**BALANCE**

As a teenager, I would day dream to go to sleep at night (if that makes sense.) I would play out dreams in my head of what my serious girlfriend would look like. I could see myself picking her up in a certain car, wearing certain clothes and of course, I’d be wearing a nice watch. This gave me comfort and gave me something to strive for.

I had no clue what I was doing. I didn’t understand that I wasn’t just forecasting, I was planning my lifestyle. It’s not easy and it takes work. I’ve heard people talk about a balanced diet. They would say that a balanced diet was the ticket to good health. In that, they talked about food from the four food groups perfectly balanced, suggesting that you would have a better chance of being healthy if you consumed the right portions daily.

The same thing is vital when it comes to lifestyle. When we’re young we want to look good. We want to attract people. As you get older, you’re more consumed with health along with everything else. With the balanced diet, they could have just said the word diet, but they didn’t. Balance is key when it comes to being well rounded at anything. Here are a few tips for a balanced lifestyle.

1. **Exercise.** You don’t need to work out for an hour and a half. Figure out your target goals. What is it that you’d like to achieve? Do you want to be bigger, smaller or just want to maintain? Figure out how to attain these goals. Make sure you get some cardio in like brisk walking, running or cardio machines. Your heart will thank you if you do it regularly.
2. **Food.** The older you get, the harder your digestive system has to work. So watch the food you eat. You may have to consult a dietician that can help you.
3. **Health.** Stress management – especially if you’re a Black male. There are free services that can assess your stress level and teach management techniques. If you’re a veteran there’s abundant help. Start with the V.A.
4. **Emotional.** Whatever this means to you, whether it be relationships, hobbies, charities, or other social means. If you have the time, there’s nothing wrong with joining non-profit organizations and volunteering your time. Join a gym. Join a church. These are called networks as well as outlets.
5. **Financial.** Let’s face it. There are levels to this shit. I can’t offer any suggestions in this department but what’s most important is that you do what you feel is comfortable for your situation. You don’t want to live outside of your financial means. You want to find comfort on the lever you’re on. Financial security feels good. Get yourself a financial advisor. They are free. They can help you where you are and get you to where you need to be.
6. Of course, **Style.** As we get older, styles change. You don’t want to be left behind. You don’t have to follow the latest trends but you need to change with the times – but make sure it fits your character. You don’t want to look like today’s mumble rapper, but you don’t want to look like the old player with the jogging suit and Kangol either.

In essence, balance is the key to any successful plan. Like they say a little variety keeps it interesting but too much of a good thing is a bad thing.