

Revealed: the diet secrets to help you fit into your genes

An exclusive extract from a new book in which a naturopath claims he can change the way you think about your body type, lose weight and keep healthy.

By Peter J. D'Adamo

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As a naturopath, I have a deep faith in our ability to take control of our bodies. Every day, I treat patients who discover a health, vitality, and joy in life they'd never thought possible, simply by altering what they eat, which supplements they take, and how they exercise.

Yet I had one blind spot. I always assumed that the genetic part of our story had already been written – that the genes we inherited from our parents were the cards we were dealt, the ones we had for life.

Imagine my delight, then, as I began to discover that we have an enormous power to improve our lives when it comes to our genes. True, we can't add new genes to the mix or eradicate old ones, but the genes we get at conception are only the beginning of the story. From our time in the womb through our childhood, youth, and adulthood, we have the capacity to turn up the volume on some genes, and silence others, vastly improving our capacity for health and happiness. We can understand the trajectory of our life and health – what physical challenges we're likely to face, what disorders we're prone to – and we can respond. All we need is an understanding of our diet and an exercise plan that is right for our particular "genotype".

In traditional scientific practice, the word genotype is used only to describe a person's actual assortment of genes. However, my use of the word includes our relationship with the environment, the influence of family history, and the effects of prenatal history.

My Genotype Diet is based on a simple but radical notion: we have the power to alter the behaviour of our genes. Some of that power belongs to our mothers, during gestation, but a great deal of that power becomes ours from birth. Whether you realise it or not, you've spent an entire lifetime altering your genetic activity. That first sip of wine triggered your body's genetic ability to detoxify alcohol. That summer tan, activated the genes that control pigment (melanin) production. An infection, a cold or the flu, boosted activity in the bone-marrow genes that produce protective white blood cells. You see, your genes are not a fixed set of preprogrammed instructions. They are a dynamic, active part of your life, influenced by your history but responding every single day to your environment and your diet.

So let me introduce you to my Genotype programme. I have developed individual diet plans, comprising the foods



The Explorer : one of the six GenoTypes identified by Peter D'Adamo. Photo: David Tazzyman

and supplements that I believe will work best to create optimal health, weight, and vitality for each of the six Genotypes I have identified. These genotypes developed over 100,000 years of human history; they are the Hunter, the Gatherer, the Teacher, the Explorer, the Warrior, and the Nomad. Each Genotype has different issues concerning weight and metabolism, which is why they can benefit from a tailor-made diet. Following your Genotype diet and exercise plan will give your body all the support it needs to attain and maintain your optimal weight.

How to work out your Genotype

There are three Genotype Calculators (basic, intermediate or advanced). You can use the basic calculator below to get up and get going right away. It is the simplest, quickest and easiest to do. But no matter which level you begin the Genotype programme at, you can always return when you have more information and use a more sophisticated calculator. You can find the intermediate and advanced calculators in my book.

Measure the length of your torso and legs

Leg and torso ratios reject the levels of the growth factor hormones that you encountered in the womb and early childhood. Being short and having short legs appears to increase your risk of being overweight and of developing Type 2 diabetes. Short leg length is correlated with your risk for coronary heart disease. Being tall seems to increase risk of some cancers. Legs that are equal to or shorter than your torso are indicators for Teacher and Explorer Genotypes.

Measure the length of your index and ring fingers

Which is longer, your ring finger or index finger? A longer ring finger means you faced more androgens in the womb (androgens are a precursor of testosterone); a longer index finger means you faced higher levels of oestrogen. In general, more male hormones contribute to an "Andric" (male) shape: longer, leaner, more muscular.

Longer ring fingers on both hands are a keynote for the Hunter Genotype, although the Explorer and Nomad show this pattern, too. Having longer index fingers on both hands is a hallmark of the Gatherer, although it is also seen in female Nomads, and occasionally in Teachers. A different result on each hand (that is, having a longer ring finger on one hand and a longer index finger on the other) is a hallmark of the Teacher, although it is also seen in the Gatherer too.

THE SIX GENOTYPES

The Gatherer

Gatherers are nature's survival strategists, adapted to conserve calories as fat. The challenge is to fit their survival programming to the realities of today's overabundant diet.

Typical features Has a phenomenal capacity for concentrated brain work; a problem-solver and early adopter of new ideas; tends towards emotional highs and lows.

Body type Endomorphic body type, always looks "padded", even when at healthy weight. Tends toward a high BMI and waist-to-hip ratio. Lower leg is shorter than upper leg, and index fingers longer than ring fingers.

Blood type O or B, and mostly Rh-positive. High oestrogen levels.

Strengths Terrific mental endurance, highly motivated, fertile and potential to age well.

Weaknesses Gatherers are unsuccessful crash dieters. Appetite regulation can be a problem. Elevated oestrogen sensitivity can stimulate hormonal cancers. Vulnerable to accumulating damaging chemicals in tissue.

Health risks Alzheimer's disease, depression, high blood pressure, diabetes, low thyroid activity, obesity, reproductive cancers.

The Teacher

Sinewy and flexible, with great adaptability, the Teacher is a balance between opposing forces. Blessed with a tolerant immune system, the Teacher is burdened by excess altruism, leading to problems dealing with the bad guys.

Typical features Views the world in a calm way and has close links with nature – can "see the forest despite the trees".

Body type Torso usually longer than legs and generally of moderate to short stature. Andric body type. Index-to-ring-finger ratio often inverted from hand to hand.

Blood type Often A, occasionally AB. Rhesus-positive. Tolerant immune system but prone to excess bacterial growth in the digestive tract.

Strengths Successful adapter. Powerful spiritual energy. Ages gracefully. Great mechanical strength and flexibility.

Weaknesses Sensitive digestive system, but immune system may not detect cancer mutations early on. Can be too detail-oriented.

Health risks Ear infections, lung, stomach, and bowel problems. Bacterial infections. Risk of breast cancer in later life.

The Explorer

Muscular and adventurous, the Explorer is a biological problem-solver who can adapt to environmental changes and has an above-average capacity for gene repair. A balanced diet and lifestyle can overcome a vulnerability to hormonal imbalances and brain strain.

Typical features A lateral thinker concerned with changing concepts. Quirky. Great entrepreneur. Above-average intelligence.

Body type Often left-handed. Index-to-ring-finger-length ratios are often reverse of what is expected for sex (ie, longer ring fingers in women, longer index fingers in men). Often muscular, broad-headed, with "chiselled" facial features. Torso usually longer than legs.

Blood type Any ABO. Often Rh-negative. Vulnerable to borderline anaemia. Sensitive to caffeine, fragrances, medications.

Strengths Good gene repair and illness-recovery rate; stamina and memory retention in old age; a problem-solver; ages gracefully.

Weaknesses Environmental and chemical hypersensitivities. Accident-prone.

Health risks Liver function compromised. Medically hard to diagnose; blood irregularities.

The Nomad

A Genotype of extremes, with great sensitivity to environmental condition, especially changes in altitude and pressure, the Nomad is vulnerable to neuromuscular and immune problems.

Typical features Phlegmatic, easy-going, roll-with-the-punches personality. Optimistic, rational and fun-loving. Keeps emotions hidden.

Body type Physically symmetrical, index and ring-finger lengths are usually symmetrical to sex. Extremes of height – short or tall. Legs usually longer than torso. Waist-to-hip ratios high in men, low in women. Small teeth. Higher-than-average number of redheads, green eyes.

Blood type B and AB, mostly Rh-positive.

Strengths Great mind-body connection, balanced immune system and good stress-handling abilities.

Weaknesses Sensitive digestive tract.

Health risks Tendency toward "slow infections" such as lingering viral disorders, warts or parasites.

The Hunter

Tall, thin, intense and adrenalin-driven, the Hunter was originally the success story of the human species. Vulnerable to burnout when overstressed, today's Hunter needs to conserve energy for the long haul.

Typical features Detail-oriented, mechanically-inclined, has a sense of fair play. Handles stress when well nourished.

Body type Body seems symmetrical, athletic; tall, strong-boned and well-formed, is often "Andric" (tends toward masculine body type). Ring fingers tend to be longer than index ones.

Blood type Always O.

Strengths Energetic and metabolically efficient. Eats heartily, without gaining weight, for optimal stamina and wellbeing.

Weaknesses Hair-trigger reaction to infections, viruses, allergens. Beware of midlife burnout, ageing poorly and digestive problems. Adrenal and pituitary glands are vulnerable.

Health risks Allergies, auto-immune illnesses (asthma or rheumatoid arthritis), depression, coeliac-like gut problems, reproductive cancers (more common in men).

The Warrior

Strong, lean, and healthy in youth, the Warrior is subject to a rebellion from their body in midlife. With a good diet and lifestyle, the Warrior can overcome the quick-ageing metabolic genes.

Typical features Charismatic, if occasionally bad-tempered. Nimble-minded. Needs to learn how to relax. Will pursue a mental challenge until it is mastered.

Body type Legs usually longer than torso. Slender in youth; pear-shaped or barrel-chested later in life. Flushes when under stress. Index-to-ring-finger ratios are usually symmetrical.

Blood type Often A or AB and typically Rh-positive. Blood can clot too easily.

Strengths Ox-like, recovers well from illness.

Weaknesses Thrifty metabolism, stores calories as fat. Stress tends to depress immune system and cause blood to thicken.

Health risks Insulin resistance and obesity in midlife, digestive problems, hormonal imbalance and infertility, heart disease, high blood pressure.

This is just a taster for the GenoType diet; full details about which foods to eat and which to avoid can be found in 'The GenoType Diet' by Dr Peter J. D'Adamo (Bantam Press). It is available from Telegraph Books for £10.99 plus £1.25 p&p: call 0844 871 1515 or visit books.telegraph.co.uk

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