

How to Lose Fat: The Most Comprehensive Guide



This is the most complete fat loss guide online.

And let me be clear:

This is NOT some lame “weight loss” listicle or 300-word post that you read and forget within 5 minutes.

Instead, you’re getting 10,500 words of knowledge about proper fat loss and all its aspects.

If you’re looking to learn everything important about fat loss and how to do it effectively, this guide is for you.

Let’s dive right in.

But First, Understand One Thing..

Fat loss is pretty simple. In fact, not only is it simple to grasp, but it's not that hard to execute, either. Well, unless you're trying to get to stupid low levels of body fat, say for a bodybuilding show.

When we see someone with a nice physique, we connect them with a decent level of leanness. And don't get me wrong:

Being lean is important because it reveals the muscle mass you have better and it's not uncommon to actually look "bigger" while weighing less.

But to build a solid physique, fat loss won't be the biggest and most important factor. You need muscle mass.

Without it, you'll end up skinny. I know because I've been there.

You see, even if you have 20-30 pounds of fat loss ahead of you, that's nothing in comparison to having to build 20-30 pounds of muscle mass.

The first will take you 16-26 weeks of dieting to achieve. Drop a diet break or two in there and you'll need 30 weeks at most.

But, building 20-30 pounds of muscle mass is a whole other ball game. Depending on how long you've been training, this could take at least 1.5 years or it could take 5+ years.

For that reason, I want you to remember something:

Fat loss is easy, [muscle growth](#) is the difficult part. And you need to be spending a majority of your time focusing on muscle growth and less time chasing “aesthetics”.

But since my goal here is to present the most comprehensive and detailed fat loss guide online, we’ll go over everything there is to know on the subject. That way, you can do it in the simplest, most pleasurable, and efficient way possible.

Let Me Tell You Something About Motivation

But, first: What is motivation?

Many people interpret motivation in different ways. Some see it as the psychological force that shows up every so often and makes us change for the better.

Others consider it a daily occurrence that drives us to do things and improve our lives.

And neither camp is right or wrong. But the author Steven Pressfield put it eloquently in his book [The War of Art](#). To paraphrase him, *“At some point, the pain of not doing it becomes greater than the pain of doing it.”*

At some point, to change for the better becomes easier than to stay the same.

It’s easier to start going to the gym and feel embarrassed than to spend another day hating the way you look.

It’s easier to start socializing more than to spend another weekend at home, watching Netflix.

It's easier to start working harder than to spend another year broke.

We could get motivated by many things, I guess. But I think this truly is the essence of motivation.

But motivation rarely lasts long. We get an immense drive to do or achieve something. But after a few days or weeks, the motivation fades, we stop taking the positive actions and we are right back where we started.

This is especially true when it comes to fat loss.

People get motivated to lose fat all the time. They start off excited, but once the motivation starts fading and the hunger increases, they quit. I've been there before, and I'm sure you have, as well.

The solution?

Stop relying on motivation to keep you going. Make a plan, set specific goals and start.

Show up daily, do the work, gain momentum, and before you know it, you'll be well on your way to losing the excess fat.

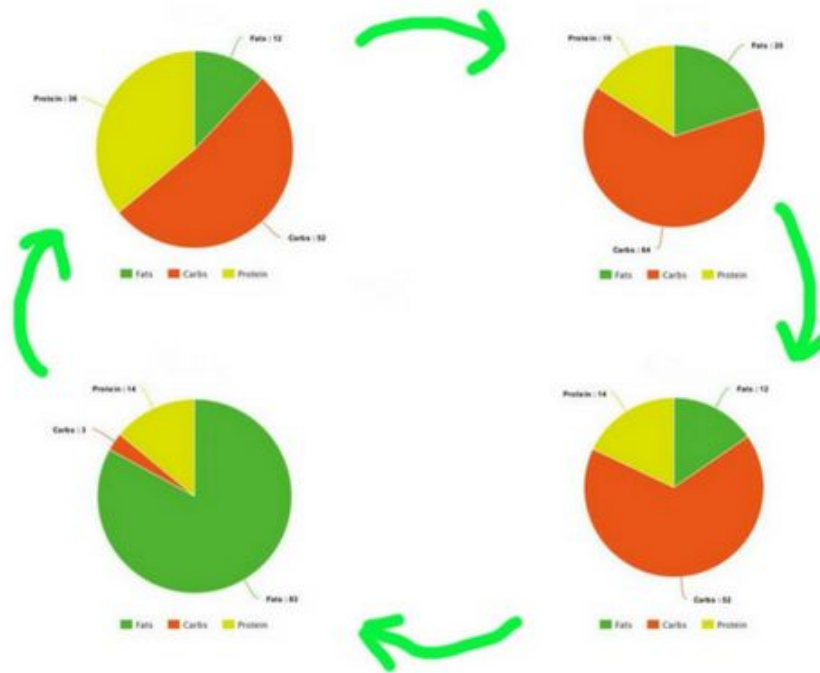
Here's the Truth: Every. Single. Diet. Works.

Yes, every possible diet you can think of works. Some work better, others are what we call "crash" diets. They make you lose a significant amount of weight fast, usually by starving you.

In 1963, a group of researchers in the Institute for Metabolic Research from Oakland, California set out to study the effects of varying diet compositions on weight loss when calories were controlled.

The caloric intake was consistent, but the composition of the diet was changed at different intervals.

For example, the fat intake varied from 12 to 83 percent, protein changed from 14 to 36 percent and carbs from 3 to 64 percent.



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During each revision of the diet, weight loss stayed consistent.

The researchers concluded that caloric intake is the most significant factor for weight loss, regardless of diet composition.

The study's name? [Calories do count](#).

[A similar study](#) from recent times ended up with the same conclusion:

Reduced-calorie diets result in clinically meaningful weight loss regardless of which macronutrients they emphasize.

Finally, [this review](#) came to the same conclusion:

We conclude that a calorie is a calorie. From a purely thermodynamic point of view, this is clear because the human body or, indeed, any living organism cannot create or destroy energy but can only convert energy from one form to another.

A calorie is a calorie, regardless of macronutrient composition. That is why there are so many “effective” diets out there.

The low carb diet makes you restrict your caloric intake thanks to the reduction in carbs.

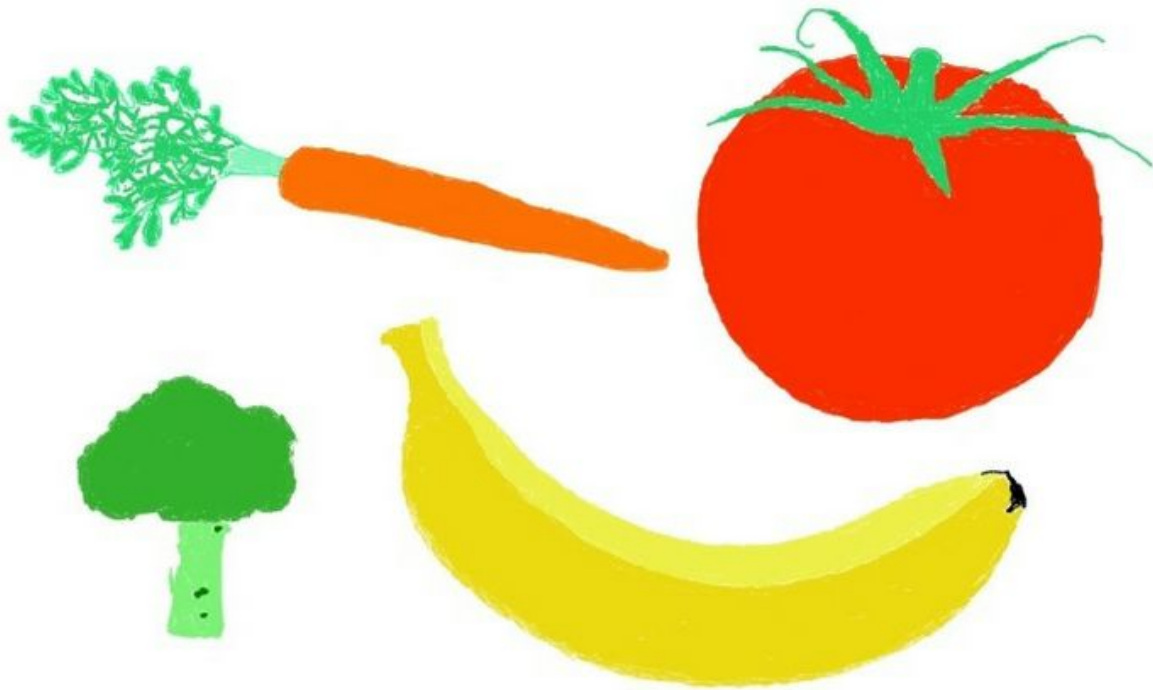


The ketogenic diet makes you restrict calories even further by completely eliminating carbs. You can only eat so much protein before you're stuffed.



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Vegan diets also reduce your caloric intake by making you eat very low-calorie foods all day.



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The [paleo diet](#) makes you cut out all processed foods, which reduces your caloric intake without you even thinking about it.



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So, all diets that make you cut out a macronutrient or food group, make you eat fewer calories and thus lose weight.

But the problem is not in the weight loss. It's in the weight loss maintenance. In other words, sustainability.

You see, most, if not all diets are super restrictive. To the point where you start going insane. You follow it, you get the results, and then..

You're off the diet.

What happens then is the turning point for most people:

They start eating the way they used to eat before and gain all the weight back, and then some.

Let me give you an example to illustrate my point:

You're an average male and you need about 2500 calories/day to maintain your current weight.

One day, you decide to start the Ketogenic Diet, cut out all carbs and start eating meats, cottage cheese, milk, eggs, leafy greens, etc.

Without even knowing it, you're now eating no more than 1600-1700 calories/day because it is hard to eat more with that diet composition.

Of course, you start losing weight. You instantly lose 5-7 pounds thanks to glycogen and water depletion and think to yourself "*Whoa, this is the best thing ever!*".

Life is good. You're losing weight at a fast rate and you eventually get to your goal.

But then, the diet ends and you start eating as usual. You introduce back carbs, your caloric intake returns back to normal.

Except..

The new caloric needs are lower than they used to be before your weight loss. Thanks to the [natural metabolic adaptation](#) and the lower body weight, your new maintenance calories aren't 2500/day, but more like 2100.

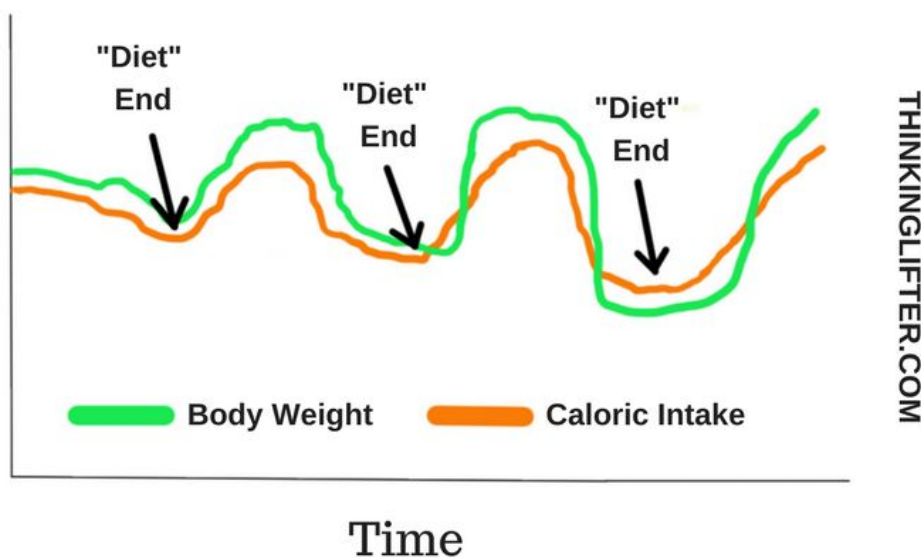
And when you couple that fact with the cravings that you're feeling at the end of a diet, you can see where things take the wrong turn.

Because of your elevated hunger levels, you can be eating upwards of 3000 calories per day and gaining back the weight fast.

So what's the bottom line?

You starved yourself, lost a bunch of weight, started eating more and gained back everything. The popular "Yo-yo effect".

"If you like rollercoasters, then you'll LOVE our new and improved diet!"



I don't know about you, but this doesn't seem productive to me and it can lead to an unhealthy relationship with food and a [binge-eating disorder](#).

But It Goes Much Deeper Than Just Calories: Enjoyability and Health

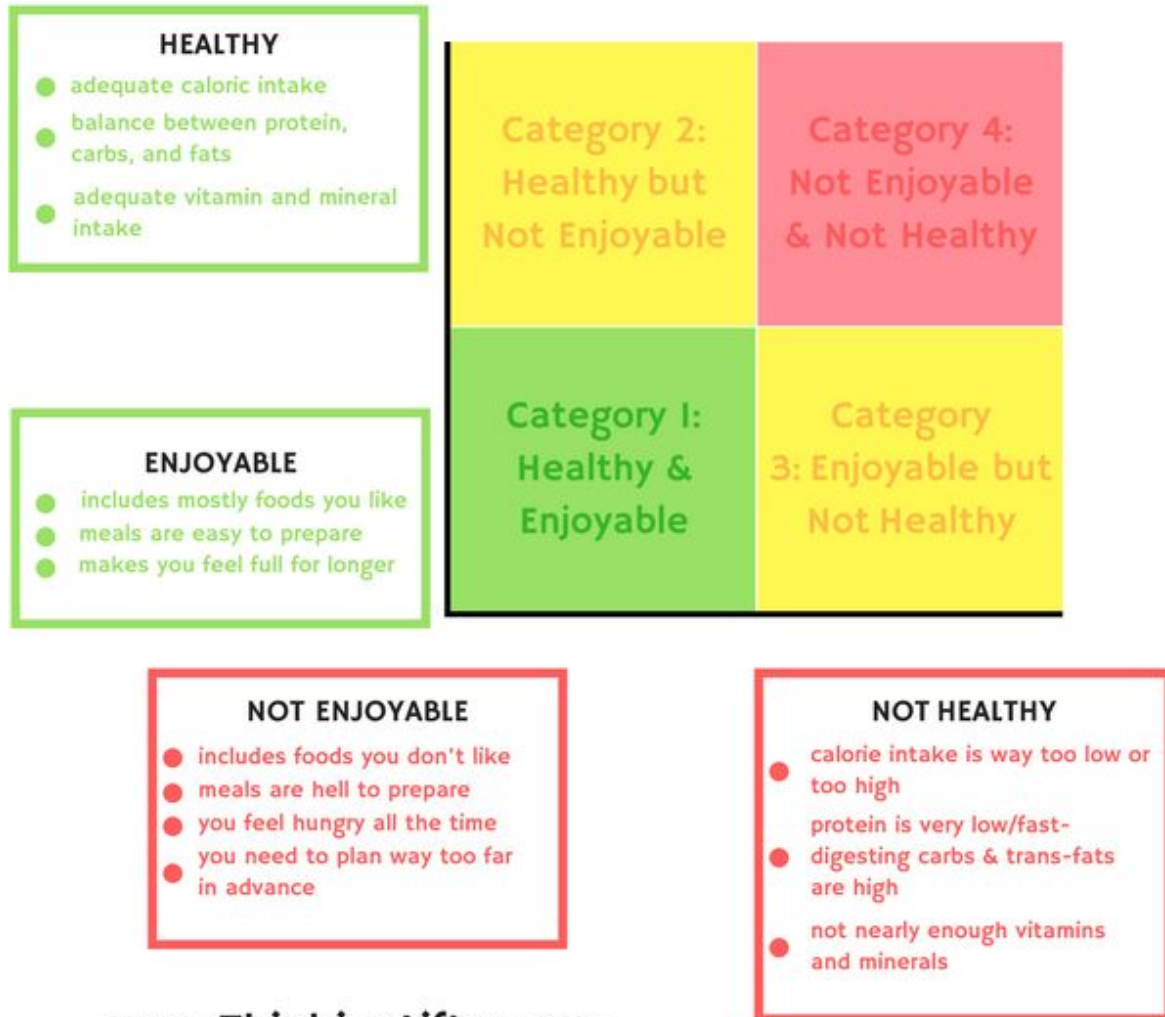
Okay. Every diet works. That's fair enough. But when picking one for yourself, you need to keep 2 things in mind:

- How healthy the diet is
- How enjoyable the diet is

Without having these 2 factors in a good balance, your diet won't keep you satisfied for long. You'll end up binge-eating and gain all the weight back.

Generally speaking, there are 4 categories of diets out there and some are better predisposed to deliver success than others.

The Is This Diet Dumb Graph



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Category 1: Enjoyable But Not Healthy

Most people follow this type of eating. Processed-food-based, high fat, high carb, low protein diets.

Sure they are enjoyable but don't expect to make any notable progress in the gym and don't expect to be a healthy person.

Category 2: Enjoyable and Healthy

This is the ideal scenario and where you want to be. This type of eating allows you to get the adequate protein, fats, carbs, and micronutrients from foods you enjoy eating. This way, you can lose the weight more easily and maintain the weight loss.

Category 3: Not Enjoyable But Healthy

This is where most people fall when they decide they want to lose some weight. This is the popular "clean eating" approach.

The idea is to cut out all "unhealthy" foods and eat only lean meats, fish, dairy, veggies, fruits, and such.

Sure, this is healthy but it's not sustainable for most people because it is not enjoyable.

Category 4: Not Enjoyable and Not Healthy

This is the worst possible situation you can get yourself in, yet is very easy to do so. Most diets out there are dumb and are made by people who have no business writing about nutrition.

I won't point fingers here, but a diet like this is both unhealthy and not enjoyable to follow.

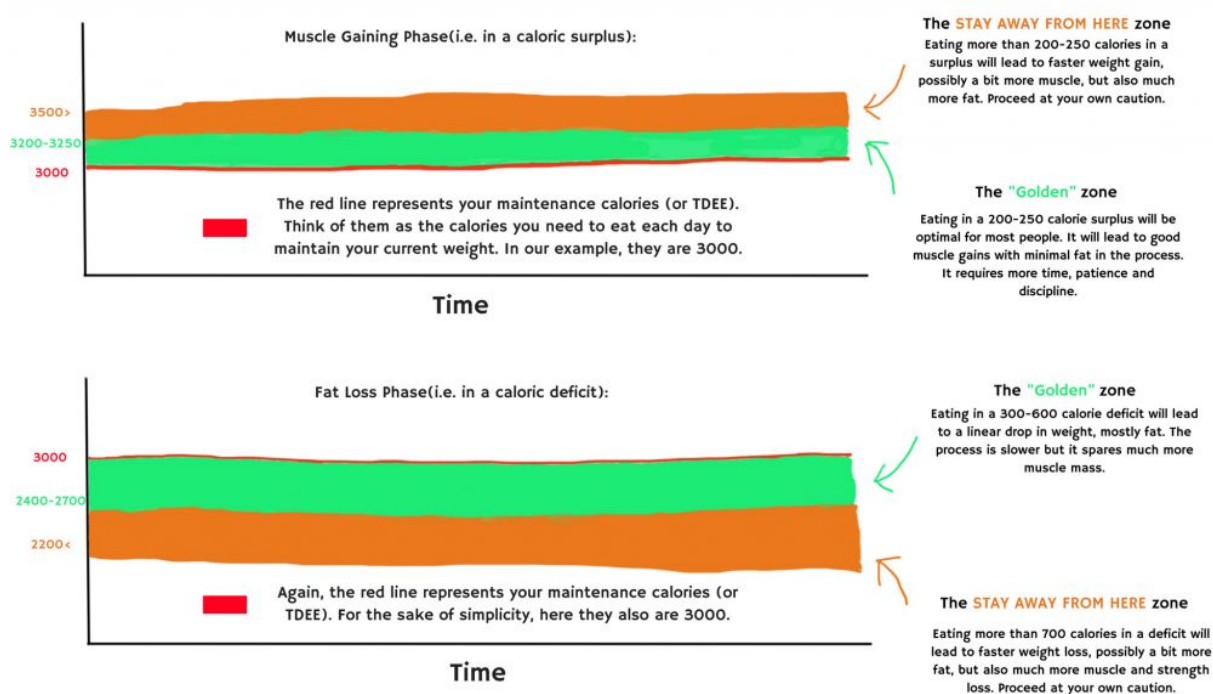
Let's take some time to review what a diet from category 2 would look like. In other words, a diet that is both healthy and enjoyable.

A Diet That is Healthy

Requirement #1: Controlled Calorie Intake

This is an obvious rule. Whether your goals are to build muscle or lose fat, you need to control your calories. When trying to build muscle, eating too much or too little calories will either make you gain too much fat or not gain any muscle at all.

When trying to lose fat, eating too little or too much will make you lose too much muscle or not lose any weight at all, respectively.



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Requirement #2: Adequate Macronutrient and Micronutrient Intake

Total calorie number is the main dictator for weight loss and gain. But, the composition of the diet is just as important. Here are some rules to follow when calculating your macronutrients:

- Eat between 0.8-1g of protein per pound of body weight. If you weigh 170 pounds, eat 136-170 grams of protein daily.
- Eat between 0.3-0.6g of fats per pound of body weight. If you weigh 170 pounds, eat 51-102g of fats daily.
- Get the rest of your calories from carbs and aim for 10-15 grams of fiber for every 1000 calories you eat.

A Diet That is Enjoyable

Requirement #1: Caters to Your Personal Preferences

The diet you follow needs to account for your personal preferences. If you love red meat, but follow a diet that restricts it and instead makes you eat fish 4 days a week, you can see where problems arise.

If you enjoy some ice cream after dinner but your diet forbids “junk foods”, it’s the same deal.

Requirement #2: Food Preparation is Simple

Let’s face it: no diet is going to be effective for you if preparing the food is a big chore.

You have a life, a job/go to school, and don’t have a personal chef. Your diet needs to offer easier to prepare foods.

Requirement #3: Feeling Full and Satisfied

When eating in a caloric deficit, you’ll feel hungry sometimes. There’s not much you can do about it. But, you can reduce the hunger you feel.

For example, eating 2000 calories of mostly processed foods will likely make you feel hungry.

But, getting 85-90% of those calories from whole, rich in protein, fiber, and slow-digesting carb foods would fill you up better.

For that reason, you should adhere to the 90/10 rule and aim to get around 90% of your calories from whole foods and leave 10% for treats (ice cream, chocolate, cookies, chips, etc.).

The Most Important Aspects of a Successful Diet

For a diet to be successful, it needs to cover a few criteria. Let's take a look:

Calories Come First

To lose weight, you need to be taking in fewer calories than you are burning every day. The diet composition does not matter. You can be eating twinkies all day and still lose weight.

Don't believe me?

[Professor Mark Haub underwent a 10-week diet](#) that consisted of twinkies, oreos, and other junk. Despite what many believe about 'clean foods', Haub lost 27 pounds.

But what was his trick? He restricted his calorie intake to 1800 per day.

What's more, Haub's bad cholesterol, or LDL, dropped 20 percent and his good cholesterol, or HDL, increased by 20 percent.

How to Calculate Caloric Intake, Step-by-Step

I don't recommend using most online calculators because I've found them to be inaccurate. For example, most of them calculate my maintenance calories at around 2000 per day where in reality I need around 3000.

Use this formula:

English BMR Formula

Women: $BMR = 655 + (4.35 \times \text{weight in pounds}) + (4.7 \times \text{height in inches}) - (4.7 \times \text{age in years})$

Men: $BMR = 66 + (6.23 \times \text{weight in pounds}) + (12.7 \times \text{height in inches}) - (6.8 \times \text{age in year})$

Metric BMR Formula

Women: $BMR = 655 + (9.6 \times \text{weight in kilos}) + (1.8 \times \text{height in cm}) - (4.7 \times \text{age in years})$

Men: $BMR = 66 + (13.7 \times \text{weight in kilos}) + (5 \times \text{height in cm}) - (6.8 \times \text{age in years})$

Credits: <http://www.bmi-calculator.net/bmr-calculator/bmr-formula.php>

Once you know your BMR, calculate it by one of the numbers from below based on your activity level:

Harris Benedict Formula

To determine your total daily calorie needs, multiply your **BMR** by the appropriate activity factor, as follows:

- If you are sedentary (little or no exercise) : Calorie-Calculation = $BMR \times 1.2$
- If you are lightly active (light exercise/sports 1-3 days/week) : Calorie-Calculation = $BMR \times 1.375$
- If you are moderatetely active (moderate exercise/sports 3-5 days/week) : Calorie-Calculation = $BMR \times 1.55$
- If you are very active (hard exercise/sports 6-7 days a week) : Calorie-Calculation = $BMR \times 1.725$
- If you are extra active (very hard exercise/sports & physical job or 2x training) : Calorie-Calculation = $BMR \times 1.9$

Credits: <http://www.bmi-calculator.net/bmr-calculator/harris-benedict-equation/>

Once you have your TDEE, or caloric needs to maintain your current weight, a good rule of thumb is to put a 500 calorie deficit to that number.

Why?

A pound of fat contains roughly 3500 calories. When you set a deficit of 500/day, that turns to roughly 3500/week, which in theory should make you shed 1 pound of fat per week.

Of course, the human body is much more complex, but calculating your caloric needs doesn't and shouldn't feel like rocket science.

Depending on your current level of leanness, you can adjust the deficit higher or lower to cut the risk of muscle loss.

Follow these guidelines:

- 10-15% deficit if you're on the leaner side (below 15% body fat)
- 20-25% deficit if you have more fat to lose (above 15-20% body fat)
- 25%+ deficit if you're very overweight or obese. You can get away with losing fat faster without sacrificing muscle mass.

Examples:

- 10-15% deficit - say your TDEE is 2800 calories. $2800 * 0.15 = 420$. $2800 - 420 = 2380$ calories.
- 20-25% deficit - same TDEE. $2800 * 0.25 = 700$. $2800 - 700 = 2100$ calories.
- 25%+ deficit - same TDEE, 30% deficit. $2800 * 0.30 = 840$. $2800 - 840 = 1960$ calories.

How to Calculate Macronutrients, Step-by-Step

You know your caloric needs, you've calculated the deficit, now it's time to split your calories between carbs, fats, and protein.

For those of you who don't know what "macros" are, they are the components that make up food. Also, read [this](#).

Each macronutrient has a certain number of calories per gram. Protein and carbs have 4 calories and fats have 9 calories per gram.

Protein is First

Protein is of great importance for us lifters, especially when trying to lose fat.

Protein helps maintain muscle mass. This in combination with strength training ensures that you lose little to no muscle during fat loss, as long as the deficit is reasonable.

Protein is very satiating. When calories are lower and hunger levels rise, having a higher protein intake will keep you full for longer.

As far as intake goes, 1 gram per pound of body weight is enough to maximize its effects. If you weigh 180 pounds, aim for 180 grams of protein. Simple.

Same for you ladies. If you weigh 125 pounds, eat 125 grams of protein daily.

The only exception to this rule applies to very overweight or obese individuals. The rule above isn't set as eat a gram of protein per pound of weight. It is set as eat a gram of protein per pound of lean mass.

The problem here, for the average person, is that figuring out your lean mass can be difficult and time-consuming. For that reason, adhering to the 1g/lb of weight will be just as good for you.

But, getting back to my point on overweight and obese people:

This rule doesn't work well for people with lots of fat to lose because it's an overkill. Say an untrained guy weighs 270 pounds and is 30+% body fat.

This person wouldn't need 270 grams of protein per day. That would be too much. This person would benefit much more from an intake of 0.6-0.7 grams of protein per pound of weight.

$270 * 0.6 = 162$ grams of protein. Much more achievable and just as effective.

Carbs and Fats are Second

Splitting up your remaining calories between carbs and fats should be based on your personal taste, but there are two rules to keep in mind:

Get between 0.3 and 0.6 grams of fats per pound of body weight. If you weigh 180 pounds, aim for 54 to 108 grams of fat/day ($180 * 0.3 = 54$, $180 * 0.6 = 108$). At the very least, 15% of your calories.

If you're eating around 2700 calories per day, 15% is 405 calories ($2700 * 0.15 = 405$), which is 45 grams of fat ($405 / 9 = 45$).

A lot of people (read: zealots) like to pick on dietary fat and demonize it, because..

Reasons, I guess?

But the fact is, dietary fat is an integral part of any balanced diet. Fats support metabolic function, cell signaling, immune system function, hormone production, and the absorption of important nutrients (such as vitamin D and A).

Fats also add texture and taste to meals and take longer for the body to break down and absorb, which makes you feel full for longer.

There is much to be said about dietary fat, but it's beyond the scope of this guide. If you're interested, read: [All About Healthy Fats](#)

Finally, on to carbohydrates. Once you have your protein and fats numbers, calculating carb needs is pretty straight-forward:

Leave the rest of your calories for carbs.

Let me give you an example (**warning: basic math ahead**):

You're eating 2700 calories per day and weigh 180 pounds.

You'll need 180 grams of protein ($180 * 4 = 720$ calories) and 54 to 108 grams of fats ($54 * 9 = 486$ calories, $108 * 9 = 972$ calories).

The remaining calories go to carbs. In our case:

$2700 - 720$ (protein calories) = 1980;

$1980 - 486$ (fat calories) = 1494 calories;

Now, split 1494 by 4 (number of calories per gram of carbs).

$1494 / 4 = 373$ grams of carbs;

Or, if you go with the high end of fats intake (0.6g/lb), the example would look like this:

$2700 - 720 = 1980$;

$1980 - 972 = 1008$;

$1008 / 4 = 252$ grams of carbs per day;

The higher your fat intake, the lower your carbs need to be and vice-versa. Don't stress too much about it. Get enough protein, eat within your range of fats and get the rest from carbs.

Also, aim for 10-15 grams of fiber for every 1000 calories you eat.

Fiber provides many health benefits and keeps you regular. Fiber also fills you up, which is especially important during fat loss periods.

Foods that are high in fiber are generally high in volume and low in calories.

This is awesome for dieting because you can satisfy your hunger with less than 200 calories. Think cucumbers, celery, cabbage, etc.

If you're interested in learning more about fiber, [read this](#).

We went over a ton of information, so let's recap how to set up your diet:

Here's an average guy who's looking to shed some fat. Let's call him Bob.

- Bob is 6'2" (188cm) and weighs 200 lb (~90kg.).
- He is 27 years old and is moderately active.
- He spent an entire year eating in a surplus, gaining muscle and strength.
- Now he wants to lose some of the extra fat and reveal the muscle mass he's been building.

Step #1: Calculate Bob's maintenance calories, or TDEE

Calories come first. Using the formula from above and using Bob's stats, we can get to his TDEE:

For Bob, we'll use his height and weight in cm and kg respectively.

$BMR = 66 + (13.7 * \text{weight in kilos}) + (5 * \text{height in cm}) - (6.8 * \text{age in years})$

$66 + (13.7 * 90) + (5 * 188) - (6.8 * 27) = 2055$ calories

Now that we know Bob's BMR, we'll multiply it by 1.55 (Moderately active - moderate sports/exercise 3 to 5 times per week). This number best describes his activity.

$2055 * 1.55 = 3186$ calories for maintenance.

We'll add a 500 calorie deficit to this number and our starting calories for fat loss will be 2686.

Step #2: Calculate Bob's protein needs

This one is pretty simple. We are using the 1g per lb of body weight rule. So 200 lb = 200 grams of protein per day.

Step #3: Calculate fats, carbs, and fiber

We'll first set the fats number and leave the rest for carbs. So adhering to the 0.3 to 0.6 grams of fat per lb of body weight rule, we end up with:

$200 * 0.3 = 60$

$200 * 0.6 = 120$

Bob is going to be eating somewhere between 60 and 120 grams of fats per day and get the remaining calories from carbs.

He is also going to eat 10-15 grams of fiber for every 1000 calories. In other words:

$10 * 2.7 = 27$ grams of fiber

$15 * 2.7 = 40$ grams of fiber

Final result:



2686 calories.
200 grams of protein.
60-120 grams of fat.
remaining calories for carbs.
27-40 grams of fiber.

How and When to Make Adjustments to Your Diet for Ongoing Progress

All these numbers are great, but they are only the starting point. The calorie and macronutrient numbers you need for optimal fat loss are going to change as you lose weight.

Part of the reason is that of the natural metabolic adaptation you will experience. Also, weighing less will make your body burn fewer calories on a day to day basis.

A person will burn more calories from everyday activities and training at a bodyweight of 220 pounds than at 200 pounds. And at 180 pounds, he would burn even fewer calories.

What does this mean?

As you diet down and your body weight decreases, your diet needs to be adjusted to account for that.

Allow me to illustrate. For example, say you're eating 2900 calories per day and are doing 20 minutes of low-intensity steady state cardio per week.

You also track your body weight daily, in the morning (we'll go over fat loss tracking methods below) and take the weekly average:

Week 1

Monday	197.3lbs./89.4kg
Tuesday	196.4lbs./89kg
Wednesday	195.5lbs./88.6kg
Thursday	198lbs./89.8kg
Friday	196.6lbs./89.1kg
Saturday	196lbs./88.9kg

Sunday	199.1lbs./90.3
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Weekly Average	196.9lbs./89.3kg
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Week 2

Monday	196.6lbs./89.1kg
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Tuesday	196lbs./88.9kg
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Wednesday	195.1lbs./88.4kg
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Thursday	197lbs./89.3kg
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Friday	196.1lbs./88.9kg
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Saturday	195.5lbs./88.6kg
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Sunday	195.1lbs./88.4kg
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Weekly Average	195.9lbs./88.8kg
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Week 3

Monday	196lbs./88.9kg
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Tuesday	196.6lbs./89.1kg
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Wednesday	195.1lbs./88.4kg
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Thursday	196.5lbs./89.1kg
Friday	196.5lbs./89.1kg
Saturday	196lbs./88.9kg
Sunday	195.1lbs./88.4kg
Weekly Average	195.9lbs./88.8kg

As you can see, from week 1 to week 2, there was about a pound of difference, but on week 3, body weight stalled.

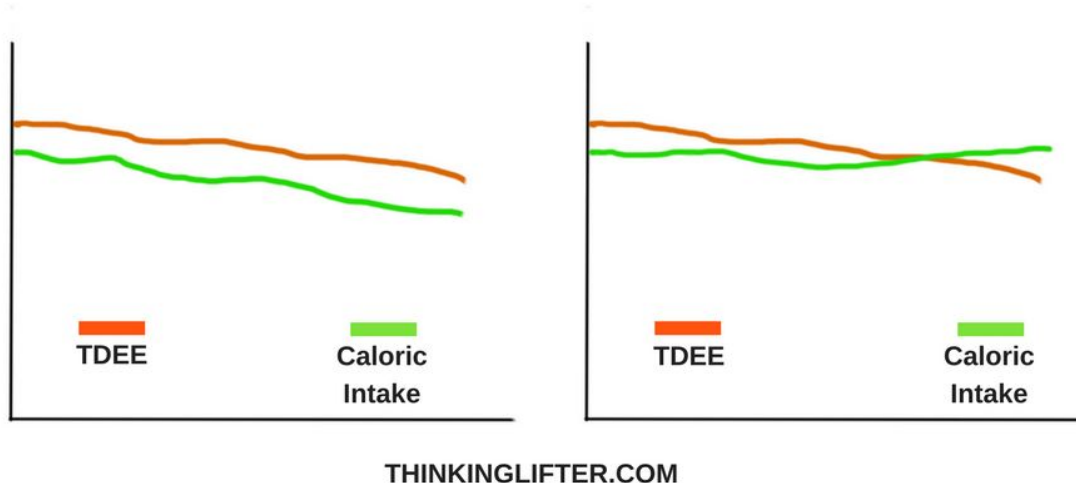
At this point, you can either keep everything the same for another week and see if there is a decrease in body weight, or you can adjust your diet or cardio.

You can go from 2900 calories per day to 2800 or increase the weekly cardio by 20-25 minutes. But don't adjust both.

There is no much difference, it should be based on personal preference. If you want to eat as many calories as you can, then increase activity. If you don't mind eating a bit less, decrease calories.

Make sure to do things gradually and not adjust both calories and cardio on the same week.

The goal is to keep the caloric deficit in a certain range throughout the fat loss and see moderate progress. Once the progress stalls, you can adjust again.



As for the macronutrients, I don't want to confuse you so we'll keep it simple.

Keep protein intake the same, eat within 0.3-0.6g per lb. of weight of fats and get the rest from carbs. Same rules apply, only protein intake stays consistent.

For every 10 or so pounds of weight you lose, you can adjust protein intake down (to 1g/lb.) or you can keep it the same.

Remember, protein is very satiating and eating a bit more of it can help you with hunger problems.

How to Put It All Together With Eating

These numbers are well and good and hopefully, you've made the calculations for yourself. But, now what?

What should you actually eat to reach these numbers? I'll give you my recommendations in a moment, but first:

Why I don't like the if it fits your macros (IIFYM) approach and mentality.

The term IIFYM has this incorrect connotation and most people fall into the trap that *"As long as I hit my macronutrient numbers, the foods don't matter."*

While hitting your caloric numbers and macronutrients is very important, it's one side of a coin. Calorie quality matters.

IIFYM is one extreme, but there's another: "clean" eating.

Unlike IIFYM, where most people take it up as a challenge to shove as much junk down their throats as they can, clean eating is the opposite. With it, the goal is to eat only "clean" foods: veggies, lean meats, fish, dairy products, fruits, etc.

This is all well and good but it makes people develop this black and white, good and bad mentality towards food. Where a meal that consists of fish and veggies is "good", foods like chocolate and pizza are inherently "bad".

And these people are the ones who avoid the "bad" foods that they love because they think that pizza will go straight to their abs.

The solution?

Adopting a "flexible dieting" mindset.

But isn't [flexible dieting](#) another word for IIFYM?

No, and here's why:

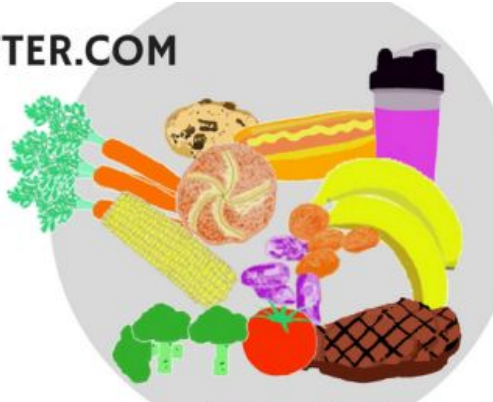
Where IIFYM follows the rule of "hit your macros for the day, the foods don't matter", flexible dieting is different.

With flexible dieting, your goal is to hit your macros for the day but with a more balanced and “adult” approach to nutrition. With it, you get 80-90% of your calories from whole, nutritious foods and the rest are left for your treats.



IIFYM Dieting

- ✓ Adequate caloric and macronutrient intake
- ✓ Balance between protein, carbs, and fats
- ✓ Includes mostly foods you like
- ✓ Meals are easy to prepare
- ✗ Meals make you feel full for longer
- ✗ Adequate vitamin and mineral intake
- ✗ Not relying on supplements to make up for lacking nutrition
- ✓ You don't have to plan meals in advance
- ✗ Fundamentally good for your health
- ✗ No energy crashes or afternoon fatigue
- ✗ Allows you to maintain a healthy relationship with food



Flexible Dieting

- Adequate caloric and macronutrient intake ✓
- Balance between protein, carbs, and fats ✓
- Includes mostly foods you like ✓
- Meals are easy to prepare ✓
- Meals make you feel full for longer ✓
- Adequate vitamin and mineral intake ✓
- Not relying on supplements to make up for lacking nutrition ✓
- You don't have to plan meals in advance ✗
- Fundamentally good for your health ✓
- No energy crashes or afternoon fatigue ✓
- Allows you to maintain a healthy relationship with food ✓

How to Set Up and Track Your Training for Fat Loss

Let's face it: training can be complex. There are a lot of moving parts:

[Periodization](#), [training volume](#), [frequency](#), [exercise selection](#), weekly training design, and more.

The list goes on and on.

And dialing in these things is even more important when you are in a caloric deficit.

Why?

Because when your body is short on energy, your training needs to be tightly tuned. That way, you maintain your strength and muscle mass, and not [overtraining](#) or get injured.

You can get away with sub-optimal training and still make at least some progress when eating more food. But the energy deficit needed for fat loss is much less forgiving.

Let's dig in and go over what your training should look like to achieve the above.

Cardio is not better than strength training for fat loss

We need to get this out of the way first and get on the same page. Cardio is a very popular method for fat loss and there are tons of people who consider it mandatory if they ever hope to shed a few pounds.

But, not only is cardio not required for fat loss, it can even be more damaging than helpful for some people.

1.Overweight people using high impact cardio to start their fat loss journey

Individuals who have a lot of fat to lose shouldn't start with high impact cardio such as running because it puts too much stress on the knees and ankles.

The type of cardio done should be something less impactful, such as swimming or riding a bike.

2.People whose hunger levels rise when they perform cardio and end up overeating

We share lots of similarities, but there are also individual differences. For example:

In [this post](#), Bret Contreras looked at cardio and appetite, among other things, and how individuals differ. To quote him:

Take a look at [THIS](#) study where researchers looked at people's calorie intake responses to a 50-min low-intensity cardio session at 50% of max heart rate. The researchers looked at the compensatory response to the exercise session. In other words, if you burned 100 calories in a workout, would you then make up for it by consuming 100 calories later?

And:

A couple of people ended up with 300-600 calorie deficits after the exercise session, yet several people ended up with 300-600 calorie surpluses! The

former group saw amplified results on account of their decreased caloric intake following the cardio session, whereas the latter group sabotaged their fat loss efforts by consuming more calories than they burned during the cardio session.

How does this apply to you? Are you a person who feels extremely hungry after low-intensity cardio? Then perhaps it's not for you. Or maybe you're a person who doesn't get hungry, or even loses appetite, in response to low-intensity cardio. If that's the case, low-intensity cardio might be a good way to help you establish an energy deficit to lose fat.

[Read the full post here.](#)

Furthermore, when comparing cardio and resistance training in a weight loss protocol, many studies ([the most recent one](#)) have shown that lifting weights is much more efficient and better at preserving muscle mass than cardio is.

And when you're trying to lose fat, one of your biggest priorities should be to keep the muscle mass you have.

This is because muscle mass is metabolically costly.

If we were to compare two people of the same age, gender, height, and weight, but one had 33kg./73lbs. of muscle mass and the other had 50kg./110lbs., the person with more muscle mass would burn more calories throughout the day.

This means that this person would be able to eat more calories each day and maintain the same weight.

How much more? Research has come up with a calculation of roughly 13 kcals/1kg. of muscle.

Hardly stunning, but these calculations account for muscles at rest. Meaning, the more muscle mass you have:

- the more difficult workouts you can complete;
- the more calories you'd burn during workouts;
- the more calories you'd need for muscle recovery.

What's the bottom line?

Lose fat and maintain your muscle mass. You'll be able to eat more food during and after the diet and you'll look better than if you were to aim for "weight loss".

So, how do you do that? There are a few simple steps to take, but first:

Why I don't like the *"keep your training the same"* advice that is thrown around

This advice is thrown around by people with good intentions.

You see, a few years ago, everyone who wanted to lose fat and get ripped believed in the "toning" crap. Supposedly, doing high rep, low-intensity training burned fat and brought out definition.

(Today, I'd like to believe that we are over that, but my Twitter newsfeed never ceases to amaze me.)

This often leads people to follow these dumb and ineffective “*fat loss programs*” that promised “*ripped arms*”, or “*ripped abs*”, or “*ripped <insert body part here>*”.

But, after a few weeks of training that way and eating in a deficit, most people (except, maybe, [the beginners](#)) start losing tons of muscle mass and strength.

Why? Because one of the key factors for muscle preservation during fat loss was missing: mechanical tension.

In other words, there is no lifting heavy weights relative to your absolute strength.

So, while your body is still going to need some training volume (weight lifted * repetitions done * sets done), the stimulus of heavy compound lifts is going to be much more important for muscle retention.

In simpler terms, you need to give your body a reason to hold on to the muscle mass.

So, while people found it logical (?), or more effective (?) to do 5 sets of 25 reps on the bench to get “ripped pecs”, all they needed was a few heavy sets of 4 to 8 repetitions per week.


Since we know that [spot reducing fat](#) is a myth and the human body doesn’t work that way, we can conclude that hammering a certain muscle group with a million repetitions every week won’t make it more “ripped”.


In fact, this type of training is going to exhaust you and make your training sessions tough to recover from. The perfect recipe for muscle loss.

So what does this have to do with the “*Keep your training the same*” advice?

I'm glad I asked.

As time passed and we got more and more educated on why lifting heavy is crucial for muscle maintenance during fat loss, this common advice started to pop up:

#1	
Idoinfactlift007 Rep power: -0,04 	Hey guys. I've been bulking for 8 months and I've gained a ton of strength and muscle mass, as you can see in my avatar ;) (got that sweet selfie last night, after lifting). But I also got a bit fluffy and I need to cut for a while. How should I train?
	Reply

#2	
Broeski6724 Rep power: over 9k 	Awesome job, brah. For fat loss, keep your training the same. You don't want to be doing this high-rep, low-intensity bull crap. Spot reducing fat is a myth, you know.
	Reply

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...

I guess this advice is better. But I still don't think it's accurate.

First of all, most people asking this question don't post their training routines.

We have to assume that their programs are solid, hence the progress they've made. (I don't know how to quantify *"ton of strength and muscle mass"*, but whatever.)

So, telling that dude “*keep your training the same*” is dumb.

Second, even if he didn’t post his routine, 9 times out of 10 I can guess it:

It’s either a push-pull-legs split or a bro-split with an average of 4.5 training days per week and somewhere between 12 and 25 working sets for each muscle group.

Do you think it’s wise to do 20 sets for chest every week while in a caloric deficit? I don’t.

So you can see how giving him the advice to keep his training the same can do more harm than good.

As we already discussed above, when eating in a caloric surplus, you can get away with a lot more sub-optimal training and way too high of a training volume.

But, when you cut the caloric supply short for fat loss, you need to get your training sorted out. Otherwise, you’ll risk burning yourself out and losing lots of muscle and strength in the process.

Sure, keeping your training the same for the first few weeks could work, especially if you have lots of fat to lose. But after a while, the high volume is going to catch up and you’ll be in trouble.

Your performance will deteriorate, you won’t recover, and you’ll risk injuring yourself.

The solution?

Lower Training Volume, Maintain the Intensity

Maintaining a proper balance between training intensity and volume is very important for muscle growth, but is even more crucial for fat loss.

For muscle growth, more volume is going to produce more results, to a point. But, for fat loss, more volume is often not needed, but also counterproductive.

To avoid that, you should keep lifting the same amount of weight you normally do but reduce the number of sets you perform.

For example, say you followed a standard push-pull-legs split during your gaining phase, where you alternated between 4 and 5 training days per week:

Week 1

Monday	Chest, Shoulders & Triceps
Tuesday	Back & Biceps
Wednesday	Off
Thursday	Legs & Abs
Friday	Off
Saturday	Chest, Shoulders & Triceps
Sunday	Back & Biceps

Week 2

Monday	Off
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Tuesday	Legs & Abs
Wednesday	Off
Thursday	Chest, Shoulders & Triceps
Friday	Back & Biceps
Saturday	Off
Sunday	Legs & Abs

You can keep following that same configuration during the first few weeks of fat loss if you wish. But, my recommendation is to immediately drop the 9th training day and train 4 days per week.

For example, by switching to an upper-lower body split:

Monday	Upper Body
Tuesday	Lower Body
Wednesday	Off
Thursday	Upper Body
Friday	Lower Body
Saturday	Off
Sunday	Off

You would keep the total sets for each workout the same, but with one less workout.

After a few weeks in a caloric deficit, it's advisable to lower the total sets you are doing. You can do that either by:

- Removing another training day, down to 3 times/week (example split below);
- Reducing the total sets you do for each exercise;
- Cutting one exercise per muscle group out from your training.

If you go with the third option, keep the training sets for compound lifts the same and cut out isolation exercises instead.

Maintaining your performance on the [deadlift](#), [overhead press](#), [bench press](#), and [squat](#) is going to help you maintain much more muscle mass than doing 3 extra sets of bicep curls every week.

3 training days/week split:

Monday	Legs & Abs
Tuesday	Off
Wednesday	Chest, Shoulders & Triceps
Thursday	Off
Friday	Back & Biceps
Saturday	Off

Sunday

Off

The goal here is to do the most important and effective work (maintaining your strength) and cut out the non-essential (doing tons of isolation work for each muscle).

As the diet progresses, you can keep cutting out a set here and there, every other week and maintain the intensity of lifting.

The stimulus is going to help you preserve your muscle mass and strength and because the volume will be controlled, you'll be able to recover and hit each workout fresh and with force.

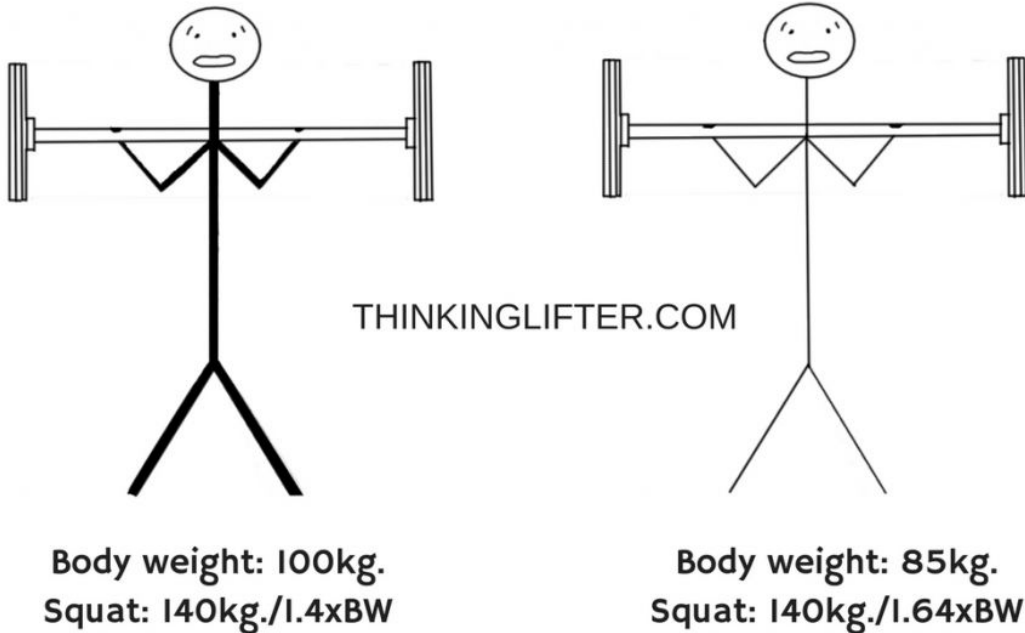
Ideally, at the end of your diet, you should be as strong as when you begin, with the only difference being in the total volume you do each week.

For example, if you can squat 140kg./310lbs. for 8 in the beginning, there is no reason not to be able to do it at the end, if you do things correctly.

Not only will this state that you've done a good job at keeping your muscle mass, but also that your relative strength has improved.

Squatting 140kg./310lbs. when you weigh 100kg./220lbs. is one thing. Squatting the same poundage when you weigh 85kg./187lbs. means you've improved.

Same guy, same squat weight. Better relative strength.



And the best part is, by maintaining your strength during the caloric deficit, you can go into your next off-season leaner, ramp up the training volume again, and make great muscle gains.

Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Track Your Progress

Tracking your fat loss progress is one of the most important aspects:

- It keeps you accountable when your progress slows down or stops.
- It keeps you motivated to keep going when you see improvements.

Without decent tracking, a lot of people end up in a sort of “maintenance” mode where they think that they are losing fat, but the deficit they’ve once had is no longer there. This often results in frustration and time wasting.

To track progress properly, you need to set **S.M.A.R.T. goals** and couple them with proper tracking techniques.

What are smart goals?

S - Specific

M - Measurable

A - Attainable/Achievable

R - Realistic

T - Time Bound

Specific: A specific goal is much more likely to be carried out compared to a vague one. A specific goal includes details which makes it much easier to break down into actionable steps.

A vague goal is: *“Lose some weight.”* A specific goal is: *“Lose 5 pounds in the next 30 days.”*

Measurable: A measurable goal makes it easy for you to track the progress of. And the more specific the goal is, the easier it is to measure.

For example, going back to the specific goal, *“Lose 5 pounds in the next 30 days.”* You can measure your progress by breaking it down on a week-to-week basis.

On the other hand, there’s not much you can measure about *“Lose some weight.”*

Attainable/Achievable: I'm all for ambition, but most people generally go about goal setting the wrong way. They set goals too difficult to achieve and after the motivation wanes, they usually give up.

This is why setting goals that are achievable will make it much more likely for you to go through.

"But if the goal is achievable and "easy", then I'm not progressing, am I?", I can hear you thinking.

The solution is simple: achieve a goal, then set another, and another. Small victories add up and build momentum.

Realistic: Again, this ties in with attainable goals and it's important. It's realistic to set a goal to lose 5 pounds in the next 30 days. It's not realistic to set a goal to lose 50 pounds in the same time frame.

Time Bound: Setting a time frame for your goal is crucial because it keeps you accountable and makes the goal more specific and measurable.

If you set the goal to lose 5 pounds in the next 30 days, you are much more likely to follow through and achieve it. Compare that to "Lose 5 pounds".

The second goal is much vaguer and you're more likely to drop it or forget about it.

Alright, you need to set S.M.A.R.T. goals and you need to keep track of them. When it comes to fat loss, slow and steady wins the race.

Depending on your body fat percentage, you should aim to lose between 1 and 2 pounds per week.

If you're at or above 20% body fat, you can afford to lose up to 2 pounds without sacrificing muscle.

If you're leaner, at 15% and below, aim for 1-1.25 pounds per week.

Now that we've gone over goals, here are the most important things to keep track of during fat loss.

#1: Body Weight

Changes (or lack thereof) in body weight are one of the best ways to track your fat loss progress. But to do things efficiently and to track accurately, you need to be doing daily weigh-ins.

Why?

Let's take two people as an example. Jim and Dwight. Dwight measures his weight once a week or so, but Jim does it daily. Both of them have set a goal to lose 1 pound per week.

Dwight measures his body weight on Sunday morning: 197.3lbs./89.4kg. Next Sunday morning, he does the same. This time it shows 199.1lbs./90.3kg.

So:

Sunday: 197.3lbs./89.4kg.

Monday: N/A

Tuesday: N/A

Wednesday: N/A

Thursday: N/A

Friday: N/A

Saturday: N/A

Sunday: 199.1lbs./90.3kg.

Clearly, Dwight is not being serious about his diet and isn't in a caloric deficit, right?

Not necessarily. Let's now take Jim as an example.

He measures his body weight every morning and takes the weekly average.

Monday: 197.3lbs./89.4kg.

Tuesday: 196.4lbs./89kg.

Wednesday: 195.5lbs./88.6kg.

Thursday: 198lbs./89.8kg.

Friday: 196.6lbs./89.1kg.

Saturday: 196lbs./88.9kg.

Sunday: 199.1lbs./90.3

Average weekly weight: 196.9lbs./89.3kg

Week two goes like this:

Monday: 196.6lbs./89.1kg.

Tuesday: 196lbs./88.9kg.

Wednesday: 195.1lbs./88.4kg.

Thursday: 197lbs./89.3kg.

Friday: 196.1lbs./88.9kg.

Saturday: 195.5lbs./88.6kg.

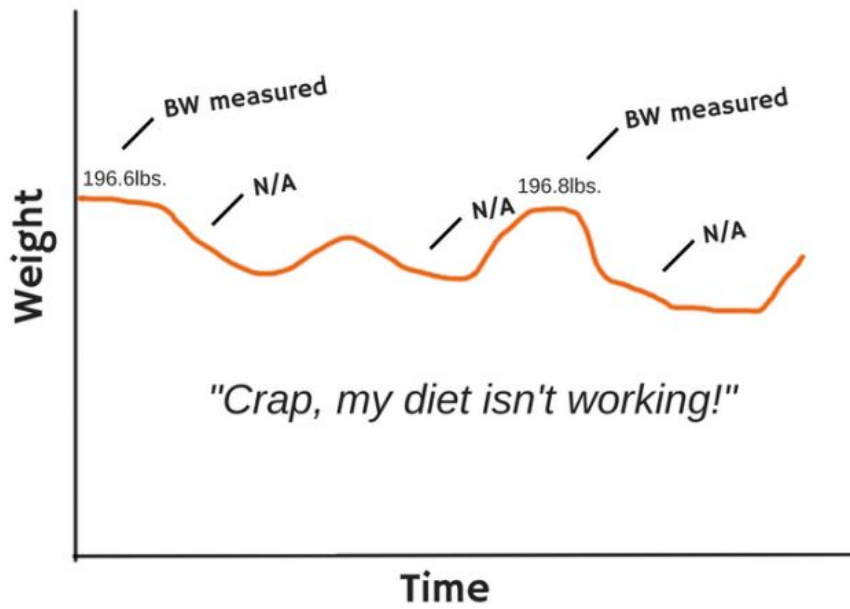
Sunday: 195.1lbs./88.4kg.

Average weekly weight: 195.9lbs./88.8kg.

Jim is down 1lb./0.4kg.

Because Jim is taking his daily weight, he can see the normal fluctuations and the trend of his body weight.

Dwight, on the other hand, is sabotaging himself by measuring his weight only once a week. If his weight fluctuates up on the exact day he takes his measurement, he assumes that his diet isn't working.



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Track your weight daily, in the morning on an empty stomach and take the weekly average.

Compare week to week and see how your weight changes over time.

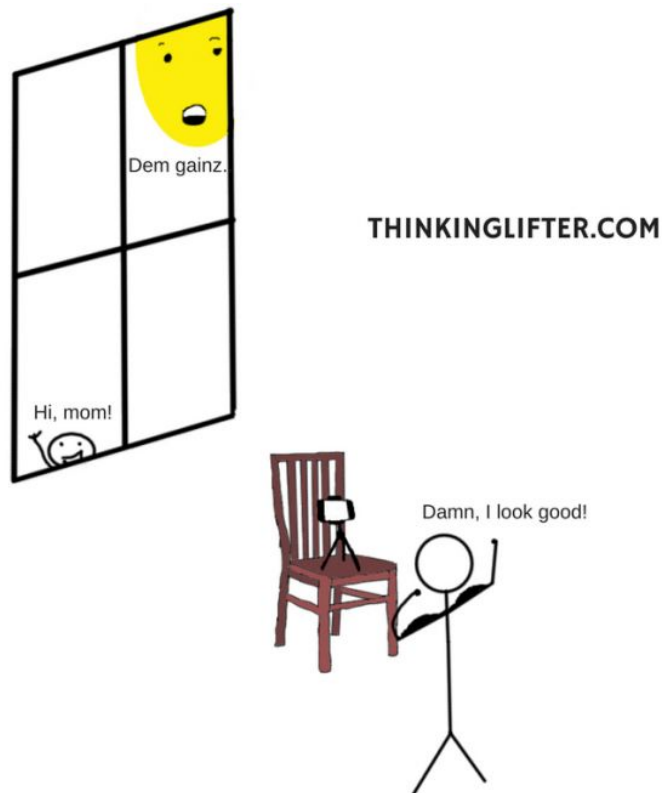
If you're losing fat too slow, you can increase the deficit. If you're losing too quickly, you can increase caloric intake a bit.

#2: Progress Pics

Next to tracking your average weight on a week to week basis, taking the occasional progress pictures is a great way to see changes.

We see ourselves in the mirror every day and changes can be difficult to notice sometimes.

But to make progress pictures effective, you need to take them under the same conditions every time and use the same poses.



Take progress pictures once every 3 or 4 weeks and compare.

#3: Performance in the Gym

Once you have a good idea of how your body is changing over time thanks to body weight averages and progress pictures, the next most important thing to track is your performance in the gym.

Whether you're using a workout log, an app, or something else, it's important to write down your workouts and track them over time.

As we discussed, when you're losing fat, maintaining your strength is crucial. It accomplishes 2 things:

- It helps you maintain your muscle mass.
- It allows you to go into your next bulking phase strong and with a greater potential for muscle growth.

Here's how I track my workouts:

I use an app called [Evernote](#). I've created separate notes that represent each individual workout.

On top of each note, I write the focus on my workout (eg. deadlift session, squat session, etc.) and the date of the workout.

On workouts where I do bodyweight movements (such as pull-ups, dips, etc.) I also write my morning weigh-in.

Below that, I have listed each exercise alongside with the number of sets and reps I do. On the compound lifts, I also record my rate of perceived exertion ([RPE](#)) and whether I'm wearing a belt or not (only for the squat and deadlift).



Workout 1

📖 First Notebook



19.11(Workout 1, Bench):

Flat bench press: 4 sets w/ 100 kg x 8 8 8 8 -
@ RPE: 5 5 5 5 (5-7)

Close-grip bench press: 4 sets w/ 92.5 kg x 8
8 8 8 - @ RPE: 5 5 5 6 (5-7)

Incl. DB press: 3 sets w/ 35 kg x 7 7 7 - @
RPE: 5 5 5 (5-7)

Unilat. DB lateral raises: 3 sets w/ 12.5 kg x
15 15 16 (12-20) - @ RPE: 7 7 8 (5-8)



Say for example, on week 1 I do 135kg./300lbs. on the squat for 2 sets of 8 reps (with a belt) at an RPE of 9. If on week two I do the same weight for the same reps, but with an RPE of 8, then I'm making progress.

Once the training week is done, I sit down for about 15 minutes and write down each workout in my workout log.

Then, I revisit each note, change the date, change the weights I'll be using for certain exercises and I'm done.

Evernote is very handy because all I have to do is write my full workout once. After that, all I have to change is the weight I'm using, the repetitions I'm doing, and the RPEs.

I also add small side notes to some workouts. For example, if I don't get a good night's sleep and my performance is down, I note it. Or if my grip starts to fail me on the deadlift, I make a note and leave it for the upcoming week.

When I see it, I can either use chalk, a mixed grip or work on [improving my grip strength](#).

Or, you can also buy a [Moleskine Notebook](#) and write in each workout there as it happens. The downside is, if you prefer to pre-populate your workout, it can get messy to make changes later.

With Evernote, you can rewrite whatever you choose.

The 3 Effective Fat Loss Supplements You Can Use

Nope, this is not the part where I promote some 'weight loss pills' or powders. Do you want to lose fat? Eat in a deficit.

With that said, there are 3 supplements that have proven themselves to aid in fat loss. And I did say aid and not create, keep that in mind.

The three supplements are:

Caffeine

Caffeine is a well-known substance and I'm guessing you drink coffee. Caffeine can help speed up fat loss by increasing your body's daily energy expenditure.

Since weight loss comes down to being in a caloric deficit, caffeine can help make sure you're in one.

Caffeine has also proven itself worthy by:

- increasing alertness and energy levels
- decreasing appetite
- improving memory
- delivering antioxidants to the body

From what we know about caffeine, it seems like a well-rounded, effective substance to take.

But, keep in mind that the body gets used to caffeine over time and builds a tolerance.

That is why I recommend laying off it for a week or two every few months. Furthermore, caffeine can also be harmful if you exceed the recommended daily limit.

Yohimbine

Yohimbine is a substance found in the Pausinystalia Yohimbe plant [that has been shown](#) to help speed up fat loss.

They assigned the subjects of the study to one of two groups:

One took tablets that contained 20 mg of Yohimbine, twice per day. The other took identical-looking tablets, containing cellulose.

Yohimbine didn't show benefits for muscle mass and performance. But it did show a reduction in body fat percentage compared to the placebo group.

Yet, despite these findings, you need to take Yohimbine [while fasted](#) for it to have an effect. This makes me lose interest in it because it doesn't fit my schedule.

Green Tea Extract

Green tea extract is a substance found in green tea leaves and has been shown to deliver [many benefits](#), one of which is an aid in fat loss.

It can increase [fat oxidation rates by as much as 17%](#) in healthy young guys.

It can also [induce thermogenesis and increase metabolic rate](#).

Green tea also contains caffeine which we already covered and found to be a good fat loss helper.

There are 2 other supplements that are worth taking year-round, including for fat loss:

Creatine

This is one of the very few supplements out there that actually [provide real value](#) and doesn't cost much.

A serving of 5 grams costs you around 18 cents and you can buy 3 months worth of creatine for less than 20 dollars.

Whey Protein

This supplement is not necessary for you to build muscle or burn fat. But it can be convenient, especially if you've got a busy life and cannot always make it to the kitchen to prep a meal.

A 30 gram serving of [whey protein](#) (which is about 22-25 grams of pure protein for the body) costs you between \$0.70 and \$1.20.

If you were to get that much protein from chicken, you would have to spend at least twice as much money.

Diet Breaks: How Not Dieting Periodically Can Improve Your Fat Loss

The idea for a diet break has been largely popularized by Lyle Mcdonald.

[He has written about it on his site](#), Bodyrecomposition.com, and in two of his books: [A Guide to Flexible Dieting](#) and [The Rapid Fat Loss Handbook](#).

A lot of people feel skeptical about diet breaks, as in *"How is NOT dieting going to help me lose weight?"*

But diet breaks have been shown to be very effective in making dieting more enjoyable and fat loss easier to maintain.

The literature also supports the idea behind diet breaks. For example, in [this study](#), the subjects were put on a standard weight loss diet. Then, they were told to get off the diet for either 2 or 6 weeks.

In their words, they wanted to “*determine whether relapses could be induced earlier by intentionally interrupting the momentum of weight loss during a treatment program and thus provide a model for weight maintenance research.*”

But, not only did the subjects not regain much weight, they also had no problem going back to the diet after the break.

The researchers failed but stumbled upon the idea of diet breaks in the process. In their words:

Breaks produced a slowing of weight loss or slight regain, but weight losses during the breaks were not significantly different from the control group. Importantly, overall weight losses (0 to 5 months or 0 to 11 months) did not differ between conditions.

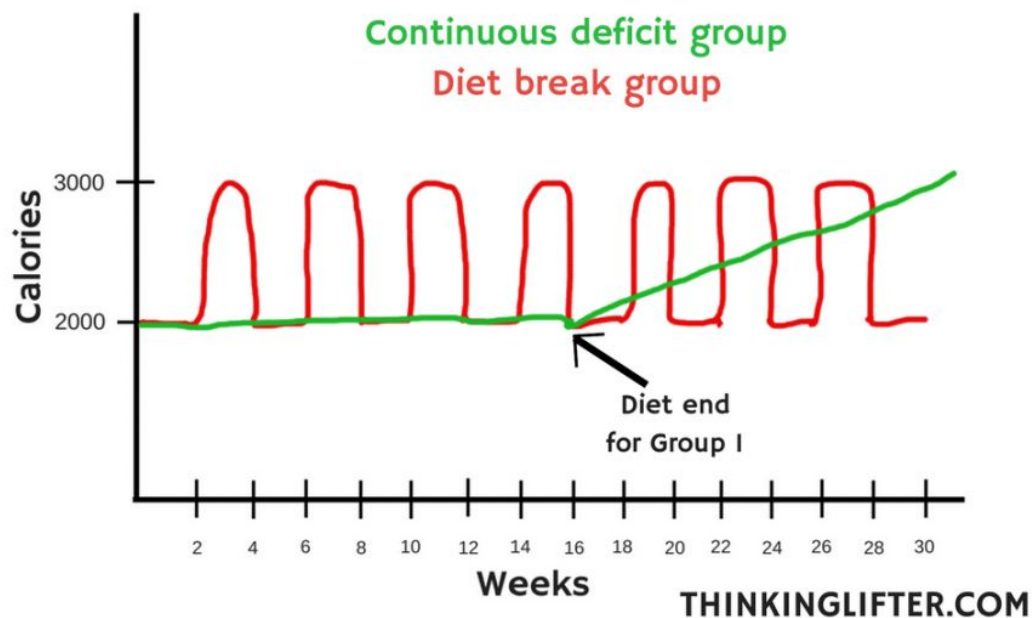
And:

This study was not successful in developing a method to experimentally produce weight loss relapses. However, the finding that prescribed breaks do not have adverse effects may have clinical application.

In [this recent study](#), researchers split the subjects into two groups:

Group 1 subjects completed 16 continuous weeks with calories being restricted at 67% of maintenance.

Group 2 subjects completed 16 weeks with calories being restricted at 67% of maintenance, but delivered intermittently, alternating between caloric deficit and maintenance every two weeks.



The findings were interesting: the subjects in group 2 lost more weight, maintained more muscle mass, and had better weight loss retention at the 6-month checkup.

But the benefits of diet breaks don't stop there. A diet break can also be a useful tool to help psychologically.

As Lyle McDonald put it so eloquently in his post on the [full diet break](#):

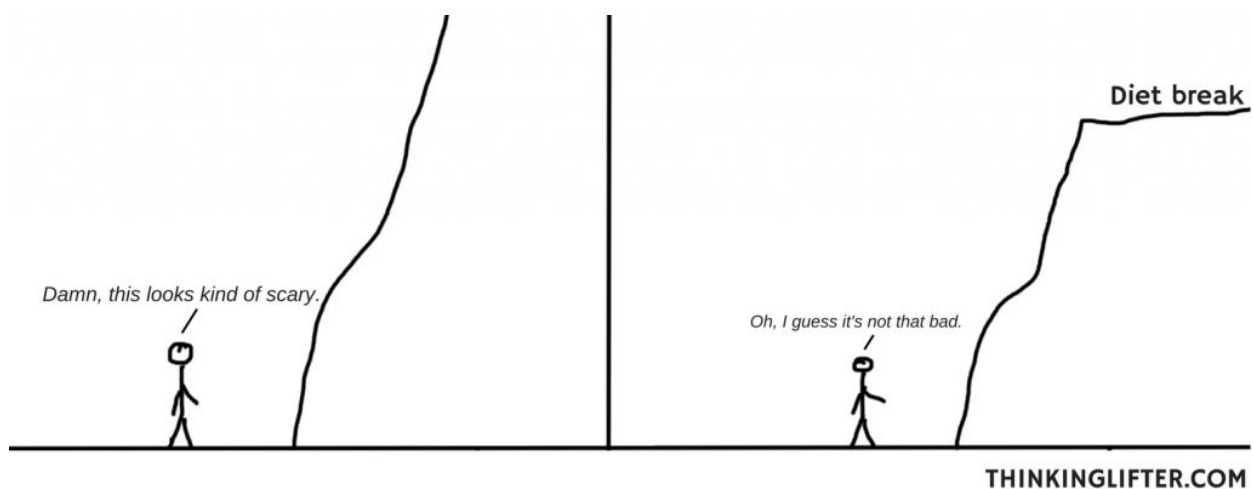
Anyway, say that you are someone who is extremely overweight, perhaps you have 50-100 pound of weight to lose (or more). Going by the standard recommendations of 1-2 pounds per week, that means that you are realistically looking at 25-50 weeks of dieting. And let's face it, no matter what diet you are on, that means some period of feeling hungry, deprived, etc. There's just no getting around it.

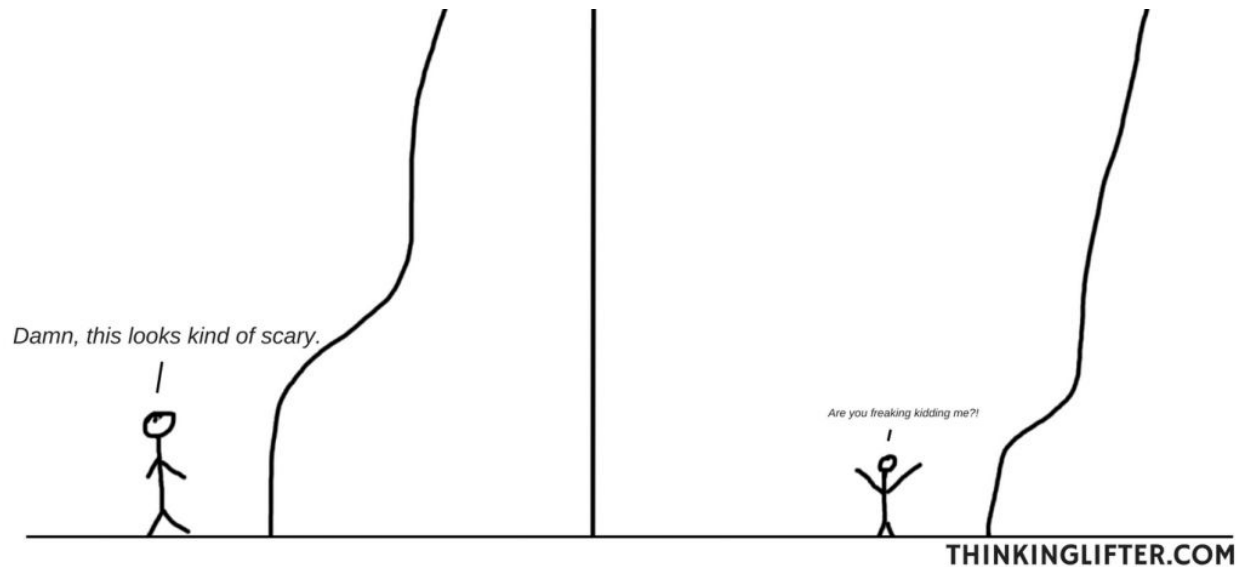
For people with more weight to lose, the time frames may even be extended beyond that.

Now, I want everyone to stop and think about that for a second, the amount of mental stress that that tends to create from the get-go. Is it any wonder that some people never bother starting?

Put differently, if I told you that you had to be miserable and feel deprived and hungry for the next 1-2 years, would you bother? Probably not.

But what if, instead of facing that huge mountain, you knew that you only had to go say, 10-12 weeks of dieting before getting a break for 2 weeks where you could eat relatively 'normally' (note: this does NOT mean returning to your old horrible eating habits) before starting the next phase of active weight loss?





So, why are diet breaks so effective?

The reasoning behind diet breaks has a lot to do with the body weight regulator leptin.

Leptin is primarily controlled by two things:

1. Short-term caloric and carb intake. Eating in a deficit directly impacts leptin, causing it to drop. Acute overfeeding on carbs [temporarily spikes your leptin](#). Temporarily is a key term here and we'll get to that below.
2. Long-term amounts of fat mass. Fat cells produce leptin. The more fat you have, the more circulating leptin, and the lower your appetite (well, there is the case of [leptin resistance](#), but this is far beyond the scope of this guide).

Obviously, the less fat you have, the lower the circulating leptin is, and the higher your hunger is.

Back to acute carb overfeeding on the temporary spikes in leptin:

The problem with these acute increases in carb intake (also known as refeed days) is that the effects are short-lived. Leptin levels drop back to normal within a day or two and you're a hungry mess again.

This is where diet breaks come in and dominate refeed days. A diet break is a period of 10-14 days (although, it can be longer) where carbs are raised and calories are at maintenance.

Temporarily eating more calories (and more carbs) helps leptin and thyroid hormones to return to normal.

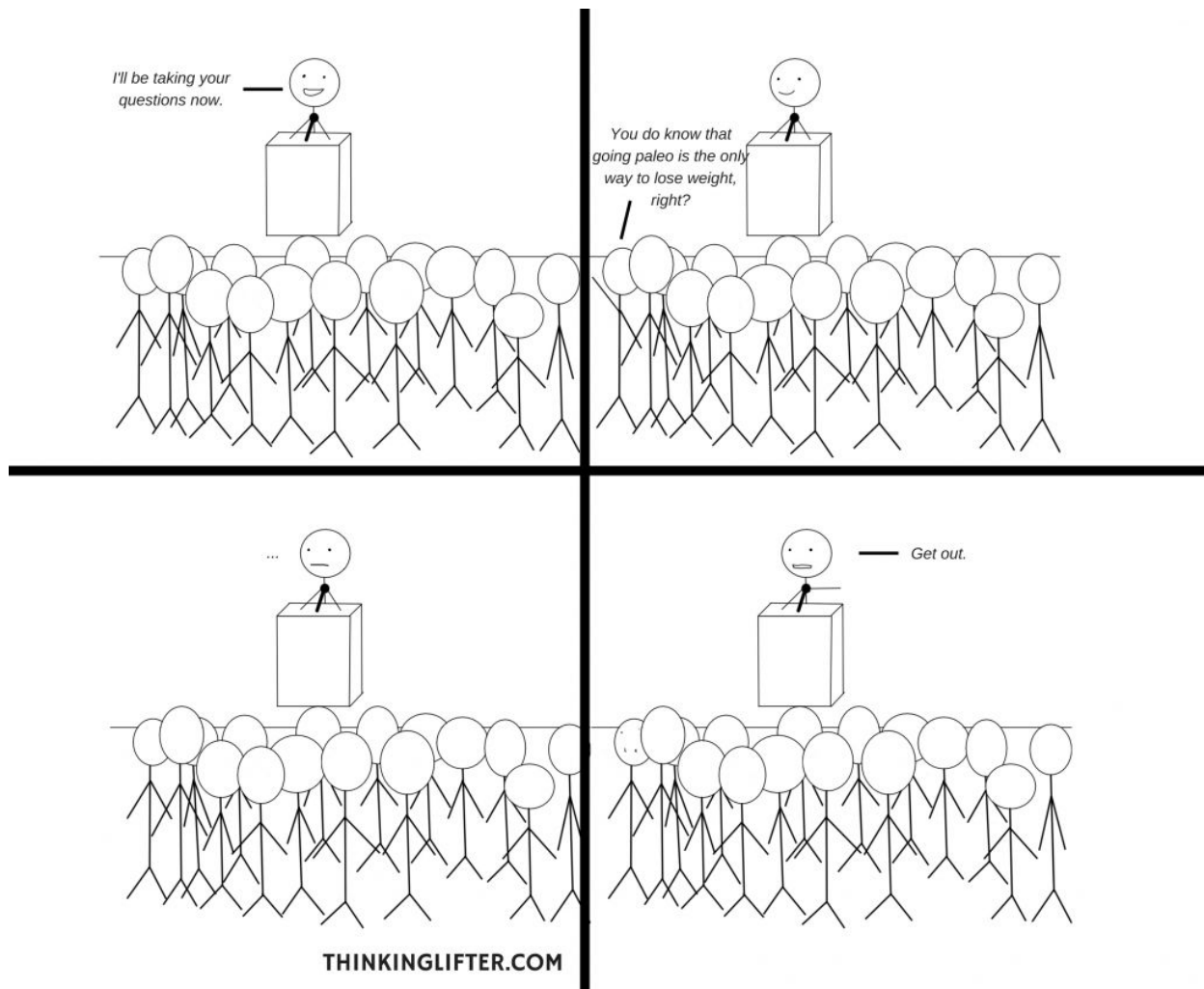
Once that period is over, you can resume the caloric deficit.

Leptin also affects other hormones related to metabolism: [T3/T4](#), [epinephrine](#), [neuropeptide-Y](#), among others.

Put in simple terms, leptin plays a major role in keeping your body weight in a certain range.

But, by using diet breaks strategically, you can make dieting and its effects on you much less impactful and maintain weight loss more easily.

Fat Loss FAQ



I didn't get the chance to answer some questions above, so here they are:

1. Should I do HIIT or steady state cardio for fat loss?

Both types are fine and you don't have to choose between one or the other. Low-intensity steady state cardio is a great option for those looking to increase their caloric expenditure without putting much strain on the body. LISS is also good for overweight beginners.

HIIT cardio is a great way to burn as many calories but in a shorter time frame. If you find LISS cardio boring or you're short on time, HIIT could work better for you.

Do keep in mind that HIIT cardio puts more stress on your body and CNS. You shouldn't do too much of it. Otherwise, it can impede recovery and make your lifting sessions less effective.

2.Can I lose fat and build muscle simultaneously?

Body recomposition definitely is possible, but there are limitations to it. For you to be able to make a meaningful recomposition, you need to fall within one of 4 categories:

- **Beginner lifter.**

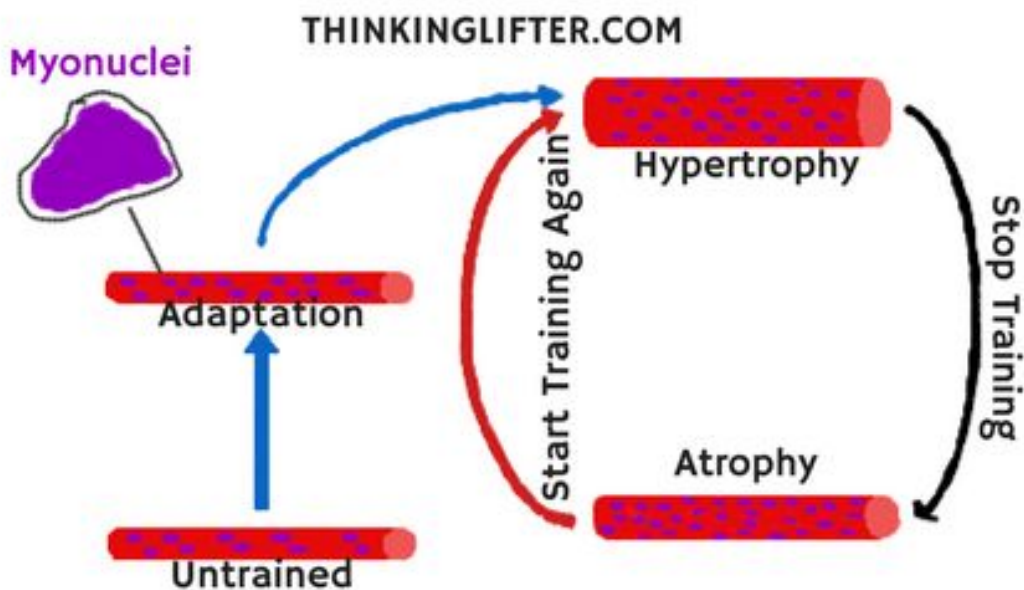
Because lifting weights is a novel stressor for beginners, they can (and in most cases should) follow a recomposition protocol. To do that, they need to be in a small caloric deficit (of 200-400/day), eat a high protein diet (1g/lb. bodyweight) and lift weights 3 to 4 days per week.

- **Detrained lifter.**

Experienced lifters who haven't trained for months can also lose fat and build muscle simultaneously thanks to muscle memory. This is because training a given muscle accumulates myonuclei cells. Once

you stop training the muscle, it atrophies. But the myonuclei cells stick around and make it much easier for the muscle to grow back to its previous size once training is resumed.

During the regrowth phase, you can lose fat and build muscle simultaneously.



- **Very overweight or obese.**

Having lots of energy stored as fat will make it easier for you to follow a recomposition protocol. This is mainly thanks to your body's ability

to use fat stores as energy to help repair and grow muscle while you are eating in a caloric deficit.

- **People on steroids.**

It's no secret to anyone that steroids can speed up muscle growth and fat loss. The case is no different for body recomposition.

Steroids help the muscle accumulate myonuclei much quicker which drives faster muscle growth. Being in a caloric deficit does slow down the process, but it doesn't stop it.

If you don't fall in one of the 4 categories, a better way to gradually improve your body composition is to focus on one goal at a time. Have dedicated periods of muscle growth and fat loss separated in time.

3. But I still have to eat 6 meals a day to keep my metabolism fast, right?

...

For some time now, I've been under the impression that this moronic myth had died. But, after having a short conversation with a fellow gym bro recently, I realized that he believed this to be the case.

This got me thinking:

How many people DO still believe in this? I followed up with about 20 more people from my gym and found that 90+% of them were under the same impression.

Okay, so let me help you out:

Fat loss comes down to creating a caloric deficit. Say, for you that is 2600 calories per day.

As long as you eat 2600 calories a day, you will lose fat. It won't matter whether you eat 6 small meals or one huge meal. The calorie number is what matters. ([study](#), [study](#), [study](#), [study](#))

Eat as few or as many meals as you like, based on your personal preference and schedule and don't worry about it.

4. Do I have to cut out sugar to lose fat?

Sugar will make you fat! Sugar will inhibit weight loss! Sugar goes straight to your hips and thighs!

...

Nope. Nope. Nope.

As we already established, calories are what matters most for effective weight loss. Eat in a caloric deficit = lose weight. Eat some sugar while in a caloric deficit = guess what? Lose weight.

5. Do I have to cut out alcohol to lose fat?

No. [Read this](#).

6. I'm skinny fat. Should I cut or bulk first?

Read [this](#).

7. Is starvation mode a real thing?

Short answer: no. Long answer: read [this](#).

8. I see you recommend 1g of protein per pound of body weight during fat loss. Isn't that unhealthy for the kidneys?

As long as you have healthy kidneys, there's no reason to worry. Read [this](#).

9. Is fasted cardio superior for fat loss?

The research is largely in an agreement:

Combining cardio with a caloric deficit will result in weight loss, but whether the cardio is done in a fed or fasted state doesn't matter. ([study](#), [study](#), [study](#))

Ah, one less complication to worry about. Isn't it nice?

