



Personal trainer turned restaurateur Martin Lorentsson on a spin bike at Pure Fitness. His Eat Right Food programme offers a variety of healthy meals delivered to the doorstep. Photo: Edward Wong

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Trainer sets the meals in motion

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After personal trainer Martin Lorentsson discovered his clients weren't losing weight due to a combination of poor diet and indulgent lifestyles, he decided to establish one of Hong Kong's first healthy restaurants, Eat Right, on Staunton Street in SoHo in 2006.

"You can work out a lot, but 75 per cent of your results are based on the food you eat," says Lorentsson, 42, who moved to the city 11 years ago. "When I realised my clients were eating crap, I asked them: 'What if I delivered healthy food to you; would you promise to stick with the diet?'"

His clients agreed and so, along with the restaurant, Lorentsson also created the Eat Right Food programme, which offers nutritious meals delivered to the doorsteps of busy Hongkongers.

Entering the food business hasn't been without challenges, and if he had to do it all over again the Swede admits he's not sure he would be a restaurateur in Hong

Kong. "The rent is a killer. You have to be different to survive in this market," he says.

But passion motivates, and at the core of Lorentsson's personal training and healthy eating crusade is a desire to inspire people to be their best.

"I always want to help people," he says. "The best machine we're ever going to get is our body, and many people have no idea what to put in it to get the best out of it."

At the height of his career as a group training instructor at Pure Fitness, Lorentsson would work – and therefore exercise – for up to 24 hours a week. To reward himself he would have a glass of wine and some chocolate.

These days, his regime is less intense thanks to his new baby – and he and his partner have another on the way.

"But I still try and squeeze in a few hours on the bike when I can," he says. He claims he is in the worst shape of his life, but his physique would still make many envious. It's all down to a healthy diet, he says.

What's your food philosophy?

I believe in trying all kinds of food. I ate raw food the other day and loved it. Raw food doesn't mean you have to be a tree hugger – it's all about variation. But I think that is just one way and I don't believe you have to cut out meat from your diet to be healthy. I think all kinds of food will give you the benefits your body needs. My most important tip, though, is portion control.

How can restaurant food be healthier?

It's all about the way food is cooked. At Eat Right, for example, we look into a recipe we like and change a few things around to make it healthier. For example, by using brown rice or cooking with olive oil.

What's your own secret indulgence?

I eat plenty of chocolate. But since I've scaled back on my training, I've also had to scale back on what I eat.

What do you love about group training?

It's a challenge to make sure you give everyone the key to reach their own goal. Everyone's goal is



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MARTIN LORENTSSON

different and people are on different levels – some people come for socialising, some people are training for a marathon. It's the same with food. What I try to do is to give people an education so they can continue with a healthy lifestyle on their own. I don't necessarily want people on my programme for five to 10 years. I want people to learn from me and then implement that in their own lives.

What's the most common feedback you get from participants?

Often people think to be healthy they need to cut out carbohydrates,

but these include potatoes and vegetables. Your brain and body need carbs for energy. We all have different carbohydrate needs, but it's still part of a balanced diet.

How important do you think organic food is in a diet?

Not as important as I wish it was. You're getting a lot of pesticides in non-organic vegetables and a lot of other bad stuff such as added hormones in meat. But at the end of the day it comes down to your wallet. If, for example, you've got kids the question is: "Should I give my child one apple, the organic one at HK\$25, or should I give them five apples for HK\$15, which will last a whole week?" I believe the message should be: eat organic when you can and when your wallet allows.

What's your hope for a healthier Hong Kong?

I would love to have some competition in the market for the healthy food delivery programme, because that would keep me on my toes. I would also love to see people eating healthier and asking for healthier food at restaurants.