

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.