

Lose Fat at Will: What it *really* takes

Jill Coleman

Ever try to lose a bunch of weight before a high school reunion? How about a big family wedding? Or a beach vacation? You may have increased your exercise from 2 days per week to 3, or tried to skip breakfast, do wheat bread sandwiches for lunch and make a nice, whole wheat pasta dish for dinner. Chances are you didn't get the results you really wanted and settled for a moderate 5-pound weight loss—oh well, there'll be another reunion in 5 years.

I am here to tell you that there exists a nutrition plan that allows 90% of the population to lose fat very quickly, and it does not include starving yourself. In fact, most people will be eating more than they can stand on this diet; bodybuilders have been doing it for years and now it is going main-stream. I warn you, this diet is not for the weak-willed; however, when followed consistently, it earns the most miraculous body transformations quickly. One can literally get substantially leaner, burn more fat and lose significant weight in a matter of a couple weeks.

I have read numerous magazine articles that tote weight loss as easy, just as long as you make a few key changes like: take the stairs in your building; park your car farther away; switch to whole wheat bread instead of white; take 10,000 steps each day. I don't disagree that these fitness tidbits aren't indeed valuable and should be incorporated into any fitness enthusiasts' daily routine. These are great ways to maintain your weight and take *small* steps up the large staircase leading to optimal body composition, especially if one was previously sedentary. However, one does not lose *significant* amounts of fat doing this, nor do they lose it quickly. The diet contained in this article gets results, guaranteed; however, be warned that it takes dedication, preparation, consistency and will-power. This program is not for everyone, and truly may not be something that works with your schedule, your lifestyle or even your level of commitment to getting lean. For some, the costs simply outweigh the benefits of doing a program like this. I wanted to write this article to acknowledge that it is actually not that easy to lose weight, but if you want to lose fat at will and in a short amount of time, there exists a solution. However, it may not be nearly as easy as taking the stairs at work.

The importance of *what* you eat, not how much

Numerous studies have shown that changes in diet are much more powerful in weight loss than is exercise. Most fitness enthusiasts know this intuitively. Eating whatever you want is detrimental not only to your physiology, but to your physique. No amount of exercise can work off a dozen Krispy Kremes—well, if you subscribe to the caloric model of “calories in vs. calories out,” then perhaps, technically, you can exercise off 2,500 calories' worth of donuts. However, how long does this take and what about the *other* effects of eating donuts? Food contains calories than can be burned during exercise, certainly, but each of these calories is derived from either carbohydrate, fat or protein. Each macronutrient (carbs, protein or fat) affects the body differently, leading to fat loss or gain. For example, carbohydrates, when consumed in large amounts or even small amounts that elicit a large insulin spike (i.e. a single donut), cause the body to release the hormone insulin. Large amounts of insulin help the body cope with a large carbohydrate intake, shuttling carbohydrates into the liver and muscle cells for either energy

use or storage. Larger amounts of carbs increase the body's storage of them, and when all the carbohydrate storage depots are full, excess carbs are converted to fat for storage in the fat cells (which have unlimited storage capacity). In addition to probable fat storing, insulin shuts off the body's ability to break-down fat for fuel. This is why many fitness experts advise performing cardiovascular exercise on an empty stomach—eating a high-carb meal pre-workout literally turns off fat-burning potential during exercise. Finally, insulin causes sodium retention, which in turn causes water retention, thus giving rise to a puffy, water-logged physique, not to mention potentially increasing blood pressure. Thus, the diet contained in this article will not have you counting calories, since it is the *macronutrient content* of a food that changes the physiology to elicit a lean physique or not. Though a small donut and a medium-sized chicken breast both have about 200 calories, it is obvious which of these is a better food choice. Nonetheless, carbohydrates *are* needed for energy, especially that of the brain, thus they cannot be completely eliminated from the diet. However, we will choose very specific carbohydrate foods that have very little effect on insulin.

Protein metabolism is completely different than that of carbohydrates, allowing it to be eaten more liberally in a fat-loss plan. Upon consumption, proteins are broken down and used by the liver to make various protein and non-protein components for use by the body, including creatine for energy conservation in the muscles, certain cellular enzymes, antioxidant compounds, neurotransmitters and most impactful on body composition—muscle mass. Branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) broken down from dietary protein are particularly abundant in the muscle tissue and upon consumption are readily used for muscle anabolism. With regard to fat storage, only as a last resort coupled with conditions of high calorie and high carbohydrate consumption is protein converted to fat for storage. More likely, protein (along with fat) will be used to make carbohydrates for energy use if dietary carbs are insufficient. Thus, foods that are high in protein are more body-composition friendly. In fact, a recent review article published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (2008) by Paddon-Jones et al. made the case that higher protein diets not only help to build muscle mass, but also create a greater feeling of satiety after eating, and help burn even more fat through increasing resting metabolic rate, whereby the body uses more energy to digest and metabolize protein than carbohydrates or fat.

Fat content in foods is a more neutral nutrient, even though fat is obviously the most easily stored nutrient in the fat cells. However, certain types of fats play different roles. Unsaturated fats such as those contained in nuts, seeds, fish, olive oil and avocados are effective in removing cholesterol from tissues, serve a protective role in tissue health, and thus can be eaten sparingly. Saturated fats and trans fats, found in such items as cookies, cakes, french fries, donuts, chips, chocolate candy and fatty meats should be avoided as they are more easily incorporated into fat cell storage. Even though short- and medium-chain saturated fats (such as those found in coconut milk) can be nutritionally beneficial, the nutrition plan contained here is designed to get its followers extremely lean and lose fat quickly. For example, nuts, containing healthy unsaturated fats, are nutritious and great for improving overall health; but in a fat-loss diet such is outlined here, they exemplify the one caveat with consumption of any type of fat: fat is a very calorically-dense nutrient and even small amounts can lead to a large

caloric intake (for example, a modest 2 tbsp peanut butter contains about 200 calories). This is one instance where calories do matter, since consuming lots of high-calorie fat can add up quickly and be deposited into fat cells easily, regardless of type.

Dedication, preparation, consistency and will-power

Based on the aforementioned rationales, a higher protein/lower carb/moderate fat diet earns a general recommendation for fat loss. This type of diet, however, may not be compatible with your lifestyle. This is because protein is not very mobile; it's not that convenient; and it's not all that neat. Lean protein sources such as chicken breasts, turkey breasts, egg whites, orange roughly and ground bison do not come ready-to-eat, nor are they conveniently pre-packaged for on-the-go eating. Most protein sources that help burn fat need to be prepared, cooked, refrigerated and eaten with a knife and fork. This means that fresh meats need to be bought regularly; in fact, this diet will require eating exclusively out of the refrigerator, as opposed to the cupboard. Cook up a dozen chicken breasts and boil a dozen eggs on Sunday. Get out the Pyrex and put serving-sized amounts of lean protein in containers to take to work in a cooler.

This fat-loss plan requires eating every 2.5 to 3 hours throughout each day, consuming 5-6 small meals, each containing a significant protein source, along with mostly green leafy vegetables and a small amount of a very specific low-glycemic carbohydrate (having minimal effect on insulin). Frequency of eating prevents ravenous hunger and small meals will satisfy, but not bloat or stuff to the point of discomfort. Likewise, frequent small meals keep blood sugar levels relatively constant so that hunger hormones never get out of control, potentially leading to a binge on sugary snacks. However, the meal timing and contents alone cannot be held responsible for preventing slip-ups. There is a certain amount of self-restraint and will-power associated with this diet. Cravings are inevitable; however, a piece of cake at an office party will always be there—there are birthday parties all the time. It is not the end of the world if you resist this once. Check yourself; be conscious of food choices; resist the temptation to just grab a brownie without even *thinking*. Every day is a series of food choices; practice making the right ones. Besides, once you say no and walk back to your desk to eat your next clean meal, not only will you experience a sense of accomplishment and pride, but most-likely you will have forgotten about the cake altogether. On top of it, consistently choosing clean food choices will add up over time, and results are yours for the taking.

The Food Choices

Remember that weight loss is guaranteed for 90% of the people who eat this way. The caveat is that there is little variety to the diet. Consistent clean eats like those found in the produce section and the meat counter (except lunch meats) are what work. Likewise, most non-perishables found in the middle of the grocery store are out, including pre-packaged dinners, soups, pastas, cereal, baked goods, chips, 100-calorie snack packs, canned fruit, dried fruit, most condiments, granola bars, breakfast bars, trail mix, etc. Stick to the perimeter of the grocery store for best results. Below is a comprehensive food list that you can use to mix and match meals. People who eat exclusively from this list will earn great weight-loss results quickly, guaranteed. Remember, however, this way of eating does not fit everyone's schedule

or lifestyle! It's up to you to choose.

Protein

Eat these liberally:

Chicken breasts
Chicken tenderloins
Turkey breast
Lean ground turkey
Ground bison
Pork chops
Egg whites (limit yolks to 1 per day)
Almonds
Tuna
Salmon
Orange roughy
White fish
Non-fat yogurt
Low-fat cottage cheese
Whey Protein Powder

Eat these sparingly:

Canadian bacon
Turkey bacon
Ham
Roast beef
Cheese
Nuts (resist honey roasted, salted, etc)
Cream cheese (limit portion size to 2 tbsp)
Milk (make sure it is skim)

Avoid:

Pepperonis
Salami
Bacon
Sausages
Bologna
Cold cuts

Carbohydrates

Eat these liberally:

Spinach
Broccoli
Kale/chard/collard greens
Romaine lettuce
Asparagus
Celery
Bell peppers
Cauliflower

Have ONE SERVING of the following with every meal before 3pm:

½ Sweet potato
Carrots
Green beans
½ cup cooked brown rice
½ cup oatmeal cooked with water (real oats from large container, not sugary packets)
½ cup oatbran cooked with water
Berries
Apple
Melon
Squash/Zucchini
Chunky salsa variety

Avoid:

White potatoes
White pasta
White bread
Cereal
Soda (even if it's diet)
Juice
Oatmeal packets
Cookies/candy/cakes/donuts, etc
Granola/cereal bars
Pretzels/chips

Many of the above foods also contain different types of fat, a fact that has been taken into account upon recommending its consumption. Condiments like mustard and salad dressing should be kept to the 2 tbsp serving, and vinaigrette varieties are the best. Ketchup and mayonnaise are out. Meats can be seasoned with fresh herbs and spices, but avoid sugary marinades like BBQ sauce. Natural nut butters can be used in moderation (2 tbsp) to help with cravings. Coffee and unsweetened tea are the only beverages besides water that should be consumed and only if taken black. Water is essential to this diet and will maximize the fat-burning potential of the foods; try to consume 2-3 liters per day. If it is not mentioned on this food list, it is not part of the plan. For the most part, this diet contains natural, whole,

perishable foods that require careful prepping, cooking, storing and cooler-mobility. It is not a diet of convenience, but certainly one of results.

The Rules

- 1) Eat every 2.5 to 3 hours (5-6 small meals per day)
- 2) Each small meal contains mostly lean protein, with green leafy vegetables
- 3) Meals before 3pm can contain 1 small serving of low-glycemic carbohydrate
- 4) All meals eaten before 8pm
- 5) Fruit can be eaten in the morning only, 1 serving at a time (see “Food Choices” section)
- 6) Limit dairy—this can be insulinegenic for many people
- 7) Nuts can be eaten throughout the day, but 1 handful only
- 8) Remember, exercise plus diet will exponentiate the body’s transformation

Final Thoughts

Unfortunately, there is somewhat of a negative connotation associated with bodybuilding in America. However, it is this group of individuals (including fitness and figure athletes) that has been eating like this for decades, and can literally burn fat at will and quickly. Essentially, the enclosed nutrition plan is a bodybuilding diet. Eat frequently, never get caught without a clean meal at hand, prepare and cook whole foods, and be consistent. The weight will fall off.

However, for about 10% of the population, this diet will not work, unfortunately. These individuals’ hormonal environment will respond insulinemically to high protein diets, and thus must eat more vegetables, less protein and moderate fats. Regardless, everyone can agree that natural, whole foods like lean protein, fruits and vegetables will always promise a leaner physique in the long run than preservative-filled prepackaged foods. If you want it badly enough, the body you desire can be yours: dedicate yourself, prepare, be consistent, and practice strong will-power. See you at the reunion!