



The **FitDVM** MOVEMENT

*A Guide to a
Healthier, Happier
YOU*

DR. LAURA BALTODANO, DVM

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I would like to dedicate this book to my husband, Bruno, and children Brandon, Andrew, Gabriella, and Victoria. They have stood by and supported me in all my endeavors from business owner to veterinarian to practice owner to health and wellness coach and beyond. It has not always been easy. The many late nights and time away have at times been a challenge. I would not have been able to do it without their love and understanding of my passion and drive to leave a legacy for them, for my profession, and for those that I serve. Thank you from the deepest depth of my soul for putting up with my level of crazy. I love you just as much.

Love always, Memoo

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A Personal Note from Dr. Laura



You love being a medical professional. You are passionate about what you do, and you do it well. Your fellow practitioners do too. And yet, studies consistently show that veterinarians have a high rate of suicide – four times higher than other professions, according to *USA Today*. Dentists used to be the highest. Why? There are many factors, but the reality is that the challenges you face on a daily basis can take a huge toll on you mentally, emotionally, and physically – causing you to neglect yourself and fall prey to unhealthy habits.

I know – because I've been there. As a veterinary practice owner, wife, and mom of four children, I know all about being busy, stressed, exhausted! When I began to make taking care of myself a priority, I experienced multiple benefits, including overall well-being, better stress management, better time management, and a more positive outlook on life.

Welcome to the FitDVM Movement – inspiring and empowering you to live a happier, more fulfilling life!

As medical professionals, we are so passionate about what we DO, and we often lose sight of who we ARE. It's time to take our health and wellness back, to prioritize ourselves! You are worth it, and you will feel so much better for it. All aspects of your life will benefit. My promise to you is that we can do it together!

So let's get started . . .

ONE

Healthy Mind



A negative mind will never get you a positive life.

MARK TIMM

Out with the old and in with the new! If you want to improve the quality of your life, feel more fulfilled, and build a bright future, you must begin by focusing on the positive. What happened in the past is in the past. You can't change it, but you can learn from it and move on. It's time to create your future and live the life of your dreams! It's time to live your life with passion and purpose. So what's holding you back?

Letting Go of Self-Limiting Beliefs

We all have beliefs that hold us back, don't we? We tell ourselves we can't accomplish something because of XYZ. It starts with a thought, but pretty soon that thought becomes a belief – a self-limiting belief. And then others like it take up residence in our minds, preventing us

from moving forward and achieving our dreams. Often it is because someone else told us we couldn't. It is most likely because *they* couldn't or wouldn't – or they don't want *you* to because it says something to them about themselves they don't want to admit.

Stop for a moment and ponder what is holding you back from being happy, successful, prosperous, healthy. How are self-limiting beliefs blocking your ability to live your best life? Grab your journal and jot down the top three things that are holding you back today from achieving your dreams. For each of those negative beliefs, write down a positive belief to replace it.

The Power of Confidence

Positive beliefs result in confidence, and confidence is incredibly powerful. Confidence is what allows you to open a door when you have no idea what is behind it and don't know what to expect.

Think about an opportunity you just can't pass up. Something that, if you took advantage of it, might lead you to everything you've ever dreamed or thought you could become. As Confucius once said, "The will to win, the desire to succeed . . . these are the things that will unlock the door to personal excellence." Confidence is the key that unlocks the door to your

full potential! Confidence is a choice – it's a gift you can give yourself over and over again. Instead of comparing yourself to others, wishing you were someone else and bemoaning your weaknesses, confidence allows you to focus on your strengths. With confidence, you realize how beautiful you really are!

Self-confidence is like a super power. Sometimes we just need to put our big girl socks on and start believing in ourselves . . . and that's when the MAGIC starts to happen! Confidence is the foundation for all great successes and achievements.

Healthy Mind, Healthy Habits

Being a medical practitioner is wonderfully rewarding in many ways, but it also comes with its own unique set of challenges. The reality is that you face some pretty daunting challenges on a daily basis – challenges that can take a huge toll on your mental health. These obstacles can lead you to neglect yourself and fall prey to unhealthy habits.

But if you learn the secrets of having a positive, healthy mind, you'll be able to rise above the day-to-day stresses and stay strong and confident.

TWO

Healthy Body



*"Your life does not get better by chance.
It gets better by change."*

JIM ROHN

As a medical practitioner in today's world, you're most likely juggling multiple roles and commitments. Your practice can be all-consuming, but you might have a family too – with its own set of equally demanding needs. With so many demands competing for your time, what often gets dropped is your own physical needs. You eat on the run, grabbing something fast and unhealthy or skipping meals altogether. And exercise? Who has time for that?

Eating healthy and exercising can actually save time in the long run, resulting in increased energy and stamina that pay ongoing dividends. Let's take a look

at some ways you can incorporate healthy physical habits into your busy life.

Five Healthy Habits

1. Go primal. Common sense dictates that the best diet is one based on foods we've been eating the longest as a species on this planet. Studies show that a "primal" diet made up of fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, as well as meat, fish, and eggs, is optimal for weight control and reducing the risk of illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes. By choosing primal foods, you can cut through the marketing hype and dietary misinformation so prevalent today, and you'll be able to make healthy food choices quickly and confidently.

2. Stay hydrated. Water is your best friend! Proper hydration has a profound influence on your energy level. When you're feeling that midday slump and are tempted to reach for a diet soda and a candy bar, enjoy a glass of water instead. Your body just might be craving some hydration!

3. Eat mindfully. When your schedule is jam-packed, finding time to eat can be difficult. If you tend to eat while you're distracted, there's a good possibility you'll eat more than you need without even thinking. And where is the pleasure in that? The answer is . . .

to eat with intention. This doesn't take a huge outlay of time, but it does mean giving thought to what you eat, where you eat, and how you eat. One particular thing to focus on is chewing your food thoroughly – not only does this help us savour food, it also assists the digestive process.

4. Rest up. Burning the candle at both ends will not serve you in the long run. Your body requires rest for mental and physical energy, as well as improves your chances to live a long life. I know it can be challenging, but one way to improve your sleep habits is going to bed earlier. Keep your nightstand free of electronic gadgets too! When your body gets enough sleep, you'll notice the difference.

5. Exercise! I can't stress enough how important this is. Even something as uncomplicated and low-impact as walking is highly beneficial and is full of mood-enhancing effects. Start with twenty to thirty minutes of brisk walking every day, and gradually add other forms of exercise. Yoga, strength training, swimming, biking – make the effort to incorporate exercise into your days and watch your life change!

You Don't Have to Go It Alone

If you start small, you'll be able to gradually replace any unhealthy habits with new, life-enhancing

habits. It's hard to do it alone, though. Consider finding a coach or joining a fitness group to keep you motivated and accountable.

THREE

Healthy YOU



*"The greatest limitations you will ever face
will be those you place on yourself."*

DENIS WAITLEY

If you're consumed with taking care of everyone else, chances are you aren't taking care of yourself. Self-care is critical to your overall well-being – by taking care of yourself, you can be a better caregiver. Far from being selfish, when you take care of you, you'll radiate positivity out to your world. Everyone around you would benefit if you:

- had more energy
- felt vibrant and healthy
- experienced enhanced creativity
- enjoyed greater confidence
- were more patient

Be Open to Opportunities

I really struggled with self-confidence when I was in vet school . . . I had the “imposter syndrome.” I didn’t think I was young enough, smart enough, or fast enough to get through the rigors of becoming a veterinarian. A wise professor once told me to read a book called *Mindset* where the author discusses how to see obstacles as an opportunity for growth. That concept changed my life, and I have integrated it into my understanding of life and its challenges.

We evolve over time, people come in and out of our lives, situations and circumstances are always changing. Whatever challenge or obstacle you may face at any given time will not be the case forever. Be strong and take from it what you can in order to grow as an individual. Life is a blessing! Live it with passion. Live it with purpose.

Get Started Now

Here are three simple ways you can begin taking better care of yourself.

Create Positive Affirmations

Positive affirmations can change your mind and your life. Write out a few affirmations that coincide with your 2017 goals and commit to repeating them daily.

Make these affirmations full, complete explanations of what you are going to accomplish. State them in the present tense, and say them out loud at least once a day (the first thing in the morning is ideal).

Keep a Gratitude Journal

Each day spend some time focusing on what you’re grateful for and write it in a special journal. That way, when you’re tempted to feel overwhelmed or you’ve had a particularly stressful day, you can look back over your gratitude journal and chase that pity party away!

Practice Random Acts of Kindness

This might sound counterintuitive at first, but it really is a powerful way form of self-care. Doing something small and special for someone, something unexpected and out of the blue, not only can bring joy to someone else’s day – it can have the same effect on you.

Live with Passion

I hope that, as you incorporate these healthy principles and habits into your life, you’ll discover a healthier, happier you. Instead of dragging through your days, feeling stressed and overwhelmed, you’ll be able to achieve more than you ever dreamed and embrace your future with hope and passion!

ABOUT DR. LAURA



Dr. Laura Baltodano was born in Puerto Rico and raised in Miami, Florida. Since she was a child, she knew she wanted to work with animals. In 2013 she graduated with a doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from Washington State University. She is the owner of Lighthouse Pet Clinic in Lehigh Acres, Florida. In addition to veterinary medicine, Dr. Laura is passionate about fitness and is a certified health and wellness coach. She is active in her church and enjoys spending time with her husband and four children.

