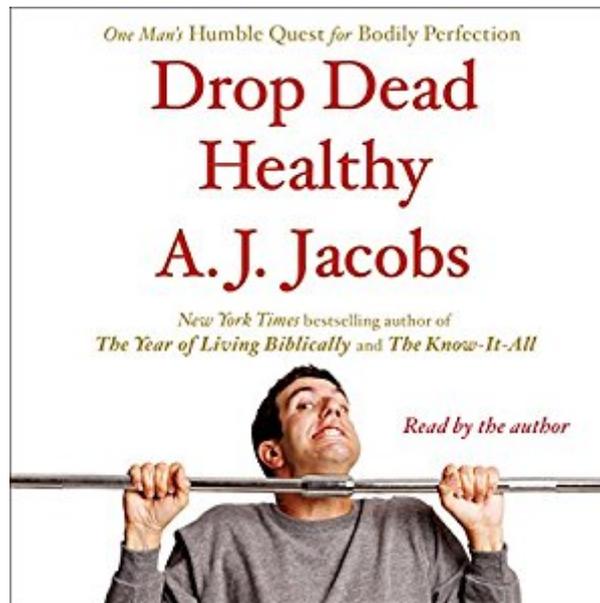


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Drop Dead Healthy: One Man's Humble Quest For Bodily Perfection



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

Magazine writer A.J. Jacobs calls it "experiential journalism." He takes on seemingly ridiculous, yet intriguing, challenges. He reads the entire *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He lives the Bible, even the apparently trivial parts, such as not shaving your face. He outsources his life to a team of personal assistants in India. He learns along the way and shares his discoveries. It's very entertaining. Jacobs has an easygoing and, for someone who writes almost exclusively in first person, surprisingly

non-egotistical style. He works hard at his projects, preparing ahead, and doing research throughout. He's a real pro at being an amateur. In his latest undertaking, he attempts to become healthy. This is more difficult than it sounds. He plans to go from slightly overweight and out of shape to heroic fitness. And that's not all. He also intends to improve the condition of all of his body parts: skin, nose, hands, etc. All this in two years! One of the first roadblocks he runs into is the sheer volume of information and theories on how to be fit. The second obstacle is that much of the information is contradictory. There is no agreed upon, guaranteed path to health. Even trusted experts don't agree with one another. But the main impediment to super health is self control. No surprise there. Jacobs manages to overcome the problem with a variety of methods. When he has trouble giving up a favorite snack, he writes a large check to the American Nazi Party and vows to mail it next time he gives in to temptation. He finds this kind of negative motivation very powerful.

I'm probably Jacobs' biggest fan. I have all of his books and have read, I think, all of his articles. With nearly every other author, I am loth to paid extra money for hardback and will simply wait until the book comes out in paperback. With Jacobs, however, I will immediately pre-order through as soon as I hear that he's about to publish a new book. However, I think I've turned a corner with Jacobs and am starting to tire of his approach. This book, while it was interesting and a page-turner, is something I would never read again. Basically, Jacobs tries to be as healthy as possible for two years, trying out various philosophies and strictures of the health movement. Although this "I did something kooky for a while and now I'm writing a popular book about it"-approach worked with the Bible thing, the George Washington thing, the cognitive biases thing, etc., it doesn't work so well with this material. In short, I guess I was disappointed with this book and am starting to run out of patience with Jacobs. I accuse him of not treating his material fairly (at least here) and not taking his material seriously. This project should have taken him 5 years, but instead he rushed through it in just two. Unlike Jacob's previous outings, you get the feeling on nearly every page that his real goal was to write and sell a book, not seriously explore the different philosophies, which is what really interests the reader. Specifically, a lot of the health, diet, and wellness approaches required more than a friggin' afternoon to really take on board! I'm sure that the proponents of these various approaches -- almost to a man -- are probably frustrated with the book and feel that Jacobs sold them short.

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