

# Healthy Body, Healthy Business

By Amy George,  
Editor in Chief

## 5 Proven Health Principles to Apply to Business Practices

**I**n uncertain economic times, there is one certainty. Good health will help get you through.

For nearly 40 years, Kenneth Cooper, M.D., M.P.H., has defined health principles for the world and reminded people that their health is the best insurance they can buy. Today, his son, Tyler Cooper, B.B.A., M.D., M.P.H., CEO of Cooper Aerobics, is taking those lifestyle principles and applying them to maintaining a healthy business.

“Look at how you treat your health and how you treat your business,” says Dr. Tyler Cooper, who holds a business degree from Baylor University and a Masters of Public Health in health care management from Harvard University. “Do you put more into your work than your own body? Or is it the other way around? We can learn from both parts for complete wellness, personally and professionally.”

In the following thorough self-assessment, Dr. Tyler Cooper shares five principles that can help individuals and companies take responsibility for both and achieve success.

### know your history

History dictates the future. Reflecting on and researching your past is critical to knowing where you are headed.

“Family history can be incredibly insightful to know what health areas you should target to prevent future problems,” says Dr. Cooper.

Ask your parents and other family members for specific health information on themselves and past generations. Document information as you learn more and experience

changes to your health, and pass the medical history on to your children.

History also plays an important part in business. “Knowing where you came from—from the beliefs of the company’s founders to its core values—can help guide you in not making the same mistakes twice,” he says.

As things change, companies are able to adapt without losing sight of their roots. Over time, they can look back to see what decisions were positive and negative and how much the company has grown as a result. Written records will help guide the next generation of business leaders.

### know your numbers

Data such as cholesterol, blood pressure, and body-fat measurements tell you where you stand today. A full blood test, stress testing, necessary body imaging, and other screenings can reveal where you are and where you’re headed.

Take the time to dig into the details. “Just because you have a ‘normal range’ in one area, it may not be ideal for you based on numbers of other related tests,” says Dr. Cooper.

Like personal health data, a company’s numbers, such as revenue, expenses, and debt, paint a picture. To understand the data, line by line, talk to your leaders and managers to get their take on the financial picture. One pitfall is assuming that all the company’s dollars are being spent appropriately.

As companies balance performance, products, and profits, leaders should examine if they are doing the best they can with realistic resources.

Whether the outlook is strong or bleak, making consistent, appropriate decisions will help keep the numbers in check. “Just because you’re healthy doesn’t mean you take up smoking,” Dr. Cooper says. “Maintenance, prevention, and consistency will help you keep in shape, regardless of what comes your way.”

### know your body

We’ve all heard that we must listen to our body. Directives on paper don’t always work in real-world applications.

But too often, people ignore their body. After years of neglect, they wonder why they wake up one day and realize they are in a crisis.

The body is no different than an organization. “The real estate industry didn’t wake up one day in a crisis,” says Dr. Cooper. “Neither does your body. Complications from being overweight, smoking, being inactive, and having a poor diet build up over time.”

Another element is knowing the key parts of your body. Your heart, lungs, and colon have important roles in your body just like your staff, company culture, and processes do in your business.

Evaluate the health of the individual parts that make up the whole. Just because you feel well doesn’t mean you are functioning well underneath the skin. The body can mask symptoms of problems until it’s too late.

If you discover a problem, take corrective action before a larger issue sets in and shuts down the whole body.

“Some companies get fat,” says Dr. Cooper, “and dieting is no fun. It can hurt before it gets better,



For both your business and your body, it's vital to have a healthy process for achieving your goals, Dr. Cooper says.

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but you have to make changes—sometimes drastic changes—for a stronger, healthier future.”

### know your goals

Goal-setting starts with knowing why you want to make changes to your health or in business. For both, the end goal should be quality and quantity of life.

Operating without goals is likely to lead to poor personal health and poor business strategy. Appropriate goals should drive your daily decisions. Goals then translate to objectives and corresponding tactics—actions that we can take that make a difference.

“For example, you have a goal to feel better,” Dr. Cooper explains. “The objective would be to exercise, eat healthy, and take vitamins. The tactic, then, is that you tell yourself that today you will eat three balanced meals and exercise for 30 minutes. Your actions

correspond with both objectives and goals. Overall, though, you are in pursuit of a long and full life.”

An example from the Cooper Clinic: Our goal is to provide a superior comprehensive physical exam. Why? To improve people’s lives. The objectives are to offer unparalleled customer service, expert recommendations from physicians, and the best technology. The tactics or actions are how the staff and equipment perform every day.

“That’s why it’s important to remember that what you put in the ‘bank’ now is what you will be living with later,” says Dr. Cooper. “Your future is based on what actions you take today.” As long as goals are attainable and evaluated regularly, then success is on the horizon.

### know your game plan

How you achieve your goals is just as important as achieving them.

If your goal is to pursue health, pay attention to the means or process for achieving the goal. “Let’s say one of your goals is to lose weight. You begin to eat a balanced, calorie-controlled diet, and the weight drops gradually,” says Dr. Cooper. “On the other hand, you only eat celery and drink water. You would lose weight, but your health would suffer significantly, and you could not maintain it.”

While it’s important to have a goal, it’s equally important to commit to a healthy process for achieving your goal. Crash diets don’t work in the long run. Consistency and moderation are good personal and business practices.

*(continued on page 6)*

Along the way, challenges will arise, but how you address the hurdles can be used to your advantage.

"You go to the doctor, who tells you that your LDL, or 'bad,' cholesterol has increased at a rate that matches your rising blood pressure. Anxiety sets in, and the notion that you've lost control of your health," Dr. Cooper says. "This response is reactionary and unhelpful, but thoughtful review of the information can help motivate you and formulate a realistic plan."

Determine your game plan to improve your healthy habits, seek medical advice from your doctor, and take medications, if advised. Take ownership of what you can change—your diet, exercise, weight, and attitude—and don't waste time and energy on what you can't.

"Your health is your responsibility. Your doctor is your guide," he adds.

### making sense of it all

While no one knows how many days he or she has on earth, we do know that the choices we make to improve health can profoundly impact our business and our life.

"When you add up your past and present state, how your mind and body work together, and have your goals mapped out, you have a unique perspective that gives you control today and in years to come. Quality of life is just as important as quantity," Dr. Cooper concludes.

There's wealth in good health after all.

**Drs. Tyler Cooper and Kenneth Cooper say data is key in tracking the health of your body—and your business.**



▶ To find out how your company can take control of its physical and fiscal health, contact Cooper Corporate Solutions at 972-560-COOP (2667) or visit [www.cooperaerobics.com](http://www.cooperaerobics.com).

## An EMBA with a Mind/Body Connection

The Baylor University Executive MBA (EMBA) Program puts these health and business principles into practice. Since 1993, the Baylor EMBA Program in Dallas has been held at the Cooper Guest Lodge at the Cooper Aerobics Center. The partnership provides students with health and wellness curriculum that engage them mentally and physically.

As part of the program, students receive a Cooper Fitness Center membership, undergo a basic Cooper Clinic physical exam, and eat healthy meals while on the Cooper "campus."

"To help alleviate stress among our students, many of whom have a career and a family, we provide an outlet to exercise their body to better exercise their mind," says Gary Carini, Ph.D., professor and associate dean for Graduate Business Programs.

The Baylor EMBA Program is a 21-month program for mid-career professionals to help prepare them for greater career success in the global marketplace. Baylor approaches the EMBA in a holistic fashion. In addition to the mind/body connection, the program offers the following advantages:

- **LEADERSHIP WITH INTEGRITY**—Baylor understands the "value of values" in business education and prepares students for ethical decision-making in today's complex environment.
  - **CUSTOMER SERVICE**—The program provides top-notch customer service to students, easing the stress that can be associated with juggling full-time employment and MBA coursework.
  - **EXTENSIVE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE**—The EMBA curriculum offers two unique learning/travel experiences: Washington, D.C., to address public policy and international issues affecting corporate America; and Asia, to expose students to inherent issues and challenges in conducting business on a global scale.
- ▶ For more information on the Baylor EMBA Program, call 972-458-2327 or e-mail [emba.dallas@baylor.edu](mailto:emba.dallas@baylor.edu).

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