KICK STARTING WEIGHT LOSS: PROTEIN, LOW-CARB, INTERMITTENT FASTING

MAY 17, 2010 — 74 COMMENTS

Time for one of my favorite kinds of posts; those kind where readers get to chip in and lend a hand.

I received an email the other day from a reader.

I've been doing paleo for about 10 days now and have lost 0 lbs!! What can I be doing wrong? Any suggestions? I've read the suggested diets in the book, and I have altered it somewhat to be more to my liking of veggies and fruits, but still no weight loss.

Can you make any suggestions??

I replied asking her for some information as to her current body comp and an idea of diet.

Thank you for helping me! I logged a typical day of what / how I have been eating:

Breakfast: piece of salmon, strawberries, honeydew melon, grapes.

Lunch: 1 avocado, boiled shrimp, orange.

Snack: 1 apple, strawberries and 2 oz walnuts.

Dinner: broiled flank steak, sauteed' mushrooms, onions, red pepper in about 2 Tbs. olive oil, romaine salad with lemon juice and 1 tsp olive oil.

Snack: 2 oz pecans

I drink lots of water daily as well. I am 53, 5’ 2” and 190 lbs. I am a caregiver so my activity is the normal running around stuff – had to stop the gym 6 mos. ago due to time constraints with the aforementioned. I am miserable at this weight and am also a weak link if my emotions get the best of me as I am an emotional eater. It's easier for me to eat simply as opposed to prepare a recipe; since I am a chef (used to be) I get carried away and before too long it's not "diet" or "clean" anymore.

So here was my suggested approach.

At first glance I would suspect way too much fruit. I'd initially cut out the melon, apple, orange, grapes. Keep it to blueberries and strawberries. Augment with more meat or non-starchy veggies. That alone might do it but if not here's a more intense approach.

1. **Estimate your caloric requirements.** I suspect it will come out around 2,500 per day.

2. **Begin tracking everything you eat via FitDay.**

Then, put yourself into a good 500 calorie per day deficit or more if you can take it, and I'll show you what to do so you can. 1,800 calories per day ought to be a cinch if you do it right. You can easily kill the hunger by upping your lean & moderate-fat protein until you just can't eat any more. If you get in 150g per day of protein, then:

- **Protein:** 150g = 600 cal (4 cal per gram)
- **Carbohydrate:** 50g = 200 cal (4 cal per gram)
- **Fat:** 110g ~ 1,000 cal (9 cal per gram)
But if you find yourself getting too hungry then simply up the protein and make up for it by cutting carbs and/or fat. Also, feel free to go as low as you want on the carbs. Feel free to up the protein to 200g and you’ll probably have a tough time getting it all down, especially if you use leaner cuts like lean ground beef, tuna, and so on. The reason for using leaner cuts of meat is that when you ingest that much protein you can easily blow the caloric limit from fat content. For example, for regular ground beef (80/20) it would take about 21 ounces cooked weight to get your 150g of protein and the fat yield would be 110g. That would leave no room for additional fat you might get from veggies, a salad or whatever. Of course, you could choose to eat 1 and 1/2 pounds of ground beef per day and just be done with it, but that would get old fast, I’m sure. So, it’s better to use leaner sources at this point in order to give you the flexibility to cook your veggies in butter, dress your salad and so on.

Many people find that they don’t have to count anything and weight just starts coming off. But for you and some less fortunate others, you may have to take a more technical approach. The key is to induce an energy deficit while maintaining your lean mass and keeping hunger in check. And you do this with lean & moderate-fat proteins, lots of them. This isn’t long term but we need to get you moving in the right direction.

There’s a lot of debate about a claimed metabolic advantage with low-carbohydrate dieting and by extension, paleo which limits carbohydrate intake. But I say that if you want to get the weight off and there’s a way to do it without undue hunger, then why not go with it? Moreover, there’s a definite metabolic advantage to high protein and I don’t believe there’s any dispute about that.

The high-protein diet produced a greater weight loss (-8.3 +/- 1.2% versus -5.5 +/- 2.5%, P = 0.012) than the control diet. Interestingly, an activation in the mitochondrial oxidation was found in the high-protein-fed group. This stimulation was positively correlated with the final resting energy expenditure and negatively associated with the final fat mass content. CONCLUSION: Low-carbohydrate high-protein diets could involve specific changes in mitochondrial oxidation that could be related to a higher weight loss.

Translation: high protein speeds up your metabolism.

Speaking of metabolism, have you considered fasting? Two ways to do that.

In the weight loss phase, two 24-hr fasts per week. Try to eat normal the day after, but this would be a good time to really up the protein sky high those days.

The second way, the one people have the easiest time with is to fast every day in an “eating window” of some period of time, typically a 5-8 hr eating window. I’ve done them all, using 24-30 hour fasts initially to lose weight, and now I usually practice an eating window regime and occasionally go a full 24-hrs. Personally I prefer 12pm – 8pm, then I have only water, coffee or tea from 8 to noon the next day. I consume all my food in 2 meals during the eight hour period. I find it very easy. Usually the only time I have any significant hunger is on some days from 10:30 or so until noon when I eat.

Unfortunately there’s currently a lot of misinformation around about fasting and how it will “destroy your metabolism.” Nothing could be further from the truth. I quote from Brad Pilon’s excellent book, Eat Stop Eat.

In one study, researchers found that when they made people fast for 3 days, their metabolic rate did not change(7). This is 72 hours without food. So much for needing to eat every three hours!

In another study by a different group of researchers, people who fasted every other day for a period of 22 days also had no decrease in their resting metabolic rate(8).

In addition, people who were on very low calorie diets and on a resistance exercise program (i.e. lifting weights) did not see a decrease in resting metabolic rate, and these people were only eating 800 Calories a day for 12 weeks!

In another interesting study, women who ate half the amount of food that they normally eat for 3 days saw no change in their metabolism either(9).

In still more studies, there was no change in the metabolic rate of people who skipped breakfast, or people who ate 2 meals a day compared to 7 meals per day(10, 11).

References:


9 Keim NL, Horn WF. Restrained eating behavior and the metabolic response to dietary energy restriction in women. Obesity
In fact, your metabolism will eventually slow, and hopefully quite a lot. But why? Will it be the caloric deficit or the fasting? No, it will be caused by weight loss. Your body mass is the chief factor that determines your metabolic rate. Indeed, you do want to slow your metabolism. At 120 pounds, 70 less from where you are right now, you better believe you’ll have a lower metabolic rate.

OK, this is just one set of suggestions. Other ideas from readers?

My own on-the-scene expat photos, stories, podcasts, and video adventures, currently from exotic Thailand

Or, if you prefer, here’s the SubscribeStar mirror site

FAT LOSS BLUEPRINT

…Hey, very soon I’m going to be blogging about how I’ve easily lost over 4 kilograms the last couple of months here in rural Thailand while building a house. You can get a jump start by checking out Fat Loss Blueprint.

But, I’ll give you a hint: I eat Thai food, except when I make my occasional western dish. The only fast food here in the deep rural within hundreds of miles is a few KFC. Here’s my rule of thumb with my take on the Thai eating way: half the rice, twice the protein.

Again: Fat Loss Blueprint.
ELIXA PROBIOTIC IS A BRITISH BIOTECH MANUFACTURER IN OXFORD, UK. U.S. DEMAND IS NOW SO HIGH THEY'VE ESTABLISHED DISTRIBUTION CENTERS IN ILLINOIS, NEVADA, AND NEW JERSEY.

STILL, SELL-OUTS HAPPEN REGULARLY, SO ORDER NOW TO AVOID A WAITING LIST.

COMMENTS

Patrik May 17, 2010 at 14:36
Just a thought here — when did “snacks” become common-place and expected/accepted?

When I see someone who deliberately dials “snacks” into a diet — no matter how healthy/Paleo-esque — I cringe.

How about the following? Eat when you are hungry, not when you are bored.

REPLY

Hillary May 18, 2010 at 14:48
I must agree with this. Snacks are completely unnecessary! There is no reason for any moderately healthy person to be eating snacks. Even children do not need so many damn snacks.

Every diet plan I have ever seen includes at least two snacks a day. That means you are expected to eat 5 times a day. That is absurd. I eat 2 to 3 meals a day and I am perfectly content. Also, it is okay to be hungry sometimes! If you eat breakfast at 7 and your lunch break is not until noon, and you start feeling hungry around 10:30, you’ll not die if you go for 1.5 hours feeling a little bit hungry. You don’t have to cure that small pang of hunger with a snack.

My guess would be that the average person eating three meals a day plus at least 2 snacks has no idea when they’re truly hungry. Worse yet, we are currently raising a whole generation of children for whom snack time never ends.

REPLY

Dave, RN May 17, 2010 at 15:19
You’re right about the fruit. The excess stood out like a sore thumb. Personally, I’d cut the fruit entirely.
I tried FitDay, but ditched it when it said cream (not half and half) had 12.9 carbs. My carton says 0…

REPLY

Richard Nikoley May 17, 2010 at 15:29
When I do use fit day I typically create a lot of custom foods. There are different kind of creams and some do have carbs. I believe those are whipping creams and the ones with zero are heavy creams.

REPLY

Dave, RN May 17, 2010 at 20:24
You’re right. Mine says “Heavy whipping cream”.

REPLY

Jim May 18, 2010 at 07:38
I’d agree with the fruit intake being too high. I’m not nearly as militant as some are about fruit consumption, and that really stood out for me. There’s a lot more carbs and sugar in there than most people think.

Best thing I ever did when I went paleo was to start skipping breakfast. I never thought about it literally, but it does end up turning my diet into an ‘eating window’ like you were talking about, Richard. But it’s really just the simplest way to cut your calories.
Bane May 18, 2010 at 09:05
It was a pain while getting set up, but now FitDay is excellent for me. Everything I eat on a daily basis has been added as a custom item, so I know everything I track is 100% correct.

Amy May 17, 2010 at 15:42
If the idea of that detailed tracking is discouraging, it might make sense to take a tiered approach. First cut down on the fruit and increase veggies and lean protein, and see if it makes a difference. Also, is she getting enough sleep and keeping stress to manageable levels? Caregivers often have incredible stress along with sleep deprivation, leading to elevated cortisol levels, which ups carbohydrate cravings (which could explain the presence of all the fruit). After addressing the carbohydrate and sleep issues, then dive into the tracking.

Of course, if tracking does not discourage her, dive right in to that too!

Susan May 17, 2010 at 17:59
Hi Amy,
I’m the person who wrote requesting help after losing 0 lbs. I do have alot of stress and rarely sleep through the night. I’m sure that my cortisol levels are completely out of whack, Thanks for the comment.

Aaron Curl May 18, 2010 at 03:39
I have found the good nights sleep will follow once your food intake is dialed in. Like others, the first thing I saw was the fruit and nuts, which are not ideal if you are trying to lose weight (they can be added back in once weight has come off). Just from looking at the list of food it seems like the old eat 6 times a day to keep your metabolism going crap! I need to eat only 1-3 times a day (most other cavenmen/women agree)....sometimes I have to make myself eat because I just don’t get hungry some days. No matter what, each person is different and we just have to figure out what works. It’s obvious something isn’t working with the current combination....so just change it up. I suggest berries or preferably no fruit until the weight starts falling off....and it will!

Amy May 18, 2010 at 09:40
Hi Susan, glad it was helpful. I’m also struggling with elevated cortisol issues so it’s on my mind a lot. These lifestyle issues – diet, exercise, sleep, stress, hormones (esp. for women) – are all feedback loops, so it’s hard to know what causes what and where to intervene first. The body is incredibly complicated! Keep playing with it and experimenting, listen to your body, and seek out plenty of support. You’ll get it figured out!

mgood66 May 17, 2010 at 16:28
Is there a danger that too much protein will stall weight loss, vs. upping the fat intake instead. I always thought that excess protein, via gluconeogenesis, would be converted to glucose and halt weight loss, whereas that won’t happen with fat.

Richard Nikoley May 17, 2010 at 16:38
In the general sense I’m not sure but I doubt it. In this case, no chance. We’re running a decent caloric deficit for one and keeping carbs low for another.

This is only “high protein” in relative terms. Still over 50% energy from fat. It’s only high protein in the sense that she’d be eating a lot more protein than normal. But only for a time.

Sonagi May 17, 2010 at 16:33
I noticed the generous portions of fruit and large snack, too. While losing 15 pounds several years ago, I used to eat a small apple to stave off hunger before lunch. I only ate it if I felt hungry, to keep myself from eating something much worse. The pectin in apples makes them an outstanding snack, but one small to medium apple alone should suffice.

Koreans and Chinese eat what we would consider lunch and dinner food for breakfast: fish, soup, rice, and pickled and seasoned parboiled vegetables. I’ve gotten rid of the Western notion of breakfast food and always include nonstarch vegetables with breakfast by adding spinach to homemade meat stock or topping asparagus stalks with a couple slices of bacon and baking in the oven. My favorite easy, delicious, and healthy breakfast is an egg poached in meat stock. I usually add minced onion, a diced green, leafy vegetable, and flavor with herbs. By 10:30 AM, my colleagues are digging into granola bars and bowls of yogurt while I’m still feeling full and satisfied.
Sonagi May 17, 2010 at 16:36

correction: Koreans and Japanese. The Chinese eat a starchier breakfast of grain porridge or steamed buns made of flour with a hardboiled egg. Once a rarity, meat is now a staple of lunch and dinner but not breakfast in China.

lynch May 17, 2010 at 16:56

Any recommendations on supplements to start along with the eating regimen you describe here? I just started Paleo and am only doing Vitamin D and Fish Oil at the moment. Thanks!

Richard Nikoley May 17, 2010 at 17:12

The only thing I'd consider adding is K2. I use this product, one per day and I think you can get from Amazon:


Search the blog for vitamin k2 for info on the huge benefits.

Oh, and on the fish oil, not sure how much you are taking but I think it’s a good idea to replace 1g of your fish oil with 500mg krill oil. So, if you are taking 2 1g fish caps per day, take one and one of the krill. All the krill products I’ve seen come 500mg.

Sue May 17, 2010 at 18:20

The fruit really stuck out for me and the snacks. So 3 solid meals, no snacks and no fasting whilst not sleeping and excess stress.

Sue May 17, 2010 at 18:23

I also agree with leaner cuts of meat and adding butter etc. You control calories more. Some of us need to be mindful of the calories if weight loss is not happening.

Wayne May 17, 2010 at 19:10

What are the best sources to add fat into your diet? I know butter is one. What else can a person do to get more fat into their diets?

Aaron Curl May 18, 2010 at 03:43

I add heavy whipping cream to my coffee. I could add it to scrambled eggs also…then cook them in butter. Just need to experiment and think outside the box.

Jonathan May 18, 2010 at 11:02

I added heavy cream to my coffee as well. But I found after measuring one day that I was easily adding 400C and sometimes up to 800C worth to my coffee. I try to use less if I’m planning on eating or just consider my coffee as an entire meal, lunch or breakfast.

I also add coconut milk to my coffee sometimes along with a little less cream than normal. Good way to get some MCT.

Matt May 17, 2010 at 19:15

Eat meat and vegetables (no potatoes) only. Eat only when you are hungry, eat as much as you want. Don’t worry about the leanness of the meat. If you are drinking coffee or tea eliminate it, it will help your sleep. Don’t drink fluids 30 minutes before or after eating, this will aid in your digestion. Don’t eat out.

Austin May 17, 2010 at 19:18

I agree with everyone here. Remove the snacks and go easy on the fruit. That alone will reduce your calories by quite a bit. And I wouldn’t weigh myself more than once a week.
Danny May 17, 2010 at 19:27
I had a question regarding the calorie deficit: How long do you eat under maintenance before going back to your normal caloric intake? The few times I tried cutting calories I was left feeling lethargic.

Richard Nikoley May 18, 2010 at 08:34
I think it depends, Danny. If you’ve got a lot of fat to lose, staying pretty deep into deficit should release fat, which makes up the remainder of your caloric requirements.

You’re actually not really in a deficit at all, only in terms of intake. You’re still getting all the energy your body wants, but the rest is coming from oxidation of your own fat stores. Remember, all weight loss diets are high fat diets.

https://freetheanimal.com/2008/12/all-diets-are-high-fat-diets.html

JUPITER May 18, 2010 at 11:09
When you say “deep defict” how deep are you meaning, i have a fair amount of fat to lose, would staying at 800 cal/day be to low to stay at for a week or two,

Richard Nikoley May 19, 2010 at 07:32
Depends on how quickly you want to lose but I’d say 500 calories from your presumed lean mass requirement would be a good start.

JUPITER May 19, 2010 at 09:36
Thanks Richard, i looked at the numbers of Jimmy Moore’s “eggfest” and they would put me at around that 500cal lower then my lean mass so i’m going to give it a try for a couple of weeks and see what happens.

Lucille Roberts May 17, 2010 at 19:49
Great article. So many people have the wrong idea about intermittent fasting. Have a large intake of protein and fast using one of the 2 ways mentioned. The “eating window” seems more convenient. Good Luck.

Gail May 17, 2010 at 20:03
I would emphasize to take it one step at a time. Change one thing, and then when you get comfortable with that change, make another change. Keep doing this until you’re at where you want to be. If you do it all “cold turkey” in one step, you’re less likely to stick with it.

Seth May 17, 2010 at 20:53
Wow, I was thinking cut the nuts out they are a lot higher in calories than the fruit. I am paleo, but im a caraholic. I eat like 5-10 pieces of fruit a day. I usually make a egg/chicken/veggie scramble and have some nuts sprinkled in throughout the day. I havent lost or gained weight since starting paleo, but I thinned out because the bloating is gone, and I found out i’m allergic to wheat/oats/shrimp after trying to go back to the S.A.D. diet. I would eat more meat, but its so expensive, especially grass fed, which is all I eat. I dont especially care for steak, but iIl eat it if it will help lose weight. any suggestions for cheaper paleo? im 32yrs old 6’ 2″ 180 about 10%body fat, want to go down to 5-7%.

Aaron Curl May 18, 2010 at 03:49
I currently still eat the grain fed crap. Going to switch soon to see if it makes a difference. I am currently at 8-9% body fat and want to get to 5-6% and I am 6’1” at 174-176. I want to see if the grass fed actually helps me get to a lower %.
really doubt that grassfed beef is gonna make any difference in bringing ur bodyfat comp. if you want to eat “cleaner” yea its a good choice, but its not a magical way to be less fat…

Richard Nikoley May 18, 2010 at 08:38

Seth:
grassfed ground beef is pretty reasonable, as are the various roasts, tri-tip, brisket, etc. Also, you’ve got flank steak, hangar, flap steak / bavette. Short ribs. And so on. Liver is very inexpensive too.

As far as getting below 10% BF, realize that your body is not going to give a shit about that and will probably fight you on it. That’s probably unnaturally lean, especially as you advance in age. But if you’re determined, then seek out the advice of Martin Berkhan at Leangains.

http://leangains.blogspot.com/

san fran J May 18, 2010 at 21:34

ah ha, richard so martin is training you ;), just kidding i know u weren’t going to talk about that.

san fran J May 18, 2010 at 21:47

I agree on that one, 9-10% seems to be a homestatic point for me, once i get below that, my body lets me know…and I never get lower, have not. coincidentally I may consult Martin in a few months if what I am doing now doesnt get me to 5-6% bf.

Dave, RN May 18, 2010 at 08:45

Try this:
An alternative if affording grass fed is hard.
I’t’s not as much as you might think. Sure, store bought meat is cheaper, but when you cut out buying junkfood and all the other foods based on corn and wheat and/or is processed and comes in a box or a soda can or bottle, you have a lot more left for good food. I’ve kept track the past few days and eating grassfed is so far costing me $5.00 a day. This includes all food, not just meat.
Sometimes you have to get creative. My butcher sells “petfood” for $1.99 a lb. The ingredients look like the perfect blend of muscle and organ meats! The hamburger is $4.69 a lb, so at $1.99, I just may try the “petfood”. It’s produced in the same clean conditions and standards as the rest, so why not?

Roadrunner May 17, 2010 at 21:52

This was a very good post by Richard. The calorie deficit is very important and simply cannot be ignored. Eating the “right” foods is not enough. Eating less of them is important as well. Richard’s suggestion on intermittent fasting is great—as is the Eat Stop Eat info. While you never want to be starving all of the time, learn to take some pleasure in hunger. Hunger is not a bad thing—you need to be able to tolerate it, even enjoy it at times.

Don’t wait until your “stress” or sleep issues are optimal. They likely never will be. Everyone is stressed out. It will not prevent you from losing weight-like some metabolic road block that is impossible to get past—if you are doing most of the other things correctly.

Weight train!! Intense and brief. It will help maintain your muscle while on a calorie restricted diet. Brad Pilon explains this in Eat Stop Eat. It’s importance cannot be over stated. Otherwise just do a lot of moving around.

The main benefit of a lower carb diet is in controlling hunger (IMO). It’s a good way to go if you don’t want to be starving all of the time.

When you make a mistake and eat poorly, don’t sweat it. Just jump right back on the program as soon as possible and continue forward. It will happen at times—don’t let guilt make you discouraged and cause you to blow a week or even quit. No one gets fat from one poor meal or even one poor day of eating.

Give it time—one year or more—to reach your goals. This time will help you turn your new eating pattern into more of a personal eating culture and you will learn to tweak it according to your individual needs. You may feel isolated from the rest of the world at first but you will learn what you can and can’t get away with over time. This also allows you to develop a personal eating culture that doesn’t make you a total dietary hermit relative to your friends and family (although you may feel like this at first). Watch—eventually they will be trying to do what you are doing.
of the time. I actually expect to feel a little hungry at times during the day—and it is a comfortable feeling for me. My
all of the time. I do have times when I eat a lot, but I cut back at other times—so it all equals out. I don’t like feeling full all

ingrained, however, I’m finding it very hard to eat enough. I actually do not like the feeling of eating boat loads of food

wanted to put on a little more muscle. For me, this requires eating more food. My current eating habits are so

establishing an eating culture that works for me. I recently decided to gain some weight—I love to weight train and I

Try this on for size—I actually have the opposite problem. I succeeded in losing about 55 pounds several years ago—firmly

Roadrunner May 18, 2010 at 08:18

Ok—but getting to that point may take some time and in the mean time people need to actually put some effort into
eating less food—likely experiencing some hunger. Relying on your bodies internal mechanisms and cues isn’t a good
idea in the beginning—it takes time. The tweaking and finding out what you can get away with is all part of building this
eating culture—one that is healthy and allows you to manage your body composition. It’s a process and beginners can’t
just jump into it in an expect to trust their hunger cues.

Some people still gain weight on a ketogenic diet—there are likely other issues involved in their overeating—it’s just not a
sure thing. For losing weight/fat—calorie deficit is at the base of the pyramid—it is the most fundamental part of the
whole process. Everything else is above it. Those other things may be what allows it to happen more easily, but it is still
the most fundamental part. Eat too much protein and fat—you still gain weight.

pfw May 18, 2010 at 10:18

Right. If you have a broken endocrine system, you’re going to have to consciously take over. But I don’t think most
people are that broken. Eating only fatty meat quickly reigns in an appetite unless the person in question has some
issues. There are those who manage to gain weight on that approach, but they’re in the minority—most people seem
to spontaneously lower calories without needing to think about it. Most people don’t even need to go zero carb to get it
to work.

That’s borne out by a lot of studies, to the point where calorie is a calorie people crow about it whenever people talk
about low-carb: people spontaneously eat less, thus they lose more weight, so it’s just a low-calorie diet in disguise!
No, it’s an appetite controlling diet. There’s a huge difference there, because wild humans outside of metabolic wards
who are sated aren’t going to fall off the wagon and binge like wild humans who aren’t sated.

I wouldn’t agree that there’s a pyramid at all, let along that calorie deficit is the bottom. Metabolism is incredibly
complex and obviously obese people who want to lose “weight” wouldn’t be happy if they lost 20lbs of muscle and 5lbs
of fat. On top of that, people who have to ignore hunger to lower their calories are more likely to crack in the long run
than someone who doesn’t really think about hunger; calorie deficit becomes irrelevant if it can’t be maintained.

So how your metabolism responds to the calorie deficit is as important as the deficit itself, perhaps even more so
depending on the population you’re testing, and how you generate that deficit is important as well.

Roadrunner May 18, 2010 at 10:30

pfw—You’re probably right about the pyramid—it really isn’t that simply linear. I agree with what you are saying. I still feel
like people need to learn to tolerate some hunger-learn to even like it to a degree (not starvation). I know this goes
against what most people want to feel, but I think it’s just a reality when it comes to taking off significant body fat—your
going to feel hungry at times and it’s OK—its natural—and it won’t last for very long.

pfw May 18, 2010 at 11:00

True enough. In fact, it’s probably very important to warn people that hunger changes as your diet changes. You’ve got to
re-learn how to be hungry :)

Roadrunner May 18, 2010 at 12:00

Try this on for size—I actually have the opposite problem. I succeeded in losing about 55 pounds several years ago—firmly
establishing an eating culture that works for me. I recently decided to gain some weight— I love to weight train and I
wanted to put on a little more muscle. For me, this requires eating more food. My current eating habits are so
 ingrained, however, I’m finding it very hard to eat enough. I actually do not like the feeling of eating boat loads of food
all of the time. I do have times when I eat a lot, but I cut back at other times—so it all equals out. I don’t like feeling full all
of the time. I actually expect to feel a little hungry at times during the day—and it is a comfortable feeling for me. My
REPLY

May 18, 2010 at 14:48

I spent two months eating 3500-4000 calories a day while lifting, more or less just to see what would happen. I went from 160 to 185 (I’m 6’3″), so I went from “super skinny” to “moderately less super skinny”), but I had the exact same experience. I was never hungry, and at some times I literally could not eat another bite of hamburger or whatever it was. If it wasn’t for liberal doses of heavy cream, I never would have been able to maintain that amount of intake for that long. Without any hunger cue, eating was mechanical and not much fun. I can see why gallon of milk a day and such things are so valuable to dedicated strength people because otherwise eating enough food would be hard as hell.

Good luck with the program. I crapped out at 175 on the squat, although by crapped out I mean chickened out because I couldn’t get my form correct and didn’t want to add weight until I did. Then I went on a two week business trip to India and lost about ten pounds in the process. I just recently re-started my squat linear progression at the bottom and so far so good, but then again it’s hard not to have good form at 135!

REPLY

May 17, 2010 at 23:10

A few things that helped me in the beginning: give up coffee/tea for at least a week (this can be tough), stop artificial sweeteners (I was using saccharine), cut out nuts, and add more fat (my main source is heavy cream). I think the most important thing at the beginning is to get insulin under control, so cut out anything sweet including fruit. Once insulin is reigned in, it should be pretty easy to move to one meal a day with a cup of heavy cream as a ‘snack’. I haven’t tried IF beyond eating one meal a day, but it sounds interesting and it seems to work really well for a lot of folks.

I don’t see exercise as a function of ‘going to the gym’. Exercise is supposed to help insulin sensitivity (and it definitely helps with stress), especially when combined with a low carb diet, but its contribution to weight loss is hotly debated. In my case, for example, exercise can be an excuse to cheat with too much white wine, but I try not to sweat the small stuff. A couple minutes of say, squat-thrusts (with mason jars or some other convenient weight lying around) twice a week is a realistic start for a busy person. You want to try and focus on intensity and strength rather than duration. I do all my exercise at home (except for sprints), I’m laying on the floor whimpering after five minutes of bodyweight training (which is another thing that is another thing that is difficult to do at the gym).

In my opinion, lose the insulin addiction and everything else will follow from that. I’m not a big fan of replacing neolithic carbs with protein since protein can also spike blood sugar, but if it works, go with it, of course. If you feel better, you know you are headed in the right direction (once off the insulin).

REPLY

Janet (Pantry Bites) May 17, 2010 at 23:31

IF using an “eating window” approach is really easy to do and it kills your appetite. My solution to fruit is taking 1/4 of a small banana and having it with about a tablespoon of almond butter. Surprisingly filing and kills the sweet cravings.

REPLY

James May 18, 2010 at 06:20

I’ve lost almost 30 pounds by:
Remembering there is not a single carbohydrate required by the human body, according to several bloggers and authors such as Mark Sisson and Dr. Michael Eades.

I eat when I am hungry but since protein and fat are very filling, I am (naturally) eating only two or, maybe, three times per day.

There have been times when, for instance, after having eaten some grilled asparagus topped with butter and a rather large steak, I awaken the next morning to find I have lost an additional pound or two. Simply amazing.

In fact, asparagus and steak was on the menu last night and as I type this, I am actually a bit hungry — it’s now 7:56 a.m. In the past, my usual carb-loaded evening meal would have left me feeling bloated until past noon.

As a former chef, I still eat very well. For instance, this morning I plan to have Eggs Benedict Florentine: Three soft-poached eggs, Canadian bacon, and wilted spinach, all topped with Hollandaise Sauce. The only difference in my recipe and any restaurant’s recipe is I don’t use the English Muffin.

REPLY

Rocco Ernest May 18, 2010 at 07:37

I’ve been really stalled as well, my comment is about the calorie deficit.

According to my measurements, I should have a cal requirement of nearly 3500! I weigh 290 lbs, am pretty overweight (fat % 35), 5’11”, 41 y/o, 6 resting 16 very light (deskjob) 2 light (walking and working out – it’s probably higher but I’m being conservative). 3466
Jim May 18, 2010 at 07:56
You’re probably not as active as you think you are. There’s descriptions of each activity level if you go down further on the link Richard provided.

Either that, or you’re like me, and your calorie count is higher than you think. I’m 6’4”, started doing paleo at 240 lbs and I’m down to 210 as of this morning, so I’m a large boy. I know a ‘serving’ has never been enough for me.

Rocco Ernest May 18, 2010 at 08:02
My activity on that thing was 6 hours of resting, 16 hours of very light, 2 hours light. I checked that out. I generally walk about an hour a day and an hour’s exercise.

If my calorie count is higher than I think, is the fact that I’m potentially under-eating stalling my weight loss? It’s not like I’m ravenous all the time.

Jim May 18, 2010 at 12:59
“If my calorie count is higher than I think, is the fact that I’m potentially under-eating stalling my weight loss? It’s not like I’m ravenous all the time.”

I think you misunderstood me. I meant you’re probably eating more calories than you think you are. At first glance I think we naturally go “okay, that was one serving of ______.” But if you actually measure it out, you might be eating closer to 2-3 servings. I’ve never been one to count, but my girlfriend started holding to serving sizes religiously awhile ago, and I was just amazed at how little 6 oz. of something was and how much more than that was I was actually eating.

Richard mentioned working in some more exercise with your walks. I’d also vouch for Tabata Sprints. MDA has an article about them, and I think they’re fantastic. My favorite is to do those, then immediately go and take the dog for a walk.

Richard Nikoley May 18, 2010 at 08:45
Rocco:
You might try recalculating based on where you want to be in terms of weight at your current activity level. I get about 2,500. You might try eating 2000-2500 and make sure 200g is protein, keep carbs under 50, and see what happens.

Also, you might want to do a lot of pushups, squats and lunges on those daily walks.

You also might be interested in trying out Jimmy Moore’s “eggfest” that he blogged about and which knocked him out of a stalled, weight gain phase.

Paul C May 18, 2010 at 10:52
I am virtually the same stats as you (40, 6′, desk job) except I am 175 lb. My calorie requirement came out at about 2900, while yours is 600 cal higher. I think the calculator is not built to take excess body fat into account, and just treats all mass equally.

Richard is right — use your desired weight in the calculator rather than your current weight.

Paul C May 18, 2010 at 11:37
Ahhh I see the trick in that calculator now Rocco — change the row that says height to be body fat % instead, and enter 50 (just a guess that you have around 145lb lean mass). The number will come out much closer to 2500.

Sue May 18, 2010 at 08:22
I would recommend more fat and very low carb...I would also recommend figuring out your caloric needs based on your ideal weight and body comp. So at 5’ 2” and say 20% body fat, you may want to weigh say 125, and your LBM would be about 95. At 14 cal per lb LBM, you would shoot for about 1330 cal per day. Eat whole food, more fat, moderate protein, as few carbs as you can stand (from non starchy veggies and rarely berries – skip the rest of the fruit)

Do resistance exercise (short, intense workouts) for fat loss and longish walks for destressing

At age 57 and 5’3.5” - low carb (@20 – 50 g carb per day) and resistance training took me from about 140 to about 125 over 18 months and the last 6 months, by decreasing protein and increasing fat, I have gotten down to 120. I am happy with 120, but am now working on my body comp. I went from about 35% to 25% over the last couple of years and am shooting for 20% by increasing my resistance
exersize and feeding 95lb LBM. (I figure about 14 cal per lb LBM – so about 1330 cal/day)

Jonathan May 18, 2010 at 11:24
I agree with the cutting fruit (especially the apples, grapes, oranges, and melon). I’d cut the nuts as well because nuts normally just make me hungry. You might want to cut the avocado down to only half of the whole per day as it does have carbs. Don’t cook with the olive oil (free radicals). Use some ghee or butter and coconut oil to sauté the vegetables and pour what’s left of the butter in the pan over the meat you cooked after you plate it. Increase the fat to replace the cut fruit calories and it will keep hunger down. You’re probably one that needs to keep carbs normally under 20 per day.

Don’t loose hope. Everyone goes through stalls. You may even go up in weight as your body might put on muscle faster than it burns up the fat. You got to let your body heal.

san fran J May 20, 2010 at 21:32
seriously doubt that oranges, watermelon is making you KEEP WEIGHT ON. however, the caloric deficit holds true for sure.

golooraam May 18, 2010 at 11:50
after years and years of fighting the notion of calorie counting – I have to agree that along with minimizing fruits, you gotta be careful of nuts and cheese as well…

I am at a phase where I am fasting completely 1x to 2x a week and getting good results while still building strength in the gym
if you do dairy… I find consuming half a pint to a pint of cream with my last meal for the day before a whole day fast makes the fasting day go really easy… if I am “too paleo”, just grassfed meat and egg yolks, the hunger does me in my late afternoon…

Anna May 18, 2010 at 12:20
Grapes are super high in sugar (raisins, too). Sugary bombs like grapes send my BG up like a rocket, as do pineapples, dates, mangos, and lots of other fruits from warm-weather climes. So aside from the general consensus to cut out between meal snacking and replace some or all of the high carb fruit with non-starchy veggies (by weight non-starchy veggies provide more nutrient bang for the buck anyway), I’d also suggest staying away from such high sugar fruits when fruit is eaten. Cold weather fruits (even those in moderation) tend to be lower in insulin-raising sugars than Mediterranean and tropical fruits and are more nutrient-dense by weight.

Pharm May 18, 2010 at 13:38
Decrease carbs (2 servings fruit per day), even out the omega’s, looks heavy on the 6’s (avacoda, pecan, olive oil), temporarily decrease exersize if doing high intensity or chronic cardio (reduces stress response), cut out caffiene if it’s been in the mix for a while, make sure you are sleeping well. These are all short term “sacrifices” and down the road things can be added back in when you are where you want to be. Oh, and don’t allow any cheat days for several weeks. Give it time and you will be amazed at the transormation, and how easy it can be.

Hillary May 18, 2010 at 15:02
A 5'2″ tall, 53 year-old woman probably needs very little food. I am 5'10″, 28 years old and I probably eat about half what you eat in a day. I am losing weight and feeling fantastic. I would step back and really consciously assess your hunger levels. I truly believe that much of what we eat has less to with hunger or need, and more to with habit or ritual. Some of the ritual is unavoidable, but otherwise, we are free to form our own eating habits. For example, I do not need a breakfast. I eat at noon and then again around 6. That means I also get a good 18 hours or so of fasting time every day. Once you starting eating real foods, you’ll be shocked at how little you need.

golooraam May 18, 2010 at 15:10
another way of looking at your sample meal plan looks perfect for fat loss…
just cut your breakfast, lunch, and 1st snack
then just sprinkle your second snack on top of your salad with dinner…
that should pull off the fat real quick

Walter Norris May 18, 2010 at 21:22

I agree with removing the fruit. While nuts are paleo, I think they are counterproductive when trying to lose weight, so while I also agree with cut the snacks, don’t have nuts as part of your meals while trying to lose weight, add them back in after the weight loss.

san fran J May 20, 2010 at 21:35

you don't have to cut out the nuts completely. you just have to be in a caloric deficit. this lady is getting close to 800 calories from nuts. she has to cut everywhere else down to bring this down.

I eat about 400-500 calories from nuts a day and 300 from fruit. As long as I stay in a caloric deficit with the rest protein(meat/fish/shellfish) that weight/fat will come off.

PK May 18, 2010 at 23:40

"Of course, you could choose to eat 1 and 1/2 pounds of ground beef per day and just be done with it, but that would get old fast, I'm sure."

I do this a lot, exactly that amount even, and while yeah, sometimes it gets a little old, it's also really, really easy and takes all the thinking out of it. I have a strange schedule and so taking a pre-measured amount of meat with me that I can microwave and know that I'll feel satisfied after eating that amount is very handy. I tend to vary my menu on weekends when I have time to really cook, but for those who are busy and find that they really don't think of food as much as they used to when blood sugar levels are stable, then it's not really much of a "chore" to eat the same thing every day.

That being said, I always covet your food porn, Richard, and wish I had a kitchen available at dinner time to think up and make sauces.

Rocco Ernest May 19, 2010 at 10:00

Thanks for the info all! Especially Richard. Donate, folks, for the resource! This might be a full post, but here goes:

Anyway, I have a unique situation (well not that unique these days) – lost my job yesterday. Instead of brushing up my resume and immediately getting back into the job market I've decided to take a couple of months off and learn some new skills. This gives me an excellent opportunity to really get a handle on the weight loss as well, since I'll have plenty of time.

Given my situation – 290 lbs, 35% fat (this is from a couple of different fat scales and caliper tests), good health (can jog some, actively walk/run a few days a week and weight train 1-2 a week), live in NYC, gym membership, etc – I'm trying to come up with a 60 day plan.

I don't want to do some kind of biggest loser lunacy, but I think I can handle go above "go for 1 hr walk every day and a weight training session per week" level.

Right now based on above and the past, it's looking like:

With a final BMR of around 2500 or so, I should tag calories daily at 1500-2000. Protein at 200g, less than 50g of carbs (I'm used to lower). Suppplements, water, and maybe some extra sleep. I might do the eggfest just to have a controlled menu – maybe add some zero-carb beef jerky or protein powder to up that. IF on days I do weight training. Limited eating window in general.

I can only do so much weight training – two intense sessions per week. How else can I maximize my exercise potential in a way that's consistent? From a paleo perspective, there had to be times of extra work and lean times (versus a forced death march, say). Walks every day with scattered anaerobic exercises as suggested (squats, lunges, pushups) 2-3 hours of walking a day? Maybe add time aerobically at the gym, knowing its only for two months?

I've got a great opportunity here to make a real dent in this due to the time factor – looking for suggestions in a way that's not unhealthy. But basically what's more intense then the standard "I barely workout at all!" that most paleo folks seem to be able to maintain on.

Jim May 19, 2010 at 13:46

As I mentioned, I think Tabatas are great. The other thing that consistently kicks me in the ass is this:

http://fitnessblackbook.com/workout-routines/body-weight-circuits-are-kickin-my-butt/

The thing is, what everyone says about diet being the most important part really is true. I do these workouts to speed it along a little bit and add some muscle, but I think really the most important thing I did was cut out the crap food. Sounds like you already did that though.
TrailGrrl May 19, 2010 at 15:33

Amy,

I didn’t see any weight loss on the scale at first. Then suddenly I needed smaller pants. I’m not sure if it’s a gender thing, but women often don’t see dramatic changes at first like men using this sort of eating style. I don’t eat very much fruit at all because I never feel good afterwards. Once I got used to primal eating, I started eating when I was hungry, instead of by the clock. I used to not be able to function without breakfast. Now I do an “unintentional IF” where I don’t eat until I’m hungry, which some days (like today) wasn’t until 3 pm. I will eat dinner tonight with hubby around 9 or so. Some days I am hungry at 11:30am depending on when and what I ate the night before. So, I don’t do 3 meals a day or planned snacks. I don’t graze. I have dropped about 3 sizes in clothes over 3 years and have kept it off without “dieting” or exercising much. I used to run a lot, but not anymore or by a schedule. You don’t need a gym. Trying to be on someone else’s schedule just stressed me out. I use bodyweight, rubber bands, kettlebells, and the newest thing I got as a birthday present is a suspension trainer. So I work out at home or wherever I am and keep it simple. When it’s nice out I go trailrunning and do my strength as I go along with trees and branches and rocks and things. Basic is best… no brainer. Keep the food simple and keep the exercise “routine” pared down as well. If you are using artificial sweeteners or drinking diet soda, get rid of that immediately. You will sleep better and I am hardly as hungry now as when Diet Pepsi was my last holdout item.

The eating is the trick, so work on it more than worrying about exercise.

TrailGrrl

SassaFrass88 May 21, 2010 at 11:41

Here’s an idea: Health issues.

I think some of us Paleo/ Primal folks forget how different each person’s body is, especially in regards to gut health. I, for one, found out that I have LGS (Leaky Gut Syndrome). I am on a STRICT Paleo diet and even with working out, I am COMPLETELY stalled on my weight-loss. The doctor (he’s paleo) is telling me to not worry about this, as we are working on healing my gut (along with liver, endocrine system, pancreas, kidneys, metal-toxicity & some kind of ‘bug’ – all due to this LGS!) before we can even focus on weight loss :-(

So, calorie deficit & fasting are not only going to NOT work on someone like me, but it also is ill-advised as the low-blood sugar causes stress on my pancreas, thus causing stress on my kidneys, throwing my healing process of track!

Just food for thought.

Go get a full blood panel/ lab and go over the results with your doctor (I highly recommend a reflexologist/ Paleo doc like I have! Mine didn’t even balk at the fact that I eat high-fat food when my cholesterol came back high. Instead, he said it was from the inflammation from my LGS and ‘bug’ invading my body).

Kathy June 23, 2010 at 10:38

I have a little bit of a problem in that I have a healthy breakfast of oatmeal, 1 tsp of brown sugar, 2 tsp of ground wheat germ but I always seem to blow the whole day by eating two chocolate bars a day. And I have lunch and dinner regularly.

Jonathan June 23, 2010 at 11:19

Wheat and sugar (though not much) do not make a “healthy” breakfast. Try some bacon and save the grease to cook 2 or 3 eggs (or 5 or 6 if you feel you might get hungry). Bet you wouldn’t crave the sugar in the chocolate so bad. Nothing wrong with eating regularly. Skipping breakfast would be really good for you since it would be cutting out worthless grains (just don’t add them back to your other two meals).
I’m Richard Nikoley. Free The Animal began in 2003 and as of 2020, has 5,000 posts and 120,000 comments from readers. I blog what I wish...from lifestyle to philosophy, politics, social antagonism, adventure travel, nomad living, location and time independent—“while you sleep”— income, and food. I intended to travel the world “homeless” but the Covid-19 panic-demid squashed that. I’ve become an American expat living in rural Thailand where I’ve built a home. I celebrate the audacity and hubris to live by your own exclusive authority and take your own chances. [Read more...]
Or, if you prefer, here's the SubscribeStar mirror site

GASTROINTESTINAL HEALTH

ELIXA PROBIOTIC IS A BRITISH BIOTECH MANUFACTURER IN OXFORD, UK. U.S. DEMAND IS NOW SO HIGH THEY'VE ESTABLISHED DISTRIBUTION CENTERS IN ILLINOIS, NEVADA, AND NEW JERSEY.

STILL, SELL-OUTS HAPPEN REGULARLY, ORDER NOW TO AVOID A WAITING LIST.

MY BOOK

Free The Animal

Richard Nikoley

RECENT POSTS

YOU CAN’T RECOUNT YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS
It’s a hot mess inside of a shitstorm From about 1990 until midterms, 2018, I was a non-voter, even though I generally supported libertarian and ...
NOVEMBER 3RD
Less than a week out and looking forward to forgetting about it for another 4 years. 320+, and the popular vote. Bank on it. That is all ...

PLEASE WEAR YOUR MASK TO HELP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19
Finally some good news. Turns out, via CDC, that habitual mask wearers are the ones spreading the virus around the most. That's fantastic since ...

THAI LIFE UPDATE: THE BEACH CONDO AND A SECOND RESTAURANT
I've been remiss, time to get back to it. It wasn't laziness, just a series of things that consumed my attention and focus. Plus, in some measure ...

UMAMI BEEF POT ROAST AND BEEF STEW
Answer: the beef stew you just made. The recipes: Pot Roast. Use this recipe to the letter for a pressure cooker, or with my adaptations for a ...

POPULAR POSTS

Coronavirus #3: Denise Minger is Thorough But Misses the Boats
92 Total Shares

My 8 Weeks in Thailand #1
88 Total Shares

First Impressions: Location Independent Nomads in Chiang Mai, Thailand
86 Total Shares

Covid-19 Is Impeachment 3.0; BLM Riots, 4.0; Re-Lockdown, 5.0
83 Total Shares

My Musings on the Coronavirus (Covid-19)
73 Total Shares

Coronavirus #2: The Dumb and the Dumber
58 Total Shares

I Met A Dry Fasting Nut
39 Total Shares

CovidScam Unravels. Backlash Grows and Intensifies.
35 Total Shares

Coronavirus #1: The Innocent and the Guilty
30 Total Shares

Chiang Mai, Thailand Early 2020 Nomading Update
30 Total Shares

LAST 10 COMMENTS

Geoff Mc on Minimalist Shoes on a Budget: Sanuk & Vans

Linda Camp on Cooking, Cooling, and Reheating Starches For Even More Digestive Resistance

Richard Nikoley on My “Magical” Fat and Weight Loss (with bonus video)

John on My “Magical” Fat and Weight Loss (with bonus video)
Digital Nomad Jobs - Your step by step guide to quitting your desk job, starting a location independent business and living your digital nomad dream! Cloud Office. Family Office.

Recent years have seen the emergence of a new lifestyle that is growing in popularity all around the world: Life as a Digital Nomad. The term Hanging Hammock. Looking for location independence through the digital nomad lifestyle? Let's look at how to get started, find some ideas, and look at examples of successful businesses you can manage from anywhere. Table of Contents. Starting an online business that lets you travel. What is a location independent business? Why location Independence? How to start an online business from scratch. Routine is an important component of a healthy mind. However, the biggest advantage of running a location independent business is the ability to find your routine in a new country. I run several businesses from my laptop. I make money from multiple channels. Some digital nomads have multiple streams of income. Others have just one – be it drop shipping, freelancing, or a niche website, as examples. Location Independent is a digital nomad blog about travel, visas, finance & lifestyle design. Learn how to become a digital nomad with my guides & tips & enjoy the freedoms that come with creating a location independent lifestyle. Finding digital nomad accommodation can be daunting for a first timer, time consuming for even experienced nomads, and can lead to your living costs spiralling if the wrong decisions are made. Read my top tips of how to find cheap digital nomad accommodation in whatever place you go. Read More. January 3, 2017 by James. Reflections on a location independent year: my 2016 roundup & 2017 thoughts. I wanted to put together a roundup of lessons I've learnt "on the road" in 2016, and some of my goals I will achieve in 2017. Location Independent Business: Online Payroll Tools For Digital Nomads. So you've figured out how you're going to become a digital nomad and now you're looking for the best tools to make your business as successful as possible. One of the first things entrepreneurs and online business owners encounter is the question of...Read More. Virtual Assistant Jobs That Let You Work From Anywhere. So you’ve decided that you want to kick your 9 to 5 to the curb and become location independent. Maybe you’ve picked an employment path, but now you’re wondering how in the world people make money online. Well today, we’ll show you how you can...Read More.