

Is Your Mindset Blocking Healthy Cells? How to Think, and Eat, Your Way Back to Balance

By Robert Ferguson

Have you ever wondered why two people can read the same article, or listen to the same lecture, and walk away with completely different ideas? It is not always about the facts. Many times, it is about how our mind processes those facts. The way we think can become the very thing that keeps us from accepting new truths that could improve our health.

As a nutritionist, I have coached thousands of people over the years. Working with a diverse range of people has provided me with a wealth of experiences. Over the last year, I have seen 32 of my clients with dry eye completely get rid of their symptoms after improving their omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. Research supports this, showing that omega-3 fatty acids, especially eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), can reduce inflammation, which is the body's natural response to injury or stress, and improve dry eye (Kangari et al., 2013; Liu & Ji, 2021). This same process of lowering inflammation can also help with many other chronic conditions that are fueled by inflammation.

Another important fact about what I witnessed with my clients is that it was not just based on stories or opinions. Sometimes people share personal experiences, and while those stories matter, they are called *anecdotal* -- meaning they are not backed up by proof. In this case, however, the results went far beyond stories. Each client who reported relief from dry eye also took the at-home BalanceTest, which measures the omega-6 to omega-3 ratio.

Unfortunately, every one of these clients started out with poor results, averaging a ratio of 32:1. To put this in perspective, the ideal is closer to 3:1 or lower. A ratio as high as 32:1 is a red flag that the body is in a state of extreme inflammation, which increases the risk for many chronic conditions.

After six months, none of these clients were using prescription drugs or over-the-counter products for dry eye. Even better, every single client who felt relief also showed clear improvement in their follow-up BalanceTest results, with most dropping into the healthy range of 3:1 to 5:1, and some achieving ratios as low as 2:1.

Excited about these results, I shared this with a family member who had been struggling with dry eye for years. Her response was, *"Give me some information on it and I will talk to my doctor about it."* But she never followed up. To this day, she still struggles with dry eye and avoids the topic.

Why didn't she take me up on the offer? Did she think I was exaggerating? Or was it because I am her cousin, and she assumed I was just trying to sell her something? I may never know. What I do know is that she lost an opportunity to feel better simply because of how she thought about the messenger.

Debra's Story: A Year Lost to Old Thinking

This same pattern shows up in many areas of health. Take Debra, for example. At 52, she was worried about inflammation, had arthritis in her hands, and was taking about seven supplements every day. I introduced her to BalanceOil+ and the BalanceTest, explaining how her omega-6 to omega-3 ratio and her arachidonic acid to eicosapentaenoic acid ratio are important *biomarkers*. A biomarker is something we can measure in the body that gives us information about health or disease (Simopoulos, 2016).

I told her that to truly improve her health, we had to start at the **cell level**. Your body is made of trillions of cells, and each one is wrapped in a **cell membrane**. The membrane is like a flexible skin or gatekeeper that controls what goes in and out of the cell.

When membranes are **fluid**, meaning soft, flexible, and able to let things pass through, they work the way they are supposed to. Nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and oxygen can flow in easily, and waste products can flow out easily. This keeps your cells fueled and healthy.

But when membranes become **rigid**, meaning stiff, less flexible, and less able to let things pass through, this process breaks down (Stillwell & Wassall, 2003). Nutrients cannot get in as easily, and waste cannot get out as easily. The result is low energy, more stress inside the cell, and more inflammation in the body.

Think of it like a **screen door**. When the screen is clean and the hinges are smooth, fresh air flows in and stale air flows out. But if the screen is clogged with dirt and the hinges are rusty, airflow is blocked, and the house feels stuffy. In the same way, rigid cell membranes act like a clogged screen door, blocking nutrients from entering and trapping waste inside.

One of the biggest reasons membranes become rigid is the type of fat we eat. Modern diets are loaded with **linoleic acid**, which is a type of omega-6 fat. In small amounts, linoleic acid is essential, but today people eat far too much of it. That's because it is the main fat in cheap oils that fill processed foods, fast foods, and restaurant meals.

These oils are some of the most common ingredients in everyday foods you'll find at restaurants, in fried foods, salad dressings, sauces, and packaged snacks. They are what I call the "**Terrible 10**," which I will share with you later in the article. When you eat them often, they can flood your cell membranes with too much linoleic acid, making those membranes stiff and inflamed. Over time, this imbalance can lead to health problems like arthritis, dry eye, high blood pressure, weight gain, and type 2 diabetes.

At first, Debra did not believe me. That was our first meeting.

A little over a year later, she scheduled a free consultation. This time, she was ready to listen. When we tested her, the results were shocking:

- **Omega-6 to Omega-3 ratio:** 51:1 (ideal is below 3:1)
- **Arachidonic acid to eicosapentaenoic acid ratio:** 44% (a sign of extreme inflammation)

This was the proof she needed. Debra began taking BalanceOil+ every day and worked hard to avoid the Terrible 10 oils. Eight months later, her results were incredible:

- **Omega-6 to Omega-3 ratio:** 2.8:1
- **Arachidonic acid to eicosapentaenoic acid ratio:** under 3.2%
- And most importantly, she felt the best she had in years.

Debra lost a full year of healing because of the way she thought. Just like my family member with dry eye, it was not about intelligence or effort; it was about mindset.

The Real Barrier: How We Think

These stories show that health is not only about what we eat or what supplements we take. It is also shaped by **how we think**.

Here are three common mental traps:

Confirmation Bias

This is when we look for and believe information that matches what we already think, while ignoring information that challenges us (Nickerson, 1998).

- For example, ignoring years of research about sugar and insulin resistance, but sharing a TikTok that says, *“Carbs are not the problem.”*
- It is like wearing sunglasses indoors; everything is filtered through your lens, even if it keeps you in the dark.

Cognitive Dissonance

This is the stress we feel when what we do does not match what we know is true (Festinger, 1957).

- It is like driving with one foot on the gas and the other on the brake. You burn energy, make no progress, and eventually something breaks.
- Picture someone who knows smoking is harmful but keeps lighting up. The clash creates constant inner stress.

Dichotomous Thinking (“All-or-Nothing Thinking”)

This is the habit of seeing things only in extremes, good or bad, success or failure, all in or all out (Beck, 2011).

- I tell my mom, “I love chocolate milk.” She quickly says, *“So you don’t like white milk?”*
- A client sees no change on the scale and assumes nothing is working, ignoring better sleep, more energy, and less bloating.

Intelligence and Learning Styles

Remember: **intelligence isn't universal**. We all learn differently and at different speeds. Some people understand new ideas quickly, while others need more time and practice.

But speed is not what matters most. What matters is eventually *getting it*. Once you understand the ideas in this article and see how your thinking affects your health choices, you can position yourself to **learn how to learn**. This gives you clarity and allows you to use **critical thinking** to choose what is best for your health.

The Terrible 10: Oils Highest in Linoleic Acid

To support healthy, fluid cell membranes, it is not just about what you *add* (like omega-3s and polyphenols). It is also about what you *remove*. The **Terrible 10** are the oils highest in **linoleic acid (omega-6 fat)**. Too much linoleic acid makes cell membranes stiff, raises inflammation, and disrupts the omega-6 to omega-3 balance (Ramsden et al., 2013).

1. **Safflower Oil** – about 75% linoleic acid
2. **Grapeseed Oil** – about 70% linoleic acid
3. **Sunflower Oil** – about 65% linoleic acid
4. **Corn Oil** – about 58% linoleic acid
5. **Soybean Oil** – about 55% linoleic acid
6. **Cottonseed Oil** – about 52% linoleic acid
7. **Sesame Oil** – about 42% linoleic acid
8. **Rice Bran Oil** – about 35% linoleic acid
9. **Peanut Oil** – about 32% linoleic acid
10. **Canola Oil** – about 20–28% linoleic acid (Gunstone, 2004)

These oils are everywhere, in fried foods, packaged snacks, fast food, salad dressings, sauces, and even foods marketed as “healthy.”

Better Choices for Cooking and Eating

The good news is that there are many healthier options you can use in your kitchen. These fats and oils are lower in linoleic acid and more supportive of cell membrane health:

- **Extra virgin olive oil** -- always look for *extra virgin* on the label.
- **Coconut oil**
- **Palm oil**
- **Avocado oil** -- again, choose *extra virgin* when possible.
- **Grass-fed butter**
- **Ghee (clarified butter)**
- **Beef tallow** (from grass-fed animals)

Debra's success was not just from taking BalanceOil+. It was also about avoiding the Terrible 10 oils as much as possible and replacing them with healthier alternatives, such as these. When she combined both, her numbers improved, and her health completely turned around.

Connecting Mindset to Cellular Health

Debra and my family member with dry eye remind us that **sometimes it takes time** for the truth to break through our doubts and habits. Both had access to answers, but only one accepted the science when she was finally ready.

You can eat the best foods and take the highest quality supplements, but if your cell membranes are rigid instead of fluid, your body will not absorb or use them properly. When your membranes are fluid, nutrients flow in and waste flows out more easily. This is how you create more energy, lower inflammation, and unlock better health.

Takeaway: Your mindset can either block or unlock better health. Do not let confirmation bias, cognitive dissonance, or all-or-nothing thinking stop you from acting on the truth. And do not worry about how fast you “get it.” What matters is that you do. When it comes to your health, especially at the cellular level, **fluidity matters**: in your mind, in your habits, and in your cells.

Next steps: One of the most important things you can do is take the **BalanceTest** to learn your omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. Then, improve your numbers by:

- eating more **fatty fish** (like salmon, sardines, and mackerel), **or**
- supplementing with **BalanceOil+**, which combines omega-3s and polyphenols to help support a healthier ratio.

To learn more about the **BalanceTest** and **BalanceOil+**, ask the person who shared this article, email me at robert@dietfreelife.com, or [schedule a free consultation](#). Good luck!

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