

I Biohacked for 10 Weeks to Try to Live Forever

At the dawn of a new decade, I wondered: How many more decades can I live?



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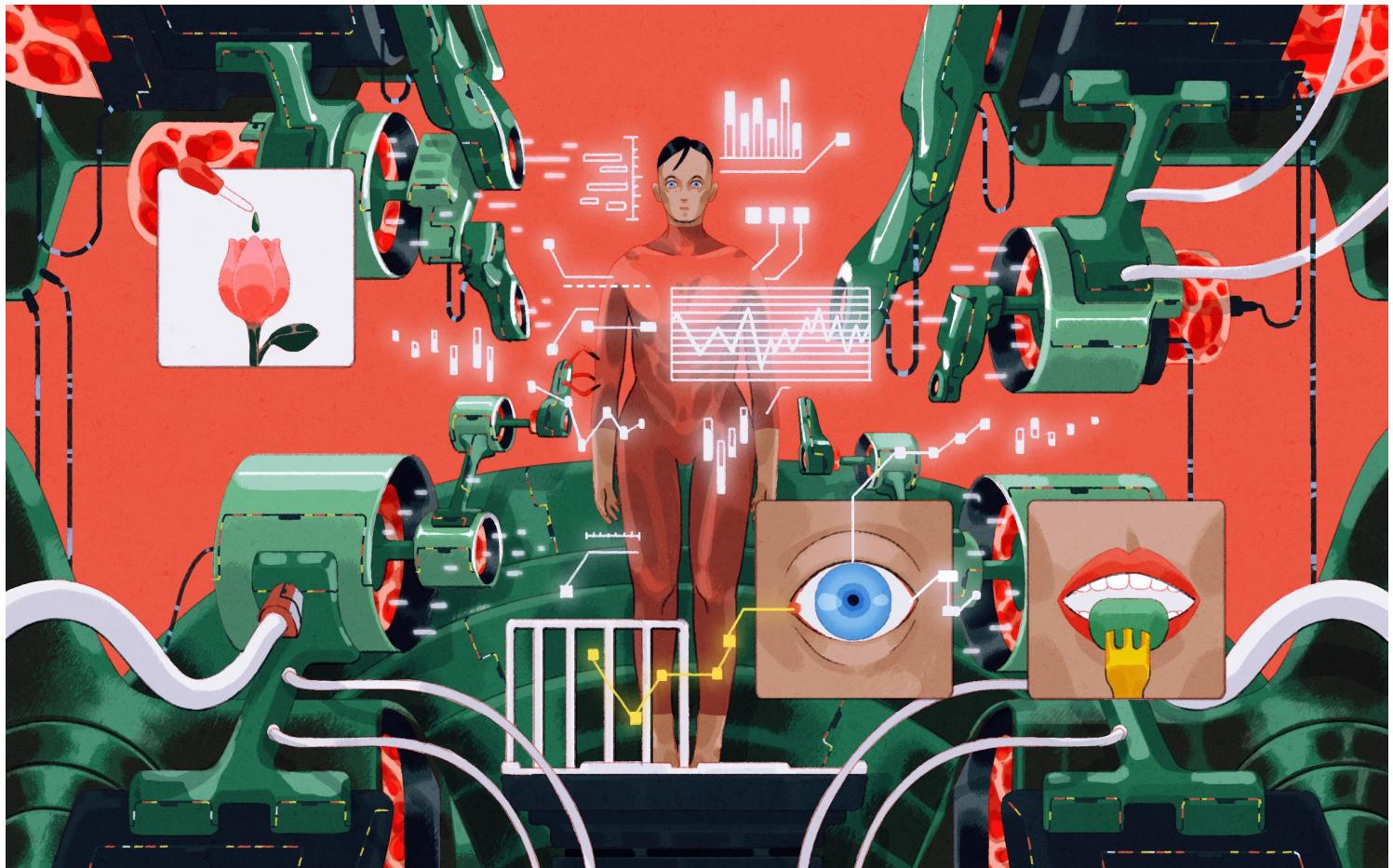


Illustration: [Mojo Wang](#)

I put on a pair of wool socks, slippers, mittens, earmuffs, and a surgical mask, remove my shirt, and open the door of a coffin-sized chamber, thereby releasing vapor into the room. I glance up at the screen inside my human freezer as it starts to count down the three minutes I'll spend in a tiny room chilled by air that is negative 220 degrees Fahrenheit. It is noon and I have not eaten since 6 p.m.,

other than a cup of coffee that I put in a blender with a pat of butter and some coconut oil.

I'm going to live forever.

Unless I freeze to death trying.

For the next 10 weeks, I'm full-on biohacking.

Four years ago, I got into great shape for an article by having a celebrity trainer, Harley Pasternak, put me on the program he used for actors who had landed roles as superheroes. I walked 12,000 steps a day, lifted weights four days a week, and ate five meals a day that consisted of low-fat protein, a lot of high-fiber fruits and vegetables, and a little healthy fat. I looked great. I felt good. I experienced the joy of being hated by my friends and family.

But I was going to be dead by 90.

Silicon Valley bros see a century of human life as a 20th-century limitation. If we went from a TRS-80 to an iPhone in 30 years, we can surely double human life using big data and self-quantification. What is the body if not another piece of hardware waiting to be hacked? Isn't it time that death got disrupted?

Such a bro friend of mine, Jason Diaz, was visiting L.A. and said he didn't have time for lunch, but I could meet him at the biohacking conference he'd flown out for. He had sold his company and realized the stress, long hours, and poor eating of entrepreneurship had damaged his body. He had his telomeres tested and was told his biological age was 25% higher than his physical age. This made him, conceptually, 54, just one year younger than his grandfather was when he died. Now Diaz was setting a goal of seeing the 22nd century. "There's been so much bad data: Don't eat eggs! Only eat the yellows! Only eat the whites! We finally have good data today," Diaz said. "Me living to 127 is not out of the realm of possibility."

The annual conference (the next one is in March) is thrown by biohacking activist Dave Asprey, the founder of Bulletproof coffee and author of *Super Human: The Bulletproof Plan to Age Backward and Maybe Even Live Forever*. Asprey defines biohacking as "the art

and science of changing the environment around you and inside you so that you have full control over your own biology.”

Asprey, a 46-year-old former information technology exec who lost 100 pounds and says he fixed his Asperger's syndrome in part by changing his diet and removing toxins from his environment, has injected stem cells into his penis. He had his blood filtered externally and put back in his body, implanted a blood glucose monitor into his arm, and shoves some of his 150 daily supplements up his butt. His self-experiments lack scientific rigor — he's a test group of one and has no way to account for the placebo effect. But as he explained on Dax Shepard's podcast, “Medicine and science want to know why. I don't care. The body is a frickin' black box.”

The biohackers' credo is: “Dude, just try it.”

By the end of the conference, Diaz had convinced me to give biohacking a try. Resistance to Silicon Valley utopian sales pitches, as we have all learned, is futile.

Asprey agreed to put me on a three-day-a-week program at his Upgrade Labs gym, which costs \$1,440 month. Over 10 weeks we'd track my changes not through before-and-after photos but through analysis of my blood, stool, cells, body fat, resting heart rate, heart rate variability, deep sleep, and REM sleep. I was going to become bionic.

First, we'll need some data

A few weeks later, I parked my car at the Beverly Hilton and headed downstairs past black-and-white photos of 1950s actors, all of whom died before they turned 100, and entered Upgrade Labs, which looks like a spa for blade runners. All the trainers wore black Lululemon, and most donned yellow-lensed glasses designed to protect your eyes from the blue light emitted from screens. Here's me wearing a pair:





Photos courtesy of the author

My trainer, Carly Sunae Mayers, a cheery former dancer who was a powerlifter in college, asked me about my goals. I muttered something about “being in shape.” She explained that biohacking wasn’t about getting a six-pack, being swole, or running a marathon. It was about my cells.

I needed to make my cells efficient, she explained, so the mitochondria would have the energy to dispose of broken-down cells and produce new, good ones. I told her I didn’t know my workout could affect my cells. “How do you think your cells work?” she asked.

I started a sentence about chlorophyll and then trailed off midway through. Mayers shook her head.

I got on an InBody scale, told it that I’m a 48-year-old man, and watched a screen calculate my body composition. I weighed 177.8 pounds, nearly 15 more than when I ended my training with Pasternak. But I had added more muscle since then, too: I was 15.6% body fat and my body burned 1,841 calories per day without moving at all. Mayers and her biohacking colleagues may not care what my “before” photo looks like, but you’re probably curious, so here you go:





The InBody readout showed that my “whole body phase angle” was 6.1. This was a measurement of my “cell integrity” and the amount of water inside my cells. A higher number was better. By higher, of course, they meant younger.

One key to pumping up my cell integrity was the Bulletproof Diet. It's a mix of carbohydrate restriction and eliminating foods that are irritating to you specifically. I was supposed to remove foods such as eggplants and onions and see if I felt better without them. Each day, I was supposed to eat six to 11 servings of organic vegetables, five to nine servings of fats, four to six servings of protein, and one starch at night if I really needed it. The most Bulletproof-approved foods are fatty grass-fed beef and lamb, wild fish, organic grass-fed butter, and organic vegetables. Farmed fish, grain-fed butter, and fatty grain-fed beef were to be avoided. What I ate seemed to matter less than how much I paid for it.

I'm told to start out with a little bit of the oil because too much might cause me to have "disaster pants."

Scarier than the diet itself was the intermittent fasting. I was supposed to end my dinner by 7 and not eat again until at least 11 a.m. the next day (and preferably much later). This would put my body into autophagy, during which it would eat itself. Asprey believes this causes our cells to more efficiently dispose of junk. My nearly carb-less diet would also send me into ketosis, during which my body wouldn't be able to use sugar for energy and would have to rely on turning fat into ketones. Asprey believes this has anti-aging benefits. It's caused quick weight loss for lots of people, including Jimmy Kimmel and Penn Jillette.

To stave off hunger and maintain energy, I'd start my day with a cup of organic Bulletproof coffee that I'd put in a blender with a pat of expensive butter and a tablespoon of Bulletproof Brain Octane, which is made of coconut oil. I'm told to start out with a little bit of the oil because too much might cause me to have "disaster pants." I am happy to report that no pants disasters occurred. But going to the bathroom was a little weird.

It's pretty good coffee, and while the butter and oil don't ruin it, they come close. Worse yet, every morning, I would cut off that slab of butter, drop it into my coffee, and think, "Why can't you be in a croissant instead?"

All this was a radical departure from the diet that Pasternak put me on four years ago and that I've maintained, more or less, ever since. I've been eating five times a day, and many of my regular foods were now nearly verboten: fruit, non-fat Greek yogurt, skim milk, hummus, beans, flax seeds, chia seeds, raw spinach, canned tuna, quinoa. I was warned to stop sous viding, microwaving, and stir-frying.

Like Pasternak, biohackers want me to sleep enough. Unlike Pasternak, Asprey wants to boost my sleep efficiency so I don't waste precious hours of my 180 years on Earth by being unconscious.

I got a \$300 Oura ring, which gave me a sleep score, measured my "sleep efficiency," and reported how much light sleep, deep sleep, and REM sleep I logged each night. It also

measured my resting heart rate and my heart rate variability, one of the most beloved metrics for biohackers. This number measures how quickly your heart rate can jack up during exercise and then calm back down afterward. It's a good way to gauge your body's ability to recover. Biohackers are really into recovery.

I also get a Whoop band (\$30 a month) and a \$150 Fitbit Charge 3. I have three gadgets on at all times, and they all measure the same data. To a biohacker, there is no such thing as too much data.

World's weirdest workout

One week after my initial consultation with Mayers, I drove to the Beverly Hilton for my first workout. It was 10 a.m. and I had only coffee and butter in my system. I was supposed to work out in a fasting state, to boost my autophagy. And to feel like a badass.

Every workout begins with three minutes in that cryogenic chamber. Mayers set the upright coffin to negative 185 degrees Fahrenheit. This, she explained, is a beginner temperature I'll work my way up from.

This was not why I moved to L.A. from New York. I had abandoned my family, career, and friends because I could not handle 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Worse yet, one week earlier, then-NFL player Antonio Brown had to quit during training camp because of a foot injury he suffered in a cryogenic chamber that was reported as “extreme frostbite” but looks like “ripped off the bottom of his feet.” (The FDA has also expressed skepticism about cryotherapy, to put it politely.)





Mayers cheerily insisted that I'd be protected with the slippers, earmuffs, and gloves. More importantly, three minutes isn't enough time for the temperature, as insane as it is, to do any damage to the rest of me. I nervously agreed to walk into a room that is nearly the average temperature on Jupiter. The only person I have heard of who has done this besides Antonio Brown is Ted Williams. And he waited until he died.

Mayers blasted the speakers inside the chamber with — for reasons that confused me even more than the fact that people pay to enter a negative-185-degree room — Will Smith's *Gettin' Jiggy Wit It*. She opened the door and I walked in. She closed the door and... it wasn't that cold. I've felt way colder before. I don't know if it's because it's only three minutes, the lack of wind, not being wet, or the gloves and slippers, but I didn't mind it. I didn't *like* it, but it was not a big deal.

The three minutes of anti-warm-up are meant to aid in, yep, recovery. Plus, while I was in the chamber, my body had to work to keep itself warm, thereby helping my mitochondria. It's not that different from people in Finland submerging themselves in a cold lake in the morning. Some biohackers take very cold showers, or fill their bathtubs with ice and cold water and submerge themselves. Asprey says that when you get out of the cryogenic chamber (or the ice bath) you should feel invigorated. But I felt the same. I warmed back up in seconds. Admittedly, I'm not finely tuned in to my body or my emotions, but I also wonder how much of this invigoration is a placebo effect.

Mayers took me out of the main spa area to the gym. We passed the Beverly Hilton's beautiful outdoor hotel pool, where people were lazily lounging and sipping sugared alcoholic drinks, toward the small room that serves as Upgrade Labs' gym. There are

only five pieces of equipment in the room, and no free weights. I was the only one there, which remained the case for most of the next 10 weeks, except for an occasional *Real Housewives*-looking woman getting a spa-like recovery treatment.

For the second part of my warm-up, I stood on a vibration plate while red infrared lights shined on me from both sides. The vibration plate is supposed to improve your blood flow and force you to use small muscles to balance, and the red light therapy is supposed to stimulate your mitochondria. And improve your sleep. And boost your testosterone. And make everything in the room look blue, like a Korean horror movie, as soon as they're turned off.



The main part of my strength training will involve the ARX Alpha. This is a flat plate attached to a motor, with attachments that allow you to do various exercises. The plate slowly pushes toward you as you strain to resist it, then reaches the end of its range and slowly moves away as you try to pull it back. All in vain. The idea is to max out on each

long, painful rep and — conceptually, at least — do an entire week's workout in 10 minutes. It's a miserable few minutes of two sets of seven reps of bench presses, rows, leg presses, and crunches.



But it's quick. And I don't feel sore afterward.

On the cardio side, biohacking is all about high-intensity training. The Vasper is a seated elliptical machine used by NASA, the Navy SEALS, and the San Jose Sharks. First you remove your shoes and socks and strap your feet into the pedals, which are cooled to 47 degrees Fahrenheit. Then you put your arms and legs into similarly cooled compression bands that pump up like blood pressure cuffs in order to restrict blood from getting to your major muscles. Some biohackers will tie up their arms and legs when lifting weights in an attempt to keep lactic acid from making their muscles give up before their heart rate can get high enough. The cooling is also meant to help your muscles from tiring, by keeping the oxygen-rich blood from escaping to cool your skin instead of staying in the muscles to keep them working.

With all of these hacks, the Vasper claims to deliver the equivalent of a two-hour run in 21 minutes of elliptical work. And for most of those 21 minutes, I'm barely moving. I sprint seven times, each for 30 or 60 seconds, getting my heart up to 157 beats per minute. I don't even sweat, however, because of the cold water surrounding my muscles.

For my first day's post-workout recovery, Mayers took me to a dark room, switched on the infrared lights shining up from a large plastic bed, closed the door, and told me to lie

on it naked for 40 minutes, flipping halfway through. This is what it looks like when I flipped (I put on shorts for the sake of both you and Mayers, who took the picture):



It was relaxing and warm and made me feel exactly the same as if I'd spent 40 minutes in a warm room that wasn't red.

Two days later, I returned to Upgrade Labs. The ARX workout was supposed to take care of a whole week's worth of weightlifting, but Mayers is supplementing it with exercises on Tonal, a high-tech cable system with a huge display screen. I used it for flies, shoulder presses, tricep pushdowns, and lunges.

For my cardio, I jumped on a stationary bike called CAR.O.L., which supposedly uses artificial intelligence to deliver a 45-minute workout in about nine minutes. After some practice runs, it's able to set the gear resistance perfectly so I'll work at my maximum heart rate for two 20-second sprints; the remaining eight minutes and 20 seconds are for warm-up, recovery, and cooldown. It's hard to believe I really got a workout in 40 seconds of exertion, but I am not going to argue with Carol.

That's because Carol is the sexiest British dominatrix I have ever heard. While I'm pedaling, I put on headphones and listen to her soft, powerful voice tell me exactly what to do, including when and how to breathe. Which is very slowly. The LED screen on the bike morphs into the shape of her full lips as she shows me exactly how. Then she says:

"Out of the corner of your eye, you catch sight of a shadow in the distance and it's racing toward you at full speed. The shadow of a saber-toothed tiger. You need to sprint away now! Spring! Fast! Your life depends on it! ... It's getting harder now, but don't give up! There's a small wood ahead with places to hide. Use every single ounce of energy to reach it."

Even sexier, she wonders what it is like to be 100 years old. "At this rate," she whispers, "you'll find out."

At some point, Carol told me that, because the time I spent exerting myself was so short, I don't need to take a shower after my workout. Which is the dirtiest thing any woman has ever said to me.





For my recovery, I lay down on a bed where Mayers zipped me into sleeping-bag pants. They compressed my body in rolling waves, starting at my feet, passing uncomfortably by my testicles and ending at my waist. This was meant to flush my legs of all the lactic acid that built up during my workout. And make me forget about Carol.

While I was being squeezed, I breathed from a humidifier that Mayers said was filled with “structured water.” Familiar with very few forms of water, I asked Mayers what structured water is. She informed me that it’s the “fourth state of water.” She said structured water improves intercellular hydration.

When Mayers left the room, I did two things. One was rearrange my testicles. The other was go to Wikipedia.

The first sentence of the entry I looked up said, “Hexagonal water, also known as structured water, is a term used in a marketing scam.”

When I got home, I was surprisingly beat from my workout. I told my lovely wife Cassandra I couldn’t even watch TV with her and fell asleep at 10 p.m. I may or may not have dreamt about Carol.

I mean, why NOT amp up my testosterone?

The doctor at Upgrade Labs took a blood sample and, as with every other time my testosterone has been checked, it was below the normal range. The normal amount of free testosterone for a man my age is 9 to 30 according to the lab that tested my blood sample. I’ve got 3.6. That’s barely enough to be a writer.

This doctor, like every other one I’ve panicked in front of after seeing my results, told me not to worry about it because I had no problems with sex drive, erections, or putting on

muscle.

The normal amount of free testosterone for a man my age is 9 to 30. I've got 3.6. That's barely enough to be a writer.

Asprey, however, does not feel that way. "How do you know the way you have sex is the way everyone else does?" he asks in a way that implies I've never seen porn. "You might find that you're running at 20% of your potential sex life. I would play around. There's little harm in testing a little testosterone cream for a week."

Almost no one at 48, he says, has normal testosterone, and men are suffering for it. "Testosterone is life-prolonging and quality-of-life-prolonging," he said. Though he did suggest starting at a low dose. "If you've always had low testosterone, we don't want you to be high normal or you'll be trying to have sex with a doorknob."

Little does he know that I almost tried to have sex with a stationary bicycle.

Sex, sleep, and alcohol

My wife Cassandra has called biohacking "Goop for bros." Like Gwyneth Paltrow acolytes, we are analyzing our poop, worrying about toxins, fretting about inflammation, and going on extreme diets. Why?

"It's a little bit of that adventurer/explorer/slay-the-dragon mentality," says biohacker Ben Greenfield, a triathlete, trainer, and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Beyond Training: Mastering Endurance, Health & Life*. "I realized that's stereotyping, but men are a little hardwired to be less safe and explore the fringes."

Greenfield, for instance, uses an electrical muscle stimulation device, which means he sticks electrodes to his body to shock his muscles while working out. He drips a few drops of rat tapeworms down his throat every two weeks to boost his immunity and improve his gut biome. Like Asprey, he too has injected stem cells into his penis. He got another penal injection to numb it before subjecting himself to sound waves to increase vascularity. And his penis was working fine.

I asked Greenfield what other non-penis things I should do. He told me to get in touch with the earth. Walk outside barefoot, an activity biohackers call “grounding” or “earthing.” The concept is that the earth has a mild negative charge that cancels out the positive charge that builds up in our cells throughout the day, causing inflammation.

I have no idea if that’s true, what a charge is, or why it would be bad. It’s one of the many biohacking claims for which there is no scientific proof. Yet people are buying \$60 grounding mats you plug in and stand on in your office. Greenfield also suggested I drink “hydrogen-rich water” to “hack more water in my cells.” I should buy a cooled pad called an Ooler to put under my back while I sleep to keep my core temperature down. And take 100 milligrams of CBD before bed to improve my sleep.

I’m a champion sleeper. I’m often awakened by Cassandra, who talks to me as we’re going to sleep, amazed by the fact that I am already sleeping. I get about seven hours of sleep each night.

But my “deep sleep” numbers were displayed in warning red on all three of my trackers. I got significantly different readouts from the Whoop, Fitbit, and Oura each morning, but all agree I’m getting less than an hour of deep sleep per night instead of the two hours I need. (My light sleep and REM numbers were fine.) Deep sleep happens early in the night, and is particularly important for physical recovery. And mine sucks.

I tried a bunch of fixes. I went to sleep around the same hour and woke up at the same time every day, even on weekends. I made my room much colder at night: 65 degrees. At night, I dimmed all my lights and avoided my computer and phone for two hours before bedtime. I wore blue-light-blocking glasses at night.

I got my deep sleep numbers way up — from an average of 40 minutes up to two hours. I also had more energy because I slept more, and I noticed that, even when I did a new exercise, I wasn’t sore.

The greatest sleep hack was also the saddest: not drinking. If Carrie Nation had given out Oura rings instead of busting up bars with a hatchet, Prohibition would have never have been repealed. Even one drink reduces my deep sleep significantly. It’s the one thing my Whoop, Oura, and Fitbit completely agree upon. Alcohol (and sugar),

especially when consumed later at night, sends my heart racing and interrupts my sleep even when I don't notice it. Especially my deep sleep.

There is one thing that biohacking and my old Pasternak regimen have in common: Both make Cassandra not want to have sex with me. Greenfield had warned me that his wife called his blue-light-blocking glasses the “birth control glasses.” But it’s not just that I’m doing all kinds of unsexy, annoying things like not drinking and saying night-night at 10 p.m. Even the somewhat sexy light-dimming drives Cassandra crazy. It’s because every physical improvement I make causes her to feel worse about her body. And women’s sexuality, I’m told, is dependent upon how sexy they feel.

When I asked if I could replace my wedding ring with my Oura ring so I wasn’t wearing two rings, she freaked out. So I wore two rings. But when I had to take both off for a recovery session at Upgrade and accidentally left them there, I spent three days ringless, which she didn’t notice. Biohacked me is not her favorite version of me.

And on top of all that, the lack of sex is bad for my deep sleep numbers.

I decided not to bring this up.

Some pain, some gain, and a visit with an old guru

A month into biohacking, I was doing rows on the ARX machine when, on my third rep of rows, I gave it a yank to get some power into it, like one would do with a cable or free weights. This is very dumb. The ARX is an all-powerful, slowly moving plate that can probably pull a truck. Yanking on it is like yanking on the moon.

It was sharp, hot pain. I was not sure if I could move. I feared that my biohacking was over for the year.

Mayers had me lie down on the PEMF machine, which delivers pulsed electromagnetic field therapy. I did not know what this was, but I was not interested in asking questions at the time.

Augusto Pinochet used many torture methods on his enemies, and I have to guess that PEMF was one of them. Needles of shock went into my body as Mayers turned up

the dial, making my muscles visibly spasm. I stopped her when she reached 75 out of a maximum 103. After five minutes, I asked her to turn it down to 70.

The ARX is an all-powerful, slowly moving plate that can probably pull a truck. Yanking on it is like yanking on the moon.

I also asked her what the hell was going on. She explained that the electricity was targeting the cells that needed recharging to aid healing. The electricity seemed to target whatever points I pressed most firmly on the mat. I have no idea if it helped with recovery, but in three days I was nearly back to normal and ready for more ARX workouts.

However, Mayers did not like what she saw on my InBody results. While my all-important “whole body phase angle” was up to an amazing 9.2 (from 6.1 when I started five weeks ago), and I had lost four pounds, two and a half of those pounds were muscle. My body fat percentage had gone from 15.6 to 16.5.

Biohacking was making me pudgy.

Mayers told me to start eating five meals a day to get more protein into my body. You can only process about 30 grams of protein per meal. And I wasn’t having enough meals. These results are exactly what Pasternak warned me about four years ago when we talked about the paleo diets and the CrossFit workout my friends were doing: Fad diets wouldn’t provide enough protein, and high-intensity training would lead to injuries.

So for the first time in four years, I stopped by Pasternak’s gym. He listened patiently to everything I’d been doing, looking things up online as we talked because he had never heard of lots of it.

After a while, he said, “I think that’s the craziest shit in the entire world.” Some of what I’m doing, he said, might give a slight edge to Olympic-level athletes in specific areas, but it’s a waste for me. “It’s like building a house and instead of building a good foundation, you’re focused on the eaves troughs on the roof made out of special composite carbon

fiber. If I were to triage the things you can do to live longer, the things those people are focused on are so tertiary or beyond.”

He was particularly upset about my diet. “Intermittent fasting used to have another name: an eating disorder.” Autophagy, he said, means my body is not merely getting energy from fat, but from muscle and organs. “I ask people, ‘Would you want your kids to eat like this?’ How bad are you at being able to make good food choices that you need to restrict the majority of foods to put your body in this fight-or-flight state that it’s eating itself?”

As far as the organic high-fat meat, Pasternak said, “That’s like being a smoker and having organic tobacco.”

I asked him if it’s really that bad to put butter in my coffee every morning. “Why shouldn’t you put butter in your coffee?” he asked. “Why shouldn’t you rub shit on your face? There’s no science behind that whatsoever. Most of these diets are created by people who have no experience in the field of nutrition.”

It is unwise to visit your old guru when working with a new guru. I vowed to ignore everything Pasternak said — even though much of it sounded right.

Hungry to get back on track. Also just hungry.

When I told Asprey that Mayers took me off of intermittent fasting, he overruled her. “If you’re losing muscle, it’s not because of intermittent fasting,” he said. He suggested I add some carbs to my post-workout routine to solve my unusual problem. Stress might be an issue. I should try meditating. Or maybe I should stop intermittent fasting and run with the big boys and do a 48-hour fast every few weeks. But eating protein five times a day like Pasternak advised, he said, is a bad idea. “Bodybuilders eat chicken breasts six times a day,” he said. “That’s why they all die.”

I went back to intermittent fasting.

My workouts were sometimes not until 1 p.m., but my body got used to exercising hungry. In fact, not eating until 2 p.m. got oddly easy. For the first few days I was light-headed and hungry — I quit mid-workout one day to eat a Bulletproof Fudge Brownie Collagen Protein Bar (greasy, crumbly, delicious, pretty low in protein per calorie).

But by the end of the first week of intermittent fasting, I didn't feel as light-headed and hungry. In fact, I felt clear-headed and energetic, which might be a positive spin on "light-headed and hungry." The morning crankiness I'd sometimes felt over the past few weeks was gone, and I learned to stop overeating when I broke my fast. I felt like I was controlling my body instead of it controlling me.

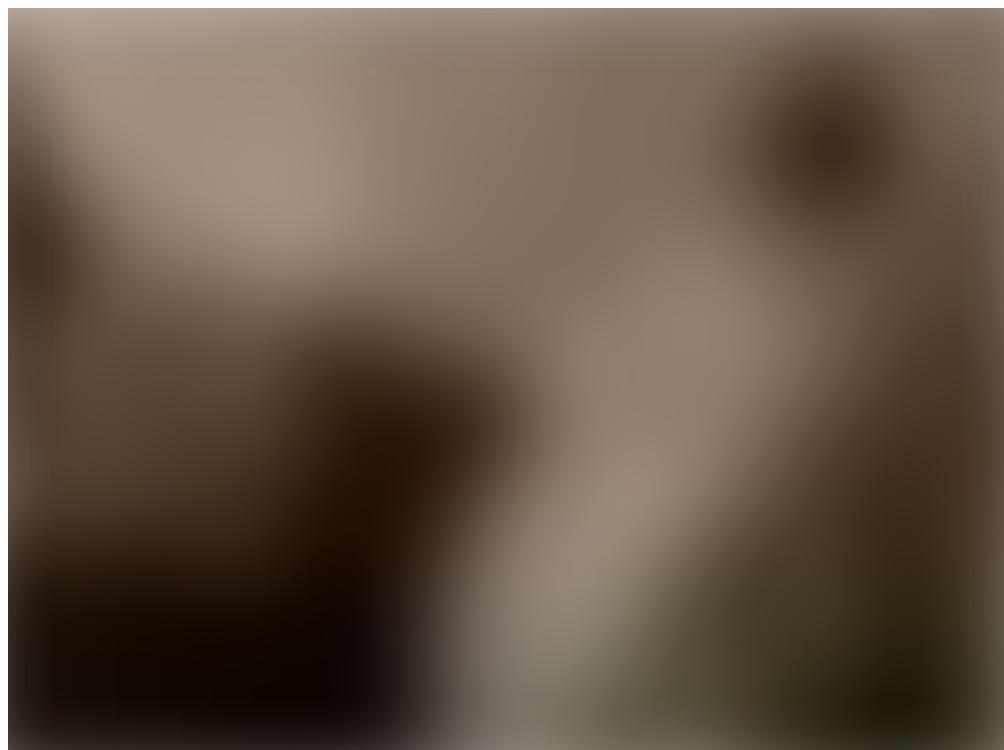
Mayers upped my weight training. In addition to the ARX machine and more cable exercises on the Tonal, she pulled out a mat and a bench during workouts. We did push-ups, planks, tricep dips, tricep push-ups, reverse lunges, wall sits, crunches with a medicine ball. It was like I was back at my gym at the YMCA. It felt like cheating.

An embarrassment of hacks

Over the 10 weeks, I tried lots of biohacks.

To each earlobe, I attached clamps that ran into a handheld Alpha-Stim machine. The cranial electrotherapy stimulation is meant to help with anxiety, insomnia, depression, and pain, none of which I have. But the biohacker technicians thought it would do me good nevertheless, like a brain boost. For 30 minutes, I walked around sending micro-currents through my brain. I felt buzzed, as if I took a decent hit of weed.

I also recovered in an infrared sauna, which is a lot like a sauna, but redder.



The ozone sauna was far more intense. I entered a pod with my head sticking out, and one of the biohacking technicians placed an oxygen mask on my mouth and nose because the ozone isn't safe to breathe. I was supposed to stay put for 30 minutes, but as sweat rolled down into my eyes that I couldn't use my trapped hands to push away, the heat and the oxygen mask became too much and I popped out of my confinement, like a sweaty Hulk, if the Hulk then sat on a chair and drank water in silence for 20 minutes.

I walked up to the counter at Upgrade Labs and examined their newest product, a \$495 infrared tool called a vFit, which is shaped like a vibrator. I asked the biohack technicians what a vFit is. It is a vibrator. For "10 to 12 minutes a day" a woman is supposed to shine infrared light into her vagina to improve her pelvic floor. I did not take this home because I feared Cassandra would get furious at me for believing people should self-improve even during masturbation.

Here's something you don't want to know I did and I didn't want to do: I spread a piece of paper over my toilet, defecated on it, and scooped a tiny spoonful into a vial, put the vial in an envelope addressed to a company called Viome, placed the envelope in my mailbox, and never told my mail carrier about this. I believe I should serve jail time for this.

As part of the \$150 gut analysis, I filled out a questionnaire on the Viome website, answering questions that I was surprised had anything to do with my poop. Questions such as "Did you grow up on a farm?" The possible answers were "yes," "no," and "I don't know." Which means there are people willing to pay \$150 to defecate on paper, scoop it into a vial, and mail it who don't even know if they grew up on a farm.

A month later, I called Viome account manager Rob Pellow to go over my results. Basically, he was impressed with my poop. My gas production was great, which means I don't fart too much, which, to my horror, means other people fart more than I do.

My "butyrate production pathways" are lacking. I have an average set of workers in my gut lining, but they're not producing enough. To reduce inflammation, control my appetite, and increase my metabolism, I need to feed them more, which would require tinkering with my diet. I should eat a lot of asparagus, artichokes, leeks, garlic, and lentils. I could do that.

Also, my “LPS biosynthesis pathways” are an embarrassment to my lower intestine. Which makes me more vulnerable to inflammation. The solution was to eliminate certain foods, such as quinoa, tomatoes, bell peppers, and kombucha. And to avoid others such as spinach, kale, almonds, cauliflower, egg yolks, corn, sweet potatoes, and white rice.

Avoiding spinach and cauliflower seemed insane to me. “When you eat something that everyone would agree is healthy, microbes in your gut break down that piece of food. If you don’t have the microbes to break down that specific food, then putting that food into your system is the equivalent of putting diesel food into a regular car.” I had never had another man look at my poop and then call me a “regular car.”

But I agreed to listen to him for six weeks, and see if I could get my butyrate numbers up. I will never know if I actually accomplished that, because it would require scooping up more of my feces. But I do believe that my gastrointestinal system — which I’ve never gotten along with — behaved better.

The century-and-a-half club

At the end of Asprey’s Bulletproof Radio podcasts, he always asks his biohacker guests to guess how long they will live. They give some sort of optimistic number, such as 90, and then he argues with them until they get exhausted and say 180 to get him to shut up.

I asked Asprey, based on my InBody and lab results, how long I will live.

“I’m going to put you above 150,” he said.

I told him that’s unlikely.

And he got right to arguing.

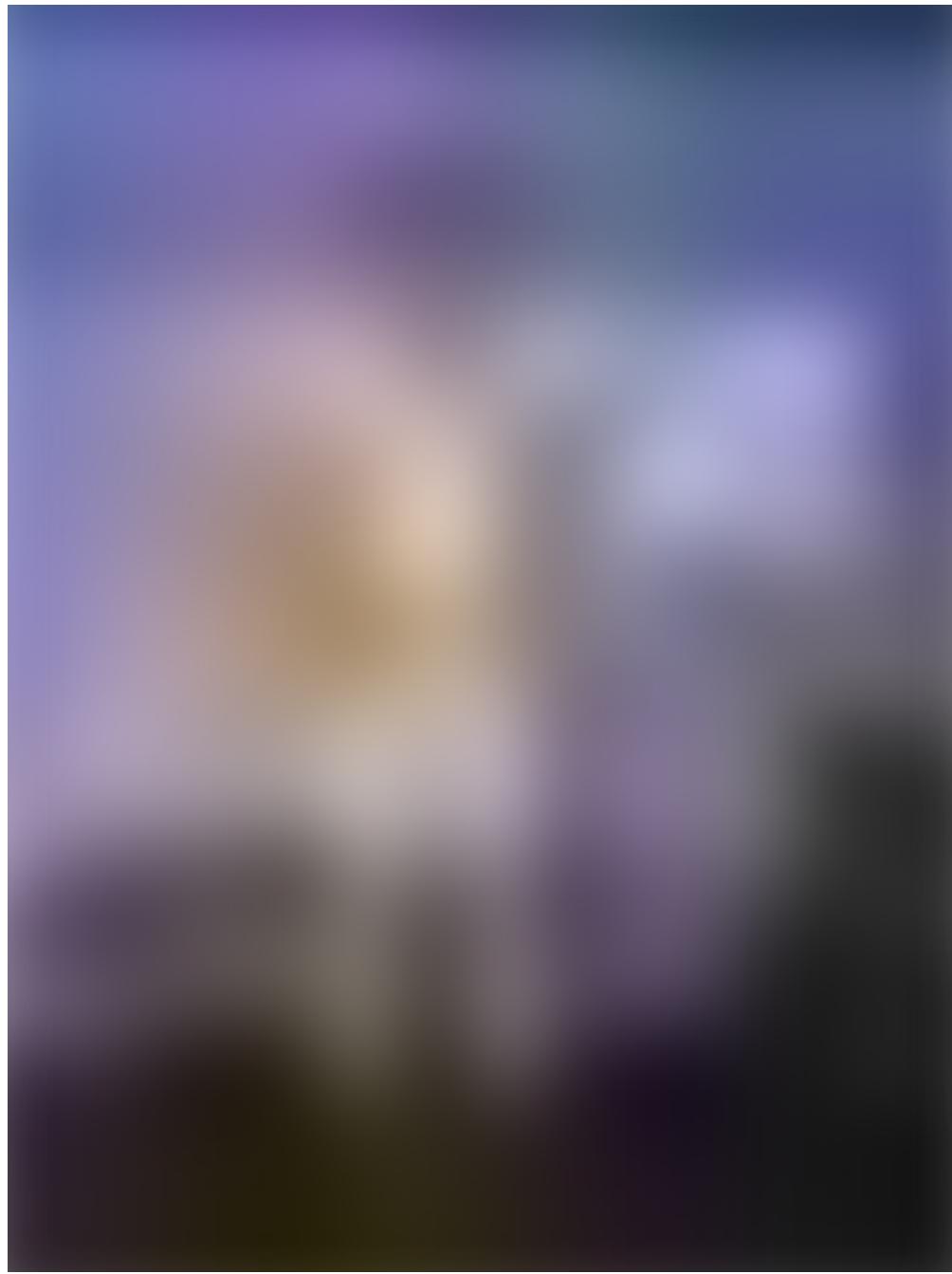
When I first started in journalism, he reminded me, I had to look up old articles using microfiche. Asprey mentions microfiche a lot when he makes this point about living to 180. The elimination of microfiche is his polio vaccine.

I couldn’t hear his entire speech about microfiche. Our connection was breaking up because he was on a tiny plane he takes from Seattle to his house on an island off of Vancouver. “I’m pulling onto a private runway with a tiny Cessna that costs less than a

Tesla. Come on! Fifty percent longer with all the technology we have? 180 isn't a marketing number. I'm pretty sure we can do that," he said.

I am inspired. Though I note that for a guy who is doing everything he can to live forever, Asprey rides in a lot of tiny planes.

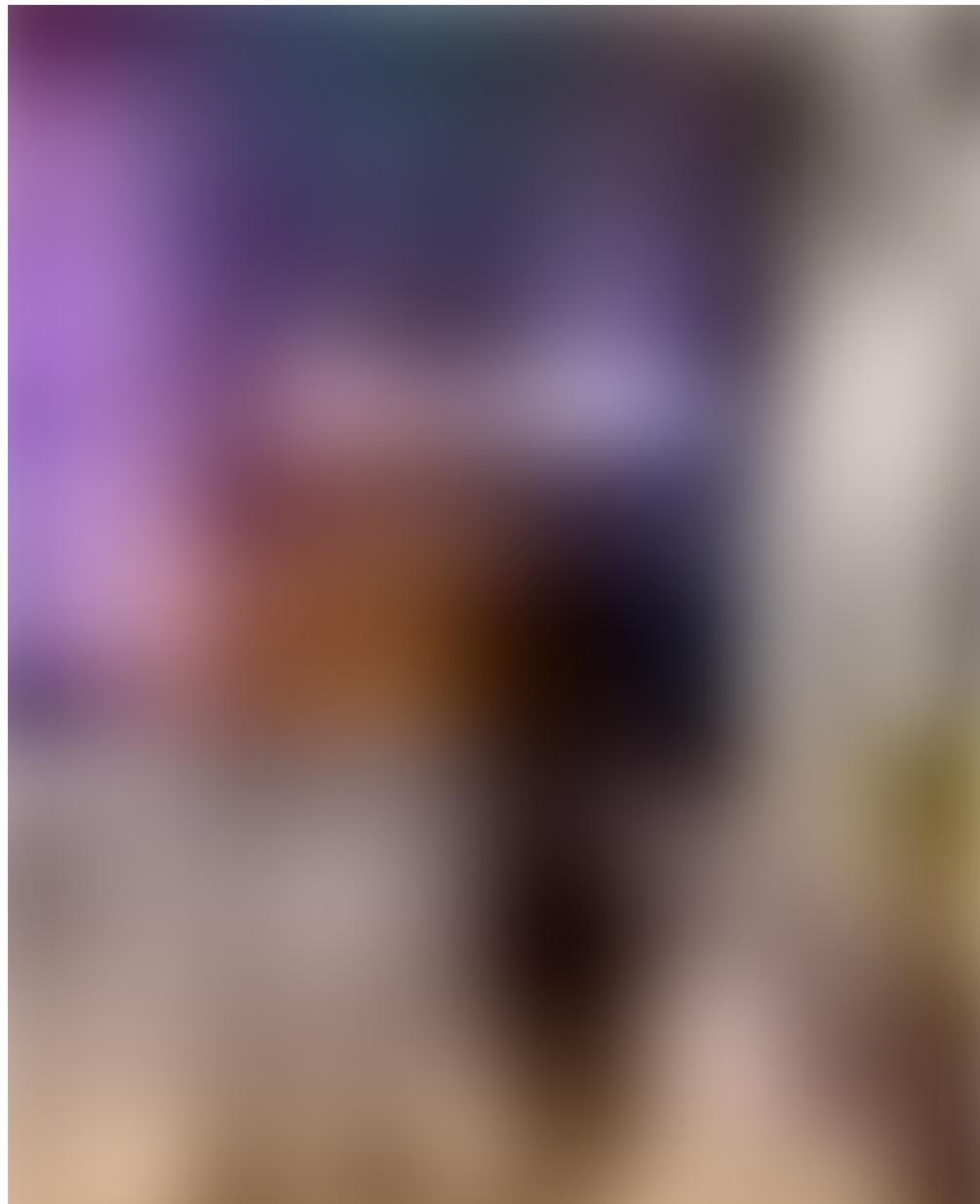
At the end of 10 weeks, I looked better, even if that wasn't the goal:



I had gone from 177.8 pounds to 171.3; my body fat had dropped from 15.6% to 14.5%. I had lost a little muscle, but not much for a guy who replaced lifting for an hour three

times a week with those 10-minute ARX workouts and wasn't eating much protein. My whole phase angle, that cell wall thing, was up from 6.1 to 7.3. I'm not sure why it dropped from 9.2 (slightly worse sleep, or the intermittent fasting?) but everyone was still impressed by my numbers. Well, most of my numbers. My heart rate variability had not improved. Neither had my free testosterone. In fact, it slightly decreased from 3.6 to 3.1.

Asprey had suggested that I smear testosterone gel all over my body, but the doctor at Upgrade Labs warned me against it. There are side effects, such as prostate cancer, stroke, and — per Asprey's own warning — doorknob fucking. Plus, after you get off of T-gel, your body might make less of it naturally, and it can take a while to return to normal. I can't afford to not return to 3.1.





I miss going to Upgrade Labs, with its cheery, optimistic biohack technicians who will live forever. I miss sitting in saunas. I miss the quick workouts. I miss Mayers.

But that's about all I miss. A few weeks after I finished, I left my Oura, Fitbit, and Whoop chargers at a hotel. I only bothered to replace the Fitbit one, because it was cheap. The unexamined body, it turns out, is indeed worth having.

Still, three months later, I have stuck to two key principles of biohacking.

The main change I've made is focusing on my sleep. I cut back on the number of nights I drink, I dim lights, I go to sleep (10:30 p.m.), and wake up (6:45 a.m.) around the same time every day. When I feel like I have to work late, I often decide not to, prioritizing sleep.

To my surprise, I'm also intermittent-fasting a day a week or so. I don't know if I really believe that it's good for me, but I know it cuts back on the calories I eat. So if I overindulge the previous night, I sometimes skip breakfast.

I'm glad I tried all of these hacks. But I'm not an adventurer. I wouldn't have gotten myself a ship and crew during the Age of Exploration. I don't have the slay-the-dragon mentality.

A few weeks ago, I looked at Dave Asprey's Instagram page. He was smiling, naked on a beach, giving a thumbs-up, looking fit and happy. His caption:

"Decided to double down by earthing and allegedly increasing vitamin D by exposing my perineum to sunlight. There are studies I've written about before that say getting sunlight on your testes will increase testosterone, and there are recent studies showing that UV light changes your gut bacteria. However, there are no actual studies about #buttholesunning (yet)"

Maybe Dave Asprey will live far longer than I will. Or maybe he'll inject the wrong chemical into his penis while flying a Cessna to a beach for more butthole sunning and it

will all end in a horrifying Instagram photo. Either way, I'm back to eating five times a day, walking 12,000 steps, and going to the gym three days a week.

I'll shoot for 90 years old. And be thrilled if I make it.

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