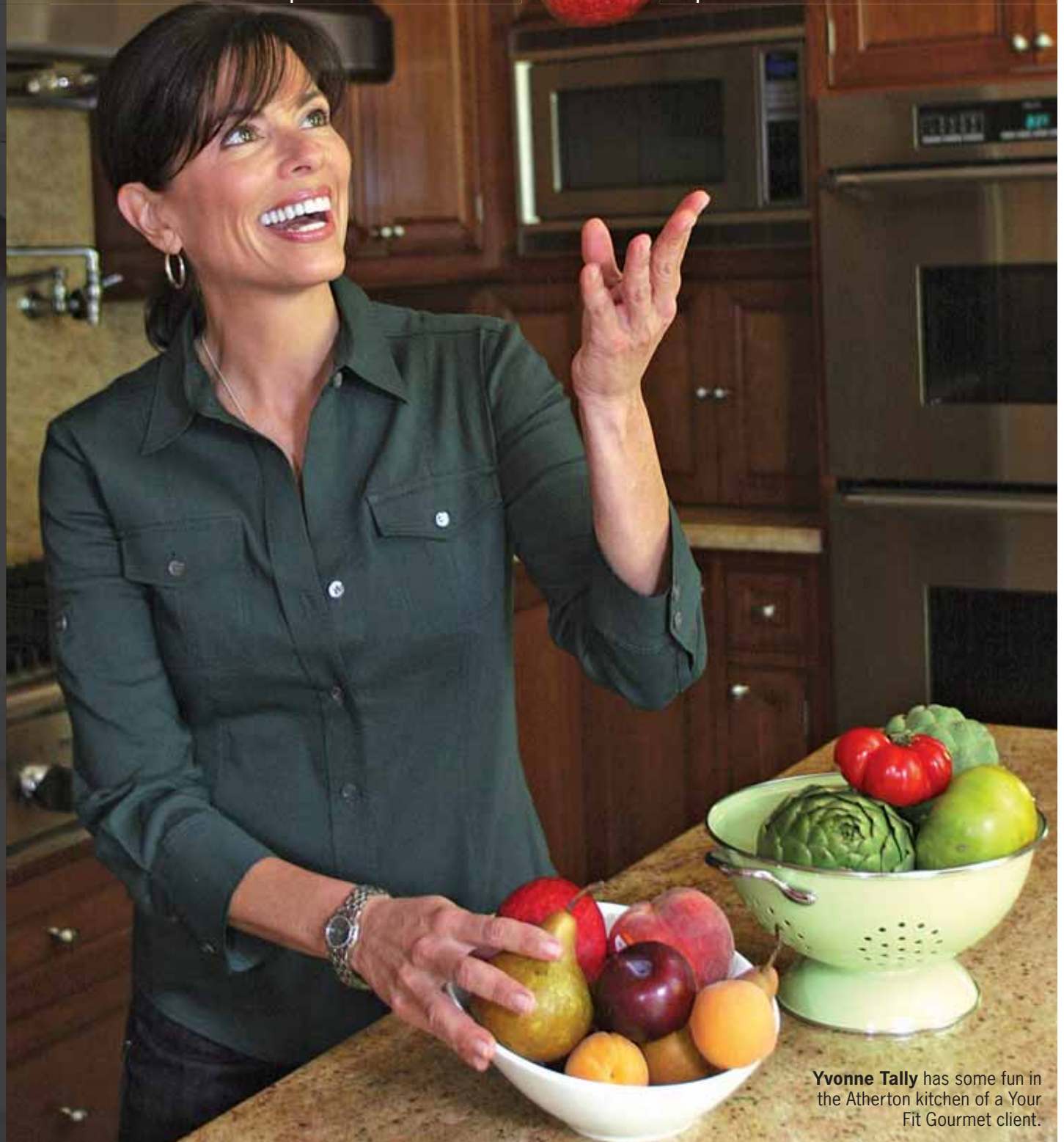


## Good Health: *step by step*

[meals included]

MENLO PARK CULINARY AND HEALTH PRO SAYS MEASURED LIFESTYLE CHANGES ARE MORE EFFECTIVE, LESS PAINFUL THAN EXTREME STRATEGIES

STORY BY RENEE BATTI  
PHOTOS BY VERONICA WEBER



Yvonne Tally has some fun in the Atherton kitchen of a Your Fit Gourmet client.

There's nothing more likely to defeat someone who's determined to improve his or her health than an "all or nothing" attitude and expectations of quick results.

Examples are plentiful: the couch potato who decides to start jogging — attempting three miles on Day One; the overweight ice cream junkie determined to change her eating habits by consuming nothing but salads and reducing her intake by 1,000 calories a day.

We've all been there, or know others who have. And the outcome is predictable: Mr. Couch Potato turns in his running shoes after Day Two, and Ms. Sweet Tooth raids Safeway's Ben & Jerry's section after Day Three.

Food and fitness professional Yvonne Tally of Menlo Park has seen enough

of this extreme change in behavior to understand how futile — and fleeting — it is. Change happens, she insists, "one small step at a time."

That belief is the cornerstone of Ms. Tally's work with individuals trying to make lifestyle changes to improve their health. A co-owner of Poised fitness center in Menlo Park with her friend Jill Plant, Ms. Tally says: "The biggest problem for people trying to make lifestyle changes is that they try to change too much at once, and it's so overwhelming that it hurts. It really hurts, and they (ultimately) give up."

Ms. Tally and Ms. Plant have operated Poised, a private personal training center, for nine years, focusing not only on strength training and Pilates practice but on a healthful lifestyle as well.

Certified as a personal trainer and in the Pilates method, Ms. Tally says that one of her goals is to help her clients think differently.

"For example, people dread getting up out of bed to go exercise," she says. "But I remind them that what they dread will only last 40 minutes to an hour at the most ... and I tell them to think about how they'll feel for the other 23 hours of the day."

### Nutrition and the happy palate

In addition to her work with Poised, Ms. Tally offers her expertise to clients through a second business — one that nicely balances out the exercise component of good health. A high-honors graduate of the California Culinary Academy who has worked professionally as a chef, she established Your Fit Gourmet about

10 years ago.

As a food, nutrition and kitchen organization consultant, Ms. Tally teaches cooking classes, advises on healthful eating, and offers to come into your home for a "pantry raid" — a purging of your pantry and refrigerator of the unhealthful stuff and a consultation on what should replace it, along with meal-planning and kitchen organization advice.

In her capacity as a culinary and nutrition specialist, Ms. Tally emphasizes fresh food over processed food, doesn't shun all culinary fat, loves olive oil and demands good flavor. For those trying to lose weight, she advises a cut in portion size, not abandonment of enjoyable, flavorful food.

See **HEALTH**, page 23



**Yvonne Tally** coaches Sandra Schlotter during a session at Poised, a fitness center owned and operated by Ms. Tally and Jill Plant.

## Step by step

### HEALTH

continued from page 21

“Again, it’s one small step at a time,” she notes. “I’ll say (to a client), ‘Let’s cut one portion every day — instead of a large latte, have a medium latte.’” Each day, another step is encouraged.

On her Web site, [yourfitgourmet.com](http://yourfitgourmet.com), Ms. Tally offers recipes, personal essays, and food- and fitness-related advice. Among the topics she writes about is what to pack for your kids’ school lunch — a subject she also addressed during an interview that ran on CBS-5’s “The Real Deal” program.

### Following her passion

Her work as “your fit gourmet” reflects far more than her credentials as a trained chef and a commitment to a healthful lifestyle. Talk to her for 30 seconds about freshly harvested fruit and vegetables, good wine and family cooking traditions and it will become clear that this is woman who is passionate about food.

That passion “really started in the kitchen with my mom,” she explains. The youngest of “a lot of children” in her family, she says, “my way of spending time with (her mother) was to be in the kitchen with her.”

As a young adult, Ms. Tally indulged her love of travel by working for a time as an airline stewardess and by going to Europe and “eating my way through the south of France.”

That experience was satisfying not only for her taste buds but for her soul, she notes.

She returned to France once she graduated from the culinary academy, and there she apprenticed with two respected chefs.

At one point during these formative years, she lived for a time in Washington state to be with her mother, who was ill. There, she started taking

morning aerobics classes at the local health club. She liked the workouts so much, she decided to teach some of her own.

“Back then, if you could fit in a leotard and could dance, and had a record player and records, you could teach a fitness class,” she laughs.

But bored in the afternoons, she soon found a local restaurant that needed a sous chef; she applied and was hired.

After moving to the Bay Area, Ms. Tally worked in the corporate food service world for a time before beginning her own consulting and fitness businesses.

Ms. Tally says the enterprises that make up her career today bring together two components that she finds indispensable to a balanced life, along with a third element: a positive attitude.

“They’re all about great food, moving your body, and keeping

*Balanced, healthful living is ‘all about great food, moving your body, and keeping your mind in a good place.’*

YVONNE TALLY

your mind in a good place.”

Juggling her two health-related businesses with raising her teenage daughter, Juliette Burns, Ms. Tally continues to throw more balls into the air, with her trademark enthusiasm and focused attitude. She has written a cookbook, “Your Fit Gourmet: Turning Ordinary Ingredients Into Extraordinary Meals,” which she is self-publishing in September.

In addition, she’s wrapping up another book, “Vibrant You: A Lifestyle Plan for the Overscheduled Woman,” which she hopes to have published next spring.

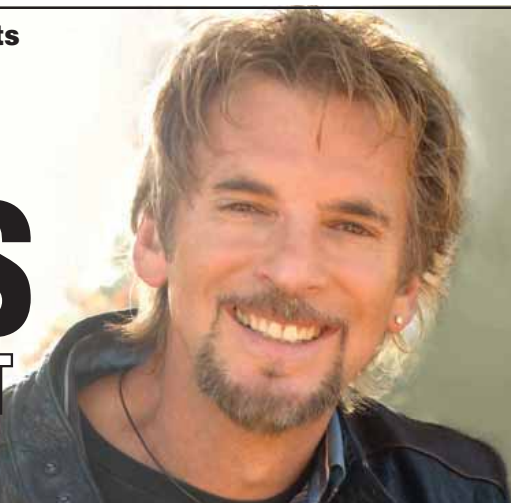
And beginning next month, Ms. Tally will write a regular column for The Almanac’s Health & Fitness section. ▀

Children’s Health Council presents

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July 20, 2008



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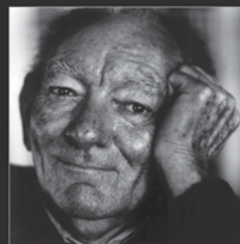
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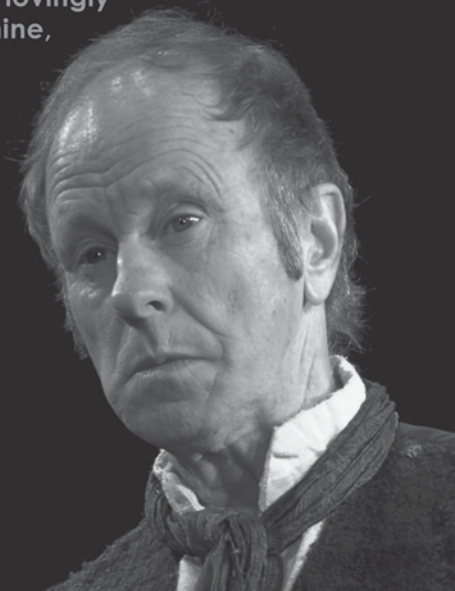
—The New York Times

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