

This Is What A Health Guru's Lifestyle Really Looks Like

[Rachel Sugar](#)



When it comes to juggling both a healthy lifestyle and a busy schedule, it's easy to let things slide — especially on the weekends. But, then you meet Fernanda de la Puente, and all those excuses go out the window. She's a New York-based holistic nutrition counselor, a natural chef, a lifestyle coach, *and* a certified yoga instructor — and, her passion for clean living is totally contagious.

Not that we're surprised. De la Puente was born for this — literally. Raised on an organic farm in her native Peru — a country known for its food culture (it's the *home of quinoa*, after all!) — a career in nutrition seemed written in the stars. But, when she realized a standard Western approach to health wasn't cutting it, she headed to India to study alternative healing systems. By the time she came back, her course was set.

Now, the wellness guru spends her days helping her clients find their perfect balance in food *and* in life at [Peeling In](#), her own nutrition coaching company. And, de la Puente practices what she preaches. How does she do it (and where does that glow come from)? We tagged along through her daily routine to soak up her healthy living tips, catch her easy-going spirit, and see how she effortlessly styles her [lululemon](#) gear for both the studio and the city streets. So, clear your mind, breathe deep, and get ready to move one step closer to nirvana.

Photographed by [Ben Lamberty](#); Styled by [Alison Mazur](#); Hair and Makeup by [Ashleigh Ciucci](#)

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When did you know you needed to approach life differently, more holistically?

"So, I ate all this amazing, organic food as a kid in Peru, and then when I

came to California to formally study nutrition in college, my actual diet wasn't good at all. I was learning the whole Western approach to health and nutrition — very scientifically based. It was really, really interesting, but..."

But, something was missing?

"Yeah. For me, it wasn't whole. So, I went to India to find that other component."

Did you know what you were looking for when you went to India?

"Honestly? No. I just wanted to find the thing that would make my life more complete. My boyfriend at the time invited me — I just trusted the opportunity for presenting itself like that. And, then in India, I discovered meditation and Ayurveda, and I learned about Chinese medicine and herbs. All that brought me back to what drew me to nutrition in the first place. When I got back to the U.S., I totally switched gears."

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That must be so empowering, to be able to discover a completely different path to health. But, certain practices, like yoga, have *always* been important to you, right? When did you start practicing?

"Yes, I've been doing yoga forever. I think I was 15 when I started, back in Peru, and then I got into it in college in California. When I moved to New York, I fell in love with the Jivamukti school. For me, yoga isn't just about exercise — it's about learning to live joyfully and steadily in the world."

Do you make it to yoga every day?

"Yep. No matter what else is going on in my life, I get to yoga — always at the Jivamukti school. Since I found it, I haven't done any other yoga. I want that consistency. If can't go in the morning, I go at noon. If I can't go at noon, I go at 6 p.m. But, I never miss it. That's important to me. That discipline is something I really value."

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Tell us more about your love of dancing — how do you incorporate that into your wellness routine?

"I do this practice called the 5Rhythms — it's dance meditation, and it's an

incredible way for me to disconnect from the real world. For two hours, I'm in a space where I can be completely free. It's totally different than a club environment. No one is looking at you, there's no alcohol — you're just dancing and letting go of whatever you want to let go of. And, the music, of course, is awesome. I do that once a week. And then..."

There's more?

"Well, I don't always do it, but I try — again, I *try* — to go to Broadway Dance Center one afternoon a week to do either hip-hop or jazz funk. That way, I have it balanced — some 5Rhythms, some jazz, and then yoga every day."

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12 p.m.: Fuel Up

Let's talk lunch. What do you eat to keep yourself energized?

"Lunchtime is the center of my day, so I try to have my biggest meal then — something very, very complete. I do vegetables and then a protein — salmon, or another kind of seafood, or maybe beans and quinoa. Definitely some kind of whole grains. If I'm going to be active, I need that fuel."

You mentioned the incredible food you were exposed to growing up. Do you think your Peruvian roots still play a role in your eating choices today?

"I was born and raised on an organic farm in Lima, so good food's always been a passion of mine. The Peruvian culture is very much a food culture, very focused on fresh, high-quality ingredients. Quinoa, cacao, maca — all the amazing superfoods that are cool right now? They've been in Peru for ages. They're ancient foods."

What do you think gets in the way of people prioritizing healthy eating and wellness in the U.S.?

"Stress, for sure. And, by stress, I don't just mean work stress. We all put so much pressure on ourselves to be perfect. We're constantly trying to go up that ladder. In NYC, especially, it's go, go, go all the time."

Topshop jacket, Laurence Decade shoes.

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We hear you. Some people believe a certain amount of stress is healthy and that it motivates you. But, do you think the level of stress in NYC has a negative effect?

"Yes, we're in a constant fight-or-flight response. When your body thinks you're in an emergency situation, it's not concerned about your digestion or milking all the nutrients from the food you're eating."

So, then what happens?

"It's concerned with survival, with getting enough food. So, we end up

over-eating, gaining weight — just being generally not happy. That's one of the biggest things I work on with clients: fighting stress and slowing down."

What tricks do you recommend for people who have issues with stress eating?

"I'm really into smoothies. I recommend them all the time; they're an amazing way to get the creaminess and sweetness we all crave, but they're healthier than ice cream. And, they don't make you crash later, especially if you mix in something to balance out the sugars, like coconut oil."

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Everyone is all about green juice these days. Why do you think it's become such a big thing?

"You can actually get a lot of proteins from greens, like kale and broccoli, if they're in a concentrated juice form. Greens are a really good way for vegans and vegetarians to get protein."

So, are you a vegetarian?

"I'm not. I *used* to be raw vegan, and sometimes I'll still do a full day of not eating animal products. It can absolutely be a fantastic diet, if you're really committed to it. I think it's especially great for someone who wants to go through some big change in life. But, for me personally, right now? I do include animal protein. Not chicken or beef, but eggs, yogurt, fish...a lot of fish."

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What types of things do you discuss with your clients? What do they come to you for?

"My company is all about helping people peel back their exterior facades and find their core selves. I do a combination of things: lifestyle coaching,

nutrition, and eating psychology."

So, integrative nutrition is much more than just regular healthy eating and exercise?

"Right. Integrative nutrition isn't just about food — it's about your career, your relationships, the way you wake up in the morning. All that stuff is reflected in how you eat. It's as much about your mind as it is your body."

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Who's your typical client?

"I used to work exclusively with models because I thought it would be more challenging — they're under so much pressure to look a certain way, which leads to all kinds of issues around food."

But, now you work with all kinds of people?

"Yeah, and the funny thing I've realized: *Everyone* has issues around food. Sometimes I think people who aren't models actually have it even worse, since they're seeing the models and the fashion world as something they want, something they're aspiring to. Well, maybe not worse — but equally hard, for sure. Basically, it's hard for everyone."

What do people get wrong about eating right?

"People think you have to be vegan to be healthy, or that you have to be vegetarian, or on a really strict juice cleanse. I mean, honestly? I have never been able to make it through a one-week juice cleanse. People think it's all or nothing, that you have to be totally perfect, and that's not true at all."

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Is it ever hard for you, too? Do you have any, uh, not-so-holistic vices?

"Sometimes, I'll stay out dancing really late. I really do try to keep my

eating at a healthy balance, though. Not that I don't ever splurge — I do. But in general, I'd rather take risks on going out and *doing* things than with what I eat."

What do you do to relax, besides yoga?

"Well, I love to walk around. Now that I live in Brooklyn, I find it really, really nice to just take walks. Brooklyn is very laid-back compared to Manhattan. When I lived in Manhattan, it was always so stressful just to be on the street. Now, in Williamsburg, I feel I can just wander. And, showers — I'm a big fan of an evening shower. And, dinners with friends."

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Are all your friends as health-conscious as you are?

"Not at all. I actually prefer it that way. No, I'm kidding — but I really do like being with everyone. I have so many different friends with so many different backgrounds who work in so many different industries, and I love that. I feel like I learn so much more about the human psyche from being in the real world, instead of isolating myself in some health-conscious vegan yogic world."