

# **METABOLIC MEAL PLANNING**

*Theory Guide*



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# Introduction

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No matter what goal in life you want to accomplish you will have to come up with a strategy, because without it a goal is nothing more than a dream.

When it comes to meal planning and nutrition your goals might be to lose weight, to gain muscle or to simply live a healthy life. Whatever your goals are, this e-book is meant to teach you what strategies and principles are proven to work.

In order to give you a complete and concise introduction into nutrition, we have to start with the most abstract principles and work our way towards more practical advice later. So over the next few pages I want to teach you the most important dieting principles that govern your body composition and will determine whether or not you will reach your goals.

Together they will make up what we call a meal and diet plan and you have to understand each aspect to execute your plan correctly. All of these principles play an important role in your diet but some are a lot more important than others. Here they are:



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# Chapter 1: The Theory Of Weight Loss

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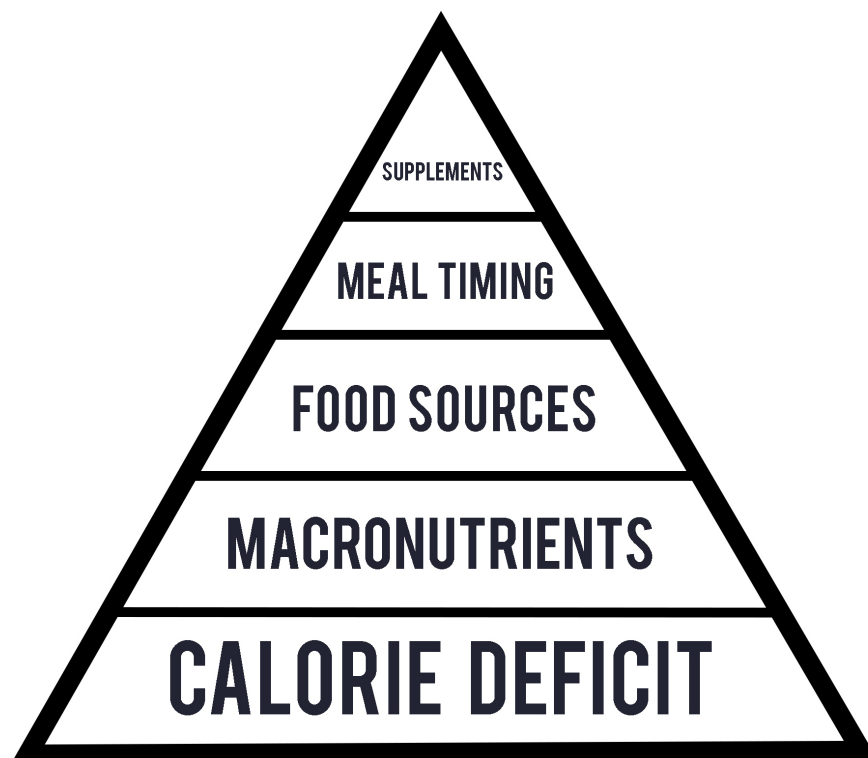
# Chapter 1: The Theory Of Weight Loss

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As a fitness and diet coach I always ask myself what's the best way to teach my students about the most important principles of weight loss. There are so many website, books and courses on weight loss that it's easy to get confused and to lose motivation.

To start off this program I want to show you one of the best resources of practical dieting advice I have ever seen. It's amazingly simple yet very effective. I call it the "weight loss pyramid" and it is designed to show people the different factors that go into weight loss and how important they are.

Let's have a look.





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I'm sure you have seen similar nutritional pyramids before. But they usually include certain foods that should make up your diet. This is not what this pyramid is all about. The weight loss pyramid orders the different aspects of your diet according to their importance towards your weight loss goal.

As you can see a calorie deficit is at the very bottom. What this means is that any diet that is designed for weight loss purposes has to include a calorie deficit. It doesn't matter how healthy you eat or what kind of fancy supplements you take if you don't have a calorie deficit in place none of that is going to make a difference. We will talk about the right calorie deficit later in more detail. For now, just keep in mind that this is the most important aspect of your diet and the base of the pyramid. Without it everything will collapse like a house of cards.

The next important principle are your macronutrients so your daily protein carbs and dietary fats. Your macronutrients along with your exercise regime will determine how you lose weight, which can be fat muscle or water. Of course, what we want to accomplish is pure fat loss so optimizing your macros is extremely important. Most beginners get their calorie deficit right, but mess up macronutrients. So please pay close attention when I talk about the ideal intake of proteins, carbs and fats.

In third place come your food sources, so what type of foods you actually consume. This is a tricky subject and many people ask me why it's not lower on the pyramid meaning more important in your overall diet. What you have to keep in mind is that when it comes to your health food composition is definitely very important. The right foods provide you with important nutrients like vitamins and minerals, whereas the wrong foods will provide only empty calories.



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But when we look only at weight loss and want to design a diet that achieves that, what you eat is actually a lot less important. I know this goes against everything you have been told from gurus preaching to eat this and not that. But the science on this is pretty straightforward.

There are countless examples where people have followed very bad diets that still led to weight loss because they simply made sure to have a calorie deficit in place and get enough protein. Of course, this is not what we are going to do in this program and the diet we will set up for your will also be healthy. But I just want you to understand that from a priority standpoint calories and macronutrients are always more important than food sources.

At this point we are already pretty high up the pyramid. Anything that comes after the first three factors of calorie deficit, macronutrients and food sources will only have a minor impact on your diet success. This doesn't mean you should neglect the following factors, but make sure you have the first three in place before moving on.

Also, if you lead a busy lifestyle and want to follow a diet that is a simple and straightforward as possible, then make sure you focus on the first two or first three aspects. These alone will account for 85% to 90% of dieting success and are enough to get you great results.



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One reason why many people give up their weight loss goals is because they overcomplicate things. You don't have to follow a perfect diet to see results as long as you stick to the lower parts of the weight loss pyramid. Always get your rocks in place before worrying about your pebbles.

But what if you want to perfect your diet?

Then you can also consider the last two aspects of the weight loss pyramid, which are meal timing and supplements.

Meal timing (which also include meal frequency) basically state how often and what time of day you eat whereas supplements refer to anything that is not considered a normal or natural food.

I will go over them in later parts of the program but like I said before they aren't nearly as important as many fitness gurus make them out to be. Most of the supplements out there are pure hype and only a handful will actually help you in the long run.





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# The 5 Priorities Of Metabolic Meal Planning

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- 1. Calorie Deficit**
2. Macronutrients
3. Food Sources
4. Meal Timing
5. Supplements



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# Calorie Deficit

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The single most important factor for weight loss is always a calorie deficit. From a scientific standpoint whether you gain weight or lose weight is determined by the first law of thermodynamics which states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, it can only be transformed from one type to another.

I don't want to turn this into a physics lesson but when applied to dieting, the first law of thermodynamics states that your body weight is dependent only on the difference between the amount of calories that you consume versus the amount of calories that you burn, which is known as your caloric balance.

Before we go into the different forms of calories balances, let's first talk about what a calorie actually is. A food calorie is the amount of energy needed to raise the temperature of 1 litre of water by 1 degree Celsius. As you can see, calories are a form of energy measurement.

When you eat food, you are consuming the energy that is stored within the food. Your body then uses this energy to produce movement and keep your organism alive. Alternatively, if not all energy is used right away it can also be stored for later use. Some energy can be stored in the muscles and liver as glycogen, but these stores fill up pretty quickly so your body will then stored any additional calories in the form of body fat.



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To achieve weight loss we need a negative calorie balance. This occurs when someone burns MORE calories than he or she consumes. Here, your body needs more calories to produce energy for your daily functions than it gets for your food. That means it make up the difference by burning stored energy, meaning you will lose weight.

Because the necessary energy will come from the breakdown of body tissues, a negative calorie balance ALWAYS results in weight loss. This can sometimes be masked by changes in water retention but if we exclude this factor there have been ZERO exceptions in medical history so far discovered.

Now that you know the fundamentals behind a proper calorie deficit let's see how all this dry theory can help us with actual real life dieting. What you need to understand is that your calorie balance will determine how much muscle you can gain and how much fat you can lose over any period of time.

Why?

Because calories are literally the building blocks of body tissues. If you want to build more muscle you not only need to train but you also need to provide your body with the necessary raw materials to form muscle cells. On the other hand, if you want to burn fat you have to make sure that not enough calories are shuttled into fat cells to keep them the same size.



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# Macronutrients

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The last part about the importance of a calorie deficit was a little dry, right? You might think that this is nothing new and everyone knows that you need to eat less to lose weight.

I get it.

Calories aren't sexy and counting them definitely isn't groundbreaking advice.

But calorie counting isn't what this program is all about. The last section was just to help you understand that calories matter and anyone saying otherwise is lying to you. But don't worry, this doesn't mean you have to count calories for the rest of your life. In the Q&A I will list ways to lose weight without micromanaging every aspect of your diet.

So with that out of the way, let's now talk about macronutrients, which are the second most important factor in your diet. Macronutrients are the three main nutrients your body uses for important vital functions. They are protein, carbohydrates and dietary fat.

Protein is one of the basic components of food and makes all life possible. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins and help provide for the transport of nutrients, oxygen and waste throughout the body. Basically they provide the structure for all tissue in our bodies.



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Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for our body and muscles. The role of carbs in weight loss diets is very controversial and always hotly debated. Unlike fat and protein carbs are not essential meaning you could survive without them. But, as you will see later, there are quite a few arguments to still include them in your diet.

Lastly, we have dietary fats. Like carbs, they are primarily energetic, but also essential for hormone production, brain function, and other body processes. There are potentially hundreds of different fatty acids, but just a few dozen are commonly found in the foods we eat.

Now that you have a broad overview of the three macronutrients, let's look at each individually starting with protein.



# How Much Protein For Weight Loss?

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Protein is by far the most important macronutrient when you are dieting. Having enough protein in your system is a necessary requirement to maintain muscle mass when wanting to lose fat. That means if you don't consume enough protein when dieting your body will not only burn fat but also your hard earned muscle. This is not what we want to accomplish. Therefore, it's important that you know how much protein you need to consume every day.

Fortunately, this is pretty straightforward. The optimal protein intake lies anywhere between 0.8g to 1.0g per pound of body weight per day. This range is what has shown to maximize muscle growth in clinical studies and should be your daily goal. This assumes you exercise regularly and also do some sort of resistance training. If you don't exercise at all or just do cardio you can likely go a little below this range because you don't stress your muscles as much. But since my students are motivated and know of the benefits of resistance training I will assume you do hit the gym regularly :)

If you want to be even more specific about where exactly you fall along this range here are the two factors that will determine this: body fat percentage and activity level.



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Simply put the leaner you are, meaning the more muscle instead of fat you have the more protein your body requires. The same goes for people who are more active (either through their training, during their hobbies, or while working).

If you you're leaner than 10% body fat for males and 20% for females and you are very active and train with high intensity than you probably want to shoot for 1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight. However, most beginners will get enough with 0.8g of protein per pound.





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# How Much Fat For Weight Loss?

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On to your ideal fat intake during weight loss. This is a lot simpler than calculating protein needs. In order to maintain your general health and fitness, you need only around 0.3 grams per pound of fat-free mass per day. Here, “fat-free mass” is everything in your body that isn’t fat, i.e., muscle, water, and bone.

This translates to roughly 15 to 20% of your daily calories for most people and is a target value you should not undercut both when dieting to lose weight and to build muscle.

That might sound like a lot at first but remember that 1 gram of fat has around 9 calories so this only translates to about 35 to 45 grams of fat per day for someone following a 2000 calorie diet.



# How Many Carbs For Weight Loss?

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The role of carbs in weight loss diets is very controversial and always hotly debated. I will try to make setting up your diet as simple as possible, so here is my recommendation based on what we know from scientific studies about optimal carb intake.

If you don't exercise then carbs are completely optional and you can include them or cut them from your diet. But if you regularly exercise then they are pretty much a must. Carbohydrates are the body's preferred energy source and as long as you stick to quality sources you will feel the difference.

So if we assume you exercise, how many grams of carbs do you need?

The most straightforward way is to calculate your protein and fat intakes first and then subtract those from your daily calories. Next, you simply fill the rest of your daily calories with carbs.

It's really that easy.

We will go over an example later in the course, so don't worry if you don't know how to do this, yet.



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# Food Sources

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Food sources refer to the individual foods you eat and their given nutrition. Among the other aspects of your fitness diet, they rank third in importance (after calorie deficit and macronutrients).

You might ask yourself why this diet aspect is less important than the first two. Don't fitness gurus always tell you that it's super important to eat certain foods and not others. For example, you often hear claims that there are special weight loss foods that will accelerate your metabolism and make fat loss that much easier.

So why are food sources only in third place?

When it comes to meal planning for fitness, meaning your goals are to lose weight, gain muscle or both, food composition really is a lot less important than people think. As long as you follow the guidelines I showed you regarding calorie consumption and macronutrient intake you will pretty much be guaranteed to reach your goals.

What this means is that consuming enough protein is a lot more important than where this protein comes from (e.g. an egg or a piece of meat). Our bodies are very intelligent organisms and can handle a wide variety of food sources.



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Of course, when it comes to being healthy and consuming nutrient-rich meals, there are differences between different foods. So even though the right foods aren't extremely important for your weight loss success, they are important for your overall health.



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# The Right Protein Sources

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Protein quality can be measured in a number of ways. Most often you will hear the concept of bioavailability, which describes what percentage of the protein that you consume is actually absorbed into the bloodstream.

Another indicator of protein quality considers how much of the protein is composed of essential amino acids (which are those your body cannot make itself) and how much of the protein is composed of non-essential amino acids (which are those your body can make itself). Obviously, sources that are rich in essential amino acids are of higher quality in this sense.

In general, protein quality ranks from animal sources to plant sources. Here is a short list of common foods ranked by their protein quality according to the concepts I just mentioned, starting with the most quality sources first.

Whey Protein

(Cooked) Eggs

Beef and Pork

Chicken

Fish and Seafood

Soy Protein and Quinoa

Complementary Plant Sources (e.g. beans and rice)

Isolated Plant Sources (e.g. nuts or whole grains)



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What this means is that, all other things equal, your fitness will be better if the proteins higher on the list predominate in your diet over the proteins lower on the list. But - and this is a big but - don't go out and buy buckets full of whey protein powder while consuming nothing else.

First of all, the differences between the foods are very small and will make up only a few percent of diet success at the most. Second, there is nothing worse for your physical and mental health than a completely one-sided diet. For example, even though nuts aren't the highest quality source of protein, they are a great source of healthy fats and micronutrients. The same goes for other plant-based proteins or fish and seafood.

This also means that vegetarian athletes will see great results as long as they make sure to get their protein from a variety of plant sources to ensure they get enough essential amino acids through their diet.



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# The Right Carbohydrate Sources

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Just like protein quality, carbohydrate quality can be measured in a number of ways. The most common is the glycemic index. In its simplest form, the glycemic index is a measure of both how fast a food raises blood glucose levels, and how much it elevates insulin levels.

This measure is generally applied to carbohydrates and ranks them from 0 to 100. The faster a carb is absorbed and the larger its effect on insulin, the closer it will be to 100. Slower absorbing and digesting carbs on the other hand will be closer to zero.

Here is a short list of common carbs and their GI ratings:

Dextrose Powder 100

Honey 87

Bran Flakes 74

White Bread 70

Orange Juice 57

Most Beans 20 - 40

Apples 39

Tomatoes 38

Carrots 35

Peanuts 13





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Again, just as with protein quality the glycemic index comes with a big “but”.

Here is the problem: GI rankings are based on the glycemic effects of specific foods that are consumed isolated and fasted state.

That means unless you eat first thing in the morning or after a long fast, you’ll never be consuming your carbohydrates in a fasted state. And even then, a typical fitness meal plan always combines carbohydrates with fats and proteins.

Since fiber and fat slow down digestion and absorption, they will lower the glycemic index of the entire meal. But even if you did consume a high glycemic carbohydrate source alone and in a fasted state, it still won’t affect your health negatively.

Unless you are a diabetic or have a pre-existing health condition, our bodies are very good at keeping blood sugar levels and insulin levels within a healthy range. This applies especially to people who regularly exercise. Â

What this means is that even though the GI index is a nice theoretic concept, in real-world scenarios it’s really not as an important as many people make it out to be. So instead of comparing “fast carbs” and “slow carbs” here is what you should focus on.



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First, get the majority of your carb intake (80-90%) from high fiber, minimally processed sources. This includes foods such as oatmeal, rice (brown or white), potatoes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

Second, consume your carbs as part of a complete meal with protein and healthy fats. As long as you do these two things you will be fine and there's no need to go crazy about carb composition.



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# The Right Fat Sources

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For your fitness goals, fat sources will be even less important than carb and protein composition. Nonetheless, consuming the right kinds of fats and staying away from others will make a big difference in your overall health.

As you probably know, fats are usually categorized as saturated, unsaturated or trans fats. Unsaturated fats can further be broken down into monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

You want to make sure to reach your daily fat intake through mainly monounsaturated fats such as avocados, nuts and olive oil. Polyunsaturated fats, which include many vegetable oils and healthy saturated fats (e.g. from coconut oil or grass-fed beef) also have their place in a well-rounded diet.

What you should limit or avoid though are trans fats which can be found in highly processed foods. They have been shown to not only have negative effects on muscle growth and fat loss, but are also bad for your overall health.



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# The 5 Priorities Of Metabolic Meal Planning

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# Meal Timing & Meal Frequency

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Here is the honest truth about meal frequency. It doesn't really matter if you eat three or six meals or anything in between. All studies on different meal frequencies have shown that different setups lead to basically the same results. This also means you don't gain anything from eating several small meals.

No, it doesn't boost your metabolism to any meaningful degree and your overall energy expenditure will be the same as if you ate three large meals. But what about the extreme cases like only two meals per day or more than six?

More than six meals shouldn't be a problem in theory, but for me personally it wouldn't be practical to be preparing meals all the time. Two or even just one meal per day can lead to problems because they would have to be quite big to cover your daily calories.

Also, when it comes to protein you want to ensure a steady supply throughout the day which would be difficult with only one meal as your body would digest all at once and would have a hard time storing any protein for later.



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But of course anything is possible and studies on intermittent fasting have shown that if you design your diet correctly and ensure that you consume sources of slow digesting protein, two meals a day can lead to the same results.

But in my opinion, you don't have to overcomplicate things here so I'll just leave it up to you. The most practical scenario is probably one where you eat 3 - 6 six meals throughout the day. Once you have your meal schedule in place, the only other thing you need to worry about are pre- and post-workout meals.

In the rest of this section I will explain protein, carbohydrate and fat timing in more detail.



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# Protein Timing

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You probably heard the age-old advice that you should eat six meals throughout the day to constantly supply your muscle with enough protein that it doesn't break down. The idea is that while our body can store dietary fat (adipose tissue) and carbohydrate (liver and muscle glycogen), it cannot store excess protein.

That's why for years bodybuilders religiously planned their meals and always had a protein shake or protein bar with them to avoid going into a catabolic state where your body breaks down muscle tissue.

However, today we know that even though the body cannot store excess protein, it's a lot smarter than many people think and you don't have to eat six meals to grow and maintain muscle tissue, nor do you have to time them exactly three hours apart. Let me explain.

When it comes to protein timing our one and only goal is to create a continual supply of amino acids (from digested protein) into the bloodstream to avoid muscle breakdown. The one important variable we have to look at here is protein digestion.

Protein digestion describes how fast the consumed food is actually broken down into amino acids and absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract. How long this process takes depends on three factors: (1) protein type, (2) meal size, and (3) fat and fiber content.



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## Protein Type:

The fastest digesting protein is whey, which can clear the GI tract in within one hour. Whole food proteins (e.g. chicken breast, lean beef and fish) come next. These proteins can take a few hours to be absorbed from the GI tract. Last on the list are dairy products. This is because of their casein content, which can take up to seven hours to be absorbed.

## Meal Size:

Because our stomach requires a certain time to break down and absorb food simply adding more food will prolong the digestion time of protein. The protein in a normal whey protein shake will usually be digested fairly quickly. But, if you add to that shake some oatmeal the same protein will be digested a lot slower. Even more protein itself can bring down absorption times.

## Fat & Fiber Content:

Both fat and fiber will also prolong the digestion of proteins. That's why a big and fatty steak can take as long to be digested as a casein source.

With this in mind there are different strategies to achieve a consistent supply of amino acids in the body. You can eat six small meals and simply follow the old bodybuilder advice. But you can also just eat three meals as long as they are large enough to cover both your daily protein needs and are slowly digested.





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# Carbohydrate Timing

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For carbs, meal frequency is not generally an issue unless you want or need to consume a lot. That means that you can again eat them in two to six meals throughout the day. In theory, carbohydrate meals that are too large to be converted into glycogen will be deposited more as fat tissue. However, from my experience the drawbacks are minimal. What's more important is that you time your carbs according to your workout schedule.

Simply put, you want to eat some form of carbohydrates before and after your workout.

Why?

Because eating carbs before your workout will provide your muscles with additional fuel for your training, which will indirectly affect your muscle growth because you will be able to lift more weight or train more intensively.

Eating carbs after your workout on the other hand will refill glycogen stores which have been depleted in your workout. Also, include carbs in your post-workout meal will quickly raise insulin levels and keep them elevated for longer periods of time. Insulin acts anti-catabolic, which means it lowers the rate of protein breakdown that occurs after exercise.



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So you see it's pretty simple. How often you eat carbs throughout the day doesn't really matter as long as you get some before and after your workout. You probably want to know how long before and after you need to consume your carbs and how much exactly. That is what I talk about in the section on pre and post workout meals.



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# Fat Timing

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In general, it makes sense to eat less fat and more carbs and protein before and after hard exercises. That's because fat is more difficult for the body to digest, so it also slows down the digestion of anything you eat along with fat.

This is not what you want in your pre-workout meal because you want the carbs and protein to readily available during your training. Therefore, the closer a meal is to your workout the less fat it should have. So, if you like a larger pre-workout meal with more fat, make sure to leave some more time before you hit the gym.

But you can also use fat strategically to your advantage at other times of the day. Because of its ability to slow down digestion, fat can also be used to time meals over long intervals. For example, if for whatever reason you cannot eat anything for a very long time, let's say for the next 8 or more hours, a large amount of fat should be eaten in the meal before that interval.

This high fat intake will not only slow down the absorption of carbs and protein, which allows for consistent blood amino acid and glucose levels, the fat will also help stabilize hunger.



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That's also why stakes are so filling. They are high in protein, which is the most filling macronutrient and high in fat, which slows down digestion. Another good application of this strategy is before you go to bed.

If you want to make sure to provide a consistent protein supply to your muscles throughout the night, you can eat a good amount of healthy fats along with your nighttime protein shake. That way you give your body all the necessary building blocks for muscle growth and maintenance even when you sleep.



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# The Perfect Pre-Workout Meal

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Once you know you're getting all of your total macros right for the day, both your pre and post workout meal are the most important meals of the day (and not your breakfast like many people believe). Let's first talk about pre workout nutrition. It's main function is to fuel the workout itself and maximize your performance throughout.

Sounds simple, right?

That's because it is. Unfortunately, the fitness world has really overcomplicated this, and many gurus will sell you super specific recommendations or products that really don't make a difference. Let's cut through all of that nonsense and figure out exactly what you should be eating before your workout. Like I said before this meal is meant to fuel your workout. In a scientific sense it's meant to do three things:

- Reduce muscle glycogen depletion.
- Reduce muscle protein breakdown.
- Reduce post workout cortisol levels.



How exactly do you accomplish this? Easy, you eat carbs and protein before your workout. What this means is, the most important rule of your PRE workout meal is to consume a good amount of both carbs and protein before you train. I know this sounds very simple and maybe too simple to you, but let me tell you way too many people overcomplicate this and fear that if they don't consume x grams of protein and x grams of carbs x minutes before their workout they will build no muscle and lose no fat.

Fortunately, that's not the case and anyone telling you otherwise is probably trying to sell you some overpriced supplement. Of course, I don't want to leave you with no guidelines at all so I will give you a few rough values that you can keep in mind when you prepare your pre workout meal. The true specifics here will always differ from person to person and depend on what time of the day you work out or how much time you actually have before your workout, but it's still a good reference.

If you can, eat a balanced meal with 0.2 to 0.25 g/lbs of your bodyweight (for both carbs and protein) around one hour before your workout. People with a very high body weight should go with their target weight.

In case you don't have time for that and/or your last meal lies more than two hours prior to your training, consume liquid or easily digested protein and carbs 30 minutes before your workout. This could be a protein shake with a banana for example. The liquid will be more easily digested allowing your body to absorb nutrients faster.



I personally, like to eat a normal meal of brown rice and chicken or meat an hour before my workout. You see, this is nothing special just protein and carbs coming from normal foods one to two hours before working out.

This is what is proven to get you the best results and will keep things as simple as possible. There's really no need to get any more complicated than that, and no need to obsess about the specifics. Last but not least, In case you don't like rice and chicken or don't want to eat it every day here are some more suggestions for pre workout meals:

Meals that you can eat up to 1 hour include:

- Oatmeal with whey protein mixed in
- Large chicken sandwich with whole grain bread
- 2x or more hard-boiled eggs on toast
- Whole grain pasta with some sort of protein (again chicken or meat or whatever source of protein you prefer)

Snacks right 30min or less before your workout:

- A banana with a whey protein shake
- Apple wedges with cinnamon and some sort of light protein
- A protein bar



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# The Perfect Post-Workout Meal

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Now that you know what to eat before your workout let's see what best after your workout. Your post-workout meal is meant to supply your body with everything it will need to repair and recover the muscle tissue that was broken down during your workout.

Specifically, the goal of the post-workout meal is to accomplish the following:

- Replenish muscle glycogen that was depleted during your workout
- Reduce muscle protein breakdown caused by exercise
- Reduce muscle soreness and fatigue
- Enhance overall recovery

How can you achieve this?

By giving your body the same macronutrients you did in the pre workout meal: Carbs and Protein. Again, your primary goal with your post-workout meal is to consume a good amount of both carbs and protein in some form soon after your workout.





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How much protein and carbs exactly?

Again around 0.2 to 0.25 g/lbs of your body weight (for both carbs and protein). If you're really hungry you can increase the carbs, too. These are just general values to keep in mind.

When should you eat your post-workout meal?

Timing should be around 1 - 2 hours after your workout and pre- and post-workout meals shouldn't be separated by more than 3 - 4 hours. That means if you had a large meal an hour before your workout you have more time afterwards to prepare your post workout meal.



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# Supplements

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We all know that supplements can never replace proper diet planning and nutrition, but they can help you reach your fitness goals faster. Unfortunately, with so many different supplements on the market it can difficult to choose the right ones. I remember how intimidated I was after my first visit to the local supplement store, where they had literally hundreds of powders, bars and pills.

It's also not helpful that most supplement ads make promises that are often exaggerated and sometimes even flat-out lies. You should always be skeptical when someone tells you they lost crazy amounts of fat with some new product, especially if they're trying to sell it to you.

The simple truth is that the supplement industry is huge. Huge as in BILLIONS of dollars. It is also true that most of that money is spent on worthless supplements that won't have any effect on muscle growth or fat loss. So to help you find the ones that are worth their price tag, here is my short list of the best muscle building supplements for beginners.



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# #1 Beginner Supplement: Protein Powder

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Protein powder is probably the single most popular workout supplement. This is because when you want to build muscle through strength training your body requires more protein for a muscle repair and growth after a workout. While this doesn't mean you have to use protein powders to reach your recommended daily protein intake, consuming enough protein every day can be tricky.

Especially when you don't have time to prepare high protein meals all the time, a good protein powder can really make your life easier. That is why most athletes and bodybuilders use protein powders in addition to a balanced diet. You probably already know this and might just be asking yourself which protein powder is best.

From whey to casein to vegan, there are a lot of options to choose from and within the fitness and bodybuilding community there is always a lot of discussion about which is best. But as I explain [here](#), it most likely won't matter all that much which kind of protein you buy as long as you take it regularly. So just go with the one you like best (unless it's soy or beef protein).

Optimal dosage: max. 30% – 50% of your daily protein intake



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## #2 Beginner Supplement: Creatine

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Creatine is an organic acid that helps supply the muscle cells with energy during high-intensity, short-duration exercise. Along with protein powder, it is one of the few supplements that actually delivers on its promise to help you see more gains.

Unfortunately, due to its popularity there are also a lot of misconception about creatine. No, creatine won't harm your kidneys unless you have an already existing condition, [study](#) after [study](#) has proven this. It also doesn't build muscle by itself, but it will increase your strength level.

If you have read my [Ultimate Beginner's Guide To Building Muscle](#), you know that only way to ensure long-term muscle growth is by applying progressive overload. You have to continually increase the tension placed on your muscle to force it to adapt (=and grow). By enabling you to lift heavier weight, creatine will indirectly help you build more muscle but you will still have to put in the work.

[Here](#) is an in-depth article on how to take creatine correctly. It will teach you everything you need to know about the optimal dosage and timing etc.

Optimal dosage: 3 - 5 grams per day



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# Why Most Fat Burner Supplements Are Overrated

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Fat burners are one of the most popular type of supplement on the market today, and just with pre-workout supplements there is an almost endless supply of options. So how do you know which is good and which isn't? And are they even worth taking in the first place?

What you have to understand is that fat burner themselves don't burn fat. To sell you their product, most supplement companies will talk about all kinds of fancy sounding terms like increased fat oxidation, enzymes related fat storage and of course hormones.

The problem is that even though all these aspects are part of fat loss there are really only a few ways to actually speed it up, given of course you are already in a calorie deficit. Without this no fat burner in the world will help you.

Here is what fat burner supplement can theoretically achieve:

1. They can speed up your metabolism
2. They can lower the chance of hunger and cravings ruining your plans
3. They can make the overall experience of dieting more enjoyable



Most fat burners will focus on number one. But there are only few ingredients proven to increase your metabolism. So make sure that your fat burner has those if you really want to buy one.

What ingredients am I talking about?

### Caffeine

Caffeine will help you by slightly increasing your metabolism while also giving you more strength during your workouts.

### Synephrine

Synephrine is a chemical compound found in certain types of citrus fruits. Research shows that synephrine also increases your metabolism and works well when combined with caffeine.

### Green Tea Extract

Green tea extract has been shown to slightly accelerate exercise-induced fat loss

These are the ingredients an effective fat burner should have to be worth your money. But let me now tell you why I still don't supplement with fat burners even when I'm trying to lose fat. Even if a certain fat burning supplement is decently formulated, and not under or overdosed, the effects you will see are still going to be small in the overall picture.

Most of your fat loss results will always come down to a proper calorie deficit and effective exercise. For beginners it's a lot more important to understand how to come up with the right diet and stick to it than how to choose the right fat burner. Don't be the guy or girl that eats tons of food and tells everyone: "It's Ok, I'm taking my fat burner every day."



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# Chapter 2: Setting Up Your Diet

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## Chapter 2: How To Set Up Your Weight Loss Diet

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Now that we covered the theory behind successful fat loss, let's get to the actual diet. Using the diet priorities I outlined in the last chapter, we can come up with a 4-step game plan that covers all the important aspects of a successful diet.

Here is what it looks like:

1. Calculate your ideal calorie intake
2. Calculate your ideal macronutrient intake
3. Choose the right food sources
4. Decide on meal frequency & timing

As you can see, the first step will be to calculate your calorie intake. This is fairly easy and can be done using an online calculator.

Once you have your daily calories, we can use this value to determine your ideal macronutrient intakes for protein, fat and carbs.

Next, I will help you find the right food sources to build your individual meal plan. And lastly, you can decide on a meal frequency and meal timing schedule that best fits your lifestyle.



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# Step 1: How To Calculate Your Ideal Calorie Intake

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The first step to finding your ideal calorie intake is figuring out your total daily energy expenditure (TDEE). Your TDEE is the number of calories that your body burns in one day. It is calculated by estimating how many calories you burn while resting (= Basal Metabolic Rate) and adding a certain number of calories on top, depending on how active you are. If you were to consume roughly the same amount of calories as your TDEE your weight would stay the same. So to reach a negative calorie balance (= calorie deficit), you want to consume fewer calories than your TDEE.

There are two ways you can calculate your TDEE. Either by using the excel sheet that is included in this program or by using an online calculator such as this one. Both will ask for your age, weight, height and weekly exercise and then automatically calculate your TDEE. Keep in mind that in both cases the result will not be 100% accurate, as we all have different metabolisms and BMRs. But they will give you a good idea of how many calories you need to consume in order to maintain your current weight. If this is still not exact enough for you or you feel the value you got from the online calculator is a little off you want to do the following:

1. Use the estimated TDEE value and consume around this number of calories every day for a week.
2. Next, weight yourself every day (naked and on an empty stomach) and monitor changes in weight.



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If you are losing weight, the estimated TDEE was too low and you should increase it by 100 calories. If you are gaining weight, the estimated TDEE was too high and you should decrease it by 100 calories. Continue this strategy until your weight stagnates which is the point where you have found your true TDEE.



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# How To Create The Optimal Calorie Deficit

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Once you have calculated your TDEE, you will probably ask yourself how much you need to subtract to reach the optimal calorie deficit. Unfortunately, there is a lot of contradictory information about this on the internet and I understand how it can easily be confusing.

In general, there are three classifications of calorie deficits:

Small: 10-15% below TDEE

Moderate: 20-25% below TDEE

Large: more than 25% below TDEE

There are some sources that will recommend a small deficit and some that will recommend a moderate one (very few recommend a large deficit). The argument for a small deficit is usually that it will lead to less loss of fat-free mass, however studies such as this one have shown that larger calorie deficits don't necessarily mean more muscle mass will be lost.

Thus, if your goal is to lose body fat fast, a moderate deficit of 20% below TDEE will probably be your best option. It's what I use and recommend for most beginners. The only people that should consider a larger deficit are those starting off from a very high body weight, who want to lose a significant amount of fat. The larger fat reserves can somewhat compensate for the energy deficit and you will see results faster.



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An example:

To make things easier for you let's take the example of a man who weighs 180 lbs (or 80 kg), is 6 foot tall (or 180cm) and 25 years old. If we assume he trains 3 to 4 times a week at high intensity, his TDEE will lie anywhere between 2500 and 2700 calories per day. For easier calculations let's go with 2500 calories. To get his ideal calorie deficit he would then subtract 20% from 2500 calories. His daily calorie intake is therefore 2000 calories. The same calculations apply to women, as well.



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## Step 2: How To Calculate Your Macronutrient Intakes

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Let's recap the daily intakes for each macronutrient from chapter 1:

Protein: 0.8 - 1 gram per pound of bodyweight (more muscle & less body fat —> more protein)

Fat: 15% - 35% of daily calories

Carbs: The rest of your daily calories

Using these values we can calculate the ideal protein, fat and carb intakes. Let's start with protein.



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# How To Calculate Your Daily Protein Intake

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The optimal protein intake is about 0.8g to 1.0g per pound of body weight per day (note: if you are significantly overweight use your target body weight rather than your current body weight).

So for a 180lb man, we would choose an average intake of somewhere between 145g and 180g of protein per day. The lower your body fat percentage and the more muscle you have, the more protein your body requires. The same goes for people that are more active (either through their training, during their hobbies, or while working).

If you are a man and leaner than 10% body fat or a woman and leaner than 20% and very active you probably want to shoot for 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight. The same applies if your diet includes a very large calorie deficit. However, most beginners will get enough with 0.8g of protein per pound body weight.



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# How To Calculate Your Daily Fat Intake

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Your fat intake should be around 15% to 35% of your daily calories. Going below 15% could hurt your hormone production and general health. Going above 35% will leave less room for carbs, which means your workout performance will likely suffer.

You will have to experiment a little to figure out where exactly you lie between these two extremes. Keep in mind that the more fat you consume the less room you have for carbs and vice versa.

As an example, if you consume 2000 calories daily your fat intake will be between 300 and 700 calories. That might sound like a lot at first but remember that 1 gram of fat has 9 calories so in this example these values only translate to about 33 - 77 grams of fat per day. If you have no idea with which value to start, go with an even 25% (in this case 500 calories or 55 gram).





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# How To Calculate Your Daily Carb Intake

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Now that you have both your daily protein and daily fat intake, calculating your carb intake is relatively easy. You just subtract protein and fat intakes from your daily calories. For these calculations you need to know that 1 gram of protein or carbs has 4 calories and 1 gram of fat has 9 calories.

Your calculation would then look something like this:

2000 daily calories  
- 580 calories from 145g protein  
- 500 calories from 55g fat  
= 920 calories for carbs (230 grams)

This means you are left with 920 daily calories for carbs. Because 1 gram carbs has 4 calories this translates to 230 grams. Therefore, your daily calorie and macronutrient intake looks like this:

2000 daily calories  
145g protein  
55g fat  
230g carbs



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## Step 3: Choosing The Right Food Sources

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Choosing the right food sources for your meal plan is a lot easier than you might think. First you reserve 80% to 90% of your daily calories for quality, nutrient-rich foods. These are the foods most people would regard as “clean” or “healthy”.

Simply make a list of the foods you like and that would make your meal plan enjoyable and use them to fill your daily protein, fat and carb intakes. You can use the suggestions below. Next, you can fill the remaining 10% - 20% with your favorite junk food or candy.

Yup, it's that easy. On the next page you will find a few suggestions to help you get started.



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### Good Sources Of Carbohydrates

(Brown) Rice  
Whole Grain Pastas / Breads / Cereals  
(Sweet) Potatoes  
Quinoa  
Oatmeal  
Vegetables  
Fruits  
Lentils & Beans

### Good Sources Of Protein:

Chicken Breast  
Fish (Tuna, Salmon, Halibut)  
Lean Beef and Veal  
Yogurt  
Milk  
Eggs

### Vegetarian/Vegan Sources Of Protein:

Green peas  
Beans  
Quinoa  
Nuts & Nut Butter (high in calories!)  
Chickpeas  
Tofu  
Hemp

### Good Sources Of Fat:

Avocados  
Olive Oil  
Nuts & Nut Butter  
Seeds  
Fatty Fish  
Coconut Oil



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# What About Fat Loss Foods?

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At this point you probably want me to recommend some magic fat loss food. But the problem is that the term “fat loss food” is misleading. I know many fitness gurus will tell you that you have to eat this and not that to lose weight, but that’s not true.

No foods in the world will boost your metabolism to any meaningful degree and saying that one food is “better” than another for losing weight misses the point, because the foods we consume don’t burn fat, energy expenditure does.

What foods can do, however, is help you cope with hunger. Generally speaking, the most filling foods are those that provide lots of volume, fiber and nutrients. If they are also light in calories then you got a perfect match for weight loss. Foods that fall into this category are lean types of meat (chicken, lean beef, fish, and so forth), grains, vegetables and fruits. When you focus on eating these types of foods, you’re much less likely to struggle with hunger issues and overeat.

On the other hand, even though nuts and vegetable oils are sources of healthy fats, they aren’t that filling and also come loaded with calories. Therefore, make sure to limit them in your meal plan.



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# I Don't Know How To Select My Foods - What Should I Do?

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I understand that as a beginner you might not know how to select the right foods for your diet. You might even be overwhelmed by this dietary freedom and would like a more restrictive approach.

In that case, I recommend you either take one of the sample meals plan included in the program or you head over to [eatthismuch.com](http://eatthismuch.com) and let them generate one for you. I have recorded a video showing you how to use this free tool.



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## Step 4: Setting Up Meal Timing & Frequency

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Now that we have determined how many calories and protein, carbs and fats you should eat every day we have to come up with a meal structure. Meal structure refers to how your diet is set up taking into consideration the 4 following variables:

- 1.) Number of Meals
- 2.) Protein Intake Around Activity
- 3.) Carb Intake Around Activity
- 4.) Fat Intake Around Activity

As for your number of meals, anything between 3 and 6 meals per day is both effective and realistic. Like I said in the lesson on meal frequency you can get away with only two meals but it makes things more complicated than they need to be. In this section I am going to assume our 180 lbs man eats 5 meals per day. If you eat fewer meals, don't worry and simply combine two meals. So step one in our meal structure is done and we now have to add the right macro intakes to each meal.



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Let's start with protein.

In general protein timing is not a very important factor in your diet as long as you consume some of it before and after your workout. In the lesson on pre and post workouts you learned that this should be around 0.2 g/lbs of your body weight. Let's assume he wants to roughly maintain his body weight, so he would have to consume around 35 grams of protein pre and post workout

Meal 1

Meal 2

Meal 3 (Pre-workout): 35g protein

Meal 4 (Post-workout): 35g protein

Meal 5

This leaves us with 75 grams of protein that we will evenly consume throughout the day.

Meal 1: 25g protein

Meal 2: 25g protein

Meal 3 (Pre-workout): 35g protein

Meal 4 (Post-workout): 35g protein

Meal 5: 25g protein



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On to carbs.

Just as with protein you want to provide your body with carbs before and after your workout. And again it should be at least 0.2 g/lbs of your target bodyweight. Since going higher than this isn't really a problem as these are simply some guidelines, I will assume that our 25 year old eats 0.3 g/lbs before his workout and 0.4 g/lbs after his workout as he just go out of the gym and is hungry.

Meal 1: 25g protein

Meal 2: 25g protein

Meal 3 (Pre-workout): 35g protein, 55g carbs

Meal 4 (Post-workout): 35g protein, 70g carbs

Meal 5: 25g protein

This still leaves us with 105 grams of carbs for the rest of the day. How you divide them up is really up to you. You might want to eat a large breakfast or a snack before before bed. For the sake of simplicity I will divide it up evenly among the meals but feel free to change this up according to your lifestyle.

Meal 1: 25g protein, 35g carbs

Meal 2: 25g protein, 35g carbs

Meal 3 (Pre-workout): 35g protein, 55g carbs

Meal 4 (Post-workout): 35g protein, 70g carbs

Meal 5: 25g protein, 35g carbs





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Last on the list is fat timing.

Fat timing should be the least of your concern, since it really doesn't matter. Like I said before the only time it can have a negative effect is right before your workout as it slows down the digestion of both carbs and proteins. So if you eat your pre workout meal very close to your workout keep this in mind. At this point though I think things are complicated enough so we will just divide the 60 grams evenly throughout our meals. This leaves us with the following meal structure.

Meal 1: 25g protein, 35g carbs, 11g fat

Meal 2: 25g protein, 35g carbs, 11g fat

Meal 3 (Pre-workout): 35g protein, 55g carbs, 11g fat

Meal 4 (Post-workout): 35g protein, 70g carbs, 11g fat

Meal 5: 25g protein, 35g carbs, 11g fat

Please keep in mind that this is just one example. Don't let my structure confuse you. Meal timing isn't very important and you can divide your meals pretty much as you see fit, as long as you follow the rules of pre- and post-workout meals.



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## Step 5: Adding The Right Supplements To Your Diet

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Like I said in chapter 1, supplements will affect your diet only in a very minor way. Maybe 5-10 percent of the overall results. I usually recommend only two supplements: protein powder and creatine. They are proven to work and have pretty much no side effects in healthy adults. Generally, I would recommend them to you as part of your weight loss diet, but there is one problem with protein powder: It's liquid calories.

Liquid calories aren't less healthy than solid calories but they are digested more rapidly and leave you less satisfied. This can lead to more cravings and which puts you at higher risk of overeating. So, if you struggle with cravings and hunger then protein shakes or any other kind of meal replacement shakes are usually not a good idea. Instead cook some egg whites with vegetables or eat a chicken filet which will also provide you with quality protein but leave you full for longer.

If you don't have problems with hunger but find it difficult to reach your daily protein requirements then protein powder can be a good addition to your weight loss diet. As for creatine, it's really an amazing supplement if you are doing strength training and I recommend it for anyone dieting or not.



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# Chapter 3: Optimizing Your Diet & Solving Common Problems

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## Chapter 3: Optimizing Your Diet

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In the last chapter you learned how to set up your ideal weight loss diet. Even though that's pretty much all you need to see results, there are a few aspects of dieting I still haven't talked about. Things like diet breaks, cheat meals and weight loss plateaus. All of them will be talked about in this chapter.



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# How To Correctly Track Your Weight Loss Progress

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Tracking your diet success is vital to your motivation. I, for example, am a person that is driven by results. If I see them I get even more motivated but if I don't see them I lose motivation very quickly. Maybe you are the same or maybe you are different but either way, it's very important that you watch your results so you know if you are still on the right track.

The first thing you want to do is to weigh yourself regularly. This is pretty obvious but exactly how often should you weigh yourself?

I personally weigh myself twice a week naked on an empty stomach in the morning. This has worked well for me, but if you feel you need an even more accurate value then weigh yourself every morning upon waking and note the weekly average.

When comparing your weight from week to week only look at the averages and not the individual days. This will give you the most accurate result possible. The only drawback to this method and the reason I don't use it is because people tend to get obsessed with their weight when they weigh themselves every day. So, this is something you have to see for yourself.



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Next, don't rely on the mirror. I already talked about water retention and how it can change your appearance and weight. All this combined can really make you look like a completely different person from one day to another so don't pay too much attention here.

Don't get me wrong. What counts in the end is not how much your weight but how you feel and look so of course over the long run you should rely on the mirror. But a better strategy here is to take pictures maybe once a week and then compare them after a month or two.

A third option is to take circumference measurements with a tape measure once per week and noting your measurements. The problem with this is that you will have to do it yourself rather than relying on a partner because two different people measuring with the same tape might get slightly different results and mess them up.

Another thing you can track are your subjective feelings of things like sleep quality, hunger, stress levels and fatigue once a week or after your workouts.

A good way to track this is by using a 0-5 scale (for example in regards to sleep 0 would be a good night of sleep and 5 would be insomnia). This is done to help you identify issue early and solve them quickly.



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Here's an example:

A good night of sleep will help you train better just like not enough sleep will hurt your training performance. Same with recovery and muscle retention when you are in a calorie deficit. Of course, hunger and hormone levels will also be suboptimal if you don't sleep enough. So if you feel weaker and are experiencing more cravings than normal, by using this scale and seeing that your sleep quality had been poor, you can identify the culprit and adjust your schedule.

Another example would be stress. So, if your weight hasn't been coming down in the last few weeks, but your stress levels are higher than normal, then this might be something you want to look at. Maybe high cortisol levels are preventing you from losing weight or maybe you just made too many changes to your diet at once.

If you work out then another thing should track are your lifts. Getting weaker during a diet is normal but it should happen slowly and gradually. If you see your strength plummeting, you're probably crash dieting and should revise your calorie deficit.

One more thing before I end this post. Tracking your stats is a great way to keep a good overview of your diet, but sometimes all this data can be overwhelming. For beginners tracking only your weight will probably be enough. If you run into problems also track your subjective feelings and if you work out then tracking your lifts is a must anyway. Anything else is probably too much and we don't want to overcomplicate this.



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# How To Lose More Than 1-2 Pounds Of Fat Per Week

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Throughout the program I generally recommended a 20% calorie deficit. Depending on your current body weight and calorie intake this usually leads to 1 - 2 pounds of fat loss per week. Most beginners do best with such a moderate deficit, because they will see results faster than on a small deficit, but their hunger levels will still be more or less normal.

Now, even though this is the recommended strategy for most beginners, I realize that some people want to see results faster and would like to lose more than 1-2 pounds per week. So then, how do you achieve faster weight loss without crash dieting and crazy hunger cravings?

In theory, fast weight loss is fairly straightforward. You simply increase your calorie deficit and stick to your diet as you would with a smaller deficit. But in practice there are some other adjustments you need to make to not turn this into a crash diet.

## **The most important adjustments in a large calorie deficit**

- (1) Keep protein intake high (or increase it further)
- (2) Focus on the right foods to avoid unnecessary hunger
- (3) Cut everything from your meal plan that is unnecessary
- (4) Maintain your strength in the gym
- (5) Have a time plan





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## **(1) Keep Protein Intake High**

The more intense your diet, meaning the larger your calorie deficit, the more you should watch your protein intake. Because of protein's muscle protecting abilities, having enough of it in your meal plan is extremely important. As you know, I generally recommend intakes of between 0.8 - 1 grams per pound of body weight. When you create a large calorie deficit (—> more than 30% below maintenance), you want to get AT LEAST 1 grams per pound of body weight and maybe even as much as 1.2 grams per pound of body weight. That's because the larger your deficit the more protein will be burned off for heat/energy, which leaves the body with less of it for muscle repair and maintenance. I cannot stress this enough! Sufficient protein is the most important factor of your diet and more so the larger your calorie deficit.

## **(2) Focus On The Right Foods To Avoid Unnecessary Hunger**

Obviously, the biggest problem with larger calorie deficits is hunger. Whereas hunger can generally be managed pretty easily in small and medium deficits, larger ones basically always mean more cravings and constant hunger. Now even though you cannot eliminate the hunger completely, focusing on the right foods will minimize it to the point where it is bearable. The best foods for hunger management are those that are high in volume and fiber but low in calories. The best foods include:

Carbs: vegetables, fruits, brown rice and whole grains.

Protein: chicken breast, lean meats and eggwhites.

Fat: see “(3) Cut everything that is unnecessary”



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### **(3) Cut Everything From Your Meal Plan That Is Unnecessary**

The more fat you want to lose in a week, the less room you have for unnecessary calories. I personally have to completely eliminate candy and junk food from my diet when I want to create a deficit larger than 30% below maintenance but not feel hungry all day.

But cutting unnecessary calories also means limiting your (healthy) fat intake, because fat is extremely calorie dense while doing little to keep you full. So even though I generally recommend a minimum fat intake of 15% of your daily calories, you can sometimes go below this value. Make sure to keep such a strict diet to no longer than two to four weeks and also take 2 - 4 grams of omega 3 supplements so you get all your essential fatty acids.



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## **(4) Maintain Strength In A Large Calorie Deficit**

Depending on how intense your workout routine is you might want to make a few adjustments to compensate for the reduction in performance and recovery that comes with being in a large deficit.

### Reduce frequency

Reducing frequency would mean fewer total workouts per week and/or fewer times working the same muscle groups per week.

Exactly how much of a reduction is needed is hard to say, as it will vary by person based on everything from age, genetics and strength levels, to stress levels, sleep quality and how much frequency your chosen workout program initially called for.

Generally speaking, though, 3 total workouts per week is a good idea. 4 can also work, but 5 or 6 is really pushing the limit. So, if your current building program involves 4 or more workouts per week, you might want to switch to one that involves 3 instead. If your muscle building program already calls for 3 workouts per week, you're good.

### Reduce volume

Reduce volume means less total work (so fewer total sets and exercises) being done in a given workout or perhaps throughout the entire week combined. Just like with frequency, reducing volume from what's optimal for muscle growth in a surplus to what's sufficient for maintenance in a deficit is often the right idea.. Also just like with frequency, the degree of reduction needed will vary by person for the exact same reasons I mentioned before. Usually You will only have to make very minor reductions to volume, though (for example, one less set here and there).



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Now, in some cases, only one of these adjustments (frequency or volume) is already enough. In other cases, both adjustments will be needed. And in others, it's possible that neither adjustment will truly be needed, but it's important that you yourself watch your workout performance and stress levels. If you feel your old workout is getting too difficult during a diet then that's a clear sign you want to make these adjustments.

## **(5) Have A Time Plan**

Even though you can use large calorie deficits to get some quick results and lose weight as fast as possible, they are not suitable for long term dieting. That's why if you decide to do it, make sure to have a good time plan laid out. I personally only use large deficits for two to four weeks and then take a diet break. This makes sure my hormone levels normalize again and I don't go crazy from all the hunger. I suggest you stick to a similar time frame.



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# How To Cheat On Your Diet (Cheat Meals & Cheat Days)

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Cheat days and cheat meals are one of the most controversial topics there is in fitness and nutrition. Let's start with the smaller version of the two: the cheat meal.

Let's assume you have been "eating clean" over the last few days, preparing healthy meals like chicken breast with rice and vegetables or fish with sweet potatoes. Now you're wondering if it would be okay to sneak in that Snickers bar or pizza at the end of the week without breaking your diet. That's what cheat meals are all about: Some junk food that you get to eat (usually on weekends) as a reward for adhering to your diet for most of the week.

So, what's the deal with cheat meals? Are they fine, or will they compromise your results? Will some high sugar ice cream or a high fat croissant hurt your muscle building or fat burning progress? The short answer is: No, as long as you keep your calories and macros in check.

Remember what I taught throughout this program: Calorie balance and macronutrients are the most important aspects of your fitness diet. Your body does NOT look at individual foods, but your diet as a whole. If you're eating clean and fulfilling your nutritional requirements through traditional "clean" foods most of the time and then have some ice cream, your body will not stop building muscle or regain all the fat you lost so far.



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Proper dieting is all about the big picture, which means watching your total calories and macronutrients. That's why I always tell my students that 80-90% of their diet should come from quality whole foods and the remaining 10-20% can come from whatever foods they like as long as it fits their total daily calories and proteins, carbs and fats.

This will ensure that your needs are being fully met when it comes to essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals, fiber and essential fats, but it also leaves you with 10-20% of your total daily macronutrient to spend on whatever foods you want.

As long as you stick to the basics of correct dieting, cheat meals are not going to magically cause you to get fat or lose muscle. I know that a lot of fitness gurus on instagram or youtube preach that they eat clean 24/7 and that's fine if they have the time and energy to do that. But the average person is often under a lot of stress and requires a more flexible approach to dieting.

Just remember that this isn't a free ticket to begin eating tons of ice cream and pizza. The "cheat foods" that you include still need to reasonably fit into your overall diet as a whole in terms of calories/protein/carbs/fats.

## **The Major Problem With Cheat Days**

And that's the problem with cheat days instead of cheat meals. Cheat days are entire days where you don't watch your calories and macro intake and just eat whatever you like. In its simplest form fat loss always comes down to a proper calorie deficit based on your total calorie intake versus your total calorie expenditure.



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That means, even though you don't have to be in a calorie deficit every day, over the course of a few days and weeks it has to be there, to get your body to burn fat. Individual cheat meals won't significantly affect this but entire days can. For example, let's assume you were following a diet with a deficit of around 500 calories below your maintenance level.

If you followed this diet for six consecutive days, you would have created a total deficit of 3000 calories. If your cheat day now falls on the 7th day, every calorie that you eat above your maintenance level will directly reduce that 3000 calorie deficit you had in place.

Everyone is different of course and has a different appetite but trust me when I say you can easily eat 1500 calories above maintenance on your cheat day. That would already cut your weekly deficit in half. Now imagine going all out and eating 2000 or even 3000 calories above maintenance. That way you lose most of the progress you made throughout the week. All it takes are a few high calorie meals and maybe some cake or ice cream for dessert.

Always keep an eye on your daily and weekly calories. To lose fat make sure you stay at a deficit and as long as you account for the right amount of proteins, carbs and fats you will be fine. One or two minor cheat meals usually won't negatively affect this but entire cheat days most definitely can. Of course, at the end, the best approach is to develop a flexible diet that fits your individual lifestyle and preferences.



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# How & When To Take Diet Breaks

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A diet break is a planned and purposeful break from dieting. This break can be anything from a few days, up to several weeks. Like cheat meals, diet breaks are a controversial topic because when done wrong they can erase your hard earned calorie deficit and weight loss progress.

That's why you need to know how to take diet breaks the right way. When done right, diet breaks will help prepare you for the next phase of dieting and are vital for your long term success. But before we go into the details let's first talk about why you should take regular diet breaks in the first place. There are physiological as well as psychological benefits and both are equally important.

The most important physiological during a diet break is in the form of hormones. For most people dieting and calorie deficits translate to more stress in their lives and more stress often correlates with more cortisol in your blood. Now, while short spikes in cortisol levels aren't an issue, long term elevation does cause problems and will affect your dieting efforts.

Research has shown that prolonged calorie deficit and increased cortisol levels cause a few unwanted effects for example higher water retention, which makes your skin look puffier. When you take a diet break and do it right, cortisol levels as well as overall stress levels will go back to normal. This also means that you'll be less hungry, have more energy and fewer cravings.





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What about psychological benefits of diet breaks, which many people underestimate in my opinion? First of all, dieting can be tough, very tough and even though it gets easier the more experience you have I would be lying if I told you I love it. One way to make things easier though is when you know that you are taking it one step at a time. Knowing you will be taking a break at a certain time in the future is a lot better than thinking about it with no end in sight.

Taking a planned break from your diet will take off much of this stress and give you something to look forward to. This also helps maintain your motivation and reach your long term goals.

### **What does the right diet break look like?**

Basically to achieve the benefits I outlined before you want to raise your calories to maintenance level, Eat your meals at normal times and don't worry too much about your macros. I say don't worry *too much* because obviously a diet break that consists of nothing but candy and pizza is not a good idea. So I still suggest you stick to mostly unprocessed healthy foods but don't worry about hitting your protein needs exactly to the gram every day.

Depending on how intense you exercise, cutting down cardio and decreasing your workout volume during the diet break can also be good idea, but keep in mind that less intense workouts also mean lower calorie maintenance levels.



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## **How long should a diet break be?**

This is a difficult question because it will depend both on your metabolism and motivation. In my experience the psychological benefits of diet breaks happen fairly quickly. Pretty much as soon as you leave your calorie deficit and eat at maintenance level. So if you feel that you only need a small psychological boost for the next phase of dieting than a short break of 3 to 7 days will probably do the trick.

When it comes to actual physiological changes with your metabolism and hormone levels such a short break will usually not be enough to bring things back to normal. Here a break of two or more weeks will be needed. However, when taking these longer diet breaks, it very important you make sure to really stay at maintenance level and not go into a calorie surplus. Otherwise you'll gain back all the weight that you just lost over the last few weeks.

## **How often should you take diet breaks?**

This will largely depend on how lean you already are. The less body fat you have the more often you need to take breaks to not overstress your body. For men a good rule of thumb is to take a break every 4-6 weeks if you're below 10%, every 6-8 weeks if your between 10 and 15% and every 10-12 weeks if your between 15 and 25%. With a body fat percentage of over 25% you should take breaks even less frequent (women should add 5% to 7% percent to these figures and get their body fat percentages).



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Keep in mind that these are just general guidelines and the exact timing will differ from person to person. As with everything in health and fitness you should try to get a feeling for your body and listen to it when it's too stressed or overworked.

And that's it.

I hope you understand now that regular diet breaks are an important part of the dieting process and when done right will help you feel and look better. Don't take this as a free pass to binge eat! As long as you stick to the steps I outlined you will be fine.



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# How To Break Through A Weight Loss Plateau

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If you have ever started a diet in your life chances are you also hit a fat loss plateau. During the first few weeks fat practically falls off your body but then all of the sudden the scale doesn't move anymore and you're wondering what changed.

So, did your diet suddenly stop working or is there something wrong with you?

The first thing you need to keep in mind is that changes in your weight aren't always due to changes in your body fat percentage. Most people think that when the step on the scale and see that it displays a pound less than last week that they lost exactly one pound of body fat. However, this is not always the case.

Weight loss can happen because any number of things change not only your body fat percentage but also your muscle mass, your glycogen level, the food you carry in your stomach or - the thing that changes fastest - water.

Nothing brings weight up or down like water retention. For example if you eat a meal heavy in carbs and sodium your body will usually retain more water than usual which can add anywhere from 1 to 3 pounds to your bodyweight. Women are affected by this even more than men because of menstruation so keep this in mind ladies.



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## **What do you have to do to get rid of unwanted water retention?**

In most cases eating less sodium and drinking more water will do the trick. This is because your body retains water only because it thinks it's not getting enough on a regular basis and has to store some for later. But what if water is not the problem and you hit a plateau because of other reasons?

First, you have to keep in mind that the more fat you lose the harder it will get. The leaner you become, the longer it takes to lose fat in a healthy way and without sacrificing muscle mass. For example if you have a body fat percentage of 25 or 30% you can easily lose 2-3 pounds of fat per week at first. Your body will still have enough calories for overall health and muscle maintenance. But if you are at or under 10% for men and 15 to 20% for women things will get a lot more complicated. So just a slowing of your rate of fat loss is normal and to be expected.

The next thing is to keep in mind that the lighter you become the fewer calories your body needs. This means the daily amount of calories that used to create a deficit might just be enough to maintain your weight after a few weeks. This is why you probably want to recalculate your calorie needs every so often.

Another aspect of dieting is that your metabolism also slows down as you lose weight to retain energy. This definitely sucks because it means you would have to eat even fewer calories to achieve weight loss again. However, lowering your calories more and more is not always sustainable and why you should take diet breaks regularly.



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Last but not least there is one more factor which is often responsible for weight loss plateaus: hidden calories, meaning people consuming more calories than they think. I know that you probably think you are tracking correctly but if your weight has been stagnant for several weeks than make sure to check again.

Calories can be hidden in many places. Small snacks or eating out at restaurants are just two examples. Not tracking butter, oil or sauces is another common mistake. Also check your alcohol intake as it can add up to quite a few calories and the truth is that 200 or 300 additional calories every day can break your diet and stop your progress completely. 200 is only a bit of olive oil or a bunch of nuts so remember to track those, too. Unfortunately dieting is that tricky sometimes, but if you track correctly then you will see results.



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# Explaining Unexpected Weight Changes

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Similar to weight loss plateaus some people experience unexpected weight changes during their diets. Of course this is not what you want. In a perfect world you follow a diet and your weight declines in a linear fashion until you have reached your ideal weight.

Unfortunately, we don't live in a perfect world, so we have to first identify the cause of unexpected weight changes and then solve it. To help you do this we will now go over the most common causes of sudden weight changes. Some of them are similar to the causes of weight loss plateaus but there are a few additional causes you might not be familiar with.

The first and most common one is water retention (just like in the case of weight loss plateaus). Unwanted water retention can usually be overcome by drinking more and lowering your sodium intake. If you have been dieting for a very long time, so for several months, the stress hormone cortisol can also lead to water retention. here, the best solution is a diet break, but don't use this as an excuse to go off your diet and make sure elevated cortisol levels are really the reason.

Certain medication and supplements like impure forms of creatine can also to water retention making your skin look puffy and your muscles less lean. so if you are regularly taking certain meds make sure to talk to your doctor about this.



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Another common reason for sudden weight changes is a higher than normal carb intake. Carbs are stored as glycogen in the liver and muscles and each gram of glycogen is stored along with around 3 grams of water. So if you recently switched to a high carb diet than this might very well be the reason for your weight changes. This by itself is not a problem, of course, because like I said before carbs are not evil and additional water weight isn't really a health problem. Just make sure your carbs are coming from quality sources like rice, potatoes or whole wheat products

Number three on the list is food. Obviously food weighs something, which means that if you weigh yourself right after eating you will weigh more than on an empty stomach. To cancel out these kind of fluctuations I recommend weighing yourself twice a week in the morning after you got out of bed and before you eat breakfast.

Two last things that also influence weight, but that are outside of my expertise are a women's monthly period and digestive problems. Both can lead to sudden changes in your weight and if you believe you're having your period irregularly and/or have digestive problems then please talk to a doctor.





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# Chapter 4: FAQ

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## Chapter 4: FAQ

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The last chapter of this books is all about frequently asked questions. Here is a list of what we will talk about:

I Don't Exercise - What Should My Diet Look Like?

Is Starvation Mode Real?

Is Eating Before Bed Bad For Fat Loss?

Does Eating Slower Make You Lose Weight?

Do Negative Calorie Foods Exist?

What Are The Biggest Diet Breaker Foods & How Do You Avoid Them?



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# I Don't Exercise - What Should My Diet Look Like?

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Throughout this program I always assumed you regularly exercise and probably also do strength training. But what if you don't? What if you are completely sedentary but still want to lose weight? In that case, do any of my recommendations change?

Yes, especially when we are talking about carbs. Carbohydrates are primarily energetic, which means their purpose is to give our cells energy. But if you don't exercise your body, it doesn't need very much energy.

This is where low-carb come into play. Even though I'm generally not a big fan of low-carb diets (read [this](#) to find out why), they are a good option if you don't exercise. That's because they do two things: It (1) eliminates most candy & junk food and (2) helps with low insulin sensitivity.

(1) Going low-carb will usually mean you also eliminate most candy and junk food from your diet, which are generally high in simple sugars. This of course help control your calories and often leads to a calorie deficit without changing anything else. Also, for someone who regularly eats junk food, cutting it out completely is often easier than only reducing it. Over time you simply forget about it and get used to other foods.



(2) Of the three macronutrients, carbs generally cause the largest insulin spikes (although certain types of protein will also spike it quite noticeably). If you are obese and have low insulin sensitivity (both tend to go hand in hand), your cells are not responding well to insulin. This causes higher blood sugar levels and can lead to type 2 diabetes among other health problems. In that case, reducing your carb intake can often help lower insulin spike and improve blood sugar levels. This applies especially to simple carbs, which are digested more rapidly and affect blood sugar levels more drastically than slower digesting complex carbs.

### **So should you go low carb if you don't exercise?**

It's really a question of taste and preference. If you believe the two benefits I just mentioned are important then I suggest you try it out. Research has shown no difference in metabolic rate, weight loss, or fat loss when people are put on tightly-controlled low carb or higher-carb diets, so go with what you like best. See how your body reacts to high and low carb intakes and afterwards adapt your diet while keeping your protein intake high.

If you want to improve your diet without cutting carbs, the best way is to stick to more complex alternatives, like whole grains, potatoes and rice. Since they are digested slower and come with more fiber than simple sugars, they tend to be more filling and also lead to lower spikes in blood sugar levels.



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# Is Starvation Mode Real?

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Is this effect enough to make you stop losing weight?

No, most certainly not.

And it definitely isn't significant enough to cause weight gain. Adaptive thermogenesis happens slowly and over weeks or months. We know this from starvation studies like the minnesota study where participants had to follow a 24 week long starvation diet consisting of two meals small per day of roughly 1500 calories. This amount was then reduced even further until they reached about 5% body fat.

In this experiment what happened to their metabolisms?

By the end of the study, the men's metabolic rates had dropped by about 40%. This is quite a bit but keep in mind that much of this was due to the overall loss of weight and 40% still isn't close to the 100% that would constitute a complete shutdown of your metabolism. And all this was under the largest possible calorie deficit. Something that you will unfortunately never have to go through.



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The bottom line is that if starvation mode was real, it would have kicked in and prevented this drastic weight loss from happening. Now before you think the idea is completely fabricated, there is a similar phenomenon that does occur along with prolonged calorie deficits.

This phenomenon not only includes the small drop of metabolic rate but also increased cravings and fatigue. This is due to increased cortisol levels due to the stress you put your body through when crash dieting. This is why I always tell my students to use a moderate instead of a large calorie deficit and to take regular diet breaks. Taken together they will make the experience of dieting a lot more tolerable and boost your motivation and energy.



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# Is Eating Before Bed Bad For Fat Loss?

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For many years it was common knowledge that you shouldn't eat anything, especially carbs right before going to bed and that your last meal should be at around 6 p.m.

The argument was that because you don't really do anything while you are asleep, your metabolic rate would slow down so eating anything right before bed will translate to more fat storage. But in recent years this notion has been challenged and so today many people are confused if eating before bed is really a problem for fat loss.

As you will see in a second the science on this is actually pretty straightforward and I will also give you some practical recommendations as to when you should eat for optimal weight loss.

The first thing we should look at is the general research on late eating and weight gain. The truth is that there are several studies showing that people who eat before bed are more likely to gain weight.

So, does that mean late eating really causes weight gain?



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No, the studies looked only at correlations but not causation. This means that while more people who eat or snack at night might gain weight, it's not the underlying cause. In fact, the reason is much simpler.

People who eat before bed are more likely to be obese simply because a bedtime snack is an additional meal which in turn translates to more total calories. You also need to keep in mind that most people are hungriest later in the day, which makes it more likely that they will overeat.

Late eating isn't bad per se, and I will tell you why in a second, but for some people it can become problematic because they get stuck in a cycle where they eat too much at night, skip breakfast the next morning because they are too full, but then again feel extremely hungry the next evening and overeat again.

This cycle often leads to weight gain, simply because you go over your total daily calories because of the large late meal. So it's not the timing of the meal, but rather its size. That means the problem with eating at night is not your slow metabolism but the unhealthy habits that often come with late snacking.

### **But why isn't your metabolism to be blamed?**

Weight loss ultimately comes down to a proper calorie deficit, which means you need to take in fewer calories than your body burns on a regular basis.





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Most people already know this, but they think that there are is also an “on-off” switch for fat loss, so that you either have fat gaining days or fat burning days. That kind of misses the point, though. Over the course of a day your body will store and burn fat multiple times and what counts is the result of all the fat storing processes minus all of the fat burning processes.

Your body needs a certain amount of energy to maintain your current weight. It pretty much doesn't care if it gets most of this energy in the morning through a large breakfast or at night through a large dinner. In the case of the large breakfast, your body would store more fat earlier in the day and burn more later, while in the case of the large dinner it would store more fat later in the day and burn more earlier.

To show what I mean let's assume the most extreme case in which you ate all your daily calorie right before going to sleep. Would this change anything?

Not really.

Even though your body would store more fat right after your meal, because you don't need the energy during your sleep, you would burn this fat again in the morning and during the next day when you are active again. So, even in the most extreme case, you wouldn't gain weight unless you also created a calorie surplus, which means that you eat more calories than your body needs.



## **Why late eating can still be a problem for many people**

That said, late eating isn't ideal for many people, because as I said earlier it's more difficult to control your calorie intake when you are eating chips on the couch while watching TV.

Also, some people will feel bloated after a big meal, which keeps them from falling asleep. If this is you, then of course eating a bit earlier makes sense for both weight loss and overall health. But the bottom line on eating before bed is that meal timing doesn't matter nearly as much as most people think.

Most important are always your total calories. If you want to lose weight make sure you create a calorie deficit. Not through crash dieting, but through a smart meal plan that will make sure you stay healthy and energized throughout the day.

Once you have that set up, you can eat pretty much whenever you like. Of, course there are things like pre- and post-workout meals, but leaving these aside you shouldn't worry too much about meal timing. As long as your overall diet follows a calorie deficit and gets you all the nutrients your body needs eating right before bed is NOT going to magically make you gain fat.



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# Does Eating Slower Make You Lose Weight?

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Slower eating is often said to be an easy trick to lose weight. But is this actually true and does slow eating work? Here is what the research says:

To figure the role eating speed plays in weight loss, we first have to differentiate the two main aspects of weight loss. First, there is the physiological aspect, which states that the calories and nutrients in food have an impact on your results. So the larger your calorie deficit the greater your weight loss. This is pretty obvious, of course.

And then there is the psychological aspect, which states that another thing that matters are your habits and lifestyle because they have a big impact on how much and what you eat, which in turn influences your calorie and nutrient intake.

## **The Physiological Effect Of Slow Eating**

Let's start with the physiological aspect of eating slower. Does it help your body take in fewer calories somehow? Actually, the opposite is true. At least when you assume that people who eat slower also chew their food better. There are studies showing that our body takes in more nutrients and energy when we chew it longer. That's because it's better broken down by the chewing and digestion is therefore easier.



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That said, the difference is fairly small and you shouldn't worry too much about it.

So, don't start swallowing your food as a whole if you want to lose weight. Not only would this lead to stomach cramps, but as you will see in a second, slow eating comes with some benefits you don't want to miss out on.

The bottom line in regards to physiology and calories is that if you consumed the same amount of food with the same amount of calories and nutrients eating slower would not lead to more weight loss.

It could even lead to a very minor increase in energy intake, but like I said before don't worry about it.

## **The Psychological Effect Of Slow Eating**

Let's now look at the psychological impact of eating slower. This is also what most studies focus on and where you will likely see an impact. Here is what I mean:

There are a number of studies showing that people who self-report as fast eaters tend to be heavier than those who say they eat more slowly. Some of the studies followed the participants over years and also noticed that those who said they ate "very fast" would gain weight at a faster rate, sometimes more than twice the normal rate.



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But how can this be? We just saw that if everything else is equal, eating speed doesn't really impact calorie intake. Well, the answer is simple. Everything else wasn't equal. It wasn't that the fast eating made those people overweight. It's that the fast eating led to more overeating which made people overweight.

This happened because your appetite and therefore your calorie intake is largely controlled by hormones. When you eat your gut will release hormones telling your brain you are full. Two hormones that play a big role here are ghrelin and peptide YY (PYY).

These hormones are like messengers, letting your brain know that you're eating and therefore taking in nutrients. The more these hormones rise the less hungry you will feel and once you feel full you stop. What's interesting is that this process does not happen instantly and can take a while. It differs from person to person but anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes is a rough estimate.

So if you fall on the higher end of that range your brain will need up to 20 minutes to signal that you are full. That's why people who eat too quickly tend to overeat as well. When their brain starts to signal that they are full they have already consumed more than enough calories.

There is one study that illustrates this perfectly. I like it because they fed participants of normal weight 300 ml (10 oz) of ice cream at two different times. During the first session, everyone was instructed to eat the ice cream within 5 minutes. During the second session they were told to eat it within 30 minutes.



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Then the scientists measured their ghrelin and Peptide YY levels, showing that eating slower led to a better response of Peptide YY than eating very fast. While there are other studies that found no increase in satiety hormones, they did find a significant increase in fullness for slower eating. What this means is that for most people, eating slowly will give your gut enough time to signal your brain you are full. This, in turn, will keep you from overeating and helps keep your calories in check.

## **Practical Advice For Better Results**

In terms of practical advice you should do the following if you want to take advantage of this effect:

First, turn off distractions and don't eat in front of the TV. Eating with friends or family is always a good thing and should be made a daily habit. If you are alone and really can't keep yourself away from the screen, choose a 20 to 30 minute show and make your meal last the whole time.

Next, you want to always include vegetables in your meals. They are high in fiber, need a good amount of chewing but are low in calories. And lastly, simply pay more attention to what you eat. Preparing your meals yourself and knowing what it consists of often helps people limit their food intake and keep total calories in check.



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# Do Negative Calorie Foods Exist?

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I have to admit, the idea of negative calorie foods is pretty awesome. It says that there are certain foods that require more calories to digest than they provide in the first place.

Foods that are said to be negative in calories are usually vegetables or fruits like celery, lettuce or grapefruits. For example, if a food only has 10 calories per 100 gram, but your body needs 20 calories as energy to process the food, you would theoretically have created a 10 calorie deficit.

Imagine for a second how amazing that would be. You pretty much wouldn't have to worry about calories anymore because as long as you stuck to these foods you definitely wouldn't gain any weight and probably also lose some. Like one fitness blogger said: "It would be like having a tiny magical personal trainer in your stomach who does all the dieting for you while you sit on the couch and do nothing."

As cool as all this sounds, it's pretty much nonsense preached by people who either don't understand how digestion works or want to sell you some new diet. The problem is that, as with most nutrition myths, there is some truth to the idea of negative calorie foods.

Let me explain.



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When you eat food, not all of the calories in the food will be available to your body and a small portion will always be lost along the way. Depending on the foods you eat and how well your body handles them this loss can make up 10% of the total calorie value, sometimes more. That's simply because even though our body is very good at retrieving energy from food, it's not perfect.

What's even more interesting is that food also requires energy to be absorbed and metabolized. This is called the thermic effect of food, which you probably already heard of. This effect is different depending on the macronutrient. Fat has the lowest thermic effect with around 5 %. Then come carbs with 5 to 15% and the highest is protein with 20 to 35% max.

Together it is estimated that the thermic effect of food makes up about 10% of your overall calories. So, if you consume 2,000 calories per day about 200 calories will be expended on digesting, absorbing and metabolizing that food. Now, this isn't shabby of course, but it's still far away from the notion that there is a diet that lets you burn more calories than you consume.

But what about individual foods? Are there certain foods that provide so little energy that digesting them burns more? Celery is usually said to be one of these foods. There are actual studies on this, so let's see what they say:





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One study from the Oxford Brookes University looked into this and studied fifteen young women by measuring their resting metabolic rate before and after consuming 100 g worth of celery. What they found was that of the 16 kcal usually said to be in 100 g of celery, only a little over 2 kcal were actually absorbed. This is very little of course, but it's still more than zero or any negative value, which would be needed to qualify as a negative calorie food. Other studies also confirmed this and one actually concluded that the "concept of negative-calorie foods has no external meaning or application."



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# What Are The Biggest Diet Breaker Foods?

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I'm not a big fan of labeling foods in categories like “good” and “bad” or “healthy” and unhealthy”. What matters at the end of the day for both health and fitness are not individual foods but your diet as a whole. Yes, a diet that contains mostly junk food and candy will usually lead to bad health and obesity, but that doesn't mean you can't eat donuts or hamburgers every now and then.

This is also why I think the idea that there are foods that you have to exclude from your diet plan is stupid. That said I want to talk about a food category that does kind of fit the bill of a "bad" food and could be called a diet breaker. The foods I'm talking about include certain starches and sugars. But don't get me wrong! I'm not anti-sugar or anti-starch and cutting these out from your diet won't guarantee weight loss success, either.

What I'm trying to say is that there are certain foods that can ruin a diet even in small amounts, not because they are physiologically bad for you, but because some people cannot stop eating them once they have started. Foods that fall into these categories are some sources of simple carbs like chocolate and certain starches like potato chips or sugary cereal.

Like I said before, these foods will not make you gain weight unless they also lead to a calorie surplus, but for some people even moderate amounts make them hungry for more of the same, which can ruin their diet.



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Now that I explained the meaning behind my definition of diet breaker foods, what can you do to keep them from ruining your diet?

## **1. Identify Your Diet Breaker Foods**

The first step is identifying your diet breakers and writing them down. They will be different from person to person and the ones I listed before are just a few examples. Basically, you want to figure out if there are any foods out there that you know you won't be able to resist once you have eaten just a tiny bit.

A good example for me personally would be doritos. Once I eat just a single chip I cannot stop and will probably finish the whole bag. Sounds pretty scary I know, but I'm only human, too. Working around my diet breakers helped me control my cravings and improve my dieting results. How did I do this?

## **2. Exclude Diet Breakers From Your Diet**

Basically, the next thing you want to do after having identified your diet breakers is to look at your meal plan and see how often they are included. If you are just starting your diet you should either cut out that food entirely from your meal plan or limit its intake to 1 or 2 days. This might sound drastic especially if you really like it, but keep in mind that this doesn't mean you can never eat chocolate or chips again.



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The interesting thing is that your cravings will decrease quite a bit when you lower your consumption of these foods. This works best when you eliminate them completely from your diet but eating them only once or twice per week also helps. If you decide to keep them around the house, make sure to buy the small packages so even if you can't control yourself anymore you will only have a little bit of this food for the grabbing.

### **3. Substitute Your Diet Breakers With Alternatives**

Next, you have to figure out what to do with the extra calories you just gained after taking out your diet breakers from your meal plan. There are two ways to go about this. I will assume that your protein intake is already high because there is really no reason to have it low at any time. High protein diets start at around 0.8 gram per pound of bodyweight daily.

So assuming sufficient protein is already included in your meal plan you can either substitute the diet breakers with more carbs or more fat. If you are currently following a high carb and low-fat diet your best bet will be to go with more fat, primarily unsaturated fats. These fats will not only be healthy for your, but they also balance hunger since fat slows down digestion.

But what should you do if you already have quite a bit of fat in your diet?

It depends.



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If diet breakers are just a minor inconvenience in your life then it usually doesn't matter what you swap them with. When you go for more carbs just make sure to choose quality complex carbs like whole grains, rice or potatoes. When you go for more fat focus on primarily unsaturated fats like nuts or olive oil.

But if diet breakers are a huge problem that you need to get out of the way before seeing any success, you will not only have to go with more fat but probably also want to reduce your total carbohydrate intake even more. This will create a high-fat and low-carb diet, which does several things.

First, it categorically rules out most junk food which definitely helps with weight loss. Next, it is better for people with low insulin sensitivity. People who fall into this category are usually overweight and don't exercise. And lastly, it further stabilizes hunger because of the high protein and fat content in the diet.

Now there are some drawbacks to this approach, which is why it's not right for everyone. Some people, myself included, feel extremely weak on such a diet and the low carbohydrate intake will also hurt your performance in the gym. There are some solutions to these problems like targeted ketogenic diets, but I won't go into these now.

You have to try it yourself. If you believe you might have low insulin sensitivity and diet breaker foods are more than a small inconvenience, try limiting not only those but your total carb intake.



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For everyone else, especially people who regularly exercise, a moderate to high carb intake and a moderate fat intake will usually be best.

So in conclusion, diet breaker foods do exist, but they aren't what most people think. They won't magically make you gain weight but can mess up your diet simply because you cannot stop eating them once you had a tiny bit. The solution is to identify your diet breaker and then either substitute them with more quality fats or more quality carbs.

And that's it. With these tips your diet breakers will once again turn into what they were meant to be. Delicious treats instead of dangerous weight gainers.



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# How To Lose Weight Without Counting Calories

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As you know after reading this book, calories are crucial for weight management and getting your calorie balance right will definitely bring you results in regards to weight loss. The problem with this is that many people hate counting calories. This can be because of a variety of reasons:

- Maybe they don't know how to do it correctly
- Maybe they had bad experiences with it in the past
- Maybe they are afraid that they will have to do it for the rest of their lives

Even though many of these things can be solved easily, I want to take a different approach now. I want to teach you how to lose weight without counting calories. I call this the dark side of dieting because usually what happens when someone tells you that you don't have to watch your calories to lose weight, they are trying to sell you some fad diet that doesn't work while capitalizing on human laziness.

This is not what we will do. I will teach you tricks that don't directly involve calorie counting but will, if implemented correctly, lead to an indirect reduction of calories. So here are 4 simple strategies to help lower calories and increase your chances of weight loss success without actually tracking them.



## **1. Focus On Whole Foods (But Watch Out For Traps)**

This food category includes everything from veggies, fruits, lean meats, eggs, potatoes, rice and also minimally processed foods like whole grain bread or whole grain pasta. I will go into more detail of why proteins are great for weight loss but for now let's focus on why unprocessed carbs like veggies, fruits and rice are a good choice.

First of all, they have tons of fiber and water. This makes them both low in calories and very voluminous. Larger volume means a food takes up more space in your GI tract, signaling your brain that you are full earlier.

Also eating more veggies and fruits provides you with more vitamins and minerals which brings with it another series of health benefits while also keeping hunger in check.

At this point, you might be wondering if all whole foods are a good option for weight loss. Unfortunately, the answer is no. High-fat whole foods like most nuts, olive oil or avocados should generally be limited. Not because they aren't healthy, but simply because they are fairly calorie dense and therefore more likely to undo your calorie deficit. Remember: Even if you aren't tracking calories, they still exist!





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## **2. Eat More Protein**

Protein does wonders to satiety. By consuming more of your daily calories in protein such as lean dairy products, eggs lean meats or high protein plant foods like beans and soy, your hunger levels will be reduced quite a bit.

Not only that but protein is also highly important for building and maintaining muscle mass when in a calorie deficit. This is the reason pretty much any fitness diet out there is high in protein. So if you haven't yet make sure to increase your protein through the foods I outlined here.

## **3. Reduce (Trans) Fats and Sugars**

Reducing trans fats as well as sugar is pretty straightforward. Simply eat less junk- and processed food. Junk food is high in trans fats and sugars pretty much only for taste or shelf life reasons. Humans are programmed to like sugar because it is a quick source of energy and fat because it is so energy dense.

But nature gave us these inclinations when we still had to fight for survival every day and food was scarce. Nowadays food companies take advantage of this fact and add sugar and fat to make food tastier. So, if you are on a weight loss plan and you are trying to cut calories, start by eliminating most processed foods from your diet like pizza, hot dogs and candy. Of course, a chocolate bar here and there isn't going to kill you and often needed to stay sane, but don't overdo it.



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At this point, I should mention that sugar isn't bad per se and I'm not anti-sugar. The problem is that most modern foods high in sugar (e.g. candy or chocolate) are also high in calories but come with little of the nutrients and fiber responsible for keeping you satisfied. This makes them ideal candidates for overeating.

#### **4. Eat When You Are Hungry & Not Out Of Boredom**

We all like chips to our Friday night movie. But if food is an important source of entertainment as the movie you have to change something. the problem is that if you eat out of boredom you lose sight of how much you eat and also forget to listen to your body's hunger signal.

The consequence will be quite a bit of unwanted calories that will be hard to keep in check especially if you aren't tracking them. So if you still want snacks for your movies, do a quick google search on healthy alternatives which are low in calories. They will benefit you a lot more in the long run.

# RESOURCES

## **Weight Loss & Macronutrient Calculator**

[Click Here To Download](#)

## **Eat This Much**

[Eatthismuch.com](#)

## **My Blog**

[NutritionAndFitness.net](#)