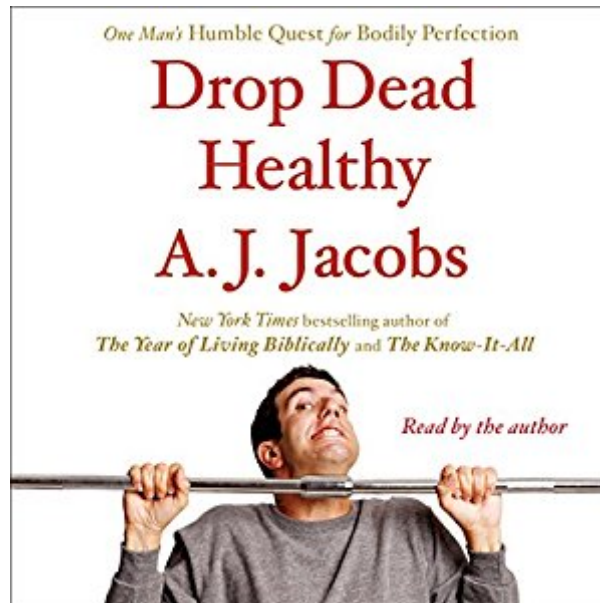




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Drop Dead Healthy: One Man's Humble Quest For Bodily Perfection



Synopsis

New York Times best-selling author and king of "immersion journalism" A.J. Jacobs tackles his most challenging experiment yet: a yearlong mission to radically improve every element of his body and mind - from his brain to his fingertips to his abs. Having lifted his spirit in *The Year of Living Biblically* and sharpened his mind in *The Know-It-All*, A. J. Jacobs had one feat left in the self-improvement trinity: to become the healthiest man in the world. He doesn't just want to lose a couple of pounds, or finish a triathlon, or lower his cholesterol. First, he had to tackle a complicated web of diet and exercise advice, most which is nonsensical, unproven, and contradictory. Second, he had to consult a team of medical advisers. And finally, he had to subject himself, over the course of two years, to a grueling regimen of exercises, a range of diets and nutritional plans, and a brutal array of techniques and practices to improve everything from his hearing to his sleep - all the while testing the patience of his wife. This latest work bursts with hilarity and warmth, all the while testing our culture's assumptions and obsessions with what makes good health and allowing the listener to reflect on his or her own health, body, and eventual mortality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Jacobs two-year-long story about living healthier conveys the same level of confusion we all have negotiating the myriad of options. The 41-year-old gentleman living in New York City with his wife and three little boys allows him easy access to services not available here in my state of Maine. I'm not sure if it's a good thing or a bad thing because some of the activities he tackles are unconventional and, in my humble opinion, worthless. However, it does lead to some wonderful

funny observations by the author. Much of the practical health information is seamlessly intertwined with his personal adventures and delivered in a gentle self-deprecating manner. I can't recall if there's any profanity in the thing but if there is, it's minimal. Because the cover design shows the author doing a chin-up, I assumed the book focused only on exercise, but he takes a more holistic approach by covering such areas as including noise pollution; the immune system; having more sex (I'll never look at a Graham cracker the same again.); the nervous system; acupuncture; placebos; proper poop practices; managing stress; improving brain proficiency; living in a nontoxic home; teeth; sleep; the bladder; and good posture. There are a few quirky subjects such as the Quantified Self movement, Hygiene Hypothesis, Ergonomics (not a typo), and the Caveman Workout. There are amateurish black-and-white photos near the beginning of each chapter showing Mr. Jacobs's in various "health" activities. The inclusion of his interactions with his 94-year-old grandfather and Aunt Marti throughout the book were especially heartwarming and introspective. After previously reading two successive depressing/infuriating nonfiction works, 'Drop Dead Healthy' was a welcome respite. The only thing that was unnerving in it was a small excerpt describing an 1810 mastectomy that made my nipples tingle... and not in a good way. The Appendix includes a helpful synopsis of what Mr. Jacobs found valuable in his quest for better health. You could just read them and ignore the rest of the book but you'd be missing out on a lot of funny material.

I downloaded this book onto my Kindle before heading to Australia for a 3 week vacation. While there, I ended up in the emergency room with a situation that required admission to the hospital, then surgery. While I laid there in the hospital not going to the Great Barrier Reef, my husband brought me my Kindle and I read this book. I laughed out loud when I read the catalyst for AJ's getting healthy: he had landed in the hospital in Jamaica with pneumonia while on vacation. Immediately I felt a bond, and his book definitely helped the hours pass. AJ Jacobs writes in the same easy, conversational way he did in his other two books. In this one, he commits himself to getting healthy; and as usual, does the 360-degree research, interviewing completely opposite points of view. He dives into it 100%, doing offbeat things like running caveman-like through Central Park (one of my favorite parts), typing while on a treadmill, wearing noise reducing headphones (it was very interesting to read the various decibel levels of everyday noises). Along the way, he is inspired in different ways by his eccentric aunt, his grandfather, and his wife Julie. AJ Jacobs tackles his projects very methodically and never takes anyone's word as the last word. I did feel the book lagged a bit; maybe he got tired on the treadmill, but my sense is that it lagged because it took so long to write and there was just so much he wanted to cover that it almost overwhelmed him. I very

much enjoyed it and along the way, I learned a few things. Now, I am off to eat a few walnuts.

I have to hand it to Jacobs, he sucked me in. Our dentist had the book in his waiting room and I managed to read a chapter at each visit. Then the book became too compelling and too funny to put down. I had to order one of my own. Jacobs has a mighty understanding family and a great sense of fun. He subjects himself to all manner of healthy eating and acting to assess the efficacy of each program - to often hilarious result. Fun. And he learned to take better care of himself in the process.

This book wasn't what I expected - I expected it to be centred around diet and fitness regimes, and while it certainly dealt with a range of them, the author also decided to take each part of the body (even parts like ears and hands) and investigate ways to make them 'perfect.' It was an interesting way of tackling his quest, but I still would have preferred a thorough investigation of the myriad diets and exercise regimes out there - maybe a bit much for one man! Nevertheless, I still enjoyed the book - even learnt a thing or two- and I really enjoy the author's sense of humour. I laughed out loud in several places, and judging from the book, his long-suffering wife Julie sounds just as funny. In previous books, A.J. has investigated the intellectual life and the spiritual - what else is left? I wait with bated breath for his next book.

Jacobs is an author who is COMMITTED. He lives his work and takes the reader inside the story. His writing style is engaging and he makes it look easy which is what anyone great at his craft can do. There is a lot of useful information here although it is not definitive nor meant to be. Jacobs entertains and informs. There are some very personal elements to the book as well. What more could a reader ask?

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