

Dr. Douglas Husbands: Advocate for Spiritual & Physical Health



Douglas Husbands was a champion bodybuilder while a student at SI, but now focuses on helping his patients live healthy lives through nutrition and lifestyle habits.

THE CLASSIC TV SHOW *THE SIX MILLION Dollar Man* began with these opening lines: “We can rebuild him. We have the technology. We can make him better than he was. Better ... stronger ... faster.”

Dr. Douglas Husbands ’76, in some ways, has lived out those opening lines, turning himself into a bodybuilding champion. He then went beyond the oil and muscles to help others have better and stronger lives.

Just consider his post bodybuilding career, one that led him to become a personal trainer, a chiropractor, a certified clinical nutritionist, a board certified anti-aging health practitioner and an expert in functional medicine after he received training to learn how bodily systems work interdependently.

You don’t have to look much farther than his muscled physique to see the results of a life devoted to healthy living, one that involves strict regimens of diet and exercise. When he rolls up his sleeves and starts lifting 30-pound dumbbells, you can see more than his giant biceps. You can see the joy in his face that comes from a life

well lived both for himself and in the service of others.

A born-again Christian, Husbands is a firm believer in the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans, where he urges his fellow Christians, “by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

Husbands, who now practices chiropractic medicine in San Carlos at Rivera Chiropractic Group, began his physical and spiritual journey at SI in his sophomore year, when he met Kenny Simon ’75. Simon invited Husbands to work out with him at the Sports Palace on Valencia, owned by Jim Schmitz, who went on to become the USA weightlifting team coach for the 1980 and 1988 Olympics and president of the U.S. Weightlifting Federation.

“I was a skinny kid and wanted to put some muscle on,” said Husbands, who was also drawn to the discipline of physical training five days a week, working out with Simon as a training partner. Within three months, he had gained 30 pounds of muscle.

Shortly after graduating from SI, he earned fifth place in the Pacific Coast Body Building championships for his age group. The following year, at 19, he took second place. He studied at City College and SFSU, switching from an engineering major to physiology along the way, in part to improve his body-building techniques. He finished his bachelor’s degree in 1983 from SFSU in biology and trained along the way for the San Francisco Body Building Championships.

Standing at five feet, six-and-a-half inches, he bulked up to 205 pounds with 6 percent body fat. Then, while doing 800-pound leg presses, he damaged his hamstring and had to drop out of the competition.

That was enough to put him on a different path, one where physical health meant more than being muscle-bound. “I hurt myself, in part, because I had been dehydrated,” said Husbands. “I needed to spend time learning how to improve and maintain my health.”

He did that by working as a personal exercise trainer and physical therapy aide for four years while studying chemistry and nutrition. In 1985, he moved to Southern California, where he worked at a prestigious sports medicine clinic.

Then, one day after a strenuous workout, he threw one of his ribs out of alignment. “It felt just like a heart attack,” said Husbands. “I had all the symptoms, including shortness of breath, pressure in my chest and pain radiating down my left arm. But I knew it was unlikely it was a heart attack since I felt a twinge while I was working out.”

Though he was skeptical of chiropractic medicine, he took a chance and visited a chiropractor who, within moments “had put my rib back in place. That’s when I started to see the value in chiropractic health care.”

In 1988, he had another change of heart, this one involving his faith. He had joined a group called The Way International that preached Christ was human and not divine. That didn’t sit right with Husbands, who turned to the Bible for inspiration. He opened it and found numerous passages that convinced him “to accept Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior. I finally realized that I had been living for myself. All I cared about was personal accomplishments and self-aggrandizement. Just living for myself

didn't satisfy me. By the grace of God, I came to see that the most important thing is to live for the glory of God."

That awakening occurred a year after he entered the Doctor of Chiropractic program at Cleveland Chiropractic College of Los Angeles in 1988. He completed his chiropractic training and earned his license in 1991. He did solo practice working with two separate groups in Northridge between 1992 and 2004, when he returned to the Bay Area.

Along the way, he received post-graduate training to become a Certified Clinical Nutritionist, as he saw the natural connections among bodybuilding, personal training, nutrition and chiropractic medicine.

"When I first started bodybuilding in high school, I ate so much that my mother made me learn how to cook. For my first meal, I boiled chicken with some salt and pepper. It didn't taste very good, nor did the frozen veggies I prepared. But I've learned how to cook since then."

More importantly, he learned how to eat. These days, Husbands brings along a cooler with him for the six meals he consumes each day – three big meals and three big snacks. "I make sure to eat plenty of high nutrient-dense food. Taste is secondary. I care more how food affects my body than about being a slave to taste. I'd rather have a high quality of life than the short-term enjoyment I would receive from eating something tasty that later makes me feel awful. However, I've learned that healthy food can also be very tasty."

Husband's regimen is enough to give the average overweight American pause. He wakes up at 4:30 a.m. on weekdays and eats a high-protein meal before 5 a.m. A sample breakfast includes an omelet made up of five egg whites and one whole egg along with kale, bok choy, tomatoes, onions and whole grain toast. He drinks unsweetened green tea or aloe vera juice rather than coffee, which he argues elevates stress hormones and overtaxes the adrenal glands.

He reads the Bible for an hour and then drives to a gym for an hour-and-15-minute interval training workout. By 7:30 a.m., he's in the office, where he eats his post-workout snack, which on

some days is a protein shake with fruits and nuts.

His 10:30 a.m. snack might consist of protein powder and green tea, two green nutrition bars and an apple. For lunch he may have chicken, vegetables and rice followed by a 4 p.m. snack of goat's milk yogurt, berries, nuts and cold green tea. Dinner at 7 p.m. involves more protein (chicken, fish or grass-fed beef) and more vegetables. "I hardly eat any starches at night. That's how you put on fat."

Then, right before bed, he downs a glass of whey protein powder with water or green tea mixed with L-glutamine powder and an L-arginine capsule, to help the body recover and repair.

He takes eight supplement pills each day and sometimes more when he's detoxifying his body. He points to some studies that show a linkage between obesity and toxins. "A hundred years ago, we weren't exposed to as many chemical pesticides, soft plastics or other manmade products. Everyone needs to do a periodic detoxification."

This may seem a bit much to those of us who wonder what Subway sandwich we'll buy as we drive home. But this routine has worked both for Husbands and for his patients, including one woman who came to him with a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease that he managed to reverse mainly by changing her diet and lifestyle habits.

"She made dietary changes and added specific nutritional supplements targeted for her condition," said Husbands. "She also started turning off the TV and computer an hour before going to bed and falling asleep no later than 10 p.m. Light from those devices suppresses the body's melatonin production, which is a key hormone for regulating sleep-wake cycles and a powerful brain antioxidant that also helps regulate all other major hormones. Instead of watching TV, she listened to relaxing music, read or spent time talking with one of her family members in a non-stressful way. Her body eventually healed itself, and she no longer has that medical condition."

If you go to Husband's website at HolisticHealthBayArea.com, you'll find pages of testimonials from patients who swear by this holistic approach to health.

The local medical establishment has also taken note of Husbands' success. When the San Francisco Preventive Medical Group accepted Husbands into its ranks in 2005, he became the first chiropractor to receive that honor. He also taught at the 17th Annual World Conference on Anti-Aging Medicine in San Jose in 2009.

Despite all his accomplishments, he is proudest of his family. He and his wife, Rosete De Las Alas, have a 5-year-old daughter, Kristiana. "Both my marriage and the birth of my daughter helped me be less selfish and self-centered," said Husbands. "Being born-again, I learned to accept God's grace to live for the Lord Jesus Christ and for my family rather than for myself." ∞

Douglas Husbands in his San Carlos Office.

