



ULTIMATE FAT LOSS GUIDE

***HOW TO EAT
TO LOSE THE FAT
& KEEP THE MUSCLE***

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This guide is for you if

- You have at least 10 lbs to lose
 - You want to decrease your body fat %
 - You want to skip the BS and learn what really works
 - You want specific, actionable steps
 - You're ready to make the necessary sacrifices
-

If you follow these steps and guidelines, you **WILL** lose weight and it **WILL** be mostly fat. Muscle mass **WILL** be spared and in some cases, even increased.

Please note: This is not a quick fix - this is a safe, healthy, sustainable approach to fat loss and ultimately to desired weight maintenance.

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Practical Approach

People talk about losing weight, but what they really want is to lose FAT. It's easy to lose weight - eat very little and do a ton of cardio. But that will leave you metabolically and hormonally deranged, "skinny fat" without the lean and shapely look you want, and, of course, miserable.

The ONLY safe, reliable, natural way to lose fat while maintaining the muscle tissue that is so critical for overall health and aesthetics is to

1. Be in an appropriate calorie deficit
2. Eat enough protein
3. Perform regular resistance training

The focus of this guide is diet, but I will touch on exercise because it is essential for muscle maintenance while losing weight.

Calorie Deficit

Weight change is almost entirely attributable to net calorie balance: calories in (all the food and drinks you consume) vs calories out (all the calories you burn).

When calories in < calories out, you lose weight. This is called being in a calorie deficit.

When calories out > calories in, you gain weight.

When calories in = calories out, your weight remains stable.

The difference in calories between how much you consume and burn every day will determine your rate of weight loss.

Despite popular belief, the actual nutrient content of the food does matter - although much less than net calorie consumption. Certain compounds in processed foods interact with our metabolism, hormones, gut health, and immune system to affect weight gain. Limit ultra-processed foods as much possible.

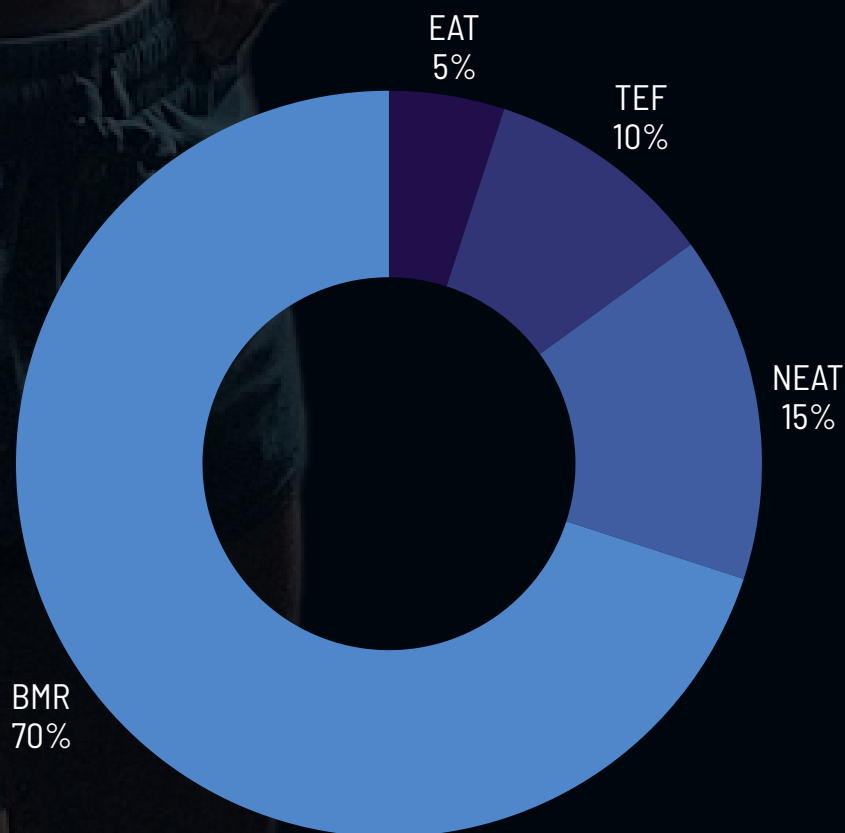
Calorie Deficit

“Calories Out” is also known as your Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE), and it reflects the sum of these 4 components:

- Basal (or Resting) Metabolic Rate (BMR), which is affected by things like age, activity level, muscle mass, function of various hormones, and many more
- All the calories you burn during dedicated exercise (Exercise Activity Thermogenesis, EAT)
- All the calories you burn from your usual movements throughout the day, like doing laundry, walking the dog, making lunch (Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis, NEAT)
- Calories used in the digestion of your food (Thermogenic Effect of Food, TEF). Note: you burn much more calories digesting protein than carbs or fat!

Calorie Deficit

By far, the largest contributor to Calories Out, or TDEE, is your BMR. Notice how little of an effect dedicated exercise (EAT) has on your TDEE. This is why exercising more, without changing your diet, will not lead to weight loss. This is why they say that weight loss happens in the kitchen.



Calorie Deficit

“Calories In” is much simpler and easier to measure. It reflects all the calories that you consume in a day, including calories from drinks. In order to know your Calories In, you must measure and record everything you consume. This is called “tracking your food” or “tracking calories” and it’s an incredibly reliable and effective way to lose fat.

If you’ve never done this, don’t be intimidated. It takes about 1 day to get the hang of it. All you need is a smart phone and a food scale, which you can buy for about \$10.



Calorie Deficit

How do you track your food?

Download a free app like MyFitnessPal (this is the one I use for myself and my clients) or Lose It. In the food diary, simply enter the food item (manually type it in, select from a list of options, or scan the barcode) and the quantity. It will give you the # of calories and grams of protein, carbs, and fat.

Example: I use my food scale to weigh out 3oz chicken breast. In the app, I enter “chicken breast” and select an option. For serving size, I enter 3oz. It tells me that provides 90 calories, 0g carbs, 1.5g fat, and 19.5g protein. I add that to my diary and I am shown my totals for the day for calories and each of the macros, as well as how many are left in my budget for the day.

I explain how to create your budget in the next section.

A person in athletic wear, including a grey sports bra and dark shorts, stands with their hands on their hips. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

Calculate Your Numbers

So what do you need to do?

1. Figure out your TDEE
2. Subtract 10-20% to get your daily calorie goal
3. Calculate your macros

Calculate Your Numbers

1. There are 3 ways you can determine your TDEE:

TRACK FOR A FEW DAYS: As long as your weight has been relatively stable lately, meaning your TDEE (Calories Out) is about equal to your Calories In, you can get a decent estimate by tracking your food for a few days. Note: you have to be honest and eat in a way that's typical for you. Count everything that has calories, but you can leave out anything that is calorie-free.

TDEE CALCULATOR: Google "TDEE Calculator" and enter your data. This is easier and faster, but typically less accurate.

GET TESTED: Search your city for a facility that provides BMR testing. Once obtained, multiply it by your Activity Factor (a number that reflects your average weekly activity level - this can be googled as well). This is the most accurate method, but it's expensive - the average cost is \$100-\$250.

Calculate Your Numbers

2. Calculate your daily calorie goal

It's reasonable to start with a 10-20% calorie deficit, meaning you subtract 10-20% from your TDEE to get your daily calorie goal. For example, if your TDEE is 1800, your initial goal may be 1440-1620.

A 10% deficit will be easier and more comfortable, you'll be less hungry and less likely to burn out, but you'll see results more slowly. 20% is appropriate if you're very dedicated and motivated. You can choose anywhere in between as well. You can always adjust your numbers as needed once you see how it feels and how your body responds.

There are other methods of determining your daily calorie goal more specifically based on your goals, but they are outside the scope of this guide. If you're interested in learning about these, please [contact me](#) - I'll be happy to walk you through them.

Calculate Your Numbers

3. Calculate your macros

“Macros” refers to the 3 macronutrients: protein, carbs, and fat. Eating the right quantities of each is important for many health and aesthetic reasons, especially when in a calorie deficit.

Protein: necessary for muscle repair & growth; improves metabolism, supports cardiovascular, brain, immune, hormone, GI, liver, and kidney function; helps to manage blood sugar levels; promotes healthy skin, hair, & nails.

Carbs: primary source of energy; fruit, vegetables, and grains contain fiber, vitamins, and minerals, each of which provide a plethora of health benefits.

Fat: necessary for cell structure, hormone production & function, absorption of certain vitamins, health of brain, heart, skin, & hair, major source of energy storage.

Calculate Your Numbers

While in a calorie deficit, you WILL lose weight, regardless of your macro ratios. However, in order for the majority of the weight loss to be from fat - and to preserve your muscle tissue - macros matter. They also matter in terms of your energy and hunger levels and overall health.

- We aim for lots of protein each day, since it's so crucial for fat loss and improving your metabolism.
- We aim for a moderate amount of carbs to obtain the health benefits of fiber and micronutrients without subjecting ourselves to the health risks of over-consumption.
- We aim for generally low fat intake, since fat is so calorie-dense (1 gram of fat is more than twice as many calories as 1 gram of protein or carbs).

Calculate Your Numbers

Forget what you've heard in the past about protein intake - the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of 0.36 g protein per lb of body weight per day is the bare minimum required for your organs to function - it is NOT a goal to aim for when trying to optimize your health and metabolism! It's actually about 1/3 of the goal you should aim for.

Your daily protein goal in grams = your Ideal Body Weight (IBW) in pounds.

IBW is simply the calculated weight at which someone of your gender and height has the lowest risk of death from disease. Google "IBW Calculator" and enter your gender and height. If you're a 5'5" woman, your IBW is 126 lbs, so your daily protein goal is 126 grams. This is likely MUCH more protein than you're used to eating. The sooner you get on board with it the better - **eating a ton of protein is the key to fat loss.**

Calculate Your Numbers

The safe lower limit for fat intake for most people is 0.3-0.4g per lb IBW per day. It's reasonable to set your daily fat goal within this range, for the reasons outlined above.

Once you've determined your goals for protein and fat, your daily carb goal can be calculated, since the macronutrients are all interdependent within your calorie target.

I'll explain. A little math is necessary here - I'm sorry.

Total calories comprise the calories from each of the 3 macronutrients. Protein and carbs each have 4 calories/gram and fat has 9 calories/gram. Therefore,

$$\text{Calories} = 4(\text{protein}) + 4(\text{carbs}) + 9(\text{fat})$$

Calculate Your Numbers

Since you've already determined your daily goals for calories, protein, and fat, we solve for carbs:

$$\text{Carbs} = [\text{calories} - 4(\text{protein}) - 9(\text{fat})] / 4$$

Let's say your calorie goal is 1600 (10-20% of your TDEE) and your IBW is 126 lbs.

Protein goal in grams = IBW in lbs = 126

Fat goal = 0.3-0.4 g/lb IBW = 37.8-50.4g = Let's go with 44g.

$$\text{Carbs} = [1600 - 504 - 396] / 4 = 175\text{g}$$

So your daily macro goals would be
Protein 126, Fat 44, Carbs 175.

A person wearing a grey athletic tank top and dark shorts is visible on the left side of the page. The background is dark and out of focus.

Calculate Your Numbers

Note: your daily carb and fat goals are not as strict as your protein goal. To a degree, you could eat more fat and fewer carbs one day, or vice versa, as long as you stay within your calorie budget and meet your protein goal.

It's reasonable to eat more carbs and less fat on days that you exercise, since access to the glucose is helpful in terms of energy and also for muscle-building purposes. This isn't necessary though. It's certainly easier, and effective enough, to have one set of goals that you stick to every day.

When to Reign it in: Limits

While it's certainly appealing to go balls to the wall and try to lose as much weight as possible as quickly as possible, that's not recommended.

Firstly, if you eat too little for too long, your metabolism will slow down in response, making it even more difficult to lose fat.

Secondly, you want your setting point to change. Have you noticed that your body “prefers” a certain weight, and even if you have an indulgent weekend or vacation, you always tend to migrate back to that weight? That's called your “setting point” and you are going to LOWER it by following this plan. Once you achieve this, you no longer have to eat in a calorie deficit to maintain it.

In order to make sure that your body sees your new weight as its new setting point, and not just a months-long deviation that needs to be corrected, you have to follow certain guidelines.

When to Reign it in: Limits

Guidelines to ensure you establish your new setting point

- Max weight loss of 1% total body weight (TBW) per week
- Max weight loss of 10% TBW over the entire fat loss phase
- Max phase duration 16 weeks (12 is preferable)
- Enter a maintenance phase* once you've either lost 10% TBW or you've been dieting for 16 weeks, whichever comes first.

The bottom line: It's really fun and exciting to watch the weight drop off while following this plan; you get to eat lots of delicious food and you're not hungry very much aside from a bit at the beginning; but don't get carried away and lose too much too quickly or for too long, because you won't establish a new setting point and you'll likely bounce back to your starting weight - or worse, slow your metabolism in the process.

*Maintenance phase is outside the scope of this guide, but I'm happy to discuss it with you if you contact me.



Exercise

In order to maintain (and possibly even grow) your muscle tissue while losing fat, you **MUST** provide frequent and progressively increased stimulation to your muscles with strength training. Here are the recommendations:

- 2-5 days per week of load-bearing exercise: this can be done with machines, free weights, bands, or even bodyweight.
- Progressive Overload: incrementally increase the difficulty of the work to cause your muscles to constantly adapt and grow. This usually means increasing the weight and/or the number of reps as often as you can - ideally with every workout.
- Rest: recovery between workouts is when your muscles repair and grow, so leave at least 48h between workouts that target the same muscle group.



Exercise

In order to **AVOID** breaking down your muscle tissue to use as energy while losing fat, choose your cardio wisely. Here are the recommendations:

- Low-intensity activities like walking are great and always encouraged. For most people, the optimal "fat-burning" zone corresponds to a heart rate range similar to what you achieve with brisk walking. In this zone, you'll burn more fat/minute (as opposed to carbs) than with any other heart rate range.
- High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) is an excellent way to burn tons of calories, given that your body continues to burn calories long after the workout ends by increasing your BMR.
- Moderate-Intensity Steady State cardio such as jogging should be limited (while in a calorie deficit), as it can promote muscle breakdown, increase cortisol, and take time and energy that is better spent doing strength training.

Tips for Success

- Be ok with being a little hungry occasionally at the beginning.
- The first couple weeks are the hardest, but it really only takes about 2-3 weeks of consistency to see and feel noticeable results. Trust the process.
- It may take a little time to learn what foods (& quantities) get you to meet but not exceed your goal numbers. It's all part of the process. Before long, it will become second-nature.
- Treat yourself once in a while; no food is off-limits, as long as it's eaten in moderation.
- If you "mess up" one day, don't worry about it and don't change anything about the plan - just get back on track the next day.
- Planning ahead with meal prep makes this much easier.
- Your weight will naturally fluctuate based on water content and hormone levels. Don't let this throw you off. Only make changes to your plan if you notice an unwanted trend that persists for at least 2 weeks.

Tips for Success

- It's really hard to stick to the plan while eating out and ordering in; limit these as much as is reasonable, at least at the beginning while you're getting the hang of it.
- Eating lots of high fiber foods, especially vegetables, keeps you fuller longer and adds minimal calories. Snacking on raw veggies is excellent for the same reason.
- Ways to get more protein in your diet:
 - Include protein in every meal - ideally at least 30g
 - Snack on protein between meals - edamame, beef/turkey jerky, non-fat yogurt, protein bars, etc
 - Include more of the protein component in your meals - 6 slices of deli turkey instead of 2
 - Supplement with protein shakes - either pre-made ones or make your own with protein powder
 - Add protein to dishes that you may otherwise have without - soups, salads, omelets, etc.

Tips for Success

- Avoid alcohol as much as possible (I'm sorry!) - here are just some of its negative effects:
 - Increases fat storage and inhibits fat breakdown
 - Affects your hunger hormones to make you feel “false hunger”
 - Affects testosterone and cortisol levels to decrease muscle building and increase fat storage
 - Causes poor sleep quality, which slows your metabolism and impairs muscle recovery
 - Decreases motivation for, and quality of, exercise
 - Leads to liver damage, even a small amount of which is notable given its key role in detoxifying the body and metabolizing fat
 - Interferes with absorption of nutrients
 - Increases your risk of cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, anxiety, and depression
 - Many, many more!

Overcoming Challenges

It's not just you - everyone has weaknesses with food. Here are some ways to handle them:

Plan for indulgences in advance:

If you know that you can't say no to ice cream after a long day, you can plan to have some (a few small spoonfuls) 3 days a week, and you'll account for it in the rest of the day. Those days, you'll have a bit less fat and carbs in your other meals.

Take just a few and eat mindfully:

No one can eat just a few potato chips then ignore the open bag next to them. Avoid the temptation. If you must have some, put a small amount in a bowl, then close the bag and put it away. Eat the small serving slowly and thoughtfully. Really enjoy each bite - the taste, the texture. You're eating for the mouthfeel and the taste, and you get that from 5 chips just the same as you get it from 50.

Overcoming Challenges

Recognize emotional triggers:

Sometimes we eat because we're bored, angry, nervous, excited, proud, or some other feeling that's not hunger. In our efforts to lose weight, this is counter-productive. The first step is being thoughtful about why we're about to go to the kitchen. If you're truly hungry, go for it. If it's because you just got an upsetting email from your boss, take a walk instead.

Recognize social triggers:

Certain situations can trigger the desire to eat (think of it as a learned reflex) even if we're not hungry, such as watching TV in the evening or social events or even being with certain people. Again, the first step is recognizing that this is a pattern you have and making a conscious effort to refrain from eating in those situations unless you are truly hungry.

Overcoming Challenges

Upgrade your routine from negative to positive:

If you tend to have a bag of M&Ms each day at work mid-afternoon, try switching that out for something healthier (and higher protein!) such as turkey jerky or a single serving container of fat-free Greek yogurt. That way, you can keep the routine that you enjoy and have established without sabotaging your efforts at weight loss.

Avoid the temptation entirely:

If you're a sucker for chocolate and you really struggle to stay away when it's in the house, don't bring it into the house at all. If this affects your family or roommates, have a conversation with them about the importance this holds for you. Similarly, avoid restaurants that serve mostly unhealthy, highly processed food.

A person wearing a grey athletic tank top and dark shorts is shown from the waist up, standing against a dark background. The person's arms are crossed, and they are looking down.

Supplements

Most supplements out there are just money-makers and not necessary or even really helpful in any meaningful way. Your first priorities should be diet, exercise, sleep, hydration, and stress reduction. If you have ALL of those dialed in, go ahead and invest in supplements that may provide a small benefit.

There are a few, however, that are worth using.

Supplements

- **Creatine:** Recommended for most people, except those with kidney disease; a naturally occurring compound found in muscle cells that plays a critical role in short-term energy production; helps regenerate ATP (the body's primary energy currency), which can improve performance during high-intensity activities like weightlifting and sprinting; has been extensively studied and consistently shown to be safe and effective; leads to increased muscle mass, primarily through water retention in muscle cells and potentially by enhancing protein synthesis.
- **Omega-3 Fish oil:** Recommended for everyone, especially while eating a calorie deficit and therefore limiting intake of fatty foods. Benefits abound: It reduces muscle soreness, speeds recovery, supports muscle building and reduces muscle breakdown, promotes fat breakdown, reduces joint inflammation, and promotes cardiovascular and brain health.



Supplements

- **Multivitamin:** While in a calorie deficit, we may not eat as much fruits and grains as we would otherwise, so it's helpful to supplement to make sure we're meeting our daily recommended doses. These serve as a widely-available and inexpensive insurance policy against deficiencies, so there's not really a downside.
- **Fiber:** Not just for good poops, benefits include improved cardiovascular health, lower blood pressure, blood sugar regulation, enhanced absorption of nutrients in the gut, inflammation reduction, and increased satiety leading to decreased calorie intake. Most Americans don't even come close to the recommended daily amount (about 25g for women and 38g for men).

Appendix

Sample weight chart - this is helpful to ensure that you stay within the recommended parameters detailed on page 20.

Week	Goal weight	Weigh-in 1	Weigh-in 2	Avg weight for the week	Change from last week
1: Oct 14-20	180	180.6	179.4	180	-1.0
2: Oct 21-27	178.5	178.8	178.0	178.4	-1.6
3: Oct 28-Nov 3	177				
4: Nov 4-10	175.5				
5: Nov 11-17	174				
6: Nov 18-24	172.5				
7: Nov 25-Dec 1	171				
8: Dec 2-8	169.5				

Grocery List

for fat loss & weight maintenance

Meat & Poultry

Chicken breast
Turkey breast
Lean beef
Pork tenderloin
Lean ham
Canadian bacon
Bison, Venison
Lean Jerky

Vegetables: Non-Starchy

Salad greens, spinach, kale, lettuce
Broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts
Tomatoes
Bell peppers
Mushrooms
Cucumbers
Spinach
Zucchini
Asparagus
Green beans

Vegetables: Starchy

Sweet potatoes
Squash
Plantains
Beets
Corn
Green peas

Carbs: Grains, Legumes

Oats rolled or steel-cut
Quinoa
Barley
Couscous
Brown or wild rice
Lentils
Chickpeas
Beans: black, kidney, navy
Whole grain bread, tortillas

Fat

Avocados
Nuts: walnuts, almonds
Seeds: pumpkin, chia, flax, sunflower
EVOO, avocado oil
Nut butters: PB, almond butter
Cheese: the lower fat the better

Other

Protein powder
Peanut butter powder (low fat)
Salad dressing (low/non-fat)
BBQ sauce
Salsa, hot sauce
Spices

Fish & Seafood

Cod
Halibut
Sole
Tilapia
Mahimahi
Bass
Snapper
Shrimp
Scallops
Salmon & trout: not lean but high in omega-3

Eggs & Dairy

Whole eggs
Egg whites
Yogurt: low-fat, non-fat
Skyr: low-fat
Cottage cheese: low-fat
Milk: low-fat, non-fat


Fruit: Low-Glycemic Index

Berries
Cherries
Apples
Pears
Oranges
Peaches
Plums
Grapefruits
Kiwis
Figs

Fruit: High-Glycemic Index

Pineapple
Bananas (ripe)
Dates
Grapes
Watermelon
Cantaloupe
Dried fruits

- Lots of lean, high-protein foods
- Wide variety of foods = broad range of vitamins & minerals
- Fatty meat/fish: high calorie content - eat in moderation
- Tuna: lean protein but high in mercury - eat in moderation
- Full-fat dairy has lots of health benefits but also lots of calories - eat in moderation
- Starchy veggies are dense & fibrous - great source of vitamins & minerals but high calorie content - eat in moderation
- Avoid eating high-glycemic index carbs alone (without protein/fat)
- Careful with sauces, dressings, toppings - they add lots of calories
- Avoid ultra-processed foods
- Avoid high-calorie foods



Thank you so much for reading! I hope you learned a lot and are excited to take this on! You now have all the information you need to get started, and you can contact me if you have any questions about any of this. I've done this myself and I've coached countless clients through it successfully - you WILL lose weight, you WILL improve your body composition and health, and you WILL look and feel better than ever before!

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