



NEWS + RESEARCH

# Altus Sports Institute: The Science of Optimal Health

By Jasmine France On Jun 30, 2016



*On our quest to find the latest and greatest in health advancements, we discovered the Altus Sports Institute in Santa Monica, California. The Institute was founded by Dr. Christopher Vincent and his brother Paul. Both brothers were top-level athletes on the Olympic track and have a long history of chasing optimal health and fitness.*





Throughout his career, Dr. Vincent was looking for ways to be the best he could be in the most natural way while preventing injuries. When he retired from competitive sports, he wanted to support athletes in that same way. Together with Paul, he created a place to provide everything an athlete needs to stay in the game. The Altus method was developed to increase performance, prevent injuries, and to preserve the longevity of athletes careers using a combination of modalities.

At the Altus Sports Institute, a staff of nutritionists, personal trainers, physical therapists, and other professionals collaborates on the treatment of each individual. They test blood for chemistry and hormones to provide direction on optimal diet in nutrition, provide cognitive therapy through neurofeedback, lay out personalized fitness routines, and call on Eastern Medicine to treat pain naturally through herbs and acupuncture. By putting that all together, Altus says it can get an athlete back on the field much faster than any other method.

The real secret is in the systematization of all these components so they all complement each other. Using a model, Altus has developed an optimum performance continuum. Each individual undergoes an array of testing, and then from that, Altus devises an individualized plan for them. Depending on the scores, a person will fall into one of three different phases of the plan: Regenerative, Functional, or Performance. Each individual goes through the phases, and then gets re-tested to be put into the next phase.

Although the system was developed for professional athletes, Altus has since evolved to treat a variety of individuals. They've branched out from sports, and now offer the same model to the regular people who want to be super fit. It's suitable for anyone willing to commit to this high-level model to maximize their health in a short amount of time. Each session at Altus runs \$150.

We sat down to chat with Dr. Vincent further about Altus and what health means to him.

**BasilHealth: Where does the name “Altus” come from? What does the brand stand for?**

**Dr. Christopher Vincent:** My brother and I were both athletes on track for the Olympics. We loved the motto Citius, Altius, Fortius (Latin for

“Faster, Higher, Stronger”). We kept coming back to Altius, which means higher. Since we’re coming from Portugal, we decided to change the root a bit to make it Altus. It stands for our company providing a higher level of care and service, and our objective of helping people get to a higher standard of life.

**BH: Who are your clients? Can anyone come to Altus?**

**CV:** Anyone can come to Altus, and we treat everyone. Generally, the people who find us are people who are really driven in life. Obviously we see quite a few top level athletes, specifically those seeking an extra level of performance and who want their bodies functioning optimally. Then, there are the same kind of people who are successful in business. Typically, these people are driven to perform at the highest level mentally, and they now are starting to pay attention to their health. They gravitate to us to help them get the healthiest they can possible be in the shortest amount of time. Our system is helpful for those who have daily time constraints since it’s all about efficiency. We also see actors, particularly those who perform their own stunts, or who are trying to look a certain way for a role without using unhealthy methods. And there are those who aren’t in any of those categories who simply want to get most out of their bodies.

**BH: When you're working with a client--or when we're trying to live a healthy, balanced life--do you think any particular factors are more important than others? (Such as diet, lifestyle, environment, relationships, fitness and activity.)**

**CV:** I’d love to say environment is most important--for selfish reasons! I went to Bora Bora with my wife, and that would be a place I’d love to be. It’s an incredible, healthy environment. I don’t know if any single thing is really more important, or if it’s more of a balance. When you look at living a healthy life, oftentimes those are represented by being able to balance family and relationships with work. Of course, sleep is huge. Sitting less is a big one as well, as we’ve been learning more and more about how bad it is to sit as long as we typically do.

**BH: What is your overall nutrition philosophy at Altus? Have you personally tried many different diets over the course of your life?**

**CV:** My overall philosophy now is balance and healthy eating. This involves cutting out foods that are not healthy, and making sure you have enough of the good foods. Diets will be different depending on the person and activity level; it’s very specific to each person. The U.S. “normal diet” is 20 to 1 inflammatory foods to anti-inflammatory foods. Even the healthiest diet tends to be heavier in inflammatory foods, so you want to make sure you’re getting anti-inflammatory foods. This

means eating as many vegetables as you can, and getting them as fresh and as clean as you can. Go for farmer's market, organic, and slow food.

For me, I've tried a lot of diets--more in the performance realm. I competed at UCLA and studied exercise physiology and nutrition, so I was able to try out a lot of diets and see how it related to my performance. I was very strict then. Now, I think that being that strict isn't as healthy as allowing an indulgence now and then. We all need that balance and to give ourselves a little bit of leeway.

**BH: Talk to us about healthy balanced living. What does this mean to you? How do you personally stay healthy and balanced on a daily basis?**

**CV:** I have the motto that you have to make time for your health, or your health will take time. It's important to schedule time for health, and do everything you can to stick to that schedule. You make that as important as any business meeting.

**BH: We just heard about your company-wide cleanse that you do each January? What does it entail? The entire team participates?**

**CV:** We do it every January, and it's not just for the team. We offer it to all of our clients as well. It makes it easier to stick to with the support from others. Our clients love it. They're going through it and know we're going through it at the same time. Pretty much the whole company participates. The timing is purposeful after the holidays, when most of us consume a lot more calories, sugar and alcohol. So we do 21 days of extremely clean, healthy living. First, elimination phase; we take out cravings like sugar, alcohol, and caffeine. Then, we do three days of protein shakes, vitamins, and high fiber. The next 18 days are extremely clean eating. We have vegetarian days, making sure you're combining days. At the end, we'll add back foods to test reactivity. We'll do another in May or June. I think it's healthy to slip back into enjoying your indulgences in between.

**BH: What's the most important piece of advice (or the top 3 things) you have for people trying to proactively take better control of their health and make the right decisions to stay healthy everyday?**

**CV:** The scheduling time for physical health, but also the mental aspects of health. You need to be clear with yourself in who you want to be, why you're doing this and what you want out of it. That informs better decisions. If you're just doing it without drive or direction, it will be hard to achieve control over your health.

Find the balance and start practicing it. It takes 31 days to create a habit. Take one thing at a time and implement it for 31 days. And then notice the results of how you feel, and then you can implement something else.

**BH: How do you find time to manage all of your business ventures? What does your "team" look like to help you balance work and personal life?**

**CV:** Her name is Kirsten. [Laughs.] My assistant protects my schedule and makes sure that I have time for balance. She schedules my wake up time, and then 5 minutes of meditation, and then exercise, and then time turn on the phone (I leave it off until this point in the morning), and then breakfast, then family time--it's all meticulously scheduled. Same thing as I power down from work and return home. She also makes sure there's healthy food available when it's mealtime.

**BH: What did you want to be when you were younger?**

**CV:** This is a funny question. I grew up in a tiny fishing village in Portugal. We had the only car in the village. Nobody had jobs; it was all trade. People just lived off the land and the ocean. I remember I was maybe 12 years old and was sitting on the cliffs, and this conversation came up. I said "I'm going to go to the Olympics." My dream was to win a gold medal. The kids I was with had no idea what I was talking about. They aspired to own a boat bigger than their father, or to raise more animals.

**BH: What are you working on right now? What's next for you?**

**CV:** Besides positively affecting people's lives through Altus, my latest project is transforming corporations. I am going into large companies and teaching these philosophies, and seeing them be more successful and increase productivity while being healthier at the same time. It turns out that getting rid of or reducing stress is good for the bottom line!

**BH: What's in your kitchen today that you simply could not live without?**

**CV:** There's two ways to answer this question. Scientifically, it's all the salads, fruits, vegetables and vitamins. Then, there are the two things that I love and I crave: I love coffee, and the ritual of it. Then there's 73% dark chocolate. I can live without it, but I don't want to.

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