra energy. It's also a great mood booster.

7. **Nag parents: "Buy healthy snacks."**
   After school is the time when your energy's probably at its lowest – and your hunger is at its highest! When you have healthy snacks on hand, it's easier to reach for the good stuff.

8. **Look in the mirror.**
   Focus on five things you really like about yourself and write them down. Stick them on your mirror and read them every morning.

9. **Choose variety.**
   When you sit down to dinner (or any other meal), make sure you have a balance of different types of food on your plate. Try not to load up on one at the expense of the others.

10. **Visit TeensHealth.org.**
    Got more questions? There's tons more stuff like this on **TeensHealth.org**.

# DON'T GIVE UP!

When you're making a change in your life, such as eating right or getting exercise, it's normal to slip up now and then. Were you so hungry after soccer that you stuffed yourself with pizza at the post-game lunch? Were you doing really well with your morning exercise routine and then it was just so dark and cold this morning that you slept in? That little slide doesn't mean it's all over.

If you slip up, forgive yourself and move on. Remind yourself that all changes come gradually. It takes time to adjust to a new routine and way of doing things. In fact, the occasional slip-up can remind you why you're making a change for the better!

Stay motivated by writing down the reasons you want to make the change, along with your goals. Then paste this somewhere where you'll see it regularly, such as on your desk or inside the cover of your notebook.

Change is exciting – we'd all be very bored without it. Good luck in reaching your goals!

# Y B Healthy?

*Exercising is a great way to have fun and to meet people. And, making good food choices can help keep you healthy and looking good.*

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Mercy MC+ and YMCA are partners in helping St. Louis area kids be healthy. We are committed to spreading the word on why it's important to be active, full of energy, and have strong self-esteem. Using TeenHealth.org is the first step toward a better you.

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