

## HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS

## WHAT'S YOUR WORKOUT?

## Bakery CEO Does Not Live on Bread Alone

By MELANIE GRAYCE WEST

Ron Shaich loves his carbs. The daily craving hits at about 11 a.m. and he reaches for a bagel, a muffin or a fruit pastry at the office.

Resisting baked goods is a special kind of torture for the 58-year-old founder and co-chief executive of Panera Bread Co., a restaurant chain of roughly 1,600 bakery-cafes.

Mr. Shaich, a confessed couch potato, says he wasn't an athlete in his youth and only paid lip service to exercise in his 30s and 40s, preferring instead to work, sleep or spend time with his wife and two children. "There's always something that's more urgent, even if it's not more important," he says.

By his 50s, Mr. Shaich (sounds like "shake") made a commitment to lose weight and increase his fitness level—both so that he could be active with his son and daughter, now ages 13 and 8, and so he could keep up mentally and physically with the demands of a growing business.

About five years ago, Mr. Shaich's doctor introduced him to Alexander Ponomarenko, a former trainer for the Ukrainian Olympic track-and-field team. His physician thought Mr. Ponomarenko would be a perfect personality match because he had worked with other older, Type-A personalities.

Mr. Ponomarenko is from Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, and works as a full-time personal trainer with a studio in West Concord, Mass. Mr. Ponomarenko says that he enjoys working out with Mr. Shaich because it's interesting to learn from someone in business. "It's boring to only talk about exercise," he says.

Since working with a trainer, Mr. Shaich says he has built muscle and trimmed nearly 10 pounds from his 6-foot frame, bringing his weight to around 186 pounds.

The one-on-one training works because there are no excuses: Mr. Ponomarenko arrives at Mr. Shaich's Brookline, Mass., home just before 5:30 a.m., two to three times a week. "I'm not very good at exercising, but I'm good at keeping appointments," Mr. Shaich says.

After five years, Mr. Shaich says that he still has to "drag" himself to exercise and the best part of the workout is the end. "This is not something I love. This is something I have to do and I feel great about the accomplishment of doing it," Mr. Shaich says.



Ron Shaich, co-chief executive of Panera Bread in the baseball cap, often starts his morning workout by running and chatting with trainer, Alex Ponomarenko. Mr. Shaich, right, works off beloved baked goods and caramel lattes with abdominal ball exercises.



## The Workout

Mr. Shaich says that weekday workouts are usually an hour and those on Sundays run 90 minutes. In good weather, they exercise outdoors instead of in Mr. Shaich's basement home gym.

The workout always begins with some form of intense cardiovascular exercise—typically running or sometimes a swim in either his indoor or outdoor pool. Then come hurdles of varying heights designed to stretch ligaments, back and hips while keeping the heart rate up. Abdominal exercises, which Mr. Shaich likes, happen either on a mat or with a weighted ball. He says Mr. Ponomarenko has at least 10 different ways of doing sit-ups.

The workout usually ends with strength training or weights, but Mr. Ponomarenko skips the weight machines. "He prefers real barbells and then he leans on me," groans Mr. Shaich. "And at the end of the damn thing, he makes me do push-ups. Which is like, 'Oh, come on!'"

On the days when Mr. Ponomarenko doesn't visit, "I do my best to run," says Mr. Shaich.

## The Diet

Mr. Shaich visits between 25 to 100 Panera stores a month and says that about one-third of his meals and snacks come from Panera. He says he's a picky eater and a constant snacker. He particularly loves car-

mel lattes.

He says he normally has oatmeal with fruit for breakfast and a salad from Panera for lunch. If he is hankering for a sandwich, and a particularly indulgent one, he goes for a Panera Cuban Chicken Panini with ham, Swiss cheese and chipotle mayonnaise spread at 860 calories.

For dinner, he usually eats at home and his wife makes fish or pasta. "We try to eat well," he says. If he is in a restaurant, he eats a salad or soup and an entrée. Every two weeks he "gives in" and has a steak.

Mr. Shaich would like to lose another 10 pounds and get into the 170s, so Mr. Ponomarenko has required him to keep a food diary. Since he's been a careless eater through the years, Mr. Shaich says the diary makes him more aware of the calories he consumes. Now, there are fewer baked items and bagels, more lean meat. Those beloved caramel lattes? They're now made with skim milk and about half the caramel.

## The Cost

Mr. Shaich pays Mr. Ponomarenko \$70 an hour or \$750 to \$1,000 a month.

His basement home gym includes an elliptical machine, treadmill and weights. He estimates that outfitting the room cost about \$25,000.

When he buys his kids their back-to-school clothes, he purchases his

workout clothes in bulk at an outlet store, buying oversize shorts that allow for more movement, T-shirts and gym socks, about 15 at a time, for a cost of roughly \$975. He buys two pair of Brooks cross-training shoes for \$250 every year.

## Playlist

Mr. Shaich never listens to music, but instead talks with Mr. Ponomarenko about politics, family and other personal matters. He describes the time as "therapy" and calls Mr. Ponomarenko a friend. The trainer keeps Mr. Shaich motivated by talking about his future, any health goals and his kids. His regular words of encouragement are "one more" and "you might be the boss in your job, but here I'm boss."

When he isn't talking, he is mentally working out business or interpersonal issues or composing a speech. Sometimes he stops to write something down. The workout time is good for solving problems, says Mr. Shaich. "I find it amazingly refreshing. Your mind floats to all kinds of places."

## Bread's Temptations&gt;&gt;



Scan this code to watch a video on the Panera Bread CEO's workout, or see it at [WSJ.com/Wellness](http://WSJ.com/Wellness).

## Demystifying Good vs. Bad Carbohydrates

Is there such a thing as a good carbohydrate?

In short, yes, says author Barbara J. Rolls, chair of the department of nutritional sciences at Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa. A good carbohydrate is the one with a lower calorie density—which means fewer calories per bite.

Say you're faced with a bowl of pretzels and a bowl of berries. As one might suspect, the berries have a lower calorie density, making them the better food choice.

Dr. Rolls doesn't believe in vilifying carbohydrates, which make up some 50% to 65% of the average person's diet. Some people looking to lose weight decide to keep carbs completely off the menu. The problem with that approach, according to Dr. Rolls, is that a healthy range of carbohydrate intake is between 45% to 65% of a diet. This figure includes fruits and vegetables, which many people fail to categorize as carbohydrates. Mangoes, grapes, dried fruits, corn and potatoes, for example, all score high in the carbohydrate department, but they're also sources of fiber, minerals and vitamins—and still serve up fewer calories than breads and cereals.

Diets that temporarily or completely limit carbohydrate consumption give the average dieter a psychological "boost" when watching the scale, says Dr. Rolls. By subscribing to rules about certain categories of foods, she says, dieters often end up breaking the rule, leading to what she calls the "what-the-hell effect." That's where a dieter eats "lots more than they usually allow themselves."

But carbs keep the brain and red blood cell system functioning well, says Dr. Rolls—as well as the immune system. Carbohydrates are a preferred source of fuel for the body, she says.



Bread carbs have more calories per bite.