

# Reasons We're Getting Fatter



The evidence that humans are getting fatter is rather apparent. Though it's most noticeable in western countries, with the USA at the forefront, it's also occurring in other regions of the world such as India and China as well as parts of Europe. What's particularly alarming is the number of children and teens that are obese in America. Factor in the cases of type-2 diabetes, and even high cholesterol among this age group, and the cause for concern greatly escalates.

Projecting out a few decades, it's not too difficult to imagine the increase in health care costs to treat these at-risk young people once they reach adulthood. The question that needs to be addressed is why is obesity on the rise in both adults as well as in children and teens?

It's been observed that obese women are giving birth to obese offspring. The health risks for both mother and fetus are increased when the mother is obese [1]. It's possible that the trait of obesity is being passed on to subsequent generations, however, it becomes quite literally a "chicken and the egg" paradox as to what's truly behind this disturbing trend. Perhaps the search for an answer should begin with uncovering why, as a society, Americans are becoming heavier and unhealthier.

## Fast Food Takeover



Triple cheeseburgers, buckets of greasy chicken, and the obligatory super-sized soft drink to wash it all down with are what make up the typical fare at most fast food establishments. I'm old enough to remember when a McDonald's was a rare sight in many towns and eating there was just the occasional treat after a movie or night out bowling.

They also didn't have much competition unless you included diners and cafeterias. Back in the "Good Old Days", most families still ate the majority of their meals together around the kitchen table and children either brought packed lunches to school or purchased, what was for the most part, a well-balanced school lunch.

Fast forward a lot of years to today and the landscape is vastly different.

Fast food chains of every variety are crammed along thoroughfares next to one another and many of us are now eating more and more of our meals at these places. The convenience and comfortable predictability of this way of eating becomes a very stubborn habit to break free of.

Fast food by design is created to have you craving more. Fat, sugar, and salt are all appetite stimulants and all are found in most fast food menu items in abundance. To make matters worse, fat is very calorie dense at 9 calories per gram and when you liberally sprinkle in loads of sugar in the way of

soft drinks and dessert items, you quickly find yourself consuming more calories than you should be at a single meal. As the habit grows, the more you find yourself craving this kind of appetite-stimulating, calorie dense food. The average fast food meal ordered by adults contains 836 calories [2]. That may not seem like a lot, but when you factor in the other two meals of the day along with snacks and soft drinks, it's not hard to get the daily total up around 3000 calories – more than most sedentary people require to maintain their basal metabolic rate.

## Lack of Exercise and Technology Advances



It's no revelation that as a society, Americans don't engage in enough physical activity in order to maintain a healthy body weight and it goes beyond just jumping around in an aerobics class or heaving weights off our chests. Back in the "Good Old Days", and this time long before even I took in my first breath, people used the muscles of their bodies a whole lot more.

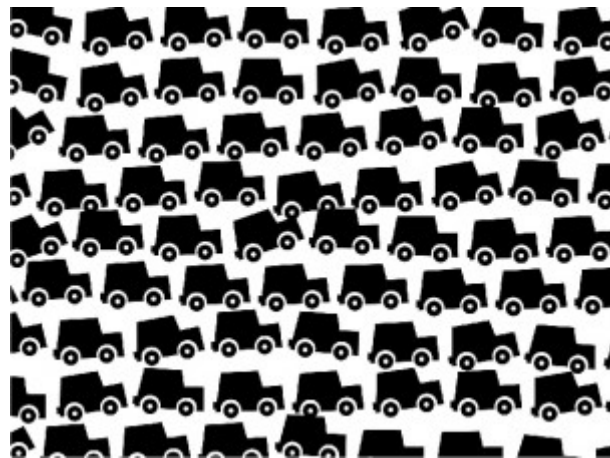
People thought nothing of having to walk just about every place they needed to go. Cars and public transportation were for really long excursions. They also had to move a lot more in general because the modern machinery and technology that we have today didn't exist back then.

For the average family, calories consumed and expended either balanced out or were in a slight deficit so it was rare to

encounter extremely overweight people. And yes, despite what passes for Gospel in some nutritional quarters (extreme low-carb), calories do matter.

Fast forward our time machine again back to today and we now find that too many people take in way more calories than they expend in the course of a typical day. It eventually reaches a point where getting things back into balance is an almost impossible task. Overcoming the inertia of a sedentary lifestyle combined with unhealthy eating habits is often more than most overweight people can deal with. It's much easier to give in and continue on as usual since forcing yourself to diet and dragging yourself into a gym to be tortured by a Sadistic personal trainer isn't going to make much of a difference anyway, so why suffer?

## **A Busy Society with Less Time**



If the technology boom has been partially responsible to our declining activity levels, it's also in part responsible for placing additional demands on our time as well as our immune systems. This all goes hand in hand with more demanding workloads, caring for children, and taking care of the daily responsibilities of life. You would think that these additional activities would actually help to burn more calories and at a certain level they do, but the downside is that individuals and families who are stretched for time also look to saving time when it comes to meal preparation and

eating.

We've already touched on the fast food takeover. This habit is further fed by the general lack of time in today's society. Eating out in general, beyond fast food joints, also becomes more common when time is at a premium. Though the menu choices may be somewhat healthier at "sit down" restaurants, what people actually select and the over-sized portions at many of these places often don't work out to be much healthier than fast food.

And it's not just eating out too much that gets us into dietary trouble. An over-reliance on highly-processed foods isn't helping. You know, the stuff that comes in a box or plastic package. Many times it will even be touted as being low-fat, low-calorie, or even low-carb, but it's certainly not a "healthy choice." A quick check of the nutrition and ingredients labels should provide a quick tip off that things aren't as advertised. Many times the first three ingredients (largest proportion of ingredients) contain sugar, high fructose corn syrup (aka sugar), vegetable oil (mostly likely containing trans fat if partially-hydrogenated), and white flour.

## **Stress and Not Enough Sleep**

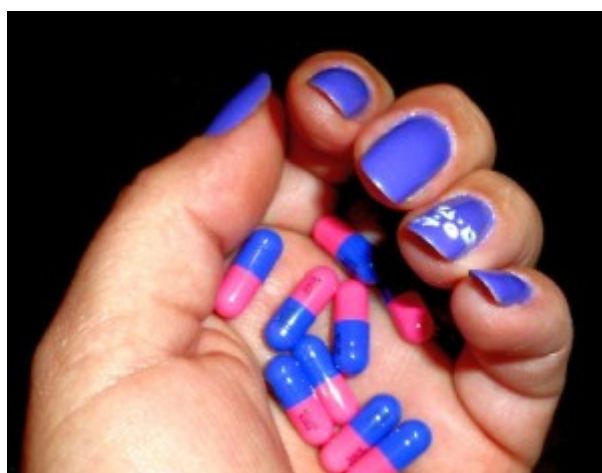


Along with our fast-paced, modern, tech-driven society also comes additional stress. This is also part of having less time

to get things done. Our precious free time is also being whittled away – time in which we need to decompress and simply relax and enjoy the good things in life. Stress, besides being a silent killer that plays a role in hypertension and even psychological disorders, also has been shown to be an underlying cause of overweight and obesity due to stimulation of the “stress” hormone, cortisol [3,4].

If this wasn't enough, there is also evidence to suggest that not getting sufficient sleep may contribute to our bodies laying down fat deposits. Just how much sleep is considered sufficient? Turns out that the old admonition from our parents to get 8 hours is what's required to be on the safe side, but who really has the time to get a full 8 hours? Sometimes it just seems that the entire world is conspiring against us when it comes to maintaining a healthy body weight!

## **Quick Fix Weight Loss Solutions**



If all the factors mentioned previously weren't enough to make us tune out all the dire warnings and just curl up with a half-gallon of chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream, there is also the ever present industry of false hope that bombards us from every angle.

The diet pill and weight loss supplements industries are booming – along with the nation's waistlines. We really need to pause and ask ourselves why this is. There are certainly no

shortage of miracle prescription diets pills along with herbal supplements like acai berries, colon cleanse capsules, green tea supplements, ephedra supplements, and the list goes on and on.

Have you ever personally met or known anyone who has lost significant weight on any of these products and kept it off? It seems the only ones who claim to have lost weight as a result of using these products are the fake people in the fake blogs and fake news articles that pollute the Internet.

Losing excess weight in the form of fat loss and keeping it off is not an easy process – at least not as easy and painless as these “Miracle Diet Pills” would lead you to believe. But it also is not as difficult as you’ve probably led yourself to believe if you choose to go the route of a healthy and practical eating regimen that you can follow for the rest of your life in order to keep the excess pounds off.

It takes some effort and determination as well as planning, but the rewards will last you a lifetime. Hopefully, a lifetime that is both long and healthy!

## **Some Suggestions**

Below are a few suggestions for getting on track for cleaning up your eating habits as well as fortifying yourself against the slings and arrows of daily living:

- Cook more. If you don’t know how, resolve to learn. It doesn’t have to be gourmet and there are plenty of online resources in the way of blogs and videos to help you along. There are plenty of [low-carb recipes](#) right here on the blog as well as cooking videos on my [YouTube channel](#).
- Plan your meals. Nothing obsessive, just make sure you shop for groceries at least weekly and purchase whole, fresh foods.



- Start bringing your lunch to work or school at least twice a week. You'll eat less, it'll be healthier and you'll save some money in the process.
- Stop drinking soda, sugary sports and energy drinks, and alcoholic drinks with sugary mixers. Cutting down on beer will also cut down on a developing "beer" gut.
- Eat breakfast.
- Eat a healthier breakfast. Instead of a bagel or corn flakes, try eggs, oatmeal, yogurt, or some fruit and whole grain toast.
- Have healthy snack foods on hand in case you get hungry between meals. See this post on [low-carb snack ideas](#) – they work even if you don't eat low-carb.
- Instead of dosing off in front of the TV after dinner, take a walk or spend some quality time with your family.
- Try getting to bed earlier if possible.
- Go for a quick walk on your lunch break. You'll have more time if you bring your lunch (hint, hint).
- Let go of things that are out of your control – especially work or social issues. You don't always need to be right – even if you know that you are.
- Blow off steam playing a competitive sport or working out.

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## Low Carb Snack Ideas





It frustrates me that the notion of snacking is still being attacked in some quarters of the health and fitness industry. When I was growing up during the 1960s, snacking was blamed for unwanted weight gain. It even acquired the moniker of “in-between-meal snacking” to give it added vilification in case

the point hadn't been made strongly enough. On the flip side, parents were forever blaming snacking for spoiling their kids' appetite for dinner. It seems snacking couldn't win for losing back in the day!

Fast forward fifty years and it seems little has changed with regards to the poor, defenseless afternoon snack. Perhaps it's because the most common remedy for between meal hunger is to head for the vending machine or pantry and opting for the most convenient form of “nourishment.” This typically turns out to be a candy bar or bag of chips. And thinking that the low-fat and so-called “healthy” snacks have you covered, well, think again.

By now you've probably heard it over and over how eating a snack high in sugar will momentarily satisfy your hunger, but will leave you hanging an hour later no better for having consumed the empty calories. This is aggravated if your lunch consisted of hitting the drive-thru. It's kind of hard to sustain yourself eating less than nutritious main meals. Let's start with the assumption that you're eating a balanced diet consisting of real foods even if it's not strictly low-carb.

The main challenge of eating healthy between-meal snacks is being prepared. Preparation is key. You will need to include the basic ingredients for your snacks as part of your weekly grocery shopping list. What you want is a nutritious snack that will satisfy your immediate hunger and also tide you over

to your next meal, or if necessary, your next snack.

I'm including certain food groups as well as individual foods that aren't typically allowed or at best, frowned upon in some low-carb eating plans. Ultimately, it's up to you to decide what you're going to eat and not allow your choices to be swayed by dietary dogma. At the end of the day, having the occasional banana beats the heck out of the momentary satisfaction delivered by a Snickers bar.

- **Fruit** – the low-carb directive on fruit is to go with low glycemic index fruits such as berries, but unless you're on a ketogenic diet, any kind of fruit is fine for snacking, even a dreaded banana now and then.
- **Meat** – if you're OK with processed meats, then cold cuts and pepperoni are quite convenient. Uncured, nitrate-free meats are a better choice.
- **Cheese** – all kinds of cheese make for terrific snacks. Their fat content also helps satiate hunger more effectively than a candy bar or bag of chips.
- **Yogurt** – something else that's usually forbidden on very low-carb diets, but if you can tolerate milk, then full-fat plain yogurt (avoid the fruit varieties due to the added sugar). It's almost like having a dish of ice cream!
- **Sugar-free dessert and candy items** – coconut oil fudge and other sugar-free treats can satisfy a mid-afternoon sweet tooth flareup. See some of my [videos](#) for suggestions.
- **Nuts** – all kinds, especially pistachios, pecans, cashews, almonds, and walnuts. Just be sure to watch quantities as it's easy to get carried away.

In the video below, I review some of my favorite snack items:

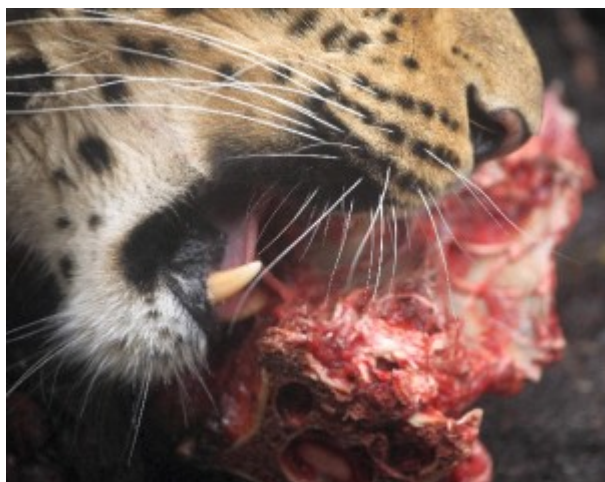
Hopefully, you're bringing your lunch to work or school on most days of the week. If you're not, then I trust you're doing your best to navigate the menus of the places where

you're grabbing your lunch. You may want to consider bringing your lunch at least one or two days a week. It will not only assure that you're eating a healthy meal while away from home, but the cost savings can add up pretty quickly. Just be sure to leave some room in your lunch bag for at least two snacks: a mid-morning snack and a mid-afternoon snack. If you work later, then even a snack for the road is a good idea. That way you won't burst through the front door when you arrive home and trample the cat on the way to the fridge.

The timing of snacks should depend on when you're feeling hungry. One of the maxims of low-carb eating is to eat when you're hungry. I love this! This is the exact opposite of a severely calorie-restricted diet that depends on self-denial and willpower. Now, this doesn't mean going hog-wild with your food consumption. At its core, a low-carb diet works because of lowering daily calorie consumption below what your body requires for maintenance. In general, you shouldn't be eating massive meals. And if you can't wait until the next one, then think of snacks as the stepping stones to get you there unscathed.

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## **Is Low Carb Necessary To Lose Weight?**



Eating a diet that is lower in total daily carbohydrates has been shown to cause weight loss. I won't link to any of the studies, as they're the same ones linked to by a lot of other nutrition bloggers and most readers don't bother to follow the links anyway. What has yet to be sufficiently studied,

however, are what happens to people that eat a low-carb diet for more than a year. This is an issue we'll look at a bit further down, but for now let's agree that eating low-carb results in weight loss, at least in the short term. It should be noted that other diets also result in comparable weight loss – over the short term anyway. Again, something we'll look at further down. For now, let's address some essential questions surrounding eating low-carb:

1. What truly constitutes a “low-carb” diet?
2. And is it really necessary to eat low-carb in order to lose weight?

The cutoff point for total daily carbohydrates in order for a diet or eating plan to be considered “low-carb” is subject to some debate. Perhaps it's best to begin answering this question by looking at the number of daily total carbs in the Standard American Diet (SAD). Yes, it is SAD when you examine what we Americans eat in a typical day, but the rest of you non-Americans shouldn't be so smug. It seems our dietary customs have caught on in your part of the world and is responsible for adding pounds and inches (or kilograms and centimeters) to your bodies as well.

## **It's a SAD, SAD World**



The SAD or "[Western Pattern](#)" diet is 50% carbs, which is below the 55% recommended amount. It surprised me that even this relatively high number of carbs isn't considered high enough by the nutritional authorities. Taking a nominal calorie count of 2700 kcal for this diet, the daily total for carbs comes out to just above 300g. Even at half that amount, 150g, it is still within a range above what is generally considered to be low-carb.

The upper threshold for low-carb is somewhat arbitrary, but we need to set it somewhere, so let's call it at 100g. I eat within a range from 50g-100g of carbs per day. This range most likely doesn't permit me to enter ketosis (producing ketone bodies to be used for fuel instead of glucose). For my particular metabolic type, which I've determined to be one characterized by insulin resistance, I do quite well eating within this total daily carb range. My weight is down and more importantly, I feel good in terms of energy, stamina, and mood.

This raises a controversial topic, of which there are many where it comes to weight loss and nutrition, relating to which is more important when it comes to losing weight: calories or the amounts and balances of macronutrients (carbs, protein, and fat). As to be expected, there is a lot of misinformation, misunderstanding, and even (shudder) acrimony surrounding this debate. Again, without bogging things down with that messy thing called "science," the brief answer is: "both matter."

But this pithy answer comes with a caveat: the weight of their individual importance varies with your metabolic type.

While some people seem to be able to eat just about anything they please – ice cream, donuts, beer, and get all three meals from a fast food drive-thru – and not get an ounce. These people are more the exception than the rule and I'm willing to bet that their underlying health isn't all that great. Their blood lipids, degree of inflammation, risk for heart disease and they may even be dangerously close to full-blown type 2 diabetes. And yes, it's possible to be at risk for diabetes or have full-blown type 2 diabetes without being overweight.

## Health Isn't Always About Body Shape



You can't always gauge a person's overall health by simply looking at their body size. Conversely, people that are overweight (not obese) can be quite healthy. There are people that don't eat what is considered a low-carb diet (carbs well over 150g per day) and are both quite healthy and are able to maintain a normal body weight. People such as these are blessed with a very healthy metabolism, and though they may indulge occasionally in unhealthy foods, they have, in general, a healthy relationship with food. Often times, people such as these eat a balanced diet consisting of mostly unprocessed, fresh foods consumed in amounts that don't exceed the number



of calories required to maintain their current, healthy body weight.

The rest of us are going to fall somewhere below these “metabolically blessed” types and must adjust our eating accordingly if we want to be both healthy as well as maintain a healthy body weight, which may not be quite a slim as we’d like.

## **Cut The Junk!**



You can go a long way towards achieving this result by eliminating a lot of the sugar in your diet along with a lot of processed foods such as frozen dinners, packaged snacks, sports and energy drinks, candy, and ice cream. These products draw you in with their carefully crafted tastes with an emphasis on salty, sweet, and fatty flavors. The end result is your hunger isn't fully satisfied and you wind up craving even more. It's true that "you can't eat just one." I cringe when I hear someone say they ate an entire can of Pringles in one sitting or devoured a bag of Double-Stuffed Oreos while watching TV, but it's certainly easy to see how this can happen. I'll stop shop of calling this a true addiction as exists for drugs and alcohol, but since one's sensitivity for these tastes become lessened; it requires ever increasing "doses" in order to satisfy the cravings. Once you begin to wean yourself off food with empty calories, you will find that your cravings lessen and foods that you once found unpalatable



such as fruits and vegetables all of a sudden have a pleasing sweet taste which actually leaves you satisfied after eating it.

Not everyone needs to cut carbs down to the bare bone or gasp, eat a “zero carb” diet. In fact, I’ll go out on a limb and state that most people don’t need to go to these extremes. Yes, there are those with diabetes and who are extremely insulin resistant that probably need to eat a ketogenic diet, but ask yourself if you fall into that classification. Despite being insulin resistant, I know that I thrive by not being in ketosis. Instead, I eat the aforementioned “lowish” carb diet.

## **One Size Does Not Fit All!**



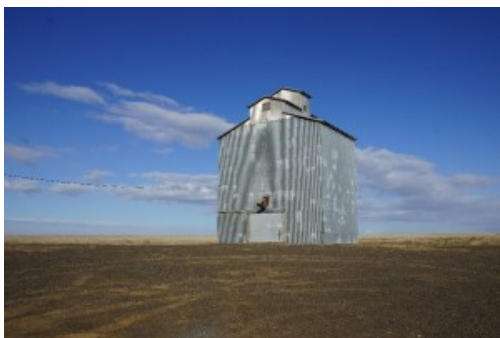
The best way to find out the optimally balanced diet in terms of carbs, protein, and fat is to first cut out the processed junk items mentioned above. Do this for at least two weeks and see if you’ve lost weight, and more importantly, take an assessment of how you look and feel. From there, you can then start becoming more “carb aware.” This means reading nutrition labels as well as asking yourself if what you plan to eat is “high carb” or “low carb.” You don’t need to count calories or even carbs for that matter. Just eat regular meals and eat until you’re no longer hungry. Replace the starchy carbs and sugar-laden items that you used to eat with more vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, and healthy snacks such as nuts and

fruit. And if you're losing weight simply by cutting out the junk, then stick with it! No need to further restrict things like carbs or even fat.

Portion control is also important, so don't eat beyond the point of being satisfied. You want to avoid the feeling of being stuffed at all costs even if it means saving some of your food for another meal. One of the side benefits of lowering total carbs in your diet is a gradual reduction in appetite and cravings. This will make it much easier to cut back the overall calories you consume in a day. By following a plan of "gradual immersion" it's much easier to get to a point of healthy eating and more importantly, you set the foundation for sticking with it for the long haul and that's where so many fail, regardless of the style of eating.

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## Food, Inc. Movie Review



Committing to watching a documentary film is typically a risky proposition because you can find yourself unwittingly being preached to, and even worse, bored to tears. For a documentary to be good, it must both educate as well as entertain. When a documentary film is so powerful that it profoundly moves us, then it becomes great and is worthy of consideration as art. [Claude Lanzmann's Shoah](#) immediately comes to mind as a great documentary. At 9.5 hours, it better be great!

Some documentaries are created with the intention of inspiring people to take action in alignment with the filmmakers' own social, political, or moral views. I'm sure you can think of

more than a few from recent years that fall into this category – both from the political left as well as from the right. There's nothing wrong with this per se, as long as the film meets the two criteria for good documentary filmmaking. The risk of being subjected to a bad viewing experience then drops considerably. However, having an agenda places the film dangerously close to becoming propaganda.

[Food, Inc.](#), produced and directed by Robert Kenner and co-produced by Eric Schlosser of *Fast Food Nation*, is a documentary with an agenda. There's even a clear call to action at the end to put into practice what the filmmaker rails against in the film. The film has a [website](#) where discussion guides outlining the key points discussed in the film can be downloaded in case you're sufficiently inspired to spread the message. *Food, Inc.* takes square aim at the "agribusiness" that is responsible for producing the vast majority of the food in America.



Goodbye Farmer Brown & Bessie

There's a powerful image at the beginning of the film of silhouetted businessmen toting briefcases while marching through rows of crops towards a vast factory with billowing smokestacks off in the distance. The filmmakers disabuse us from the outset of the idyllic notion that Farmer Brown and his faithful cow Bessie are the ones sending the harvest to market. Poor old Farmer Brown is now a relic of the past.

Bessie has gone off to explore greener pastures. This sets the tone for the topics raised and then discussed throughout the film.

Food and how it affects our health is a topic that I spend a great deal of my time thinking about and commenting on and *Food, Inc.* is a film I've been eager to see. The film more than adequately satisfies the first criteria of what a good documentary should be: it educates while seeming to get most of the facts right. The facts and statistics the film presents come at you fast and furiously. I haven't been able to check each and every one, and some I have reason to question, but most seemed to be undeniable.

Below are a few that left an impression:

- McDonald's is the largest buyer of potatoes in the world
- The fast food industry (McDonald's) is responsible for creating agribusiness
- Chickens weigh a lot more today than they did in the 1950s. Breast size is now huge to satisfy the demand for white meat
- Chickens have become so large that many are unable to stand on their own
- Chicken tenders used to be discarded but are now used to make chicken fingers for kids
- The average poultry farmer is \$500,000 in debt and only earns around \$18,000 / year for the trouble



Want fries with that?

The contention that the fast food industry, led by McDonald's, was the impetus for turning American agriculture from a family-based business to the vast agribusiness it is today seems believable, though I also wonder how much adapting to modern technology and the demands of feeding a growing population also contributed to it.

It's the last point that I'm going to have to verify. It seems crazy that a business person would go into that much debt in order to make so little in return. I'm sure it happens, but is it as typical as the film states?



Chickens Take it Tough

The segment dealing with poultry farming is particularly disturbing. Fresh out of the egg, chicks are subjected to rough treatment as they hurtle down a conveyor belt and are tossed about by plant workers like so many widgets. They are then shipped off to be raised in stifling barracks that reek of feces and rotting bird carcasses. The windows are covered up to block out all sunlight. We are told this is done to keep the birds from getting agitated when they are rounded up for the slaughter.

A farmer that drew the line at covering up the windows of her chicken houses is eventually forced out of business by the largest poultry producer in the country: Tyson Foods. This last point also makes it clear that animals are not the only

ones made to suffer. The toll taken on farmers and farm workers from exploitation and harsh working conditions is a key point brought out in the film.



The Final Product

Michael Pollan is featured in talking head scenes throughout the film. I had heard of Mr. Pollan from reading customer comments on Amazon.com for various low-carb diet books and after seeing him in Food, Inc. I'm motivated to pick up a copy of his [Omnivore's Dilemma](#). He's so well-spoken, that he compels you to listen.

Other people featured in the film are Barbara Kowalcyk, a food safety advocate whose son died after eating a hamburger contaminated with the E. coli bacteria, Joel Salatin of Polyface Farms, and Gary Hirshberg the founder of Stonyfield Farm. Ms. Kowalcyk's story moved me the most.





## Taking The Case to Congress

It's unimaginable to have your smiling and happy child taken from you in such a painful way. The description of what it's like to die from E. coli poisoning is gut-wrenching. As sad as her story is, it also takes an inspiring turn. The film follows Ms. Kowalcyk and her mother as they travel to Washington, DC to meet with their state senator and then testify at a Congressional hearing on food safety. Ms. Kowalcyk discovered that the tainted package of meat that killed her son was part of a batch that was eventually recalled – after her son had become stricken. The only conclusion that we can draw is that the needless death of her child was the result of unrestrained and unrepentant greed. Ms. Kowalcyk and her mother are fighting the good fight on behalf of all of us.



Happy Down on the Farm!

The film then takes a bit of a goofy turn, at least that's the way it struck me, when we're taken on a field trip to visit Joel Salatin down on his Polyface Farms. If we've been wondering where Farmer Brown and Bessie have gone, then Mr. Salatin, dressed in bib overalls and a straw hat, may provide



some clues. Perhaps Farmer Brown went into the Witness Protection Program and has reinvented himself as the “entrepreneurial farmer.”

In the Shenandoah region of Virginia, he operates a farm that raises chickens, cows, and pigs. He even gives a huge porker a big affectionate hug. He “shows and tells” us the humane and environmentally friendly ways he raises his livestock – cows are grass-fed, chickens are free to roam and are then slaughtered the good old-fashioned way: yanked through a funnel contraption where their throats are then expertly slit with a very sharp knife. Even the blood that spurts everywhere looks to be wholesome.

Apparently, the Polyface Farms way of farming is good for business. We’ve shown people that have come a great distance to shop there. When asked about expansion, Mr. Salatin says it’s not his goal to get really big and he’s not sure what he’ll do if demand exceeds his supply.

I found that to be a key point: you can’t scale a business like this. Its capacity for expansion is limited by the available land and labor, both of which are rather limited in this operation, but that’s the very thing that makes it unique and wholesome. I suppose more land could be devoted to local farming operations like this, but then how do you feed a country of over 300 million people with this kind of model? I’m thinking you can’t.



### Big Box Goes Organic

To get a fuller idea of the direction the market for all things organic is going we're then taken on a visit with Gary Hirshberg down on his Stonyfield Farm – a much bigger operation than Polyface Farms. Our visit comes in the midst of negotiations with none other than Wal-Mart. It seems that even the big box retailers can no longer ignore the drumbeat of increasing demand by their customers for healthier food options. This segment of the film I found unintentionally funny or maybe it was intentional as I can imagine the films' creators winking at us off camera.

The tension and seeming disdain on both sides for the other is palpable. The Wal-Mart reps dressed in new down jackets look like they would prefer to be anyplace else than out in the middle of nowhere in some godforsaken field, *"Is that spinach I'm standing in or is it kale? Who gives a shit!"* And speaking of kale, McDonald's just announced that kale will be a new menu option. It seems that even the great Mickey D's is scrambling to appease the health movement in the wake of declining sales of their traditional junk fare.



Corn is King!

The segment on corn is perhaps the most revealing of how agribusiness operates and just how powerful it has become. When a commodity is sold below its cost of production, then something is up and alarm bells should be going off. The horror story of the death grip Monsanto has on corn and soy bean seeds is pretty well-known. Such absolute control over a key staple of agriculture harkens back to the dark days of tenant farming.

Farmers caught in “illegal” possession of seeds containing patented Monsanto DNA are subject to visits from large, intimidating “representatives” and financially destroying law suits. By way of example, the film tells the story of a “seed cleaner” who is mercilessly pursued by Monsanto. The profession of a seed cleaner is a venerated one that goes back to frontier days. He’s a professional that sifts through harvest residue to extract useable seeds to be used to grow the next season’s crops.



Is it Monsanto's or is it  
Mother Nature's?

The poor fellow featured here predictably and invariably gets caught in Monsanto's web. It's impossible not to get cross contaminated with Monsanto's seeds. It just takes a strong gust of wind to blow a single seed from a neighboring field planted from Monsanto seed to come over into a field that isn't. It's truly head-scratching that such a monopoly is allowed to exist. Do America's anti-trust laws have any teeth at all anymore?

What's a bit puzzling is this is the extent of the discussion on GMOs – nothing regarding the uproar over health concerns arising from them. I also found it perplexing that there is no discussion of the demand that the energy industry places on corn production by way of ethanol. I suppose that there was only so much that the film was able to cover. Like agribusiness itself, it consists of a huge set of topics.

The mistreatment of both animals and people involved in agribusiness is cause for major concern. And there is also the environmental toll, which the film doesn't touch on much at all. As for the human toll beyond the one exacted on farmers, we're briefly shown the mistreatment of farm workers. The film informs us that prior to the emergence of agribusiness, being a meat packer was a decent job for the American middle class worker, especially after the reforms made to the Chicago meat packing industry in the wake of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and the ensuing outrage it generated.

In recent years, the jobs of the lowest paid poultry workers have changed hands from poor whites and African Americans to Hispanic workers, many of them illegal aliens. Law enforcement agencies make token roundups of illegals primarily for show, but not enough to impact production. We're told that the big companies have an arrangement with law enforcement to allow for such a homeostasis to exist.

*Food, Inc.* shows us the problems with the way our food is produced, and they are many. But what's the solution?

Should we all swear off eating animal products and become vegans? That's a place I can never go. Even only buying locally raised meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products is impractical for many, though it's a good place to start. And protesting by not consuming products delivered to us by big agribusiness will probably have little to no effect. Do you think they're even going to care?

Yes, things need to change and change is coming about slowly, but that change is probably going to take decades. The necessary changes will gradually occur via grassroots efforts like those of Ms. Kowalczyk and with more pressure from the rest of us placed on the US Government to act. But the reality remains that you need some kind of industrial infrastructure on the scale of agribusiness to produce a ready supply of food to a country with over 300 million hungry mouths that need to be fed. There's no turning back on this, but as the species at the top of the food chain we need to be better than we currently are.

*Food, Inc.* is a good documentary film. It both educates as well as thoroughly entertains.

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## **Chicken Alfredo Without The Guilt**



Alfredo sauce is one of those decadent delights that we've been conditioned to regard as extremely rich and fattening. We've been told that a single exposure to it will surely lead us down the path to an early death courtesy of a heart attack that we so richly deserve. At least the first part of that belief is still true (it's extremely rich).

The rest has been proven to be pure baloney.

If you eat poultry, then you're pretty much on Easy Street when it comes to eating low-carb. There are so many ways to prepare chicken that you could probably go for an entire year without repeating any of them. If you think I'm exaggerating, then punch "chicken recipes" into Google and let 'er rip. It seems that just about every nationality and ethnic group has a chicken recipe they're known for, with the exception of possibly the Inuit and Kalahari Bush People, but they have their own delicious forms of cuisine. What's great about chicken and low-carb is that if an existing recipe isn't already low-carb friendly then it can usually be adapted so that it is.

When you think of Alfredo the first thing that probably comes to mind is Fettuccine Alfredo. Now this definitely isn't low-carb and it's an unhealthy combination of starchy carbs and saturated fat. But when we divorce it from its long-term pasta pairing, things really open up in terms of low-carb possibilities. What is also great about Alfredo sauce is that it doesn't require an additional thickener such as flour or corn starch. The heavy cream and loads of Parmesan cheese handle all that on their own... what's not to like and best of all, no guilt (unless you want it)!

**Servings: 2**

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 4 oz	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 560	Calories from Fat 229.5
% Daily Values*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 25.5g	<b>39%</b>
Saturated Fat 12g	<b>60%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Sodium</b> 815mg	<b>34%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 0g	
<b>Protein</b> 29g	<b>58%</b>

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

## Ingredients:



- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (4oz each). Pound or cut in half so relatively thin.
- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 Tbsp EV00
- 1/4tsp garlic salt
- 1/4tsp ground black pepper
- 1/4c heavy whipping cream
- 1/2c grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2tsp dried parsley flakes (optional)

## Directions:





1. Season chicken breasts with garlic salt and black pepper.
2. Heat 1Tbsp butter and 1Tbsp EV00 in a skillet.
3. Sautee chicken breasts until brown on both sides and cooked through. About 4-5 mins per side. Remove when done to serving plate.
4. Melt 2Tbsp butter in a small sauce pan.
5. Add heavy cream to pan and lower heat.
6. Gradually add grated Parmesan to sauce while stirring. Bring to just below a boil. Don't overheat. Sprinkle black pepper into Alfredo sauce and stir.
7. Pour Alfredo sauce over chicken breasts and sprinkle dried parsley on top.

The really great thing about Alfredo sauce is that you can pour it over just about anything, including beef, fish, and veggies. It did wonders for those cut green beans in the photo at the top of this post!

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## All Natural Sugar Free Hot Cocoa



It's been a cold winter so far here in the Northeast, US. The other day the outdoor thermometer read a whopping 3F! And that's without the wind chill factor. Of course, my brother Rob calls me a lightweight when I complain about the cold. He's been seeing -14F with a wind chill of -40F out in Fargo, ND. Either way you slice it, cold is cold and cold weather and I don't get along very well. That's why this time of year I get nostalgic for hot cocoa.

It's one of the ultimate comfort foods and something that brings those memories of being a kid rushing back. Who doesn't remember coming home to a piping hot cup of hot chocolate after a long day of sledding and playing in the snow? The only problem is good luck finding a hot chocolate mix that isn't loaded with extra sugar or a "sugar-free" version that isn't a cloying mixture of artificial ingredients. Yuck!

I had been thinking for a while to experiment with natural cocoa powder and the opportunity arose recently when I tried out an incredible low-carb fudge recipe that Lynn Terry posted on her [Traveling Low Carb blog](#). She has two recipes: one for chocolate and peanut butter fudge and one for all peanut butter. They're both based on healthy coconut oil. She posted a great variation using heart-shaped molds to make Valentine's candies. Clever and delicious! I then got motivated and decided to try the chocolate and peanut combo fudge so I picked up a can of Hershey's Natural Unsweetened Cocoa.



Um, bitter!

The first thing you discover with this stuff is it's bitter. Not semi-sweet, dark chocolate bitter, which I love, but nose-crinkling, mouth puckering bitter! It almost seems like there's not enough sugar in the world to make this stuff palatable. Fortunately, liquid stevia once again came to my rescue and made everything all nice and sweet and perfect!

There's a recipe on the side of the Hershey's can for "Favorite Hot Cocoa." I modified it for a single cup—the recipe on the can makes four servings. I also replaced the sugar with sufficient liquid stevia and used some heavy whipping cream for some added richness and a silkier texture. The addition of heavy cream is essentially topping the finished product with a dollop of whipped cream, but for those too lazy (me) to make whipped cream. Whipped cream actually reverts back into cream form when it dissolves in the hot liquid, so no fuss, no muss! If you don't have cream on hand, then just replace it with more milk.

It took me a few tries to get the measurements just right. If you look at the recipe as a two-step process, then things come into focus. The first step is to make a thick chocolate sauce. This then forms the base for the milk portion. It's really very similar to making hot chocolate using Nestlé's or Hershey's chocolate syrup. Hot chocolate makes for a great snack in place of coffee or tea as well as a very satisfying and filling dessert. Just go easy on the mini marshmallows if you got 'em!

**Serving Size:** 10 oz

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 10 oz	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 215	Calories from Fat 148.5
<b>% Daily Values*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 16.5g	<b>25%</b>
Saturated Fat 9.4g	<b>47%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Sodium</b> 671mg	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 11g	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 0g	
<b>Protein</b> 6g	<b>12%</b>

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

## Ingredients:



Yep, salt. Helps cut the bitterness.

- $\frac{1}{4}$  c water
- 1 Tbsp Hershey's Natural Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla extract
- Dash tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp heavy whipping cream
- $\frac{3}{4}$  c whole milk
- 4-8 drops liquid stevia

## Directions:

1. In a small sauce pan, bring water to a boil.
2. Stir in cocoa powder with a wooden spoon. Mix well until powder is completely dissolved. Should form a thick chocolate syrup.
3. Lower heat and add salt and vanilla extract. Stir.
4. Add heavy whipping cream.
5. Gradually add milk while stirring. Raise heat slightly to just below a boil. Be careful not to scald the milk.
6. When thoroughly hot, pour into a coffee mug. You may want to use a teaspoon to mix in any remaining syrup at bottom of mug while drinking.

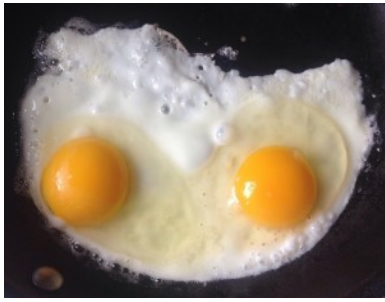


Serve hot – pug mug optional!

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# Dietary Guidelines For 2015

# Released



The 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee recently issued their [2015 dietary guidelines](#) to the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture. These agencies will then jointly compile these guidelines into a document entitled: *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which will then be promptly overlooked, ignored, and scoffed at by a lot of American consumers. Actually, these guidelines already are.

What seems to be noteworthy about the panel's current set of recommendations is the warning to limit added sugar. And oh, they've backed off on their demonization of fats, however, rather reluctantly and tepidly it seems. They won't receive any argument from me regarding the warning about avoiding added sugar, but even this revision is long overdue and doesn't go nearly far enough. It seems more like an acknowledgement or capitulation if you will, to the campaign to remove soft drinks from schools in response to the childhood obesity epidemic that's plaguing America. Sugar is definitely at the root of a lot of nutritional evil, but where are the warnings regarding refined flour products and the over consumption of starch in the American diet. That stuff converts directly to glucose (sugar) once metabolized. Shouldn't these nutrients be regarded as a form of "added sugar" as well?



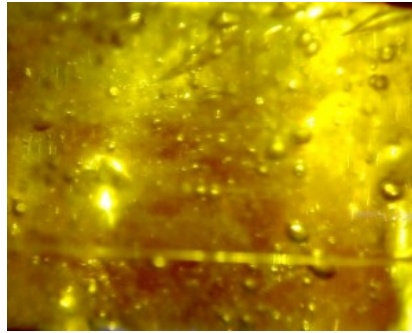
Less Added Sugar

The other big revelation, and the one seeming to get the most attention in the media, is the panel's revised guidelines regarding fat and the consumption of eggs. The new recommendation for fat consumption starts out fine, but it seems that the dietary poopahs are still driving the car with one foot on the gas and the other on the brakes. They recommend getting most of your dietary fat from unsaturated fat. Their recommendation is to obtain fats from fish, nuts, olive oil and vegetable oils. It's solid advice up to the point where they recommend vegetable oils—the polyunsaturated fats. This is where I have to smack my head. Aren't vegetable oils known to be a major cause behind inflammation in the body? And why still all the hate for saturated fat? It seems like the dietary panel is still clinging to the notion that animal fat is not healthy. Perhaps the USDA's Food Pyramid is still casting its long shadow over things while the American Heart Association is still whispering in their ears about the dangers of saturated fat and heart disease.

At least they appear to have granted a reprieve to the venerable egg, which has been unfairly blamed for raising cholesterol levels and fingered as the culprit in heart disease. This is being touted by the media as a major revelation in the new guidelines, but really, did it need to take this long to tell us that we needn't worry about our egg consumption? Eggs aren't dubbed "the perfect food" for nothing and it's a shame that we've been scared into shunning them by



our government and the health industry.



Fat (unsaturated) is  
A-OK

Though most people will go about eating the way they always have—either consuming healthy whole foods that include eggs, healthy fats, and limiting sugar and refined grains or doing just the opposite, the ones that may possibly be helped are children. The push to improve the diets of school-age kids is a worthy effort and since they are in the custody of the state between the starting and ending bells, it's the one shot we have at influencing their life choices. Progress may be glacial, but standing by and doing nothing is not an option. Perhaps with time and a little luck, the nutritional lessons they receive at school will be taken home and shared with the adults that should know better.



School Kids May  
Benefit

The Dietary Panel has quite a few sins to atone for. Their guidelines dating back to the 1980s which resulted in the

wretched USDA Food Pyramid is directly responsible for the obesity epidemic in the US and which has now gained solid footholds in many other regions of the world. Foisting the notion that the bulk of our diet should consist of grains in the form of bread, pasta, and sugar-laden cereals is hard to forgive. Fortunately, informed people have long ago decided to ignore the pronouncements and guidelines from this group. The result is slowly improving health in this segment that has chosen to think for itself. It would be nice if the media would stop yipping like a lap dog every time the government declares what's good for us. Instead of make subtle changes to their guidelines, the USDA and HHS should issue an apology for the harm they have caused their nation.

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## The Seven Principles of the Practical Carbs Lifestyle



Putting together the *Practical Carbs* eating plan and lifestyle has taken me almost twenty years. That would be twenty years of trial and error, experimentation, self-study, and a ton of frustration and setbacks. It's also involved considerable financial investment. I've purchased loads of diet and nutrition books, nutritional supplements, and exotic food products.

Despite going on and off low-carb diets for years, I knew from the outset that it was the long term solution to my weight loss issues. It would take a few more years for me to realize

that it was also the long term solution to many of the health issues that had plagued me up to that point.

I may not be a quick learner, but bang your head against a brick wall often enough, you tend to learn a few things. Either that, or you eventually knock yourself out. The result of this hard-won learning process are a set of strategies that I've been able to put to good use. I call these the *Seven Principles of the Practical Carbs Lifestyle*:

1. **Health First** – The old SNL Fernando Lamas skit used the catch phrase, *It's better to look good than to feel good*. It might have played to huge laughs back in the day, but it's an apt and sad commentary on how our society approaches the subject of body image. Simply removing sugar and starchy carbs from your diet can have an immediate impact on a host of medical conditions. Blood lipids improve, skin and hair become healthier, and of course fat is usually lost. Fat loss in turn lowers insulin resistance and which in turn lowers your risk for developing prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. The result is a cascading series of health benefits.
2. **Eat for your Type** – Where most diet plans, low-carb included, fall short is making the assumption that we're all alike. This is why the traditional low-fat, low-calorie diet has failed time and time again. Besides being a very difficult way of eating long term because most people can't tolerate being hungry all the time, which unfortunately is very common with this type of diet, not everyone can handle such high amounts of starchy carbs and sugar. On the other hand, some people may actually require more (healthy) carbs in the form of whole grains, fruit, and vegetables to fuel their activity level while also keeping their weight down. People who do physical labor and those involved in athletic pursuits often have a difficult time sustaining a strict ketogenic way of eating. In the end it comes

down to how your metabolism responds to insulin. The good news is this can be evaluated either subjectively by gauging your body weight with what you're eating or objectively, via various blood tests such as a lipid panel, C-Reactive Protein, and the panel of blood tests for glucose and diabetes.

3. **Gradual Immersion** – Forcing people wishing to embark on a low-carb eating plan into a state of ketosis such as the Atkins Induction Phase is much too abrupt a transition for my liking. In many cases, cutting back on sugar and refined flour products is enough to achieve significant weight loss as well as reap the accompanying health benefits. Daily net carb levels in this case can be several times those of Atkins Induction, often between 100-150 grams of daily net carbs. If after a few weeks at the higher levels, adequate weight loss is not experienced, then it's much easier to drop down to a lower level since you've already prepared both your mind and body for reducing carb consumption. In my experience, it's far easier to tighten things up while descending gradually than it is to relax your discipline while reintroducing carbs back into your diet. More often than not, the tendency is to relax things too much and then winding up blowing all your efforts.
4. **Nutritional Compromise** – In an ideal world, eating 100% "clean" and healthy would be incredibly easy and inexpensive. In my world, and probably yours as well, there are limits. Anything labeled "Organic" is most likely more expensive than the non-organic version. In many cases, a LOT more expensive. This also goes for "grass-fed" and "free-range" anything. Is it healthier? Yes, I won't argue that, but I choose to purchase the non-organic varieties because it better suits my budget. I'm also not up for an extra trip to a special store that carries such products. Am I worried about ruining my health from eating non-organic? No. I personally feel the risk is small and is greatly outweighed by the risk

of being forced off my eating regimen and back to being overweight and unhealthy simply because I can't afford to buy organic products. But this is my personal choice. If you're unwilling to make such a compromise, then I respect that. This is in line with *Principle 7: You're Always in Control*.

5. **Prepare Your Own Food** – I could never have started on eating low-carb unless I was willing to cook most of my own meals. This includes weekly grocery shopping excursions. Before you throw up your hands and say *that's way too much time and effort* or *I'm a terrible cook*, please hear me out. It's not all that hard. I realize that meal planning is a deal breaker for a lot of busy people. After all, who has the time or patience to sit down and plan out every meal for the coming week? I don't. What I do is make certain that I have all the ingredients for the core recipes that I like to cook. Many items can be purchased in bulk sizes and kept frozen such as chicken breasts, seafood, and even beef if you eat it. Vegetables like peas and green beans can also be kept frozen. Fresh items such as salad greens, fruit, vegetables, eggs and dairy products can be purchased during your weekly grocery shopping. Snack items such as nuts, cheese, and salami can also be purchased weekly. And when it comes to cooking, no worries! If you can fry an egg, then you can cook a wealth of mouth-watering low-carb meals! No one would mistake me for a gourmet cook, but I eat quite well with a very limited set of culinary skills. I also prepare very simple meals that that often only require one pot or pan, use a limited set of ingredient, and can be on the table in 30 minutes or less. Try and top that Domino's Pizza!

6. **Evaluate, Tweak and Move Forward** – Measuring your progress and taking assessment of where you've been and where you're currently at are important steps in keeping up your progress. Things don't stay constant. Your life

or work situation may change, requiring you to adapt your eating schedule and routine. You may experience a setback where you've put on extra weight despite being strict with your eating. Our bodies and metabolism change as we age. This is a fact. What once worked splendidly now appears to have little to no effect. When this occurs, it's time to take assess and adjust. It also requires a frank and honest evaluation of how well you've been sticking to both your eating and exercise plans. Have you gone off track? Are you giving full effort? It's never too late to get back on track and push even harder.

7. **You're Always in Control** – How you ultimately decide to live your life is your choice. What you eat and drink and your activity level are also your choices—very important ones. A lot of diet books and experts will tell you that it's not your fault that you're overweight. I understand what motivates this as we all want to be reassured and comforted, but in the end, it is your responsibility how you choose to deal with your condition. My goal is to help you choose a way of eating and exercising that best suits your metabolic and personality types.

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## **Best Type of Exercise For Losing Weight**



Diet and exercise have long been accepted as the foolproof way to lose weight. You might say they go together like love and marriage. For a lucky few, exercise alone can make up for a host of dietary sins. For the rest of us, both the diet and exercise bases need full coverage. The question then comes down to which type of exercise works best at melting off the pounds. And do you need to practically kill yourself like a contestant on *The Biggest Loser*?

There are two basic forms of physical exertion: aerobic and anaerobic.

Aerobic activity requires the presence of oxygen in order to burn energy in muscle cells in response to signals from your brain to contract them. Anaerobic activity on the other hand expends energy without utilizing oxygen. Instead, it's able to burn energy without oxygen, but as you can imagine, your muscles can't do this for very long. You can go a whole lot longer without food than you can without oxygen. Your muscle cells eventually crave oxygen and fatigue quickly sets in. The burning sensation you feel when doing a grueling set of barbell curls is the result of lactic acid being produced in response to metabolizing glucose without the use of oxygen.

Types of aerobic activity are long sessions of low to moderate intensity cardio exercise. Some examples are jogging on a treadmill or Zumba dancing. Short bursts of high-intensity exercise such as going all out on the bench press or running sprints are forms of anaerobic exercise. A rest period is required between these high-intensity efforts to allow oxygen back into the muscle cells and also to allow the lactic that's built up to be flushed out. This is why you rest between sets of weight lifting exercises or have a resting phase when doing interval training. Different sets of muscle fibers are also called into action. Aerobic activity recruits more of the slow-twitch fibers whereas anaerobic recruit primarily fast-



twitch fibers. This is the reason for the leaner physique of the marathon runner and the more muscular build of a sprinter.

Many people are under the mistaken assumption that anaerobic exercise is strictly weight training. In fact, activities that are typically performed in an aerobic manner such as running can become anaerobic when an all-out effort is applied. Running sprints or doing HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) on a treadmill or elliptical trainer are examples of a cardio movement turning anaerobic. In fact, most forms of physical activities are not strictly one or the other. There is a continuous shifting between anaerobic and aerobic throughout the duration of the exercise—from going all out to the “resting” phase.

So what form of exercise should you perform if weight loss is what you're after? From the caloric equilibrium equation of calories in and calories out, any type of physical activity will cause weight loss provided net calories are below the number of calories required to maintain your current body weight. Things become different when you want to hang onto or even build lean muscle mass while burning off stored fat.

One of the problems I've run into in the past when going on a low-carb or ketogenic way of eating is that even though I've lost considerable weight, I've wound up looking skinny—definitely not the look I was after. Even though I achieved my goal of no longer being overweight; being skinny is far from a healthy look. It also didn't do much for convincing skeptical friends and family that reducing sugar and starchy carbs was a good idea.

The ironic thing is that I lifted weights throughout my periods of low-carb eating. It took me a while to discover that I was actually doing the wrong kinds of exercise and putting myself into an over trained state. By complementing my weight training sessions with long periods of cardio training, I was burning off a lot more muscle than I realized. I was

also relying too much on the scale to gauge my weight loss progress, forgetting that what I really wanted was “fat” loss.

Once, I cut back on both the cardio as well as the amount of weight training exercises (yes, you can also overdo the weights), then I was able to hold onto a little more of my lean muscle mass. It just took some mental adjustment when looking down at the scale and not seeing it budge for days. The real test was gauging my waist size. Even though I wasn't losing body weight as rapidly as during previous low-carb excursions, my body fat was slowly going down. This is where periodically measuring your body fat comes in very handy. I like to use an Omron impedance body fat meter for this. This type of body fat measurement device isn't all that accurate, at least compared to the calipers method or DEXA scan, but it still gives you a relative indication that things are going in the right direction—hopefully downward.

During the early phases of a low-carb or ketogenic diet, I recommend doing some form of resistance training three times per week. It doesn't have to be a long session and you don't even need to have a gym membership or even own a set of weights. A lot can be accomplished in as little as twenty minutes using just body weight exercises performed in a series of cycles.

A good core set of exercises are:

- Pushups
- Body weight squats
- Lunges
- Chair dips
- Jumping jacks
- Running in place

The last two exercises on the list are to add a little cardio activity to your routine. Adding a door chin up bar and a few dumbbells will greatly expand your exercise options. You can

also add some brisk walking on the days in between your resistance training to keep burning calories throughout the week. Hopefully, finding the right mix of both diet and the RIGHT kind of exercise will accelerate your fat loss efforts without you winding up looking like you've been on hunger strike at the end!

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## Chili Recipe



When it comes to chili, people can get rather passionate. Texans insist that real chili doesn't contain beans. Cincinnatians agree on that point, but then go and commit "chili sacrilege" by seasoning their peculiar version with cinnamon and then dumping the whole mess on top of buttered pasta!

There's a famous place here in DC that makes huge batches of spicy red chili for the sole purpose of slathering it on half smokes. They even have a stand at Nat's Park. Nothing more American than a "Ben's Chili Bowl" half smoke, a cold beer, and baseball!

Wherever your tastes in chili lie, it's a hearty meal that will warm you up in the dead of winter or spice up a Fourth of July cookout.

Unfortunately, many people on low-carb eating plans think that since chili usually contain beans, that it's a forbidden dish. I'm not sure which low-carb diet plan forbids legumes. Atkins? Paleo? Sorry, I seem to have misplaced my low-carb diet plan

scorecard.

Beans are a great source of protein as well as a natural source of soluble fiber, something which is quite important when eating a lot of animal protein and cutting out most grains. I'm sorry, but there's just not enough lettuce and broccoli to make up for the lack of bulk in the typical low-carb diet.

That's why I suggest the use of fiber supplements such as Metamucil. Beans can help pick up the fiber slack in your diet and if you're a vegan attempting to do low-carb, then beans should be an important part of your diet in order to round out the protein portion of your macros. My wife makes a vegetarian version along side my "chili con carne."

I enjoy homemade chili year round, but really get into it when there's snow on the ground.

Chili occupies sort of a no-man's land between a soup and a stew. And for that reason, I like my chili on the "wet" side. My version borrows a pinch of cinnamon from the Cincinnati version and some of the seasonings typically used for beef stew – another hearty wintertime meal.

## **Ingredients:**

### **3-4 servings**

- 1lb ground beef (85% lean)
- 1 green bell pepper
- 3/4c sweet onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp cooking oil – preferably canola (don't recommend EV00 or coconut oil)
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp (or more) chili powder
- 1 tsp (or more) cumin powder

- 3 large bay leaves
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 2 15oz cans kidney beans (dark or light or one of each for color variety)
- 1 15oz can Hunt's tomato sauce
- 1/2 tomato sauce can of water

## **Directions:**

1. Dump both cans of kidney beans into a colander. Rinse thoroughly with cold water to remove bean slime.
2. Heat 1Tbsp cooking oil in large sauce or stew pot. To this add chopped onions and bell pepper. Saute on medium heat until vegetables are soft. Add minced garlic and stir until garlic is pungent. Don't let garlic brown.
3. Add beans and tomato sauce and 1/4c water. Lower heat to simmer.
4. Meanwhile, heat 1Tbsp cooking oil in large skillet and brown ground meat. Season with some black pepper, salt, and dash of cumin powder. The meat doesn't need to cook through. It will finish cooking in sauce pot.
5. Using a slotted spoon transfer ground meat to sauce pot. Optional: add about a tablespoon of grease from skillet to sauce pot for beef flavor and a touch of greasiness.
6. Season chili with salt, pepper, chili powder, cumin powder, oregano, bay leaves, and cinnamon.
7. Stir chili and add a touch more water so that the chili can "stew down" while simmering. Bring to boil and then let simmer for 1 hour without a lid.
8. Ladle into large soup bowls and use topping suggestions below.
9. This recipe makes 3-4 servings. You can freeze the leftovers in a plastic carryout container for quite a while. Defrost 24 hours before reheating. I like to add a tablespoon or two along with some Worcestershire sauce to reconstitute the wetness. This also makes a great

meal to take to work or school. Simply reheat in the microwave.

## **Topping Suggestions:**

- Grated cheddar cheese
- Chopped fresh or pickled jalapenos
- Sour cream

## **Chili Trivia:**

- Legend has it that chili got its start on the streets of San Antonio, TX. Mexican women cooked it up and served it to the locals. Town officials eventually banned these vendors citing “health” reasons.
- 5-Way Cincinnati Chili consists of: beanless chili served over vermicelli pasta, and topped with shredded cheddar cheese, chopped onions, and jalapeno peppers. Sorry, no Cincinnati Chili for you!
- Texas Chili is made without beans, as any good Texan will be sure to remind you!