



# Rituals of the Ageless Warrior

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# The Challenge

## Tom's Experiment

### The path to Rituals of the Ageless Warrior

Growing up with German DNA can be... let's just say *interesting*. The mindset isn't about trying to be smart — it's about making sure you're **not stupid**. We grew up hearing **Dummheit muss bestraft werden**, which translates to: "*Stupidity must be punished.*" So anytime you think you're good at something or believe you've created something smart, there's always that little voice in the back of your head asking, "Prove it. Show me you're not a dumb dumb"

That voice got loud when I developed the program and lifestyle behind "**Rituals of the Ageless Warrior**". I believed in it. I knew it worked. But my German conscience wasn't having it.

"Prove it," it said.

So how do you prove that your "rituals" work? Not with theory. Not with hype. With "**measurable results**". With something undeniable.

And then it hit me:

I had to turn **myself** into the human experiment.

There was one problem — I was already in great shape. To truly prove that my fundamentals worked, I'd have to do the unthinkable: get myself into **terrible** shape first. At 60 years old. On purpose. And then rebuild myself using only the rituals of my program.

So that's exactly what I did.

I spent nine months deliberately shifting my entire lifestyle to match how the average sixty-year-old lives — food, training (or lack of it), movement, flexibility, mindset, and supplementation. I let myself deteriorate so I could climb back out using only the “rituals” I believed in.

It was risky. It was uncomfortable. And it was the only way to silence that little German voice.

I started with the food.

Breakfast became peanut butter on toast, washed down with coffee loaded with cream and sugar. Lunch? A beer, a grotesque corner-store submarine sandwich, and chips. Dinner was basically a repeat of lunch.

I bought what was being marketed as “healthy” bread and lived on cold-cut sandwiches—salami, mortadella, ham, all the usual suspects most people grab without thinking. For supper it was pasta with tomato sauce, or mac and cheese, often with hot dogs tossed in for good measure. Since I’d never really eaten processed meats before, I was curious to see what effect they’d have on me.

This became my daily menu for nine straight months. The only variety came from the occasional pizza or a desperate run to a hamburger joint. That was it. That was the nutritional backbone of my experiment.

Perfect timing, too: it was peak COVID.

Gyms were closed. Routines were shattered. And I fully embraced the collapse.

No workouts. No lifting. No postural training. Not a single stretch.

A full “zero” on movement.

The supplements I'd taken religiously for years—vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, omega-3s with DHA/EPA, winter vitamin D3, L-glutamine on training days—gone. Cold turkey.

Instead, I watched Netflix for eight hours a day. Every day.

How did I make money during this?

I didn't. COVID took care of that. I lived off my savings, which were shrinking just as fast as my health.

It didn't take long before the negative symptoms started piling up. Within days, then weeks, then months, the decline was obvious—I was sinking fast into the cesspool of health mediocrity. And the symptoms hit hard:

- **My skin went first.**

It became bland, blotchy, and rough. Then it got worse—much worse. My skin began **flaking off like a shedding snake**. Arms, chest, shoulders, back, legs... everywhere. I'd find dime-sized pieces of skin coming off daily. It was horrifying.

The only small mercy? No major dandruff. That could have taken months to recover from.

My best guess is that this skin disaster came from the chemical-laden submarine sandwiches I was eating for both lunch and dinner—those things are engineered for “shelf life”, not human life.

It was disgusting.

It was destructive.

And it was exactly what I had committed to.

If I was going to run the experiment, I had to follow through.

As well towards the end of the nine months I started to develop skin tags. Little tags of skin that just started to appear? Like what old people get for some reason? I didn't know why but it felt like I was aging in light years.

I don't know if it was connected to the skin flakiness and overall collapse of my skin health, but my body hair started falling out. Not Alopecia Universalis—not the full-body wipeout—but my arms, legs, and chest were slowly vacating their former hair follicles. At sixty years old, I'd always had a full head of hair, thick and reliable, but for the first time in my life I started noticing a bit of thinning above my forehead. That was the first moment when the thought hit me: *maybe I should end this experiment before it ends me.*

But I kept going.

• **Then came the drug Noassatol.**

Terrible drug. Let me sound it out for you: **No-Ass-At-All.**

From sitting endlessly, I shifted from a slightly anterior pelvic tilt to a full-on posterior tilt. Posterior tilt is where your ass literally disappears. The glutes stop firing, shut down, and the pelvis compensates by tipping backward so the hamstrings and other parts of the posterior chain strengthen the dysfunction.

Sad truth? I used to have an above-average butt. As my client Tasos used to say about certain women, *She left her ass at the beach.*

Well, I left mine in a chair.

**And the chair kept taking its toll.**

My shoulders and upper thoracic spine started collapsing into sustained flexion —spine curled, shoulders rounded, neck drifting forward like I was permanently bowing to the Netflix gods. But the scariest part was my wrists and hands. They started feeling arthritic.

I was sure it was partly from my ruined upper-body posture, but the diet wasn't helping either. My wrists felt tight and weak. My fingers began to twist, stiffening into flexion like old tree roots. Even the skin on my palms looked older, tighter—like someone else's hands had been glued onto my body.

This part terrified me. I knew how to fix muscular imbalances. But bone? Cartilage? Joint deformities? Was I screwing myself up permanently?

My feet started getting cold.

That had never happened before.

It felt like poor circulation. A dull, unsettling cold that wouldn't go away.

I remembered my father complaining about his cold feet.

That memory hit harder than the sensation itself.

I didn't feel like I was dying.

I just felt... aged.

Like I'd fast-forwarded twenty years in a matter of months.

On so many levels, my body simply wasn't functioning the way it used to.

•**Muscle loss was inevitable.**

Over the nine months, I estimate I lost around **30 pounds of muscle mass**. No Dexa scan, but I know my body—and this wasn't subtle. When I sat down, I

could feel my sit bones pressing into the chair. No padding. No glutes. My ass wasn't just smaller—it was *gone*.

My strength vanished too. I went from grabbing a frying pan with one hand—something I never thought twice about—to needing both hands because the water sitting in it suddenly felt too heavy. That moment hit me hard. I wasn't just de-conditioned. I was becoming frail.

Did I mention I'd get personal and transparent about everything? I have to be—because I'm after the truth. The real truth about human health, wellness, and performance. And sometimes that truth is uncomfortable.

So how do I say this without drifting into medical jargon or pretending to be a physician?

My “hammer”—my buddy downstairs, the guy that lives in my basement, my hog—you get it—stopped working.

No morning tent, no spontaneous tepee, no possibility of pitching anything at all. I think everyone understands what I'm saying.

I told you I'd get personal.

To make matters worse, I didn't even have a “recipient” in my life at the time who could help resuscitate or resurrect my little buddy, give him some CPR, get a pulse going again. He wasn't just unconscious—he was shrinking. And that was terrifying, I mean just ask George Costanza about shrinkage.

And if you're a woman reading this, I want you to understand something you probably already know if you're in the demographic for this book: we dudes have a special connection with our hammer. Since about age twelve or thirteen, our dude used to wake up before we did. Every morning it would greet us at full staff, like a loyal friend saying:

*Good morning, champ! Beautiful day ahead. Let's rise, shine, and maybe try to pee with a calculated parabola and hit the toilet bowl target.*

So whether you're a man or a woman, you can appreciate the shock when your lifelong buddy suddenly starts sleeping in. No salute. No respect. No acknowledgment. Nothing. It's like he doesn't even say hello anymore.

It's sad...

But don't worry—there *is* a happy ending.

...And I just realized that might be why they call it a “happy ending” in the first place.

When I say **muscle loss** I also lost muscle on my face and neck. What I noticed was my face started to change and my neck got smaller in circumference. How could this be? A deficiency in testosterone and Growth Hormone and/or IGF-1. This was very very good to know. Just before I committed to the “Human Experiment” I was getting a little obsessed with the human face. My opinion was why do we all start looking like shit after the age of 40? Is it just age and aging sucks? No there are other factors as well and these hormonal deficiencies are a strong part of it.

### **Other symptomatic Problems;**

-Sleep patterns were disturbed-first time in my life. I was developing insomnia? That's something I never new. That lowering my health lifestyle could lead to insomnia? Crazy.

-Really bad brain fog-couldn't focus, forgot things all the time, couldn't find my words in talking or explaining about something?

I know this is gross—but it’s important, and I promised to be transparent. My bowel movements went downhill fast. I used to have nice, long, effortless six-to-eight-inch loafs. No strain, no drama. Suddenly everything changed. What little *did* come out was in thin shavings, like my body was filing down a stool instead of producing one. I was constipated for the first time in my entire life. I had *never* experienced that before.

Using the Bristol Stool Chart, I’d always been a reliable Type 3 or 4—textbook healthy. During the experiment, I slipped into Type 5 and 6, and sometimes even Type 1. Three times over those nine months I had blood in my stool, and on a couple of occasions the stool was very dark—possibly dried or older blood.

## The Bristol Stool Form Scale

|        |                                                                                     |                                                 |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Type 1 |  | Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)   |
| Type 2 |  | Sausage-shaped but lumpy                        |
| Type 3 |  | Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface   |
| Type 4 |  | Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft        |
| Type 5 |  | Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily) |
| Type 6 |  | Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool  |
| Type 7 |  | Watery, no solid pieces<br>ENTIRELY LIQUID      |

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This wasn't just "feeling unhealthy." This lifestyle was literally killing me from the inside out.

-Then there were my feet. The toes on both feet started to **spread apart**. I've always had toes that lined up neatly beside each other, but now they were drifting outward like a duck's. It looked bizarre, but it also made perfect sense: with no training, no walking, no real movement, the entire hip-knee-ankle-foot chain had lost its normal loading. The small muscles that keep the toes aligned had basically gone **flaccid**. My feet were literally losing structure.

My feet also started to swell at the end of my nine month term. That was also very scary because if you google that symptom there are some pretty nasty medical problems associated with swollen feet and legs although it was only up to the ankles for me. My feeling was that this had everything to do with weight gain but more directly my hemoglobin A1c was on the rise. Insulin resistance is, in my opinion, the beginning of the end for most people.

-My fingernails started developing **ridges**, becoming **brittle**, and—strangest of all—growing **slower**. Nails are usually one of the first indicators of internal health, and mine were basically sending up flares. It was amazing, in a horrifying way, how many signals the body gives you when you start sliding into declining health. According to top Endocrinologists in Belgium conclude that this can be due to a "*Adult Growth Hormone and/or IGF-1 Deficiency*". Well, there were a few more symptoms, but I'm going to leave it here.

If you're reading this, go straight to the conclusion **after you've finished this book**—after you've taken in all the principles of the **Rituals of the Ageless Warrior**. There's a reason I want you to get there.