

21 DAYS TO HEALTHY EATING

Realizing Your **Fat Loss Goals** One Meal At A Time



by Carolyn Hansen

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	
Chapter One – You Really Are What You Eat	
You have to be able to live with your fat loss solution	4
Please no more diets	5
Mastering the fundamentals first	6
Is your relationship with food problematic?	6
Starting your journey strong	8
Chapter Two - Both Calories And TOXINS Make You Fat	
Toxins in our environment and food lead to weight gain	10
Toxins are stored in body fat as protection	12
We have to have 'metabolic fitness' to be able to lose weight	13
How do toxins affect metabolism?	14
Toxicity makes losing weight a complicated process	14
How can you detoxify your body?	15
Chapter Three – How Clean Eating Speeds Your Weight Loss	
Your ticket to better health	17
The baseline diet fundamentals	17
The importance of stable blood sugar levels	18
Eating clean	20
What is eating clean?	20
A simple diet	21
This way of eating is easy to live with	23
More of a lifestyle change	24
The principles of clean eating	25
The benefits of clean eating	25
Chapter Four - Banishing HFCS And Trans Fats From Your Diet	
Low quality foods do you no favours	27
Processed food versus junk food	28
Sweeteners in our food	29
The real villains	30
What has happened to our appetites?	31
What are trans fats	31
Trans fat health risks	31
What can you do?	32
Watch out for this evil sweetener	33
Do not eat these nasties	34
The top 12 worst junk foods	35

Chapter Five - Become The Architect To Your Weight Loss Goals	
Keeping it balanced	37
The balance of a meal	37
Food groups	42
How your meals are constructed	44
The top 12 best foods you should eat regularly	46
Chapter Six – 21st Century Nutrition	
Baseline Meal Formula	47
How many calories will you need?	48
Meet your calorie range by the end of the day	50
Calculating your macro-nutrient balance	50
How to build a meal	51
Pay attention to proper portions and practice portion control	51
The 80/20 rule	53
Call these meals your ‘free’ meals	53
Give yourself time to make these changes	55
Make the commitment	56
Three meals a day is ancient history	56
Multiply your meals	57
Chapter Seven - Planning For Weight Loss - One Meal At A Time	
Plan for success	58
Plan your meals	58
How to use a meal planning worksheet	59
Take your food with you	60
Identify the trouble spots	60
How do you begin?	61
Help, suddenly I can eat anything	61
What gets measured gets managed - calorie counting	62
Can food journaling really help you lose weight?	63
Should everyone count calories and track food?	64
When calorie counting goes too far	64
Measuring your body composition	65
Chapter Eight - The First 7 Days To Fat Loss – Reinventing Breakfast	67
Chapter Nine - The Second 7 Days To Fat Loss – Let’s Do Lunch	73
Chapter Ten - Final 7 Days To Fat Loss – Dinners That Delight	80
Chapter Eleven – The Challenges Of Eating Clean	85
Be prepared initially for some blandness	86
Home made protein bars	89
Chapter Twelve - A Firm Toned Body Is Your Ticket To Fat Loss	93
Conclusion – The Principles Of Fat Loss	96

Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to take control of your body weight by learning about the system of weight loss that I call 21 Days To Healthy Eating.

By the time you have finished reading this book you will understand exactly what has been keeping you from successfully losing weight and keeping it off.

Moreover, by using the ideas, the instruction, and the recipes offered on these pages you will be able to make the necessary changes to your current approach to dieting that until now you have not been able to make work for you.

My name is Carolyn Hansen. Over the years I have worked with thousands of people whose fitness goals have no doubt been very similar to your own. These are people who want to get into shape and arrive at a healthy body weight.

They want to be able to do this without having to worry that all their efforts to reach that point will be wiped out when they stop that special diet or exercise regime that has been able to capture their attention for a short time with promises of pounds that “melt away” if they will just stick to the plan.

In short, they want a reliable strategy for weight loss that will once and for all wean them from the never-ending temptation to try the latest fad dieting scheme.

So do not worry, 21 Days To Healthy Eating was designed to do just that.

I too have tried the diets. In fact, dieting was a kind of obsession of mine. For years I trained as a competitive bodybuilder. Getting my body fat level down to an insanely low level seemed to me to be one of the prerequisites for winning a national physique title.

So I tried virtually every diet on the face of the planet. I learned a lot about how my body responds to nutrition (and the lack of it), and ultimately I discovered that dieting is simply the wrong approach to weight loss – especially if one’s goal is to retain a low level of body fat.

I gave up the competitions some years ago, but I never stopped learning about nutrition and the way it affects our bodies. I became a fitness professional and I trained clients to improve their own physiques.

I opened one gym, and then another and I continued to interact with people who needed to get into shape and stay in shape. I became actively interested in the preparation of foods and I spend almost as much time these days in my kitchen as I do anywhere else.

I have discovered that there is a way to eat that does not involve starving yourself in any sense, but which nonetheless leads to long term weight loss, or even weight gain if your goal is to add lean muscle mass to your frame.

If this is a **secret** weight loss strategy it is only a secret because the ideas seem almost **obvious**, and therefore unworthy of any serious consideration as a viable approach to arriving at the body weight that you would like to achieve.

After all, with more than a **billion** people on the planet currently groaning under the weight of their obese frames, how could anyone claim that the formula for losing weight is not at all complicated, but can be summed up in a few principles that can be written on a single page?

And yet that is exactly what you will have discovered by the time you have finished reading 21 Days To Healthy Eating. There **are** only a few important principles to fat loss. But to fully understand what they are, and the reasoning behind them, will take the remainder of this book to get across to you.

So, I beg you to have a little patience. We will get to the end of our journey, and the time spent on it will be well worth the wait. Why? Because it will pay off with improved health and feelings of both well-being and fitness that will serve you not only for the short term, but for the rest of your life.

That is my goal for you and I have not the least doubt that you will reach it if you give me the few short hours it will take you to read this book and digest the ideas.

So are you ready to embark on this fat loss journey with me? I am guessing the answer is a firm **yes**. I know I am ready to teach you. Let's get started, shall we?

We live in a world where misinformation about the quality of the nutrition we put into our bodies is everywhere (as evidenced by this advert from an earlier time when food companies did not work quite so hard to disguise their misinformation). This book is designed to help you recognize what the truth is, and how to go about adjusting your dietary intake to ensure that maintaining your body weight, or losing excess body fat, is no longer a mystery."



Yes, this ad really says the following:

How soon is too soon? Not soon enough. Laboratory tests over the last few years have proven that babies who start drinking soda during that early formative period have a much higher chance of gaining acceptance and "fitting in" during those awkward pre-teen and teen years. So do yourself a favor. Do your child a favor. Start them on a strict regimen of sodas and other sugary carbonated beverages right now, for a lifetime of guaranteed happiness.

You Really Are What You Eat

What you put into your body is important - you only get one body. It is yours for life. You alone live in it. If you continually feed it low quality fuel there is no way it can perform optimally. What you put into it dictates every moment of every day.

What you eat dictates whether you are lean, overweight, or obese. It dictates whether you have energy to spare or find yourself falling asleep at your desk. It dictates how fast you are aging and whether you will remain healthy or end up with a chronic disease.

When you give your body everything it needs to be healthy, it will run along so smoothly that you will not even give it a second thought. That is, until you catch a glimpse of yourself in a window and think about how amazing you look!

You have to be able to live with your fat loss solution

Learning to eat well and exercise in a healthy way that you can live with and enjoy for the rest of your life is not a new or unique concept. You will hear the same general advice from every health and fitness professional who takes the time to put their philosophy of healthy living into an executable plan.

The purpose of the plan you are reading now is not to help you with your next diet, but to help you put an end to the dieting cycle. Forever. Temporary weight loss is of little benefit to you, and is not a true weight loss solution.

The weight loss plan outlined in 21 Days To Healthy Eating is designed to provide you with a proper understanding of the principles of fat loss. Only by beginning with a solid understanding of the way your body processes food and burns fat can you be expected to successfully incorporate the weight loss strategies spelled out in these pages.

Healthy foods and portion control are required for a no-nonsense approach to weight loss and healthy living. If you want to lose some weight, then following a healthy eating plan is a good start, but allowing someone else to dictate exactly what, when and how much you can eat is not a good long term solution.

Guidance is good but ultimately you must learn to make better choices about what you eat yourself. Do this and you gain the ability not only to become slim and trim, but to maintain your new shape after the weight has been lost.

Eating poorly and being overweight increases your risk of many serious illnesses and diseases. It also lowers the quality of your life, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

You are probably reading this book because you want to lose weight to look better. Not only will 21 Days To Healthy Eating help you achieve that goal, you will feel healthier when you have put its ideas into practice.

Learning to eat well and exercise properly is the only solution to long-term weight loss.

This is probably the most important point in this entire plan.

Please no more diets

Are you ready to diet? Yet again? Diets entice us with promises of quick, easy weight loss. But the people we know who eat well and look healthy are not dieting at all. They have simply adopted good eating habits. In other words, this is not something 'they do' but rather something 'they become'.

It is far better to develop a healthy eating plan that you can follow for the rest of your life, than to pin your hopes on a short term diet that cannot provide you with long term results. What you need is an eating plan that will allow for 'free' days, going to restaurants, going on holiday, or attending social gatherings.

Diets are generally so restrictive that they set you up for failure from the start. Some are so low in caloric intake that you literally do not have the energy to continue with them for more than a few weeks. And while most diets produce quick weight loss at the outset, they often cause your metabolism (your body's engine) to slow to a crawl.

It is also important to understand what happens when you skip a meal or go on a crash diet. When you skip a meal your metabolism slows to conserve your energy. And when you try to lose weight too quickly, after just a few days the brakes go on. Your body thinks it is threatened with starvation and goes into survival mode. It fights to conserve fat stores, and any measurable weight loss is mostly due to the elimination of water and muscle tissue.

The result is that you have to eat less and less to keep losing weight. You quickly become discouraged, give up, and start eating like you used to. But now, with a slower metabolic rate you will be burning less fuel and you regain all the weight you lost, and more.

You do not need to sign up to a commercial diet program, purchase special foods or dietary supplements, or use diet pills to succeed at weight loss. In fact, the best thing that you could do would be to start eating healthy right now and continue to do so for the rest of your life.

Of course, very few people will be able to do this straight off. But step by step, meal by meal, and workout by workout, is the way to do it, slowly replacing your not-so-good habits and not-so-good food with better habits and better food. 21 Days To Healthy Eating will teach you how to eat healthy and get a jump-start on reaching your weight loss goals.

Mastering the fundamentals first

Many commercial diet plans are designed for temporary use and lead to temporary weight loss. They start you on the strictest version of their diet first because they do not want you to get discouraged with slow fat loss during the initial stages.

We commonly hear the words 'quick start' or 'lose 20 pounds in 20 days' or other promises. These weight loss campaigns encourage fast fat loss right from the start so their program appears effective regardless of what happens in the long run.

A weight loss diet is an advanced weight (fat) loss strategy. People launch into it at the top level and wonder why they cannot get it to work. It has been proven over and over again that 95 percent of all diets fail. Mostly this is because the people who go on and off these diets cannot maintain this extreme way of eating and/or because it is not natural and you cannot live with it long term.

These same people continue to get sucked into the latest fad diets that promise the world and deliver little in the way of results. Because they have not yet mastered the basics of eating properly there is very little chance that they are going to keep the fat off for long. The usual outcome is years (maybe decades) of yo-yo dieting.

The truth is a weight loss solution has to be long term for it to work. There is no short term solution. This point is worth underscoring - there is NO short term solution.

Before you can lose weight for the long term there are certain nutrition fundamentals you have to understand and master. After learning the fundamentals of diet and weight loss you will be able to continue on your own, improving your eating plan from month to month and year after year.

You will be able to steer clear of marketing gimmicks and promises of short term results, and you will have a solution based on sound, realistic, and healthy weight loss principles. This solution is 21 Days To Healthy Eating.

Is your relationship with food problematic?

Your current body, health, strength, slimness, and fitness, are all the results of the decisions you have made so far. If you want to change something about your body or your life, the first step is to make better choices that fully support these goals.

These choices will feed your success, whether it is losing weight, gaining strength and energy, or rebuilding health.

Intelligent choices will be made using your mind, not your stomach or your cravings, and they will be made in advance of eating, so you will be prepared.

You can learn to eat better by taking steps that retrain and strengthen your awareness of how food leaves you feeling. You will also gain an understanding of why you are eating in the first place.

Many people become slaves to their hunger and food cravings. They simply succumb to these feelings, looking for some pleasurable quick fix - the quelling of that empty feeling we experience when our body needs to be nourished.

Once the craving has been satisfied with something good to eat you then forget about food until the next time you get that same hollow feeling. Then you repeat the process. When you are ruled by cravings in this way your focus on food ends when you eat. Yet your attention to good nutrition and healthy eating should not end after each feeding.

The new way of eating I recommend you adopt is the flip side of simply satisfying your cravings. It involves becoming aware of how food fulfils your nutritional needs. You will begin to focus more on how food will enhance your body and your life, laying down the basic plumbing and wiring for enjoying the foods that will benefit you the most - elevating your mood, your energy, and your life.

Eating what is best for your body will become so second nature that you will not be doing it because you know it is good for you but because you **desire** the way it makes you feel. Your aim is to get to the point that when you look at an apple and an ice cream you will instinctively want the apple more than the ice cream because you understand at a deep level which one will provide you the most mileage.

Beginning today, you can establish a more beneficial relationship with food for the sole purpose of nourishing your body, rather than quelling your cravings. And yes, it WILL be a challenge because it will take you beyond the immediate indulgence of food purely for enjoyment - but you will get to a place where you experience the ability of food to uplift and energize.

Rather than using food just as a means to quell hunger you will discover in this book how eating vibrant living (unadulterated) food can stoke your fire. You will discover this way of approaching food to be a source of new found strength, energy and vitality.

Starting your journey strong

Many people who are not in peak health and are overweight live busy stressful lives. Our modern world and its advances in technology mean things happen at a frightening pace often leaving us struggling to keep up. Career goals, relationships, school and family commitments – all these can take their toll on our energy and time reserves. Time for ourselves is often put on the back burner when we need every scrap of energy just to make it through the day.

It is very common for those who embark on diet and exercise programs with great enthusiasm and gusto to hit a brick wall after a few weeks (sometimes sooner). This may be interpreted as low motivation levels, but it is really fatigue taking over. The body is saying “enough already, I can’t do this”. The facts are that adding stress; even a positive stress can be the straw that ‘breaks the camels back’ on an already overloaded system.

If you are one of the many who have tried in the past to cement an eating or exercise program into your life, and have failed, there is some good news. What you actually failed to do is prepare. It is not that you really failed; you just did not start the journey properly.

To make sure you start this new journey strong and revitalized, so you are good for the long haul, you need to step back, take a deep breath, and recharge the batteries. Maybe it is a good time for letting go of some of the projects and commitments that do not serve you well.

Instead, embrace the things that you need to do to make a healthier and more vibrant you.

The journey to weight loss or better health is not one big event, but is made up of hundreds of small steps. Every healthy clean meal and every workout is just one of those small steps. Think of it like a bank account, every meal and workout is a deposit, and before long those accumulated deposits add up so you have a healthy balance that continues to grow.

The opposite is true as well, because when you continually make withdrawals, and fail to make regular deposits, you will eventually end up with an overdrawn account. But in this case the currency is not money but health, energy, excess body fat, lower self esteem, the speed at which you age, your increased risk of illness and disease, the way you look, the way you feel, and your general quality of life.

Keep in mind that progress never builds as a perfectly straight line. It is a curve, and at the start what you put into your eating plan or exercise program may be greater than what you get out of it. But with consistency over time, those little things that you do will add up to a strong foundation, where effort and momentum over time can have a huge impact that propels you forward. Soon, you will reach a point where your results far outweigh your efforts.

Try to look at the journey as one that takes place one day at a time. Do not try to visualize the whole picture at once as then it looks overwhelming. As you will discover, it is really not this way at all.

21 Days To Healthy Eating is all about setting aside some time to get your 'ducks in a row' – to rehearse and practice your new healthier way of eating so it can become a habit and be cemented into your life and become a part of who you are.

You are important (not only to your family but to yourself too!) and you should never regret the time and energy you invest into yourself. After all, if you do not do it, who else will?

Both Calories And TOXINS Make You Fat

Toxins in our environment and food lead to weight gain

We all understand the general principle that a high calorie diet produces excess body fat when we take in more energy than we can expend over the same time period. Not so well appreciated is the idea that toxins in the food we ingest can also play an important role in the rate at which we store body fat, or lose it.

Our bodies store toxins in many places, including organs, lean muscle tissue, and bone. But it is our fat cells that prove particularly good at storing these foreign substances that our body cannot use constructively. This observation did not go unnoticed by researchers in the middle part of the twentieth century – a time at which a growing concern about the pesticides and other chemicals we were inadvertently adding to our diet began to surface.

At the time, the observation that body fat was a good place to look for evidence that we were poisoning ourselves led to a scientific initiative called the [National Human Adipose Tissue Survey](#) (NHATS), which resulted in the collection of body fat samples from about 12,000 people over a period of about 20 years beginning in the early 1970s.

The survey was not particularly well designed, and it could certainly be argued that the results were not entirely representative of toxin distribution in the general populace of the United States – though that was the intended aim of the study. But some conclusions were undeniable and highly relevant to the theme of this book.

The specific aim of the survey was to determine the baseline level of toxins in our bodies, so that levels could be monitored in response to programs to clean up our food supply and other sources of unwanted contamination. Some of the findings were entirely unexpected.

In December of 1986 NHATS reported that EVERY sample of body fat collected from Americans contained chlorinated solvents and heavy metals, including aluminium, beryllium, cadmium, lead, and mercury – all of which are known to be responsible for a host of debilitating chronic illnesses.

The same was found to be true of five extremely toxic industrial pollutants that cause damage to the liver, heart, lungs, and nervous system - octachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, styrene, 1,4-dichlorobenzene, xylene, and ethylphenol. In one NHATS study DDT – the chemical used to defoliate jungle vegetation in the Vietnam War, also known as Agent Orange – was found in the body fat of more than 70 percent of four-year olds.

In short, our bodies have become reservoirs for the toxins that reach us not only through casual exposure to off-the-shelf cleaners and air pollutants, but also through the food we eat. This would be of only passing interest to us if it was not for the fact that we now know that toxin accumulation also plays a role in weight gain.

In other words, it was probably no accident that we ended up scrutinizing the content of body fat cells to learn about the poisons in our system. Those poisons may have made us fat to begin with. This may also be one of the reasons that many people have trouble maintaining a healthy weight.

If this idea of toxins causing weight gain seems a little strange, consider for a moment a more familiar example of this effect in action - weight gain that can be caused by taking medications. While medicines are on the whole beneficial to us, sometimes they do result in toxic side effects that change the underlying weight-regulating processes in our bodies.

Mood altering medications, like lithium for example, can cause weight gain, as can other hormone suppression drugs. Sometimes these effects can be dramatic and cause patients to abandon their medication. To a lesser extent the same kind of problem can be instigated by the toxins we unknowingly ingest on a daily basis.

Today more than 80,000 chemicals are in active production, and our exposure to these toxins is greater than at any time in history. More than 3,000 chemicals are added to our food supply and more than 10,000 chemicals in the form of solvents, emulsifiers, and preservatives are used in food processing and storage.

We are continually subjected to poor air quality, chemically contaminated food and water, household cleaners, paint fumes, pharmaceutical drugs, pesticides, and heavy metals.

When these chemicals find their way into our bodies they can remain there for years causing damage. This damage can alter our metabolism (the body's engine), cause enzyme dysfunction and nutritional deficiencies, create hormonal imbalances, and lower our threshold of resistance to chronic disease.

Studies show that most of us have between 400 and 800 chemical residues stored in the fat cells of our bodies. These chemicals and heavy metals make up the 'total toxic burden'. When our bodies exceed the limit that we can excrete, we begin to store these toxins, and this accumulation may seriously compromise our health.

With the ever-increasing amount of toxins in our environment and the foods we eat, it is not surprising that for many people their level of toxicity surpasses the point that their body's own natural detoxification system can cope with. Chemicals and toxins can build up in your system and cause problems regardless of your body weight.

So when body fat begins to accumulate, that usually means toxins are accumulating too. The body retains fats as a way to protect the vital organs in the body from the toxins that we ingest (and create through stress). Body fat accumulation, especially around the mid section, is a visible sign of toxic build up and a good indication that the liver is not functioning as efficiently as it should.

Everything that crosses your lips must be used by your body, or it must be neutralized and eliminated as a waste product. Otherwise it is stored in your body and piles up like garbage.

Toxins are stored in body fat as protection

New evidence is emerging regarding the role of the level of toxins in the body as a contributing factor in excess weight. As these toxins are stored in our body in fat cells, people who have a higher body fat percentage generally store a greater amount of toxins.

Our body's reaction to a toxic substance is simple: protection. There are two primary ways that the body takes action. First, it tries to flush the toxins out. If that fails, it will try to lock the toxins away. As toxins build up faster than can be eliminated, and beyond a level with which the body's detoxification pathways can cope with, the body begins to 'dilute' the amount of circulating toxins in an attempt to protect organs and tissues.

Body fat and water are our body's way of protecting us from poisonous toxins. It does this by diluting them, and storing them in water and fat. The majority of these toxins are fat soluble so the body will also make new fat cells to store them as far away from vital organs as possible.

Think about it this way - what do nuclear power plants do with toxic radioactive waste? They seal it in concrete and bury it. This is essentially the same thing our body does with toxins that we ingest. If it cannot get rid of them, it seals them up in fat cells and locks them away where they cannot harm us.

It appears that our highly intelligent immune system will not allow the removal of excess fat and water if the level of toxins that is stored in them could put our life in jeopardy by their release into the bloodstream. The body will protect itself by holding onto fat to keep the toxins locked safely away.

The types of fat cells used for this waste storage are particularly stubborn and the body does not give them up easily. This is often the reason why many people have great difficulty in losing weight. It can become nearly impossible to keep body weight down unless you decrease the total toxic load first.

For this to happen you will need to do as much as possible to help your body detoxify, and this is what we will be working towards in 21 Days To Healthy Eating. This will give your body a chance to cleanse, repair, and strengthen itself - and when the toxins disappear, guess what happens to the protective layer of fat? Yes, that disappears too!

We have to have 'metabolic fitness' to be able to lose weight

Certain body fat cells are like factory workers helping coordinate how much we eat, signalling muscles when they can burn fat, and helping to control the flow of energy in and out of cells.

Inside each cell are multiple instances of a structure known as mitochondria, which means 'little bean'. That is literally what they look like - tiny bean-shaped energy factories that convert the food we eat into energy. When food is combined with oxygen this fuel mixture is used to run every system and process in our body.

And since fat is ultimately part of the food that they convert, our mitochondria need tip-top 'fitness', working fast and efficiently if we are going to burn off excess body fat. A single cell may have anywhere from 200 to 2,000 or more mitochondria.

Cells that work hard, such as those in the heart, liver, or muscles, contain the greatest number of mitochondria. You would not be able to breathe, much less walk out your front door if it were not for these little powerhouses. They are responsible for keeping you alive.

The rate at which your mitochondria transform food and oxygen into energy is called your metabolic rate, which is basically the speed at which your body's engine is running. This is determined in part by two factors: the number of mitochondria you have and how efficiently they burn oxygen and food calories.

The more mitochondria you have, and the more efficiently they consume oxygen, the faster your metabolic rate, the easier it is for your body to burn calories, and the more energy you will have.

Every one of these mitochondria is listening to, and responding to the metabolic signals that you give them - or more likely that you fail to give them. Not just once a week or even once a day, but every 15 to 20 minutes all day long.

These little cellular furnaces await your signals and, depending on the signals they get from you in the way of proper nutrition and exercise, will either fire up - which results in cell and tissue growth and renewal - or dampen down like a fire that has run out of fuel.

Good things happen when the mitochondria fire up, but when they dampen down, or are even extinguished altogether, the cells shift toward body fat storage or fatigue, under-produce energy, and they lapse into disuse.

Anything that can harm these little powerhouses, such as a build up of toxins, will seriously affect your body weight and ultimately your health. The last thing you want to hear is that something floating around in your body is preventing you from burning those unwanted pounds of body fat. But that is what these toxins can do, and studies going back more than thirty years indicate that such toxins can hinder the efficiency of your fat-burning systems.

How do toxins affect metabolism?

A number of studies describe the means by which metabolism is negatively affected by toxin build-up. These effects include:

- Damage to the mitochondria, resulting in a lessening of each cell's ability to burn sugar (converted fat) to produce energy.
- Reduction of thyroid hormone levels. Thyroid hormones contribute to the basal metabolic rate (rate of fuel burning at rest) and are particularly involved in fat and carbohydrate metabolism.
- An increase in the excretion of thyroid hormones by the liver. By upsetting the natural balance of weight-regulating hormones the body's ability to maintain a healthy weight is compromised.
- Some toxins have an affinity with the receptor sites where thyroid hormones need to attach in order to produce their regular metabolic effects.
- Some toxins block the effects of the hormone leptin which signals that you are full. Thus, you may think you are hungry even when you are not and end up habitually overeating.

In reality, the complex interplay of the many biochemical pathways that work to extract energy from food and use it to power our bodies, or store it in the form of body fat, is something that only the experts can be expected to fully understand. The only thing we need to take away from the discussion is that if we want to make the task of losing weight as easy as possible, we need to eliminate the effect of toxins where we can.

Toxicity makes losing weight a complicated process

Unfortunately, simply burning off body fat is not enough to counter the effects of the toxins already stored in your body. If you do not manage to excrete the toxins at the same rate that you lose weight, their elevated levels in your bloodstream can hamper your metabolic rate. In effect, they work to put the brakes on your body's ability to shed excess weight.

If these substances are not eliminated, they build up, clog you up, drag you down, and in the long term could seriously damage your health.

Your liver plays a critical role in eliminating toxins and processing everything that goes into your body. If your liver gets overloaded, toxins begin circulating in your blood. Besides making you feel tired and sluggish, those toxins can damage your organs and glands, cause increased inflammation in your body, cause headaches, cause weight gain, and generally make you feel 'unwell'.

How can you detoxify your body?

There are a number of things you can do to detoxify your body. This includes:

1). A proper exercise program that contains mostly strength training exercise to improve the condition of the mitochondria - our little energy factories - to increase our 'metabolic fitness'. When you work out - they work out.

Strengthening the entire body, and all of its sub-systems, helps it to function properly and cleanse itself.

2). Eat 'clean' and organic vegetables and fruits where possible to avoid the chemicals, pesticides, and herbicides generally found in produce. As fewer toxins are added to the system, the body has time to eliminate the accumulated toxins.

You should aim to minimize the amount of ingested foods that contain toxins such as preservatives, pesticides (wash your fruit and vegetables thoroughly), antibiotics, and heavy metals (such as the mercury increasingly found in some species of fish).

3). Choose good quality grass fed and organic meats where possible to avoid the hormones and antibiotics found in non-organic meats.

It may be expensive, but you can purchase beef, lamb, and pork products imported from countries like New Zealand where farm animals are grass fed. In contrast, animals in the United States are typically fed a diet of corn - a grain that their bodies did not evolve to digest, and for which they must be fed massive quantities of antibiotics and other chemicals in order to tolerate their unnatural diet.

4). Choose unprocessed foods (non man made) so as to avoid preservatives, dyes, nitrates and a multitude of other harmful chemicals.

This means that, wherever possible, avoid white bread, white rice, pastas, table sugar, and all of the junk foods that you tend to reach for when a sugar craving hits.

5). Choose natural skin and hair products that do not contain chemicals and dyes. The skin is a source of absorption for toxins and chemicals. What goes **on** your skin goes **in** your skin.

6). Take only nutritionals that do not use chemicals, additives or preservatives.

To sum it up: to help your body detoxify include simple steps like proper exercise that works the muscular system to condition and strengthen the entire body. Eat plenty of fresh natural whole foods and avoid processed, refined sugary foods. Also try to drink plenty of water rather than fruit juices or soda.

Toxin References

[Systems Biology: The Gut-Brain-Fat Cell Connection And Obesity](#)

[Review of the National Human Adipose Tissue Survey and Selected Program Alternatives](#)

[Adipose Tissue as a Medium for Epidemiologic Exposure Assessment](#)

[Sauna and Pesticides, Heavy Metals](#)



How Clean Eating Speeds Your Weight Loss

Your ticket to better health

In this chapter we begin the process of cleaning up our food so our body can start the spring cleaning job which allows it to shed that excess body fat.

If we can prevent excess toxins from being added to the body's existing toxic overload this will buy some time for the body to start making its way back to improving and boosting the fat burning systems.

First, we will concentrate on the base-line eating fundamentals. When these things have become not something that 'you do' but rather something that 'you become' you will know you are 'there'. To do that you will need to focus on eight base-line eating fundamentals.

Forget entirely about what you **should not** be doing, or eating, and focus instead on what you **should** be eating and doing. This will keep you so busy you simply will not have time to do anything but stay on track.

The baseline diet fundamentals

You must find ways to implement these eight factors:

1. Start the journey strong and continue strong.
2. Burn more fuel (calories) than you eat.
3. Eat 'clean' at least 80 percent of the time.
4. Eat 5-7 small meals each day every 2-3 hours.
5. Make the time to prepare those meals the night before.
6. Take food with you wherever you go so there is no excuse for not eating the right thing.
7. Eat quality protein at each of your meals.
8. Create meals containing 300 – 400 calories.

When you have these fundamentals firmly in place in your life at least 80 percent of the time you will not have an excess body fat problem. It will be long gone!

But before we launch into a proper discussion of clean eating principles I want to take a moment to address an important topic. I know that in the pages to follow I will be making mention of this topic repeatedly, so we might as well get you up to speed on it now - that way, you will not be taken by surprise when I begin referring to the mysterious subject of **stabilized blood sugar levels**.

The importance of stable blood sugar levels

In this chapter, and those that follow, you are going to hear me mention blood sugar and the importance of ensuring that your blood sugar level remains stable over the course of the day. This is one of the reasons that I advocate eating numerous small meals throughout the day rather than two or three large ones spread far apart.

So why is this important - to keep the blood sugar level on an even keel? What happens when you do not?

The short story is that when you eat large quantities of food at times spaced well apart, you promote fat storage. You also run the risk of developing diabetes, which is a condition in which your body is unable to cope properly with the conversion of food into energy because the mechanisms by which this takes place have broken down. The result is poor health.

To understand roughly what is going on here you need to know a little bit about the way your body processes food. Primarily, the energy that your body uses to keep itself warm, to run the myriad biological processes, and to enable you to move your bodily limbs, is supplied by the conversion of simple sugar into carbon dioxide and water.

The simple sugar is glucose, which your body stores in easily accessible form as glycogen mostly in your liver - from where it is dispensed to cells throughout the body as needed. At any one time we have about a half days worth of glycogen ready to be called upon within the cells. Glycogen is converted into glucose and then "burned" to produce energy.

We get the raw materials for glycogen production from the foods we eat. Primarily we take in complex carbohydrates from vegetables. Carbohydrates are long chains of simple sugars, so our bodies do not have to work too hard to break these down into shorter pieces that can be converted to glycogen and stored.

Glycogen is also present to some extent in the meat in our diet, so that becomes available to us as well. Both of these sources of what ultimately will become the glucose that we burn for energy are good sources of energy, and our bodies have evolved over a period of millions of years to process them efficiently.

Another source of simple sugars, which include glucose in ready-to-burn form, is fruits. But fruits tend to provide their sugars mainly in the form of fructose, which we need to convert into glucose before we can derive energy from the sugar. Eating too much fruit in one sitting, then, could easily lead to a blood sugar high, as glucose is absorbed directly into the blood.

When this happens our bodies release insulin to instruct our fat cells to mop up the excess glucose and convert it into triglycerides - or regular body fat reserves - where it is stored until such times as glycogen levels in the body drop and the fat is converted back to glycogen as needed.

This all works out nicely if the diet resembles that of the pre-twentieth century foods that powered the energy requirements of humans until that point. But with the introduction of refined foods in the mid twentieth century, the quantities of simple sugars in the diet escalated rapidly.

Processed foods today are teeming with highly refined carbohydrates which are much closer in form to the simple sugars that can quickly be converted into glucose and delivered to the bloodstream.

The result is the familiar sugar-high that can put people into a “food coma” and send them in search of a napping area after a large lunch. Pastas, white rice, white bread, plus all the sweet desserts that we have become used to, are staples of the restaurant lunch time fare.

The sudden influx of sugar into our system taxes the pancreas as it goes into overdrive to produce insulin to clear the blood of excess sugar.

Of course, this ingestion of refined carbohydrates is not restricted to lunches. We feed ourselves highly refined sugar-loaded cereals and do similar damage at dinner time with meals that come out of cans or packages after having been highly processed for taste. Sugar has been added to almost every food that we have handed to us.

In time, the repeated stressing of the pancreas, as it continually attempts to churn out unnatural levels of insulin, results in a regulatory system that becomes less and less effective at keeping blood sugar levels stable. Your body becomes better at storing fat than burning glucose efficiently, and the condition becomes known as diabetes, and your ability to enjoy life is severely curtailed.

So the moral of the story is that stabilized blood sugar levels keep your pancreas operating efficiently in terms of insulin production and the regulation of body fat levels. If you eat complex carbohydrates, rather than processed foods with their high concentration of simple sugar-like molecules, you will better keep your blood sugar level in check, and if you eat smaller meals, more regularly, you are also helping to achieve the same effect.

You will have energy on demand, when you need it, and your body will keep to a minimum the process of converting the excess sugars into long-term fat.

Now, with that little lecture on the importance of maintaining a stable blood sugar level behind us, we can get back to the real subject of this chapter, which is clean eating. What is it, and how does it impact our ultimate goal of ridding ourselves of excess body fat?

Eating clean

While fad dieting continues to be ineffective, there are some approaches to creating a balanced nutrition menu, such as eating clean, that serve both athletes and health-fitness seekers well.

Whether your goal is sports performance, weight loss, leaning down (reducing fat to a lean body composition), or building muscle, learning to eat properly and in accordance with your goals is a key component to your success.

Learning and following the principles of eating clean means creating a change in lifestyle instead of simply following a diet. You will adjust these principles to your individual needs and begin to lean down, lose weight, improve your performance, or all three!

Since eating clean is intended to be a permanent change to the way you approach food and consume it, think of it as an **evolution**, not a **revolution**, in your diet. The revolution part will come later, when you suddenly realize after eating this way for 3-6 months that you are leaner and healthier and more filled with energy than ever before.

What is eating clean?

Eating clean is a new way of thinking about food that results in treating your body right. It is a simple back to basics approach to nutrition – consuming food in its most natural state, or as close to it as possible. It is also a healthy approach that shifts your mindset from eating simply to satisfy, to eating to nourish.

It is a concept that is growing in popularity. It is not a diet, fad or a gimmick; it is a step above this and is a lifestyle approach to food and its preparation, leading to health, well-being and a slim, trim, lean body.

Over the years, we have lost sight of what real food looks like. Foods have lost their nutritional value as they have slowly transformed into a cocktail of sugars, salts, fats, preservatives, artificial colours, and flavours have been added to extend shelf life.

When a natural food is altered to this extent and over-processed, it is no longer considered “clean.”

So what happens when you choose clean foods? These less refined and processed choices can improve energy levels, stabilize blood sugars and make you feel “full” for longer. They can help you boost your metabolism, lose weight, and reduce your risk for chronic disease.

These foods are broken down more slowly by the body, which means you take longer to digest them - this keeps insulin levels in check and body fat levels down.

This permanent change to how you eat and look at food is liberating. By choosing water to quench your thirst over sugary chemical laden ‘pop’ or sweetened juices, for example, you rehydrate, help remove toxins from your body, and help keep your energy levels up - all by making one simple choice. You also avoid consuming another 100-250 sugar calories.

Deciding to cook your own baked sweet potato fries takes only an extra 15 minutes to prepare compared to opening a package of frozen, commercially packaged fries, and it prevents loading your body with refined carbohydrates and harmful chemicals.

By popping your own popcorn with an air popper and topping it with flaxseed oil instead of nuking and then eating a package of high sodium, colour-laced and mystery-fat microwave popcorn you nourish your body with more fibre, vitamins and healthy complex carbohydrate.

Making smarter, clean eating food choices is not difficult - it just requires planning ahead. When we have healthy food on hand, including snacks, we and our children make better choices. When you are more satisfied with good food more often, you have fewer cravings for sugars, fats and sodium-rich packaged foods.

Clean eating helps us restore and heal our bodies. It is a positive way of eating that will help us re-nourish our lives and our children’s lives, today and for the future. Lastly, this smart clean way to eat is not only healthy, but also preserves our Earth’s resources.

A simple diet

A clean diet is a simple diet. It is one that is rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and proteins. It limits sugars, preservatives, artificial colours, flavours, and unhealthy food preparation. It also eliminates heavily processed foods and other ‘junk’ food from your diet.

You should not be getting your food from a drive-thru window and you should be avoiding foods that are over-processed, high in fat, sugar, and salt. Instead, eat high quality foods in their most natural state that are basically free of all unnatural additives - foods free of harmful hydrogenated fats, trans-fats, and artificial ingredients that many people now believe are ‘toxic’ to the human body.

If you were to only shop in the outside aisles of your supermarket, you would be eating a pretty clean diet. Clean eaters choose whole natural foods, the way they came out of the ground or off a plant or tree. In other words, as close to their natural form as possible. Whole foods means that a tomato, a carrot, an apple, or foods like nuts and seeds are eaten just as they are.

Vegetables (both raw and cooked), fruits, legumes (beans lentils, chickpeas), 100% whole grains, eggs, fish, beef and poultry are clean eating staples. It is eating the way nature intended. A good way to test whether a food is natural or not is "Did this food come out of the ground or off a plant/tree this way?"

Think about the foods you have put into your body so far today. How far from their natural state were they? How processed were the ingredients put into your foods? Canned peaches in heavy syrup or a fresh peach? It should be obvious which one is the healthier choice.

When you eat, ask yourself "What did this food look like in its natural state?" Obviously you do not want to eat the chicken with the feathers still on, but eating food that is recognizable is a good way to start. There is no such thing as a chocolate bar, Twinkie, or potato chip tree.

We become so accustomed to eating over-seasoned and over-processed foods that we forget what natural foods taste like. Making the transition to eating more clean foods can be difficult, particularly when you are currently eating a diet rich in foods from the freezer section and the local drive-thru.

Clean eating requires creative thinking for people who are accustomed to a less-than-healthy diet. When you eat this way you eat more often, eating 5 or 6 small meals per day and eating every 2 to 3 hours. You will eat lean protein, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats to keep your blood-sugar levels stable and keep you feeling satisfied. We will look more closely at recipes for clean meals later in the book.

Best of all, eating this way keeps you feeling great and full of energy. In fact, you can forget all about the days when "dieting" meant feelings of hunger, lethargy, cravings or deprivation.

By keeping your meals smaller, you make sure you are only eating an amount of food that your body can utilize for energy and recovery over the next 2-3 hours. This discourages overeating, or calorie intake in excess of what your body needs. This will keep you lean or help you shed excess body fat.

Enjoy better, more sustained energy. Eating smaller meals, more frequently, helps keep your blood sugar levels stable and prevents energy crashes. Blood sugar spikes also encourage excess calories to be stored more readily as body fat, so when you keep blood sugar stable, it can help you lose fat - or at least maintain leanness.

Regulating your blood sugar level is the most effective way to maintain your fat-burning capacity. Never skip a meal, especially breakfast, and eat healthy snacks between meals. Eating frequently prevents hunger pangs and the binges that follow, provides consistent energy, and may be the single most effective way to maintain metabolic efficiency.

If there is one rule of clean eating that sums it up, this is the one that rules them all. In fact, if you understand this principle, all of the others pretty much fall into place. Man made foods and ingredients should be eaten only occasionally if you wish to lose weight and get healthier. A simple rule of thumb is 'if man made it, do not eat it.'

Walk down any supermarket aisle and you will see 3-4 different choices of the same product. Light, fat free, and sugar free are the most common, and it can be very overwhelming. You buy them thinking that they are "better for you and your waistline".

Chances are that when you eat these items you may eat more calories than you would if you were to buy a package of the original "non-improved" item. Instead of just reading the nutritional value, read the ingredient list as well. Can you pronounce the ingredients? Do they sound appealing? Can you recognize ALL of them? Yes, the product claims to have only 110 calories and 1 gram of fat, healthy right? Think again.

Know your labels. Read the ingredient list, and do your best to eliminate products that contain man made ingredients. If you cannot determine what it is you are really eating, then do not eat it!

The concept is pretty easy to grasp: If you cannot go pick, reap, or acquire the food in the field, farm or orchard, and then eat it, you are on the wrong track. Now, does that mean that you are destined to eat nuts and berries the rest of your life?

No. The key here is to use this principle to make better choices between foods. This is not rocket science, and the 'less is more' theory applies here - less food of a higher quality will help you lose weight more naturally.

You will feel a world better when you ditch processed foods. Your natural energy levels will increase and you will have more focus to do the things you love to do.

This way of eating is easy to live with

21 Days To Healthy Eating is a plan for eating clean, but it is not so strict as to ruin your life. If you are a physique competitor or have a modelling contract you may wish to adhere to a stricter version.

But if you want to lead a normal life, eating out sometimes, enjoying parties sometimes, and generally not feeling like you have to watch every scrap of food, or suffer the consequences, then this is the plan for you.

Although this way of eating is not a diet you still need to have a certain amount of focus. And this is what 21 Days To Healthy Eating is all about – paying more attention and creating more awareness about what you are eating, and setting more time aside to prepare what you eat.

More of a lifestyle change

More than being just a diet, clean eating is a lifestyle that does require time, commitment, and pre-planning. It is not about deprivation, avoiding food groups or starvation, but about making healthy food choices and providing the body with the best foods possible.

This way of eating has many advantages, and gives you a more energetic and fit lifestyle. It prevents you from feeling sluggish, worn out, and irritated throughout the day. It will also help you to sleep better at night.

When you eat clean your body will react by losing weight (if you need to lose weight) or by maintaining a healthy weight if that is where you are currently. But regardless of whether you want to lose weight or maintain your current weight, you will feel better than you ever have before.

If you do need to lose weight it will happen almost without you having to try. And yes, you can have your favourite treat now and again.

Clean eating is not a new concept. Those involved in any way with health, fitness, or nutrition, from fitness competitors to personal trainers to health-conscious individuals, have known about eating clean for years. Clean eating is gaining popularity as a way to gain better health, easily maintain weight, and as a way to lose weight and keep it off for life.

Finally, do not expect instant fat or weight loss in large quantities with the clean eating approach to your diet. While that will come, it will take a little time. The good news though, is that unlike other fad diets or eating plans, the fat you lose will come off slower, and you will not experience the frustration of rebound weight gain.

Better yet, the weight loss will be permanent.

In the long run, you will be more satisfied (and healthy) with the clean eating approach than with quick-fix diet solutions. You could liken them to filling up the swimming pool with the hose in one end while you are trying to empty the pool with a bucket at the other end – futile.

The principles of clean eating

- Eat a small meal every two to three hours (5 to 7 small meals per day total) to keep blood sugar stable and prevent hunger.
- Combine lean proteins and complex carbohydrates at every meal.
- Avoid all over-processed and refined foods (especially sugar, white rice, and white flour).
- Avoid saturated and trans fat - consume healthy fats instead.
- Avoid soda and other sugary juices and drinks.
- Avoid high-calorie, zero nutrient foods (junk food).
- Eat proper portion sizes.
- Create properly balanced meals (with the right ratio of protein, carbohydrates and fats).

The benefits of clean eating

There are many health benefits to eating clean. These include:

- Decreased body fat.
- Increased energy.
- General improvements in overall health and immunity.
- Increased mental well-being.
- Clearer skin, shinier hair.
- Higher quality sleep.
- Decreased risk of certain types of diseases like cancer, heart disease and diabetes.
- Less consumption of pesticides, artificial food additives and preservatives, sodium and sugar.
- Less impact on the environment as the foods you eat are minimally processed, and thus use less energy and produce less waste than highly-processed foods.
- Less expensive and more cost-effective than eating pre-packaged food or fast food. Clean meals are healthier, more satisfying and more nutritionally-dense.
- Sustainable. Unlike fad diets, clean eating is a holistic approach to eating that a person can practice for their entire life. You do not 'go on' a clean eating plan – you are always clean eating.

Clean eating appears to be a desirable, sensible, and doable approach to gaining and maintaining a healthy body weight, and is really what we should be striving to do to achieve optimum health and body composition (muscle tissue/fat ratio), slow the aging process, and create abundant energy and vitality.

You eat the foods that our bodies have evolved to function best on, and that make you feel – and function - and look – fantastic.

It is a common misconception that modifying your eating habits need only apply to those who desire weight loss - performance related goals require the same or even more nutrition planning. In fact, most high-performance athletes are lean and strong.

If your sport requires strength, speed, agility, endurance, or stamina, losing excess body fat by following a healthy, well-balanced nutrition plan will improve your performance.



Banishing HFCS And Trans Fats From Your Diet

Low quality foods do you no favours

The reason that eating clean is so crucial to the maintenance of a lean and strong body, optimum performance, and good health, is explained when you consider your body at the cellular level.

Invisible to the naked eye, microscopic cells work together performing the many important functions of the metabolism that keep the human body alive and healthy.

Eating low quality foods can prevent the body's cells and tissues from receiving the necessary nutrients, and therefore reduce its overall performance. You will not feel any outward physical effects from eating one unhealthy meal, but over time the effects accumulate if you continue to ingest poor quality foods.

You may think that you can get away with it, but this is simply wishful thinking. It may take a long while before the damage shows. But when it does, it is significant damage. It may take the remainder of a lifetime to deal with the ill effects.

For example, cell membranes may become damaged, and lose their ability to transfer much needed proteins, nutrients, and waste into and out of the cell. As more and more cells function at a reduced capacity, various indicators begin to act as 'warning signs' of trouble ahead.

You may experience symptoms such as lethargy, regular headaches, a cold or flu, aches and pains, or you may just not feel 'well.' Eventually, if continued for a long period, there is an increased risk of serious disease or illness because of prolonged deprivation of appropriate nutrients to the cells in the body.

The symptoms, both minor and major, are signs that your cells are not able to do their job adequately. Undoubtedly, genetic dispositions and abnormalities can cause disease, but the most common diseases in the world today are directly related to obesity that develops from poor lifestyle choices, including poor nutrition and not enough proper exercise.

Delicious, high calorie, fast and convenient food lures us into its web. And just like a spider web we slowly get entangled in bad habits until eventually it all seems normal to us. But the sticky threads of the web slowly bind us, limiting our vitality and eventually downgrading our health and the quality of our lives.

The principles of clean eating are almost the complete opposite to the typical “American Diet” that now also pervades the rest of the world. These foods that we know and love include fast food, doughnuts, fries, hot dogs, white bread with no substance, sugar and fat laden ice cream, sugary sweet drinks, cereals, and snacks, like potato chips.

Yet even though people feel awful, lethargic, and keep piling on the body fat with this type of diet, they continue to eat more and more of the same junk.

Processed food versus junk food

All too often, processed and packaged foods - colourful packages full of ingredients we cannot pronounce and do not recognize - have become our diet mainstays. We have forgotten the importance of what we put on our tables and into our bodies.

Junk foods have little or no nutritional value and they do not boost your metabolism. This is why they are called ‘empty calories’. You simply cannot eat this low quality food on a daily basis and expect to achieve long term good health.

Although most of us are aware that ‘junk food’ is bad for us, how many of us know that ‘processed food’ is also bad for us? How many of us even know the difference between the two?

Why do many health-conscious consumers shun potato chips but enjoy granola bars in abundance? Why do many health-conscious consumers refuse to buy soda and sugary drinks for their children but see no problem with purchasing fortified juice beverages?

Processed food is food that has been heavily manufactured in order to be shelf-stable. Processed food rarely resembles anything from nature. It fills the inner aisles of the supermarket; things like cereal, crackers, cookies, biscuits, breads, bottled beverages, granola bars, packet drinks, and loads of other low quality so-called foods.

They come in pretty boxes and packets, are made with dirt cheap ingredients, and supply little to no nutrition whatsoever. There is no question that **these foods are not part of a healthy diet.**

When a food undergoes so much manufacturing, it becomes nutritionally devoid. An enormous amount of preservatives and other artificial ingredients are added to these foods to keep them ‘fresh’. In addition, a great deal of sugar and salt is often added to make these so called ‘foods’ taste better.

Our bodies are not designed to consume these man-made concoctions that many people have come to accept as food. When we eat shrink-wrapped, boxed, frozen, bagged creations, we will not reach optimal health and weight. Calories are irrelevant here; the food you eat is a lot more complex than just the calories it contains.

There is rarely any dispute over junk food. The general consensus is that foods like Twinkies, potato chips, sweets and soda are not good for us. This is true; however, there are many foods just like these that the average family would consider a healthy addition to their pantry.

Unfortunately, a great deal of marketing and advertising fools most consumers into believing that items like granola bars or fortified fruit drinks and cereals are a beacon of health, while in reality, they are much like Twinkies in disguise.

While these “healthy substitutes” may be certified organic and may not contain harmful ingredients like high fructose corn syrup or trans fats, they are certainly not the foundation of a healthy diet. Nearly all these foods are very high in sugar and are heavily processed.

The healthiest foods are the ones closest to their natural state. When eating clean, you want to try to choose fruits and vegetables in as close to this state as possible.

Yet we can so easily be confused about this. Take apple juice for example. Apple juice seems to be a pretty healthy food, right? But ask yourself: Have you ever seen an apple tree that produced juice?

Of course not. A person has to press the juice out of the apples, and then throw away the pulp that is left over. When you eat a whole apple, you get all of the benefits of the fruit: the fiber in the flesh; the vitamins, minerals and energy in the juice, and the powerful antioxidants in the skin. If you only drink the juice, you are consuming a third of what the fruit has to offer nutritionally, not everything.

Clean eating, first and foremost, is about maximizing the nutrition available in a food. There is also mounting scientific research to support the idea that substances in the flesh, skin and juice of fruits and vegetables work together to protect the body from damage and disease. If you eat only one of these substances, you are shortchanging yourself.

So when eating fruits and vegetables, try to always eat them in their whole form. If you want an apple, eat a whole apple, skin and all. Same goes for a carrot, or potato, or pear.

Sweeteners in our food

Some simple sugars, like table sugar (sucrose) and other common sweeteners used in processed foods and candies are digested very quickly by the body and cause blood sugar spikes. These spikes typically cause a rush of energy and then a ‘crash’ later on.

Blood sugar spikes also cause a complex cascade of bio-chemical reactions in the body that encourage fat storage. Of course, sugars are also extremely calorie dense gram-for-gram and have zero vitamin or mineral content. So simple sugars violate the clean eating concept of nutrient density and do not qualify as a 'whole food' since they require extensive processing to create them.

A better alternative is to utilize sugars that appear naturally in nature — things like fruit or whole food sources of fruit sugars like dates, raisins, honey or maple syrup. These sweeteners also have their own unique flavors that can enhance the foods that you add them to.

Processed, simple sugars like table sugar are very sweet and our taste buds become accustomed to this intensity. It is like a drug, and the more sugar we consume, the more 'resistant' to it's sweetness we become. So we crave more.

However, as you pull back on processed, simple sugars your taste buds adjust - and even fruit can taste very sweet after a few months away from the processed stuff.

The real villains

'Whole wheat' bread and cereal are two of the worst offenders; people think that a 'whole grain' label is a sign of a truly nutritious choice. These breads and cereals are full of preservatives and often still contain refined white flour and sugar.

But perhaps the worst offender is functional or fortified foods. These are standard, processed foods that have certain vitamins or nutrients added to increase their marketability. Things like vitamin C, fiber, omega 3's antioxidants, and pro-biotics are just some of the current health buzzwords. There is always a new nutrient or fad in the spotlight with incredible health claims and promises.

Food companies know that consumers are becoming increasingly interested in health, so they fortify their processed, cheap, junk food with these so called healthy additions. These **are** most likely very healthy substances when found **occurring naturally** in whole foods.

However, supplementing a nutrient-devoid, sugar-laden, chemically-ridden cookie or snack bar with a certain nutrient will not make it healthy.

Be a smart consumer and stay ahead of these unscrupulous manufacturers. When considering your food purchases, do not be enticed by health claims and packaging. Stick to foods that resemble something that may be found in nature and the nutrition will take care of itself.

What has happened to our appetites?

Fifty years ago our 'appetite control system' was in better shape and easier to control. Today we have all sorts of additives and genetically modified 'anti-nutrients' that interfere with our body's hunger signals.

With this system 'out of whack' it is hard to identify when one is really hungry or just suffering from a 'craving'. These days, too many additives in our food get in the way of the delicate signals of our 'appetite control system'. So what are some of these anti-nutrients that throw our appetite control system 'out of whack' and make us hungry all the time?

What are trans fats?

The biggest villain of them all - trans fat. A man made unnatural fat created in a synthetically produced industrial process that turns liquid oils into solid fats. This process is called hydrogenation. Hydro-what? In a nutshell, hydrogenation is a process by which vegetable oils are converted to solid fats simply by adding hydrogen atoms.

When vegetable oil is turned into trans fat, it becomes harder and can be used in a greater variety of products than liquid oil. Margarine, cooking fats for deep frying, shortening, and baking fats are prime examples.

Using hydrogenated vegetable oil in these products is an easy, inexpensive alternative to naturally occurring forms of hard fat. They give foods a desirable taste and texture. Add to this that trans fats have a very long shelf-life and you get a combination that many food manufacturers just cannot resist.

Many restaurants and fast-food outlets use trans fats to deep-fry foods because oils with trans fats can be used over and over again for frying - an attractive commercial aspect for restaurants and junk food retailers.

Why hydrogenate? Hydrogenation increases the shelf life and flavour stability of foods. Sound like something only food scientists have to deal with? Think again. Chances are you are eating trans fats every day. Chances are they could end up killing you.

Since trans fats were introduced, heart disease and cancer rates have gone through the roof. In the realm of dietary dangers, trans fats rank at the very top of the list.

Trans fats health risks

We all know that eating saturated fats raises the level of bad cholesterol, or Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL), in our blood. But at least that is where it stops.

Trans fats, on the other hand, not only increase LDL, they also lower good cholesterol, or High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) - the substance that helps remove cholesterol build-up from artery walls.

As a result of this double-whammy, trans fats have been solidly linked to clogged arteries and an increased risk of heart disease, type-2 diabetes, heart attacks, and strokes.

Trans fats are bad for so many reasons, one of which is that they find their way into the cells and tissues of your body and your brain, where they block the receptors that control your metabolism.

Unlike other forms of fat, trans fats are unnatural and not necessary for life; our bodies just do not need them. So why are we eating them? Although they have been used widely for the last twenty years, it was not until the 1990s that research began to identify their health risks.

It has been estimated that trans fats are responsible for some 30,000 early deaths every year in the United States. Worldwide the toll of premature deaths is in the millions.

These man-made fats are much worse for you than any other natural fat, even the saturated fats found in butter and beef. Today trans fats are found in 40 percent of the products on supermarket shelves.

Examples of foods that contain trans fats are the commercially baked goods - cakes, biscuits, crackers, muffins, donuts, pies, pastries, pizza dough, microwave popcorn, fried foods like fried chicken, fries, margarine, chocolate, potato chips, salad dressings, and junk foods of all kinds.

What can you do?

The obvious course of action is to remove trans fats from your diet as much as possible. Reduce your intake of junk food and commercially fried food. Bake at home using healthy ingredients rather than buying commercially baked goods.

Avoid all products that list hydrogenated oil as an ingredient. Secondly, use only natural vegetable or olive oil or animal-based fats (butter, ghee, lard, dripping) for cooking.

Do not believe everything that you read on a food ingredient list either. If a product has 0.5 mg or less of trans fats per serving the manufacturer is generally permitted to state on the label that the product contains 'zero trans fats'. For example, even though the Oreo cookie package says 'zero trans fats' you are still getting trans fats. So, if you have six Oreo cookies you could be getting up to 3 milligrams of trans fats.

You can determine the amount of trans fats in a particular packaged food by looking at the Nutrition Facts label. You can also spot trans fats by looking for the ingredients referred to as 'partially hydrogenated oils.' If you see the phrase anywhere on the packet, the product will contain trans fats. Leave it on the shelf.

The bottom line: eating trans fats will increase the likelihood that you develop diabetes, weight gain, heart disease, inflammation, and even cancer. Forget about weight loss while you are eating this devil.

Watch out for this evil sweetener

Another villain is 'high-fructose corn syrup' (HFCS) - an extremely bad sugar. Most people look at a field of corn and see waves of grain, but food companies see it as a cheap sweetener - one that increases the chances of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Obesity is known to cause insulin resistance, high blood pressure, and glucose intolerance.

Research shows that high fructose corn syrup, a sweetener and preservative found in many processed foods, is one of the many culprits that contribute to obesity.

High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is corn syrup that has undergone enzymatic processing to increase its fructose content. Fructose is the natural sugar found in fruit. Until recently, it was thought to be a healthier alternative to sucrose, known more commonly as table sugar.

HFCS has been proven to be a definite health risk as new research continues to link it to the exploding epidemic of obesity, diabetes, cancer and heart disease. A person in the US consumes an average of 81 grams of HFCS each day. A can of soda has 50 grams.

HFCS produces high levels of the hormone insulin which leads to insulin resistance where the body cannot control the high levels of blood sugar levels (hello diabetes). And, it blocks the important hormone leptin which is responsible for appetite control.

Unfortunately, thousands of different products in the grocery store contain HFCS.

Problems caused by this villain:

- It can lead to higher caloric intake.
- It can lead to an increase in bodyweight.
- It fools your body into thinking it is hungry.
- It increases the amount of processed foods you eat, thereby decreasing your intake of nutrient-dense foods.
- It increases insulin resistance and triglycerides (blood fats).

HFCS can be found in a huge variety of foods, everything from bottled salad dressings, ice cream, yogurt, tomato sauce, ketchup, sports drink - even bread, cereals and cookies. It is used in everything from pasta sauces to bacon to beer as well as in "health products" like protein bars and "natural" sodas.

Do not eat these nasties

If you value your health you will eliminate these two major unnatural and harmful man-made non foods. Trans fats and HFCS have no place in a healthy diet.

Here are a few things you can do to make sure these anti-nutrients do not interfere with your appetite control system and ultimately your health.

- Read the labels on everything (even your pet's food). Go to your refrigerator and cupboards and look for products that contain HFCS and trans fats and get rid of them.
- Avoid frozen prepared meals, as they are some of the biggest culprits.
- Stay on the outer aisles of the supermarket where you will find whole foods—vegetables, fresh fruits, meats and eggs (organic, grass-fed and free range if possible).
- Remember fresh foods do not generally have food labels. If it has a label man has interfered with it in some way.



You can spot empty calories by looking at nutritional labels and ingredient lists on foods. Empty calories will usually have very low fiber (if any fiber at all) and will be high in carbohydrates (especially sugars), high in fat, and low in protein.

Often the nutrition labels will list either sugar or white flour as one of the first ingredients. Also, if the ingredient list has all kinds of words you cannot pronounce, it is definitely not a clean food. The shorter the ingredient list, the better.

The best way to start learning how to pick the right foods and make healthier meals for yourself and your family is to start with what you should not be eating.

The top 12 worst junk foods

Ice cream and frozen 'treats'

'Fizzy' drinks, energy drinks and soda

Candy and sweets

Hot dogs, fast food burgers

Cookies, biscuits, cakes

Potato 'chips' and other man made snacks

Fruit drinks and packet fruit drink mixes

Doughnuts and pastries

White bread and buns

Sausage and luncheon 'meats'

Processed meats such as chicken 'nuggets'

Sugar laden breakfast cereals that pretend to be healthy

Now, do me a favour and take a quick inventory of the foods you typically eat during the course of a week. If you can spot more than one or two of those foods on the list above then you would be advised to eliminate them from your diet.

If you are eating HALF of the items on this list the process of removing them from your diet may seem like a major shakeup in your life. But by the same token, the resulting effect on your metabolism will be equally substantial.

You can expect to make MAJOR changes to your body composition when you take steps to remove these junk foods from your diet. Maybe you cannot do this overnight, but you can do it. This book was designed to offer you alternatives to these foods, and by the time you have finished reading it you will understand **exactly** what it is that you need to do to get started.

Many people who eat mainly processed foods are overweight. This is believed to be because processed low quality food is so lacking in vital nutrients that the body just keeps turning up the appetite in the hope that it will eventually receive the nutrients it needs to keep itself healthy.

Processed foods that include white flour and sugar are examples of simple carbohydrates which spike insulin levels causing increased food cravings and binges. Many processed so-called foods will contain these ingredients, including white bread, cookies, chips, crackers, juice, soda, ice cream and most things considered 'junk food.'

Uncontrollable food cravings will kill any diet program dead in the water. But by eating fresh natural foods these cravings can be eliminated.

One of the benefits of a balanced appetite control system is a 'geared up' and faster, more efficient metabolism. This will make losing weight and improving your health so much easier. When you get these dreadful chemicals out of your food, out of your body and out of your life, everything will simply fall into place.

To learn more about healthy clean food alternatives to the junk food that might still be lurking in your home at this very moment, take a look at my book [100 Healthy Raw Snacks And Treats](#). You will find snack and dessert ideas here that are not only good for you (and clean in the sense of this chapter), but which also taste great too. I know, because I eat them almost every day!

Become The Architect To Your Weight Loss Goals

Keeping it balanced

Many popular diets involve taking at least one macronutrient (protein, carbohydrates, and fat) way out of balance. Take your pick, low fat, low carb, no carb, low protein, high protein.

Maybe you have tried one of these diets yourself. If so, you too may have discovered that these are not long term strategies for successful permanent weight loss. While they may produce some 'short term' results, these dieting approaches fall short on their promises for the long haul.

Thankfully there is one sane approach to eating that has proven effective in reducing excess body fat and increasing lean muscle tissue. It also keeps you strong and vibrant, slows the aging process, and improves overall health.

It is not a diet but a long forgotten way of eating – one that we have somehow all but overlooked. It is concerned with preparing and eating sensible, minimally processed, nutrient rich meals - those with the right balance of proteins, carbohydrates and essential fats.

When you eat this way, the persistent appetite you misinterpreted as just another food craving to give into – “I need something really sweet now” – is completely eliminated as your body is finally satisfied.

When you supply your body with the nutrients it needs it will not have to keep turning up your appetite and increasing food cravings in the hope that you will eat something it needs for repairs and maintenance.

It is a little known fact that you actually have to get healthy to lose excess body fat. People often mistakenly think they need to lose weight to get healthy but it is the other way around.

You cannot lose the weight unless your body is functioning properly, and that has to be achieved first and foremost. 21 Days To Healthy Eating is about getting your body and mind into the sort of shape they need to be in so your weight loss will require the least amount of effort.

The balance of a meal

When you read that word 'macronutrient' think of the three primary nutrients that are essential in the largest amounts for your body – protein, carbohydrates and fats.

Protein, from the Greek work **protas**, which means 'of primary importance', is essential to the structure and function of every cell and tissue in your body. It has a leading role in the formation of muscle tissue and also has the ability to elevate your mood, increase mental focus, sustain energy, support your metabolism, strengthen and protect your immune system.

Many people who go on weight loss programs greatly reduce their protein intake because of the association of protein and fat. This is a big mistake. Our muscle tissue is comprised of amino acids taken from protein. If you do not maintain adequate protein intake you will lose lean muscle tissue instead of body fat.

When the diet is finished, lean muscle tissue will not be replaced by lean muscle tissue. It will be replaced by body fat. That is why we see people yo-yo dieting and getting larger and heavier each time.

Balanced meals rich in quality protein have the ability to provide long lasting fullness and freedom from hunger and cravings for hours after eating. This makes protein the star of most sensible weight loss programs. Protein, as part of a balanced meal, slows the release of carbohydrates and produces a favourable insulin response.

If you have been enjoying a 'fit' lifestyle for any length of time, you will know the importance of eating quality protein. It provides the building blocks for your muscles, skin, vital organs, bones, and blood, as well as every cell in your body.

In addition to its role in the renewal, repair and regeneration of cells and tissues, protein also boosts the metabolism – your fat burning machinery. Your body has to work hard to break down protein, and approximately 30 percent of its caloric value is lost during the conversion into energy.

Protein should be the centrepiece for every meal - chosen first - then the other components added to the meal. Wherever or whenever you eat – at home, at work, on the road, or on the go, make the selection of a source of quality protein the primary task. If you do this first, everything about this way of eating is easy and quickly falls into place.

For breakfast you might choose some scrambled eggs, or some cooked oats with some whey protein added. For lunch it might be tuna or chicken and for dinner it might be some lean steak. A great snack might be a protein shake made with whey protein.

For convenience, along with many health benefits, nothing beats high quality whey protein that comes from grass fed cows. The protein in milk is whey protein. Whey is the liquid that separates from the curd during the production of cheese. Whey powder is the result of drying liquid whey. The nutrients become concentrated and it is then packaged and used in that form.

Whey powder can be added to food and drinks, it is portable and instant, so keep a tub of whey protein handy at all times. It is available flavoured (watch for added sugar) or unflavoured, and you can add your own flavours with fruit.

If you get to the end of the day and discover you have not had enough protein it is simple to take a scoop and mix with water or milk to give yourself a protein shot.

You might even experiment with vegetarian sources of protein and with a bit of research you will soon find lots of healthy options that will add variety and a change from animal-based sources of protein.

Carbohydrates are often made out to be the villain when it comes to a consideration of weight loss strategies, and in recent years they have taken a beating. This is actually somewhat of a good thing, as people need to be aware of them and have respect for them. The fact is, carbohydrates are not evil at all, and it is just the way that refined high sugar carbohydrates tend to be consumed in excess these days that causes problems.

For example, a non diet soda can easily contain 13 teaspoons of refined sugar - the resulting spike in insulin is off the charts as your body tries to lower your blood sugar levels. Many other highly refined carbohydrates, such as sugar laden cereals, cookies, and snack type bars and sweets, are the real villains.

People must be eating them in large quantities as the supermarket shelves are groaning under their weight. No wonder we have an obesity epidemic in developed countries.

Carbohydrates are cheap and plentiful. Go to any restaurant and watch as they are piled on before, during, and after the meal. You would think protein is the most valuable resource on the planet the way most places serve you up bread, potatoes, white rice, or any other dirt cheap carbohydrate they can lay their hands on.

“Bring me the chicken or steak” you should say, and leave the cheap carbohydrates on the plate.

One of our acceptable leisure pastimes is consuming and snacking on high carbohydrate food. Be it baked potato chips, fat free cookies, snack bars, or sugar-filled drinks. These overhyped fat free snack foods are nothing more than high-glycemic carbohydrates that contain zero nutrition and quickly skyrocket your insulin levels and put fat storage into overdrive.

The over production of insulin means excess finds its way into all sorts of places in the body causing long term damage to cells and tissue. The absence of protein in these snacks and its ability to buffer the release of carbohydrates is one of the main reasons eating these types of junk foods is so detrimental to one’s body weight and health.

This type of eating is an addictive habit that is a fast track to diabetes, heart disease and other serious diseases. It also may explain why somewhere close to one third of the world's population is overweight (according to the World Health Organization's [projections for 2010](#)).

As part of a well-balanced meal, carbohydrates help the effective delivery of proteins and tell the brain, "You have got fuel for energy". For that reason every meal should contain both protein and natural complex carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates are a macronutrient that your body needs on a daily basis for proper functioning. When you eat complex carbohydrates, they get converted to glycogen and are either used immediately for energy, providing a steady dose of blood sugar, or they are stored in the muscles and liver for energy at a later time.

Simple carbohydrates by contrast, cause a spike in blood sugar and quickly send excess fuel (calories) to the fat storage cells. For sustained energy, eat foods rich in complex carbohydrates such as the following examples.

Vegetables

Vegetables are high in water, low in fat, have multiple vitamins and minerals, and most varieties are complex carbohydrates. Examples are sweet potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, turnip greens, eggplant, potatoes, yams, corn, carrots and onions, all types of lettuce, celery, cucumbers, cabbage, artichokes, and asparagus.

Legumes

Legumes are oftentimes called pulses. These are characterized by seeds that have an exterior pod surrounding them. Beans are a type of legume that is a complex carbohydrate. Specific examples include lentils, kidney beans, black beans, peas, garbanzo beans, soy beans and pinto beans.

Whole Grains

Whole grains are high in fibre, have moderate protein levels, are low in fat and are also a good source of complex carbohydrates. Specific examples include millet, oats, wheat germ, barley, wild rice, brown rice, buckwheat, oat bran, cornmeal and amaranth.

Any product that is made from these grains is also complex as well. Whole grain bread, bagels, buns and rolls are examples of these. Also pasta, macaroni, and breakfast cereals that are made from whole grains, are complex carbohydrates.

Fruits

Fruits are high in water content, fibre, vitamins and they have virtually no fat at all. Fruits that are packed with complex carbohydrates include apricots, oranges, plums, pears, grapefruits and prunes.

Miscellaneous

Soy milk made from soy beans, and dairy products like low-fat yogurt and skim milk, are also complex carbohydrates.

Fats – For the last twenty years or so fats have been characterized as the villain of nutrition and despite the ‘low fat’ craze of the eighties and early-nineties, fat is not your enemy. The real baddies are the ‘bad’ saturated fats and trans fats.

Now we know that fats are not all bad and some are even essential to life. Today the focus is on increasing our intake of the health-promoting essential fats – while curtailing our intake of unhealthy fat, including saturated fats and trans fats.

Good fats — the kind that come from foods like nuts, fish, and vegetable oils that are high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats — can be liberally consumed without having a detrimental effect on your overall health.

In fact, studies have shown that people who consume even large amounts of healthy fats have better cholesterol profiles, less body fat, and less risk of certain kinds of cancers.

Your body needs a certain amount of fats to produce hormones and repair cells and tissues. Fat also lowers the glycemic load (the rate at which carbohydrates induce insulin release into the blood) of foods, so when you eat healthy fats with complex carbohydrates, it slows digestion and keeps blood sugar and energy levels more stable.

Fat is satisfying to the taste buds, so people who eat more healthy fats tend to be less hungry, experience less food cravings, and eat less overall. Reducing fat in the diet, if weight loss is the goal, is the wrong thing to do as the body gets less essential fatty acids which are necessary for many body functions and hormonal balance.

Also the body will not release excess body fat if there is a lack of essential fatty acids.

Essential fats, including omega-3s and omega-6s, and others, are vital for optimal human physical, mental and emotional health and performance. They provide fuel for energy, support fat loss, and promote optimal health right down at cellular level.

Good sources of healthy fats, as part of eating a clean diet, include oily coldwater fish like salmon, nuts (especially almonds, walnuts and pecans), nut butters, flax seed, avocados, nut oils, and olive oil.

Food groups

All foods that provide similar nutrients have been put into food groups so you can better understand where these foods fit into a meal plan. It is very important to eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods from each of the core food groups each day, to make sure you are getting all the carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals your body needs to be healthy and function efficiently.

The core food groups are proteins, carbohydrates, both complex and simple, dairy products, fats and drinks. Most of the foods in your daily meal plan should be chosen from these food groups.

No single food contains all the essential nutrients the body needs to be healthy and function efficiently. The nutritional value of your diet depends on the overall mixture, or balance, of foods that is eaten over a period of time, as well as your individual needs.

That is why a balanced diet is one that is likely to include a large number or variety of foods, so adequate intakes of all the nutrients are achieved.

Note: If you do not find the food you are looking for in the food group you would expect it to be in, it may be because the food includes ingredients from more than one food group – for example, lasagne, hamburgers and meat pies.

Group One - Lean proteins

Chicken or turkey breast

Fish (flounder, salmon, cod, tuna, orange roughy, snapper etc)

Shellfish (lobster, clams, oysters, shrimp, prawns, mussels etc)

Lean red meat

Eggs / egg whites

Low fat dairy products (milk, cheese, yoghurt, cottage cheese etc)

Tempeh or tofu made with soy beans

Whey protein concentrate

High quality meal replacement formula

Group Two - Carbohydrates – complex - starchy

Oatmeal or any other grain (rye, barley, wheat, multi grain)

Potatoes (white, red)

Yams, sweet potatoes, carrots, sweet corn

Beans, lentils, legumes, chick peas

Brown rice

100% whole grain cereals, pasta or bread

Group Three - Carbohydrates – complex – fibrous

Asparagus	Mushrooms
Broccoli	Okra
Brussels sprouts	Peas
Cauliflower	Peppers all colours
Cabbage	Spinach
Cucumber	Salad
Kale	Squash
Green Beans	Tomatoes
Lettuce	Zucchini

Group Four - Carbohydrates – natural simple

Apples	Melon
Bananas	Nectarines
Berries	Oranges
Cantaloupe	Peaches
Grapes	Pears
Grapefruit	Pineapple
Kiwifruit	Plums

Group Five - Dairy Products - Half protein/half carbohydrates

Milk
Cheese
Yoghurt
Cottage Cheese

Group Six – Fats

Olive oil or other vegetable oils
Flax seed oil
Fish oil
Nuts
Seeds
Butter
Natural nut butter
Avocado

Drinks

Water
Herbal tea
Green tea
Coffee (in moderation)
Vegetable juice
Kombucha (health tea)
Coconut water

How your meals are constructed

When you are putting together a meal you will be constructing it with the following macro-nutrients.

- 1.) Choose a lean protein from the protein list for every meal
- 2.) Choose a starchy carbohydrate from the list for every meal
- 3.) Choose a fibrous carbohydrate from the list for every meal
- 4.) Choose a simple carbohydrate for two of your meals
- 5.) Choose a fat portion for two of your meals

Here is how they will look:

Meal One

Lean protein, starchy or fibrous carbohydrate, simple carbohydrate (dairy or fruit)

Meal two – Snack/smaller meal

Lean protein, starchy or simple carbohydrate,

Meal Three

Lean protein, starchy and fibrous carbohydrate (vegetable/salad)

Meal Four Snack/smaller meal

Lean protein, starchy, fibrous or simple carbohydrate

Meal Five

Lean protein, starchy and fibrous carbohydrate (vegetable/salad)

Meal Six if required snack before bedtime

Lean protein, starchy or simple carbohydrate or fat

Sample meal plan number one

This is what a sample day of clean eating meals might look like, based on a 2000 calorie diet.

Breakfast:

1/2 cup dry oatmeal cooked with water, cool then add 1 scoop protein powder, small packet raisins mixed together.

Mid-morning:

2 hard boiled eggs with 1 piece of fruit.

Lunch:

Chicken breast, small yam, 2 cups raw or cooked vegetables.

Mid-afternoon:

Protein shake made with 30 grams whey protein, ½ cup low fat milk, water and ice.

Dinner:

Beef steak, small potato, 2 cups raw or cooked vegetables.

Or 1 piece fish, 1/2 cup brown rice, 2 cups raw or cooked vegetables.

Mid- evening:

1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese mixed with ½ cup low fat yogurt, 1 piece fruit.

Or ½ hour before bed – 1 protein shot - find a protein powder with about 18 - 20 grams of protein and only 2 grams of sugar and blend it with ice and some water.

Sample meal plan number two

Breakfast:

Bowl of oatmeal with fresh fruit and scrambled egg whites with one whole egg.

Mid -morning:

An apple with almond butter spread on the slices.

Lunch:

Sliced chicken breast (from a home-cooked chicken breast, not deli lunchmeat) on Ezekiel 4:9 sprouted grain bread with lettuce and tomatoes and a side salad with olive oil and vinegar dressing.

Mid-afternoon:

Homemade granola with low fat milk and whey protein powder mixed together.

Dinner:

Salmon fillet with herbed brown rice and steamed asparagus in Dijon mustard sauce.

Mid-evening:

Cup of low-fat cottage cheese with a handful of almonds.

The top 12 best foods you should eat regularly

Lean red meats from grass fed animals

Free range poultry and eggs (organic if possible)

Fish and shellfish

Brown rice

Nuts and seeds

Vegetables both cooked and raw

Fresh fruit

Oatmeal or other cooked grains, such as barley, rye, amaranth, millet, buckwheat etc

Low fat dairy products (yoghurt, cheese, milk etc)

Olive oil, flax seed oil, and butter from grass fed cows

Yams or sweet potatoes

Whole wheat bread and 100% whole grain products, sprouted wheat bread.

21st Century Nutrition

Baseline meal formula - 40% carbohydrates, 30% protein, 30% heart healthy fats

Cut the carbohydrates; add the fat. Over the last decade “expert” advice has directed us to do just the opposite and during that time, our average weight has increased by 10 pounds. The typical diet in the developed world is composed of 60-70% carbohydrates, 5-10% proteins and 20-30% fat.

This diet not only increases the likelihood that you will become overweight, it also causes blood sugar instability and loss of muscle tone. It saps vital energy, slows the metabolism and dulls the mind. This type of diet also fails to supply vital building blocks for muscle repair and it lacks the transition fuel source which enables the breakdown of fat.

The pendulum has swung from the high-protein and low fat diets of the 70’s and 80’s to the high carbohydrate diet of the 90’s. And now it seems to have moved toward the middle, the point of balance as we have come to recognize the hormonal effects of the food we eat.

The 40-30-30 eating plan which 21 Days To Healthy Eating recommends is a popular way of eating that favours a ratio of 40 percent carbohydrates, 30 percent protein and 30 percent fat. The 40-30-30 diet works to stabilize blood sugar to help control hunger. It [curbs food cravings](#) and promotes weight loss, yet at the same time supplies enough energy so that an effective exercise program may be undertaken.

The goal of the 40-30-30 diet plan is to achieve proper balance between two primary metabolic hormones; insulin and glucagon. Insulin encourages the body to store excess calories as fat. Glucagon is responsible for seeing that fat is burned off.

There is a metabolic state in which the human body operates most efficiently. This metabolic state can be achieved by eating the correct proportion of carbohydrates, fats, and protein in your every meal. The 40/30/30 formula is favoured by everyone from competitive athletes to people wanting to lose weight to people with illnesses to achieve this beneficial hormonal state for the aim of better health.

Hormonal balance is the key to health maintenance and/or restoration. Since food elicits hormonal responses that can be beneficial or detrimental, it is advisable to cultivate the habit of conscientious eating. We need to be aware of the effect our food choices will have not only on our overall health but also on our physical performance, and our mental and emotional state of health.

This state of exceptional health is well-known to champion athletes. Your own journey toward it can begin with your very next meal. Try not to think of food merely as an item of pleasure or a means to appease hunger. Food is your medicine and your ticket to that state of ultimate body balance, weight loss, strength, great health and greater disease protection.

How many calories will you need?

The World Health Organization states that a diet of 1800 calories for women or 2400 for men is a starvation diet. Yet many people around the world try to diet on much less than this - sometimes as low as 1200 calories for women and 1800 for men.

But we know that diets do not work 95 percent of the time, and this is the main reason why. The calories are too low and trigger the 'starvation response' that teaches the body to hang on to as much fat as possible in preparation for a famine.

To lose weight it is important to go no more than 100-200 calories below your maintenance level. This is determined by that base level of 1800 calories for women and 2400 for men. Then your activity level is added to incorporate activity into your daily caloric needs.

Look at the following calculation:

Taking the base level of 1800 for women and 2400 for men, we add the following based on your activity level.

- If you are sedentary: add 20 percent
- If you are lightly active: add 30 percent
- If you are moderately active (You exercise most days a week.): add 40 percent
- If you are very active (You exercise intensely on a daily basis or for prolonged periods.): add 50 percent
- If you are extra active (You do hard labour or are in athletic training.): add 60 percent

For example: for women who are sedentary, 20 percent of the baseline of 1800 calories is 360 calories which, when added to the baseline, results in a total of 2160 calories.

Here are the caloric results for all levels of activity, for women and men:

Women 1800 + 20 percent equals 2160 calories

1800 + 30	"	"	2340	"
1800 + 40	"	"	2520	"
1800 + 50	"	"	2700	"
1800 + 60	"	"	2880	"

Men 2400 + 20 percent equals 2880 calories

2400 + 30	"	"	3120	"
2400 + 40	"	"	3360	"
2400 + 50	"	"	3600	"
2400 + 60	"	"	3840	"

The result of this formula will be the number of calories you can eat every day and maintain your current weight. In order to lose weight, you will need to take in 100-200 fewer calories than the number listed above that is appropriate to maintain your weight.

You can start your 'clean eating' at this level. If you are not losing weight after two to three weeks, drop another hundred calories off that amount. Try that for another two to three weeks and if you are still not losing fat drop it another 100 calories.

This will still keep you 'under the radar' with small decreases so the 'survival mode' is not triggered - sending your body into 'diet shock' and putting the brakes on fat loss.

Everybody's metabolism is different, and everyone needs to find their own maintenance requirement. If you have not been eating properly for some time your metabolism may have slowed to a crawl and eating plenty of good food will help 'wake' it up again.

Ideally you want to be eating as much as possible but still losing fat slowly. You should be able to increase your food intake over time as your metabolism increases and rebuilds.

This is great for your body as it will have a wider range of food to grab its essential nutrients from. You will also have plenty of energy to support a proper exercise program so you can put some effort into it to make the changes you need to your metabolism so you can eventually have a strong, lean, fit, healthy body.

Well, if this is the goal you cannot rebuild your body with food restriction, which means less food, less energy, less strength, less of everything. Think more - more food, more energy, and more strength. Get your body working with you, not against you, as that is a battle you will never win.

Working with your body and coaxing it to give up its fat stores will mean weight loss, and getting into better physical shape will be an effortless on-going event. Not like the one trick diet pony that promises weight loss in the short term but ignores the rebound weight that kicks in as soon as the diet is called off.

Forget the notion that you can starve the fat off – that is simply not going to happen.

This time we want it to last and be effective every minute of every day and night, whether you are working out or parked on the couch watching television. Once boosted and running right, your metabolic engine will be slowly but surely chewing into those body fat stores.

If you are not losing the fat you want quickly enough, try increasing your exercise intensity. Your strength training program done at the right level of intensity will increase your metabolism and burn the fat off like no other exercise regime on the planet.

If you are unsure of what is involved in strength training, and need some ideas about how to use this mode of exercising to elevate your metabolism, you might find the following two titles of mine useful:

[Hot Metabolism](#) includes two overall strength training routines, while my [Hot Legs Workout](#) was developed to get the ladies in shape fast.

Meet your calorie range by the end of the day

You should also meet your body's needs for all other key nutrients like protein, carbohydrates and fats. One good way to do this is to decide how many meals you want to eat over the day and divide your calorie goal by that number to find out how many calories each of your meals should contain.

If you require 2000 calories per day, divide 2000 by 6. You will learn that you need to eat six 330 odd calorie meals per day. If you require 2400 calories per day you would need six 400 calorie meals. Some meals may have slightly less and some slightly more, what matters is that at the end of the day you have eaten your target calorie goal.

You can either have all of your meals of a similar size, or have three bigger meals as your main meals and two or three smaller meals. The in between meals should still always have a portion of protein and a portion of complex carbohydrates.

Once you have figured out your ideal daily calorie intake, you can go further, and convert this into grams of macro-nutrients. Food can be grouped into carbohydrates, proteins, and fats.

Calculating your macro-nutrient balance

To calculate these ratios exactly, and how many grams of protein, carbohydrate, and fats are required in your daily diet, go to this page and enter in your daily calorie goal. <http://21daystohealthyeating.com/calculators/macro-nutrient-ratio.php>

The calculator will give you the number of grams you will need to aim for each day in each of the three main macro-nutrients - protein, carbohydrate, and fat.

If you want to find out how many grams of protein, carbohydrates, or fats you should have in each meal divide the numbers that this calculator gives you by 6. For example if you need 120 grams of protein each day, divide by 6, and then aim for 20 grams of protein per meal.

You can do this with other nutrients too, to get an idea of how much you need of certain things from each meal. You can purchase a simple nutrition food composition table book or find one online for nutritional tables (protein, carbohydrates and fats) so you can plan your meals and also track what you have eaten each day.

How to build a meal

When you build a balanced meal, consider these simple guidelines. Do not get all caught up just in counting calories. Instead focus on portions. A portion, or one serving, is about the same size as the palm of your hand.

Your first step is to select a quality source of lean protein. Then balance it with an equal quantity of complex carbohydrate. Add at least one or more main course vegetable portions and a leafy green like a green salad. A good goal to aim for is to have a meal made up with at least 50 percent vegetables (raw or cooked).

As for fats it is more about getting bad fats out than finding a source of good (essential) fat in your day – not each meal. Try to avoid the fattest cuts of meat, full fat dairy products like cheese, butter and milk. You can have olive oil on a salad, stir fry your dinner in it, or grab a handful of nuts as a snack.

This simple way of building a meal is repeated meal after meal, day after day, improving your health and your life one meal at a time. It is a lifestyle you can thrive on, not a 'diet' you just 'survive' on.

Remember, when building a balanced meal:

- Protein is the centre piece
- Protein portion size is palm size (4 – 6oz)
- Balance with an equal portion of acceptable carbohydrate (starchy carbohydrate serving is a ½ cup)
- Include a serving of essential fats daily
- Add at least one or two servings of vegetables twice daily

Pay attention to proper portions and practice portion control

Clean eating is not a blank check to eat all you want as long as they are 'clean foods.' Once you know your goal and calculate your target calories for that goal, you will then need to pay attention to portions.

You also need to eat with a goal in-mind. If that is to lose some excess body fat, you will need to structure your meals to keep you within a certain calorie range that results in a slight calorie-deficit by the end of the day.

On the other hand, if you are trying to gain lean tissue like muscle, you will eat slightly more calories than your body requires for maintaining itself. For successful weight control, focus on compliance to a calorie deficit, not just compliance to a food list.

Many people, thanks to super-sized menus and all-you-can-eat buffets, have very whacked out concepts of what a serving is. A serving of brown rice, for instance, is a 1/2 cup of cooked rice — not a mound of it (which could actually be 2-3 servings.)

Sticking to your eating plan does not just mean eating the right foods, it means eating the right amount of food. You might be doing a great job at eating only the foods that are clean on your nutrition program, but if you eat too many of these 'clean' foods, you will still get fat.

As far as fat loss goes, the **quantity** of food is always the main factor to achieve this, not just the **quality** of food. If fat loss is your goal and you are going to be reasonably strict about your nutrition, then also be strict about maintaining a slight (100-200) calorie deficit each day.

If you are overestimating serving and portion size, you will be eating more food than you need. This is why initially when you start a clean eating plan, for the first few weeks, **pay close attention to portions.**

Buy an inexpensive food scale and weigh out portions and use a calorie tracking program at a free site like <http://FitDay.com> This will allow you to get a real sense for portion sizes and how much energy you are consuming in food and how much you are expending with activity and exercise levels.

While you will not need to do this permanently, weighing and tracking your food initially for a period of a few weeks, will 'recalibrate' your sense of what a portion actually is. Once that is done, you can usually 'eyeball' portions accurately.

All meals should be balanced with a protein, a carbohydrate, and a good fat. A good way to measure what to eat is to portion a regular size dinner plate: 1/4 of the plate would be protein, 1/4 complex carbohydrate and 1/2 fibrous vegetables.

To eyeball portion sizes you can use the following estimates:

For one serving

3-4 oz meat = deck of cards
Whole fruit = baseball
Rice = ice cream scoop
1 oz cheese = 2 dice

Cooked vegetables = ½ cup
Fibrous vegetables = 1 cup
Pasta = size of CD
Bread = 1 slice (80 calories)
Peanut Butter = Size of walnut in shell

The 80/20 rule

You do not have to commit to a 100 percent clean diet. If you want to, great! However, that just is not realistic for many of us. Simply being more conscientious about the foods you put into your body can make a big difference to your body composition (muscle/fat) ratio.

Clean eating is not a diet. It is a lifestyle change. So you need to do what works for you in the long term. So many people take an all-or-nothing approach to nutrition, making it hard to stick to long term. Rather than set yourself up for failure, you can aim for eating clean 80 percent of the time. When you cut yourself some wiggle room it makes a healthy eating plan much easier to maintain.

If weight loss is your main goal you will need to aim for eating clean approximately 80 percent of the time. This still leaves you a bit of leeway so you can enjoy social occasions and allow the odd slip up without it sending you backwards. This will help you stay committed to clean eating as a style of eating for the long haul.

If you choose clean foods for this percentage of the time, it is easy to control your calories, you consume enough nutrients for good health, and what you eat the other 20 per cent of the time will not stop you losing excess body fat.

Suppose you eat 6 small meals every day, for a total of 42 meals per week. Sticking to an 80 percent clean eating rate would mean following your clean eating plan for 33 of those weekly meals.

The other 9 times per week, you eat whatever you want as long as you do not go overboard - assuming weight loss is your goal. This kind of approach to your diet is entirely reasonable and should pose no true barrier of any kind to your eventual weight loss.

You do not have to be perfect when you are attempting to eat clean. Just do your best and over time you will make the right choices more often than not.

Call these meals your 'free' meals

If there is something you just cannot live without, be it a special snack, a certain meal, or a few drinks, do not despair. Remember, this is an eating lifestyle, a plan for real-life situations, and a plan you can follow the rest of your life.

Save your special treat for a special day of the week or a special occasion. If you want one or two meals of freedom choose a consistent day of the week to enjoy them – a floating day does not work so well.

Knowing that you have this day to enjoy one or two ‘anything goes’ meals is helpful for your mental well-being. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that you will make faster progress losing fat if you do not allow yourself this freedom.

Quite the opposite can occur, and you end up sabotaging your efforts when the pressure builds up from denying yourself some of the foods you may be used to and enjoy.

This need is met on this day off so you can carry on strongly. If you get right back on track your weight loss goal will not be sabotaged. The trick is not to let your one or two ‘free’ meals take over the rest of the day or the rest of the week.

One thing is for certain – the majority of your calories should come from natural nutrient-rich foods because what you eat most of the time becomes your habitual pattern. Habit patterns are tough to break and what you do every day over the long term is what really counts the most for weight loss and good health.

Once you get in the habit of clean eating, you will generally find that your cravings for less healthy foods are reduced. However, even the cleanest eaters will want to celebrate a birthday with some cake, or maybe eat a dish of Fettuccine Alfredo at a nice Italian restaurant.

Clean eating is about averages, not the exceptions. Many people give themselves one day each week when they get to break the rules a little bit. There is nothing wrong with this, provided the rest of the week you are eating properly. The benefits of the other six days of healthy eating will far outstrip a few indulgent meals.

Do not get hung up on what you cannot have. Focus on what you can eat and should be eating and keep that your main focus. Avoid the all-or-nothing attitude, or filling your mind with opposing thoughts.

If you make a mistake, do not let it ruin your entire program – certainly not a whole week, and hopefully not even an entire day. What ruins a healthy eating program is thinking that you must either be ‘on’ or ‘off it’ and allowing one meal off your program to completely derail you.

All or nothing thinking is the great killer of lifestyle changes in their infancy. Rest assured a single meal of **anything** will have virtually no impact on your condition. It is not what you do occasionally, it is what you do most of the time, meal after meal, day after day, that will determine your long term results.

Give yourself time to make these changes

It is important to point out that reaching your weight loss goal is not something that will happen right away. We are surrounded by poor quality food and some effort will need to be put into avoiding it along with making the necessary changes. This will not happen instantly but bit by bit, by eliminating poor food choices and replacing them with higher quality more natural foods.

How long this journey will take is different for everybody. Some people can jump in and 'get it' really quickly, others take longer. Some even have detours where they go off the track and others can come to a complete stop and even go backwards for a while. If you have been eating poorly and not exercising, both your body and your mind will have some adjusting to do.

When you eat 'whatever, whenever', and all that sugar and fat, the experience is fairly enjoyable, and sitting on the couch does not feel too bad, either. If you try to change everything too quickly the odds are good that you will feel bad, get discouraged, and give up. So be patient, as a time will come when a healthy snack will taste as good as the junk food you felt bad about eating.

Deciding to lose weight and eat clean higher-quality food is not a decision you will make just once and everything will fall into place. It will be a decision you will need to make each and every day. There will always be the need to think ahead and plan and prepare your food for the next day if you have to leave your house and go off to work.

This will never change. But it is crucial if you are to have the right foods to eat at the right times so you are not left at the mercy of whims, cravings and circumstances. Eating 'whatever, whenever' is easy. But that way of eating is responsible for you not feeling or looking your best, and generally leads to weight gain. Eating the right foods can be a challenge if you have spent a majority of your life eating whatever you want.

It can be hard to break bad habits and even harder to create new ones. But there really is no alternative if you wish to recover your health and make the most of your life.

There is no other way.

So, to rebuild health and lose the weight you want and need to, you will have to get your head around the fact that you need to make some changes. But it is not so bad done slowly over a period of time. That way you will scarcely notice the changes and it is easier on your mind and body as it adjusts at its own pace.

With perseverance you will reap the rewards. You will notice your body becoming leaner, your energy levels will rise, and you will notice improved performance in your chosen physical activities. You can literally transform your body composition (muscle/fat ratio) into a much healthier ratio by eating clean.

Eating regular, high quality meals supports your metabolic rate right down to cellular level. When you provide your body with the right combination of nutrients you are giving it the right fuel for it to perform at the highest level. If you really want to look your best and feel your best, you will need to eat as clean as possible.

Scientific studies prove that clean eating will build healthy cells and therefore a healthy body that not only functions at its best but is also resistant to premature aging and preventable disease.

Pretend your body is a high performance sports car, and the food you eat is the gasoline. What type of fuel would you put into it? Certainly not low octane fuel as the car will not perform well unless you fill it with the highest grade gasoline.

Well, your body works the same way and it will not function effectively or look good if you feed it inferior quality foods.

Make the commitment

Eating clean does require a commitment and you should be realistic with yourself because eating clean takes thinking ahead, planning, preparation and some work to make sure you have your meals organized for the day ahead.

You will need to pack your own small meals for the office or work, since the options available to you there will probably not be 'clean.' The good news is that once you get in the habit of preparing your meals ahead of time you will develop some techniques for making it easier and more efficient. You will save yourself some money as well.

Eating clean as a temporary weight loss solution will only frustrate you and make you give up. Commit to it as a lifestyle change and it will become a habit rather than a chore.

If things seem overwhelming at first just start with modest, attainable goals like removing the worst offenders first, and then gradually make other improvements in the coming weeks. The goal is always focused on improvement not perfection.

Three meals a day is ancient history

Our ancestors used to eat three square meals each day. They worked hard manually, often farming or working in the fields, and could easily burn off thousands of calories in a single day. Big hearty meals fuelled this physical labour.

Now-a-days pushing a pen or controlling a computer mouse does not exactly fall into the category of hard physical labour. We can get through the day without hardly lifting a finger or exerting ourselves in any way. About 70 percent of the work force is involved in this labour-non-intensive work. This means that most of us simply do not need to eat big meals to fuel our activities.

Mostly we get out of bed, get in our car, and drive to work, sit at our desk all day, sit in the car driving back home, then sit on the couch and watch television before we go to bed again. We may have been inactive and mostly seated for almost all of the sixteen hours we are awake each day.

The three meals a day regime was a product of a different time and a very different world. It served us well when we were much more active, but now the three squares a day is ancient history and today there is a better way.

Multiply your meals

Eating 5 or 6 compact small meals every 2-3 hours throughout the day is the absolute best way to fuel your body in today's more sedentary world. It is the most efficient way to keep your body's engine (your metabolism) stoked and running well and your energy levels high.

Rather than going for six or more hours without eating, consuming smaller meals more often is an effective way to avoid becoming ravenously hungry and overeating. If you do overeat, the extra calories are more likely to get stored as fat and add stress to your body.

Eating small meals more often is not only good for your waistline it also keeps your blood sugar levels stable, reducing your risk of killer diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

Planning For Weight Loss - One Meal At A Time

Plan for success

Although eating can be one of life's great pleasures it can also be a huge inconvenience. It takes time out of busy days – time that often we feel we should be giving to other, seemingly more important things.

Ironically, the more we attempt to save time by missing meals or neglecting our nutrition the more we harm our health. When we become very hungry it takes over and exerts its control with little regard for our health, waistline or our energy levels.

If we fail to plan what our meals contain and when we are going to eat them we are setting ourselves up for one failure after another and a long road ahead. No amount of willpower or wishful thinking can make up for the short and long term consequences of becoming a 'whatever, whenever' eater.

It is a fact that if you plan ahead and develop a regular schedule anticipating when you need nourishment you will end up eating better food. You will be able to make better choices than if you wait until a craving or whim causes you to eat in response. It tends to be these times when your eating is more likely to end up out of control.

Write down and plan your meals for tomorrow, even if you know that three of those meals will be exactly the same as today. This will help you avoid becoming a victim of uncontrollable splurges of nutritional time bombs that will do nothing good for your health.

By making it a habit to plan and write down your meals, the added consistency to your day will help set your new healthier habits firmly in place for the long haul. By doing some up front planning you will find that you need much less effort and discipline to eat right.

This time and dedication spent planning and preparing is also the key to success for anyone looking to make important changes in their eating habits whether for weight loss or simply to have more energy and 'get up and go'.

If you have never planned your meals before, now is the time to start. Towards the close of each day, look forward and plan your meals. This will give you time to organize the components you need for the following day rather than trying to put together meals on the spot.

Plan your meals

You can plan out your meals for the entire week. This will make it easier when it is time for grocery shopping and you will not have to rack your brain wondering what to eat. It will already be planned out for you.

Plan ahead so that you know what you are going to be eating. Leaving it to the last minute when you are starving or in a hurry can make it hard to make those healthy food choices.

Also if you know what you will be eating for each meal ahead of time, it will be much easier to plan out your healthy grocery list. You will then be much more likely to have the right ingredients on hand when you step into the kitchen.

Planning ahead also gives you the time to try new recipes, and experiment with new types of clean foods. Investing some time each week thinking ahead about your meals and food choices will help you reach your weight loss and fitness goals that much faster.

Once you have determined your nutritional needs you need to create an effective eating plan based around your lifestyle and how you intend to fit your healthy eating around your work, school, family or recreational schedule.

How to use a meal planning worksheet

A meal planning worksheet is a great tool to help you figure out and plan what you will be cooking and preparing for each meal. It will also give you a good overview for an entire week.

It is a good idea to start by pencilling in the meals in the appropriate boxes. Then it is easy to make any necessary changes.

You can download a copy of a weekly meal planning worksheet here:

<http://21daystohealthyeating.com/misc/WeeklyMealPlan.pdf>

Print out some copies so you have them handy.

A meal planning worksheet can also be done in a simple spiral exercise book. You could use one page for the meal plan and the opposite page for preparation instructions so they are at your finger tips.

List the meals down the left hand side for example, breakfast, mid morning, lunch, mid afternoon, dinner and evening snack. Across the top of the page you will need seven columns one for each day of the week. This will give you a box for each meal. Simply write in it what you plan to prepare.

You can either keep your meal planning worksheet in a visible place or you can take it with you if you go off to work. You can also add the intended meal times - for example 7-10-12-3-6-9 so you can keep yourself on track and not get too hungry.

Take your food with you

When you will be away from home or work, plan your meals and take them along so that you will be able to eat regularly and will not be tempted by junk food. If necessary, carry a cooler loaded with clean eating foods to get through the day.

Even people who stay at home will still need to plan ahead so their meals are already planned and prepared. Have a couple of back up meals handy like a protein bar or packaged protein drink, almonds, mixed nuts, fruit like apples in your glove box, handbag, laptop bag or desk at the office.

These can come in handy if you should miss a meal, find yourself out to lunch with a friend, or something else has caused you to get off track. This will give you some clean eating options when you need them.

Identify the trouble spots

You will soon get to know where you have the most trouble staying on track. For many people it is the first meal in the morning and for others it could be when you get home from work hungry and tired.

The only way to counter these trouble spots is to brainstorm a solution or two and put it in place so there is no reason not to have a proper meal. It could mean preparing food beforehand and having it ready in the fridge so you do not have to cook anything when you are short on time or energy.

It could be that you use a convenience type of food to get you by - for example, a quick protein shake, meal replacement powder or protein bar. This will buy you some time to sort out something more substantial as eating real food is always a better option than a supplement type food. But if it stops you going off track it is well worth the trade off.

Time for food preparation is the key, whether breakfast at home, snacks/lunch to go, or dinner plans. Eliminate time-wasters (like staying at work to finish that 'one more thing' that never ends) as these take away from food preparation time. You might even have to give up some television time but it will be well worth it.

Beware the urge to slip out in the middle of the night to the drive thru to quell a late night craving (as these inevitably add salt, sugar or unhealthy fats to whatever is causing the yo-yo yearnings). This will mean less sleep, then lack of motivation for exercise in the morning because you feel too tired or bloated from the unhealthy food.

Sometimes you will slip up and disrupt the cycle that you have been adhering to faithfully. But it is always a matter of choice as to how quickly you can stem the damage, and, thankfully, anywhere on the cycle **we can get back on track!** You are only ever one meal away from getting back on track.

If you slip up and miss a meal or two and go on an uncontrollable binge, do not beat yourself up. Most likely it will be because you have not planned enough food for the day. Rather than dwell on something that is over and done with, plan at least two solutions for the next time you are at risk of the same thing happening.

It could be something as simple as a handful of almonds, an apple and a scoop of protein powder in some low fat milk while you prepare something more satisfying.

Remember, it is all about improvement, not perfection. You will get better and better at managing these situations. Like anything worthwhile in this life it takes some effort and practice before we get things mostly right.

At the end of each day have a quick think and ask yourself this: "Have I done enough today to move me towards my goal?" You are either moving towards it or moving away from it there is no middle ground on this one.

You will know when the balance shifts away from the negative and towards the positive on a more consistent basis. And you will reap the rewards of your efforts - big time.

How do you begin?

There are two ways to attack this - you could go 'cold turkey' and just do it starting right now or start slowly and make changes over time. Going cold turkey is better for those who do not like to be tempted by certain foods; sometimes just having a taste can do more damage than good and you want to eliminate temptation right from the start.

Those who prefer a gradual start might have more willpower to resist food temptations and overeating. If you are going to start slowly, begin to gradually add healthier foods to your menu on a daily basis. Each week try to increase the portion of healthier foods and decrease the foods you normally eat that are not so healthy.

To start cold turkey, clean out the refrigerator and pantry so that you always have healthy choices on hand, and get rid of all the unhealthy foods. Your first trip to the supermarket may be a long one but in time you will know what to eat and what not to eat without having to read every label.

Help, suddenly I can eat anything

Old fashioned restrictive food dieting is easy, at least in one way. It is very black and white. You know exactly what to eat (but usually it is not what you want) and exactly how much to eat (but never as much as you want).

But eating one item from column 'A' and two from column 'B' and occasionally one from column 'C' has never been and never will be a permanent weight loss solution. How can you live your life like that? Is it any wonder that diets fail to work 95 percent of the time?

In contrast, 'everyday' healthy eating comes in all shades of gray. You still know you need to eat clean, but many of the foods forbidden to the strict dieter are now acceptable, at least when eaten in moderation. So do not be like a kid in a candy store – slow and sure wins the day.

A whole new way of eating and living is about to be discovered and enjoyed by you. Let go of old beliefs and obstacles in your thinking and embrace a healthier way of enjoying one of our greatest pleasures – the food that we eat. Now you can let it do its real job and that is to supply you with the energy to live your very best life.

What gets measured gets managed - calorie counting

There are few words that spark more passionate debate in the fitness community than whether people should count calories. The pro-calorie counting camp argues that it is virtually impossible to make successful changes in a person's diet without knowing exactly what they are consuming each day.

The anti-calorie counting group believes that counting calories is tedious, unnecessary, and often de-motivating. And like all grand debates, the truth typically lies somewhere in the middle.

If calorie consumption is at the root of fat gain or fat loss, then calories do matter a great deal. Calorie counting means a detailed daily tracking of food. This requires measuring and/or weighing food and logging it in either a journal or online in a special software program.

While calorie counting is often associated with weight or fat loss programs, it can also be a powerful tool if you are trying to gain lean body mass, strength, or improve your athletic performance.

It is not unusual to fix training plateaus or performance in the gym or sports with tweaks to an eating plan. In fact, it is probably the first place anyone should look when they have hit a wall in their progress. So even if you eat clean and are already very fit, you can benefit every now and then from short-periods of detailed food tracking.

Tracking your food and calories creates awareness.

Awareness is always the first step in changing or fixing something. If you are not aware of a problem, it will persist. In the case of eating healthier there are multiple layers of awareness that people need to have in order to make improvements.

At the most basic level, you have to understand what you are actually eating. Study after study shows that most people underestimate how much food and how many calories they actually consume each day.

Just the act of keeping track of your food creates awareness. Forget about whether that food is good or bad. Just learn what it is. A website like <http://FitDay.com> has made it easier than ever for you to log your food. As you do this, you will develop a heightened awareness for a number of things:

Nutritional labelling

Portions

How many calories you are actually consuming

Your own perception gaps between what you think you are eating and what you really are eating

Macro nutrients, (protein, carbohydrates, fats) and their ratios

Once you have that awareness it is much easier to continue to tweak your eating plan, since you will know exactly what you need to work on. But without that awareness and baseline, you will be aiming in the dark.

Can food journaling really help you lose weight?

According to a group of researchers involved in the Weight Loss Maintenance study, the answer is a resounding yes. In the study, nearly 1,700 overweight and obese people were asked to keep a daily journal of both food and exercise.

After six months, participants lost an average of 13 pounds. When researchers analyzed the data, they found that weight loss virtually doubled between those who kept a journal and those who did not.

According to Weight Control Registry (which monitors the habits and behaviours of more than 5,000 individuals who have lost weight and kept it off for at least a year), keeping a food log ranks up there among the top three or four most important strategies people use to lose weight and keep it off.

One of the greatest benefits to tracking your food intake is that you will become aware that about 80 percent of the improvements to your overall health and body weight will come from making better decisions about approximately just 20 percent of the foods that you currently have been eating.

Devise a plan to correct these problematic areas in your current diet and you will have a target to aim for. For people who already eat fairly healthy, or are trying to optimize their diet for certain athletic or fitness goals, it will be much harder to diagnose areas of improvement without more detailed tracking.

If you have already ditched all the junk, and you are still hitting a wall, it is more important than ever to dig down into the details to find a way to progress.

Once you identify the worst offenders, you can then start to look at healthy substitutions and make good decisions about what you need to eat to hit your body composition (muscle/fat ratio) goals.

Again, because most food tracking tools now do all the calculations for you, setting a daily calorie consumption goal is really a cinch. Same goes for tracking and tweaking macro-nutrients.

Losing body fat or gaining lean muscle is a slow, gradual process that is measured in weeks and months, not days or hours. One of the benefits of tracking food alongside other metrics like percentage body fat, weight, and lean body mass, is that it allows you to look back and see your progress, which can be very rewarding and motivating.

It also lets you spot the areas where you continue to struggle, and to come up with adjustments to fix them. Food tracking gives you visibility into the 'whys', not just the 'what's'.

Should everyone count calories and track food?

It is a good idea for everyone to track food and calories for at least an initial period of time when starting a new fitness or diet routine. In most cases, an initial round of tracking (4-6 weeks) is beneficial to nearly everyone, especially people who are just starting to clean up their diet, sometimes after years of poor eating habits.

Awareness is so important in these cases, and it is difficult to create that awareness without daily accounting and visibility.

How long to continue detailed tracking is really a question of how easy it is for people to 'unlearn' their bad habits and adopt the new ones. It takes about 30 days to break a pattern, so depending on how responsive you are to what you are learning from food tracking, a detailed log might become unnecessary within 4-6 weeks.

At that point, your intuition and 'feel' for what you are eating may be enough to carry you along.

When calorie counting goes too far

While some people decide to track calories for the long-haul, this typically is not necessary. After a few months, most people should have a pretty solid idea of what they need to eat and in what amounts to support their goals.

Athletes, competitive bodybuilders, or figure competitors can benefit from more regular and ongoing food tracking, since more detailed tweaking can be competitively advantageous. However, outside of periods when you have to be in peak condition, ongoing food tracking is not typically necessary.

Obsessive or compulsive calorie-counting or food tracking can also be a symptom of more serious underlying issues, like a developing or existing eating disorder. Even here, it is important to remember that food tracking and calorie counting is not the cause of this behaviour, but typically a symptom of a pre-existing or underlying condition.

Remember, the real goal of calorie-counting and food tracking is to get to a point where you no longer need to use this tool on an ongoing basis to eat healthy and stay lean and trim.

Measuring your body composition

Body composition is the body's relative amount of fat to fat-free mass (muscle/fat ratio). Those with optimal body composition are typically healthier, move more easily and efficiently, and in general, feel and look better than those with less-than-ideal body composition.

Achieving a more optimal body composition goes a long way toward improving your quality of life and overall health and wellness. As it involves losing body fat it also reduces your risk of disease.

Body composition is divided into two separate types of mass: fat-free mass - which is comprised of all of the body's non-fat tissues - and body fat. Fat-free mass includes muscle tissue, bone, organs and tissues.

Body fat is literally fat located at storage sites within the body. Some fat is essential and is necessary for overall health, protecting internal organs, providing energy, and regulating hormones that perform various functions in metabolic health.

However, when someone becomes overweight or obese, they have an excessive accumulation of body fat. This can be measured by a body fat calculator that you will find here:

<http://21daystohealthyeating.com/calculators/body-fat-percentage.php>

Your body fat percentage is the percentage of your total body weight that is comprised of body fat. Decreasing your body fat percentage, if it is too high, is not just about improving your appearance. A high percentage of body fat can have a negative effect on your overall health and well-being.

Weighing yourself on a regular bathroom scale does not assess your body composition, because a regular scale cannot tell the difference between how much of your total weight is comprised of water, fat, or muscle.

If you are on an eating program with the goal of losing weight, assessing your body fat percentage is THE most important measurement you can take. A good goal to aim for in the healthy range is under 30 percent body fat for women and under 20 percent for men.

Body composition is an **essential** measure of health and fitness for both athletes and the general population. Athletes have much lower levels of body fat, as carrying around an excess is just dead weight, and cannot contribute to athletic performance.

The First 7 Days To Fat Loss – Reinventing Breakfast

Putting it all together - 21 Days To Healthy Eating

In this chapter we are going to begin the process of putting it all together – taking the theory of clean eating that I outlined in the previous chapters, and using it to modify your diet. But do not worry; you will not be required to make a lifestyle change overnight. Instead, I will show you how to do it incrementally, so that you can effect your own change of diet on your own schedule.

I am going to show you how to do this over a period of exactly 21 days. Now, there is no need to follow this plan religiously for 21 consecutive days. That is probably not realistic. So instead, I am going to break it down into three segments of just 7 days. You can work on each segment for exactly 7 days, or you can spend a month getting comfortable with each one before moving onto the next.

The important point is to use these three separate eating plans, which will cover (and reinvent) breakfast, lunch, and dinner, to effect a plan of clean eating that will put you on the path to guaranteed fat loss.

Again, this is not a “diet” that I am putting you on. So you do not need to throw yourself into it with the expectation that you can “do it” because you only need to make it to the finish line somewhere in the near future. There is no finish line. There is only a process to get started, and you can ease yourself into the process at your own pace.

You can think of all the components of 21 Days To Healthy Eating that you have been reading about as parts of a jig saw puzzle. We are now going to put them together so that an entire picture is built up and becomes recognizable. This picture will be your new, healthier way of eating that will result in losing excess body fat. It will also help increase your energy levels and have you both looking and feeling your best.

Piece by piece we will work on placing the parts together into the jigsaw puzzle. Some will go into place easier than others. But they do all fit together, so it is just a matter of persevering until the puzzle starts to take shape and you can see the results of your labour.

In this chapter we tackle what many nutritionists believe to be the most important meal of the day – breakfast.

Days 1 through 7 – Getting the breakfast menu right

Day 1

Set some time aside to read 21 Days To Healthy Eating at least half way through.

Day 2

Read the rest of the program.

Day 3

Step 1) Go to page 48-49 and calculate the number of calories you will require each day depending on your current activity level. Cut back 100-200 calories if weight loss is your goal.

Step 2) After you have worked out your ideal daily calorie intake you can then go a step further and convert this into the ratios of macro-nutrients that will make up your meals. This will give you the weight in grams of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats you will be eating.

The ratio of percentages for these three macro-nutrients recommended for the 21 Days To Healthy Eating program is 40-30-30. This means 40 percent of your meal should be carbohydrate, 30 percent protein, and 30 percent fat.

To convert these ratios into physical numbers that you can work with – which is the number of grams of protein, carbohydrate, and fats required for your daily diet, go to this page and enter in your daily calorie goal.

<http://21daystohealthyeating.com/calculators/macro-nutrient-ratio.php>

This calculator will give you the approximate number of grams you should aim to eat each day for each of the three main macro-nutrients - protein, carbohydrate, and fat.

If you want to find out how many grams of protein, carbohydrates, or fats you should have in each meal divide the numbers that this calculator gives you by 6 (assuming that you will be working off a plan that involves eating 6 small meals each day – as I do). For example if you need 120 grams of protein each day, divide by 6, and then aim for 20 grams of protein per meal.

Day 4

Print out the meal plan worksheet here:

<http://21daystohealthyeating.com/misc/WeeklyMealPlan.pdf>

Start by putting in your breakfast for the next 7 days.

Choose some simple meals to start off with. It does not matter if the same meal is used over and over. Some people enjoy cooked oatmeal, fruit and protein powder for months (sometimes years) on end, and are quite happy with the ease, speed, simplicity, and convenience of preparing so simple a breakfast.

If you choose a breakfast like this it can be made the night before so you only need to grab it from the fridge when you arise in the morning. This makes breakfast a no brainer. You can vary the fruit you use with your cooked oatmeal adding either fresh or dried fruits, like sultanas or goji berries or apricots.

There are literally dozens of other possible choices here. Even chopped nuts, like almonds or flaked dried coconut, can give natural flavour, different textures, and add variety.

This breakfast is a little like a yummy dessert. Imagine chocolate or banana flavoured porridge! But it is actually a perfectly balanced, delicious portable meal and it could not be easier first thing in the morning when in a rush and it is already prepared and ready to go.

Here are some of my favourite breakfast ideas:



1) Rise 'n shine smoothie

Blend 1 scoop whey protein powder, 1 cup fat-free milk, 1 banana.

Nutrition Info: 341 calories, 25g protein, 32g carbohydrate, 7g fat.

2) The traditionalist

2 hard-boiled eggs, 1 slice rye bread, toasted, 1 cup fat-free milk.

Nutrition Info: 330 calories, 22g protein, 32g carbohydrate, 8g fat.

3) Power oatmeal

Cook 1/4 cup dry plain oats and mix with 1/2 scoop whey protein powder, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 2 tablespoons walnuts, 1/3 cup blueberries mixed in 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese with 1 tsp pure maple syrup.

Nutrition Info: 338 calories, 26g protein, 35g carbohydrate, 9g fat.

4) The mini rise 'n shine

Blend 1 scoop whey protein powder, 1 cup fat-free milk, 1/2 cup raspberries (or any other berries), 1/2 banana, 2 teaspoons almond or other nut butter.

Nutrition Info: 356 calories, 34g protein, 38g carbohydrate, 9g fat.

5) The slimmed-down traditionalist

1 hard-boiled egg, 1 slice rye bread topped with 2 teaspoons almond or other nut butter, 1 kiwifruit, 1 cup fat-free milk.

Nutrition Info: 358 calories, 20g protein, 42g carbohydrate, 13g fat.

6) Best of all breakie

Small tin salmon, 1/2 cup boiled diced potatoes, small onion, diced, medium tomato, diced.

Fry onion in little olive oil, add diced potato, salmon broken up, tomato diced. Beat an egg a little and pour over. Flip over after a few minutes. Cook a couple more minutes.

Nutrition Info: 386 calories, 30g protein, 143g carbohydrate, 18g fat.

More breakfast examples

Example One

4 egg whites plus 1-2 yolks omelette
1 cup mushrooms
Oatmeal/low fat milk

Example Two

Oatmeal cooked
Protein powder
Banana

Example Three

1 slice wholegrain toast
Tin sardines
Tomato

Example Four

Berry smoothie with protein powder
Whole meal toast with 1 tablespoon any nut butter

Day 5

Now that you have chosen your breakfasts write out a shopping list for the ingredients you will need and do your shopping so you have everything on hand to get started. Have a practice run with a breakfast recipe.

Continue re-reading 21 Days To Healthy Eating so that you really start to reinforce the concepts of clean eating in your mind.

If you are not already doing so, start breaking your meals for the day into 5-6 smaller meals.

Day 6

Today we are going to set up tracking our food. There are three ways to do this:

- 1) Use the free online resource that is <http://FitDay.com>
- 2) Use the food tracker worksheets available by clicking on the links presented below.
- 3) You can also use a simple exercise book - just rule up four columns across the page for protein, carbohydrates, fats and calories.

If you are going to use this last method to track your calories make sure you have purchased your exercise book so you can start writing in your meals.

If you wish to use the 21 Days To Healthy Eating Daily Food Tracker sheet go to one of these pages and print some out.

This one has lots of rows and makes it easy for you to track up to 4 food items per main meal, and 3 items per smaller meal:

<http://21daystohealthyeating.com/misc/DailyFoodTracker.pdf>

This one has one fewer rows per meal:

<http://21daystohealthyeating.com/misc/DailyFoodTrackerLessRows.pdf>

Finally, this version has no rows, allowing you to write in whatever you like. So you will be able to record more food items per meal, but you sacrifice the ability to easily lookup the quantities of protein, carbohydrates, fat, and calories that go with a particular food item.

<http://21daystohealthyeating.com/misc/DailyFoodTrackerNoRows.pdf>

Have a look at each of them and print out the one you think you can work with the best.

If you have decided to use the online tracking program at <http://FitDay.com> go there and set up your free account and explore the website. It will take a few sessions to become familiar with the process of tracking your food, but once you have learned how to do it you will find it quick and easy.

If you have decided to use the tracker sheets, or exercise book, list your foods down the left hand side of the page.

You will need the number of grams of protein, carbohydrates, and fats, and the number of calories to enter in the columns across the page. You can use the following resources to get these quantities for a particular food:

No 1) <http://FitDay.com> has a food composition database.

No 2) Online food composition tables are available here:

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/>

No 3) Hard copy food composition tables can be purchased from a book store.

Add all the amounts at the bottom of the page each day to give you your total number of grams in each of the macro-nutrients, and the total number of calories.

Some of your meals will be the same, so the hardest part is getting the nutritional information together for the first time. It gets easier as you assemble your template. Eventually you only have to look up the odd food if you try a new recipe or eat different foods.

Day 7

Keep working on your breakfasts, preparing them and working out the quantities of macro-nutrients and calories, and keep recording them on your food tracking worksheet.

Revise everything you have done in these first six days. Continue on reading over anything that is unclear in your 21 Days To Healthy Eating manual.

The Second 7 Days To Fat Loss – Let's Do Lunch

The evidence is overwhelming that next to breakfast, lunch is the most important meal of the day. But these days the old fashioned hour long lunch break is not so popular and many people find it easy to skip this meal. But skipping lunch causes a reduction in blood sugar levels and lowers the metabolism throughout the afternoon. If your blood sugar becomes low it is hard to concentrate on anything as your body runs low on fuel.

Your body needs food for energy just like a car needs fuel in order for it to run. You would not get very far on an all day trip if you did not stop and refuel your car. The same is true for your body.

Eating a balanced lunch helps curb your appetite all afternoon and into the evening. When you skip lunch, by mid afternoon your energy stores are exhausted. You may feel tired, drained, and ravenously hungry. This increases the risk of out-of-control food cravings, overeating, or indulging in unhealthy foods.

It is important to take a proper lunch break away from your desk or work environment. Taking the time to clear your mind and recharge your batteries will keep you energized throughout the afternoon and well into the evening.

When you pack a small healthy meal for lunch you will discover that you become more creative and productive in the long run. You may even be able to have a chat or a laugh with co-workers while you eat your lunch. This will break up the day and make it more enjoyable.

A healthy lunch does not have to be difficult to prepare or boring to eat. Simply by planning ahead and preparing your lunch the night before you will dramatically improve your chances of sticking to your goal of regularly eating clean lunches.

Day 8

Plan the week's breakfasts again on your meal planning worksheet. But this time add lunches as well.

Some lunch ideas:

1) Anytime anywhere pancake

Yields: 1 large pancake.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup quick oats or old-fashioned oatmeal, 4 egg whites,
1/2 apple, diced, 1 scoop protein powder, 1 teaspoon cinnamon.



Put all ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Stir until the mixture has a semi-liquid pancake-batter-like consistency.

Spray some non-stick spray on a frying pan and pour the mixture into the pan. Cook on medium heat. When one side is lightly browned and solid enough to flip, turn the pancake over with a spatula and cook the other side until firm.

Wrap up your pancake in foil and take it to go, put it in the fridge for later use, or eat it hot. Oatmeal pancakes will also stay fresh all day long without refrigeration.

Nutrition info: 423 calories, 39g protein, 53g carbohydrate, 6g fat.

This recipe makes one large (6-8" diameter) pancake and it is a complete meal. If you need fewer calories to accommodate your personal nutrition plan, simply decrease the amounts of all ingredients proportionately to get the desired number of calories.

You can use other types of fruit, such as bananas or berries, instead of apples (get as creative as you want).

If you need more or fewer calories, increase or decrease the amount of ingredients. If you use more than a cup of oatmeal, it is best to make two smaller pancakes, because if the pancake is too large, it tends to fall apart when you try to flip it.

If the batter consistency is not right, you can use fewer egg whites or more oatmeal to make it thicker, or vice versa. You can also add water if it is too thick. To add calories, use a whole egg or two. You can also reduce the oatmeal slightly and add $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cottage cheese for an even more filling pancake.

This is truly the ultimate travel meal because you can take it with you anywhere. It is also 'finger food' and you can eat it conveniently, a little piece at a time, even while you are behind the wheel.

Other lunch ideas:



2) Salmon sandwich

1 slice whole grain toast topped with 3 oz smoked salmon, 1 tablespoon low-fat cream cheese, sliced tomato and baby spinach, 15 baby carrots, 1 medium apple.

Nutrition info: 380 calories, 24g protein, 48g carbohydrate, 6g fat.

3) Greek chicken salad

Mix 3 oz skinless chicken breast (diced), 1 oz Feta cheese, crumbled. 1/2 cup chickpeas, 1/2 cup salad greens, 1 tomato, diced, 5 small olives.

Nutrition info: 365 calories, 28g protein, 32g carbohydrate, 10g fat.

4) Bean wrap

1 whole-wheat tortilla topped with 1/2 cup bean salad, 1/4 cup low-fat shredded Cheddar cheese, 1/2 cup shredded romaine lettuce, 1/4 avocado (sliced), 2 tablespoons salsa.

Nutrition info: 342 calories, 21g protein, 44g carbohydrate, 12g fat.



5) Chicken and avocado wrap

1 rice mountain bread wrap topped with 4 oz cooked chicken, 1/2 avocado, 1/2 cup shredded lettuce and 2 tablespoons salsa.

Nutrition info: 286 calories, 26g protein, 24g carbohydrate, 10g fat.

6) Turkey sandwich

2 slices whole-wheat bread topped with 4 slices (3 oz) turkey breast. 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard, sliced tomato and baby spinach, 15 baby carrots, 1 apple

Nutrition info: 326 calories, 26g protein, 41g carbohydrate, 4g fat.

7) Tuna melt patties

1 6oz can tuna, drained, 1 egg, beaten, 1/2 cup boiled potato, mashed, 2 tablespoons onion, diced, (or 1/4 teaspoon onion powder), 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder, salt and pepper to taste, 2 tablespoons mozzarella cheese (optional).

Mix all ingredients except cheese together in a small bowl. Heat a small non-stick frying pan over medium heat and spray with non-stick cooking spray.

Make two patties by spooning 1/2 of tuna mixture into each side of the pan and lightly pressing with fork to flatten into a patty. Cook until both sides are brown. Top with 1 tablespoon cheese, or salsa.

Nutrition info: 356 calories, 31g protein, 26g carbohydrate, 7g fat.

Day 9

Check your breakfast and lunch choices so that you have the ingredients you need for your meals for the next few days. Get used to looking ahead and writing down on your shopping list what you need to purchase to make it all happen seamlessly.

Day 10

Calculate your body composition on page 65 and see where you are on the body fat recommendations on the same page below the body fat calculator. Read the entire page again so you understand what your body composition means and its importance in weight loss. Remember the bathroom scales will not be able to measure your true progress.

Day 11

Start to clean out your kitchen. This begins with removing temptation – make your kitchen a ‘junk free’ zone. If it is not there you cannot eat it. It really is this simple.

Look through your fridge, pantry, and freezer, removing all known ‘junk foods’ that will not serve you well, and replace these with foods from the suggested ‘good’ list (page 46). This will move you in the right direction.

Start with modest, attainable goals like removing the worst offenders first, and then gradually make other improvements in the coming weeks.

Day 12

Print out some more meal-planning worksheets and start planning your next week’s meals. Put in your breakfasts and lunches, especially the ones that you enjoyed and found were easy to prepare. Leave anything that was too hard or did not appeal to you.

Some of your meals will be the same, which is fine, and as these increase in number things will get so much easier as you will be building up your favourites.

Write your protein source in first as this is the hardest as it usually takes the most preparation and cooking. So if you plan that first you should find the rest of the meal is easier, as it is usually vegetables which require less attention.

Day 13

Replace any meals that did not work out with some new ideas. Do not be afraid to try new foods and new dishes. You are building a library of new small meals and the more variety you have the more interesting and enjoyable your meals will be.

Remember to multiply favourite meals and put some portions in your freezer so you have some easy meals at your fingertips when you do not feel like cooking.

Day 14

Start to think about those mid morning, mid afternoon, and mid evening small meals. Remember they can be the same size as your other meals or smaller. Do whatever fits best for your day's activities. It is all very flexible, and planning ahead will allow you to decide this.

If you are active, and are exercising on a regular basis, even if it is just a couple of times per week, it is good to be able to prepare appropriate before and after meals that you can wrap around your workout. Here are a few examples of light small meals that will not weigh you down.

Pre-workout Small Meals

1) Power pb and j

1 slice whole-wheat bread topped with 1 tablespoon natural peanut or any other nut butter and 1 tablespoon unsweetened apple butter.

Nutrition Info: 189 calories, 8g protein, 15g carbohydrate, 9g fat.

2) Tropical yogurt

1/2 cup plain low-fat yogurt mixed with 1 teaspoon protein powder and 2 tablespoons raisins.

Nutrition Info: 186 calories, 15g protein, 36g carbohydrate, 2g fat.

3) Mediterranean mini meal

1/2 small whole-wheat pita with 2 tablespoon hummus and 1 tablespoon sunflower seeds 1 apple.

Nutrition Info: 203 calories, 7g protein, 33g carbohydrate, 8g fat.

4) Salmon pita

1/2 whole-wheat pita, 3 oz. canned salmon, sliced tomato.

Nutrition Info: 210 calories, 23g protein, 25g carbohydrate, 5g fat.

Post-Workout Small Meals

1) Recovery shake

Blend 1 scoop whey protein powder, 1 cup low fat milk, 1/2 cup strawberries and 2 tablespoons wheat germ.

Nutrition Info: 306 calories, 29g protein, 43g carbohydrates, 4g fat.



2) Power yogurt

Mix 3/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt, 1/2 scoop whey protein powder, 1/2 cup blueberries (or other berries), 2 tablespoons sunflower seeds.

Nutrition Info: 321 calories, 26g protein, 28g carbohydrate, 13g fat.

Final 7 Days To Fat Loss – Dinners That Delight

Many people have fond memories of times spent lingering around the dining table with family and friends, sharing meals and lively conversation. But now-a-days many families are often coping with long workdays, after-school activities, and otherwise hectic lifestyles. Too often, family meals eaten together are the first thing to get squeezed out of the schedule.

Studies verify what some might consider common sense: families that eat together eat healthier. They consume less fast food, less refined and processed food, and they eat more meals cooked from scratch from healthy ingredients.

Since the purpose of 21 Days To Healthy Eating is to help you effect a lifestyle change it is also important to involve the ones you love the most. Help your significant other and your children understand the importance of eating healthy food as well. This will make your success greater and help all of your family achieve a greater appreciation of the food you eat.

Making simple changes, one at a time, is the best way to get your family to eat more 'clean' foods. You can even start with working more salads and vegetables into your meals. Be creative, and remember it may take a few tries before a new food is accepted.

Parents play a big role in shaping their children's eating habits. When parents eat a variety of foods that are 'clean', children learn to like these foods as well. Your commitment to a healthy diet will encourage your children to recognize the importance of good nutrition. This can carry over into settings where children and young adults make their own choices.

Developing good eating habits early on can help your children be healthier for the rest of their lives. It is a good opportunity to teach them the difference between clean eating and processed food. It could prove to be one of the most beneficial lessons you give them.

Family meals do not have to be fancy; they can be made up of easy dishes that you enjoy together a few times a week. Have the whole family help in the kitchen. Children can wash or cut vegetables, toss salads, mix sauces, and set the table.

Cook a big pot of something delicious during the weekend for easy meal preparation on busy weekdays. Or try a crock-pot dish that you put together before leaving for work in the morning, and come home to the delicious smell of a home cooked meal.

You can make healthy eating a family affair so everyone looks forward to the event and values their time spent together.

Day 15

Put together your meal plan for the week. Try to fill in every blank space. Breakfast, mid morning, lunch, mid afternoon, dinner and a mid evening small meal.

Some dinner ideas:

1) Italian favorite

1 cup cooked whole-wheat pasta tossed with sauce made with 4 oz pre-cooked, extra-lean ground beef (or ground turkey/chicken, 1/2 cup tomato sauce, 1/2 chopped red pepper and desired spices; top with 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese.

Nutrition Info: 433 calories, 43g protein, 50g carbohydrate, 11g fat.



2) Fresh fish fare

4 oz grilled white fish (or wild salmon), 1/2 cup cooked quinoa, 1 cup steamed broccoli drizzled with 1 tablespoon olive oil.

Nutrition Info: 454 calories, 35g protein, 35g carbohydrate, 19g fat.

3) Tofu stir-fry

In a non stick frying pan, cook over medium heat (until veggies are tender) 3 oz firm tofu, 1/2 cup cooked brown rice, 2 tablespoons peanuts, 1/2 cup chopped carrots, 1/2 cup chopped red pepper, 1/2 cup broccoli and 3 tablespoons Teriyaki sauce.

Nutrition info: 390 calories, 22g protein, 45g carbohydrate, 12g fat.

4) The tiny Italian classic

1/2 cup cooked whole-wheat pasta tossed with sauce made with 3 oz pre-cooked extra-lean ground beef (or ground turkey/chicken), 1/2 cup tomato sauce, 1/2 chopped red pepper and desired spices; top with 1 tablespoon grated parmesan cheese.

Nutrition info: 351 calories, 32g protein, 41g carbohydrate, 7g fat.

5) The smaller fish fare

3 oz grilled white fish (or wild salmon), 1/2 cup cooked quinoa (or rice), 1/2 cup steamed broccoli drizzled with 2 teaspoons olive oil.

Nutrition info: 363 calories, 29g protein, 32g carbohydrate, 14g fat.

6) Grilled chicken breast and vegetables

4 oz chicken breast, 1/2 cup brown rice. 2 cups raw or cooked vegetables of your choice.

Nutrition info: 340 calories, 28g protein, 42g carbohydrate, 6g fat.

Day 16

Make sure you have the ingredients you need for the next few days written on your shopping list.

Continue to keep stocking up on food items from the supermarket that you enjoy and are easy for you to prepare. It is important to have some simple choices that can be assembled quickly when time or energy is in short supply.

Keep training yourself to look ahead, plan ahead, shop ahead, prepare ahead. This is the secret to making this easy and doable. If you are always on the back foot unprepared it will be stressful trying to keep to your clean eating plan.

Day 17

Keep working on improving the macro-nutrients balance, the protein, carbohydrate and fat.

Try to eat the right amount this week – not too low, not too high.

Eat throughout the day to curb hunger.

Day 18

You should be getting used to setting aside some time each day to prepare your meals for the next day.

It may mean giving up some television time but it will be worth it. The TV programs will be long forgotten but you will be working towards that strong, lean, slim, and healthy energetic body that will more than make up for some lost TV time.

Day 19

Your 'why' will pull you through - we each have moments in our healthier eating journey where we may feel discouraged, tempted, or frustrated. We are only human - to expect no bumps along the path is unrealistic. They are going to come sooner or later.

The key is being able to face them and bounce back quickly. During these times we may need to dig deeper within and refocus on the prize. The prize is the reason 'why' you want to eat healthier, and it is of vital importance to keep this firmly in your mind.

We each will have different reasons, it could be to lose weight, to better manage a health condition, to have more energy, to slow the aging process, or to be around to get to know your grandchildren - or be sure you even get to meet them.

This is where your 'why' will help pull you through when things get difficult. So in order that this strategy can help you manage a 'bump' in the road, you need to develop a very clear vision of what your reason is.

So get a piece of paper and write all the reasons 'why' you need to eat healthier and lose weight. The more reasons you can find the better.

Maybe you can come up with twenty reasons, or even more. These are your very own 'whys'. Keep the list somewhere so you can review it often and remind yourself when things get tough.

Day 20

Start taking your meals with you wherever you go during the day.

Continue to clean out your kitchen until you have no junk food and have replaced it with lots of good clean foods.

Day 21 - Taking it one day at a time

At times you may 'not be feeling like it'. You may lose your focus and even experience frustration and doubt. You will not likely be feeling or seeing much in the way of results yet. Do not worry; just hang in there, as any doubts will be resolved when you are greeted by your first significant breakthrough when you finally 'get it'.

These first 21 days will be the hardest, but just take it **one** day at a time. When you are establishing a good pattern, doing as many of the right things as possible your body will resist change for a while, and then suddenly start working with you.

This reward is usually enough to give you a boost to finish this 21 day period strong so you can go on and continually make further improvements as you go way beyond this period.

Do not expect it to be perfect, nothing in life is perfect. But we can expect improvement and that will be enough to allow you to live happily in your body for the rest of your life.

After these first 21 days of moving into a sustainable clean eating plan you will have pretty well developed a new healthy eating habit, and hopefully one that will be difficult to break. You will not want to go back to feeling less healthy and less energetic.

The Challenges Of Eating Clean

While eating clean is a simple and straight-forward concept, sometimes putting it into practice can be challenging. It is important to know of these challenges ahead of time so you can be prepared and have a plan to overcome them and not let them get the better of you.

Processed food is processed in large part to make it more convenient to prepare. Packaged macaroni and cheese can be made in less than ten minutes by just adding boiling water, but something simple like brown rice can take 45 minutes to cook.

You will need to be prepared to spend more time in the kitchen preparing clean foods. You cannot eat clean unless you begin cooking your own meals. Unless you have someone who will do it for you, you will be preparing your breakfast, lunches, and dinners. But cooking is not hard and can actually be fun.

Clean eating is not complicated, nor is it expensive. Cooking fresh foods from scratch actually costs less than pre-packaged foods. When buying meals-in-a-box, you are actually paying for convenience. But buying food this way instead of fresh foods is trading convenience for nutrition which is not so good for our health.

Pre-packaged foods are highly processed and are also full of sodium, calories, fat, sugar and a multitude of nasty chemicals that disrupt the body's hormone balance and cause you to become overweight.

While cooking from scratch may take a little more time in the kitchen planning and cooking meals, it can be worth it in terms of saving money and getting more vitamins, enzymes and nutrients from food.

When you cook with fresh, whole foods and high quality ingredients, you need less to satisfy you, therefore you consume fewer calories. This will also help you to lose weight.

Take advantage of your freezer, since, despite your best intentions, there will be times when you will not be able to cook a meal from scratch. Plan ahead and cook a big pot of something that you can split into individual meal portions and freeze.

On the days where you cannot or do not want to cook, just take one of these portions out of the freezer and you will have a healthy meal which requires little to no preparation.

Use your days off or weekends to prepare for the week. Make some precooked meals and freeze or refrigerate. Cook some brown rice or chicken, prepare some vegetables and fruit. Make fruit purees and freeze in ice cube trays, or peel and slice some bananas and freeze for an icy treat throughout the week.

Be prepared initially for some blandness

For a while the foods that are 'clean' may seem a bit bland or boring. Processed foods have all kinds of unnatural chemicals and flavourings added to them, all carefully researched by 'food scientists' to tickle your taste buds, even if it causes you to develop heart disease or diabetes or become overweight in the process.

At first glance eating clean might sound boring, but if you are creative in the kitchen you can use fresh and dried herbs and spices, marinades and other flavours and combinations of foods to make meals more interesting and flavoursome.

You will be surprised at the healthy and good tasting choices you can create and like most things the more practice you get the better you will become at it.

When people switch to whole foods, their taste-buds basically go through withdrawal and nothing seems to have the flavour of those pretty boxes of chemically laden food. But keep persevering and do not be afraid to try new foods that have been forgotten and overshadowed by easy convenience processed foods.

Make the changes you need to make on some of the food items you eat most often. Start substituting 100 percent whole wheat bread for white bread. Also check out some of the whole wheat, high fibre wraps, tortillas and pita pockets. Available now are thin rice, corn, wheat, or rye mountain bread at just 70 calories a wrap as alternatives to the usual loaf of bread.

These wraps and pockets are great for filling with meat, fish, eggs and rice or bean salad and are very portable. Wrap in cling film to hold it all together then you can just eat the wrap like an ice cream, pushing the cling film down as you go.

Move away from the refined sugar-rich processed cereals into more natural whole grains like oats, or make yourself a mix of whole grains like barley, millet flakes, rye flakes, quinoa (pronounced keen-wa), amaranth and buckwheat to increase your family's nutritional status overnight. It could be your own special '7 grain mix'.

Cook a ¼ cup of this dry grain mix for a few minutes in some water, let cool and add some whey protein powder and fresh or frozen fruit or berries for an instant dessert. This has got to be the quickest most satisfying dessert ever. You could make a different version every evening and have it for breakfast too. Just double the mix.

Find new recipes for interesting grains and try to cook with wild rice, bulgur wheat, brown basmati rice and couscous. You can make up large brown rice or bean salads with lots of raw vegetables included that will last all week. Simply add some protein and you have an instant meal.

Wrap some up in your mountain bread for a very portable meal to take to work. Or when you get home you only have to cook some steak, chicken or fish and with your rice salad you have a quick and delicious easy meal.

Do not be afraid to test out new recipes. Pick out several recipes that sound appealing to you and try them all out. Make note of the ones that you really like and add them into your weekly rotation. Continue to do this on a regular basis and you will always know what to eat.

Eventually, as you eat cleaner, whole foods, your taste-buds will adjust and you will start to appreciate the natural flavour of the whole food, and not the additives. You will discover many new foods that will more than make up for the loss of flavour from all the chemicals and preservatives that were doing you no good anyway.

Eating out can be easy, make it a game

More and more restaurants are getting on the healthy eating bandwagon. Look for salad options, or dishes that feature one food with a simple side dish of vegetables. For example lean cuts of steak, fish or chicken breast. Many restaurants will make modifications to the dish based on your request, so it pays to talk to the staff.

Instead of dreading the times you have to eat out, turn it into a game. Do your best to make your restaurant meals as clean as possible and when you get your meal you will know in your mind that you have won as you look around at some of the meals other people are eating that are probably much higher in fat and calories.

Drink lots of water

Water keeps you hydrated; helps your body detoxify, aids digestion, can improve concentration and energy and can help you feel fuller and more satisfied over the course of the day.

And when you drink water instead of empty calories like soda, you can dramatically decrease your overall calorie intake for the day.

There are also ways to make water more exciting and flavorful. And, yes, even moderate consumption of tea (black, green or white) and coffee can count toward your daily water requirements.

Concluding words of wisdom

If you have become overweight you will need some rules to get yourself back into good shape. Trying to eat 'intuitively' or just 'winging it' from the start is a recipe for failure.

Ironically, intuitive eating does not come intuitively so you absolutely must have a plan and you must follow that plan if you are to be successful at losing the weight you have planned to lose.

Eventually it will become easier, but it is harder at these early stages while it is not yet a habit. And once it is habit it will hardly need thinking about – you just do it.

Creating nutritional rules and boundaries does NOT create more rules to break. Only unrealistic or unnecessary rules create problems. That is why the rules of clean eating are based on a combination of structure and flexibility so you can live with the concept long term.

If you have too much flexibility and not enough structure, you no longer have a workable plan to follow. If you have too much strict structure and not enough flexibility, you have a plan you can not stick with long term.

Bottom line: Keep a flexible view of your diet but not too much!

In conclusion, eating “clean” is not very complicated. It will adapt to most every day situations and lifestyles. It will be easy to stick to, once you have adapted a taste for it.

Knowing that you are eating healthier should be a good motivation, besides the fact that you will lose weight, if that is your goal.

More ideas for simple meals:

- 1) Grilled chicken steamed brown rice and stir-fried asparagus tossed with olive oil.
- 2) 2-3 scrambled egg whites plus one yolk in vegetable oil, 1 slice whole wheat toast.
- 3) 1 can light tuna, 3-5 grain crackers, green salad with oil/vinegar dressing.
- 4) 1 serving light cottage cheese, 6-8 baby carrots, handful walnuts.
- 5) 1 bowl soup made with kidney/black beans, vegetables and barley.
- 6) 1 large spinach salad topped with grilled salmon and sunflower seeds and your favourite dressing plus 1 whole grain roll.
- 7) Tofu tossed with whole wheat pasta, diced tomatoes and olive oil.
- 8) Small container yogurt topped with slivered almonds, orange segments.
- 9) 1 turkey breast sandwich on whole wheat bread with lettuce and tomato.

- 10) 1 veggie burger patty, steamed broccoli, small baked sweet potato.
- 11) Steak, sweet potato and green beans.
- 12) Sardines, tomatoes on toast.
- 13) Low fat cheese and tomatoes on whole wheat toast.
- 14) Protein shake, 30 grams whey protein, ½ cup milk, water/ice.
- 15) 2 rice biscuits, cottage cheese and tomato or beetroot slices.
- 16) Low fat cottage cheese with mandarin oranges or strawberries.
- 17) Meal replacement shake mix.
- 18) Oatmeal/cottage cheese/egg white pancake with fresh berries.
- 19) Small handful of almonds with an apple.
- 20) Half and half yoghurt and cottage cheese.

Homemade protein bars

Store-bought protein bars can be expensive and full of artificial ingredients, and many of them have an unpleasant flavour or texture. Creating high-protein bars at home is easy and does not require expensive or hard-to-find ingredients.

Best of all, homemade protein bars can be customized to suit your specific nutritional needs and enhanced with flavour extracts or ingredients to create tasty snacks or meal replacements.

Measure out approximately one cup of old fashioned or quick oats into a blender. Process the oats until they resemble flour and then pour them into a large mixing bowl. Add 1 ¼ cups of vanilla protein powder and stir it into the ground oats.

In the blender, combine one tablespoon honey, two teaspoons vanilla extract, 1/2 cup low fat cottage cheese, 1/4 cup water, and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon.

Blend the mixture until it is smooth and uniform in colour and consistency. Pour this mixture into the oats and protein powder and add one cup of natural peanut butter. Mix everything together until it is well combined. Line a 9-inch x 9-inch baking pan with aluminium foil and spray the foil with non-stick cooking spray.

Pour the batter into the pan and refrigerate for at least two hours. Cut into 8 bars, which each supply 300 calories and 24 g of protein. The bars can be cut in half if it is necessary to reach your nutritional goals.

The type of protein powder you use will have an effect on the nutritional content of the finished bars. The peanut butter bars were created by using a 100 percent whey protein powder containing 80 calories per 1/4 cup measure and 22 g of protein.

Your protein powder may contain a different amount, so take that into consideration. Whey, soy and egg protein powders can all be used to create high protein bars. Choose a protein powder that tastes good as a simple shake mixed with water for optimal results.

Variations

Add your own personal twist to homemade protein bar recipes by adding new flavours and ingredients. For example, any flavour of protein powder can be used with good results. Adding chocolate protein powder rather than vanilla creates chocolate peanut butter bars.

If you are not fond of peanuts, replace the peanut butter with almond, cashew or sunflower seed butter. Flavoured extracts are another great way to liven up a batch of protein bars, and you can find many types of extracts such as almond, orange, lemon and coconut in your grocery store.

Sugar-free chocolate chips, dried fruits and chopped nuts also make great additions. The calories in your personalized protein bars can be determined by adding up the calories of all the ingredients and dividing by the number of servings.

Here are a couple of bar recipes to get you started.

Almond maca bars – breakfast or anytime bars



These no bake, high-protein, high-fibre bars are a cinch to make. The chocolate topping makes them seem a bit decadent (skip it if you must, they will still come out fine) – though dark chocolate, rich in anti-oxidants has now entered the echelon of power foods

Ingredients

1 cup almonds raw, 1 cup macadamia nuts, ½ cup flax meal (flax seeds ground in a high powered blender), ½ cup shredded coconut, ½ cup coconut oil, 1 cup dates, 1 tablespoon vanilla extract, ½ teaspoon sea salt, 1 cup dark chocolate 73% (optional)

Place almonds, and macadamia nut into blender and blend until crumbly, add dates and blend till mixture is sticky and is starting to form a ball. Add remaining ingredients and pulse till well combined.

In a small sauce pan, melt coconut oil over very low heat, remove coconut oil from stove, stir vanilla into oil. Add coconut oil mixture to food processor and pulse until ingredients form a coarse paste.

Press mixture into an 8 x 8 glass baking dish. Chill in refrigerator for 1 hour, until mixture hardens. In a small saucepan, melt chocolate over very low heat, stirring continuously.

Spread melted chocolate over bars; return to refrigerator for 30 minutes, until chocolate hardens. Remove from refrigerator, cut into ten bars.

Each bar – 410 calories, 12 g protein, 22 grams carbohydrate, 31 grams heart healthy fats.

No bake protein bar



Ingredients

5 tbsp natural peanut butter (chunky or smooth), 1/2 cup dry oat meal, 1/2 cup oat flour (double the dry oats if you do not have oat flour), 6 scoops chocolate whey protein (approximately 132 grams worth of whey protein powder, 1 tablespoon vanilla essence, 1 cup non-fat dry milk powder, 1/2 cup water (depending on what type of protein you use, you may need to add more)

Modifications: Use vanilla protein and replace ~1/4 cup of the oat flour with a variety of nuts, seeds, or dried berries.

Spray an 8 x 8 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Combine dry ingredients in a medium size bowl and mix well. Add peanut butter and mix - the mixture will be crumbly and dry. Add water and vanilla essence.

Using a wooden spoon or rubber spatula, mix everything until a dough forms which will be sticky. Spread dough into pan using a clean wooden spoon or spatula that has been sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.

Refrigerate a few hours (or freeze for an hour) and cut into 9 squares. Wrap bars individually (use sandwich bags or plastic wrap) or store in covered container between sheets of wax paper. Keep refrigerated.

Each bar - 197 calories, 21 g protein, 13.7 g carbohydrate, 7.2 g fat.

More recipes like this can be found in my snack book [100 Healthy Raw Snacks and Treats](#) They require no baking, have no sugar or gluten and are delicious and fit perfectly into a clean eating diet.

A Firm Toned Body Is Your Ticket To Fat Loss

Say “strength training exercise” and many people think bodybuilding and bulking up. But nothing could be further from the truth. Strength training is undoubtedly the single most important tool in the fight against excess body fat and being overweight.

The fact is that strength training will tone and rebuild lost muscle tissue, thereby increasing your metabolism (your body’s engine). This means you will be burning more calories when you are active and when you are resting or asleep. You will be mobilizing those body fat stores and using them for energy.

And, even though the bathroom scales might read the same you will lose both body fat and inches as muscle is denser than fat and takes up less space. So you can become a smaller and leaner person when you perform strength training exercise on a regular basis.

It seems so silly that some people (especially women) still worry about overdeveloping their muscles and becoming unattractive. As if protruding bellies, thin thighs, saggy butts and flabby chests and arms that many people own are attractive. Toned muscle tissue is what gives a body that firm, sleek shapeliness that most people admire.

For the last 30 odd years we have been lead to believe that aerobic (cardio) activity such as walking, jogging or cycling is necessary for weight loss. Research has now shown that aerobic exercise alone is not sufficient for weight loss. Why, you may say? What are the reasons behind this shift in beliefs?

Muscular strength is now considered a very important piece of the fitness / health puzzle, and a loss of strength is one of the first indicators of the aging process. This loss of muscle tissue starts around the mid 20’s at the rate of around one half pound per year and this rate doubles after age 50 and is a result of not enough muscle building and muscle maintaining activity.

If health is to be maintained this loss needs to be addressed and the only way to do it is to work the muscles with proper exercise on a regular basis. It is no longer enough to exercise the heart and lungs and stretch our muscles. As our muscles are attached to our bones, when we exercise our muscles we strengthen our bones as well as reduce the risk of osteoporosis - the bone thinning and weakening disease.

We used to believe that cardio endurance activity works the muscles, but in reality strength gains are miniscule and very little toning and firming takes place. Any repetitive activity such as cross training machines, stair climbers, bicycles or treadmills do not provide the progressive resistance necessary to develop meaningful strength and an increase in metabolism that strength training can accomplish.

When you are doing activities like walking or jogging, your muscles work repetitively against minimal to zero resistance. This is not the path to building strength and body firmness along with stronger bones. These benefits can only come from increased strength.

As the amount of toned muscle tissue you have on your body determines the metabolic rate (the rate your body burns fuel) if your muscles become flabby and un-toned the amount of fuel (calories) you burn decreases and it becomes more likely that you will become, and remain, overweight.

The only way to guarantee sustained, permanent and long term weight loss (fat loss) is to boost your metabolism. The most effective way to do this is to have a greater proportion of functional, toned muscle tissue on your body. And the only way to do this is with strength training exercise.

Strength training is not just your ticket to fat loss and the body of your dreams, but offers a wealth of health benefits as well. Just a couple of sessions each week with the right program and you will be amazed at how quickly you will get into better shape.

There is no other type of exercise that can compare with strength training and its effect on the metabolic rate. After each exercise session your body will undergo a significant increase or spike in metabolism which will allow you to burn fat faster than you were able to before. This will even happen while you are sleeping, or when you are on the couch watching television.

As you continue to build and maintain your strength your body becomes more efficient at burning body fat. The lean muscle tissue on your body is also what makes you look good. Once you dump off the excess body fat, the lean muscle underneath your skin will be more visible making you look firm, well toned, lean and healthy.

Long term success managing your weight starts with the right approach. If you are overweight, you need to be aware that the real problem is that you have too much body fat for how much lean muscle tissue you possess. A body composition solution is needed which is more than just a weight loss diet. Your goal should be to lose body fat without losing muscle tissue or sacrificing your health in the process.

If you do not incorporate strength training exercise into your weight loss program then look forward to very disappointing results. The key is to burn off the body fat not starve it off. Quality natural whole foods and more energy output are the goal you will need to shoot for. Get your metabolism burning hot and keep it cranking and this cannot be achieved by missing meals and missing workouts.

Exercising without maintaining a balanced diet is just as harmful as dieting while remaining inactive. Decreasing calories through reduced food intake is not nearly as effective as increasing calories burned through proper exercise. Your new clean way of eating will properly support your exercise program so you have the strength and energy to make the necessary changes to your body and metabolism.

Lots of muscle activity through strength training exercise and lots of good food, not calorie deficiency has the far greater power to get you lean and healthy for life.

Conclusion – The Principles Of Fat Loss

Now that you have reached the end of 21 Days To Healthy Eating you are in a position to see that what I told you at the beginning of the book is true: there are only a few principles that you need to adhere to in order to shed fat from your body and keep it off. So here they are, the principles of fat loss on a single page. Keep these principles in mind in the days to come as you adjust your approach to preparing your daily meals and your desired level of fat loss is guaranteed.

- Your metabolic rate is not cast in stone. Regardless of your baseline rate, you can choose to elevate your metabolism by taking the appropriate actions, and thereby increase the rate at which you burn fat.
- Muscle cells burn fat continuously whereas fat cells merely store fat. When you incorporate strength training into your exercise habit you build muscle tissue and thereby increase your base metabolic rate. More muscle means less fat in the long term.
- Processed foods contain toxins that interfere with your body's metabolic rate. One side effect is that your body will try to lock away excess toxins in body fat, and that until you cleanse the toxins from your body, the fat will be difficult to remove.
- To give your body a chance to **cleanse itself** of toxins you need to eat **clean** food. This means avoiding processed foods as much as possible and replacing them with foods that can be placed on your plate in their natural state, or close to it – i.e. favour the raw apple over apple juice or baked apple pie.
- In order to lose weight your daily calorie intake needs to be short by 100 - 200 calories. To be able to maintain that deficiency you will need to learn about food portioning – at least initially.

So there you have it, a condensed set of principles to fat loss you can use to change your approach to eating, one meal at a time. Incorporate these ideas and eventually you will attain your desired body weight goal, keep the weight off, and reap the health benefits for life.